



CHRONICLE



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STINKENDEN HEISSEN



TRAVELS IN A NEW GERMANY

Writer: Rab G.P. Lewin, 1993-94.

Marcus and I relocated from Munich to Berlin in our 1972 Opel Ascona in the winter of '92. We obtained a legal old DDR apartment with an Ossie hippy friend of ours in Friedrichshain but it was not to last due to it being too large for single males; so we got booted out. We'd befriended another Ossie guy called Dougal who was house-sitting a squatted flat in Kruezzigerstr. and began to share a kitchen with one of the serious politico-squats next door. We shoplifted tonnes of fine food from the local supermarket and tried to keep favour with the Anti-Fa activists who lived in the house but we were made to feel **extremely unwelcome** so an alternative housing situation had to be found.

We were told to go down to East Side Gallery to look for a German guy called Stefan so **for the first time we set foot on the famous crusty Gallery**. Stefan said there was an empty flat on Simon Dachstr.42 and he gave us a key. It was on the fourth floor of a back house with normal Ossie neighbors. We **had no electricity but did have gas** and we befriended an American woman Martha who was squatting the first floor flat who had no water. So we ran a cable out of her window up into ours and could always tell when Martha had been around as there were puddles of water going down the stairs back to her flat.

Marcus repaired the toilet and we shared one room. We spent our nights in the squat bars and got a job on a grain

storage depot located beside Sachsenhausen concentration camp applying **some nasty pesticide to wipe out the micro bugs**. The grain was then going to be sold off to Poland which we thought was historically sinister. All monies we made lasted for ages so we remained comfortable for quite a while on **our ill gotten gains**.

On the eve of May first the temperature went from freezing to 30c the next day so Berlin literally warmed up for the **weekend of protesting, partying and rioting**. Armed with my trusty old Nikon I sauntered down to Kruezberg to join up with the demo. Our mate's band *Who's Rachael* [or *Who's Awful*] were playing on the back of a truck that was being pushed along through the demo so I took a media place on the truck.

Then I wondered why the band had **suddenly stopped playing** and were now lying flat on the truck, which had stopped moving.



The air then rained down a **barrage of missiles, rocks, bottles and full beer cans**; as it turned out, the Turkish Maoists and the anarchists were having a punch-up. After a few people had been twatted with donor kebab poles the cops jumped in, placated the mayhem and dragged off a few offenders.

It was now **stinking hot!** I was stoned [by smoke] and had a painted blue face. I saw a cop running towards me so decided to contribute to the violence by knocking him over which I succeeded in doing **only to get battered by his mates' batons** and was lucky I didn't get totally smashed for my efforts.

I managed to pick off some pretty cool action shots but also came across a **heinous bloody scene** where the cops dropped a dreadlocked lad on the pavement and walked off; his head injury was so severe I saw his brains exposed and when I saw his fixated pupils I thought he was dead but luckily for him he survived the clobbering.

After the day's chaos was over we went drinking in Prenzlaurburg, so between beers we lobbed cobble stones at passing police vans and **choked on the tear gas**. On the Sunday night we went to a street party on Kruezzigerstr. and were sitting around a fire where we met a cool German woman called Mina; she asked us did we know that there had been a nuclear accident in the Ukraine and that the winds had come from the East that weekend?

I laughed and said *"Shouldn't affect me, I'm an alien!"* She coolly fixed my gaze and replied *"I know!"*

This, at least, explained the rise in temperature.