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Twelve German Cities Confront the Nazi Past

Gavriel D. Rosenfeld

Paul B. Jaskot

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Contents

Acknowledgments	ix
Introduction: Urban Space and the Nazi Past in Postwar Germany <i>Paul B. Jaskot and Gavriel D. Rosenfeld</i>	i
PART I: SITES OF RECONSTRUCTION: BETWEEN RECLAIMING AND EVADING THE PAST	
The Politics of New Beginnings: The Continued Exclusion of the Nazi Past in Dresden's Cityscape <i>Susanne Veas-Gulani</i>	25
Reconciling Competing Pasts in Postwar Cologne <i>Jeffry M. Diefendorf</i>	48
Evading What the Nazis Left Behind: An Ethnographic and Phenomenological Examination of Historic Preservation in Postwar Rostock <i>Susan Mazur-Stommen</i>	67
PART 2: SITES OF NEW CONSTRUCTION: INDUSTRIAL CITIES AND THE EMBRACE OF MODERNISM	
Memento Machinae: Engineering the Past in Wolfsburg <i>Jan Otakar Fischer</i>	89
Inventing Industrial Culture in Essen <i>Kathleen James-Chakraborty</i>	116

**PART 3: PERPETRATOR SITES:
REPRESENTING NAZI CRIMINALITY**

The Reich Party Rally Grounds Revisited: The Nazi Past in Postwar Nuremberg <i>Paul B. Jaskot</i>	143
Memory and the Museum: Munich's Struggle to Create a Documentation Center for the History of National Socialism <i>Gavriel D. Rosenfeld</i>	163
Concrete Memory: The Struggle over Air-Raid and Submarine Shelters in Bremen after 1945 <i>Marc Buggeln and Inge Marszolek</i>	185
Restored, Reassessed, Redeemed: The SS Past at the Collegiate Church of St. Servatius in Quedlinburg <i>Annah Kellogg-Krieg</i>	209
PART 4: JEWISH SITES: COMMEMORATING THE HOLOCAUST	
The Politics of Antifascism: Historic Preservation, Jewish Sites, and the Rebuilding of Potsdam's Altstadt <i>Michael Meng</i>	231
Marking Absence: Remembrance and Hamburg's Holocaust Memorials <i>Natasha Goldman</i>	251
The New Börneplatz Memorial and the Nazi Past in Frankfurt am Main <i>Susanne Schönborn</i>	273
Epilogue: The View from Berlin <i>Brian Ladd</i>	295
Contributors	303
Index	307

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50. Most of these other sites were in the immediate vicinity of the Königsplatz but were already committed to other functions.
51. "Neuer Anlauf für das NS-Dokumentationszentrum," *Die Welt*, April 3, 2005.
52. Sonja Zekri, "Streit um NS-Dokumentationszentrum," *SZ*, March 31, 2004.
53. Till, *The New Berlin*, chap. 3.
54. James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, 1993), 21.
55. Kastner performed his first famous *Brandfleck* installation in 1996, with city permission.
56. Christian Ude mobilized the tired excuse that the plaques' vulnerability to vandalism made them an "inappropriate" way to remember the victims.
57. Kirsten Grieshaber, "Plaques for Nazi Victims Offer a Personal Impact," *New York Times*, November 29, 2003, B23.
58. See Paul Jaskot's essay in this volume.
59. See Jeffrey Diefendorf's contribution in this volume.
60. See the introduction of Peter Reichel's edited volume *Das Gedächtnis der Stadt: Hamburg im Umgang mit seiner nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit* (Hamburg, 1998).
61. Of late, criticism of Munich has reached an English-speaking audience. See Peter H. Koepf, "Swept Under the Carpet," *Atlantic Times*, November, 2005, 18. See also "A Shift in the Landscape," *Economist*, December 18–31, 2004, 81; Gavriel Rosenfeld, "Munich Evokes the Past in Future Museum," *Forward*, February 10, 2006.
62. Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "Munich Redux," *Forward*, November 3, 2006.
63. <http://www.architekturmuseum.de/ausstellungen/detail.php?which=68&show>.

Concrete Memory

The Struggle over Air-Raid and Submarine Shelters in Bremen after 1945

Marc Buggeln and Inge Marszolek

Walking through the Bürgerpark behind Bremen's central train station, one sooner or later strolls past two massive concrete cubes lying close to one another. Visitors often stop for a moment to listen to jazz music emanating from somewhere deep inside one of the structures. Graffiti on one of them testifies to someone's self-hatred: "I hate myself and want to die" (Kurt Cobain). Most people are familiar with the protective function that these World War II shelters once had, but few realize that, at the end of the war, it was from inside these shelters in Bremen that the Nazi Party (NSDAP) leadership attempted to hold off the *Götterdämmerung* (twilight of the gods) and to drive their soldiers, militias, and general population into a final war of attrition.

To the north of Bremen lies an idyllic landscape of rivers and streams. Cycling through the green fields and forests that follow the Weser River northwards, one is suddenly confronted by a gigantic and seemingly endless wall of concrete: the south face of the submarine shelter Valentin, one of the biggest military ruins left behind by National Socialism (fig. 1). The structure is 426 meters long, up to 97 meters wide, and up to 33 meters high, a concrete colossus of monstrous dimensions, seemingly indestructible, and built as if to last for eternity. The history of the shelter is indecipherable to passing cyclists and boaters. Locals have never liked talking to outsiders about it. When questioned by their children about the shelter, they may have muttered a few words about the National Socialist era, the war, and how terrible things were back then. What they never talked about was just how and under what conditions the shelter was built. When locals happen to talk about the massive structure, they avoid the subject of the war and National Socialism. Instead, they focus their discussion on the shelter's current users: the Federal Armed Forces.

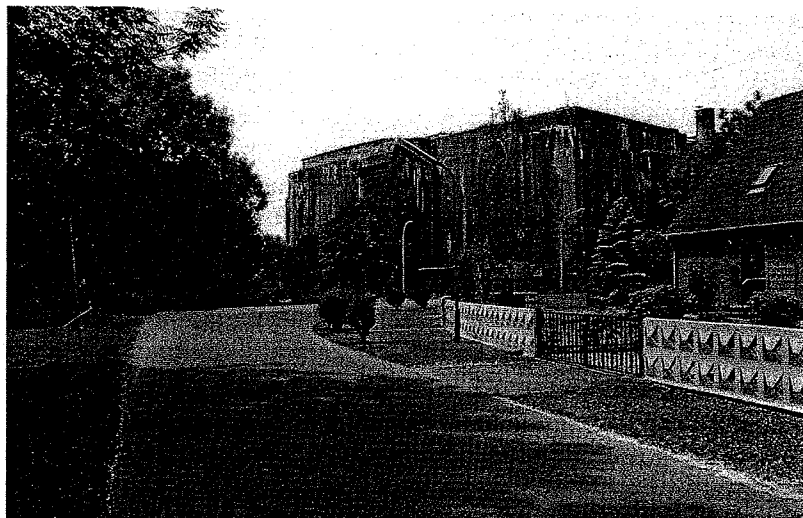


Fig. 1. The submarine shelter Valentin, built in Farge-Rekum (a suburb of Bremen) from 1943 to 1945. View from the village of Rekum today. (Photo: Barbara Milies and Harald Schwörer. Reproduced with permission.)

