

**RECONSTRUCTING THE CITY IN OCCUPIED
GERMANY: PLANNING AND REBUILDING
IN THE BRITISH ZONE, 1945-1949**

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by

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Abstract

Reconstructing the City in Occupied Germany: Planning and Rebuilding in the British Zone, 1945-1949 by Julie Deeming

This thesis investigates the reconstruction of German cities under British occupation between 1945 and 1949. During this period of political instability, economic crisis, material want and social rupture, German politicians, planners and city inhabitants slowly began to rebuild their cities and their lives and in the process transformed cities of rubble into viable, modern living spaces.

The thesis argues that the British occupation had a much greater influence over this process of German urban reconstruction than is generally perceived. In support of this argument three key arenas of British Control Commission policy are analysed: housing, the revival of the building industries, and town and country planning. The core of the thesis is a comparative study of two reconstructing cities in the British Zone, Cologne and Kiel, and considers the influence of their history, geographical location, place within their wider regional network and existing urban resource base on the direction of their reconstruction. By analysing examples of negotiations over urban planning and reconstruction, the author examines how dominant discourses in Britain shaped the approach of British occupiers to the German city. Furthermore, the author considers how British policies were contested and negotiated by German planners and municipal governments, as they struggled to find new, viable economic bases and identities for their devastated cities. Finally, the research considers how occupation, memory and history interact in the construction of city identities, and exposes how these identities take physical form and become crucial stakes in determining the future of particular areas, neighbourhoods and districts.

The thesis concludes that postwar developments in German cities can only be understood through a detailed study of the interaction between occupation policies and German designed plans for reconstruction.

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Abbreviations

ACC	Allied Control Council
BAOR	British Army of the Rhine
BDA	Bund Deutscher Architekten
BICO	Bipartite Control Office
BRD	Bundesrepublik Deutschland
CCG(BE)	Control Commission for Germany (British Element)
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union
CIAM	Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne
COGA	Control Office for Germany and Austria
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik
DP	Displaced Persons
EIPS	Economic and Industrial Planning Staff
ERP	European Recovery Programme
GEAB	German Economic Advisory Board
GmbH	Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung
FO	Foreign Office
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands
MARS	Modern Architectural Research Group
NAAFI	Navy, Army and Air Force Institutes
NGCC	North German Coal Control
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
OMGUS	Office of Military Government United States
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
SA	Sturmabteilung
SBZ	Sovietische Besatzungszone
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
SS	Schutzstaffel
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Association
TPI	Town Planning Institute
VfW	Verwaltung für Wirtschaft
WO	War Office
ZAC	Zonal Advisory Council
ZEO	Zonal Executive Office
ZfW	Zentralamt für Wirtschaft
ZPI	Zonal Policy Instruction

Glossary

Aktiengesellschaft	joint-stock company
Alltagsgeschichte	history of everyday life
Altstadt	Old Town
Arbeitsstab Wiederaufbauplanung bombenzerstörter Städte	Planning staff for the reconstruction of bomb-damaged towns
Auflockerung	loosening-up
Baurat	Head of the planning department
Demontage	dismantling
Gemeinde	municipality
GmbH	limited company
Hansestadt	Hanseatic town
Kreis	ward/district
Land (pl. Länder)	state(s)
Landeshauptstadt	state capital
Landeswohnungsamt	State Housing Office
Landeswirtschaftsamt	State Economic Office
Ministerpräsident	Leader of the Federal German State
Neugestaltung	redesigning
Oberbaudirektor	Director of Planning
Oberbürgermeister	Lord Mayor
Oberstadtdirektor	Town Clerk
Rathaus	Town Hall
Schadenskarte	damage map
Schlichtungsstelle	Arbitration Board
Schwerpunktplan	programme of priorities
Siedlung	settlement
Städtebau	urban development
Stadtbauamt	Urban Development Office
Stadtkreis	city borough
Stadtplanung	town planning
Stadtrat	City Council
Stunde null	zero hour
Wiederaufbau	reconstruction
Winterfest	winter-proof
Wirtschaftswunder	economic miracle
Wohnungsamt	Housing Office
Wohnsiedlung	housing estate

Introduction

This is a study of the reconstruction of German cities under British occupation between 1945 and 1949. During this period of political instability, economic crisis, material want and social rupture, German politicians, planners and city inhabitants slowly began to rebuild their cities and their lives, transforming cities of rubble and ash into viable, modern living spaces of the future. Cities were reshaped through the experience of occupation and reconstruction and new urban identities were created in the process. This thesis will examine the urban challenges faced by German cities during the early postwar years and will analyse the responses of both occupiers and occupied to these challenges. It will evaluate Britain's contribution to the planning and renewal of cities in its occupied zone and propose an explanation for the nature and extent of Britain's involvement in the reconstruction process.

In May 1945 Germany lay in ruins, defeated and occupied by the victorious Allies. Her people were confronted by the enormous task of reconstructing not only the physical environment but the very moral and psychological fabric of their society. After six years of sustained warfare, the Allies stepped into the breach left by the collapse of the National Socialist state and were forced to assume the complex new duties of both eradicating all traces of Nazism and of managing the initial phases of the political, social, economic, physical and cultural rehabilitation of their former enemy. Alliances forged between the victors during the war became increasingly strained. Although peace had ostensibly arrived on the continent, Europe remained burdened by the material shortages, demographic and social fractures, and political and economic volatility that usually characterise wartime.

European cities and their inhabitants had suffered greatly from the effects of aerial bombardment.¹ As the nerve centres of governance, economy and culture, cities have always been vulnerable targets and since antiquity have been besieged, pillaged by their enemies and forced to reconstruct.² However, the destruction wrought by the Second World War on cities of the world was on an unprecedented scale. Most major cities in Europe suffered damage and in Germany some were all but obliterated. Around sixty million people had perished during the Second World War and, of the survivors, millions more had been left homeless and hungry.³

In Germany, early proposals by American Secretary of State, Henry Morgenthau, to turn the country into an agrarian state, though initially supported by Churchill, were soon abandoned as unworkable.⁴ German cities were to be the crucible of political and economic life and, consequently, their reconstruction was critical to Germany's survival. In order to achieve this, a complex set of additional 'invisible' enabling apparatuses such as finance and legislation was needed to support the planning process. In addition, consideration had to be given to matters of a less tangible nature, such as how local civic identities were to be rejuvenated and the problematic Nazi past confronted. In spite of the extraordinary burdens and the

¹ There is a growing body of literature on this subject including Jörg Friedrich, *Der Brand: Deutschland im Bombenkrieg 1940-45* (Munich, 2002); Christoph Kucklick, *Feuersturm: Der Bombenkrieg gegen Deutschland* (Hamburg, 2003); Winfred Georg Sebald, *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 2002); Wolfgang Bönitz, *Feindliche Bomberverbände im Anflug: Zivilbevölkerung im Luftkrieg* (Berlin, 2003); Stephan Burgdorff and Christian Habbe (eds), *Als Feuer vom Himmel fiel: Der Bombenkrieg in Deutschland* (Munich, 2003); Klaus Rainer Röhl, *Verbotene Trauer: Die vergessenen Opfer* (Munich, 2004) among many others.

² Joan Ockman (ed.), *Out of Ground Zero: Case Studies in Urban Reinvention* (Munich, 2002); Lawrence Vale and Thomas Campanella (eds), *The Resilient City: How Modern Cities Recover from Disaster* (New York, 2005); Nassrine Azimi, Matthew Fuller and Hiroko Nakayama (eds), *Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Japan, Republic of Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, East Timor and Afghanistan* (New York, 2003); Tony Addison (ed.), *From Conflict to Recovery* (New York, 2003).

³ Gerhard Weinberg, *A World at Arms* (Cambridge, 1994).

⁴ Patricia Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People, Germans Under the British, 1945-50* (London, 2001), pp.221-22.

understandable pessimism demonstrated by many contemporaries, within ten years German cities were once again recognisable and Germany was embracing an 'economic miracle'.⁵ At one level, the revival of German cities is well documented and much is known about German reconstruction plans and the outcome of important civic rebuilding projects.⁶ But plans are not the only things which make a city. Prewar reconstruction plans were rarely fully implemented and how and why some features were adapted or rejected can explain much about the postwar environment in which these decisions were made. Moreover, as yet we know little about the policies of the occupiers towards rebuilding and how they approached the challenges of German urban reconstruction.

Literature Review

a) The Importance of Occupation

Strangely, the occupied city as a subject for research has been neglected, despite the undoubted impact of military assault and occupation on both built environments and the occupied populations living within them.⁷ Scholarship about occupations has been written mainly from within the field of political history, often taking a legal perspective, and has attempted to construct typologies of occupation and their

⁵ Many German architects believed it would take at least a generation to repair the damage to Germany's cities. Only Karl Band, a Cologne architect, was more positive and thought that reconstruction might be completed in a decade. Band, Gedanken zum Wiederaufbau unserer Stadt, 29 June 1945, HASTK 2/1313.

⁶ See for example G Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory* (California, 2000); K. von Beyme, W. Durth, N.Gutschow, W. Nerdinger, and T. Topfstedt (eds), *Neue Städte aus Ruinen: Deutscher Städtebau der Nachkriegszeit* (Munich, 1992).

⁷ Marcus Funck and Roger Chickering (eds), *Endangered Cities: Military Power and Urban Societies in the Era of the World Wars* (Boston, 2004) is one exception but, as a collection of essays on individual cities from a variety of authors, lacks a unifying theory. Eric Carlton, *Occupation: The Policies and Practice of Military Conquerors* (London, 1992) is the best example of a comparative theoretical study of occupations through history.

respective status in law.⁸ Of course, several works have addressed the effect of particular occupations, such as the German occupation of France or the Soviet Union during the Second World War.⁹ These studies have principally come from within the highly fertile field of research into the Nazi dictatorship. In most cases ‘occupation’ per se is left unexplored or, at best, is secondary to the narrative of the dictatorship. Studies of Israel and Palestine form a further category, although some of these are marred by their heavy political rhetoric, often stressing the illegality of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.¹⁰

Over the past sixty years the study of history has gone through various transformations, reflecting changing academic fashions, the incorporation of other academic disciplines and their methodological approaches, and the fragmentation of history into a multitude of sub-disciplines. Many early studies of postwar Germany concentrated on political reconstruction or military history and explored mainly ‘great men doing great things’¹¹, while recent research reveals the impact of postmodernism,

⁸ Eyal Benvenisti, *The International Law of Occupation* (Princeton, 1993); Geoffrey Best, *War and Law since 1945* (Oxford, 1994); Karma Nabulsi, *The Traditions of War: Occupation, Resistance and the Law* (Oxford, 1999); Adam Roberts, ‘What is a Military Occupation?’, in *The British Yearbook of International Law*, vol. 55, 1985; Emma Playfair (ed.), *International Law and the Administration of Occupied Territories* (Oxford, 1994).

⁹ Ian Ousby, *Occupation: The Ordeal of France, 1940-44* (London, 1999); Alex Kay, *Exploitation, Resettlement, Mass Murder: Political and Economic Planning for German Occupation Policy in the Soviet Union, 1940-41* (New York, 2006); Henrik Dethlefsen, ‘Denmark and the German Occupation: Cooperation, Negotiation, or Collaboration’ in *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 15, no. 3 (1990), p. 201; Werner Warnbrunn, *The German Occupation of Belgium, 1940-44* (New York, 1993).

¹⁰ A polemical approach is perhaps to be expected, given that this particular occupation is ongoing. Unfortunately, it also limits the usefulness of such studies.

¹¹ W Friedmann, *The Allied Military Government of Germany* (London, 1947); S K Padover, *Experiment in Germany* (New York, 1946); A Dorender, *Der Zonenbeirat der britisch besetzten Zone* (Göttingen, 1953). Very few of the senior British members of the Control Commission published accounts of the occupation: Sir Cecil Weir, *Civilian Assignment* (London, 1953); Sir Robert Birley, *The German Problem and the Responsibility of Britain* (London, 1947); Noel Annan, *Changing Enemies* (London, 1995). Official histories, for example Frank Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government Central Organisation and Planning* (London, 1966) and *Civil Affairs and Military Government North West Europe 1944-1946* (London, 1961) often provide much of the detailed information missing from modern texts. They are an underused and invaluable source of information for researchers of this period.

evident in the explosion of works on themes such as collective memory and the representations of marginalised groups.¹² Despite the post-modern turn, traditional subjects, such as the restoration of postwar German political life, remain a perennial interest for historians.¹³ Research into the revival of the postwar German economy forms another large contingent but has continued to focus rather narrowly on industry or the effects of the Marshall Plan.¹⁴

The initial period of allied occupation from 1945 to 1949 has given rise to countless studies of four-power politics, allied relations, the division of Germany and so on.¹⁵ However, detailed investigations of the four occupation zones, and especially their policies and administration, are much harder to come by. Gimbel's monographs on the American Zone remain the most comprehensive despite their vintage. His two studies, *A German Community under Occupation: Marburg 1945-52* and *The*

¹² Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton, 2005); Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe* (Oxford, 1999).

¹³ Henry Burke Wend, *Recovery and Restoration: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Politics of Reconstruction of West Germany's Shipbuilding Industry, 1945-1955* (Westport, 2001); Wade Jacoby, *Imitation and Politics: Redesigning Modern Germany* (Ithaca, 2001).

¹⁴ Richard Reichel, 'Germany's postwar growth: economic miracle or reconstruction boom?', *The Cato Journal*, vol. 21, no.3 (2002); Diane B Kunz, 'The Marshall Plan reconsidered: a complex of motives', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 3 (1997); Hans-Jürgen Schroeder (ed.), *Marshallplan und Westdeutscher Wiederaufstieg: Positionen – Kontroversen* (Stuttgart, 1990); Helge Berger and Albrecht Ritschl, 'Die Rekonstruktion der Arbeitsteilung in Europa: Eine neue Sicht des Marshallplans in Deutschland, 1947-1951.', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 43 (1995); Wilfried Mausbach, *Zwischen Morgenthau und Marshall: Das wirtschaftspolitische Deutschlandkonzept der USA 1944-1947* (Düsseldorf, 1996).

¹⁵ There are far too many to produce a comprehensive list but some good examples are: Dennis L Bark and David R Gress, *A History of West Germany. Vol 1: From Shadow to Substance, 1945-63* (Oxford, 1989); Mary Fulbrook, *History of Germany 1918-2000* (Oxford, 2002); Kettenacker, *Germany after 1945* (Oxford, 1997); Tony Sharp, *The Wartime Alliance and the Zonal Division of Germany* (Oxford, 1975); Theodor Eschenburg, *Jahre der Besatzung* (Stuttgart, 1983); Anthony Glees, *Reinventing Germany: German Political Development since 1945* (Oxford, 1996); Barbara Marshall, *The Origins of Postwar German Politics* (London, 1988); Hermann Graml, *Die Alliierten und die Teilung Deutschlands: Konflikte und Entscheidungen 1941-48* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1985); Rebecca L Boehling, *A Question of Priorities. Democratic Reform and Economic Recovery in Postwar Germany* (New York, 1996); Alan Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe, 1945-51* (Berkeley, 1984). Dominik Geppert (ed.), *The Postwar Challenge, 1945-58* (Oxford, 2004); Dominik Geppert, *Die Ära Adenauer*, (Darmstadt, 2002); Wolfgang Benz, *Der Gründung der Bundesrepublik: von der Bizone zum souveränen Staat* (Munich, 1999); Christoph Klessmann, *Der doppelte Staatsgründung: Deutsche Geschichte 1945-55* (Bonn, 1991).

American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-49, offer valuable insights into the enormous difficulties faced by the American occupiers and their impact on the administration of a local community.¹⁶ *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany*, edited by Jeffry Diefendorf et al., is a collection of essays about economic and political reconstruction of the American Zone. The editors reject the notion of a linear development of American policy in Germany and argue that the essays presented offer a much more complex and realistic picture of American attitudes and activities. The book contains a comprehensive and useful bibliography.¹⁷ There has been a limited but growing interest in the effect of occupation on German culture and society; work on the Americanisation of Germany has become a very popular subject in recent years and has generated some useful studies.¹⁸

Of the four occupation zones, the French Zone remains the least documented and researched. This is mainly due to the fact that the French opened their archives relating to the occupation some years later than the other western Allies, which meant that until the mid-1980s, scholars working in this area had to do so without access to the official archives. The work of F Roy Willis, published in 1962, remained the only monograph on the French Zone until it was joined by Claus Scharf's and Hans Jürgen

¹⁶ John Gimbel, *A German Community under American Occupation: Marburg, 1945-52* (Stanford, 1961) and *The American Occupation of Germany: Politics and the Military, 1945-49* (Stanford, 1968); Other books about American occupation include: John Willoughby, *Remaking the Conquering Heroes. The Postwar American Occupation of Germany* (New York, 2000).

¹⁷ Jeffry Diefendorf, Axel Frohn and H. Rupieper (eds), *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-1955* (Cambridge, 1993).

¹⁸ Ralph Willet, *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-49* (London, 1989); On the Soviet Zone - David Pike, *The Politics of Culture in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945-49* (Stanford, 1992); Alexander Stephan, *Americanization and Anti-Americanism: the German encounter with American culture after 1945* (New York, 2005); Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender and Foreign Relations, 1945-49* (London, 2003); Konrad H. Jarausch, Hannes Siegrist (eds), *Amerikanisierung und Sowjetisierung in Deutschland 1945 – 1970* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1997); Susanne Hilger, *„Amerikanisierung“ deutscher Unternehmen. Wettbewerbsstrategien und Unternehmenspolitik bei Henkel, Siemens und Daimler-Benz, 1945/49 - 1975* (Stuttgart, 2004).

Schröder's, *Die Deutschlandpolitik Frankreichs und die Französische Zone 1945-49*¹⁹ and Klaus Dietmar Henke's and Rainer Hudemann's research in the early 1980s about French foreign policy and social policy respectively.²⁰

Similarly, the opening of the Soviet archives has allowed work on the Russian Zone to be carried out on a scale that was previously impossible. Norman Naimark's impressive study, *The Russians in Germany*, has been the most comprehensive work on the Soviet Zone to date.²¹ Unusually, it covers political, economic and social aspects of the Soviet occupation and argues that the Soviet administration's occupation policies were largely opportunistic. Far from having a coherent set of objectives, the Soviet administration was often heavily influenced by the ongoing conflict with the western Allies.

A number of recent studies of the Soviet Zone have investigated the darker side of liberation. Studies of women's experiences of the Soviet occupation, in particular the brutal acts of rape and pillage accompanying the Soviet assault on cities such as Berlin, has further fuelled debates on German victimhood.²² The exploration of civilian trauma has sparked interdisciplinary studies into the transfer of trauma related disorders to second generation Germans.²³

¹⁹ Claus Scharf and Hans Jürgen Schröder, *Die Deutschlandpolitik Frankreichs und die Französische Zone 1945-49* (Mainz, 1983).

²⁰ F Roy Willis, *The French in Germany* (Stanford, 1962); Klaus Dietmar Henke, *Politische Säuberung unter französischer Besatzung* (Stuttgart, 1981); Rainer Hudemann, *Sozialpolitik im deutschen Südwesten zwischen Tradition und Neuordnung, 1945-53* (Mainz, 1988).

²¹ Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-49* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1995).

²² Erika M Hoerning, 'Frauen als Kriegsbeute: Der Zweite-Frinten-Krieg. Beispiele aus Berlin', in Niethammer and von Plato, *Wir kriegen andere Zeiten*, pp.327-44.

²³ Alice Förster and Birgit Beck, 'Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and World War II: Can a psychiatric concept help us to understand postwar society?', in Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (eds), *Life After Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge, 2003), pp.15-36; Helke Sander and Barbara Johr (eds), *Befreiung und Befreite* (Munich, 1992); Naimark, *Russians*, Chapter 2; Erika M Hoerning, 'Frauen als Kriegsbeute: Der Zweite-Frinten-Krieg. Beispiele

The British Zone remains relatively under-researched, although a few studies have focussed upon Germany's development during the British occupation.²⁴ Several studies have tried to evaluate the impact of the British occupation on particular areas of German life. Ian Turner's unpublished thesis, *British Occupation Policy and its Effects on the Town of Wolfsburg and the Volkswagenwerk 1945-1949*, and his edited volume, *Reconstruction in Postwar Germany*, both demonstrate the lasting impact of British policy on German industry.²⁵ Barbara Marshall's work, *The Origins of Postwar German Politics*, highlights the political revival under occupation through a detailed case study of Hannover and questions why the British Labour Government failed to export socialism to Germany.²⁶ Another important insight into the influence of the British occupation is to be found in Arthur Hearnden, *The British in Germany: Education Reconstruction after 1945*, which looks at the work of Robert Birley who was responsible for reforming the German education system.²⁷ Finally, Benedikta von Sehr-Thoss recently completed a thesis, *An Unprecedented Occupation: The British Control Commission in Germany, 1949-1955*, about the Allied High Commission during the latter stages of the British occupation. She concludes that to understand

aus Berlin', in Lutz Niethammer and Alexander von Plato, *Wir kriegen jetzt andere Zeiten* (Bonn, 1985), pp.327-44.

²⁴ Adolf Birke and Eva Mayring (eds), *Britische Besatzung in Deutschland. Aktenerschliessung und Forschungsfelder* (London, 1992) a stimulating collection of articles concerning the mechanisms governing the occupation of Germany; Ulrich Reusch, *Deutsche Berufsbeamtentum und Britische Besatzung 1943-47* (Stuttgart, 1985).

²⁵ Ian Turner, *British Occupation Policy and its Effects on the Town of Wolfsburg and the Volkswagenwerk 1945-1949*, unpublished thesis (Oxford, 1981) and Ian Turner (ed.), *Reconstruction in Post-War Germany: British Occupation Policy and the Western Zones* (Oxford 1989).

²⁶ Barbara Marshall, *Origins of Postwar German Politics* (London, 1988).

²⁷ Arthur Hearnden, *The British in Germany: Education Reconstruction after 1945* (London, 1978).

Britain's impact upon postwar political developments, one should focus on 'interactions rather than the occupier's rights and responsibilities'.²⁸

Several trends and avenues for future research can be discerned from the recent studies into the four zones of occupied Germany. Firstly, there is a need for further explorations of interactions between occupiers and occupied, particularly outside of the more formal, official channels. Secondly, policy developments in the zones must be seen in the light of both domestic and international events. Thirdly, policy developments were rarely simply linear and were, at times, influenced by complex inter-allied relationships. Finally, the activities of the occupiers could have lasting effects on German culture and society, and on political structures and institutions.

The transient nature of occupations partly accounts for their neglect in the historiography. Yet occupations have the potential to shape lives, to transform social structures, institutions or cultural activities and to even alter the course of history in the host country.²⁹ The relatively short occupation of Germany by the Allies was undoubtedly a period of transitions; still, it deserves greater historical attention, particularly outside of the purely political and economic arenas. Arguably a situation that persisted for ten years, as in this case, is hardly all that provisional. Why, then, have the occupied zones received so little attention?

One explanation can be gleaned from taking a closer look at postwar German historiography. Since the Second World War most historical attention understandably focussed on trying to comprehend how one of the most civilised and cultured nations

²⁸ Benedikta von Sehr-Thoss, *An Unprecedented Occupation – The British Control Commission in Germany, 1949-1955* (unpublished thesis, Oxford, 2004).

²⁹ Diefendorf, Frohn and Rupieper, *American Policy*; Ian Turner, *Reconstruction in Postwar Germany*; Arthur Hearnden, *The British in Germany* (London, 1978); Carlton, *Occupation*.

in Europe could have brought the horrors of Nazism and the Holocaust to the world.³⁰ In German contemporary society, attention, at least in public, was initially devoted to looking forward, to recovering sovereignty from the Allies, to legitimising two new states and creating distance between postwar Germany and the Third Reich. Emphasis was placed on the positive and the heroic, the *Wirtschaftswunder* and the Berlin airlifts, for example. Postwar Germany was focussed on survival, restoration, denial. Furthermore, recent traumas were quickly superseded by a new conflict, given tangible physical form through the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, right through the heart of Germany's divided capital.³¹

The direction that written history has taken, as is so often the case, has been (unconsciously) steered by contemporary political and social events. The formation of two new German states in 1949 left the earlier period of occupation stranded, a no-man's land between the end of the Third Reich and the formation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic. Many studies investigating the period of allied occupation have been retrospective attempts to connect the formation of the two German states and the division of Germany to the political and economic events of the occupation.³² These pre-histories of the BRD and DDR tend to lump together the activities of the Western Allies, thus superficially smoothing the uneven surface of postwar history, neglecting important differences experienced between the three western zones. German history itself, then, goes some

³⁰ See for example Karl-Dietrich Bracher, *Die Deutsche Diktatur* (Cologne, 1972); Fritz Fischer, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte* (Munich, 2003).

³¹ Brian Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin. Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago, 1997).

³² John Backer, *The Decision to Divide Germany* (Durham, 1978); David Williamson, *Germany from Defeat to Partition 1945-1963* (Harlow, 2001); Peter Pulzer, *German Politics 1945-1995* (Oxford, 1995); Sabine Lee, *Victory in Europe. Britain and Germany since 1945* (London, 2001); Mary Fullbrook, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies, 1945-90* (Basingstoke, 2000).

way to explaining the absence of scholarly studies devoted to this important area of research.

Local and personal experiences of the occupation have been expressed in various ways from film and art through to literature and oral histories. The unique experiences of German cities merit separate monographs and many works have already been produced which can offer rich, personalised accounts of individual places as a counter balance to the vast array of more general studies on postwar politics.³³ Many Germans experienced this period as the most difficult of their lives, in some ways more traumatic even than the War itself, and historical accounts like those described in the studies of four power politics and economic recovery lack the immediacy and richness of their own memories and experiences.³⁴ Although some scholars are dismissive of the (often) pictorial local histories of the 'Frankfurt: Then and Now' variety, these perform an important function as they capture more closely the lived experience of German civilians. At the very least, their popularity says something about the way in which the story of German reconstruction has been conceptualised, represented and dispersed to many Germans and, indeed, to tourists. The lives of most individuals in the early postwar years were characterised by real want, by personal attempts to make sense of the past and to come to terms with defeat, by the struggles to rebuild lives, homes and communities and to find a viable future for themselves and for the German nation. Outside of the ubiquitous *Alltagsgeschichte*, these struggles have been largely

³³ Christa Geckeler (ed.), *Erinnerungen der Kieler Kriegsgeneration 1930-60* (Bielefeld, 2003); Georg Mölich and Stefan Wunsch (eds), *Köln nach dem Krieg: Facetten der Stadtgeschichte* (Köln, 1995).

³⁴ Robert G Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, 2001). Konrad Jarausch, *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton, 2003).

overlooked because of the continued primacy given to broader political and economic developments.

To ignore civilian perceptions is to distance oneself from the lived reality of the past. Konrad Jarausch has offered a penetrating insight into the way in which scholars have imposed temporal divisions drawn from key political and economic events, which may not relate to those divisions used by citizens, and has shown how this can affect our reading, understanding and interpretation of the past. While it is clear that these events, at one level, have a critical impact on the lives of ordinary people, scholars must be sensitive to the many layers of historical experience and knowledge that inform our understanding of the past and which may not correspond to the obvious temporal divisions provided by political revolutions, economic crises and social catastrophes. From the perspective of German city dwellers, as users of the city, ruptures in 1943 and again in 1948 may well be more appropriate than the traditional division into war and postwar periods. The sharing of common features across the period between these dates, for example personal privation and national humiliation, may cause the period to be categorised as a unit and become, perhaps, ‘the years of suffering’.³⁵

The British occupation has traditionally been judged rather harshly, particularly by German scholars, who have cited the limited success of the denazification programme and industrial dismantling as examples of British negligence.³⁶ There are

³⁵ Konrad Jarausch, *Shattered Past*.

³⁶ D Petzina and W Euchrer (eds), *Wirtschaftspolitik im britischen Besatzungsgebiet* (Düsseldorf, 1984); U Schneider, ‘Britische Besatzungspolitik 1945, Besatzungsmacht, deutsche Exekutive und die Probleme der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit, dargestellt am Beispiel des späteren Landes Niedersachsen von April bis Oktober 1945’, Dissertation (Hannover, 1980). A more recent thesis by Benedikta von Sehr-Thoss has challenged these assertions, B. von Sehr-Thoss, ‘An Unprecedented Occupation - The

strong grounds for criticism of some British policies and their implementation. But although some interventions were unsuccessful, others had far reaching positive effects that are still in evidence today. Furthermore, Britain's activities have often been compared unfavourably to those of the Americans, who won considerable approval through their economic aid programmes. Britain was, of course, in no position to compete on these terms. Moreover, contemporary criticisms of the occupation employed large amounts of political rhetoric, the purpose of which was to hasten the return to sovereignty.³⁷ A healthy skepticism must be employed when examining contemporary accounts. Reconciling their role as both perpetrators and victims remains a challenging issue for a nation that was simultaneously the guilty perpetrator of the most heinous crimes against humanity and yet whose people undoubtedly suffered during the war. There was only limited acceptance of this responsibility and many blamed their occupiers for their postwar privations. Deindustrialisation, in particular, was interpreted by the majority as a deliberate attempt to hamper economic rebuilding and hinder competition with Britain's own industrial producers.³⁸ The narrative of struggle and suffering under incompetent and ruthless occupiers and horrific material conditions bears some truths and thus has passed firmly into German collective memory. It does not however, reveal the whole story.³⁹

If there has been little scholarly work on the civilian experience of occupation, the same cannot be said for the civilian experience of war. Recently there has been a

British Control Commission in Germany, 1949-1955', Ph.D. thesis (Oxford, 2004). See also Daniel Rodgers, *Politics after Hitler: The Western Allies and the German Party System* (New York, 1995).

³⁷ Konrad Adenauer's speeches often criticised the British occupation forces for this reason.

³⁸ Ian Turner has produced convincing arguments against this in both his unpublished thesis and his collected volume. Ian Turner, *British Occupation Policy* and Ian Turner (ed.), *Reconstruction*.

³⁹ Alan Milward's criticism of German scholarship about the British occupation can be found in 'Literatur', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 40 (1992), p.456.

resurgence of interest in the issue of German victimhood, and in particular an explosion of studies and conferences concerning the civilian experience of air attacks. The publication of Jörg Friedrich's *Der Brand*, Winfred Sebald's *Luftkrieg und Literatur*, Frederick Taylor's *Dresden*, as well as Günther Grass' controversial literary work *Im Krebsgang*, provoked criticism and intense international debates about guilt and retribution, victims and perpetrators, liberators and oppressors.⁴⁰ These debates may encourage a more balanced, nuanced depiction of human experience in all its contradictions which go beyond the more usual but unhelpful and simplistic dichotomies.

The sixtieth anniversary of the capitulation may also partly account for the renewed interest in German wartime experience and its immediate aftermath, exemplified by the emergence of these studies. In 2005, city bookshops in Germany were stuffed full of popular history books examining or recording the last few days before liberation and the collapse. Deutsche Taschenbuch Verlag published a series '60 Jahre Kriegsende' and reissued many books about World War Two and its immediate aftermath.⁴¹ One might speculate that this will lead to further studies of the occupation which followed. Certainly, since reunification, research into the Soviet occupation has increased, partly because the archives are now accessible but also because the history of the Soviet Union and the Soviet occupation is indelibly linked to the genesis and collapse of the DDR.

⁴⁰ Friedrich, *Der Brand*; Kucklick, *Feuersturm*; Sebald, *Luftkrieg und Literatur*; Frederick Taylor, *Dresden: 13th February 1945* (London, 2004); Günther Grass, *Im Krebsgang* (Göttingen, 2002).

⁴¹ For example, Peter Suess, *1945 Befreiung und Zusammenbruch : Erinnerungen aus sechs Jahrzehnten* (Munich, 2005); Burgdorff and Habbe (eds), *Als Feuer vom Himmel fiel: Der Bombenkrieg in Deutschland* (Munich, 2003) as well as literary works such as Heinrich Böll, *Der Engel schwieg* (Cologne, 1992).

While the blossoming interest in daily life during the early postwar years is encouraging, there is no doubt that the occupation of Germany remains under-researched and fragmented. Memoirs and biographies of military personnel and politicians involved in the rebuilding of postwar German society exist alongside, but disconnected from, the more recent oral histories and testimonies from the individuals and communities who lived through the occupation.⁴² Research is needed which connects these experiences to produce richer historical accounts.

b) Rethinking Reconstruction

Postwar urban planning and development has attracted considerable scholarly analysis. This has taken a number of forms from international comparative studies of twentieth century urban planning to more detailed works focussing on particular geographical areas or groups of cities sharing important characteristics. Within this broad field are a collection of studies which chart the impact of the Second World War on the cities of Europe.⁴³

The European Heritage year of 1975 was one important impetus for studies of postwar reconstruction as the concerns of contemporary urban policy makers shifted to the preservation of Europe's remaining historic buildings. Reflecting on the nature of

⁴² Konrad Adenauer, *Erinnerungen 1945-53* (Stuttgart, 1965); Noel Annan, *Changing Enemies* (Ithaca, 1997); Kirsten Serup-Bilfeldt, *Ins Gedächtnis Eingebrennt* (Köln, 2005); C. Geckeler, *Erinnerungen der Kieler Kriegsgeneration 1930-60* (Bielefeld, 2003).

⁴³ Lionel Esher, *A Broken Wave: The Rebuilding of England, 1940-80* (London, 1981); Jeffry Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (New York, 1993); Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Postwar World: Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain* (London, 2002); Adolf Ciborowski, *Warsaw: A City Destroyed and Rebuilt* (Warsaw, 1964); John McCarthy, 'The Redevelopment of Rotterdam since 1945', *Planning Perspectives*, 14 (1999); P. Larkham, and K. Lilley, *Planning the 'City of Tomorrow': British Reconstruction Planning, 1939-1952: An Annotated Bibliography* (Pickering, 2001).

postwar reconstruction opened discussions about the successes and failures of postwar rebuilding. By the mid-1980s, an active field of scholarship on European reconstruction had grown. There is thus no shortage of literature, although scholars have tended to concentrate on the activities of individual countries or cities.⁴⁴

As one of the most damaged European nations, German cities have received much scholarly attention. Niels Gutschow and Werner Durth have both published extensively on German architects and planners and collaborated to produce a two-volume study, *Träume in Trümmern*.⁴⁵ Theirs was the first project to consider the reconstruction period from 1940 to 1950, rather than beginning in 1945, indeed the authors insist that the period must be viewed as uninterrupted by the collapse of the National Socialist state. Niels Gutschow's father, Konstanty Gutschow, worked as chief planner in Hamburg during the Third Reich and was dismissed from office by the British in 1945. The works of both Gutschow and Durth, and the American scholar Jeffry Diefendorf, made heavy use of the personal papers belonging to the late Konstanty Gutschow, which chart the activities of former National Socialist planners, primarily employed in private practice after 1945. *Träume in Trümmern* is richly illustrated with primary source material from cities across Europe. It also includes a chapter about the period of Allied occupation but, surprisingly, makes no attempt to discuss in any depth the Allies' town and country planning or housing policies.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Jeffry Diefendorf (ed.), *The Rebuilding of Europe's Bombed Cities* (Basingstoke, 1989); Leo Grebler, *Europe's Reborn Cities* (Washington, 1956); Stanislaw Jankowski, 'Warsaw: Destruction, Secret Town Planning, 1939-44', *Town Planning Review* XXVIII (1957); Gutschow and Stierner, *Dokumentation Wiederaufbau der Stadt Münster* (Münster, 1982).

⁴⁵ Durth and Gutschow, *Träume in Trümmern. Planungen zum Wiederaufbau zerstörter Städte im Westen Deutschlands 1940-1950* (Braunschweig und Wiesbaden, 1988).

⁴⁶ Niels Gutschow is also responsible for a detailed and impressive work on the reconstruction of the city of Münster, while Durth has produced a valuable biographical study of German architects between 1900 and 1970. Werner Durth, *Deutsche Architekten: Biographische Verflechtungen 1900-1970*

Jeffrey Diefendorf has been a prolific researcher of urban reconstruction.⁴⁷ His pioneering monograph, *In the Wake of War*, is still one of the best in the field. It sweeps across German urban planning from Weimar through to the mid-1960s and covers an impressive range of German cities. Diefendorf's research highlights the key debates surrounding postwar reconstruction, analysing the challenges faced by planners as they confronted the enormous task of rebuilding Germany's destroyed cities, from legal problems such as determining property ownership and passing new planning legislation to organisational challenges such as determining who should be responsible for rebuilding. As with any study centred on particular agents and their activities, the firm focus on planners and the planning process means that there is little exploration of other key players who helped to shape Germany's cities after the war, such as the property owners, politicians, financial institutions and the building industry. There are also few indications of how the new postwar economic and political frameworks affected the direction of reconstruction planning. While the book makes a fascinating and solid contribution to our knowledge of postwar German planning, it leaves scope for further explorations of the processes which allowed, or prevented, the realisation of plans.

Klaus von Beyme made a significant contribution to the field of urban reconstruction history with his book *Der Wiederaufbau*. This work encompasses the

(Braunschweig und Wiesbaden, 1986), Gutschow and Stierner, *Dokumentation Wiederaufbau der Stadt Münster* (Münster, 1982).

⁴⁷ Jeffrey Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War. The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (Oxford 1993); Diefendorf, Axel Frohn and Hermann-Josef Rupieper (eds), *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945-55* (Cambridge, 1993), Jeffrey Diefendorf, 'Artery: Traffic Planning in Postwar Germany', *Journal of Urban History*, 15 (1989); Jeffrey Diefendorf, 'Cities of Rubble to Cities in Greenery: Postwar Reconstruction Planning in Germany', *Planning History*, 12 (1990); Jeffrey Diefendorf (ed.), *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities* (London, 1990).

main facets of reconstruction in both East and West Germany.⁴⁸ Planning in the former GDR has been investigated by Düwel, Bodenschatz and Bernhardt.⁴⁹ Klaus von Beyme and Durth were both involved in the production of another important text, *Neue Städte aus Ruinen*, an edited volume of short reconstruction essays, each one concentrating on a different German city.⁵⁰

Without exception the scholars above have argued that 1945 must not be seen as the starting point for reconstruction but rather that postwar reconstruction was both based on a longer tradition of ideas about the ideal modern city and carried out by the same planners who had engaged in wartime and prewar reconstruction and urban renewal programmes. This commitment to historical continuity stems from the rejection of the idea of a *Stunde null* in 1945. Germany's capitulation was seen by many contemporaries as a zero hour.⁵¹ However, the *Stunde null* is now regarded as a myth, generated partly as a result of the end of the Second World War and the collapse of the Nazi state, but also reflecting people's perception of their physical surroundings. The idea of the *Stunde null* became a convenient propaganda tool, used to create distance between postwar Germany and its Nazi past in all aspects of Germany's reconstruction, not just the physical. The generation of scholars after the Second World War rejected this position of denial on moral grounds. They criticised the stance of distance, adopted so quickly after 1945, and sought to expose the continuities with the Third Reich by way of atoning and facing their uncomfortable national, and in some

⁴⁸ Klaus von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau. Architektur und Städtebaupolitik in beiden deutschen Staaten* (Munich, 1987).

⁴⁹ Durth, Düwel, Gutschow, *Ostkreuz, Personen, Pläne, Perspektiven, Architektur und Städtebau in der DDR* (Frankfurt, 1999); Christoph Bernhardt, 'Planning Urbanization and Urban Growth in the Socialist Period: The Case of East German New Towns, 1945-89', *Journal of Urban History*, 32 (2005).

⁵⁰ K. von Beyme, W. Durth, N. Gutschow, W. Nerdinger, and T. Topfstedt (eds), *Neue Städte aus Ruinen: Deutscher Städtebau der Nachkriegszeit* (Munich, 1992).

⁵¹ Geppert (ed.), *Postwar Challenge*.

cases personal, histories.⁵² This revision extended into the discussions of postwar German urban planning and physical reconstruction and was endorsed by many leading scholars in the field, who highlighted continuities in planning practice and personnel and furthermore, concluded that the success of postwar German planning, particularly in north Germany, rested on these very continuities.⁵³

In the drive to disprove the existence of a *Stunde null* and to demonstrate strong continuities with the war and pre-war era, the representation of postwar urban planning in Germany has become rather over-simplified. Discontinuities and ruptures have been largely ignored, an indication that the pendulum has perhaps swung a little too far. Each of the studies by Durth, Gutschow and Diefendorf have increased significantly our knowledge and understanding of reconstruction in post-war Germany, but they have privileged an argument, focus and periodisation which is inclined to obscure any discontinuity. In spite of the continuities they have successfully demonstrated, 1945 did also mark a turning point for Germany in many ways. The absence of political and cultural contributions to their arguments about the formation and execution of plans leaves an important gap in their reconstruction narratives. The Allied occupations changed the economic, political and social climates in each of the zones and provided new frameworks in which planning would take place and unique opportunities for the exchange of ideas. During the occupation the foundations were laid for the rebuilding of German cities and decisions were reached about future economic orientations, urban specialisations and civic identities. These activities were shaped by the interactions

⁵² Niels Gutschow, 'Väter und Söhne', *Bauwelt*, 75 (1980).

⁵³ They argue that the practices developed by Speer's Arbeitsstab (a group of elite urban planners) in the last two years of the war, and the continued postwar employment of its members, accounts for more effective planning in north German cities. References to be found in Durth, *Träume in Trümmern*, pp. 67-8 and Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.279.

between occupier and occupied and came to define the nodal importance of particular cities within their wider regional networks, even after the formation of the Federal Republic.

It is important to acknowledge continuities but it is equally important not to lose sight of the contexts in which planning and reconstruction took place. Studies which do not pay sufficient attention to the special circumstances experienced during the occupation, the divergent paths followed by German cities during the critical four year period in which Germany was divided and occupied, remain deficient because they cannot explain adequately why places responded differently to the challenges they faced. Consideration of the occupation offers an additional dimension which may help to explain some similarities and differences in reconstruction practices.

Scholars conducting research into the German occupation of various European cities in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Norway offer convincing arguments about the way in which occupations have the potential to alter the direction of urban development.⁵⁴ In Poland, the occupation was to have ideological and symbolic effects on urban development. Germany's systematic attempts to annihilate all traces of Polish culture and national heritage through the destruction of the historic city of Warsaw ensured that Polish reconstruction planning would work to demonstrate the failure of this aim.⁵⁵

The themes of occupation and reconstruction are thus central to this thesis. Although this study focuses on just one feature of the postwar rehabilitation of

⁵⁴ P. Uyttenhove, 'Continuities in Belgian Wartime Reconstruction Planning' in Diefendorf (ed.), *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities* (London, 1990). Bosma 'Planning the Impossible: History as the Fundament of the Future. The Reconstruction of Middelburg, 1940-44, in Diefendorf (ed.), *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*.

⁵⁵ Jankowski, 'Warsaw' in Diefendorf (ed.), *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*.

Germany - urban reconstruction - the restoration of cities was central to German recovery. Reconstruction formed a part of everyday life for the majority of German citizens, shaping the way that they experienced their homes, streets and neighbourhoods. Changing streetscapes mirrored the evolution of postwar German society from crushed dictatorship to flourishing democracy. The key to understanding postwar German society does not just lie in the 1950s economic wonder and the political experiences of the Cold War but also in the individual's experience of these wider forces at work in their lives and their experience of defeat, occupation and reconstruction.

Aims and Approach

The review has demonstrated the need for studies of postwar German reconstruction which move beyond the activities of German planners and municipalities, and which integrate postwar reconstruction more finely with the political, economic, social and cultural contexts in which the decisions were taken and plans implemented. The allied occupation occurred at a critical juncture in the reconstruction of German cities and thus, is deserving of the scholarly attention which has hitherto largely neglected it.

Occupation had significant effects on both short and long-term urban planning and reconstruction activities. The circumstances in which the British Military Government found themselves in the cities they occupied demanded a response, even if this could begin only with piecemeal improvements. The depiction of the reconstructing city as a German space is therefore untenable. Occupied cities had to find strategies to cope with shortages and improve the lot of their citizens, they needed

to secure and develop new economic roles and to renew and redefine their civic images and international reputations. Exposure to interurban competition for resources and the new developments and strategies implemented by their occupiers encouraged German cities to address the challenge of reconstruction energetically. Furthermore, relationships had to grow and be nurtured between occupiers and occupied who, despite being former enemies, now shared the task of rebuilding Germany.

The memory of the recent past played a defining role in the policies and plans made by both parties and recent history was invoked by both sides to legitimise their political actions.⁵⁶ As we will see, the moral and psychological rebuilding of German society was connected to the restoration of cities in the minds of both German and British officials. The reconstruction process was, therefore, not simply a case of allocating resources and other mechanical, practical tasks but rather was intimately tied to nation building and the survival of Germany. Identities had to be redefined and the spectre of Nazism had to be confronted in a very real and immediate sense. Spaces and places had to be denazified as well as individuals. Cities had to find new bases for their economies and new regional and local identities on which they could build a secure future.

Recent research into transnational connections and the diffusion of innovations reminds us that, even under normal circumstances, nations are rarely insulated from foreign influences. The roots of urban change may often be traced to webs and networks reaching far outside national boundaries. Perhaps the opportunities for the

⁵⁶ Barbara Miller-Lane, *Architecture and Politics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1985); Gavriel Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory* (California, 2000), Rudy Koshar, *Germany's Transient Pasts* (North Carolina, 1998); Bessel and Schuhmann (eds) *Life after Death*; Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanies* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1997).

import and export of ideas are even greater under a system of occupation. But, as scholars such as Rodgers and Saunier have shown, it is not enough to simply fall back on superficial explanations of ‘foreign influence’; rather our task must be to show how and why innovations are exported, imported, adopted or rejected, and how far and in what ways they are taken up or transformed to suit local conditions. Circulations and flows of people and ideas must be meticulously charted across, not just within, national boundaries and across and within groups of individuals who have aims or knowledge in common.⁵⁷ This study draws upon the works of Rodgers, Saunier and Hietala who, through their examinations of municipal exchanges, have demonstrated forcefully the value of transnational connections in explanations of urban change and development.⁵⁸

The British made several serious attempts to reform German society with varying degrees of success. The reforms of the education system and the civil service reflected British models and a confidence in British systems of governance. But there are also examples of relationships and connections formed outside of official channels through which ideas and experiences could be exchanged. The 1940s saw radical social reform in Britain, not least in the field of housing and town planning. There have been no studies to date which have examined British housing or town planning policies in occupied Germany and research into postwar German reconstruction has not examined in any detail the policies and activities of the Allies. Much reconstruction

⁵⁷ Pierre-Yves Saunier, ‘Changing the City: Urban International Information and the Lyon Municipality, 1900-1940 in *Planning Perspectives*, 14 (1999); Friedhelm Fischer, ‘German Reconstruction as an International Activity’ in Jeffry Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe’s Bombed Cities*; Steven Ward, ‘Re-examining the International Diffusion of Planning’ in Robert Freestone (ed.), *Urban Planning in a Changing World* (London, 2000); Steven Ward, *Planning the Twentieth Century City. The Advanced Capitalist World* (Chichester, 2002).

⁵⁸ Pierre-Yves Saunier, ‘Taking Up the Bet on Connections: A Municipal Contribution’, *Contemporary European History*, 11 (2002); Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998); Marjatta Hietala, *Services and Urbanization at the Turn of the Century: The Diffusion of Innovations* (Helsinki, 1987).

planning and, crucially, the development of the planning apparatus, took place before 1949. One of the central aims of the thesis is to discover what, if any, impact was made by the British occupation on the postwar planning and reconstruction of German cities. This study seeks to discover how Britain perceived its role in the physical reconstruction of Germany and to what extent this was translated into a coherent policy.

The study has grown from a set of related research questions. Firstly, there is the question of the conceptualisation of the reconstruction problem. How did events present themselves to those who had to appraise them and decide how to respond? How did the occupiers understand the tasks that they faced? How did they formulate a view of the reconstruction problem? To what extent did they feel any responsibility towards this task?

Secondly, there are questions arising from the chosen urban policies. Did the occupiers have a coherent plan? How were major decisions taken and by what factors were they influenced and constrained? How far was their approach linked to planning in other policy areas? How were their strategies perceived by professionals in the occupied country? Why were some activities supported and not others?

Thirdly, the origins of the strategies should be considered. Did the occupiers attempt to employ their own national strategies when formulating policies or did they view the tasks there in their own terms? To what extent was there co-operation within professional communities across national boundaries? What alternative sources of inspiration were used in reconstruction processes and from where did these ideas originate? How were knowledge and innovations circulated?

Finally, there are questions relating to the outcomes of urban reconstruction policies during this period. In which areas could the activities of the occupation authorities be most clearly felt? To what extent was the approach to reconstruction in Germany the same during the occupation, before and after it? Were the decisions made under occupation of lasting importance?

These questions have inspired the choice of themes and their treatment. An understanding of these aspects offers the possibility of another picture of German reconstruction with which to balance our detailed knowledge of the activities of German planners, one in which the interaction with British occupiers and Britain's planning elite through informal channels had a significant effect on shaping the reconstruction of German cities. It will offer an alternative or complementary explanation to the reasons behind the successful reconstruction of north German cities after 1945. This study will enrich our understanding of the reconstruction process, how it was organised and how it functioned in practice and will offer new insights into the origins of planning developments. It will also demonstrate, with concrete examples, the flows of ideas and innovations across national boundaries, through both formal and informal relationships, as well as positing some explanations for why particular innovations were more successful than others.

Methodology and Limits

This study looks at an established field from a fresh perspective and uses untapped primary sources. It builds on and extends the work of scholars engaged in the study of

postwar reconstruction and illuminates an unexplored dimension arising from the circumstances of the occupation.

The British Zone was the most densely populated and urbanised of the four occupation zones and, as such, it provides an appropriate case study for examining the revival of cities under occupation. It will be essential to offer a glimpse across zonal boundaries in order to make a few general comparisons between the different approaches of the occupying powers. However, this remains a study of the British Zone; the purpose is not to provide an exhaustive history of the occupation and reconstruction of Germany.

The core of the thesis is an analysis of British zonal planning and reconstruction policies, followed by a comparative study of the initial planning and reconstruction of two German cities within the British Zone of occupation, Kiel and Cologne, examining how these cities reacted to the challenge of reconstruction and occupation between 1945 and 1949. In short, it explores the formation of policies at zonal level, sees how they were applied, then examines their concrete effects at local, city level. While this study concentrates on the years 1945 to 1949, it would be impossible to write without reference to events before and after.

Comparative analysis has proved to be a valuable method for the study of urban areas and for establishing different urban genres or typologies.⁵⁹ The two central case studies offer a contrast in size, topography and location, economic base, historical urban development and civic identity. Both cities are large enough for there to be evidence of substantial reconstruction planning but Cologne is much larger and suffered a greater degree of war damage than Kiel. They are situated at opposite sides

⁵⁹ Derek Fraser and Anthony Sutcliffe (eds), *The Pursuit of Urban History* (London, 1983).

of the British Zone in very different regions. Kiel is the capital of Schleswig-Holstein, and is a port city, while Cologne, though larger, is not a *Land* capital and lies inland, on the River Rhine. In addition to the two main case studies, several other cities in the British Zone have also been referred to in this thesis. The omission of Berlin is regrettable but, as the city was occupied by four powers and operated under unique circumstances, it would require the description of completely different sets of apparatus and is not representative of the experiences of other cities in the British Zone.

A variety of primary sources have been employed in this study to tackle the question of British influence on the reconstruction of German cities. Extensive use has been made of the documents produced by the Foreign Office and the various departments within the British control apparatus, such as the Building Industries and Housing Branches. These help to show the shifting agendas of the British authorities and their complex attitude towards reconstruction, but also facilitate an understanding of the relationship between the British authorities and their German counterparts. In practice towns were planned and reconstructed by German architects and planners, within the framework defined by these policies. The files supply fascinating details about the activities of the occupation authorities, their motivations, their internal conflicts, the potential solutions developed, the policies they supported and those they rejected, and the techniques of analysis they applied.

Records management was apparently very uneven and before the transfer back to the UK, many files were lost, thinned out or even destroyed. The severe shortage and poor quality of paper resulted in some activities being inadequately recorded and

certain records have deteriorated. That said 26,000 files relating to the British occupation are held in the National Archives. The use of these sources has been greatly facilitated by Adolf Birke's mammoth eleven-volume *Akten der Britische Militärregierung*, an inventory of the Control Commission files held at the National Archives in Kew.⁶⁰ The sheer volume of material makes studying urban policy rather unwieldy, especially as there was no single department responsible for urban planning and reconstruction. During this uncertain period there were also many alterations to the organisation of the control machinery and shifts in responsibility between departments. These factors are also given appropriate consideration.

In order to understand planners' responses to reconstruction it is necessary to turn to the places where their ideas and preoccupations found expression. Contemporary journals, planning competitions and conferences can all offer insights into the ways in which planning was represented, received and discussed. It was here that planners could publicly review new tasks and potential solutions and articulate their visionary plans for the future. To assess the German planning discourse and ideology I have consulted and analysed the content of several German planning periodicals including *Neue Bauwelt*, *Baukunst und Werkform*, *Die neue Stadt*, *Bauen und Wohnen*, and *Baurundschau*. German newspapers also contain information about local conditions, new planning projects and the experience of occupation. Local newspapers were, however, initially controlled by the occupation authorities and therefore subject to their restrictions.

⁶⁰ A. Birke (ed.) *Akten der Britischen Militärregierung in Deutschland Sachinventar 1945-55* (Hannover, 1993).

German local archives in the case study cities provided the records of the mayor and town clerk, housing, town planning and building departments amongst others. These were supplemented with maps and plans, photographs and other visual sources such as film. Insight into local civilian experiences has been gained through newspapers, several oral testimonies and letters, as well as other indicators of public response and participation, such as visitor surveys of exhibitions and public opinion surveys. In addition, sources relating to international organisations, personal planning networks and municipal connections have been consulted in order to understand the bonds which existed across national boundaries and to glimpse the epistemic communities which influenced postwar reconstruction.

Structure

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first part broadly sets up the context for the two parts which follow. It begins with a chapter on the challenges facing both occupiers and occupied in postwar German cities. The parameters for the reconstruction are defined which provides the conceptual framework for subsequent discussions. It considers the mechanics and scale of the tasks involved and shows how far reconstruction had progressed before 1945 and how actors understood the task of reconstruction. The second chapter presents the organisational framework of the British occupation and introduces the departments and key actors responsible for managing the urban environment in occupied Germany.

Part two analyses the policies of the British occupiers towards the urban environment in three key policy areas: housing (chapter 3), the revival of the building

industry (chapter 4) and town and country planning (chapter 5). The third part shifts focus to the experiences of particular cities and investigates urban reconstruction in practice. 'Making Homes' (chapter six) considers living conditions in the two case study cities and explores how housing policy developed in practice.

'Remaking Cities' (chapter seven) considers the processes by which cities reimagined their past and future and how these acts shaped their reconstruction plans. It also considers the strategies developed by cities to manage changes brought about by the demands and priorities of the occupiers. Furthermore, it explores the way in which new urban identities were presented to the outside world in a conscious act of place promotion.

Finally, the conclusion reflects on the nature of urban reconstruction under occupation and offers some general observations and directions for future research.

Part I

Chapter One

The Challenge of Reconstruction: British Zone Cities in Perspective

This chapter surveys aerial warfare during the Second World War and considers both the nature of the destruction to urban centres in the British Zone and the implications of this for the reconstruction process. Following this assessment, some of the difficulties involved in evaluating and tackling the damage caused by aerial warfare are explored. The urban catastrophe is then considered from the perspective of city dwellers and an insight is offered into the daily lives of civilians. The chapter concludes with an examination of how the many challenges of reconstruction were understood and conceptualised by contemporaries during the war and assesses how far reconstruction had progressed by 1945.

Aerial bombardment and the destruction of the built environment

When the Allies entered German cities to occupy them in the spring and summer of 1945, scenes of utter devastation and deprivation awaited them. One British observer described the Ruhr as ‘the greatest heap of rubble the world has ever seen’.¹ The diary of the poet Stephen Spender, written during a journey through the Ruhr in the summer of 1945, offers an account of misery and destruction repeated almost without exception in cities throughout Germany:

These destroyed bridges with their swooping girders ending in frayed ribbons of steel, splinters and shreds, make the whole landscape seem turbulent. And as the foreground to this dramatic scenery of destruction, there are dark dogged crowds of people with their bags and bicycles surging in utter silence over temporary bridges. Beyond the bridge the cathedral, solitary,

¹ Sir Orme Sargent referring to the Ruhr area of the British Zone quoted in Kettenacker, *Germany after 1945*, p.5.

almost undamaged, surrounded by ruins of buildings which seem to have been scratched and torn down by gigantic claws: scooped and tattered cliffs torn by tempests.²

Cities in the north-west of the country had suffered the most sustained and intense aerial bombardment because they contained much of Germany's industry, were most urbanised and in closest proximity to the Allied air bases.

It was during the First World War that the bombing of urban centres was first employed as a military strategy but it was the technical innovations and theoretical developments of the 1920s and 1930s which increased the likelihood of cities being on the frontline. The targeting of civilian areas was underpinned by the belief that sustained bombing would disrupt the economy of the enemy nation, undermine civilian morale and had the potential to act as a catalyst for social revolution.³ New navigational technology allowed precision bombing, tested in conflicts in Spain, China and Finland. From the perspective of military strategists at least, aerial bombardment was an acceptable and useful military tool, despite the fact that it rarely delivered the promised social revolutions or weakened civilian morale.⁴

During the Second World War aerial bombing began in September 1939 when Germany launched an attack on the small town of Wielun near Breslau in Poland. This was followed shortly afterwards by the first raids on Warsaw. In all, 160 Polish cities suffered damage or were completely destroyed.⁵ German raids against Britain began in the following year with attacks on London, Coventry, Southampton, Bristol and many

² Stephen Spender, *Journals 1939-83* (London, 1985), p. 62. Entry from 11th July 1945.

³ Michael Sherry, *The Rise of American Air Power* (New Haven, 1989), p.28.

⁴ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.4. Italian General Giulio Douhet believed that future warfare would be predominantly aerial. See Giulio Douhet, *The Command of the Air* (London, 1943).

⁵ Jochen Böhrer, 'Bombs on Polish Ground: The Fate of Warsaw and its Inhabitants during World War Two', conference paper delivered at the European Urban History Association Conference (Athens, 2004).

other industrial and port cities.⁶ Reprisals began soon after. Between 1940 and early 1942 British targets in Germany were mainly industrial: oil, light metal works and aero-engineering plants, and the communication and transportation systems which served them.⁷ However, by the autumn of 1940 it was argued that cities should be targeted if bombers were not able to reach their industrial targets. Soon after, the Political Warfare Department began advocating a policy which shunned primary industrial targets in favour of working-class housing in towns.⁸ By 1942, the concepts of ‘dehousing’ and ‘neutralising’ German civilians were made explicit.⁹ The rationale behind this strategy was that the targeting of cities would cause the dislocation of the industrial workforce and the disruption of industrial production which would, in turn, damage German war production and the economy. The attacks, which began against relatively small towns, were scaled up to larger cities in 1942. The first large scale area raid was in March of that year against Lübeck and destroyed about a third of the central area.¹⁰ This assault was publicly declared a reprisal for the bombing of Coventry in 1940. ‘Retribution’ was, in reality, just a smokescreen for the new strategy of deliberately targeting civilian centres. The bombing of Lübeck sparked the infamous Baedeker raids in which the German Luftwaffe directed its air power towards historic

⁶ Junichi Hasegawa, *Replanning the Blitzed City Centre* (Buckingham, 1992).

⁷ British Bombing Survey Unit, *The Strategic Air War Against Germany 1939-1945: Report of the British Bombing Survey Unit* (London 1998), p.3.

⁸ German War Propaganda in Germany, FO 371/26532.

⁹ In 1942, Professor Frederick Lindemann, a Jewish physicist and influential scientific advisor to the British government, presented the War Cabinet with a paper advocating a strategic bombing campaign against German cities. The paper became known as the ‘dehousing’ paper as the principal strategy was to destroy as many working class homes as possible, displacing their inhabitants and thus reducing the work rate of the industrial workforce and the capacity of German industry to support the war effort. The paper was based on studies of the effects of German bombing on cities like Birmingham and Hull. It was agreed by the Cabinet, became government policy and was implemented by Arthur “Bomber” Harris’ when appointed to RAF Bomber Command. British Bombing Survey Unit, *Strategic Air War*, p.7; Frederick Alexander Lindemann Obituary, *The Times*, 8 July 1957.

¹⁰ Magistrat Baudezernat Landeshauptstadt Kiel, *Wiederaufbau der Innenstädte Kiel, Coventry, Lübeck: ‘Chancen und Pläne’ Dokumentation zur Ausstellung* (Kiel, 1990), pp.6-7.

and culturally important British towns, chosen supposedly from the Baedeker travel guide to Great Britain. These attacks, coupled with the relatively weak British position in the war on the ground, served to escalate aerial bombardments against German cities after 1943. The combined offensive of British aerial assaults by night and American precision daytime attacks meant that from 1943 many German cities found themselves under almost constant bombardment from the air.¹¹ Besides military targets, axis and allied tacticians were now deliberately targeting cities of little or no military or industrial value. Breaking civilian morale may have been one motivation but the strategy was accompanied by a desire to destroy the cultural and architectural heritage of the enemy. In a war that was as ideological as it was territorial, the annihilation of all that the enemy held dear, the manifestations of its traditions and history, became necessary for victory. Such aims, executed by modern technology, were devastating for European cities.

Until recently it was believed that this strategy had neither succeeded in reducing industrial production nor in breaking morale. Indeed, the US Strategic Bombing survey deduced from its investigations that before 1943 the production of the German economy was not retarded by air raids.¹² Far from breaking morale, the attacks paradoxically appeared to intensify resistance against the enemy. Politicians positively encouraged identification with the soldiers on the front, drawing parallels between their bravery and sacrifice and that of civilians working in war industries in cities.¹³

¹¹ Diefendorf, *In the Wake of War*, p.7; Sebald, *Luftkrieg*; Friederich, *Der Brand*.

¹² British Bombing Survey, *Strategic Air War*, p.69.

¹³ Helen Jones, 'British Cities "In the Front Line": Representations and Realities, 1939-1945', conference paper delivered at the European Urban History Association Conference (Athens, 2004). One of the main differences between WW1 and WW2 was that there was no longer a distinction between 'home' and 'front'.

Furthermore, after air raids it was commonly noted that people felt a heightened sense of identification and pride in their city or area. Though it may not have broken morale in the enemy country, destruction did have a high propaganda value and raised morale back home. Sebastian Cox's recent research into the effects of aerial warfare has suggested the bombing war had a greater impact on the economy than was previously understood. Cox has argued that morale was demonstrably affected, production was decreased considerably, and many man hours were lost through the failure of workers to appear for work after a serious raid, and furthermore, that the concentrated and devastating attacks against transportation systems towards the end of the war were most successful precisely because of the earlier damage to transport nodes in urban centres.¹⁴

For millions of civilians the bombing campaigns were a central experience of their war. Clearly, the extent and nature of physical destruction within cities was of critical importance to the form of postwar reconstruction. The accompanying human and psychological damage, impossible to quantify, was no less important. Bombs that annihilated the fabric of cities also destroyed individuals, families and communities. The sites of physical destruction were also sites of murder and memory. These less tangible experiences influenced reconstruction in subtle ways.

Though efforts were made to protect civilians during the bombing, it is estimated that around 593,000 people in Germany lost their lives in air raids (compared with combined UK civilian deaths registered as 100,927) and a further 7 million lost

¹⁴ Sebastian Cox, 'The Overall Report in Retrospect' in British Bombing Survey, *Strategic Air War*, p.xxx.

their homes (the total England and Wales housing loss was approximately 450,000).¹⁵ In addition to this, up to 800,000 civilians were injured.¹⁶ Pressure on the housing supply was made more acute by the 11 to 14 million refugees who had to find a new home in Germany after they were forcibly expelled from territories in the east.¹⁷ While there is no doubt that British cities suffered during the Blitz, the scale of destruction was small in comparison to that experienced by cities in Germany. Hamburg lost ten times more of its central area through the aerial bombardments than London.¹⁸

Aerial warfare destroyed historic buildings, exacerbated existing housing shortages, confronted authorities with unprecedented challenges and changed cities forever. Less than 50 per cent of the building stock remained in most cities situated in the British Zone although the effect of this destruction on cities was by no means uniform. A closer examination of the degree, distribution and types of bomb damage in the British Zone, as well as the factors which determined these enables a more detailed assessment of the nature and extent of the urban catastrophe. How uniform was the damage to cities? What were the long-term implications of different types of destruction?

¹⁵ Von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau*, p.37

¹⁶ Ibid, pp.37-8; Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.11.

¹⁷ Brakman, Garretsen and Schramm, 'The Strategic Bombing of German Cities during World War Two and its Impact on City Growth', *Journal of Economic Geography*, 4 (2004), p.206.

¹⁸ Patricia Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People, Germans Under the British, 1945-50* (London, 2001), p.36.

