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Housing Policy in Soviet Russia and Germany between the Two World Wars: Comparative Analysis of Two Systems

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Abstract

World War I played a key role in shaping modern housing policy. While in the pre-War era, there was virtually no housing policy, hostilities led to an almost immediate and comprehensive state intervention in the housing market, particularly among those engaged in the war. Originally, Russia went the same way as the other countries. However, after the communists seized power in November 1917, they started conducting a different policy reflecting their specific objectives. These differences become apparent when Soviet Russia is compared with Germany—a large European market economy that faced similar challenges: the devastating consequences of World War I, hyperinflation in the early 1920s, and the dictatorship regime of the 1930s. Thus, the diverging characteristics of the housing policy of both countries can to a large extent be attributed to the ideological differences between the centrally planned and the market economies.

Keywords

Germany, Russia, housing policy, World War, rationing, tenant eviction, rent control, nationalization

Introduction

World War I played a key role in shaping modern housing policy. Although there was virtually no housing policy prior to the outbreak of war, the beginning of hostilities led to an almost immediate and comprehensive state intervention in the housing market, particularly among those countries engaged in the war.

In the beginning, Russian policy, both czarist and—between March and November 1917—democratic, was similar to that of other countries. However, after seizing power in November 1917, the Bolsheviks immediately started conducting a different policy reflecting their radical communist ideology. The specific nature of their housing policy is best understood when compared with a market economy. We chose Germany as a reference country given not just its political and economic importance in Europe but also the similarities in the historical trajectories

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of both countries. First, both Russia and Germany suffered greatly from their participation in World War I. Second, hyperinflation dominated the economy of both countries throughout the early 1920s. Third, both countries were led by strong dictators: starting in 1928, Stalin had virtually unlimited power, while in 1933, Hitler came to power in Germany.

The choice of Germany and Russia can also be justified by a strong path dependency in housing regulation, meaning that many of the instruments in place today originated decades ago. In particular, German tenant protection has remained in force since its introduction during World War I. Housing rents are still subject to rent controls introduced in 1922, albeit strongly modified in the 1970s. Housing rationing is an instrument still widely used in the German housing policy. In contrast, after seventy years of strict housing market controls, Russia removed them altogether in the early 1990s as a part of its move to a market economy from that of being centrally planned. As of 2015, the Russian housing market is one of the most liberalized in Europe. Nevertheless, due to the difference in the housing policies that persisted for many decades and despite a vigorous expansion of housing construction in Russia in the 2000s, the provision of housing in Russia is well below that of Germany. Thus, in 2014, there were 45.5 square meters of housing area per person in Germany versus 23.7 square meters in the Russian Federation. Moreover, dwellings in Germany are much larger than those in Russia: 91.4 square meters and 54.9 square meters, correspondingly.

The aim of this article is, by comparing the housing policies in these two countries, to identify the specific characteristics of the early communist system as opposed to those of market economies. Given the extreme complexity of housing policies, in what follows, we concentrate exclusively on policies focused on existing housing stock in the cities. Moreover, our analysis is concentrated on the interwar period, that is, 1918-1939.

Early Soviet housing policy is not widely analyzed in international literature,¹ although there is a large literature on the subject for those literate in the Russian.² However, this literature considers separate segments of housing policy, especially that of housing construction, without providing a comprehensive, systematic, and unified view of the overall policy. Moreover, there are virtually no studies comparing Soviet housing policy in the 1920s and 1930s with that of other countries. This article addresses this gap, examining tenant protection, rent controls, rationing, and nationalization of housing in Russia and Germany in a parallel way.

This article is structured as follows. The next section examines the starting conditions in both countries. In the sections “Housing Policies in Germany” and “Housing Policies in Russia,” the housing policies of Germany and Russia, respectively, are briefly described. We attempt to make the description as uniform and consistent as possible to simplify the comparison. In addition, the section “Housing Policies in Russia” draws the parallels and stresses the differences between Soviet and German housing policies. The final section concludes.

Similar Starting Conditions

Both Germany and Russia started from similar positions in the period under consideration. The fast growing urban population, during the industrial revolution, faced an acute shortage of housing supply, especially in large industrial centers that were the main areas attracting new labor. A particularly large housing deficit existed in the lower segment of the housing market, namely, in that of small and cheap apartments.

In German cities, the share of rental housing attained 80 to 95 percent.³ In Russia, the situation was very similar. For example, in St. Petersburg in the late nineteenth century, this indicator approached 94 percent.⁴ Virtually all workers lived in rental housing. In that period, the housing law in both countries almost did not regulate the relationship between the tenants and landlords. It was departing from the principle of “a contractual freedom” that allowed the unscrupulous landlords to take advantage of the tenants’ stressful situation: at any moment, the landlords could either raise the rent or end the contract. The result was a high tenant turnover and insecurity. Both

in Germany and in Russia, subletting and bed-lodging (*Schlafgänger* in German and *koyechnik* in Russian) flourished.⁵ In the latter case, singles, who did not have their own dwelling, rented not a room or its corner but rather a bed on a part-time basis.

The housing shortage caused by World War I was exacerbated in Russia by the revolution and civil war. There are at least four basic reasons for this: the aforementioned housing shortage that existed prior to World War I, the lack of housing construction during the war, a loss of housing stock during hostilities (especially in Russia), and an increase in the number and size of households due to the desire of people to make up for the time lost, as during the war, marriages and childbearing were postponed awaiting “better times.”

Housing Policies in Germany

In Germany, housing policy in the modern sense—as purposeful efforts of the government to foster housing construction by all types of investors, to act as the housing projects owner, and to regulate the relationships between the landlords and tenants—was born with the outbreak of World War I.⁶ Before then, the government avoided intervening in the housing sector and confined itself to some minimal regulation regarding the quality of housing (sunniness, dryness, and size).⁷ The 1900 German Civil Code provided a complete freedom of contractual relations in the housing market.⁸ This implied that the relations between the tenants and landlords were regulated exclusively by the contracts they concluded. Typically, model contracts, which were compiled by landlords and their associations that primarily protected the landlords’ interests, were used.⁹

This situation changed radically during World War I. Initially, the departure of men to the front along with the forced return of many wives to their parental households, to reduce the housing costs, helped mitigate the housing shortage. However, later on, as a result of the inflow of the new labor into the cities (especially to the centers of the armament industry) and an almost complete cessation in the construction of new housing, the shortage of dwellings once again became acute. The already strained situation deteriorated even more when the soldiers started to return home.

Attempting to avoid social turmoil, German authorities actively intervened in the housing market. To alleviate the housing problem in the short run, authorities used three forms of regulations.

Tenant Protection from Eviction

First, tenants were protected from eviction. As early as 1914, a few days after the outbreak of war, a moratorium on litigation against war participants was imposed.¹⁰ This was extended to include family members of soldiers who died in battle.¹¹ This made it virtually impossible to evict war participants and their immediate family from the housing they were renting. The regulations enacted at the end of the war extended protection to other tenant categories.¹² The tenant eviction was now only possible upon a court decision and only in one of the following cases: if the tenant was causing serious problems for either the landlord or other tenants; if the tenant was unduly utilizing or misusing his dwelling in such a way as to endanger the dwelling or the whole building; if the tenant, without the landlord’s permission, was subletting his dwelling to a third party; if the tenant had not paid rent for an excessive period of time; or if the landlord urgently needed the rented out dwelling (and was able to prove this need in court).¹³ In the latter case, the eviction could only take place if the tenant being evicted was provided with an alternative dwelling. Moreover, in certain cases, the tenant could claim moving expenses from the landlord.

Rent Controls

Second, rent was frozen. This measure concerned only the so-called “old housing” (*Altbauwohnungen*), that is, the housing built before 1918. The rent in these houses was fixed at

the July 1, 1914 levels. It was called “legal rent” (*gesetzliche Miete*) or “peacetime rent” (*Friedensmiete*) and could not be freely increased by the landlords.¹⁴ Any changes to rent were only made by the authorities. At the local level, the issues of rent setting were dealt with by “arbitration councils.”

Housing Rationing

Third, a so-called housing rationing (redistribution of the scarce existing housing stock) together with restrictions upon the migrations between regions and in some cases even prohibitions to marry were introduced.

