The Squatter Movement in Germany
1970–1984

Penka Rare Books and Archives
Contact
Penka Rare Books and Archives
Dr. Philipp Penka
Gustav-Müller-Str. 40
10829 Berlin, Germany
+49 (0)30 28602740
info@penkararebooks.com
www.penkararebooks.com
VAT-ID: DE285184104

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Texts: Friedrich Haufe

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The squatter movement in the Federal Republic of Germany, which had a lasting impact on cities such as Frankfurt am Main, West Berlin, and Hamburg in the 1970s and 1980s, was ideologically, politically, and culturally heterogeneous. This chronologically ordered list provides insight into the publishing activities of various groups and initiatives. The journals, flyers, posters, and other ephemera allow developments and debates to be traced over a relatively long period of two decades. It becomes clear, for example, that the fundamentally anti-capitalist, communist or anarchist intentions of the movements gradually weakened over the years. In Frankfurt am Main (→ no. 2), it was still communist and occasionally anarchist, ideologically trained, divided groups (Leninists, Trotskyists, Maoists, etc.) from the student milieu who used the squats as a stage with their experience, for example in printing leaflets and magazines, in agitation and street fighting.

The German Beat author Jörg Fauser would later describe the internal ideological trench warfare and authoritarian pecking orders that raged and prevailed behind the gesture of the liberation struggle in his novel Rohstoff (Raw material). Not yet reflected in the Frankfurt pamphlets are all the non-political, subcultural groups that were involved in squatting. In contrast to the later Berlin publications, the Frankfurt pamphlets and magazines were still characterized by the goal of political-theoretical persuasion. Fauser described the daily battles over which flags to hoist, which music to play, and who was to be allowed to live on which floor. Life in the squats was like an endless plenary session interrupted only by sleep. It was the environment in which Joschka Fischer, who later became German Foreign Minister, received his political education.
But even beyond these political and subcultural alliances, the occupation of old buildings threatened with demolition also found increasing sympathy among the middle classes, because the activists ensured that individual buildings were listed as historic monuments. In many cases, the buildings with their ornamental decoration, which still bore witness to the bourgeois residential culture of the late nineteenth century, were slated to make way for functional office complexes. Squatting as a form of protest also became popular in bourgeois circles who wanted to prevent the demolition of these historic buildings. The architectural historian Heinrich Klotz, who later became known as a theorist of postmodern architecture, reported on a rescue operation in Göttingen: “We had nothing to do with politics. [...] We were strange sectarians who were committed to ridiculous things. But when the whole town began to participate in the event, the first political groups appeared.” After a short time at Yale, Klotz was hired to teach in Marburg (near Frankfurt am Main), with its old town consisting of half-timbered houses. In the early 1970s, plans were made to demolish most of the medieval and early modern old town. It was possible to convince the city government of the need to preserve it. (Heinrich Klotz, Weitergegeben, Cologne 1999, pp. 40–65)

This was accompanied by an increasing fundamental criticism of modernist architecture, which had already been advocated by Italian communists in the 1960s in favor of a return to pre-modern values and forms in urban coexistence (see https://schlaufen-verlag.de/blog/aufruch-zurueck, 21.04.2024). In the mid-1970s, a symposium was held in Berlin entitled “The Pathos of Functionalism,” at which architects such as Aldo Rossi (who was later to replicate part of the façade of Michelangelo’s Palazzo Farnese in Berlin), Robert Venturi, and Denise Scott Brown opposed continuing the tradition of Gropius and Mies van der Rohe (on this and the following, see Klotz, pp. 66–85).

Rossi presented his projects with a slide projector to aggressive laughter, Venturi read out his manifesto, which stated, among other things: “Less is not more — Less is a bore!” and Denise Scott Brown pleaded for the preservation of historic old towns. The group was concerned with a “revision of modernity” as a response to the uniform, coldly rational social and office estates. Klotz reports that this movement met with vehement rejection from left-wing architects of the 1968 generation in particular, as the defense of ornamentation was considered “reactionary.”

At the same time, however, Berlin was also affected by large-scale plans in the 1970s and 1980s to demolish the old turn-of-the-century buildings which had been spared during the war, in order to raise new buildings quickly and cheaply in their place. Renovating the old buildings seemed too costly and not profitable enough. At the same time, the first squats took place in Berlin, which, together with citizens’ initiatives, prevented the demolition of the nineteenth-century Bethanien Hospital, for example (→ no. 4). In 1975, the year of monument protection, critical architects took the opportunity to engage with the squatters and interpret them as a movement against the uniformity of modernism (→ no. 10).

West Berlin was a place where the Left increasingly turned away from the Marxist dogmas of 1968. The “Tunix” (“do nothing”) congress, attended by Michel Foucault and Jean-Luc Godard, was regarded as the founding act of an undogmatic alternative movement. The dogmatic Left was widely regarded as a failure
and the RAF seen as a phenomenon of dissolution. In any case, the subculture of punk had little use for the various communist theories and forms of organization. This context gave rise to a subculturally dominated Berlin squatters’ movement, whose publications are extensively represented in this list of offerings.

The year 1981 in particular marked the zenith of this development. Numerous buildings were occupied and the “Tuwat” (“Do something”; → no. 17) congress was organized, in which the first computer hackers also formed. Unlike in Frankfurt am Main ten years earlier, the focus was now not on political theories, but on concrete measures to preserve the buildings. This becomes clear from the publications. The “Instand-Besetzer-Post” (Restoration squatters post, → no. 19) dealt with everyday issues of renovation and restoration, but also with the sometimes violent clashes with the police, which were referred to as “Häuserkampf” (urban warfare, or literally: house fight). The material presented here shows impressively how a politically left-wing alternative scene fought for the preservation of bourgeois housing culture, while “conservative” politicians strove to tear down entire neighborhoods to make way for uniform new concrete buildings.

The tragic climax of this conflict was the death of squatter Klaus-Jürgen Rattay, who died during a police eviction. A collection of press photographs extensively documents this event and the subsequent demonstrations (→ no. 15). Ultimately, numerous buildings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were saved from demolition. At the same time, the International Building Exhibition (IBA) in 1987 became one of the central testing grounds for postmodern architecture, which attempted to integrate itself organically into the ensembles of old architecture. The IBA is regarded as a turning point, the aim of which was now a cautious urban renewal.