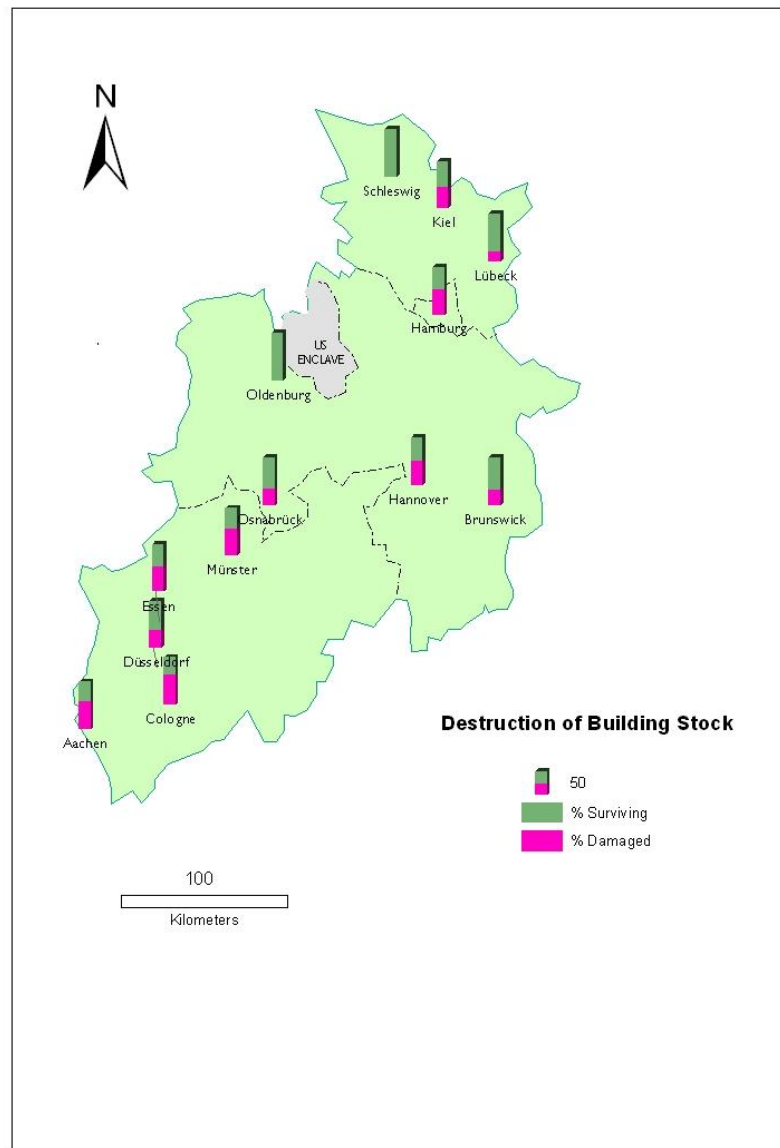


Figure 1.1 - Destruction in the British Zone of Germany¹⁹

Cities were bombed unevenly. While some cities suffered repeated attacks, Kiel, for example, was hit 91 times and Cologne 150 times, others were hit only once or twice.²⁰

Fewer raids did not, however, necessarily ensure that a city was more intact at the end of the war; Hildesheim suffered one major attack shortly before the capitulation in

¹⁹ From statistics in von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau*, pp.38-43.

²⁰ Brakman, 'Strategic Bombing', p.205; Kettenacker, *Germany after 1945*, p.5.

which 46 per cent of the city area was destroyed.²¹ As Diefendorf has argued, the degree of destruction was more dependent on the fabric of the city and the type of bombs used to target it, than on the number of hits it received. Medieval towns with large numbers of timber framed buildings, like Hildesheim, could be obliterated with a small number of incendiary bombs. Some cities were targeted with both incendiary bombs and high explosives in successive raids in order to destroy whatever had been spared by the fire.²² Those cities which had been targeted with explosives suffered a greater loss of foundations and obliteration of plot lines than those which had been targeted with incendiary bombs. Surviving foundations and plot lines enabled quicker and easier reconstruction but they also constrained more radical reconstruction.²³ In an environment of severe shortages of materials and labour, it would prove difficult to avoid making use of existing structures or to mount an effective argument against those who wished to maintain the status quo and to salvage what little was left of the surviving buildings. Partially functioning infrastructure was certainly a factor in the unwillingness displayed by some cities to carry out comprehensive urban renewal.²⁴

Destruction within cities was also uneven. The layout of the city was a critical factor in determining the loss of building stock. Older, densely populated areas of cities with narrow streets were destroyed most easily. Often a large percentage of the bombing was concentrated in particular districts, as bombing policy had deliberately targeted working-class populations and factories. East Hamburg suffered disproportionately in the infamous Hamburg firestorm of July 1943 when the city was

²¹ Von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau*, p.39.

²² Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.13.

²³ *Ibid.*, p.xv.

²⁴ Dieter Schott, 'Wege zur vernetzten Stadt – technische Infrastruktur in der Stadt aus historische Perspektive', *Information zur Raumentwicklung*, 5 (2006), p.251.

bombed five times in a matter of days. The bombing raid, popularly known as ‘the catastrophe’ killed 43,000 people. High explosives rained down on the city, followed by incendiary bombs, followed by another wave of explosives to prevent fire fighters from attending to the blaze. Bombs containing phosphorus ensured that they could not be extinguished with water. The ensuing firestorm created a vacuum which collapsed buildings and caused balls of fire to hurtle through the streets.²⁵ The case of the Hamburg firestorm also indicates the extent to which environmental conditions could play a part in the relative destruction of cities. The firestorm was intensified by ‘favourable’ weather conditions which allowed the inferno to spread quickly over an enormous area.

The timing of attacks affected how advanced reconstruction planning was by the end of the war. Cities attacked earlier in the conflict had spent longer considering reconstruction. One might speculate that individual, sudden, severe attacks may have had greater psychological impact than a series of smaller attacks, after which some attempts were usually made to remove rubble, at least along main transit routes. In these cases, life could continue as normal in some parts of the city.

One of the primary tasks in the first few months of the occupation was to survey and calculate the damage to cities caused by the aerial attacks. An accurate assessment of the damage sustained by cities was needed in order to establish the total amount of time and resources required for rubble to be cleared and housing needs to be met, and to apportion and allocate resources such as building materials, labour and funds to meet the needs of the worst hit towns and cities. Albert Speer’s Working Party

²⁵ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, pp.34-6; Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.6-7; Sebald, *Natural History*, pp.26-30.

for the Reconstruction of Cities Destroyed by Bombing, *Arbeitsstab Wiederaufbauplanung bombenzerstörter Städte*, had already engaged in producing bomb damage maps or *Schadenskarten*, but these were no longer accurate by the end of the war and often needed to be revised substantially. Those produced after 1945 were much more detailed and at a larger scale.²⁶ Assessments were made by building experts of the remaining standing buildings but one of the most common methods of quantifying and comparing the destruction in cities was to calculate the amount of rubble.

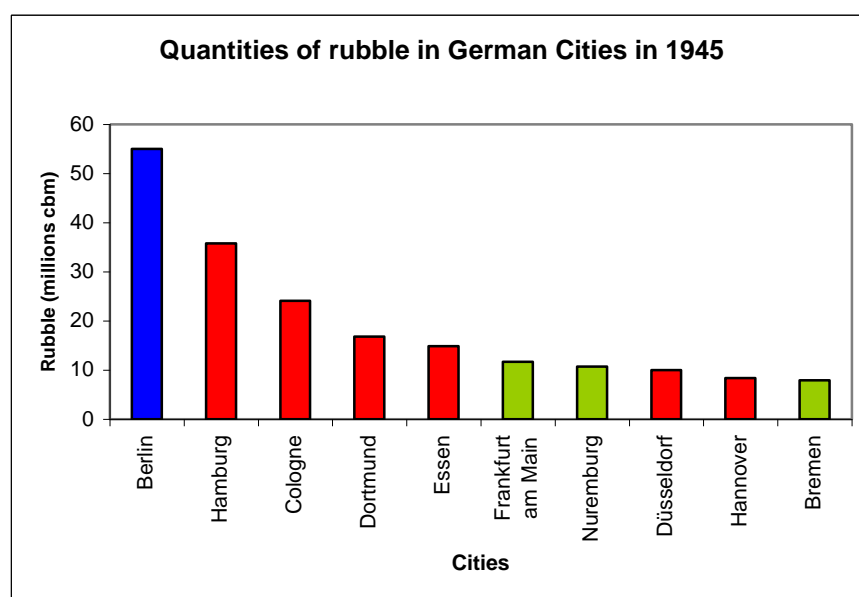


Figure 1.2 – Cities with the largest quantities of rubble in 1945

Figure 1.2 illustrates the relative burden of destruction falling to each of the western occupied zones.²⁷ Of the ten cities with the greatest amount of rubble six were in the British Zone (red), three lay in the US Zone (green) and one, Berlin, was jointly

²⁶ Wartime reconstruction planning in Germany did produce some plans such as the *Schadenskarten* but these were often out of date by the end of the war and did not reach the standards laid down by the British occupation government. See HASStK, Best.7102/1134.

²⁷ Bundesministerium für Vertriebene, Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte, *Dokumente deutscher Kriegsschäden* (Bonn, 1960), vol.1, p.50.

administered by all four powers (blue). Rubble was also often calculated on a per capita basis as a means of evaluating how quickly a city could be cleared by employing the labour of its inhabitants.

Table 1.1 – Five British Zone cities with the greatest amounts of rubble per capita

City	Rubble per capita in cubic metres
Cologne	31.2
Dortmund	30.9
Essen	22.4
Aachen	21.2
Hamburg	20.9

Source: *Dokumente Deutscher Kriegsschäden*, p.50.

Even per capita statistics can give a false impression of the resources required for a city to clear its rubble. Most calculations of this sort were based on the city's 1939 population figures and were therefore meaningless. Cologne's population fluctuated from around 40,000 to a little over 400,000 between May and October 1945, and did not reach its prewar level until early 1951.²⁸ Even figures calculated with more realistic population statistics take no account of the fact that the people remaining in the cities consisted mainly of women, children and elderly men.

The destruction of the urban fabric may have differed in character and scope but in every case it presented municipal authorities and occupiers with enormous problems in terms of housing urban populations and restoring transport networks and local services. Living conditions in cities were appalling. Those remaining inhabitants

²⁸ Bevölkerungszahlen, HASTK Acc 5/925.

who had failed to evacuate cities were often forced to live in cellars or bunkers or even what was left of buildings. As J. Cole, a writer and British soldier, reported:

Those towns we passed through that morning had not simply been bombed in any sense that we in England understood the process. They had been bombed and burnt and then the ruins had been pounded and pounded again...In a building which had only one set of rooms at the front, and no back, a man in pyjamas was shaving by a window.²⁹

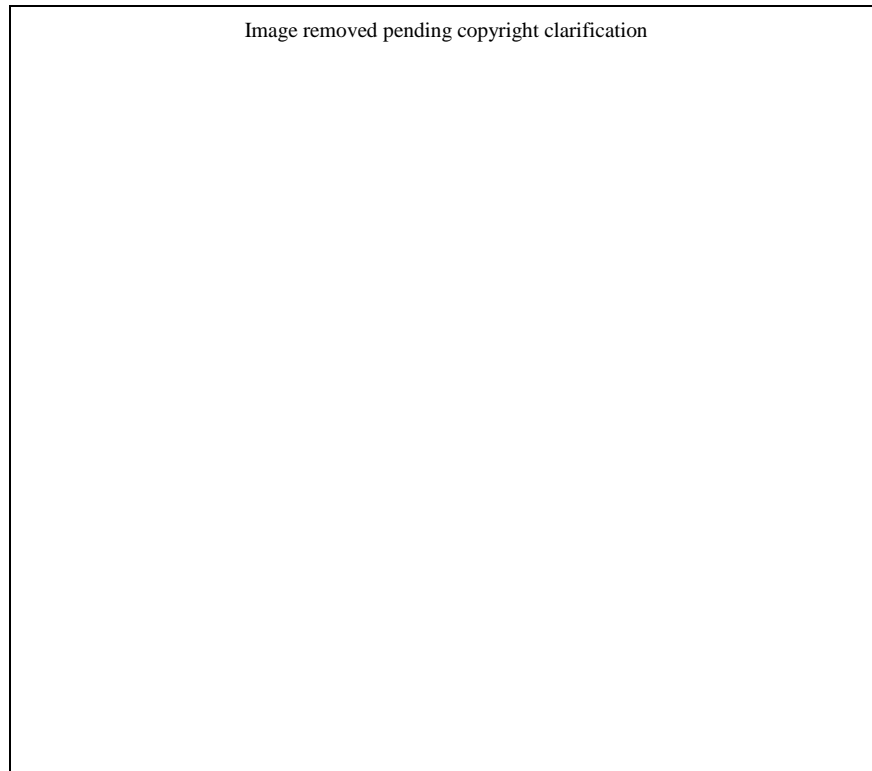


Figure 1.3 - A house on the Ring Strasse in Cologne, 1946³⁰

Housing was of the most primitive form and, because much of the destruction had affected multiple-unit buildings in the inner cities rather than single family houses in the suburbs, the poorer segments of the population suffered more than the wealthy.

Less visible but equally problematic was the disruption to the utilities which serviced properties, as one British Officer reported: 'There are very few cities in which the three main utilities – gas, water and electricity - are still functioning. In no city

²⁹ J. Cole, *My Host Michel* (London, 1955), p.16.

³⁰ 'Haus am Ring' (1946), Stadtkonservator Köln.

visited were all three functioning at the same time.’³¹ Service line damage varied according to the location of the services (above ground lines were obviously more likely to be destroyed than underground utilities) and the nature of the bomb damaged received. Underground utilities were unlikely to escape explosives but usually survived incendiary attacks. Disruption to utilities was not only inconvenient but also had serious implications for public health. Bombing had shattered sewage pipes so that raw sewage ran into the streets; vermin and disease were rife.³²

Transport networks had been a popular and vulnerable target for Allied attacks, especially towards the end of the war. Furthermore, Hitler had ensured that transport networks were ruined by Germans themselves in desperate, and ultimately futile, attempts to slow the advancing Allied armies.³³ Apart from the destroyed railway lines, bridges and blocked roads, the shortages of vehicles, fuel, tyres and engine parts further hampered movements around the zone. This disruption to transport networks exacerbated food and fuel distribution problems, preventing vital goods from being transported across the region and, in particular, from reaching cities. Supplies of food, for example, were often trapped in the countryside while urban populations slowly starved.

The experience of aerial bombardment was to have long-term implications for the form of reconstruction and lasting psychological effects on urban populations. Civilians experienced violence, social rupture and the dislocation of their communities. Instability generated by the physical destruction of cities was exacerbated by the collapse of the state and the general chaos of life in the early days of the occupation.

³¹ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.36.

³² Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.16-17.

³³ Kettenacker, *Germany after 1945*, p.5.

The tactics which arguably helped the occupiers to win the war, created new challenges for them to confront: disease, homelessness, poverty, hunger and unemployment.

City dwellers and the urban catastrophe

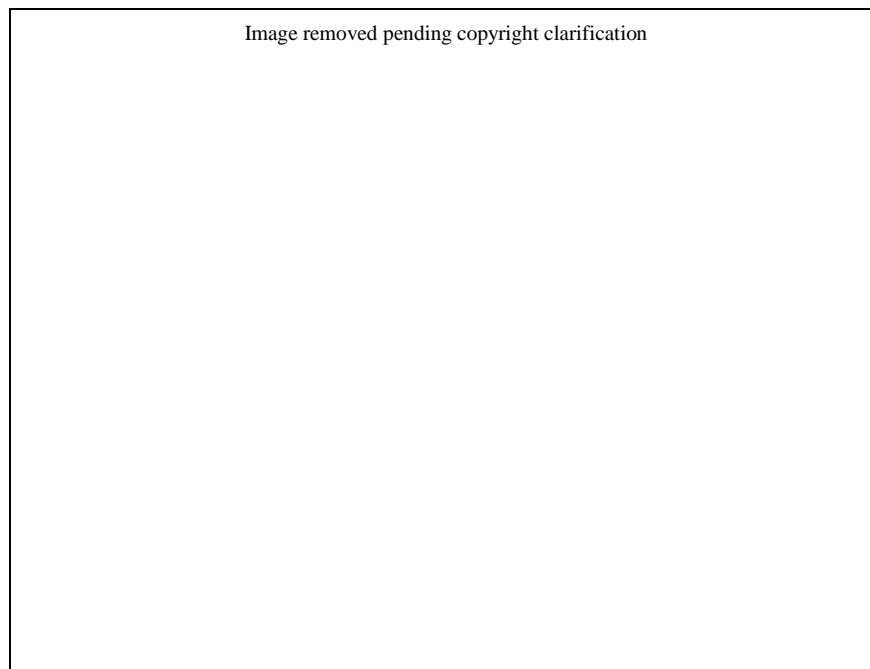


Figure 1.4 – View along Rheingasse taken from Thurnmarkt, 1946³⁴

What was it like to live in a German city in 1945? Photographs like the one of Cologne in figure 1.4 can be found adorning the covers of local history books in any bookshop in Germany.³⁵ These scenes offer a sense of the devastation wrought by the allied bombing campaign but they are also strangely dehumanising. The apparent emptiness and silence conceals the more disturbing reality that destroyed cities like Cologne were

³⁴ Rheingasse von Thurnmarkt (1946), Stadtkonservator Köln.

³⁵ Peter Fuchs, *Köln damals, gestern, heute: Vorkriegsansichten, Zerstörungsbilder und Wiederaufbaufotos im Vergleich* (Köln, 1998). This book is now in its twelfth edition.

not in fact empty. Cities, once proud, now more akin to an amalgamation of graveyard, flea market and shanty town, housed many thousands of people. A moment in time, captured in the photograph, gives us some sense of the physical destruction. But the picture is incapable of conveying the sounds, smells and taste of life in the ruined city, nor the internal, psychological damage to those who inhabited it.

In trying to communicate the scope of damage to cities, academic literature has, for the most part, mirrored the contemporary evaluations of destruction by measuring and comparing bomb damage statistics.³⁶ The extent of destruction is couched in terms of cubic metres of rubble, tonnes of explosive dropped and percentage of housing stock destroyed. Jörg Friedrich and Winfred Sebald attempted in their different ways to illustrate the profound psychological destruction by describing the civilian experience of aerial bombardment.³⁷ The now familiar photographs of ruined cities, like the one above, were accompanied in their works by lengthy sensory descriptions: the smell of burning flesh, the screams of dying humans and animals, the darkness, the commotion of fleeing people, in order to represent the terror and the chaos faced by city dwellers. Instead of the aerial perspective and statistical assessment of the bomber and tactician, we are offered the 'victim's' perspective and in appealing to our senses and describing events on a horrifyingly immediate human and personal scale, we are forced to imagine and identify with the victims.

Whether orchestrating identification with German civilians as victims is legitimate is a matter of intense debate.³⁸ Nevertheless in trying to understand postwar

³⁶ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.8-17; von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau*, pp.25-37.

³⁷ Friedrich, *Der Brand*; Sebald, *Natural History*.

³⁸ There has been a fierce debate in Germany in recent years over the question of German victimhood. One such hotspot of controversy was surrounding the portrayal of Hitler in the film *Der Untergang*, for

German society, the civilian perception of their experience does matter. Without question giving primacy to German civilian perceptions should be exposed to critical analysis, but if we are trying to understand how German society developed, we must try to get to grips with how people understood and interpreted their experiences rather than entering a cul-de-sac of contradicting these interpretations and questioning the validity of German victimhood. Rather our questions should be: how did German civilians make sense of what had happened to them? What do we know about their perceptions of destruction and city loss? What limitations did these experiences place on reconstruction? How did their experiences affect their attitudes towards their occupiers?

There are numerous contemporary German accounts which indicate surprise at the severity of the attacks against cities. Hanoverians, for example, believed that historic links with the British Royal Family would spare their city. It seems that some may have identified themselves first with their home town (or *Heimat*) and only second with the *Land* and thirdly with the nation, which may be a reflection of the relative autonomy historically experienced by German cities in contrast to Britain.³⁹ Attacks against cities were interpreted outside of the framework of national conflict. Few Germans equated the destruction of their local environment with their own support of the National Socialist regime, rather they lay the blame at the feet of their occupiers and former enemy. British occupiers engaged in costly public relations exercises to try to counter this attitude. One of these, a series of posters aimed at the

which Joachim Fest was the consultant historian. See for example the excellent critique by Wim Wenders, 'Tja, dann wollen wir mal', *Die Zeit*, 21 October 2004.

³⁹ The German Federal State consists of a central Federal Government and sixteen states or *Länder*. In Germany the states handle both state administration and execute most central government laws.

residents of Cologne, expressly showed images of their famous landmarks and explained in rhyming slogans that Cologne's inhabitants had Hitler and the National Socialists to thank for the destruction of important local historic monuments and their homes: 'Dem Kölner Dom wär nichts passiert, hätt Adolf Hitler nicht regiert.' and 'St Martin wie die Welt es kannte, eh Hitlers Krieg es Niederbrannte.'⁴⁰ One of the more unusual reproaches levelled at Britain came from the citizens of Würzburg, who believed that their city ought to have been spared because Churchill had stayed in a hotel there once! Whether they really believed this or not is difficult to say but there are enough accounts to suggest that there was widespread surprise and unhappiness. These mistaken beliefs of British civility may have intensified feelings of reproach towards their occupiers who they certainly held responsible for the destruction of their cities. During the first years of occupation, feelings of self-pity and resentment were fuelled further by harsh material conditions and by the apparent inability of the occupiers to relieve their suffering.

When confronted with the bomb damage statistics, a US State Department consultant, Hans Speier, 'was actually surprised at the 'low' figures, because [his] visual impression in city after city was of a loss larger than the figures indicated.'⁴¹ The gulf between perception and statistics indicated by the response above is deepened if one then considers the symbolic value of city losses. The destruction of cities represented far more than just a loss of bricks and mortar; people's homes, their religious and cultural buildings had gone. The schools, hospitals, universities, museums, libraries, galleries, theatres, shops, town halls which form a city were

⁴⁰ These posters are now held at the Kölner Stadtmuseum.

⁴¹ Quoted in Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.14-15.

affected. Familiar cityscapes and landmarks were irretrievably lost, threatening civic identities which were so often linked to the physical fabric; the body of the city had lost its face.⁴² Cologne once famed for its religious buildings and architectural heritage became little more than a showpiece of destruction. In the words of one British Housing Officer: 'Cologne proved to be one of the most interesting places you could wish to see, if you want to see bomb damage to housing at its best.'⁴³ For civilians the destruction of their physical environment was accompanied by a loss of their mental maps, making orientation around the city more difficult.

The collapse of the Nazi state, the destruction of its urban centres and the dislocation of the transport infrastructure splintered the country into thousands of isolated neighbourhoods. Without functioning central and local administrations, cities and their inhabitants were temporarily left to fend for themselves until order could be restored by the occupying powers. The priority for individuals was to secure the basic necessities for life such as food and shelter. Although civilians needed the occupying forces to restore law and order to their shattered towns, there was considerable anxiety about the impending occupation. Germans were especially fearful of the treatment they might receive under Russian occupiers as war-time Nazi propaganda taught them to expect violence, rape and pillage at the hands of the Soviet Red Army; a prophecy which was, unfortunately, fulfilled.⁴⁴ As the allied armies advanced, city dwellers fled urban areas and small towns to avoid the fighting. In the ensuing chaos and atmosphere

⁴² The destruction of the built environment has been shown to affect a person's orientation because of the confusion created in mental maps. See for example Hubbard, Lilley and Faire, 'Remembering Postwar Reconstruction: Modernism and City Planning in Coventry 1940-62', *Planning History*, 24 (2002), pp.7-20; Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1960).

⁴³ Report by Major Wilson, December 1945, FO 1051/799.

⁴⁴ Naimark, *Russians in Germany*, p.80; Anonymous, *A Woman in Berlin* (London, 2006).

of fear, basic instincts and drives ruled. Suicides were commonplace, as was the frantic hiding and looting of valuables.

In the areas occupied by the western powers, this situation was not protracted. Subdued city dwellers quickly began to return to their home towns once they realised they had little to fear from their conquerors. Many cities had been declared 'open' by the German authorities to avoid further civilian deaths so there was little active resistance, though few greeted their occupiers as liberators.

British reports at the beginning of the occupation offer a window into the state of German cities. Indeed, some accounts provide an insight into the assault on the senses that the ruined cities created. Victor Gollancz, journalist and champion of the German cause, described the smell of one city as 'a solid and continuous wall of congealed bad breath.'⁴⁵ The stench was generated not just by the rotting human flesh trapped beneath the crumbled buildings but by the many thousands of breaks in the sewage pipes and the vermin, rats and flies that thrived on the detritus amongst the ruins.

The poet Stephen Spender remarked: 'In the destroyed German towns one often feels haunted by the ghost of a tremendous noise. It is impossible not to imagine the rocking explosions, the hammering of the sky upon the earth, which must have caused all this.'⁴⁶ Those living in cities continued to experience destruction after the cessation of violence. City dwellers competed daily with the hazards of falling masonry as Heinrich Böll described:

Somewhere in those immeasurably silent nights loose stones would crumble or a gable collapse... It was often possible to look on in broad daylight as a gable slowly, almost ritually,

⁴⁵ Victor Gollancz quoted in Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.36

⁴⁶ Stephen Spender quoted in Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.31.

collapsed, mortar seams breaking apart, expanding like a net – and a shower of stones came rattling down...The spontaneous collapse of a high façade caused neither by blasting nor any other acute force is an unforgettable sight; at some unpredictable, much less calculable, moment this beautifully ordered structure, put together in cheerful confidence and pleasure gives way.⁴⁷

Descriptions like those above and small details given about everyday life help to build up an, albeit far from perfect, picture of life in cities. It is worth considering briefly some of the difficulties people faced as they tried to mete out an existence in the devastated cities. Bread and clothing were naturally scarce but the absence of services and basic items, previously taken for granted and now glaringly absent, was a source of constant surprise and frustration: there was no cutlery, sewing or knitting materials, shoelaces, pots and pans, scissors, paper, nails, string, envelopes, tap water, soap or medicines. Scavenging became an integral part of everyday life for people of all ages and classes.⁴⁸ In amongst the ruins individuals searched for food and tried to salvage materials which could be traded on the black market.

Securing food for the population and maintaining public health were two of the most pressing demands facing the occupiers. Food had to be brought into cities from the countryside and from the agricultural areas located in the other zones. Although they theoretically had the power to direct labour, the occupiers found that it was difficult to muster sufficient human resources for crucial tasks. During the first autumn of occupation, civilian manpower was needed to bring in the harvest but many people felt that their chance of survival would be greater if they used their time to scavenge rather than work. Money, in any case, was almost worthless and food allocations slow to appear. The vicious circle of the food crisis continued, food requiring labour, labour

⁴⁷ Heinrich Böll, 'Which Cologne?' (1965) in H. Böll, *Missing Persons and Other Essays* (New York, 1977) trans. Leila Vennewitz, p.24.

⁴⁸ Meehan, *Strange Enemy People*, p.33; Cole, *My Host Michel*, p.26.

needing food. Poor climatic conditions further increased food shortages and diminished the harvests. Undernourishment, poor living and working conditions, lack of heating, inadequate clothing and light and psychological stress caused a general deterioration in the health of the population and impaired the efficiency of the industrial workforce. Famine oedema, dietary imbalances and vitamin A and D deficiency were the cumulative effect of food shortages. Tuberculosis and venereal disease were also endemic. Other prevalent infections noted by British Public Health officers were typhus, paratyphus, scarlet fever, dysentery and diphtheria.⁴⁹ Only the reported cases appear in the British statistics and the British Zone as a whole was healthier than its urban populations.

Disease spread easily because of the severe overcrowding. The difficulties of accommodating the 20 million people living in the British Zone were increased by the influx of refugees from the east and so-called 'Displaced Persons'. Displaced Persons constituted the liberated forced labourers and survivors from concentration camps. Some of these roamed in bands through villages and towns raping and pillaging as retribution for their suffering under the Germans during the war. Millions of refugees had fled the Soviet advance, fearful of finding themselves occupied by Russians. Staggering numbers of foreign workers were also moving along roads. The presence of Displaced Persons and refugees was a source of tension; the more that migrated to a city, the more thinly its limited resources had to be spread.

The British Zone contained a chaotic mass of people moving from one locality to another looking for family members, work or food. Human beings swarmed over wrecked bridges, across blocked waterways, and along the tangle of twisted metal of

⁴⁹ Commission Re: Overcrowding in the British Zone, June 1946, FO 1010/8.

former railways. People wandered like ghosts through the cities carrying their belongings with them, searching, fleeing, lost. Doorways or piles of bricks where houses once stood were appended with little makeshift signs indicating where the surviving residents of a bombed out house could now be found, should one of their loved ones come looking for them.

The German population had offered little resistance to the occupation but they were certainly not law abiding. Crime was widespread, not limited to any particular class or age and born out of the terrible living conditions. Stealing fuel and food was so common that the newly created police force was near powerless to do anything about it.⁵⁰ Cigarettes replaced money in a flourishing Black Market. However, scarcity also inspired ingenuity: colanders and sieves appeared, made out of oil drums, and makeshift shoes were fashioned from cardboard and string.⁵¹

Towards reconstruction: Visions of the new urban form 1930-1950

The appalling urban conditions described above required the immediate attention of local officials, planners and the occupation authorities. War had certainly increased the urgency to improve the physical environment but, in fact, the necessity of a radical reconstruction of European cities had been realised well before the bombs began to fall.

⁵⁰ In a homily given on New Years Eve 1946, Cardinal Frings of Cologne provoked controversy when he appeared to condone the stealing of essential items, such as coal and food, if there was no possibility of obtaining these necessities legally. From this episode, the verb 'fringsen' entered the German language. Another interesting instance of this kind was the new use of the word 'organisieren' or 'besorgen' as euphemisms for 'stehlen'.

⁵¹ Many of these items are now on display at the Stadtmuseum in Cologne. 'Schleswig-Holstein Workers Skill and Ingenuity', *Buzz*, 3, no.2, June 1947, p.9; *British Zone Review*, 1, no.17, 11 May 1946, p.11.

Even before the war wrought destruction, the city was, for many, an unpleasant, unhealthy, and overcrowded place in which to live. Those pressing for radical urban renewal contrasted the unregulated, squalid nineteenth-century city with a brighter, ordered, more egalitarian one, in which a working man might enjoy living in a healthy domestic environment of his own.⁵² Criticism of decades of uncontrolled urban growth and expansion during the age of industrialisation was not confined to urban planners and architects but found expression in politics, art and literature. Revolutionary ideas had gathered momentum since the early years of the century and a number of groups were forming who desired not just an urban renaissance, but to harness and exploit modern technology and scientific advancements to improve the condition of humans to a level befitting the modern age.

The clearest expression of this call for change was found amongst the members of the modernist movement on the continent. This movement had widespread appeal but flourished particularly in Germany, Holland, the Soviet Union and France.⁵³ The 1920s were an extraordinarily fertile time for new ideas about urban living; the modernist commitment to social reform and economic equality produced new designs for housing and residential estates, employing novel materials and technologies in their construction of housing for all. In Germany, members of the Bauhaus were building social housing estates that were the envy of the planning profession in other parts of Europe.⁵⁴ Fresh ideas about the future of the city were conceived by Le Corbusier, who

⁵² Gordon Cherry, 'Reconstruction: its place in planning history' in Diefendorf, *Rebuilding Europe's Bombed Cities*, pp.210-11.

⁵³ Stephen V Ward, *Planning and Urban Change* (London, 1994), pp.62-5; John Gold, *The Experience of Modernism* (London, 1997); John Gold, *The Practice of Modernism* (London, 2007).

⁵⁴ Gordon Cherry, *Cities and Plans: The Changing Shape of Urban Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1988), p.107; Stephen V Ward, *Planning the Twentieth Century City: The Advanced Capitalist World* (Chichester, 2002), pp.82-5.

envisaged high rise cities set in large landscaped parks, as in his plan for the Ville Contemporaine in 1925.⁵⁵ Modernist planners from all over Europe backed the new functional town planning principles put forward by the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) in their renowned Charter of Athens of 1933, which outlined a rational approach to city planning using the principle of functional zoning.⁵⁶ Across the Atlantic, Clarence Perry developed his ideas of the 'neighbourhood unit' in 1929, and Frank Lloyd Wright created Broadacre, the ultimate vision of a decentralised city.⁵⁷ Solutions to suburban sprawl and overcrowding in the inner cities harnessed modern materials and techniques, revolutionising the appearance of the urban fabric.

During the 1920s and early 1930s, Britain remained relatively conservative, still committed to the much-loved principles of the Garden City. An exception was the small but growing group of architects associated with the Modern Architectural Research Group (MARS), founded by the young Welles Coates, Maxwell Fry and Morton Shand in 1933. They were closely allied with the CIAM during the course of the 1930s and 1940s, and by the end of the war had become a strong voice in the urban planning profession in Britain.⁵⁸

Foundations had thus been laid for radical reconstruction right across Europe, independent of wartime destruction, and some professionals were already receptive to the call for urban renewal. Reconstruction was, therefore, not just an answer to the damage caused by aerial warfare, but was already considered the solution to long-term urban decay and slow degradation of the city fabric. By the early 1930s, architects and

⁵⁵ Ward, *Twentieth Century City*, p.99.

⁵⁶ Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, p.107.

⁵⁷ Ward, *Twentieth Century City*, pp.116-25.

⁵⁸ Nicholas Bullock, *Building the Post-War World: Modern Architecture and Reconstruction in Britain* (London, 2002), pp.27-42.

planners across Europe were already thinking about how cities should be improved and something of a consensus was being reached about the form that this renewal should take.

The threat presented by aerial warfare, coupled with the problems of overcrowding in the inner city, were factors influencing schemes of decentralisation. In Britain, the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Industrial Population, set up in 1937, examined the need to decentralise London and to relocate some of its industries elsewhere. The Commission produced the Barlow Report in 1940, which helped shape urban planning in Britain for the next half of the century.⁵⁹

In Germany, political ideology drove urban renewal plans but the National Socialists had a confusing, contradictory, almost schizophrenic attitude towards large cities. On the one hand they were considered degenerate, unnatural places. Like their British counterparts, German planners subscribed to the idea of decentralising urban populations and planned to evacuate one-third of Germany's city inhabitants and resettle them in the countryside. But cities were also essential to the Third Reich, as centres of industrial production and as symbolic arenas, which could be sculpted to reflect the power and success of the regime. From October 1937, planners were called to respond to Hitler's Representative City programme, which assigned specific symbolic roles to many German cities and required them to produce plans commensurate with their significance as centres of the Nazi empire. The *Neugestaltung*, or remodelling, of cities was supposed to demonstrate Germany's world domination in physical form.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Cherry, *Cities and Plans*, pp.110-11.

⁶⁰ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.160-9.

This spirit determined approaches towards solving old problems associated with the cities of the nineteenth century. Although the avant-garde was rejected, modernism in technical fields, such as engineering and design, was embraced as a symbol of progress. By 1943, some German planners had moved beyond representative cities and were looking at the broader issues facing urban areas as a result of the both the wartime destruction and longer-term decay, and the new requirements for a modern, twentieth century city, for example efficient traffic planning and functional zoning.

Many of the planning theories developed in Germany displayed similarities with key concepts in other countries. Reichow and Gutschow's principle of the *Ortsgruppe als Siedlungszelle* shared many elements with the concept of the 'neighbourhood unit'.⁶¹ These similarities allowed the concept to be purged of its Nazi ideology and survive into the postwar period.

By the early 1940s, it was clear that the reconstruction of the damage caused by aerial warfare would be accompanied by broader programmes of urban renewal. Reconstruction raised difficult questions about precisely what should be reconstructed, how and by whom this should be done, and to what extent immediate and pressing needs should be allowed to eclipse more considered planning proposals which might take longer to prepare. Also, how could these visions of a new urban form be reconciled with historic preservation?

Some of these issues were considered by the Nazi *Arbeitsstab Wiederaufbauplanung*, a working party set up by Albert Speer when Hitler demanded

⁶¹ Stephen Ward, 'Re-examining the International Diffusion of Planning' in Robert Freestone, *Urban Planning in a Changing World* (London, 2000), pp.46-7.

that plans be made for the reconstruction of Germany's war-ravaged cities. The core members of the group numbered about twenty, including Konstanty Gutschow, Friedrich Tamms, Rudolf Hillebrecht and Rudolf Wolters. The tasks entrusted to them included the development of a process for surveying the nature and extent of bomb damage and the creation of a set of principles which would guide future planning. They were also asked to produce reconstruction plans for 42 cities which had been selected for the first wave of reconstruction.⁶²

Evaluating the direct impact of the *Arbeitsstab* is extremely difficult. Even for those cities where reconstruction plans had been prepared during the war, significant alterations were necessary. At the very least, any overt references to Nazi ideology, grandiose Nazi public buildings and monumental axes had to be removed. Planners employed by cities after the war had their own conceptions of the most appropriate designs for the city. Rudolf Schwarz's postwar plans for Cologne, for example, were vastly more conservative than those produced by the *Arbeitsstab* during the war. Furthermore, although the guidelines produced by Gutschow instructing local planners how to collect accurate statistics of bomb damage and represent these cartographically acquainted planners with appropriate surveying techniques, these were only issued to planning departments in the final year of the conflict when local planning officers were simply unable to keep pace with the rate of destruction. Surveys produced during this period were also mostly obsolete after the war. Likewise, Gutschow's provisional planning guidelines, though comprehensive, were not widely adopted within the planning profession outside of his circle of friends and colleagues. Perhaps the most accurate assessment of the influence of the *Arbeitsstab* came from Gutschow himself:

⁶² Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.170-6.

‘when we finally come to reconstruction in practice, it will have been useful that a small circle of men will not have begun at that moment to think but rather have been racking their brains over it for some time and at least will be far enough along to know where the problems are.’⁶³

The political, economic and legal framework for planning collapsed with the Nazi state. German planners could not expect any guarantees of support for urban planning at all from their occupiers, let alone assume that they might be able to implement any of their earlier plans. The complete power granted to the occupiers by unconditional surrender ensured that any continuity could only occur with their compliance and they might even choose to adopt an authoritarian colonial style regime, as the French were initially inclined to do. There could be no question of any Nazi or monumental planning elements remaining in any new plans that would be drawn up. Neither could they expect anything like the extensive powers afforded to them by the National Socialist regime, which had been so attractive to many German architects. Reconstruction in Germany, more than anywhere else, could not be a merely technical affair and had to be understood in the broadest political sense of the word: reconstructing the foundations of life and culture. Urban planning could, and indeed must, have a calculated influence on people’s political behaviour.

In the meantime, a new leader had emerged in the field of postwar urban planning. Britain had been developing a comprehensive planning apparatus which made concepts and tools available to municipalities to guide them through everything from the redesign of their central areas to the construction of standardised, affordable

⁶³ Quoted in Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.179.

housing.⁶⁴ The British Government pledged a better future for the people of Britain. Germany had slipped from its position as leader in the field in urban planning and in 1945 did not have the tools available to implement any ambitious reconstruction plans. The *Arbeitsstab* proposals had not been widely supported and an appropriate planning apparatus was not yet in place. Plans were obsolete and the tools were lacking with which to implement them.

Reconstruction was understood firstly, in terms of the broad urban problems generated by uncontrolled growth and secondly, in terms of satisfying immediate needs caused by wartime destruction. The challenge was to reconcile emergency demands with longer-term desires for a new urban ideal form. Cities were already in need of attention but war accelerated destruction and increased the need for immediate solutions. It compressed the available time for considering and responding to longer-term urban decay. Furthermore, destruction could not be controlled nor targets chosen, as would be the case in a programme of urban renewal. Destruction did present opportunities by removing some of the obstacles to radical renewal, such as opposition and objections to the loss of existing buildings. But in many respects planners had not had enough time to assess the problem and were not yet ready with the solutions, nor were material conditions conducive to widespread urban renewal.

⁶⁴ Peter Hennessy, *Never Again* (London, 1992), pp.169-74.

Chapter Two

Occupation and the Management of the Urban Environment

This chapter explores the framework for the management of the urban environment under British occupation. It begins with a discussion of Allied policies towards Germany, which draws out the differences between the Allies in their approach to the occupied country. There is then a short discussion of the legal basis of the occupation, British planning for the occupation and the structure of the Military Government in the British Zone. Taken together, these sections evaluate the extent to which the British Government and British officers on the ground were adequately equipped to deal with the tasks they faced. The concluding section delves deeper into the administration of the two key departments within the British Military Government which were responsible for aspects of urban reconstruction.

Negotiating Allied policies towards Germany

The Allies made some limited attempts from 1942 onwards to consider the fate of Germany after her defeat but when the negotiations seemed to be producing more discord than constructive policies it was decided to postpone the major political decisions concerning the future of Germany until after the war. The first priority had to be to maintain the alliance and ensure victory. Wartime conferences in Tehran and Yalta thus generated only loose agreements such as a commitment to unconditional

surrender, planning for the Nuremberg trials and an agreement on the four power administration of Greater Berlin.¹

In so far as they existed, Allied policies towards Germany could be extremely inconsistent. Even as Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin discussed the division and dismemberment of the defeated nation, the European Advisory Committee were left in the dark and so continued to plan on that basis that the country would remain unified.² With glaring deficiencies at a fundamental level, it is small wonder that the Allies were incapable of defining more detailed policies to govern every day life in postwar Germany.

The expectation that the Potsdam conference would provide an opportunity to resolve the principal issues surrounding the future of Germany was soon revealed to be a vain hope. The negotiations at Potsdam in July and August of 1945 were tense and further highlighted, if indeed it was necessary, that the Allies would struggle to agree on reparations, the frontiers of Poland and countless other issues. What did come out of the conference was a broad agenda for policies in Germany. The country was to be denazified, demilitarised, dismantled and democratised.³ At their most basic level, the aims of the Allies were to maintain security, eradicate Nazism and exact reparations. While the importance of democratising Germany in order to realise these aims was a point on which they could all agree, their conceptions of what was meant by the term 'democracy' and how one should go about achieving it were quite different.⁴

¹ Mary Fulbrook, *Concise History of Germany* (Cambridge, 1990), p.204.

² Turner, 'British Occupation', Chapter 1.

³ Kettenacker, *Germany after 1945*, p.14.

⁴ Marshall, *Origins*, p.i.

The western Allies chose to assume authority for the tasks of restoring the rule of law and basic services. For the time being, all political organisations were banned.⁵ It was felt that the German people simply were not ready assume the responsibility inherent in political activity; to allow them to revive political parties and organisations would threaten the very security the Allies hoped to achieve through the occupation. In contrast, the Soviets quickly licensed political parties, along with trade unions and used their power to bolster the political left, in particular the German Communist Party. The Soviet Military Government had different priorities and forged ahead with their land reform policies and their first structural changes to the economy.⁶

Each of the Allies occupied a unique place in the new world order and their desire to protect and strengthen these positions took precedence over any notions about what might be best for Germany. The Second World War had caused significant shifts in the balance of power in Europe and Germany was the chief battleground in an ideological war waged by two new superpowers. Despite their commitment to security against German aggression, it quickly became clear to the western Allies that they had more to fear from the Soviet Union and Communism than Germany and Nazism.

But even among the western powers there were differences of opinion. The United States, ‘defender of the free world’, had emerged from the war a much stronger military and economic power than Britain which staggered under the weight of the economic burdens incurred during the war and was clearly stretched by its disparate political commitments across the Empire. The United States saw the British Empire as

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Naimark, *Russians in Germany*, pp.10-16.

an anachronism and steadfastly opposed any measures in Germany which suggested imperialism at work.

American aims were approximately the same as those of Britain. Although the United States did not want to remain in Germany indefinitely, neither they nor Britain wanted to repeat the disastrous consequences of the premature withdrawal of troops that had caused so much grief after the First World War. In the long-term, the United States wanted to create stable, democratic countries from which they could reap material benefits through a free market system of trade. With the exception of denazification, the United States was less interventionist in local affairs than the other Allies, preferring to allow the Germans to decide for themselves how to run their Zone. There were other, subtle ways in which they encouraged the adoption of American principles. For example, by imposing certain political sanctions to gain access to its economic aid, the European Recovery Programme, the United States was able to coerce countries into adopting particular financial and managerial practices.

Predictably, France was the most consistently obstructive to Germany's political and economic revival. After a century of intermittent conflict with its neighbour, France perceived the German threat the most keenly and thus the core of French policy was security against Germany. The French, like the Russians, had suffered the Nazis on their soil and French public opinion was, therefore, firmly in favour of a strictly punitive policy. France's initial desire to destroy her former enemy was, however, tempered by postwar realities. France recognised slowly that the best

way of controlling any future resurgence of German aggression was through its integration into a stable European community of nations.⁷

Britain's relationship with the rest of the world had been turned upside down by the war. From a position of economic strength, she emerged from the war in a position of financial dependency on the United States and with more debts than any other country in the world and a balance of trade deficit running into thousands of millions pounds.⁸ Despite having won the war, Britain had lost much of her status and political power.⁹ As von Sehr-Thoss has argued, British policy walked a tightrope between security against Germany and security against Communism through Germany.¹⁰ She was caught in a dilemma: strengthening Germany and the industrial heartland, the *Ruhrgebiet*, might bring about a renewed security threat from Germany but keeping Germany weak guaranteed a further, and increasingly untenable, economic burden.

Knee-jerk responses, including the US Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau's plans to make Germany into an agrarian state, rarely got the upper hand in British occupation policies. The British Government leant towards the pragmatic and tried to avoid policies which were likely to provoke strong resistance from the German people. With the exception of the allied dismantling policies, the British faced few challenges to their authority. Notwithstanding some suggestions to the contrary, Britain did not primarily exploit the occupation for its own financial ends by eliminating competition.

⁷ Von Sehr-Thoss, 'Unprecedented', p.20.

⁸ Alec Cairncross, *Years of Recovery: British Economic Policy 1945-51* (New York, 1985), pp.8-12.

⁹ D. C. Watt, *Britain Looks to Germany* (London, 1965), p.53.

¹⁰ Von Sehr-Thoss, 'Unprecedented', p. 15.

Equally Britain's attempts to encourage the reconstruction of the Germany economy should not be viewed as altruistic; to do so was simply in their best interest.¹¹

The presence of the United States was vital for the success of British security aims. If the United States was to withdraw after two years, as they had originally proposed, the Soviet Union would fill the power vacuum left behind. But deepening the involvement of the United States in Europe was, for Britain, a double-edged sword, because it led inevitably to a decrease in British influence and the ceding of even more power to the new political giant. This was particularly apparent with the end of the Lend-lease agreement and the convertibility crisis of 1947, brought about by tough US economic policies towards Britain.¹²

Britain's approach to the administration of Germany could best be described as that of a 'centralised bureaucracy'.¹³ The victory of the Labour Government in the General Election of 1945 changed the direction of British policy towards Germany very little. The new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, had been involved in many of the Allied negotiations as a member of the coalition and there was a much higher degree of accord amongst the Conservatives and Labour over foreign policy than there was over domestic policy. Although the new British Labour Government had a clearly defined policy of moving Britain towards socialism, there was no obvious attempt to export this to Germany.¹⁴

At the highest political level, there was an extraordinary absence of will to engage with Germany and the Germans. Neither Attlee nor the Foreign Secretary,

¹¹ Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, p.204.

¹² Milward, *The Reconstruction of Western Europe*, pp.1-19.

¹³ Kettenacker, *Germany*, p.27.

¹⁴ Turner, *British Occupation Policy*, Conclusion.

Ernest Bevin, liked or trusted the German people and there was little faith in the abilities of the German Socialist Party, the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, because of its failure to prevent Hitler's ascent to power. So unlike the Soviets, they did not favour one political party over the others. The Prime Minister's only visit to occupied Germany was in 1948, during the Berlin airlift, and even then he never left Tempelhof airport. Remarkably, Bevin also avoided visiting the country. Among Cabinet members, the day-to-day running of Germany was overshadowed both by Britain's other international commitments and by comprehensive domestic reforms. For the British Government, Germany was a serious financial burden but its political centrality in the battle between east and west at least ensured the continued involvement of the United States in European affairs. Before long, and in spite of the existence of the combined Allied Control Council, the differing Allied political and ideological priorities soon left their mark on the identities of the four occupation zones.

The legal foundation for the occupation of Germany

The legal foundation for the occupation was in the form of two documents, the *Act of Military Surrender*, signed on 8th May 1945, and the *Berlin Declaration Concerning the Defeat of Germany and the Assumption of Supreme Authority by the Allied Powers*, signed on 5th June 1945.¹⁵ The first of these offered the surrender of the German Army but had insufficient authority to convey the entire German nation and her people into Allied hands. The Berlin Declaration, on the other hand, granted the Allies complete sovereignty over the German state. The unconditional surrender opened up the

¹⁵ Beate Ruhm von Oppen, *Documents on Germany Under Occupation 1945-54* (London, 1955), pp.22-30.

possibility of a different kind of occupation from those that had been seen in the past, one which fell somewhere between a belligerent occupation and annexation. This unusual case had no legal precedent so that the existing international laws which would otherwise come into force in an occupied country simply did not apply.¹⁶

Apart from the documents which granted the Allies sovereignty, they also made use of the new United Nations Charter, signed in the summer of 1945, which had established the United Nations and superseded the League of Nations agreements in existence since the end of the First World War. The purpose of the UN Charter was to ensure that its members maintained a commitment to peace and allow legal collective action to be taken by the international community against aggressive nation states to achieve this aim. Furthermore, the charter contained provisions which allowed political controls to be applied in order to enforce and maintain peace. These provisions were used to buttress radical political approaches to demilitarisation and denazification.

There were some similarities between Britain's relationship with occupied Germany and with countries in the Empire. Britain administered the Empire through 'indirect rule', using existing institutions to govern and control with minimal manpower. British officers were quite used to effecting British-inspired 'improvements' in this way in matters such as public health and education. In his memoirs, Noel Annan, a British officer within the Political Affairs Division relates that some of his colleagues brought their colonial attitudes to Germany and treated Germans as colonial officers treated the 'natives'.¹⁷ It was intended that occupied Germany should be governed in the same way, with the British occupation authorities

¹⁶ Adam Roberts, 'What is a Military Occupation', p.268 and p.302. The state of war with Germany was officially ended in July 1951.

¹⁷ Annan, *Changing Enemies*, p.157.

adopting a mere supervisory role. However, this strategy soon proved impractical. Although Town Councils were reformed at a fairly early stage, Britain retained a high degree of direct control in Germany until after 1947, when more significant powers began to be devolved to the local authorities through the passing of Ordinance 57.¹⁸

British planning for the occupation of Germany

Of all the Allies, Britain made the most extensive preparations for the occupation of Germany. Planning had begun four years earlier when the Foreign Office set up numerous groups of specialists, academics and civil servants to provide them with a series of recommendations and ideas from which they could draft the directives which would govern the most important aspects of occupation policy in Germany. German exiles were also invited to contribute their knowledge so there was at least some understanding of German affairs.¹⁹ A *Handbook for Military Government* and a series of technical manuals were published to offer guidance to British officers in Germany²⁰ but did not proscribe how officers were to put into action the recommendations. This allowed for a high level of autonomy in the implementation of policy and room for pragmatic approaches to tackling problems on the ground.

Working parallel to the Foreign Office, there was a separate planning department within the War Office whose job it was to co-ordinate British plans with those of the American planning group of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF).²¹ During these early planning phases, Germany

¹⁸ Von Oppen, *Documents*, pp.192-5.

¹⁹ Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, pp.1-17.

²⁰ Ibid, p.193.

²¹ Ibid, pp.17-37.

represented the greatest threat to security so policies were rather more punitive than they later became in practice.

As well as the dearth of international policy directives there were problems with the organisation and administration of the groups described above. The experts employed to draw up occupation guidelines did not receive a clear set of aims and objectives from the Government.²² The results lacked coherence with each group founding their recommendations according to their perception of the 'German problem' and in particular, their explanation as to why the German people had embraced Nazism. Some concluded that the German nation was inherently militaristic and submissive to authority, while others believed that the Germans needed only to be re-educated and shown the 'best example' of a functioning democracy, i.e. the British way of life.²³ Naturally, the two interpretations required radically different solutions. In the event, the path taken was somewhere between the two.

The structure of the British control machinery

The administrative structure of the British control machinery changed several times during the period of occupation in response to both international political developments and domestic pressures. The formation of Bizonia through the fusion of the US and British Zones in early 1947, for example, created new bizonal organisations which further complicated the administrative hierarchy. Furthermore, the experience of administering the occupied country raised questions about the efficiency of particular parts of the British apparatus which brought about further changes. It is

²² Watt, *Britain Looks to Germany*, p.31.

²³ Annan, *Changing Enemies*, pp.159-64.

very important, therefore, to understand at each point of the occupation, which organs were in existence and the nature of the relationship between them. A description of how and why the control machinery evolved is worthy of an entire monograph; the following explanation of the British control machinery should therefore be understood as a simplified summary of the main features and changes.

During the period of four power rule, important occupation policies were negotiated at allied level within the Allied Control Authority. At the highest level was the Allied Control Council which consisted of the Allied Military Governors. Any new piece of allied legislation had to be passed unanimously by this group.²⁴ As Turner has described, in practice, by the time legislation reached this level, the authorisation was more or less a formality.²⁵ New allied laws were generated by one of the twelve functional directorates. Within each of the twelve directorates, there were numerous sub-committees and working parties responsible for the various policies of that function. The legislation and policies they produced were then passed on to the co-ordinating committee of Deputy Military Governors. This was the level at which the detail of legislation was thrashed out between the interested parties and an agreement negotiated.²⁶

²⁴ Turner, *Reconstruction*, p.359.

²⁵ Ibid, p.362.

²⁶ Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, p.248.

Organisation of the Allied Control Authority

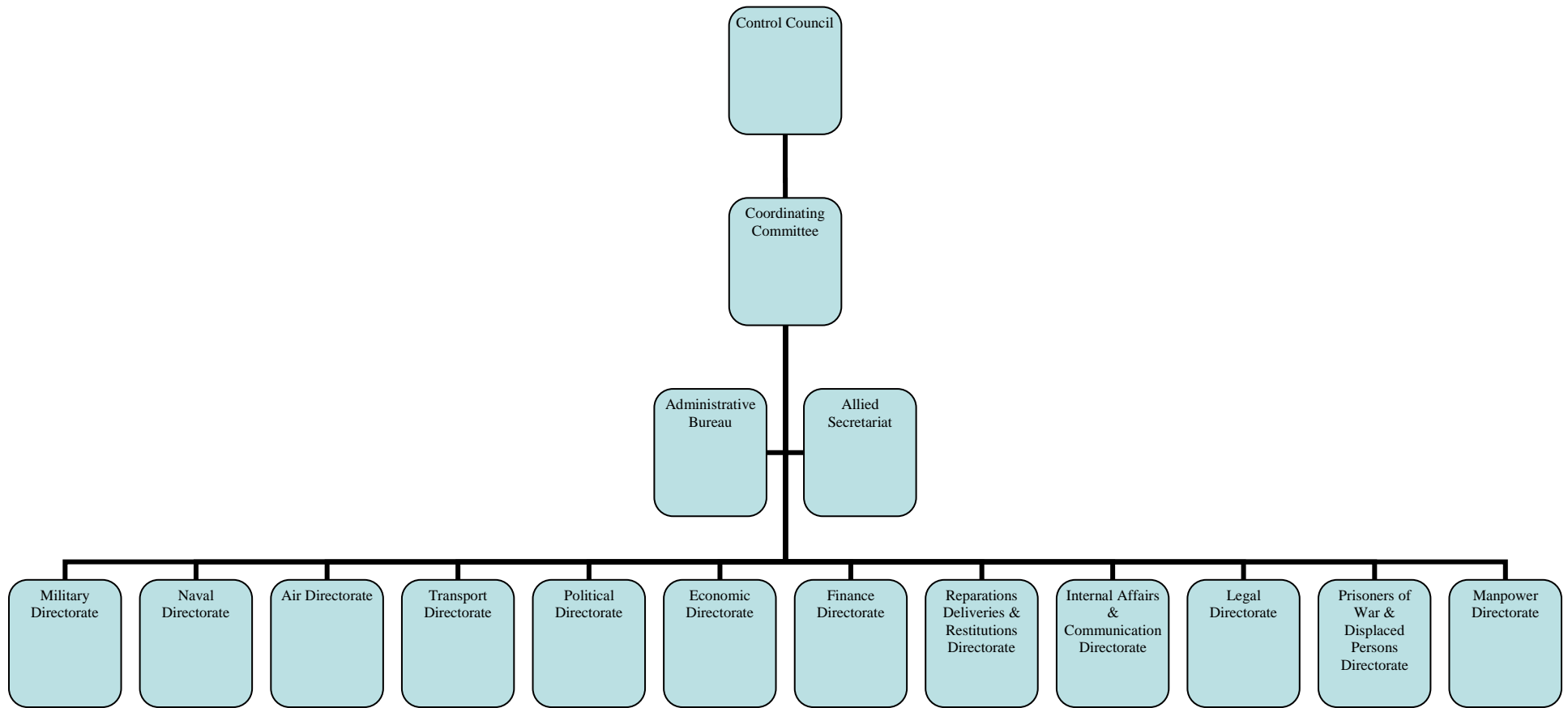


Figure 2.1 – Organisational structure of the Allied Control Authority

Source: Guide to the Functions and Organisation of the Allied Control Authority and the Control Commission for Germany (British Element), September 1945, FO 371/55879.

The Allied Control Council (ACC) met monthly to consider the countless laws being drafted by the tens of thousands of civil servants employed by the directorates. The machine was monstrously large and correspondingly sluggish. Even when legislation was eventually agreed and passed by the ACC, its implementation relied completely on the will of the Zonal commanders to put in to force. In some cases they simply ignored or only partially implemented the agreed legislation. The implementation of the denazification decree illustrates this point rather well: the official Allied policy was pursued vigorously by the Americans who tried more than eight times as many Germans as either the Russians or the British.²⁷

In the absence of a central Government, the Allies were free to organise the administration of their zones as they wished with the result that each Military Government in Germany was different. In the British Zone, the Military Government units were assigned in a strict hierarchy to particular areas or cities.²⁸ The most senior detachments were responsible for the provincial level of Military Government and were designated 'P' detachments, next came the regional units 'L/R' and the smallest were at district level 'K'.²⁹

At the end of August 1945, these Military Government Detachments handed over the administration of the Zone to the Control Commission for Germany (CCG).³⁰ The first task of the CCG was to transform these detachments into civilian units which would act as the local executive division. According to international law, the CCG was still a military government but every effort was made to give the administration a civil rather

²⁷ Aidan Crawley, *The Rise of Western Germany 1945-72* (London, 1973), p.45.

²⁸ Turner, *Reconstruction*, p.359.

²⁹ Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, p.227.

³⁰ Turner, *Reconstruction*, p.359.

than a military character. Due to the destruction of the larger cities within the zone, Zonal Headquarters, which was the centre for the functional organisations, was based not in one town, but in five small towns in Westphalia.

The transfer of control was gradual. Civilian specialists were recruited in Britain while some military officers were retained after being demobbed to continue their work with the Commission. At the Zonal HQ of the CCG, the administration was divided into twelve divisions, corresponding to the Allied Control Council directorates. These divisions were further sub-divided into branches which handled particular aspects of German life. Housing Branch, for example, was a department within Manpower Division, while Building Industries Branch, a department within the Economic Division.

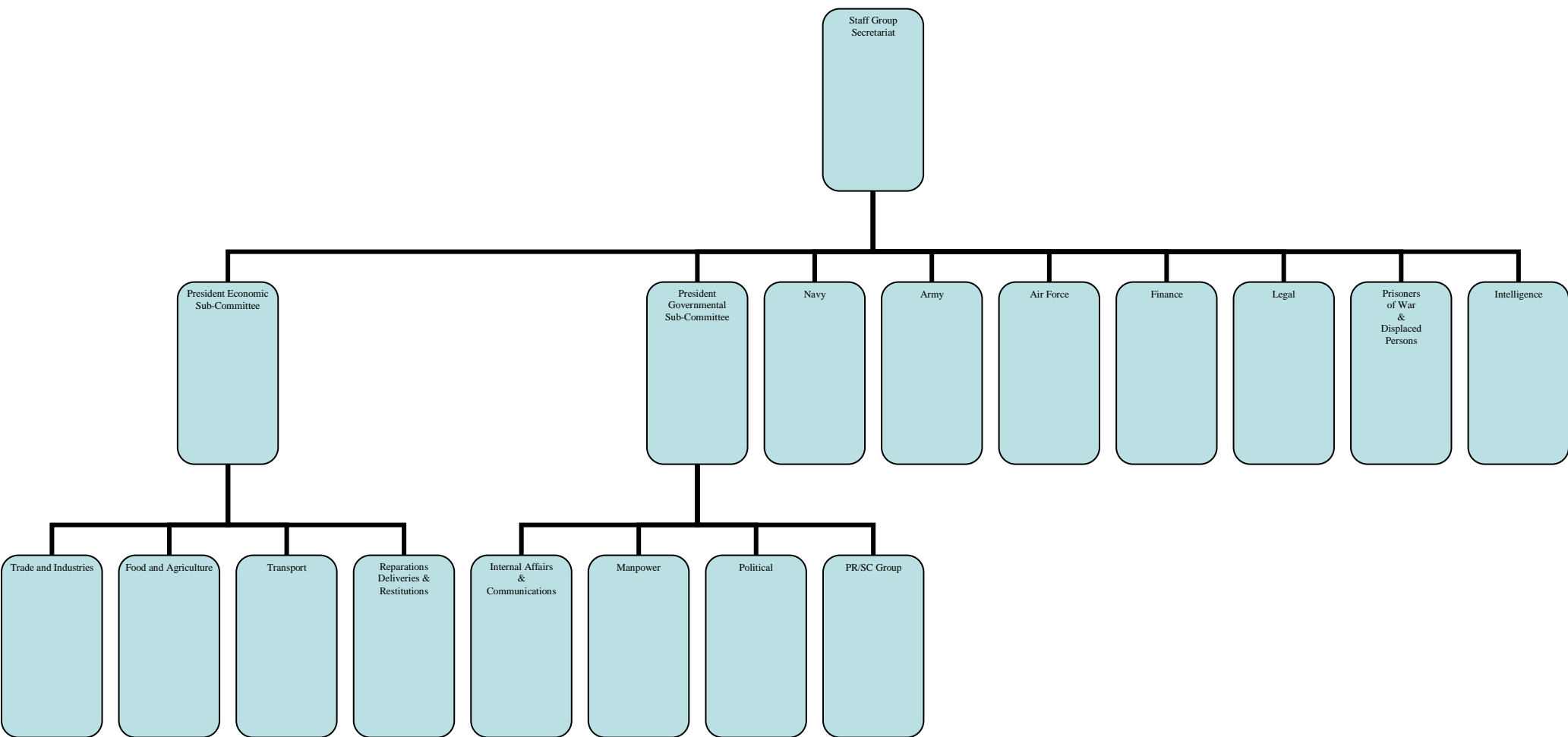


Figure 2.2 – Organisational Structure of the Control Commission for Germany

Source: Review for the Month of the Control Commission for Germany, 1946-1950.

In October 1945, a department was set up in London to administer the CCG: The Control Office for Germany and Austria (COGA).³¹ The director of COGA was a junior Labour MP, John B. Hynd. In many ways, the establishment of this department outside the Foreign Office and the appointment of Hynd is a good indicator of the British Government's lack of commitment to internal German affairs. Hynd's position was non-ministerial and, as he had been granted neither a seat on the Cabinet nor an office in Germany, he was often isolated from the decision making processes in both London and Berlin.³² Even more frustrating, COGA's precise responsibilities remained ill-defined. The department seemed to carry the responsibility for the administration and recruitment of staff for the CCG but it was detached from the Foreign Office. It was supposed to oversee British occupation policy without being involved in the formation of this policy at Allied level.

Hynd appears to have been dedicated to his work but thoroughly frustrated by the lack of direction and power given to his department.³³ Furthermore, and perhaps because of COGA's lack of political clout, it was frequently sidelined by the CCG itself. Correspondence between the heads of the CCG and the Foreign Secretary was rarely routed through COGA as it should have been, thus depriving the department of information.³⁴ CCG staff, it seemed, felt that the COGA staff in London were bureaucrats who failed to appreciate the difficulties they were facing on the ground. These tensions were finally resolved in the spring of 1947 when COGA was absorbed into the Foreign Office German Section. Hynd was replaced by Lord Pakenham who was as dedicated but

³¹ Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, p.276.

³² Meehan, *A Strange Enemy People*, pp. 53-5.

³³ Ibid, p.53.

³⁴ von Sehr-Thoss, 'Unprecedented', p.34.

had all the political advantages that Hynd had lacked and the considerable political weight of the Foreign Office behind him.

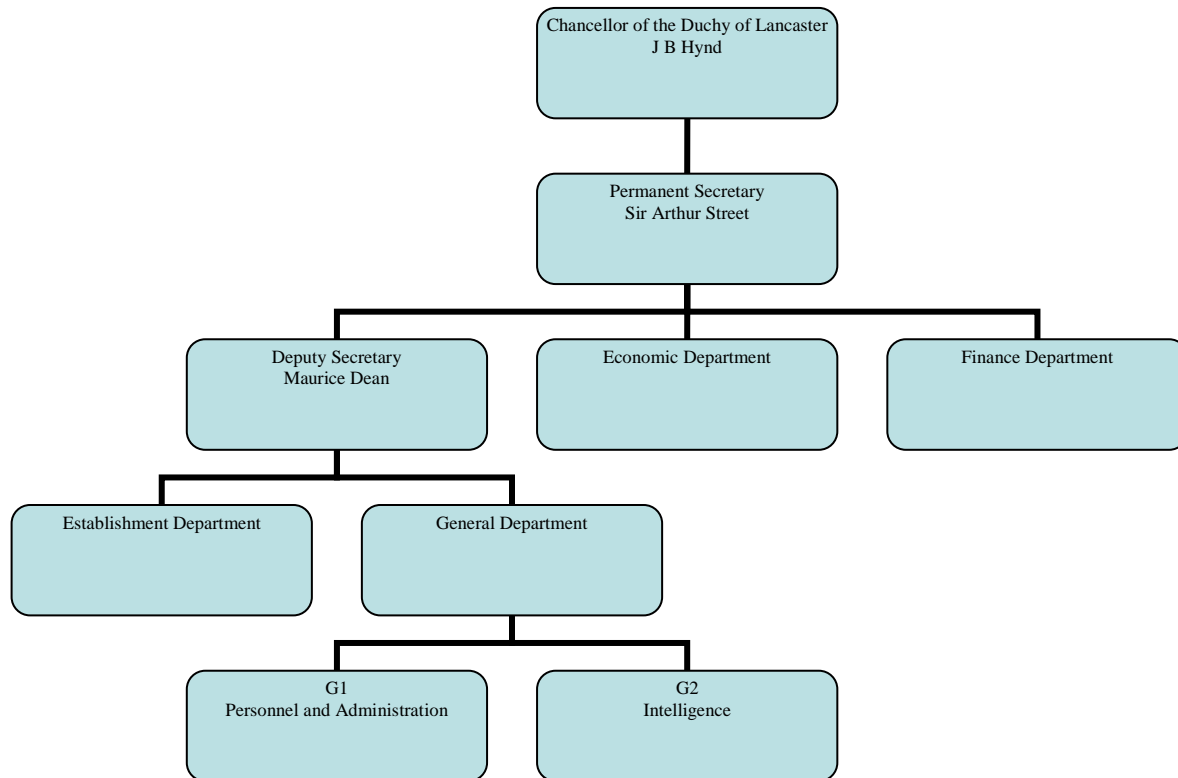


Figure 2.3 – Organisational Structure of the Control Office for Germany and Austria³⁵

The administration of the British occupation was unsatisfactory on several levels. Firstly, the transition from the planning phases to the actual occupation was hampered by a lack of continuity. The groups of experts who had been preparing for the occupation were not employed in Germany after 1945 to assist with the implementation of their recommendations, many of them returning instead to their home ministries or to their ordinary civilian jobs. Very few individuals moved between the Foreign Office and the

³⁵ Ulrich Reusch, 'Die Londoner Institutionen der britischen Deutschlandpolitik 1943-48: Eine behördengeschichtliche Untersuchung', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 100 (1980), pp.437-8.