In 1918, a regulation was enacted that was aimed at the preservation, registration, and use of the existing housing stock, as well as the creation of new dwellings through conversion of non-housing into housing stock.¹⁵ The key result of this regulation was a replacement of market distribution of housing with a public one, that is, local governments obtained the authority to prohibit the demolition of the private housing and conversion of the housing into nonhousing stock; assign tenants to the unused housing, which was to be reported to the local authorities by the landlords¹⁶; and take any measure, in case of an especially acute housing shortage, that the local authorities find necessary. The last provision gave local authorities the wide latitude necessary for intervening in the functioning of the housing market. For instance, Bavarian government introduced a state monopoly on the letting out of housing.¹⁷ The local authorities in other Länder (federal states) started to identify “redundant housing,” both in the rental and owner-occupied housing, subsequently confiscating it and assigning new tenants who were officially registered as looking for a place to live (*Einquartierung* or *Wohnungsrationierung*). However, no precise legal definition of the “redundant housing” existed nationally. It existed only in Baden, where a household was entitled to as many rooms as the number of household members plus one common room. All extra rooms were treated as “redundant.” In Bavaria, a more sophisticated scheme of identifying the “redundancies” was used, accounting for the age, gender, and health condition of household members.¹⁸

The housing shortage had also brought about “housing swaps” (*Wohnungstausch*), a new institution where tenants could trade apartments among themselves, needing only the permission of the local authorities, not that of their landlords.¹⁹

The housing regulations introduced in Germany seriously limited landlord rights. Prior to World War I, landlords had an almost unrestricted freedom to do whatever they wanted with their property. At the same time, tenants and homeowners also lost some freedom. On one hand, the tenants lost freedom of choice in housing, as they were forced to occupy the housing that was assigned to them by the local housing office. On the other hand, both tenants and homeowners were subject to a forced “consolidation,” when, if they possessed redundant housing, complete strangers were assigned living quarters within their dwelling. Sometimes this led to violent conflict. This feature made the housing rationing policy extremely unpopular.

All the aforementioned restrictions were regarded as provisional measures that would be abolished after the housing market situation improved. Nevertheless, the restrictions remained in force much longer than initially expected.²⁰ Only starting from the second half of the 1920s did their gradual dismantlement begin,²¹ although this was interrupted in 1936, when the Nazis initiated their military preparations.

State Redistribution of Rental Revenue

It should be noted that the restrictive measures were accompanied by incentive measures designed to foster housing construction, which fell dramatically during World War I and the initial postwar years. To some extent, this drop in construction can be explained by the fact that many private

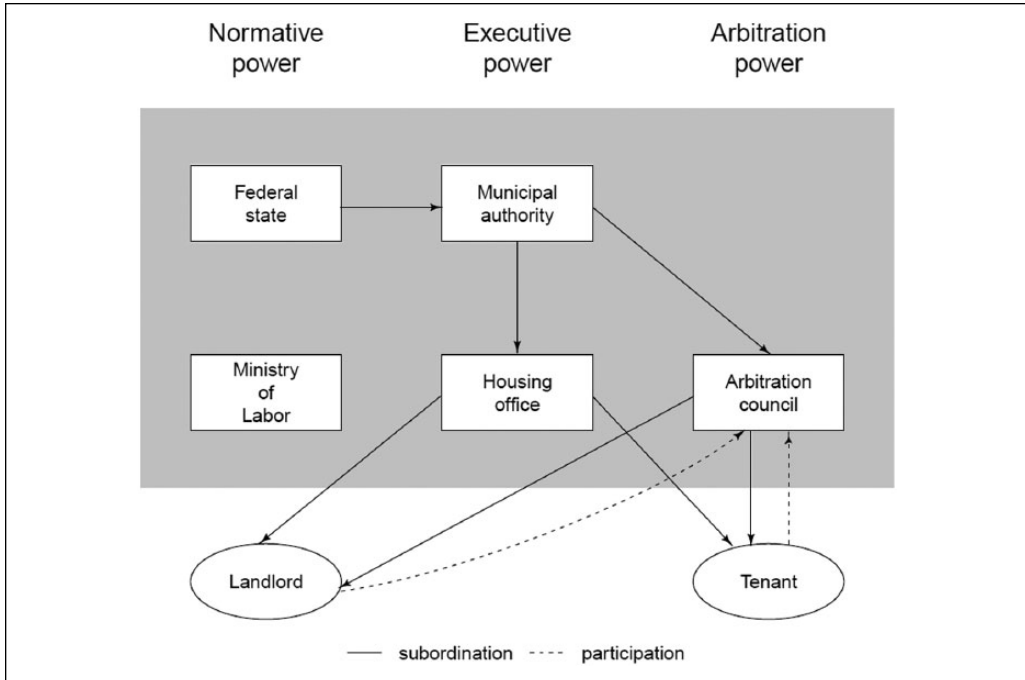


Figure 1. Organizational structure of housing policy in Germany.

investors lost their capital as a consequence of the 1922-1923 hyperinflation. In addition, it was much more profitable to invest remaining funds in industry rather than housing, as housing had low rates of return due to the rent freeze and increased tenant protection.²²

The state was forced to play an active role in accumulating funds and allocating large investments to the housing construction to compensate for the lack of private investment. Initially, the major source of the funds was the so-called housing construction fostering duty (*Abgabe zur Förderung des Wohnungsbaues*) that was collected from the housing users (*Nutzungsberechtigte*).²³ In case of rental housing, the users were the tenants. The hyperinflation led to a complete depreciation of the mortgage debt. In response to this, in 1924, a so-called “inhabited housing tax” (*Hauszinssteuer*, or *Mietzinssteuer*) was introduced. It was levied upon the owners of the built-up plots, who had mortgage debts on December 31, 1918, and sought to offset gains made as a result of hyperinflation.²⁴ The revenues from this tax went into the budget of the corresponding Länder and served as a source of financing for housing construction. In particular, these means could be allocated in the form of building loans to families with many children, low-income families, and persons with war-related disabilities.

Large-scaled public (municipal) financing of the housing construction did not mean that private housing provision was crowded out of the market—construction funds were allocated to those who wanted to build residential housing, provided that they would keep the rent below a certain ceiling. As a result, all property forms of housing remained important in Germany: publicly provided, employer-provided, cooperative, and private housing.

Organizational Structure and Goals of German Housing Policy

Figure 1 represents the organizational structure of German housing policy. Three branches of power can be distinguished: normative power (rule making), executive power, and arbitration

power (settling the housing conflicts). The bodies responsible for housing policies are depicted in the form of rectangles in the shadowed area. Although the diagram is simplified, it clearly shows the main actors of housing policy and their relationships.

In Germany, housing policy at the federal level was overseen by the Ministry of Labor. At the same time, the Länder and municipalities possessed a wide autonomy in the field of rule making and control over the housing situation. In particular, to settle the conflicts between the landlords and tenants in an extrajudicial way, “rental arbitration councils” (*Mieteinigungsämter* or *Einigungsämter*) were locally created during World War I.²⁵ These councils were comprised of representatives of both landlords and tenants. Their purpose was to settle conflicts between landlords and tenants as well as between mortgage creditors and debtors out of court. Starting from 1917, the powers of the arbitration councils were substantially expanded.²⁶ The councils received the right to decide whether a tenant was evicted unjustly or if a landlord set rent too high—in the latter case, requiring rent be reduced. The decisions made by the arbitration councils were definitive and incontestable, without any possibility of appeal. These decisions were made at “reasonable discretion” (*nach billigem Ermessen*), that is, the councils had wide latitude in interpreting the existing laws. In some cases, the Länder authorities confined the jurisdiction of the arbitration councils to small dwellings, dwellings with a rent below certain level, or to particular areas.

The task of housing provision was performed by the “housing offices” (*Wohnungsämter*), which were part of the municipal authority bodies. Some offices were established even before World War I.²⁷ Initially, they controlled the housing quality in terms of its healthiness and the occupation density (to avoid overcrowding). After the beginning of World War I and the accompanying housing shortage aggravation, their functions were expanded to include the registration of the available housing, creation of the lists of those who were in need for housing, and rationing of the housing stock.²⁸

Housing policy in Germany played a dual role. On one hand, it was a tool of the social policy. On the other hand, it was used as an instrument of the wage policy, whose objective was to maintain the competitiveness of the German goods by keeping production costs in check. Given the relatively large share of rental expenses in the household’s income,²⁹ keeping rent stable and low allowed wage increases to be limited, if not avoided. The state maintained this balance through a rent freeze and, in some cases, even through its legally prescribed reduction (for example, rents were cut in 1931 as a part of an administrative general price decrease by the Heinrich Brüning’s cabinet in response to the economic troubles caused by the Great Depression).³⁰

Housing Policy under Nazi Rule

The accession of the National Socialists to power did not lead to any changes in the nature and direction of German housing policy. Initially, they continued the removal of the housing policy restrictions initiated by their predecessors. Thus, in 1933, housing offices and arbitration councils were dissolved.³¹ In fact, the National Socialists disliked the rationing of housing due to the extremely unpleasant impressions it gave the public. The National Socialists did not want to put their popularity at risk by reintroducing such measures. Three years later, in 1936, the Nazis reinstated the following regulations: tenant eviction protection, rent freeze at “peacetime levels,”³² and a prohibition on converting housing stock into nonhousing.³³ The only category of population that did not benefit from these protections were Jews. In contrast, in 1939, a special law deprived them of virtually all of their rights in the housing market: landlords received the right to evict their Jewish tenants for almost any pretext, provided that they could guarantee that the evicted would have an alternative dwelling. Furthermore, Jewish landlords were obliged upon request from local authorities to accept Jews as tenants.³⁴

Nevertheless, circumstances caused the Nazi government to reintroduce the unpopular housing rationing. In 1939, the landlords were compelled to provide rental dwellings to families with

many children.³⁵ In 1943, when faced with enormous housing stock destructions caused by the allied bombardments of German cities, authorities were forced to issue an act that required reconversion to housing of the dwellings that were previously converted to nonhousing uses; registration of vacant, newly built, and reconverted housing units; priority quartering to the vacant housing belonging to the persons with “preferential and beneficiary” status (*bevorrechtigte und begünstigte Volkskreise*); and limitation of immigration to “areas with extreme housing shortages” (*Brennpunkten des Wohnungsbedarfs*) and the encouragement of out-migration from these localities.³⁶ This meant a return to the housing rationing, albeit in a somewhat softer form than in the early 1920s.

