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RECONSTRUCTING THE PAST: REBUILDING CHURCHES AND REINVENTING IDENTITY IN POSTWAR GERMANY

by

VIRGINIA MORRIS

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HONORS BACHELOR OF ARTS IN HISTORY

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November 17, 2017

ABSTRACT

RECONSTRUCTING THE PAST: REBUILDING
CHURCHES AND RECONSTRUCTING
IDENTITY IN POSTWAR
GERMANY

Virginia Morris, B.A. History

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2018

Faculty Mentor: Joyce Goldberg

When the Second World War ended in 1945, Germany lay in ruins. Divided East and West, under Western and Soviet occupation, their country devastated, Germans began to rebuild their lives, homes, and country while searching for a way to process their role in the war, their defeat, and its meaning for themselves as a people. One way they began to reconstruct a sense of identity was to highlight historic German cultural creations. Germans, amidst the physical and political turmoil that surrounded them under military occupation, expended extraordinary efforts to preserve and rebuild two churches nearly obliterated by Allied bombing--the Frauenkirche of Dresden in East Germany and the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächniskirche of Berlin in West Germany. The struggle to preserve as much as possible the pre-war appearance of these universally recognized splendid

architectural landmarks demonstrates how Germans, even in defeat, used links to past glory to help forge a new, postwar German identity.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Europe in 1945 was a desolate place. "It was like a city of the dead," General Lucius Clay commented after touring Berlin on July 16.[1] Many of Germany's most important cities were bombed-out wastelands. Cologne, Nuremberg, Hamburg, Stuttgart, and Dresden, to name a few, had suffered enormous damage from Allied bombing and the firestorms that followed. Water sources became polluted with sewage, and rivers were clogged with the rubble of bridges and the remains of ships. Bombs had destroyed seventy-five percent of Berlin. The damage extended far beyond Germany. In Greece, a million people were homeless, and one out of every four buildings had been damaged or destroyed. Seventy percent of Vienna's historic city center lay devastated. In Yugoslavia, six of its seven main power stations were inoperable. Besides the enormous physical destruction, the war had caused loss of life on an immense scale. Fifty-five million people are estimated to have lost their lives during the Second World War. Thirty-five million of these were Europeans, and of these approximately six million were Germans. In the Soviet Union (U.S.S.R.), at least twenty-one million civilians and soldiers died.[2] The war destroyed cities, urban infrastructure, and populations so greatly that whatever emerged from reconstruction efforts would likely be significantly different than what had previously

[1] Quoted in On Every Front, 4. American General Lucius D. Clay held several critical roles in the U.S. defeat and occupation of Germany, including head of the army procurement program (1942-44), deputy military governor of Germany (1945-47), and Commander in Chief of the U.S. forces in Europe, and governor of the U.S. occupation zone in Germany (1948-49).
[2] Paterson, 1-10.

existed in terms of political structures, demographics, and physical appearance. As historian Thomas G. Paterson wrote:

> The conflagration of 1939-1945 was so wrenching, so total, so profound, that a world was overturned—not simply a material world of crops, buildings, and rails, not simply a human world of healthy and productive laborers, farmers, merchants, financiers, and intellectuals, not simply a secure world of close-knit families and communities, not simply a military world of Nazi storm troopers and Japanese kamikazes, but all that and more. The war also unhinged the world of stable politics, inherited wisdom, traditions, institutions, alliances, loyalties, commerce, and classes.[3]

In 1945, Germany's cities, suburbs, and infrastructure urgently needed to be rebuilt. Women cooked over outdoor fires in Berlin. Most of the city had no electricity. Few buildings had glass left in their windows. In Dresden, the historic *Altstadt* (old city) lay in rubble. Still, in addition to their pressing physical needs for food, shelter, and other basic necessities, the German people seemed to need something else—something intangible.

By the end of the Second World War, the German people needed a new vision of their nation. The promised thousand-year Reich lay in ruins. Many of its leaders, Adolf Hitler, SS and Gestapo Chief Heinrich Himmler, and Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels, had committed suicide. Loyalty to the fallen Reich put one in a dangerous position with the occupying forces. The strong, nationalistic, superior German identity that Hitler promoted (with all the evil inherent therein) became meaningless with the utter failure of his plans and government. Instead of a glorious and victorious fatherland, Germans now inhabited a nation of ruins under the control of occupying forces. The myth of German invincibility that Hitler created was as shattered and empty as the burned-out shell of the Reichstag. The people needed food, clothing, and shelter. But as those basic needs were met, they would also need a way to process the trauma they and their nation

[3] Paterson, 15.

had experienced. With the war behind them, they needed a way to think about it, talk about it, remember it.

Everyone had their own personal story. Germans faced the challenge of blending those millions of personal narratives of loss, grief, anger, guilt, fear, and suffering into a cohesive national narrative. They confronted the thorny task of turning the events of the past into a history—of shaping the actual events of the war and its aftermath into a collective memory. This resulted in Germans "collectively and individually searching for identity."[4] Several factors deeply influenced this process, including the ongoing presence of the occupying forces, Germany's division into separate states, and the assimilation of those two states into opposing spheres of influence. However, in all occupation zones, the former proud, superior identity of Germans no longer seemed acceptable. Germans needed to reinvent their collective identity as a people. Doing so presented difficult questions for both themselves and their occupiers, whose immense influence on the reconstruction Germany in both physical and mental spaces cannot be ignored. Regardless of the difficulty involved, creating a national history meant creating a shared past, and that connecting link was desperately needed in postwar Germany. As historian Rudy Koshar points out, "the political and cultural need to rediscover a point of commonality for populations torn apart by the war was most compelling...thus, it may be argued that the revival of German memory in the first years after the war was necessary to the survival of the country as both a national and European entity."[5]

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[4] Jeffry M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 280.
[5] Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870-1990*, 1st ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 153.

For many Germans, the answer to their search for identity—for a new way to think about themselves as a people—lay in the cultural achievements of the past. German cultural heritage provided an area in which Germans could celebrate their past while avoiding their unpleasant recent history. Emphasizing these past achievements allowed Germans to focus on an honorable aspect of their history that was largely untainted by Nazism. Historian Friedrich Meinecke wrote in 1946 about the need to celebrate German culture and restore the "German spirit" as a means of reconnecting with the rest of the western world. He specifically focused on German music, stating, "What is more individual and more German than great German music from Bach to Brahms?...It was always the case that a specifically and truly German achievement of the spirit came to have a universal impact on the Western world."[6] This approach also applies to other areas of culture, including literature, art, and architecture. Since the cultural achievements of past generations of Germans were celebrated and appreciated around the world, culture formed a space where Germans could cling to their past while bypassing their recent history.

Within this trend of emphasizing past German culture, two church buildings—the East German Frauenkirche of Dresden and the West German Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche (KWG) of Berlin—gained particular significance. While cultural materials such as art, music, and literature could also help create a sense of familiarity and continuity, architecture had a unique function because it determined the physical environment in which peoples' daily lives took place. With their physical environment so greatly damaged after the war as to be unrecognizable in some cases, restoring or preserving familiar elements of that environment helped Germans recover some sense of normality. The Frauenkirche was

[6] Friedrich Meinecke, "Die deutsche Katastrophe," in *Germany 1945-1949: a sourcebook*, ed. Manfred Malzahn (New York: Routledge, 1991), p 97.

destroyed by the bombing and subsequent firestorm in Dresden in 1945. Dresdners went to great lengths to protect the church's ruins, even while the rest of their city lay in piles of rubble and basic needs went unmet. While the church was never rebuilt under the German Democratic Republic (GDR), Dresdners remained deeply attached to the ruins and launched an international fundraising campaign to rebuild the Frauenkirche as soon as the GDR collapsed. The KWG was destroyed in late 1943 by bombing raids on Berlin. While reconstructing the church was ruled out because of the prohibitive cost, two attempts by the city and church to remove the heavily damaged bell tower caused massive public outcry. Public opinion was so greatly in favor of keeping the tower that church and city officials were forced to change their plans for the church on both occasions. As cultural landmarks, these buildings became pivotal points in creating a postwar German identity. Both buildings stood for honorable times in German history: the KWG for the newly united German nation, and the Frauenkirche for the flourishing German culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Frauenkirche and KWG gained immense symbolic significance to Germans after the Second World War because, as cultural landmarks, they became physical manifestations of the cultural heritage Germans wished to emphasize in their postwar identity.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Frauenkirche and KWG became so significant partly because of their locations in two prominent German cities. Berlin, divided into occupation zones that grew increasingly hostile, became a Cold War ideological battleground between the United States and the U.S.S.R. As the only German city that the Iron Curtain split in half, Berlin became a place where competing ideologies existed in close proximity, and each tried to demonstrate its superiority over the other. Dresden, formerly internationally renowned for its architectural and cultural masterpieces, had been destroyed in February of 1945 by U.S. and British bombs. The bombing and ensuing firestorm killed as many as 35,000 people and destroyed the city's magnificent *Altstadt*, which contained many historically and architecturally important buildings. Because the bombing occurred late in the war and death tolls were difficult to estimate, Dresden's reputation as a city of culture was quickly replaced by an identity as the ultimate victim city. However, the symbolic significance of Berlin and Dresden derived from their historic importance to the German state and not merely from their experiences during and after the war. Therefore, it is important to understand both the historical and wartime background of these cities in order to give context to the symbolic importance of the KWG and Frauenkirche reconstruction efforts.

2.1 Berlin

By the end of the Second World War, Berlin had long been established as one of Germany's most important cities. Germans were accustomed to looking to Berlin for

leadership because it had been the seat of Nazi power and the capital of united Germany since 1871. The city began as a humble Slavic village built on the marshy ground around the River Spree. While one author estimates it was founded as early as 400 A.D., it is difficult to be certain because its earliest inhabitants left no written records.[7] Berlin became a German village in the twelfth century when ethnic German settlers began moving into the area, expelling the Slavic residents. The earliest written record associated with Berlin is a document from 1237 that mentions the town of Cölln,[8] a city founded at approximately the same time, which lay on an island directly across the Spree from Berlin. Cölln gradually merged with Berlin as the two towns expanded, and the expansion assumed the name Berlin.[9] Berlin grew extensively under the Prussian Hohenzollern dynasty (1415-1918). Friedrich Wilhelm I (1713-1740) is particularly notable for his efforts to expand and fortify the city in order to maintain his growing army. Some of his expansion efforts included giving subjects land upon which they were compelled to build houses large enough to billet troops. He also constructed a new wall with eighteen gates around Berlin, which created large new spaces intended as parade grounds. Friedrich Wilhelm's son, Friedrich II (Frederick the Great, 1740-1786), took Prussia's power to new heights with his military conquests. As Prussia's influence grew through Frederick the Great's efforts, Berlin's status as the Prussian state capital increased.[10]

Although prominent as Prussia's capital, Berlin experienced a significant increase in population, commerce, and importance after the unification of the German states in

[7] Ewan Butler, *City Divided: Berlin 1955*, (New York: Prager, 1955), 22.
[8] Also spelled Kölln or Kollen. Butler, 22.
[9] Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 44.
[10] Ladd, 71-72.

1871. Author Susanne Everett describes the transformation Berlin experienced as the difference between being a "provincial city" and a "boom city."[11] The unification of the German states occurred largely because of the adroit political maneuvering of Prussian Foreign Minister Otto von Bismarck (1862-1871). Bismarck ensured that Prussia had a dominant role in the new German confederation and that Prussia's King Wilhelm I became Kaiser Wilhelm I (1871-1888) of unified Germany. This placed Berlin in the spotlight as the capital of the new German nation and as the residence of the first Kaiser. Berlin's new importance was also reflected in its population growth. Its population in 1865 was 658,000. Four years after unification, it had risen to 964,000, and by 1910 it had grown to two million.[12]

As German cultural expert Barbara Becker-Cantarino puts it, "Berlin has been the primary site of political, social, and cultural transformation in modern Germany. Unlike any other German city, Berlin...has witnessed, influenced, and mirrored the political metamorphosis of Germans during the entire twentieth century."[13] Berlin, by extension, came to be considered representative of the German people as a whole. Historian Brian Ladd asserts, "Two related facts—Berlin's status as a national capital and its division—have made the civic identity of Berlin inseparable from the national identity of Germany since World War II."[14] While Berlin had been known internationally as the German capital, its poignant Cold War symbolism began in earnest during the Berlin Blockade in 1948-9 and only increased after the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961. Berlin came

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[11] Susanne Everett, *Lost Berlin*, (New York: Gallery Books, 1979), 17-18.
[12] Everett, 18.
[13] Dirk Verheyen, *United City, Divided Memories? Cold War Legacies in Contemporary Berlin*, (New York: Lexington Books, 2008), 2.
[14] Ladd, 3.

to represent the struggle of divided Germany both to Germans themselves and to observers across the world. More than any other city, Berlin represents the experience of the German nation during the twentieth century.[15] It is this symbolism that makes Berlin critical to understanding the struggle for identity that Germans faced following the Second World War. Because of the city's prominence, reconstruction in Berlin proved both structurally challenging and burdened with huge symbolic meaning. The KWG's location in Berlin assured that debates surrounding its reconstruction held national significance.

2.2 Dresden

Dresden's history as a city of cultural importance for the German people dates back centuries. Like Berlin, Dresden had its roots in a Slavic settlement founded in the latter half of the twelfth century. Germanic tribes moving into the area slowly pushed out the Slavs and established a trade settlement on the location of Dresden as a prime site on the convergence of the Meissen and Freiberg silver trading routes.[16] The first surviving written reference to Dresden dates to 1206, and its first mention as a city came in 1216. The city gained international prominence several centuries later under August the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (1694-1733). August had extravagant taste in the arts and believed that he needed to bolster his prestige because his Protestant subjects in Dresden disapproved of his conversion to Catholicism to gain the Polish throne.[17] It was under his sponsorship and supervision that Dresden acquired magnificent art collections and its distinctive architecture took form as construction began on four of Dresden's most famous

[15] The fact that Berlin was the capital of five different German states in a period of one hundred years illustrates that this experience—and by extension, that of the German people—has been anything but smooth. Verheyen, 2.
[16] Anthony Clayton, "Dresden 1206-1918," in *Dresden: a City Reborn*, ed. Alan Russell and Anthony Clayton, (New York: Berg Publishers), 9.
[17] Clayton, 14.

buildings—the Zwinger castle, an opera house, the Catholic Hofkirche, and the Protestant Frauenkirche. Dresden also became known during August's reign as one of the work sites of the former alchemist Johann Friedrich Böttger, who discovered how to make porcelain, highly prized but only available as an import from Japan or China. August the Strong acquired an extensive collection of Japanese, Chinese, and later German porcelain. He also began collecting the paintings of prominent Dutch, Italian, and German painters. Dresden owes much of its rich cultural history and fame to August the Strong, who turned the city into a thriving community of 40,000 people and "a major European capital with a court renowned for its splendor."[18]

August's son, Friedrich August II, continued his father's legacy of collecting great artwork. Under Friedrich August II's rule, Dresden became home to Raphael's "Madonna of San Sisto," one of the city's most iconic paintings. Dresden's fantastic art and porcelain collections also can be attributed to August II's close counselor Graf Heinrich von Brühl, an avid art collector who frequently channeled government money into his passion at the expense of more practical government programs. During August II's rule, German philosopher Johann Gottfried von Herder wrote, "Blühe, deutsches Florenz, mit Deinen Schätzen der Kunstwelt!" ("Blossom, German Florence with your treasures of the art world!").[19] Herder's comparison of Dresden to Florence soon became popularized in the name *Elbflorenz*, or Florence on the Elbe (the Elbe River flows through Dresden). During the nineteenth century, Dresden adjusted well to the Industrial Revolution and became a thriving center for industries such as glassware, optics (cameras and photography

[18] Clayton, 17.
[19] Quoted in Tony Joel, *The Dresden Firebombing* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 45.

equipment), luxury foods, and mechanical engineering.[20] When Saxony became part of united Germany in 1871, the unification benefitted Dresden economically by providing a wider market in which to sell its wares.[21] As travel became easier and more affordable during the nineteenth century, Dresden's art collections attracted many tourists, and its magnificent architecture became a favorite for postcards. The city maintained its significance as a unique European cultural site up until the Second World War.

