

# Reframing the Workers' Militia Monument in Post-Unification Berlin

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*In the early 1990s, after the fall of the Wall, the citizens and politicians of Berlin sought an ethically sound way to handle the large political statues of former East Berlin. This article examines how legislators in Berlin's district of Prenzlauer Berg treated its workers' militia monument, inaugurated by the East German regime in 1983 and removed from public view in 1992. The author argues that the various ways in which the legislators attempted to reframe the monument are inextricably linked to the significance of the workers' militia before 1989 as a symbol of the ambiguous relations between the citizens and the regime of the former German Democratic Republic. The people's participation in the militia of the working class and the construction of the Wall in 1961 complicate any act of censorship surrounding the handling of the monument and its site after 1989.*

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After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and German unification the following year, many viewers began a campaign against the presence of the gigantic and provocative East German statues still visible in the urban landscape. The statues often glorified communist heroes, such as Lenin, and were intended as triumphant “monuments”, rather than the mournful “memorials” that West Germans had come to regard as the proper form of commemoration after World War II (HEINRICH, 1993, p. 7, 17). The most infamous case in the post-1989 handling of East Germany's political monuments was undoubtedly the Berlin Senate's dismantling of the Lenin monument in Berlin's district of Friedrichshain during the winter of 1991-92. The case ended in embarrassment for the Senate, accused by many Berliners of pursuing a mentality of victory over the East. However, in the shadow

of the iconoclastic critiques and protests surrounding the demolition of East Berlin's Lenin monument, a little known but equally controversial East German monument was being dismantled in the neighboring Berlin district of Prenzlauer Berg. On February 28th, 1992, and without vociferous protest from Berliners, the district assembly of Prenzlauer Berg removed the workers' militia monument ("Kampfgruppen-Denkmal") from public view (Ill. 1). The authorities simply carted the monument off to its final destination in a storage room at the German History Museum's depot in Spandau where it remains to this day. This paper examines the ways in which the authorities in the district of Prenzlauer Berg treated the workers' militia monument in the 1990s in an effort to reframe it and make viewers reconsider or disavow it. The paper argues that the anxieties related to this controversial political monument in post-unified Berlin were due not only to the oppressive measures of the workers' militia, linked to the undemocratic rule of the East German regime ruled by the Socialist Unity Party (SED), but also due to the fact that the workers' militia was a volunteer organization and represented a part of everyday life in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). As such, the representation of an evil and improper other, as symbolized by the monument, comes dangerously close to the self.

### **The Inglorious Intentional Monument**

Like the Lenin monument in former East Berlin, authorities removed the workers' militia monument from public view before the Berlin Senate had established a Senate Monument Committee, whose task it was to evaluate all of East Berlin's political statues, memorials, plaques, and busts to determine which to preserve, modify, or destroy. Various interest groups had requested a politically independent committee of monument experts from East and West Berlin in 1990, hoping to prevent further destruction and removal of commemorative symbols before adequate reflection on their historical significance had taken place. After Berlin's 1990 government elections, plans had been arranged for such a committee, but it was not until the spring of 1992 that the Berlin Senate began the process in earnest, with a report assessing all of former East Berlin's commemorative symbols finalized in 1993. By then, however, many socialist commemorative plaques



ILL. 1

Gerhard Rommel, *Kampfgruppen-Denkmal (Workers' Militia Monument)*, East-Berlin, 1983.  
Courtesy of James J. Ward.

and statues, including the workers' militia monument, had been removed from the urban landscape.

One of the obstacles faced by the Senate Monument Committee in carrying out its evaluations was that East Berlin's political monuments were "intentional monuments" ("gewollte Denkmale"), according to Alois Riegl's definition in his 1903 essay on the preservation value of historic monuments (RIEGL, 1982, p. 21). While Riegl's proposal for preservation laws concerned the Austro-Hungarian Empire specifically, his fundamental ideas for monument protection were subsequently put into practice in the two Germanys in the late twentieth century. Since an intentional monument is erected in order to honor a specific person or event and constructed, like most Western monuments, for the sake of future generations, preservation laws protect the

intentional monument against human destruction. In post-unified Berlin, however, some legislators and politicians questioned the appropriateness of this preservation law in regard to socialist monuments in former East Berlin. Thus, the ways in which the Berlin Senate's Monument Committee justified the dismantling or destruction of Berlin's controversial monuments in its 1993 report involved the establishment of a list of twelve cases where intentional monuments may be legally destroyed, one of which reads as follows:

