Cold War Architecture:
A comparison between the architectural styles of East and West Berlin in the 1950’s, focusing on Interbau (West) and Stalinallee (East)

Cold War Culture: Art & Politics Since 1945

B.A. Honours in History of Art
Abstract

This is a comparative study between two housing blocks in East and West Berlin during the early Cold War period. Stemming from the extreme housing problem for Berlin's inhabitants in the immediate post-war period, the building of housing was a topic that could make or break the success of the opposing ideologies of the Soviet East and American West during the subsequent Cold War. Berlin became a battleground upon which the superpowers fought at this time, which, as this study argues, was expressed strongly through the building of domestic architecture. Two chosen housing developments will be observed as the case studies for this essay; Stalinallee in East Berlin, and Hansaviertel (Interbau) in the Western sector, both built in the 1950’s. They will be compared in great detail with a predominantly visual, art-historical approach, exploring the difference in exterior and interior styles; and a sociological approach, comparing the success of these developments, and thus the success of the opposing regimes, for the people. It must be noted that the research for this study was done on a trip to Berlin in 2012, which enabled me to observe the buildings in greater detail.
1. Post-war Berlin in a Cold War climate

Post-war Berlin was a scene of absolute devastation. About his visit to Berlin in 1957, architectural journalist, Rolf Rosner, described how, ‘even twelve years after the war one is awed by the massive destruction.’¹ Photographs taken of Berlin’s central streets by LIFE photographer, William Vandivert, in July 1945 (figures 1 and 2), demonstrate the magnitude of reconstruction that had to take place in Berlin throughout the post-war period. Entire blocks of buildings were left as mere shells; vulnerable and demoralized, while the streets were lined with mounds of debris. Werner Rosenthal joked about how ‘the only material that is available in plenty [in Berlin] is brick rubble.’² Millions of homes were destroyed, and even by 1957, it was said that ‘most families have to share flats and houses.’³ The reconstruction of Berlin from the late 1940’s was, therefore, a daunting task, made increasingly difficult as the site ‘of a Cold War freeze in the relations between former allies.’⁴

The divide that formed between East and West Berlin from 1949 meant that, initially, any reconstruction in either sector was utterly distinct from the other. While the post-war period saw the necessity of housing across the entirety of Berlin, the Cold War climate had a vast impact upon the conflicting styles of housing between the East and West. West Berlin, under the rule of the United Kingdom, France and the United States, became the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in 1949. Meanwhile, the Eastern Bloc, under Soviet Communist rule, became the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The influx of Capitalist and Communist ideologies in each sector had a huge impact on the opposing styles of living in post-war Berlin. The corresponding influx of money that entered Berlin for its reconstruction programme, from the United States Marshall plan to the West and from the Soviet Union to the East, increased the influence that the Cold War superpowers had over their sectors and consequently, over the styles of architecture within.

What architects did share across Europe at this time was ‘a fervent desire for a better tomorrow,’ explained in the High Society exhibition of post-war living, at the RIBA in 2012.⁵ Like other destroyed European cities, Berlin had the opportunity to create an entirely new society through architecture and urban planning. Architecture was now viewed as a

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⁵ Royal Institute of British Architects, High Society exhibition, London: RIBA, 16 February - 28 April, 2012
politically significant ‘expression and embodiment of Culture’ of the new societies created by the FRG and GDR. The cultural significance of architecture is strongly supported by architects to this day, with Shelley McNamara and Yvonne Farrell, of Grafton Architects, having recently stated, ‘what we build as Architects is in fact the New Geography.’ A comparison between the styles of architecture in East and West Berlin during the early Cold War period is thus revealing of the political opposition between the United States and the Soviet Union. This study will not, however, be focusing on the architecture of the space-race between the superpowers, such as military bases, bunkers and satellite towers, all of which have already been written about extensively. Instead, the housing developments of the Cold War era will be investigated, to explore the impact that the opposing political regimes and their cultural propensities had upon their visions for post-war living in Berlin. Architects of this era were not only creating a new geography, as aforementioned, but a new lifestyle.