Control Commission, while those officers recruited to the CCG had played no part in the wartime planning for occupation. This absence of any continuity of personnel meant that in some cases CCG officers failed to understand the rationale behind the policies and as a result the transition from planning to implementation was inconsistent.³⁶

Secondly, during the early planning process, those preparing for the occupation were forced to do so without any clear direction from the political leadership. After the war it became obvious that even the most basic of assumptions on which much of the earlier planning had been based were false: the occupation would not be short-term, they would not be able to adopt a policy of indirect rule, and the Soviet Union, not Germany, was the greater potential threat to security. These changes to Allied policy meant that it was difficult to determine a coherent course. Lack of guidance from the top meant that the occupation authorities on the ground created their own policy solutions to the challenges they faced. This had some benefits but also led inevitably to inconsistencies in the overall direction of occupation policy.

Thirdly, the administrative apparatus was poorly designed. The wartime planning groups had considered both the possibility that the German Government would survive and that it would not. But the structure of the CCG was based on the premise that the German central government would remain in some form.³⁷ Unconditional surrender and the impossibility of a German central government did not produce a corresponding change to the structure of the Control Commission. Meehan has suggested that the detachment of COGA from the Foreign Office and the appointment of Hynd was

³⁶ Von Sehr-Thoss, 'Unprecedented', p.33.

³⁷ Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, p.243.

deliberate.³⁸ However, in terms of administrative efficiency it was clearly an error of judgement and prevented the London department from receiving accurate information about the Zone at a speed which would allow it to affect decisions of policy within Germany. Furthermore, the division of the CCG into both regional and functional organisations made the structure overly complicated and bureaucratic.

Finally, the CCG rarely had access to best specialist British staff. The combination of home Government departments jealously guarding their personnel and inferior one year contracts preventing the CCG from recruiting on equal terms to the Home Civil service, ensured that the Control Commission rarely acquired the most experienced or competent staff. There was very little incentive for high calibre civil servants to apply for a post with the Control Commission.³⁹

Occupation policy could thus be contradictory, slow or unforthcoming and was implemented with a high degree of flexibility and pragmatism. Officers on the ground had large areas to control and few specialist high calibre staff. Policies from the Divisional Headquarters were generally implemented as far as local conditions would allow. But ill-conceived policies or those which seemed as though they had been produced in an office in London with little thought for, or knowledge of, conditions on the ground, were rejected or only implemented partially. Common sense reigned. Individuals wielded more power than one might expect because it was almost impossible for the London department to control whether their policies were being properly or fully implemented. The distinct lack of commitment to German matters demonstrated by Bevin left the CCG without clear leadership from above.

³⁸ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.54.

³⁹ Annan, *Changing Enemies*, p.151; Marshall, *Origins*, p.4.

In spite of all these difficulties, as Turner has also shown, the British approach to the occupation of Germany proved to be more consistent than those of the other Allies.⁴⁰ General policy objectives were understood, the CCG consulted the Foreign Office about British policy when it was necessary to do so but, in a sense, the organisation evolved of its own accord to meet the demands of administering Germany by circumnavigating the part of the apparatus which was ineffectual, namely the COGA in London and in so doing, allowed itself to interpret loose policies from the Government or from the Allied Control Council in a pragmatic way, whilst still achieving the general direction of British policy towards Germany. On the downside this often led to some inconsistency in the detail of policy and to in-fighting between departments within the CCG.

British management of the built environment

The British occupation authorities had a complex attitude towards the rebuilding of cities and their policies towards reconstruction evolved with their wider political agenda in Germany. In practice towns and cities were reconstructed by German architects, planners and local authorities, but during the first critical planning years, they did so within the framework defined by British policies. Defeated and occupied, the country was not free to rebuild in whichever way it chose.

In theory unconditional surrender gave the Allies the power to direct reconstruction within their zones up until the creation of the Federal Republic in 1949 and to some extent even after this. No common policy towards urban Germany as a whole was ever agreed and the only suggestion in this direction, the infamous

⁴⁰ Turner, 'British Occupation', p.297.

Morgenthau plan, was dead in the water.⁴¹ However, they did attempt to control particular aspects of the reconstruction process, mainly because of its impact on the economy and security of their zones. These interventions included the control of construction through the issuing of building permits for materials, manpower and fuel and through the tight control of construction firms and factories producing building materials. It was the Allied Military Governments in their respective zones who determined which of these could operate and in what quantities they could produce. Jeffry Diefendorf has asserted that these kinds of activities did not have a long-term impact on the nature of rebuilding.⁴² However, an investigation of zonal policies offers a more complex and convincing picture.

Each of the Allies tackled the particular issues of urban reconstruction such as housing and town and country planning in their own way and went to different lengths to control reconstruction. They may not have dictated the actual plans but they did provide the framework of policies which guided them, defined what was permissible, and also founded and supervised the organisations which would be responsible for reconstruction.

Unlike the system in Britain, the British occupation authorities did not at first appoint a Minister of Reconstruction or Minister of Town and Country Planning to organise the reconstruction of German cities. This was partly because it had been decided that the allied administrative structure should closely mirror the former German central government departmental divisions in which there was no Minister of Reconstruction. Allied negotiations only decided the directorates, not the specific branches within them nor which branch would have control over policies and how much control they could

⁴¹ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, pp.221-22.

⁴² Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.245.

exert. Within the British Zone, policies controlling city reconstruction were initially decided by two different departments within two separate directorates.

The first, the Housing Branch, was in the Manpower Directorate. The principal function of the Manpower Division was to abolish Nazi institutions and doctrine in the field of labour, which included the destruction of *Deutsche Arbeitsfront* and its auxiliary agencies. Their remit encompassed a wide range of activities from the encouragement of Trade Unions, the handling of industrial relations and supervision of wage controls, to the organisation of German labour to secure Allied objectives, the supervision of social insurance schemes and unemployment relief and the housing of the German population.

Housing Branch combined some of the functions of the former *Reichsarbeitsministerium*, *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, *Reichswohnungskommissar*, *Baupolizei*, *Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*, *Baugenossenschaften* und *Bausparkassen*. It was staffed partly by military officers with specialist knowledge and partly by civilians seconded from the British Ministry of Health. The heads of all Manpower Branches had held senior administrative rank in the HQ of a major government department and were familiar with ministerial and Cabinet procedure as well as with government administration.⁴³ A few examples amply illustrate the calibre of staff and the considerable experience on which they could draw to inform their activities in Germany. R. W. Luce, for example, took up his post as a senior official in 1945, but had previously worked as a senior staff officer on the Board of Trade and as assistant secretary in the Ministry of Labour and National Service. The latter department had also employed Morgan and Blumer as principals in their Services and Establishments

⁴³ Guide to the Functions and Organisation of the Allied Control Authority and the Control Commission for Germany (British Element) October 1945, FO 1082/2.

departments, while Ryan had worked on the War Damage Commission as a principal assistant secretary. Meanwhile another senior officer, Cleary, who later became director of the Housing Branch, had moved from the India Office to occupy a post in the Ministry of Home Security before moving back again in 1944. In the case of the Housing Branch, the director, Joll, had held a senior post in the British Ministry of Health. The personnel of these departments responsible for defining policy were thus drawn from a number of sources and included both those with professional expertise and career civil servants. In each case they were strongly influenced by their previous experiences and the working practices within their professions.

Housing policy was formulated and executed with regard to health, public safety, town planning, finance and economics. The Housing Branch was responsible for civilian housing, but also for town and country planning, and the distribution and settlement of refugees.⁴⁴ As well as determining priorities of work and fixing programmes of repairs they were responsible for setting standards of living space. This was an integral part of establishing housing programmes because the determining of minimum standards affected the density of population and the allocation of dwelling space. Once the programmes of work had been defined, Housing Branch were required to furnish Building Industries Branch, in the Economic Directorate, with the programmes of work and requirements of all building materials and components for consideration, together with requirements of all other branches of the Control Commission and of the Army, for the purpose of obtaining allocations of labour and materials from the resources available. British needs and German civilian requirements had to be coordinated and were drawn from the same pool of resources. In conjunction with Building Industries Branch, the

⁴⁴ Housing, Planning and Construction, FO 1051/748, 8.

maximum constructional standards for all repairs, reinstatement, conversion and new building were agreed. Housing Branch was responsible for and determined the German housing administration, that is, the establishment or reestablishment of German Housing Authorities. Once these had been set up, Housing Branch was responsible for issuing instructions and obtaining reports and returns from them.

The second department, Building Industries Branch, was part of the Economic Directorate. The general task of the Economic Division was to ensure that the terms of surrender were fully carried out in the areas over which they had jurisdiction (industry and manufacturing, commerce, food and agriculture, fuel and power, armaments and engineering). Its terms of reference necessitated a more punitive approach than that of Manpower Directorate, and thus consisted of more negative, prohibitive policies rather than positive, constructive ones. It was divided into sixteen branches. The division closely resembled the former German economic organisation, but the organisation of British government departments was also taken into account to affect a compromise structure which partially satisfied both requirements. With such a vast remit, branch functions were framed so that each branch only had to deal with one British government department or to represent one British industry and partly to avoid overloading one branch with too many functions. The heads of all branches and the Chief of the Economics Division and his deputies formed a general council at which policy and the work of the division as a whole was decided.⁴⁵ Building Industries Branch was accountable for the control of all building construction and building industries, and material production, as well as the release and allocation of building materials and the

⁴⁵ Guide to the Functions and Organisation of the Allied Control Authority and the Control Commission for Germany (British Element) October 1945, FO 1082/2.

formulation of standards to ensure economic use of the scarce resources.⁴⁶ Its director, Farrington, had trained as an engineer but by 1943, was employed by the Ministry of Works and Planning as the director of Building Programmes section. His deputy, an enthusiastic architect named Harold Hinchcliffe Davies, had also been his deputy director in Britain. Their successful partnership and considerable experience were transported to Germany, to direct the entire building industries in the British Zone.

Building Industries Branch was responsible, in co-operation with Housing Branch, for the execution of all housing work and had the responsibility for all other building work. This entailed the establishment or re-establishment of appropriate agencies for the control of the building industry and building materials producing industries, and the issuing of instructions to those industries through the new agencies. They were also in charge of instructing the producers of building materials and the building industry. All building and civil engineering contractors, plant hiring and plant repair contractors had to be registered with the Building Industries Branch, which issued them with instructions relating to the use of contractors plant and tools and the production, use, stocks allocation and distribution of building materials. Estimates of numbers and distribution of labour in the building industry and allied industries were obtained from the Labour Supply Branch. The Building Industries Branch was then responsible for relating the demands for all building received from all Branches and Divisions of the Control Commission and from the Army to the available resources and recommending allocations of building labour and materials. They had to co-operate with Labour Supply and Housing Branches in the provision of materials, plant contractors and

⁴⁶ Housing, Planning and Construction, FO 1051/748, 8; Control of Building and Building Industries, August 1945, FO 1039/683, 8.

labour for approved housing repair and building projects within the allocations agreed. They also had to determine the standards and quality of building materials. Another part of their remit was to assess labour in building industries and allied industries and make recommendations of suitable allocations of labour and materials to British and German projects. In addition, they were responsible for obtaining statistical reports and, through the Housing Branch, reports on housing projects.

Housing and town planning policies were thus to be determined by Housing Branch but executed by the Building Industries Branch. While Housing Branch was more socially orientated and interested in improving conditions, Building Industries Branch naturally gave economic factors primacy and often applied the brakes to Housing Branch's attempts to accelerate positive activities, such as the civilian housing programmes. There was a severe tension between their approaches to German cities, positive-constructive on the one hand and negative-punitive on the other.

There were early indications that the split between a Housing Branch and a Building Industries Branch would cause administrative difficulties. As early as January 1945, Kahn from the British Ministry of Production questioned Sir Percy Mills about the logic of the division between Housing and Building Industries Branches and anticipated the future problems that the demarcation of responsibilities would cause.⁴⁷ From a very early stage there are indications that Kahn's reservations were fully justified as the two branches grappled with each other to ring fence their spheres of activity. Over and over again terse letters passed between the heads of the two departments, admonishing one another for assuming responsibility or taking decisions on matters which should not have

⁴⁷ Kahn to Mills, January 1945, FO 1039/913.

been their concern.⁴⁸ Any task that was not clearly aligned to a particular department was fair game and quickly poached. Such was the case with setting up and sanctioning professional associations of architects or identifying who should have the ultimate control of town and country planning. They were quick to point out the deficiencies of one another's department as this quote from a letter from Hinchcliffe Davies to Joll demonstrates: 'the assumption is that your branch will accept responsibility for town and country planning, though I gather from our conversation that you have no-one on your staff or in sight at the moment who is qualified to deal with these problems.'⁴⁹

The directors of Building Industries Branch frequently called the competency of their Housing Branch counterparts into question. Once activities in such an area had commenced they were jealously guarded. Alliances with other interested departments were formed and 'impartial' individuals called upon to arbitrate. The conflict between the two departments did not go unnoticed by German officials who, on occasions, exploited these difficulties for their own ends.⁵⁰ An early decision to follow the German administrative structure had caused this division between policy making and its execution.

In 1948 the problematic situation was rectified with the subsumation of the Building Industries Branch into the Housing Branch of the Manpower Directorate. The Branch was renamed the Housing and Building Branch. Shortly afterwards in September 1948, the Branch underwent a further reorganisation, not, this time, because of internal tensions, but because of external pressures. The Frankfurt Economic Council for the Bizonal area had decided to deregulate the building industry and, therefore, much of the

⁴⁸ For examples see generally FO 1039/913 and FO 1051/1187.

⁴⁹ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Joll, 26 October 1945, FO 1039/913, 2.

⁵⁰ Werkmeister to Friedmann, 2 August 1946, FO 1051/1187, 7.

function of the building side of the branch was rendered obsolete. The branch was thus once again re-designated 'Housing Branch' and had a correspondingly reduced staff and streamlined set of functions. The primary functions of the branches changed and their degree of intervention altered over time, according to wider German and allied policy and changing conditions within the zone. The nature of the intervention also changed from direct control to a more supervisory and advisory role. The discussion of particular policies in part two will show in more detail the effect of the reorganisation on policy making and its implementation.

As well as these two branches, a large number of other departments had jurisdiction over particular aspects of urban policy (Manpower, Trade and Industries, Political, Food and Agriculture, Legal, Transport, Internal Affairs and Communications, Finance and the Services). Interests ranged from the location and level of industry to the settlement of population and from public health to compensation and betterment.⁵¹ For example, the Department of Transport and Highways defined which roads should be cleared or which bridges should be rebuilt, while the Department of Industry could control the types and scale of industry allowed in a particular town, including whether factories should be removed and similar industries prohibited from taking their place, which would inevitably lead to their replacement by other forms of land use such as housing or commercial properties. These departments were generally required to submit proposals through the Housing and Building Industries Branches or were invited on to committees or working parties, which were numerous.

⁵¹ Housing, Planning and Construction, FO 1051/748, 8.

The structure of the British occupation was not conducive to efficient policy making and implementation. Little attempt had been made to ensure a smooth transition from wartime planning to the occupation and insufficient resources were made available by the civil service back home. The chosen structures of administration were overly bureaucratic and cumbersome, and had to be constantly altered to improve efficiency and economy. Political leadership from the Foreign Office was not forthcoming, either because of Bevin's lack of interest or because other international commitments were more pressing and there was certainly little in the way of a clear policy at Branch level. The two key branches involved in reconstruction fared a little better than some in that they had dedicated, qualified individuals to lead the departments. However, the division of functions across the two branches which ought to have been kept together caused many difficulties and significantly slowed reconstruction progress. Clear policies towards the urban environment only began to emerge during the first phase of the occupation and because the branch leaders were essentially left to their own devices, the level of control they chose to exert was greater than was officially professed in the broader British occupation policy.

PART II

Chapter Three

Building a Better Germany?: Civilian Housing Policy in the British Zone

The destruction of a large proportion of the housing stock during the Second World War caused unprecedented social and economic upheaval. Shortages can be measured crudely in terms of the number of households to the number of remaining dwellings. Britain had a postwar housing shortage of 450,000 homes which had been totally destroyed or made uninhabitable, and a further 3 million which had suffered some damage.¹ The total shortfall of housing in Britain was, therefore, around 3.5 million dwelling units. In Germany the figures were much larger: 2.5 million homes had been totally destroyed or made uninhabitable, a further 1.6 million were classified as heavily damaged (between 50 and 80 per cent damaged), while 5.5 million others were partially destroyed and in need of repair (damaged up to 50 per cent).² The total shortfall in Germany was, therefore, 9.6 million dwelling units.³ Though useful for comparisons, these statistics offer no sense of the architectural and cultural loss, nor do they take into account the location or the quality of the homes left behind. Fewer houses survived in the city than in the countryside. In addition to the shortfall caused during the conflict, Germany's housing provision had already lagged behind demand to the tune of 1.5 million homes, a significant deficit even without the effects of aerial bombardment.⁴

¹ Peter Malpass and Alan Murie, *Housing Policy and Practice* (Basingstoke, 1999), p.52.

² Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.125.

³ The figures for the British Zone are as follows: 1.6 million more than 60 per cent damaged; 280,000 between 40-60 per cent damaged; 350,000 between 15-40 per cent damaged; 770,000 up to 15 per cent damaged. Housing Repairs and New Construction in the British Zone, February 1947, FO 1051/761, 29.

⁴ von Beyme, *Der Wiederaufbau*, p.247, Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.125-6.

By 1945, British cabinet ministers had been debating British postwar housing policy for four years. Both Attlee and Bevin had held senior roles in the War Cabinet and were influential members of the Reconstruction Committee which had been established in 1943. The committee considered postwar reconstruction priorities, the location of industry, building licenses and rent control. Over the next two years ministers prepared legislation on health, employment, town and country planning, national insurance and, of course, housing. The aim was to 'build a better Britain' and, in particular, to improve the lot of the working classes. This commitment had particular resonance because of the failure after the First World War to provide the promised 'homes for heroes'. In housing terms this entailed an improvement in access to quality housing and a substantial reduction in overcrowding, as the Reconstruction Committee's White Paper outlined: 'The government's first objective is to afford a separate dwelling for every family who desires to have one'.⁵ Over the next decade, the country would be committed to a massive building and redevelopment plan. The construction industry would absorb surplus labour and at the same time, help realise the ambitious housing programme. This objective represented a new ideal, a shift towards government accepting responsibility for ensuring quality housing provision for all.

This detailed and ambitious policy did not involve the kind of systemic reform necessary to enact the new health, social security or town and country planning policies. It was established that, in the long-term, the private sector would continue to provide most of the new housing stock but in the short-term, so-called transition

⁵ The White Paper was issued in March 1944. Peter Malpass, 'Wartime Planning for Postwar Housing in Britain: the Whitehall Debate, 1941-45', *Planning Perspectives*, 18 (2003), pp.177-96.

period, local authorities would shoulder the burden of housing provision. This would take the form both of repairs to war damaged dwellings and programmes of new construction. Once the private sector was in the position to take over, local authorities would revert back to slum clearance and provision of housing for the poorest citizens. In addition, prefabricated, temporary housing would be needed which could be replaced after the emergency period was over in around five years.

In postwar British housing policy, the repair of war-damaged property was made the top priority and every attempt was made to make good the shortfall in available housing. This entailed the suspension of the widespread slum clearance programmes until the housing stock could recover.⁶ Building was subject to a system of licensing, which remained in operation until 1954.⁷ Local authorities did, indeed, provide 80 per cent of all new housing between 1945 and 1951. Despite severe material shortages and a disrupted economy, the quality of the housing constructed was very high. There was strong public and political consensus for local municipal building programmes, and the skilled working class, in particular, demanded reasonable rents and an improvement in the quality of their homes.⁸ Important wartime housing surveys and reports gave weight to the housing reform which gathered momentum, promising to raise the standards and quality of postwar homes. The 1944 publication *The Design of Dwellings*, also known as the Dudley Report, for example, raised the recommended standards of living space and exerted influence over local authorities through its

⁶Malpass and Murie, *Housing Policy*, pp.53-5.

⁷ Ibid., p.57.

⁸ Ibid.

guidelines on minimum acceptable standards, and its recommendations on design, room sizes and circulation space.⁹

How did British housing policy in occupied Germany compare with that practised at home? In fact, despite differences in the degree of destruction between the two countries, housing policies employed in Germany did display some striking similarities to those being followed in Britain. Officers within the Housing Department explicitly drew upon the expertise and developments from within ministerial departments and professional organisations back home, frequently contacting their counterparts in Whitehall for advice when facing new problems.¹⁰ Housing Branch was on the distribution lists for circulars of a variety of Government ministries, such as the Ministry of Health, and officers were regularly sent papers likely to be of assistance, such as documentation relating to debates in the House of Commons, and any new bills and reports of the Housing Advisory Committee and Sub-committees.¹¹ The housing reforms of the 1940s and the new guidelines on housing standards, design and room surveys all found their way into policies for the provision of German civilian housing. The following evaluation of housing policy in the British Zone of Germany between 1945 and 1949 will demonstrate these features, explain why particular approaches were chosen and explore how these policies were received by German officials. Finally, their effectiveness will be measured against the expressed aims.

⁹ Ministry of Health, *The Design of Dwellings: Report of the Design of Dwellings Sub-Committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee* (London, 1944); Malpass and Murie, *Housing Policy*, pp.60-62.

¹⁰ Joll to Maine, 10 October 1945, FO 1051/716, 49.

¹¹ Joll to Sharpe, 20 October 1945, FO 1051/753, 3.

The aims and objectives of British housing policies

An analysis of housing policies in Germany reveals two phases of policy: those that were designed to deal with the immediate housing problem and those which had long-term improvements in mind. Their policies covered a diverse range of areas from standards and types of construction, finance and housing organisations to emergency repairs, German administrative organisation and priority building projects. The long-term aim was simple and mirrored the new aim of housing policy in Britain that had been outlined in the 1944 White Paper: to provide every family with its own dwelling space containing adequate light and ventilation, and according to a set of acceptable minimum standards. Any new construction would have to be of a standard that would normally be acceptable in peacetime. Achieving this aim would require a considerable investment of time, labour, materials and money but policies were nevertheless to be directed towards this ideal.

In the short-term, Housing Branch had a set of policies to increase the supply of habitable housing stock and to distribute this equitably, in order to provide shelter for the maximum number of individuals. At the beginning of the occupation, the British believed that they would have to remain in Germany for many decades and, in any case, new construction would not be possible for some time to come because of the dearth of materials. This, coupled with a commitment to acceptable minimum standards, took new construction off the agenda for the foreseeable future. Of immediate and paramount importance was the economic and equitable use of available resources and, consequently, British short-term policies mainly concerned repairs, and the redistribution of living space amongst the population. While in Britain repairs

proceeded alongside new construction, in Germany, where the material situation was much more serious, work concentrated initially only on repairs. The housing problem had to be tackled in an environment of scarcity with regard to broader economic considerations. Public health concerns such as adequate light, water, sanitation and ventilation were of critical importance and were given priority. Considerable resources were expended on utilities and sanitation, which were deemed more urgent than cosmetic repairs. Housing provision at this stage was more about short-term survival for the majority rather than long-term comfort for the few.¹²

Of course, the British occupiers did not feel the same moral obligations towards German civilians as British ministers did towards their citizens back home, but they did want to behave humanely and recognised that future generations would judge them by their actions as occupiers.¹³ More importantly, there was an acute awareness of the potential for urban unrest which could grow from poor living conditions.

The period of most intense activity and intervention lasted from spring 1945 to January 1947, after which many executive powers were devolved to the fledgling German *Länder* Governments. During this early period, the Housing Branch pursued its own policy in the British Zone, while at the same time trying to secure acceptable policies in the lengthy Allied negotiations.

Allied policy often lagged behind that which was already in place in the four occupied zones. Each policy detail at allied level had to be negotiated which made the process very slow. Indeed, no important allied housing laws were passed until March 1946, despite the fact that negotiations on the subject began at a relatively early stage

¹² Report on Occupancy Standards, February 1946, FO 1039/913, 29.

¹³ 'For those at Home', 8 December 1945, *British Zone Review*, 1, no.6, p.1.

of the occupation. In the meantime, housing officials in each of the zones were free to tackle housing issues as they wished, without much regard to the wishes of their Allies. Despite this fact, there was a strong incentive to anticipate future tensions and to try to come up with working strategies that could be demonstrated as effective when the time came, with the hope that the other Allies could be pressured and coerced into accepting these strategies.

During the first phase of housing provision, activities in the British Zone were, therefore, governed solely by British policy and it is to these policies that we now turn.

‘Wir machen uns winterfest’

During the early planning phases, before the occupation commenced, Britain believed that it could operate a policy of indirect control in local areas. At the early planning stages it was mistakenly believed that municipal governments would survive the war intact and thus, the local administration of urban and rural areas would fall to these local governments, under the control of a very small number of occupiers. Germany would be supervised in a manner not unlike that operated in the colonies. The level of physical destruction and political and social collapse was both unexpected and unprecedented. Despite advanced reconstruction plans for Britain, the initial housing policy for Germany was, like most early British policies, a vague, decentralising policy and, therefore, thoroughly unsuitable to the conditions in which the officers actually found themselves. A memo from March 1945 amply illustrates the paucity of their proposed housing policy:

In Housing, indirect rule will be the order of the day ... it will be essential to set up, or to ensure the continuance, of such German civilian organisation as will secure that the work is done by the Germans themselves and that the Housing Specialist Officer at Military Provincial

level shall be able to confine himself to control pure and simple. It also follows that there must be a maximum of decentralisation so that most pressing and important matters only will require his attention.¹⁴

Likewise, the *Military Government Handbook*, prepared in 1944, contained only two short paragraphs about housing which were as inaccurate as they were insubstantial.¹⁵ A paper issued in March 1945, outlining the housing procedure for starting works, demonstrates that it was fully expected that Housing officers would take a back seat and that operations would proceed through German municipalities with simple checks provided by the Housing and Building Industries Branches.¹⁶ It was recognised that German local bodies needed to be re-established before they could assume control of housing matters, but once this had been achieved they would 'retain all their control over all aspects of housing under the supervision of Military Government.'¹⁷

This approach was quickly superseded by a more direct, interventionist role as the officers in Germany became acquainted with local conditions. The near total collapse of German local administration made the management strategy described above impossible. Instead of supervising German administrators, the British Housing officers found themselves solely responsible for all housing policy and much of its implementation. A fact-finding visit to provincial housing offices in July 1945 found overworked Housing officers in need of urgent assistance. A request was made for an immediate increase in Housing officers to be supplied to all provincial detachments

¹⁴ Housing as a Military Government Problem, 23 March 1945, FO 1051/759, 3.

¹⁵ SHAEF Handbook for Military Government in Germany, paragraphs 1003 and 1005, 1 December 1944.

¹⁶ Housing Procedure for Starting Works, 20 March 1945, FO 1039/889, 1.

¹⁷ Draft report on Military Government Housing Policy, 19 July 1945, FO 1051/876, 14.

and additional officers to those areas and cities with specific housing problems like the Ruhr and Hamburg.¹⁸

Civilian housing needs were not given priority until August 1945, up until that point stocks of building materials were assumed and controlled by the military through the Royal Engineers, and all materials and labour had been directed towards the needs of Military Government, displaced persons and the German army. For the first three months of the occupation, the civilian housing problem had been barely mentioned in official reports. The occupiers were slow to realise that they needed to take control of civilian housing provision and their intervention was initially driven by negative ‘push’ factors, such as an increase in Black Market activities and the realisation that only those who could pay in some form were having repairs carried out.¹⁹ Finding a swift and acceptable solution to the civilian housing problem was essential for the maintenance of law and order and for the economic recovery of the zone. Only by providing the basic necessities for life could the British occupiers ensure a supply of labour for essential economic reconstruction. Those without food or without adequate shelter would absent themselves from work, or worse, could be a potential threat to public order. It was these concerns, rather than any altruistic notions, which drove the first positive interventions in civilian housing provision. August 1945 witnessed the first of a series of directives aimed at improving conditions for civilians. On 17 August it was decided that civilians should receive equal priority to the German Army. Measures were taken to step up the manufacture of corrugated iron sheeting and glass substitute for the repair of homes. Concurrently, it was decided that there were not

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Report on Housing, 11 August 1945, FO 1051/823, 1.

enough Housing Branch and Building Industries Branch officers to organise the repair of civilian houses, which had fallen to them. The German housing and building industry needed to be revived to the greatest practical extent and local knowledge and experience was essential to operate them efficiently. However, it was vital for Military Government to retain control so that they could ensure that the work was executed fairly and in accordance with Military Government principles. Because Housing Branch was so understaffed and ill-prepared, many practical activities were temporarily handed over to the Royal Engineers, while the Housing Branch officers concentrated on assessing the situation and developing strategies and policies to deal with the growing housing problem. They also began to recruit German officials for the new *Landeswohnungsämter* and to organise contractors and resources.²⁰ With the help of the Royal Engineers, the British Housing officers set about organising the rapid repair of as many dwellings as possible, alongside the restoration of basic public services such as the repair of water, sewage, gas and electricity facilities.²¹

The following month, the CCG took the unusual measure of consultation and attempted to gauge public opinion regarding the potential solutions to the housing crisis that were being considered by the branch. The Housing officers were sharply aware of the overcrowding and poor conditions and the potential public health crisis that the housing shortage and current living conditions presented. As they saw it, there were three options available to them to alleviate the overcrowding: repair and reconstruction, house rationing, or forced evacuation and, in all likelihood, a combination of all of these methods would be necessary. Each of these options had

²⁰ Joll to Provincial Detachments, Civilian Housing Emergency Repair Programme, 31 August 1945, FO 1051/721.

²¹ Housing Directive 2 - Emergency Repairs of Civilian Housing, 23 August 1945, FO 1051/728.

some disadvantage. Repair and reconstruction would have limited appreciable effect before the approaching winter. There was considerable reluctance on the part of German local officials to ration houses because this was likely to prove unpopular with German civilians. Although questions had been raised by a number of British officers about the workability of such a scheme, planning for an enforced evacuation was advanced and seemed set to go ahead. Significant tensions existed amongst the German public officials too. The Mayor of Cologne, Hermann Pünder, told his staff that the hated word 'evacuation' should be dropped from all correspondence and speeches.²² On the other hand, many German Public Health officials supported the idea of forced evacuation, believing that civilians were unaware of the dangers posed to themselves and their families and therefore, their wishes ought to be ignored for their own good.²³

The public surveyed, for their part, were in support of local, voluntary evacuation but not over long distances.²⁴ In one public opinion survey, carried out in North Rhine Westphalia, 870 people were questioned in at least eighteen towns. The report concluded: 'The view of almost every German is that evacuation is a very good idea, but not for him.'²⁵ The main reason given for unwillingness to be evacuated was work, but emotional responses were almost as common, as the public opinion officer reported: 'Next in importance to work comes the word home and all its sentimental and practical associations.' Many urban dwellers had experienced considerable hardship as the result of wartime evacuation to the countryside and complained of ill treatment and

²² Public Opinion Survey, [September 1945], FO 1051/878.

²³ Public Opinion Survey, [October 1945], FO 1051/878.

²⁴ Public Opinion Housing Problem, August 1945, FO 1051/878, 21.

²⁵ Report on Evacuation, September 1945, FO 1051/878, 28.

exploitation by their rural hosts. This experience coloured their view of the evacuation scheme: 'Besser hier sterben, als beim Bauer Sklave sein!' Even those housed in poor dwellings, not yet weatherproof, were reluctant to move; only two or three per cent stated that they would be prepared to volunteer for evacuation. Of those living in bunkers, the figure was much higher, around 45 per cent. Their responses were greatly affected by the fact that in many of the bunkers visited, disease had already broken out.²⁶

Interestingly, the majority were wholeheartedly in favour of a scheme being British operated, with no Germans playing a role other than that of interpreter. The excesses of the Nazi regime and the disappointment and sense of betrayal had led to widespread mistrust of German officials. One British officer noted in his report: 'There is almost a pathetic trust in the fairness of the British'. The report concluded that a compulsory scheme for those without employment would be accepted, if it was shown to be necessary and reasonable, but that if they tried to move people with employment then fierce opposition would be encountered.²⁷ These surveys shaped the range of evacuation policies proposed. Those which were considered unacceptable by the population were not implemented, even when proposals were at an advanced stage, as was the case with enforced evacuation. The surveys could thus be considered an act of 'negative democracy'. Certainly, they show the reluctance of Housing officers to enforce a strategy which might spark civic unrest, even if it meant prolonging discomfort for urban civilians and potential public health concerns. Approved at least in theory by the population, the voluntary evacuation scheme went ahead and was

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

announced in the *British Zone Review* in October 1945. Posters were placed in eighteen *Kreise* among them Essen, Bochum, Cologne, Dortmund, Aachen, Münster and Mulheim. Conditions were imposed which prevented families from returning to their homes without Military Government permission.²⁸

Many desperate civilians had not waited for the policy makers and had already engaged in self-help activities. The British actively encouraged these activities through posters and radio programmes. Six talks were broadcast on Monday evenings on Radio Hamburg from the 8 October 1945, in a series called 'Wir machen uns winterfest'.²⁹ The programmes offered suggestions about how civilians might improvise repairs but they were also presumably part public relations exercise, aimed at raising the profile of Military Government's positive contributions to the housing problem. After so many months of ignoring the plight of civilians, it was clearly important to promote any positive interventions, particularly if these were accompanied by policies less palatable to civilians. The first programme was a general presentation of the principles of Military Government housing, progress so far, construction standards, principles of self-help etc. Later talks consisted of staged discussions, for example between a coalminer and a Ruhr building official or between the owner of a damaged dwelling and a building expert. There was also a programme to discuss repopulation to countryside areas.³⁰

With the winter drawing nearer, Housing Branch began a serious drive to make houses weatherproof. Houses had been destroyed to differing degrees so, before a programme of reinstatement could be drawn up, careful surveys of the existing stock

²⁸ 'Voluntary Evacuation of Urban Areas', 13 October 1945, *British Zone Review*, vol. 1, 2.

²⁹ Self-help Radio Programmes, 8 October 1945, FO 1039/889, 27.

³⁰ Self-help Housing Proposed Programme, October 1945, FO 1039/889.

were needed and an efficient method developed for using the scarce materials to increase the available space. The branch drew upon the wartime and postwar experiences of the Ministry of Health in Britain and instituted a First Aid Repair programme. A triage was developed to categorise housing for the purposes of implementing the programme: a) inhabited houses, b) uninhabited but capable of being made habitable by first aid repairs, and finally c) uninhabited but preventable by first aid repairs from becoming total losses. Initially, only those properties damaged up to 40 per cent would be included in the programme. Technical manuals laid down the standards for these emergency repairs which were not to be exceeded so as to spread materials over as wide an area as possible. Extended repairs, reinstatement, adaptation, and conversion were, for the time being, prohibited while materials were needed for essential repairs. Surplus materials in a particular district, after essential emergency repairs had been completed, were to be transported to nearby districts with the greatest need.

The First Aid Repairs programme was devised by the Housing officers but it was implemented by German local officials under their supervision. The First Aid Repairs programme was often hindered by the local German building officers, who were regularly found to be falsifying or misrepresenting statistics. Dwelling units were logged as 'incomplete' when they were only short of new glazing, a repair not part of the emergency scheme. One of the principal weaknesses of the programme was that it allocated resources on the basis of need, the assessment of which was provided by local German officials. Municipal authorities thus had a vested interest in misrepresenting the condition of houses, knowing that too much recorded progress

would lead to a curtailing of supplies over the next quarter. Similarly, the more the situation in their town was lamented, the greater the amount of help that would be forthcoming. In Düsseldorf, the population statistics provided by the city's economic office was found to be exaggerated by 50,000 people, considerably distorting the city's material needs.³¹

Householders in British occupied cities could expect relatively fair treatment – their homes, providing they were not too badly damaged, would be repaired regardless of their social status or financial situation - but they had to be prepared to accept that any repairs would be carried out with complete disregard for their aesthetic sensibilities. Patchwork roofs of corrugated iron, flat sheet, roofing felt or tiles had to be accepted whatever the property's original roof material.³² Work proceeded as follows: first, the local *Baurat* divided the town or city into a series of districts (about 1000 houses per district), those areas registered as totally demolished were not included. Second, for each district the *Baurat* appointed one supervising architect and/or one or two contractors. Under orders from the *Baurat*, the contractors carried out the First Aid Repair programme systematically street by street. The architect was responsible for ensuring that these were performed in accordance with the designated technical instructions provided by the Housing Branch.

Materials for the programme were issued to the contractors from civil housing dumps. The Garrison Engineers provided transport where necessary. Labour was charged to the German local authorities, who were also required to pay the architects

³¹ The total number of residents was approximately 20,000 less than stated and of the population, 54,000 were children under the age of 12 and counted as only half an adult in the regulations for housing space. Housing Branch to Oberbürgermeister Düsseldorf, 2 January 1946, FO 1051/750, 8.

³² 186 C.R.E Works (Civ Housing) Works Instruction 5, 22 October 1945, FO 1051/878, 33.

and contractors. Importantly, individual householders were not called upon to pay for either materials or labour. The target was a repair to the minimum standard to make the dwelling wind and weatherproof for the maximum number of people. Although this in effect, took the place of the earlier self-help policy, the British expressly allowed self-help to continue, provided that it was limited to the standards laid down in the First Aid Repair programme. Despite the difficulties supervising the scheme, these repairs progressed at some speed. A return for November 1945 indicates the repair of 2953 dwelling units in one two-week period and a report for Cologne in March 1946 showed that, by that date in Cologne alone, 85,970 First Aid Repairs had been carried out and these were increasing at a rate of 1000 per week.³³

Table 3.1 - First Aid Repairs between 1st September 1945 and 31st December 1945

Area	Total requiring repair at 01.09.45	F.A.R. completed by 31.12.45	% of total repaired
Schleswig-Holstein	48,731	17,000	35
Hansestadt Hamburg	177,931	10,458	6
Westfalen	423,168	94,202	22
North Rhine	515,300	135,234	26
Hannover (excluding Bremen enclave)	233,585	41,912	45
Totals for British Zone (excluding Berlin)	1,398,715	298,806	21

Source: Housing Emergency Repairs, 19 January 1946, FO 1039/910.

The progress of the First Aid Repair programme varied quite dramatically between the different regions, with the poorest progress shown by Hamburg. First Aid Repair housing only referred to lightly damaged properties (up to 40 per cent damaged) and thus only accounted for a small amount relative to the total number of homes destroyed

³³ 'The Price of War – Cologne the most devastated of cities in the Zone', 30 March 1946, *British Zone Review*, 1, no.14; Civil First Aid Housing Progress Return, 27 November 1945, FO 1051/878, 52.

(around about 37 per cent of the destroyed dwellings). By the end of 1946, 750,000 repairs had been carried out through which an additional 6 million square metres of living space had been made available (enough to accommodate an additional 1.5 million people at minimum standards).³⁴ Although this represented a tremendous achievement there was still a long way to go.

Once First Aid Repairs had been completed, there was a further phase of second stage or extended repairs, laid out in a further instruction. Housing Directive 8 ensured a temporary block on all new housing and that resources could only be expended on war damage repairs. The categories permitted were also limited to moderately damaged dwellings, that is those designated as class C (1-15 per cent damaged) and D (16-40 per cent damaged), which could be made habitable after three weeks work. Extended repairs were only to be executed once the first aid work had been completed.³⁵ In practice, this meant that certain areas began extended repairs before others had finished their emergency repairs. Transport difficulties prohibited the movement of materials over any distance but clearly, repairs in one town could not be blocked because a neighbouring town was worse off if there was no possibility of transferring materials there. It was probably at this stage that progress between towns and cities began to diverge, particularly as areas designated ‘totally destroyed’ were not first-aided. Large cities were most likely to be disadvantaged by the transportation problems and classification of dwellings.

By January 1946, Housing Branch had recruited more personnel and the genesis of a coherent set of policies towards housing. Revised descriptions of the

³⁴ Housing Repairs and New Construction in the British Zone – Progress to date and Prospects in Relation to Coal and Building Material Allocations produced by Joll, February 1947, FO 1051/761, 29.

³⁵ 186 C.R.E. Works (Civ Housing) Works Instruction 6, 25 October 1945, FO 1051/878, 35.

objectives and role of the Housing Branch demonstrate the increasing scope of their intervention into housing matters, which by now included an enormous array of tasks, outlined in table 3.2. Their function remained to control the German administrations, i.e. Housing Branch was to lay down the policy and see that the German machinery was set up for its implementation though their approach was far from ‘indirect rule’.

Table 3.2 – Functions and responsibilities of Housing Branch, 15 January 1946

POLICY AREA	ACTIVITY
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy determination in housing, settlement and town and country planning.
Housing Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of housing departments at Province, Land, Regierungsbezirk and Kreis levels of government.
Housing Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing financial policy e.g. role of public funds, private, semi-public and agencies. • Local authority role in house construction and house-owning. • Fixation of rents of publicly-owned houses.
Programmes and Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing programmes. • Order and degree of various stages of the provision of housing space (repairs, reinstatement, adaptations and conversions, reconditioning, new construction).
New Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of land, planning and layout of estates. • Housing standards (size, type and cost of houses). • Housing design and standards of construction (architectural, social, health and amenity aspects).
Public and Semi-Public House-owning Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of their housing policy.
Rents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restriction of rents and selling prices of houses other than publicly owned.
Town and Country Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of development with regard to distribution of population, level of industry and other policies.
Existing Living Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control and use of existing living space (co-ordination of competing demands, priorities in allocation, billeting, requisitioning, evacuation, proper distribution of refugees, prohibition of changes of residence).

Source: Compiled from Housing Directive No.5 including Appendix A, Housing and Town Planning Functions, 15 January 1946, FO 1051/1172.

The purpose of housing control had been, by now, clearly articulated to all British Housing and Labour officers: to prevent disease and unrest; to prevent the enjoyment

by Germany of a standard of living in excess of the average standard in Europe (outside Great Britain and Russia) and to impose on Germany a level of industry which, on the one hand, would provide for reparations and, on the other, would ensure that Germany could not make war. As Joll stated in a brief to his officers:

It would be manifestly wrong that Germany, having inflicted such great damage on other countries, should in reconstruction and living standards be allowed to go ahead of those countries. This consideration alone – apart from shortage of materials and other reasons – will justify the enforcement, for many years, of very modest standards of accommodation and amenities...on the other hand it would be clearly unwise to permit the continuance of a standard of housing markedly below the European standard.³⁶

Two further ordinances had been enacted in December 1945 to control population movements around the zone and to restrict the pressure on the housing supply in urban areas. Ordinances 16 and 17 prohibited changes of residence without permission from the British Military Government. If one wanted to move or return to one's home city, one had to obtain a form. Permission could be refused if Military Government decided that the city in question could not accommodate a further influx of people. The *Kreiswohnungsämter* were responsible for the operation of the ordinance. Each *Kreis* received a 'saturation limit' and, once this was reached, the *Kreis* would be designated a 'black area', ensuring no further people could be sent there.³⁷ It was the responsibility of British Housing officers to make sure that the limit was not exceeded.³⁸

Ordinance 16 was thus a valuable tool for controlling overcrowding in towns and freezing the settlement of refugees. But when viewed alongside other similar measures it becomes apparent that these ordinances were designed partly with the view to encouraging the depopulation of metropolitan areas to smaller towns. The reduction

³⁶ Joll to Housing and Labour Officers, 6 March 1946, FO 1039/910.

³⁷ Zonal Policy Instruction No. 20.

³⁸ Joll to Housing and Labour Officers, 6 March 1946, FO 1039/910.

in urban-based industry was considered desirable on security grounds. With the anticipated restrictions on the level of industry it seemed likely that there would be less heavy industry in and around cities and therefore fewer employment opportunities. The need for a large workforce in most cities would decline. The new German economy was to be supported instead by dispersed light industry and agriculture and therefore, when the time was right, it was felt that new construction ought to be concentrated in smaller towns and rural areas. Consequently, German metropolitan areas would shrink and the population would disperse to rural areas and smaller towns, where they could find employment and housing. The shift could be further encouraged by making it difficult for people to return to larger industrial towns.³⁹ This broad occupation policy thus had an impact on the nature, sites and extent of new construction, but also on the degree of reconstruction which might be appropriate for an area. Housing Branch was reluctant to engage in any new construction in inner-city areas for the same reason. If the long-term plan was to depopulate metropolitan areas, it would be wasteful to build large numbers of new homes in inner-city areas.⁴⁰ This proposal was naturally resisted by German politicians who wanted to do everything in their power to ensure the survival of their cities and, if possible, see them grow.

Ordinance 16 was often not enforced with the necessary strictness by German local officials and there were also numerous instances of Military Government not providing the necessary forms. If stalling the applications was supposed to prevent population movements from taking place then it failed. Many changes simply went ahead without permission. Furthermore, the ordinance failed to make any provisions

³⁹ Housing Branch to Oberbürgermeister Düsseldorf, 2 January 1946, FO 1051/750, 8.

⁴⁰ Joll to all Labour and Housing Officers, 6 March 1946, FO 1039/910.

for interzonal movements of refugees, who were entering the British Zone at a rate of 1000 per week.⁴¹

Although official policy was to encourage the depopulation of large cities, there are some examples of fruitful collaboration between certain Military Government officers and German officials to keep people in their home towns. One such example took place in the Rhineland in October 1945. Within a few short days of his appointment as *Oberpräsident* of the North Rhine Province, Dr Lehr was charged with the task of evacuating 600,000 people from his province. The severe pressure on the housing stock had compelled the Military Government to begin implementing a forced evacuation in that area. Lehr's protests to the Military Government officer, Brigadier Barraclough, resulted in his being granted three days to come up with a viable alternative. Together with an advisory architect, Lehr drew up a plan which would use a combination of temporary buildings and repairs to make the housing available in a couple of months. Barraclough agreed and gave Lehr two months to prove that the proposal would work. The British, for their part, provided much of the materials and transport. Together they exceeded all expectations and 1 million Germans were accommodated.⁴²

Housing Branch was not the only department involved in rebuilding in the zone. Other divisions were able to sponsor construction work. The Food and Agriculture division sponsored many repairs to food shops, storage barns and warehouses. Although there were repeated claims that food shopkeepers were having their premises repaired because they could pay for it with black market resources,

⁴¹ Housing Branch to Oberbürgermeister Düsseldorf, 2 January 1946, FO 1051/750, 8.

⁴² Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, p.234.

sometimes the work had been paid for perfectly legitimately by a Military Government department.⁴³

British intervention into housing reconstruction extended into matters of design, particularly if there was a symbolic dimension for either occupiers or occupied. One reoccurring impasse was the construction or reconstruction of cellars. There were several reasons for the refusal of British Housing officers to sanction the construction of cellars. Partly, it was felt that the materials, labour and money could be better spent above ground, improving and repairing more dwellings, but there was a more interesting and significant dimension. Cellars had been a standard feature of domestic architecture and had offered protection during aerial bombardments. Indeed, their use as bomb shelters had been promoted by the National Socialists and adaptations had often been made to allow subterranean escape routes for civilians into neighbouring dwellings. In symbolic terms they represented protection from an aggressor. One British official believed that the prohibition of cellars would have a 'psychological effect on the man in the street and be an additional deterrent to any future ambitions.'⁴⁴ In hindsight this may seem a ridiculous proposition but, in January 1946, Germany was still viewed as a potential threat to Allied security. The cellar issue was raised time and again by German officials. Fütterer, the Minister for Reconstruction of North Rhine Westphalia, stated that: 'the most beautiful dwelling will leave a German workmen's family unsatisfied if there will be no cellar'.⁴⁵ Rappaport, of the German Advisory Agency, denied that incorporating cellars would be more costly and argued their necessity on security grounds: 'I do not think it to be right of inciting Germans to

⁴³ Joll to Hollins, 1 October 1946, FO 1039/910, 140.

⁴⁴ Purcell to Joll, 29 January 1946, FO 1051/799, 27.

⁴⁵ Fütterer to Gunnel, 6 October 1946, FO 1051/892, 14.

cultivate their gardens, if they are given no possibility of securely storing their produce.⁴⁶ Outbuildings were offered as an alternative, in line with the proposals in the Ministry of Health *Design of Dwellings* publication but these were also rejected as unsuitable by German officers.

The Housing Branch, like the Ministry of Health back in Britain, was also interested in prefabricated housing as a potential, temporary solution to the pressing need for rapid new construction. Building Research Stations were established in Germany to seek out innovative materials and investigate new construction methods that would require less time and skilled labour than was necessary for traditional forms of housing. Buildings Industry Branch and Housing Branch directed the use of locally sourced materials to cut down on transport costs, and the reuse of rubble was also explored at an early stage.⁴⁷

There was very little high level political interest in the civilian housing programme from British politicians, like Bevin, who had been so engaged in reconstruction planning during the war in Britain. However, lower level occupation officials had, in some cases, come from ministerial departments which had been involved in preparations for British reconstruction, so there was a high level of knowledge of current British philosophies of housing matters. The senior housing officers also maintained contact with their former colleagues and received relevant papers. Despite the lack of preparation, remarkable achievements were made during

⁴⁶ Rappaport to Housing Branch, August 1946, FO 1051/892, 6.

⁴⁷ Emergency Housing, 30 October 1945, FO 1039/889, 30; 'Rubble is used in this German "portal"', 10 November 1945, British Zone Review, 1, no.4.

these few months before March 1946.⁴⁸ However, As Barbara Marshall points out in her study of Hannover, the contribution by British officers to the astounding progress made was not referred to in German reports.⁴⁹ There are several possible reasons for the lack of credit given to British activities. In spite of these considerable achievements, much remained to be done and the slow, incremental, often internal, repairs were not easily visible to the civilian population, many of whom were still living in very poor conditions. Repairs to utilities soaked up large quantities of materials and resources but were necessary for even the most basic acceptable level of public health provision. Without new construction, there was no appreciable improvement in the cityscape. Furthermore, politicians and German building officials benefited from misrepresenting progress statistics in their official reports and lamenting the state of their cities. British officers could be forgiven for feeling that their efforts were not appreciated by the German civilian population. But demonstrating progress brought no rewards for German local councils, rather it hindered further repairs in the following quarter, as resources were redirected to those areas in greatest need. Their duty was to local civilians whose lot could only be improved by a steady supply of materials and goods. Moreover, in spite of the considerable progress made in repairing homes, this was unbalanced by the enormous numbers of refugees entering the zone, some 2.5 million in the first 18 months of the occupation.

⁴⁸ Housing Emergency repairs 19 January 1946, FO 1039/910. Also see report in FO 1051/761 'upwards of 400,000 dwellings were first aided' during the winter 1945/46.

⁴⁹ Marshall, *Origins*, p.38. Marshall cites, for example, the German report by Hillebrecht, '*drei schwere Jahren*' which conveniently forgets the British assistance and evidences only German efforts.

Negotiating an Allied housing policy

At the same time as the repair programme was in progress, senior British Housing officers were in Berlin, debating a series of allied policies towards housing. The Allied Housing committee met at least once a week to discuss various aspects of the civilian housing problem, such as standards of repair, construction priorities and minimum dwelling space requirements. At each of the meetings, the committee members would discuss and debate a paper prepared by one of the Allied representatives prior to the meeting. The British representatives generally prepared their own proposals before the meetings, in order to defend British interests during the negotiations. After the meeting, redrafts of the paper would be drawn up until a rough policy agreement was reached. The intention was to eventually combine these into an Allied Housing Law. Morgan, the British Manpower officer in Berlin and Ryan, his Housing Branch deputy, handled most of the negotiations in Berlin and both maintained regular contact with Joll, the Housing Branch director at headquarters. These men were responsible for the British position towards German civilian housing, which was determined with reference to the wider purposes of the British occupation.

The minutes of the Allied negotiations expose the contrasting approaches of the Allies towards the housing problem. The British approach was characterised by a desire for flexibility, a concern for the economic ramifications of decisions, and ambivalence towards denazification clauses, particularly where these would have a detrimental impact on alternative, pragmatic housing solutions. Discussions centred upon how to improve the stock of housing and how to distribute the dwelling space among civilians. Disagreements arose over what and how much to restore, how to

categorise damage and repairs, the appropriate living standards for German civilians, what priorities should be set and how repairs should be funded. As with most Allied negotiations, conflicting political and ideological perspectives considerably slowed progress and ultimately resulted in weak policies. A few examples will demonstrate their relative tendency to intervene and the kinds of policies advocated by each.

In October 1945, the Allies began to discuss laying down suitable distinctions between first aid repairs, medium repairs and final repairs.⁵⁰ Emergency repairs were already in progress in each of the zones but these were designed to make properties weatherproof only. While they had been largely able to agree on what constituted an emergency repair, defining categories of further repair was not so easy. The definition of extensive repairs was finally given in February 1946 as the ‘repair of brick and woodwork, roofs, reframing and reglazing of windows, and such minimum internal repairs as are necessary to produce a tolerable state of habitability.’⁵¹ So far, so good. But of course, each house would require a different degree of labour and materials to achieve this level of habitability. It was not enough to simply define what the repairs would entail. They also needed a method of calculating the resources which would be required when officers were faced with a semi-destroyed urban block. The British members of the committee wanted to keep the system flexible and link the definition of the level of repair to the amount of man hours that would be needed to complete it. Then not more than so many man-hours should be expended on that type of repair e.g. 30 square metres might take 100 man-hours for emergency repairs, while medium repairs might take 200 man-hours to enact. This system of calculating repairs based on

⁵⁰ Definitions of First Aid Repairs, October 1945, FO 1051/716.

⁵¹ Definitions of Extended Repairs, February 1946, FO1051/716.

labour, represented best practice in Britain and after considerable negotiation this system was agreed.

Reinstatement or partial reinstatement would involve various degrees of improvements to bring a home back up to its prewar standard. The British fought against permanent conversions or the subdivision of houses into more than one dwelling unit, presumably out of concern for the cost of dividing properties into separate units and providing each with their own facilities, especially if this might need ultimately to be reversed at some point in the future when conditions improved. Instead they promoted the idea of adaptations to large properties with the implied communal use of facilities and pointed to similar conversions that had taken place in London during the war, when large houses and flats were divided into smaller units and roof space was converted into attic dwellings.⁵² Such conversions later formed a small but important part of the British repair programmes.

As the most urbanised, the British Zone held the greatest potential for civil unrest if living standards remained low. Consequently, the British representatives generally fought for greater investment of resources in the repair programme and higher standards than their Allied counterparts. These were often criticised by the other Allies for being too generous; the implied accusation was that German civilians would have access to better housing than civilians in the other liberated countries of Europe. In a paper concerning repair standards extending after emergency repairs, the British member was compelled to state: 'It is of course, clearly understood that the recommendations made will in no circumstances allow Germany to undertake a

⁵² Standards of Repair, Conversion and New Construction, and Standards of Housing Space, 26 September 1945, FO 1051/716, 29.

programme of new construction which would put her in a more favourable position than that of the surrounding liberated countries.⁵³ Standards were to be kept at a minimum and ostentatious reconstruction prohibited. Although it is very unlikely that the Housing Branch wanted to raise German standards of living higher than other places in Europe, neither did it hold the opinion that standards should be kept artificially lower as a punishment.

Commensurate with his characteristic black-and-white approach, the Russian delegate did not wish the Allies to pursue a phased programme of repairs. His own proposal moved from emergency repairs to total reinstatement without any intermediary stages. This would have entailed an inequitable distribution of materials and labour, so that a small number of houses would be completely renovated, while others would remain with just rudimentary repairs for an indefinite period. The British delegate could not agree to such a proposal, which would have effectively allowed some to be comfortable, while a large number of their countrymen suffered. His counter-proposal was to ‘spread available labour and materials for repair over as many Germans as possible, in order to keep them alive and contented so that they would work for the purposes of the occupation’⁵⁴ and to progressively increase the standards of housing for as many people as possible at the same time. It is impossible to say whether the British delegate fought for an equitable distribution of resources on moral grounds, but it is clear that the effect of the Russian proposal would have been far more obvious in the predominantly urban British Zone than in the predominantly rural Russian Zone. One can imagine the likely impact of a small number of dwellings in a

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Report on the Seventh Meeting of the Housing Committee produced by Morgan, 6 October 1945, FO 1051/716, 45.

city being improved to their prewar standard, while in the neighbouring block people continued to live in bombed out hovels.

The British delegate was isolated in his desire to support a progressive programme of repair. The US representative displayed typical reticence to commit to any detailed proposals as the US was against interfering in German affairs on principle. He refused to concern himself with any long-term housing programmes. The Russian delegates believed that any building over 70 per cent damaged should not be repaired or reinstated at all.⁵⁵ This took no account of the fact that the remaining portion of a building might be habitable for a small number of people. The Russian Zone had comparatively fewer problems with overcrowding. For the British Zone this proposal, had it been passed, would have been catastrophic for urban populations, as it would not only have dramatically reduced the available housing stock, but would have also meant the destruction of what little remained of inner-city buildings, perhaps even approaching a near total loss of the remaining historic architecture. Had this proposal been accepted, few historic buildings would have survived in Germany at all.

The British approach to housing displayed a tendency towards pragmatism and a degree of ambivalence towards denazification procedures, especially where they might override technical and practical considerations. Housing, in particular, could be framed in value neutral terms: an urgent technical problem needing to be solved. Because of this approach they advocated the use of some policies that were already familiar to the Germans, for example the 1943 German Standards of Repair.⁵⁶ The rationale behind the suggestion was that it provided a standard which could be

⁵⁵ Joll to Minister of Health, October 1945, FO 1051/716.

⁵⁶ Standards of Repair, October 1945, FO 1051/716.

instituted quickly and which the Germans would understand. The French member was particularly unhappy with this proposal. Eventually, the logic of using some existing directives won through and the plan was implemented.

Reaching a decision about how to distribute living space was also problematic. During the war it had been common practice in both Britain and Germany to apply a calculation to work out how many individuals could be accommodated in a given dwelling. These calculations were, however, applied with a significant degree of flexibility, taking a range of factors into account, such as the general sanitary conditions. The Allies had agreed on a restrictive minimum standard of four square metres per person. Many Germans would have less space than this but a yardstick was needed by reference to which new construction could be justified as against mere repairs. Joll argued that this should be the universal standard throughout Germany so that surplus materials could be directed to less fortunate areas, presumably because he hoped that as the British Zone was the most overcrowded, they would be able to demand more building materials from the other zones and would be able to justify new housing.⁵⁷ The problem with the four square metres standard was that, in contrast to British and German wartime practices, it was to be rigidly applied, with no adjustments made for any factors affecting the level of habitability. As one British officer stated in December 1945: 'Air raid shelters are warm and dry but they are artificially ventilated, and a five minute visit to one of those shelters would convince anyone that people cannot live in such conditions for very long periods.'⁵⁸ According to the calculation, some regions of the British Zone were not classed as overcrowded and could,

⁵⁷ Joll to Ryan, 3 September 1945, FO 1051/716, 19.

⁵⁸ Giles to Housing Branch, 18 December 1945, FO 1051/799, 21.

therefore, accommodate more people. There were considerable fears from British quarters that the Russians might use the statistics against them in other allied discussions, such as those concerning refugee quotas.⁵⁹ Allied negotiations were thus hampered by a lack of trust between the participants and the enormous political stakes of even routine negotiations. The British were thus reluctant to give accurate population statistics for their zone in relation to the housing problem in case it backfired. They feared that the Russian Housing officers would pass on information to their refugee negotiators who would then use the population and dwelling space statistics to argue for greater numbers of refugees to be sent to the British Zone.⁶⁰

Another central matter for debate was billeting and the allocation of dwelling space. The Russian delegate seemed to be primarily concerned that no Nazis should have preferential treatment in the allocation of housing but, amongst the other Allies, there was support for a clause to allow Military Governments to give preferential treatment to priority workers, such as miners, dockworkers and builders. The Russian delegate was opposed to any preferential scheme because he feared that former Nazis might flock to these trades to obtain the benefits and thus, Nazis could end up with better housing than non-Nazis. He, therefore, proposed that the only discrimination that should be made was between Nazis and anti-Nazis. The lack of subtlety was displayed on a number of occasions but he was outnumbered and the Housing Law did eventually contain a clause to allow certain groups preferential access to housing.

A further contentious issue concerned how repairs should be funded. During intense allied negotiations, the American delegate expressed the view that people

⁵⁹ Joll to Morgan, 4 October 1945, FO 1051/759, 25.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

should pay for repairs to their own homes. In Joll's eyes this was unacceptable because 'it was a complete accident whether one's house was destroyed or not' and 'the costs of reconstruction should be borne by all'.⁶¹ The British committed to an equitable distribution of housing space and believed that housing repairs ought to be state paid and administered by the municipality through the *Bauamt*. In the British Zone the Finance department had already examined war damage legislation in Germany as it affected buildings and housing and offered their views on the possibility of taking over salvage for use on war damage repairs.⁶² The question of financing housing was discussed as both a separate problem and as part of the problem of currency reform and the clearance of debts, solved by the organisation of joint risk undertakings. The problem of adjusting rents on old buildings to conform to those on new buildings to get uniform rent assessment was also considered.

It took ten months for the Allies to reach an agreement on a housing policy. In March 1946, Control Commission Law No. 18 was enacted.⁶³ The Law placed all housing in the British Zone under rent controls and prices were frozen at 1936 levels.⁶⁴ The law was designed to deal with the existing housing space and to protect, expand, survey, allocate and utilise it. The Law reflected the allied negotiations, its clauses diluted and lacking ideological cohesion. It provided a common framework for the Allies, but also allowed for differences in the amount of control retained by the Military Government in each Zone. Firstly, housing policy was to be ratified by the German local authorities under the control of the Military Government and in

⁶¹ Joll to Ryan, 3 September 1945, FO 1051/716, 19.

⁶² Joll to Hedge, 21 August 1945, FO 1051/823, 3.

⁶³ Allied Control Commission Housing Law No.18, March 1946, FO 1039/910.

⁶⁴ I. Flagge (ed.), *Geschichte des Wohnens Bd 5: Von 1945 bis heute: Aufbau, Neubau, Umbau* (Stuttgart, 1999), p.58.

accordance with any additional instructions issued by it, while also allowing German local authorities to issue regulations for their areas that would help them carry out the law. This allowed the four zones to issue their own ordinances and regulations to enhance their control and to shape the housing policy within the Allied framework. The law also provided rules for the setting up of housing offices and committees, specifying how housing committees should be composed. This included features such as having a standardised agency to handle allocations, and a committee of non- or anti-Nazis, including members of each political party and at least one woman. The British in particular were committed to involving women in committees across the board and in the composition of housing committees there were echoes of the recommendations in the 1944 *Design of Dwellings* report.

Thirdly, it required a census of housing space to be carried out and placed the responsibility of providing housing for an area squarely with the German housing authorities. A further set of articles outlined the procedure for changes in ownership, including the definition of ‘vacancy’ and legal changes to the ownership of and entitlement to property. In connection with allocations and ownership, a list of priorities were given which placed resisters to the Nazi regime at the top, followed by families, children and the elderly. The law also contained the British-designed clause allowing Military Governments to offer preferential treatment to those engaged in particular trades or industries, if there was a labour shortage in some essential employment sectors, such as mining or the building industry. No priority could be claimed on the grounds of financial or social status. The procedure for allocating housing space was also outlined; civilians had to show their ration cards and, if they

were of working age, their work permits, in order to qualify for a housing allocation. The law also provided for the enforced movement of populations for reasons of economy. Another article laid out the system for the anticipated civilian complaints and appeals.

In addition to articles which dealt with the allocation of housing, there were also rules which governed how other buildings might be used and converted into housing with the express aim of creating more dwelling spaces. The minimum standards set were still very basic. The law was backed up by punitive measures to deal with non-compliance: those found guilty would face one year sentence and/or a fine of 10,000RM.

There were no provisions in the law to govern new housing nor was there any indication of tenure preferences, certainly local authorities were not required by the Allied Law to engage in housing construction. Nor were there any provisions governing architectural style, the use of external spaces or making repairs to one's own home. Despite discussions on these subjects, there were no provisions for the fixing of rents or financing of housing. Those matters left outside of the scope of the Law left the Allies open to enact policies in their own zones. The Allied Housing Law did not impose any significant regulations which were not already in place in the British Zone. The British had proposed many of the key elements of Control Council Law 18 and their own policies extended far beyond the provisions of the Allied Housing Law. In fact, the greatest achievement from Britain's perspective was probably keeping out undesirable articles.