Housing Policies in Russia

Prior to the October Revolution in Russia, housing policy, if any, was similar to that of Germany. Legislation regulating the rental relationships imposed only very mild restrictions on the landlords (in fact, it only prohibited the conversion of housing to nonhousing uses).³⁷ No restrictions on tenant eviction or rent levels existed. Only during World War I, when Russia faced the same challenges as Germany, did Russian authorities introduce tenant eviction protection and limit the growth of housing rents. On August 27, 1916, the council of ministers issued an act prohibiting housing rent increases.³⁸ If the contract was concluded before July 19, 1914, the rent could not be increased by more than 10 percent of that level. Otherwise, rent was frozen at January 1, 1915 levels. Any increases in excess of these were forbidden and could be punished with a prison sentence. In addition, the act required landlords to extend tenant contracts for one year if the tenant requested an extension no later than one month prior to the end of his contract for rental apartments or one week prior to the end in the case of rental rooms. Contracts were extended under the same conditions. Low-income tenants who rented beds or room corners were automatically granted the right to prolong contracts, as long as they were paying their rent; eviction was prohibited. Landlord could evict existing tenants in three cases: if the tenant infringed contract conditions, if landlord proved that he needed the dwelling for himself and his family members, or if tenant’s behavior made normal cohabitation with other tenants impossible. Expensive apartments were excluded from rent controls.

On August 5, 1917, the Russian provisional government issued an act that set new upper bounds on the rents in form of percentage increases with respect to the pre-War (before July 19, 1914) rents.³⁹ These increases were progressive (the higher the initial rent, the higher the percentage it was allowed to be raised, with highest increase not exceeding 100 percent; thus, the tenants of cheaper apartments were subject to smaller rent increases) and depended on the settlement (all settlements were categorized into four classes based on the direct taxes schedule). The act also recommended that the municipalities create arbitration councils (*primiritel’nye zhilishchnye kamery*) that had the same composition (representatives of both landlords and tenants) and the same functions (settling housing disputes, in particular, those concerning the rent level) as their German counterparts.

Soviet Russia used different methods to solve war-related housing challenges than did Germany or the Russian imperial and provisional governments, as seen in Table 1. First, the state nationalized the bulk of housing stock, turning itself into a megalandlord. Second, tenants had virtually no protection from eviction. In contrast, it was made easier for the megalandlord to evict tenants who belonged to certain social categories. Third, rent controls were designed in a completely different manner to discriminate between social classes. Finally, the rationing of housing existed in Soviet Russia but in a more severe form, perhaps due to the widespread destruction of housing stock during World War I and the subsequent Russian Civil War. These aspects of housing policy are considered in more detail below.

Table 1. Summary of Similarities and Differences of German and Russian Housing Policies.

	Germany	Soviet Russia
Policy purposes	Reduce social tensions, help promote German competitiveness through low wages	Provide strong incentives to work where needed and to comply with the communist regime
Landlords	Many, relatively weak market power	Few, strong market power
Property	Predominantly private	Predominantly state
Tenant eviction	Tenants strongly protected	Tenants have no protection
Rent control	Rent freeze for pre-War housing, no controls for newly built housing, discrimination against landlords, regardless of their socioeconomic status	Rent freeze for the whole housing stock, mainly in the urban settlements; discrimination against businessmen, capitalists, and professionals, regardless of whether they were tenants or landlords
Housing rationing	Strong	Strong
Discrimination	Against Jews from 1939	Against “socially alien people” from 1917

Nationalization of Housing Stock

Formally, the same property forms in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) existed as in Germany and the Russian Empire: state housing, employer-provided housing, cooperative housing, and private housing. However, while Germany did not abolish private property, in the USSR, the nationalization of housing in the cities was a top priority. This objective was achieved in the first months of Soviet rule: the bulk of the urban housing (all stone buildings and wooden buildings with the area exceeding 115 square meters) were confiscated from their former owners and nationalized.⁴⁰ This procedure was given a name of “municipalization.” According to some estimates, these efforts led to a dramatic decrease in privately held housing in urban areas across the USSR: starting at 100 percent in 1913, the share of living area that was privately held fell to 52 percent in 1926 and 37 percent in 1940.⁴¹ The confiscated housing stock was provided to the branch-specific people’s commissariats (government agencies)—the bodies that were in charge of specific branches of the economy. In fact, they effectively possessed and controlled all the labor resources that were concentrated in the cities and, given the socialization of the economy, were bound to solve all issues related to their housing provision.

Against a background of economic collapse and hunger, which only encouraged outward migration from cities, the main policy goal of the Soviet government under War Communism (1918-1921) and the beginning of the New Economic Policy (1921-1928) was to keep qualified labor in the cities, where it was needed. Another goal was to attract new employees. As a result, housing confiscated from private owners by the Soviet government, and allocated to the commissariats, was subsequently used to attract those who lived in crowded conditions, in low-quality wooden dwellings and worker barracks, or were coming to the cities in search for employment but otherwise lacked shelter. Housing was provided conditional upon employment, thus serving to discourage people from quitting their jobs. The government supported this strategy of using housing as a tool to ensure that the state industry was supplied with labor by issuing the decrees that required individuals who had “lost the contact with the employer” to be evicted. In particular, such measures were supported by introduction of a legal definition of the so-called “fixedly attached” housing, that is, the dwellings that were transmitted by the government in the possession of the people’s commissariats. The provision of “state employer provided” housing was not regulated by the private contractual relations (like in Germany or in pre-Communist Russia) but

rather by the “official working relations.”⁴² This implied that “a death, transfer, or a dismissal of the employee that was provided with housing immediately led to his replacement by another employee who obtained the dwelling that was occupied by his predecessor.”⁴³

As a result of the policy of mass municipalization of private housing stock that took place in 1917-1920 and despite the later demunicipalization—an inverse process that started 1921 with the introduction of the New Housing Policy⁴⁴ and New Economic Policy—few house owners remained in the cities. Neither central nor local authorities cared about the relationships between the private landlords and tenants, since according to state ideology, no private landlords should exist in the communist state. The housing policy of the Bolsheviks was based on the belief that housing should not be in private property and that all related processes—construction, exploitation, disposal, and so on—should be the prerogative of the state. In that respect, the USSR strongly differed from Germany, where the government, despite freezing rents and rationing housing stock, never sought to nationalize housing stock.

In the early to mid-1920s, the leadership paid most attention to the formation of exclusive employer-provided housing stock and hence development of a system of legal measures to use it as a means of coercion to work for state enterprises and government agencies. There were many reasons for the people to refuse working in the state sector of economy: reluctance to collaborate with the new authorities due to the principles, unwillingness to perform the job that did not correspond to their qualifications, unwillingness to work under the offered conditions, disagreement with the incompetent party-led management, and so on. In the absence of other incentives, the allocation of the state housing stock (only to those who took employment in the state sector of economy) turned into perhaps the most, if not the only, effective means of managing labor resources. The Soviet authorities needed “human material” that would be socially homogeneous, dependent, controllable, and attached to the workplace and lodging. This need was perfectly met by the “state employer provided” shared housing. Typical forms included worker dormitories and communal houses (dwellings where each room was occupied by one family). In such a way, those who worked together also lived together in the so-called “collectives of coworking and cohabiting people.”

The Soviet government tried to cope with the housing problem not by constructing new housing but rather by consolidating existing housing stock. Despite formal similarity of the Soviet and German housing rationing policies, they were directed at different ends. Where in Germany, serious efforts were concentrated on tenant eviction protection, in the USSR, by contrast, policy aimed at easing the eviction of tenants from the employer-provided housing they occupied.