When a regime falls or is toppled, the monuments created by it lose, as a matter of principle, their right to exist insofar as they served to legitimize and bolster the regime. This is especially the case when the fallen regime was an unjust and violent governance, decidedly rejected and condemned by the citizens of the subsequent political system. (ABGEORDNETENHAUS VON BERLIN, 1993, p. 5)

The report makes an effort to downplay any potentially heated emotional debates or sense of fear evoked by the socialist monuments. It does so by announcing that they are archaic and no longer a menace to society:

In our society the belief in the power and impact of monuments has become weak. Other media are far more effective for the transmission of historical-political models. The 19th-century faith in monuments, revitalized by the communist states in the 20th century, no longer exists today. Generally, in democratic societies, the political monuments from an older, pre-democratic time have been mitigated through historicalization, as was observable in the former Federal Republic with the monuments of the empire or with many war monuments. A threat to the democratic constitution of our society is without a doubt no longer the issue in regard to these monuments. These experiences should encourage us to a calm handling of the political monuments of the time of the SED, too. (ABGEORDNETENHAUS VON BERLIN, 1993, p. 5-6)

The necessity of clarifying the above sentiment in the Senate Monument Committee report suggests, perhaps, that the socialist monuments did still function on some level, conveying a degree of force that disturbed their post-1989 viewers. In fact, the report is often emotional, displaying a thinly veiled disdain for many of the political monuments. While it does not provide a detailed evaluation of the workers' militia monument specifically, in one of the few remarks about this monument, the report draws attention to the men's faces depicted on the monument, describing them as "fully emptied of meaning" (ABGEORDNETENHAUS VON BERLIN, 1993, p. 18). Inves-

tigating the social life of this monument, its inflated value at the moment of its inauguration in 1983 and its subsequent deflation as a meaningless thing after 1989, will bring to view the anxiety-producing problem generated by the SED regime's presentation of this particular monument. Effectively, the regime turned the monument into a symbol of the close bond between East German viewers and the militia.

### **Bound Together: An Image of and for the Collective**

The commissioners' intentions with the workers' militia monument clearly demonstrate the extent to which this East Berlin monument served as a mediator between the people, understood as a collective mass, and the SED regime. The selected location for the monument, for example, was the recently developed southern entrance to the people's park in Prenzlauer Berg across from newly constructed residential housing. Its link to the residential buildings was crucial, as residents in the housing complex across the street enjoyed the optimal view of the monument when they exited the front entrance of their home and walked down a narrow path toward the street. This habitual view of the monument was guaranteed to become an abiding memory for them. Equally important for instilling the memory was the spacious square facing the street in front of the monument, which allowed for large audiences, rallies, marches and military deployments of up to 300 men. Indeed, the location of the monument was conceived as a site that connected the daily lives of East Berliners entering the park or exiting their homes with a persistent reference to a military presence as mediated by the image of the monument.

The workers' militia monument consisted of four bronze components slightly distanced from each other, involving two sculptures in the round and two stelae. The installation was placed on a hillside so that numerous steps led up to the monument divided between two planes on the hill, allowing for the aesthetic intentions of a part-by-part engagement with it. The main component of the workers' militia monument was an over life-size bronze sculpture-in-the round (3 m) standing on a relatively low (1 m) pedestal, representing three standing men. The middle figure depicted a workers'

militia member holding an assault rifle, a so-called Kalashnikov traditionally employed by Soviet soldiers. His appearance, uniform, cap, and rifle, were recognizably that of the workers' militiamen during military parades in the 1950s, during the construction of the Wall in 1961, and into the 1980s. This central sculpture portraying muscular men emphasizes one of the most striking aspects of the workers' militia monument as a whole, for although women did participate in the workers' militia, all the bodies depicted in the monument's four parts represent virile men. Moreover, while the uniforms define each man as a worker or a fighter, they are markedly similar in physiognomy, gender and age. In fact, the generic, anonymous men portrayed in the workers' militia monument seem to convey the Everyman, or men sublated into man.