Saturation, shortage and stagnation

By the middle of 1946, the Housing Branch was pushing for the formation of a Ministry of Reconstruction to co-ordinate housing and town planning at *Land* level. In order to achieve greater uniformity of policy implementation and housing standards, a greater degree of centralisation was now needed than was possible within the current system. The British had been cautious in granting power to politicians and civil servants who had so recently supported the Nazi dictatorship, and only gradually built up the political hierarchy, starting from grassroots. The inefficiencies this provoked were obvious to the Housing Branch officers, who were only too aware, from the British example of what could be achieved with a strong centralised controlling authority to co-ordinate reconstruction activities. Smith of the Housing Branch met with officers at Administration and Local Government Branch to discuss the housing issue and aired his concerns: 'Hitherto the Germans have shown no great co-ordination and drive in implementing housing policy.' The Housing Branch had a travelling Inspectorate which toured the zone and reported on housing problems: 'The impression that Housing Branch have formed through these visits is that the higher level officers have not got a grip of the situation.'⁶⁵ These statements about German inefficiency should be taken with a degree of scepticism. Administration and Local Government Branch frequently resisted greater intervention in German affairs because they were responsible for re-educating Germans in democratic values. Too much intervention by other branches of the Control Commission undermined their work. In order to obtain

⁶⁵ Note of Visit by Mr Smith, Housing Branch to A & L G Branch, Zonal Executive Offices, 9 July 1946, FO 1051/750, 25.

any concessions from the Administration and Local Government Branch it was necessary to cast doubt on the ability of German officials to get the job done.

Without a central government, co-ordination had to be achieved by other means. As well as pushing for super-regional housing bodies and Ministers of Reconstruction, the Housing Branch also held various zonal conferences and meetings. The first joint conference of CCG Housing officers with German Housing officers of *Länder* and with members of the German Housing Panel (part of the German Labour and Housing Agency) was held on 29 May 1946. Eighteen senior British officials and fourteen senior German officials took part. Amongst the British officers were Joll, who was the chair, and representatives of each of the regional housing branches. The German officials consisted of a mixture of members of the German Economic Advisory Board, the German Local Housing Authority, Municipal Housing and Building Offices in the Regions, and *Landeswohnungsundplanungsämter* and included Rappaport, Hillebrecht, Neuhaus, Fuchs, Steckeweh, Schwippert and Petersen. The housing officers discussed the organisation of German Housing Authorities, war damage repairs and financing, clearance of rubble and salvage of materials, housing accommodation, miners houses, Ordinances 16 and 17, licensing, Town and Country Planning (including the British Town and Country Planning Act of 1944), and Housing Law 18. The meeting, which lasted five and a half hours, was mainly a forum for German officials to air their grievances and concerns.⁶⁶

Efforts were also made to involve German housing officials in Europe-wide debates on the housing problem. On 16 August 1946 a 'Special Meeting on Emergency Housing Problems' was held in Brussels, sponsored by the Emergency Economic

⁶⁶ Minutes of the Conference, 29 May 1946, FO 1039/900, 13.

Committee for Europe. Fourteen countries were represented, as well as representatives from the American, British and French Zones of Germany, and three international organisations: the European Central Inland Transport Organisation, the International Labour Office and the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Each country was faced with serious housing problems. Their problems differed in degree and character but they also faced many challenges in common. This was an important opportunity for an international exchange of ideas and experience in the matter of housing. The delegates drafted a series of resolutions on a variety of areas such as health and sanitary standards, rationing of housing space, utilisation of materials in critical supply.⁶⁷

German officials may have been involved in these conferences but Housing Branch was still very much in the driving seat. In line with their increased remit, outlined earlier in table 3.2, Housing Branch issued a further series of directives between March 1946 and January 1947 to control and license building works, manage residential property belonging to industrial enterprises and public utility undertakings, control housing finance, deal with UN property, direct the use of temporary accommodation such as Nissen huts and prohibit new construction.⁶⁸ The census required by the Allied Housing Law was also executed on 30 September 1946, and greatly increased the accuracy of available housing statistics, enabling more precise and realistic housing programmes to be prepared.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Report on a special meeting on Emergency Housing Problems produced by E Wyndham-White, Secretary General of the Emergency Economic Committee for Europe, FO 1051/1194.

⁶⁸ List of Housing Directives and Circular Letters Re: Housing, 28 September 1946, FO 1039/910.

⁶⁹ Ibid.; Rappaport to Housing Branch, 22 July 1946, FO 1051/770, 12.

Directives and policies were of little use, though, without sufficient resources to implement them. Severe shortages of materials and coal were causing stagnation in the housing programme and by mid-1946 the situation was becoming desperate. Building material stocks had been exhausted and current production was pretty meagre. Receiving sufficient coal allocations to make inroads into the housing deficit was the major difficulty. The prevalence of economic considerations over social in the priorities for allocations of coal was evident both in the amounts received for building materials but also in the coal quota for building materials specifically for housing. For the second quarter of 1946, for example, the coal available for zonal use, after export demands were met, was 10 million tonnes. The building industries received a mere 300,000 tonnes, or three per cent. Of this, the allocation to housing was 40,000 tonnes. A tiny 0.4 per cent of the zonal availability of coal went to housing, after exports. Serious views of the situation were stated in the Working Party notes of 27 May 1946:

It is our opinion that a programme of extended repairs to existing houses must be supported by an adequate allocation of materials and that an adequate coal allocation should be made for this purpose. Unless the demands for housing are given a higher priority than at present it is not possible to embark on any sustained programme of extended repairs.

Housing Branch had increased their own level of responsibility for housing matters and believed that there was a moral imperative to provide housing, as well as an economic one.⁷⁰ Senior members of the branch continued to advocate a constructive policy but by July 1946 they began to realise that the resources necessary for such interventions was not going to be forthcoming under current economic conditions. As well as the economic problems within the zone, domestic financial crises were squeezing the Treasury purse and operations were more likely to be scaled back than stepped up.

⁷⁰ Housing and Town Planning Functions, c. June 1946, FO 1051/770, 7.

Some of the officers were pessimistic about the possibility of controlling housing, as Bate stated to his director: 'It is already abundantly clear that unless an unforeseen influx of Housing Branch officers becomes available we shall have to operate indirect control to a superlative degree.'⁷¹

Yet, in spite of the current economic climate, many other Housing Branch officers felt that a plan and programme for housing ought to be drawn up irrespective of current conditions with an emphasis on the social aspects of the plan. They registered their disquiet that economic considerations were being allowed free reign over policy decisions. At the current state of progress, the Housing Branch believed that it would take ten years to achieve even a tolerable state of habitation. Joll steadfastly believed that there should be a three or five year plan: 'whatever the implications of this, they should be given effect to. This is, of course, a question of high policy and it will mean that if the suggestion is adopted, housing will have a definite priority upon a definite programme and standard.'⁷² Despite the efforts of Housing Branch to push civilian housing up the occupation policy agenda, it was not given priority at higher policy levels. There was no high-level commitment to a definite programme or standard.

Though there was little support for their plans, Housing Branch doggedly went ahead with the programme. The Five Year Plan was drawn up in the summer and autumn of 1946 by Gunnel in consultation with the German Zonal Housing Agency.⁷³ It was a medium-term scheme of extended repairs which would systematically extend the earlier repair work carried out on housing damaged to 40 per cent to complete

⁷¹ Bate to Joll, 9 July 1946, FO 1051/750, 24.

⁷² Joll to Farrington, 1 July 1946, FO 1051/151.

⁷³ Purpose of the Five Year Plan, October 1946, FO 1051/1173.

those houses damaged up to 60 per cent. The objective was to repair 1.4 million dwelling units which were damaged but repairable within five years. Repair work would remain in the foreground, although the programme did involve a limited amount of new building (such as attic conversions, miner's hostels, semi-detached rural and suburban dwellings, and some blocks of flats).⁷⁴ The Five Year Plan would attempt to increase the living space available per person to 7.1 square metres.⁷⁵ The Plan required an increase in coal allocations, at first only a small rise to 350,000 tonnes increasing steadily over five years to 550,000 tonnes. Continually frustrated over coal allocations for housing, the Housing Branch threw down the gauntlet to the Economic Division. The plan clearly showed what could be achieved with only a modest increase in coal. If an even greater allocation were forthcoming then the repairs would proceed faster and the programme could be completed in less than five years or new construction could commence.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Housing, Five Year Programme, 14 October 1946, FO 1051/1173, 8.

⁷⁵ President of Economic Sub-Commission to Secretariat, 25 September 1946, FO 1051/1173, 8.

⁷⁶ Whitfield to Luce, 29 October 1946, FO 1051/1173.

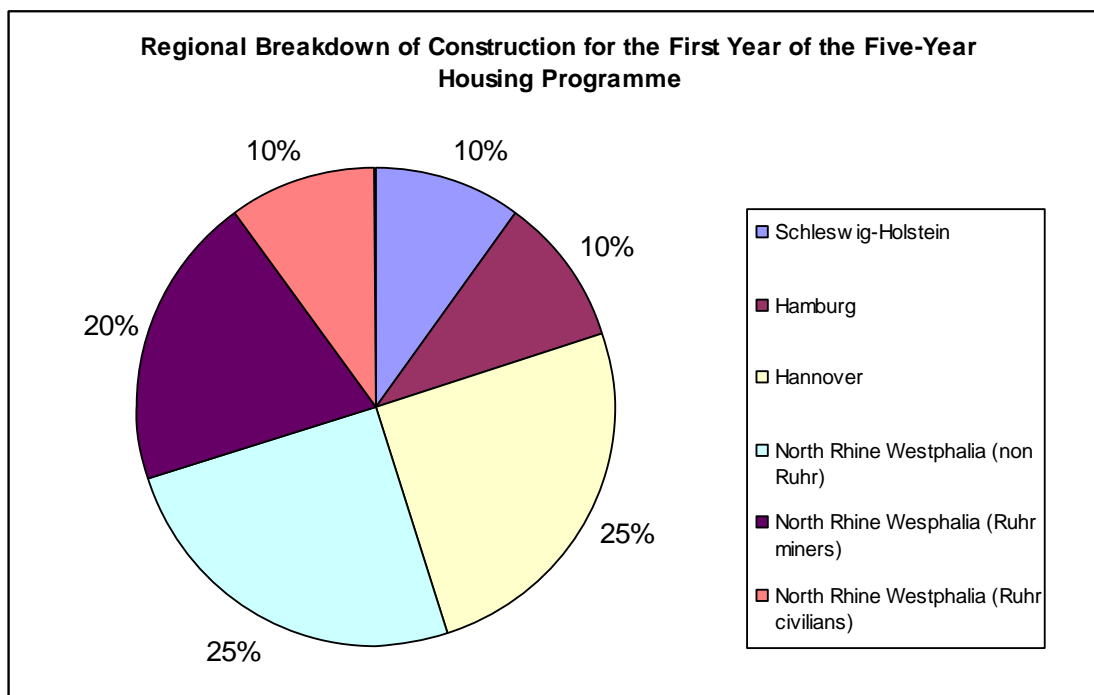


Figure 3.1 – Regional Breakdown of Construction for the First Year of the Five-Year Housing Programme⁷⁷

Interestingly, the greatest quantities of resources were to be devoted to reconstruction in the non-Ruhr parts of North Rhine Westphalia and the rural region around Hannover, in keeping with the broader housing policy of encouraging urban depopulation. Miners in the Ruhr were also to receive a greater share of the housing provision and in fact, received 100 per cent of the materials allocation during the final months of 1946.

While drawing up the Five Year Programme, Housing Branch continued with the current programme of repairs which were, by November 1946, proceeding at a rate of approximately 15,000 dwelling units per month, although they were criticised for not achieving more. It was very difficult to obtain sufficient materials to proceed any faster: ‘The urgent necessities of repairs to mines, public utilities, transport services,

⁷⁷ Housing Programme for the First Year, FO 1051/1173.

hospitals, schools etc. has prevented more than a comparatively small proportion of resources being allotted to housing.’⁷⁸ But by November 1946, in addition to those moderately damaged dwellings, 150,000 houses in the British Zone that had previously been uninhabitable had been repaired to habitable standard.⁷⁹

Higher allocations of coal were repeatedly requested and usually ignored. An increase in the coal allocation for housing was eventually received, but this still came out of the same building industries quota. By the end of 1946, the proportion allocated to housing had risen from 13 per cent to 23 per cent. Although the coal needed for the plan to succeed would have only represented 1 per cent of the zonal availability, not even a third of that was received.⁸⁰ Instead of an improvement, the situation steadily worsened owing to dilapidations and the growing population of the Zone.

In spite of the setbacks, Housing Branch did not give up trying to increase the stock of civilian housing and in December 1946 put forward proposals for a series of new construction projects, chiefly to improve morale when there was little chance of making a quantitative impact on the deficit. Plummer of the Housing Branch successfully negotiated substantial subsidies from the Finance Branch for local authorities to carry out the proposals: ‘I indicated that, in the first instance, it was proposed to try out experimentally various designs of economical construction in different parts of the zone, and I stressed the importance of the psychological effect of German communities being able to witness the erection in their midst of new dwelling units.’⁸¹

⁷⁸ ACA Paper Housing in the British Zone, 1 November 1946, FO 1051/1194, 1.

⁷⁹ Telegram BERCOM to CONFOLK, 6 November 1946, FO 1051/151, 7.

⁸⁰ Housing Repairs and New Construction in the British Zone, 10 February 1947, FO 1051/761, 29.

⁸¹ Plummer to Joll, 11 December 1946, FO 1051/709, 84.

The period between March 1946 and January 1947 represented an increase in external pressure on the British control apparatus and a departure from equitable distribution to priority projects aimed at alleviating economic concerns.⁸²

A crisis of governance: democracy and devolution

January 1947 marked a turning point in British occupation policy as domestic economic pressures and new political alignments forced the British administration to rethink its strategy towards Germany. Quadripartite control had all but disintegrated and Britain's financial difficulties had led to negotiations with the US to fuse their two zones to form a bizonie.⁸³ The imminent fusion of the zones and the establishment in late 1946 of bizonal political and economic agencies forced the British to fast-track the transition of their German political apparatus to a measure of self-determination, in order to bring it in line with practices in the US Zone.

Significant reforms were implemented after 1945 to transform the relationships between civil servants and elected officials, despite a great deal of resistance on the part of German officials who objected to the new system. The British intervened in the management of the electoral process and insisted on the inclusion of particular provisions in electoral laws.⁸⁴ But they were slow to grant their new German governments real power over their own affairs.

Councils were set up at *Gemeinde*, *Kreis* and *Land* levels. Initially, councillors were appointed but elections took place at *Gemeinde* and *Kreis* levels in the autumn of

⁸² Statistics of repairs can be found in FO 1051/719, FO1051/790 and FO 1051/791.

⁸³ Watt, *Britain Looks to Germany*, p.32.

⁸⁴ Reusch, *Deutsches Berufsbaementum und Britische Besatzung 1943-1947* (Stuttgart, 1985), pp.179-234.

1946 and in the spring of 1947 at *Land* level.⁸⁵ In the absence of a central government, the governments of the *Länder* became particularly powerful, particularly after November 1946 when, with the passing of Ordinance 57, they were given executive control over many important areas of local government such as education and public health.⁸⁶ The ordinance also contained a list of schedules which listed the subjects excluded from the competence of the *Land* legislatures and those which had to incorporate fundamental principles laid down by the Military Government.⁸⁷

The passing of Ordinance 57 was an important step towards self-government for Germany but some officers within the Control Commission resented the change and felt that Ordinance 57 threatened to erode the foundations of British occupation policy. In part this was because they believed that this development had been brought about by economic and political pressures rather than a genuine belief that the German *Land* administrators and politicians were ready to manage their own affairs. There was some truth in this. If it had not been for the impending fusion with the US zone, it is unlikely that the British would have devolved executive decision-making to the *Länder* so soon.

Higher level co-ordinating organisations, such as the German Economic Advisory Board and the Zonal Advisory Council, existed in the zone but as these were simply advisory bodies, they had no power over lower levels of government. German Ministers of Reconstruction in the *Länder* took over responsibility for executive control of housing administration from 1 January 1947 but fared little better than the zonal advisory agencies in forcing municipal governments to comply with their wishes.

⁸⁵ Marshall, *Origins*, p.36.

⁸⁶ Ordinance 57, FO 1051/749, 27A.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Housing and Town and Country Planning fell into this latter category.

The German Ministers of Reconstruction experienced considerable difficulties enacting the Allied Housing Law, for example, because they were not granted sufficient authority over local councils to direct billeting and requisitioning nor to move people from one area to another.⁸⁸ Remarkably, when the Minister sought assistance from the Military Government and asked them to issue an order granting him powers over local councils, they decided not to take any action. The CDU and the SPD were both reported to be against any increase in the powers of the *Land* over the powers of the councils and were against housing matters being taken out of the jurisdiction of local authorities.⁸⁹ The Legal Branch and Administration and Local Government Branches were against meddling in such matters and stated that they were only prepared to grant an extension of powers if the Minister would guarantee to put forward draft legislation to the *Land* Cabinet and if this was likely to be supported by the Cabinet and have a fair chance of success. If the *Land* government refused to grant the Minister statutory powers the Military Government order could not continue in operation.⁹⁰

However, these power struggles between the *Länder* and local authorities caused serious headaches for the Housing Branch with which their counterparts in the Legal Branch and Administration and Local Government Branch were unable or unwilling to engage. Housing Law 18 included a supervisory element: ‘such authorities shall be supervised by the appropriate German authorities at higher levels’ and this alone, in their opinion, ought to have been sufficiently clear to grant powers to the

⁸⁸ Senior Control Officer Administration and Local Government Section to Regional Governmental Officer, 30 April 1947, FO 1051/761.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Chief Manpower Officer to Regional Government Officer Land Nordrhein-Westfalen, 7th May 1947, FO 1051/761, 44.

Minister of Reconstruction. Rather than admitting that recalcitrant local authorities were obstinately refusing to carry out part of the *Land* level housing plans, the Administration and Local Government Branch somewhat charitably suggested that perhaps the German translation, *Aufsicht*, was giving the impression of mere oversight, without any powers of a higher authority to intervene in the local authority decisions. Housing Branch were once again forced to intervene to clarify this ‘confusion’ and put the question beyond doubt: ‘the intention was that the Land authority had power to **instruct** the German local authority in the matter of a) the transference of population from one Kreis to another, and b) the requisitioning of housing space to accommodate persons evicted by order of Military Government.’ This rendered unnecessary any Military Government special orders and forced the *Land* to sort out its own disagreements.⁹¹

With the devolution of responsibilities looming, the British wanted to ensure a controlled and orderly withdrawal from their responsibilities. In December 1946, the *Land* Manpower Officer in North Rhine Westphalia outlined to his Housing Officers the field visits and checks he still expected to be carried out even after the official handover to the German officers:

I want you personally to concentrate on the practical side of devolution in the field, visiting outstations as frequently as possible and keeping me fully informed. In Housing, our own staff have hitherto performed a great deal of executive work, especially on the repairs programme, and this must not be relinquished so suddenly as to invite a breakdown...If at any point the German administration is found by you to be insufficiently ready, we will take up the matter immediately with the Minister.⁹²

One cannot help thinking that there is something slightly hopeful in the tone of his instruction. In practice, getting British officers to hand over responsibility to the

⁹¹ Tate to Chief Manpower Officer Nordrhein-Westfalen, 8 May 1947, FO 1051/761, 45.

⁹² Land Manpower Nordrhein-Westfalen to Land Housing Officer Nordrhein-Westfalen, 28 December 1946, FO 1051/761, 20.

Germans was more difficult than simply passing an ordinance. The missionary zeal which had sustained and driven interventions in the reconstruction of all aspects of German life could not simply be switched off and many officers, now beginning to see the fruits of their labour, were disinclined to simply end their involvement in matters for which the month before they had been the masters of policy. Although the devolution of responsibilities to the municipalities should have meant an end to most British participation in housing matters, the director of Housing Branch was still keen to engage positively in reconstruction, as he outlined in a letter to one of his regional officers:

I believe, with you, that we are interested in “good Government” as a whole and that we must not too narrowly confine ourselves merely to so called “purposes of Occupation” (in the sense of denazification, reparations, prevention of disease and unrest). I feel that our mission here should be more creative and more co-operative with the Germans than a merely repressive or extractive policy.⁹³

As Joll prepared to retire as director of Housing Branch, his final speech reflected his opinion about future policy and Britain’s role in it:

We need on the CCG side, a positive policy towards reconstruction – a policy to make available to the Germans the requisite additional resources (even at the expense of the export to other countries of coal and timber), to give them guidance and control in the broad direction of their plans, to assist them with advice on the necessary legislation and to make available to them the vast fund of technical research in new methods which has been so long denied them.⁹⁴

In the spring of 1947, a co-ordinating committee was set up by the head of the North Rhine Westphalia Manpower department, which brought together British and German housing, manpower and mining officials to co-ordinate housing provision for the Ruhr miners. The committee had considerable success at finding or creating temporary dwellings space for the expanding mining force. The Minister of Reconstruction in

⁹³ Joll to Woffenden (Housing Officer Land Niedersachsen), 18 January 1947 and Woffenden to Joll, 13 January 1947, FO 1051/760, 7 and 8.

⁹⁴ Housing in the British Zone - Notes by the retiring director of Housing Branch, Mr A E Joll, February 1947, FO 1051/761, 30.

North Rhine Westphalia, Philip Rappaport, was also invited to prepare an initially theoretical programme for the mining force, including the projected increases that were hoped to result from the aggressive recruitment scheme. In order to achieve maximum coal production in the zone a mining labour force of 400,000 was needed; a target which the British hoped to achieve by the end of December 1948. By 1949, they anticipated that all of these miners would be living in normal accommodation. Rappaport's programme posed a solution which would create four times as much accommodation as the Five Year Programme already in progress. However, it would require around three times more building materials in the first year and five times more in the second year. It would both improve the quality of dwellings available to current miners and create new accommodation for new recruits. While there were many positive elements to the plan it would inevitably entail serious inequalities as half of the building materials in the British Zone would be absorbed along with large quantities of timber. Bavaria had not fulfilled its commitment of 28,000 cubic metres of timber in 1946 and this plan required over 110,000 cubic metres in the first year of the programme. Like the Five Year Plan, the Miners' Two Year Plan was destined to fall into arrears because of material shortages, but arrangements were made to accommodate the miners in sufficient temporary accommodation. It was soon recognised that the plan could not be achieved in two years and was amended to four years, with the new target of providing accommodation for the 400,000 miners and their families by September 1952.⁹⁵

As economic conditions worsened and traditional building materials were in ever shorter supply there was a drive to encourage the use of alternative building

⁹⁵ Notes on the Activities of Housing Branch of Manpower Division, [July 1948], FO 1051/780, 9.

materials and construction methods. Technical sections of the Branch worked on new building techniques representing a shift to more interventionist stance over building materials. In May 1947, the German Standardisation Committee finally agreed that prefabrication was necessary. Housing Branch approached the *Bund Deutsche Architekten* and asked them to produce some designs. However, in spite of these efforts, British officials were frustrated. German local officers were very reluctant to consider prefabrication as a possible solution to the acute housing shortage. The British felt that this was because they didn't fully understand the potential of prefabrication.⁹⁶ It is more likely that they were dragging their heels over implementing such plans as they did not want to see estates of prefabricated houses in their cities. There are many instances of deep resistance to new styles and methods of construction and corresponding support of styles close to vernacular architecture.

Imposition and influence

By April 1948, the time for intervention had passed, at least in theory. Cleary, the new Director of Housing branch wrote to Hume, one of his officers describing the current official position of the Branch: 'As you know in view of impending cuts in staff, it will become more and more necessary to draw in our horns so far as Housing and Town and Country Planning are concerned.'⁹⁷ But the combination of devolution and the impending cuts in CCG staff did little to deter Housing Branch officers, who found plenty of ways to circumnavigate the sticky problem of devolved responsibility. Ordinance 57 had failed to extinguish their enthusiasm and they continued to exploit

⁹⁶ Housing Branch Report for BERCOS, 29 May 1947, FO 1051/761, 50.

⁹⁷ Cleary to Hume, 24 April 1948, FO 1051/726, 33.

semantic and legal loopholes. The ‘fundamental principles’ of schedule D were frequently invoked to coerce the *Länder* into compliance with their own policy desires: ‘although they have not been made mandatory [fundamental principles] should be regarded as an expression of the Control Commission’s policy.’⁹⁸

Housing Branch often issued complicated, misleading statements to German officials:

we are not in a position to give a firm guarantee that we will not legislate in the field of Housing and Town and Country Planning...Even if we do not intend to legislate, we can hardly say that the *Länder* are fully responsible, for their legislation must always be subject to Control Council Law No.18 and any Mil Gov ordinances such as Ordinance No 21 (setting up local councils) and No 137 (Expropriation). They are also expected to have regard to the Fundamental Principles even though they are only issued in the form of guidance.⁹⁹

Precisely how much control Housing Branch could retain legally was ambiguous, as was the extent to which they intended to exercise any control over the *Länder*. In July of 1948, Cleary was still issuing to his Chief Manpower Officers of the *Länder* guidelines on restrictive standards of construction, accommodation and amenities. Although Regional Housing officers and Building Industries officers no longer exercised direct executive responsibility, they continued to exert their influence to make sure that the principles laid down in previous policy instructions were adhered to. Although empowered to do so, no *Land* Government had yet initiated legislation. It is quite obvious that Military Government knew that they were extending their control above and beyond what was now legally possible. As Bate admitted in a letter to Cullingford about intervention into housing for the miners: ‘No-one ever explained to

⁹⁸ Cleary to Burkhill, 10 May 1948, FO 1051/771, 6.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

us how, in the face of Ordinance 57, we were to exert any authority. If the Germans had objected to my doing so, I really don't know what the answer would have been.'¹⁰⁰

Moran, head of the Manpower Division, expressed his concerns about the activities of Housing officers to the Branch's director, and summarised the difficulties as he understood them: 'a) the necessity to keep their missionary ardour within practical limits in the changed outlook dictated by changed circumstances and b) the difficulty defining clearly in their own minds what the limits of their necessary activities should be.'¹⁰¹ In August a categorical statement was issued:

Housing and Building are fully devolved upon the German Administrations therefore the time for action by British officers in these fields is now past. With the exception of a small number of specific subjects of primary importance to the occupation and concerning which, clear instructions will be given by this HQ from time to time, no intervention whatever will take place in German local housing and building matters.¹⁰²

It is quite clear that the Germans themselves were not really sure what the position was and how far they were now empowered to legislate and control policy. In some cases, even German officials continued to exploit the slightly murky waters of devolved responsibility when it suited them to do so. The *Land* Government of Schleswig-Holstein had not exercised its powers to forcibly transfer people from one *Kreis* to another, which it was empowered to do now without the consent of the German *Kreis* authorities. Despite the repeal of some of the earlier Military Government ordinances, like that prohibiting changes in residence, many local authorities continued to pretend that these restrictions remained in force. In some cases the *Länder* saw no reason to enact their own legislation if they could continue to rely on old British directives, even though these no longer had the force of law.

¹⁰⁰ Bate to Cullingford, 31 August 1949, FO 1051/727, 16.

¹⁰¹ Moran to Cleary, 8 July 1948, FO 1051/726, 39.

¹⁰² Young to SRMOs in Essen, Cologne, Münster, 19 August 1948, FO 1051/726, 14.

Housing Branch continued to make forceful recommendations to the *Land* Ministers of Reconstruction in critical matters, such as the formation of their Building Laws and local authority housing construction.¹⁰³ In the latter case there were repeated attempts to convince German Reconstruction Ministers that they should follow the British system and their position was explicitly stated in their fundamental principles:

In the past German local authorities have, in the main, left the building of all new dwellings to Housing Associations. In this respect the German practice differs widely from that in the United Kingdom where the local authorities are responsible not only for repairs but also for the building of new houses which they own and control...It is felt that the local authorities must be forced to take a more direct interest in house building. The practice at present in England seems – *mutatis mutandis* – to be the right one to impose on the British Zone. This is the purpose of this paragraph.¹⁰⁴

The attempts to persuade German local governments appear to have met with some success. It is interesting to note that cities in the British Zone of Germany emphasised social housing and public subsidies far more than their counterparts in the southern, American-controlled states. Between 1946 and 1952 approximately 48 per cent of all new housing in Hamburg was publicly subsidised or social housing.

The financing of housing and supply of money dominated discussions of housing policy from currency reform until, and beyond, the formation of the Federal Republic. There was some anxiety about the effect that the currency reform would have on house building and reconstruction. Although the currency reform was expected to be of great benefit to the restoration of the country as a whole, it was understood that local authorities would suffer from a deterioration of their coffers and that, consequently, the progress of housing programmes was likely to be retarded. This fear was borne out and miners' housing and social housing programmes were indeed

¹⁰³ Cleary to Chief Manpower Officers in the Länder, July 1948, FO 1051/771, 27.

¹⁰⁴ Explanatory Notes on the Fundamental Principles relating to Housing and Town and Country Planning, [April 1948], FO 1051/771, 1; Military Governor's Conference with Regional Commissioners 23rd Meeting Social Housing Finance, [March 1949], FO 1051/863, 88.

temporarily affected. The Military Government stepped in with subsidies for both miners' and civilian housing, which received 6 and 5.5 million Deutschmarks respectively.

By the spring of 1949, housing finance was considered the greatest obstacle to housing construction. A draft paper on the subject outlined the reasons for the financial difficulties, which were bringing public housing schemes to a standstill:

...rents which are controlled at the prewar level are insufficient to cover payment of interest and amortisation of the greatly increased initial capital costs of construction and subsequent maintenance. The disequilibrium between supply, demand and price is such that housing has become the cheapest and most needed commodity in Germany. So long as housing construction is financially unprofitable it will fail to attract the capital required to carry out the large scale public housing schemes needed to remedy the existing conditions.¹⁰⁵

The Control Commission's solution was to lean upon the *Land* governments to remove the unprofitable elements of housing construction. One way that this could be achieved would be to adopt cheaper methods of building:

It has been constantly urged on the Land Government that the major social housing requirement in the Land is for the construction, on a very large scale, of working class dwellings of the most simple and frugal type practicable. There is still much professional adherence to traditional design, but the Minister has now accepted the policy of supporting designs of a simpler and less costly character...I shall, of course, continue to exercise all the influence possible on the Land Ministry with a view to reducing the gap between building costs and economic value by means of simplification of design and method. It cannot be hoped, however, that the gap can be entirely eliminated. A substantial subsidy will have to be found if there is to be any real progress in improving housing conditions.¹⁰⁶

Further fiscal tools such as lowering the interest rate on loans from public funds, offering tax remissions, revising rents, and voting substantial sums from their own budgets would also reduce the financial burden:

Housing Branch has been studying the question generally and is of the opinion that two positive steps should be taken towards bridging the gap. First, that there should be a controlled increase in the rents of newly constructed dwelling units similar to that which has been permitted in the UK for local authority housing constructed since the war. Second, that the balance of the gap, (i.e. the difference between the rent and the annual interest on capital cost of

¹⁰⁵ Draft Paper for RECO Financial Problems Connected with Housing, [March/April 1949], FO 1051/863.

¹⁰⁶ Military Governor's Conference with Regional Commissioners, Social Housing Finance, FO 1051/863.

the building) should be closed by a grant from central funds for a specific term of years along similar lines to the UK Treasury grant set out in the Housing (Finance and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1946.¹⁰⁷

In Britain it had been recognised that both the public and private sectors were necessary to reduce the housing deficit. The measures they were proposing would encourage the *Länder* not just to invest in public housing provision themselves but also induce them to make it easier for private investors.¹⁰⁸

Joint Anglo-German committees were established to work out the best way of removing the financial impediments to housing construction. Change finally came with the passing of the first Federal Housing Law, *Erstes Wohnungsbaugesetz*, on 24 April 1950.¹⁰⁹ The First Federal Housing Law gave social housing a new foundation by finally bridging the gap in the capital market with public money. The Law required towns, states and the federal government to acquire and make land available for housing. Its provisions were designed to stimulate housing construction by making available funds for low interest loans, subsidies for social housing and by granting property tax relief for new private housing and housing being repaired or rebuilt. Not all local authorities were happy about the developments. Some complained that the law required them to subsidise certain kinds of housing and make available building land at the same time as reducing one of their primary revenue sources: local property taxes. Diefendorf has speculated that the high uptake of social housing in the northern cities of Germany in comparison to cities in the south is explained by a concentration of

¹⁰⁷ Memo by Housing Branch on the effect of the housing situation on unemployment, 11 March 1949, FO 1051/863.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ I. Flagge (ed.), *Geschichte des Wohnens Bd 5: Von 1945 bis heute: Aufbau, Neubau, Umbau* (Stuttgart, 1999), p.58.

wartime urban planning there.¹¹⁰ It seems more likely that the relentless pressure on local authorities from the British Military Government to build houses and their commitment to working out financially viable incentives was at least as, if not more, important.¹¹¹

Past scholarship has given the impression that the activities of the occupation authorities had little positive effect on housing the German populace, at least until after the currency reform. While it would be true to say that little new construction took place during the early postwar period, a range of housing policies ensured shelter for German civilians. A phased programme of housing provision was implemented, which reflected the economic and political conditions.

Earlier attachments to ‘indirect rule’ were superseded somewhat belatedly in August 1945 by more direct controls and a more interventionist strategy, which was principally devised from British practices back home. British policies for Britain set the agenda for Germany i.e. they framed the areas for which British policy was felt to be needed. A coherent system of repairs was drawn up and implemented which provided an equitable distribution of resources amongst the German population. With no clear policy directions from London, officers in the Housing Branch drew on British wartime experiences and adapted these to German conditions. Their objectives closely mirrored British practices and reflected the aspirations of many of the professionals employed by the Control Commission, whose musings on the subject have a strong socialist flavour. They were on the whole more pragmatic than political, more positive

¹¹⁰ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.135.

¹¹¹ Memo by Housing Branch on the effect of the housing situation on unemployment, 11 March 1949, FO 1051/863.

than punitive. Those features which could be implemented were and those which were not immediately possible were postponed until resources were more readily available. With a long occupation on the cards, strategies were designed to be long-term and phased.

Space standards were obviously much lower and new construction could not immediately commence. The effect of the First Aid Repair programme on the civilian population was largely positive. Public opinion was taken into account and no measures deemed unacceptable to the population were implemented. However with the enormous numbers of refugees entering the Zone, these repairs did little more than maintain the amount of dwelling space available per capita and few inroads were made into the deficit.

In Allied negotiations, the British showed the greatest commitment to restoration. They adopted the most pragmatic approach to reconstruction and fought for equitable and flexible housing laws, always with the view to minimising the chances of urban unrest. Their actions ensured that historic but badly damaged building stock was not written off and demolished and that priorities could be given to particular sections of the workforce, which was essential for the revival of the German economy.

Housing policies were not devised in isolation and their drafting and implementation were subject to broader political and economic concerns. This was misunderstood by sections of the German population, often leading to erroneous conclusions about British motivations. Britain did support German reconstruction but had to be sensitive to European and Allied commitments and the constraints these

imposed. The Germans had been defeated and it was unrealistic of them to expect better treatment and conditions than was possible for other Allied countries in Europe. Innovation in design and construction methods was encouraged though these were largely rejected by German officials who resisted standardised methods of construction and prefabrication.

The criticism by contemporaries that civilian housing improvements came only very slowly is partly justified. It is certainly true that the housing programmes met at best with mixed success. The failure of the ambitious Five Year Plan and Miners' Two Year Plan was due to matters outside of the control of the Housing Branch and the *Länder*. The absolute failure of Housing Branch to get anything like the modest quantities of building materials necessary for the programme was a failure of high-level policy, which prioritised exports above all else.

After control had ostensibly passed to the German authorities it was more difficult for Housing Branch to push for British systems in housing. However, they did manage to encourage German authorities to draw on their positive experience and certainly the Federal housing legislation and social housing projects bear the hallmarks of British intervention.

Chapter Four

Coal, Control and Construction

Until 1944, Germany's building industry had been able to satisfy the considerable demands placed upon it.¹ Though the building industry had been scaled down, and much of its labour recruited to the armed forces, a steady supply of workers had been ruthlessly ensured through foreign labour, prisoners of war and concentration camp inmates who were exploited in cities to clear rubble and in factories producing building materials. The ferocious aerial attacks against transport networks, factories and city centres eventually took their toll on production levels. By May 1945 the German building industry had all but collapsed and the occupying forces found a critical industry at a standstill through lack of raw materials, labour or the skilled personnel to administer it, at a time when the country most needed efficient suppliers of building materials and construction firms in a position to rapidly carry out repairs to the many buildings and structures which so desperately needed them.

One might assume that the degree of destruction in Germany would have rendered the revival of *any* industry extremely difficult. But despite the appalling and extensive damage, Germany's industrial capacity at the end of the war remained high.² The brutal exploitation of foreign labour and resources during the war had allowed Germany's industrial production to expand to record levels without hardship falling on the German population, who continued to enjoy a relatively high standard of living until the final stages of the war. Much of the coal and iron ore used by Germany during the war had been plundered from annexed territories, the acquisition of which also

¹ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.19.

² Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945-1955* (Oxford, 1991), pp.17-23.

allowed Germany to expand its capital investment in industry and replace outmoded equipment.³

The problems facing all industries were similar: machinery was of high quality and largely in working order but there was insufficient labour, materials and fuel to reinstate production to anything like prewar levels. It was inevitable that the loss of forced labour and of access to foreign raw materials would result in a corresponding fall in potential productivity. The ban on imports of Swedish iron ore hit production levels in the iron and steel industry hard. Before the war Swedish ore had constituted almost two-thirds of all ore used in the industry.⁴ After 1945, lower grade domestic ore had to be used instead and this required far greater quantities of coal to extract the same quantity of iron. But as Kramer has shown, in spite of these setbacks, viewed in terms of capital investment, there was an enormous potential for growth.⁵

Paradoxically, this considerable industrial potential created obstacles to the recovery of German industry. Modern warfare is founded on metallurgical, chemical and engineering industries and to some extent the size and strength of these industries determine the power wielded by the nation who owns them. While German recovery clearly needed the maximum possible revival of industry in all its forms, the Allies' primary aim was ensuring European security, which meant the elimination of the industrial foundations of Germany's war potential and the dismantling of functioning plant and machinery. Moreover, under occupation, Germany's economy and

³ Ibid, pp.19-23.

⁴ Nicholas Balabkins, *Germany Under Direct Controls: Economic Aspects of Industrial Disarmament 1945-48* (New Brunswick, 1964), pp.129-30.

⁵ Kramer, *West German Economy*, p.17.

production levels would be defined not just by domestic economic requirements but by the foreign political and economic priorities of the victors.

Fiscal tools and economic controls put in place by the National Socialists during the war, such as price, rent and wage freezes, and the rationing and central allocation of materials and manpower were more or less preserved to prevent open inflation, control demand and stabilise the economy.⁶ There was little need to justify this since virtually identical measures to suspend market forces were in place in other European countries, including Britain.

The Allies determined a list of production priorities which included the main commodities in short supply, such as food and clothing as well as items needed for the repair of public utilities and services. Top of their list, and most important of all for the recovery, not just of Germany, but of the whole of Europe, was coal.⁷ Output had fallen rapidly during the final months of the war and came to a standstill in April 1945. The critical position occupied by the German mines in European recovery was stressed in the foremost finding of the Potter-Hyndley report, produced in the summer of 1946 by a joint Anglo-American mission. It stated: 'Unless drastic steps are taken, there will occur in Northwest Europe and the Mediterranean next winter a coal famine of such severity as to destroy all semblance of law and order, and thus delay any chance of reasonable stability.'⁸ The report swept away the final vestiges of the Morgenthau Plan and put the revival of the coal mines at the top of the Allied agenda.⁹ In possession of the most important coal producing region in Europe, it fell to the British occupation

⁶ Balabkins, *Direct Controls*, p.35.

⁷ Kramer, *West German Economy*, p.26.

⁸ The coal situation in North West Europe. Report by the Potter-Hyndley Mission to North-West Europe, 7 June 1945, FO 942/179.

⁹ Balabkins, *Direct Controls*, pp.112-14; Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, p.405.

authorities to find an effective means of expanding coal output and this task absorbed much of the Control Commission's energies during the first two years of the occupation.¹⁰ The pressure on Britain to get coal from the Ruhr mines and to the liberated countries of Europe was immense and its diplomatic relations with France, in particular, were defined by coal. Britain battled against criticism from all sides: there were repeated Allied calls for the Ruhr to be placed under international custodianship, whilst the Germans complained that not enough coal was remaining in Germany to support the revival of industry and reconstruction. Roseman has argued convincingly that until Britain had more confidence in its relationship with the United States, it could not afford to take a stance on German coal which might upset their alliance with France. Until then, coal continued to be exported at prices considerably below the market rate.¹¹

The Military Government authority managing the industry, the North German Coal Control, had some success in attracting workers to the mines but output remained low during the first two years of the occupation and this had a knock-on effect on all industry. The principal difficulties were not easy to overcome: shortages of skilled labour and housing for miners in the Ruhr, paucity of food supplies, run down machinery, and insufficient pit props.¹² Unfortunately, without an increase in coal production, these problems remained intractable.

The Allies' attitude towards German industrial and economic recovery was embodied in the 'Control Commission Plan for Reparations and the Level of Postwar

¹⁰ For a detailed exploration of the revival of the mining industry see Mark Roseman, *Recasting the Ruhr 1945-1958: Manpower, Economic Recovery and Labour Relations* (Oxford, 1992).

¹¹ Ibid., p.53.

¹² Kramer, *West German Economy*, p.29.

German Economy', more commonly known as the 'Level of Industry Plan'.¹³ Its purpose was to define the limits of industrial production, the levels of international trade and the form of reparations to be exacted from Germany. The Allies had reached this agreement on the future level of the German economy in March 1946. When the first 'Level of Industry Plan' was drawn up, Germany had not been expected to play a significant role in European recovery and the content of the plan reflected this. The industrial capacity was to be reduced to about half of its 1938 level and the quantity of German exports and imports was to be drastically reduced, to about a quarter of their 1928 value. The central feature of the plan was a commitment to the prohibition and removal of particular key industries (e.g. shipbuilding, armaments, aircraft production) and the limiting of others also considered a security threat to a fraction of their prewar levels (e.g. steel, machine tool manufacturing).¹⁴ In contrast, those industries deemed 'peaceful', such as the building materials and building industries, were to be encouraged. There was a tremendous amount of construction work to do and the building industry had many advantages: it was not considered a threat to security, it would help improve living conditions and resuscitate the economy, and could absorb much of the capital and labour previously engaged in war activities.

The realisation came belatedly that Europe's restoration was to a large degree dependent upon Germany's industrial recovery. In August 1947, a second Level of Industry Plan was negotiated which revised upwards the levels of production of essential materials, though not so far as to offer much encouragement to German

¹³ 'Control Council Plan for Reparations and the Level of Postwar German Economy, 28 March 1946' in Beate Ruhm von Oppen (ed.), *Documents on Germany Under Occupation 1945-54* (Oxford, 1955), pp.113-18.

¹⁴ Ibid.

industry and capital investors.¹⁵ As one would expect, the plans, and in particular the intention to dismantle and remove large quantities of industrial plant, received condemnation in Germany and beyond.

Reviving the building industry and the building materials industry

The Building Industries Branch was responsible for the enormous challenge of reactivating the building and building materials industries in the British Zone.¹⁶ Its director, Farrington and his deputy, Hinchcliffe-Davies, had previously worked together during the war in the Ministry of Works and Planning in the Building Programmes section, which had handled, amongst other things, the wartime requisitioning and conversion of property and the control of the building and building material industries.¹⁷ Farrington, a civil engineer, held the post of Director of Building Programmes from 1943 and was responsible for scrutinising the building programmes of each department, scheduling works and drafting quarterly allocations of labour and materials. Hinchcliffe-Davies was his Chief Allocations Officer. He was by profession an architect but had special experience in progress planning. During the war he had been responsible for forecasting, recording and managing labour requirements and adjusting allocations as works progressed, not just for the building programmes of his own department but for each Government department, within each region and for the whole country.

¹⁵ 'Revised Level of Industry Plan for the United States and United Kingdom Zones of Germany, 29 August 1947'; Kramer, *West German Economy*, p.118.

¹⁶ Agreed definition of respective functions, 28 August 1945, FO 1051/730, 48.

¹⁷ C M Kohan, *History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Civil Series: Works and Buildings*, (London, 1952), p.409.

Their remit in Germany was extensive and included all aspects of the production of building materials and the control of their use: the issuing of policy instructions to contractors on the use and allocation of tools and plant; the production, use, stocks, allocation and distribution of building materials; the standards and quality of building materials; the production of statistical reports and reports on housing progress; the register of all building and civil engineering contractors, plant hiring and plant repairing contractors.¹⁸ Their considerable experience in Britain no doubt helped them and it is clear from the files of the Branch that they drew heavily upon their wartime experience, adopting and adapting policies and procedures to suit the challenging circumstances in which they found themselves.

The Branch was responsible for the production and control of all important building materials: cement, bricks, tiles, lime, roofing slate, glass, stone, gravel, stoneware pipes, wallboard and so on, with the exception of timber and steel. Although the demand for these building materials was extremely high and the Allies had agreed that the building industries ought to be placed in the unrestricted category, it did not follow that full production could be reinstated immediately or that there were no further obstacles to reconstruction. The building industries relied on skilled labour and factories needed a reliable supply of raw materials and fuel. Even if sufficient materials could be manufactured, the use of other essential construction materials such as timber and steel was heavily restricted and this placed significant limits on the type and quantity of reconstruction. What steps did the Building Industries Branch take to revive the building industries and how successful was the Branch at raising production

¹⁸ Agreed definition of respective functions, 28 August 1945, FO 1051/730, 48; Division of Functions – Housing and Building Industries, August 1945, FO 1051/730, 41.

levels and satisfying demand? How did broader policies towards labour and industry impact upon the building industries?

Stocks of building materials had largely been consumed by 1946 and future reconstruction would depend on the ability of the Branch to prime the pump of the building materials industry. They began by taking control of the producers, granting a licence to individual factories which allowed them to commence production and entitled them to a fuel and power allocation. Not all factories were reactivated. There was little point wasting precious resources on factories whose output could not easily be distributed to where it was needed so factories were chosen on the basis of efficiency and location.¹⁹ This was a careful balancing act between centralisation and decentralisation. Too much centralisation and it might be difficult to distribute materials to where they were needed, too little and it would be impossible to institute checks and control production. In practice there was some divergence in production patterns within the industry. Brick and tile factories tended to be smaller but more plentiful and generally employed fewer workers. Cement and lime, on the other hand, were mainly produced by a small number of sizeable firms employing a large workforce.

Of course, simply licensing factories did not ensure that building materials would be produced in the necessary quantities or that they would find their way to where they were needed. The challenge was two-fold: to develop a stable, productive workforce and to ensure a steady supply of raw materials and fuel to the industry and

¹⁹ Reactivation of Factories - General Policy, August 1945, FO 1039/893; Farrington 'Building Industry Faces Enormous Task', *British Zone Review*, 1, no.7, p.13, 22 December 1945.

thereby raise production. What steps did the Building Industry Branch take to meet these demands?

a) Labour

One of the principal difficulties in raising production in the reactivated factories was securing sufficient labour. Although the potential labour force was about 7 per cent higher in 1946 than it had been in 1939²⁰, this proved to be a burden rather than an asset. Meagre food supplies in the Zone had to be shared amongst an enlarged population and workers rarely received their complete food allocation. The calorific intake, particularly in urban areas, was almost at starvation levels and although heavy industrial workers, like those in the cement industry, were entitled to more, it was common for workers to share their ration with family members on lower rations. Productivity and industrial output reflected the diet that workers ingested. Malnutrition was widespread and absentee levels high.

Labour exchanges had been revived quickly after the war but the efforts of their officers were principally directed towards finding new recruits for the mines.²¹ Coal had been made a priority on both economic and political grounds and therefore aggressive attempts were made to secure, develop and sustain a stable workforce for the coal industry. Coal took the lion's share of labour capable of heavy work, leaving other industries, like the building materials industry, understaffed with little hope of fresh supplies of recruits.

²⁰ Kramer, *West German Economy*, p.11. Kramer gives the corresponding figure for 1948 as 14% higher than the prewar population.

²¹ Roseman, *Recasting the Ruhr*, p.28.

Mark Roseman's excellent study of the revival of the Ruhr coal mines has demonstrated some of the strategies used by the British to increase labour in that industry.²² For a short while, the British pursued a policy of coercion and attempted to compel men to the mines, a strategy that was ultimately unsuccessful. As quickly as new labour appeared, others deserted and this haemorrhaging of the workforce was not only costly but often left the mines with a further deficit of equipment and specialised clothing, which was difficult to replace. Even more serious was the erosion of morale amongst the established workforce.²³ Until the policy of coercion was replaced by a system of incentives, the labour crisis in the coal industry threatened to destabilise all of German industry. Roseman concluded that the efforts expended on the coal industry were out of proportion to the results achieved, wasteful of resources and retarded progress in other industries.²⁴

It would have been theoretically possible for the British, through the Labour Exchanges, to have adopted a similar policy towards the building materials industry and compel men to the factories and quarries but in practice they had neither the manpower to police this nor the political will to do so. In any case, such a measure would have run contrary to their broader occupation policies and might have smacked of Nazism. In truth it had only been countenanced in the coal industry under extreme pressure and was by no means a favoured approach. The unhappy experience of trying to increase recruitment by force established that the British were ineffective at pursuing policies of coercion and in reality unwilling to back the policy with the

²² Ibid., See chapters 1-2, pp.21-94.

²³ Ibid., pp.28-36.

²⁴ Ibid., See conclusion, pp.311-27.

necessary brutality. There is no evidence to suggest that a similar attempt in the building industry would have met with more success than it did in the mines.

Labour shortages continued to plague the building industries.²⁵ Building Industries Branch was constrained by British policies towards labour, and in particular by the priority given to the coal industry. They could neither compel workers to the factories and quarries, nor were they in a position to offer any incentives as encouragement. In the absence of coercion or incentives, labour transferred from heavy industry to light industry, agriculture and the service industry.²⁶ One partial explanation for the shortage of labour in heavy industry was the location of the factories and their potential labour force. Most factories in the British Zone were located in North Rhine Westphalia²⁷ but this was also the area which had suffered the most severe bomb damage. Urban populations had dwindled in the wake of mass migrations to the countryside. Most job openings were in the metallurgical, extractive, construction or engineering industries construction but there was still plenty of work available in agriculture. There was little incentive to move to urban areas in search of work, particularly when housing and food were easier to come by in the countryside. Rural dwellers were often healthier than those in urban areas and therefore potentially more capable of the heavy work involved in quarrying, cement manufacture and brick making. But without transport to get workers from rural areas to the factories, it was impossible to make use of them.

The building industries also suffered through a lack of skilled workers as many had been conscripted into the armed forces during the war and had not returned. The

²⁵ *Report for the Month of the Control Commission for Germany (British Element)*, May 1947, p.22.

²⁶ Balabkins, *Direct Controls*, pp.173-80.

²⁷ *Report for the Month*, October 1946, p.24.

quick release schemes to return key workers, like ex-miners, from Prisoner of War camps simply did not exist for the building industries. Instead the industry had to compete against other heavy industries for suitable labour. Construction work required a high level of skill but qualified tradesmen, carpenters, joiners, glazers and the like were also in short supply. The building industries struggled to attract and retain labour. Working environments were quite primitive and factories often could not supply their workers with appropriate clothing and footwear. The job involved heavy, physical work – not easy when you are trying to survive on limited food rations. Furthermore, under the Nazi administration certain industries had been handsomely rewarded with high pay increases which had had the desired affect of encouraging more labour to migrate to them. Wages in the iron and steel industry were, therefore, artificially high in 1945 and the wage freeze kept them that way.²⁸ Remarkably, even though the Allies wanted to reduce significantly iron and steel production, they made no attempt to cut wages in the industry as a disincentive, nor did they increase wages in industries they wished to encourage; wages remained highest in those industries which had contributed towards Germany's war potential.²⁹ Wages in the building industries were, on average, 30 per cent lower than those of steel workers in June 1946 (see table 4.1, p.161). These substantial inequities were not addressed for two years.

Some of the labour problems faced by the building materials industry were inherent to the system of a controlled economy. Economies under direct controls discourage efficiency by removing incentives through controlled prices. High production costs and fixed prices encouraged firms to pay their workers the lowest

²⁸ Balabkins, *Direct Controls*, p.171.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.180-83.

possible wages but also ensured that factory owners employing skilled labour held on to their workforce even when there was no work for them to do, i.e. when production ceased because of power shortages. With high taxes on profits, it was not in a factory owner's interest to lose his workforce when production slowed or ceased, so workers continued to be paid even when there was no work for them to do. This hid the true levels of unemployment and underemployment and reduced the flexibility of an already overstretched labour market.³⁰

During the second half of 1946, Building Industries Branch began to take action to increase the availability of skilled labour and established 35 training centres in various locations across the zone to turn surplus unskilled labour into skilled building workers. Apprenticeship courses were subsidised within established firms and in newly created teaching centres. By 1st November 1946 around 14,500 building workers were being trained.³¹ It would take some time for the effect of this measure to be felt but it indicated that the Branch was trying to implement a long-term, positive labour strategy to overcome the skills gap.

The real turning point for the industry finally came in 1947. The slow but steady rise in coal production coincided with a critical change of Allied policy towards German industry. The initial concentration of effort on the coal industry had allowed other industries to stagnate to the point at which the whole economy was suffering, including the coal industry itself. The shift was decisive: an attempt would now be made to redress the balance between the production of basic industries and investment

³⁰*Report for the Month*, January 1947, p.51; *Report for the Month*, March 1947, p.55. See also tables indicating building operatives available for employment but not employed, and divided by sex and region, FO 1051/1199.

³¹*Report for the Month*, December 1946, pp.27-8.

goods, including construction materials.³² Two important policy developments illustrated the change in emphasis and had a direct and immediate impact on the building materials industry. The first change came in January 1947 when it was finally agreed that some skilled building workers should be released from the coal mines as an exceptional measure, an action which would have been unthinkable a year previously.³³ The second, more significant measure was introduced in July: a pay increase for workers in the building industry and building materials industry.

Table 4.1 - Average weekly gross earnings of manual workers in manufacturing and construction industries in the Bizonal area in RMs (combined male and female).

Industry	June-46	June-47	June-48	%increase in wages
Iron and Steel	42.20	47.35	52.19	23.7
Non-ferrous metals	39.21	41.02	46.04	17.4
Foundries	39.90	44.48	48.09	20.5
Metal fabricating	38.26	40.20	42.29	10.5
Chemical	35.24	38.23	43.50	23.4
Glass	36.94	38.90	42.97	16.3
Building and Allied Trades	32.99	36.50	42.37	28.4
Sawmills	31.89	34.15	38.69	21.3
Textiles	24.97	26.57	30.44	21.9
Clothing	25.33	25.75	28.40	12.1
Shoes	26.42	25.73	28.16	6.6
All industries	35.22	37.41	40.51	15.0

Source: Statistischesamt des Vereinigtem Wirtschaftsgebiet, Wirtschaft und Statistik, I (1949), p.489

Manpower Directorate agreed to allow a wage increase of up to 20 per cent in the building industries and up to 16 per cent in the building materials industries to be negotiated in order 'to eliminate maladjustments and correct inequalities and allow these industries to regain their correct place in relation to other industries from which they had been forced by Nazi manipulation of wages in the interests of the war

³² Kramer, *West German Economy*, p.102.

³³ James to HQ Mil Gov Nordrhein-Westfalen, 24 January 1947, FO 1051/1161.

effort.³⁴ Typically, there was no acknowledgment that these inequalities had been allowed intentionally to continue because it had suited the Military Government's labour priorities.

The lukewarm commitment to fair wages for building workers was demonstrated by the provision included to maintain wage differentials between skilled workers in the building industries and mining in those districts classified as coal mining localities. Although the wage increases were a positive step, it was obvious that coal remained the most important industry in the zone. Nevertheless, table 4.1 illustrates the dramatic increase in wages in the building industry compared with those of other comparable industries. By the middle of 1948 they had risen more than 28 per cent. The result of these wage incentives and the apprenticeship programmes was an increase of labour in the industry of just under 40 per cent by December 1948 compared with March 1946.³⁵

b) Production

At an early stage the Building Industries Branch had made a decision to control the building and building materials industries along the lines of the UK system. It was assumed that a black market in building materials could be avoided simply by controlling construction. If all building work was tightly monitored and materials allocated with the license to build, then illegal building materials would become useless. It was felt by Farrington and Hinchcliffe-Davies that there was no need to

³⁴ *Report for the Month*, July 1947, p.41.

³⁵ Statistics calculated from *Monthly Statistical Bulletin of the Control Commission*, 2, no.1 and 2, January and February 1947, p.50 and Memo by Housing Branch on FO despatch No.142 on the effect of the housing situation on unemployment, 11 March 1949, FO 1051/863.

control the distribution of materials from point of production. The only control was through the allocation of raw materials in strict quotas. Factories were told how much output they were expected to achieve with their coal allocation. Production figures had to be logged and checked by the Building Industries Branch who would then give instructions to the *Landeswirtschaftamt* to authorise selected builders' merchants to purchase the materials from the factories.

But firms found ingenious ways of surviving the harsh postwar conditions, many of them illegal. They discovered means of making their slight allocations stretch further, of circumnavigating production ceilings and retaining their underutilised labour force. When supplies allowed, factories were known to produce extra materials which were not declared in their production returns.³⁶ Brick manufacturers underbaked their bricks to make a larger quantity than their coal allocation permitted.³⁷ These could then be siphoned off to workers, hoarded or traded illegally. The Reichs Mark was good for very little other than the official ration, and those factories able to offer their workers something in kind as a supplement to their wage were more successful at retaining labour.³⁸ A so-called 'compensation trade' developed in which employees' incomes were supplemented with the produce of the industry. This practice became so widespread that firms employing labour in unattractive industries, like the cement industry, risked losing their workers if they refused to participate. Cement factories were found to be supplementing their workers wages with a fortnightly 'bonus' of bags of cement. In 1947 one conscientious cement manufacturer complained to the Building Industries Branch that he was at the point of closing down

³⁶ Memorandum on Black Market Building Activities, 23 December 1946, FO 1006/344.

³⁷ Report on Black Market Activities in Building Materials, July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

³⁸ Kramer, *West German Economy*, p.87.

because of illegally operating competitors. The *Reichsbahn* and the mines were the chief offenders in priming the black market with coal, and farmers, supplied with lime which they were supposed to put on their fields, added to the Building Industries Branch's woes.³⁹

The 'compensation trade' did not simply operate within firms but also between firms, as was explained in a Building Industries Branch memo in December 1946: 'A pulp making firm will demand so many rolls of roofing felt before delivering pulp to the roofing felt factory; a ton of cement is offered for transport of each ton of coal from the mine to the cement works, and so on.'⁴⁰

It seems that the materials traded in this way were less likely to end up on the retail black market than those given to workers as a 'bonus'. More often than not, the receiver wanted the goods to repair his own factory or to trade with another firm for a third material in short supply. While such activities could ensure a firm's survival, they simultaneously increased pressures on the postwar German economy as a whole and damaged overall progress by routing essential materials on to the grey and black markets.

Although Building Industries Branch was well aware of the flourishing black and grey markets in building materials they appeared powerless to prevent them. With their small staff they were unable to directly control the factories and even though they pressured their German counterparts to police the industry more vigorously, they were frustrated by what they saw as the German officers' inability to appreciate the necessity for stricter control and their unwillingness to provide for sufficient inspectors

³⁹ Memorandum on Black Market Building Activities, 23 December 1946, FO 1006/344.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

in their budgets. In fairness to all concerned there were more than 3000 building materials factories in the British Zone employing more than 25 employees and countless smaller producers not subject to the zonal allocations.⁴¹ Policing their activities would have taken an inspection force of staggering proportions. German officers maintained that an element of barter was necessary for factories to continue production as one Manpower Directorate report recounted:

The Germans hold strongly to the view that without some barter the factories could not carry on at all, and that it is better to have production with barter than reduced production if it were practicable to eliminate barter altogether. The possibilities of barter are so varied and so intricate that the entire elimination of it appears to be impossible.⁴²

Building Industries Branch suspected that the German officers entrusted with site checks were turning a blind eye to violations. This was confirmed during a spot check carried out by a British officer who uncovered 12 violations on 24 sites in one day, while 63 German inspectors had uncovered only 19 cases in a whole month.⁴³ Producers who were caught selling their excess output on the black market complained that they only did this because they were not allowed to sell it on to authorised users. This was not strictly true but the procedure in place to deal with surplus production was slow and unprofitable.⁴⁴ As a result, large quantities of material escaped control. In one month it was reported that 20,000 tonnes of cement had gone missing.⁴⁵ Building Industries Branch admitted the weakness of their position and tried to come up with a solution of sorts:

We should endeavour to make it more difficult for building materials to be illegally disposed of by the factories. Unfortunately, with the exception of cement and lime, building materials are produced in so many small isolated factories that close supervision would be impossible. Cement and lime, however, are key materials without which it is practically impossible to

⁴¹ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Cleary, FO 1051/1175.

⁴² Report on Black Market Activities in Building Materials, July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁴³ Cole to Morgan, 19 July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁴⁴ Manpower Nordrhein-Westfalen to Cole, 11 June 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁴⁵ Report on Black Market Activities in Building Materials, July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

build. Cement at least is manufactured in a limited number of large factories and most lime is manufactured in large factories.⁴⁶

There were only 62 cement factories and 124 factories producing lime, compared with more than 1000 brick and tile factories, which made them a soft target for an investigation and subsequent crackdown. A small scale detailed investigation was carried out of cement factories in Westphalia during May 1947 and confirmed the worst fears of the Building Industries Branch. Even though the coal allocation for May was considerably lower than it had been in April, and in spite of the fact that deliveries fell short of the allocation, sufficient coal was obtained to allow an **increase** in production compared with the previous month.⁴⁷ This was ascribed to the fact that the industry had been able to obtain auxiliary coal supplies from other industries requiring its products which was a plausible explanation but it is also quite likely that there had been significant underreporting of production during the previous months. The *Landeswirtschaftsamt* in the Zone were duly required to target lime and cement factories and ensure that 'every bag is accounted for against official release certificates.'⁴⁸

The Branch was acutely aware, however, of the negative impact that the crackdown was likely to have on production levels within the industry. If factories were no longer able to supply workers with their weekly 'bonus' bags of cement, they were likely to lose labour. Production would fall if there was no 'surplus' to barter with the *Reichsbahn* or the mines in exchange for coal. Furthermore, it would become impossible for factories to allow the road transport companies their customary rate of

⁴⁶ Control of Building: Memorandum by Building Industries Branch on BERCOS minute 654, FO 1039/888.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

10-15 per cent rake-off on loads carried, with the result that it would be difficult to obtain transport. Haulage companies often contended that they were only able to get the tyres and bulbs they needed by barter and so were only prepared to deal with firms willing to pay for their services, at least partly, in kind.⁴⁹

There was a good deal of criticism of the Building Industries Branch's handling of the building materials producing industries, and in particular the system of input-output quotas came under fire:

the system whereby output is strictly related to coal allocation is unsound in that many producers have no difficulty exceeding their allotted production quota. The excess production, being outside the quota, requires an official release note before being sold to authorised purchasers and is consequently more easily disposed of on the black market.⁵⁰

Production calculations gave producers a sizeable margin for overproduction but there was no incentive to declare any additional output. On the contrary, factories could gain more by using the excess in exchange for goods or to retain their workforce.

Manpower officers rarely missed an opportunity to criticise their counterparts in the Building Industries Branch but they correctly identified the principal problem with the building control strategy in place: 'Building Industries Branch ... do not seem to have made any serious attempt to attack the evil at source, i.e. the producer of the building materials.'⁵¹ The Manpower officer of North Rhine Westphalia suggested: 'crucifying the manufacturer or wholesaler who put them into circulation letting the user (unless he were a very big fish) go unpunished apart from withdrawing the

⁴⁹ Control of Building: Memorandum by Building Industries Branch on BERCOS minute 654, FO 1039/888.

⁵⁰ Report on Black Market Activities in Building Materials, July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁵¹ Cole to Morgan, 20 June 1947, FO 1051/1175.

building license and transferring his labour and materials to other more essential work.⁵²

Interestingly, the Building Industry Branch interpreted the illegal activities as ignorance. Firms, so they believed, simply did not realise that they were harming German recovery because there was no visible state building programme. They felt that reconstruction plans and progress ought to be reported more frequently and that the British and Americans needed to provide strong leadership on reconstruction to combat the illicit black and grey market in materials.⁵³ The most obvious explanation, that firms were simply competing for survival and driven by self-interest was not articulated.⁵⁴

Production levels depended very much on the coal allocations to the building materials industry and the delivery of these allocations. They also depended upon consistent supplies of power; when there were power shortages more coal was needed to maintain production levels.⁵⁵ Inadequate coal supplies were the most important factor in low output during the first 18 months of the occupation, though coal production ceased to be a limiting factor by the end of December 1946. From January 1947 it was the transport network and the difficulty of distributing the coal that hampered production.

⁵² Manpower Officer North-Rhine-Westphalia to Cole, 11 June 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁵³ Control of Building: Memorandum by Building Industries Branch on BERCOS minute 654, FO 1039/888.

⁵⁴ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Cleary, 21 July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁵⁵ Balabkins, *Direct Controls*, p.204.