The submarine shelter Valentin and other structures like it represent Bremen's largest architectural question marks and stand as constant reminders of the era of National Socialism. The strategies of dealing with this legacy have undergone many changes since 1945. Closer examination shows that, as ruins left over from the war, these shelters have raised different questions and presented different answers at different times. Occasionally they were made virtually invisible and thus unable to provoke questions. Alongside other shelters featured in this essay, the submarine shelter Valentin has acted as the projection surface for the positive visions of many people, while others have seen it as a monstrosity of war and a site of endless suffering. The intention of this essay is to outline the practices of memory as exemplified by the different approaches adopted in Bremen with respect to its surviving submarine and air-raid shelters. In the following pages, we will show how the public relationship to these structures has changed over time, and we will explore the local tensions between politics, architecture, and memory.¹ Examining these shelters as "sites of memory" (*Gedächtnisorte*) not only adds depth to the space of memory of postwar Bremen but helps us better grasp how actual places constitute public memory in Germany.

One principle challenge in this discussion lies in the use of the term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, which describes the process of coming to terms with the past.² The significance of place in the construction of "cultural memory" has only been analyzed in its basic outlines. While Pierre Nora has proposed a map of places of memory, on which actual places could be mapped alongside other relics of cultural—and, in Nora's case, national—heritage, we are attempting to describe the topography of the bunkers within the place of memory of the city.³ To this end, we focus on the practices through which the shelters have been made "visible"—that is, on the social, cultural, and economic practices of concretizing (or objectifying) the past. The various ways of using or referring to the shelters in different historical periods can both heighten and diminish the shelters' visibility in the public sphere. Their "visibility" and "concealment" in public memory enables varying forms of discussion and multilayered processes of remembering.⁴ At the same time, we draw on Michel Foucault's idea of heterotopy and view the shelters as "sites of otherness": some of them are underground, others—though solid and visible—somehow resistant to public perception.⁵ The stories of these shelters' construction and their wartime function are inscribed not only in their usage and management concepts but also in the projections that these relics stimulate. The wartime "bunker communities" (*Bunkergemeinschaften*) were the sites of diverse experiences, which after the war constituted both communities of memory and communities of denial.

Bremen and National Socialism

Due to Bremen's long-standing independent political status as a free Hanseatic city, its history differs from that of German cities that were administratively integrated within larger regional states. In Bremen, political and economic life had long been in the hands of the mercantile and commercial bourgeoisie, which, over time, constructed a cosmopolitan and liberal identity for the Hanseatic city.⁶ In reality, of course, the city's self-image was not as liberal and cosmopolitan as it claimed to be. The nationalism of the German Empire made its presence felt in the city to a large degree.⁷ Moreover, the bourgeoisie's control of Bremen was challenged by the electoral successes of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) during the Weimar Republic. Still, even if the city was not as liberal as it imagined itself to be, it was sufficiently able to resist the rise of the

NSDAP, which did not fare particularly well in local elections, polling lower in the city than in other parts of Germany.⁸

This fact notwithstanding, the years 1933 to 1945 in Bremen were characterized by the political rule of the Nazis, whose leadership consisted mainly of individuals from the petty bourgeoisie.⁹ During the first months of Hitler's rule in 1933, Nazi persecution predominantly targeted the Social Democrats and Communists, particularly as the Jewish community in Bremen was relatively small, due to the city's restrictive and strongly anti-Semitic residency policy from the nineteenth century. However, as was true of other cities throughout the German Reich, Jews in Bremen were discriminated against, persecuted, deported, and finally murdered. Overall, the National Socialist senate and the city authorities cooperated smoothly in the racist regime of persecution, and they did so with the general approval (or at least tacit understanding) of the majority of Bremen's citizens.

The National Socialist senators proved to be less than competent in many areas of political administration, and they frequently depended on the expertise of the administrative organs. These were still the domains of the Bremen bourgeoisie, who retained their decision-making competency over the economic and architectural development of the city. Bremen's business concerns focused traditionally on international trade and were initially skeptical of the National Socialist drive toward autarky. As in Hamburg, business circles in Bremen swung around during the course of the 1930s to become unconditional supporters of the path to war. Close ties existed between local arms producers and business groups in Bremen, which benefited from the rising profits of the armaments industry. In addition, the occupation of Eastern Europe also offered commercial interests in Bremen the prospect of new colonial development projects.

In the realms of architecture and urban planning, Bremen had long adhered to tradition and largely spurned modernist trends. This tendency dovetailed nicely with the architectural philosophy of the Nazi regime, and during the Third Reich, the major architectural changes in Bremen included the construction of garrisons within the city zone, the expansion of armaments production facilities, and the annexation of nearby settlements in 1939, which made Bremen a city of 450,000. Significantly, the first large-scale, modern building project in Bremen was the construction of air-raid shelters, which were built along purely functional lines. Accordingly, the shelters manifest few regional characteristics and lack any references to local traditions.

The Construction of Air-Raid and Submarine Shelters in Bremen, 1940–45

At the outbreak of the war, the German Reich and the city of Bremen were almost completely unprepared for aerial attacks. It was not until October 10, 1940, that a Führer decree ordered the construction of air-raid shelters in sixty-one cities.¹⁰ In 1941, this program was the main area of building activity in Germany, and by October 22, 1941, the program had utilized 3.4 million cubic meters of concrete. Because there were insufficient numbers of German laborers, the majority of those working on the shelters were foreign forced laborers.¹¹ In 1942, the program was scaled down, and in September 1942, drastic cuts were made in the program to facilitate the construction of the Siegfried Line.¹² Even after work on the Siegfried Line was ended following the Allied invasion in Normandy in June 1944, German building efforts were not redirected to the construction of shelters for the civilian population. Instead, most resources were devoted to protecting the armaments industry.¹³

The construction of shelters in Bremen paralleled a similar development throughout the German Reich. However, Bremen's relative proximity to England and the importance of its harbors and industrial facilities for the German war effort made it one of the most threatened cities in the country. Accordingly, an extensive program for the construction of shelters was planned for Bremen. In October 1940, the erection of between 200 and 400 bombproof air-raid shelters was discussed, and in December 1940, Oberbaurat Kummer, a senior councillor for construction, spoke of as many as 450 shelters. Only 131 had been built by August 1944, however, most of them *Hochbunker* (aboveground shelters), constructed by foreign forced laborers.¹⁴

Construction of the shelters was not centrally planned. Instead, the management of the program was regional, and all towns built their shelters in a different manner. Authorities in Bremen abstained from camouflaging their shelters with paint, thus failing to take the opportunity to integrate the shelters within the cityscape. One exception to this is a shelter located at the Diakonissenhaus (the home of a Protestant Community of women who cared for sick or elderly people) on Bremen's Nord Strasse, which was decorated with fake neo-Gothic windows.¹⁵ In the inner city, rudimentary and temporary shelters were the only protection available for forced laborers, who were made to build proper air-raid shelters but forbidden to use them. At the close of the war, the official capacities of the air-raid shelter were exceeded twice or even three times over: approximately two hundred thousand people took shelter in the bunkers,

roughly two-thirds of the total population. This statistic also explains the relatively small number of people killed during the air war: the bombing raids over Bremen killed 3,850 people including forced laborers.¹⁶