2. Introducing Stalinallee and Hansaviertel

The scale of a comparison between the architecture of East and West Berlin during this period would, however, be a vast undertaking, and will therefore take place between two chosen housing developments built in the 1950’s: Stalinallee in the East (1952–1960) and the Hansaviertel district (Interbau) in the West (1957). A number of sources have hinted at a comparison between the two developments already, with Crowley describing the building of Hansaviertel as the ‘West Berlin response to Stalinallee.’ The United States hoped that Hansaviertel would represent ‘the superior claims of Capitalist democracy over Soviet-style socialism.’ The architecture of these two developments was thus a significant Cold War tool. This is underlined by Jan Fischer, who describes how ‘the instruments of this conflict were not satellites or atomic weapons, but apartment blocks.’

Both housing developments were created from completely destroyed areas of Berlin from the Second World War. Stalinallee was constructed from the remains of Frankfurter Allee, the main axis route along the East German capital of Friedrichshain, and Hansaviertel

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7 S. McNamara, Y. Farrell, Grafton Architects
9 D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ Cold War Modern Design, 59
10 D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ Cold War Modern Design, 59
from the ‘devastated’ Hansa district, to the northwest of the Tiergarten. A basic map of Berlin (figure 3) highlights the location of both developments, either side of the Berlin Wall. From this map, the difference between the shapes of the developments can be seen, for Stalinallee (now Karl-Marx-Allee, for reasons that will be explained later), is a ninety-metre-wide and two-kilometre-long dual carriageway, along which apartment blocks were built. Meanwhile Hansaviertel occupies a much more unconventional site that dips into the Tiergarten, with the ‘grouping’ of individual buildings dotted across the area. The difference between the shapes of these two sites is further emphasised by observing their site plans (figures 4 and 5), which demonstrate the difference between the linear style of urban planning in the East and the freer, irregular style in the West. Looking more closely at the site plans, it can be noted that the apartment blocks along Stalinallee are all of a uniform, rectangular shape. The apartment blocks in Hansaviertel, on the other hand, differ greatly in shape, size and the direction at which they are facing. Already, therefore, it seems fitting that Crowley describes both housing developments as ‘significant exercises in ideology,’14 for much like the effect of Abstract Expressionism versus Socialist Realism, the United States could be seen as a ‘free society as opposed to the regimented communist block,’15 through architecture.

The architecture of the USSR under Stalin was highly influential to the new architecture of the GDR. Walter Ulbricht, the East German Communist leader, sent the East German Ministry of Building to the Soviet Union in 1950, for a ‘study trip,’16 exposing them to the buildings and plans of Stalin’s Moscow. The Ministry would have seen the developments of Stalinist skyscrapers, including the monumental Kotelnicheskaya Embankment Apartments (1947-1952, figure 6), with its classically inspired arches and ornamental façade. Upon their return to Berlin, Brian Ladd describes how the ‘Soviet influence was decisive’17 and thus the new design of the Eastern Bloc was likewise to ‘display centralization, hierarchy, and monumentality.’18 Architectural plans that went against this return to classical traditions were dubbed as ‘cosmopolitan fantasies,’19 ‘cosmopolitan’ being the Stalinist synonym for ‘American.’ Within this period of ‘vast

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12 R. Rosner, ‘Exhibition, or New City?’ 242
13 R. Rosner, ‘Exhibition, or New City?’ 242
14 D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ Cold War Modern Design, 59
17 B. Ladd, The Ghosts of Berlin (Chicago, 1998), 182
18 B. Ladd, The Ghosts of Berlin, 182
ideological disinfection… against American culture,²⁰ therefore, Stalinallee’s post-1950 apartment blocks were to be ‘the expression of the political life’²¹ of the GDR, as a measure of the success of Communist rule in its creation of the ‘harmonious satisfaction of the human demand for work, inhabitation, culture and recreation.’²²