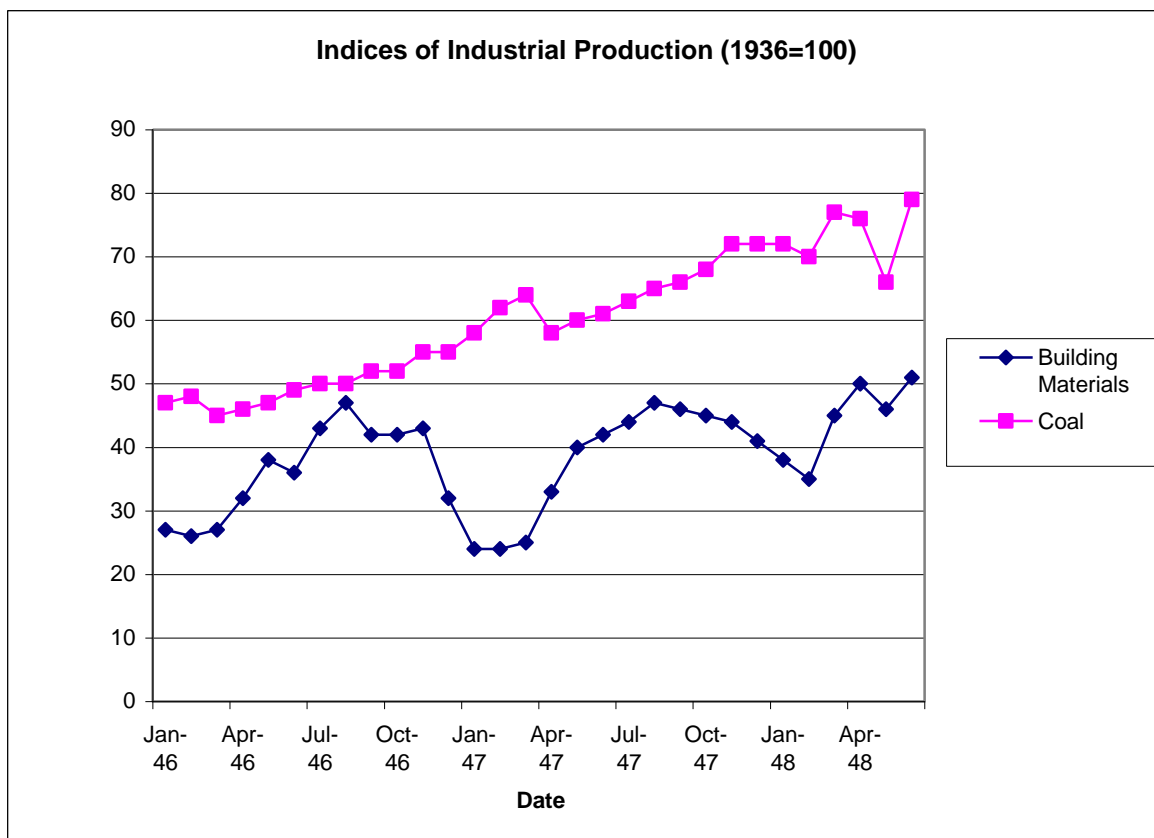


Figure 4.1 – Production levels of coal and building materials⁵⁶

Until the currency reform, the official production statistics of building materials indicate an industry performing considerably below its prewar level. As Balabkins has indicated, yields of cement hovered at around 30 per cent, bricks at 20 per cent and both lime and tiles at around 40 per cent of the 1936 production levels.⁵⁷ Figure 4.1 indicates the major trends in production between January 1946 and July 1948, though it must be borne in mind that the figures represent only the production indicated by factories on their official returns. We can assume that production levels were a good deal higher than the official figures would suggest, though the general trends are likely to be the same.

⁵⁶ Statistics were obtained from the *Monthly Statistical Bulletin of the Control Commission for Germany*, July 1948, pp.60-61.

⁵⁷ Balabkins, *Direct Controls*, p.201-205.

The first winter showed good growth as production was recommenced in the licensed factories. During the first quarter of 1946, a production plateau of 27 per cent of the 1936 level was reached. Between March and August of that year, the building industry rapidly expanded its production and achieved around 47 per cent of its prewar level. However, this trend began to be reversed slowly during the autumn of 1946, when production levels stabilised once more at around 42 per cent.⁵⁸ In spite of this increase there were continued calls for more coal to be allocated to the building materials industries to try to meet the intense demand.⁵⁹ Shortages of coal and inconsistent power supplies had a serious effect on production during the terrible winter of 1946/47 when production levels fell sharply between November and January to just 24 per cent.⁶⁰ The line indicating coal production on Figure 4.1 demonstrates that this was not due to falling levels of coal production, which had been increasing steadily and showed even sharper growth during the worst winter months. Rather the fall was due to the effect of the dreadful weather on the transport network. Even though stocks were increasing at the pit heads, the coal allocations could not be transported because inland waterways were frozen, and some roads and rail tracks impassable.⁶¹ The impact of non-delivery of coal allocations was immediate: many factories simply had to be shut down.⁶² Food supplies were similarly affected by transportation difficulties, which in turn reduced labour productivity. Although many Germans blamed coal exports for their desperate plight, it was the level of coal deliveries that was really capping production. Nicholas Balabkins discovered in his

⁵⁸ *Report for the Month*, October 1946, p.24.

⁵⁹ *Report for the Month*, November 1946, p.12.

⁶⁰ *Report for the Month*, February 1947, p.22.

⁶¹ *Report for the Month*, January 1947, p.13.

⁶² Building Industries Branch Monthly Progress Report 13, March 1947, FO 1039/882, 73.

study of economic aspects of industrial disarmament that the amount of coal received by German industry was more than exports, the allocations to the occupied forces and the German transportation system put together.⁶³

Supplies of materials were very low in the first quarter of 1947 and it was only with the spring thaw that production was able to resume.⁶⁴ Deliveries of coal recommenced in April 1947 but were below allocation levels. Coal output for that month dropped again because of a food crisis and did not recover until the autumn of 1947.⁶⁵ Clothing and ration shortages for heavy workers continued to affect output.⁶⁶ From the spring of 1947 those sectors which had seen the sharpest drop in their production over the winter saw the strongest growth. Coal and power cuts prevented a steady flow of production. By June 1947, substantial growth was reported across the board but once again, transportation proved an obstacle to getting the materials to where they were most needed.⁶⁷ Even when sufficient coal was reaching the factories, a shortage of power could limit production. Without sufficient power the best use could not be made of the fuel available.⁶⁸ It took until August 1947 to recover to the peak of 47 per cent reached during the previous August. By autumn the building industry managed continuous high growth rates. Once again, production slowed as winter approached though the drop in reported production was not nearly as serious as in the previous year. This time, transportation was given top priority in the final quarter of the year – some lessons had clearly been learnt from the previous winter.⁶⁹ In

⁶³ Balabkins, *Direct Controls*, p.125.

⁶⁴ *Report for the Month*, February 1947, p.22; *Report for the Month*, March 1947, p.31.

⁶⁵ Kramer, *West German Economy*, p.92.

⁶⁶ *Report for the Month*, April 1947, p.22.

⁶⁷ *Report for the Month*, June 1947, p.19.

⁶⁸ *Report for the Month*, October 1947, p.26.

⁶⁹ Kramer, *West German Economy*, pp.100-1.

January 1948, the production of building materials improved considerably and in the last three months before currency reform, the average monthly output figures were roughly 70 per cent higher than in the previous year. The sharp drop in production in May 1948 is explained by hoarding in anticipation of the currency reform but as Figure 4.1 shows, this was a temporary setback.⁷⁰ By the summer of 1948, the battle to revive the building materials industry had largely been won.

Managing scarcity: the road to a new building law

Alongside the procedures governing the production of building materials, there were a series of controls to regulate their use. A system of controlling construction had been in place in both Germany and Britain during the war. In Britain, the Ministry of Works had a well-developed licensing scheme, which was used to limit demand and opportunity for capital investment and manage the distribution of materials and labour in short supply. A similar system had been in operation in Germany and was known to the Control Commission. As Joll of the Housing Branch explained:

Owing to scarcity of materials and labour, special economic controls were introduced both in England and Germany during the War and have remained in being. In England these are exercised by the Ministry of Works and Buildings and in Germany by Trade and Industries Division (through Building Industries Branch) as successors to the General Plenipotentiary for the Control of Building (Dr Speer). The controls are partly industrial (production of materials) and partly regulatory (standards of construction, materials and components) but all are designed for economising materials and labour in short supply.⁷¹

At the early planning phases for the German occupation, it was taken as self-evident that such controls were both required and enforceable.

The Control Commission did not assume its responsibilities until August of 1945, three months after the cessation of hostilities. Production of new building

⁷⁰ Ibid, p.95.

⁷¹ Joll draft report Housing, Planning and Construction, 4 September 1946, FO 1051/748, 8.

materials had ceased, but substantial stocks of materials had accumulated at the factories. However, when Building Industries Branch arrived they found that the American and British military units, which had entered Germany ahead of them, had frozen large quantities of building stores, either because they were needed for specific projects or to prevent their disappearance and misuse. Such fears were not unjustified. In a climate of scarcity and disorder, materials left unsupervised may well have been deployed on unnecessary projects, bought up by wealthy firms, or stolen and sold on the ever-expanding black market. But the freezing of stocks had been a haphazard process, often unauthorised and so, by the autumn of 1945, there were large supplies of frozen stocks but little idea of who had frozen them or why. This chaotic situation was made worse by some German firms who appeared to be hoarding their stocks of building materials, stating that they had been frozen. In the absence of any paperwork it was difficult to prove either way.⁷² Finding a satisfactory resolution to this muddle took several months and it was not until the introduction of an authorisation card, on 1st November 1945, that German firms were prevented from hoarding. Stocks belonging to an owner without a signed and stamped card were considered free.⁷³

The following month, Building Industries Branch issued Zonal Policy Instruction 16, as an interim measure, to control and regulate building activities.⁷⁴ A new, comprehensive directive, Zonal Policy Instruction 19, was enacted on the 29 March 1946 and this defined the licensing and allocation procedure for all building projects.⁷⁵ The procedure had been drawn up by the Building Industries Branch, in

⁷² Report Freezing of Building Stores, 2 October 1945 FO 1051/ 878, 22.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ ZPI 16 was enacted 1st December 1945.

⁷⁵ Hinchcliffe Davies to Deputy Chief Manpower, 16 April 1948, FO 1051/899.

consultation with an inter-departmental committee, back in the autumn of 1945 and modified and strengthened the temporary bidding system for building materials and labour of ZPI 16.⁷⁶ A handbook was produced for all German and British Building Industries Officers explaining in detail how the system of licensing, control and allocation would work. All building, whether public, private, for the occupation forces, municipality or state was governed by ZPI 19: ‘All building work, the value of which exceeds 200M at mid-1944 values, or employs more than two skilled or semi-skilled building workers, must be licensed or must cease by one month after the above date [1st April 1946] and no new work may be commenced without a licence after the above date.’⁷⁷

The licensing system applied irrespective of whether labour was employed or whether controlled materials would be used. ‘Building work’ was identified as any project consisting mainly or wholly of the following activities: construction, alteration, repair, decoration, reconstruction or demolition of buildings, including docks, harbours, bridges, roads, viaducts, aqueducts, canals, inland navigation, pipe lines, plant foundations, cooling towers and ponds, cable trenches, cable ducts, railways, sea or river works, piers, quays, wharves, reservoirs, filter beds, sewage works, tunnels, gas holders, the erection of overhead line supports etc. Alongside the license, a permit also had to be obtained which would only be issued if the proposed works complied with the bye-laws. This was issued by a separate authority, as in Britain. As Hinchcliffe Davies wryly put it: ‘The building permit organisation is trained to ensure

⁷⁶ Joll to Regional Housing Officers, Directive 6, 5 February 1946, FO 1039/640.

⁷⁷ Handbook – Control and Licensing of Building Work, FO 1039/640. To put this amount into perspective the average industrial worker earned approximately 150 Marks per month (from zonal statistics).

that the building is good enough. The building control organisation ...is there to ensure that the building is not too good.'⁷⁸

Responsibility for approving a license was split between the German and British building authorities, with the latter controlling the higher value works.⁷⁹ Two broad categories of construction projects were identified: major works (those with a value of over 10,000 Reich Marks) and minor works (those projects costing between 200 and 10,000 Reich Marks). Each of these categories was further subdivided into smaller value bands. Before applying for a license it was, therefore, necessary to estimate the value of the work to be undertaken. These estimates had to include all labour, all materials (whether new, second-hand, salvaged, already on site, or the property of the owner or contractor), the waste of any material used in scaffolding, contractors overheads and profits, and fees charged for professional or technical services, although the latter did not include permanently employed salaried personnel such as municipal officials or road engineers. The total that could be spent on construction, reconstruction or alteration on any one property in any 12 month period without a license could not exceed 200 Reich Marks, which prevented individuals from scheduling work in stages to avoid obtaining a license.

⁷⁸ Hinchcliffe Davies to Cleary, 21 July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁷⁹ Much of the minor maintenance and emergency work for utilities, transport and communications were packaged together and treated as major works.

Table 4.2 - Licensing bands and their issuing authorities

Value of work (RM)	Issuing authority
0 – 200	No license required
201 – 10,000	German Kreis Building Authority
10,001 – 100,000	Building Industries Officer at L/R Det
100,001 – 1,000,000	Regional Controller Building Industries
1,000,001 upwards	Regional Controller Building Industries after approval by Building Industries HQ

Source: Handbook – Control and Licensing of Building Work, FO 1039/640.

Major works could only be carried out if they had been requested or sponsored by a Control Commission department and could be carried out within that department's allocation of resources. In practice this meant that the Control Commission had complete control over all large construction projects while the licensing system was in operation. Each branch of the Control Commission had its own area of responsibility and often had an associated set of building works under its jurisdiction. In the course of its regular activities, a branch might decide that a particular repair or new construction project was required. For example, Food and Agriculture had a programme of works which included the repair and construction of sufficient barns to house food stocks and received allocations of materials for this purpose. Every six months each Division of the Control Commission and each of the Services were required to complete a form of their forward requirements for building materials and labour for all of their building programmes over 10,000 Reich Marks in value. Those Divisions considered priorities, such as the Services, Transport, Public Utilities and the Post and Telecommunications Branch of the Internal Affairs and Communications Division, had to include all their projects, including those under 10,000 Reich Marks to ensure that they received sufficient resources. Building programmes would be prepared largely by German agencies of those Divisions in each region. The Headquarters of each Division would

then collate the regional requests and return them to Building Industries Branch who would, in turn, scrutinise the returns and weigh up the needs against available resources.

Although the allocations of materials and labour were determined by Building Industries Branch, each Division had the opportunity to discuss the allocations at a special meeting of the Building Sub-Committee of the Economic Planning Committee. On receipt of their allocation, each Division had to adjust their planned programme of works accordingly, notifying Building Industries Branch of the breakdown of their allocation of labour and materials by region and by branch.⁸⁰

It was not long before tensions emerged within the Control Commission concerning the quantities of materials expended and the use to which they were being put. Perhaps understandably, the Branch which complained most was the Housing Branch. This was conceivably due to some bitterness at the departure from the original list of construction priorities, which had placed civilian housing (and therefore Housing Branch requirements) directly after projects for the occupying forces.⁸¹ Oblique comments made by Hinchcliffe Davies at a meeting with Housing Branch in March 1945 hinted that Housing Branch was likely to receive less than they were expecting: 'if they [Housing Branch] liked to say that sewage, water and lighting could be dispensed with in the initial stages, then it would doubtless be accepted, but nevertheless Public Utilities and Transport both had certain responsibilities...which would certainly involve the use of building materials and labour.'⁸²

⁸⁰ Handbook Control and Licensing of Building Work, FO 1039/640.

⁸¹ Minutes of meeting between Joll, Watt, Hedge and Hinchcliffe Davies, 6 March 1945, FO 1051/876.

⁸² Ibid.

In the event, Housing Branch was way down the pecking order. Frustrated by the meagre resources allocated to civilian housing projects, Joll, director of Housing Branch, looked for instances of other Divisions misuse of materials. After a tour around the zone, Joll could not contain his disbelief at the building work proceeding in rural areas and felt compelled to write to Hollins, his counterpart in the Food and Agriculture Department, about the:

very extravagant building, which has been, and still is, going on in the countryside in the restoration and building of barns for the farming community. On Sunday last I came across a barn between Detmold and Horn, belonging to Furst Leopold Von Lippe, which was said to replace an old barn burned down. In any event, it contained enough materials to build 40 houses or repair 100 or more. It was built in traditional style and with an extravagance unbelievable in these times; I do not think it would be possible that such a building could be put up in any other part of the world except in rural Germany.⁸³

Joll went on to question how far the technical officers of the Food and Agriculture Branch investigated the necessity of the work and standards of construction when sponsoring building projects. Although some food storage was necessary, he felt that they ought not to be able to hold such huge stocks of food which ought to be shipped out to urban areas. If huge stocks could not be held then there was no need for such enormous barns. He continued: 'I notice also on my travels, how many and how excellently food shops are repaired. I take it that the sponsoring of this work is also your division's responsibility.'⁸⁴ This in part offers a counterbalance to the claim that butchers, bakers and grocers etc were 'buying' reconstruction or using black market resources to get their premises repaired. While this indisputably did occur, it was also common for the repair of food shops to be sponsored by the Control Commission.

⁸³ Joll to Hollins, 1 October 1946, FO 1039/910, 140.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Hollins' somewhat feeble reply was that they intervened only to 'say whether a repair is necessary or desirable'.⁸⁵

Other accusations drew sharper responses. In a letter to the Economic Sub-Commission, McMullen of the Transport Division expressed forcefully his unhappiness at the implication that his Division was wasting resources:

Certainly I have no intention whatever of querying, or opposing, other Divisions bids, and I can see no reason why any other Division should require to satisfy themselves that my Division bids have been "conscientiously considered". Were we to take this attitude of apparent mutual distrust over each others plans to all forms of planning we should spend our time examining other Divisions bids instead of getting on with our own ... I take the very greatest exception at the implied mistrust of this Division.⁸⁶

Whether or not Divisions were making the best possible use of their allocations is difficult to judge but it is clear that an allocation process and bidding system which pitted departments against each other to secure an adequate share of scarce resources was bound to provoke inter-departmental tensions. It is quite possible that some departments inflated their estimates to ensure that their essential requirements were met.

Of course, some Control Commission-led works and most civilian applications were for projects with a value of less than 10,000 Reich Marks. These were dealt with at *Kreis* level and were not included in the forward requirements to Divisions. A pool of materials and labour was made available in each *Kreis* for repairs, maintenance and small new works and a value was set for how much minor work of this kind could be carried out during each calendar month. This was known as the *Kreis* Monthly Maximum for minor works and was a fairly crude calculation based on the population of the *Kreis*. Initially, it was set at between 2 and 5 Reich Marks per head, though this

⁸⁵ Walston to Joll, 5 October 1946, FO 1039/910, 139.

⁸⁶ McMullen to Economic Sub-Commission, 4 December 1946, FO 1051/1161.

varied from month to month and from *Kreis* to *Kreis*. Applications received by the German *Kreis* building authority for projects costing between 200 and 10,000 Reich Marks could only be approved if they could be carried out within the Kreis Monthly Maximum. Applications required detailed particulars of the resources needed and the nature and purpose of the building work. There was some leeway for changes to the amount of materials or labour required but if these exceeded the stated requirements by 10 per cent then an additional license was required.

If an application was successful, work had to be commenced within a month of the license being issued. This could be problematic as it sometimes took weeks before materials were available by which time the license had lapsed. The licenses were issued by the German building authorities but those over 10,000 Reich Marks were only valid if also endorsed, dated and stamped by the appropriate British Building Industries officer. Work for the occupation forces, such as housing for Control Commission personnel, was dealt with on a separate order and took precedence over all other works in all respects.

The Control Commission could veto or defer the endorsement of a license on several grounds: if the work was unessential or uneconomical, could not be executed within the available allocation, or could contribute towards war potential. The German authorities had similar powers over minor works and were obliged to refuse a license if it could not be executed within the 'Kreis Monthly Maximums'. The Control Commission kept close tabs on this and scrutinised the weekly returns from the German building authorities to ensure that 'Kreis Monthly Maximums' were not exceeded and to make sure that rejected applications had been dealt with fairly. Once a

license had been endorsed by the Control Commission, the German building authorities had no power to refuse it.

No civil building work was to be permitted which did not conform to the prescribed standards of constructional design. It was explicitly stated in the handbook that quality was to be kept low to ensure that the required quantity was achieved and that building and civil engineering works were not to exceed in strength, stability or loadings the requirements of the purpose for which they were to be occupied. Indeed, these were to be reduced wherever possible. Although the official reason for this measure was to ensure the most economical use of materials, it could also be an indication of the Control Commission's intent to limit Germany's war potential. More positively, the development of new materials and building elements which required minimal use of fuel for their production was expressly encouraged.

Coupons for the acquisition of controlled building materials were issued with the licence and were valid for one month. The coupons allowed license holders to purchase materials from a specified builder's merchants sufficient for use that current month. If the coupon lapsed, it was possible to renew it at the *Landeswirtschaftsamt* provided there was still material available. Before issuing subsequent materials release coupons, the German building authority had to make sure that the first batch of materials were actually incorporated into the licensed project for which they were issued. A long list of building materials were subject to control: bricks, cement, lime, manufactured gypsum, glass, roofing tiles, roofing felt, wallboard, timber (including plywood), steel and iron. Each of these materials had a separate coupon. Of these controlled materials, timber and steel were outside the jurisdiction of the Building

Industries Branch, and were controlled by the North German Timber Control and the North German Steel Control respectively. Building Industries had to bid for timber and steel, like every other department, and once it had received its allocation, had to share it amongst the various departments requiring these materials for construction.

The movement of materials from their sites of production to the retail outlet were logged but not tightly controlled. The Regional Controller of Building Industries would communicate every two weeks with the building materials section of the *Landeswirtschaftsamt* and with the *Provinz Oberbaudirektor*. Each fortnight, selected builders merchants were authorised by the *Landeswirtschaftsamt* to purchase an agreed quantity of controlled materials from specified factories. No new or second-hand or salvaged materials could be bartered or exchanged without authorisation from the *Landeswirtschaftsamt*, but of course without proper checks in place this statement was unlikely to prevent such activities. The movement of materials between factories and builders merchants was arranged by the *Landeswirtschaftsamt* and German Transport offices and approved by Military Government Regional Headquarters Transport officers. For long hauls by rail or water, builders' merchants were expected to collect from the goods yard or port.

Materials held in ex-Royal Engineers' dumps were to be used for emergency repair works only and were not used to supply materials for ordinary civilian building works. Material release coupons were to be stamped 'Emergency Repairs' by the issuing office. Such materials were to be allotted by the *Provinz Oberbaudirektor* to contractors for specific Emergency Repairs. Neither *Landeswirtschaftsamt* nor the contractors had to pay for these. Non-controlled materials could be stocked by

builders' merchants without specific instructions. All factories and builders merchants were required to produce a return stating the total amounts of controlled materials delivered by them and totals of coupons. Factories also had to have figures of total production and stocks. *Landeswirtschaftsamt* was supposed to scrutinise the activities of builders' merchants and *Provinz Oberbaudirektor* the contractors and builders, though no-one appears to have been responsible for keeping a close eye on the factories and there was no means by which the accuracy of production returns could be verified.

Responses to the licensing system varied. Some, particularly those in the building and planning professions, saw the necessity for some sort of licensing system and voiced their support:

Building materials are in short supply, therefore they must be controlled and directed according to priority needs...they cannot be left to the mercy of the free play of economic forces...If somebody should argue, that building materials need not be controlled, he might just as well contend that we could be without food rationing. The absence of control would result in a general run and the financially strongest party would secure the spoils.⁸⁷

There were plenty of others though who considered the licensing system unnecessarily complicated.⁸⁸ Building Industries Branch refused to concede that this was the case: 'The only complaints received are from people who do not understand the scheme... It is not the system that is at fault but the application.'⁸⁹

If the object of ZPI 19 was to prevent illegal building then it failed fundamentally in its task. In a memo by Building Industries Branch of 23rd December 1946, the extent of illegal building was described as 'very considerable'.⁹⁰ The Control Commission was well aware of the flagrant violations of the building law going on all

⁸⁷ *Baurundschau*, 1, 1 January 1947.

⁸⁸ Durth and Gutschow, *Träume in Trümmern*, p.130.

⁸⁹ Hinchcliffe Davies to Cleary, 21 July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁹⁰ Memo Black Market Building, 23 December 1946, FO 1006/344.

around them, as shown by a letter from a member of the Housing Branch to a colleague: ‘As you are aware, unlicensed building goes gaily on within a stone’s throw of Housing Branch Headquarters!’⁹¹ Some of the failures stemmed from the design of ZPI 19 and others from its implementation.

A complete misjudgement of the available resources and capacity to produce sufficient materials from current production was one such failure. The exemption of projects below the 10,000 Reich Marks threshold from the forward requirements to the Divisions led to a substantial underestimation of the material requirements at *Kreis* level for so-called minor works. This was compounded by the Control Commission’s gross overestimation of the value of materials that would be available per head of population for minor works. In part, this was unavoidable. Schleswig-Holstein, in particular, was affected by a rapid influx of refugees. Licenses had been issued based on the early figure of 3.5 Reich Marks per head for the Kreis Monthly Maximum but with such a significant increase in population, the formula produced a figure closer to 0.5 Reich Marks per head with the result that for many months materials were expended on minor works to the detriment of new, more urgent, requests.

But the main problem with the scheme was that an enormous amount of manpower was required to enforce it properly, both in the field carrying out random checks and in the offices administering the licenses. German building offices were insufficiently staffed and so was the small Building Industries team. There was simply too few field inspectors to manage the system effectively. Even individuals who had obtained a licence could engage in extensions to their projects without much chance of

⁹¹ Plummer to Timblich, 22 August 1947, FO 1051/710.

being discovered.⁹² German Building offices could not keep up with the flow of applications and although the claims that it took six months to obtain a building license were probably exaggerated, for many people it was a lengthy process and some simply could not, or would not, wait.⁹³

Two classes of illegal building were identified: unlicensed using black market materials and licensed using black market materials, the former being less prevalent than the latter. If ZPI 19 had been implemented properly then licensed black market building could not have occurred. The correct procedure was to allocate the licence and materials together. Despite clear instructions and a translated handbook for officials, German licensing officers frequently issued licenses to applicants who claimed that they did not need materials. A charitable view would be that they did not fully understand the system but it was not unduly complicated and the translations of the regulations were unambiguous. It is more likely that building officials at the local level knowingly issued the licenses incorrectly, possibly because they found themselves under pressure from wealthy or influential locals or simply because any building was better than no building, even if it was with black market materials. Unfortunately, this undermined the whole system.⁹⁴

Penalties were imposed when culprits were caught but in most cases these were meagre and no real deterrent.⁹⁵ Large illegal projects were spotted far more easily and received disproportionate attention. Some notable examples of illegal building work

⁹² Manpower Department Nordrhein-Westfalen to Cole, 11 June 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁹³ Easterbrook to Building Industries Branch HQ, 3 September 1946, FO 1039/894, 22.

⁹⁴ Manpower Nordrhein-Westfalen to Regional Controller Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2 July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁹⁵ Report by Davey on Control and Licensing of Building Works of Zonal Policy Instruction 19, 12 September 1946, FO 1039/894.

were an ice-rink, a large hotel, two department stores in Düsseldorf, and a cinema in Münster.⁹⁶ On the other hand, the myriad of small-scale transgressions in the form of repairs inside flats and houses were much more likely to go unnoticed. Because it was left up to the local German building authorities to decide how illegal activities would be punished, there were considerable variations in both the numbers of offences prosecuted and the penalties imposed for infringements of the licensing regulations:

A man who built a dance hall in Kreis Segeburg without authority was fined 100RM or five days. He could have paid 1000RM and recovered it in profits in a very short time. In Brunswick on the other hand penalties of 20,000 Marks and two years imprisonment have been established and black market building has invariably been severely punished; consequently there are now comparatively few offences.⁹⁷

In July 1947, the fines levied as a percentage of the total value of the illegal building work varied from 1.64 per cent in Münster to 60 per cent in Brunswick.⁹⁸ Building Industry Branch officers repeatedly called for penalties to be increased to imprisonment or a fine at least equivalent to the value of the building work involved. Token fines of a few hundred Reich Marks for work which ran into thousands of Reich Marks made a mockery of the licensing system.

The transfer of responsibilities to the German authorities increased the incidence of black market building activities.⁹⁹ The British officers repeatedly blamed the German building offices for the illegal activity and failure of the licensing system.¹⁰⁰ One Building Industries officer reported in November 1947: ‘Since the Germans took over the system of building control, it has degenerated into chaos. More than half of all building work is now being done on a black market basis.’

⁹⁶ Report on Illegal Building by Young, June 1947, FO 1051/1175.

⁹⁷ Memorandum on Black Market Building, 23 December 1946, FO 1006/344.

⁹⁸ Information Sheet, August 1947, FO 1039/880.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Report on Black Market in Building and Building Materials, 11 July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

But in truth the system had been flouted from the outset. In September 1946, while the system was still under British control, the Branch had issued instructions for harsher penalties to be handed out for violations and for individuals to be made an example of, which suggests that the level of illegal activity was already significant.¹⁰¹ It was not just German officers who were believed to be turning a blind eye to violations of the licensing procedure and there were several discussions about how British officers found to be condoning illegal activities ought to be punished.¹⁰²

Further complications came externally from shifts in occupation policy, in particular changes to the degree of executive authority afforded to the newly created German zonal agencies and the confusion surrounding their legal status in relation to the *Länder*. Ordinance 52 transferred most executive responsibilities from Branches of the Industry Division to the new German central economic authority, the *Zentralamt für Wirtschaft*. But within a couple of months a separate ordinance was passed which defined the powers of the *Länder*. A ridiculous situation developed in which although the direction of basic industries lay with the *Zentralamt für Wirtschaft* and should have allowed them to impose significant prison sentences and fines of up to 5,000,000 Reich Marks for unlawful possession, production and use of rationed goods, the Control Council law in question was not enforceable until it had been passed by the *Länder*. It took several months before a further ordinance could be passed to resolve this unacceptable state of affairs.

After the transfer of responsibilities, Building Industries Branch continued to work with *Abteilung Bau* of the *Zentralamt für Wirtschaft* in an advisory capacity. A

¹⁰¹ Report by Davey on Control and Licensing of Building Works of Zonal Policy Instruction 19, 12 September 1946, FO 1039/894.

¹⁰² Report on Black Market in Building and Building Materials, 11 July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

close working relationship developed between Hinchcliffe-Davies and Hillebrecht, who had previously worked in Speer's *Arbeitsstab* and who later became Chief Planner in Hannover. *Abteilung Bau* was advised to develop its own Building Law, which would take the place of ZPI 19 and so began a series of conferences with representatives from each of the *Länder* to discuss the issue. The normal practice was to send new legislation intended to apply to the whole bizonal area through the German Economic Council and Bipartite Board for approval but the Council was known for taking a long time to process and approve new laws. *Abteilung Bau* decided to adopt a different tactic. Instead of routing the law through the council, they decided to try to get an agreement from the *Länder* to every clause first and then hope that they would implement the agreed model and thereby secure a degree of uniformity without having to pass a law for the whole bizonal area. The Building Industry Branch feared that in the end, the *Länder* might not pass an identical law and the Control Commission would only be able to exert an influence at *Land* level and then only for the British *Länder*. No system of building control existed in the US zone¹⁰³ and the Americans were not in the least concerned about the problem, indeed it was, "at variance with present US policy to attempt to secure uniformity."¹⁰⁴ After six successive drafts the new law was sent to the *Länder* in October 1947 with a request that they should implement it by passing their own legislation. Building Industries Branch had sent out copies of the fifth draft to the Control Commission Legal Division in order to establish whether the powers of the *Länder* were sufficient to pass the law. Legal Division replied in November to the effect that Ordinance 57 precluded the *Länder* from the direction of

¹⁰³ Manpower Department Nordrhein-Westfalen to Cole, 11 June 1947, FO 1051/1175; Purcell to Joll, 3 February 1947, FO 1051/1161.

¹⁰⁴ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Cole, 8 November 1947, FO 1051/899, 21.

basic industries and the distribution of materials ‘in critically short supply’. If they were to be able to pass such a law they would need to be empowered to do this by their occupiers. The bipartite view in Frankfurt was that the Economic Council ‘could quite easily delegate its powers to the Land Governments’ so the *Länder* were advised to write to the Economic Council to ask for these powers. By April 1948, there were still legal disputes concerning the powers of the *Länder* to pass this legislation. An exasperated Hinchcliffe-Davies wrote to a colleague in Manpower Division: ‘Black Market building offences are being punished with trivial fines and the black market in building is increasing daily... the constant interchange in correspondence just results in further delays.’¹⁰⁵

While the negotiations over the new Building Law were proceeding, black market offences continued. Building Industries Branch could do little to force the *Länder* to pass harsher sentences. October 1947 was a typical month: one case was dealt with in the Control Commission court and punished by imprisonment; 431 cases received administrative fines; 133 convictions were made in a civil court. The fines represented only around 7 to 9 per cent of the value of building work carried out, hardly a convincing deterrent. The fault lay not with *Abteilung Bau* but with the *Land* Governments over whom they had no control.¹⁰⁶ Building Industries Branch exerted as much pressure as they could on their appointed Ministers of Reconstruction in the *Länder* but found them to be weak and reluctant to use their powers. A frustrated Building Industries officer complained in July 1947 that the Ministers of Reconstruction were simply not using the existing legislation at their disposal to

¹⁰⁵ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Deputy Chief Manpower, 16 April 1948, FO 1051/899.

¹⁰⁶ Memorandum by Building Industries Branch on BERCOS minute 654, [November/December 1947], FO 1039/888.

improve tough sentencing and enforce the law. Even before the passing of a new building law there were numerous measures which were immediately available to the German Ministers of Reconstruction such as the revocation of a license or the requisitioning of the property, but German officials seemed loathe to take such actions.¹⁰⁷ To avoid making unpopular decisions the Ministers frequently requested military government intervention but the latter were unable to interfere because they had already passed their legislative powers to the Germans.¹⁰⁸ They considered threatening to cut off the supply of building materials to 'persuade' the *Länder* to pass tougher sentences though there is no evidence to suggest that this actually occurred.¹⁰⁹

By the summer of 1948, laws for the control of building had been enacted in Schleswig-Holstein and Hamburg, while bills were being considered by the *Länder* of Nordrhein-Westfalen and Niedersachsen. Most building materials had been decontrolled and the functions of the amalgamated Housing and Building Branch reduced considerably. They remained responsible for some reserved aspects of building control and the general supervision of programmes of Bizonal and *Land* importance but a more collaborative relationship was developing, especially in the area of design and building research. Hinchcliffe-Davies, who by this time had become the head of a combined Housing and Building Branch, expressed concern that after the currency reform the *Länder* might dispense with building control and licensing all together. He need not have worried. As Meachem, the Chief Manpower Officer for Schleswig-Holstein explained:

¹⁰⁷ Manpower Nordrhein-Westfalen to Regional Controller Nordrhein-Westfalen, 2 July 1947, FO 1051/1175.

¹⁰⁸ Memorandum on Black Market Building, 23 December 1946, FO 1006/344.

¹⁰⁹ Morgan to Luce, 30 May 1947, FO 1051/1175.

There is no suggestion of the licensing system being discontinued, on the contrary, the German authorities favour the retention of a form of licensing, even if the supply of materials and labour should exceed the demand. They say that the issue of a license forms a very convenient method of keeping themselves informed as to the overall position and also helps them in their technical supervision of building works.¹¹⁰

A sentiment echoed in the report by Wolfenden, Chief Manpower Officer for Niedersachsen: 'A German ordinance, based on ZPI 19, was published, upon which it is proposed to control building until further legislation on an agreed basis between *Länder* is completed.'¹¹¹

Currency reform and employment in the building industry

Much black and grey market activity was blamed on the instability of the German currency. There is little doubt that the hoarding of goods and barter trade was an indication of a lack of confidence in the Reichs Mark and many believed that it would only be a matter of time before a new currency was introduced. While a reform of the currency would seem to be of benefit to the economy as a whole and to individuals, many local planning departments were less enthusiastic about the impending reform. For local governments it would mean a severe shortage of capital for investment which would restrict larger construction programmes.

Concerned about the impending stagnation of the building industry which was being predicted by the economists, Hinchcliffe-Davies issued a questionnaire to his regional officers to monitor the changes after the currency reform was introduced.¹¹² It was fully anticipated that there would be a down turn in the building trade and that

¹¹⁰ Meachum to Housing and Building Branch, 2 September 1948, FO 1051/767.

¹¹¹ Wolfenden to Housing and Building Branch, 2 September 1948, FO 1051/767.

¹¹² Building Policy Effect of Currency Reform, 21 August 1948, FO 1051/767.

unemployment in the industry would rise as a result.¹¹³ Surprisingly this turned out not to be the case. Although large municipal building projects were certainly affected, building work actually *increased* after the currency reform: 'The housing repair programme has been slowed down as far as local authorities are concerned because of shortage of D Marks in the Treasury chest but there is still quite a lot of active repair work going on by private individuals where the cost does not exceed 500 D Marks.'¹¹⁴ Building activity had simply shifted from larger projects to small scale repairs and reconstruction work.

According to the Ministry of Reconstruction in Nordrhein-Westfalen, the cost of building materials had increased 'to an alarming extent', which was likely to affect large municipal works in progress like the miners and general housing programmes.¹¹⁵ Loans and supplies of capital were unlikely to be worth as much, especially with an increase in prices: 'House repairs by local authorities which were started before the currency reform are still proceeding and will be completed but it is unlikely that the authorities will be able to start any new repair programme for some time.'¹¹⁶

The anticipated rise in unemployment never materialised. If anything, there was now even less unemployment in the industry. In fact there were 3000 vacancies in Hamburg alone which could not be filled.¹¹⁷

It has now been fairly well established that a major part of minor works are being carried out on behalf of small owners, and that the demand for repairs greatly exceeds the capacity of the building trade...Building contractors have reported that a lot of building materials are being bought in very small quantities which are being used by small owners for maintenance, repairs and minor work.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Dawes to Housing and Building Branch, 15 September 1948, FO 1051/767.

¹¹⁵ Davies to Housing and Building Branch, 20 September 1948, FO 1051/767.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Dawes to Housing and Building Branch, 15 September 1948, FO 1051/767.

¹¹⁸ Davies to Housing and Building Branch, 13 September 1948, FO 1051/767.

Labour in the building industry is very flexible and shifts easily between different types of job. When laid off from larger projects, it proved fairly simple for a building worker to work for themselves on simple domestic projects.

Hinchcliffe-Davies mused on the unexpected turn of events in a letter to a colleague: 'It may be that they [the economists] were too much inclined to regard building as "capital expenditure" or influenced by the fact that little or no funds would be available from Land or municipal budgets for public building.'¹¹⁹

It is easy with hindsight to be critical of Allied policy towards industry; it was an untidy mess of contradictions. But it is hard to escape the feeling that this came about less as the result of incompetence and more because of extremely difficult choices that had to be made under very challenging circumstances. Certainly the protracted negotiations over which factories would be dismantled had far longer term effects than the production ceilings and coal exports which Ludwig Erhard claimed were damaging German industry. Capital investment was undoubtedly discouraged.

The intense focus on the revival of the coal industry was both necessary and understandable but the methods used to recruit labour were ineffective and damaging to the other industries which the British were also struggling to revive. A more reasoned labour policy was needed and a system of incentives to encourage workers into heavy industry. Wage inequities should have been addressed much earlier than they were.

¹¹⁹ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Silcock, 18 August 1948, FO 1051/767.

Within the constraints placed by the Control Commission's labour policy, Building Industries Branch made a reasonable job of increasing the workforce in the building industries and reviving the building materials industry. It took three years to increase official production levels to their prewar level but if one takes into account the extensive underreporting, this was probably achieved somewhat sooner. In any case, given the terrible postwar conditions this was quite an achievement. The new training centres and apprenticeship schemes were a positive measure in the face of labour shortages and much more constructive than the alternative policy of coercion would have been.

On the other hand, the Building Industries Branch did make some serious policy errors. They relied too heavily on simply importing the familiar British model of licensing and control without appreciating that the economic and material conditions of everyday life were not the same. The weak currency and the severe shortage of materials tempted producers to abuse the lack of supervisions in the factories. In addition, the Branch did not make it easy for them to sell their excess production or make a profit, which further pushed them towards black market activities.

There was a certain naivety about the motivations of factory owners and workers. The controlled economy removed the usual incentives and these were not replaced with any of the other material inducements which might have helped to beat the compensation trade. One approach might have been to route excess production through a controlled exchange system whereby factories could get the materials they needed for repairs to their factories. In the long-term, this might have helped increase overall production.

The system of linking production to coal allocations was not effective and gave producers too much of a margin for overproduction. Smaller firms should have been subject to the same controls as larger firms. Perhaps payments for haulage ought to have been routed through a central Control Commission body to avoid allowing haulage firms to demand goods for transport services.

Many local German licensing authorities certainly played their part in the failures of the licensing system. The over-issue of licenses beyond the materials available and the issuing of licenses to individuals in possession of black market materials seriously undermined the building control system. It was unacceptable that the handing out of meagre penalties was allowed to continue for so long. Building Industries Branch could have avoided this had they not given the responsibility for determining penalties to local building offices. Rather the punishment for violations of the law should have been explicit in ZPI 19 along with severe penalties for any building officers who issued a license without a materials release coupon.

Abteilung Bau of the *Zentralamt für Wirtschaft* should not have been expected to control building and licensing without sufficient authority over the *Länder*. This was a failure of policy at the highest level. There was little point in the Allies creating impotent central organisations while at the same time giving the supposedly subordinate *Länder* greater legislative powers.

Regulatory efforts were a failure in terms of enforcement. They failed to halt a black market trade in building materials and they did not prevent illegal building. The failure of building control during this period probably undermined confidence in the future building law. But without the building controls many more residents of the zone

would surely have suffered. The controls were there to protect the little man, to make reconstruction fair. They also hindered large scale unregulated building, which may have prevented the more comprehensive urban reforms.

Chapter Five

Town and Country Planning

Although planning for reconstruction had been under way in German planning departments since late 1943, the collapse of the National Socialist State and the confusion which followed left many planning departments facing an enormously complex task with insufficient qualified staff. It took many months for planning offices to be re-established, staff appointed and for those staff to collect the necessary data and to be able to begin drafting plans. Furthermore, planning for the long term had to take second place to first aid repairs, rubble clearance and other emergency measures. Reconstruction planning had commenced during the latter stages of the war but it was by no means complete and, in any case, significant damage in the final year of the war had rendered many of the plans obsolete.

In the British Zone, the treatment of wartime planners was somewhat inconsistent and the careers of planners were determined by crudely applied denazification procedures. The Allied purge of senior local government officials exacerbated an already chaotic situation; by August 1945 only three of the wartime chief planners remained in office: Joseph Schlippe in Freiburg, Hans Pieper in Lübeck and Herbert Jensen in Kiel.¹ The dislocating effect of this purge should not be underestimated. Konstanty Gutschow, Hamburg's chief planner and a key figure in Speer's *Arbeitsstab*, was temporarily allowed to continue working before eventually being removed from office in September 1945. Further architects and planners who were dismissed because of their National Socialist backgrounds included Hans Bernhard Reichow, Wilhelm Wortmann and Michael Fleischer. Other planners, like

¹ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.181.

Rudolf Hillebrecht, were more fortunate. Although a colleague of Gutschow and a member of the *Arbeitsstab*, Hillebrecht had not joined the Nazi party and found work with the occupation authorities for several years before becoming Hannover's chief planner. Friedrich Tamms, Rudolf Schwarz and Johannes Göderitz all managed to find new positions despite holding planning posts during the war.²

The expertise of those planners forced from office was not lost: on the contrary, as Diefendorf and Durth have argued, in the years that followed, many planners were able to find work in private practice and continued to exert influence in an advisory capacity and through professional bodies.³ Their experience and skills were desperately needed and whatever official purges were attempted by the occupation authorities, these were unlikely to affect long-established professional and personal networks.

Allied interventions in town planning were not limited to the hiring and firing of planners. During the last quarter of 1945, town and country planning policy was on the agenda of the Building Industry Sub-Committee of the Allied Control Council. Predictably, the French delegate was the most keen to intervene in German planning. Town and country planning was to be used as a tool to ensure the implementation of Allied security measures, the reduction of war potential and the consequent redistribution of the German population. As he rather pompously declared: 'The decision of the Control Council will thus no longer be mere texts but will be embodied in the most lasting way known to mankind to mark its action: i.e. building.'⁴

² Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.186-7.

³ Ibid., pp. 181-2; Durth, *Deutsche Architekten*, pp. 252-8.

⁴ Proposals for the Control of Town Planning, 15 December 1945, FO 1051/717.

The proposals tabled would have required close supervision on the part of the occupiers. Within two years, towns with more than 10,000 inhabitants, all those with an industry employing more than 500 workers, all towns in which more than 25 per cent of its buildings were severely destroyed, and any towns whose industries were likely to be modified, reduced or abolished, would be required to produce a planning scheme for approval by the Allied authorities (for towns with over 100,000 inhabitants the approval would have to come from the Allied Control Council itself), who would stipulate the capacity of commercial, industrial, and residential areas and those intended for public utilities, underground works etc.⁵

The proposal was ambitious and, as was so often the case, the Allied Control Council could not agree. Although they had the power to determine the direction of urban reconstruction there was insufficient political will to create a unified Allied policy. French interests were not shared by the Americans who were against any kind of involvement in German affairs beyond what was absolutely necessary for the principal aims of the occupation and who had little interest in planning of any kind. In town planning terms they were ideologically worlds apart. France's commitment to centralisation and the existence of a powerful reconstruction ministry in France set the precedent for intervention on a grand scale. The Americans, on the other hand, did not endorse centralised planning and largely left the German planners in their zone to their own devices. Consequently, town and country planning in each zone was defined to a fair degree not by joint Allied policies but by how much the respective occupying forces wished to intervene. The Americans chose to do nothing, the French went so far as to appoint their own teams in cities like Mainz and Saarbrücken to carry out Charter

⁵ Ibid.

of Athens inspired modernist reconstruction. The British, like the French, encouraged the adoption of expansive planning legislation and a strong central Ministry of Reconstruction.⁶

In Britain, Attlee's Labour Government was pursuing a distinct agenda of urban and regional change.⁷ Although not on the same scale as Germany, Britain was facing similar problems caused by the wartime destruction of cities and long-term decay of the urban fabric. Regional disparities in economic and industrial growth were to be rebalanced through the nationally controlled distribution of employment, metropolitan decentralisation and the extension of planned urban redevelopment. The Town and Country Planning Act of 1944, the 'Blitz and Blight' Act, had given compulsory purchase powers to local authorities to enable the planning of areas which had been either damaged during the war or which had become dilapidated through neglect. Momentum gathered through a series of white papers on the control of land use and unemployment, the publication of Abercrombie's Greater London Plan in 1944, and culminated in the New Towns Act of 1946 and the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, which obliged counties and boroughs to regulate nearly all land development. The notion of planning in the common interest was the keystone of the current political ideology.⁸

In spite of the growing planning agenda at home, British policy for German reconstruction was initially rather sketchy. An exchange between George Lionel Pepler

⁶ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.244-6.

⁷ For further information on these developments see for example Dennis Hardy, *From Garden Cities to New Towns: Campaigning for town and country planning, 1899-1946* (Oxford, 1991); Dennis Hardy, *From New Towns to Green Politics* (Oxford 1991); Gordon Cherry, *Cities and Plans: The Shaping of Urban Britain in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London, 1988).

⁸ David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain* (London, 2007), p.30, pp.160-8; Hardy, *Garden Cities*, p.275, Ward, *Planning*, pp.92-100.

and Alan Dudley of the Foreign Office illustrates Whitehall's position on the subject quite well.⁹ Referring to a point made by the German Jewish émigré planner, Erwin Anton Gutkind, Pepler wrote: 'If we let the Germans build up again their huge cities, particularly Berlin, they will become centres of Deutschland uber [sic] Alles. What we ought to do is secure planning for rebuilding on lines of decentralisation so that there are more focal points and fewer metropolises which by their size encourage grandiose ideas.'¹⁰ Dudley doubted whether such action was necessary and rather flippantly replied:

A contraction of the big German cities will follow automatically from the breaking up of the greatest concentrations of German industrial power in the Ruhr and elsewhere... Since you wrote another factor likely powerfully to influence the dispersal of German cities when rebuilt has come into existence [sic] the atomic bomb. Perhaps, for security's sake we ought to insist on German cities being concentrated not dispersed!¹¹

The Foreign Office had given little thought to German urban reconstruction when the Housing Branch of the Control Commission was put in charge of town and country planning in the British Zone. Fortunately, those who were appointed (including Gutkind) had a better grasp of the subject than Dudley, although as we have seen in earlier chapters the division of responsibilities between the Housing and Building Industries Branches was sufficiently unclear (and, one might add, nonsensical) as to make some interference from the latter inevitable. Compared with the Branch's housing policies, those for town and country planning were initially vague and insubstantial; the Branch would be responsible for 'the control of development with

⁹ George Lionel Pepler is an important figure in British planning history. He was one of the founding members of the Town Planning Institute and held several key positions in this organisation between 1919 and 1950 including president, secretary and treasurer. Pepler had a very successful career as a civil servant in a variety of roles, for example Chief Town Planning Inspector in the Ministry of Health. He was also heavily involved in the preparations for the New Towns and remained active after his retirement as a consultant planner. For a useful summary of his career see Gordon Cherry, 'George Pepler' in Gordon Cherry (ed.), *Pioneers in British Planning* (London, 1981).

¹⁰ Pepler to Dudley, 23 July 1945, FO 371/46957.

¹¹ Dudley to Pepler, 27 August 1945, FO 371/46957.

regard to the distribution of population, level of industry and other policies'.¹² This was not elaborated upon nor was there any indication of how this was to be achieved.

A working party was established in January 1946, whose primary purpose seems to have been to improve relations between the two branches and to negotiate a mutually acceptable division of responsibilities, after the Building Industry Branch attempted to poach this policy area from the Housing Branch. Their principal objection was that the Housing Branch did not have the qualified, experienced staff to formulate town and country planning policies: 'The assumption is that your branch will assume responsibility for Town Planning, though I gather from our conversation that you have no-one on your staff or in sight at the moment who is qualified to deal with these problems.'¹³

The criticism was not without foundation but the protracted internal wrangling did little to increase the policy output of either branch. However, from the spring of 1946, this matter had been resolved and several factors came together which encouraged the Control Commission to devote more attention to the role of town and country planning in the occupation.

From Master Plan to Fundamental Principles

Chapter four explored the difficulties that the Control Commission faced when trying to enforce a system of building control on their zone and it was partly this experience which led to the development of a zonal 'Master Plan' for reconstruction. The absence of a central national programme of reconstruction was felt to be partly to blame for the

¹² Draft report on Military Government Housing Policy, 19 July 1945, FO 1051/876, 14.

¹³ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Joll, 26 October 1945, FO 1039/913, 2.

poor progress in rebuilding and housing provision and the extensive black market trade in building materials (see chapters three and four). By the spring of 1946 there was considerable anxiety within the Control Commission about the civilian population's perception of the occupation forces and the potential for civic unrest.¹⁴ Progress in reconstruction was rather optimistically seen as a key to improving stability, fostering better relations and eliminating undesirable black market trading:

If in every Kreis there was a known reconstruction programme, of so many food and export factories to be put back into operation, power stations to be reinstated, bridges to be rebuilt, damaged houses to be repaired and new houses for key workers to be built, all within the next six months, and if regular reports were published showing the progress achieved towards the target compared with progress in other Kreise, the deterrent effects of illicit building operations would be more evident and a stronger social sense would be awakened.¹⁵

By April of 1946, the Housing Branch had cemented its hold over the field of town and country planning within the Control Commission and, over the next six months began to consider in more detail the policies which would be imposed on German planning departments.¹⁶ The subject was elevated from a mere footnote to housing policy to 'one of the most important functions of the German Local Administration'.¹⁷ Joll, the Director of Housing Branch, explained:

It is obvious that physical planning and reconstruction in Germany must, as soon as the problem of food and some of the more urgent consumer goods have been solved or improved, become Internal Politics No.1 Undoubtedly, in England, housing and reconstruction hold this position and they will be likely to do so all the more in the vastly worse conditions in Germany.¹⁸

Physical reconstruction was considered a matter for the German authorities¹⁹ but the Control Commission was determined that these authorities should only be permitted to

¹⁴ Memorandum by Building Industries Branch on BERCOS minute 654, FO 1039/888.

¹⁵ Bishop to Macready, 3 January 1948, FO 1051/899, 53.

¹⁶ Appendix A to housing Directive No.5, FO 1051/1172.

¹⁷ Further notes by the Director of Housing on housing and reconstruction in the British Zone, 28 December 1946, FO 1051/1201.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Memorandum by the British Member on Control of Town and Country Planning, 27 August 1946, FO 1051/770, 76.

take control once they were up to the task and should approach reconstruction planning in a particular way. In a decisive shift from the earlier limited perspective of control in the interests of national security, town and country planning was now being described in more familiar terms - as a positive, constructive activity with a much wider scope.²⁰

The role of the Branch would be to provide a guiding hand:

[Town and country planning] may prove a potent medium for re-orienting the German mentality...For this purpose some body in the Commission will have to prepare to watch over and vet proposals for enabling legislation, e.g. upon such topics as acquisition of land, compensation and betterment, financial assistance for reconstruction of 'blitzed' towns, rearrangement of existing plans in 'blitzed' towns, setting up new satellite and other towns, land settlement, and redistribution of population.²¹

Certainly, planning could be employed in a restrictive sense to prevent developments which would contravene the provisions for the level of industry or the restrictions towards building up war potential, but it was also seen as an essential prerequisite for the democratic revival of Germany and as 'a co-operative public and social crusade in the interests of the people.'²² The Housing Branch officers saw themselves as guardians of good planning and intended to facilitate the passing of appropriate legislation on the acquisition of land, compensation and betterment, the adjustment of boundaries of individual ownerships, the breaking-up of estates, agencies for the development of new and satellite towns, and a strong central planning department.²³

With current British planning as a blueprint, German urban reconstruction was to be viewed very much in the wider context of regional planning and redevelopment and any suggestion that this was a purely local matter, concerned with simply

²⁰ Control of Town Planning, 1 August 1946, FO 1051/1194.

²¹ Joll to Farrington, 31 July 1946, FO 1051/770, 11.

²² Further notes by the Director of Housing on housing and reconstruction in the British Zone, 28 December 1946, FO 1051/1201.

²³ Report by Joll Housing, Planning and Construction, 4 September 1946. FO 1051/748, 8; Conference of CCG Housing Officers with German Housing Officers of Länder-Provinces and with members of the German Housing Panel, 29 May 1946, FO 1039/900, 13; Further notes by the Director of Housing on housing and reconstruction in the British Zone, 28 December 1946, FO 1051/1201.

rebuilding damaged structures, was strongly rebutted: 'in reality town and country planning in Germany is the planning of re-development and planning must come first to act as a guide to reconstruction.'²⁴ As it was not possible to secure a national reconstruction plan, it was felt that at least some uniformity could be achieved within the British Zone: 'The reconstruction of Germany calls for a Master Plan or "Design" laying down the main framework within which Land Ministries can carry out their local plans. There is at present no co-ordination, or provision for the co-ordination of the reconstruction programme in the economic, social-service, transport and housing spheres.'²⁵ The Master Plan would lay down broad outlines for the location of industry with the object of guiding the reconstruction of the western zones of Germany as an economic whole, rather than a collection of self-contained *Länder* each striving after economic self-sufficiency. It would cover the utilisation of space, in particular the zoning of industry, agriculture and residential areas, as well as the development of transport and communication networks. It would also consider the redistribution of the German population along similar lines to those being employed in Britain.²⁶ The formation of the Master Plan was to be a collaborative process, led by the Housing Branch. It was envisaged that industry, transport and agriculture would remain subject to Military Government control for the foreseeable future, while housing, health and education would be subject to broad policy from the centre; only municipal building and public works were envisaged as the sole responsibility of the *Länder*:

The replanning of German Urban and Rural areas and the subsequent rehousing of their inhabitants ... should be conceived as one coherent whole involving redistribution of

²⁴ Report by Smith on Town and Country Planning, 4 September 1946, FO 1051/770, 37.

²⁵ Reconstruction Planning, 25 November 1946, FO 1051/761, 15C.

²⁶ Ibid.; Draft Proposal for Organisation to deal with Housing and Town Planning, 5 December 1946, FO 1051/761, 15B; Further notes by the Director of Housing on housing and reconstruction in the British Zone, 28 December 1946, FO 1051/1201.

population and industry and social services from urban to rural areas or vice versa... The Master Plan according to which Physical Reconstruction should proceed, is the expression of a general social policy in the interests of the German people. As such it lays down the fundamental purpose and procedure and execution from the Central down to the local level. It should be given first priority over all other activities as it touches on all essential aspects of rehabilitation. It should be made the focal point on which Physical Reconstruction is centred as without a co-ordinating idea only unrelated results of minor importance can be expected ²⁷

Housing Branch was to draw up the plan in consultation with the German Labour and Housing Agency. The plan would be divided into a long-term programme and a short-term programme, which would determine a schedule of priorities for the following three years. The scope of the plan conceived went far beyond simply town and country planning policy. Those problems for which Housing Branch would be responsible were town and country planning, redistribution of social services, redistribution of industry, redistribution of population, land reform, replanning of urban and rural areas as integrated regional units, and the assessment of reception and evacuation areas.²⁸ Gutkind was put in charge of devising the Master Plan and toured the Zone gathering data.²⁹

Detailed plans were requested from the *Länder*. Each plan had to be divided into the following parts: firstly, the town and province as it formerly existed; secondly, the town and province as it currently existed (i.e. in 1946) in an undamaged and/or useable state and finally, the town and province as was proposed for the future. A bewildering list of statistics were requested: the population of the city and province; the agricultural population for which the city was the normal purchasing centre; the number of workers employed in industry, commerce, agriculture and service; the type of industry, commerce and agriculture in which the majority of the workers were

²⁷ Physical Reconstruction and Town Planning, [December 1946], FO 1051/761, 6.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Reports on visits to German cities, June 1947, FO 1051/769. Gutkind also made a point of listing the topics he discussed with various city architects, these included subjects such as reconstruction laws, replotting ordinances and the general purpose of town and country planning.

engaged or proposed to engage in the future; the total areas for housing, industry, commerce, public and municipal buildings, health and education along with the number of these establishments and their floor space; the area served by public utilities; the total area of paved streets and highways; the kilometres of different forms of public transportation; the areas devoted to public recreation and the locations of railway stations, waterways, docks and harbours. Many of these statistics were expected within six months!³⁰

The German response to these requests was unenthusiastic, as a letter from Philipp Rappaport, director of the Ruhr Regional Planning Authority demonstrates: 'The Länder are now being asked to submit plans. In accordance with my duty I must, however, point out that herewith an unusually big task is being demanded. Neither does it appear certain whether a central agency is really able to obtain an overall view from these hundreds of plans.'³¹

The advent of Ordinance 57 brought the formation of the 'Master Plan' to an abrupt halt. Housing Branch, like many other Branches within the Control Commission faced an uncertain future. The ordinance was the result of an occupation policy conceived at the highest level and therefore superseded all other departmental policies already in place. It had been decided that the fledgling German local governments were ready to take on the responsibility of administering themselves. The ordinance was to become effective on 1st January 1947. Fields of responsibility were to be placed in various categories according to whether continued Military Government control was considered to be still essential. These categories ranged from 'restricted' to

³⁰ Building Industries Sub-Committee Proposals on Town Planning, 31 August 1946, FO 1051/770, 75.

³¹ Rappaport to Housing Branch, 19 March 1947, FO 1051/770, 20.

‘unrestricted subject to certain fundamental principles’ which were to be laid down by the Military Government. It was important for Military Government to hand over as much responsibility as possible; to have done otherwise would have rendered Ordinance 57 meaningless. Town and country planning, along with many other responsibilities of the Housing Branch, was to be placed in Schedule D, the lowest category, and this designation started a flurry of reports and memoranda from the Branch who desperately tried to justify their continued involvement and demonstrate their indispensability to avoid the significant impending cuts in their resources and personnel.³²

The tide of opinion was against them, the ordinance was passed and town and country planning remained in the unrestricted category. The retiring director of Housing Branch spoke of his bitter disappointment in his final report in February 1947:

What is wanted is an entirely new attitude both on the part of the Occupying Powers and the Germans to the problems of physical reconstruction. If we cannot get assent to new measures by the other Powers, we should at least look to the rehabilitation of our own Zone as far as it lies in our power ... we need, on the CCG side, a positive policy towards reconstruction – a policy to make available to the Germans the requisite additional resources (even at the expense of the export of coal and timber), to give them guidance and control in the broad direction of their plan, to assist them with advice on the necessary legislation and to make available to them the vast fund of technical research in new methods which has so long been denied to them.³³

In a rare demonstration of solidarity, Hinchcliffe Davies, deputy director of Building Industries Branch, echoed Joll’s criticism of British policy:

In view of the time it takes to formulate and co-ordinate plans for reconstruction it has now become imperative that some machinery should be set up to handle these responsibilities so that when new construction does start it does so under proper guidance...Co-ordination of some kind is essential if only for the purpose of comparing the different plans and drawing attention to instances where a particular Land proposal formulated without knowledge of the larger picture might conflict with interests of other Länder or of the bizonal area as a whole...Still more important it would give new hope to the Germans if they were given tangible evidence of a recognition by Military Government of the scale of the reconstructional problems with which they are confronted. Up to now they have been given no glimpse of a policy on the British side

³² Report by Smith on Town and Country Planning, 4 September 1946, FO 1051/770, 37.

³³ To Luce, 27 February 1947, FO 1051/1201.

and no opportunity or encouragement to formulate policy for themselves on a zonal or bizonal scale.³⁴

The final official opportunity to influence German town and country planning was the drafting of the ‘fundamental principles’, which were to be issued for those policy areas to be handed over to the German authorities. This offered the opportunity of using the Master Plan proposal, albeit on a much reduced scale:

I have discussed the position of fundamental principles with Mr Gutkind and with Mr Moran, and have suggested that these should be regarded as of negative force, i.e. they should be a list of subjects (possibly fairly closely defined) on which Land Governments shall not take action without reference to Military Government or any authority appointed by Military Government. Decisions on these subjects would then be given by Military Government or this Authority in accordance with what Mr Gutkind calls a ‘Master Plan’. This Plan would not be a positive one in the sense that it would compel Land Governments to take the initiative. If they wished to do certain things, however, they would be compelled by force of the fundamental principles to do them in conformity with this Plan. I do not think Mr Gutkind likes this idea, but I am convinced that the general constitutional structure of Germany and our own policy demand it.³⁵

While some officers like the one above had accepted that the time for intervention had passed, others were certainly not in favour of the limited scope of the fundamental principles being proposed and spoke out vigorously against the direction the Branch was now taking:

It would be an untenable situation if the German Authorities were left free to implement in their own way a policy which they don’t like and even oppose...The Länder plans and the regional plans worked out by the Länder need coordination and integration above Land level in a Master Plan. It is the same problem which was given special consideration in the Barlow Report where it was pointed out that it is not sufficient to cover the land of Great Britain even by excellent local and district plans, that these plans would never make a whole without coordination by higher authority and integration into a Master Plan worked out under the guidance and auspices of a co-ordinating authority...If the draft of the Fundamental Principles were accepted we would not only have no power to influence or to direct the activities, but also no means of preventing detrimental trends or creating conditions which would finally guarantee results in the political and economic sphere...What will be done in the sphere of town and country planning is decisive for the whole future of Germany and Europe. This is no exaggeration.³⁶

Incursions into property rights remained one of the few planning areas still within the exclusive competence of Military Government. The fundamental principles issued

³⁴ Hinchcliffe Davies, Memorandum on Reconstructional Planning, 28 March 1947, FO1051/1187.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Gutkind to Morgan, 12 February 1947, FO 1051/749, 31.

were confined to a fairly limited range of issues. The main restrictions placed on the German authorities were that any legislation passed should be consistent with the policies of the occupation forces (for example the level of industry) and that Military Government Laws should be implemented fully (for example Housing Law 18).³⁷ The responsibility for the redistribution of population and the control of construction was placed with the *Land* Governments because 'past experience has shown local authorities are too subject to pressure from interested parties to be able to exercise a sufficiently rigid control over the licensing of new construction'.³⁸ German local authorities would be compelled to build new dwellings for letting purposes.³⁹

A year later, the Housing and Building Branch still had reservations about the ability of the German authorities to tackle the problem of urban reconstruction and, once again, raised the possibility of increased intervention on the part of the occupying powers through a bizonal reconstruction directorate. A review of German progress provided by Wood of the Housing and Building Branch was damning:

Such plans as have been prepared are scrappy and unimpressive and to date no master plan has been thought of, let alone worked out. In the meantime, the majority of architects have been unemployed or engaged in work of competition for money prizes offered by certain of the more enterprising towns and firms for the purpose of preparing designs for the reconstruction of small areas or individual buildings. This time should properly have been spent in the preparation of preliminary plans for reconstruction, with architects working in groups, collaborating together to produce the best possible solution to the many and various problems, instead of competing against one another for trivial prizes.⁴⁰

³⁷ Fundamental Instruction Nr. 33, 6 May 1948, FO 1051/771.

³⁸ Explanatory Notes on the Fundamental Principles relating to Housing and Town and Country Planning, FO 1051/749, 94; Housing and Town and Country Planning Fundamental Principles, FO 1051/749, 92; Fundamental Instruction Nr. 33, 6 May 1948, FO 1051/771.

³⁹ Explanatory Notes on the Fundamental Principles relating to Housing and Town and Country Planning, FO 1051/749, 94; Housing and Town and Country Planning Fundamental Principles, FO 1051/749, 92.

⁴⁰ Reconstruction in the Bizonal Area, 3 December 1947, FO 1039/888, 5.

It did not seem to occur to Wood that the German authorities may well have found the very idea of a 'master plan' distasteful so soon after the architectural and planning excesses of the National Socialists.