On February 13, 1945, American and British bombers led a raid on Dresden that permanently changed the city's physical structure and its reputation. This joint raid consisted of 1,083 aircraft that dropped 1,952.2 tons of explosives and 1,477.6 tons of incendiaries on Dresden over the course of fifteen hours. The attack resulted in a firestorm that raged through the city center, killing thousands of people and destroying many of the city's famous buildings. Because so many other cities had been damaged or destroyed, Dresden was filled with refugees, and its population was higher than normal. Thousands of people died in the fire or suffocated while sheltering from the air raid in their basements. The Nazi Propaganda Ministry immediately used the attack on Dresden to illustrate Allied cruelty and their intent to "annihilate" all Germans.[22] The raid sparked outrage in Germany and continued to be widely controversial after the war as Soviet, German, and British writers elaborated on Dresden's ruined cultural heritage, relatively minor military significance, and difficult-to-calculate death toll. After extensive investigation, East German officials released an official estimate of 35,000 dead. Several popular publications,

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[20] "City of Industry," *Dresden,* https://www.dresden.de/en/02/07/City-of-Industry.php (Accessed May 3, 2017).
[21] Mary Endell, *Dresden – History, Stage, Gallery*, (Dresden: Johannes Seifert, 1908), 1-4, 37-46, 52-74, 106-109.
[22] Joel, 68.

however, insisted that there were far more refugees in Dresden than East German officials admitted, and that the death toll was far higher. These publications included *Der Tod von Dresden*, by West German author Axel Rodenberger. Published in 1951, this book sold 250,000 copies and reported a death toll of 100,000-400,000. *The Destruction of Dresden,* published in 1963 by now-discredited English author David Irving, blamed Churchill for personally ordering the raid and reported 135,000 dead. Although Irving retracted this claim in 1966 when he discovered many of the documents he had used were Nazi documents intended as propaganda, his book had already been translated into German and had sold many copies both in England and West Germany.[23] Statistically, Dresden did not sustain damage as severe as cities such as Hamburg, which experienced 40,000 dead and 900,000 refugees, nor experience the terror of continual bombing raids, as did Cologne and Essen, which individually endured more than 250 Allied bombing operations.[24] In spite of this, because of its pre-war reputation, Dresden acquired a new international reputation as an *Opferstadt.* This German term translates to "victim city," though *Opfer* can be used to refer either to a victim or to a sacrifice. Historian Tony Joel notes that although other cities experienced more severe damage, "Dresden, however, lost its very character and identity when immolated in February 1945, for its pre-war standing as the *Elbflorenz* was buried under a hail of falling bombs and fiery debris, replaced by a new status as the German *Opferstadt*."[25]

The historical and cultural significance of Berlin and Dresden put them in the national spotlight in the years after the Second World War. Berlin gained renown as the

[23] Joel, 72-76.
[24] Joel, 54, 58.
[25] Joel, 60.

historic capital of Germany, the former seat of Hitler's power, and the capital shared (and ultimately divided) by the Allies. Dresden grew prominent as a tragic victim of war—its thriving population and beautiful architecture destroyed in what many described as senseless violence. These identities of Cold War icon and *Opferstadt* influenced the reconstruction of the KWG and Frauenkirche, as well as the meanings Germans attached to these two churches. Another significant influence, however, came from the U.S. and Soviet occupation in Germany. As a conquered people, Germans were affected by how their occupiers treated them. The attitudes and actions of Americans and Soviets toward Germans influenced how they viewed the past and constructed a German postwar identity.

CHAPTER 3

OCCUPATION

The immediate postwar years represented a critical moment in German history. In the war's aftermath, Germany's occupiers determined how reconstruction proceeded and tried to impose their own vision of German identity on the German people. Amid the struggle for survival, the efforts to rebuild housing and basic infrastructure, and the process of denazification, the German populace had to find a way to come to terms with what they and their nation had perpetrated and experienced. The rise and fall of the Third Reich permanently changed the German people's perception of themselves and their reputation in the world. Germans on both sides of the Iron Curtain struggled with how to process and conceptualize their personal and national experiences. This process was complicated by the creation of two separate Germanys in 1948-1949, and each one's perception of the past was heavily influenced, and in some cases even appropriated, by their occupiers. The churches reflect particular aspects of this influence.

Berliners saw preserving the KWG ruins as controversial in part because preservation could be interpreted as an implicit condemnation of Allied bombing raids while the Americans and British were in the process of helping rebuild Germany. In Dresden, the Frauenkirche ruins became an important propaganda tool allowing the Communist regime in East Germany to join with the U.S.S.R. in condemning the cruel wartime policies of capitalist nations. The British, French, Soviets, and Americans had all experienced the war in different ways and had different goals for occupation. Therefore,

they each approached occupation differently, though they faced many of the same challenges. For the Americans and Soviets, confusion regarding how to proceed and lack of clear instructions from those in authority represented two of the most difficult problems. Because the two churches in question were located within the American and Soviet zones, understanding both American and Soviet approaches to occupation is key to understanding the events surrounding the churches' reconstruction.

3.1 The American Occupation

American forces faced obstacles in two broad categories: reconstruction and rehabilitation. Germany was physically devastated, factories bombed out, farmland destroyed, and 7.5 million homeless German refugees.[26] Allied air raids alone killed between 400,000 and 600,000 civilians and devastated an average of 50 percent of German cities with a population over 100,000.[27] In Hamburg alone, 79.5 percent of the housing was destroyed and there were 2,200 breaks in the sewer lines. An extremely destructive bombing raid in 1943 had resulted in a firestorm that killed 35,000 people and injured 125,000. By 1945, Hamburg had 35,800,000 cubic meters of rubble—enough to circle the globe if loaded into freight cars stacked end to end.[28] Although Hamburg topped the list in terms of cubic meters of rubble, cities such as Cologne, Nuremberg, and Stuttgart experienced similar damage to their housing, public and historic buildings, and utilities. The prospect of rebuilding a nation so thoroughly destroyed appeared daunting.

Infighting and uncertainty within the highest levels of government characterized the American occupation and manifested themselves on the ground in an array of

[26] Rick Atkinson, *The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945*, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2013), 536
[27] Diefendorf, 11.
[28] Diefendorf, 11, 15, 17.

sometimes conflicting and counterproductive orders. American administrators in Washington had to deal with problems that had no precedent in American history, while American army officers in Germany had to carry out confusing, impractical, and contradictory orders. Unlike the French and British, the Americans did not set up central planning offices for the rebuilding process. Instead, rebuilding was mostly a piecemeal process left up to the Germans once basic facilities had been repaired sufficiently to allow the occupation forces to function. Clearing and repairing utilities, streets, hospitals, and housing took priority. The military controlled the reconstruction of various factories needed to support their occupation activities; however, General Lucius Clay clearly voiced the U.S. position that housing constituted "an entirely German problem."[29] This meant that there were no broad directives concerning reconstruction from U.S. policymakers. As a result, reconstruction of private homes and businesses in the American zone was largely left up to the local German officials. Even in Berlin, reconstruction was not coordinated among the Allies. When the city was divided in 1948 into occupation zones, most of the official city maps were in the eastern half and became inaccessible to western planners.[30]

The second obstacle, rehabilitating the German people, posed a far greater challenge than physically rebuilding Germany. As the atrocities that Jews, political dissenters, and other minorities faced in concentration camps became known, guilt became a problem with which both Germans and their occupiers struggled. Who was responsible for the horrific deeds and state-sponsored genocide committed under the Third Reich? Was it only Hitler and a small circle of elites who bore the guilt? Was it the SS guards who physically murdered concentration camp prisoners? Was it the masses of German citizens

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[29] Diefendorf, 243-247.
[30] Diefendorf, 249-50.

who either actively or passively supported Hitler? If the latter, the occupying forces would be faced with the colossal task of rehabilitating (or punishing) an entire nation of guilty people. It soon became clear to both the United States and the U.S.S.R. that it was impractical to hold *all* Germans criminally responsible. However, holding no one directly responsible would be to trivialize the deaths of millions of Jews and other Nazi victims. It was therefore necessary to hold *some* Germans responsible. Precisely which Germans to hold responsible was an important question, and one which would shape how Germans viewed each other and themselves as a collective whole.

After rejecting the Morgenthau Plan and similar initiatives that called for the complete dismantling of German industry, American leaders agreed that Germany must somehow be rehabilitated in order to rejoin the world community. This was a daunting task, and in many ways more difficult for the Americans than the Soviets. The U.S. Army's "Pocket Guide to Germany" published in 1944 for the occupation forces made clear that all Germans were collectively responsible for the bloodshed and atrocities committed in the war because they had knowingly elected the Nazis to power. "The German people had all read Hitler's 'Mein Kampf,'" the handbook told enlisted men. "They knew what Hitler meant to do to the minorities and the world. This book told them and a majority of them voted for the Nazis knowing this would give the Nazi Party absolute control, with Hitler as Chancellor."[31] American officials decided that even though the German people bore the guilt for bringing Hitler to power, Nazi party members bore an extra measure of blame. This conclusion led to an extensive process of denazification, more intense in the American zone than in the other occupation zones.

[31] United States Army, Army Information Branch, *Pocket Guide to Germany*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1944), 4, https://archive.org/details/PocketGuideToGermany1944 (accessed April 26, 2017).

Denazification was a haphazard process. There were simply too many Nazis and not enough people above suspicion to replace them. The Nazi party boasted 8.5 million members, including administrators at all levels of government, businessmen, and virtually anyone of any importance in Germany. This figure did not include those who had been affiliated with the myriad of Nazi-sponsored organizations such as the Hitler Youth and German Labor Front. Paper mill manager Hanns Huber saved all 8.5 million Nazi party membership cards instead of destroying them as the Nazi government had ordered him to do in April 1945. He turned these records over to the Americans, allowing them to know beyond doubt who had been a party member.[32] Because an overwhelming majority of Germans held Nazi membership cards, Allied authorities needed to determine who had been a devoted Nazi, and who had joined merely out of convenience or fear. Unfortunately, the methods they used to determine this constantly shifted, causing a great deal of confusion, anxiety, and distress for the German people affected by these orders and the American officials who carried them out.

The implementation of Military Government Law No. 8 is a good example of the confusion and inefficiency that characterized denazification. In March 1945, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) set January 1933 as an unofficial cutoff date for determining if Nazi party membership proved true support of the Nazi agenda. Since the Nazis came to power in January 1933, Germans joining the Nazi party after this date could reasonably argue that they had joined simply to save their jobs or their lives. Those who could demonstrate a lack of party involvement would not be barred from

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[32] Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany,* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2011), 249-251.

holding public office.[33] In September 1945, however, Military Government Law No. 8 became public and "prohibited employment of Nazi party members in business in any capacity other than common labor...[and] applied not only to executives and managers but also to private owners, including owner-operators such as grocers, barbers, bakers, and butchers."[34] This law caused massive confusion because only the regional military government knew of its existence, and even agencies such as the United States Forces European Theater (USFET) expressed surprise. U.S. Army historian Earl F. Ziemke explained that, "[USFET] had just released the *Ortsgruppenleiter,* the lowest and one of the most numerous automatic arrest groups, from the internment camps.[35] When the incongruity of certified active Nazis walking the streets at the same time less-implicated Germans were being thrown out of their businesses and jobs became evident, as it soon did, USFET had to stage a special 24-hour sweep, Operation CHESTERFIELD, to get them back behind barbed wire."[36]

American opinion, both official and public, reflected a sense that Germans needed to be brought to justice. In a communication to General Holmes in June 1945, General John Hilldring declared that the German people needed to see the "error of their ways" and should be "held at arm's length."[37] This approach is evident in the U.S. Army's "Pocket Guide to Germany, which told soldiers in emphatic italics, "*There must be no*

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[33] Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1990), 381, https://history.army.mil/books/wwii/Occ-GY/index.htm#contents (Accessed May 23, 2017).
[34] Ziemke, 387.
[35]This word roughly translates to 'local group leader. Individuals who held certain positions in the Nazi party were subject to automatic arrest under the U.S. occupation, regardless of their effectiveness or dedication in that position.
[36] Ziemke, 367.
[37] Ziemke, 97.

fraternization. This is absolute!"[38] Soldiers were cautioned, however, not to take this order too far: "This warning against fraternization doesn't mean that you are to act like a sourpuss or military automaton. Your aspect should not be harsh or forbidding."[39] President Franklin D. Roosevelt pressured his generals into issuing this non-fraternization order after pictures of American soldiers and German citizens mingling freely caused outrage at home.[40] However, the U.S. Army justified the policy as the necessary result of Germany's collective sins. "However friendly and repentant, however sick of the Nazi party, the Germans have sinned against the laws of humanity and cannot come into the civilized fold by merely sticking out their hands and saying 'I'm sorry.' It is up to the people to prove they deserve a place once more among respectable nations."[41] American policymakers intended the occupying forces to demonstrate the superiority of democracy and American values as well as to instill in the German people a deep sense of how low they had fallen. Germany was not to be forgiven quickly nor was it to escape a full realization of its sins.

Denazification proved to be one of the hardest issues of the American occupation. U.S. officials had hoped they would be able to find the "good Germans" and install them in positions formerly occupied by Nazis. However, U.S. forces on the ground faced the grim fact that there simply were not enough Germans untainted by Nazism to fill all the positions. Unlike the Soviets, who had trained an elite group of German exiles and Russian administrators to take over German governmental positions after the war, the U.S. Army faced an enormous difficulty finding qualified German administrators.[42] Because Hitler

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[38] *Pocket Guide to Germany*, 2.
[39] *Pocket Guide to Germany*, 2.
[40]Ziemke, 98.
[41] *Pocket Guide to Germany*, 4.
[42] The Soviets faced a different manpower shortage. So many Soviet officials were convicted of corruption or related charges and sent back to Russia that they could not find enough men to fill the *Soviet* positions in the occupation government.

had given all the positions of power to fervent Nazi supporters—or at least Nazi party members—there were few qualified Germans who had not served in the Third Reich. As Ziemke points out, "Having been a party member did not prevent a man from being better at his job and having a more agreeable personality than someone who was not...Frequently the Nazis had training, experience, energy, affability, and not a bad political record."[43] In some cases, the need for personnel was too desperate to exclude former party members. Medical personnel were an exception. Many local doctors were given temporary licenses and allowed to keep their offices open even though they were former Nazis. Doctors associated with concentration camps, however, were usually prosecuted.[44]

As historian Robert G. Moeller points out, most Germans believed that only a very small number of Wehrmacht soldiers had committed crimes—the majority had simply performed "their duty."[45] The Allies eventually accepted a version of this narrative—that Hitler and his top officials (not the army or most civilians) were criminally responsible for the atrocities of the Third Reich.[46] Trying to bring an entire nation to justice would have been counterproductive to efforts of unification. Instead, the denazification effort concentrated on high-profile Nazis. By designating Hitler and his top generals as the perpetrators, space was created for ordinary German citizens to identify themselves as something other than perpetrators. In the aftermath of the war, many Germans identified most easily as victims. Indeed, for Germans who had played no active part in the war but saw their city destroyed, their family members killed or horribly maimed, and who found

[43] Ziemke, 380.
[44] Taylor, 85.
[45] Roberg G. Moeller, "The Politics of the Past in the 1950s: Rhetorics of Victimization in East and West Germany," in *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany*, ed. Bill Niven (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 32.
[46] Ibid, 32.

themselves living under occupying forces, it must have been hard *not* to feel like victims. This sense of victimhood shaped how many Germans chose to create their postwar identity.

The American occupation forces confronted many of the same issues as their Soviet counterparts. The disorganization and struggle to find suitable replacements for formerly Nazi-occupied positions that plagued the Americans also affected the Soviets. Germany presented a multitude of problems to the forces, both Soviet and American, which were tasked with shaping its physical reconstruction and its national identity.

3.2 The Soviet Occupation

The Soviet occupation in Germany, especially in the first five years, reflected corruption at all levels of administration, a chronic lack of manpower, and immense confusion regarding policy and the distribution of power. Despite having the advantage of a pool of German Communists ready to occupy some of the administrative positions previously held by Nazis, the Soviet occupation proceeded in a disorderly fashion amid great confusion and uncertainty. Although the Soviets established an occupation government relatively quickly, chaos continued to reign in the day-to-day operations on the ground. Soviet commanders received confusing and contradictory orders from different agencies on how to conduct everyday matters and lacked a clear line of command. Even after the establishment of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SVAG) on June 6, the situation did not improve dramatically. SVAG attempted to establish command centers known as kommandanturas as the basic unit of government and gave the commandants the mission of maintaining security for the public and Soviet troops, as well as for enforcing SVAG orders. These kommandanturas typically consisted of five departments including the Political Department, Propaganda Department, Military Affairs

and Security Department, Economics Department, and Supply Department.[47] However, unclear chains of command greatly reduced the efficiency of these administrations. For example, after July 1945 the city of Dresden had a city kommandantura, a district kommandantura, a kommandantura for the headquarters of provincial military administration, and a kommandantura for the First Tank Regiment commander. It was not clear where the jurisdiction of these kommandanturas began and ended, and which commandant could supersede any other should they issue conflicting orders. As a result, commandants frequently ran their territory according to their own personal priorities. At times, this meant distributing rations to Soviet troops to the neglect of the German people, executing German citizens without due process of law, and seizing private property and food without authorization.[48] At a higher level, Stalin’s lack of instructions to his staff regarding the occupation of Germany caused high-level policy to be uncertain and hesitant. Stanford historian Norman Naimark explains that “a great deal of latitude was given to Stalin's administrators, especially those located far from Moscow, who were in the unenviable position of trying to anticipate the Kremlin's wishes. There was little incentive to take any initiative, and there were no clear lines of responsibility.”[49]

Widespread corruption and lack of manpower plagued the Soviet forces. Drunkenness was rampant and contributed to a rising number of fatal auto accidents, armed robberies, and rapes. Soldiers and officers alike were involved in the theft and sale of German goods and property. Despite efforts by high ranking officials and the Cadres Department to curb the corruption, it continued. Even General Georgi Zhukov, chief of the

[47] Naimark, 11-14.
[48] Naimark 13-14.
[49] Naimark, 25.