Berlin squatters: a group of journals, leaflets, and other publications | Berlin: various publishers, 1970–1983 | Folios to octavos (45.9 × 100.6 to 14.5 × 21.0 cm) | Different types of original binding | About very good (54221) €750

Although the practice of “squatting” began in West Germany at Frankfurt am Main, the debates that led to this form of action had already begun in the large university cities, including Berlin. For example, the volume contains a pamphlet by the Association of Student Residences, in which numerous debates already appear that were to be decisive for ten years between the city administrations and the squatter scenes. At issue was not only the difficulty for students to find affordable housing, but also the planned demolition and new construction of entire neighborhoods. The publication also reports on government demolition bonuses and notes the first squats in Frankfurt am Main.

Also worth highlighting is a poster by the left-wing cartoonist Gerhard Seyfried, who, disillusioned with the Marxist groups of the late 1960s, joined the left-wing alternative forces of the Berlin squatter scene and worked in their environment. He shaped the image of the Berlin alternative scene among the left-liberal section of the West German population like hardly anyone else. His caricatures were reviewed in the high-circulation weekly “Der Spiegel”, among other publications, and his drawings appeared not only in small left-wing publications but also in books published by major publishing houses.

One theme that runs through the Berlin squatter scene is media criticism in the form of imitation. The high-circulation newspapers and magazines such as “Bild”, “Stern”, and “Spiegel” repeatedly reported on the squatter scene, and “Bild” in particular did not spare indignant and scandalizing headlines about the “chaos”. Again and again, the Berlin squatters published magazines and flyers (see the following numbers of our list), in which they imitated the typography and writing style of such “official” news media, but reversed the content. In this group, we find the example of “Extrablatt Berlin” respectively “Berlin Extra”, whose layout is modeled on the “Bild” newspaper. In it, the “Bild” newspaper and its headlines are also explicitly quoted. One headline reads: “Springer wirft mit Schlagzeilen” (The Springer publishing house is throwing headlines). The formulated goal was to let “the other side have its say.” The second issue is also illustrated with photo-montages based on Heartfield’s model. However, the publication “Extrablatt Berlin” was mainly published by supporters of the squatter scene. Among them were the Green Party and the Berlin Tenants’ Association.


In addition:

Furthermore, a supplement: pirated print: Werner Hofmann: Bodeneigentum und Gesellschaft — Theorie und Wirklichkeit [Land Property and Society — Theory and Reality].

2 Documentation on the Frankfurt squatter scene. 93 leaflets and journals, predominantly by the council-communist organization “Revolutionärer Kampf” (Revolutionary Struggle) and the “Häuserrat” (Council of Houses). In addition, several leaflets from other associated councils and two supplements: Frankfurt, 1971–80 | Folios and quartos (ca. 43 × 30.5 and 30 × 21 cm) | Folio leaves mostly folded horizontally; some leaves somewhat toned and with marginal tears; a few leaves with larger tears and somewhat stained; some of the leaves and issues hole-punched at the margins; else good or better | (54222) €3,500

The West German squatter scene began in Frankfurt am Main. Two factors played important roles in this. On the one hand, Frankfurt was one of the centers of left-wing students, whose actionism, however, turned away from the critical theory of Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer. On the other hand, after the division of Berlin, the city became the financial center of West Germany. Frankfurt grew rapidly and the need for office space was great. Moreover, office space was also much more profitable to sell and rent than residential space. Plans were made to erect numerous office towers in the formerly bourgeois “Westend” district, which was characterized by unrenovated Historicist and Art Nouveau city villas. The richly decorated fin de siècle buildings, which no longer offered much in the way of comfort, were left to decay and rented out to students and migrant workers until they were demolished.

The owners, speculating on the quickest possible demolition of the buildings, deliberately let the houses fall into disrepair. The neglected properties quickly received approval from city authorities for demolition. The workers and students who united against this process were not only concerned with preserving the historic architecture, but first and foremost with preventing the conversion of low-cost housing into office space. With this concern, the various initiatives had links to left-wing activist groups organized at the university and trained in Marxism and critical theory, which had made it their task to support various social struggles. A prominent role was played by the organization “Revolutionärer Kampf” (Revolutionary Struggle), which had emerged from 1968. In addition to the so-called “Häuserkampf” (struggle for the houses), the organization formed various groups in factories, for example, to help organize strikes. The squatters were organized among themselves according to the council-communist model. Leninist centralism was rejected; instead, the groups in the factories and squats organized themselves on a grassroots democratic basis. For example, numerous leaflets in this convolute deal also with the workers’ struggles at the automobile manufacturer “Opel”, where various council-communist groups were active. This form of organization is clearly noticeable in the convolute: different councils also disseminated their own leaflets in deviation from the umbrella organization. Among the members of “Revolutionärer Kampf” (Revolutionary Struggle) at that time were Joschka Fischer, who later became foreign minister of Germany, and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who later became an EU politician.

The first squats in West Germany, which were supported not only by left-wing groups but also by broad sections of the urban population, escalated into violent street fighting. Despite the radical leftist militant rhetoric, the squatters tried legal negotiation strategies with the city government and the owners. In this way, some of the houses were finally listed as historic monuments and thus saved from demolition. The present leaflets deal with the occupations of individual houses and the resulting conflicts with the owners, the city politicians, the municipal offices and the police. In a few
leaflets, the street fights are also presented photographically from the perspective of the squatters. Extensively documented is especially the dispute over the neo-Renaissance villa built in the late nineteenth century at Kettenhofweg 51. During the turn of the century, the magnificent building was used by the entrepreneur Marx Löwenstein as a horse stable and living quarters for his servants. What is interesting about the radical left-wing leaflets here is how Marxists fought to preserve the bourgeois architecture. Last but not least, the functional concrete high-rises of social housing were compared with the advantages of the old building in the middle of the city, where the mixing of different social groups was possible, unlike in the “ghettos” of the commuter towns.

The Frankfurt “Häuserkampf” also found its way into West German theater and film history. In the late 1970s, Rainer Werner Fassbinder staged a play in which numerous allusions were made to participants in the Frankfurt real estate market. The performance became a scandal. Fassbinder was accused of reproducing anti-Semitic stereotypes. The convolute offers a comprehensive insight into the history of West Germany between the death of Theodor W. Adorno and the so-called “German Autumn”, the escalation of terror by the RAF.