In Bremen, as throughout the Reich, the protection of industrial facilities important to the war effort was given priority over constructing shelters for the civilian population. The central sites were two major ship-building yards: Krupp's Deschimag AG Weser shipyards in Bremen-Gröpelingen and the Thyssen-owned Bremer Vulkan AG in Bremen-Vegesack. In late 1942, the decision was made to build large bunkers in both shipyards for housing and constructing submarines. The Deschimag bunker, code-named Hornisse (Hornet) was to be built directly at the shipyards.¹⁷ In the case of the Vulkan bunker, Valentin, the authorities decided to relocate the facility to the township of Farge, ten kilometers downstream on the Weser River (fig. 2).¹⁸

During its planning phase, the construction of the submarine shelter Valentin became one of the German Navy's most important high-tech projects. Inside a massive production hall measuring more than 426 meters in length and 97 meters wide and protected by a concrete ceiling 7 meters thick, submarines were to be constructed using modern assembly-line techniques for the first time ever. The aim of building the submarines section by section was to accelerate the production process and enable the yards to release a completed submarine from the site every fifty-six hours. However, there were almost no German laborers available to work on the enormous construction project, so here, too, forced laborers carried out the construction, under tremendous time pressure.¹⁹ Work at the site was especially debilitating for the malnourished inmates of concentration camps (fig. 3), and the death rate here was one of the highest at any of Neuengamme's satellite camps.²⁰ As a result of these ruthlessly exploitative and murderous working conditions, 90 percent of the construction had been completed shortly before the end of the war. Two direct hits during bombing raids by Allied aircraft on March 27 and 30, 1945, penetrated the ceiling of the bunker and ended work at the site just weeks before the war ended.

"Everything was different in Bremen": The Legend of the Free Hanseatic City after 1945

During the American occupation after 1945, politics in Bremen continued where the Weimar Republic had left off, with a coalition between the SPD,

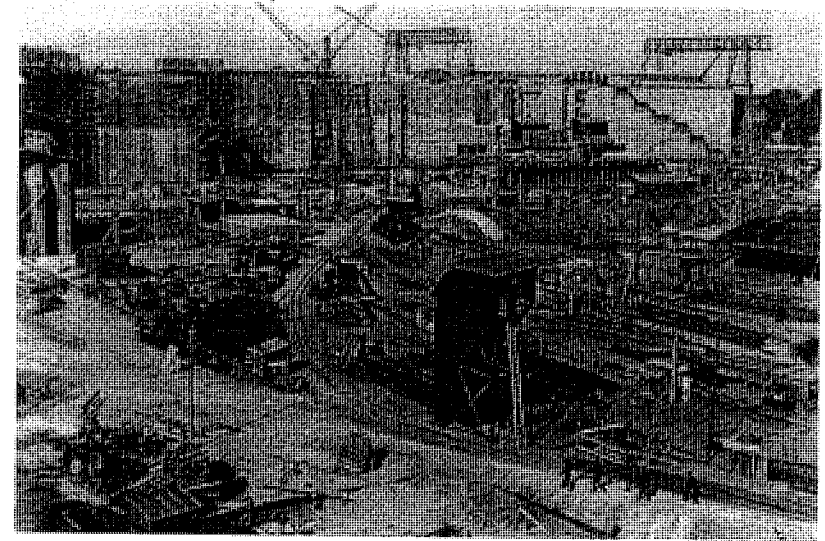


Fig. 2. View of the south side of the construction site for the submarine shelter Valentin, 1944. This photo is part of a larger series taken by local photographer Seubert. (Photo: Private Archive of Inge Marszolek.)

the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) governing the city until 1955. Thereafter, the SPD governed the city-state alone for almost forty years, with the exception of several short coalitions. The SPD and CDU would not form a coalition together again until the 1990s, following the collapse of a coalition between the SPD, FDP, and Greens.

For most of this period, the commemoration of National Socialism, its buildings, and its crimes was not a major priority in Bremen. With the removal of swastikas from town buildings, National Socialism was considered to have been overcome. Traditionalist and modernist architects were in agreement, moreover, on the need to avoid overt political symbolism in architecture, which both viewed as the essence of National Socialist architectural design.²¹

The approach taken in the management of the two monuments erected by the National Socialists in Bremen is typical of this dehistoricization. In 1935, the head of the Bremen School of Arts, Professor Ernst Gorsemann, designed a monument for the soldiers who fell in World War I. The monument, the Kriegerdenkmal Altmannshöhe (the Altar of the

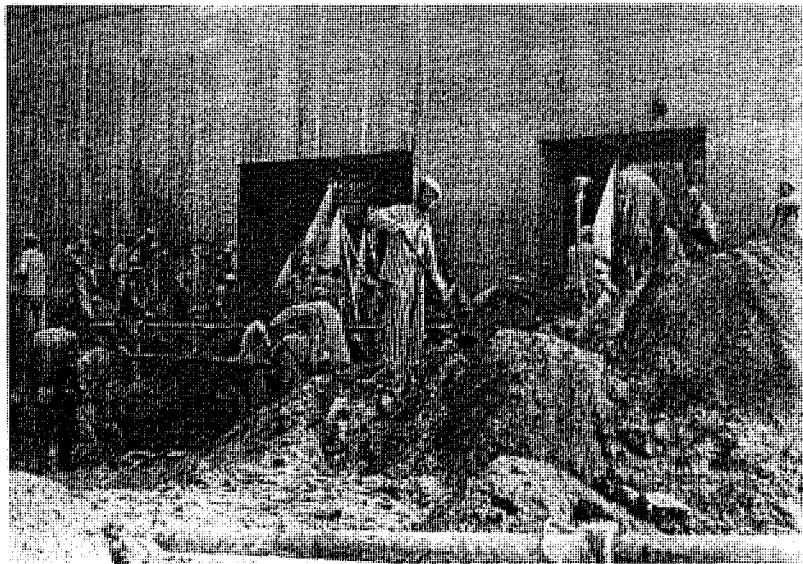


Fig. 3. Concentration camp prisoners at work on the north side of the construction site for the submarine shelter Valentin, 1944. The prisoners are guarded by a so-called *Kapo* (prisoner-foreman). This photo is part of a larger series taken by local photographer Seubert. (Photo: Private Archive of Inge Marszolek.)