SVAG, was accused of taking German belongings for his own personal use to furnish several apartments. Removing officials was often impossible because there was no one to replace them.[50] Naimark explains, "The manpower crisis reached severe proportions in 1947 and the first quarter of 1948. Not counting normal transfers, 6,823 SVAG workers were released from their posts and sent back to the Soviet Union, of whom 3,513were considered politically or morally compromised. Only 844 arrived in Germany from the Soviet Union to take their place."[51]

Berlin, the site of the final Nazi resistance, the German capital, and the only city to be divided among the Allies, had a unique occupation experience. Soviet forces reached Berlin first, surrounding the city by April 26, 1945. The ensuing battle was extremely fierce, with German commanders ordering their men to continue fighting even after every reasonable hope of victory or escape had disappeared. As the situation grew more desperate, teenage boys from the Hitler Youth were sent out with automatic weapons to engage the Russians in street fighting. By the time Soviet troops prevailed, the city was in ruins, with 1.5 million Berliners homeless, 75,000 wounded and 30,000-55,000 killed.[52] Soviet forces had incurred 300,000 casualties in taking the city.[53] Following their victory in Berlin, Russian soldiers displayed a total lack of discipline during the initial weeks of occupation. They forcibly took anything that caught their fancy, with their favorite items including watches, phonographs, and bikes. Soviet soldiers also raped at least 20,000 women in Berlin during their occupation of the city. This number did not include women who chose to attach themselves to a Russian officer to receive protection from the nightly

[50] Naimark, 33-36.
[51] Naimark, 30.
[52] Everett, 186-7
[53] Naimark, 11.

rapes.[54] The Soviet soldiers' (and sometimes commanders') treatment of German citizens resulted in part from their anger over the brutality and destruction German soldiers had inflicted during the invasion of Russia. The Soviet Union is estimated to have lost eleven million soldiers, and an estimated twenty million civilians during the Second World War.[55] As one Russian general put it, "During my whole life I have seen nothing like the bestial way German officers and soldiers pursued the peaceful population [of Russia]. All of the destruction you have here in Germany is nothing by comparison."[56]

In Berlin, at least, the confusion within the administration did not prevent the Soviets from quickly restoring basic functions. By May 13, 1945, Berlin had a working bus route. By May 14, it had an U-bahn route, and by May 21, it had a Soviet-run newspaper.[57] Immediately after occupying Berlin, the Soviets also began dismantling all forms of industrial machinery to send back to Russia to take the place of destroyed equipment. The Soviets also quickly turned their attention to establishing a government. An elite group of German Communists known as Muscovites, who had received training in Russia, arrived in Berlin as soon as Soviet troops secured the city. This group included future Socialist Unity Party secretary Walter Ulbricht as one of its main leaders. Ulbricht identified the Muscovites' mission as "the building of German agencies for self-government in Berlin."[58] This included winning over the German population, as well as finding Communists or Communist sympathizers who could be installed in government positions. Since there were not enough Muscovites to fill all administrative positions, they

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[54] MacDonogh, 96-98.
[55] JT Dykman, "The Soviet Experience in World War Two," *Eisenhower Institute*, http://www.eisenhowerinstitute.org/about/living_history/wwii_soviet_experience.dot (Accessed July 3, 2017).
[56] Quoted in Richie, 616.
[57] MacDonogh, 108; Naimark, 19.
[58] Quoted in MacDonogh, 104

had to be scattered throughout the government. Ulbricht determined that Berlin should appear to become Communist of its own volition, not by Soviet-directed mandate. Therefore, the Muscovites and Soviets worked to find administrators who might belong to another political party, such as the Social Democrats, but who would follow Soviet commands without question. Wolfgang Leonhard, a Muscovite who later defected and became a professor at Yale University, explained in *Child of the Revolution* that Ulbricht's strategy was to find men who had been anti-fascist and willing to take orders, especially for positions in education, personnel, and police forces. The emergence of a predominantly Communist government needed "to look democratic, but all that really matters must be in our [the Muscovites' and Communists'] hands."[59] Although Ulbricht and his fellow Muscovites wanted to have everything under their control, having at least some support from the German people seemed necessary to ensure a stable government. Winning the favor of the people became much more important to the Soviets once British and American troops arrived in Berlin. Once the German people had an opportunity to compare Soviet occupation forces with others, Soviet authorities became much more concerned with how their troops appeared to German civilians. Because of this concern, Soviet officials began to crack down on corruption and disorderly conduct among the troops.[60]

From the beginning, the Soviets concluded that Germans must be made to take responsibility for the rise of Hitler and for the terrible consequences of the war. Still, Soviet propaganda and policy also placed great emphasis on those who had heroically resisted fascism. This created a dual narrative: all Germans held some collective moral responsibility for the atrocities of the Second World War, but all Germans were neither

[59] Quoted in MacDonogh, 106.
[60] MacDonogh, 102.

evil nor criminally responsible for wartime barbarities. In August 9, 1945, a speech from German writer Johannes Becher, head of the newly formed Cultural Union for the Democratic Renewal of Germany, suggested that Germans who had resisted Hitler would form the basis of a new German identity of Germans as the victims of Hitler:

> We commemorate the dead Germans, [who are German] not just in name, in origin or speech, but Germans who had maintained in themselves the best of German tradition, and who in the most difficult, distressful time of our history held steadfast to these traditions, remained true to them and placed a seal on them with their death. Every one of our dead lived, worked, suffered, and went to their deaths for the human empire of the German nation. German poets, the true Germans that they were, could and would not be silenced as Hitler brought ruin to Germany.[61]

Becher's remarks suggest that he viewed Hitler as an aberration from honorable German history and tradition, and that those who had resisted Nazism displayed the highest German values. By identifying those who resisted Nazism as "true Germans," Becher implied that true German identity and values could be found in Germany's past, not in the recent years under the Nazis. By creating a hero class from among the Germans themselves, the Soviets reinforced the message that Germans were not inherently evil people even if they did share responsibility for electing Hitler. Moreover, becoming devout Communists offered Germans a way to exonerate themselves from their moral responsibility for empowering Hitler and the Third Reich. After the creation of two competing German states, the Soviets used this narrative simultaneously with narratives emphasizing the incompetence of Hitler, and the cruelty of the Western powers in their conquest of Germany.

The Soviet and American occupations of Germany faced enormous challenges and exhibited repeated inconsistencies, confusion, and blunders. Neither country was prepared for the enormity of physically repairing and morally rehabilitating an entire nation. As they

[61] Quoted in Naimark, 401.

went about this task, the Americans and Soviets created distinctive narratives that they attempted to impose on the German people and which deeply influenced the Germans' attempt to create postwar identity for themselves. American forces initially emphasized all Germans' guilt and tried to enforce denazification across the board. When this proved impractical because of the sheer number of former Nazis, they focused on prosecuting a few Nazis whom they considered the most prominent offenders. This allowed Germans who were not selected for prosecution to feel absolved of guilt and to focus instead on the trauma the war had inflicted upon them. This created a strong victim narrative. In the Soviet zone of occupation, Soviet leaders emphasized that all Germans were responsible because of their complicity with Hitler, but acknowledged that only Hitler and a few top officials shared criminal guilt. Again, this allowed average German citizens the freedom to feel like victims both of Allied violence and of Hitler. The Soviets offered Communism as a path that would elevate Germans above their unfortunate past. This was the political context within which German postwar identity began to take shape. Although this identity continued to evolve long after the Allied occupation had reached its end, the influence of these early stages cannot be ignored. It was during American and Soviet occupation that a German identity began to form that would find physical expression years later in the Frauenkirche and KWG.

CHAPTER 4

CHURCH HISTORIES

The preservation and reconstruction of the Frauenkirche and KWG took place in a complex postwar political and cultural setting, and reflect many complicated themes related to German identity, reconstruction, and culture. Because historians, psychologists, and various other researchers have performed extensive research into German collective memory, victimization, and guilt, it is possible to explore numerous themes in the stories of these two churches. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen three themes. The first and most closely related to my main argument is that the churches reflect the tendency of the German people to reach back to the pre-Nazi period to find a sense of cultural identity. Secondly, the churches express Germans' intense desire to recreate familiar surroundings. Third, they are expressions of German victimhood. While the stories of these churches are quite different, these three themes are most strongly expressed in the preservation and reconstruction of each. All three represent crucial aspects of Germans' search for a postwar identity in both East and West Germany. The Frauenkirche and KWG form critical points of that identity because of their status as cultural and architectural landmarks before the war. Because the churches constituted visual and spatial reminders of the war, the decisions regarding their treatment also influenced how war survivors as well as future generations of Germans and visitors remembered the war. As German historian Wulf Kansteiner contends, visual experiences play an exceptionally important role in collective memory because they allow people who have not actually lived through a past event to experience

a small part of it.[62] Because of this, places such as these churches are important in that they allow people to experience elements of the past through multiple senses such as sight, touch, and sound. These experiences then shape their perception of the past. Because of their cultural importance and visual significance, the Frauenkirche and KWG form part of the lens through which Germans see their own past, which forms a key component of their postwar identity.

4.1 The Frauenkirche

Dresden's Frauenkirche has been an integral part of the city for centuries. The earliest incarnations of the Frauenkirche predate even Dresden itself, as a missionary church under the name "Frauenkirche" existed on the site of present-day Dresden during the eleventh century. After the founding of the city of Dresden in the latter part of the twelfth century, the Frauenkirche underwent numerous expansions and a relocation to meet the needs of the growing population. The unique building that featured prominently in Dresden's famous skyline for two hundred years was more recent. By 1722 the old Gothic Frauenkirche building had become so decrepit that the Dresden City Council closed the building and commissioned the city's master carpenter, George Bähr, to design a new church. After the City Council rejected several of his drafts, Bähr received their approval for the building that would become an identifying mark of Dresden. Construction began in 1726 with approval and sponsorship of August the Strong. Sadly, neither Bähr nor August the Strong lived to see the church's completion in 1743. Historian Anthony Clayton noted that the church represented a "spiritual unity" in Dresden: although Protestant, it had the

[62] Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics After Auschwitz,* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 22.

sponsorship of a Catholic ruler, and the unusual name of "Church of Our Lady."[63] It was also closely tied to Dresden's historical roots, since the first Frauenkirche predated the city. Both Catholics and Protestants found the church appealing, resulting in its broad popularity throughout Dresden.

The building's massive dome turned out to be its most impressive feature as well as its greatest cause for concern. Originally, Bähr designed the dome to be constructed out of wood and plated with copper in order to reduce its weight. However, the City Council voted to build the dome out of the same sandstone used for the rest of the building in order to save money. Almost immediately after the dome's construction, cracks appeared in the support structure, causing great concern. After consulting with several building experts, the Council approved a lighter lantern for the top of the church. The structural problems that resulted from the immense weight of the dome were never fully resolved, and by the early twentieth century the church needed both structural and cosmetic repairs. It underwent two periods of renovations, 1925 to 1932, and 1938 to 1942. The repairs that began in 1938 focused on reinforcing faults in the load-bearing support stones. Unfortunately, these repairs were short-lived. The newly renovated Frauenkirche was destroyed in the aftermath of the Dresden bombing attacks on February 13 and 14, 1945.[64]

Although the church survived the bombing, the ensuing firestorm doomed it. The inside of the church contained flammable materials such as wooden pews, which quickly ignited as the firestorm engulfed Dresden's *Altstadt*. The heat was so intense that the sandstone support columns began to crack and chip and the steel girders expanded. This

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[63] Clayton, 16.

[64] Wolfram Jäger, "A short summary of the history of the Frauenkirche in Dresden," *Construction and Building Materials*, 17, (2003): 641-649. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0950-0618(03)00061-8 (Accessed June 4, 2017).

weakened the building until the dome became too heavy for the damaged support structures. The church collapsed at approximately ten o'clock on the morning of February 15, 1945. The dome fell as one solid piece and shattered upon hitting the ground. Only two sections of wall remained standing amid the heap of rubble.[65] The bombing and firestorm destroyed reduced most of the surrounding area to rubble as well. Twelve square kilometers of historic downtown Dresden were completely destroyed, creating ten million cubic meters of rubble and rendering thirty-nine percent of housing completely unusable. The rubble took fifteen years to clear.[66]

It is a testament to the importance of the Frauenkirche that Dresden officials began efforts to investigate and preserve the church's ruins within a month of the bombing, despite facing overwhelming problems such as the burial of thousands of corpses and repair of basic facilities. In March 1945, Senior Church Inspector Hermann Weinart used explosives and tunnels to investigate the ruins, and was rewarded with the discovery of photographs, drawings, and plans of the church. These included plans from the recent repairs conducted on the church, which proved invaluable. Despite the massive scale of destruction in their city, Dresdners continued to invest time in preserving what they could of the church. By November 1948, they had measured and recorded six hundred cubic meters of rubble from the Frauenkirche, and painstakingly hauled it by wheelbarrow to a nearby alley. Because the Frauenkirche's stones were not noticeably different from the hundreds of thousands of other stones that crowded Dresden's rubble-filled streets, conservationists halted the removal of Frauenkirche rubble after discovering some of the

[65] Jäger, 644-645.
[66] John Soane, "Dresden: its Destruction and Rebuilding, 1945-85," *Dresden: a City Reborn*, eds. Anthony Clayton and Alan Russell, (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999), 71.

relocated stones had been taken for other building purposes.[67] Dresdners clearly cared deeply about preserving and restoring the Frauenkirche, as demonstrated by their efforts to conserve the church ruins during a time of other pressing physical needs.

Neither their Soviet occupiers nor the German Democratic Republic (GDR) created in 1949 considered the church a priority. The GDR struggled financially throughout its entire existence, and didn't have the funding to either clear the ruins, or rebuild the church. Local efforts in the late 1940s to raise money for the church through private donations and a lottery had little success. Officially, the Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands[68] (EKD) owned the building, and was responsible for its care. In the aftermath of the war, however, the EKD had no money to rebuild the church, and turned custody of the building over to the Institut für Denkmalpflege (Institute for Monument Conservation) headed by renowned monument conservator Dr. Hans Nadler.[69] Nadler called the GDR's lack of funding fortunate because it guaranteed the ruins would not be demolished. He approved of the city's meager, but affordable, conservation measure of planting wild roses among the ruins to stabilize them.[70]

Dresden experienced great physical, political, and cultural changes during the GDR period. Some officials and city planners wanted to take the opportunity afforded by Dresden's destruction to remake the city entirely. Among these was the first mayor of Dresden installed by the Soviets after the war—a devout Communist named Walter Weidauer. Weidauer wanted to change Dresden's historic downtown district entirely

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[67] Hans Nadler "The Battle to Conserve – Securing the Ruins of the Frauenkirche," *Dresden: a City Reborn*, eds. Anthony Clayton and Alan Russell, (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999), 91-92.
[68] A federation of Reformed, Lutheran, and United regional churches. More information can be found at the EKD's official website: https://www.ekd.de/en/
[69] Joel, 105.
[70] Nadler, in *Dresden: A City Reborn*, 92.

because to him it "represented the exploitation of working people by the bourgeois ruling elite."[71] Modernist planning leaders Hans Hopp and Mart Stams agreed with Weidauer, and argued that the city should be rebuilt with a primary focus on reflecting Socialist values and practicality in an industrial age. No one denied that certain changes needed to be made, such as revising the street plan in various places and adding utilities in convenient places. Modernist planners, however, pushed to take these changes to such an extent that it would change Dresden's *Altstadt* entirely and make it impossible to restore the majority of Dresden's famous old buildings. An opposing school of thought, led by Eberhard Hempel and Wolfgang Rauda of Dresden Technical University's Department of Planning, led the movement, which asserted that Dresden and its surrounding area "should not only regain their unique harmony of appearance, but should reaffirm the close relationship that had long existed between the physical environment and the citizens' daily and working lives."[72] Although many modern buildings were installed in downtown Dresden, the efforts of conservative planners and local officials resulted in the conservation and restoration of many of Dresden's most famous buildings. Restoration work began on the Zwinger castle complex as early as October 1945, in spite of chronic shortages of building supplies across Germany, and the city invested 2.5 million East German marks in the restoration over the next four years. The efforts of local authorities also resulted in the preservation of the historic Theaterplatz square, the preservation and eventual reconstruction of the Semper Opera House ruins (completed in 1985), and the restoration of the Catholic Hofkirche (completed in 1962).[73] However, other historic buildings, such as the Sophienkirche, were

[71] John Soane, "Dresden: its Destruction and Rebuilding, 1945-85," *Dresden: A City Reborn*, 73.
[72] Soane, 74.
[73] Soane, 81.

demolished. Despite the arguments of GDR officials and planners that Dresden's extravagant architecture represented an oppressive capitalist past, Dresden's citizens and local officials did not relent in their efforts to preserve what they could of their city's cultural identity. Architectural historian John Soane described the feeling among Dresden's inhabitants: "Irrespective of the expansive rhetoric of politicians and the immediate desire of a traumatized population to have a modern, clean, and efficient city as soon as possible, no rebuilding plan for Dresden could ever have completely replaced the residual longing for the unique work of art that had been lost; a sense of psychological alienation was now borne by practically every inhabitant."[74] This longing for the past affected the choices citizens and local officials throughout Germany made as they began to deal with the destruction the war left behind. An intense feeling of nostalgia motivated Germans to focus on rebuilding cultural sites within their cities even while they experienced severe housing shortages. A striking example of this comes from Frankfurt in West Germany, the birthplace of famous German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. The house Goethe was born in had been a significant heritage site for Frankfurt until its destruction in 1944 in an air raid. Despite widespread destruction across the city, locals officials began rebuilding the *Goethehaus* in 1947, and completed it in 1951. At the time the house was finished, it stood alone amidst a sea of rubble as the only restored building in that area.[75] The fact that city officials, supported by citizens, made the reconstruction of a cultural monument a priority over rebuilding nearby homes and businesses demonstrates an intense nostalgia for the past, and demonstrated how vital cultural landmarks were to restoring a sense of German identity after the war. These factors intensified for Dresden, a city whose

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[74] Soane, 74.
[75] Vees-Gulani, *Guilt and Trauma,* 47.

international reputation was tied to cultural and architectural edifices. Significantly, Dresden's previous identity had been expressed visually through imposing architectural features. Architecture offered Dresdners a chance to restore a sense of familiarity as they restored buildings to their pre-war appearance. These buildings gave substance to the concept of identity that postwar Germans were seeking.