Most of the leaflets can be attributed to the organization “Revolutionärer Kampf” (Revolutionary Struggle) by the use of the symbol of the clenched fist. Unlike in the communist movement of the Weimar Republic, the fist is not raised in the air, but in a sense comes toward the reader of the leaflet. 17 folio brochures by the organization, of 4 pages each, are also headed with the name of the association. 17 folio pamphlets are mostly marked only with the symbol; few of the sheets are written in Italian. With the groups “Lotta continua” and “unione inquilini” from Italy, immigrant workers also participated in the actions. 40 quarto leaflets are printed mostly on red paper, half have the symbol, the other half have been written and distributed by individual councils or groups. 8 folio sheets were written by the “Häuserrat” (Council of Houses), which also distributed folio issues under the title “Häuserkampfzeitung” (Council of Houses Newspaper), each with 4 to 6 pages, of which 3 copies from different years are available here. In addition, the House Council printed a folio wall newspaper (43.0 × 70 cm) “Wandzeitung des Häuserrats” (Wall newspaper of the House Council). We have from the year 1973 the numbers 2, 3, 4 and 6. An extensive, richly illustrated folio publication by the students of the University of Frankfurt and the House Council from the same year deals on 24 large newspaper pages with the struggle for the villa built by Marx Löwenstein: “Kettenhofweg 51: Wohnungsämpfe in Frankfurt. Documentation (...)” (Kettenhofweg 51: Housing Struggles in Frankfurt. Documentation). Numerous illustrations in it show the evictions; in addition to witness statements, excerpts from the police radio were also printed. Furthermore, there is a quarto issue of the “Häuserkampfzeitung” (Housing Council Newspaper) from April 1974 (No. 10, 4 p.) as well as the 10-page quarto issue “Häuserkampf-info 1” (Housing Struggle Info 1) from January of the same year. In addition, the convolute also contains isolated pamphlets from other councils.

Supplements:

Berlin squatters in Kreuzberg: group of 10 journals and leaflets by different Kreuzberg squatter initiatives | Berlin: self-published, 1971–1982 | Octavos to folios (20.6 × 15.0 to 41.7 × 29.6 cm) | Various types of original bindings | A few leaves with stamps of a squatter organization; else about very good | (54223) €250

Kreuzberg was the part of Berlin where the squatter scene played perhaps the most important role. This was for two reasons. On the one hand, Kreuzberg was located directly by the Berlin Wall, and on the other hand, the neighborhood was declared a redevelopment area. At that time, redevelopment in Kreuzberg was synonymous with the demolition of turn-of-the-century architecture and the construction of modernist concrete apartment blocks. The squatters’ interest was different: preserving the old buildings and restoring them. Two terms thus became synonyms for the different approach to urban planning: “redevelopment” (Sanierung) and “repair” (Instandsetzung). Thus the squatters created a new German word: “Instand(bei)setzung” (repairing by squatting). The insertion of one syllable was enough to make clear that occupation and repair were opposed to the urban-politically desired redevelopment. The term “repair” was originally a municipal term from the shortage economy of the 1940s and 1950s, which the squatters now discovered for themselves and their concerns. Unlike in Frankfurt am Main, the Berlin squatters were intent on restoring the houses themselves to counter neglect and demolition. The publications presented here already give a small cross-section of the Kreuzberg scene. Individual occupation projects are represented in more detail in the following catalog numbers with flyers and journals.


Early, rare leaflets by the squatters of an annex of the Bethany Hospital built in the mid-nineteenth century. The occupation of the house gained popularity in the left-wing scene of West Germany mainly through the band “Ton Steine Scherben”, which released a song about the “Rauch-Haus”. Even before the occupation, the historic building complex was the subject of disagreement. The city government planned to demolish the buildings, which the protests of the Berliners prevented. After the buildings were listed as historical monuments, they nevertheless remained unused and left to decay. After the anarchist Georg von Rauch died during a police operation, students and other young people occupied the building in December 1971 and named it after the activist. A housing project was established consisting of homeless youths, young trainees, pupils, students and workers in self-administration. The present leaflets deal with the clashes between the squatters and the state authorities, with the raids on the one hand and the contract negotiations to legalize the project on the other. After the legalization of the project, the main building of the old hospital was used by artists. That this use of the main building was not welcomed by some occupants is shown by the third supplement of this convolute, a flyer stating that the planned studios would be the “height of impudence”. The artists would be subsidized for their “extravagances” by “our taxes” and claim for themselves the space that was due to the citizens of Kreuzberg. Later, architecture students also worked in the studios, preparing for the Berlin International Building Exhibition, which incorporated postmodernism and its critique of modernist functionalism into urban planning.

The convolute contains the following leaflets

I: Wie starb Georg von Rauch [How did Georg von Rauch die].

II: Ein Angriff gegen das Georg v. Rauch Haus ist ein Schlag gegen uns Alle! Schlagen wir gemeinsam zurück! [An attack against the Georg v. Rauch House is a blow against us all! Let’s fight back together].

IV: 1:0 fürs Rauch-Haus. Der Senat hat verloren [1:0 for the Rauch House: The Senate has lost].

V: No. 1 Georg v. Rauchhaus: Das ist unser Haus! [No. 1 Georg v. Rauch house: This is our house].


VIII: Jugendliche gegen Bürohengste [Young people against office jockeys].

Three additions:


– Supplied: Two further leaflets of the “Rauch-Haus”.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list a copy of the leaflets in any North American library.
It is assumed that this manual was created in the context of the squats in Frankfurt am Main. This is already indicated by the preface, which rejects “critical theory” in favor of actionist struggles. Accordingly, the main subject of the booklet is the practice of squatting and physical confrontation with the police. There are detailed instructions on how to build street, door and window barricades out of wood and barbed wire. The brochure also deals with the construction of weapons such as Molotov cocktails and with strategies of violent eviction on streets and in houses. It also provides information on first medical aid, such as the application of bandages or artificial respiration. The brochure concludes with legal advice on dealing with the police and legal proceedings.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list a copy in a North American library.
Very rare document of the Berlin squatter scene. What is striking is the plain design, created with very simple printing techniques, which stands out from the otherwise visually overloaded publications of the left-wing initiatives. The otherwise prevailing horror vacui of such publications is not dominant here. The title with its children’s drawings appears somewhat ornamentally overloaded, but it is given plenty of space. Both covers are printed in two different colors. The layout of the interior is also tidy.

