Schrebergärten in Imperial Germany: Bourgeois Anxieties and the Spatial Politics of an Agrarian Urban Landscape

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In 1925, the *Kreisverbandes der Schreber- und Gartenvereine*, the District Association of Schreber and Garden clubs of Leipzig, published a booklet about the infamous Dr. Moritz Schreber and the foundation of Leipzig's first Schrebergarten. It begins: "Appreciation for Schreber has spread in recent years across the whole of Germany and comes from a beautiful pairing: garden care - youth care, bursting everywhere."[1] While the *Schrebergarten* was founded in Leipzig in 1860, by the turn of the century, *Vereine* (clubs) had grown in cities around the country. In Berlin alone, the number of residents who gardened in allotments jumped from 2,500 in 1880 to 50,000 in 1900.[2] Such a rapid explosion poses a question: why did *Schrebergärten* become so popular so suddenly? What did they offer to the German people that other organizations didn't? In 2002, nearly 150 years after Doctor Ernst Innozenz Hauschild founded the first *Schrebergarten* in Leipzig, the non-profit art and culture organization *Cabinet* wrote, "Schreber gardens are folk-cultural remnants of a long, contradictory, and multilayered social history in which one finds almost every movement, error, and aberration in German history."[3] As Johannes observes, the *Schrebergarten* stands as an artifact of German culture, one that not only has survived through uneasy moments in history, but also reflected and captured the many political and cultural tensions that defined these times. At the time of its inception, gardens provided a solution to cultural anxieties triggered by two concurrent processes – national unification and rapid industrialization. In short, the *Schrebergarten* acts as a microcosm where one can

[1] Gerhard Richter, *Das Buch der Schreber-Jugendpflege* (Leipzig: Verlag des Kreisverbandes der Schreber- und Gartenvereine, 1925), 5.
[2] Egon Johannes, *Entwicklung, Funktionswandel, und Bedeutung Städtischer Kleingärten: Dargestellt am Beispiel der Städte Kiel, Hamburg, und Bremen* (Kiel: Geographischen Instituts der Universität Kiel, 1955), 15.
[3] Jan Turowski, "The Schreber Garden," *Cabinet*, Spring 2002.

explore the interplay of forces that shaped German cultural and social landscapes: capitalism, nationalism, urbanism, and unification.

Uncertain about their own place in an autocratic German culture that emphasized land ownership, the late nineteenth-century bourgeoisie turned to gardens as a way to stabilize its social and political position while simultaneously addressing the pressing questions of modernity, including that of the potential radicalization of the working class. Alarmed by this potential danger, conservative bourgeois Germans embraced the traditionally hierarchal structure of the organizations, occupying the leading roles of the *Vereine* to control the working class bodies that gardened in the grounds of the colonies. As a reaction to growing tensions between working and middle class society, the bourgeoisie shaped the urban landscape of the nation's cities to assert power over working class bodies, infusing allotment gardens with their own ideals of hard work and discipline. This process in turn introduced to workers traditional agricultural roles, as well the values associated as it restored the lost connection between newly urbanized workers and nature.

In its most basic form, *Schrebergärten*, indeed all gardens, are a kind of landscape. John Stilgoe defines landscape as "the surface of the earth people shaped and shape deliberately for permanent purposes."[4] Landscape, therefore, is influenced by the intentions of societies, linking landscape to a social power. According to art historian W.J.T. Mitchell,

> …landscape is itself a physical and multisensory medium (earth, stone, vegetation, water, sky, sound and silence, light and darkness, etc.) in which cultural meanings and values are encoded, whether they are *put* there by the physical transformation of a place in landscape gardening and architecture, or *found* in a place formed, as we say, 'by nature.'[5]

Mitchell further argues that, as a medium expressing value, landscape is a fetishized commodity.[6] As a fetishized commodity, landscape becomes what Marx calls a "social

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[4] John Stilgoe, *What is Landscape?* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018), ix.
[5] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 14.
[6] Mitchell, 15.

hieroglyph," symbolizing social relations that it conceals.[7] The act of transforming a landscape is an act of writing into and over landscapes the existing relationships of power in a given society. Related is the theory of spatial politics: the investigation of how spaces are constructed, and by whom, as well as how such constructions may create new or re-enforce existing social inequalities or injustices by limiting access to certain populations or creating certain meanings within those spaces, emphasizing the status of one group over another, or projecting social messages.[8] The construction of *Schrebergärten* for working class Germans by the bourgeoisie was an act that politicized urban space to quell the dissatisfactions of a factious working class through physical control of the spaces they inhabited, and hence the bodies that filled those spaces.