Responding to the hugely successful building of Stalinallee, West Berlin hosted an International Housing Exhibition (Interbau) from July 6th to September 29th, 1957, for which the reconstruction of the Hansaviertel district was the focus. The City of Tomorrow was the name given to the exhibition, to set a scene of post-war optimism and progressive Modernism in the West. German architects were in charge of the layout of Hansaviertel, while the forty-six individual buildings for the site were designed through a competition between renowned architects from all over the world, including Le Corbusier (France), Alvar Aalto (Finland) and Walter Gropius (U.S.A.). The Architect’s Journal in 1957 described how this ‘decision to commission foreign architects was certainly imaginative and it does provide a rare opportunity of seeing the national characteristics of modern architecture side by side.’²³ These ‘national characteristics’ of the Modernist style were, however, the reasons why the GDR accused Western buildings of ‘looking alike, whatever their location,’ by being ‘subordinated to the cosmopolitan ideology of American imperialism.’²⁴ Despite a reliance upon the funding from the United States Marshall Plan, however, Sibyl Moholy-Nagy is keen to stress that Berlin already had its own reputation for Modernist architecture, with structures such as Mendelsohn’s Columbus House (Berlin, 1931-32).²⁵ With this in mind, Interbau’s ‘showcase for Western ideas of modern, decentralized urban form’²⁶ was perhaps more welcome in Berlin than the Soviet-inspired equivalent.

3. Stalinallee and Hansaviertel Exteriors: Case Studies in Political Ideology

The buildings on Stalinallee were certainly not devoid of German tradition, however. Following the architecture from the East to the West of Stalinallee, ‘the eye meets a great many references to Berlin’s baroque and romantic-period monuments.’²⁷ Halfway down the

²⁰ D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ Cold War Modern Design, 44
²¹ J. Ockman, Architecture Culture, 127
²² J. Ockman, Architecture Culture, 127
²⁴ D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ Cold War Modern Design, 45
²⁶ B. Ladd, The Ghosts of Berlin, 180
street, the first monumental apartment blocks by architect, Richard Paulick (1903-1979), can be seen. Richard Paulick was ultimately a Modernist architect, having previously worked as one of Walter Gropius’ assistants in Dessau, thus favouring Bauhaus rationality and simplified forms in architecture. During the tense early Cold War period, however, he had to carry out ‘stylistic switches that marked official East German Architecture.’ Consequently, despite being an unnatural progression of his architectural oeuvre, Paulick designed the Palaces of the Workers, either side of Stalinallee, in 1952 (figures 7 and 8). These buildings both extend further in width than the images show, and are eight storeys high, alluding to the power and domination of the East. The ground floors of the blocks supported this image, as the ‘showcases for socialist ideals’ of living, housing bookshops, restaurants, cafes and other such amenities, as can be seen in figure 8. These ideals are further promoted through Paulick’s close attention to classical details on the exteriors, using ‘architectural principles that spurned the Athens chart,’ such as the fluted Doric columns of the portico, which emphasise the illusion of the strength and grandeur of the regime. The entablatures of the portico and the main building are similarly clad in ceramic decoration, albeit simple, to enhance this image of luxury. The use of ceramic decoration for the façade of the building, however, like others along Stalinallee, was due to a lack of post-war funding in the East and the speed at which the GDR wished the blocks to be built. Jaquand thus explains how ‘the installation of this highly decorated architecture called for industrialized construction procedures (crane tracks, in situ prefabrication, etc.),’ which suggests that the actual apartments were not as lavish and comfortable as they first appeared. They were simply furthering the illusion of a prosperous Communist lifestyle.

The importance of the façade of Paulick’s Palaces of the Workers is, however, only revealed when observing it more closely. Figure 9 shows a detail of the façade above the portico of the apartment block, in the centre of the building. It clearly portrays six images, in relief, which depict the various activities of the workers who built the building in the early 1950’s. The illustration in the bottom-left panel portrays two male workers, in simple dress, carrying a long joist beam; while on the second level, in the middle panel, three workers enjoy their break from labour, with one reading a newspaper and another drinking. On the next level up, to the left, two men plant a tree to demonstrate the importance of landscaping in the urban environment, while a panel at the top of the façade, to the right, introduces three