The occupation of two upper floors of the turn-of-the-century building in 1973 by young people was intended to prevent its demolition. A citizens’ initiative with the street name “Putte” had already been running a children’s and students’ center in the building for some time. The building was evicted by the police in 1974 and finally demolished. The sheets inform on the one hand about the projects of work with children and young people and on the other hand about the state of negotiations with the city to prevent the demolition of the building. The sheets are intended above all to encourage the neighborhood to support the initiative.

In addition: 1 leaflet (Putte von Abriss bedroht: Wir fordern Nutzungsvertrag für unser Haus! [Putte threatened with demolition: We demand a contract of use for our house!]). And: postcard with a picture of the building.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list any holdings in North America.
YOUTH AND HOMELESS WORK

Tommy-Weissbecker-Haus. Three leaflets | Berlin: self-published, 1973–76 | Folio and Quarto (ca. 43 × 30.5 cm and 30.5 × 21.5 cm) | Original pictorial self-wrappers; [4]; [4]; [8] pp. | With illustrations | Paper mostly toned; the folio issue with horizontal crease; margins with tiny tears; else about very good | (54203) €300

Rare, early flyers of the “Tommy-Weissbecker-Haus”, a turn-of-the-century tenement building which the squatters named after the left-wing extremist Thomas Weisbecker, who died during a police operation in which he was to be arrested. Weisbecker, whose name the squatters mistakenly write here with a double s, belonged to the “2 June Movement”, named after the death date of leftist student Benno Ohnesorg in the summer of 1967 and founded in response to the death of Georg von Rauch in a shootout with police. Some members of the terrorist group later switched to the RAF. Both the occupation of the Georg von Rauch House and the Tommy Weisbecker House were still under the sign of an ideologically formed left, which assigned itself to different dogmatisms. This changed in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which were characterized by punk and a postmodern left that was moving away from Marxism.

As in the “Georg-Rauch-Haus” and the “Putte” squatting project, the “Tommy Weissbecker Haus” was primarily an initiative of left-wing youth and social workers who sought to help homeless young people who had fled their families or reformatories. Like the other two projects, the initiators pursued a balancing act between militant fundamental opposition on the one hand and acceptance and support by state institutions on the other. The texts of the leaflets are also characterized by this dual strategy.

The convolute contains the following leaflets:

I: Tommy-Weissbecker-Haus. Hier wohnen wir!

II: Unser Kampf ums Tommy-Weissbecker-Haus.

III: Dokumentation. Abriss vom Tommy-Weissbecker-Haus???

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list a copy in a North American library.
Five publications of the squatter scenes of different cities in Northern Germany. Bremen, Hamburg, and Hannover: self-published, 1973–79 | Different formats, octavos to folios (21 × 15 to 41.7 × 29.6 cm) | Different types of original binding; about very good | (54224) €450

Particularly noteworthy is the Hamburg brochure “Wir greifen an” (“We attack”) on the occasion of the occupation of Ekhofstraße 39, which took place only a few days after the eviction of the villa at Kettenhofweg 51 in Frankfurt (→ no. 2). As in Frankfurt, there were ambitious plans for urban redevelopment in Hamburg, culminating in the consideration of replacing the historicist building of the Hamburg “Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe” with a high-rise building. Once again, opposing views of urban policy confronted each other. One side wanted to preserve both the buildings and the social structure, the other wanted to fundamentally transform certain areas, which included the elimination of the historic buildings. The conflict was not only between left-wing squatters and various players in the real estate business, but extended into city politics and administration. Even the youth organization of the conservative Christian Democratic Party showed understanding for the left-wing radical squatters. (See: Karl Christian Führer, Die Stadt, das Geld und der Markt, Berlin 2016.)

The convolute contains the following publications sorted by city:


As of February 2024, OCLC does not list copies in North America.
Thirteen leaflets and journals from the districts of Schöneberg, Wedding, and Zehlendorf. Berlin: self-published, 1974–1981. Octavos and quartos (21.6 × 29.7 to 30 × 21.5 cm). Different types of original binding; overall very good. €450

Highlighted in the convolute are the city district newspapers, through which it becomes apparent how a part of the left-liberal population in the city districts reacted to the squats. Expressions of solidarity predominate. At the same time, the relationship was not always easy, despite sympathy. Within the squatter scene in Berlin, there were different opinions about how to act in public and how far to go with statements and publications. For example, the neighborhood newspaper “Winterfeldt Platzette” reported in detail about the squats in Schöneberg, about the individual houses, the renovation work, and the threat of demolition by investors, but also about the isolation of individual squatter groups from the public. Also interesting is a documentary by the Green Party about the squatter scene in the Berlin villa district of Zehlendorf, which is now one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the German capital. It presents individual villas that were threatened with demolition and were eventually squatted. Police eviction and demolition could not always be prevented. Some of them were very stately villas of the turn of the century with wood-paneled walls, stucco ceilings, and parquet floors.

The convolute contains, sorted by year of publication:


As of February 2024, OCLC does not list any holdings in North American libraries.
Published on the occasion of the European Year of Monument Protection in 1975, this brochure impressively documents how closely the concepts of postmodern architecture on the one hand, and the restorative and preservative practices of the squatter movement on the other hand, were interwoven. What they had in common was a critique of the modern architecture of social housing with its standardized facades. Right at the beginning of the publication, it states that the goal of functionalism was the glorification of progress and technical rationality. It would be inhumane to purify architecture of its picturesque and sculptural components, as this would force play and improvisation out of people’s lives. The house squatters and their wild architecture, the wall paintings with the inclusion of the ornaments of historicism, were to be understood as a return of what had been displaced by modernism.