From 1871 to 1918, Germany was an empire governed by the political and economic needs of a landowning elite. As historian Wolfgang Mommsen puts it, the founding of the Reich was a "revolution from above, which, unlike the rapidly faltering bourgeois revolution of 1848-49, enabled a philosophy of social conservatism to hold sway for half a century."[9] Despite the changing structure of German society caused by the converging processes of industrialization and urbanization, the Bismarckian system of Imperial Germany was shaped to defend the power of traditional elites – landowners. Bismark's constitution stands as a prime example of the actions the ruling class took to preserve its landowning position and control progressive forces that had begun to form as Germany's industry grew. But this growth had been delayed, and stood as a new threat to conservative German powers in the latter nineteenth century. Unlike Great Britain and France, Germany at the beginning of the century lacked capital from colonial trade that her European neighbors relied on to invest into

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[7] Karl Marx, *Das Kapital: A Critique of Political Economy* (Washington DC: Regenery Publishing Inc., 2009), 85.
[8] Richard Schonfield, "About the Spatial Politics Research Domain," *King's College London*, accessed November 18, 2018, https://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/geography/research/Research-Domains/Spatial-Politics/Spatial-Politics.aspx.
[9] Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Imperial Germany, 1867-1918: Politics, Culture, and Society in an Authoritarian State* (New York: Arnold Publishing, 1995), 1.

their industrial development. The Napoleonic Wars in the first half of the century only further challenged Germany's economic standing, leaving behind a legacy of large national, provincial, and municipal debts.[10] Germany, therefore, barely felt the effects of industrialization until the 1850s, and only underwent an "industrial spurt" in the 1880s.[11] It was in this last third of the nineteenth century that Germany experienced a mass migration of people moving from country to city in search of job opportunities and a higher standard of living.[12] Between 1870 and 1910, the percentage of people living in big cities of at least 100,000 inhabitants rose from less than 5 percent to over 20 percent.[13] While Germany unified in 1871, the makeup of the nation was anything but uniform, and new cities became spaces filled with individuals from all classes and backgrounds in close quarters with one another. The tensions between these classes manifested themselves in the urban landscape. But instead of addressing economic problems articulated by the working class, such as housing, food shortages, and urban health, middle class associations tried to resolve these problems through direct control of working class spaces and bodies, with *Schrebergärten* emerging as one of any strategies to exercise such control in a complicated landscape of a modern German city.

Delayed industrialization did not mean German cities were any less developed than their English or French counterparts. In fact, German cities emerged as examples of 'successful' urbanization. The metropolitan city of 1900 was hardly related to the "commercial, administrative" town of previous centuries, the Germany for which Bismarck had written his 1871 constitution,[14] and one based on land ownership in an agrarian landscape. Rather, the new German city was based on new aesthetic concepts of urban

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[10] W. O. Henderson, *The Industrial Revolution on the Continent: Germany, France, Russia* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1961), 14.
[11] Mommsen, 57.
[12] Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin, 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 57.
[13] Friedrich Lenger, "Building and Perceiving the City: Germany around 1900," in *Towards an Urban Nation: Germany Since 1780*, ed. Friedrich Lenger (New York: Berg Publishing, 2002), 88.
[14] Fritzsche, 29.

development. New buildings in *Residenzstädte* were required to "present a sufficiently dignified appearance."[15] Planning energies were directed at beautifying cities, building or restoring imperial monuments,[16] and emulating boulevards like Baron Haussman's Parisian thoroughfares of the 1850s.[17]

Such decisions on the part of planners represents a politicization of public space. While wide boulevards proved solutions to such practical issues as traffic and sanitation, they simultaneously placed the pedestrian in a realm of constant visibility. At the same time that the pedestrian was being observed by figures representing the authoritarian state, such as the Feldgendarmerie, they were constantly reminded of the imperial state through monuments and bureaucratic palaces. But this imperial grandiosity was not the only image of the German city.

For the bourgeoisie, the city meant such new spaces as cafés, parks, and waiting rooms. The projections of imperial power pushed bourgeois intellectuals to meet in such spaces, contributing to the growth of a new public sphere and the development of a middle-class culture based on the critique of traditional social and political practices of mainstream society.[18] Middle class thinkers frequently reflected on this new type of culture and the individual that embodied it. Philosopher and sociologist, Georg Simmel, compared "the small-town life in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages" to life in the modern, metropolitan city in his 1903 lecture "The Metropolis and Mental Life." Life in a feudal system "set barriers against movement and relations of the individual independence and differentiation within the individual self." These societal barriers limited the opportunities any one had to gain an education and employ his knowledge to develop independent thought and identity. Under

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[15] Brian Ladd, *Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), 111.
[16] Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 96-98.
[17] Ladd, *Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914*, 113.
[18] David H. Haney, *When Modern Was Green: Life and work of landscape architect Leberecht Migge* (New York: Routledge Publishing, 2010), 5.

such barriers, the "modern man could not have breathed."[19] Of course, Simmel does not use breathe in the physical sense, but rather implies that the modern man experienced a new freedom of the mind and spirit in metropolitan cities.

But the modern city was also crowded, dangerous, and industrial; it was the city the urban poor inhabited. Between 1890 and 1900, the number of industrial workers in Berlin doubled, and they all needed housing, clothing, and food.[20] But the chaotic and distant industrial spaces that the working classes inhabited did not separate them from the direct influence of the bourgeois, consumer class. Through the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the working class poor found their lives influenced not by the events of the natural world around them, but by the speculation and profiteering of the bourgeoisie. Such speculation caused food prices to rise ever higher as wages continuously fell. The urban poor were forced to live in overcrowded housing in the ghettos of industrializing cities, areas that didn't even meet modern fire regulations.[21] By 1910, the average number of residents in a Berlin building was seventy-six, the highest amount in any western city,[22] and the standards of overcrowded tenements were unregulated, with poor sanitation, leading to disease. City planners saw this lack of proper housing as an issue of public health, and therefore a threat to the welfare of the state and of German moral order.[23] Reformers believed that by improving the health of the laboring class, the health of the community would rise, strengthening the German Volk.[24] For the German bourgeoisie, working class tenements were disorderly and inorganic, and therefore potentially breeding immorality.