28 C. Jaquand, ‘Hermann Henselmann, Architecte de la Stalinallee,’ Architecture d’Aujourd’hui, 61
30 C. Jaquand, ‘Hermann Henselmann, Architecte de la Stalinallee,’ Architecture d’Aujourd’hui, 62
31 C. Jaquand, ‘Hermann Henselmann, Architecte de la Stalinallee,’ Architecture d’Aujourd’hui, 62
women, cleaning the new build with cloths, buckets and a broom. These decorative reliefs were influenced by the motifs of Karl Friedrich Schinkel’s nineteenth-century architecture in Berlin and ancient classical friezes. In addition to the name of the apartment blocks as *Palaces of the Workers*, therefore, Paulick’s reliefs, which would have traditionally depicted figures of great importance in the Classical era, act to glorify the workers as the key figures of a successful Communist regime. It is important to recognise, however, that the apartments were only ‘allocated to those who had distinguished themselves in arts and letters.’\(^3\) What the reliefs do reveal, however, is the fundamental principles of a Communist ideology in the East, in which all men and women are employed in their respective duties and are rewarded by urban residential districts that represent ‘a city in perfect order.’\(^3\)

The idea of living in ‘perfect order,’ however, was viewed as incredibly restrictive in the West. Crowley suggests that *Stalinallee*’s ‘monumental proportions and limited repertoire of forms extinguished the excitement and unpredictability that characterise modern urban life.’\(^3\) This ‘unpredictability’ is certainly demonstrated by the individual buildings that form the *Hansaviertel* district. The employment of a range of architects from across the world to create each building in the district resulted in a wide range of Modernist styles, heights and types of housing. Whilst some critics of the era believed the ‘individual conceptions of the various blocks... give you an impression of disorder,’\(^3\) others believed that ‘variety [was achieved], without clash or confusion.’\(^3\) The *Hansaviertel* district offered an entirely different style of living from the urban *Stalinallee*, in the form of creating a ‘pastoral’\(^3\) community lifestyle through a complex of buildings. Differing from *Stalinallee*’s ground-floor amenities, apartment blocks in *Hansaviertel* were situated amongst a separate library, a theatre, a restaurant, shops, school facilities and two churches. The presence of a Catholic and a Protestant church certainly presented one of the clear differences between a Communist and Capitalist lifestyle. Meanwhile towards the East of the site, a highly Modernist *Kongresshalle* (Hugh Stubbins (U.S.A.), 1957, figure 10) was built as the centre of the *Interbau* exhibition. The curves of Stubbins’ building and the seemingly suspended roof, dubbed by West Berliners as ‘the pregnant oyster,’\(^3\) differ greatly from the right angles of Paulick’s apartment blocks. The inclusion of a *Kongresshalle* is, however, particularly

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\(^{3}\) B. Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin*, 186
\(^{3}\) D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ *Cold War Modern Design*, 53
\(^{3}\) D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ *Cold War Modern Design*, 53
\(^{3}\) R. Rosner, ‘Exhibition, or New City?’ 242
\(^{3}\) R. Painz, ‘Commentary,’ *Architect & Building News*, vol. 212, 19 September (1957), 374
\(^{3}\) D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ *Cold War Modern Design*, 52
significant, for while Paulick’s apartments represented a collective society, the very style and presence of the Kongresshalle reveals the Western emphasis upon the individual. The Kongresshalle thus seems to be a clear representation of Western political ideology: one leader that protects and guides all.

Walter Gropius’ (1883-1969) apartment block (figure 11) provides a more direct comparison to the style of Paulick’s housing. Gropius’ structure is also high-rise, with eleven storeys, yet the overall impression is far less intimidating. Built out of reinforced concrete, due to a post-war shortage of steel, the curved front of the building, with staggered balconies in coloured enamelled steel, ‘makes a splendid façade’\(^\text{39}\) that projects the south of the building towards the Tiergarten park, the outlook of which can be seen in figure 12. Landscape planning was a significant part of building the Hansaviertel district, with an idea to create an ideal ‘pastoral life in the suburbs,’\(^\text{40}\) as aforementioned, in comparison to the centralised Stalinallee housing. German architect, Gerhard Jobst, described how ‘the free man does not want to live in an army camp, not buildings in rows,’ but in buildings ‘arranged organically… to convey the impression of people turning to one another in conversation.’\(^\text{41}\) This is exactly the kind of sociable, free style of living that Gropius’ curve promotes. Along with the use of colour, it acts to invite the viewer into the building, in comparison to Paulick’s rather hostile Palaces; while the staggering of the balconies and windows are representative of the lack of uniformity that was so associated with the excitement of Interbau.\(^\text{42}\) It is because of this that the Architect’s Journal of 1957 stated that, ‘the vigorous life of the West made the drabness of the East sector most depressing.’\(^\text{43}\)