Yet another fundamental difference between German and Soviet housing policy was that in the USSR, the “employer-provided housing,” or “departmental housing,” was also used to intimidate neglectful employees—those working carelessly, shirking, arriving late, violating the rules of the internal code of conduct, and so on. The authorities were fighting against “poorly working employees”—idlers, truants, job hoppers (those who were self-willed and often changing their jobs), and grabbers (those who declined to do additional work for free). In this struggle, authorities used financial measures (fines), moral measures (reprimand), and, in extreme cases, dismissal. In particular, an employee who committed three infractions during a single month—such as coming late to the work without reasonable excuse, leaving for lunch before time, returning late from lunch, leaving work before the end of working time, and being idle during work—or four such infractions during two months in a row was subject to dismissal for violating the legislation on work and workplace discipline.⁴⁵ However, the most effective threat was immediate eviction from housing upon termination of employment. The reason is that even “when having been fired for breaking the workplace discipline or having left their employment at the factory in a self-willing way,” these people kept lodging “in the housing that was built by the factories for their workers.”⁴⁶ As such, they were eroding the integrity and moral environment of the collectives of coworking and cohabiting people. The government fought this decisively: it issued

decrees ordering the immediate eviction from employer-provided housing of those dismissed from employment.⁴⁷

It should be noted that in the Soviet Union, housing was used not only to recruit staff and enhance workplace discipline but also to combat dissent and other opposition to the authorities. For this purpose, a quite specific definition of “poorly working employees” was complemented by the rather vague and nonspecific definition of “a disorganizer of production,” and by an even more ambiguous term “malicious disorganizer of production.”⁴⁸ In such a way, it became possible to dismiss not only those who were working poorly but also those who were possibly working very well and diligently but were not happy with something, openly and loudly. These persons could now be denounced as “disorganizers” (and, provided that they did this repeatedly, “malicious disorganizers”) of production process and legally dismissed. The eviction of “malicious disorganizers of production” from the employer-provided dwellings was carried out in an extremely severe way: “immediately after their dismissal.”⁴⁹ Nothing similar was observed in Germany. The only part of population against which a discriminatory policy was directed were Jews.

Soviet and German housing policies were completely different with respect to the private housing. In Soviet Russia, property rights were severely restricted. The state forced it to obey the same regulations as employer-provided housing. “Private” dwellings in the USSR were not really private, for the state completely deprived the owner of almost all property rights, leaving only the responsibility to take care of maintenance. It appropriated the right to dispose freely of “private housing,” virtually equating it with “employer-provided housing.” For example, in the mid-1930s, regional administrative capitals (Kirov, Krasnoyarsk, Pyatigorsk, Yessentuki, Mineral’nye Vody, Orenburg, Orsk, Omsk, Kuybyshev, and so on) were established, which caused a rapid growth of the number of the party, administrative, and law-enforcement functionaries. This, along with reduced residential construction by state-owned industrial firms for their employees, aggravated the housing crisis. The authorities issued a series of acts that allowed the local authorities to “confiscate 20% of living area in those private houses, where such a confiscation could produce a separate room with an area not smaller than the minimum standard.”⁵⁰ To house as many people as possible in the confiscated housing, the legal minimum standard of living area was reduced from eight to five square meters per person by the state.⁵¹

The main forms of housing property rights were inseparably related to employment. People could only obtain housing from companies and state agencies after becoming employed. Local authorities would also provide housing in a shared apartment if an individual was employed by a local government body. One could become a member of housing cooperative at one’s workplace, which is where housing construction cooperatives were organized. Thus, unlike Germany with its employer-provided, cooperative, and private housing, in the USSR, there was state-employer-provided, state cooperative, and, paradoxically as it sounds, state private housing. The state invested only in constructing one type of housing: “state employer provided” housing. To some extent, it also invested in construction of “state cooperative” housing, which was entirely at the disposal of industry management and municipal authorities. This investment was absolutely insufficient. The main reason was that a major part of the government budget was allocated not to the housing construction but rather to erection of the factories belonging to the military industrial sector, which was called “industrialization.”

Rent Controls

The very first decrees of the Soviet government radically transformed the rental payment system across the entire country: Soviet authorities equalized the rights and obligations of the landlords and tenants, requiring the former to pay rent for the dwellings they occupied.⁵² The only category

of population completely freed from paying rent were low-income persons, in particular those Red Army soldiers who were performing military services; protection was also extended to their family members.⁵³ Otherwise, the rent remained frozen at the level specified in the August 5, 1917 law. In summer 1919, the rent for all dwellings was frozen in Moscow and Petrograd at the level of July 1, 1919.⁵⁴ It was declared as a provisional measure. However, no expiration date was set. In January 1921, all workers and public servants living in nationalized and municipalized housing were freed from paying rent.⁵⁵ This decision was possibly affected by the civil war and hyperinflation in Russia that made rent payments rather senseless. The abolishment of housing rent covered neither private housing nor the so-called “persons with unearned income,” that is, businessmen and capitalists (rentiers), since they were considered by communists to be class enemies and parasites.

Faced with the impossibility of maintaining the housing stock without collecting rents, the government restored rents one year later, starting in 1922, once economic recovery and lowered inflation were evident.⁵⁶ Under the new system, rent in urban settlements was a function of three factors. First, different social classes (capitalists, professionals, craftsmen, and employees) faced different fixed maximum rents: “persons with unearned income” paid the highest rents, while low-wage workers paid the lowest rents. The highest rent could be one hundred times higher than the lowest. Second, rent depended on the living area per person: if the area exceeded approximately 4.55 square meters per person, the rent for the “excessive area” doubled. Third, maximum rent depended on housing quality: tenants living in cellars, attics, or other dwellings that lacked sufficient natural light were allowed to pay half of the normal rent. Specific rent rates were set by local authorities in consultation with trade unions. Rents were binding both for state-owned and private dwellings. Attempts by landlords to set rents higher than allowed could be punished with criminal sanctions.

In 1924, new regulations that made the rent setting even more sophisticated were issued. Factor three, the quality of housing, was further refined: the rents should take into account housing characteristics such as availability of water or electricity, whether the dwelling was in basement level or in the third or higher floor in a building without an elevator. A new factor rent affecting was introduced, namely, the number of dependent persons in the tenant’s family. Thus, large worker families in low-quality dwellings had to pay the lowest rent per square meter, which, however, could not go below certain minimum set by law.⁵⁷

In 1925, the regulations concerning rent setting were changed again. Local authorities in urban settlements had to set rents in such a way as to cover their costs: maintenance, depreciation, and interest payments. However, the increased housing cost had to be carried to the larger extent by the “persons with unearned income,” since upper bounds for rents were fixed for all other categories of tenants.⁵⁸ Moreover, these persons were the only category of tenants who had to pay the “special-purpose housing tax” (*tselevoi kvartirnyi nalog*)—an analog of German-inhabited housing tax—whose revenue was designed to finance the construction of dwellings for workers.⁵⁹ Thus, communists used the housing-related payments as a means of their redistribution policy.

During the 1920s, at least fourteen decrees were issued that specified in increasingly detailed ways the rent-setting mechanism.⁶⁰ Although differing in details, the main feature remained unchanged—all were regulations discriminating against the private economy. This is stressed by the small-minded restrictions that abounded in the regulations: no doubling of rent for excess living area in private dwellings, but double or triple rent in nationalized dwellings; higher rents for the workers of private enterprises; and earlier rent payment deadlines for “persons with unearned income”—just to name a few. Here is the crucial difference between communist and democratic housing policies: whereas Soviet rent controls punished the entrepreneurs and favored the employees, German rent controls protected a wide class of tenants without paying attention to the socioeconomic status of individual tenants and landlords.

Housing Rationing

An acute housing shortage in the USSR induced the state, through its legal acts, to force municipal authorities to carry out regular “consolidations,” relocations, evictions, and so on, to provide housing to an ever-increasing number of municipal agency and service personnel. All the above-mentioned housing rationing measures were treated as provisional, which, like those taken in Germany, should have been removed once the situation improved. However, the housing deficit was expedient to the Soviet authorities, who purposefully exploited it as a powerful tool pushing people to find employment.⁶¹

Municipalities were forced to lodge an ever-increasing number of working people who lacked shelter into private dwellings. For this purpose, “vacant” living areas were confiscated. In the 1920s and 1930s, the confiscation of “redundant dwelling areas,” with the subsequent lodging of individuals from the housing waiting lists, was ubiquitous across Soviet cities, just as it happened in Germany. Unlike Germany, which did not have a general nationwide definition of *redundant housing*, in the Soviet Union, this term was clearly defined. The definition was provided directly by Vladimir Lenin just two weeks after the Bolsheviks seized power. Lenin’s notion of a “rich man’s apartment” was clear: “A rich man’s apartment is any apartment where the number of rooms is larger than or equal to the number of occupants permanently residing in the apartment.”⁶² Thus, while in Germany, the redundant rooms were those exceeding $K = N + 1$, in the USSR, rooms were redundant and confiscated if their number exceeded $K = N - 1$, where K is the number of rooms and N is the number of occupants.

