



# In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II

By Jeffrey M. Diefendorf

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In 1945 Germany's cities lay in ruins, destroyed by Allied bombers that left major architectural monuments badly damaged and much of the housing stock reduced to rubble. At the war's end, observers thought that it would take forty years to rebuild, but by the late 1950s West Germany's cities had risen anew. The housing crisis had been overcome and virtually all important monuments reconstructed, and the cities had reclaimed their characteristic identities. Everywhere there was a mixture of old and new: historic churches and town halls stood alongside new housing and department stores; ancient street layouts were crossed or encircled by wide arteries; old city centers were balanced by garden suburbs laid out according to modern planning principles. In this book, Diefendorf examines the questions raised by this remarkable feat of urban reconstruction. He explains who was primarily responsible, what accounted for the speed of rebuilding, and how priorities were set and decisions acted upon. He argues that in such crucial areas as architectural style, urban planning, historic preservation, and housing policy, the Germans drew upon personnel, ideas, institutions, and practical experiences from the Nazi and pre-Nazi periods. Diefendorf shows how the rebuilding of West Germany's cities after 1945 can only be understood in terms of long-term continuities in urban development.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"Diefendorf's book is excellent history, thorough, documented, well organized, and readably written."--*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*

"Far-ranging...An extremely valuable contribution to planning history and to postwar German history."--*Journal of Modern History*

"Not only historians but students of architecture, urban planning, and historic preservation, as well as lawyers, environmentalists, and communitarians, will find much of absorbing interest in this dense but well-written history. Highly recommended."--*Choice*

"A fascinating account of the reconstruction of German cities following the end of World War II...Diefendorf suggests that by learning from the German experience of revitalizing its devastated cities, the United States can be more efficient in attacking urban blight in its own cities."--*History: Reviews of New Books*

"[A] major contribution to the subject."--*American Historical Review*

#### From the Back Cover

In 1945, Germany's cities lay in ruins, destroyed by Allied bombers that left major architectural monuments badly damaged and much of the housing stock reduced to rubble. At the war's end, observers thought that it would take forty years to rebuild, but by the late 1950s West Germany's cities had risen anew. The housing crisis had been overcome and virtually all important monuments reconstructed, and the cities had reclaimed their characteristic identities. Everywhere there was a mixture of old and new: historic churches and town halls stood alongside new housing and department stores; ancient street layouts were crossed or circled by wide arteries; old city centers were balanced by garden suburbs laid out according to modern planning principles. *In the Wake of War* examines the questions raised by this remarkable feat of urban reconstruction. Jeffrey M. Diefendorf explains who was primarily responsible for the reconstruction, what accounted for the speed of rebuilding, and how priorities were set and decisions acted upon. He argues that in such crucial areas as architectural style, urban planning, historic preservation, and housing policy, the Germans drew upon personnel, ideas, institutions, and practical experiences from the Nazi and pre-Nazi periods. Diefendorf shows how the rebuilding of West Germany's cities after 1945 can only be understood in terms of long-term continuities in urban development. The first comprehensive book in English on Germany's reconstruction, *In the Wake of War* examines postwar urban reconstruction from many

perspectives, including architecture, historic restoration, housing, town planning and law, and it consistently interprets the features of German reconstruction within the context of continuous developments in these areas since the 1920s. This study will appeal to architects and urban planners as well as historians.

About the Author

Jeffrey M. Diefendorf is at University of New Hampshire.

## **Users Review**

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**Melanie Ratcliff:**

This In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II book is not ordinary book, you have after that it the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is actually information inside this book incredible fresh, you will get details which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This particular In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II without we understand teach the one who looking at it become critical in pondering and analyzing. Don't be worry In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II can bring when you are and not make your handbag space or bookshelves' come to be full because you can have it inside your lovely laptop even phone. This In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II having excellent arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not feel uninterested in reading.

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