Altmannshöhe), was erected on one of the few hills within the city, close to the old defensive embankments, behind the town's art gallery (fig. 4). Although planned prior to 1933, the monument was clearly embedded within National Socialism's aesthetic glorification of heroic death. A certain degree of controversy surrounded the monument, which also listed the names of twenty-four Freikorps soldiers who were killed fighting against the Soviet Republic of Bremen in February 1919. In the 1950s, the senate considered enlarging the monument to include those killed during World War II—a proposal that reflected a general derealization of the monument's past political significance.²²

A second monument, entitled *Sterbende Jüngling* (Dying Youth), was created in 1936 by Herbert Kubicka and also commemorates the soldiers of the Gerstenberg Division and the Freikorps Caspari who died in fighting against the Soviet Republic of Bremen. This statue of a youth crowned with a laurel wreath first stood in the Liebfrauenkirche on the inner-city market square. During the war, the statue was placed in the city's art

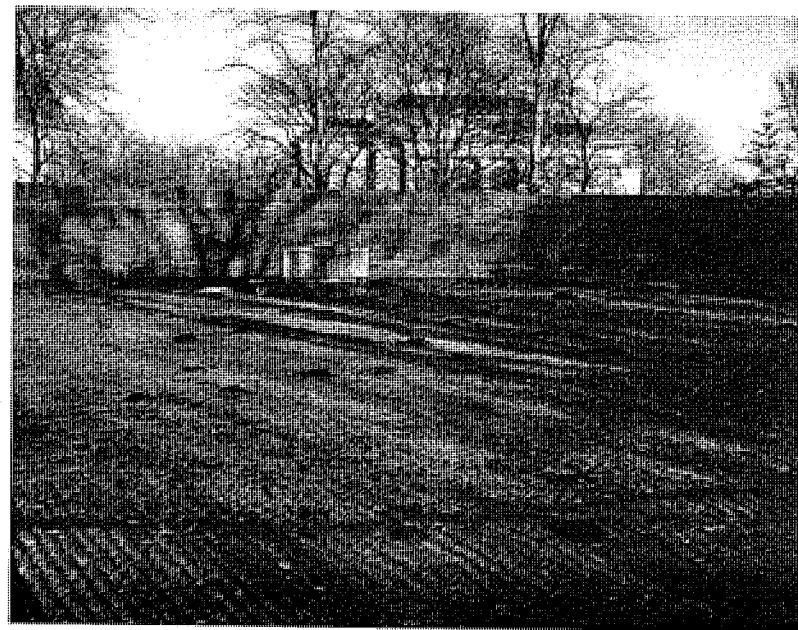


Fig. 4. The Kriegerdenkmal Altmannshöhe, Bremen, today. The altar is covered in red ink from an antifascist action. Because of this, the area is fenced off. The building behind the wall is the art gallery. (Photo: Marc Buggeln.)

gallery. In 1955, it was moved to the Wall-Anlagen Park, but without the victor's laurels and the inscription commemorating the Freikorps soldiers (fig. 5). This decision, too, reflected a desire to establish distance between the Nazi past and the democratic present.²³

In the aftermath of the denazification process, during which representatives of the labor movement had fought for the harsher punishment of incriminated citizens, political interest in National Socialism declined. There was a tacit understanding between the SPD and the bourgeois parties that it was more important to look forward. This sentiment was also expressed in the artistic decoration of new buildings. The vision of an intact and peaceful world risen from the ashes dominated the 1950s, allowing little room for a critical discussion of the past and propagating an ahistorical reconciliation of humankind.²⁴

Especially dominant was the myth that National Socialism had never been able to establish itself in Bremen. The story that Hitler had visited Bremen just once and had not liked the city at all was commonly recited



Fig. 5. Herbert Kubicka's *Sterbende Jüngling* and Jürgen Waller's Lidice Memorial, Wall-Anlagen Park, Bremen, current condition. (Photo: Marc Buggeln.)

with much pride.²⁵ The spirit that prevailed in Bremen in the postwar years is captured well in the judgment passed in the denazification hearing of a senior director at the Bremen utilities company (Bremer Stadtwerke). The judge explained:

The promise of National Socialism came from Bavaria. From there Hitlerism spread out across the country to arrive finally in northern Germany. Here he encountered a bastion of free-spirited citizens. . . . It is only natural that this "new doctrine" was rejected by such free-spirited citizens. In fact, their attitude to National Socialism was one of animosity. . . . As far as Bremen was concerned National Socialism was simply imported goods. And senior Nazis knew this too; that's why Hitler and his chums so often swore and cursed the fools in Bremen. . . . It is a notorious fact that National Socialism was forced upon the citizens of the Hanseatic city against their will.²⁶

With the widespread support of local historians, this view prevailed in the city for almost forty years. This state of affairs paralleled events in Ham-

burg, where the first postwar mayor, businessman Rudolf Petersen, created a similar legend. Petersen emphasized that it was simply a "fact that Hamburg was not affected by the crimes and excesses of National Socialism to the same degree as most other parts of the German Reich."²⁷ In Hamburg, local historians upheld this myth for forty years, until criticism began to assert itself in the early 1980s. The only factual basis that these myths were able to draw on was the relative unimportance of the NSDAP in both cities prior to 1933. Otherwise, these legends rested solely on the construct of the cosmopolitan and liberal businessman.

The Submarine Shelters Valentin and Hornisse, 1945–80

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the management of the militarily significant submarine shelters lay in the hands of the U.S. military missions. The German engineers managing the project were particularly proud that an American commission, which inspected the Valentin shelter after the war, had been impressed by its construction. This did not stop the commission from demanding the demolition of the shelter, however. But calculations showed that a complete demolition of the building was impossible without seriously damaging the surrounding township. As a first step, the commission had the diving test basin and the exit lock destroyed and the production facilities dismantled. But the ultimate goal of complete destruction was soon forgotten. The debate over the shelter's destruction only began anew after a military commission inspected the shelter again in 1948 and found the building still generally intact.

By this time, political institutions existed again in Bremen and demanded to be involved in the discussion. The position taken by Bremen's politicians and public at the outset of this debate was ambivalent. The population of Farge, together with a part of Bremen's government, planned to bury the shelter under rubble and debris. Plans were also circulated to bury the shelter under a hill of sand and build a coffeehouse on the summit. The port director, Professor Agatz, opposed these plans, however, and successfully fought power to preserve "his" creation.²⁸

In the meantime, the British and American air forces had begun testing the effectiveness of new rocket-propelled bombs on the shelter. The tests were met by increasingly angry complaints from the local population, which repeatedly petitioned against the growing strength of the explosions. Representatives of the senate spoke out repeatedly, but it was not

until a conversation with the senatorial president in November that the U.S. high commissioner for Germany, John McCloy, agreed to end the bombing.²⁹ By this time, the management of the shelter had passed to the Oberfinanzpräsidenten (Treasury Department) in Bremen. From this time on, the city of Bremen was greatly interested in finding a financially worthwhile use for the shelter.

In this context, the shelter became the projection screen for almost every kind of fantasy that was driving the young and ambitious Federal Republic. Following the short period of stillness when most were in favor of tearing down the relics of National Socialism, the mood changed. Within a few years, people were ready to look ahead again, liberate the shelters and bunkers from their shadows, and enlist them in the service of new dreams. According to one popular saying, the shelter in Farge was the "eighth wonder of the world."³⁰ The centerpiece of these popular fantasies was the archetypal architectural and industrial icon of the 1950s—the atomic reactor. As early as 1952, the senator for economics stated that his department would investigate whether or not the shelter could accommodate several atomic reactors.³¹ Despite the negative conclusion of a study conducted on this question, the plans remained in discussion until 1957.³² At the same time, plans to store nuclear weapons in the shelter began to circulate.³³ So, too, did plans to convert the shelter into a marina, a grain silo, and a synthetic fertilizer container.

