

## 12. Karl Marx Hof



place Heiligenstädter Strasse 82–92, XIX Döbling  
 time May 14, 1933, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

II.10 · III.3.4

“The rooster tails are demonstrating for Fascism in Schönbrunn today,” prints the Social Democratic *Kleines Blatt* on Sunday, May 14, 1933. “The republican people of Vienna will celebrate republican freedom at the same hour in the municipal housing projects.”<sup>122</sup> While the Austrian Homeland Protection (*Heimatschutz*) is evoking a bygone age of heroes in the **gardens of Schönbrunn Palace**, “**Red Vienna**” looks to a socialist future. On Saturday, May 13, 1933, the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* publishes a Social Democratic declaration strictly rejecting the annexation of Austria by a Germany under Adolf Hitler. However, “German-Austria” should not become an authoritarian “corporative state” (*Ständestaat*) as the federal government envisaged, but remain a democratic republic, offering asylum for “German freedom and German culture.” The long-term objective of the Austrian Social Democrats was still to “join a free and peaceful Germany of the future.”<sup>123</sup>

One of the about fifty “**freedom celebrations**” taking place in Vienna on May 14, 1933, was organized in the Karl Marx Hof at Heiligenstädter Strasse 82–92, which continues to rank among the largest housing complexes in Vienna today. With 1,382 apartments for around 5,000 people, the municipal housing project (*Gemeindebau*) between the Heiligenstadt train station and the Hohe Warte stadium was the size of a small town. Open-air concerts and political speeches are held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the two courtyards linked by a **central tract** with driveways and tower constructions.<sup>124</sup> Only 28,751 of the 156,027 m<sup>2</sup> **ground area** were built on, just under a

Fig. 127, p. 297

Fig. 134, p. 302

122 “Wir kämpfen für die Freiheit,” in: *Das Kleine Blatt* (Vienna), May 14, 1933, p. 2 [our trans.]. The expression “rooster tails” (*Hahnenschwänzler*) is an allusion to the decorated hats worn by the Austrian Home Guards (*Heimwehren*).

123 “Weder Hitler noch Habsburg!,” in: *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna), May 13, 1933, pp. 1–2 [our trans.].

124 See “Die Freiheitsfeiern in den Wiener Bezirken,” in: *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna), May 15, 1933, p. 1.

fifth of the total area. The “freedom celebration” takes place among the spacious garden areas and playgrounds intended for community use.

“Only a municipal construction activity concerned with public health can and must consider the hygienic side of building in such extensive dimensions,” the Vienna municipal construction office declared in the brochure for the opening of the Karl Marx Hof.<sup>125</sup> The majority of the **apartments** were 38 to 48 m<sup>2</sup> and equipped with fitted kitchens, running water, and toilets. Communal facilities with baths and showers were built in the public part of the estate, along with electric launderettes, two kindergartens, a dental clinic, a pharmacy and a health insurer with an outpatient clinic, a youth center, a post office, a public library, and numerous retail units.

It is characteristic of Vienna’s interwar urban planning that a single housing block rather than multiple smaller buildings was erected on the Hagenwiese in Heiligenstadt from 1926 to 1930. Instead of the Karl Marx Hof, a garden city would also have been a possibility, as the architect Adolf Loos had endorsed as head of the Vienna Settlement Office (*Siedlungsaamt*) in the early 1920s.<sup>126</sup> The Social Democratic city government suggested another route, however, once the starvation after World War I was alleviated. From 1923 to 1934, around 400 municipal housing projects with approx. 64,000 apartments were constructed in Vienna, providing windows in all rooms, WCs, running water, and gas stoves.<sup>127</sup>

The Karl Marx Hof is also typical in terms of design. Its architect Karl Ehn was a student of Otto Wagner, whose urban planning had a longstanding influence on the municipal housing program. The monumental residential blocks countered the bourgeois representative architecture of Vienna’s

125 *Der Karl Marx-Hof. Die Wohnhausanlage der Gemeinde Wien auf der Hagenwiese in Heiligenstadt*, ed. Wiener Stadtbauamt, Vienna: Thalia [1930], p. 5 [our trans.].

126 See Eve Blau: *The Architecture of Red Vienna 1919–1934*, Cambridge: MIT Press 1999, pp. 98–114.

127 See Eve Blau: “Wien 1919–1934. Grossstadt und Proletariat im ‘Roten Wien,’” in: Eve Blau and Monika Platzer (eds.): *Mythos Grossstadt. Architektur und Stadtbaukunst in Zentraleuropa 1890–1937*, Munich: Prestel 1999, pp. 205–214, here p. 206.



Fig. 31: Photographs of the “freedom celebrations” in Vienna’s municipal housing projects on May 14, 1933, printed in *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna), May 16, 1933, p. 3. Source: Austrian National Library, 974000-D.

Ringstrasse with socialist institutions. Life in public housing was organized according to strict rules—from schedules for garbage removal to gender segregation in the launderettes.<sup>128</sup> The communal solidarity for which the city government strived was to develop in the courtyards. Consequently, on May 14, 1933, the municipal housing projects served as infrastructure in which to build a counter-public against the Austrofascist “Turks Deliverance Celebration” (*Türkenbefreiungsfeier*).

## 13. Radio Wien



place      Johannesgasse 4, I Innere Stadt  
 time      May 14, 1933, 10:20 a.m. to 11:05 a.m.

From 10:20 to 11:05 a.m. on Sunday, May 14, 1933, *Radio Wien* broadcasts the speeches held at the “Turks Deliverance Celebration” (*Türkenbefreiungsfeier*) in the **gardens of Schönbrunn Palace**.<sup>129</sup> The speakers at the event, officially

128 See Gottfried Pirhofer and Reinhard Sieder: “Zur Konstitution der Arbeiterfamilie im Roten Wien. Familienpolitik, Kulturreform, Alltag und Ästhetik,” in: Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder (eds.): *Historische Familienforschung*, Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp 1982, pp. 326–368.

129 See “Radio-Wochenprogramm vom 13. bis 21. Mai,” in: *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), May 13, 1933 (evening edition), p. 4.