During the GDR period from 1949-1989, GDR officials used Dresden as a key propaganda tool to support their anti-West and anti-capitalist rhetoric. Elaborate state sponsored commemoration ceremonies took place in Dresden on important anniversaries of the bombing, with speakers discussing the city's suffering, recovery, and glorious Communist future. Although the message they chose to take from Dresden's destruction changed throughout the years, GDR officials consistently used Dresden's wartime experience as an emotional touchstone to promote their own agenda. Thus, as Dresdners dealt with the changing architectural face of their city, they also had to deal with changing cultural and political messages that GDR officials assigned to Dresden and broadcast throughout East Germany. Although the Frauenkirche did not figure prominently in these anniversary celebrations until the 1960s, it is important to understand some of the ways in which GDR officials characterized Dresden during the intervening years, because these characterizations influenced how Dresdners and East Germans thought about the city.

The ways in which Soviet and GDR politicians and officials used Dresden, and to some extent the Frauenkirche ruins, to support their political agenda can be seen in an overview of the yearly memorials of the Dresden bombing. February 13 became one of the GDR's most important days of commemoration. Dresden's *Gedenktag* (day of commemoration or remembrance; not simply an anniversary) drew varying types and

extents of celebrations, depending on its usefulness to Soviet and GDR officials at the time. In addition to its pre-war reputation as a cultural wonder, Dresden stood out in the Soviet Zone as one of its most badly damaged cities. Its cultural heritage, unknown death toll, and destruction by American and British bombers allowed Soviet and GDR officials to politicize the city's destruction to condemn both Nazi actions and the brutality of the western nations. Dresden observed its first Gedenktag under the Soviet military governor, Major Broder. Broder forbid February 13 to be a day of mourning out of fear that a tearful observance would stir up negative feelings against the occupying powers. Instead, twenty-nine commemorative events of varying types were organized around the theme "Der Neuaufbau Dresdens" (The Rebuilding of Dresden). During this *Gedenktag* Soviet officials avoided blaming England and America for Dresden's destruction by failing to mention whose bombers had attacked the city. Instead, official rhetoric focused on German responsibility for allowing Nazis into power and the despicable nature of Hitler's regime. The Soviets blamed the Nazis for starting the war and for prolonging it. This last argument was especially relevant for Dresden, because if the war had been shortened by a mere two months the city might have avoided destruction. Soviet officials designed the *Gedenktag* ceremonies to convey Dresden's supposed rebirth as a socialist city, but Dresdners were not enthusiastic about this message. This first *Gedenktag* initiated the annual tradition of tolling all of Dresden's church bells at 9:40 pm, the time when bombers were first sighted on February 13, 1945.[76] Memorial ceremonies were limited from 1947-1949, but the attitudes of East German citizens and officials underwent an important shift during this period. As relations between the United States and the U.S.S.R. became increasingly

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[76] Joel, 84-86.

hostile, the focus shifted from the Nazi's insistence on fighting to the last, to the enormous destruction American and British bombers had inflicted. The 1950 *Gedenktag* featured a rally of 100,000 people in Dresden and supportive rallies across all of East Germany. The rally in Dresden included multiple openly anti-American banners. By this time, Soviet and German leaders were emphasizing German suffering under Hitler as well as from the destruction the Western powers had inflicted during their invasion. Although victims of fascism (such as Communists persecuted by Hitler) still received the most emphasis, GDR and Soviet officials cultivated a broader narrative of German suffering to include those whom the constant focus on victims of fascism alienated.[77] As the premier example of German loss and suffering, Dresden strongly reinforced the idea that even ordinary Germans suffered tremendously. The scale of the observance in 1950 compared with no rallies in 1947-48 and very modest rallies in 1949 demonstrates Dresden's increased usefulness in the GDR's political narrative.

Dresden remained of national importance to the GDR through the mid-1950s, and its annual observances drew leading Communist figures to speak such as Walter Ulbricht, GDR president Otto Grotewohl, and prominent politician Johannes Dieckmann. The tenth anniversary *Gedenktag* set the standard for elaborate observances. Lectures, public discussion forums, and rallies occurred for days. Official pamphlets described the raid that decimated Dresden as a "terror attack by the American air force."[78] Otto Grotewohl's keynote speech drew a crowd of 250,000 people. Symbolic ceremonies occurred in numerous locations across the city, including the restoration of a statue of Martin Luther in front of the Frauenkirche, a re-consecration ceremony for the newly restored

[77] Joel, 86-92.
[78] Quoted in Joel, 94.

Kreuzkirche, and the first performance of the Kreuzkirche's famous boys choir in the new church. The choir performed *Dresdner Requiem,* which choirmaster Rudolph Mauersberger composed in the bombing's aftermath, and which was traditionally performed each *Gedenktag*. The performance in 1955 was special because it was the first time in ten years the choir could perform in its home church.[79] After 1955, annual observances continued on a significantly smaller scale.

During the 1960s, *Gedenktag* observances focused on themes of "Peace and Reconstruction" as official criticism shifted from the United States to the West German government in Bonn.[80] GDR officials increased their anti-West Germany propaganda, particularly after the construction of the Berlin Wall in August, 1961. Official rhetoric portrayed Bonn as the replacement of Hitler's Germany. During the 1960s, the Frauenkirche became known as "Dresden's foremost site of war memory."[81] By this time, very little rubble from the bombing remained, making the church's ruins stand out amid the new cityscape. The city still did not have the money to either repair the church or clear the ruins, but city officials gave the ruins official status by incorporating them into the city's Structure Plan for 1966. The city council also commissioned a small commemorative plaque which was mounted on the stair tower wall, one of two walls still standing. Installed in 1967, the plaque stated simply: "FRAUENKIRCHE. BUILT BY GEORGE BAEHR 1726-1743. DESTROYED BY ANGLO-AMERICAN BOMBERS ON 13.2.1945."[82] The fact that the plaque did not contain a more vehement condemnation of the nations responsible for Dresden's destruction demonstrates the waning focus on America and

[79] Joel, 94-95.
[80] Joel, 98.
[81] Joel, 105.
[82] Joel, 107.

Britain as the chief enemies of the GDR.[83] The plaque also marked an important step, as it, along with inclusion in the Structure Plan, marked the ruins as an official commemorative site which would not be removed in the near future.

In the 1980s, the Frauenkirche ruins took on new significance as the focal point of the peace movement in Dresden. The movement took shape when a 17-year-old university student, Annette Ebischbach, organized an action group after being expelled from a university for subversive literature. The group known as *Wolfspelz* consisted mostly of young people and persisted in its efforts to organize and advertise a peace demonstration in spite investigation and threats from the Ministry for State Security (better known as the Stasi, East Germany's secret police). The group chose February 13, 1982, as the date for its demonstration. Pamphlets instructed participants to meet in front of the *Kreuzkirche* before the bells rang at 9:40 pm, when they would make a silent pilgrimage to the Frauenkirche, where they would take part in silent reflection and hymn singing. Because official warnings and condemnations of the event seemed to hint at forcible interruption, Protestant State Bishop Johannes Hempel organized a peace forum meeting at the *Kreuzkirche* during the same time in an effort to give demonstrators an alternative and circumvent violence. Both the peace forum and the Frauenkirche demonstration attracted large crowds: between 5,000 and 8,000 people attended the peace forum, and approximately 2,000 marched to the Frauenkirche when the bells began to toll. The *Wolfspelz* pamphlets had instructed demonstrators to bring a candle and flowers to lay on the ruins, which nearly all did, and the participants remained at the ruins until midnight.[84]

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[83] Previously, the attack force had been described as "American air gangsters" and which conducted a "terror attack." See Joel, 39.
[84] Joel, 111-113.

Despite their earlier threats, neither the Stasi nor the police interfered. The candlelit march to the Frauenkirche became an annual event and occurred each year from 1982 until the end of the GDR. This tradition has been called the birth of the East German peace and civil rights movement.[85] Supporters of this view point out that the yearly march to the Frauenkirche ruins was the only peaceful protest occurring in East Germany in the early 1980s.[86] Although police, Stasi, and other official forces never interfered with the annual marches, the demonstration in 1982 did prompt the installation of a much larger official plaque known as a *Mahntafel*, or warning plaque. This new plaque included an engraving of the church's original appearance, the text of the old plaque, and also stated, "THE DRESDEN FRAUENKIRCHE WAS DESTROYED IN FEBRUARY 1945 BY ANGLO-AMERICAN BOMBERS. ITS RUINS SERVE AS A REMINDER OF THE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DEAD AND URGES THE LIVING TO FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALIST BARBARISM FOR THE PEACE AND HAPPINESS OF THE HUMAN RACE."[87] The plaque managed to avoid stating a controversial death toll and condemned "imperialist barbarism" in terms ambiguous enough to seem to refer either to Hitler or Anglo-Americans, depending on the reader's perspective. Soviet and GDR officials never reported or encouraged the inflated death tolls found in the emotionally charged literature dealing with Dresden's destruction.[88] Referencing "tens of thousands of dead" allowed the GDR officially to acknowledge the enormous death toll while avoiding controversy about exact numbers. The term "imperialist barbarism" would refer to the Americans and British

[85] Joel, 114.
[86] Joel, 176.
[87] Joel, 114.
[88] Joel claims that this is because they did not want to emphasize America and Britain's airpower, see Joel, 73.

for those familiar with the GDR's past rhetoric towards those countries but could easily be expanded to include Hitler's regime. The fact that federal soldiers installed the plaque soon after the march to the Frauenkirche in 1982 indicated that the demonstration had caught the eye of national GDR officials and merited more than a local response.

In 1989 discontent in the GDR came to a head in a series of tumultuous events that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany. In May 1989, Hungary opened its border with Austria. As Hungary was one of the few places East Germans could travel for vacation, this allowed thousands of vacationing East Germans to flee first to Austria and then move on to West Germany. Thousands of East Germans continued to flee throughout the summer months, both through the Hungarian border and by claiming asylum at the West German embassy in Prague. Public protests against the government began in September, the most famous being the Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig. As demonstrations increased and large numbers of East Germans continued to flee the country, political pressure became so intense that Erich Honecker, SED leader and chairman of the Council of State, and other high-ranking GDR officials resigned on October 18, 1989, just eleven days after the GDR's fortieth anniversary. On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall fell after GDR spokesman Günter Schabowski mistakenly stated at a press conference that the wall would open immediately. As the new GDR government struggled to decide how to proceed, West German chancellor Helmut Kohl visited Dresden on December 19, 1989, to negotiate with GDR leader Hans Modrow. Huge crowds welcomed Kohl, waving makeshift West German flags made from GDR flags with the Communist symbols in the center cut out. Kohl had not initially planned to speak, but was so moved by the enthusiastic welcome from Dresdners that he agreed to address the crowd. According to Kohl, Dresden

mayor Wolfgang Berghofer suggested the Frauenkirche ruins as a suitable place.[89] Approximately 100,000 people arrived to listen to Kohl's speech. He thanked East Germans for their restraint in conducting a "peaceful revolution," announced that his negotiations with Modrow had led to agreements for further cooperation, and concluded with the statement, "And I also want to say this at this tradition-steeped place: My aim remains, if the historical hour allows it, the unification of our nation."[90] Kohl's speech represented the first time a West German chancellor addressed East Germans from within East Germany. He knew that other European nations would pay close attention to his speech and his greatest concern was that the crowd would appear so nationalistic as to provoke alarm from nations such as France and Poland. Kohl could not afford to push reunification too strongly—negotiations with Modrow's government were still tenuous and subject to Moscow's influence. Therefore, Kohl acknowledged that other European nations might be concerned at the reemergence of a reunited Germany. He reassured the crowd that West Germany intended to help East Germany but would not dominate the country. Because Kohl's speech tried to reassure both Europeans and East Germans that Germany would not become an aggressive nation, speaking in front of the Frauenkirche ruins became a visual reminder of how Germany suffered during its last aggressive action. "Kohl, then, could appropriate the *Frauenkirche* ruins as corporeal evidence for why a reunified Germany would covet peace."[91] Kohl's speech drew international attention and paved the way for German reunification. As the site of a crucial political speech, the Frauenkirche

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[89] Helmut Kohl, "'We Are One People'—My Speech Before the Ruins of the Frauenkirche," Huffington Post, March 12, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/helmut-kohl/helmut-kohl-frauenkirche-speech_b_6124262.html (Accessed July 20, 2017).
[90] Ibid.
[91] Joel, 151.

ruins provided a vivid reminder of Germany's past. By choosing the Frauenkirche as a backdrop when other rebuilt areas of Dresden would have served equally well, Kohl and Mayor Berghofer demonstrated that the German people were still highly conscious of their past.

Shortly before Kohl's groundbreaking speech, a small group of Dresdners met to discuss the future of their beloved Frauenkirche. On November 26, 1989, this group held a meeting and decided the time had come to rebuild the church. They quickly organized a *bürgerinitiativ* (citizens' action group) to begin fundraising, but decided to delay announcing their efforts until February 13. They believed announcing their plans on the emotionally charged *Gedenktag* would ensure they got the highest possible response while the delay also allowed them to reach out to the EKD and world leaders before going public.[92] To their disappointment, the EKD refused to help fund the project for three reasons: first, the EKD was low on money; second, in such a time of chaos they believed the money they did have was better spent elsewhere; third, the church would not serve a functioning Protestant congregation and was therefore not a priority.[93] The action group used the intervening period to organize themselves and compose a compelling call for the Frauenkirche's reconstruction. Professor Ludwig Güttler, an internationally recognized trumpet virtuoso from Dresden, agreed to serve as the group's spokesman. Other prominent members included Dr. Karl-Ludwig Hoch (a well-known Protestant pastor in Dresden) and Professor Dr. Hans Nadler (the famous monument conservator and head of the National Institute for Monument Conservation). The group also sent out private letters asking for support from world leaders including President George H.W. Bush and Queen Elizabeth

[92] See footnote 79 for information on the EDK.
[93] Joel, 156.

before going public. On February 13, 1990, the action group published a proclamation known as the Appeal From Dresden.[94] Twenty-two prominent community members signed the Appeal, including four civil engineers, three monument conservators, three architects, two dentists, a microbiologist, and a physicist.[95] Members of the action group, all men, carefully worded the document to appeal to an international audience, not just Dresdners. They claimed that restoring the Frauenkirche would turn it into an international center for peace.