All these plans were scrapped in October 1960, when the Federal Armed Forces decided to establish a depot for naval materials in the shelter. The front section of the shelter was overhauled for approximately five million Deutsche Marks, and the shelter passed from the state to the federal treasury. In 1960, the Federal Armed Forces also hindered the publication of photos of the shelter by Radio Bremen. Just fifteen years after the end of the war, the shelter again became a military secret and was removed from maps and aerial photos. The shelter disappeared from broader public consciousness. This development suited the local population quite well, as they had never relinquished their hopes that the shelter might be torn down and banished from memory. Their hope that the shelter would disappear under a mountain of sand remained unfulfilled, but the armed forces made the shelter as inconspicuous as possible, shielding it with trees and removing it from public maps. They also made it possible for the locals to give the site a new name. The terrible story of the submarine shelter Valentin faded away and was masked by a new name that referred only to the shelter's current use: Marine Materials Depot.

The history of the submarine shelter Hornisse is similar. The Allies also planned to destroy this shelter but never did. It stood derelict for many years, while construction companies formerly involved in the project fought with the senate over the salvage rights to the shelter, which now lay within the jurisdiction of the state of Bremen.³⁴ The Port Building Authority was unable to release the shelter for use until 1968. The logistics company Lexzau, Scharbau & Co. then built its administration building on top of the shelter, inaugurating it in June 1969.³⁵ The local newspaper wrote of a "fortress that towers over the Weser" but failed to mention one word about the concentration camp inmates who laid the foundations of this "fortress."³⁶ The shelter appeared on the horizon of public perception just this once, without any historical reference, and then immediately disappeared again.

Air-Raid Shelters in Bremen, 1945–80

After the war, Allied disarmament experts trained their sights on German air-raid shelters. Directive No. 22 issued by the Allied Control Council required the demolition of all air-raid shelters. The housing shortage in the western zones was so high that the living space provided by the bunkers seemed indispensable. Lengthy negotiations between the municipal authorities and the Allies followed, resulting in the demolition of most military bunkers and the conversion of many civilian air-raid shelters. The conversion of shelters included their tactical neutralization by drilling holes through the walls and ceilings, making them ineffective against bombs.

Although the shelters in Bremen were not used to provide accommodation for refugees, Allied plans to demolish them as war relics still met with resistance. Their demolition would have added substantially to the amount of rubble in the city. Some of the shelters built aboveground stood in the immediate vicinity of residential buildings, which would have been endangered by demolitions. Such actions seemed highly inappropriate considering the housing shortage in the city. The senator for economics also argued that the shelters were needed to provide storage for goods. Eventually the Allied Military Government declared that it would only demolish those shelters for which no use could be found.³⁷ One shelter, the invisible underground bunker on the Cathedral Square, was used by the military government, first as a private prison by the military police and

later as a detention center. After 1948, the shelter was subsequently converted into an underground parking garage.³⁸

When the Disarmament Branch ended its activities on September 12, 1950, the federal authorities ordered an immediate stop to the demolition of shelters. Debate over their future quieted down. In Bremen, even the aboveground shelters in the Bürgerpark, which had been used by the leadership of the NSDAP and the government in the final months of the war, remained standing. In 1951, a letter published in a local newspaper suggested covering the bunkers with greenery. The idea was taken up by Director Toppel, who began inquiries at the Garden and Landscape Department.³⁹

In 1951, the first steps were also taken to prepare civil defense structures for the cold war and the threat of nuclear conflict.⁴⁰ In 1957, German experts were permitted to observe American tests of shelters exposed to atomic explosions in the Nevada desert. German cities were then requested to report to the federal authorities on the state of their air defenses, and in May 1960, the federal government issued its guidelines for the maintenance of shelters. According to the guidelines, existing shelters were to be retrofitted and their walls reinforced to a width of three meters. Due to the scarcity of funds, the program made slow progress, and in 1975, its overall goals were scaled down. The project was finally mothballed in 1992. Since then, funding for civil defense has only been made available for the general maintenance of existing shelters.

Hostels and Hotels in Shelters

In 1942, the Nazi mayor of Bremen suggested opening cheap hotels inside the shelters after the war.⁴¹ In August 1945, this possibility was raised again, but without the added luxury of installing bathrooms. With the permission of the Reichsbahn management, the senator for health and social services made the eastern section of a shelter located below the forecourt of the central train station available to a humanitarian organization, the Innere Mission, which used the shelter to provide sleeping accommodation for refugees and travelers who filled the station's waiting rooms and halls.⁴² Together with an aboveground bunker in an outlying suburb, the underground shelter below the central station forecourt was used to provide accommodation for homeless men until 1976. In 1960 alone, 70,248 men slept in the shelter below the central station.⁴³ Before long, however,

the shelter's long-term use by the Innere Mission sparked controversy. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, several newspaper articles in *Die Zeit* harshly criticized the living conditions in the shelter.⁴⁴ Sanitation was next to nonexistent. New arrivals, picked up drunk by the police, were brought to the shelter in dog wagons. The men slept on the floor on newspapers. With neither daylight nor an infirmary, the shelter was the last station for alcoholics, disabled people, and the ill.

Supported by senate authorities, the Innere Mission began to look for a site for a new men's home. Local residents who took legal action against the project regularly thwarted their plans. Despite the assurances of the Innere Mission and the senate that most of the men were employed, nobody wanted the two hundred men from the shelter at the central station in their neighborhood. The Innere Mission's new home was finally opened in 1976. However, even today, the home is located outside of residential suburbs. But that is not the last story about the use of air-raid shelters in Bremen as emergency accommodation. In 1991, refugees arrived in Germany in large numbers, and many headed for the allegedly liberal city of Bremen. Three air-raid shelters were opened again to provide mass accommodation—this time for Africans and Kurds, as well as Sinti and Roma from Yugoslavia and Romania, all of whom filled the shelters in the Scharnhorststrasse, Zwinglistrasse, and Friedrich-Karl-Strasse.⁴⁵

The 1980s: Bremen's Citizens Begin to Remember

The closing years of the 1970s saw the beginning of a paradigm shift within the field of historiography. Differing from the reigning tradition of structuralist social history, the new paradigm focused on the everyday lives and experiences of ordinary people. This new perspective was accompanied by a local historical movement, the history workshops, which were often closely tied to the "new social movements" of the time. In Bremen, the search for traces of the National Socialist era was also taken up, but with one important difference: from the outset, the workshops in Bremen had the support of the Social Democrats, who also dominated the city's administration. This fact may explain why the initial interest in the workshops in Bremen was stronger than in other industrial cities and was focused so strongly on the labor movement's resistance to the National Socialist regime.