This definition, given by the head of the state, provided the legal foundation for confiscating living areas from the bourgeois class, nobility, clergy, and other persons “with unearned income.” After March 1, 1918, it became the basis underlying Soviet housing policy for many following years.⁶³ The experts in housing laws, trained before the October Revolution and developing drafts of new Soviet laws, tried to soften Lenin’s definition to make it closer to the German one. For instance, the “Draft of a decree on lodging of the families of the Red Army soldiers and unemployed workers in the apartments of bourgeois and on rationing of the dwellings” that was issued on March 2, 1918 contained the statement “. . . If the family has at least 6 adults, then one common dining room in excess of the family size is allowed.”⁶⁴ This definition corresponded to the $K = N + 1$ formula. However, in reality, this provision was almost always violated. Practically, from the very beginning, “redundant housing” was determined not based on the number of rooms but rather on the living area: 8.25 square meters for an adult⁶⁵ and five square meters for a child aged between two and twelve years.⁶⁶ Confiscating the “redundant living area” turned into relocating all the family members of the former landlord into a single room. In case of noncompliance, the whole family could be thrown out in the street without their belongings.⁶⁷ This mission was assigned to the so-called “house residents’ committees” (*domovye komitety*), which consisted of the active proletarians who resided in the house. If the residents’ committee was not diligent enough in relocating or showed mercy toward former landlords, its members were subject to arrest and confiscation of their belongings.⁶⁸ This, of course, had no parallels in Germany, which did not know legal discrimination by social class.

Organizational Structure and Goals of the Soviet Housing Policy

A very simplified organization structure of the Soviet housing policy is schematically depicted in Figure 2. It should be noted that the structure continually evolved over the whole period under consideration as existing bodies were renamed, abolished, or replaced with new ones. Similar to Germany, housing policy in the USSR was conducted by a single ministry. In the USSR, this was the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), whose activities were based on the same decrees and acts that were issued by both the party leadership and the government. Within

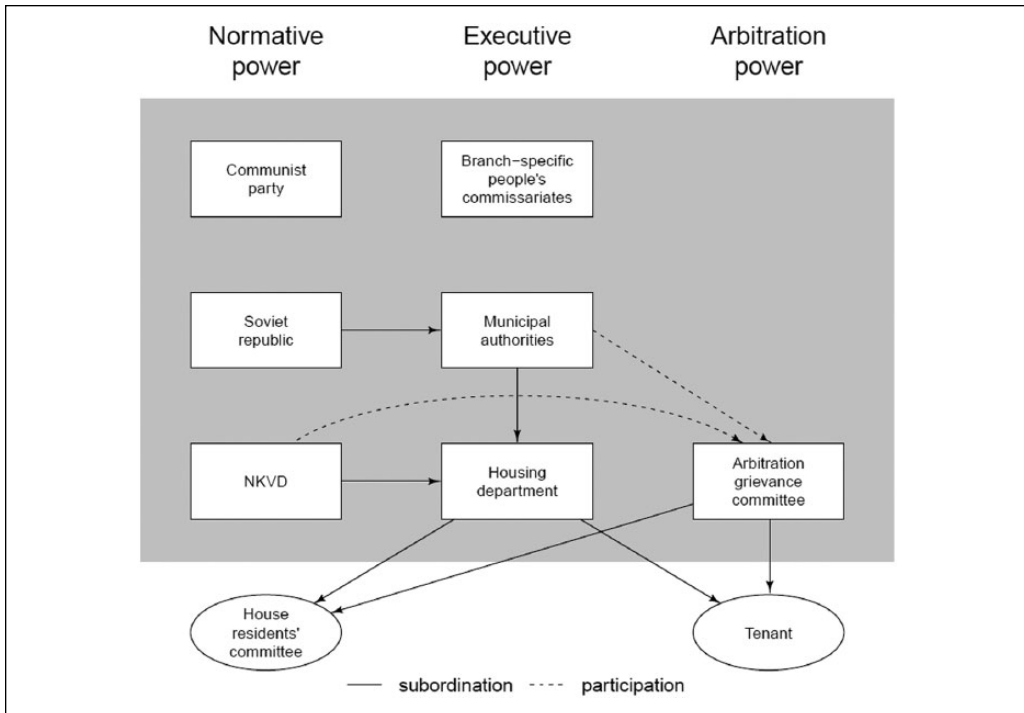


Figure 2. Organizational structure of housing policy in Soviet Russia.

NKVD, a centralized system was created to conduct the housing rationing policy. On top of the system was the so-called General Directorate for Housing (GUKH NKVD) that executed the state housing policy and had its own departments in the municipal bodies—the so-called “departments for housing.” Those departments were placed under a dual control of the head of municipality and of the NKVD. Like in Germany, the departments for housing were the bodies of local authorities and were in charge of controlling the quality of housing, registering and redistribution of housing, as well as registering the tenants. Typically, they included the representatives of the municipality, factory workers, the Red Army, and trade unions.⁶⁹ The departments for housing at the city level also included representatives of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (*Cheka*, Soviet secret police at that time).⁷⁰ Formally, the departments performed the same functions as the German housing offices. However, the Soviet municipal authorities had no say in the rule making, and were purely agencies carrying out the decisions made by the party and government as well as orders issued by the NKVD. Here lies yet another difference between the housing policy in Russia and Germany, where regional authorities and, to a large extent, local authorities possessed autonomy in setting rules and controlling the housing market.

The management of the nationalized housing in the Soviet Russia was carried out by the house residents’ committees (*domovye komitety*), which were created and operated at the level of individual houses. The house committees were designed to replace private landlords. They had to settle the relationships between new tenants (mainly workers who were lodged in the “rich man’s apartments”), on one hand, and the old tenants (having, as a rule, higher incomes and education) and former landlords, on the other hand. The committees included both revolutionary-minded tenants and representatives of local authorities. The house committees performed the following functions: collecting and reporting to the local authorities data on “redundant” rooms and the square meters occupied by former landlords and tenants,⁷¹

guaranteeing the seizure of the rent payments by force when the tenants rejected paying,⁷² requisitioning of warm clothing for the army and fining those who refused to provide them,⁷³ and managing the confiscated housing.⁷⁴ The house committees were acting exclusively in the interests of the authorities against the former landlords. In fact, they were an extended arm of the Soviet authorities.

The arbitration councils apparently disappeared after the Russian Civil War. However, with housing shortages, there were increased tensions between tenants and house management—especially among the tenants themselves—and in 1927 the arbitration councils were recreated in form of “arbitration grievance committees on housing issues” (*primiritel’no-konfliktnye komissii po zhilishchnym delam*). The committees consisted of the representatives of the local authorities, NKVD, and local union of housing cooperatives. In contrast to the arbitration councils, they included no tenant representatives.⁷⁵ Among other issues, the committees considered the level of rent and housing consolidation. The committees were finally abolished in 1931 and replaced with the “Burlaw courts” (*tovarishcheskii sud*), whose sole purpose was to settle minor conflicts among tenants.⁷⁶ In case of conflicts with house management, tenants had to address the normal courts.

The housing policy of the USSR, similar to that in Germany, also played a dual role. However, it had a different focus. Soviet housing policy, especially from 1917 until the mid-1920s had two but radically different sides: protectionist and discriminatory. The purpose of protectionism was to foster self-sacrificing work and a “correct” lifestyle within cohabitation and coworking collectives. Its target group was the so-called “socially close elements,” namely, workers, civil servants, and specialists who were attracted by authorities to provide public services (scientists, engineers, doctors, agronomists, painters, writers, and so on). The discriminatory part of the Soviet housing policy, which was in place throughout the period under study, addressed a different category of people: the so-called “socially alien elements,” namely, former representatives and descendants of nobility, civil servants of Russian Empire, merchants, entrepreneurs, and former landlords who were persecuted, repressed, and deprived of their electoral rights. However, by the late 1920s and during the first five-year plan periods, discriminatory policy was increasingly used against the “socially close elements” of peasants (unauthorized migrants to the cities who did not want to enter employment) as well as workers and civil servants who shirked, worked badly, openly opposed the decisions of administration, demonstrated nonconformity, or otherwise criticized the authorities.

Conclusion

The similarities between Germany and Russia in terms of the policies concerning existing housing stock in the urban areas resulted from the similar challenges (war-related housing stock destructions as well as construction stops, hyperinflation, and continuing industrialization), while the differences can be attributed to the different political ideologies.

Soviet Russia used different methods to solve the war-related challenges in the housing sphere than those used by either Germany or Russian imperial and provisional governments. Table 1 gives a brief summary of the similarities and differences in housing policies for both countries. First, the Russian state nationalized the vast majority of urban housing stock, converting itself into a megalandlord. Second, the rudimentary protection of tenants from eviction that was introduced by the czarist government during World War I was eliminated by the communists. By contrast, in the Soviet times, it was even easier for the megalandlord to evict tenants who belonged to certain social classes (such as entrepreneurs, capitalists, and professionals). Third, rent controls under Soviet rule were designed in a completely different manner: the purpose was to discriminate against undesired social classes. Fourth, Soviet Russia was forced to ration housing, but it did so in a more severe form, perhaps due not just to the destruction of

housing stock during both World War I and the Russian Civil War but also due to the radical communist ideology.

German authorities sought to ensure social and economic stability by supporting the tenants—by protecting them from eviction and arbitrary rent increases, given that they made up the largest fraction of the population, especially in the big cities. Soviet authorities, who municipalized and nationalized private housing, thus making the state a “megalandlord,” used housing to achieve completely different objectives: compel individuals to find employment and adopt a prescribed lifestyle.