The Appeal begins by stating that the church was destroyed by "air attacks," avoiding mentioning that it was American and British bombers.[96] The Appeal noted that the Frauenkirche ruins had remained a deeply symbolic site during the GDR years: "In the difficult times of political suppression and the build-up of arms throughout the world, young people never stopped lighting candles and placing them amid the ruins. This form of non-violent protest was intended to give a sign of hope that peaceful times, justice and normal life would return."[97] It is perhaps an overstatement to claim that Dresden's youth "never stopped" placing candles amongst the Frauenkirche ruins, since that tradition was only in its eighth year, but it serves to emphasize the importance of the Frauenkirche—even in its destroyed form—to Dresdners young and old. It also reassures the world that the ruins carried an inspirational message untainted by either Nazi appropriation or forty years of Communist rule. Rather, the church's prewar form symbolized Dresden's former cultural splendor, and its postwar ruins carried a message of hope during hard times.

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[94] From the German *Der Ruf aus Dresden. Ruf* is typically translated as *call*. The translation *appeal* comes from the English section of the official Frauenkirche website.
[95] "It all began with the 'Appeal from Dresden,'" *Frauenkirche Dresden, http*://www.frauenkirche-dresden.de/en/reconstruction/appeal-from-dresden/.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

After acknowledging that neither the Protestant Church nor the city or federal government had the money to repair the church, the Appeal emphasized the significance of the church to Europe as an architectural masterpiece, a part of cultural history, and a powerful modern symbol for peace and reconciliation:

> Nevertheless, we cannot accept that this wonderful, unique building should stay a ruin or, worse still, be demolished completely and the site cleared. We therefore appeal to people all over the world to launch an initiative for the reconstruction of the Dresden Frauenkirche with the aim of making it a global Christian centre of peace in the new Europe. In this church, the gospel of peace should be proclaimed in word and music, images of peace should be shown, peace research and education should be facilitated. As such, an architectural artwork of unique value, which is inextricably linked not only to the name of its great builder George Bähr, but also to the names Gottfried Silbermann, Johann Sebastian Bach, Heinrich Schütz and Richard Wagner, would return to the fold of the world's cultural heritage. As such, a testimony in stone to Christian faith would be recreated; a church that was built by the Protestant community on the foundations of Dresden's oldest church. As such, one of central Europe's most beautiful cityscapes would regain its most outstanding jewel, the 'Stone Bell', without which Dresden's reconstruction would remain piecemeal.[98]

The Appeal found favor among potential donors on multiple levels by strongly emphasizing the Frauenkirche's importance beyond Dresden. It put the restoration of Dresden's historic skyline in a secondary position and instead focused on the church as a part of European history, Christianity, and a monument for peace. The repeated references to the church as a center for peace were vague. It is not clear what the authors meant by declaring the church would display "images of peace," nor is it clear what is involved in "peace research." Their focus on peace, however, supported the message that the newly reunited Germany tried to send its neighbors. As nations such as Britain, Poland, and France harbored fears that a reunited Germany could again disrupt Europe, German leaders repeatedly emphasized that they intended to pursue peace. The Appeal also demonstrated

[98] Ibid.

the church's connection to Germany's honorable pre-war cultural by connecting the church to famous organ builder Gottfried Silbermann and musicians such as Bach, Schütz, and Wagner. This signified that restoring the church would restore another piece of Germany's honorable cultural legacy instead of prolonging a painful reminder of Germany's guilt and defeat. Christianity is mentioned twice in this section—enough to attract the attention of those who might value the church for its religious significance but not overt enough to alienate the nonreligious who might donate to the church purely for its cultural or historical significance.

Next, the Appeal specifically addressed specific nations that had once been enemies: "We appeal above all to those countries that fought in the Second World War. We are painfully aware that Germany started the Second World War. Nevertheless, we call upon the victorious powers and the many good-willed people in the US, the UK and all over the world—let us together build this European 'House of Peace'!"[99] By acknowledging Germany's responsibility for starting the war and avoiding mention of those who had destroyed the church, the authors likely hoped to avoid offending potential American and British donors. Although the Appeal never specifically mentioned reconciliation, by specifically reaching out to former enemies to ask for donations to repair the damage they had inflicted, the action group demonstrated a desire to renew positive relationships with former foes.

Opposition to the Frauenkirche reconstruction came from various quarters and had numerous arguments. First, several religious authorities argued that other causes were more meritorious and that rebuilding a church without a functioning congregation amounted to

[99] Ibid.

extravagance. Second, although two sections of wall remained standing and stones from the rubble could be reused, the church was damaged to such an extent that called into question the historical authenticity of any reconstruction efforts. The German Foundation for Monument Protection based in former West Germany issued a statement in 1991 condemning the reconstruction efforts on this basis. The statement declared that "copies" could never truly reflect momentous past events, and that such reconstruction efforts did not demonstrate a true desire to conserve the past but merely to serve the purposes of the present.[100] Additionally, critics cited the Venice Charter issued in 1964 by the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historical Monuments, which contained several passages that seemed to support the preservation, rather than the reconstruction, of the church's ruins. Ironically, some of the same passages could also be interpreted as supporting the reconstruction of the church. The difference lay in whether readers believed the primary meaning of the Frauenkirche ruin was its testimony to Dresden's ancient glory or its more recently acquired symbolism of warning against war. The Venice Charter's preamble stated: "Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions...It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity."[101] To critics of reconstruction, this passage clearly supported preserving the ruin in order to retain the "full richness" of its anti-war message for future generations. Critics argued that removing the ruins would destroy the powerful warning of the

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[100]Quoted in Diefendorf, 211.
[101] International Council on Monuments and Sites, IInd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*, Venice, 1964, http://www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf (Accessed August 1, 2017), 1.

destructiveness of war that they conveyed.[102] For supporters of reconstruction, only restoring the Frauenkirche to its original splendor would allow it to become a "living witness" of past generations' "age-old traditions." Critics also pointed out that according to the charter's guidelines on anastylosis (an archaeological term, referring to the principle that restorations must incorporate original materials as much as possible) the rebuilt church would have to be considered a copy or replica because of the amount of new materials that would have to be introduced. One practical alternative to reconstruction was to preserve the ruins in a complex similar to that of the KWG. This, however, would not do for the many Dresdners who longed to see the church restored. As an article discussing the reconstruction movement in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* declared, "So long as this dome of the Church of Our Lady no longer crowns the city, not only will Dresden have a gaping wound, but also every Dresdener, regardless of where they live now, will have a bleeding heart."[103] The original Frauenkirche had become such an important symbol of pre-war Dresden that only full restoration would satisfy the many Dresdners who supported its reconstruction.

In spite of opposition from several conservation groups, the Appeal From Dresden met with phenomenal success and drew contributions from all quarters. It drew a particularly large response in Great Britain. Dr. Alan Russell, a prominent medical researcher at the University of London, organized the Dresden Trust in 1993 to promote awareness and to raise funds for the Frauenkirche within the United Kingdom. The Dresden Trust received the patronage of HRH the Duke of Kent, and the organization embarked on a wide-reaching publicity campaign that included a travelling exhibition on the Frauenkirche. The

[102] Joel, 205.
[103] Quoted in Diefendorf, 211.

exhibition toured the United Kingdom for over three years raising donations. The Dresden Trust emphasized that supporting the Frauenkirche was a chance to reconcile with Germany. As a visible symbol of that reconciliation, they sponsored a special project—funding and commissioning a golden orb and cross for top of the Frauenkirche's new lantern. The trustees highlighted the fact that one of the craftsmen, goldsmith Alan Smith, was the son of a British pilot who flew in the Dresden raid, which further supported their reconciliation efforts. The Dresden Trust's website states that after being installed in 2004, "The Orb and Cross now stand atop the cupola of the Frauenkirche as a symbol of enduring friendship."[104] The Trust's efforts raised a total of £1 million for the Frauenkirche's reconstruction. Because the Trust advertised the project as a reconciliation measure, the success of their efforts demonstrated that the British were willing to financially support reconciliation with Germany. Founder Alan Russel stated in a BBC interview on the day the orb and crown were placed on the Frauenkirche that the ornaments were extremely important. "The fact that it's come from the hearts, and indeed the bank balances of ordinary British people gives it an extraordinary significance."[105] Besides the Dresden Trust, the Frauenkirche also received personal support from prominent political figures such as Queen Elizabeth II and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Queen Elizabeth even sponsored a concert for the benefit of the Frauenkirche which raised £358,000.[106] Former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl celebrated his sixtieth birthday in 1990 and asked that in lieu of gifts, friends and supporters donate to the Frauenkirche reconstruction. His request resulted

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[104] "The Dresden Trust, *Dresden Trust*, https://dresdentrust.org/ accessed 6/30.
[105] Ray Furlong, "Dresden Ruins Finally Restored," *BBC News Online,* June 22, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3830135.stm, accessed June 30, 2017.
[106] Joel, 240.

in €750,000 in donations.[107] In 1992, the Dresden City Council voted with more than an eighty percent majority to help finance the reconstruction. The Dresdener Bank also agreed to support the endeavor and began selling donor certificates to sponsor the work. The bank's final contribution totaled $82 million.[108] In 1995, the German government issued a ten Deutschmark coin to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Frauenkirche's destruction. The coin featured a depiction of the rubble with a lighter engraving of the church's original form. This was encircled by the inscription "50 year admonition of peace and reconciliation."[109] Equally important, numerous German musicians solicited funds by holding concerts to benefit the church along with the "practically innumerable" private donors whose contributions both large and small helped pay the enormous costs of rebuilding.[110] Out of a total cost of $218 million (€182.6 million), $121 million came from private donations with the remainder coming from corporate and governmental organizations such as the Dresdner Bank and the Dresden City Council.[111]

On October 1, 1992, the construction project Dresdners had hoped for finally began. Supported by world leaders and the Society to Promote the Rebuilding of the Frauenkirche, with over nine thousand members in twenty-two countries, after forty years Frauenkirche

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[107] Joel, 165.

[108] M. Landler, "A symbol of war's horrors is reborn in Dresden as a testament to hope and healing." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, October 30, 2005. https://login.ezproxy.uta.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uta.edu/docview/93014003?accountid=7117 (Accessed June 12, 2017).

[109] "10 Deutsche Mark, Frauenkirche in Dresden," *Numista,* https://en.numista.com/catalogue/pieces7754.html (Accessed July 21, 2017)

[110] H. J. Jaeger," The citizens' initiative to promote the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) in Dresden," *Transactions on the Built Environment* 39, (1999):812-813, https://www.witpress.com/Secure/elibrary/papers/STR99/STR99076FU.pdf (Accessed August 17, 2017).

[111] Landler, M. "A symbol of war's horrors is reborn in Dresden as a testament to hope and healing."

could at last be rebuilt.[112] The building proceeded according to three fundamental principles:

1. George Bähr's Frauenkirche should be **rebuilt using its original structural substance** to the largest extent possible **in accordance with the original construction plans**. This should be done
2. with the **aid of modern technology** as well as the theories and methods of structural engineering and physics valid today, while
3. giving due **consideration to all the requirements resulting from a vibrant usage** of the building in the 21st century.[113]

The last point especially contradicted the Venice Charter's instructions, which were aimed at preserving historic buildings as true to their original form as possible, even at the expense of modern practicality. However, after being advertised as a center for peace and reconciliation, the Frauenkirche needed to be practical for modern use. As mentioned previously, the Frauenkirche had unusually complete plans because it had been renovated shortly before its destruction and those plans had been saved. Therefore, it was largely possible to follow the "original construction plans." Modern technology, though not supported by the Venice Charter, was necessary to determine the soundness of the original building materials, determine their placement, and keep building costs down. From October through December, 1992, building crews under the supervision of the Architecture and Engineering Association of Dresden prepared the site to begin clearing the rubble and extracting stones for future use. In January 1993, the crews began clearing, measuring, and meticulously documenting the rubble. This process took seventeen months and cleared 22,000 cubic meters (776,923 cubic feet) of stones and other debris. Workers measured each stone and recorded where it had been found in order to facilitate identifying the stones

[112] Jaeger, 813.
[113] "The reconstruction of the Frauenkirche: the return of Dresden's landmark," *Frauenkirche Dresden,* http://www.frauenkirche-dresden.de/en/reconstruction/ (Accessed May23, 2017).

and placing them within the reconstructed church. The first stone was laid on May 27, 1994. This was not the cornerstone, because the original cornerstone had not been disturbed by the collapse and was still in its place underneath the choir. After laying the symbolic first stone, work began on the southeast wall of the church. During 1995, workers focused on constructing the outer walls of the church, including a variety of smaller rooms such as bathrooms and dressing rooms. The new church included a variety of modern improvements such as electricity, ventilation and heating systems, emergency generators, and even a transformer substation. During 1995, work continued on the church's extensive basements, many of which remained fairly undamaged. Modifications were needed, however, including vents for the heating system, pipes for the sanitation system, and spaces for electrical wires. The new basements included a large black altar, and on August 26, 1996, Volker Kreß, Evangelical Bishop of Saxony, consecrated part of the basements as the Lower Church. Work continued steadily on the outer walls during the next several years. Although set back briefly by severe flooding in the summer of 2002, construction continued on schedule. In early summer 2003 the great dome of the Frauenkirche again crowned the Dresden skyline. Also during the summer, the Frauenkirche's eight bells (including one from the original church) were installed. The bells rang for the first time on June 7, 2003, and approximately 40,000 people gathered in the streets below for the occasion. With the completion of the lantern on April 13, 2004, the last stones were laid. Throughout the next year and a half work focused on the inside of the church, including ceiling murals, the installation of an organ, and numerous other elements of interior decor. The lantern viewing platform opened on February 1, 2005. Construction work was finally

completed on September 20, 2005[114] (see Appendix A.1). An elaborate consecration ceremony took place on October 30, 2005, and over 60,000 people crowded into the area surrounding the new Frauenkirche to watch the ceremonies on large screens erected for the occasion. Visiting dignitaries included the Duke of Kent (royal patron of the Dresden Trust), Horst Koehler (President of Germany), and Gerhard Schroeder (Chancellor of Germany). The BBC reported that President Koehler addressed the crowd, stating, "Did eastern Germany not need roads, roofs and factories more than an expensive church? But a group of residents said Dresden needed more. And now we can see that those people were right."[115]

A unique building of great symbolic importance, the Frauenkirche strongly demonstrated the need Germans had to emphasize their past cultural history in order to create an identity that did not include the Nazi era. After Dresden's destruction, the Frauenkirche symbolized past glory and served as a reminder of Dresden's rich cultural history untainted by Nazism. The Dresden that the Frauenkirche represented was an architectural wonder filled with classical artwork, exquisite porcelain collections, and frequented by some of Europe's finest musicians. This gave Dresdners an identity to cling to—one that predated their more recent identity first as followers or collaborators of Hitler and second as a conquered people. The value Dresdners placed on this pre-war identity and the persistence with which they sought to recreate it is demonstrated in their monumental efforts to preserve its physical manifestation in the architecture of their city. As German historian Susanne Vees-Gulani has documented, Dresden's identity has long been

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[114] Ibid.
[115] "Dresden Consecrates Famed Church," *BBC News Online,* October 30, 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4389904.stm (Accessed July 14, 2017).

connected with its physical appearance. The city gained fame in the second half of the nineteenth century for its picturesque qualities and became a highly popular tourist site. Tourists bought visual representations of Dresden, particularly postcards, in such high numbers that printers from other cities printed Dresden postcards and shipped them to Dresden for sale. This emphasis on Dresden's physical appearance resulted in the city "being encoded visually in German, and indeed international, memory."[116] Thus, when air raids destroyed Dresden's physical appearance, its citizens could justifiably believe that a crucial part of their city's identity had been stripped away. This explains why Dresden planners strongly resisted Communist attempts to reform their city and worked hard to save as many historic buildings as possible. More than mere buildings, they were attempting to conserve their city's pre-war identity. The Frauenkirche's importance in this conservation is demonstrated by the fact that Dresdners began preservation efforts a mere month after the bombing while the city still lay in ruins. By focusing on recreating an earlier identity, Dresdners did not have to confront their own responsibility for the Second World War.