The Modern Garden Settlement is extensively discussed and compared to Baroque and Renaissance gardens. Individual occupied houses, their wall paintings and plantings are also presented. Another topic is alternative settlements made of construction trailers, the phenomenon of individual design of the wooden barracks by their inhabitants. These are compared, for example, with the Mannerist sculptures of the Bomarzo garden. In general, historical illustrative material, which is used for comparison, plays an important role in this publication. The principle of the publication is to turn against purism through eclecticism, whereby the squatter scene on the one hand and historical materials on the other are important sources.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list any copies in North America, and only one outside of Germany (in Italy).
The Factory Commune was quite different from other Berlin squatting groups. Unlike these, the factory commune was not concerned with a direct confrontation with owners and authorities, but with alternative living and working conditions. Subculturally, the group was still influenced more by the hippie movement and less by the punks. There were various working groups in the Fabrik, for example a group for photography with a darkroom, another group for printing crafts, in which the basics from layout to offset printing were taught. Various sports, from karate to soccer, were also organized. There were also theater, music, and dance groups. The issues provide extensive information about the various activities, the expansion of the workshops. The basic political stance becomes clear again and again, but in contrast to the publications of the squatters, confrontations with the police play no or only a clearly subordinate role.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list any holdings in North America, and only one outside of Germany (in the Netherlands).
Comprehensive anthology on the social history of Berlin tenements. With extensive writing, for example, about the construction of entire urban areas during the imperial period at the end of the nineteenth century, when the housing demand increased enormously within a few years due to the development of industry. The business practices of the builders and the housing situation for the workers are documented by photographs and floor plans, among other things. Sources include newspaper reports and court records. Other topics include the various housing initiatives in Germany and Austria after the end of World War I, as well as housing shortages and rebuilding after the end of World War II. Ultimately, an attempt is made to contextualize the squatter movement socio-historically in this series. Accordingly, the volume concludes with plans for urban redevelopment and resistance to the planned demolition of historic tenements, which is described as a destruction of cities.

Very rare publication by squatters from Berlin-Charlottenburg, aimed at residents of the district. The cover is designed with an unusually artistic title illustration for the squatter scene, showing two crocodiles crawling out of old building windows. This alludes to the term “swamp” used by representatives of the Berlin authorities who wanted to “dry up” the squatters’ “swamp”. The aim of the publication is to present the urban policy goals and the criticism of urban planning in Berlin Charlottenburg at the time to the population from the perspective of the squatters. Criticism is levelled at the practice of homeowners of deliberately making living space “uninhabitable” in order to subsequently demolish the empty historic old buildings. The concepts of the city government’s plans, other old buildings that had been spared from the demolition plans were to be renovated in such a way that the previous tenants could no longer afford the apartments. The squatters, on the other hand, present plans for a cost-effective redevelopment of the apartments and ask for support.

As of February 2024, not in KVK, OCLC.
Press photographs: 147 original prints, mainly dating to 1981 and 1982. Vintage silver gelatin prints, measuring ca. 20 x 25 cm. White margins mostly hole-punched and with typewritten index card inscription; very occasionally affecting the image; a few prints with the stamp of the picture service “The Associated Press GmbH” to verso. Overall about very good. (54206)

€2,800

Striking group of photographs which give a cross-section through the press documentation of the so-called “Häuserkampf” (house fight) in Berlin. Photographed are facades of squatted houses with slogans, posters, and banners, scenes of violent fights on the streets between police and squatters, burning vehicles and street barricades, police evacuations of squatted houses, arrests, looted stores, smashed glass windows, house demolitions, children playing in front of ruins and in wrecked cars, and more rarely scenes of renovation work carried out by the squatters on their own initiative.

Two incidents play a prominent role in the convolute: the left-alternative congress TUWAT (see no. 16) and the death of squatter Klaus-Jürgen Rattay, who fled into the street during a police eviction and was run over by a bus. Two pictures show Rattay lying in front of the bus while passersby rush to him. Numerous pictures document the mourning demonstrations.

The year 1981 was characterized on the one hand by the fact that many houses were occupied within a short time, and on the other hand by an escalation of violence between police and squatters. Some of the photos show conditions similar to civil war, although it must be remembered that the press photographers had a great interest in taking pictures that were as spectacular as possible. A few of the photographs also show an aesthetic will to form and go beyond the repertoire of ordinary press photography.
HAND-PRINTED ARTIST BOOK COMMEMORATING RATTAY

Wagner, Dieter (editor, designer, and printer) and Christoph Niess | Berlin 22.9.81 | Scheiben klirren und ihr schreit — Menschen sterben und ihr schweigt [Windows clink and you scream — people die and you stay silent] | Berlin: Dieter Wagner, 1984 | Quarto (28 × 19.7 cm) | Original hand-bound and printed boards (bookbinder: Hugo Hoffmann); 50 leaves mostly made of waste paper, overprinted with text in large font sizes | Also included are four lithographs after red chalk drawings by Christoph Niess on a different, firmer and not overprinted paper | About fine (P5218)

€2,500

Very rare hand-press print made in an edition of only 200 copies in memory of squatter Klaus-Jürgen Rattay, who died during a police eviction. The elaborate designed and printed volume gathers short lines of text dealing politically with the death of the squatter. After the evacuation of eight squatted houses as part of a large-scale police operation on September 22, 1981, Senator Heinrich Lummer gave a press conference in a previously vacated house. Demonstrators gradually gathered in front of the building to protest against Lummer. The group was dispersed by a police operation. While running across the street, 18-year-old Klaus-Jürgen Rattay was hit by a bus and dragged to death under the left front wheel.

An unusually elaborately produced document and art object about the Berlin squatter scene. Dieter Wagner, a printer, developed his hand press from the old lead types that had become obsolete. The materials from the old printing techniques were stored in the factory yards so that they could be picked up by scrap dealers or the garbage collectors. Wagner used the principle of reuse consistently and printed on paper remnants and waste sheets that could also be found from the printers’ yards. In this way, each print from Wagner’s press is individual and also contingent in its design. An important point of reference for Wagner was Victor Otto Stomps, who had been working with printing waste and unusual materials for a very long time. Also influential for him were Hendrik Nicolaas Werkman and Franz Mon. In 1985, the city of Mainz awarded him the prestigious Victor Otto Stomps Prize. His prints are in the Klingspor Museum in Offenbach am Main, the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, and the Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry in Miami Beach.