If the monument represents the Everyman as a compact mass, then this collective people defines, simultaneously and paradoxically, those who are excluded from its membership. The workers' militia monument manages to persistently thematize the idea of a social group placed in opposition to an enemy, consequently posing the question of whom that "other" should rightfully be. Indeed, the history of the workers' militia—also called the "combat groups of the working class" or "factory fighting groups"—is pivotal to an understanding of the act of reframing the "other" after German unification. Multiple frames were operative from the very start, for in the regime's official discourse, the task of the workers' militia was to protect the workers and peasants and secure the state against foreign enemies. Yet, less officially and more precisely, the militia's duty was to protect internal security by preventing social unrest and potential protests against the SED leadership from GDR citizens. Thus, while the leadership explicitly portrayed the "other" as "outside" the state, implicitly, the members were protecting the SED party against potential revolts inside the borders from fellow East Germans. The tension between an "outside" and "inside" enemy is, then, embedded in the discourse surrounding the monument from the very start.

Since the armed soldiers of the workers' militia were under the direct leadership of the SED party rather than the East German state, it served as a tool strengthening the power of the dictatorship. The units were affiliated

with the members' place of work, such as factories, state-run agricultural enterprises and other state-run institutions, and were reserve forces arranged locally throughout East Germany. Serving in the workers' militia was a part of everyday life for many citizens, and hundreds of thousands were members in the 36 years of its existence. Service was voluntary and consisted primarily of SED members, but also included individuals without party affiliation. Combat units defended the construction of the Wall by breaking up anti-wall demonstrations in Berlin (KOOP, 1997, p. 98). Personal testimonies by militiamen, recorded by functionaries between 1973 and 1976, give the impression that the militia members genuinely agreed with the need for an "antifascist protection" wall.<sup>1</sup> Some militiamen expressed pride in their efforts to "secure freedom," and the SED leadership praised them for "their enthusiasm and morale," which "was demonstrated most forcibly on the 13th of August, 1961, when militiamen took control of the GDR's state border with Berlin (West)" (GDR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, 1989, p. 283).

Other East Germans, however, were deeply critical of the need for a workers' militia and questioned the ethics of bearing arms after the horrors of World War II. Many citizens perceived the workers' militia as representing the Wall metonymically, existing as a persistent sign of the dictatorship's oppressive and militant methods. Because the concept of the workers' militia was difficult to accept for many East Germans, the inaugural ceremony for East Berlin's workers' militia monument in 1983 appeared all the more striking for its blatant glorification of the combat groups through spectacular events, such as military parades and celebrations, ironically meant to impress this East German audience.

Nonetheless, the leadership went to great lengths to establish a symbolic bond between the people and the workers' militia so that, ideally, the people would see themselves as one entity embodied in the image of the workers' militia. As one Politburo member proposed during the inauguration, "the monument and its entire complex embody the close bond between the workers' militia and the collective people."<sup>2</sup> A caption in a newspaper article the day after the monument's ceremonial inauguration reiterated the intention to draw citizens and the combat units closer together: "The



Workers' Militia is Closely Bound to the People.”<sup>3</sup> The celebration of the workers' militia monument would give the workers the opportunity to convey to the combat groups “how strongly they are connected to them,” announced the General Secretary of the SED party Erich Honecker during his speech (КООР, 1997, p. 305-6). Interrupting Honecker was the voice of an elderly man in the front row yelling “Shut up!” Two Stasi members in civilian clothes quickly escorted the man away from the square.<sup>4</sup>

### Participation and Renunciation

Considering the palpably negative reception of the workers' militia among many East Berliners, the question of East Berlin's municipality's justification for the erection of a workers' militia monument glorifying the combat groups in 1983 requires further consideration. The answer for its justification must lie, fundamentally, in the willingness of a sufficiently large number of people to facilitate an image of consent. Criticism of the workers' militia and the construction of a monument honoring the militia were cancelled out by the compliant masses. This collective people assimilated an image of consent as part of an outward appearance that supported the regime's practices. In the words of the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, this outward appearance served as “an objective semblance,” an apparently neutral façade where citizens managed to reproduce an air of uniformity that corresponded to the regime's worldview (ŽIŽEK, 2008, p. 157). In East Germany, the objective semblance was partially created through participation in the volunteer workers' militia and in official ceremonies. During May-Day celebrations, for example, the space in front of East Berlin's workers' militia monument functioned as a meeting place for swearing-in ceremonies when new members were accepted to a militia unit.