Dresdners experienced a sense of incompleteness without their city's iconic appearance, manifesting itself in a deep nostalgia for the way life had been before the war. As residents of a city whose identity was rooted in the past—a past incongruous with the destruction and suffering of the present—Dresdners had a deep desire to restore the city's past glory. As its citizens slowly repaired Dresden, the desire to restore the past concentrated more and more on the Frauenkirche. One by one, Dresden's famous buildings resumed their former appearances—the Hofkirche, the opera house, the Zwinger castle

[116] Susanne Vees-Gulani, "The Ruined Picture Postcard: Dresden's Visually Encoded History and the Television Drama Dresden," New German Critique, no. 38 (Winter 2011): 85-113, JSTOR Arts & Sciences, http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uta.edu/stable/41288125 (accessed April 13, 2017), 94-96.

complex—until the Frauenkirche remained the lone reminder that Dresden's recovery was incomplete. As the missing piece in Dresden's skyline, the Frauenkirche represented all that the war had taken from Dresden and its citizens. More than mere nostalgia, the idea that Dresden would never be complete without the Frauenkirche became so engrained in the city's culture that it even influenced younger generations who had no personal memory of the church. By the time of the Appeal From Dresden in 1990, it is reasonable to conclude that people under age fifty would have only limited, if any, personal memories of the church. Yet people of all ages supported the rebuilding project, not merely older generations. A prime example of this phenomenon is the spokesman for the citizens' initiative, Ludwig Güttler. Güttler was born in 1943 and was therefore only two years old at the time of the Dresden air raid. Despite having no personal memory of the church, he dedicated substantial time and effort to promoting its reconstruction. Clearly, the Frauenkirche held great importance beyond a passive nostalgia felt by those who remembered it from the pre-war years. This longing of Dresdners is best expressed by a passage in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* article: "So long as this dome of the Church of Our Lady no longer crowns the city, not only will Dresden have a gaping wound, but also every Dresdener, regardless of where they live now, will have a bleeding heart."[117] As the last missing piece of Dresden's pre-war identity, the Frauenkirche's reconstruction symbolized healing. As thousands of people, even Germany's former enemies, donated funds for the reconstruction, the church became an icon for reconciliation and a way for Europeans to demonstrate their desire for peace. Unlike the painful and sometimes irreversible psychological and emotional damage the war left behind, the Frauenkirche

[117] Quoted in Diefendorf, 211.

damage could be repaired simply by ordinary citizens sacrificing a little spending money. Repairing the Frauenkirche offered a highly visible way to repair the damages of war that lingered on even forty-five years later. The significance Dresdners attached to the Frauenkirche explains why stabilizing the ruins or turning them into a memorial complex (as with the KWG) would not have satisfied most Dresdners. To do so would have been to immortalize the incompleteness and loss the ruin expressed and condemn this "wound" to remain unhealed.

The Frauenkirche strongly expressed German victimization both in its destroyed state and rebuilt form. As one of the most important sites of memory in Germany's most famous victim city, the Frauenkirche provided abundant physical evidence of German suffering. Portrayed as an innocent and tragic victim of wartime brutality, Dresden became a powerful propaganda tool for East Germany and a tragic example of senseless loss of German life, history, and culture in West Germany. The Frauenkirche's ruins remained a bleak reminder of what Dresden had suffered while the rest of the city was repaired. The remains of a beautiful old church in the middle of a devastated city embodied German loss, suffering, and sorrow without reference to German guilt in the Second World War. As the ruins grew as a *Mahnmal* to warn against the horrors of war, they also reminded viewers that Germans were deeply familiar with those horrors. While Dresdners might have had bleeding hearts from the absence of their Frauenkirche, survivors of the air raid had also experienced a traumatic event that would haunt many for the rest of their lives. Ruins in the middle of an otherwise modern and fully functional city mirrored the psychological damage that many Germans still dealt with long after outer scars had healed over. This ongoing reminder of the trauma Germany and its citizens experienced reinforced the

German narrative of victimization. After its reconstruction, the Frauenkirche continued to memorialize German victimization. Its façade contains 7,110 original stones that are clearly visible due to their blackened appearance[118] (see Appendix A.2). The official interpretation of the combination of original and new stones, as explained by the official Frauenkirche website, is that "the dark colouring of the old stones and the dimensional differences in the joint areas between the new and old masonry resemble the scars of healed wounds."[119] It further states that, "Old and new stones have been joined to give a clear, meaningful indication that the past is always part of the future and that wounds can heal."[120] In this way, the rebuilt Frauenkirche continues to emphasize German suffering and victimization because it draws attention to Germany's extensive (though now healed) wounds. The old stones serve as a reminder that Dresdners (and by extension all Germans) must never forget the damages of the war because "the past is always part of the future."

Susanne Vees-Gulani argues in *Trauma and Guilt: Literature of Wartime Bombing in Germany* that the Frauenkirche's restoration not only provided a crucial connection to the past, but allows Germans to ignore the entire period from Hitler's rise to power to the fall of the GDR. She contends that rebuilding the Frauenkirche, "not only wipes out the visible marks of the consequences of the war, but also over forty years of Socialism...The rebuilt Frauenkirche thus provides a vehicle for an idealization of the pre-Nazi past and the suppression of the years 1933-1990...Erecting the Frauenkirche is understood as the possibility to rebuild one's true and lost identity."[121] Additionally, she states that Dresdners

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[118] "Dates, Facts and Figures," *Frauenkirche Dresden,* http://www.frauenkirche-dresden.de/en/dates-facts-figures/ (Accessed April 17, 2017).
[119] "The reconstruction of the Frauenkirche: the return of Dresden's landmark," *Frauenkirche Dresden,* http://www.frauenkirche-dresden.de/en/reconstruction/ (Accessed April 17, 2017).
[120] "Architecture," *Frauenkirche Dresden,* http://www.frauenkirche-dresden.de/en/architecture/ (Accessed April 17, 2017).
[121] Vees-Gulani*, Guilt and Trauma,* 61.

attempted to suppress the Nazi and GDR years by removing as much physical evidence of these periods as possible. Thus, reconstructing the Frauenkirche symbolically erased fifty-seven years of history, confining them to the realm of memory or the "scars" of darkened stones dotting the façade of the church. Sociology and German studies expert Jason James takes a different approach, stating that the Frauenkirche's restoration does not reflect a desire to deny the past, merely a naïve belief that the past can be repaired or reversed. He calls this phenomenon "reversing loss" and argues that "this fantasy does not require one to forget loss or pretend it never occurred—only to believe it can be reversed."[122] The Frauenkirche came to represent the loss all Dresdners, and by extension all Germans, experienced. This explains the hope expressed by many Dresdners that their city would be restored to wholeness if only their beloved Frauenkirche could be rebuilt. The sense of loss and incompleteness the war evoked in Dresdners concentrated on this single church as a physical representation of that loss. By restoring it, they hoped to ease the emotional pain and loss. James notes that since German culture became such a central part of how German identified themselves, restoring this important cultural site had important implications for German identity. Restoring the Frauenkirche "implies that an intact, unadulterated national tradition once existed, was lost, and can now be recovered—as if Germanness were an artifact or thing."[123] Abstract concepts such as "identity" are often tied to physical symbols—in this case, a church—in order to give them substance. How a physical symbol is treated, therefore, reveals important insights into how people perceive the abstract concept. By aligning German identity with the storyline of the Frauenkirche, we see that

[122] Jason James, "Undoing Trauma: Reconstructing the Church of Our Lady in Dresden," *Ethos* 34, no. 2 (2006):. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3651906 (Accessed June 22, 2017), 249.
[123] James, 248

Germans viewed their pre-war history as proud, beautiful, and part of an extensive tradition, just like the original Frauenkirche. Then, like the church, it was destroyed by "the war," or "Hitler," or "American air gangsters," depending on one's viewpoint. For Germans disillusioned with Communism, it may have seemed that their half of Germany continued to lie in ruins for the duration of the GDR, held back economically while West Germany surged ahead. Watching the church rise from the ruins represented a recovery of the basic form of that prior identity, scarred and built from new material, but once again standing complete and beautiful.

It is not often that a single building captures the heart of a city and less often that it attracts the sympathy and support of people across the world. The Frauenkirche has done both. George Bähr's building acquired symbolism he could never have imagined and a level of popularity of which he likely did not even dream. In its varied history, the Frauenkirche has served as a link between Protestant citizens and their Catholic king, a landmark for postcard images, a site for solemn remembrance of tragic loss, and an international symbol of healing and reconciliation. It has always, however, remained a rallying point for Dresdners and an icon of their beloved city.

4.2 The Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche

The Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche (KWG) was one of the most imposing monuments of the united German state. Kaiser Wilhelm II sponsored its construction from 1891 to 1895 to memorialize the achievements of his grandfather, Kaiser Wilhelm I. His father, Fredrick III, had died less than a year after ascending the throne. Thus, it was to his grandfather Wilhelm I, the first Kaiser of united Germany, that Wilhelm II dedicated the splendid church. A Protestant church association headed by his wife, Empress Auguste

Viktoria, which sought "better ecclesiastical care for the people and church building," oversaw the church's design and construction.[124]

Berlin had grown quickly in the late nineteenth century and needed new public facilities, including schools, hospitals, and churches to serve its growing population. As a result, the association decided to construct a new church building in Berlin's Charlottenburg district to meet the needs of the Protestant believers there. The association held a competition among nine architects to pick a design for the church building. Architect Franz Schwechten's plans won, and the committee awarded him the contract for the church. Wilhelm II took an enthusiastic interest in the arts and personally intervened when national art awards or displays did not meet with his approval. Schwechten's plan for the church, however, had his support, and the Kaiser declared he wanted it to be a magnificent national monument.[125] The neo-Romanesque style of architecture Schwechten used certainly fit that description, as did the brilliantly colored ceiling murals in the vestibule, which depicted scenes from Wilhelm I's life (see Appendix A.4). Although Empress Auguste Viktoria sponsored the construction of forty-two churches over a ten-year span, the KWG remained unique because it was dedicated to the Hohenzollern dynasty rather than to a saint or Biblical hero, as was typical.[126] The church stood on the centrally-located Breitscheidsplatz and was the lone building on a small square located at the convergence of several streets. In both design and location it was meant to be visually striking.

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[124] Peter Haupt, Wolfgang Pehnt, and Horst Gunter, *Egon Eiermann: The Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche*, trans. Michael Robinson, (Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1994), 6.
[125] Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter, 16
[126] Richie, 218.

The imposing building was dedicated on September 1, 1895, with great pomp and ceremony as part of the twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the battle of Sedan.[127] The anniversary celebrations began at the KWG with the arrival of the Kaiser and Empress to the sound of all the church bells ringing in Berlin, Charlottenburg, Willmersdorf, and Schöneberg. According to a *New York Times* correspondent who attended the ceremonies, "The church itself was completely covered with flags, banners, flowers, and garlands."[128] The décor was extravagant and included stands across from the KWG's entrance that were "occupied by 2,000 girls attired in light-colored dresses" as well as a parade where all 31,000 Berlin school children assembled to see the Kaiser as he rode by.[129] Although the structure was complete, the mosaics in the vestibule would not be finished until 1906. For the next forty-eight years, the church served the Charlottenburg district as a thriving place of worship. The church had an active Protestant congregation, could seat up to 2,500 people, and became a prominent landmark known across Berlin.[130]

The KWG held special significance as one of the most prominent monuments of the newly unified German state. From the beginning, it served a dual purpose as both a functional religious building and a monument to the secular achievements of Wilhelm I. As a nation with a short collective past—Wilhelm II was the third ruler of the German state founded in 1871—monuments provided important rallying points to emphasize Germans' shared history. Monuments in the early Kaiserreich helped encourage a sense of unity and

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[127] This was the final battle of the Franco-Prussian war. It was this war, along with the masterful political maneuvering of Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, that convinced the rulers of the other German states to give their allegiance to Wilhelm I, who was King of Prussia at the time. This resulted in a united German state for the first time.
[128] "The Sedan Celebration," *New York Times (1857-1922),* Sep 02, 1895. https://login.ezproxy.uta.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uta.edu/docview/95213953?accountid=7117 (accessed May 2, 2017).
[129] Ibid.
[130] Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter, 16-18

served as a reminder of the emotional moment in which the nation was formed.[131] While each German state had lengthy individual histories, monuments such as the KWG helped create a sense of national German identity distinct from previous regional or state identities. Buildings such as these "were created in public settings by a society seeking national markers of meaning, focused on significant events."[132] For the fledgling nation, the KWG was a celebration of their new identity as united Germans, and was intended to instill them with a robust national pride.

On the night of November 22-23, 1943, an Allied bombing raid on Berlin destroyed much of the KWG. The two spires opposite the bell tower were destroyed, as were the transept and the nave. The bell tower, one spire, and the structure directly underneath and behind the bell tower remained. Artillery fire during the battle for Berlin damaged the remaining structure. By 1945, the church was a burned-out shell in the midst of the ruins of Berlin. Still, author Peter Haupt has noted, "The Gedächtniskirche itself became an unmistakable landmark because of its position, and retained its significance as such in the city's consciousness even after it had been destroyed."[133] Unlike the Frauenkirche's destruction, historians do not consider the KWG's destruction controversial. As the capital city of Nazi Germany, bombing Berlin was an important and accepted part of Allied military strategy, particularly as the war drew to a close. Those who condemn the Dresden attack argue that Dresden had little military significance and its destruction did not affect the outcome of the war. The same cannot be said of Berlin, since it was the site of Hitler's headquarters and the hub of the German military command. Although the KWG was

[131] Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces*, 17-18.
[132] Verheyen, 25.
[133] Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter,18.

destroyed nearly two years before the end of the war, neither Berliners nor the federal government had the time or resources to repair the church in the midst of the war. Clearing debris, keeping necessary facilities functioning, and continuing the war effort were higher priorities than rebuilding churches.

In the months following the official end of the war on May 8, 1945, rebuilding churches still featured low in the priorities of Berliners and their occupiers. Berlin lay in shambles. The destruction that had engulfed Dresden during one night accumulated in Berlin over a period of years, intensifying in the last weeks of the war. Soviet artillery began hitting downtown Berlin on April 20, 1945, and Soviet troops entered the city eight days later. German officers frequently ordered their men to fight to the death, going so far as to kill deserters in the last days of the war when any reasonable hope of victory was gone. Members of the Hitler Youth took to the streets in Berlin to fight the Soviet advance block by block. Many surviving soldiers experienced a lingering bitterness that they and their comrades had been forced to continue fighting—and dying—when the war was clearly hopeless.[134] When the fighting stopped, Berlin had become a wasteland with over a million homeless people, many living in cellars, and over 55 million cubic meters of rubble.[135] Although the Soviet occupation was marked by disorganization on a wide scale, in Berlin at least, reconstruction began rapidly. As the capital, Berlin received special attention and by May 13 it boasted a working bus route. By May 14 it had an U-bahn route, and by May 17 Berliners had ration cards.[136] Although this progress was significant, Berliners still experienced dismal living conditions, food shortages, and sometimes brutal

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[134] Antony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin, 1945*, (New York: Viking, 2002), 378-9.
[135] Beevor, 419; Dieffendorf, 15.
[136] MacDonogh, 108, 111.

treatment from their occupiers. The Soviets also began dismantling any German industrial or factory equipment they could find to ship back to their devastated homeland, which severely hindered Berlin's recovery. Stalin believed Berlin to be of key importance and he tried to delay the other Allies from entering the city for as long as possible. On June 23, over a month after the war's end, Soviet soldiers refused to allow an American reconnaissance force entrance to Berlin. Soviet soldiers attempted unsuccessfully to stop the convey from entering the Soviet zone at Dessau on the Elbe but finally halted them in Babelsberg. The Americans were forced to turn around without ever reaching Berlin.[137] American and British troops began entering Berlin only in July—two months after the end of the war. Yet the arrival of the other Allies did not solve Berlin's problems. As the winter of 1945 set in, food became increasingly scarce, with rations in the British section dropping from 800 to 400 calories per day.[138]

Because the Allied Control Council in charge of Berlin required unanimous consent for any decisions, the Soviets had an immense advantage. During the two months during which they delayed the other Allies from entering the city, they had already established control over Berlin and set up governmental and military structures. This meant that any British or American initiatives counted as changes to the established Soviet system and the Soviets could simply veto them. Living situations worsened when German refugees, expelled from surrounding countries, began streaming into Berlin, aggravating the already-desperate shortages of food, housing, and medicine. Recovery was slowed and exacerbated by tensions among the occupying powers.

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[137] Richie, 627.
[138] Richie, 635.

In early 1948, the Allied Control Council fell apart amidst intense disagreement among the Soviets, Americans, and British. By summer 1948, the German economy was still in shambles. Berliners in particular lived almost exclusively off the black market, using cigarettes as currency. On June 20, the Allies introduced the Deutschmark in one of the most significant steps in helping the German economy recover. Currency reform did not initially include Berlin since the city was shared between the four powers, but its effects were profound and immediate in the rest of Germany. According to economist Henry Wallich, "Currency reform transformed the German scene from one day to the next...goods reappeared in the stores, money resumed its normal function, the black and grey markets reverted to a minor role, foraging trips to the country ceased, labour productivity increased, and output took off on its great upward surge."[139] The Soviets responded by announcing their own currency reform. During a meeting on July 22 to discuss currency in Berlin, the Americans and British made an astonishingly generous offer to allow the Soviet currency to be the official money for all of Berlin. By this time, however, the Soviets were looking for an excuse to push the Americans, British, and French out of Berlin. They rejected the offer. In spite of this, Soviet officials announced to the acting mayor later that evening that their new currency would be the only official currency in Berlin. The Americans responded by bringing the Deutschmark to Berlin. Tensions ran high.[140]

On July 23, the Soviets announced that roads and railways leading into West Berlin would be closed due to "technical difficulties."[141] Electricity was shut off for the same reason. As American authorities scrambled to figure out how to respond, General Lucius

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[139] Quoted in Richie, 660.
[140] Cherny, 235-239.
[141] Quoted in Cherny, 241.