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[19] Georg Simmel, *The Metropolis and Mental Life*, in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: Bibliolife, 1950), 98.
[20] Karin Sahn, *100 Jahre Berliner Laubenkolonisten: Die Anfänge* (Leipzig: Deutsches Kleingärtnermuseum e.V. Wissenschaftliche Schriften, 2001), 8.
[21] Ladd, *Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914*, 112.
[22] Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, 100.
[23] Ladd, ibid., 138.
[24] Rotenberg, 214.

With no support from the government, almost 30 percent of the German urban population depended on charity for survival.[25] Such hardships pushed many working class citizens to find their own solutions, turning to anarchist and proletarian associations. Socialist-oriented political organizations emerged in Germany in the 1860s and 1870s, inspired by the burghers' *Vereine* of the early nineteenth century.[26] Despite antisocialist legislation passed in 1878,[27] by 1900, working class *Vereine* had established a firm position in urban life. According to Vernon Lidtke, such organizations allowed workers to restructure their social existence from one dictated by the feudal social structures to one shaped by their interactions independent of a landowning presence in accessible urban spaces.[28] At an institutional level, the Social Democratic party responded to working class needs in its own way by creating new educational programs with a pluralist approach in curriculum, to serve their "emancipatory goal" and encourage worker-students to think critically.[29] But while Simmel's modern middle-class man was individualistic and educated, such a working class man posed a threat to middle-class stability as modern men was not only free from the restrictive roles and expectations of small-town life, he was also free from a traditional cottage economy that created many layers of interdependency and relatedness between masters and workers.

Modern capitalism instead had created a labor force characterized by high mobility and a lack of attachment to a place typical of feudal economies. In addition, the workers, no longer controlled by traditional constrictions, always migrated dangerously close to radicalization and turning against the very system that produced them. Thus, though capitalism created workers, the workers threatened the stability of the system itself. In such circumstances, new

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[25] David G. Williamson, *Germany Since 1815* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 44-45.
[26] Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture: Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3.
[27] Lidtke, 28.
[28] Lidtke, 25.
[29] Lidtke, 165.

mechanisms of control and stabilization were required, and the *Schrebergarten* provided a solution.

Rather than see independent workingmen organizing together with political intentions, the middle-class desired a docile worker with his life centered around domestic family life, much like the conservative members in the organizing *Schrebervereine*. Indeed, it must be noted that the first Workers Garden, an iteration of the *Schrebergarten*, was begun in 1891 by a French noblewoman, Madame Felicia Hervien. This garden, in Sedan, Ardennes, was founded only twenty years after the short-lived Paris Commune of 1871. The Commune was a radical socialist government that ruled Paris from 18 March to 28 May 1871 after the collapse of the Second French Empire. Parisian workers desired a democratic republic, and believed in a self-governing Paris.[30] Though the government only lasted a little over two months, the sudden power of the working class radicals shook the stability of the French bourgeoisie. The twenty years that had passed would not have wiped away the threat of radical workers. As such, Madame Hervien's decision to organize a worker's garden club in a similar hierarchical structure to the German *Schreberverein* meant exercising direct control of working class bodies through garden organizing was a bourgeois design to quell their own anxieties.

Madame Hervien's intention stemmed "from the following basic ideas: Man is not made to beg but to work. He has the right to live from his work. Charity does not have to give alms to him, but to give him the bread of labor."[31] Hervien was not forgiving or charitable, but rather desired that workers earn their place in a garden through hard work. Requiring dedicated work, the garden prevented workers from organizing according to their own means around radical political ideals.

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[30] Kristin Ross, *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2015), 7.
[31] von Kalckstein, 4.

A 1909 pamphlet published in Leipzig titled *Arbeitergärten (Schrebergärten)* begins with a summary of the goals of garden associations organized by middle-class reformers for urban working class families:

> 1. Physical recovery of the worker and his family in healthy air after daily work in the workshop, etc. and on Sunday.
> 2. Strengthening of old and disabled persons, convalescents, healed and improved lung patients by engaging in gardening.
> 3. Distraction of the worker from tavern visits, thereby improving their economic situation, and increasing satisfaction with life.
> 4. Strengthening the sense of family life through joint work and recreation by moving children from the large tenements, the dusty streets, the dark courtyards to the flower-decorated garden home.
> 5. Awakening a sense of ownership for the rented garden and home-grown fruits.
> 6. Spreading understanding of agriculture in adults and children, thereby attracting future agricultural workers from the circles of the urban population. Preparation of agricultural colonization by weak people consecrated in the city to soon dying.[32]

These lines suggest that the *Schreberverein* emerged as a key element of social reform, seen by the German bourgeoisie as a solution to perceived working class problems in the new urban landscape. The unique development of German cities as centers of bourgeois culture and industrialization threatened traditional agrarian values, namely a structured family life based around work on the land. Increased migration of agrarian workers into urban centers threatened the basis of German culture – or so they believed. The greatest anxieties of the middle-class reformers, then, were public health, family life, a threatening rural labor shortage, and access to green spaces outside poor housing environments. It was the unique form of urban development in nineteenth century Germany that shaped these anxieties for the middle-class.