4. Stalinallee and Hansaviertel Interiors
What emphasises this divide in the style of living between the two sectors is the design of the interiors of the apartment blocks. Gropius’ apartments embraced the optimism of a modern lifestyle in post-war Berlin, with central heating, a warm water supply, automatic laundry facilities on the ground floor and a television aerial and telephone in each flat.\(^\text{44}\) On the other hand, very little has been written about the interiors of the Stalinallee apartments, which suggests that they were fairly simple in comparison. Some information can be found, however, about the interiors of crowned architect of the GDR, Hermann Henselmann’s

\(^{39}\) R. Rosner, ‘Exhibition, or New City?’ 247
\(^{40}\) D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ \textit{Cold War Modern Design}, 52
\(^{41}\) G. Jobst, quoted in D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ \textit{Cold War Modern Design}, 59
\(^{42}\) R. Rosner, ‘Exhibition, or New City?’ 242
\(^{43}\) R. Rosner, ‘AA Visit to Berlin,’ \textit{Architect’s Journal}, 386
\(^{44}\) R. Painz, ‘Commentary,’ \textit{Architect & Building News}, 383
Palaces of the Workers, on the West end of Stalinallee (figure 13). Henselmann, like Paulick, was traditionally a Modernist architect. Yet the power of the GDR over the architecture of the East is demonstrated by the fact that the apartments are very similar in size and style to Paulick’s. Shown in figure 13, Henselmann’s Palaces also have simplified neoclassical facades and arcades running along the ground floor level. The flats inside the impressive building, however, are said to have been of very small, narrow proportions, with only one or two rooms in addition to a kitchen. The space of the communal stairwells was used as much as possible for providing extra space, being used to store bicycles, prams and refuse chutes. In order to promote a more communal lifestyle inherent of Communist societies, therefore, the GDR’s focus does not seem to have been on the comfort of individual apartments. The GDR’s Sixteen Principles for the Restructuring of Cities stated, ‘residential districts are made up of residential neighbourhoods whose hearts are the neighbourhood centres. In these centres are all the necessary cultural, commodity and community facilities for the life of the populace within these neighbourhoods.’ Stalinallee, as the showcase of a collective society, therefore, was supplied with communal facilities, such as laundries and childcare centres. These tools, implemented by the State to encourage communal living and to reduce the costs of building, thus seemed to prioritise practicality, and the promotion of a political ideology, over comfort in the East.

There are some reasons to believe, however, that the Eastern apartments, such as those by Henselmann, were not completely lacking in signs of modernity. The permanent exhibition at the original GDR café, Café Sibylle, on Stalinallee, demonstrates that new technological appliances of the 1950’s, such as televisions and electric ovens, were embraced by some of the residents of the East (figures 14 and 15). There is not enough documentation, however, to be able to decipher whether these appliances were part of most households along Stalinallee, or whether photographs such as figure 15 were solely produced by the GDR to promote the style of living in the East. This would not have been unusual for the GDR, who paid money to place Western-style advertisements on top of some of the buildings on Stalinallee, despite the lack of competition between companies under Communism, because ‘advertisements were a sign of a contemporary city.’ With their reputation for creating illusions of modernity, therefore, the interiors of the Eastern Bloc were most likely lacking in

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45 D. Crowley, ‘Europe Reconstructed, Europe Divided,’ Cold War Modern Design, 52
46 B. Ladd, The Ghosts of Berlin, 125
47 J. Ockman, Architecture Culture, 128
comfort, especially considering the GDR notion that ‘the growth of the city must be subjugated to the fundamental principle of usefulness.’

Oscar Niemeyer’s (Brazil, 1907-) Interbau Apartment House, on the other hand, encompasses usefulness, imaginative design and comfort. Shown in figure 16, the building was hailed as ‘the most impressive edifice of the whole scheme’ of Interbau, using reinforced concrete to create spacious, ‘free-flowing’ apartments, resting on distinctive triangular piloti (figure 17). Freedom of space was certainly the emphasis of Niemeyer’s apartment block, with balconies and windows extending across the whole frontage of the dwelling to produce light interiors, differing greatly from the small windows of Paulick and Helselmann’s Palaces. The remaining spaces in the communal corridors were separated by glass partitions, so that they could be used for various activities by the tenants, while the fifth floor of the building was set aside as a purely communal floor; a ‘meeting ground for tenants.’ This communal aspect of the building is particularly interesting, given that communal living was much more of an Eastern tendency. It was because of this part of Niemeyer’s design that his initial plans were rejected by the architects in charge of the scheme for fear that they were ‘alien to Berlin’s climate and living habits.’