Soviet industrial policy replaced material incentives to work with administrative incentives, including housing as a key incentive. Housing, through its provision, redistribution, confiscation, forceful lodging, and eviction, became the tool used to put pressure upon citizens. It must be noted that these measures were very effective given that the housing is a fundamental need, especially in Russia where severe climatic conditions make shelter indispensable. In those cases where people were not interested in working because everyday life troubles (food and consumer goods shortages, as well as long queues to obtain what was available) absorbed their energy, the threat of being dismissed and automatically evicted from their housing—with virtually no alternatives possible—was effective coercion. In contrast, in Germany, even under the Nazi government, housing was never seen as a means of manipulating people to guarantee their submission and stimulate them to work. Other incentives—in particular, wages, a fear of becoming unemployed, and, later on under Nazi rule, the threat to be sent to concentration camps or executed—were enough to make people in Germany work.

The need of Soviet authorities for socially homogeneous “human material” that was dependable, controllable, and attached to the workplace was fulfilled through the creation of “state employer provided” shared housing. This included, for example, worker dormitories and communal houses. Housing construction was financed by the state, and without a free market, construction materials were impossible to buy. In Germany, which also faced huge housing shortage, the state was committed to the provision of housing to minimize political instability. It actively participated in financing housing construction by redistributing the funds from the sitting tenants and landlords, who had profited from hyperinflation, to the construction of new dwellings, especially of inexpensive small apartments for low-income families, families with children, and war-disabled veterans.

Soviet authorities purposefully created a sociocultural, legal, and economic organization that ensured control over its citizens by manipulating the fulfillment of their fundamental needs, starting with shelter. As a result of such policies, during the intrawar period, housing allocation in Russia became an integral part of the state allocation system (along with other items satisfying fundamental needs, such as food, clothing, health care, education, and old-age provision) and started to serve the same priorities as other elements of this system. In particular, it was used by authorities to fulfill the “submission and control” task.

To summarize, the key difference of housing policy with respect to the existing housing stock between communist Russia and a “typical” European industrialized country, as exemplified by Germany, is rooted in their political attitudes. Where the latter cared about the well-being of the majority of its citizens, the former used its citizens as just another production input to achieve the utopic goals set by the communist party.

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Notes

1. Only a few studies are available, see Gregory Andrusz, *Housing and Urban Development in the USSR* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984); Milka Bliznakov, “Soviet Housing during the Experimental Years, 1918 to 1933,” in *Russian Housing in the Modern Age: Design and Social History*, ed. William Craft Brumfield and Blair A. Ruble (New York: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 1993), 85-148; and Julia Obertreis, *Tränen des Sozialismus. Wohnen in Leningrad zwischen Alltag und Utopie 1917–1937* [Tears of socialism. The life in Leningrad between daily routine and utopy 1917–1937] (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2004) among others.
2. Екатерина Герасимова, “Советская коммунальная квартира как социальный институт: историко-социологическое исследование (на материалах Ленинграда. 1917–1991 гг.)” [The Soviet Communal Apartment as a Social Institution: An Historical-Sociological Study Based on the Materials for Leningrad in 1917–1991] (PhD diss., European University of St. Petersburg, 2000); Татьяна Вороненкова and Дмитрий Савин, “Жилищно-арендная кооперация. Опыт новой экономической политики и возможность его применения в современной России,” [Housing Cooperation. The Experience of the New Economic Policy and Possibilities of Its Application in Modern Russia] *Жилищный альманах* 4 (1999): 1-181; Сергей Горин, “Формирование и реализация социального заказа на массовое, доступное жилище в Москве 20–30-х гг.,” [A Formation and Accomplishment of a Social Order for Mass and Easily Available Housing in Moscow in the 1920–1930s] *Архитект ура. Строительство. Дизайн* 3 (2001): 8-11; Марк Меерович, *Наказание жилищем: жилищная политика в СССР как средство управления людьми (1917-1937 годы)* [Punishing with Housing: Housing Policy in the USSR as a Means to Control People (1917–1937)] (Москва: РОССПЭН, 2008), just to cite a few relatively recent publications.
3. Sylvia Brander, *Wohnungspolitik als Sozialpolitik. Theoretische Konzepte und praktische Ansätze in Deutschland bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg* [The housing policy as a social policy. Theoretical concepts and practical application in Germany up to World War I] (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1984), 81.
4. Екатерина Юхнёва, *Петербургские доходные дома. Очерки из истории быта* [St. Petersburg’s Commercial Apartment Houses. Essays on the History of the Everyday Life] (Москва: Центрполиграф, 2007), 120.
5. See, for example, Brander, *Wohnungspolitik als Sozialpolitik*; Юхнёва, *Петербургские доходные дома*; and Юлия Яковлева, “Регулирование рынка жилья в России в конце XIX—начале XX века” [Housing Market Regulation in Russia in the Late 19th—Early 20th Centuries] (PhD diss., Sankt-Peterburgskii universitet ekonomiki i finansov, 1993).
6. For a systematic analysis of the German housing policy between 1913 and 2015, see Konstantin Kholodilin, “Fifty Shades of State: Quantifying Housing Market Regulations in Germany” *Discussion Papers of DIW Berlin* 1530 (2015): 1-60.
7. For instance, in some German cities, minimum standards of housing area per person varying between three and four square meters existed. However, even these standards, which, from current perspectives, seem to be insufficient, were regularly violated; see Brander, *Wohnungspolitik als Sozialpolitik*, 102-103.
8. So §565 of the 1900 German Civil Code stipulated that a housing rental contract without definite duration could be terminated by the landlord, depending on rental payment frequency, at the end of the current payment period (week or month). In addition, landlords might immediately evict a tenant, if the latter violated the contractual conditions, particularly if subletting the dwelling without landlord permission (§553) or did not pay rent, on time, for at least two subsequent periods (§554). See Alexander Achilles, Max Grieff, Friedrich André, Friedrich Ritgen, Otto Strecker, and Karl Unzner, eds., *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch nebst Einführungsgesetz / Mit Einleitung, Anmerkungen und Sachregister nach dem Tode des ersten Herausgebers Dr. A. Achilles* [Civil Code together with the introductory law / With introduction, comments, and subject index after the death of the first editor Dr. A. Achilles] (Berlin: J. Guttentag, 1909).
9. Martin Häublein and Arnold Lehmann-Richter, “Mieterschutz in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” *Wohnrechtliche Blätter* 22 (2009): 363 [Tenant protection in the Federal Republic of Germany].
10. “Gesetz, betreffend den Schutz der infolge des Krieges an Wahrnehmung ihrer Rechte behinderten Personen” [Law Concerning the Protection of Persons Who as a Result of the War Cannot Take Advantage of Their Rights], *Vom* 4, August 1914, *RGBl*, 325.