The emphasis of *Schrebervereine* on orderliness was a direct action against the chaos of the city beyond bourgeois café walls. Sociologist Werner Sombart distinguished the 'big city' from early modern industrial towns, pointing out that the big city was "a multifunctional

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[32] von Kalckstein, W., *Arbeitergärten (Schrebergärten)* (Leipzig: Felix Dietrich, 1909), 3.

phenomenon, being a centre of industrial production as well as of commerce but above all also a centre of consumption."[33] The turn of the century saw the building of the monumental department store Kaufhaus des Westens (KaDeWe) in 1907 by Adolf Jandorf. The space was one of "tasteful indulgence"[34] and represents the new middle-class desire for comfort and luxury goods, traditionally reserved for aristocracy but now exhibited the wealth and status of the middle class. Such consumption furthermore placed value on ownership. To strengthen the capitalist economy and assure continued access to their luxury goods, the middle class recognized the need to encourage a sense of ownership amongst working class residents of the city too. If the working class felt themselves as members of a property-owning class, the middle class hoped, they would be more likely to take care of their 'property,' and become a docile domestic class.

To this end, the *Schreberverein* highlighted the importance of "Awakening a sense of ownership for the rented garden and home-grown fruits."[35] The 1909 pamphlet *Arbeitergärten (Schrebergärten)* outlines the rights and duties of a garden renter. The land used for these gardens, often barren, lay alongside the factories in which workers worked, and was to be leased only, not purchased. The lease typically lasted up to six years, after which time, "the old tenant [had] the preference for the same price."[36] The length of a lease and the right of the tenant to keep the affordable price encouraged a sense of ownership of the land. Furthermore, the provisions of a leased garden in a town of Bitterfeld called the renter a "garden owner." The sense of ownership was further solidified by requiring that "each garden owner [be] obligated to the proper maintenance of his garden and the associated enclosure and the way, to the maintenance of the fixed boundaries." Such language encouraged the responsibility that a feudal land-owner might hold towards his farm. The rest of this

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[33] Lenger, 89.
[34] Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*, 113.
[35] von Kalckstein, 3.
[36] Ibid., 9.

requirement stated that the garden owner was equally responsible for "the careful use of the communal facilities" and that above all, "every garden owner [was] expected to be particularly concerned with the constant maintenance of order and good manners on *Schreberplatz*," the central communal space.[37] While the division of the *Schreberverein* land into individual allotments might seem to encourage an individualization amongst the 'owners,' this focus on the use of communal facilities and spaces reminds the worker that he did not, in fact, own the land, but rather was permitted to use it only if he met the standards of the middle-class reformers in charge. These regulations situated the worker within the system of value of middle-class property owners defined above all by orderliness and docility.

While bourgeois culture focused on the newfound importance of the individual, the middle class did not consider the individual working man, but rather only the working class family. In "Building and Perceiving the City: Germany around 1900," Friedrich Lenger observes that housing reformers were focused on building working class housing "fit for families," comprised of separate dwellings for families similar to middle-class homes. As such, reformers were creating "preconditions for middle-class family life" with the intention of the eventual "civilization" of the urban lower classes.[38] The tendency of working class men to turn to drink and entertainment outside the home was not only disruptive to the bourgeois image of a clean, metropolitan city, it did not fit with bourgeois desires for a docile proletariat centered on family life. Carl Johannes Fuchs, a prominent housing specialist, wrote in 1911: "If the worker returns from work tired, but does not find any comfort, no family peace, he will go to the pub."[39] With a father at the pub, a working class family was incomplete and immoral. Middle class anxieties about the situation of working class people in the city, then, were based on both medical and social problems, or problems of morality.

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[37] Ibid., 11.
[38] Lenger, 97.
[39] Carl Johannes Fuchs, "Wohnungsfrage," in *Handwörterbuch der Staatswissenschaften* (Jena, 1911), 891.

Again, in response, members of *Schrebervereine* articulated the goal of a docile, domestic working class by praising the benefits of garden work. In his 1909 pamphlet *Arbeitergärten (Schrebergärten)*, middle class reformer, von Kalckstein recognized the choice *Schrebervereine* made in arranging spaces for individual families. He emphasized that organizing through garden work and working the land in the *Schrebergarten* could help "[Strengthen] the sense of family life through joint work and recreation." Specifically, this could be done by displacing working class residents from the damaging environments they inhabited. Children had to be moved "from the large tenements, the dusty streets, the dark courtyards to the flower-decorated garden home."[40] The garden, then, was not just land for single workers to plant and harvest food, but was a space for the family to come together and work towards a self-sustaining existence. But creating a space for German working class families was not enough to solve middle class anxieties of the dangers of the urban landscape.

According to Brian Ladd, it was a "fashionable belief" amongst urban Germans that "big cities were unnatural entities without organic stability."[41] This concept clearly emerges in contemporary art, painted from the eyes of the bourgeoisie. Adolph von Menzel's 1875 painting *Das Eisenwalzwerk* (*The Iron Rolling Mill*) shows the view the bourgeoisie had of industrial sites such as factories (see figure 1).[42] Menzel is known for paintings of historic battles, but his choice to feature an industrial factory floor fits with his portfolio. The scene is dark and chaotic, and the floor workers appear to be at war with a machine. Indeed, the workers look like an army, a mass wearing the mute colors of military uniforms. The machine sits on wheels as a canon might, and spits fire at the workers, associating industry with a violent form of dehumanization. The painting *Imperial Wharf in Kiel* represents a

[40] von Kalckstein, 3.
[41] Ladd, *Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914,* 244.
[42] Adolph von Menzel, *Das Eisenwalzwerk*, 1875. Oil on canvas, 62.2 by 100 in. Berlin, Alte Nationalgalerie.

similar feeling of unease (see figure 2).[43] The painting depicts a group of working class men, all wearing similar overalls and caps, in different shades of black and grey. Most of the workers are faceless and lack any energy as they stand bent over industrial ranges. The ranges, spread throughout the scene, are the only sources of direct light, dull and dirty yellow fires. The hazy light from the windows is similarly dirty and somber. By titling the painting *Imperial Wharf*, the artist (unknown), is tying this inhumane scene to the power of the Empire, one structured by landowning elites.