Spindler 134.10

As of January 2024, not found in KVK, OCLC.
The TUWAT congress ("tuwat" colloquially stands for the call to do something) followed three years after the TUNIX congress ("tunix" colloquially stands for the call to do nothing). TUNIX is considered the founding event of the alternative left, which was also constituted as a result of the so-called "German Autumn" in order to emerge from the ideological Marxist hardening and leftist terror of the RAF. Among the outstanding participants were Michel Foucault and Jean-Luc Godard. Three years later, the situation within the left was different. The Green Party had been founded. The protest against nuclear power had taken hold of broad circles of society, and the planned demolition of many turn-of-the-century apartment buildings led to a steadily growing squatter movement. Out of this climate came the TUWAT Congress, which in turn repositioned itself on the question of violence. The organized terrorism of the RAF continued to be rejected as dogmatic, but at the same time violence was advocated at demonstrations against nuclear power plants or in resistance to police evictions of squatters' houses. The self-image was one of individual struggles of certain groups, who were no longer concerned with the enforcement of a concrete system against the existing one, but with the radical change of certain living conditions. (See: Alexander Sedlmaier, Konsum und Gewalt. Radikaler Protest in der Bundesrepublik, Berlin 2018.) The specific occasion of the congress was an announcement by the police about evicting nine occupied houses. In this flyer, the Cold War and the nuclear weapons policy as well as the construction of nuclear power plants are discussed. There is an appeal to advertise the congress, for example by creating your own posters, flyers, and wall paintings.

As part of the four-week congress, the Hamburg computer hacker Wau Holland organized a conference in the left-wing alternative daily TAZ, from which the “Chaos Computer Club” eventually emerged. The aim was to bring together the avant-garde of young computer enthusiasts who were active beyond the mainframe. Even then, the topics were state surveillance via computer technology, the networking of computers via telephone cables and the technology of teletext (Internet), data security and copyright. (See: Katrin Ganz, Die Netzbewegung, Opladen, Berlin, Toronto 2018, p. 27.) As early as 1980, the Hamburg punk band “Abwärts” published a piece entitled “Computerstaat” (Computer State).

As of February 2024, OCLC lists only one copy worldwide, in North America.
The efforts of the Berlin squatters to be perceived by the public not only through their conflicts with the city government, the building owners, and the police, but above all as repairers of old buildings threatened with demolition, made it necessary to make this claim visible as quickly as possible. Thus, various publications including the squatter newspaper “Instand-Besetzer-Post” (Restoration squatters post) (see no. 18) contained a call to paint the façades. Instead of the quickly weathered banners hanging from the windows, complex, colorful murals were to be created. Extensive instructions were published on how to prepare the façades for painting, which primers were suitable and how paints were produced. The Kreuzberg Art & Culture Center, which was run by squatters, offered courses and help.

This design for a façade painting is executed with astonishing thoroughness and precision. It shows the intervention of the colossal hand of an investor — characterized by cufflinks, cuffs, jacket sleeves. The detailed work is the result of a competition held in the scene at the end of October 1981. The two houses stood in the immediate vicinity of street prostitution, as emphasized in the invitation to tender. Individual issues of the “Instand-Besetzer-Post” were also produced in the two houses. The competition brief described the project as a problem child. The problematic neighborhood of prostitution, the suicide attempt of a visitor, and covert police measures presented the squatters with challenges. The competition for the façade painting was intended to counteract the tendencies towards dissolution. The invitation to tender stated: “Now, however, things can only go upwards (..) if the façade works, it will perhaps provide some protection against the sinister intentions of the eviction mafia. So go for it!”
Complete run of this central source of the redeveloping squatter scene in West Berlin, which gives deep insight into an essential part of Berlin's subculture in the early 1980s. Their critique of the demolition of historicist architecture (which they occupied and improvisationally renovated) and of the rationalist building of Modernism and Brutalism paved the way for postmodern architecture in Berlin.

The first issue published (number zero) begins with a report on a central collection point for building materials, where renovating squatters could obtain building materials that were available through financial and in-kind donations. The report informs about the formal procedures of giving materials to squatters, about the help of craftsmen who were connected with the scene. At the same time, the article asks that the squatters give as accurate a description as possible of the structural condition, ideally with the help of an architect. It is also noted that the craftsmen working free of charge should be paid at least for his expenses and food. The theme of self-help in construction runs like a thread through the issues. Numerous tips on craftsmanship are intended to help avoid accidents, for example in dealing with electricity and water, or to offer inexpensive solutions for damage to old buildings. Duplicated drawings of electrical installations, for example, can also be found. There are also reports on other infrastructures of the squatter scene, such as a children's farm in the direct vicinity of the Berlin Wall. The planning for the International Building Exhibition 1984 (IBA), which had taken up many of the squatters' impulses, is also critically covered. They also wrote about the history of individual houses. A significant part of the issues is devoted to the squatters' confrontations with the city administration and especially the police.

Under the heading “Mail from the Front”, the conflicts with the state authorities from the point of view of the squatters were written about in detail. In particular, evictions of squatters by the police on the one hand, and new occupations on the other, were discussed. The weekly issue also functioned as a quasi-bureaucratic communication within the divergent political currents of the scene. For example, decisions from the Kreuzberg squatters’ council were announced. Information was also provided about other structures of Berlin subculture, such as other clandestine journals, books, pirate radio stations, bookstores, galleries, theaters, and cafés. In one issue, for example, there was a report about Joseph Beuys' visit to one of the squats. Beuys had stated at this meeting that the occupation and renovation of the houses was entirely in the spirit of his art of "social sculpture".

In a Dadaist manner, the makers of the illustrated weekly magazine helped themselves to the various press products, used their typefaces, took up ironic headlines, and adopted the page layout of established magazines. Sometimes even photomontages were printed. The appropriation of the
comics “Donald Duck” and “Asterix” also played an increasingly important role, with the characters in the issues now acting out scenes from the squatters’ everyday lives. Similar to the Dadaists and later the Fluxus artists, the aim was to criticize the established media forms of mass culture and opinion formation. Explicit commentary is also made on press coverage of the squatter scene, again in part with comics. The occupation of an editorial office was also reported. At the same time, the eclectic design, whether intentional or not, continued the principle of repair by squatters in the issues, working with found or donated bits and pieces and improvising.