11. "Bekanntmachung über das Kündigungsschutz der Hintergebliebenen von Kriegsteilnehmern" [Act on Eviction Protection of the Surviving Dependents of the War Participants], Vom 7. Oktober 1915, RGBl, 642.
12. "Bekanntmachung zum Schutze der Mieter" [Act on Eviction Protection of Tenants], Vom 26. Juli 1917, RGBl, 659 and "Bekanntmachung zum Schutze der Mieter" [Act on Eviction Protection of Tenants], Vom 23. September 1918, RGBl, 1140.
13. "Gesetz über Mieterschutz und Mieteinigungsämter" [Law on Tenants' Protection and Arbitration Councils], Vom 1. Juni 1923, RGBl, 353.
14. "Reichsmietengesetz" [Reich's Law on Housing Rent], Vom 24. März 1922, RGBl, 273.
15. "Bekanntmachung über Maßnahmen gegen Wohnungsmangel" [Act on Measures against the Housing Shortage], Vom 23. September 1918, RGBl, 1143.
16. If the landlord declined to accept a tenant who was assigned into his dwelling by the local authorities, they could force him to sign the rental contract against his will.
17. See Karl Christian Führer, *Mieter, Hausbesitzer, Staat und Wohnungsmarkt. Wohnungsmangel und Wohnungszwangswirtschaft in Deutschland 1914–1960* [Tenants, landlords, state, and housing market. Housing shortage and housing rationing in Germany 1914–1960] (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1995), 306.
18. Führer, *Mieter*, 319.
19. "Wohnungsmangelgesetz" [Law on the Housing Shortage], Vom 26. Juli 1923, RGBl, 754.
20. Rent controls and tenant eviction protection were initially—according to *Bekanntmachung zum Schutze der Mieter* of 1918—set for an indefinite period, whose cessation was to be determined by the Reich's Chancellor. Later on, new provisions were included in *Reichsmietengesetz* published in 1922 and the *Gesetz über Mieterschutz und Mieteinigungsämter* published in 1923, which planned the abolishment of these regulations effective July 1, 1926. Although intermediate laws extending these protections were not located, it is safe to assume that they remained in effect as, both were extended through 1928 (*Gesetz zur Verlängerung der Geltungsdauer des Mieterschutzgesetzes und des Reichsmietengesetzes*. Vom 30. Juni 1927, RGBl, 131 and *Gesetz zur Verlängerung des Mieterschutzgesetzes und des Reichsmietengesetzes*. Vom 24. Dezember 1927, RGBl, 513); in 1928, both were further extended through 1930 (*Bekanntmachung des Reichsmietengesetzes*. Vom 20. Februar 1928, RGBl, 25). In 1930, both were extended again through 1931 (*Gesetz zur Verlängerung der Geltungsdauer des Mieterschutzgesetzes und des Reichsmietengesetzes*. Vom 8. März 1930, RGBl, 31). Finally, in 1933, in the law concerning tenant eviction protection, §54, which stipulated the regulation's ending date, was removed, thus making its validity indefinite (*Gesetz über Mieterschutz und Mieteinigungsämter*. Vom 27. April 1933, RGBl, 235). In the case of rent controls, similar provision, which was contained in §24, was removed in 1936 (*Reichsmietengesetz*. Vom 18. April 1936, RGBl, 380).
21. In large cities, where the housing shortage was more acute, this process was slower. There, in the first place, the restrictions were removed from the upper market segment—that of large and expensive dwellings. See Führer, *Mieter*, 327.
22. See Dan P. Silverman, "A Pledge Unredeemed: The Housing Crisis in Weimar Germany," *Central European History* 3 (1970): 117–18.
23. In 1921, a law was enacted that requested the Länder to introduce a fee (at least thirty mark a year per capita), whose revenues had to be directed into the construction of housing, especially of small and middle dwellings, and to be levied upon the users of the buildings constructed before June 1, 1918. The users could be the homeowners, if they occupied their own dwellings, and tenants who rented the dwellings in such houses. See "Gesetz, betreffend die vorläufige Förderung des Wohnungsbaues" [Law Regarding an Interim Support of Housing Construction], Vom 12. Februar 1921, RGBl, 175. The fee was collected from the annual rental revenues, and initially, its rate was fixed at 5 percent; see "Gesetz über die Erhebung einer Abgabe zur Förderung des Wohnungsbaues" [Law on Levying a Fee to Support the Housing Construction], Vom 26. Juni 1921, 773.
24. "Dritte Steuernotverordnung" [Third Extraordinary Taxation act], Vom 14. Februar 1924, RGBl, 74.
25. Arbitration councils—which initially emerged in some localities as public (*kommunale*) or general utility (*gemeinnützige*) bodies—were empowered by the "Bekanntmachung, betreffend Einigungsämter" [Act Concerning the Arbitration Councils], Vom 15. Dezember 1914, RGBl, 511. For example, the arbitration council in Berlin was founded in October 1914 by the city government and local parliament;

- see Ernst Kaerber, *Berlin im Weltkrieg. Fünf Jahre städtischer Kriegsarbeit* [Berlin in world war. Five years of the work of the city during the war] (Berlin: Trowitzsch und Sohn, 1921), 446.
26. “Bekanntmachung zum Schutze der Mieter” [Act on Protection of the Tenants], Vom 26. Juli 1917, RGBI, 659.
 27. In Berlin, for instance, the first housing office was founded in October 1914, see Ernst Kaerber, *Berlin im Weltkrieg. Fünf Jahre städtischer Kriegsarbeit*. In Charlottenburg—one of the Groß-Berlin districts—it was already established in 1910; see anonymous author, “Wohnungsämter,” *Berliner Tageblatt und Handelszeitung* [Housing offices], June 12, 1910, 55.
 28. Amt für Wohnen und Migration München *100 Jahre Wohnungsamt. 1911 bis 2011* [100 years of the housing office. From 1911 to 2011] (München, 2011), 9-13.
 29. On the eve of the World War I, in 1910-1913, this indicator in Germany was 15.7 percent. By 1925-1929—to a large extent thanks to the rent freeze—it went down to 11.3 percent. See Diedrich Saalfeld, “Mieten und Wohnungsausgaben in Deutschland 1880-1980,” in *Wohnungspolitik im Sozialstaat. Deutsche und europäische Lösungen 1918-1960*, ed. Günther Schulz (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1993), 201-21 [Housing policy in the social state. German and European solutions 1918-1960].
 30. “Vierte Verordnung zur Sicherung von Wirtschaft und Finanzen und zum Schutze des inneren Friedens” [Fourth Act to Safeguard the Economy and Finance and to Protect the Interior Peace], Vom 8. Dezember 1931, RGBI, 700.
 31. Führer, *Mieter, Hausbesitzer, Staat und Wohnungsmarkt*, 336; Amt für Wohnen und Migration München *100 Jahre Wohnungsamt*, 13.
 32. “Verordnung über das Verbot von Preiserhöhungen” [Act on Prohibition of Price Increases], Vom 26. November 1936, RGBI, 955.
 33. “Gesetz zur Änderung des Reichsmietengesetzes und des Mieterschutzgesetzes” [Law on Changing the Reich’s Law on Housing Rent and Law on Protection of the Tenants], Vom 18. April 1936, RGBI, 371.
 34. “Gesetz über Mietverhältnisse mit Juden” [Law on Rental Relationships with Jews], Vom 30. April 1939, RGBI, 864.
 35. “Verordnung zur Erleichterung der Wohnungsbeschaffung für kinderreiche Familien” [Act on Facilitation of Housing Provision of the Families with Many Children], Vom 20. April 1939, RGBI, 817.
 36. “Verordnung zur Wohnraumlenkung” [Act on Housing Allocation], Vom 27. Februar 1943, RGBI, 127.
 37. «Закон о найме и отдале в содержание частных имуществ» [Law on Rental of the Private Properties] published in Без автора, *Свод законов Российской Империи* (Санкт-Петербург: Издание товарищества «Общественная польза», 1900), Volume X, Part 1.
 38. Высочайше утверждённое положение Совета министров «О воспрещении повышать цены на жилые помещения» [On Prohibition to Increase the Housing Rents], August 27, 1916.
 39. Постановление Временного правительства от 5 августа 1917 «Об установлении предельных цен на квартиры и другие помещения» [Decree of the Provisional Government of Russia “On Establishing the Maximum Rents for Apartments and Other Premises,” August 5, 1917] published in Без автора, *Собрание узаконений и распоряжений Временного правительства* (Петроград: 1917), № 191, ст. 1136, 10-11.
 40. «Об условиях демунципализации домов»—Декрет СНК от 28 декабря 1921 года (“On Conditions of the Housing Demunicipalization”—Decree of the Council of People’s Commissars, December 28, 1921) published in Без автора, *Систематическое собрание законов РСФСР, действующих на 1 января 1928 года* [Systematic Collection of Laws of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic That Were Prevailing on January 1, 1928] (Москва: Госюриздат, 1929), Volume 2, 861.
 41. Andrusz, *Housing and Urban Development in the USSR*, 22. Clearly, 100 percent of private housing in 1913 must be an exaggeration, for it ignores other forms of housing that existed before the World War I in Russia, such as state, employer provided, cooperative, and so on. For the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, official statistics from 1940 indicate that privately held housing accounted for 31 percent of the total living area in that republic. ЦСУ РСФСР, *Народное хозяйство РСФСР за 60 лет (Статистический ежегодник)* [National Economy of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic over 60 years] (Москва: Статистика, 1977), 225.
 42. «О разъяснении порядка освобождения жилищ в железнодорожных зданиях в полосе отчуждения от лиц, утративших право на их занятие» [“On Clarification of the Order of Emptying