And anxieties about industrialization continued to be expressed in painting well into the twentieth century. Gustav Wunderwald's paintings of industrial Berlin in the Weimar Republic provide insight into what German cities must have looked like as they reached their peak in industrialization at the turn of the century. Wunderwald's "Unterführung in Spandau" ("Underpass in Spandau") of 1927,[44] shows the city as a machine of metal (see figure 3). The educated bourgeois found themselves repelled from this chaotic world of metal and smog.

In this context, many found themselves longing for a return to a greener landscape, romanticizing the pastoral as it stood in stark contrast to the dark, mechanical cityscape.[45] Modern urbanization did not erase the historical connection between German culture and agrarian landscape. Nineteenth century philosophers urged the bourgeoisie to abandon the immorality of the city and return to the wellspring of social and cultural health in agriculture.[46] Threatened by the unnatural entity that was the modern city, the German middle-class appropriated the countryside through natural activities such as hiking. Back-to-nature organizations such as the Wandervogel Movement encouraged shaking off the restrictions of a modern, consumerist society and returning to an agrarian landscape of freedom and moral purity. In Austria, Volk-reactionary romantics, as Robert Rotenberg calls

[43] *Imperial Wharf in Kiel*, 1900. Oil on canvas. Private Collection, Freiburg.
[44] Gustav Wunderwald, *Unterführung in Spandau*, 1927. Oil on canvas. Private Collection.
[45] Lenger, 98.
[46] Rotenberg, 215.

them, and members of alpine clubs competed with cows to breathe the pure air of the mountains and through that, strengthen their bodies and forged a spiritual connection with the mountains where the spirit of the nation rested.[47] Thus, the metropolitan bourgeoisie infused the national landscape with their own meanings. The countryside was no longer a relic of a feudal, conservative society, but was a romantic landscape in which middle-class city dwellers could escape the dangers of the urban landscape and get in touch with their national spirit.

Art began to exhibit this longing for an agrarian landscape, too. German painter Willhelm Carl August Zimmer's work places the urban middle class into nature as he situates his Biergarten in *The Orchestra, Biergarten* (1900) in the woods (see figure 4).[48] Rather than depict the subjects, all dressed in elegant evening attire, in the metropolitan concert hall of Berlin or the salon of Vienna, Zimmer chooses to place the musicians and listeners in a fully natural environment. Both the Biergarten and the forest represent important elements of German culture. The Biergarten became an important cultural institution in the nineteenth century, providing spaces for the public to mingle together and develop a shared set of values – and a sense of civic society. While the forest, as Jeffrey Wilson argues, began to be understood as reservoirs of national memory.[49] In his 1909 painting *Mädchen auf dem Heimweg in blühenden Ginster*, Zimmer shifts the attention from the forest to a pastoral landscape (see figure 5).[50] Here the subject is dressed in traditional German garb, and stands against a backdrop of green trees and blue sky, a wistful expression on her face. Though we cannot know the girl's background, her clean and elaborate attire is not that of a traditional agrarian worker, but rather of a German burgher who finds moral purity and regeneration in country air, which was not only healthy but also infused with national ideas. Paintings such

[47] Rotenberg, 214.
[48] Willhelm Carl August Zimmer, *The Orchestra, Biergarten*, 1900. Oil on canvas. Private Collection.
[49] Jeffrey Wilson, *The German Forest: Nature, Identity, and the Contestation of a National Symbol*, *1871-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 26.
[50] Zimmer, *Mädchen auf dem Heimweg in blühenden Ginster*, 1909. Oil on canvas.

as Zimmer's brought the German landscape into the living rooms and salons of the middle class, only emphasizing the longing for an accessible agrarian landscape.

While some members of the urban bourgeoisie had the means to travel to the countryside and experience its physical and spiritual benefits first hand, this was not accessible to all members of the metropolitan German middle class. The city-bound bourgeoisie found a solution to their anxieties in the "Garden Reform" Movement, which took root in Germany at the turn of the century. David Haney writes, "Garden reform was a part of a wide range of popular cultural reforms, many aimed at the improvement of domestic life through more rational, healthier design."[51] Bourgeois figures such as art historian, curator of the Hamburger Kunsthalle, and "father" of the German Garden Reform Movement, Alfred Lichtwark, idealized the agrarian landscape. Lichtwark presented a restructured and bourgeois agrarian landscape in his "farmer's gardens," which embodied the new concepts of aestheticism. He wrote, "The principle of this artistic garden is the most natural, because it corresponds to our human nature … because appropriate to our understanding and feelings, requiring rhythm, order, mass, and defined spaces" and while it was constructed aesthetically, it was "inherently functional," with spaces for physical activity as well as for growing both flowers and produce.[52] While these artistic gardens were built for bourgeois residents, the goals of improved health and wellbeing in green spaces were shared by other bourgeois planners, particularly those focused on the problems of the working classes, frightened as they were by the independent organization of workers into socialist *Vereine*.