An unexpected, and somewhat paradoxical, outcome of the transfer of responsibilities to the German authorities was an increase in the latter's interest in British town and country planning policies:

There is one function, however, not mentioned in the original terms of reference of the Branch, which has arisen almost insensibly out of the general reorientation of policy...It arises not solely out of the changed outlook of the CCG but also out of the changed outlook of the Germans, now that we are no longer controlling them or their activities they are keen to discuss their problems with us and learn how similar problems are dealt with in Britain, especially in the fields where Britain is in advance of Germany, such as Reconstruction Planning (which includes Town and Country Planning) and new constructional techniques such as prefabrication. They are keen also to establish contact again with British planners and architects. Thirty years ago Germany led the world in town planning; largely as a result of Nazi policy, they have been cut off from developments in the outside world for the last fifteen years and are only now beginning to realise how much they are lagging behind. Britain, on the other hand, now leads the world in Town and Country Planning, above all in its legislative aspects.⁴¹

The Control Commission was keen to encourage this positive development and so the new post of Reconstruction Officer was created and filled by Hinchcliffe-Davies. His job was to provide expert advice on all matters connected with physical reconstruction and to maintain contact with planning authorities, professional and technical organisations, building research establishments in Germany and with parallel departments in the UK, a role which he attacked with characteristic gusto.⁴²

Exchanges and exhibitions: Re-education in town and country planning

There was understandable unhappiness that the opportunity to have a positive impact on German reconstruction planning through the Master Plan had been thwarted by the Control Commission. Many officers within the Housing and Building Branches felt

⁴¹ Proposed Decontrol of Building Materials, FO 1051/900.

⁴² Functions of Reconstruction Officer, FO 1051/900.

that the decision had created an irreconcilable contradiction between town and country planning policy in Germany and that being practised in Britain.⁴³

Hinchcliffe Davies was, on the whole, disappointed with the German plans he had seen though he owned that Military Government had to bear some responsibility for this: 'The Germans have been severely handicapped of course, in not knowing until recently what the levels of their different industries are to be; further they could not plan the location of the industries (and the future distribution of their population) until they knew which existing factories would remain and which would be dismantled.'⁴⁴ One of the most striking differences he noted was that there appeared to be no overall plan: 'Many plans have indeed been prepared, but they are almost entirely limited to the individual towns. There has been very little attempt at co-ordination of local plans or of regional planning, and certainly no co-ordination above Land level.'⁴⁵ In addition he felt that the legislation currently in place was not sufficient to allow the Germans to deal effectively with devastated areas. The principal obstacle was presupposed to be a lack of knowledge of recent planning developments:

But the greatest handicap I think is their complete lack of knowledge of the developments that have taken place in planning and architecture in other countries during the last fourteen years. This is where some really good educational work could be done – work that would not be without its propaganda value for Western ideas of democracy.⁴⁶

Fisher has shown that German planners were not completely cut off from the outside world and senior planners did, in fact, have access to periodicals via neutral counties.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, these men represented the elite and the vast majority of planners did

⁴³ Note by Hinchcliffe-Davies referring to Nicholl's letter of 26 May 1948, FO 1051/906, 104.

⁴⁴ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Spragg, 8 November 1947, FO 1051/906.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Friedhelm Fisher, 'German Reconstruction as an International Activity' in Diefendorf, *Rebuilding*, pp.136-7.

experience isolation from planning developments in other countries and the exchange of ideas; this information circulation was clearly seen as an essential feature of the profession. From the point of view of Hinchcliffe-Davies, at least, a more progressive approach to planning was only likely if there was sufficient knowledge of the latest developments abroad and if professional contacts could be resumed: 'Renewed contact with the outside world should bring about a more progressive outlook.' As he put it in a letter to his friend the architect and planner, William Holford: 'Architects in England must re-establish contact with the German architects sooner or later.'⁴⁸ These sentiments were echoed by other members of the Control Commission, in particular by individuals with a more direct involvement at the local level like Regional Commissioner of Nordrhein-Westfalen, Sir Alec Bishop:

I also feel that nothing very much worth while will be done unless the Germans can gain inspiration and energy from outside the devastation in which they are now living ... Would it not be possible to bring together the best German architects from the big cities and put them in touch with the RIBA? Visits to this country of the British architects who are rebuilding the cities of London, Coventry and Plymouth and so on with return visits of German architects to those cities, to the Royal Institute and to our own Building Research Station, would surely be beneficial.⁴⁹

One of the ways in which the Military Government had sought to encourage comprehensive planning and bring German planners up-to-date with the latest developments in the field was through the purchase of British and American publications. The provision of relevant publications, both official and commercial, was considered of sufficient importance that £300 was set aside for their purchase despite the fact that no provision had been made for this expense and although sterling and

⁴⁸ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Holford, 1 January 1948, FO 1051/906.

⁴⁹ Bishop to Macready, 3 January 1948, FO 1051/899, 53.

dollar expenses were subject to ‘microscopic examination’.⁵⁰ There was a clear sense of urgency: ‘we cannot afford to wait until the 1947/8 Budget proposals are framed and receive final approval before initiating this modest expenditure’⁵¹ and even if the Control Commission’s official policy on town planning was laissez-faire, those experts employed within the Housing and Building Branches maintained that town and country planning had a central role to play if the recovery of Germany was to be successful. In the view of these men, at least, German local authorities and their planners needed more guidance, especially once it became clear that Ordinance 57 would preclude British direct involvement in the future.⁵² It was hoped that, through the provision of these publications, plans and designs some twenty local authorities in the British Zone and the German Labour and Housing Agency would be equipped with the ‘best available information on this subject’.⁵³ The range of publications was impressive: all in all 56 different publications were dispatched to German city planning offices. The number of copies ordered varied between five and 25 but in most cases between ten and 15 copies were purchased. The major cities in the Zone and the German Labour and Housing Agency received a full set, while smaller towns received a slightly narrower range. Published plans included those of Bath, Exeter, Plymouth, London, Southampton, Middlesbrough, Hull, Durham and Manchester. Official publications ranged from the *Design of Dwellings* to the Uthwatt, Barlow and Scott reports and local authorities were sent copies of the New Towns Act, the Distribution of Industry

⁵⁰ Plummer to Cole, 27 December 1946, FO 1051/709, 95. Incidentally, £300 in 1946 would be the equivalent of just under £8000 in 2009. National Archives, Historic Money Converter, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency> [accessed on 13 September 2009].

⁵¹ Plummer to Cole, 27 December 1946, FO 1051/709, 95.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

Act, the Town and Country Planning Act of 1944 and the Bill for the new Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, along with its explanatory memorandum. Finally, there were books by eminent planners such as Lewis Mumford's *The Social Foundations of Postwar Planning*, Jaqueline Tyrwhitt's *Planning and the Countryside*, and Frederick Osborn's *Green Belt Cities*.⁵⁴

In November 1947, Hinchcliffe-Davies began to organise a lecture tour and travelling exhibition, which would introduce German planners to the latest developments in British town and country planning. It is likely that the inspiration for this enterprise was the return of émigré planner Walter Gropius to the US Zone in August, or rather the lukewarm reaction from German planners to this short visit. Although Gropius was held in high esteem, his criticism of particular individuals during his visit caused considerable controversy and his advice was deemed too vague to be of much practical use.⁵⁵ Even in the technical press, the view was expressed that, living in America, he could not understand fully the challenges facing planners in Germany's destroyed cities.⁵⁶ Writing about the German response in a letter to the Secretary of the RIBA, Hinchcliffe-Davies reasoned: 'It was apparent that they would attach greater importance to the views of experts from countries also suffering from problems of devastated areas and material shortages...German architects, planners and administrators to whom I have spoken all say that lectures by leading British experts would be welcomed.'⁵⁷

⁵⁴ List of Publications for German Agencies, FO 1051/710.

⁵⁵ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.184.

⁵⁶ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Spragg, 8 November 1947, FO 1051/906.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Lecture tours of the kind proposed by Hinchcliffe-Davies were not unusual though until this point there had not been any connected with reconstruction, housing or planning. One suspects that it was because there was no real power to impose any official policies to guide German urban planning that Hinchcliffe-Davies opted to pursue his own method of encouraging German planners to ‘plan boldly’ and to reacquaint them with planning developments abroad.

His vision was for a group of speakers of the highest calibre to tour the major cities of the British Zone where they would lecture about the way in which Britain was tackling its reconstruction problems and the new planning apparatus that had been developed to enable comprehensive planning.⁵⁸ Well aware that the Control Commission was unlikely to offer any financial incentive to the lecturers for their participation, Hinchcliffe-Davies evidently hoped that the RIBA would lend some cachet to the scheme. His efforts to garner support for the initiative employed judicious name-dropping: ‘I could of course approach my personal friends – Abercrombie, Holford, Beaufoy and others – direct, but I would prefer to treat the RIBA – if the institute is agreeable – as an official channel.’⁵⁹

The RIBA declined the invitation; the response from their public relations officer, Marfell, implied that they may have been unwilling to risk treading on the toes of more senior Control Commission figures by involving themselves in German affairs in such a direct manner.⁶⁰ Perhaps they simply did not want to place British architects in an invidious position. In any case, it seems likely that Hinchcliffe-Davies anticipated the RIBA’s refusal and the fact that he appears to have tried to organise most of the

⁵⁸ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Holford, 1 January 1948, FO 1051/906.

⁵⁹ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Spragg, 8 November 1947, FO 1051/906.

⁶⁰ Marfell to Hinchcliffe-Davies, 3 December 1947, FO 1051/906.

tour and exhibition without the knowledge and approval of his superiors suggests that he knew he would find little support for such an initiative within the Control Commission.

Hinchcliffe-Davies was not easily deterred. His next approach was more direct: he sought to enlist the help of friends and former colleagues who were experts in the field, for example William Holford. Appealing to Holford's modernist sensibilities, he summarised the current state of German planning and architecture: 'Since 1933 architecture and planning have sunk to deplorable depths in this country, the prevailing attitude being one of sentimental conservatism, with a positive passion for arty little steep-roofed cottages, and a corresponding aversion from flat roofs. Renewed contact with the outside world should bring about a more progressive outlook.'⁶¹

The subjects that Hinchcliffe-Davies wished to promote were those areas in which he felt that German planning was weakest: planning legislation, social surveys, regional planning, planning a new town, prefabricated housing and other non-traditional building methods.⁶² Although Hinchcliffe-Davies expressed preference for people he knew personally, the most important thing to him was to 'get the best man for the subject in each case'. William Holford's numerous other commitments prevented him from direct involvement though he offered some advice and suggestions.⁶³

Given Hinchcliffe-Davies' desire to get the 'best man' for the job, it is somewhat ironic that when he finally found an advocate to champion his cause back

⁶¹ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Holford, 1 January 1948, FO 1051/906. Presumably he had residential buildings in mind rather than industrial architecture which was distinctly modern.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Holford to Hinchcliffe-Davies, FO 1051/906.

home it was in the form of Lady Elizabeth Pepler (wife of Sir George Lionel Pepler). After lengthy correspondence and discussions about who should take part (names mooted included Donald Gibson, Patrick Abercrombie etc.) and how these tours were to be financed, the programme was eventually decided. Lady Pepler used her considerable connections to secure the participation of the British architects and planners that Hinchcliffe-Davies wanted. Hinchcliffe-Davies, meanwhile, made the arrangements at the German end, and relied on the German planners, like Rudolf Hillebrecht, with whom he had become acquainted, to ensure that the right people came:

It is important, I think, that the lectures should be confined to experts and persons genuinely interested and that the audiences should not be too large. I should say 200 persons is the absolute maximum – about 100 to 120 people would be ideal. After the lectures there will be opportunities for members of the audiences to ask questions...In all this I should very much value your assistance – in Hamburg at least – in ensuring that we get the right type of hall and the right type of audience.⁶⁴

The lectures were not designed to be for the general public but rather for local authority planners, Land Government officials, Ministers of Reconstruction, Housing Associations, members of Town and Country Planning and Architectural societies.⁶⁵ In each case they hoped to have a maximum of 200 people (though in the case of Frankfurt this was considerably exceeded – 500-600 attended as the Peplers' visit coincided with a conference).

The tours were eagerly anticipated by German planners, as is apparent in this extract from a letter from Hillebrecht to Hinchcliffe-Davies:

The programme you have started is most interesting and will entail a lot of work for you personally, but at the same time also much appreciation on the part of the Germans. We feel the spiritual [possible mistranslation of intellectual?] isolation still very much and consider it most detrimental to our development in general....Your programme is loosening this straight jacket,

⁶⁴ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Hillebrecht, 12 April 1948, FO 1051/906, 42.

⁶⁵ Lecture Tours and Travelling Exhibition – Reconstruction in Great Britain, May 1948, FO 1051/906, 73.

and I do wish that you will be successful. Whenever I may be of assistance to you please let me know.⁶⁶

Hinchcliffe-Davies had some experience of lecturing to German audiences and gave Lady Pepler an idea of what to expect: 'Judging by my own personal experience, it is almost certain to be both entertaining and lively...I gave a short talk on this subject to a German audience myself not so long ago and found they looked upon the new conception of property resulting from the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, as a breath-taking revolution.'⁶⁷

A short time before the lecture tours were due to begin, the Education Branch wrote to Hinchcliffe-Davies to express concern over the content of the lectures. They were concerned that, contrary to current Military Government policy, the lecturers would try to tell the Germans how to plan their cities. Hinchcliffe-Davies composed a robust reply, which is worth quoting at length:

The lecturers are coming here not to give advice to the Germans but to tell them what is being done in Britain. Nevertheless, in the ensuing discussion their views and advice may be sought. The lecturers are to be instructed that they must not put too many ideas into the Germans heads and they must be severely practical in their advice...As I understand it, about 18 months ago, the opinion was expressed in high quarters of the Control Commission that in the present phase the Germans should be discouraged from embarking on long term town and country planning and should concentrate on the immediate problems, and this has been adopted as official policy. Quite apart from the question of whether or not this policy should still hold good 3 years after the war, I wonder if the original view was not based on a misconception in high quarters of what Town Planning means. Because a plan is prepared for London or for Hamburg it does not mean that London or Hamburg immediately starts tearing down large numbers of buildings and erecting new and grandiose civic centres and so on. What it really means is that as and when anyone is in a position to start reconstruction or new building he must build only in accordance with the plan. This will even affect repair programmes. There are certain areas in London where there are buildings capable of repair, but which will, in fact, not be repaired because the plan lays down some other use for the land. The policy of the British Government, as is shown very clearly in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, is that the whole of Britain must be replanned and that all building work must be governed by the new plan. On the other hand, the policy of Military Government, if I understand it correctly, is that in Germany the initial stages at least of reconstruction should be carried out without Town Planning, although the initial stages include the erection or reconstruction of industrial buildings, power stations and

⁶⁶ Hillebrecht to Hinchcliffe-Davies, 7 May 1948 FO 1051/906, 64.

⁶⁷ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Pepler, 19 May 1948, FO 1051/906, 77.

many thousands of houses. If we are to tell the lecturers this, then I think the instructions should be put in writing.”⁶⁸

In the event, Hinchcliffe-Davies decided wisely not to send the above reply but rather to discuss the matter verbally with the Education officer. It was agreed that no written instructions would be issued but a warning note would be placed in the background information to be given to the lecturers.⁶⁹ The warning was duly buried deep in the small print.

The Control Commission paid all travel expenses and a small honorarium of £10 per week. The lectures were very well received, well publicised (all planning and architecture journals were invited to attend) and the lectures were printed in full in an edition of *Bau Rundschau*.⁷⁰ Most of the lecturers spoke in the *Länder* capital cities of the British Zone (Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Hannover and Kiel), Berlin, and finally in Frankfurt in the US Zone. Sir George Lionel Pepler (formerly of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and the Royal Town Planning Institute) and Lady Elizabeth Pepler (Kensington Borough Council and Secretary of Town and Country Planning Agency) were the first to go to Germany between 11th and 18th June 1948. Sir George Pepler spoke about general reconstruction problems in Great Britain and his wife about postwar municipal housing. They were followed on 15 July by Gordon Stephenson, Chair of Civic Design at University of Liverpool, who lectured on replanning a bomb damaged town. Next was Max Lock, a young planner famous for his regional survey and plan for Middlesborough, who went out to Germany on 14 August; his lecture was, naturally, about economic and social surveys for replanning. Desmond Heap followed

⁶⁸ Note by Hinchcliffe-Davies referring to Nicholl's letter of 26 May 1948, FO 1051/906, 104.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ List of architectural and planning journals to be informed of visits and lecture tours, FO 1051/906, 113. These included, amongst others *Die Neue Stadt* and *Baurundschau*.

Lock in September. Heap was the Controller of the City of London and lectured on recent planning legislation. Finally, Jellicoe, planner of Harlow went out to Germany in November and lectured on Planning a New Town.⁷¹ The lectures were fully illustrated with lantern slides and translated copies of the lectures were circulated to those attending before the lectures. An interpreter was on hand for the post lecture discussions. This allowed lectures to be longer than had been anticipated.⁷²

The lecture tours dovetailed exceptionally well with the planning exhibition that Hinchcliffe-Davies arranged to run concurrently. Hinchcliffe-Davies had originally hoped to secure the 'Replanning Britain' exhibition, which was, at that time, touring Europe. However, the exhibition boards had become quite battered on their journey and, with the advent of the new planning legislation, it was considered a little too out-of-date to be used. It was agreed that a new, updated version would be prepared for Germany. Once again, Hinchcliffe-Davies ran up against his superiors, Cleary, the Director of Housing and Building Branch, tersely reminded Hinchcliffe-Davies that it was 'no part of the function of Housing and Building Branch to organise and sponsor such an exhibition'. However, his principal objection was financial and he was prepared to support the venture if someone else would pay for it.⁷³

The British Council was approached for financial assistance and voiced their support though this was not backed up by hard cash: 'while the [British] Council can offer no financial assistance beyond that of providing the exhibition, they consider the matter of paramount importance that such an exhibition should be sent to Germany

⁷¹ Itinerary for the Peplers, 25 May 1948, FO 1051/906, 86 and 98; Itinerary for Max Lock, 25 May 1948, FO 1051/906, 87; Itinerary for Mr Jellicoe, FO 1051/906, 94; Itinerary for Desmond Heap, FO 1051/906, 95; Itinerary for Gordon Stephenson, FO 1051/906, 97.

⁷² Hinchcliffe-Davies to Pepler, 19 May 1948, FO 1051/906, 77.

⁷³ Cleary to Hinchcliffe-Davies, 19 March 1948, FO 1051/906.

where planning and reconstruction problems are so closely akin to our own.’⁷⁴ In the event, the funds were conjured up from somewhere because the exhibition went ahead and toured the British and US Zones for a year, spending about two weeks in each major town. The exhibition had been prepared by Sir George Lionel Pepler (Royal Town Planning Institute), Beaufoy and Kennedy (Ministry of Town and Country Planning), Matthew (Architect to London County Council) and Chitty (Fellow of the Royal Institute for British Architects and co-author of the reconstruction plan) and thus represented the views of the highest echelons of British planning.⁷⁵

Along with 21 5’2 by 3’5 screens there were 3D models of Middlesbrough, Harlow and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning block developments. The panels were concerned with the ‘Redevelopment of Central Areas’ and relied heavily on the publication of the same name which was being used as a set of guidelines for local authorities in Britain and had been distributed to major cities in Germany also. It was based on Leicester - disguised by creating a mirror image of the town - and covered topics such as surveying, zoning, densities, floor space indexing, light, layout of streets and blocks and planting, as well as step-by-step guides to the stages of redevelopment for whole central areas. There followed panels dealing with specific cities namely Manchester, London, Middlesbrough and the proposed civic centre for Harlow New Town.⁷⁶ The periodical which had published the lectures from the first tour was put on sale at each of the exhibition venues.

The exhibition opened in Berlin to great fanfare, advertised widely through bills and posters and via loudspeaker announcements. Four hundred invitations were

⁷⁴ From Head of Fine Arts to Finch, 1 April 1948, BW 32/6.

⁷⁵ Town Planning Exhibition for Germany, FO 1051/906.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

issued for the launch, including fifty to the press. 300 came to the opening ceremony at the information centre. The average daily attendance was 230 and during the two weeks of its residency there it was visited by 4,376 people.⁷⁷ One suspects that the majority were those with a professional interest although every effort had been made to make it easy for an educated layperson to understand.⁷⁸ Despite the earlier reluctance to invest in the exhibition, its success and positive reception must have contributed to its greatly extended run around the zone⁷⁹ and the modest but nevertheless additional expense incurred to make improvements to the exhibition while on tour: 'You may be interested to hear that we are having book-ends made to improve the display of books and also a sort of lecturn for the big Middlesbrough book so that it can be placed close to the model.'⁸⁰ The US zone also hosted the exhibition:

The Branch has received requests for the exhibition to be sent to Stuttgart and Bremen and for the lecture tours to be extended to Bremen and the capitals of the three US Länder. Also we have been asked for lectures on additional subjects, and for further exhibition materials in particular for a proposed International Congress of Architects to be held in Stuttgart in the autumn. Professional and legislative literature from Britain is eagerly demanded from all parts of the Bizone.

Such was the success of the exhibition that several others followed, such as an exhibition for the Council of Industrial Design in Cologne.⁸¹

Perhaps the most of ambitious of Hinchcliffe-Davies' schemes to build German knowledge of British planning developments and to encourage professional exchanges of ideas were the study visits he organised for a group of German planners which allowed them to go to Britain and see for themselves British reconstruction planning in practice. Chief planner of Cologne, Rudolf Schwarz, chief planner of Hannover,

⁷⁷ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Somerville, 15 December 1948, BW 32/6.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Punnet to Somerville, 7 October 1948, BW 32/6.

⁸¹ Hinchcliffe-Davies to Somerville, 15 December 1948, BW 32/6.

Rudolf Hillebrecht, and chief planner of Hamburg, Otto Meyer-Ottens were among those who attended. The trip was facilitated by the Town and Country Planning Association and the planners spent several weeks in Britain in the spring of 1949. First stop was London, where they spent a week with the central planning authority, the Ministry of Town and County Planning, and were also given time to study Abercrombie's reconstruction plans for London. During their stay they had the opportunity of learning in some detail about the recent planning legislation, in particular the New Towns Act 1946 and the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 and how the compensation and betterment scheme functioned. They were shown new housing projects and building exhibitions. Rudolf Schwarz expressed in his report to Cologne council how much they had admired the British developments in kitchen design: 'wir konnten uns wiederum überzeugen wieviel die Deutschen auf diesen Gebieten nachzuholen haben; namentlich die Einrichtungsstücke der Küche sind sehr viel besser und glücklicher konstruiert als bei uns und haben übrigens auch neue Formen.'⁸² After leaving London, the little group spent several weeks on a tour of Britain visiting some of the main towns carrying out urban renewal or reconstruction: Plymouth, Exeter, Birmingham, Coventry, Manchester, York. It is an indication of the importance placed on this visit by the German planners that they were prepared to leave their duties in Germany for such a long time.

Rudolf Schwarz's report contains many details of their responses to the reconstruction planning which they had seen in Britain. Interestingly, it was the School of Planning and Research for Regional Development that made the greatest impression

⁸² Rudolf Schwarz, 'Bericht über eine städtebauliche Studienreise durch England', *Die neue Stadt*, 3, no.7, October 1949, pp.286-97.

on them. The director Eric Rowse had engaged with them intellectually. It was the first opportunity at which they had felt sufficiently comfortable to ask tough questions of British planning practice: 'Wir besuchen die school of planning und finden in ihrem Leiter endlich der Mann mit weltweitem Blick, nach dem wir uns gesehnt haben. Ich kann hier meine Bedenken und Fragen los werden.'⁸³

On his return to Germany, Schwarz was asked to present his experiences to the town council and this report was published a few months later in the planning journal *Die neue Stadt* which gave (albeit second-hand) experience of British reconstruction planning to a wide circulation of other planners.⁸⁴ Schwarz was clearly enthusiastic about the extensive powers at the disposal of the Minister of Reconstruction and concluded his report with this assessment of British reconstruction planning:

Zusammenfassend kann man sagen, dass die Anstrengungen Englands auf dem Gebiet der Stadt und Landesplanung bewundernswert und auch im grossen und ganzen auch richtig ist...Man hat in England richtig erkannt, dass jetzt die Stunde ist, das alte soziale Unrecht gutzumachen. Man hat auch in England richtig erkannt, dass eine Neuordnung des Landes nicht möglich ist, wenn man über diese Land kein Verfügungsrecht hat.'⁸⁵

He acknowledged that conditions were very different in Germany but that he felt the foundations on which British planning were built were also right for Germany: 'Die Dinge liegen bei uns in jeder Beziehung völlig anders. Das ändert aber nichts daran, dass die grossen Grundentscheidungen und Grundgedanken der Engländer auch für uns richtig sind, und dass sie uns seine ernste Mahnung bedeuten.'⁸⁶

In the years that followed, there were further study visits and, as it became easier for Germans to travel, more and more planners and architects made their own way to Britain to see the developments that they had read so much about for

⁸³ Ibid., p.295.

⁸⁴ Ibid.pp.286-97.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.296.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

themselves. In 1952, *Die Neue Stadt* carried an article about the growing number of professionals who were heading across the Channel. The author, Erwin Schwarzer, felt that this was mainly due to the developments in planning legislation:

Die Frage nach dem Grundlage diese Vorgangs ist sehr leicht zu beantworten ... wir sehnen uns doch danach, dass das Bauten gesetzliche Grundlagen bekommt, die endlich die Verwirklichung alles dessen ermöglichen, was wir als Ideal betrachten, und wir wünschen uns, dass die technische Möglichkeiten, die dem Stande der Gesetzgebung voraus sind, ausgenutzt werden. Gute Architekten haben wir genug, aber Politiker, die gute Baugesetze schaffen, anscheinend zu wenig.⁸⁷

In short, Britain was in possession of what the German planners most needed: comprehensive planning legislation.

Centralising planning

The first attempts to ensure some co-ordination of town and country planning came with the formation of the *Land* Ministries of Reconstruction in August 1946. After the establishment of the *Länder* a decision had to be made about which government departments would be created and how tasks would be apportioned among them. Joll, the Director of Housing Branch encouraged his colleagues to set up a Reconstruction Ministry which would handle housing and town and country planning: 'I understand that there are to be a number of minsters and I feel that Housing and Planning questions are so important, from the German point of view at any rate, that there ought to be a separate minister in charge.'⁸⁸ Ministries of Reconstruction were formed in all four of the British *Länder*. From the perspective of the Control Commission departments with responsibility for housing, planning and rebuilding, this level of co-ordination represented the minimum. What was really required was a central

⁸⁷ Erwin Schwarzer, 'Gross-Britannien als Reiseland für Deutsche Architekten', *Die Neue Stadt*, no.7, July 1952, p.305.

⁸⁸ Joll to Morgan, 16 August 1946, FO 1051/770, 25.

government department which could manage the reconstruction of the whole British Zone: 'The subject necessarily must be the responsibility of a department of Central Government, the main duties of which are to issue orders and regulations under the legislation, to approve schemes and to issue directions upon the aspects of planning which are not local.'⁸⁹

Before the formation of the Federal Republic this was a political impossibility. The next best thing was to set up central advisory bodies in the Zone which, although not executive, could try to reach a consensus through negotiations between the *Länder*, for example the German Advisory Office for Housing and Settlements. The British set up numerous organisations of this kind in the British Zone for all sorts of matters which they felt required a centralised and uniform approach but for which there was currently no central government organ. These bodies acted in both an advisory capacity to Military Government and the *Länder* and fulfilled an important liaison role, trying to reconcile the Military Government's principles with the desires of the *Land* Governments and other interested parties.⁹⁰ Although these organisations were not always successful – their lack of political power over the *Länder* was an inevitable handicap – they did provide a forum for negotiation and an opportunity to reach a measure of consensus between the *Länder* on important issues. These bodies also contained powerful individuals who had other roles outside of their appointments within these Control Commission led bodies, for example city planners like Göderitz, and Hillebrecht, and Phillip Rappaport, the director of the Ruhr Regional Planning Authority.

⁸⁹ Report by Smith on Town and Country Planning, 4 September 1946, FO 1051/770, 37.

⁹⁰ Notes on the conference with the Ministers for Reconstruction of the *Länder* of the British Zone with regard to the setting up of a Zonal Advisory Office, 8 November 1948, FO 1051/755.

Rappaport described an independent central department for rebuilding work as ‘indispensable’⁹¹ and many German officials supported the extension of co-ordination above *Land* level: ‘Today the sphere of functions arising from the state of emergency has become far more extensive, so that an independent Central Reconstruction Office would appear all the more necessary in the same way as a special ministry of Reconstruction has been created for Land Nord-Rhein-Westfalen.’⁹² Local politicians on the other hand, could be less receptive. Hermann Pünder, Mayor of Cologne and director of the German Economic Advisory Board, felt that the proposal was undesirable, presumably because of the potential erosion of local autonomy.⁹³

With the formation of the Federal Republic of Germany, there was finally an opportunity to create a proper Central Ministry of Reconstruction. Housing Branch favoured strongly the establishment of a central ministry but felt that a department of reconstruction was more likely to be supported by the German politicians. The worst case scenario, as far as they were concerned, was for these functions to be split over several departments.⁹⁴ Unfortunately, this is precisely what happened. Once the Basic Law had been drafted all of the Land Ministers of Reconstruction in West Germany met to discuss whether they should recommend the formation of a Federal Ministry of Reconstruction. Although they agreed that a department of reconstruction was necessary, their final recommendations were completely ignored by the committee responsible for determining the organisational structure of the new Federal Government.

⁹¹ Draft report by Rappaport on the Central Office for Rebuilding in the British Zone, FO 1051/748, 4.

⁹² Report by Dr Vormbrook, FO 1051/761, 2.

⁹³ Report on German deliberations and progress towards the formation of a Federal Ministry of Reconstruction, 2 September 1949, FO 1051/756.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

The Future of Planning: New legislation

There was one aspect of reconstruction which was debated more than any other: comprehensive planning legislation. The German planning laws had long been recognised as inadequate and since the 1920s there had been various attempts to draft new legislation which would go beyond the current laws guiding town extensions and tackle the more problematic and pressing problems of urban renewal, in particular the politically sensitive issue of private property rights and the extent to which cities should be able to use expropriation for the greater good.⁹⁵

Despite the many drafts which had been prepared since the 1920s, the only comprehensive planning legislation passed had been the Law for the Redesign of German Cities in 1937, which had given planners almost unlimited powers to achieve the building projects desired by Hitler. Naturally, this legislation was removed by the Allies in 1945.⁹⁶

Postwar planners still desperately needed appropriate legislation to guide the planning process and to grant cities the powers over land and private property which they needed to carry out urban renewal and prevent speculative reconstruction. Both British and German officials shared reservations about the ability of existing German laws to provide for the task being faced.⁹⁷

Smith, Deputy Controller of Housing Branch, advocated the introduction of British-inspired enabling legislation which would guide reconstruction until more comprehensive legislation had been prepared:

⁹⁵ J. Diefendorf, 'Reconstruction Law and Building Law in Postwar Germany, *Planning Perspectives*, 1 (1986), pp107-10.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Conference of CCG Housing Officers with German Housing Officers of Länder-Provinces and with members of the German Housing Panel, 29 May 1946, FO 1039/900, 13.

The process of planning may take years to complete but in the meantime development must proceed and the enabling legislation, such as the interim development orders in England, must control development in the meantime...to give the Germans the powers which are needed to supplement their existing laws to enable them to plan and regulate the development in their devastated country and particularly in the severely war damaged areas.⁹⁸

German officials did in fact ask Military Government to assist them by passing a law or ordinance which would make it easier for them to replot boundaries on destroyed sites.⁹⁹

All of the major planning organisations and periodicals devoted time and effort to exploring the problem and lobbying for the new legislation. Many articles and speeches enviously reviewed the provisions contained within the recent British Town and Country Planning Acts, which were held up as a model of progressive planning legislation, and used them to bolster their case for similar legislation in Germany.

Wilhelm Dittus understood these problems better than most as he had spent the past fourteen years working on various drafts in the German Ministry of Labour. He produced a very comprehensive law with Ludwig Wambsganz, his colleague in the Berlin city building department, which he hoped would become the basis for a national law.¹⁰⁰

At the same time, Johannes Göderitz, a former colleague of his who had also worked on the draft law in 1942, was preparing his own new law. Göderitz had been put in charge of the reconstruction of Braunschweig by the Military Government but he also worked in the building department of their *Zentralamt für Arbeit*. He was highly respected among members of the British Housing Branch. His plans for Braunschweig were considered some of the best in the British Zone by Gutkind:

⁹⁸ Report by Smith on Town and Country Planning, 4 September 1946, FO 1051/770, 37.

⁹⁹ Conference of CCG Housing Officers with German Housing Officers of Länder-Provinces and with members of the German Housing Panel, 29 May 1946, FO 1039/900, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Diefendorf, 'Reconstruction Law', p.111.

The new plan for Brunswick has been developed on the basis of the old medieval wards each of which having a church and a market of its own. This principle conforms splendidly with the modern idea of a neighbourhood unit. The whole town area of Brunswick has been divided up into 5 or 6 neighbourhood units, separated by green wedges driven into the town from the surrounding green belt. The old street pattern has been adapted to modern needs. This is a very good and useful procedure very much in contrast to what many other towns are preparing.¹⁰¹

Gutkind felt that the residents of Hildesheim were at a great disadvantage because their 'City Architects [were] old fashioned and not up to the present standards'. The plans for Hildesheim were in Gutkind's view, 'a classic example of how not to proceed',¹⁰² and he felt that they could learn something from Göderitz.¹⁰³

This small digression illustrates that the Housing Branch knew about the various plans for the towns in the British Zone and had formed opinions of the relative merits of the planners and their plans. These connections are significant because they help to explain why it was that the Göderitz's draft, rather than that of Dittus and Wambsganz, was taken up as the basis for a comprehensive building law. Göderitz drew on the earlier draft which he had worked on with Dittus so their drafts shared common elements. One of the main differences was that the Göderitz draft included provisions for cities to have first refusal on the purchase of sites in designated reconstruction areas. The principle advantage that Göderitz had over Dittus was that he was operating from within the power circle of officials in the British Zone, whereas Dittus was located in distant Berlin, Göderitz had frequent contact with the people who mattered. His draft was supported by the Zonal Advisory Council and the Military Government, who fostered the further development of the law by arranging opportunities for key players in the British Zone to meet and work on the draft.¹⁰⁴ Dr

¹⁰¹ Visit to Brunswick 19 June 1947 and discussion with Professor Göderitz, FO 1051/769, 34.

¹⁰² Visit to Hildesheim, 21 July 1947, FO 1051/769, 32.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Rappaport to Manpower Division, 30 June 1947, FO 1051/763, 38.

Philip Rappaport, who as director of the Ruhr Regional Planning Authority also worked very closely with the Housing Branch, and representatives of the housing department of the *Zentralamt für Arbeit* and the *Deutsche Städtetag* were on the committee. Rappaport chaired many of the meetings and kept Housing Branch up to date on the drafts and discussions.¹⁰⁵

They expressed their approval of the direction that the negotiations were taking and were largely happy to let the Germans get on with the draft without their interference: ‘It is obvious that they are thinking of the Reconstruction Law in very comprehensive terms and will cover many aspects of the difficulties which we have already encountered in our consideration of these points as they have arisen in the past.’¹⁰⁶ Once the draft was prepared they would know to what extent they would need to intervene. As Cleary explained to his colleagues: ‘As soon as they have made up their minds what they want, we will then have to consider to what extent it is necessary for us to intervene, either positively – in the sense of enabling legislation, e.g. on expropriation – or negatively, in the sense of laying down fundamental principles which must be observed.’¹⁰⁷ This demonstrates that the Housing Branch was in support of the law, knew precisely what direction it was going in at all stages of the discussion and were prepared to step in if necessary.

In the spring of 1947, it was decided that the group should be enlarged to include representatives from the *Länder* of the US Zone.¹⁰⁸ The aim was to secure an agreement on the draft *before* any of the *Länder* passed their own building laws. In this

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Hedge to Tate, 22 July 1947, FO 1051/763.

¹⁰⁷ Cleary to Tate, Hedge and Gutkind, 7 August 1947, FO 1051/763.

¹⁰⁸ Extract from CCG Zonal Advisory Council – Minutes of 11th Meeting, 29-30 April 1947, FO 1051/761.46.

way, a high degree of uniformity could be expected, even without a national building law being passed. Because all incursions into private property rights had remained exclusively with Military Government when responsibilities were transferred to the *Länder* in January 1947¹⁰⁹, the draft relied on Military Government being prepared to issue an ordinance empowering the *Länder* to adopt expropriation provisions in their reconstruction laws. Military Government were more than willing to do this and passed the necessary ordinance.¹¹⁰ It was the ability to expropriate plots and consolidate them which allowed more comprehensive urban renewal to be carried out. Often, as Hillebrecht found in Hannover, it was possible to secure agreements with property owners simply because they had the threat of expropriation if they needed to use it.¹¹¹

There was one member of the Control Commission who took a rather grim view of the proposed reconstruction law: Erwin Gutkind. Gutkind had suffered the disappointment of working on the aborted 'Master Plan' and now felt that they had not intervened sufficiently in the drafting of the new law with the result that, in his view, it did not go nearly far enough: 'While it should be welcomed that one comprehensive Law has been prepared ... the proposals put forward for the consolidation of land are insufficient, open to misinterpretation and not in conformity with the needs of our own administration.'¹¹² He seems to have been the only person within the Housing Branch to have expressed this view.

¹⁰⁹ Auerbach to Housing Branch, 25 August 1947, FO 1051/764, 4.

¹¹⁰ ZAC Minutes of the Fifteenth Meeting 15 and 16 October 1947, FO 1051/764, 53; Notice of Mil Gov Ordinance 137, FO 1051/764.

¹¹¹ Diefendorf, 'Reconstruction Law', pp.124-5.

¹¹² Report on the proposed reconstruction law, Gutkind, FO 1051/763, 45.

After a further round of negotiations, a draft *Aufbaugesetz* was published in 1947 with the blessing of Military Government and was circulated widely.¹¹³ With relatively minor differences, all of the *Länder* in the British Zone passed laws based on this draft and, in addition, those passed by Baden, Württemberg, Hesse and Rheinlandpfalz were strongly influenced by it. Although there was some opposition to the new legislation from interest groups wishing to protect the holy cow of private property, it was only in Bavaria that these groups were sufficiently strong to prevent the passing of a new reconstruction law.

Unfortunately, the planners were unable to turn this success into the passing of a national building law after the formation of the Federal Republic. This was partly because there was no Federal Ministry of Reconstruction. Whereas the presence of a central housing ministry had ensured the passing of a comprehensive housing law, the absence of a ministry of reconstruction probably did much to preclude the passing of a national building law. Perhaps the very fact that there was already a high degree of parity between most of the state reconstruction laws meant that there was less perceived necessity for one.

¹¹³ Entwurf eines Gesetzes über den Aufbau der Deutschen Gemeinden (Aufbaugesetz) 12 August 1947, FO 1051/764, 1.

PART III

Chapter Six

Making Homes

The previous three chapters explored the way in which the British Military Government tackled three of the most important aspects of reconstruction: the housing problem, the revival of the building and building materials industries, and town and country planning. The following two chapters will investigate the effect of the British occupation on reconstruction at the local municipal level by examining in more detail the experiences of cities in the British Zone, in particular of Cologne and Kiel. The first of these chapters seeks to uncover to what extent housing policies were successful at solving the housing crisis and what impact the occupation had on civilian housing provision.

Chapter three revised the view that few positive inroads into the housing crisis were made until after the currency reform in 1948 and demonstrated that, on the contrary, the British occupation authority's housing programme was a coherent, phased programme, which managed to create adequate shelter from the rubble of cities for the majority of civilians, despite the challenging economic and material conditions and even though their significant achievements were somewhat obscured by the counter-effect of the growing number of refugees arriving in the Zone. Furthermore, even after the devolution of responsibility to the *Länder* in January of 1947, British officials continued to exert an influence over housing policy and, in particular, their support for legislative change was instrumental in the achievement of the first Federal Housing Law in 1950.¹

¹ For a more detailed discussion see Chapter 3.

As has been demonstrated, the sheer scale of destruction and severe material shortages limited new construction and to some extent curtailed the implementation of progressive planning. If the twin evils of disease and social unrest were to be avoided, the first priority had to be to secure weatherproof shelter for the maximum number of people as quickly as possible. In the cities of the British Zone, there was an understandable frustration at the slow progress towards improvement of the standards of living and an impatience to return to normal. But neither the political nor material conditions were conducive to a rapid reinstatement of all that had been lost. Repairs necessarily had to begin with the most basic provision of shelter and the restoration of utilities, gradually building up to the full reconstruction of the cities, many years in the future. Andreas Gayk, the first elected Mayor of Kiel, called for patience and understanding from his people during the slow reconstruction process: ‘Wenn jemand nackt ist, dann setzt man ihm nicht zuerst den Hut auf’.²

The postwar housing situation in Cologne and Kiel

Both Cologne and Kiel lost the greater portion of their housing stock in the aerial bombardments. In practice it is difficult to obtain an accurate picture of the degree of damage to housing and the extent to which what remained was habitable. The statistics which follow offer the best available indication of the war damage to each city as it stood in the summer of 1945.³ The first housing surveys were produced under highly unfavourable conditions. Over-stretched officers employed to make an assessment of

² This quote was taken from a speech given by the mayor of Kiel, Andreas Gayk, in March 1947. Oberbürgermeister Gayk, Kiels Friedensarbeit beginnt!, 24 March 1947, SAK, 58368.

³ Data collection is problematic as cities used different categories for the various grades of bomb damage. The assessment of damage was also not uniform because a degree of subjectivity is involved.

the damage had only the most rudimentary of resources and had to make swift, approximate assessments of the state of the remaining damaged buildings. Even after an assessment had been made, the degree of damage could change from one day to the next.⁴ It was quite common, for instance, for whole buildings or parts of buildings to collapse without warning or for those which were potentially inhabitable to become uninhabitable after heavy rainfall or high winds.⁵ As the weeks and months passed, some houses which had been graded severely damaged i.e. in the 40 to 60 per cent damaged category, left open to the elements, became total losses.

Compared to the industrial region of Northrhine-Westphalia, the predominantly rural Schleswig-Holstein had escaped the worst of the damage: of the 435,000 residential buildings in Schleswig-Holstein, 338,000 had survived the war intact.⁶ However, the industrial naval city of Kiel was not typical for the area; it was by far the most damaged city in Schleswig-Holstein, containing 61 per cent of the *Land's* damaged housing, including more than three-quarters of all those properties considered total losses.⁷ In this respect, the damage suffered by Kiel was comparable to that of large cities in the industrial Rhineland and Ruhrgebiet. By the summer of 1945, 52 per cent of Kiel's housing stock was found to be uninhabitable and the city's population had fallen to around two-thirds of its former size.⁸ Initially, only 30 per cent of the

⁴ This situation is well illustrated by the example of Kiel where in 1946, 2400 homes were at risk of collapse. Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Kiel, 1946, SAK 7068/18.

⁵ There was even one case in 1949 in which 12 people died after a storm caused the collapse of their home.

⁶ 'Das Wohnungsbau-Programm für 1948', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 9 March 1948.

⁷ Houses considered total losses were those where the fabric was greater than 60 per cent destroyed. War Damaged Dwelling Units, 1 October 1946, SAK, 57274.

⁸ *Kiel im Aufbau: Der Generalbebauungsplan als Grundlage für eine städtebauliche Neuordnung der Stadt Kiel*, 1947, p.5.

living space was either undamaged or only lightly damaged, and in these 25,000 homes, Kiel's population of around 160,000 had to be housed.⁹

Cologne had suffered proportionately the worst losses to residential building stock in the British Zone.¹⁰ According to the May 1939 housing census, Cologne had contained 768,352 inhabitants and 252,373 dwellings.¹¹ By May 1945, only 63,000 of these dwellings remained inhabitable and a mere 5 per cent of Cologne's population were still living in the city, the vast majority of these people were in the districts on the right bank of the River Rhine.¹² Conditions in the city were dreadful but, although the available living space had fallen significantly, the dramatic depopulation of the city, temporarily, eased the pressure on the remaining housing stock.¹³ However, in the weeks following the capitulation, many of the evacuated population returned to their city and by the end of 1945, the population had reached two-thirds of its 1939 level.¹⁴

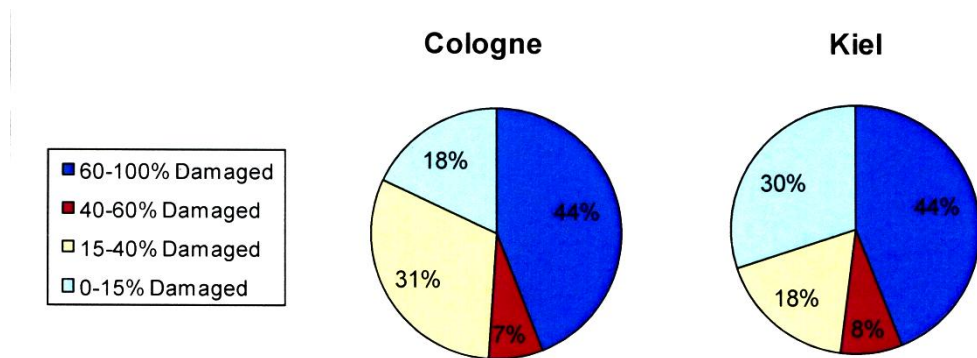


Figure 6.1 – The extent of damage to the housing stock in Cologne and Kiel¹⁵

⁹ Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Kiel, 1946, SAK 7068/18.

¹⁰ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.126.

¹¹ Köln und sein Wohnraum, 22 November 1947, HASTK, Acc 5/674, ff.153-7.

¹² Manfred Weichert, 'Die Trümmerrückbauanlage der Firma Friedrich Wassermann', in W. Schäfer (ed.), *Drittes Reich und Nachkriegszeit, 1933-48* (Cologne, 1993), p.228.

¹³ Celia Körber, *Köln 1945: Zerstörung und Wiederaufbau* (Cologne, 1985), p.3.

¹⁴ Bevölkerungszahlen 1945-1949, HASTK, Acc 5/925.

¹⁵ Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Kiel, 1946, SAK 7068/18; Fütterer to Oberstadtdirektor, 5 August 1946, HASTK, Acc 5/204, f194; Körber, *Köln 1945*, p.2.

Figure 6.1 offers an interesting comparison of the destruction to the housing stock in the two cities. Most striking are the identical levels of severe damage: 44 per cent of both cities housing stock was completely destroyed and a further smaller percentage of dwellings were seriously damaged. But, critically, in addition to the destroyed and severely damaged housing stock, Cologne also had a high proportion of moderately damaged residences (31 per cent) and only 18 per cent of its housing stock was undamaged or hardly damaged. In contrast, the figures for these two categories for Kiel are inverted: 18 per cent of its housing stock was moderately damaged, 30 per cent was undamaged or lightly damaged. In theory, Kiel had a greater potential to quickly make more living space available to its population than Cologne because a larger proportion of its houses could be made weatherproof and habitable through the First Aid Repair Programme, which prioritised repairs to lightly damaged properties.

A spatial analysis of the destruction to the housing stock using a bomb damage map can illuminate the differing fortunes of particular districts within the two cities. The distribution of damage had implications for particular communities within the city and, later, for the design of reconstruction programmes. As figure 6.2 demonstrates, the worst affected districts in Cologne were, on the left bank: the southern half of the *Altstadt* (93 per cent destroyed), the northern half of the *Altstadt* (87 per cent destroyed) and the district of Lindenthal and, on the right bank: Kalk, Deutz and Mülheim (which were all 80 per cent destroyed).¹⁶ Table 6.1, shows how few houses remained inhabitable in these districts of the city.

¹⁶ Neugestaltung Kölns, HASTK, Acc 2/366, f.210.

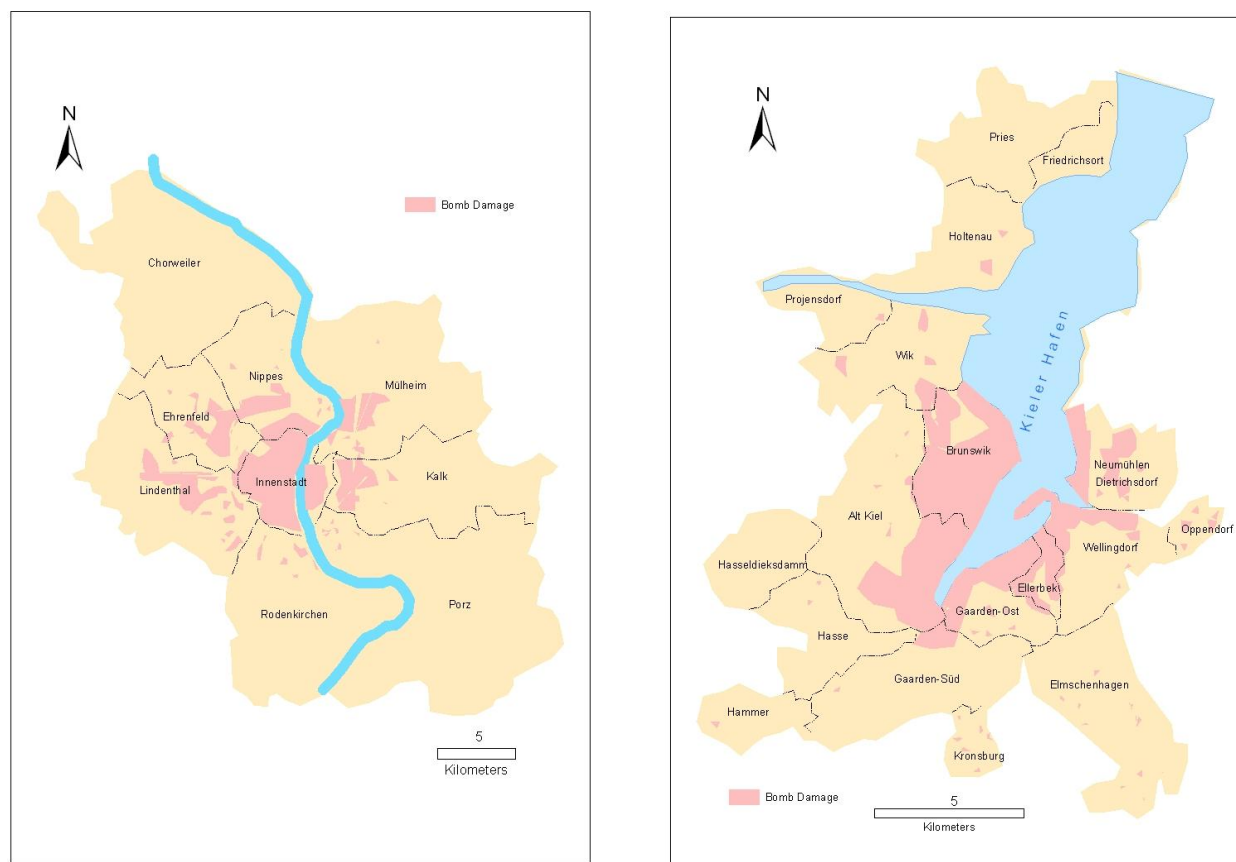


Figure 6.2 – Maps illustrating the distribution of bomb damage in Cologne and Kiel¹⁷

¹⁷ Maps drawn with the assistance of Schadenskarte from Kiel, SAK, Bebauungspläne 5 and Cologne HASTK, Schadenskarte, Best. 7102/1428 and Best. 7102/1134.

Table 6.1 – Quantities of inhabitable housing in various districts of Cologne

City District	No. of undamaged houses	Percentage of houses inhabitable
Altstadt	120	2
Braunsfeld	32	4
Deutz	32	4
Kalk	75	4
Neustadt	343	4.5
Lindenthal	343	4.5
Buchforst	45	9.5
Mülheim	364	11
Sülz	256	11
Nippes	548	20.5
Buchheim	226	60.5

Source: Übersicht über die Kriegsschäden an den Häusern im Stadtgebiet, 25 March 1946, HASTK, Acc 5/204, f196.

Areas which had been predominantly working class, such as Kalk and Mülheim, were not only the most heavily damaged but also suffered the greatest loss of population as a result of the war, losing between 50 and 85 per cent of their residents. These fractured communities could not be re-created here or elsewhere – there were few homes in this area left and any returning families were allocated housing wherever there was space in the city or the surrounding area.¹⁸

A similar situation existed in Kiel, with the worst affected areas located in working class districts around the wharves on the east bank of the Kiel fjord, such as Gaarden and Ellerbek, and in the inner city *Altstadt*. Military Government housing policies which concentrated on the reinstatement of lightly and moderately damaged properties meant that working class districts of cities were often neglected during the early postwar years. However, the relative neglect suffered by these areas during the

¹⁸ Vierteljahresbericht über die Struktur der Stadt Köln, July 1950, HASTK, Best 953/13, ff.27-36.

early postwar period also ensured that they were the first districts to receive attention when the time eventually came for new construction to begin.

Increasing civilian housing: Repairs and redistribution

One might imagine that the scenes of devastation and destruction in the cities would have deterred people from returning to them. Yet all major cities in the zone experienced rapid in-migration from the surrounding areas in the weeks and months following the cessation of hostilities and it was this phenomenon, and in particular the extent to which this occurred in Cologne, which led the British Military Government to declare certain areas ‘black zones’ and, finally, to take the drastic measure of passing an ordinance in December 1945 prohibiting anyone from changing address without permission.¹⁹ Areas could be declared black zones on a number of grounds including a shortage of habitable accommodation, fears for public health or to ease food distribution difficulties. On the other hand, certain key workers such as doctors, food operatives, and farmers, whose skills were needed to improve conditions in the town, found it relatively easy to acquire a permit to return under the terms of the ordinance.²⁰ The Allied Housing Law also contained clauses which allowed cities that needed to attract particular groups of workers to offer preferential treatment in the allocation of housing, allowing dockworkers, builders and miners to take priority over other civilians.

¹⁹ For further details about the operation of this policy see chapter 3. *British Zone Review*, 1, no.12, 2 March 1946, pp.10-11; *British Zone Review*, 1, no. 3, 27 October 1945, p.11.

²⁰ *British Zone Review*, vol 1./3, 27/10/45, p.11; Werner Heinen and Anne-Maire Pfeffer, *Stadtspuren 10II Köln: Siedlungen 1938-88* (Köln, 1988), p.15.

While the tight control of population movements was undoubtedly a sound policy for the British Zone as a whole, it was harsh for those people who wished to return to their homes but were prevented from doing so. The provisions contained within these ordinances were logical, but certain groups were clearly discriminated against.²¹ Pensioners, single women with young families and non-essential workers were unlikely to be allowed to return to their home towns. Dr Emcke, the first appointed postwar Mayor of Kiel, acknowledged the individual hardships that the Military Government policy caused but appealed to his public for their forbearance:

Das Zuzugsverbot muss leider einstweilen bestehen bleiben. Wir wissen, welche Härte darin liegt, dass viele Kieler, die sich nach Hause sehnen, z.Zt.nicht zurückkehren können. Die augenblickliche Lage zwingt uns aber, sie zu bitten, noch einige Zeit Geduld zu haben. Bis zum Winter müssen noch Tausende von Personen aus nicht winterfesten Wohnungen in anderen Häusern untergebracht werden.²²

As well as restricting movement into the cities, a voluntary evacuation scheme was put in place in October 1945 to encourage non-essential workers in the worst hit cities of the Rhein-Ruhr region to move out to the surrounding Westphalian countryside. Posters announcing the voluntary evacuation scheme went up in 18 *Kreise* in the Zone among them Essen, Bochum, Cologne, Dortmund, Aachen and Münster. The scheme was not open to everyone, for example, no-one whose work was considered essential to the city was allowed to volunteer; this would have included building workers, utility maintenance workers, and doctors etc. Families who did put themselves forward for voluntary evacuation found that they had to leave many of their belongings behind: they were only permitted to take one truck load of goods and luggage per household. In addition, they had to sign a declaration stating that they would not return to their cities

²¹ Statistisches Amt to Schwarz, 29 November 1948, HASTK, Best 953/23, ff.85-7.

²² Rundfunkansprache der Oberbürgermeister der Stadt Kiel Dr Emcke, 21 November 1945, SAK, 35832.

until Military Government gave them permission to do so, thus postponing their return indefinitely. While some took advantage of the opportunity to secure better housing in the countryside, many more preferred to take their chances in the city.

Municipal housing offices in the two cities were compelled by the Allied Housing Law enacted in March 1946 to assign any vacant housing to the homeless in strict accordance with Military Government regulations. This included handing over the homes of the most serious Nazi perpetrators to victims of the Nazi regime wishing to be accommodated in the city.²³ The following regulations issued by the Military Government to the local Housing Office in Cologne were typical: no housing would be issued to any person who had been a member of the NSDAP before 1933, nor those who held positions in the SS or the higher ranks of the SA and Nazi Party. Anyone who had not possessed an official residence in the city prior to 1942 was also excluded as well as those who had an official residence elsewhere.²⁴

In addition to the complications of establishing eligibility for housing in the city, the over-stretched housing officers had to deal with the complaints from residents desperate to protect, or return to, their own homes. It is unsurprising that the resulting confiscations and accompanying outburst of denials caused serious headaches for the block architects responsible for executing the repairs policy, as this extract from a report of housing repairs in Kiel illustrates:

Es setzte unter der Bevölkerung ein Wettlauf um Berücksichtigung der eigenen Wohnung ein, so dass die Architekten bald vor Anfragen, Klagen, Beschwerden und Verleumdungen nicht mehr zur Besinnung kommen konnten, zumal das Bauamt immer neue Berichte und Angaben von ihnen für die Militärregierung verlangen musste.²⁵

²³ Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Kiel, 1946, SAK 7068/18.

²⁴ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.129.

²⁵ *Kiel im Aufbau: Zur Kritik am Aufbau Hemmungen des Aufbaues Leistung für den Aufbau*, 1947.

To ensure the best use of the limited space, people were often moved several times and had to share their homes with other families.²⁶ Block architects at the sharp end were in an unenviable position, under pressure from both Military Government and local residents who had very different priorities: the former, to provide the greatest quantity of basic shelter and to see this allocated justly in accordance with a strict living space formula, the latter to protect and stay in their own homes, and as far as possible to share this with the minimum number of strangers.

Alongside the policies governing the distribution of available housing space, the occupation authority's main concern was to increase this by repairing lightly damaged dwellings, through the '*winterfest*' programme during the autumn of 1945 and the longer-running First Aid Repair Programme, which continued throughout 1946.²⁷ All new construction work was banned so that resources could be concentrated on the repair programme, though there were of course transgressions in every city.²⁸ In the autumn of 1945, for instance, Mr Mackay of the Military Government took the Mayor of Kiel, Dr Emcke, on a tour to impress upon him the damage being done to the repair programme by illegal construction work in his city. First stop was the home of one Herr Markmann, the owner of *Zum Schifferer*, an inn on the Walkerdamm, who had been caught painting the outside of the property without a permit. When apprehended he claimed that his actions had nothing to do with wishing to improve the outward appearance of his *Gaststätte* but that he had wished only to protect the joints against the weather. A more serious case was that of a new building, constructed by

²⁶ 'Drei Haushaltungen in jeder Kieler Wohnung!', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 2 November 1946.

²⁷ For a detailed discussion on how these actions worked see Chapter 3; *British Zone Review*, 1, no.12, 2 March 1946, pp.10-11; Jensen to Oberbürgermeister, 5 September 1945, SAK, 57893.

²⁸ See Chapter 4 for more on black market construction work.

one Herr Eichelberg. It was discovered that Herr Eichelberg had managed to obtain a not insubstantial stock of materials during the war with which he was supposed to build several temporary homes for the homeless. He had combined these materials to build himself a new house on the Waldwiese. As construction was already fairly advanced it was decided that the work should be finished and the house handed over to homeless families. Herr Eichelberg faced further punishment by the municipality.²⁹ Keeping track of black market building was a challenge for city officials and the Military Government alike but they did have assistance from local residents who keenly observed construction work in their areas and were quick to point out any injustice they perceived. Herr Horst Grohmann of Kiel wrote to the *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, in December 1947 to voice his irritation at the building work that was being permitted:

Rund um Kiel, z.B in Brandsbek, schiessen Neubauten, Einfamilienhäuser wie Pilze aus der Erde. Die Eigentümer dieser Häuser lassen diese aber nur soweit ausbauen, wie sie personenmässig besetzen können. Also wird bei den meisten der Dachstuhl gar nicht ausgebaut, trotzdem man zwei Zimmer nochmals oben abteilen könnte. Meines Erachtens ist für den Ausbau dieser Häuser nicht so viel Material nötig, wie um eine ausgebombte Wohnung wieder herzurichten. Ausserdem glaube ich bestimmt, dass der Bauherr auch noch dieses Material einkalkuliert hat, um später in 'ruhigen' Zeiten sich restlos einzurichten. Auch können sie sich vorstellen, dass man als 'Normalbürger' in Kiel ohne Dachziegel über dem Kopf, der für jedes verputzte Loch hundertmal rennen muss, erstaunt ist über den Materialüberfluss, angefangen bei Zement bis zum gekachelten Badezimmer.³⁰

Transgressions aside, thousands of homes were repaired under the official *winterfest* and first aid repair schemes every week, allowing more people to be accommodated in their cities and gradually easing the pressure on overcrowded homes throughout the zone. Through the first aid repair programme, the British Military Government were able to exceed the minimum of four square metres of living space per person laid down

²⁹ Baupolizei, 8 September 1945, SAK, 57893.

³⁰ Letter from Horst Grohmann, *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, 29 December 1947.

by the Allied Housing Law so that by March 1946, the average available living space in the British Zone was 6.3 square metres.³¹ It must be stressed that this was an average, and that some city dwellers lived in circumstances considerably more cramped than even this paltry figure suggests.³²

The figures of average available living space in each of the *Länder* of the British Zone given in table 6.2 are somewhat surprising, in view of the relatively light war damage in Schleswig-Holstein.

Table 6.2 – Average living space per capita in the Länder of the British Zone

Land	per capita living space m2
Hamburg	7.5
Hannover/Lower Saxony	5.1
North Rhine	6.1
Schleswig-Holstein	5.4
Westphalia	7.6

Source: British Zone Review, vol. 1/12, 2 March 1946, pp.10-11

The survival of much of Schleswig-Holstein's original housing stock led to the *Land* becoming a major reception and settlement area for the majority of the 1.4 million refugees in the Zone.³³ This explains why residents of Schleswig-Holstein had one of the lowest levels of living space per capita.

How successful were the repair programmes in Kiel and Cologne? Kiel made fairly rapid progress with its weatherproofing programme. By December 1945, more than 6,000 homes had been made *winterfest*³⁴ and by the end of 1946, when responsibility for housing was handed over to the local German administration, 42.4

³¹ *British Zone Review*, 1, no.12, 2 March 1946, pp.10-11.

³² Bevölkerungs- und Wohnraumstatistik, 27 May 1947, HASTK, Acc 5/674, f.159.

³³ 'Das Wohnungsbau-Programm für 1948', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 9 March 1948.

³⁴ *British Zone Review*, 1, no.6, 8 December 1945, pp.6-7.

per cent of Kiel's prewar housing stock had been made habitable – a tremendous achievement for all concerned.³⁵ By October 1948, the number of homes available in Kiel had increased to more than 47,000³⁶ (56.7 per cent of prewar dwellings were back in commission) and by September 1950, only 6.3 per cent of dwellings still needed to be repaired.³⁷

Initially, good progress was also made in Cologne, the *winterfest* action increased the available housing in Cologne by 18,500³⁸ and three months later, 85,000 dwellings in Cologne had received first aid repairs, almost tripling the available housing space compared to September 1945.³⁹ Unlike Kiel, though, Cologne managed to make fewer inroads into its housing deficit. As indicated previously, a far smaller proportion of Cologne's housing stock was only lightly damaged so it took more man hours per house to bring the average home in Cologne back into commission than in Kiel. Even by 1954, Cologne lagged behind most other cities in the zone, having managed to reinstate only two-thirds of its housing stock.

The programme of first aid repairs was accompanied by extensions to existing properties to create 'new' living space. One of the most common ways of achieving additional space was to convert the roof area of an existing dwelling into a separate flat. The British supplemented cellar and attic conversions, room adaptations and first aid repairs with the construction of temporary, prefabricated emergency accommodation. Around 60,000 people a year were housed in temporary dwellings in the British Zone. Nissen huts were favoured by the British because they were quick to

³⁵ Verwaltungsbericht der Stadt Kiel, 1946, SAK 7068/18.

³⁶ 'Dem Kieler Wohnungsneubau eine Gasse!', *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, 14 October 1948.

³⁷ Übersicht über den Gebäude- und Wohnungsbestand in Kiel, 13 September 1950, SAK, 54209.

³⁸ Weichert, 'Trümmeraufbereitungsanlage' p.13; Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, p.15.

³⁹ *British Zone Review*, 1, no.14, 30 March 1946.

erect and offered standard sized accommodation and fittings. They were a major feature of the scheme to accommodate more miners in the Ruhr but were also widely used to house refugees expelled from the former Eastern territories. Nissen huts were far from comfortable but they were preferable to some of the alternatives of dark, dank cellars or bunkers and precarious ruins. Whole ‘camps’ of Nissen huts were constructed in some cities. In Kiel one such mini estate was constructed on the site of the old main post office and Professor-Peters Platz. Although they were unloved by local residents and German officials, it is easy to see why Nissen huts were favoured by the British as a fast and efficient means of shelter provision; it was possible for a small team of builders in Kiel to constructed 75 of these huts per week.⁴⁰

The use of prefabricated dwellings met with, at best, a mixed response and at worst was openly resisted by local municipal officials. Although these hutments were used in Britain under similar conditions, many German officials complained that they were unsuitable for habitation, as this quote from a Kiel housing official demonstrates: ‘die Nissenhütte [sind] für Wohnzwecke sehr schlecht geeignet. Die dünne Blechwandung bietet keinen genügenden Wärmeschutz. Die Hütten können nur durch verhältnissmässig weitgehenden inneren Ausbau bewohnbar gemacht werden.’⁴¹ The resistance to prefabricated dwellings may have had more to do with the appearance of camps of hutments or the materials and labour expended on the construction of temporary dwellings which German officials would want eventually to replace. In some cities, officials campaigned hard to be allowed to employ the materials intended for the construction of Nissen huts to make more repairs to existing dwellings instead

⁴⁰ Plan of Organisation for the Hutting Action, 15 September 1945, SAK, 57893.