In accordance with the Social Democratic policy of making educa-

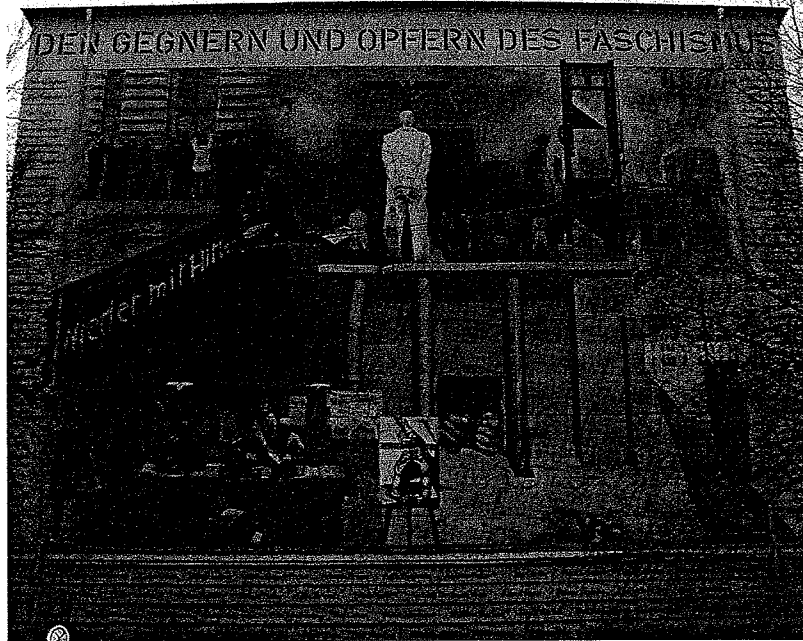


Fig. 6. The air-raid shelter in the Admiralstrasse, Bremen, current condition. The painting is by Jürgen Waller. (Photo: Marc Buggeln.)

tion and the arts more accessible to a broader section of society, a program was conceived to place works of public art at buildings throughout the city. In the course of this program, many of the air-raid shelters were painted by Bremen artists, who used these war relics and their gray walls to make artistic statements about war and fascism.⁴⁶ One of five images painted on shelters by Jürgen Waller, on the air-raid shelter in the Admiralstrasse, was dedicated to the “opponents and victims of fascism” (fig. 6). Waller’s work shows various forms of everyday resistance in a particularly plastic style of painting. The image is bordered by the names of resistance fighters in Bremen, mainly individuals from the labor movement and persons persecuted on account of their political beliefs or race. This painting illustrates the contemporary focus on the resistance movement, while the predominantly Jewish victims are marginalized. Other

paintings on shelters concentrated more strongly on the message “Never again war!” The language of these paintings is more abstract and expressionistic, and as such they are often the targets of the bitter complaints by locals. Ironically, these shelters were also retrofitted as fallout shelters, and information evenings were regularly held by the Bundesverband für Selbstschutz (a nationwide civil defense association) in the shelter in the Admiralstrasse.

Today, the images on the bunkers are fading away and becoming invisible. In the local councils, the question of whether they should be repainted or simply allowed to disappear is the subject of heated discussions. At the same time, the city has also sold several shelters, and the new owners have built houses on their roofs. This practice has often made the shelters more visible to passersby than they previously were. But this form of visibility is ambivalent. Its primary characteristic is the private appropriation of the shelters, not the memory of their history, which has largely been ignored. Most new owners have beautified the shelters and hidden them from view with ivy, transforming the actual objects into mere foundations (fig. 7).

During the 1980s, both of Bremen’s Nazi monuments were also reembedded in their historical contexts and became the focus of controversial discussion. In 1986, a peace group, the Friedensinitiative Ostertor, invited artists to submit designs for the alteration of the Kriegerdenkmal Altmannshöhe behind the town art gallery. The young Bremen-based artist Silke Hennig submitted an award-winning design that included radically altering the monument by fragmenting its rotunda. However, the municipal administration rejected the design on the grounds that the alterations would infringe on Gorsemann’s intellectual property rights. Although the Altmannshöhe is still occasionally used as a meeting place for right-wing groups, the monument remains unchanged and without any signs that could explain its history. It is as if the city had chosen to erase the monument from memory by surrounding it with silence.

The *Sterbende Jüngling* statue was treated differently: in 1989, a new memorial was built in its immediate vicinity in remembrance of the destruction of the village of Lidice and the murder of its inhabitants by the Nazis.⁴⁷ The barren language of Jürgen Waller’s design for the Lidice Memorial presents a strong contrast to the National Socialist monument’s glorification of heroic death. In the 1980s, another memorial was erected close to where the former synagogue once stood, in memory of the Reichspogromnacht in 1938. The deaths of the five Jewish citizens killed in Bre-



Fig. 7. Former air-raid shelter in the Berliner Strasse, Bremen, current condition. The shelter is hidden behind plants and has functionless windows. There is a residence on top. (Photo: Marc Buggeln.)

men during the pogrom are commemorated here each year on November 9. Plaques on buildings throughout the city commemorate the persecution and murder of Jewish citizens.

In this period, the submarine shelter Valentin also reentered public memory. In 1981, Radio Bremen broadcast a program on the use of forced labor at the site. In 1983, a memorial was inaugurated directly outside the Federal Army's barbed-wire perimeter. Former concentration camp prisoners from France attended the ceremony. The activity around the shelter has not quietened down again since then, as local initiatives have continually informed the public of their work and have also developed exchange programs with former forced laborers and inmates of concentration camps. Gradually the Federal Armed Forces began to rethink their position. While representatives of the local initiative were photographed in the

1980s by the military secret service (MAD), these same individuals were permitted to escort former forced laborers through the shelter in the 1990s. It was then even possible to hold readings with former prisoners in the undecorated section of the shelter. This development inspired the Bremen Theater to use the shelter. Since 1999, an antiwar piece by Karl Kraus, *The Last Days of Mankind*, has been performed in the shelter for six years running. Meanwhile, the Federal Armed Forces are contemplating the closure of their base at the shelter. This would reopen the discussion on the shelter's future and its possible uses as a site of memory. A local initiative has already placed stone blocks to mark the grounds where the camps for the forced laborers stood and has put up signs explaining the site's historical significance.

This diverse range of initiatives and activities has anchored the submarine shelter Valentin firmly within the public's awareness. In the meantime, thousands of Bremen's citizens have seen the building with their own eyes and will hardly be able to forget its massive—even violent—dimensions. The commemoration of the shelter's history has been such a public success that a local reporter once said that he simply could not write another article about the shelter, as so much had been written in the last years. But change in Farge itself is slow. Few locals attend the ceremonies held annually at the shelter by former prisoners. One woman from Farge says that she tells the other locals at her church about the meeting every year, although it only makes them angry. When students from Bremen University recently stopped in Farge to ask for directions to the shelter, the first four people they asked told them that there was no submarine shelter in Farge. The fifth person they stopped asked whether or not they meant the Marine Materials Depot and then showed the students the way.

The Hornisse shelter also entered into public awareness for a time in the 1980s. In 1982, employees at the Bremen steelworks began to concern themselves with the history of the satellite camp formerly located on the company grounds. Prisoners from this camp had been used to build the Hornisse shelter.⁴⁸ Since this time, former French prisoners have visited the site of their suffering annually as part of the pilgrimage of the Amicale de Neuengamme. The company management has shown little understanding, and the former prisoners are still forbidden to set foot on the grounds of Lexzau, Scharbau & Co. Lying as it does in an industrial zone and recognizable from the river only as the foundation of an office block, the shelter is invisible to most of the city's inhabitants.