The vastness of the modern city led to a wide separation between the home and workplace, "leading to an ever clearer distinction between different quarters and to a higher social homogeneity within them."[53] The landscape of city outskirts was shared by meadows,

[51] Haney, 17.
[52] Haney, 21-22.
[53] Lenger, 94.

nurseries, factories, and working-class markets,[54] and the working class was physically displaced to the outer regions of the city, away from the aesthetic, metropolitan center. It is therefore no surprise that *Schrebergärten* were almost always built on the outskirts of cities. The division of land into allotments suitable to individual families aligns with the structuring of reformed housing. Gardens, like apartments, were not meant to be shared between families, enforcing the importance of the family unit as a basis of social structure. While the garden offered the family an opportunity to develop closer bonds and reliance upon one another, it served another purpose in resolving issues of public health, one that had begun to agitate workers and direct them towards their own associations.

Gustav Schmoller, economist, social reformer, and state socialist, recognized the threat such organization would cause to the stability of the middle-class, and urged bourgeois city residents to take action in order to prevent an uprising of the working class from occuring. To avoid the "epidemics and the social revolutions that have to come," Schmoller encouraged the middle class to take action and help the urban working class, in his 1887 *Admonition in the Housing Question*. He wrote, "the property-owning classes must be shaken from their slumber," highlighting the neglect of the urban bourgeoisie towards the social and economic status of the working classes. For Schmoller, such inaction was leading to a dehumanization of "lower classes in [their] big cities" to a kind of barbarianism, "to a beastly existence." Of particular concern to Schmoller was the housing crisis that German cities faced. But simply building new housing would not be enough. Schmoller believed that "even if [the bourgeoisie] made considerable sacrifices, these will be … but a modest insurance sum." [55] Schmoller acted on middle-class fears of health epidemics and social revolution.[56] While these middle-class concerns centered largely on issues of inadequate and unsanitary

[54] Fritzsche, 88.
[55] Gustav Schmoller, *Ein Mahnruf in der Wohnungsfrage* (Berlin: Dunker & Humboldt, 1887), 37.
[56] Lenger, 96.

lower-income housing, solutions were found in the green goals of the Garden Reform Movement.

While German reformers emphasized social causes of disease, they turned to the natural environment for solutions.[57] Middle-class reformers made use of the Green City Movement as they tried to encourage the working classes to turn to gardening in order to fight issues of public health. In a 1915 pamphlet titled *The Schrebergarten: Practical Advice on the Establishment and Management of Schreber-, Small- and Home Gardens*, Heinrich Hinz celebrates the benefits of gardening for public health, calling the working class to action. He begins by stating that "great is the influence of gardening on the physical wellbeing," connecting the action of working the land to the improvement of the physical body. Even being in nature, it seems, is beneficial, as "Light, aid, and sunshine, these important factors of life permeate clothing and body." The gardener should "Stretch, stretch the lungs, and bend the limbs" to encourage "appetite and metabolism." And the garden was not only reserved for physically abled industrial workers and their young families. "all belong in the *Schrebergarten*," including "convalescents, invalids, pensioners, the mentally ill, and the elderly." Indeed, for the German middle class, placing working class families in gardens seemed to solve all societal and health problems, as "Gardening becomes the 'fountain of youth,'" eliminating any need for health care or any other food accessibility. For Hinz and other middle class reformers, the garden was "a true Eden, a place of recreation and adventure that could not be thought up more beautiful or ideal," allowing city children to exercise and experience nature first hand.[58] The working class individual, then, could improve their physical and emotional health in a natural environment, the garden. Furthermore, for the working class gardeners, the gardens *were*, of course, spaces for subsistence farming, spaces that they relied on to survive. Recognizing this importance of

[57] Ladd, *Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914*, 37.
[58] Heinrich Hinz, *Der Schrebergarten: Praktische Ratschläge zur Einrichtung und Bewirtschaftung von Schreber-, Klein-, und Hausgärten* (Frankfurt an der Oder: Trowitsch & Sohn, 1915), 9.

gardens to the workers, the middle class leaders of the project, however, used the gardens as a device to prevent further radicalization of the workers as they turned them into means of control and surveillance.

Historical plans of the gardens, for example, display the level of control *Vereine* members exercised over the worker-gardeners experiences in the spaces (see figure 6).[59] One of the guiding principles of design in *Schrebergarten* colonies was to prevent gardeners from individualizing their gardens. Each gardener was required to divide their space into segments for vegetables and fruits, with each segment carefully measured out and tended. Each garden was to be lined with flowerbeds and bushes, suggesting that gardens were not simply spaces for subsistence farming, but were "a true Eden, a place of recreation and adventure."[60] Furthermore, each garden, as regulations stated, was to have a small structure that was also carefully described. The huts were to be "solid and stable," with "boards nailed one atop the other" as "this kind of nailing [made] the walls dense."[61] Additionally, regulations stated, "each house may only be one-story and not larger than 24 square meters."[62]

These regulations fulfilled two functions. With low structures dominating the landscape, the colony appeared homogenous and orderly, but it was also open to supervision (see figure 7).[63] Gardeners were explicitly forbidden from living in their rented plots, forcing workers to remain in their poor, urban housing when not under supervision.