- the Railroad's Buildings Located in the Waysides from the Persons Who Lost Their Right to Perform the Corresponding Duties"]—Разъяснение НКПС и НКЮ № 562 от 29 июля 1922 года published in Василий Степанович Малченко, *Жилищное право. Комментарий к законодательству [Housing Legislation. Legal Acts with Comments]* (Москва: Группа юристов кооперативов, 1923), 74.
43. Малченко, *Жилищное право*, 74.
 44. Меерович, *Наказание жилищем*, 303.
 45. Меерович, *Наказание жилищем*, 667.
 46. «О мероприятиях по упорядочению трудовой дисциплины и улучшению практики государственного социального страхования и борьбе с злоупотреблениями в этом деле» [On Measures to Improve the Workplace Discipline and State Social Security and on Combating the Abuses in This Area]—Постановление СНК СССР, ЦК ВКП (б) и ВЦСПС (December 28, 1938) published in Без автора, *Решения партии и правительства по хозяйственным вопросам [Decisions of the Communist Party and Government on Economic Issues]* (Москва: Издательство политической литературы, 1967), Volume 2, 665-72.
 47. Постановление ЦИК и СНК СССР (October 17, 1937) «О сохранении жилищного фонда и улучшении жилищного хозяйства в городах» [On Preserving the Housing Stock and Improving the Housing Services] published in Без автора, *Решения партии*, 617-627; Постановление СНК СССР, ЦК ВКП (б) и ВЦСПС (December 28, 1938) and «О мероприятиях по упорядочению трудовой дисциплины и улучшению практики государственного социального страхования и борьбе с злоупотреблениями в этом деле» [On Measures to Improve the Workplace Discipline and State Social Security and on Combating the Abuses in This Area] published in Без автора, *Решения партии*, 665-72.
 48. Без автора, *Собрание законов и распоряжений рабоче-крестьянского правительства Союза Советских Социалистических Республик (СЗ СССР)* [Collection of Laws and Decrees of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the USSR] (Москва: Управлением делами СНК СССР и СТО, 1933), № 47, ст. 278.
 49. Без автора, *Собрание законов и распоряжений рабоче-крестьянского правительства Союза Советских Социалистических Республик (СЗ СССР)* [Collection of Laws and Decrees of the Workers and Peasants' Government of the USSR] (Москва: Управлением делами СНК СССР и СТО, 1935), № 59, ст. 483.
 50. Без автора, *Собрание законов и распоряжений рабоче-крестьянского правительства (СУ РСФСР) за 1934 год* [Collection of Laws and Decrees of the Workers and Peasants' Government 1934] (Москва: Управлением делами Совета министров СССР, 1948), № 10, ст. 69; без автора, *СУ РСФСР 1934*, № 30, ст. 183; без автора, *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 3, ст. 15; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 4, ст. 31; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 6, ст. 6; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 11, ст. 116; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 13, ст. 138.
 51. *СУ РСФСР 1934*, № 10, ст. 69; *СУ РСФСР 1934*, № 30, ст. 183; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 3, ст. 15; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 4, ст. 31; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 6, ст. 6; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 11, ст. 116; *СУ РСФСР 1935*, № 13, ст. 138.
 52. Без автора, *Собрание законов и распоряжений рабоче-крестьянского правительства (СУ РСФСР) за 1918 год* [Collection of Laws and Decrees of the Workers and Peasants' Government 1918] (Москва: Управлением делами СНК СССР, 1942), № 62, ст. 674, 744.
 53. On October 28, 1917, the Bolshevik government issued a decree "On Housing Moratorium" that freed Red Army soldiers and their family members from the obligation of paying rent during the war and three months after its end, provided that their income did not exceed certain threshold. This decree can be regarded as a continuation of the regulations that were introduced by the czarist government. Moreover, it is, to a large extent, analogous to the corresponding regulations adopted in Germany and other countries participating in World War I. It is worth noticing that in France, this policy was also coined "moratorium"—a decree that, issued by the French government on August 14, 1914, put a moratorium (*moratoire*) on rental payments by family members of soldiers fighting and by low-income tenants. See Jean-Claude Croizé, *Politique et Configuration du Logement en France (1900–1980)* (Nanterre: 2009), Volume II und III, 18.
 54. Декрет СНК РСФСР «О квартирной прибавке к заработку рабочих и служащих в городах Москве и Петрограде и о запрещении повышения платы за жилые помещения» [On Housing Allowance for the Workers and Public Servants in Cities Moscow and Petrograd and on Prohibition to Increase the Housing Rent], July 10, 1919.

55. Декрет СНК РСФСР «Об отмене взимания платы за жилые помещения с рабочих и служащих и за пользование водопроводом, канализацией и очисткой, газом и электричеством и общественными банями—с государственных учреждений и предприятий и их рабочих и служащих и о распространении указанных льгот на инвалидов труда и войны и лиц, находящихся на их иждивении» [On Abolishing the Housing Rent Payments for the Workers and Public Servants . . .], January 27, 1921.
56. Декрет СНК «О плате за пользование жилыми помещениями» [On Payment for Use of the Dwellings], April 20, 1922, published in Без автора, *Собрание законов и распоряжений рабоче-крестьянского правительства (СУ РСФСР) за 1922 год* (Москва: Управлением делами СНК СССР, 1950), № 30, ст. 349 and Постановление ВЦИК/СНК РСФСР «Об оплате жилых помещений в поселениях городского типа» [On Rent for Housing in the Urban Settlements], June 13, 1923.
57. Постановление НКВД РСФСР «Инструкция по применению положения Всероссийского центрального исполнительного комитета и совета народных комиссаров Р.С.Ф.С.Р. об оплате жилых помещений в поселениях городского типа» [Instruction on How to Apply the Provision . . . on Rent for Housing in the Urban Settlements], August 21, 1924.
58. Декрет ВЦИК/СНК РСФСР «Об оплате жилых помещений в городских поселениях» [Decree on Rent for Housing in the Urban Settlements], June 1, 1925.
59. ЦИК СССР/СНК СССР Постановление от 3 апреля 1925 года О целевом квартирном налоге на нужды строительства рабочих жилищ [On Special Purpose Housing Tax for the Construction of Workers' Dwellings], April 3, 1925.
60. The degree of complexity of the rent controls went significantly up: the act on rent controls issued on June 13, 1923, included just six articles, while the corresponding act issued on May 14, 1928, consisted of twenty articles, with a further forty articles by the NKVD that provided instructions explaining the implementation of the act.
61. See Марк Meerovich, “Социально-культурные основы осуществления государственной жилищной политики в РСФСР (1917–1941 гг.)” [Socio-cultural Bases of Carrying Out the Housing Policy in the RSFSR (1917–1941)] (Dr. habil. diss., Irkutskii gosudarstvennyi tehnikeskii universitet, 2004), 659.
62. Владимир Ленин, *Полное собрание сочинений* [Complete Set of Works] (Москва: Издательство политической литературы), Vol. 54, 380.
63. Ленин, *Полное*, 690.
64. Без автора, *Известия*, 2 марта (17 февраля) 1918, № 38 (302), 3.
65. This standard of minimum living area per person is based on the estimates obtained by the People's Commissariat for Health obtained in 1919. It was established that for a normal state of health after one night's sleep, a human being needs at least thirty cubic meters of air. When the volume is smaller, the human wakes up with a headache.
66. On July 28, 1924, the Moscow's Soviet of Workers, Peasants, and Red Army's Deputies issued an ordinance «Об урегулировании жилищного дела в г. Москве» [On Improving the Situation with Housing in the City of Moscow] (see Президиум Московского Совета Р., К. и К. Д., «Об урегулировании жилищного дела в г. Москве,» *Известия*, 13 августа 1924, 7) that virtually prohibited any surpassing of this standard, permitting the confiscation of not just entire rooms but also corners of already occupied rooms (ГАРФ (State Archive of the Russian Federation). Ф. Р-4041, Оп. 4, Д. 12, Л. 101).
67. Без автора, *Известия*, 2 марта (17 февраля) 1918, № 38 (302), 3.
68. Без автора, *Известия*, 2 марта (17 февраля) 1918, № 38 (302), 3.
69. Проект декрета о вселении семей Красноармейцев и безработных рабочих в квартиры буржуазии и о нормировке жилых помещений [Draft of the Decree on Lodging the Families of the Red Army Soldiers and Unemployed Workers in the Apartments of Bourgeoisie and on Rationing the Housing], March 2, 1918, published in Без автора, *Известия*, 2 марта (17 февраля) 1918, № 38 (302), 3.
70. СУ РСФСР. 1918. № 48. ст. 571. С.584.
71. Проект декрета о вселении семей Красноармейцев и безработных рабочих в квартиры буржуазии и о нормировке жилых помещений [Draft of the Decree on Lodging the Families of the Red Army Soldiers and Unemployed Workers in the Apartments of Bourgeoisie and on Rationing the Housing], March 2, 1918, published in Без автора, *Известия*, 2 марта (17 февраля) 1918, № 38 (302), 3.

72. Исполнительная часть проекта декрета об отмене права частной собственности на городские недвижимости // Газета Временного Рабочего и Крестьянского правительства. 1917. № 18, 25 ноября (8 декабря). С 1 (“Executive Part of the Draft of the on Abolishment of the Right of Private Property on the Urban Real Estates,” December 8, 1917).
73. Декрет о реквизиции тёплых вещей для солдат на фронте / Правда. 1917. № 184 (115) от 25 (9) ноября. С.1 (“Decree on Requisition of Warm Cloths for the Soldiers at the Front Line,” November 25, 1917).
74. Исполнительная часть проекта декрета об отмене права частной собственности на городские недвижимости // Газета Временного Рабочего и Крестьянского правительства. 1917. № 18. от 25 ноября (8 декабря). С 1 (“Executive Part of the Project on Abolishing the Private Property Rights for Urban Real Estates,” December 8, 1917).
75. ВЦИК/СНК РСФСР. Постановление от 7 марта 1927 года Об организации примирительно-конфликтных комиссий по жилищным делам [On Organization of the Arbitration Grievance Committees on Housing Issues], March 7, 1927.
76. ВЦИК/СНК РСФСР Постановление от 30 июня 1931 года Об организации товарищеских судов при жилищных и жилищно-арендных кооперативных товариществах и при домовых трестах и о ликвидации примирительно-конфликтных комиссий по жилищным делам [On Organization of the Burlaw Courts at the Housing Cooperatives and Unions of Housing Enterprises and on Liquidation of the Arbitration Grievance Committees on Housing Issues], June 30, 1931.

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