Clay asked General Curtis LeMay, head of the U.S. air force in Europe, to organize flights of supplies into Berlin. Clay hoped to alleviate the situation and delay the necessity of withdrawing American forces. LeMay estimated the air force could provide only one percent of the supplies Berlin needed. No one expected the airlift to become sustainable—American officials simply intended it to buy time. In August, however, air transportation specialist Bill Tunner took command of the airlift and turned the operation into a model of efficiency. After Tunner's reforms took effect, a plane landed or took off in Berlin every ninety seconds. Although the winter of 1948 was hard, by February the air lift brought sixteen million pounds of supplies a day into Berlin. This was enough to increase rations and bring in small amounts of non-essential supplies.[142] The eleven-month Berlin blockade changed the way Berliners viewed the Americans and British. In August, pilot Hal Halvorsen began dropping candy to a handful of children who gathered to watch the planes. As word spread, the crowd of children who came to watch the planes grew to the hundreds. When adults began joining, the daily crowd of onlookers at Tempelhof Airport grew to a thousand per day, and could reach as high as 10,000 in fair weather.[143] As the airlift brought food, coal, and other essentials to their city, Berliners responded by showering pilots with gifts, flowers, and tokens of appreciation. American culture exploded throughout the western half of the city. West Berliners began adopting the music, film, and fashions of the country bringing them necessities. By the time the blockade ended on May 12, 1949, East and West Berliners were firmly divided by different loyalties, different living conditions, and vastly different experiences. By its end, the airlift had flown 4.6 billion pounds of

[142] Cherny, 508.
[143] Cherny, 343.

supplies into Berlin on 227,000 flights. It had also won the hearts of Berliners.[144] The city's plight had drawn worldwide attention and confirmed Berlin as one of the symbols of the Cold War. German historian Alexandra Richie notes, "[Europe] was divided into two vast spheres of influence, between the two new entities called 'superpowers.' These giants rubbed against one another, like great seismic plates, at the 'flashpoint'—Berlin."[145]

It was in the middle of a city still in ruins, facing food shortages, and operating with a black-market economy that the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche foundation's provisional board of trustees began discussions regarding reconstruction in early 1947. The board declared its dedication to "the rebuilding, maintenance and administration of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche and the promotion of church music in that church."[146] Between 1947 and 1953, the trustees discussed the future of the building with city planners, including the options of "demolition, a change in site, and rebuilding the church."[147] Discussion proceeded slowly not only because opinion was sharply divided over the fate of the church, but because of the terrible living conditions, the tumultuous events of the Berlin blockade, and continued conflict among the Allies in the intervening years. Berliners, however, did not forget about the church. By 1953, enough rubble had been cleared that the congregation held a Whitsun (or Pentecost) service in the church's shell. Officials, however, deemed the structure unsafe and halted public access to the ruin.[148]

Berlin continued to experience political turmoil throughout the 1950s. On November 3, 1950, Bonn became the official capital city of West Germany. Although East Germany

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[144] Cherny, 543.
[145] Richie, 673.
[146] Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter,19.
[147] Ibid, 19.
[148] "1953," sign on display in the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche. Berlin, Germany. July 7, 2016.

retained eastern Berlin as its capital, for West Berliners this marked the first time in over two centuries that their city was not the capital of a German nation or province. Although separated from East Berlin by different currencies, different governments, and restrictive checkpoints, West Berliners still showed support for the other half of the city. On June 16, 1953, a workers' uprising in East Germany killed 267 and injured 1,067 across the country. In response, over 125,000 West Berliners attended a memorial service for the dead.[149] Throughout the 1950s, however, tensions increased between the Soviets and the West. As the only city both sides shared, Berlin became a key center for Cold War espionage. By 1953, the KGB had 800 agents stationed in Berlin alone. The CIA and Secret Intelligence Service performed elaborate feats, such as building a 500-yard tunnel into the east side of the city in order to tap into Soviet phone lines. "By the 1950s, Berlin was known as a city where nothing and nobody was what they seemed."[150]

Complicating the political situation, East Germans continued to pour into West Germany at a rate that greatly alarmed the East German government and their Soviet supporters. Four years after the end of the war, 59,245 Germans had fled Soviet-occupied territory to the American or British zones of occupation. By 1953, the total had climbed to 331,390. After East Germany constructed a physical barrier along its border with West Germany in 1952, Berlin became even more important for those hoping to flee west. It offered the only place where one could slip over to western territory without having to evade border guards, land mines, and barbed wire. Numerous East Berliners held jobs in West Berlin, so crossing the border was a fairly routine procedure. Just before the construction of the Berlin wall, three million East Germans had officially registered

[149] Richie, 685-688.
[150] Richie, 690-700.

themselves in West Germany. More undoubtedly remained undocumented. Most of these were intellectuals and skilled workers. They were welcomed by West Germany, given refugee status, and assisted in starting a new life.[151] Life in Berlin changed drastically when Walter Ulbricht, General Secretary of the GDR's Central Committee, issued the order to seal off the eastern half of the city during the night of August 12, 1961. The wall, initially just a barbed wire fence patrolled by armed soldiers, shocked all Berliners. It cut through neighborhoods, busy streets, and historic areas, separating families from their relatives in nearby streets and other residents from their long-time friends and neighbors. East Germany heavily fortified the wall in the following months, eventually building two walls with an area known as the death zone in between. Berlin's symbolic significance in the Cold War increased as each side incorporated the wall as a key component of propaganda against the other side.

Reconstruction in Berlin took on heightened political significance after 1948 because of intensifying competition between the opposing powers that occupied the city. "At issue, ultimately, in this ideological battle was the comparative legitimacy of the two German states to represent the entire nation. Architecture was one means employed by each in the attempt to position itself advantageously in relation to the ambiguities of German history, the contemporary realities of the Cold War, and aspirations for the future."[152] Berlin, as the city where capitalism and Communism rubbed shoulders, provided each side the chance to contrast with the other through architecture. Much of the reconstruction in West Berlin took place during the 1950s and 1960s because the lack of supplies during the Berlin airlift

[151] Richie, 715.
[152] Robert E. Alvin, "The Berliner Dom, The Kaiser Wilhelm Gedächtniskirche, and the Ideological manipulation of Space in Postwar Berlin," *East European Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (1997): 357.

crippled construction efforts. Once reconstruction began in earnest, West Berlin planners and architects emphasized a modernist style that showcased steel and concrete structures and relied heavily on skyscrapers. German and American administrators embraced this development not only because it resembled current trends in American architecture, but also because it linked Berlin's reconstruction to the *Bauhaus* movement under the Weimar Republic.[153] This link mattered because Weimar had been Germany's only prior experience with democracy. Framing democracy as a German tradition helped West Germany claim legitimacy as the representative of the German people. Planners and citizens alike embraced the modernist style, considering it the visual manifestation of a new beginning after the war. Their belief that Berlin needed a new face after the war led to the destruction of hundreds of salvageable buildings in order to replace them with modernist structures. Following the airlift, American popularity and influence continued to increase as the Marshall Plan channeled three billion Deutschmarks into Berlin. This contributed to the Americanization of Berlin's culture as American music, goods, movies, and fashions became wildly popular. Consumerism, progress, and democracy became the themes of the day. [154]

In the midst of this city of espionage, political maneuvering, and increasing tensions, the KWG's trustees began to take action to reconstruct the church. In 1954, the trustees had commissioned architect Werner March to design a new church that incorporated the old tower. March's design looked similar to the original church, with a rectangular nave abutting the tower and a lone remaining spire. The plan initially received approval from all necessary quarters—church authorities, the local congregation, and the

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[153] Ibid, 360.
[154] Richie, 704-709.

Senator for Building and Housing (*Bausenator)*. A *New York Times* article from April 10 noted the decision to rebuild the church and explained that the KWG was important as the "chief landmark of West Berlin." The article also quoted Bishop Gerhard Jacobi of Berlin saying, "Berliners love the church as it is. The tower should remain in its present form for two or three decades as a reminder of the heavy fate which befell Berlin."[155] Before construction could get underway, however, the newly-elected *Bausenator* Rolf Schwedler rejected March's plan. Schwedler argued that the church's location at the convergence of four important streets posed too great a problem for traffic. This argument was not new—the church had caused traffic congestion for at least thirty years. Schwedler would not approve city funding for the project unless the church would be relocated. This suggestion provoked an outpouring of public opinion in local newspapers. Berliners had strong feelings on the matter, ranging from intense frustration at the traffic problems to deep-rooted convictions that the church could never be the same at another location.

Der Tagesspiegel, a local West Berlin newspaper, dedicated itself to the preservation of the church on its original location and over the summer of 1955 covered developments regularly. In addition to publishing articles about official decisions, *Der Tagesspiegel* also published letters from its readers about the KWG. Since the paper had openly declared its support of retaining the church's original location, most letters it published expressed the same view. In these letters, the authors typically organized their arguments around two common themes: emotion-based appeals mentioning their personal experiences or memories in the KWG, and an assertion that Berlin would not be the same

[155] "Berlin to Rebuild War-Torn Memorial Church," *New York Times*, April 10, 1954. https://login.ezproxy.uta.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.uta.edu/docview/113124565?accountid=7117 (Accessed November 9, 2017).

unless the KWG remained in its original location. One such letter came from L. Leonard of Berlin, published on July 3. He wrote of Berlin, “It was always a city poor on good views. War and vandalism have done their part to it. Now, the last feast for the eyes will also disappear. Have the people who support demolishing the KWG never felt pleasure as they wander toward the church along the Kurfürstendamm or on the Tauenzienstraße? This view always gave me great pleasure.”[156] Leonard concluded by comparing the KWG’s importance to Berlin with another landmark structure: “Think for a moment of the Champs-Elysees without the Arc de Triumphe. What would be left of the world's most glorious road? Nothing. The road would have lost its soul.”[157] Similarly, Dr. Werner Gottstein wrote, “For me, my home city would seem like a stranger today if I could never again see that spiritual symbol of the west that used to fascinate me on my way to school.”[158] The *New York Times* article from 1954 correctly assessed the situation when it stated that, “after eleven years, many residents are sentimental about the ruins.”[159] These sentiments are similar to the ones Dresdners expressed when discussing their Frauenkirche. In the same way that Dresdners argued their city could never be complete without the Frauenkirche, Berliners felt that Berlin would lose an essential part of its identity if the KWG no longer stood on Breitscheidsplatz.

Church officials received such an outpouring of concern from the public that they felt compelled to announce they did not intend to rebuild the church elsewhere, even before

[156]“Demokratische Forum” Der*Tagesspiegel*, July 3, 1955, tranlated by the author.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Werner K. Gottstein, “Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche,“ *Der Tagesspiegel*, July 24, 1955, tranlated by the author.
[159] “Berlin to Rebuild War-Torn Memorial Church.”

they had reached a compromise with the government. *Der Tagesspiegel* triumphantly reported:

> For the protestant church administration in Berlin, there can be no more discussion over the future location of the KWG, General Superintendent Pack explained to us yesterday, acting as a representative of Bishop Debelius. Berlin would no longer be Berlin if the church were removed from Breitscheidsplatz and erected in another place. The protestant church administration supports its view with a multitude of letters and communications that were addressed to the church administration or the General Superintendent in the last week which nearly unanimously expressed the opinion that the church must be rebuilt on its former location. Thus, the scales of public opinion in recent times have significantly tipped in favor of reconstruction in the old location. Also, Bausenator Schwedler had to admit that now about half of all the letters he received expressed this opinion, whereas a week ago the bulk of writers had expressed their desire to demolish the church and build a new one of a new site.[160]

The article explained that Pack "welcomed" negotiation and support from the government, but made it clear that church authorities would not allow government financial contributions to determine the location of the church.[161] This is extremely significant because the church did not have the funds to repair or rebuild the KWG on its own. For church authorities to declare that they would not move the church, even if it cost them government funding, the public pressure must have been immense.

Not everyone agreed that the church should remain on Breitscheidsplatz. Karlheinz Schiedel of Berlin-Schöneberg wrote *Der Tagesspiegel* to disagree with the reader letters they had published in a previous issue.

> Four voices were published under this heading in No. 2976, which speak out for the rebuilding of the KWG. This cannot possibly be the opinion of the public. I ride several times a day on the tram past the ruin and listen to voices that have other opinions. You want to build the Hansa quarter in Berlin—why do not you have the courage to tear down the old walls of the church? Foreigners certainly do not come to Berlin to see a landmark marked by the war. Berlin has enough landmarks, and many have already been restored. But is something like this so important? Our

[160] "Kirche nur auf dem Breitscheidsplatz," *Der Tagesspiegel*, July 26, 1955, tranlated by the author.
[161] "Gedächtniskirche nur auf dem Breitscheidsplatz.,"*Der Tagesspiegel*, July 26, 1955, tranlated by the author.

> rubble and ruins will still be visible in twenty years to be seen and to serve as a warning. As the church looks now, it is hideous. It will not look any better after a reconstruction.[162]

Schiedel addressed the church's function as a landmark, or war memorial. His comment that Berlin's ruins would still serve as a warning in twenty years refers to the argument that the church ruins constituted an important *Mahnmal,* or memorial with a warning message, of the destruction of war. He believed the church would be unappealing to visitors, and unnecessary as a *Mahnmal* because of the amount of rubble still present in Berlin. Others argued that the church should be removed in order to allow the Kurfürstendamm to become an entirely modern district. Hartmut Lohmeyer's letter disparaged those who wanted to preserve the church as lacking foresight, stating that, "The resistance comes...from people who cannot imagine that in the future many things will look different from how they used to look."[163] Others argued that the church administration wanted to keep the central location in a busy shopping district merely because of the enormous public exposure the KWG would bring the Protestant church.[164] As evidenced by the administration's decision, however, public pressure to keep the church's location was far greater than the pressure to remove it.

Following negotiation, the *Bausenator* and church officials agreed to keep the church's location, but to reorient the new church to run east-west instead of north-south.[165] This would help alleviate traffic. Church officials abandoned March's plan for rebuilding the church. The trustees, with city approval, decided to hold a competition in which architects could submit their designs for a new building. This process was similar to the

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[162] Karlheinz Schiedel, "Demokratisches Forum," *Der Tagesspiegel*, July 3, 1955.
[163] Friedrich Bernhard, "Demokratisches Forum," *Der Tagesspiegel*, July 17, 1955.
[164] Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter 7.
[165] Alvin, 369-70.

one used to select the church's original design. Instead of the Kaiser, however, this time a committee of representatives for the church and city would select the winning plans. When the committee announced the competition in 1955, they specified that the old tower should be retained. They were, however, willing to accept alternate entries that did not include the tower. The competition guidelines stated, "A Protestant church is to be built that will be a worthy space conducive to proper devotional Protestant worship, in other words the spreading of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. It should also be appropriate to the significance of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche, which has always had a special part to play in the history of Protestant Berlin, and should continue to be available for the needs of the church in general as well as the needs of the parish."[166] Although the description did not specifically mention the church's function as a war memorial, the inclusion of the old tower in its damaged state clearly served that purpose. The competition garnered nine entries. Unfortunately, when the committee met in 1956, they judged all entries impractical, rejected all nine, and asked the architects to resubmit plans. This time, only three complied, and architect Egon Eiermann's design was selected in March, 1957. Eiermann had experience redesigning old churches, having previously submitted designs for rebuilding Hamburg's Saint Nikolai church and adding on to the rebuilt Stadtkirche in Karlsruhe. His winning design for the KWG called for the demolition of the old tower and the construction of a new rectangular church and a new separate tower. Church officials, including the KWG's pastor, approved heartily of the design because it was both practical for congregational use and because it blended in with the modern buildings of the

[166] Quoted in Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter, 19.

Kurfürstendamm. Once again, public outrage erupted in the form of floods of letters to newspaper and governmental offices.

Although many of Berlin's foremost architects and intellectuals supported Eiermann's modernist design, many Berliners did not agree. Robert Hoffmann wrote, "I cannot help feeling indignation that a small group of hypermodern architects, disregarding all the feelings firmly held in Berliners' hearts, want to carry out such a planned mutilation of the square and the final view of the Kurfürstendamm."[167] This time, *Der Tagesspiegel* decided to test public opinion through a survey. In their March 24 issue, they published a ballot with the question, "Are you for retaining the tower ruin?"[168] Nearly ninety-one percent of respondents answered in the affirmative. This poll was neither objective nor representative of Berliners in general. Since *Der Tagesspiegel* had publicly declared itself in favor of preserving the church two years earlier, citizens in favor of this approach likely gravitated to the paper. Additionally, since the poll was voluntary, those without a strong opinion on the subject probably did not respond. However, the poll results combined with numerous letters sent to newspapers, church officials, and politicians indicate that a significant portion of Berliners felt strongly about keeping the old tower. When Berliners attempted to start a fundraising campaign so that the church would not have to rely on city funds, church and government officials took action. The committee asked Eiermann to revise his plans to include the tower. Eiermann agreed and produced the design for the KWG's current form: a three-piece ensemble of bell tower, old tower, and octagonal church hall.[169] For the second time, public protest expressed primarily through letters caused

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[167] Quoted in Alvin, translated by the author, 371.
[168] Alvin, 371.
[169] Alvin, 372.

church and government authorities to change their plans for the KWG. The message was clear: many Berliners cared deeply about the ruined KWG and would take action to ensure that it stayed as it was.