Part of the responsibility of the citizens in maintaining the workers' militia and its oppressive measures also lies with an artist who willingly accepted the commission to create a workers' militia monument and promote the SED's combat groups on a symbolic level. The advisory committee on city planning and visual arts had selected the East Berlin sculptor Gerhard Rommel (1934-) for the commission. But Gerhard Rommel was by no means their



first choice, having previously invited five other artists who all declined the invitation. Two more sculptors were asked to provide proposals, which were subsequently rejected by the commissioners.<sup>5</sup> Unlike some East German artists who sought to distance themselves from military-themed commissions, Rommel thoroughly cultivated such collaborations and was rewarded handsomely for his efforts with the workers' militia monument.<sup>6</sup> Rommel's intentions with his workers' militia monument add to the existing problems with this monument. According to Rommel, he never intended it to express military authority alone. In a 1981 interview with the East German daily newspaper *Berliner Zeitung*, Rommel talks about his deliberations with the monument: "For one, I wanted to make legible a historical tradition in which our workers' militia stand. Secondly, I wanted to draw attention not only to the labor and earnestness of the workers' militia's tasks, but also to add a bit of *joie de vivre* and cheerfulness," which, he said, was also part of the life of the armed forces of the working class.<sup>7</sup>

Rommel's description of a jolly workers' militia provides a highly problematic optic through which to consider his monument in post-1989 discourse. It brings to the forefront German anxieties linked to the notion that "the people" were complicit in the agenda and oppressive measures of the volunteer workers' militia, thus rendering it difficult to vilify the SED regime as the evil dictatorship. In current German discourse, any indication of an irrational sense of enjoyment associated with the former workers' militia must be renounced and suppressed, generally favoring a black and white portrayal of the good (the German people) and the bad (the SED regime). But the generic character of the represented men in the workers' militia monument added another and troublesome dimension to its reception after 1989. For the monument did not ask the viewer to honor the SED regime specifically. There is no particular person, no represented Lenin, for example, at whom one can point one's finger and blame for the crimes he committed. Rather, the represented subject is workers and militiamen, but also military-supportive East Germans *en masse*. In a sense, the image points to the responsibility that lies in accepting a troubling East German history as part of one's own after German unification.

One way to disavow Rommel's monument after 1989 was to stress that his creation had always been an artistic mishap.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, an anecdote claims that on a visit to the iron and bronze foundry of Lauchhammer, the highly esteemed East German sculptor Fritz Cremer saw Gerhard Rommel's workers' militia monument in progress and was thoroughly mortified that one of his own former students could make such rubbish.<sup>9</sup> Rommel's workers' militia monument was "not only a disgrace for the artists but for the whole population of the GDR" who have had to tolerate it, as one former East German art historian scoffed.<sup>10</sup> It was an "embarrassment," claimed several vocal Berliners in 1990.<sup>11</sup> Yet another way to negate the monument after 1989, one seemingly preferred by the 1993 Senate Monument Committee report as well as the district assembly of Prenzlauer Berg who dismantled the monument in 1992, was to censor the image and render it a non-issue by removing it from view and public discourse. A third way for the authorities to handle the monument was through a critical intervention, as initially proposed by the cultural department of the district of Prenzlauer Berg in 1990. The cultural department suggested that a critical intervention, such as information panels near the actual monument, would generate reflection and discussion on its history and meaning. The fate of the monument, the department argued, ought to be decided democratically through public debate, whether that led to its ultimate preservation, modification, or destruction.<sup>12</sup> The three ways of negating the workers' militia monument were put into practice by different groups of viewers, but it was the critical interventions that held the highest ideals for the reframing of the monument. These ideals involved the act of showing a negation of the monument, attempting, albeit unsuccessfully, to visibly sever the bond formerly promoted by the East German regime between the viewer and the monument.

### Cutting the Bond or Reframing?

A structural similarity exists between the various interventions performed on the workers' militia monument and acts of estrangement (*Verfremdung*), suggesting Bertolt Brecht's estrangement effect. Brecht's effect describes the moment when a character is artfully displaced from its normal context, requiring a re-evaluation of what is seen that leads to revelation, con-

frontation and the potential for social change. Ernst Bloch, who left the GDR at the time of the construction of the Wall in 1961, places the positively perceived effect of *Verfremdung* in relation to the negative aspects of alienation (*Entfremdung*). Alienation is an external influence that cuts off relationships through a sense of betrayal, by means of, for example, a dictatorship's exercise of control and authority (BLOCH, 1970, p. 121-2). In contrast, estrangement reframes a subject by critically distancing the viewer from what is inside the frame. The estrangement does not cut the bond that links the first and second view but, rather, simply frames the image in a new way that depends on the prior view for its effect.