⁴¹ Aufstellung von Nissenbaracken, 22 October 1946, SAK, 57274.

and were sometimes successful.⁴² In Kiel, for example, city officials requested to be allowed to use the corrugated iron sheets in one consignment of Nissen huts as roofing material for ordinary buildings. This wish was eventually granted and in fact, allowed more living space to be added to the pool than if the huts had been erected as originally planned.⁴³

While the repair statistics offer some indication of the improvement in the number of dwellings available in both cities and an increase in the per capita living space compared with 1945, it is also worth noting that the size of the repaired dwellings did not always corresponded to those of 1939, having on average only about three-quarters of the floor space. Furthermore, each person now had only 10.5 square metres compared with the 19.4 square metres per person in 1939.⁴⁴ On the other hand, a slowing in the rate of new dwellings added to the pool did not mean that there were no improvements in housing provision. After First Aid Repairs had been completed, municipal authorities were permitted to extend repairs to internal fixtures and fittings, glazing etc., which added nothing to the available space but made homes tolerably comfortable.

As the most lightly damaged houses were put back into commission, the remaining homes with higher levels of damage required an increasing amount of money, manpower and materials. Cities had to make tough choices about how to allocate resources and where in the city these should be concentrated. In Kiel, it was decided to make fewer resources available for general repairs in every district and instead to concentrate labour and materials in particular areas:

⁴² Rede des Oberbürgermeisters Gayk, Kiels Friedensarbeit beginnt!, 24 March 1947, SAK, 58368.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Köln und sein Wohnraum, 22 November 1947, HASTK, Acc 5/674, ff.153-7.

Es ist bei der veränderten Situation nicht mehr möglich, Baustoffe pauschal für ganze Bezirke zur Verfügung zu stellen, wie es für die einfache Wetterfestmachung geschah. Die Verknappung der Baustoffe einerseits und die städtebauliche-wohnungstechnische Bedeutung der jetzt zu bearbeitenden Wiederherstellungsobjekte macht sorgfältige Prüfung und Genehmigung von Fall zu Fall nötig.⁴⁵

Instead particular areas would be targeted for improvement and renovations concentrated there to achieve the maximum benefit for the city: 'Die Instandsetzung soll nach Möglichkeit in Schwerpunkten durchgeführt werden, die in den städtebaulich und wohntechnisch lohnenden Gebieten liegen. Die kleinen Wohneinheiten sind dabei zu bevorzugen.'⁴⁶ Any small amounts of new construction would be targeted there also to unify the planning layout of these areas: 'Nach diesem 'Schwerpunktplan' wurde systematisch verfahren. So gelang es, neben der laufenden Instandsetzung beschädigter Wohnhäuser zunächst die zwischen den beiden Weltkriegen entstandenen Wohnanlagen vollständig wiederherzustellen und zugleich städtebaulich abzurunden'.⁴⁷ These priority targets were: Friedrichsort, Wik, Holtenauerstrasse, the Kronshagenerweg/Westring area, Horn, between Gaarden Nord and Wellingdorf, Gaarden Ost and Ellerbek, the Dietrichsdorf and Neumühlen area and, finally, Elmschenhagen.⁴⁸

Early Military Government measures which banned new construction in urban areas, bought city planners valuable time to begin planning new residential estates. After German municipal authorities took over responsibility for housing in 1947 they were permitted to extend these bans if they so wished, to prevent speculative building outside of their broad reconstruction programmes. This practice was used extensively in Kiel throughout the reconstruction period so that building work would be carried out

⁴⁵ *Kiel im Aufbau: Zur Kritik am Aufbau Hemmungen des Aufbaues Leistung für den Aufbau*, 1947, p.12.

⁴⁶ Schwerpunktplan 1949, SAK, 505/1982; Planungsprogramme 1948, 3 January 1949, SAK, 34258.

⁴⁷ *Kiel im Wiederaufbau*, p.16.

⁴⁸ Schwerpunktplan 1949, SAK, 505/1982.

in accordance with the Schwerpunkt Plan. Herbert Jensen continued to apply extensive building bans so that he could control development in the city.

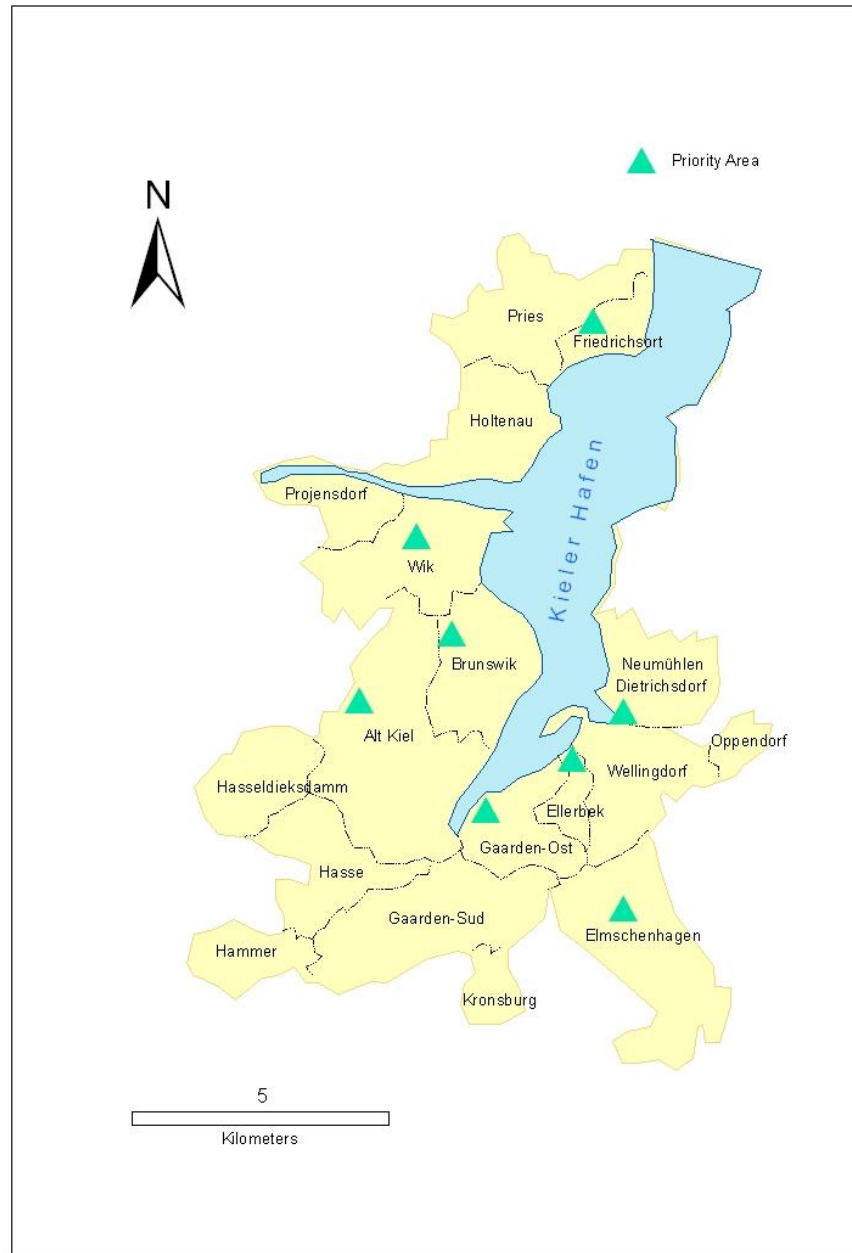


Figure 6.3 – Priority areas for housing in Kiel⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Diagram prepared with the assistance of SAK, Bebauungspläne 5, Schwerpunktplan.

Inevitably, not all residents were favourably disposed to the changes implemented by the *Stadtbauamt*, particularly if it meant that there were fewer resources available for further repairs. When work began in the working-class district of Gaarden, the *Allgemeiner Kieler Kommunalverein* wrote to Kiel's chief planner, Herbert Jensen, to complain: 'Mit dem hier verbrauchten Zement würden hunderte alte Wohnungen winterfest gemacht werden, die voraussichtlich in diesem Winter nicht mehr repariert werden.'⁵⁰ Despite his reference to the shortages of materials, it was the 'städtebauliche-wohnungstechnische' which was demonstrably more important to Herbert Jensen.

Working-class districts, like Gaarden, were often the hardest areas to reinstate, not only because of the level of damage but because few of the former residents had owned the land on which they lived. Most homes in working-class districts had been rented by their previous owners and the ownership of the land parcels were in the hands of a small number of individuals or industrial concerns who had little interest in their reconstruction and no financial incentive to help the municipality by rebuilding homes. In Cologne, Ludwig Neundörfer lamented the loss of these communities and the desolate impression created by these areas:

Wer nach Längerer Zeit wieder einmal die Arbeiterstrassen dieser Stadtteile besucht, der wird von dem Eindruck ausserordentlich bedrückt, dass seit der Bestandsaufnahme im Jahre 1947 zwar die Strassen endgültig von Trümmern geräumt sind, dass aber von Wiederaufbau oder gar Neubau in den kilometerlangen Baulücken nichts zu sehen ist. Man begehe Ehrenfeld die Sonnefelder-, die Marienstrasse, die Keppler-, die Philipp-, die Rothehausstrasse, die Geissel- und Thebärerstrasse....In Mülheim das ganze Viertel am Hafen, Wallstrasse, Regentenstrasse, Kranenstrasse. Selbst in den Hauptgeschäftsstrassen dieser Stadtteile hat sich wenig an eigentlichem Wohnungsbau getan. Einstöckige Läden, Wirtschaften und Kinos sind das einzige was das düstere Bild dieser Stadtteile ein wenig aufhellt. In Kalk sind einige Wohnblocks wieder hergestellt. Ebenso in Mülheim. Was sich daneben an echten Neubauten in den Arbeitervierteln findet, lässt sich an zwei Händen herzählen.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Allgemeiner Kieler Kommunalverein to Jensen, 7 October 1947, SAK, 46102.

⁵¹ Vierteljahresbericht über die Struktur der Stadt Köln, July 1950, HASTK, Best 953/13, ff.27-36.

Figure 6.4 shows the district of Mülheim described by Neundörfer in the paragraph above. The desolate streets and empty blocks shown in the aerial photograph, taken in 1951, reveals that although much of the rubble had been cleared from the area, no new construction work had commenced and this particular district was almost deserted.

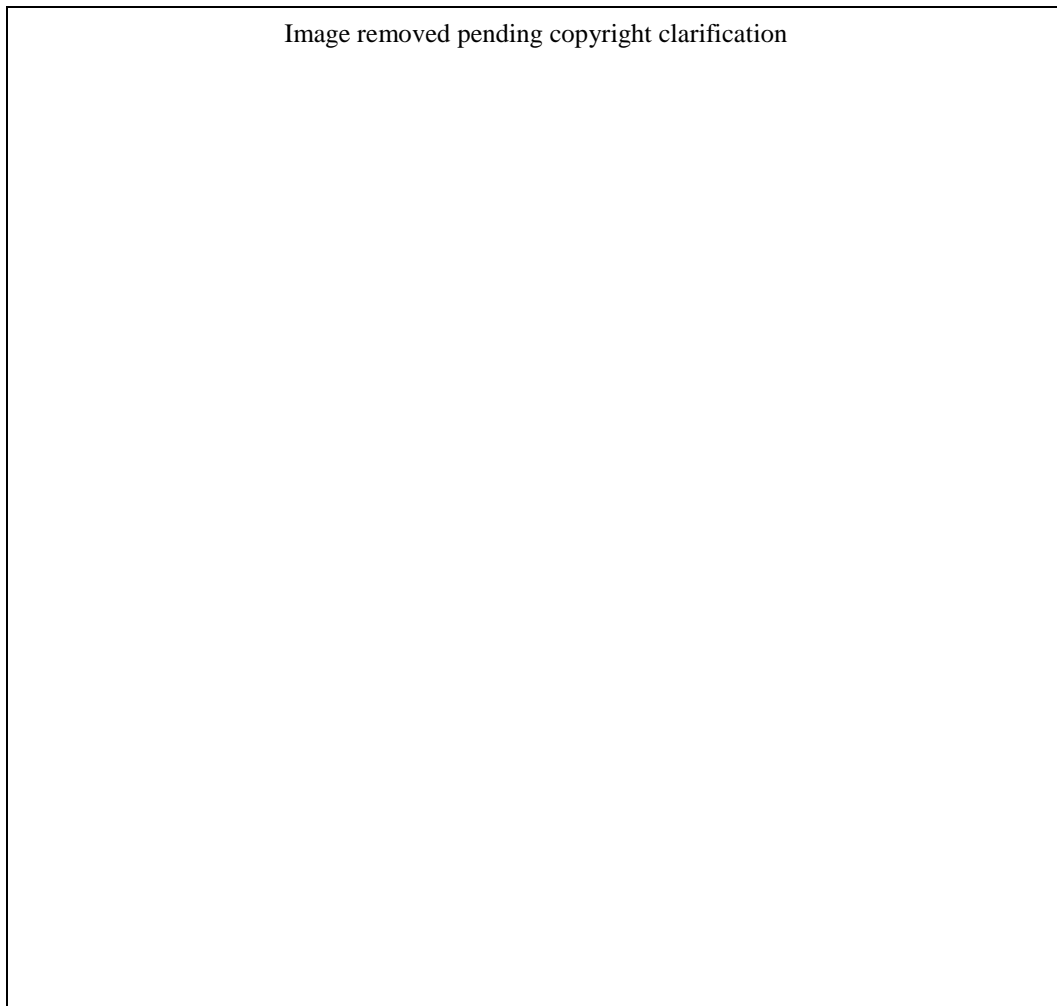


Figure 6.4 Aerial photograph of Mülheim, 1951⁵²

⁵² Produced with the assistance of Luftbildkarte, 1951 in Amt für Liegenschaften, Vermessung und Kataster, *Kölner Stadtkarten und Luftbilder* (2004), CDROM.

‘Eigenes Herd ist Goldes wert’: Families at home

When the *Deutsche Städtetag* called the solving of the housing problem ‘a question of the very existence of our people’⁵³ this was no exaggeration. Living conditions in the British Zone of Germany were some of the worst in Europe. The lucky few were forced to share their homes with other families while those less fortunate bunked down in damp, rubble-filled cellars.⁵⁴ Families unable to find a place for themselves were packed by the local housing offices into various kinds of emergency accommodation such as Nissen huts, air raid shelters, empty shops, business premises, abandoned military barracks and storage accommodation.⁵⁵ Even two years into the occupation, a little under 10% of the population were still being housed in emergency accommodation. Those housed in bunkers lived in the most unspeakable conditions, without adequate light air and sanitation facilities. In Cologne, 54 families were accommodated in five blocks at the Köln-Kalk Kaserne; four of these families were living in a watch tower. There was only one functioning tap outside one of the blocks which all 54 families had to share.⁵⁶ In another bunker, the Barbara Kaserne in Köln-Riehl, the sanitation facilities had been rendered completely unusable by the frost.⁵⁷ Poor living conditions had serious social consequences; apart from the high incidence of diseases, such as tuberculosis and sexually transmitted infections, Cologne had a much lower birth rate than other comparable cities as a direct result of poor housing.⁵⁸

⁵³ *Deutsche Städtetag, Forderungen um Wohnungsbau* (Cologne 1949), p.2.

⁵⁴ *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*, 2, no.11, November 1947, p.30.

⁵⁵ *British Zone Review*, 1, no.3, 27 October 1945, p.19; Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.129-30; *Monthly Statistical Bulletin*, 2, no.11, November 1947, p.30.

⁵⁶ Kaserne Köln-Kalk, 11 February 1947, HASTK, Acc 5/186, f.110.

⁵⁷ Barbara Kaserne Köln-Riehl, 11 February 1947, HASTK, Acc 5/186, f.111.

⁵⁸ Statistisches Amt to Schwarz, 29 November 1948, HASTK, Best 953/23, ff.85-7.

Under such conditions social relationships were inevitably strained. At the end of the war, those remaining in cities had simply moved into any unoccupied inhabitable houses. When evacuees returned to the city they expected to be able to reclaim their homes and any furniture which they had been forced to abandon. In order to arbitrate the process of returning property to its rightful owners committees called *Schlichtungsstelle* were set up with representatives from tenants associations, house and land ownership associations and the Trade Unions.⁵⁹ Each *Wohnungsamt* was obliged by the Allied Housing Law to place the hundreds of families who turned up on their doorstep looking for accommodation in houses which were under-occupied.⁶⁰ This created much bitterness and unhappiness. People disliked having to share their homes with strangers and live out their private lives in public. One of the most difficult aspects of postwar living arrangements for women appears to have been having to share their kitchens. Only just over half of those in normal accommodation had their own cooking facilities.⁶¹ In the reports of housing inspections to both normal and emergency accommodation, this was the most frequent cause of dispute within the home. Andreas Gayk, the Social Democrat Mayor of Kiel, capitalised on this in 1948 when he employed the following slogan during an election campaign: 'Jeder Frau einen eigenen Herd' on the back of a new housing programme which would provide every women with what she most desired.⁶²

⁵⁹Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, p.14.

⁶⁰ Lagesbericht der Stadt Kiel, 15 September 1945, SAK, 51611.

⁶¹ Normal accommodation did not include prefabricated dwellings, bunkers etc in which sharing facilities with several other families was the norm. Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, pp.16-17.

⁶² Gerhard Paul, Uwe Denker and Peter Wulf (eds.), *Geschichtsumschlungen: Sozial- und kulturgeschichtliches Lesebuch Schleswig-Holstein, 1848-1948* (Bonn, 1996), p.280.

It was not uncommon to find people sharing their cramped accommodation with an assortment of animals. Rabbits, hens and even goats were kept in people's homes to alleviate hunger in spite of an official prohibition: 'Nach wie vor ist das Halten von Haustieren in Wohnräumen, Kellern, Böden und Balkonen verboten und unter Umständen strafbar. Die Not der Zeit hat allerdings dazu geführt, dass das Verbot in mehr und mehr sich häufenden Fällen durchbrochen wird.'⁶³

Furniture and belongings had often been lost either through the aerial bombardment or during evacuation when only a small amount of luggage could be carried away. Quite apart from the emotional distress of losing one's belongings, everyday items could rarely be replaced because of the severe shortages of consumer goods caused by low levels of industrial production and hoarding. People were forced to improvise and found ingenious solutions to the shortages of household items: saucepans were made out of steel helmets, scrubbing brushes from old car tyres, buckets and liquid measuring jugs from oil drums, cooking utensils from scrap and slippers and shoes from straw and string. To celebrate this ingenuity, a refugee industry fair was held in Schleswig-Holstein under the auspices of the Red Cross, the Military Government and the local German authorities at which handmade toys, woven fabric, wickerwork, furniture, kitchenware, art, pottery, carets and wood carving were exhibited.⁶⁴

⁶³ 'Haben Sie schon eine Balkon-Ziege?', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 22 February 1947; Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, pp.16-17.

⁶⁴ 'Schleswig-Holstein Workers Skill and Ingenuity', *Buzz*, 3, no.2, June 1947, p.9; *British Zone Review*, 1, no.17, 11 May 1946, p.11.

Homes for Victors

For the first few months following the capitulation, British officers were only permitted to speak to German civilians in the course of duty. The little handbook issued to all British personnel dictated how they should relate to their former enemy: ‘You must keep clear of the Germans – man, woman and child – unless you meet them in the course of duty. You must not walk with them or shake hands or visit their homes. You must not play games or share any social event with them. In short, you must not fraternise with Germans at all.’⁶⁵ These draconian rules were relaxed in September 1945 but British officers continued to live segregated from German civilians. Small residential occupation enclaves were formed in each city, usually in wealthy villa suburbs where a concentration of large, undamaged houses could be requisitioned.⁶⁶ British officers not only lived apart behind barbed wire fences but also travelled in separate train carriages, attended separate concerts and cinema showings, even separate church services.⁶⁷

Although it was clearly necessary for the occupying forces to live somewhere, and understandable that, as victors, they should want to requisition the best available housing, the frequency and rather callous manner of turning inhabitants out at short notice with little chance of appeal, no opportunity to take more than the barest of their belongings with them and little prospect of any acceptable alternative accommodation was deeply distressing for those affected. The insensitivity to the plight of German cities displayed by some British officers beggared belief. The *Oberstadtdirektor* of Cologne, possibly the city most acutely affected by the housing crisis of all cities in the

⁶⁵ Handbook for British Officers, March 1945, FO 1032/1367.

⁶⁶ Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, p.43.

⁶⁷ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.15 and 150.

British Zone, was ordered to keep a pool of empty homes which could be used as and when Military Government evicted people from other parts of the city.⁶⁸

Herr J., who had lived in occupied Kiel as a boy, recalled the arbitrary nature of requisitioning: one day, two Military Government officers had knocked on the door of the neighbouring house and the family had been forced to leave at very short notice. His own family had escaped lightly: the occupiers had requisitioned only their garage to use as a store room and this turned out to be not without its benefits. They had the protection of two armed guards who, as well as preventing any looting, provided sweets and other goods for the children.⁶⁹

Not all requisitioning resulted in the German family having to leave their home as was common during the first two years of the occupation. Later it was possible for the German owner to remain in the property to act as a caretaker, housekeeper or nanny. This was very popular as it ensured a steady wage, meal, and warmth while allowing owners to protect their homes even if, for the time being, they were confined to an attic or basement room.

German public protests and demonstrations against requisitioning were met with irritation from the British officers, who were slightly incredulous at the displays of wounded self-pity by German civilians. German politicians who criticised the practice of requisitioning could expect to receive a swift reminder of recent history and a reassertion of the hierarchical relationship between the two countries, as this outpouring of anger from Brigadier Armytage of Military Government Hamburg towards the Mayor Rudolf Petersen, demonstrates:

⁶⁸ Besprechung bei der Militärregierung, 30 September 1946, HASTK, Acc 5/670, f.41.

⁶⁹ Informal interview conducted with Herr J., Kiel, October 2005.

Sie wollen sich bitte klarmachen, dass meiner Meinung nach das deutsche Volk keinerlei Recht hat, weder erbittert noch ungehalten zu sein, wenn es dem britischen Besatzungspersonal Platz machen muss. Sie wollen sich, bitte erinnern, dass zwei Mal in Ihrem und in meinem Leben das deutsche Volk die ganze Welt in Untergang und Elend gestürzt hat, und zwar einzig und allein aus Gründen seines selbstsüchtigen Machthungers....Die Behandlung, die dem deutschen Volk von seiten der Bevölkerungsmächte zuteil wird, ist nicht nur weit davon entfernt, hart zu sein, sondern ausserordentlich milde und gerecht. Lassen Sie mich nicht mehr von diesen Unsinn hören! Es ist Ihre Pflicht, wie es die Pflicht aller Deutschen sein sollte, die massgebliche Positionen bekleiden. Ihr Volk darüber zu belehren, wie unverdient glücklich es sich schätzen kann, dass es bislang mit einer derartigen Rücksicht behandelt wurde. Es müsste sich für mich erübrigen, Sie daran zu erinnern, welches das Schicksal Deutschlands in diesem Augenblick sein würde, wenn sich die Alliierten den Deutschen gegenüber während der letzten Monate so benommen hätten, wie sich die Deutschen den Ländern gegenüber benommen haben, die von ihren Streit kräften während der vergangenen 5 Jahre besetzt waren.⁷⁰

German politicians did have some grounds for complaint. The Army were particularly lax at derequisitioning properties, often holding on to houses long after they had been vacated by British officers. Housing space was so precious that homes requisitioned yet lying empty understandably caused anger among the German population, even if this only represented a minority of cases. One man, August Englisch, was evicted from his home in Düsseldorf and forced to move into emergency accommodation in a school. Some time later, he was told that the school was now needed and that he and his family would have to move out. The local Housing Office had been unable to find alternative accommodation for them. He then discovered that his original home was lying unoccupied and was being used for storage of mattresses and chairs.⁷¹

Such stories were not uncommon and can be found in almost any local paper from the time. The British Military Government was not insensible to the rising tide of public opinion against requisitioning. Throughout 1947, they tried periodically to counter the bad press by publishing their derequisitioning figures which showed that the balance was in favour of German civilians.⁷² Although the criticism of

⁷⁰ Brigadier Armytage to Bürgermeister Petersen, 25 February 1946, StAH, SKII 623.

⁷¹ Englisch to Wohnungsamt, 5 April 1949, FO 1013/2240.

⁷² 'Requisitioning of Property – Less than two per cent held by Occupation Forces', *Buzz*, 3, no.4, August 1947, pp.20-1.

requisitioning practices did not prevent these from continuing throughout the period of occupation, it did change how they were carried out. By 1949, families whose homes were requisitioned were allowed to take their belongings with them and, after the occupation forces had finished with the properties, every effort was made to return them to those families who had been evicted.⁷³ Inventories of homes were properly catalogued to prevent the chaotic and patently unjust practices of the early postwar years.

Requisitioning practices and the enclave mentality did little to endear the occupation forces to the inhabitants of their cities. Their presence was resented by many and there were occasional attacks on the homes of British personnel.⁷⁴ Some local people even felt that the occupiers changed the character of certain districts of their cities. In Cologne, residents expressed concern that the north and north-western districts of the city were becoming 'militarised' and that this was inhibiting positive developments in the area and discouraging industry:

In den vergangen zwei oder drei Jahren [habe] eine sehr beträchtliche militärische Entwicklung in dem nördlichen und nordwestlichen Teil der Stadt stattgefunden. Es seien erwähnt die belgischen Kasernen und der Panzerübungsplatz in der Grüngürtel, das Pionierlager am Fühlingersee, die Erweiterung der Ossendorfkasernen, Munitionslager mit grossen Sicherheitsgebieten und jetzt den Vorschlag, dass das Pionierlager in Dransdorf (Bonn) zu einem Gelände in der Nähe der Neusser Strasse verlegt werden soll. Kurz gefasst, bedeutet das, dass in den vergangenen Paar Jahren der nördlichen und nordwestlichen Teil Kölns einen starken militärischen Charakter angenommen habe. Es sei ausserordentlich schwierig, Entwicklungsvorschläge zu fördern oder Industrien zu veranlassen, sich in diesen Gebieten niederzulassen. Aus all diesen Gründen sei der Stadtkreis Köln gezwungen, gegen einen weitere militärische Entwicklung Einspruch zu erheben.⁷⁵

⁷³ Wohnungsbau in der Innenstadt, HASTK, Acc 5/195, f.370; Wohnungsbauprogramme für die Besatzung, HASTK, Acc 5/958, f.37.

⁷⁴ Verbatim Report of Regional Commissioner's Talk to Staff, Empire Cinema 14 November 1947, FO 1006/98.

⁷⁵ Protokoll zur Sitzung, die am Freitag, dem 8 September um 15 Uhr in Butzweilerhof 163.

As the size of the occupation force grew, the burden of their presence on the cities they occupied increased. Further strain was added by the granting of Cabinet approval for Operation Union in June 1946, a programme to reunite wives with their husbands serving in Germany. It was usual for Army wives to join their husbands overseas and civilian officers serving with the Control Commission could hardly be expected to stay in Germany indefinitely without their families. Control Commission officers were already on disadvantageous contracts and the British Government knew that they were unlikely to retain good staff if they refused them the possibility of being joined in due course by their families. There was some anxiety amongst the British Government about how British women would behave in Germany, in particular whether their attitude towards the German population would be out of step with current policy and would undermine the work being done to build bridges with their former enemy. Prime Minister Clement Attlee tried to persuade British wives that they had an important role to play in the democratisation of the country:

They should be told that they will be looked on by the Germans as representatives of the British Empire and that on their behaviour and that of their children, far more than that of the armed forces, the Germans will judge the British and the British way of life. Therefore they must be meticulously careful all the time to behave as they would wish this Empire to be regarded: good mannered and tactful, and they should take the greatest care of the homes in which they live, and the contents thereof, and not consider, just because it is German property, they can misuse it as they like.⁷⁶

In Kiel, the first party of wives arrived at the beginning of September and were accommodated in the district of Kronshagen where 150 houses had been requisitioned. The enclave had little more than a NAAFI shop but there were grand plans to open a department store, restaurant, hairdresser's salon, photographer's studio and a chemist. Conditions were not ideal for Control Commission officers and their families stationed

⁷⁶ Attlee to Control Commission for Germany, July 1946, PREM 240/46.

in Kiel. Regional Commissioner of Schleswig-Holstein, Air Vice-Marshal Hugh Vivian Champion de Crespigny, gave a speech to British personnel in Kiel at the Empire cinema in November 1947 to address the criticisms of living conditions in Kiel:

We are living amongst 247,000 people in Kiel, and it is always a question of keeping the balance continuously. To what extent are we going willingly to live in our congested areas and difficult conditions because we feel we must keep a balance vis-à-vis the German population? If we live in too much luxury here it will be un-British. People will think we are setting a bad example ... so I would ask you to be forbearing about the accommodation.⁷⁷

Life in the occupied city was particularly difficult for the wives of Control Commission officers. Everything from the size of their homes to the quantity of cutlery in their kitchen drawers was determined by their husbands rank. Unlike the Army wives, they were unused to the relentless monotony of married families' quarters with their identical floral curtains and furniture.⁷⁸ They had a lot of free time and very little means or opportunity to relieve the boredom of life in the enclave apart from the occasional trip to the cinema to watch the likes of *The Invisible Man Returns*, *Tarzan and the Leopard Woman* or *Ten Days in Paradise*.⁷⁹ On the positive side, domestic help was cheap and plentiful, although some women missed being responsible for looking after their homes.⁸⁰

The more enlightened members of the British occupation authorities realised that the official policy of discouraging social contact with German officials was at odds with the professed aim of re-educating the Germans to be peace-loving, democratic people. Gradually, the official line on social contact with German civilians

⁷⁷ Verbatim Report of Regional Commissioner's Talk to Staff, Empire Cinema, 14 November 1947, FO 1006/98.

⁷⁸ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, pp.147-50.

⁷⁹ Cinema listings, *Kiel Journal*, 17 June 1947.

⁸⁰ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.148.

softened. The growing threat posed by the Soviet Union meant that friendly relations with Germany were more necessary than ever, and in May 1947, the British issued what became known colloquially as the 'be kind to the Germans order'. Social contact was not just permitted but was now positively encouraged:

We do want you to have some contact with the German population ... we want you to foster it; to know German people of the right type and in that way to put across to them what our British ideals and way of life really mean... If we keep ourselves entirely separate, we shall never get anywhere.⁸¹

By this stage though, there were plenty of British officers who had long since disregarded the dogmatism of the early handbooks and had already developed congenial relationships with Germans with whom they worked. The Army failed to embrace this change and there were marked divisions between their attitudes and behaviour and that of the Control Commission towards their former enemy.⁸²

An 'English Town on the Alster': The Hamburg Project⁸³

For the first few months of the occupation, the various arms of the British Military Government were dispersed amongst five towns in Westphalia: the British Army of the Rhine was located in Bad Oeynhausen and Minden, while the Control Commission departments were accommodated in Bunde, Detmold and Lübbecke.⁸⁴ The decision to split the occupation forces across small, relatively intact towns had made sense at the beginning of the occupation but by September 1945, the size of the occupation forces had grown considerably and, although the British Government was unsure how long the occupation would last, it appeared that they were likely to remain in Germany for,

⁸¹ Verbatim Report of Regional Commissioner's Talk to Staff, Empire Cinema 14 November 1947, FO 1006/98.

⁸² Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.153.

⁸³ 'Die "englische Stadt" an der Alster', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 29 June 1946.

⁸⁴ Donnison, *Civil Affairs*, p.274.

at the very least, a decade. Purely in practical terms, the separation of departments and officers was inefficient; transportation and communication between the towns was unreliable and the separation of departments caused divisions and misunderstandings. Uniting the occupation forces and concentrating them in one city was therefore partly a pragmatic response designed to foster an atmosphere of greater co-operation but this was accompanied by a desire among the higher echelons of the Control Office for Germany and Austria in London to create a 'capital' of the British Zone and thereby raise the status of Military Government: 'the prestige of the headquarters and indeed of the UK itself obviously demands more suitable accommodation than that which it occupies at present'.⁸⁵

Serious discussions to concentrate British personnel in one place began in December 1945. Two options were tabled for consideration: Herford, where some of the Control Commission departments were already stationed and Hamburg, the badly damaged but large and prestigious old trading port in the north of the Zone. The Control Office eventually plumped for Hamburg for practical, financial and political reasons. The so-called 'Herford Solution' would have cost twice as much because the new headquarters would have had to be constructed on a green field site with all the associated costs of laying new underground utilities and services. Herford also lacked the large building firms and craftsmen present in Hamburg.⁸⁶ A British occupation headquarters in the historic *Hansestadt* was presumably more attractive in political and symbolic terms too.

⁸⁵ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.140.

⁸⁶ Various minutes and papers, FO1014/905.

Unlike Herford, the Hamburg proposal involved the use of an existing city district, albeit one heavily damaged during the war.⁸⁷ The district of Harvesthude to the west of the Aussenalster was chosen and required the demolition of homes and the eviction of tens of thousands of German civilians from the area, which unsurprisingly caused a great deal of local resentment in the face of the severe housing shortages in the city.⁸⁸

The Hamburg Project was exceedingly ambitious: its purpose was to provide accommodation and office space for around 30,000 British personnel. The project would provide not just living space but also social amenities and leisure facilities such as a 1500-seater cinema, a theatre, tennis courts, sports clubs, shops, a golf course and a swimming pool.⁸⁹ In the four months between the first outline plan and the green light from the Cabinet on 3rd May 1946, the plans went through several incarnations, the final plan requiring fewer demolitions and evacuations of existing civilian housing and a higher density scheme which reduced the area needed for the site.⁹⁰ The final area agreed was from the Grindelbergstrasse in the west, the Oberstrasse in the north, the Brahms-Allee to the east and the Hallerstrasse in the south. The site was protected on two sides by water which allowed a self-contained enclave to be formed.⁹¹ The residential buildings would consist of six blocks of 109 metres in length and 14-storeys high and six 8-9-storey blocks of 73 metres. The blocks were to be no deeper than 11 to 12 metres, affording the maximum sunshine and light to the flats within.⁹² The

⁸⁷ Axel Schildt, *Die Grindelhochhäuser: Eine Sozialgeschichte der ersten deutschen Wohnhochhausanlage* (Hamburg, 1988), pp.21-5.

⁸⁸ Hamburg Project: First outline plan, FO 1014/891.

⁸⁹ Hamburg Project: Second outline plan, FO 1014/892.

⁹⁰ Schildt, *Grindelhochhäuser*, p.14.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.13.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p.9.

whole development was to be positioned in a green space with no through roads to prevent noise from traffic from disturbing the calm.

British officers trawled Hamburg's architectural practices in search of a group of architects who were both suitably qualified and experienced but untainted by association with the National Socialists. Many of the most experienced and largest practices were led by individuals who had been party members. Those eventually engaged on the project were a younger generation of architects and all were members of the Bund Deutscher Architekten after 1945.⁹³ For such a high profile project, the British wanted to demonstrate a complete break with the Nazi past. This was to be a thoroughly modern project, incorporating the dominant planning techniques of high rise homes affording maximum light and air set in a park-like setting. The high-rise, Le Corbusier-style design was a first for Germany. All the buildings were to be orientated on a north-south alignment in five rows with large spaces between them. Each of the buildings was to be slightly different but sufficiently similar to create a unifying impression.⁹⁴

Unsurprisingly, the Hamburg Project generated bitterness inside Germany and disquiet amongst certain quarters back home. Hamburg Senator Paul Nevermann highlighted the opposition that would be generated against the British Government if they persisted with their plans to build tennis courts when local people were without homes. Throughout the autumn of 1946, the Minister for German Affairs and head of the London-based Control Office for Germany and Austria, John Hynd, was repeatedly

⁹³ The offices used were: Bernard Hermkes, Rudolf Lodders, Bernard Hopp and Rudolf Jäger, Heinz Ruscheweyh and Hans Loop, Albrecht Sander, Ferdinand Streb, Fritz Trautwein, Hermann Zess and Friedrich Ostermeyer. Ibid., pp.25-32.

⁹⁴ Hamburg Project: meetings, FO 1014/900.

called upon to justify the plans to the House.⁹⁵ Several ministers who had visited Germany since the capitulation and had seen with their own eyes the terrible destruction were appalled by what they felt was a gross misuse of resources on a prestige project when civilians all over the Zone continued to live in deplorable conditions. The Labour MP for Ipswich, Richard Stokes, given to rather theatrical outbursts, positively exploded in House of Commons:

Are we to see, in the midst of this devastation and in a state of things where men and women have not enough money to buy food for their families, have nowhere to live but holes in the ground, and nothing in the shape of a prospect of industrial development, what? A great big gin palace in the middle of Hamburg? For what? For what I call the Hamburg Poona, for the British Raj?⁹⁶

The Hamburg Project sapped construction workers from all parts of the Zone, but particularly from Hamburg, where repairs to civilian housing were brought to a standstill as the winter approached, just when they were needed most. The Labour MP for Norwich, John Paton, asked: ‘How is it possible to justify this enormous disproportion? In view of the dire need that exists in Hamburg for effective protection for the German population against the hard German winter should not this whole project be reviewed?’⁹⁷ John Hynd’s response to the criticisms of the evictions and hardships inflicted by the Hamburg Project on civilians was that it had been ‘necessary’ to ask the Germans to ‘move up a little and make room.’⁹⁸

The project found little support from Military Government officers in Hamburg either, who found themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to defend the Hamburg Project, when their own feelings mirrored the criticisms of German officials.

⁹⁵ See for example Hansard, 17 October 1946, vol 427, col 1154-92; 23 October, vol 427, col 1660-1; 4 December 1946, vol 431, col 323-4; 30 October, vol 428, col 610-1; 18 December 1946, vol 431, col 395; 27 November 1946, vol 430, col 1600-1.

⁹⁶ Hansard, vol 427, col 1165-7.

⁹⁷ Hansard, 4 December 1946, vol 431, col 323-4.

⁹⁸ Hansard, vol 428, col 610-11.

Privately they pleaded with their superiors in Berlin to put an end to the scheme.⁹⁹ German morale plummeted as they observed the huge quantities of material and labour that were being directed towards the project. The German administration, meanwhile, struggled to make repairs to civilian housing with much reduced resources and in addition were expected to find suitable accommodation for those evicted for the Hamburg project. 20,000 construction workers were drawn from all over the zone, even from the Ruhr area where they were desperately needed to build new miners' housing.¹⁰⁰ Nissen huts in the city went to house the incoming building workers rather than those who had been waiting to return to their home town.¹⁰¹ Rubble clearance activities were redirected from the inner city to the Hamburg Project enclave area and therefore the city could not be totally cleared by the end of 1946 as had been planned.¹⁰²

Despite the fierce opposition to the project from so many quarters, the construction work continued. British officers visited the site once a week to check on the progress of the project. Anglo-German relations were mixed, on the one hand those working on the site regularly seem to have built a friendly working relationship with their German counterparts but at higher levels, there were others who made themselves very unpopular by meddling in the hiring of contractors and demanding the inclusion of particular features which might have been included in a British development back home but which were quite out of place in Hamburg at that time.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Schildt, *Grindelhochhäuser*, p.13; Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.142.

¹⁰⁰ *British Zone Review*, 1, no. 21, 6 July 1946, p.20; Schildt, *Grindelhochhäuser*, pp.48-50.

¹⁰¹ Schildt, *Grindelhochhäuser*, p.20.

¹⁰² Hamburg Project First Outline Plan, FO 1014/891.

¹⁰³ Schildt, *Grindelhochhäuser*, p.43.

In 1947, construction work on the project came to an abrupt halt. The impending fusion of the British and American Zones and the plans for the Bizonal Headquarters to be located in Frankfurt rendered the Hamburg Project obsolete. The suspension of the project was kept under wraps for some time; officially they announced a temporary hiatus because of problems with building supplies but unofficially, it was decided to bring the project to the point where the foundations could be finished and protected so that they would not become total losses: 'Officially the project is being resumed on the original scheme and is working on top priority second only to coal mining. Actually it will be brought to the stage where it will not deteriorate when left unfinished.'¹⁰⁴ 48 million Marks had been expended on a giant white elephant.¹⁰⁵

The site was eventually handed over to the Germans to do with as they chose in 1948.¹⁰⁶ The Hamburg Senate carefully reviewed and debated the options available to them for the site. The decision was far from unanimous but eventually the Senate agreed that the construction of the Grindelhochhäuser should be finished to avoid wasting the enormous capital investment which had already gone into the site.¹⁰⁷ Work recommenced in 1949 and the project took 7 years to realise.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Meehan, *Strange Enemy*, p.145.

¹⁰⁵ 'Die Millionen vom Grindelberg', *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, 10 August 1946.

¹⁰⁶ Schildt, *Grindelhochhäuser*, pp.73-4.

¹⁰⁷ Axel Schildt, 'Hamburg: Versuch einer zweiten Moderne', in von Beyme, Durth, Gutschow, Nerdinger and Topfstedt (eds.), *Neue Städte aus Ruinen: Deutsche Städtebau der Nachkriegszeit*, (Munich, 1992), p.84.

¹⁰⁸ Schildt, *Grindelhochhäuser*, p.74.

Image removed pending copyright clarification

Figure 6.5 - The Grindelhochhäuser in Hamburg¹⁰⁹

When the Grindelhochhäuser properties came on to the market there was stiff competition for the 2122 flats, even though their rents cost twice as much as in one of the renovated traditional flats in the centre of the city. They offered an unusually luxurious residential experience for the period: generously proportioned, they offered all the mod cons such as light and airy rooms, central heating, fitted kitchens, bathrooms, rubbish chutes, and lifts. Basic shops and services like a petrol station and launderette were close to hand as well as vast, quiet green spaces with play areas for children. Reactions to the Grindelhochhäuser ranged from a description as a ‘soulless machine for living’ to the rather more proud ‘Hamburg Manhattan’. Planners, architects and architectural students for their part were very enthusiastic about the

¹⁰⁹ Informationsfahrt nach Hamburg, 1952, SAK 54206.

development and the Grindelhochhäuser became one of the most visited architectural sites in post-war Germany.

Over the years, the demographic of the Grindelhochhäuser development shifted away from the young families who had initially moved in, partly because many of the original residents remained there for most of their adult lives. The estate lost some of its lustre, despite being granted statutory protection in 1979. But in the late 1990s, the Grindelhochhäuser underwent a renaissance and secured 75 million Euros of investment to revitalise the area. Young families are now beginning to return.¹¹⁰

The Hamburg Project was a major blunder for Britain. The Control Office for Germany and Austria in London displayed an astounding lack of sensitivity to conditions in Germany and a complete disregard for the opinions of the Control Commission officers on the ground. The timescale and scope of the project and the corresponding drain on resources turned public opinion against the British and the hard work of many dedicated officers at building trust was undone by the stubborn insistence from London in pursuit of a development which ultimately proved to be costly and pointless. As a housing project and piece of architectural history, though, the Grindelhochhäuser development was clearly not without merit. The modern development, with its luxurious apartments, was very popular with both residents and architects. Without the decision by the British to make Hamburg their capital, the Grindelhochhäuser would never have been built.

¹¹⁰ Schildt, *Grindelhochhäuser*, p.9.

The Köln-Volkspark Estate

The British learned from Hamburg Project fiasco and when it came to yet another proposed relocation of the British occupation administration in the Zone, they proceeded with considerably more caution and sensitivity. With the impending formation of the Federal Republic of Germany and the decision to make Bonn its provisional capital, it was decided to move headquarters to the Cologne-Bonn area. The size of the occupation forces was, by this stage, much reduced so it did not represent the same burden on the area as had the Hamburg Project on that city. However, the building programme was still extensive and involved the construction of many hundreds of homes of varying sizes for service personnel and for members of the High Commission and their families.¹¹¹

The proposals involved both new construction work in the form of a number of modestly proportioned estates¹¹² and a small amount of requisitioning in the Mariendorf area, a district which was already home to locally engaged British Military Government officers. The requisitioning in Marienburg did cause some problems for the Military Government because three of the men evicted were leading figures of Cologne's middle class and it was feared that the city's economy would suffer if they were forced to move away.¹¹³ These renovated properties in Marienburg were earmarked for the highest ranking officials of the High Commission and would have luxurious fittings and at least five bedrooms.¹¹⁴ There was no question of

¹¹¹ Notes on the meeting with Col Reed about the building plans for the British High Commission 'K' in Marienburg, HASTK, Acc 5/958, f.40.

¹¹² Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, pp.43-4.

¹¹³ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, pp.128-9.

¹¹⁴ Notes on the meeting with Col Reed about the building plans for the British High Commission 'K' in Marienburg, HASTK, Acc 5/958, f.40.

requisitioning all of the necessary properties as had been done in the past. Several sites for new housing estates were mooted, including a controversial proposal to build on green belt land. It was decided that the new estates should be built as near as possible to Marienburg to afford a natural connection between the new estates and the requisitioned houses. The city of Cologne suggested an area between the motorway linking Cologne to Bonn and Aachen, as near to Marienburg and Rodenkirchen as possible:

Dieser Aufbau ist in Rahme des Gesamtplans zu berücksichtigen, um wie gesagt, die britische Kolonie gründen zu können... die endgültige Plan wird auf einer Konferenz in Lübbecke am Donnerstag morgen besprochen und festgelegt werden. Aufgabe der Stadt Köln ist es, sofort einen Lageplan vorzubereiten, wo die Häuser gemäss den Intentionen des Hohen Kommissars Robertson, möglichst in geschlossener Form an die Marienburg angelehnt, gebaut werden sollen. Unter Umständen müsse eine Gemeinschaftsarbeit mit dem Landkreis Köln erfolgen, falls der Kölner Raum selbst nicht ausreicht. Hierbei ist an das Gebiet von Rodenkirchen gedacht....dass Platz für einen grossen Club der Engländer mit Sportanlagen geschaffen wird....Bei der Bearbeitung des Lageplans sei darauf Rücksicht zu nehmen, dass die Häuser auch einen Hausgarten haben müssten.¹¹⁵

A further 180 homes were to be constructed outside of Cologne in the small town of Troisdorf.¹¹⁶

All plans had to be approved by the Military Government Office in charge of the project and ultimately they had the final word, prescribing both the site and the form and size of the settlements.¹¹⁷ The estates were to be provided with all the necessary services: school, church, cinema, shops, sports facilities, even a casino. Germans civilians would, of course, be prohibited from entering the settlement and using the services without prior invitation.¹¹⁸

With one notable exception, Military Government officers tried as far as possible to work with the local authorities over the choice of site: 'What can it matter

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Arnold from Tralau 20 October 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/959, f.23-25.

¹¹⁷ Hochbauamt to Dr Schweyer, 26 July 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/958;

¹¹⁸ Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, p.44.

where the estates are, so long as they are suitable in character. But to the Germans it may matter a very great deal in the long term view. In this instance it is up to us to meet their wishes and avoid magnifying insignificant disadvantages.’¹¹⁹ This spirit of compromise made the Volkspark estate a far more successful collaboration than the Hamburg Project.

In contrast to the Grindelhochhäuser, the plans for the Cologne housing estates were more in the garden suburb mould. The developments were to be mainly low rise and had to be of a differentiated and individual construction. Eleven different basic floor plans for dwellings were designed, corresponding to the eleven military grades. Set in the historic Volkspark, the architects were expected to work with the existing landscape and mature trees. The highest grade homes were to be located in the centre of the development. Roads were to gently wind through the development of mainly low rise detached houses or row houses.¹²⁰

The architects kept the design of the homes simple but the British demanded the inclusion of elements of vernacular British housing; each home had to have its own fireplace, a wash basin in every bedroom, sash windows, chimneys and garden, enclosed by a little hedge or fence.¹²¹ These details, which seemed excessive to the German architects engaged on the project, were precisely the elements which were supposed to make the British officer and his family feel at home. An important feature of the planning was that it should be possible to convert the higher grade houses into smaller units when the time came for them to be handed over to the Germans.

¹¹⁹ To Deputy Regional Commissioner, 28 August 1949, FO1013/2429

¹²⁰ The one 7-storey block in the development was designed by Wilhelm Riphahn, the detached homes by Loch Meyer, the 3-storey terraces by Hermkes and Ladders.

¹²¹ Fütterer to Steinhof, 14 November 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/959, f.28-30.

Depending on the size and floor plan, they would be convertible into 2 or 3 homes with a floor area of between 60 and 100 square metres.¹²²



Figure 6.6 – A senior officers dwelling in the Volkspark development, now subdivided into several homes as originally intended.

Brigadier Montague and Mr Young of Land Manpower Department in Düsseldorf were responsible for supplying the German architects and builders with precise specifications for the project. Their main concerns appear to have been that there should be a generous plot for each home allowing for gardens, garages and hedges, that the homes should be clearly differentiated from one another and that the site should be unspoilt by noise from road traffic or trains. The upper grade homes had to be detached with the lower grade housing as either semi-detached or terrace houses up to a maximum of four units in a row. They compromised with the Germans' preferred option of blocks of flats for a small number of residences in the Volkspark for lower grade, unmarried officers but specified that these must be set in a green open space and

¹²² Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, p.44.

have a garage: 'Diese Geschosswohnungsbauten sollen möglichst in grosse Grundstücksflächen eingeplant werden, damit der Eindruck einer parkartigen Bebauung entsteht. Auf jeden Fall sind lange Hauszeilen in gleichformiger Gestaltung unerwünscht.'¹²³

The project was to be financed not by the city, but through the occupation budget of the Federal Republic at the order of the British High Commission.¹²⁴ This was a boon for the city because they would be able to benefit from major capital investment for which they had not had to pay. Indeed, the city maximised this investment by refusing pressure from Minister Steinhof to relinquish previously developed sites and by proposing virgin sites, thereby necessitating investment in underground utilities and roads.¹²⁵ The city even managed to extend the development in Cologne by securing some of the houses intended for Troisdorf. The *Ministerpräsident* was persuaded to intercede with the Military Government:

Diese Situation veranlasst mich zu der Bitte, ihren Einfluss dahin geltend zu machen, dass die noch nicht in Angriff genommen 100 Wohnungen für Offiziere in Köln errichtet werden, umsomehr als nach Auffassung aller Sachverständigen diese Wohnungen wegen ihrer Grösse für die Industriestadt Troisdorf später nur ein Belastung darstellen, während sie in Köln bei den riesigen Wohnungsbedarf eine wertvolle Bereicherung des Bestandes an verfügbaren Wohnraum bedeuten würde, selbst wenn mit ihrem Freiwerden erst in späterer Zeit zu rechnen ist.¹²⁶

The proposal was attractive to the *Ministerpräsident* because the consolidation of projects would reduce the cost per unit:

Für die Stadt Köln hätte dieses Projekt den besonderen Vorteil, dass sich hier in städtebaulich denkbar günstiger Lage ein neuer Stadtteil entwickeln könnte, der sich in der Art seiner Bebauung und in dem Standard seiner Wohnungen organisch an den Stadtteil Marienburg

¹²³ Fütterer to Steinhof, 14 November 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/959, f.28-30.

¹²⁴ Notes on the meeting with Col Reed about the building plans for the British High Commission 'K' in Marienburg, HASTK, Acc 5/958, f.40.

¹²⁵ Vermerk über die Besprechung am Mittwoch, dem 12.10.1949 im Landtagsgebäude Düsseldorf, HASTK, Acc 5/959, f.16.

¹²⁶ Arnold from Tralau, 20 October 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/959, ff.23-5.

anschiessen würde. Bei der in Köln herrschenden ausserordentlichen Wohnungsnot würde dies im Zeitpunkt des Freiwerdens eine nicht unerhebliche Entlastung bedeuten.¹²⁷



Figure 6.7 – Aerial photograph of the Volkspark estate under construction¹²⁸

The Volkspark development received a largely enthusiastic reception in the architectural press, in particular for the contrast it offered to other German new construction projects:

Ein unbefangener Beobachter könnte bei einer Schau über deutsche Nachkriegsplanungen von Wohnhausgruppierungen leicht den Eindruck gewinnen, dass diese Planungen weitgehend gemeinsame Züge und, im Gegensatz zu der hier gezeigten Siedlung, stärkere Gebundenheit an feste, oft schablonenhaft wiederholte Formen aufwiesen. Es gibt aber nur wenige ausgeführt Beispiele, die dem entsprechen, was man eigentlich für richtig halt und was man im Ausland seit Jahre verwirklicht sieht.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Arnold from Tralau, 20 October 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/959, ff.23-5.

¹²⁸ Produced with the assistance of Luftbildkarte, 1951 in Amt für Liegenschaften, Vermessung und Kataster, *Kölner Stadtkarten und Luftbilder* (2004), CDROM.

¹²⁹ Karl Wimmenauer, 'Siedlung Im Kölner Volkspark', *Die Neue Stadt*, 6, no.3, March 1952, p.101.

The mixed, differentiated nature of the development had, of course, arisen from the fact that it was an occupation estate in which housing for different grades of officers was required. German architects were also impressed by the generosity of the development which allowed space both internally and externally:

Wir freuen uns, dass gediegen gebaut werden kann und auch einmal nicht mit Quadratmetern gespart werden muss. Dass es so etwas überhaupt noch gibt, hat man in Deutschland schon fast vergessen. Wir freuen uns, dass stille Wiesengründe mit herrlichem Baumbestand behutsam erschlossen werden, dass in die Landschaft geplant werden kann, wie es unsere Vorstellung entspricht, weiträumig, großzügig und in gemischter Bauweise.¹³⁰

The two criticisms were concerning the use of the concrete to surface the roads which was felt to unnecessarily sharpen their otherwise soft, fluid shape and the design and positioning of the school at the centre of the development:

Die Siedlung Volkspark hat in ihrem Talgrund die Schule als Ortsmittelpunkt. Ihre Architektur ruft peinliche Reminiszenzen an vergangene Herrlichkeit wach. Ist es doch noch keine zehn Jahre her ... Die neue anglikanische Kirche mit Pfarrerhaus aber liegt ausserhalb der Siedlung. Diese hätte uns in ihrer Haltung als Dominante eher behagt.¹³¹

Singled out for particular praise was the NAAFI shop, which the author thought displayed a desirable humility:

Nun ein Wort zu dem Naafishop: Mitten im Park steht das flache Gebäude unter Bäumen. Es scheint eine Freude zu sein, dort einzukaufen. Der Kaufladen gefällt uns, er ist Ausdruck einer neuen Menschlichkeit, die Behagen hervorruft. Ein deutscher Architekt hat diesen Laden gebaut – das freut uns besonders. Es gibt bei uns die Architekten, die sie spüren und in sich haben – diese sympathische Art von Menschlichkeit, die auch ein Shop, einen Kaufladen erfassen kann. Das ist längst bekannt, und wir wissen es, dass es auch bei uns viele Architekten gibt, die es können.¹³²

The Volkspark development was the largest construction project in the city of Cologne at the time and is unique as an example of a whole villa suburb planned and constructed at the end of the 1940s.¹³³ The development was much emulated in other

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.103

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., p.102.

¹³³ Heinen, *Stadtspuren*, pp.46-53.

social housing projects in Cologne and elsewhere.¹³⁴ The occupation estates are an enduring and important document of part of Germany's postwar history. While many German civilians were still housed in bunkers and emergency dwellings, luxurious houses were being erected to cater for the needs of the occupation authorities. They continue to define the district in which they are situated and are significant as the first postwar example of a modern garden suburb form.¹³⁵

Planning new homes: Social housing in Cologne and Kiel

During the period of British control of housing provision, repairs to lightly and moderately damaged properties took the lion's share of resources earmarked for civilian housing. The system they instituted had allowed many houses to be quickly reinstated but once the supply of lightly and moderately damaged houses had been repaired, only the most severely damaged and totally destroyed remained. For many cities the reinstatement of the most damaged properties would have been both uneconomic and undesirable from a planning perspective.

The widespread destruction, particularly of inner-city and working class districts, acted as a catalyst for the depopulation and decongestion of cities, a trend which planners viewed desirable and which they sought to encourage. In many European cities, the uncontrolled growth of the nineteenth century industrial town had led to extensive slums in central urban areas. Speculation and poor building regulation had resulted in dense, dark, unhygienic blocks into which the urban poor crowded. In Berlin, Hamburg and Cologne, this had taken the form of Mietskaserne, in Edinburgh

¹³⁴ Ibid., p.43.

¹³⁵ Ibid., pp.43-5.

of tenements, in London and Birmingham of back-to-back houses. The destruction of such housing stock offered an opportunity to change the nature and character of residential districts within a city by lowering densities and creating new, modern housing estates.

A less frequently articulated but no less important factor was the desire to avoid the tragedy which befell cities like Hamburg during the air raids of 1943, when fire had swept easily through the densely built up streets, leaving a trail of death and destruction in its wake. Spaces between and around buildings would reduce the likelihood of such calamities in the event of any future war.

By 1947, all cities were developing a broad town planning scheme which would guide reconstruction. Although the housing crisis probably represented the greatest challenge for German cities, the debate over housing form, location and construction methods was relatively muted in comparison to more controversial aspects of new city plans such as traffic arteries and the destruction or retention of historic plot lines. The necessity of quantifying housing damage and concentrating on the logistics of repairs and distribution to provide shelter for the maximum number of people had allowed housing to be viewed in value-neutral terms. This, coupled with the international planning community's embracement of the concept of the neighbourhood unit, allowed existing ideas to be purged of their ideological content and combined with insights from other countries facing similar difficulties.

It is unsurprising that the German concepts for housing demonstrate a high degree of uniformity with the plans for other European cities. The rally cry from the first editions of the main German architectural and planning periodicals was for 'Luft,

Licht, Grünland und Gärten'.¹³⁶ The bedrock of European housing provision would be healthy, new neighbourhoods constructed in suburban areas, in the model of garden settlements, surrounded by green spaces and a depopulation of inner-city areas would inevitably follow:

Niemand wird bestreiten können, dass in Zukunft der Stadtkern (City) immer weniger als Wohnviertel in Frage kommt, selbst wenn gerade jetzt unter dem Druck der ersten Not nach dem Zurückströmen der Ausgewanderten jeder das Bestreben hat, seinen Laden, seine Werkstatt oder sein Büro mit einer kleinen Wohnung zu versehen.¹³⁷

Where inner-city housing was reconstructed, it would be done in the spirit of *Auflockerung*, so that the interiors of blocks would be freed from buildings to allow the maximum light and air into people's homes. These principles were echoed in Chief Planner Herbert Jensen's proposals for the residential areas in the northern districts of Kiel:

Soweit die in den nördlichen Stadtteilen Wohngebiete, den heutigen Anforderungen nicht mehr genügen, ist selbstverständlich eine Umgestaltung vorgesehen. Wenn man auch aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen geneigt ist, an dem Verlauf der bestehenden Wohnstrassen durchweg festzuhalten, so kann die Bebauung den heutigen Ansprüchen an die Wohndichte, d.h. also an Lichteinfall, Gebäudeabstand, Gebäudehöhe und Grundstücküberbauung angepasst werden. Durch Einbettung in Grünanlagen und gute, ungezwungene Gruppierung der Bauten lassen sich auch bei typisierter Herstellung der Häuser vorteilhafte und lebendig wirkende Gestaltungen erzielen, wie sie dem Wohnbedürfniss und dem Lebensgefühl unserer Zeit entsprechen.¹³⁸

A comparison of the 1939 plan for the *Altstadt* with the plan for 1951 indicates that in 1939, this area of the city had a greater number of functions, more dwelling units and a more densely packed structure. The 1951 plan shows the effect of *Auflockerung* on the street plan and the movement of purely residential areas out of the town centre.¹³⁹

Rudolf Schwarz placed the family and home at the centre of his planning for

¹³⁶ Flagge, *Geschichte des Wohnens*, p.43.

¹³⁷ Wiederaufbau städtischer Innenblöcke, *Neue Bauwelt*, Heft 5, 1946, p.8.

¹³⁸ *Kiel im Aufbau Der Generalbebauungsplan als Grundlage für eine städtebauliche Neuordnung der Stadt.*

¹³⁹ Strukturplanung, SAK, 505/1982.

Cologne. The design of residential areas was supposed to foster harmony between people and their environment:

Die Familie ist die Kernzelle des Volkes und wie das Volk, muss auch sie engverbunden sein im weiteren Sinne mit der Landschaft und der Stadt, im engeren Sinne mit dem Hause und seiner Umgebung. Es wird nicht jeder siedeln wollen und könne, aber viele sind geeignet, einen Garten zu bestellen, und wenn es nu rein kleines Stückchen Erde ist. Für die, die andere Interesse haben, mag auch das Massenmietshaus und auch das Hochhaus die geeignete Wohnform sein.¹⁴⁰

Schwarz was highly critical of modern developments which sought to pile people into multi-storey buildings: 'Es gibt sehr modern tuende Architekten, die ihre Stadt gern zu einer vollendeten Maschine durchformen möchten, wozu dann wohl gehört, das seine grosse Zahl von Wohnungen zu Termitenhaufen zusammengefasst werden, die aus vielen Stockwerken getürmt sind, und in denen man den Familien fast alles genommen hat, was je ihren Inhalt ausmachen konnte.'¹⁴¹ His own view was that people in both inner-city and suburban areas should have access to land which they could cultivate if they wished.¹⁴² Every family deserved a simple home, protected from the elements, with its own cooking facilities and sufficient sleeping space but in this new period of austerity, German families would have to accept smaller homes than in the past.¹⁴³ Inner city housing would take the form of 3 to 6 storey blocks, in the suburbs of 2 storey row houses.¹⁴⁴ Like Kiel, Cologne also pursued a policy of lowering population densities in the city although he did still believe that there was a place in the centre for residential areas.¹⁴⁵

Das eigene Haus der Familie müsste in der Innenstadt wieder zu Ehren kommen. Natürlich nicht als freistehende Villa im grossen Park, sondern in der Form, wie unsere Eltern es hatten:

¹⁴⁰ Die Wohnung, HASTK, Best 953/13.

¹⁴¹ Schwarz quoted in Durth, *Deutsche Architekten*, p.358.

¹⁴² Rudolf Stegers, 'Rudolf Schwarz, the Hochstadt and the Reconstruction of Cologne', in Iain Boyd Whyte (ed.), *Modernism and the Spirit of the City*, p.246.

¹⁴³ Kurt Blaum, 'Die Drei Stufen', *Die neue Stadt*, Heft 1, October 1947, p.7.

¹⁴⁴ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.147.

¹⁴⁵ Neugestaltung Kölns, HASTK, Acc 2/366, f.210.

als drei-stockiges Reihenhaushaus mit einer kleinen Terrasse nach dem rückwärtigen Gärtchen hin. Es gibt keine echten Einwände dagegen, die Riesenstadt London, die Städte Hollands sind so gebaut und man fühlt sich darin wohl und zufrieden.¹⁴⁶

Lowering population densities and affording space for gardens would inevitably entail a further expansion of the city's boundaries and increased suburbanisation.¹⁴⁷

A general reduction in housing size was a common feature of postwar housing, borne of the limited resources to make good the shortfall. Although strict minimum standards were adhered to, planners lowered the expectations of their citizens by frequently referring to the necessity of reflecting the present material conditions in the scale and form of the newly constructed homes: 'Der Wohnungsbau der Zukunft in Kiel wird keine Paläste und Villen, keine Wohnungen mit grossen Salons sich zum Ziel setzen, sondern er soll dem produktiv und schöpferisch schaffenden Volk gesunden und schönen Wohnraum zu tragbaren Mieten sichern.'¹⁴⁸

The placement and layout of residential estates was often described in a city's published plans, such as *Das neue Köln: Ein Vorentwurf*, which outlined Schwarz's proposals for Cologne.¹⁴⁹ Schwarz envisaged the creation of a new *Stadtlandschaft*; an interesting concept in German pre-war geography. The city would be developed in harmony with the River Rhine and as a double city, with two cores: the historic Altstadt to the south which would retain its functions as a centre of culture, learning and administration, and, to the north, a separate garden city for 300,000 people. This second core would be located near the city's industrial district.¹⁵⁰ Schwarz hoped that in this way, workers would be provided with single family homes in green spaces, close

¹⁴⁶ *Das neue Köln*, p.27.

¹⁴⁷ Flagge, *Geschichte des Wohnens*, pp.42-3; *Das neue Köln*, p.28.

¹⁴⁸ Stadtrat Gustav Schatz quoted in 'Dem Kieler Wohnungsneubau eine Gasse!', *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, 14 October 1948.

¹⁴⁹ Stegers, 'Rudolf Schwarz', p.246.

¹⁵⁰ *Das neue Köln: Ein Vorentwurf*, p.27.

to their place of work so as to avoid long commutes across the city: 'Eine grosse Umsiedlung des Volkes ist einzuleiten mit dem allgemein Wunschziel, dass die Menschen in der Nähe ihre Arbeitsstelle auch wohnen.'¹⁵¹ He hoped that this second core would develop as a real urban centre. Traditional residential areas would, to some extent, still exist in and around the Altstadt, but he appears to have had in mind mainly middle class bourgoise residents, who worked in the Altstadt and were more likely to contribute to the cultural life of the city:

Sonst aber gehört der Arbeiter draussen vor der Stadt in die Siedlung, wo er seinen Garten betsellen, seine Kinder grossziehen und ein freier Mann sein kann, und für den kleinen Angestellten gilt das gleiche. In der Stadt sollten vorab die Menschen wohnen, die dort einen eignen Betrieb haben, Kaufleute und Handwerker. Ihre Arbeitszeit ist meistens sehr lang und dehnt sich über den Geschäftsschluss aus und so bedeutet die wohnend beim Geschäft für sie sehr viel, dann gewisse Schicht von Menschen, die stark im kulturellen Leben der Stadt stehen und es reizend finden, mitten darin zu leben besonders Studenten, hohe Beamte, geistig Schaffende, Juristen, Architekten, und in den Dächern die Maler.¹⁵²

He imagined the parishes of the old city quarters, dominated once more by their churches, retaining their narrow streets and traditional character.