The design of the journal changed continuously. Not only did the quality of the paper improve, but the handling of the illustrations and the typography also saw improvement over time. With the increasing professionalization of the journal, its staff commented on this change to their own scene, which eventually no longer followed the development. The declared goal was to use the journal to reach out to the city’s population from within the squatter scene and not just to remain a newsletter within the scene. The citations of the graphic design of the established magazines also served this purpose. Thus, the editors wrote that it was not only a matter of improving distribution, but also of getting closer to the reading and viewing habits of “regular citizens.” The last issues with colored wrappers could even be distributed via newsstands and no longer circulated only via street sales. At the same time, they were the last issues before their creators gave up because they were deprived of support within the scene.

As of February 2024, OCLC lists incomplete holdings in two North American libraries.
Krolow, Wolfgang (Photography) and Peter-Paul Zahl (Preface) | **Instandbesetzer Bilderbuch [Restoration squatters picture book]** | Berlin: LitPol, 1981 | Quarto (28 × 21 cm) | Original pictorial wrappers; [144] pp. With numerous, mostly full-page photographic illustrations | Wrappers slightly rubbed; else good (54199) | €100

The pictures feature political slogans and drawings painted on the walls, as well as large-format murals, posters and stickers, scenes from demonstrations, banners and scene journals. The photographer Wolfgang Krolow studied visual communication in Berlin, worked as a photographer for the press and as a graphic designer for the publishing houses Suhrkamp and Wagenbach. Throughout his life, his main interest as a photographer belonged to Berlin’s alternative district Kreuzberg.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list any copy in North America.

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Extensive documentation about the Berlin squatter scene, which distinguished itself by not only squatting houses, but also making them habitable again through restoration. The squatters of West Berlin also pursued a dual strategy between illegal struggles with the forces of order on the one hand, and legalization of their housing and construction activities on the other. The city authorities were perceived not only as opponents but also as potential partners for a different urban policy. The volume also reports on other squatter scenes in Zurich and Frankfurt.

As of February 2024, OCLC lists only one copy in North America.
The pamphlet “Movement in Freiburg,” designed in a Dadaist manner, deals primarily with the consequences of the so-called “Scherbennacht” [Night of broken glass], a reaction by squatters to the police eviction of a squatted house, during which shop windows of banks, insurance companies, and retail stores were smashed. As in Frankfurt, Berlin, and Hamburg, the issue in Freiburg was not least the preservation of historic buildings that were to make way for investors’ plans for new construction. The scene in Freiburg was deeply divided on the issue of violence; numerous groups tried to negotiate with the investors and the city administration. The aim of the pamphlet seems to have been to put the action of the “Scherbennacht,” against which a large part of the movement had spoken out, in relation to the conflicts with the city administration and the police.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list any copies in North America.

The only known issue of this publication, edited and presumably designed by Tobias Buddensieg, which imitates the typography and color of the high-circulation weekly magazine “Der Spiegel”. The well-known Berlin photographer and squatter Tobias Buddensieg was the son of famous art historian and Nietzschean Tilman Buddensieg, who was one of the first in his field to deal with the subject of everyday design. His book about industrial culture and the AEG designer Peter Behrens appeared in several editions and also in an English translation. He was a guest lecturer at Harvard, Stanford, and Columbia University, among others. Unlike his father, Tobias Buddensieg moved for decades not in the established institutions but on the cultural fringes of the alternative scene, became involved in the squatter scene, worked as its graphic designer, photographer, and cook. He was especially involved in the restoration of old buildings and organized the distribution of building materials (See: Erik Steffen, in: Tagesspiegel, 15.07.2010.)

The quality of the issue, which was unusual for the squatter movement, was probably due not least to the advertisements placed in it, for example, by the Green Party and a Berlin art bookstore that is still well-known today. Topics of the issue include the International Building Exhibition (IBA), technical problems of restoration, and battles with authorities and owners.

As of February 2024, OCLC lists only one copy worldwide, in North America.
Rare documentation of the squatter scene from the perspective of the Berlin Interior Senate. Among other things, it notes a change in the radical left, which would no longer deal with abstract, theoretical goals, but with concrete ones of the immediate living world. But these concrete actions were ultimately directed against the prevailing norms and values of the growth-oriented industrial society. It is also noted that by far the largest part of the squatters strive for nonviolent negotiations with the house owners. The publication deals primarily with the small radical part of the squatter scene and evaluates their publications and activities.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not locate any copies in North America.

This publication juxtaposes reports from squatters with articles in the press, documenting conflicts with the police. In this way, the book is an extensively annotated press anthology on the subject of squatting in Berlin. Published by: Ermittlungsausschuss, Mehringhof, Gneisenastraße 2, 1 Berlin 61.

As of February 2024, KVK, OCLC show no copies in North America.
Leaflet on green paper calling for action and sabotage should squatters be evicted. The leaflet describes various forms of sabotage, such as planned car breakdowns on busy roads, unnecessary calls and complaints in government offices, fare evasion and the use of the emergency brakes in the trains, shoplifting, etc.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list any copies.

A camouflage brochure listing all squats, or illegally occupied houses, in Kreuzberg, Berlin in 1981–82, along with the number of occupants or apartments filled, as well as the owners of the buildings. The book is somewhat humorously disguised as an official telephone book for Berlin issued by the postal service, and in many cases it does list the telephone numbers of the buildings’ owners or the directors of the responsible real estate management company. In some cases, further details are mentioned, such as the license plate of one CEO. This, along with various paroles, such as “Sofort anrufen und einschlagen!” (“Call and smash immediately!”) suggests a more radical use for the brochure... Rare document of the squatter movement in Berlin during the 1970–80s.

As of February 2024, we were unable to locate any copies outside Germany via KVK and OCLC (a single copy is noted at HSU Hamburg).


Second edition of this publication resulting from a collaboration between landscape planners at the Technische Universität Berlin and Berlin squatters. The practical documentation is introduced with a critique of modernist urban planning, monotonous architecture, and urban greenery. In contrast, “wild and beautiful gardens of imagination and independence” are to be created in the courtyards of the squatted houses. The volume extensively presents a range of ornamental and useful plants and provides numerous technical instructions for the creation of gardens.