In an effort to reframe the workers' militia monument, the cultural department of Prenzlauer Berg installed a text panel next to the monument during the winter of 1990-91. The information panel explained the monument's political-historical context, its function, and its intended aesthetic pictorial program (FLIERL, 1992, p. 242). The former city councilor for social affairs then suggested the further addition of two segments of the Berlin Wall on the square (Ill. 2). The two Wall sections, placed at an angle to the monument with the eastern sides facing it, would link the Wall with the workers' militia and preferably initiate a public and critical reflection on the role of the workers' militia in the GDR and its placement in German history. The authorities had hoped that the Wall segments would bring out the mutual roles of the workers' militia and the Wall as facilitators of oppression and dictatorship through an act of estrangement that would reframe the monument.

Since estrangement has been compared to putting things in brackets (GAMBONI, 1997, p. 74), the two Wall fragments come to resemble two visual brackets that leave the message of the monument unharmed while simultaneously setting that message aside in a category of its own. The brackets de-naturalize the image of the monument by drawing attention to its new position as a meta-image arrived at through critical distance. The frame also adds a temporal dimension to the monument, for it historicizes the present (BLOCH, 1970, p. 124). Indeed, such was the goal of both the information panel and Wall segments for the district administrators for cultural affairs



who sought to create a self-reflective and current dialogue with *the past*. Their goal was ultimately unattainable, however, for many Berliners found it difficult to distance themselves from the depicted subject in the workers' militia monument and situate the monument in an historical framework. The continued iconoclastic critiques and spectacular defacements against the workers' militia monument, between 1990 and 1992, confirm their ongoing and conflicted relations with the role of the workers' militia (NIELSEN, 2010, p. 116-162). These relations were not, as of yet, in a sufficiently distant past.

The district assembly of Prenzlauer Berg was one of the groups that refused to consider the workers' militia monument an historical document. The district assembly voted on the future fate of the monument and announced in 1991 that the monument would be removed and erased from the district's monument protection list, on the grounds that the workers' militia had served as a major instrument of the SED regime and its controlling apparatus. They argued that the goals and tasks of the militia were thoroughly against their own population. Its proud participation in the building and guarding of the Wall demonstrates its crimes: "The district assembly of Prenzlauer Berg finds it unacceptable that such an organization, serving inhumane and undemocratic objectives, should continue to be represented in a public monument."<sup>13</sup> Despite the district assembly's ethically sound rationale for dismantling the monument, based on the monument's association with the regime's oppressive measures, the result of its decision was that history was put in the service of politics before any historical reflection on the monument had taken pace.

The workers' militia monument was dismantled on the 28th of February 1992, following which the site was under consideration for new usage (ill. 3). The location was made greener and integrated more fully with the people's park, in front of which the monument had stood. In 1997, the marching

ILL. 2 (OPPOSITE)

Two segments of the Berlin Wall placed at an angle to the *Workers' Militia Monument* with the eastern sides facing it, 1990-91.

Courtesy of James J. Ward.





ILL. 3

The *Workers' Militia Monument* was dismantled on the 28th of February 1992, after which the site was under consideration for new usage.

Courtesy of James J. Ward.

square on the site of the former monument was removed and replaced with a lawn and Japanese trees.<sup>14</sup> Three landscape gardeners from the district's department of parks and recreation constructed a stone arrangement as a replacement for the removed workers' militia monument. The district's new construction consists of several parts spread out over the same location, involving a stone gate with stairs leading up to a circular stone arrangement (ill. 4). The appearance of the stone gate appropriates stylistically a Japanese Torii gate, and concomitant with the Japanese trees planted on the site comes the suggestion of a theme related to Shinto religion and the veneration of sacred nature. Whatever stand one takes on the Japanese and semi-sacred theme of the new stone park, it is clear that the district invested time, money, and effort into the new construction, which supplants the workers' militia monument.



ILL. 4

In 1997, the marching square on the site of the former monument was removed and replaced with a lawn and Japanese trees. The construction that replaces the monument consists of several parts dispersed on the same location, involving a stone gate with steps leading up to a circular stone arrangement.

Photo by author.