Reconstruction on the KWG began in May 1959. Eiermann's design called for an octagonal church building next to the ruined tower and a bell tower on the opposite side. The three buildings would be raised on a platform above the surrounding streets. The city opted to change the streets themselves as well. Today the church sits in the middle of a large pedestrian zone full of shops and restaurants. Streets pass close to the church on only two sides. Eiermann's church has double walls, made of blue stained-glass panes inside concrete frames. Lighting is positioned between the walls, illuminating the inside of the church, and causing it to glow on the outside after dark. True to the trustees' wish to promote music in the KWG, the new church includes an organ constructed by a local Berlin firm. Construction finished in 1961 and the church was consecrated on December 17, just four months after the Berlin Wall split the city in half. This recent crisis was clearly on the architect's mind when Eiermann stated at the consecration ceremony, "I want the building to remain open so that those without comfort in this tormented city may find comfort. And I wish for myself and all of us that the shadows of fear may never again fall through the light-dream of this glass."[170] Although harshly criticized by architects and planners, the KWG remained popular with residents and tourists in Berlin since its completion. German historian Alexandra Richie calls the restored church the only building that "truly captured the imagination of the walled city."[171] Among the meanings attributed to the ensemble of buildings were "the 'new rising from the old', the 'triumph of peace over war', the 'hope

[170] Quoted in Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter, 24.
[171] Richie, 280.

of the future of West Berlin’,” and “a poignant reminder of what West Berlin had lost in the war.”[172] In spite of (or perhaps because of) its odd location in a modernized and fashionable district, the KWG continued to draw the interest of locals and visitors alike. It remains one of the most popular landmarks in Berlin today (see Appendix A.3).

Historians do not agree on the motives behind Berliners’ desire to keep the KWG intact on its original location. According to architectural historian Wolfgang Pehnt, “The fact that popular opinion in Berlin insisted on the preservation of the ruined tower may well have had more to do with hankering after the so-called good old days than a desire to reflect on the causes and effects of the war.”[173] In fact, none of the reader letters published in *Der Tagesspiegel* during the summer of 1955 claimed that the church should be retained because of its function as a war memorial. Karlheinz Schiedel’s letter, however, specifically addressed the argument that the church should be left as a *Mahnmal*. This suggests that the argument was prevalent, though not included in the other reader letters *Der Tagesspiegel* chose to publish. Regardless of whether Berliners vocalized support for the church’s function as a war memorial, or even whether they intended it to be one, the KWG does serve as a memorial of the Second World War simply because of its appearance. Architect Peter Haupt did not agree with Pehnt: “The decision to retain the tower and build a new church in combination with it on the old site was influenced not just by the Berliners’ affection for the old building but also the wish to retain the landmark with its rich tradition as a memorial for the furtherance of future peace.”[174]

[172] Richie, 280.
[173]Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter, 9.
[174] Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter, 20.

By preserving and emphasizing the damage caused by the war, the KWG supports the narrative of Germans as victims. Although it has not become an emblem of German victimhood to the extent that Dresden and the Frauenkirche have, it clearly reminds visitors of what Germans suffered. Similar to the restored Frauenkirche, the KWG carries a message of hope and progress while still emphasizing the horrors Germans experienced. Just as the Frauenkirche's "healed scars" remind viewers of the tremendous destruction the building and Dresden experienced, the ruined tower reminds viewers of the desolate state of Berlin after the war. Although Berlin has multiple memorials and museums dedicated to victims of the Holocaust, the history of German Jews, and other aspects of the war, the KWG does not attempt to call attention to these aspects of the war. Signs in English inside the church describing the church's history merely state, "Insane politics led to the Second World War of 1939-1945. The merciless bombing raids on Berlin ensued." Other signs summarize the resistance efforts of Bishop Gerhard Jacobi, pastor of the KWG, and the persecution he endured. Another display contains a cross of nails from Coventry and a Russian-orthodox icon cross as tokens of reconciliation from Britain and Russia. A single display box gives tribute to the Jews who lost their lives, stating, "Among the worst atrocities of the National Socialist regime was the persecution of the Jews. After 1933 about 15 percent of the resident population in this area of the city were persecuted, forced to emigrate, deported or murdered because they were Jews. They are all to be remembered here." The display gives three examples of KWG parishioners of Jewish origin who were deported. While this acknowledgement of Jewish suffering is important, it focuses only on Jewish members of the KWG's congregation who had converted to Christianity. Although the display proclaims that all Jewish victims from that area of the city are to be

remembered, it is dwarfed by the other displays. The unspoken message is clear: this is a monument dedicated to the remembrance of Berlin's destruction and the suffering of its German residents.

During reconstruction, the area around Breitscheidsplatz became one of the busiest shopping districts of Berlin. It featured the impressive *Kaufhaus des Westens*—the first department store to open in Berlin after the war. Several high-rise buildings were built nearby, bringing even more traffic to the area. Keeping a disfigured Romanesque tower in the middle of modern stores and skyscrapers created a striking contrast. Richie calls it "a strangely disjointed and depressing symbol in a city trying to appear confident and progressive."[175] It is this contrast that gives the KWG its powerful symbolism. It placed a reminder of the past squarely in the middle of everything new. By preserving an example of how Berlin looked during its darkest hour, those who viewed the church could see the enormous progress the city has made. Bullet holes and damages from the bombing are still visible on the church's walls. Such damages look enormously out of place next to glass-fronted shops. While still reminding viewers of the war, the KWG also emphasizes how distant the war is from the present. This demonstration of progress is what gives the KWG its hopeful message. It preserves part of Berlin's history as a reminder of the city's past while also providing a measuring mark by which visitors can see just how far Berlin has come from that past.

As the church's trustees wrote in 1955, the KWG "has always had a special part to play in the history of Protestant Berlin," and Berlin in general.[176] From its beginning it was unique among the many Protestant churches in the city because it combined religious

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[175] Richie, 802.
[176] Quoted in Haupt, Pehnt, and Gunter, 19.

building with national monument. The murals depicting Wilhelm I celebrated the founding and history of united Germany and provided a unifying point for Germans as they crafted a unified German identity. The church's location, architecture, and impressive décor made it altogether an imposing structure. The KWG's special role in Berlin only increased after its destruction on the night of November 22-23, 1943. The tower provided a landmark amidst Berlin's rubble—not only to help Berliners find their bearings, but to provide a familiar reminder of the Berlin they used to know. While the pull of nostalgia was powerful, nostalgia alone cannot explain why Berliners fought to preserve the KWG while hundreds of other historic buildings around Berlin were destroyed in the name of progress and reconstruction. It was the KWG's visual expression of past German achievements that made it especially significant to Berliners. As modernization occurred and the Kurfürstendamm became a busy shopping district, the KWG became a monument not only to Germany's more distant history, but to Berlin's recent wartime experiences, and to the incredible progress the city had made. These meanings caused Berliners to protest the tower's removal so vehemently. The 1950s were a decade of dramatic change in Berlin. Yet because Berliners believed the KWG was crucial to their city's identity—and by extension their own identity as residents of Berlin—a large number insisted upon the KWG remaining unchanged. It provided a beacon of familiarity and hope in the turbulent world of postwar Berlin.

CHAPTER 5

CHURCH ANALYSIS

The idea behind this study began with a simple question: Why did Germans find it important to permanently preserve the ruins of one church in Berlin ten years after the war, yet find it imperative to rebuild another church (instead of preserving the ruins) in Dresden forty years after the war? The answer lies in the symbolism these buildings acquired as they became integrated into Germany's postwar narrative. As national cultural landmarks, the churches became focal points in creating a postwar German identity. They illustrated the tendency of Germans to claim (both verbally and through their actions) that the "real" Germany lay in its distinguished cultural past, not in its recent political actions and military defeat. Adopting this perspective allowed Germans to frame their new identity as a rediscovery of their true collective selves rather than a reinventing of their entire national character. This viewpoint supported the assumption, implicit in Allied and Soviet denazification procedures, that only Hitler and a small group of top officials held responsibility for the Nazi's brutality and crimes. By that logic, Hitler and his followers were also responsible for subjugating and obscuring German values and character, which Germans could unearth once Hitler was dead and Nazism supposedly dismantled. In addition to making the German people victims of Hitler, this approach painted the Nazi years as a startling aberration in an otherwise distinguished German tradition. Celebrating and reclaiming Germany's cultural heritage created the sense of continuity, achievement, and familiarity for which Germans longed. The symbolic importance of the Frauenkirche

and symbolic importance of the Frauenkirche and KWG to Germans comes from their prominent position within that trend. Both buildings represented links to honorable times in German history: the KWG for the newly united German nation, and the Frauenkirche for the flourishing German culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Germans needed cultural landmarks such as these to serve as tangible, visible evidence of the past they desperately wished to claim as their true identity and heritage.

Part of the churches' significance comes from their function of creating a sense of familiarity in the physical environment of their respective cities. Germans' desire to preserve such buildings unquestionably stemmed in part from dismay at the utter destruction of their cities and a strong nostalgia for the way life had been before the war. Amidst such chaos and hardship, it was a natural reaction to attempt to preserve remnants of normal life before the war. As historian David Crew points out, cities reduced to rubble were difficult even for life-long residents to recognize or navigate. Streets that residents had known well might have disappeared entirely under collapsed buildings and bomb craters, or look completely different if they were passable. Germans experienced the feeling of being strangers in their own cities—so damaged by Allied bombs as to be completely unrecognizable.[177] After such an alienating and disorienting experience, many Germans felt a deep longing to create a sense of familiarity. Jeffrey Diefendorf writes:

> To enable the citizens to identify with their home towns, it was vital that the cities be rebuilt on their old locations and that major architectural monuments be rebuilt. Thus churches, for example, were often reconstructed in neighborhoods with inadequate numbers of supporting parishioners.[178] The quest for identity also tended to mandate that reconstructed homes and businesses resemble their prewar appearance. For this reason, roof lines and shapes, building heights, materials and colors often followed local tradition...The outward shape of reconstruction—that

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[177] David F. Crew, *Bodies and Ruins: Imagining the Bombing of Germany, 1945 to the Present,* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017) 96-7.
[178] This was the case with the Frauenkirche.

> which formed the identity of the rebuilt cities—resulted from a dynamic interaction between local conditions and general trends. Thus, while historical preservationists tended to steadfastly oppose erecting copies of demolished buildings, powerful public sentiment demanded such copies for their symbolic and cultural value.[179]

The most important feature in creating this familiarity was that buildings retain their pre-war outward appearance, not that they retain their historical integrity in all aspects. This is demonstrated by the fact that preserved or restored buildings were often equipped with modern features on the inside, such as plumbing, lighting, or temperature control that detract from their historical authenticity but not their appearance.[180] Because both the KWG and Frauenkirche had been prominent buildings before the war, both contributed to creating the familiarity Germans needed to help restore a sense of normality.

Although this desire for familiarity was a natural response to the destruction Germans faced, it is important to note the decisions they made in their attempt to reconstruct normality. With so much of Germany decimated, reconstruction vitally contributed to creating both a shared German history of the war and a new German identity. Architecture was important in this process because it determined how Germans would visually remember the war and shaped the built environment in which they lived:

> The idea of forgetting the past was never a serious option, even when the builders of monuments or the stewards of historical places searched for new meanings. What *was* optional was to ask which past would be remembered, and with what past one was to reconnect. Reconstruction was, in short, a framing device over which various groups competed as they remade cities, buildings, places of resistance to Nazism, and former concentration camp sites.[181]

Within this context, the preservation and reconstruction of the two churches exemplify how Germans deliberately shaped the remembrance of the past in order to create a new identity

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[179] Diefendorf, 280-1.
[180] Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts: preservation and national memory in the twentieth century*. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 213.
[181] Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces,* 146.

in the present. The past they chose to remember was the German cultural achievements of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. As a result of the intense damage, there existed a strong desire to rebuild old icons merely for the sake of preserving something familiar. This alone, however, cannot explain the priority which Germans placed on restoring cultural buildings even before their own homes and businesses were rebuilt. The urgency and persistence Germans exhibited in working for the restoration of cultural icons generally, and these two churches specifically, goes beyond the dictates of mere wistful nostalgia. Instead, it points to a widespread pattern of a people looking for a way to identify themselves nationally, and reaching back towards their past to find reference points of that identity. The Frauenkirche and KWG provide physical and visual reference points for an identity based in pre-Nazi cultural achievements, and as such comprise important parts of that trend.

Although reflections of the same trend, the Frauenkirche and KWG were treated differently because of different political, economic, and social conditions in their respective cities. This is explained by Jeffry Diefendorf's assertion that "the outward shape of reconstruction—that which formed the identity of the rebuilt cities—resulted from a dynamic interaction between local conditions and general trends."[182] Although the churches were separated by vastly different local conditions, the general trend of preserving and reclaiming cultural heritage is manifested in the fact that Germans consistently chose the option that would best preserve the churches' prewar appearance. The fact that they chose these options in the face of opposition and difficulty demonstrates the importance these cultural landmarks held. In the case of the Frauenkirche, Dresdners carefully

[182] Diefendorf, 280-1.

preserved the ruins when there was no option to rebuild. As soon as reconstruction became a feasible option, Dresdners launched an international fundraising campaign to ensure reconstruction could take place. For the KWG, full reconstruction of the original church was not feasible primarily because of the immense cost and traffic issues. Thus, Berliners resoundingly supported the option available to them that would keep the church closest its prewar form: retaining the old tower on its original location. Keeping these buildings as close to their original appearances as possible highlighted their status as cultural landmarks from the past. The fact that Berliners and Dresdners made restoring or retaining this appearance a priority some thirty years apart suggests that drawing on German cultural heritage to form a present German identity is a trend that has continued through the postwar years at least until the time of reunification.

Throughout the debates over the fate of the KWG and Frauenkirche, those in favor of preserving the churches portrayed the structures as critical to their city's identity. When *Der Tagesspiegel* summarized General Superintendent Pack's announcement that the KWG would remain on Breitscheidsplatz, the article stated that removing the church would mean "Berlin would no longer be Berlin."[183] This sentiment that Berlin would be incomplete without the church is similar to the idea expressed in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* article stating that until the Frauenkirche was rebuilt "Dresden [will] have a gaping wound."[184] The main difference between the two cases is that Berliners were merely threatened with the removal of their beloved church while Dresdners had already experienced it. In both cases, residents insisted that a single building encapsulated their city's identity. These buildings acquired so much symbolism that locals argued their

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[183] "Kirchturm Soll in Blickfeld Bleiben," *Der Tagesspiegel*, August 19, 1955, tranlated by the author.
[184] Diefendorf, 211.

absence would (or did) change the essence of the entire city. Implicit within these arguments is the important assertion that the identity each church gave to its city was one that residents deeply desired to claim. Citizens saw these churches as crucial pieces of their cities' symbolic identities. Therefore, when they fought to retain or restore the buildings, they were fighting on a symbolic level to keep or restore the identities they believed the churches contained.

Although nostalgia and sentimental arguments feature strongly in the rhetoric surrounding each church, these emotions alone are not sufficient to explain the decisive and dedicated actions that Berliners and Dresdners took to defend these buildings. Germans were again "a society seeking national markers of meaning, focused on significant events."[185] With a disgraced recent political past, Germans clung to their older cultural history in order to find markers of meaning. Cultural landmarks from before the war helped fill this need and also helped satisfy Germans' desire to recreate a sense of familiarity. As Jeffrey Diefendorf states, "People were simply trying to return to a world they had known before the war."[186] With important elements of the pre-war world irreparable or in disgrace, architecture provided a way to preserve or restore part of the way life had been before the war. As pre-war cultural landmarks, Germans imparted enormous symbolic meaning to the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche and the Frauenkirche because they provided a sense of familiarity and as well as visible evidence of the cultural heritage that Germans wished to emphasize as part of their postwar identity. "The self becomes inseparable from what is

[185] Verheyen, 25.
[186] Diefendorf, 281.

perceived to be its physical manifestation."[187] Thus, the churches gained significance because they were the physical manifestation of the identity Germans wished to have.

[187] Vees-Gulani, *Guilt and Trauma,* 61.

APPENDIX A

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure A.1: The Frauenkirche, 2016 (courtesy of the author)

Figure A.2: Side view of the Frauenkirche, showing the patchwork of old and new stones (courtesy of the author)

Figure A.3: The Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche, 2016 (courtesy of the author)

Figure A.4: Murals on the ceiling of the old Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche Tower 2016 (courtesy of the author)

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