Niemeyer defended his plans, however, feeling that ‘it was important for the people to get to know each other and not live isolated lives in their own little cells.’ Unlike the Stalinallee apartments, Niemeyer was not forcing his tenants to use communal facilities, as such, but to simply provide them with a space in which they had the option to socialise as a community. The Interbau planners consequently allowed his plan to go ahead. What the dispute did show, however, was that the living habits of the West Berliners were of much importance to the planners of Hansaviertel, differing greatly from the little consideration of Berlin’s living traditions in the East.

Berliners of the Cold War period certainly seem to have taken pride in their own homes as independent spaces. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy mentions the Berlin paper, Deutsche Kommentare, which observes, “the Berliner regards his apartment, quite particularly his kitchen, as his castle; and will cram a wedding party in his parlour rather than ‘go public.’” In support of this, what differs hugely from Stalinallee in Hansaviertel is the inclusion of

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49 J. Ockman, Architecture Culture, 127
single housing in the design of the complex. Architects such as Arne Jacobsen (Denmark, 1902-71) created single-storey individual housing for families (figure 18), which comprised of a private garage, entrance, garden and a spacious interior for the modern family, typical of the 1950’s style of living in the United States. The influence of an American lifestyle was prominent in West Berlin at this time, with Marshall Plan exhibitions being held, such as the We’re Building a Better Life exhibition in 1952. The aim of this exhibition was to show that the same opportunities of living could be achieved by a ‘John Smith or a Hans Schmidt’ through an organised display of home furnishings and model interiors, complete with actors posing as model families to publicise the Western way of living. When open to the public for the International Building Exhibition of 1957, therefore, buildings such as Jacobsen’s single houses became exhibition spaces for this modern way of living, complete with American kitchen technology, to show the comfortable, content lifestyle available in the West. Just like the political use of architecture on Stalinallee, therefore, Interbau was an exercise in the ideological promotion of the West, with architecture becoming ‘one of the most effective psychological mechanisms for manipulating the people.’

5. Berlin: A Cold War Battleground

Despite their differences in style, therefore, the reasons for building these two developments in East and West Berlin in the 1950’s were incredibly similar. Stalinallee and Interbau responded to the necessity of housing in Berlin’s ravaged post-war state, whilst defending their sides of the East or West in a Cold War battle between the superpowers. Both parties were keen to demonstrate that the lifestyles in their sector, prompted by the differing Communist and Capitalist ideologies, were more successful than the other. Presented by the buildings of Interbau, West Berlin achieved this by embracing Modernism, through imaginative exteriors and high-tech interiors. Meanwhile on the Eastern Stalinallee, the success of the regime was alluded to through the ‘elegance’ of the neoclassical exteriors and their promotion of order, in a period of post-war disorder. Architecture was thus used as an effective Cold War tool in Berlin, as mentioned earlier, and prompted further propaganda campaigns by the East and Western governments to promote their superior ways of living. A 1957 poster created by the East Berlin Authorities stated, ‘The Interbau is a clear reflection

56 G. Castillo, ‘Marshall Plan Modernism in Divided Germany,’ D. Crowley, Cold War Modern Design, 68
58 C. Jaquand, ‘Hermann Henselmann, Architecte de la Stalinallee,’ Architecture d’Aujourd’hui, 61
of the muddled contradiction inherent in Capitalism. The organised unity of the will to
reconstruction is demonstrated by the great conception of the *Stalinallee.*

Perhaps such propaganda was more necessary in the Eastern Bloc in the 1950’s, however, for some statistics suggest that housing campaigns, such as *Stalinallee,* were not as successful as *Interbau.* In 1957, for example, the Architect’s Journal reported that 2.2 million people were living in West Berlin, with only 1.3 million in the East, which implies that the Communist lifestyle was not as popular. In addition to this, with the benefit of history, the building of the Berlin wall in 1961 can be used as evidence to suggest that the Western style of living was more successful, created as a barrier to prevent the thousands of defectors from the East to the West in the 1950’s. Perhaps part of the reason for this was because there existed a “certain irony, that in the East, the ‘democratic sector,’ the effort appeared to go into vast impressive monuments and axial avenues of reactionary architecture, while in the ‘undemocratic’ West, there was the truly social achievement in building houses.”