As of February 2024, OCLC does not list any copies in North America.
Programmatically, the cover shows the wall of a house with the painted slogan “Wir wollen nicht in Betonk(n)ästen leben” (“We don’t want to live in concrete boxes”), with a letter inserted in brackets that expands the German word for concrete boxes to signify the German word for prison. The cover is thus programmatic in that the squatters, who often acted as repairers of old buildings, formulate not only a typical left-wing critique of real estate speculation, but of modern architecture as such. After long battles with the city government and investors, Berlin’s urban planning policy changed fundamentally. Instead of eliminating old buildings, the city sought to redevelop them. The squatters’ own initiative was now even openly supported financially. At the same time, a rethinking took place in architecture itself, which now sought to overcome solely functional design under the label of postmodernism. This publication was commissioned by the International Building Exhibition Berlin in 1984, which made a break with modernism and propagated the architecture of postmodernism alongside the renovation of old buildings. Among the architects involved was James Stirling.

The volume contains numerous illustrations of repairs by squatters, of facades and floor plans. It also contains texts on the individual projects and the history of individual houses, as well as on the pragmatic challenges of repair, the founding of associations, applications to the city administration, and technical and financial organization.

As of February 2024, OCLC lists one copy in North America.
A collection of seventy broadsides and posters documenting the West-Berlin “squatter” movement from the 1970s and early 1980s, with an additional thirty-three posters by related autonomous groups in West Berlin. The West Berlin squatter movement continues to fascinate and divide today; its demands for affordable, socially just housing are echoed in today’s heated debates about urban development for a united Berlin. Many believe that the phenomenon of occupied — and often vigorously defended — buildings played a key role in preserving Berlin’s historical core and raising awareness of the historical significance of the imperial tenements. The squatters are also seen, on the one hand, as having enriched and motivated the leftist political scene more broadly. Thus, squatted properties were a way to implement various social and political centres in the 1970s, often with specific functions (such as homes for immigrants or disenfranchised youth). By the early 1980s, the squatter movement intensified and some 170 houses were occupied in West Berlin alone, as well as in other cities of West Germany. Some believed in constructive engagement with conservative politicians and investors, and formulated more moderate demands taken up by political movements such as the early Green Party (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen). Others were vigorously opposed to compromise and pursued a hard line of protests and violent conflict. For a third subset, life in squatted housing projects was less of a political movement than a lifestyle choice entailing heavy drug use and a festival culture that pursued no concrete changes.

This group of posters documents the various forms and roles of the squatter communities, as well as the general politics of occupied housing, the housing shortage, and the protests against real estate development as pursued by investors in conjunction with the West Berlin senate. The bulk of this collection (items 1–37) was used for an exhibition in Summer 2013 entitled “Wohnungsnot und Mieterkämpfe im Plakat” (Housing Shortages and Tenant Resistance in the Poster Medium). Largely arranged chronologically, they offer an overview of the scene’s development, while also constituting various thematic, political and designer-oriented clusters. Thirty-three additional posters from the same period, in a similarly good state of preservation, enhance the multifaceted picture the collection paints, and an additional 33 posters relate to other causes and events organized by autonomous groups, student organizers, and independent protesters in Berlin in the 1970s and early 1980s. Among them are the poster for the iconic Tunix Kongress held January 27–29, 1978 (featuring Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and others), the poster of the Tuwat Herbstfest 1981, and the poster of a student-organized discussion on the Vietnam War Crimes Tribunal held 1977 and featuring a talk by Rudi Dutschke. Many posters are anonymously designed. Among the outstanding known designers and illustrators are Klaus Staeck, whose Plakat-Aktion “Würden Sie dieser Frau ein Zimmer vermieten” (1971) became one of the most iconic documents of the early housing movement; Harald Juch, a skilled caricaturist part of the West Berlin squatting community; and Kurt Jotter, who designed the most
visually interesting posters in the collection. The author of a series of photomontage posters on a range of left-wing issues in the 1970s, Jotter viewed himself as an inheritor of the Dada tradition and occasionally used the pseudonym “Dada-neu.” In 1977 he published a Dada-influenced manifesto and in the late 1980s he was part of the political art activist group “Büro für ungewöhnliche Maßnahmen” (Office for unusual measures). One of his most daring designs included in the collection is a 1981 photomontage poster combining a press conference by the anti-squatter Senator for the Interior Heinrich Lummer with the body of a protestor who died demonstrating against a campaign of evictions.

The collection represents a valuable source for further research on the politics, practice and aesthetics of this movement. One scholar notes that despite “a growing body of literature on the role of ’1968’ as a watershed moment in the evolution of new social movements in West Germany, there remains little empirical work on the role of squatter movements within a broader matrix of protest and resistance” (Vasudevan, in The city is ours: squatting and autonomous movements in Europe from the 1970s to the present, 2014, p. 132). See also Vasudevan, ed., Metropolitan preoccupations: the spatial politics of squatting in Berlin (2015).
Two original wooden models of squatted houses, hand-painted and featuring typical slogans of the movement. Wood, watercolors and ink. Measurements: ca. 16 × 7 × 4.2 and 12.7 × 9.9 × 5.8 cm. Very good. €350.

The two wooden models are printed in high detail or colored using stencils. Not only the crumbling facades, the clinker bricks, the damaged windows let you recognize the buildings as a typical example, but especially the banners immediately make clear what type of house of the West German post-war period is depicted. You can read on them for example “Dieses Haus ist besetzt” (This house is squatted), “Weg mit den Spekulanten” (Away with the speculators), “Wir haben Steine geschmissen — Ihr habt 2 Weltkriege gemacht” (We threw stones — you made two world wars), “Der Präsident ist doof” (The president is stupid) or “Spekulanten — Terroristen mit weißem Kragen” (Speculators — terrorists with white collars). There are still clearly visible the old advertisements on the fire walls, which also make clear that the facades have not been renovated since the war. One model consists of a painted, plainly cut wooden block, the other model of thin plywood sheets glued together, so that the ruinous condition is even more clearly depicted. The squatted house consists only of a crumbling facade and an equally damaged firewall. It is unclear by whom, for whom, and for what purpose these models were made. The assumption is that it is the work of squatters themselves, for example in the context of social work with young people. Possibly, such souvenirs were sold at street festivals.