Although they shared some similarities, Schwarz's ideas for Cologne were more conservative than Herbert Jensen's plans for the new Kiel, which focussed on opening up the densely built central area, segregating the various functions of the city and the creation of new working-class residential garden suburbs along strictly modern principles.¹⁵³ A competition was held in Kiel in 1946 to solicit ideas for a housing development north of the city centre, *Neubebauung der weitgehend zerstörten Wohngebiete nördlich der inneren Stadt*.¹⁵⁴ Proposals came from many well-known

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.25.

¹⁵² Ibid., 27.

¹⁵³ Herbert Jensen, 'Stadtplanung und Bodenpolitik der Stadt Kiel seit 1945', *Neue Bauwelt* 7 (1952), pp.96-97.

¹⁵⁴ Herbert Boehm, 'Kiels Innere Neugestaltung – eine kritische Betrachtung des Wettbewerbsergebnisses "Städtebauliche Gestaltung der Kieler Innenstadt"', *Die neue Stadt*, 2, no. 7, July 1948, p294.

planners such as Konstanty Gutschow and Hans Bernard Reichow, and represented the predominant ideas for new housing design in postwar Germany: ‘Auflockerung – Luft – Helligkeit war ihre Devise. Im Rahmen eines Neubauplanes wurden 35 Einzelgrundstücke zusammengelegt und der so gewonnene Komplex zu einem neuen Wohnviertel, das modernsten wohnkulturellen Ansprüchen genügt.’¹⁵⁵ Planning competitions such as these were common in postwar Germany for everything from individual civic projects to designs for whole cities. The designs of the prize winners were usually incorporated in some form although rarely in their entirety or without some adaptation or amalgamation by the city planning department. In the case of the development plans for Holtenauer Strasse, successive drafts after the planning competition seem to have drawn upon new influences, most obviously the designs for the Grindelhochhäuser and the model housing promoted at the Constructa exhibition. The draft from 1950 departs from the earlier principles of block construction and instead favours row houses, where the buildings are placed at right angles to the street in wide green spaces to reduce traffic noise.¹⁵⁶

As in Britain, a consensus was reached on the question of who should build the much needed new homes. Military Government had repeatedly pushed local authorities to take up the mantle of housing provision and strongly encouraged social housing projects and the formation of legislation which would advance this development.¹⁵⁷ Although there was opposition to public intervention in housing, even the more

¹⁵⁵ *Kiel im Wiederaufbau*, p.12.

¹⁵⁶ Durth and Gutschow, *Träume in Trümmern*, p.366.

¹⁵⁷ Explanatory notes on the Fundamental Principles relating to Housing and Town and Country Planning, [April 1948], FO 1051/771, 1; Military Governor’s Conference with Regional Commissioners 23rd Meeting Social Housing Finance, [March 1949], FO 1051/863, 88.

conservative political parties such as the CDU eventually accepted the necessity of the Government leading the way for a short period until the economy recovered.¹⁵⁸

In Kiel, housing was not seen as something which could or should be left to the private developer or individual but rather must be part of an integrated plan for the city: 'Er fügte jedoch hinzu, dass der Wohnungsbau nicht auf die Initiative der einzelnen verzichten könne. Sie müsste nur in Bahnen gelenkt werden die der Allgemeinheit dienlich seien.'¹⁵⁹ But while most people agreed with the principle of planning, not everyone felt that the state or municipality should get involved in building and owning public housing. When a public housing project was approved in 1948, Preuss of the CDU objected to the fact that: 'das Wohnungsbauprogramm 1948 der Stadt Kiel vernachlässigt also in gröblichster Weise seine Hilfe dem Privaten Haus- und Grundeigentümer, der mit ansehen muss, wie durch den Krieg beschädigtes Eigentum weiter verfällt'¹⁶⁰ and protested at the project's 'eindeutige Bevorzugung der öffentlichen Hand und der gemeinnützige Wohnungsbaugesellschaften'.

The overwhelming need for such projects pushed aside political objections. Throughout the 1950s, new housing estates were built in the area surrounding the most important industrial districts: in Cologne these were on the right bank of the Rhine in Mülheim and Kalk and on the left bank in Nippes and Niehl. Like Kiel's Holtenauer Strasse development, Cologne also favoured the new form of construction with housing orientated away from the street and set in green spaces. A classic example of this is the Siedlung Vingst III which contained around 1000 homes. Cologne's social housing developments were very similar to the occupation estate in form. They

¹⁵⁸ Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.132.

¹⁵⁹ 'Das Wohnungsbau-Programm für 1948', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 9 March 1948.

¹⁶⁰ 'Die Bedenken gegen das Kieler Bauprogramm 1948', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 8 June 1948.

consisted of winding streets, a mixture of housing types and containing an accent Hochhaus. Communal facilities such as schools, shops and play areas were provided for the inhabitants.

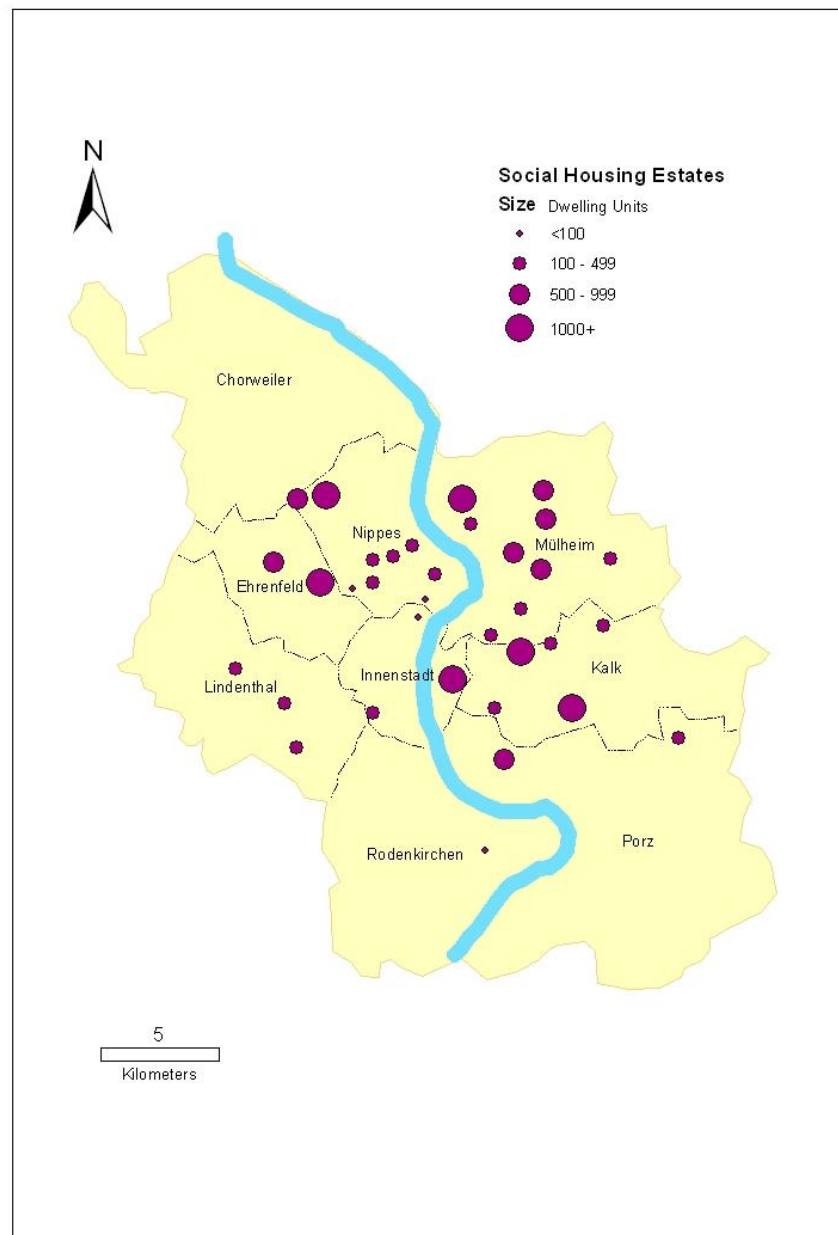


Figure 6.8 – Plan showing distribution and relative size of new social housing developments in Cologne during the 1950s.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Constructed using data contained in Werner Heinen and Anne-Maire Pfeffer, *Stadtspuren 10II Köln: Siedlungen 1938-88* (Köln, 1988).

The phased repair plan implemented by the British Military Government did succeed in increasing the available housing stock for civilians of the British Zone but the experience varied according to the city and the district in which one lived. Cologne had fewer lightly damaged properties than Kiel and therefore took much longer to make good the repairs. Working-class districts were disproportionately affected by the bombing raids and therefore were the least likely areas to be repaired. However, they were also the most likely to see new construction projects from the late 1940s and through to the mid-1950s.

Housing for the occupation authorities was a major burden for cities as requisitioning reduced the number of homes available for local families. There were stark differences in the living conditions of civilians and the occupiers with whom they shared their cities. The first new large-scale residential projects were for the occupiers. These were a mixed blessing. In the case of the Hamburg Project, resources were directed away from civilian housing in the rest of the zone and, although the Grindelhochhäuser have had a largely positive legacy, at the time they were a serious financial impediment to other developments in the city and were never actually used by the occupation forces. On the other hand, other occupation estates like the Volkspark in Cologne were advantageous for the city, which obtained major capital investment from the Federal Government and sought to maximise this where possible.

When new residential areas were planned for German cities, they usually followed a similar pattern of development. Both Cologne and Kiel saw a reduction of population density in the urban centre and a concentration of new residential estates in suburban areas. In each case low-rise row houses or separate dwellings in the garden

suburb mould were the predominant models. North German cities tended to emphasise public subsidies and social housing more than those in the south. Diefendorf has argued that social housing was more prevalent in the northern cities because of the concentration of wartime planners in this area.¹⁶² But the continued emphasis placed on social housing by the British Military Government and in particular its inclusion in the fundamental principles to local authorities is as likely to have influenced their actions.

Despite the strong socialist overtones of this consensus, housing could also be discussed in technical terms and the magnitude of the crisis helped to overcome many of the political divisions which might otherwise have existed. The Federal Housing Law removed the final impediments which had been holding back new housing construction projects with the result that between 1949 and 1955, 450,000 dwellings were built per year. The housing crisis had been overcome by 1960. Over half of all homes constructed during this period were social housing.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Diefendorf, *Wake of War*, p.135.

¹⁶³ Adelheid von Saldern, *Häuserleben – Zur Geschichte städtische Arbeiterwohnens vom Kaiserreich bis heute* (1995), p.265.

Chapter Seven

Remaking Cities

The previous chapter demonstrated the principal elements of the reconstruction plans for Cologne and Kiel. Reconstruction planning was seen as an opportunity to engage in more comprehensive urban renewal to improve conditions for the inhabitants of the city. Street layouts were consciously changed to encourage traffic to flow unimpeded around and through the city, population densities were lowered and more green spaces provided to make residential areas more healthy places in which to live. However, cities were not blank canvases on which an inspired planner could simply create a new design. The urban fabric, grown up over centuries, had both reflected and shaped the city's character and its identity. Clearly, it was desirable to regain some the unique features of a city's historic building stock, such as its medieval churches or important civic buildings. In any case, Germany was too poor to simply sweep away all of the surviving fabric of their cities. So desires for modernisation were balanced with the retention of some of the existing buildings and street layouts, partly out of economic necessity but also because strong attachments to the form of the old city remained.

The complex process of remaking cities also involved an element of competition: for resources, for population, for trade and commerce. Those cities able to provide office and industrial space quickly would be more likely to attract businesses, manpower and money and therefore create tax revenue for further improvements and bring capital into the city. Reconstruction plans were invariably founded on an evaluation of the city's future prospects and with a view to securing a sound economic base which would sustain growth.

Those cities which had enjoyed a prominent position in the National Socialist state, and in particular, those most responsible for underpinning the Nazi war machinery, had an anxious wait while the Allies determined which factories would be dismantled and which industries would cease to be a feature of the German economy. For cities like Kiel and Essen, whose industries *were* the city, the Allied level of industry plans and the British occupation authority's determination to eliminate the war potential threatened their very existence.

Although all cities were affected by the occupier's policies towards German industry to some extent, those whose fate hinged on this were in the minority. But the recovery of other cities could be affected in subtle and unexpected ways. Some cities experienced a shift in the power they enjoyed within their locality because of a change in status bestowed by the British occupiers. For Schleswig and Cologne, for example, the loss of their provincial capital status to Kiel and Düsseldorf respectively, brought with it a corresponding reduction in their local importance. Similarly, as indicated in Chapter 6, Military Government's decisions to shift their headquarters around the Zone engendered burdens for some cities and benefits for others.

This chapter investigates the reorientation of Cologne and Kiel after the war and the reconstruction plans which were founded on these newly constructed or revived urban identities. Finally, it explores the way in which both cities used civic events to reinforce their identity, and construct a narrative of their past in order to engage in place promotion.

Occupation and industry: The future of Kiel

Kiel had played a central role in the Nazi war machinery. The *Germania Werft*, the *Deutschen Werke*, the *Arsenal* and the *Howaldts Werke*, straggled along the east bank of the Kiel fjord, churned out submarines, warships, torpedos, navigational equipment, and produced some of the chemicals which had underpinned the war effort. When the British occupied the city, a Target Force took possession of the factories, docks and the Kiel Canal.

The steadfast purpose of the British Government was to ensure that the city could never again threaten the peace of the world with the fruits of its production. The war potential of the city was to be systematically eliminated. While the *Deutschen Werke*, the *Germania Werft*, the *Marine Arsenal* and so on still existed, Kiel would remain a threat to world peace:

Should Germany ever again be in a position, and wish, to prepare for war, she would undoubtedly re-establish a naval base here. The difficulty of the task and the length required to do so will depend very largely on the shipping and shipbuilding facilities, deep water berths, docks, ships etc, and the industrial potential which is allowed to remain in the area.¹

The proposal to demolish Kiel's wharves and deep water berths, its remaining industrial equipment, its factories and warehouses and the transport lines which served them would destroy its economic base, leave thousands of skilled workers without unemployment and the whole city facing an uncertain future. Local German politicians began to agitate for a decision from Military Government about what future use could be made of the city. Kiel's survival as an urban centre depended on its ability to find a new foundation for its economy and work for its people.

¹ Minutes of the First Meeting of the Kiel Reconstruction Committee, 17 June 1946, FO 1006/321.

In June 1946, the British Military Government set up a committee, called the Future of Kiel Committee, to examine this problem and submit recommendations for the economic future of the city. The committee was made up of fifteen Military Government officers from various divisions including: the locally employed officers of *Stadtkreis* Kiel, officers representing the Disarmament Branch, the Administration and Local Government Branch, the Trade and Industry, Manpower and Economic Divisions.

The committee minutes succinctly articulate the problem that they faced: 'Before any detailed reconstruction plan could be prepared it would be necessary to know what was the plan for the neutralisation of Kiel so as to remove all war potential.' How could Allied security aims and industrial restrictions be reconciled with the need to make the best use of Kiel's natural resources? The committee were further hampered by the fact that the Allied neutralisation plans were far from ready. There were also the enormous practical difficulties involved in surveying and evaluating the war potential of every industry in the British Zone, a process which was unlikely to be completed any time soon.

The committee appreciated that the city could not wait for the neutralisation plans and it was in their own interest to give the municipal government some direction about what kinds of industry would be acceptable to them. The economic revival of the city could then be started without delay. In any case, a successful plan for the future of Kiel might even influence the neutralisation plan by demonstrating that certain buildings could be usefully employed for peacetime purposes rather than demolishing them.

Various potential industries were discussed and the committee arrived at a set of recommendations: 1) the seat of the provincial government, 2) the seat of a large provincial university, 3) the home port of a fishing fleet with ancillary industries for fish processing, 4) the development of a large hospital, 5) a minor port with sufficient ocean-going berths in the vicinity of *Scheerhafen* and the facilities retained to make small repairs to shipping, 6) a small dockyard for limited repair of ships using the Kiel Canal and the maintenance of the fishing fleet, 7) some light industrial activity, 8) specified electrical industries with no war potential, 9) Kiel to be allowed to develop as a tourist centre. The city would be prohibited from keeping large underground oil storage tanks and from developing a ship building industry or in fact any heavy industries. The lower basin of the harbour would be allowed to silt up naturally to prevent its future use.²

The committee considered every major factory and industrial concern in turn and debated its future. They were not always of one mind about whether a particular factory should be allowed to continue in production. For example, Hagenuk, which had made specialist instruments and electrical equipment, was one of the Navy's priorities for dismantling. The Trade and Industry Division, on the other hand, wished to keep it to meet the needs of the telecommunications industry.

The municipal authorities tabled their own set of suggestions, which naturally included rather more extensive plans for industry than the British proposals. In the main, the German proposals consisted of the conversion of war industries into peaceful uses. Like the British plans these included the establishment of a harbour for a fishing fleet with storage and fish processing factories but also some other rather shrewd

² Ibid.

suggestions for industries which presumably they thought might have been attractive to the British, such as the berthing and storage space for pit props for shipping to England and a grain processing factory and various industries producing building materials. All of these proposals necessitated using existing buildings and some of the deep water berths and the retention of the railway running north-south through the *Germania Werft*. The German proposals were largely rejected because they were unacceptable to the dismantling team:

The Senior Economic Controller considered that it was highly undesirable to allow any deep water berthing or any of the quays to remain in the existing shipbuilding yards and suggested that all such berthing and quays should be demolished. Furthermore, that no industries should be allowed on these sites and that the areas should be used solely for housing...the deep water berths constituted a definite menace as even though the buildings gantries were demolished, provided the deep water berthing existed, they could easily be re-erected. It was pointed out that this decision, if taken, would mean that the German plan for reconstruction would have to be completely revised and that widespread demolition would cause much dissatisfaction among the Germans. The Chairman of the Regional Disarmament Working Party considered it essential that the neutralisation must be complete and therefore agreed with the banning of all industries on the sites of the *Germania Werk* and *Deutsche Werke* and the destruction of deep water berthing.³

The committee thus agreed that all deep water berthing and quays at the *Arsenal*, *Deutsche Werke* and *Germania Werk* would be destroyed and that no industries on the sites of these establishments would be allowed in future. Instead, the Germans would be told that they should build houses on these sites; an east bank full of residential buildings would be much more difficult to reconvert to heavy industrial uses.

Local politicians were horrified by the suggestions made by the British Military Government for the future of city's industrial east bank. Andreas Gayk, Kiel's Mayor, referred to the proposals as a bad joke.⁴ His response to the idea that only houses should be built on the area of land between the harbour and *Werftstrasse* perhaps grasped the subconscious intentions of the British Government: 'Ein wirkungsvolleres

³ Ibid.

⁴ 'Kiel im Aufbau', *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, 17 September 1947.

Rezept, aus Kiel wieder ein Fischerdorf zu machen, wäre tatsächlich schwer auszuendenken.’⁵

The recommendations of the Future of Kiel committee were partially followed up. The former Kolbe Werft was released by the British in July 1947 to be used for the construction of a new fishing district with factories for storage and processing. To kick-start its development, the British Military Government made 100 cutters available to the industry.⁶ Clearance work began on the site the very next day and by the spring of the following year the new fish market was thriving: ‘wo aus einem Trummerhaufen mit verhältnissmässig wenigen Mitteln eine Anlage entstanden ist, die schon jetzt einige Tausend Menschen beschäftigt und die durchaus die Aussicht hat, in insgesamt 5000 Menschen nach ihrer Fertigstellung Beschäftigung zu bieten.’⁷ By 1960, the flourishing fish market had become the fourth largest in West Germany.

Barracks in Wik were handed over for use by the Christian Albrecht University and another former military site was released for Zeiss-Ikon. In Kiel-Eichhof sites were turned over to the textile industry and various Naval installations around the fjord were handed over to allow small and medium sized firms to start their businesses.⁸ Hagenuk was saved and began producing exclusively civil wares such as radios, cinematic equipment, electrical goods. This support for particular types of industry was accompanied by the ruthless elimination of others.

Dismantling hit industrial cities like Kiel hard. When the full extent of the plans for the industrial dismantling of the east bank were made public in October 1948, the

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Eine Stadt kämpft um ihre Zukunft, 1946, SAK, 58368.

⁷ Wiederaufbau des Kieler Hafens, 14 December 1949, SAK 41748; ‘Septemberwoche “Kiel im Aufbau” geplant’, *Kieler Nachrichten*, 16 August 1947, p.3.

⁸ Etatrede 1948, SAK, 58368.

city was distraught to find that, of the 264 factory buildings in the city, 152 would be destroyed. Gayk desperately tried to persuade the Military Government to reconsider their decision:

Alle verantwortlichen Stellen der Stadt Kiel sind sich eins mit den Bestrebungen der Militärregierung, dass es sich hierbei nur um eine Industrie handeln kann, die ihrer Natur nach keinerlei Verwandtschaft mit den bisherigen Rüstungsbetrieben hat. Wir haben auch Verständnis dafür, das Anlagen, die dem Neuaufbau einer Rüstungsindustrie unmittelbar zu dienen geeignet sind, verschwinden müssen, aber es ist nicht einzusehen, warum Kaianlagen, leere Gebäude oder leichte Verladekräne ausgerechnet in Kiel eine Gefahr für die Weltsicherheit darstellen sollen.⁹

In Gayk's opinion dismantling was in direct opposition to the positive policy embodied in the Marshall Plan. The destruction would lead to mass unemployment and threaten the democratic process. If the city was not allowed to develop its economy, then the political objectives of Military Government would surely fail: 'Nur wenn die Stadt Kiel wieder zu einem kulturellen und wirtschaftlichen Ausstrahlungsraum entwickelt wird, kann es die kommenden politischen Aufgaben, die einer Stadt in einer solchen Lage gestellt werden, erfolgreich ausführen. Der wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Neuaufbau ist daher im besonderen Masse eine politische Aufgabe, die von ganz Deutschland wahrgenommen werden muss.'¹⁰

Seven important industrial firms in Kiel were partially or completely demolished including Elac (metrological equipment production), Walter-Werke (U-Boot motors), and Anschütz (gyroscopic compasses). The *Germania Werft* and the *Deutschen Werke* were closed and eventually destroyed in 1949.¹¹

⁹ Eine Stadt kämpft um ihre Zukunft, 1946, SAK, 58368.

¹⁰ Wirtschaftliche Zukunft der Stadt Kiel, November 1946, SAK 54208.

¹¹ Wiederaufbau des Kieler Hafens, 14 December 1949, SAK 41748.

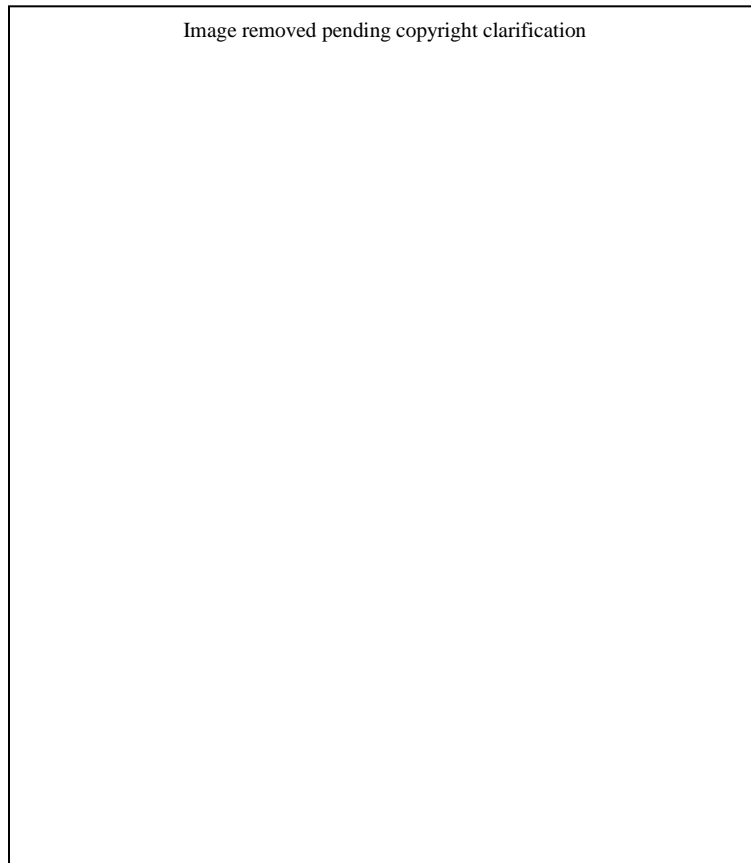


Figure 7.1 – Demolition of the Germania Werft on the east bank¹²

The biggest controversy in the city was over the *Holsteinische Maschinenbau-Aktiengesellschaft* (Holmag), which was one of the few firms to survive the war and which had been able to convert to peacetime production fairly quickly. The firm employed a little under two thousand people in the city. Although the city was aware that the firm was on the Military Government schedule for dismantling, the Germans had never imagined that it would be completely dismantled, particularly as its conversion to peaceful production had been a success.¹³ The response to this shock by the public was swift. Overnight slogans appeared on the walls of the factory: ‘Hände

¹² Kiel, Germania-Werft in Gaarden, Kiss No. 2866, SAK.

¹³ Einmütige Stellungnahme zur Holmag-Demontage, *Kieler Nachrichten*, 13 September 1947, p.4.

weg von unseren Arbeitsplätzen!’, ‘Demontage ist Diebstahl!’ ‘Wir wollen arbeiten und nicht demontieren!’ The local press carried interviews with the bitter employees, who left the occupiers in no doubt who they blamed for the catastrophes which had befallen their city:

Es ist heiler Wahnsinn, uns hier abbauen zu wollen, es gibt wohl keine Vernunft mehr in der Welt. Was hat man uns alles versprochen, als wir während des Krieges heimlich am Radio saßen und das Ausland hörten. Wir wollen ja Reparationen bezahlen, man soll uns aber nicht den Arbeitsplatz abmontieren. Die Maschinen, die der Kriegsproduktion dienten, hat doch die Engländer gleich im Anfang abgeholt.¹⁴

Sympathy strikes were held over the Holmag affair, there were silent protests and processions in the streets. Such was the strength of local resistance to the proposals that British soldiers had to occupy the factory on 10 September 1947.¹⁵ In the event, these local protests achieved a partial reprieve for Holmag. A small part was retained and became the foundation for a new company founded, the Maschinenbau Kiel AG (MAK).

The Military Government’s protracted silence over which areas would be handed over to the city had created much uncertainty regarding the economic future of the city and hindered planning for reconstruction.¹⁶ Gayk felt that the special treatment the city had received had set it back at least five years in its economic reconstruction.¹⁷ In the meantime, other cities in the area had grown.¹⁸

In 1950, the Ostufer GmbH was founded to foster the development of the east bank. Gayk explained the rationale for the formation of this company:

Schicksal unserer Stadt hängt davon ab, was aus dem Ostufer wird. Diese Industriegelände war die wirtschaftliche Grundlage für Kiel. Wer dort drüben gelebt und gearbeitet hat, weiss, dass

¹⁴ ‘Hände weg von unseren Arbeitsplätzen!’, *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, 3 September 1947.

¹⁵ ‘Polizeiaktion der Militärregierung gegen Holmag-Werke Kiel’, *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*, 13 September 1947.

¹⁶ Wiederaufbau des Kieler Hafens, 14 December 1949, SAK 41748.

¹⁷ Kommunalpolitik, 1951, SAK 58372.

¹⁸ Wirtschaftliche Zukunft der Stadt Kiel, November 1946, SAK 54208.

Industrieanlagen, Wohnsiedlungen und die dort arbeitenden Menschen das Gesicht unserer Stadt bestimmten und die wirtschaftliche und soziale Struktur darstellten. Das ist zerschlagen worden, es ist eine Lücke entstanden. Nicht nur die Anlagen wurden vernichtet; das soziale Gefüge, das Zusammenleben der Menschen wurde zerissen ohne das es bisher gelungen ist, diese Risse wieder zu schließen.¹⁹

The east bank remained important for Kiel's industry but there is no doubt that the impact of the British restrictions until 1950 meant that many firms which might have located in Kiel moved elsewhere. The food, light electrical and furniture firms which moved in were often owned by refugees from the former eastern territories. Many were capital-weak and folded within a short time. Kiel's conversion away from its military past was only partial. When the Federal Republic joined NATO in 1955, the wharves and the Navy contributed once again to the economy of Kiel.

City rivals: Cologne's status in the region

The British Military Government intervened far less in reconstruction planning for Cologne than they did in Kiel but their actions and policies still had an indirect impact on the future development of the city. Throughout the early phases of the occupation cities were pitted against one another for a share of the scarce resources available. Because it was so heavily damaged during the war, it was decided that Cologne made an unsuitable regional centre for Military Government and the associated provincial capital functions which they wished to set up in Northrhine-Westphalia. The naming of Cologne's longstanding rival, Düsseldorf, as the provincial capital was a severe blow to the city, which saw itself as the dominant city in the region.

As the Military Government decision to compensate Kiel for the many other restrictions by granting it provincial capital status had been at the expense of

¹⁹ Zur Gründung der Ostufer GmbH, SAK, 41749.

neighbouring Schleswig, so Düsseldorf's rise to power affected negatively the fortunes of Cologne.²⁰ Düsseldorf began to acquire firms, functions and institutions which would otherwise have remained in or relocated to Cologne.

The *Landeszentralbank* was one such institution which moved from Cologne to Düsseldorf and took with it various other financial undertakings.²¹ Cologne tried to fight the slow haemorrhaging of firms and institutions through its Trade and Commerce group, which lobbied Military Government for their support to encourage large insurance firms back to the town.²² General Bishop, Regional Commissioner of Northrhine-Westphalia was asked repeatedly to intercede on behalf of the city with the *Landtag*.²³ Bishop agreed to support them but, given the *Landtag*'s location in the provincial capital of Düsseldorf, it was unlikely to rule in Cologne's favour. Letters were written to various influential individuals begging them not to desert the city. Local city officials made the most spurious of claims about the importance of their city, like this one from Oberstadtdirektor Suth to the Swiss Consulate von Weiss: 'das Wirtschaftsleben, das mit Düsseldorf verbunden ist, ist seinem Umfang nach weit geringer als dasjenige, dessen Mittelpunkt Köln ist.'²⁴

Although Military Government was not *directly* responsible for the movement of firms and institutions away from the city, in one important respect, the Military Government was entirely responsible for the privileging of Düsseldorf over Cologne: the airport. Military Government had sole responsibility for determining the extent and location of civil aviation in the Zone and declared that there would be only one major

²⁰ Suth to von Weis, HASTK, Acc 5/674, f.37.

²¹ Report by Dr Schwering, 10 April 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/674, f.29.

²² Schriftwechsel mit Militärregierung, February 1946, HASTK, Acc 2/331a, f.156.

²³ Report by Dr Schwering, 10 April 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/674, f.29.

²⁴ Schwering to von Weiss, 5 June 1948, HASTK, Acc 2/366 f.254.

airport in the region. Cities submitted bids to obtain this important function. Cologne put forward a compelling argument for the location of an airport near the city, in which they took pains to emphasise that their chosen site was as near to Düsseldorf as to Cologne:

Wir haben infolgedessen vorgeschlagen, einen neuen Weltflughafen für Nordrhein-Westfalen in nächster Nähe von Köln, in der Gegend von Esch-Roggendorf, zu errichten. Dort sind alle Voraussetzungen gegeben. Düsseldorf liegt nicht viel weiter entfernt, als unsere Stadtmitte. Dieser Platz liegt genau in der Mitte eines Kreises, in dem sich die Städte Aachen, Düren, das linksrheinische Industriegebiet, Rheydt, Gladbach, Viersen, Neuss, Krefeld, Düsseldorf, Wuppertal, Remscheid, Solingen und Bonn befinden. Hier liegt die ganze Industrie, die an einem Flughafen Interesse hat. Der Einwand Düsseldorfs und des Ruhrgebietes, dass der Weltflughafen näher zum Ruhrgebiet wegen seiner Menschenmassierungen und seiner Industrie liegen müsse, kann nicht durchschlagen. Der Bergleute fliegen nicht und die Produkte der Schwerindustrie im Ruhrgebiet können auch nicht mit dem Flugzeug befördert werden. Ich bitte die Stadtverordneten, die dem Landtag angehören, in diesem Sinne auch dort zu wirken. Wenn Bonn Sitz des vorläufigen Bundes wird, würde das ein weiterer Grund sein, den Flugplatz dort anzulegen.²⁵

Düsseldorf, meanwhile, argued that its district of Lohausen was the best location on the grounds of the large population in its immediate vicinity. The location was no closer to Düsseldorf than the site of Wahn proposed by the city of Cologne but was crucially on the opposite side of the city and therefore too far from Cologne to have a positive economic impact on that city. *Oberstadtdirektor* Suth felt that this was a quite deliberate act on behalf of the local government in Düsseldorf: 'Man könne sich des Gefühls nicht erwehren, dass Düsseldorf sich nur von der Erwägung leiten lasse, der Flughafen muss so weit wie möglich von Köln entfernt sein.'²⁶

After receiving advice from the Director of Civil Aviation in Britain, the British Military Government decided in favour of Lohausen. As usual money played a large part in the decision: a second runway was needed and less construction work

²⁵ Bericht des Herrn Oberstadtdirektors über die Lage der Stadt, 23 November 1948, HASTK, Acc 5/971, f.29-38.

²⁶ Über die Besprechung bei Gelegenheit des Besuchs von General Bishop im Kölner Rathaus, 7 May 1948, HASTK, Acc 2/331b, ff.60-5.

would be necessary in Lohausen than the more hilly site at Wahn. This was a major setback for Cologne whose airport had formerly been the second busiest in Germany after Berlin.²⁷

Over the coming decades, Düsseldorf's local economy benefited enormously from its central place in the regional financial sector and from the regional airport. Although Cologne temporarily lost some of its functions to its neighbour, the city did benefit from the choice of Bonn as temporary capital of the Federal Republic of Germany after 1949. Embassies and other institutions unable to find suitable accommodation in Bonn found a home in its larger neighbour. Cologne was never able to regain its status as a major regional air hub.

New cities: Locating the past and the future in the plan

Urban identities played an important role in the form which reconstruction plans took. For planner Herbert Jensen, the harbour would be at the heart of any reconstruction plan for Kiel. As Jensen asked rhetorically: 'Was wird Kiel ohne der Hafen?'²⁸ However, the uncertainty surrounding the future of the east bank, whose cranes, docks and factories had for so long dominated the cityscape, undoubtedly forced him to focus his attention on the west bank, and the possibilities this offered to improve the fortunes of the city.

Jensen acknowledged that the change to the economic base would be decisive for the city's reconstruction plan: 'Die Veränderung ihrer Lebensgrundlagen musste sich notwendigerweise auf ihre Neuplanung auswirken...Der Neuplanung und dem

²⁷ Report by Dr Schwering, 10 April 1949, HASTK, Acc 5./674, f.29.

²⁸ 'Die Wandlung einer Stadt', *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung* 13 September 1947.

Neuaufbau Kiels mussten Überlegungen vorausgehen, welchen neuen Lebensinhalt man der Stadt geben konnte, nachdem sie ihre ehemalige Daseinsgrundlage – Marine und Werften – fast völlig verloren hatte.²⁹

Before the founding of a naval base there in 1865, Kiel had been a relatively small, undistinguished town. The city experienced rapid population growth and expansion as a result of the Navy's presence. Unlike Cologne, Kiel had little in the way of medieval fabric and few impressive historic churches or civic buildings which could be a focus for the revival of the city. Moreover, the city's postwar economy was to be far more diverse than its prewar one and some of the local markets which Kiel hoped to capture required a large scale redevelopment of the central area. But the main problem for the city was that there was little of Kiel's past which was not tainted by association with the military.

Faced with this dilemma, the city could only look forward. From 1946, Kiel began modernising on a grand scale. Herbert Jensen focussed his attention on making Kiel's commercial centre the best and most modern in the area. Visitors to cities, so Jensen argued, make their evaluation of a place on the basis of the identity created by the shopping street. Kiel would redevelop its central areas not in the image of the old medieval town, with its narrow streets and small plots but rather create a legible, modern city centre which would define the Kiel of the future:

Kiel erhält ein Gesicht, ein klares charakttervolles Gepräge aus dem Geiste unserer Zeit in der eigentlichen Geschäftsstadt. Es ist eine bekannte Tatsache, dass jede Stadt ihr charakteristisches Gepräge durch den Eindruck weniger Strassen und Platzräume im Stadtzentrum erhält. Die ganze Stadt wird nach der mehr oder weniger gelungenen Gestaltung der Hauptgeschäftsstrassen und den mit ihnen zusammenhängenden Strassen und Platzanlagen beurteilt. Das Stadtbild unserer Zeit wird durch andere Merkmale bestimmt wie in vergangenen Zeiten. Im Gegensatz zu den "malerischen" engen Gassen mittelalterlicher Städte sind heute im

²⁹ Die städtebauliche Neuordnung der Landeshauptstadt Kiel, SAK 54199.

Stadtzentrum breite Strassen und geräumige Abstellplätze zur Aufnahme des fliessenden und des ruhenden Verkehrs notwendig.³⁰

Although it had been a thriving harbour and naval base, Kiel was not as well connected to other transport systems as some of its neighbouring cities. Many of the major transit lines for traffic by-passed Kiel and Jensen realised that if the city was to develop as a regional commercial centre, better roads to, from and through the city would be required to encourage traffic:

Kiel liegt abseits vom grossen Verkehrsstrom, in ausgesprochener Randlage. Es muss also alles daran gesetzt werden, Kiel zu einem Anziehungspunkt zu machen. Das ist grundlegend anders wie bei den meisten Grossstädten, die mitten in zusammenhängenden Wirtschaftsgebieten, an grossen Verkehrsknotenpunkten liegen und das umgekehrte Bestreben haben, des ihre Innenstädte verstopfenden Durchgangsverkehrs Herr zu werden. Kiel musste seine Innenstadt, die einer weitgehenden Zerstörung anheimgefallen war, so schnell wie möglich wieder aufzubauen, um seine Wirtschaft zu beleben, um die Stadt zu einem Kaufmittelpunkt des Landes zu machen im Wettbewerb mit anderen obwohl kleineren aber verkehrsgünstiger gelegenen Städten. Kiels Innenstadt muss, im Gegensatz zu früher, ein neues, anziehendes, modernes Gesicht bekommen, um als Landeshauptstadt und Universitätstadt bestehen zu können.³¹

Reconstruction activities in Kiel therefore focussed on clearance activities, street widening and traffic planning and the creation of a modern shopping precinct. Figure 7.2 shows the prominence of the new traffic arteries in the plan. The natural beauty of the fjord would be made visible through the construction of a new street and promenade along the west bank of the fjord to allow pedestrians access to the city's greatest asset and encourage visitors to the city.³² It was only with the handing over of the east bank industrial districts in 1950 that a complete plan could be prepared for the city.³³

³⁰ Kiel erhält ein Gesicht, Städtebauliche Gedanken zur Jahreswende 1950/51 von Stadtbaurat Herbert Jensen, SAK 46136.

³¹ Die städtebauliche Neuordnung der Landeshauptstadt Kiel, SAK 54199.

³² Ibid.

³³ Kiel erhält ein Gesicht, Städtebauliche Gedanken zur Jahreswende 1950/51 von Stadtbaurat Herbert Jensen, SAK 46136.

Image removed pending copyright clarification

Figure 7.2 – Kiel's reconstruction plan³⁴

While Jensen worked on the modernisation of the city's form, the Mayor Andreas Gayk tried to break Kiel's association with an undesirable past. In a 1946 publication, *Eine Stadt kämpft um ihre Zukunft!*, Gayk outlined the lamentable position in which

³⁴ Aufbauplan der Stadt Kiel, May 1949, 1.00/799, SAK.

the city had found itself: 'Wohl kaum andere Stadt im früheren Gebiet des Deutschen Reiches und insbesondere in der britischen Zone ist durch die Folgen der nationalsozialistischen Regierung und den Ausgang des Krieges so in Mitleidenschaft gezogen wie die Stadt Kiel.'³⁵ In Gayk's interpretation of events, Kiel's unique position in the Third Reich was thrust upon it because of the natural benefits of its topography:

Wo liegen die Ursache für seinen tiefen Fall? Sie liegen in der Tatsache, dass Kiels Hafen wegen seiner ganz besondere natürlichen Vorzüge zum Reichskriegshafen ausersehen wurde...Immer wieder war es die Marine, immer wieder war es Eingriffe des Reiches und seiner Organe, die den Aufbau eines modernen Handelshafens, für den Kiel alle Voraussetzungen bietet, verhinderten.³⁶

The portrayal of the former *Kriegsmarine Stadt* as a victim of circumstance sought to absolve the city of guilt for its role in the Nazi past. The fact that a successful trading centre had not been a feature of Kiel's economy in the past was blamed on the presence of the Navy: 'Einer grosszügigen Ausnutzung dieser natürlichen und günstigen Voraussetzung des Handelshafens standen bisher die Belange der Wehrmacht und insbesondere der Kriegsmarine entgegen.'³⁷ There was no acknowledgement of the prosperity and growth that the Navy had afforded the city and its inhabitants. In this newly constructed narrative of Kiel's history, the Navy had hindered the natural development of the city. It was the German nation which had brought about the city's misery and was ultimately responsible. Kiel should not be made to pay for the sins of the nation.

³⁵ Eine Stadt kämpft um ihre Zukunft, 1946, SAK, 58368.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Wiederaufbau des Kieler Hafens, 14 December 1949, SAK 41748.

As in Kiel, city politicians attempted to distance Cologne from any involvement with the National Socialist state.³⁸ One of the ways in which the city attempted to engineer a less problematic past was to concentrate on the two thousand year history of the city, which made the recent period of Nazi rule appear to be a mere blip in a long and otherwise illustrious history.

This tactic was frequently employed by city officials to prepare the ground before launching into impassioned pleas to the Military Government for assistance.³⁹

City officials presented the city as a paragon of democracy:

Wegen seiner demokratischen Einstellung sei Köln in Berlin nicht beliebt gewesen. Zur Nazizeit habe Köln bei weitem den kleinsten Prozentsatz an Nazistimmen gestellt und sei deshalb vernachlässigt und geschädigt worden. Die Kölner Bevölkerung habe das Gefühl, dass es jetzt in demselben Sinne weitergehe. Nur habe sich der Grund geändert. Jetzt heiße es, der Zerstörungsgrad in Köln sei so gross, dass es gar kein Zweck habe, Köln zu fördern. Die Kölner Bürger seien dagegen der Ansicht, dass gerade wegen dieses Zerstörungsgrad Köln ein Gegenstand besondere Fürsorge sein müsse.⁴⁰

The narrative being constructed was of a city which could be a natural ally to the Military Government, one which had, above all cities in Germany, rejected the National Socialists and yet still suffered along with those who had fully embraced Hitler's Third Reich. Cologne was democratic city, and therefore, ignored by the Nazis. Rather than neglecting the city, the Military Government ought to make special arrangements for its revival.

In order to assert the city's dominance within its regional network, Cologne's local officials focussed on its traditional position as 'metropolis of the Rhine'. The city had formerly been a point of intersection in central Europe. As Cologne's status faded in comparison to the ascendant Düsseldorf and the quiet Federal capital of

³⁸ The Reconstruction of Cologne, HASTK, Best 953/1 ff.146-56.

³⁹ Über die Besprechung bei Gelegenheit des Besuchs von General Bishop im Kölner Rathaus, 7 May 1948, HASTK, Acc 2/331b, ff.60-5.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

neighbouring Bonn, the city strove to assert its historic importance in the region. Never mind if it was the most heavily bombed city in the area and appeared incapable of offering those central functions at the present time, this is what the city had always been and this is what it must become again:

Soll das rheinische Land, unbeschadet der demnächstigen Neuordnung in der britischen Zone oder gar weltpolitisch begründeter Vorgänge wieder aufblühen und Brücke zwischen einem neuen deutschen Volk und den Völkern des Abendlandes werden, so muss die Stadt Köln als das Kraftzentrum des gesamten wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Lebens im Rheinland betrachtet und geachtete werden.⁴¹

Cologne had much to lament: 95% of its historic city inside the Ring Strasse had been destroyed. For Cologne, the historic Altstadt *was* the city. Cologne's medieval churches and civic buildings, like the Gürzenich, were the physical expression of Cologne's identity. It was inevitable that, in contrast to Kiel, the city would try to maintain continuities with its past and would, therefore, pursue a much more conservative reconstruction programme.

The city's identity was defined not by what it produced, as was the case in Kiel, but by its cultural and architectural treasures. The preservation and restoration of the *Altstadt* was thus critical to the re-establishment of its unique identity. The dominant planning principles of *Auflockerung* and new traffic arteries were tempered in Rudolf Schwarz's plan for Cologne by a sensitivity and adherence to the traditional character of the city. To effect a change to the street pattern in the *Altstadt* of Cologne on the scale of that which took place in Kiel would have meant the loss of its medieval narrow streets and with them, the unique feel of Cologne's old town.

The city's economy could not be left to look after itself though, hence the plans for a separate centre or node of industrial areas to the north of the city, surrounded by

⁴¹ Die geistige, politische und wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der Stadt Köln, May 1946, HASStK, Acc 2/9b f.541

new, spacious working-class housing estates. The double centre plan was an uneasy compromise between the requirements of a modern city and the equally important need to retain its identity in stone:

Die Planung soll das kölsche Herz, das Gemüt, das Heimatgefühl und die Heimatliebe der Kölner berücksichtigen unter Hochachtung einer zweitausendjährigen Tradition; aber auch auf die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung unserer Stadt, des Rheinlandes, Deutschlands und Europas. Darüber müssen wir uns nicht nur klar sein, sondern auch danach handeln, dass Köln eine internationale Verkehrs- und Handelsmetropole, eine Messe- und Kongressstadt ist und in dieser Beziehung weiter ausschlaggebend werden muss.⁴²

Kiel im Aufbau

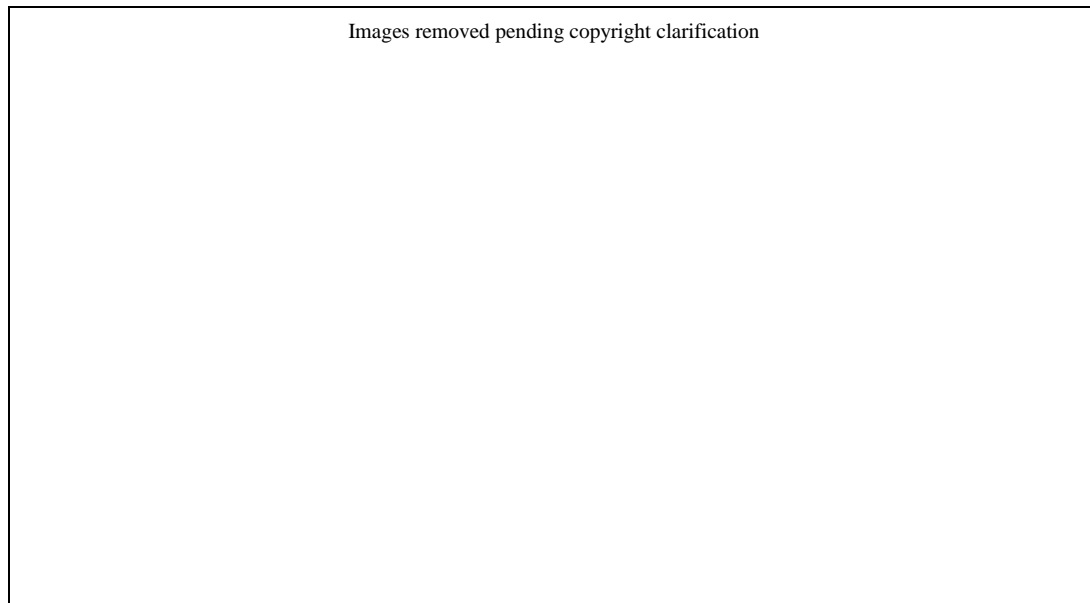


Figure 7.3 – Posters for the 1947 *Kiel im Aufbau* exhibition⁴³

In the spring of 1947, Kiel's city council decided to hold a festival in September with the theme *Kiel im Aufbau*. The purpose of the exhibition was to showcase the city's recovery to the world: 'Die Stadt Kiel ist gewillt, der Welt ihr wahres Gesicht, das

⁴² 'Der bisherige Wiederaufbau der City 1948-1949 und unsere Wünsche für 1950', Vortrag von Albert Wolter, 6 December 1949, HASTK, Acc 5/1640, ff.1-16.

⁴³ Plakate, Kiel im Aufbau, SAK 48776.

Gesicht des Friedens und der Arbeit zu zeigen.⁴⁴ The image of the dove and candle used in the marketing posters for the event, shown in figure 7.3 above, symbolised the new identity of Kiel, which the city fathers wished to convey: a city of peace, of hope, of resurrection.

One of the central features of the *Kiel im Aufbau* week was an exhibition to be mounted in the Town Hall, which would show the inhabitants of the city, and the rest of the world, the plans for the Kiel's conversion to a peacetime economy. The floundering city needed businesses and investment and to achieve this it would have to convince the world that it had a future.

Just as the city was preparing to host the festival, the council heard that the British intended to completely dismantle the important Holmag factory. The timing of the announcement could not have been worse as it undermined the central message that the city was trying to convey. Gayk was determined that the festival should still go ahead.

In the event, it provided Gayk with an important opportunity to lobby British visitors to the city. A tentative partnership had been established between Kiel and Coventry in Britain. Mr Williams, a Coventrian and Building Industries Officer stationed in Kiel, had expressed his admiration for the spirit and hard work of the inhabitants whose efforts to remove the rubble from the city had earned Kiel the accolade of the most efficiently cleared town in the British Zone. He empathised with the fate of the Kiel, thinking back to his own home town which had suffered so much at the hands of the Luftwaffe and was facing similar challenges of reconstruction. Mayor Andreas Gayk saw the political advantages of a partnership with the British city

⁴⁴ 'Was will die Woche "Kiel im Aufbau"?', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 3 September 1947, p.3.

and wrote to the local council to tell them of the recently founded 'Friends of Coventry Society' and the upcoming *Kiel im Aufbau* week and hoped that representatives of Coventry would be able to join them.⁴⁵ Intrigued, a small delegation made its way to Kiel in September 1947 to attend in the festival. The delegation included Alderman George Briggs representing the City of Coventry, Provost of Coventry Cathedral, the Very Reverend Howard and Mr W Spencer, Secretary of the Coventry Trades Council, representing the Trade Unions.

The Control Commission supported their visit and was keen, given the current tense relations between the city and Military Government, to monitor the impressions of the delegation. A secret report was made of the *Kiel im Aufbau* week, sent as an appendix to the usual monthly report to avoid the Germans seeing its highly sensitive content.⁴⁶

The last-minute arrival of the delegation from Coventry provoked a very considerable change to the programme originally forwarded by the Germans. Various meetings were hastily rearranged and speeches recast so as not to miss the political opportunity: 'Everyone from Gayk downwards realised they had been given a heaven-sent opportunity to put something across. From the beginning it was made clear that politics and the Holmag question were "out" but that did not prevent these subjects from being introduced at every possible occasion.'⁴⁷

On each day of the week-long festival a separate theme of the city's recovery was explored, including the new industries and proposed economic base of the city, the

⁴⁵ Beziehung Kiel-Coventry, SAK, 36144.

⁴⁶ Senior Control Officer Kiel to HQ Land Schleswig-Holstein, 24 September 1947, FO 1006/27, 3.

⁴⁷ Highly confidential report on Kiel im Aufbau week, September 1947, FO 1006/27, 3.

revival of culture, the so-called ‘honour service’ clearance of rubble, the ‘Society for Friends of Coventry’ and the plans for the reconstruction of the city.⁴⁸

At the opening ceremony, speeches were made by Gayk and a wreath laid at the British cemetery and at the *Rathaus* for victims of the war. The Coventry delegation were taken to the *Kiel im Aufbau* exhibition at which boards showed panoramic views of the destruction of the city and before and after stills of various sites. One board was about the fledgling ‘Society for the Friends of Coventry’ which carried the title ‘Coventry-Kiel: Zwei Städte – ein Schicksal’, thus neutralising the occupier-occupied relationship and placing the connection between the two cities outside of national politics. One board was devoted to the demolition of the Holmag works: ‘A whole panel was devoted to Holmag stressing the peaceful nature of its production. In fact a statement was made that this factory had always been producing peaceful goods. No one could explain the peaceful effects of a torpedo!’⁴⁹

Others showed the general reconstruction plans for the city, maps indicating the war damage sustained by the city, the reduction in living standards, the reconstruction of utilities, the revival of the building industries, and plans for the new Provincial Government and University sites.⁵⁰ Both mayors were very interested in the reconstruction plans of the other city:

The Mayor visited the Oberbürgermeister and after presenting him with a book showing suggested plans for the rebuilding of Coventry discussed town planning. Gayk was very much interested in the book with the result that, the rebuilding of Kiel being his own special baby, he did not bring up any of his other problems. The meeting ended with a promise on both sides to exchange plans and ideas on the rebuilding of their cities.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Kiel im Aufbau – Festliche Tage im September, 16 August 1947, *Schleswig-Holsteinische Volkszeitung*.

⁴⁹ Highly confidential report on Kiel im Aufbau week, September 1947, FO 1006/27, 3.

⁵⁰ Kiel im Aufbau, Übersicht über den Aufbau der Ausstellung, SAK, 46112.

⁵¹ Ibid.

The delegation was also taken on a boat trip to show them the destroyed harbour and the lack of any reconstruction or adaptation for peace on the east bank. A road trip was made around Kiel, once again with the intention of showing the damage to the city:

This trip was used as a means of again pointing out how much Kiel had suffered and any remark that Coventry or in fact any other town had also suffered was met either by a statement of Kiel's suffering was greater or blank silence. The destruction of Germania and Deutsche Werke were deplored but not once was it admitted how much suffering the products of these works had caused throughout the world.⁵²

Before the delegation left to return to Coventry they met with Military Government officers so that they could put questions to the Control Commission about what they had seen. Mr Spencer explained that there was little interest in a 'society of friends' in Coventry. None of the Germans had asked him about the 'Friends of Kiel Society' and he was deeply disappointed that no-one had questioned him about the people of Coventry and their lives. Gayk's zealous and single-minded attempts to drive home the desperate fate of his city had rather alienated the Coventry delegation:

[Mr Spencer's] impression was that the people of Kiel were placing emphasis on the dreadful calamity that had happened to them and they all appeared to think that the real reason for 'démontage' is the fear of competition in world markets. He thought that the people of Kiel should set their own house in order before they start worrying about outside affairs and that they showed a lack of realisation and a sense of war guilt ...Finally he criticised the German attitude of showing the worst possible side of their present existence. [The Provost] was struck by their extraordinary absorption in their own suffering and lack of any sympathy whatsoever for other people. Every answer he gave to a question regarding bomb damage in Coventry was capped by the recounting of how much more Kiel had.⁵³

Nonetheless, a relationship of sorts was built up between the two cities and Coventry delegations continued to attend events in Kiel almost every year until the 1960s.

During the *Kieler Woche* celebrations in 1948, a further event took place to introduce the new Kiel and promote the city's new image to the world, the *Kiel stellt sich um*

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

exhibition. The destruction of the harbour and industry had lost Kiel 60,000 jobs but the city was fighting back and was beginning to find a peaceful basis for its economy:

Aber schon in den wenigen Jahren nach dem Kriege hat die Kieler Wirtschaft neue Wege für ihre Existenzgrundlage gefunden. 98 neue Betriebe mit 2400 Arbeitsplätzen wurden eingerichtet. Auf 72,000 qm, die früher der Wehrmachtrüstung dienten, sind jetzt friedliche Arbeitsstätten aufgebaut worden. In einer umfassenden Schau werden dann die Erzeugnisse der bedeutendsten Kieler Industriezweige gezeigt. Wir sehen den neuen Klein-Diesel der MAG, die Tonfilmvorführungsgeräte der Elac und Hagenuk, um nur einige Erzeugnisse zu nennen.⁵⁴

Cologne Jubilees

Cologne also made use of civic festivals for the purpose of place promotion. In 1948, the city celebrated the 700 anniversary of the founding of Cologne Cathedral. The cathedral's reopening after an initial phase of repairs was timed to coincide with the anniversary. Far more than simply a celebration of the cathedral, the Domjubiläum was a calculated move on the part of the council to encourage the inhabitants to identify with their city and to focus the attention on Cologne's place in western Christian civilisation. The festival consisted of concerts, exhibitions of religious art and processions of community and religious groups through the shattered streets of the city.

Two years later, for the first time in its 1900 year history, Cologne held a festival to celebrate the anniversary of its founding, perhaps because at no other time in the city's history had its future been so under threat. An exhibition was mounted which represented selectively the city's past. The narrative constructed divided the history of the city into four phases: its Roman foundation; Cologne as a bishopric; Cologne as a free city in the Holy Roman Empire; and Cologne as a contemporary city.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ 'Kiel stellt sich um', *Kieler Nachrichten*, 31 August 1948, p.6.

⁵⁵ Entwurf für eine stadthistorische Ausstellung 1950, HASTK, Acc 29/26 ff.12-14.

The contemporary history presentation included a picture of the development of the city into a modern transport, industrial and trading centre, illustrated through a large plan of the city area in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, supplemented by images and other small plans. At the end there would be pictures of the destruction of the city and plans for the reconstruction.⁵⁶ The National Socialist period of Cologne's history was conspicuous by its absence.

The seven month long festival incorporated every imaginable form of cultural expression from carnivals to music festivals, scholarly lectures to open-air plays. More than 250,000 visitors came to the city and visited the exhibition between its opening on 26 May 1950 and the closing ceremony on 27 August 1950.⁵⁷ As with the Cathedral Jubilee, the celebrations contained significant outdoor components in which the ruins of the city were used as a backdrop for political speeches, plays, concerts and processions. This was a smart move. How could the city's status as victim be refuted when all around was ruins?

The civic events mounted by both Kiel and Cologne shared many common features: firstly, the focus on a spiritual and/or moral journey; secondly, the emphasis on place promotion; thirdly, the selective interpretation of the past, distancing from the National Socialist period and the depiction of the city as a 'victim'; and finally, the shaping of collective identity among the citizenry. The fact that such elaborate events were mounted at times of austerity indicates how important the process of place promotion was considered to be for the survival and future of the city.

⁵⁶ Zur Sitzung des Sonderausschusses Kölner Stadtjubiläum 1950, 12 May 1949, HASTK, Acc 29/26 f.42.

⁵⁷ Abschlussbericht über die stadtgeschichtliche Ausstellung Köln 1900 Jahre Stadt, HASTK, Acc 29/26 f.302.

Chapter Eight

Conclusion

It is not intended to repeat again here the content of the short summaries found at the end of each chapter but rather to try to draw together the threads of analysis and to consider what contribution the research makes to our understanding of the reconstruction of German cities and the place of the British occupation within this story.

Up until now, the reconstruction of German cities has been presented as an almost exclusively German affair. Serious academic studies have tended to underplay the role of the occupation authorities and there has been very little analysis of their policies towards cities. It is hoped that this study of the British Zone has demonstrated the many varied ways in which the occupation helped to shape German cities in the postwar period. It is by no means suggested that occupation policies were somehow more significant than German actions. The excellent studies by historians Durth and Gutschow, and Diefendorf offer irrefutable evidence of the continuities between the war and postwar periods both in terms of planning ideals and concepts brought to bear and the personnel who remained important in various capacities after the war. What is being argued here is that these continuities must be viewed within the context of serious political ruptures which created a new environment and new frameworks in which reconstruction would be executed. This additional layer of explanation complicates the account of German reconstruction but also makes it more fascinating and is essential for an accurate explanation of postwar reconstruction.

This study has reviewed the apparatus of occupational rule and examined in detail the formation and implementation of British policies in three arenas: housing, the revival of the building industry and town and country planning. It has been based on primary

sources largely untapped until now and has produced an account of the policies, personnel and practices of two major departments within the British Control Commission, the Housing Branch and the Building Industries Branch, neither of which, to my knowledge, have received scholarly attention before now. The research thus makes an important contribution to our knowledge and understanding of the British occupation of Germany.

The investigation has uncovered various insights into the administration of the Zone, such as the surprising degree of freedom enjoyed by branch officers. In this respect, it echoes the findings of the work of Ian Turner and Benedikta von Sehr Thoss. The scope of activities in which the officers of the two branches engaged was enormous and this emphasises the need to look beyond Whitehall if one wishes to understand the occupation of Germany. Indeed, key politicians in the British Cabinet displayed a marked disinterest in all but the main aim of the occupation: security.

In the absence of strong direction from London, individuals were able to shape the detail of policy in their area of control and define the scope of their intervention to a far greater degree than one might expect. This, of course, entailed a certain amount of conflict between the aspirations of different groups within the Control Commission. In highlighting this aspect of the administration, some of the problems inherent in using labels such as ‘the British Military Government’ or the ‘British occupation authorities’ when there was a high degree of variation in approach and attitude becomes apparent. Though convenient, categories such as ‘British policy’ hide this divergence of views within the British camp. Certainly the extent to which we can talk about a unified British policy is fairly limited given the variations between, say, the Administration and Local

Government Branch and the Housing Branch in their approach to the question of the degree of centralization necessary to achieve effective control over rebuilding. The investigation of the Housing Branch and the Building Industries Branch has shown that, within departments, policies had an internal coherence. The problem was that the activities of the various branches were not always co-ordinated effectively. Positive, constructive actions and phased policies could be easily thwarted by the sudden occasional 'intrusion' of directives from the British Government or trickling down from Allied level.

British models often inspired the policies implemented in Germany. Problems in the Zone were rarely tackled on their own terms. Initially, this was partly the result of bowing to the pragmatic when strategies were needed very quickly by overstretched officers struggling to cope in the chaos of postwar Germany. The fact that this practice continued has more to do with a confidence in British democracy and the recent social reforms which were reshaping Britain. The research here broadly supports the findings of Ian Turner, Mark Roseman and Barbara Marshall who have all argued that there was no attempt from the British Government to export British socialism and social reforms to the Zone. However, the fact that the Government made no attempt to do so, did not preclude particular groups within the Control Commission from drawing on these reforms when formulating their own policies for German housing, reconstruction or town and country planning. Housing Branch officers displayed strong socialist tendencies.

The desire to implement the British models was particularly pronounced in the field of town and country planning. British officers in the Housing Branch were proud of Britain's recent legislative achievements which they recognised had placed the country

on a firm footing not just for the period of reconstruction but for ongoing urban renewal. The technical similarities of the tasks being faced concealed the different social and cultural circumstances in Germany. British officers appear to have been either ignorant of or insensitive to the strength of German adherence to conservative attitudes towards private property and local autonomy. They also singularly failed to appreciate that it would be much harder for Germany to embrace strong centralised planning so soon after the excesses of the Third Reich. It is surprising that this point was overlooked given the propensity to remind Germans of their deplorable recent past.

The policies developed in the three areas investigated were implemented with mixed success. The extent to which their effects endured was dependent upon how far the measures were supported by the German officials largely responsible for implementing them. The British interventions which had the most far-reaching and enduring impact were those in support of comprehensive legislation to guide reconstruction in the form of new housing laws and reconstruction laws. Encouragement given to local authority housing and the work done alongside German and British financial experts to eliminate barriers to investment in housing was a very important contribution to German reconstruction. The high proportion of social housing after the passing of the First Federal Housing Law in 1951 testifies to the effectiveness of their proposals.

Even those policies which met with mixed success, such as the attempts to control illegal building and to increase civilian housing programmes were important, if imperfect, and certainly overall the British Zone, and German civilians, were better off with these in place than they would have been without them. Perhaps most importantly they demonstrated to the Germans a commitment to equitable reconstruction and revival

which helped to counter-balance some of their more restrictive policies. Often the failure of British programmes to fully achieve their aims had more to do with external events over which the departments in question had no control for example, the levels of coal available after exports for the production of building materials.

The additional dimension to research into German reconstruction offered by this study of British urban policies in occupied Germany helps to explain some of the marked differences in the achievements of cities in the north of Germany compared with those in the south. Urban renewal and reconstruction in north Germany was considered to be more successful, judged by contemporary standards. In view of this research, their success must be at least partly explained by British support for and commitment to comprehensive planning which gave cities powers of expropriation and provided them with opportunities to explore planning in cities outside of Germany. German planners in the British Zone clearly valued the platforms that were provided for them to reestablish international professional networks. Their approach contrasted with the American attitude of *laissez-faire* in their Zone.

Exposure to British models gave planners confidence and support to press their own politicians for the legislative tools and administrative frameworks which they needed. German planners, like Schwarz could point to successful British examples when he wished to encourage local politicians to adopt unfamiliar and potentially controversial measures. But, however strong the desires of German planners to reform German planning and effect changes along British lines, these could only be adopted with significant modifications to take account of German conditions and political and cultural mores.

One of the most fascinating and unexpected discoveries has been the roles which were played by the circumstances of occupation and the process of reconstruction in the construction of new urban identities. The reconstruction of cities was more than simply a replacing of lost buildings. The form taken by each city reflected a conscious process of identity formation as cities struggled to find their place in the new postwar world. In their daily interactions with their occupiers, Germans were confronted by British expectations of expressions of guilt and remorse. The study of this interaction is essential if we are to arrive at an understanding of how Germans began to cope with their past. The way in which damage to cities was presented turned the destruction into a technical problem to be solved, and stripped it of its moral baggage. Local politicians and planners were able to capitalise on this to construct new narratives of a city's history. Each city sought to portray itself as a victim of, rather than a contributor to the destructive Nazi regime. The disassociation of the city from collective responsibility for the nation allowed a retreat into the familiar realm of *Heimat*. By extension, a city's inhabitants were collectively exonerated.

This thesis has argued that the British occupation had a much greater influence over the course of German reconstruction than is generally perceived. As well as the detailed exploration of British urban policies and their implementation, it has considered the way in which occupation, memory and history interact in the construction of place-based identities. Moreover, it has exposed how these were incorporated into reconstruction planning and became crucial stakes in determining the future of these cities.

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