Schrebergarten colonies were just as structured as individual plots (see figure 7).[64] Though the sizes of those gardens varied, they were all evenly arranged and all of a standard, quadrangle shape, formed around a communal space in the center that was not much bigger than any individual gardens. This central location of the communal space, which served as

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[59] Jurass, 58-59.
[60] Hinz, 9.
[61] Jurass, 11.
[62] Sally Fuls, "Renaissance der Kleingärten- ein Hoch auf die Gartenlaube," *AD Magazin*, 22 September 2018.
[63] Sahn, 7.
[64] Hinz, 11.

the location of most headquarters of *Vereine*, allowed *Vereine* leaders to observe and control the activities taking place within the standardized huts at the perimeter.

But one of the most important features of the garden was that it placed workers into a direct relationship with a constructed national landscape, partially recreating the relationship between landowners and farmers in a new, urban setting. Gardeners, as feudal farmers, relied on the produce they grew on land controlled by a landowning elite. The relationship of patronage and dependency between the bourgeoisie and the working classes were based on a historical pattern, mimicking the relationship between the landowning elite and the farmer. Such a relation could potentially lessen antagonistic tension between the bourgeoisie and the workers. The control of land, then, directly correlated to the political control of the working class.

The structuring of *Schrebergärten* in Imperial German was paradoxical. The green spaces on city outskirts were presented as solutions to issues of social reform; *Schrebergärten* allowed workers to grow produce for sustenance, escape the damaging environment of industrial factories and experience their own nature. Yet simultaneously, the form in which these gardens of social reform were created meant they were spaces politicized by the controlling power of bourgeoisie *Vereine* members. The *Schrebergarten,* thus, emerged as a device to reconfigure the relationship between the bourgeoisie and the workers, leading to a tighter control of working class bodies in the German metropolis. The *Schrebergarten* colonies were therefor spaces of freedom from the dangerous environments of factory floors and overcrowded tenement houses, but theatres of control of the forces of capitalism and bourgeois values.

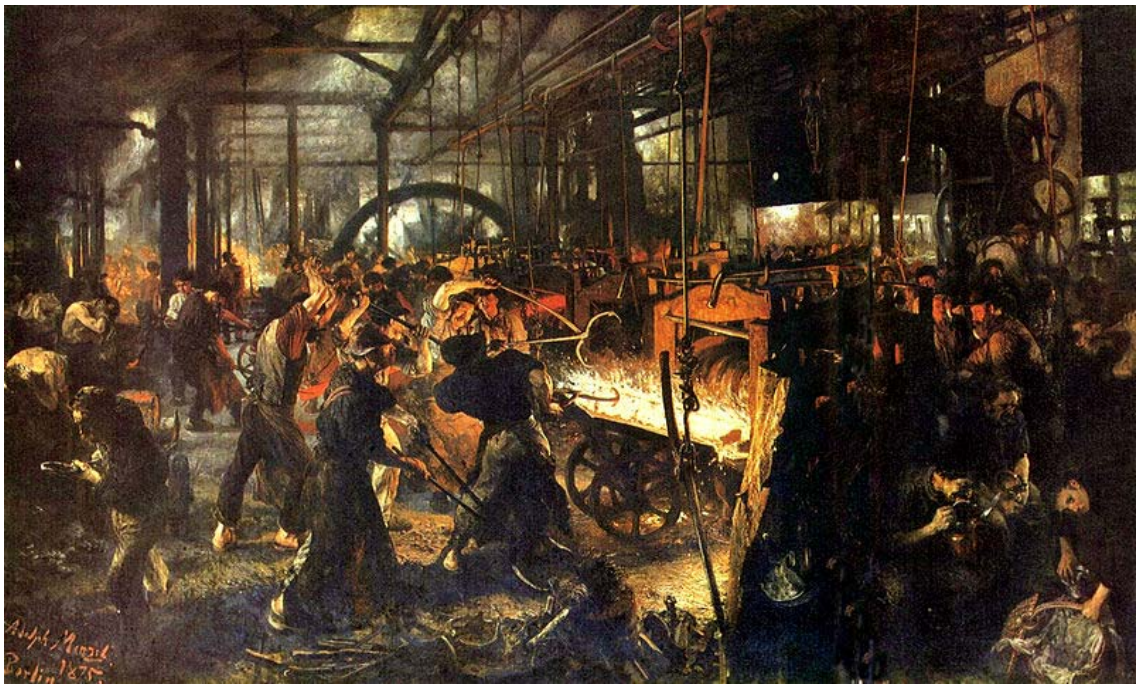

Figure 1: Das Eisenwalzwerk (The Iron Rolling Mill), 1875, Adolph von Menzel.

Figure 2: Imperial Wharf in Kiel, 1900, artist unknown.

Figure 3: *Unterführung in Spandau,* 1927, Gustav Wunderwald.

Figure 4: *The Orchestra, Biergarten*, 1900, Willhelm Carl August Zimmer.

Figure 5: *Mädchen auf dem Heimweg in blühenden Ginster*, 1909, Willhelm Carl August Zimmer.