Instead of an explicit reflection on the workers' militia monument, a different history takes its place, one that is equally invested in the notion of an implicit "other." On the inside of the 1997 stone gate, district authorities have inserted a textual plate that describes the history of the location, yet this history makes no reference to the workers' militia monument, which had stood on that very spot just years before. Instead, the account describes the gardens that emerged after 1871, the cultivation of the land in the early 20th century, how World War II rubble was brought to the site, the 1969 inauguration of the "Volkspark Prenzlauer Berg," the 1971 creation of a botanical nature trail, whereupon the account jumps to 1997 and describes the bird and animal population in the park. The plaque's concern with the park's development attempts, then, to distinguish between nature and culture. By means of this act of censorship that elevates nature to a higher



ground, the offensive cultural artifice that was the workers' militia monument is blotted out of memory. The silence is striking because the gate and stone arrangement are, as mentioned, situated on the very spot on which the workers' militia monument had stood, creating an unexpressed charge and forced tension about that which is no longer present.

Indeed, particular interest groups sympathetic to the former GDR refuse to forget the former workers' militia monument. They claim that a new workers' militia monument has been erected on the site of the old one. An article from 2008, published in a left-leaning journal on sociology and human rights, re-introduces a topic that had circulated ten years prior in a local leftist newspaper. Both articles assert, tongue in cheek, that the so-called "Monument No. 2" deliberately mirrors workers' militia monument "No. 1."<sup>15</sup> For example, on the square at street level one now finds serried rows of trees visually paralleling the ranks of soldiers on the very same spot during the rule of the SED regime. The former steps of the workers' militia monument had been removed, but new ones were built in almost the same location, narrower, but essentially based on the same spatial configuration. Segments of the old sandstone steps became spolia used for Monument No. 2, and on the higher plane where the SED leadership had stood in proximity to the workers' militia monument, one now finds low, vertical stones in their place. The squared stones are nearly identical but, as one viewer comments, "one automatically begins to wonder whom the stones represent; Politburo members or workers' militia commanders?"<sup>16</sup> While the above claim is made partially in jest, the creation of a stone gate is nonetheless an interesting choice. The stone gate that belongs to "Monument No. 2" negates symbolically the Wall with which the workers' militia has always been associated. This negation by means of a gate is thoroughly reliant on monument "No. 1" for its effect. The result is that even after the removal of the workers' militia monument, it is still there symbolically, as the new monument retains the memory of a disavowed other, both discursively in the form of the narrative plaque inside the gate, and visually through the construction of a gate that disavows the Wall.

The stone arrangement on the site of the former workers' militia monument reframes the former monument through negation. Yet, rather than sever-

ing the bond with the monument, the handling of it by district authorities in the 1990s confirms the monument's real and problematic presence in the minds of viewers at the time. The anxieties linked to the notions of oppression, dictatorship, and the possibility of a *joie de vivre* in volunteer, military pursuits continue to resonate in German memory, to the extent that reframing the workers' militia monument as an "other" can only occur disturbingly close to the "self". The various acts of reframing the monument do not sever viewers relations with the past. Thus, while the 1983 workers' militia monument aimed to represent East Germans as a collective subject, the new stone arrangement hopes to portray post-unified Germans united against an all-too familiar "other" whose presence continues to be felt.

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## RESUMÉ

### **At omfortolke Arbejdernes kampgruppe-monument i det genforenede Berlin**

I begyndelsen af 1990'erne, efter Berlinmurens fald, skulle Berlins politikere og befolkning finde en etisk forsvarlig måde at håndtere de store politiske statuer i det tidligere Østberlin. Denne artikel ser på, hvordan myndighederne i Berlins Prenzlauer Berg distrikt håndterede distriktets kampgruppe-monument ("Kampfgruppendenkmal"), indviet af det østtyske regime i 1983 og fjernet fra det offentlige rum i 1992. Forfatteren argumenterer, at de forskellige måder, hvorpå myndighederne forsøgte at indramme eller reaktualisere monumentet skal forstås i relation til kampgruppefænomens og monuments betydning før 1989 som symbol på det komplicerede forhold mellem befolkningen og regimet i det tidligere DDR. Borgernes medlemskab af de såkaldte kampgrupper og disses rolle i forbindelse med opførelsen af Berlinmuren i 1961 komplicerer censureringen af monumentet efter 1989 og den fortsatte håndtering af værket, og den plads hvor det stod, i 1990'erne.

## NOTES

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