Concrete Memories

On the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II in 2005, a local history workshop held an exhibition about the air war in a shelter in a working-class suburb of Bremen. Although the exhibition (which was only open for one weekend) drew many visitors, the air-raid shelters still appear to have an ephemeral and diffuse location in the private topography of memory. In the minds of most Bremen residents, the shelters were a place of protection but also a place of uncertainty and danger. The idealized *Bunkergemeinschaft* (shelter community) of Nazi ideology figures in their memory as a place where everyone fought for themselves, for food and for space. Apparently, solidarity was seldom extended beyond one's own family. When it was, it was directed against the *Bunkerwart*, or shelter leader.⁴⁹ After the war, the people of Bremen were glad to leave these stone giants, and for the people on the ground, they became what they were always supposed to have been to the Allied bomber pilots: invisible. Although the shelters are still perceptible to the eye, the memories tied to them have faded with time and the passing of generations, until they have become invisible elements of memory.

People were also "concealed" and made invisible within the shelters—individuals who were excluded, who did not fit into the society of the economic miracle, with its facade of propriety, moralism, cleanliness, and industriousness.⁵⁰ This function of the shelters has continued the mechanisms of exclusion so characteristic of modernity, mechanisms initiated with the birth of the prison, psychiatric clinic, and workhouse, which not only were especially evident in Nazi racial-hygiene policies but led to the deaths of those excluded. The fact that such "concrete" mechanisms of exclusion continued well into the 1970s and even in the 1990s in a city that projected a particularly liberal image of itself sheds some light on both the ambivalence of modernity and the authoritarian side of liberalism.

Sites of memory evolve and are constantly remodeled. That is what the stories of the air-raid shelters and the submarine shelter Valentin show us. These concrete relics do not become places on the maps of memory of their own accord, however gigantic, monstrous, or conspicuous they might be. This topography cannot be read in itself; it takes the aid of the stories to make the topography legible. It is only when the inhabitants of a city begin to place these relics in their specific historical contexts and make them a part of public discourse that we can decode the inscriptions on their concrete skin. It appears that the myth of the cosmopolitan and liberal

Hanseatic city of Bremen, whose commercial and political elites kept their distance to the National Socialist regime, was able to establish itself relatively undisturbed, because National Socialism had left the architectural topography of the city more or less untouched—as also occurred in Hamburg. In both cases, the underlying cause may be that the most significant sites of National Socialist crimes to survive the regime—in Hamburg the Neuengamme concentration camp, in Bremen the submarine shelter Valentin—are situated far away from the inner city. In both cases, the granting of new uses to the sites meant that the stories of these historical places could be overwritten with new meanings and thus "made invisible." This would obviously have been a difficult path to take in such cities as Berlin, Munich, and Nuremberg, where large architectural relics from the National Socialist period remain.

What place do the shelters have in the configurations of cultural memory? The "disappearance" or "overwriting" of these concrete relics of the war corresponds with the often cited "derealization" of National Socialism in the public discourse of the postwar era: the architectural remains of National Socialism were consistently cloaked in silence, recoded, and thus made "invisible" to memory. But as we have shown, these concrete relics, by virtue of their powerful and very physical existence in the visual world, simultaneously provoke memory's resistance to the dragging tide of oblivion. As heterotopical places, they combine the experiences of war and extermination with a contemporary period and simultaneously point toward the future. It was the history workshop movement, emerging out of the democratic protest culture of the 1960s and 70s, that opened up the city to the remembrance of the National Socialist era. In Bremen, this applies especially to the reinscription of the history of the submarine shelter Valentin in the public mind. Yet the status of the shelter remains fragile, diffuse, and uncertain. An open-ended process of remembrance was initiated with the site's new reinscription(s) on the map of memories. This process is open to many differing associations, and the concrete relics continue to be sites where memory is fought over. The establishment of everyday ways of using and referring to "the shelter" as a place can also reinforce the externalization of uncomfortable or unwanted layers of memory. The "visibility" and relative utility of the shelters in public space remains ambivalent. Architects, designers, and artists have discovered shelters as aesthetic spaces, which can be renovated and used as apartments. The shelters are also used for alternative cultural activities and as practice rooms for music groups. The question remains, how can a

critical culture of remembrance be created by appropriating and redesigning sites with the intention of exposing and preserving the visibility of the various layers of memory embedded within them? As we have shown through the varying historical approaches taken in the city of Bremen, the evolving figuration of the shelters in public memory always holds two possibilities: the potential to forget or, alternatively, the opportunity to inscribe the shelters on the memory maps of the city as persistent and permanent carriers of a many-layered process of relating to and coming to terms with the past.

As relics of the war and testaments of forced labor, the shelters remain places of the Other, and they may all too easily be utilized as such—as shown by the use of shelters in Bremen to accommodate asylum seekers. The Other is a threatening figure, and concrete in particular seems to offer protection from those people who are to be excluded. The myriad expropriations and contaminations are inscribed in the concrete walls—not only the bodies seized by the war and the minds captured by the stage performances of National Socialism, but also the stolen lives of those who built the shelters. The difference between the civilian population that sought protection here and the forced laborers who had to build the shelters but were forbidden entry remains an often-concealed text within the walls of the shelters. It is one that has occasionally been read and spoken of in recent years. This text speaks of a difference that cannot be smoothed over but that is often overlooked on passing the shelters' smooth concrete walls.

NOTES

1. On the concept of cities as spaces of memory, see Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Architektur und Gedächtnis: München und Nationalsozialismus—Strategien des Vergessens* (Munich and Hamburg, 2004), 27ff.
2. Peter Dudek, "‘Vergangenheitsbewältigung’: Zur Problematik eines umstrittenen Begriffs," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, nos. 1–2 (1992): 44–53.
3. Pierre Nora, *Zwischen Geschichte und Gedächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main, 1998).
4. Our understanding of visibility is partly based on the urban semiotics of Roland Barthes. See his "Semiologie und Stadtplanung," in *Das semiologische Abenteuer* (Frankfurt am Main, 1988), 199–209.
5. Michel Foucault, "Andere Räume," in *AISTHESIS: Wahrnehmung heute oder Perspektiven einer anderen Ästhetik*, ed. Karlheinz Barck, Peter Gente, and Heidi Paris (Leipzig, 1990), 34–46.
6. Malte Ritter, *Die Bremer und ihr Vaterland: Deutscher Nationalismus in der*

Freien Hansestadt (1859–1913) (Berlin, 2004). Even today, the self-image of Bremen's citizenry as free, cosmopolitan citizens standing in a long tradition clearly predominates among the city's influential figures.

7. Matthias Wegner, *Hanseaten: Von stolzen Bürgern und schönen Legenden* (Berlin, 1999).

8. In the last three national elections, the Nazi Party got 30.8 percent of the vote (July 31, 1932), 21.2 percent of the vote (November 6, 1932), and 32.6 percent of the vote (March 5, 1933).

9. Inge Marszolek and Rene Ott, *Bremen im Dritten Reich: Anpassung—Widerstand—Verfolgung* (Bremen, 1986), 131.

10. Michael Foedrowitz, *Bunkerwelten: Luftschutzanlagen in Norddeutschland* (Eggolsheim, 2002), 10–11.

11. *Ibid.*, 53.