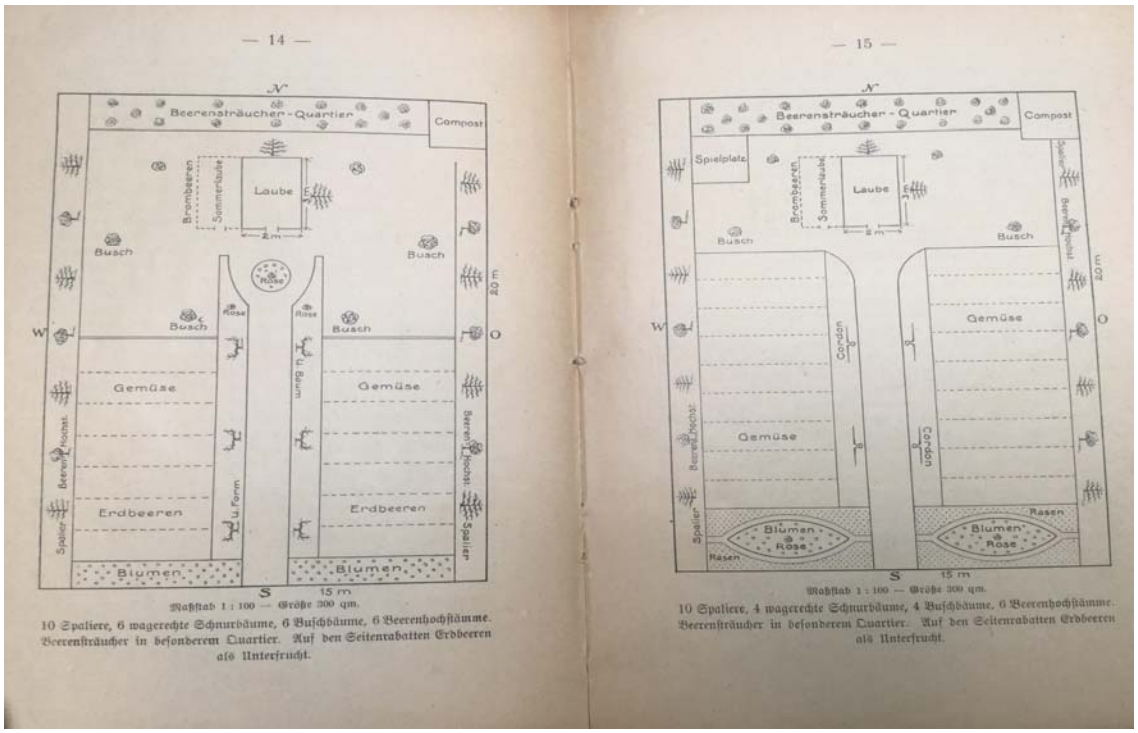

Figure 6: Plan of *Schrebergarten*, 1906.

Figure 7: Laubenkolonie, Berlin, 1911.

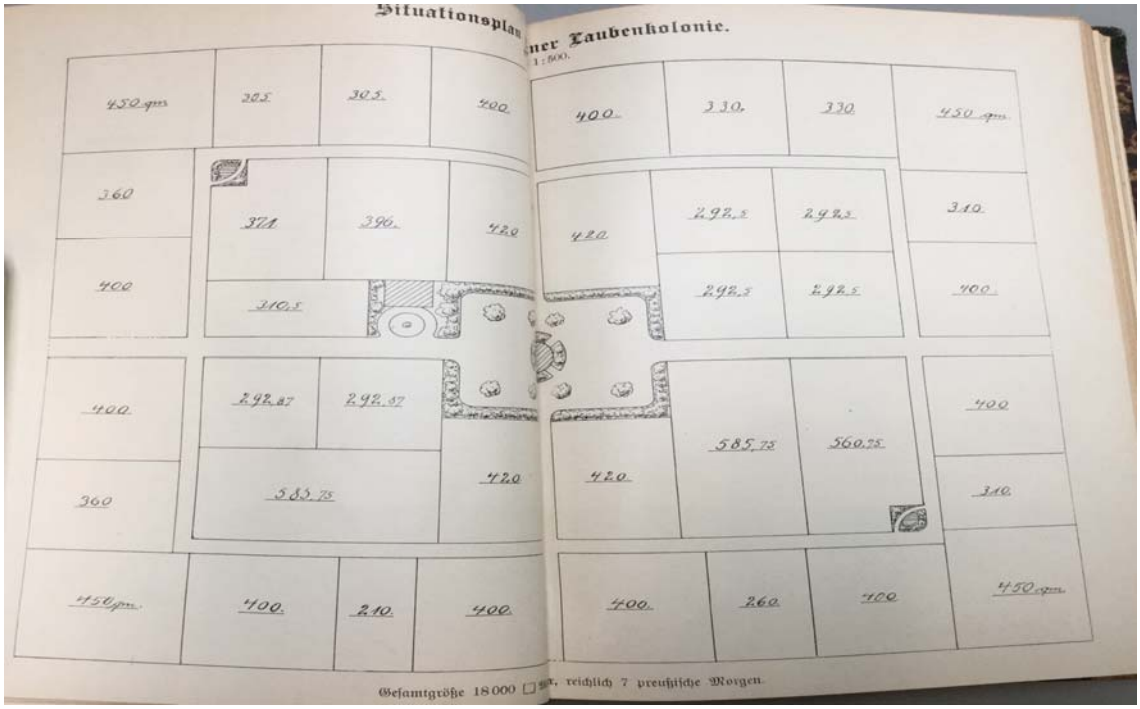

Figure 8: Plan of *Schrebergarten* colony, 1906.

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