Looking at *Stalinallee* and the *Hansaviertel* district today, *Stalinallee* is in a much poorer architectural condition, with crumbling facades that have only recently prompted renovation; while *Hansaviertel* is in pristine condition, with many young families still moving into the apartment blocks. Their respective maintenance costs were partly why, under Khrushchev’s influence post-1953, the ‘end of neo-realist architecture in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries’ was demanded. A process of de-Stalinisation ensued, prompting the re-naming of *Stalinallee* to *Karl-Marx-Allee,* as it still exists today. Nevertheless, seeing both of these developments in person in their current states, in addition to living so comfortably in a Western society today, it has been difficult to be completely objective about them and the lifestyles that they presented. What this study of the competing architectural styles of *Hansaviertel* and *Stalinallee* has hopefully demonstrated, however, was how Berlin was used by the Cold War superpowers as a site upon which to conduct their conflict of superiority. Both *Stalinallee* and *Hansaviertel* were equally successful in their powerful presentations of the lifestyles created by the political ideologies of either side.

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60 R. Rosner, ‘AA Visit to Berlin,’ *Architect’s Journal,* 383
61 R. Rosner, ‘AA Visit to Berlin,’ *Architect’s Journal,* 386
62 C. Jaquand, ‘Hermann Henselmann, Architecte de la Stalinallee,’ *Architecture d’Aujourd’hui,* 62
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Illustrations

Fig. 1.
William Vandivert
_Aerial view of bombed-out buildings, Berlin_
July 1945 issue of LIFE magazine

Fig. 2.
William Vandivert
_View of bombed building and piles of rubble, Berlin_
July 1945 issue of LIFE magazine

Fig. 3.
Google Maps
_Highlighting the location of Hansaviertel and Stalinallee (now Karl-Marx-Allee) in relation to the Berlin Wall_
Berlin

Fig. 4.
Hansaviertel Architecture Information
_Hansaviertel Site Plan_
Hansaviertel, Berlin, 2012

Fig. 5.
Stalinallee Architecture Information
_Stalinallee Site Plan_
Stalinallee, Berlin, 2012

Fig. 6.
Unknown photographer
Architects, Dmitry Chechylin and Andrei Rostkovsky
_Kotelnicheskaya Embankment Apartments_ (1947-1952)
Moscow, 2009
Fig. 7.
Emily Thomas
*Palaces of the Workers (Richard Paulick), frontal view*
Stalinallee, Berlin, 2012

Fig. 8.
Emily Thomas
*Palaces of the Workers (Richard Paulick), side view*
Stalinallee, Berlin, 2012

Fig. 9.
Emily Thomas
*Palaces of the Workers* (Richard Paulick), detail
Stalinallee, Berlin, 2012

![Palaces of the Workers (Richard Paulick), detail](image)

**Fig. 10.**
Emily Thomas
*Kongresshalle* (Hugh Stubbins)
Interbau, Berlin, 2012

![Kongresshalle (Hugh Stubbins)](image)

**Fig. 11.**
Emily Thomas
*Walter Gropius Apartment Block*
Hansaviertel, Berlin, 2012

![Walter Gropius Apartment Block](image)
Fig. 12.
Emily Thomas
*Walter Gropius Apartment Block Outlook*
Hansaviertel, Berlin, 2012

Fig. 13.
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*Hermann Henselmann Palaces of the Workers*
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Fig. 14.
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*Café Sibylle exhibition, Stalinallee television*
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Fig. 15.
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*Café Sibylle exhibition, Stalinallee appliances*
Stalinallee, Berlin, 2012

Fig. 16.
Emily Thomas
*Oscar Niemeyer Apartment Block*
Hansaviertel, Berlin, 2012

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*Arne Jacobsen Single Housing*
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