12. Olaf Groehler, *Bombenkrieg gegen Deutschland* (Berlin, 1990), 244.

13. Marc Buggeln and Inge Marszolek, "Bunker," in *Orte der Moderne: Erfahrungswelten des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Alexa Geisthövel and Habbo Knoch (Frankfurt am Main and New York, 2005), 281–89.

14. Aufstellung vom August 1944, in Staatsarchiv Bremen (hereinafter StaB), 4,29/1-962. See Stand des Arbeitseinsatzes im LS-Bau vom April 1942, in StaB 4,29/1-1240.

15. Herbert Schwarzwälder, *Bremen und Nordwestdeutschland am Kriegsende 1945*, vol. 1, *Die Vorbereitung auf den "Endkampf"* (Bremen, 1972), 91.

16. *Ibid.*, 91–94.

17. On the subject of forced labor at the submarine shelter of the Deschimag AG, see Marc Buggeln, "KZ-Häftlinge als letzte Arbeitskraftreserve der Bremer Rüstungswirtschaft," in *Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialgeschichte* 12 (2003): 19–36.

18. Schreiben des Oberkommandos der Marine betr. U-Bootsbunkerprogramm in der Heimat vom 22. Januar 1943, in Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv Freiburg, W 04/18163.

19. Marc Buggeln, "Das Außenlagersystem des KZ Neuengamme," in *Abgeschlossene Kapitel? Zur Geschichte der Konzentrationslager und der NS-Prozesse*, ed. Sabine Moller, Miriam Rürup, and Christel Trouvé (Tübingen, 2002), 15–27.

20. Heiko Kania, "Neue Erkenntnisse zu Opferzahlen und Lagern im Zusammenhang mit dem Bau des Bunkers Valentin," *Arbeiterbewegung und Sozialgeschichte* 10 (2002): 7–31.

21. Eberhard Kulenkampff, "Ein paar VorWorte," in *Flugdächer und Weserziegel: Architektur der 50er Jahre in Bremen*, ed. Franz-Peter Mau (Worpswede, 1990), 8.

22. Eva Missler, *Das Reise- und Lesebuch Bremen* (Bremen, n.d.), 162–63.

23. *Ibid.*, 164–65.

24. Hans-Joachim Manske, "'Unschuldige Provinzialität': Die 'Kunst am Bau' in den 50er Jahren," in Mau, *Flugdächer*, 65–75.

25. This myth is not unique to Bremen. Versions of it appeared in almost every industrial city within the Reich and held sway long into the 1970s.

26. Urteilsbegründung im Entnazifizierungsverfahren Friedrich Hopf vom 18.

Juli 1949, in StaB 4,66-I Hopf. Our thanks to Marcus Meyer for informing us about the existence of this judgment.

27. From Petersen's sworn statement for Curt Tothenberger from June 11, 1947, in Staatsarchiv Hamburg, 622-1 Familie Petersen, O.40, vol. 5, Sci-Z.

28. Agatz was a leading architect of the firm Baubüros, Agatz, and Bock, who were responsible from 1943 to 1945 for the design of the submarine shelter Valentin. For more on Agatz, see the uncritical biographical notes by Karl Löbe in "Ein erfülltes Ingenieurleben. Arnold Agatz 85 Jahre," in *Jahrbuch der Wittheit zu Bremen* 20 (1976): 87-131; StaB 4,29/1-963.

29. StaB 4,29/1-963.

30. *Weser-Kurier*, October 13, 1955.

31. *Weser-Kurier*, June 15, 1952.

32. *Weser-Kurier*, April 11, 1957.

33. *Norddeutsche*, June 15, 1957.

34. StaB 4,29/1-962.

35. Eike Hemmer and Robert Milbradt, *Bunker "Hornisse": KZ-Häftlinge in Bremen und die U-Boot-Werft der "AG Weser" 1944/45* (Bremen, 2005), 125.

36. *Bremer Nachrichten*, June 24, 1969.

37. StaB 4,29/1-962.

38. Niederschrift der Senatssitzung vom 13. Januar 1948, in StaB 4, 29/1-962.

39. Schreiben Tippels an das Gartenbauamt v. 16. April 1951, in StaB 4, 29/1-962.

40. Auszug aus dem Senatsprotokoll v. 18. Mai 1951, in StaB 4, 29/1-962.

41. Vermerk über einen Anruf des Reg. Bürgermeisters beim Sen. f. das Bauwesen v. 25. November 1942, in StaB 4, 29/1-962.

42. Schreiben d. Sen. f. Wohlfahrt an Sen. f. Wirtschaft, Häfen und Verkehr v. 22. August 1945, in StaB 4,124/1-184.

43. *Weser Kurier*, September 2, 1961.

44. *Die Zeit*, April 8, 1966; April 3, 1970.

45. *Weser Kurier*, June 20, 1991; *die tageszeitung*, July 8, 1991.

46. *Kunst gegen Krieg und Faschismus in Bremen*, ed. Sen. f. Bildung (Bremen, 1986). More than twenty shelters were painted in total, five of which referred to the theme of war.

47. The memorial was made by Jürgen Waller. Lidice is one of Bremen's sister cities, and a local initiative has had long and extensive contact with the town.

48. Kollegengruppe der Klöckner-Hütte Bremen, *Riespott—KZ an der Norddeutschen Hütte: Berichte, Dokumente und Erinnerungen über Zwangsarbeit 1935-1945* (Bremen, 1984).

49. Interviews conducted with witnesses by a group of students in my project seminar of 2005 confirm this.

50. In this sense, the shelters should be read as heterotopies characterized by both crisis and deviation; see Foucault, "Andere Räume."

Restored, Reassessed, Redeemed

The SS Past at the Collegiate Church of St. Servatius in Quedlinburg

Annah Kellogg-Krieg

Situated at the foothills of the Harz Mountains along the Bode River, the town of Quedlinburg appears as a medieval time capsule, as if it had side-stepped the last six or seven centuries of advancements in building technology and urban planning. Crooked door jambs, crumbling clay shingles, and modern shop windows are the only indicators of the passage of time. Narrow cobblestone alleys named after various guilds lead to a market square encircled by half-timbered houses and a Gothic town hall. From this vantage point, the castle hill is barely visible. The hill lies to the south of the town center, inconspicuously rising from the fairy-tale skyline of red roofs and chimneys. King Heinrich I established his favorite imperial residence on the hill during his consolidation of the first German Reich in the early tenth century. He obtained valuable relics for the palatine chapel, including one of St. Servatius, the namesake of the convent founded by Queen Mathilde on the castle hill after Heinrich's death in 936. Thus, Heinrich never stepped foot in the current church, the fourth sacred structure on the site, which was constructed in the years 1071-1129 after fire had destroyed the prior building.¹

The charm of the Church of St. Servatius's stocky Romanesque silhouette and the half-timbered town draw thousands of tourists, mainly Germans, to Quedlinburg each year. However, recent times have not been the first to witness mass pilgrimage to the site. The chief of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, was the most infamous visitor to St. Servatius in the twentieth century, as he sought to capitalize on Quedlinburg's important role in early German history and its stunning architecture. King Heinrich and St. Servatius were not simply tools of propaganda for the leader of the SS however. Rather, Himmler developed a deeply personal link with Heinrich