

People's Houses in Europe



Amsab-Institute of Social History

Presentation at the 47th IALHI Annual Conference

Heritage of Social Movements in a Global Perspective

Helsinki, 8 September 2016



Overview

- What is a 'People's House'?
- Project *The Spectacle of Socialism*
- Online database
The European Map of People's Houses
- Call for Cooperation!

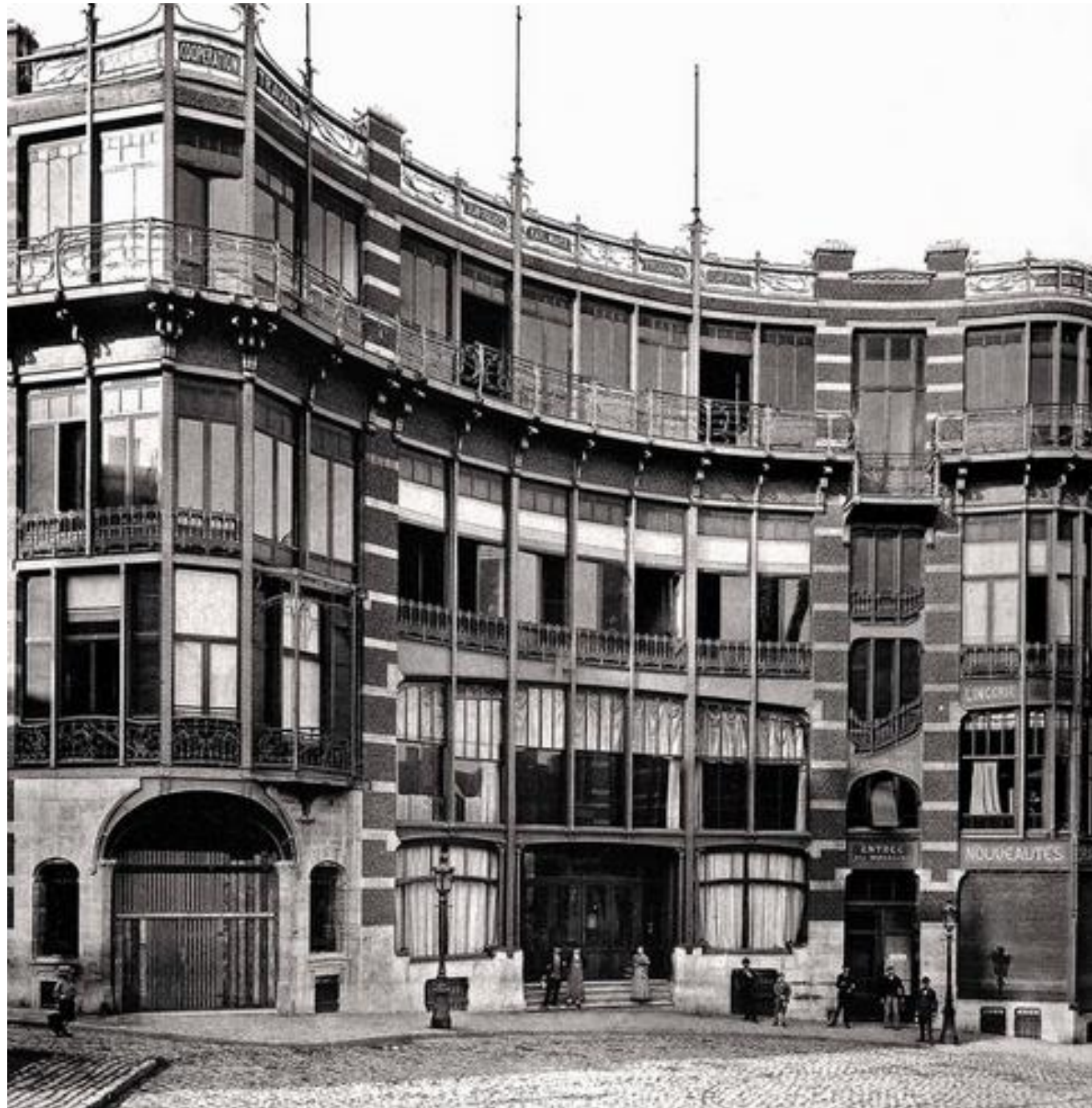


What is a People's House?

- Building acquired by emerging socialist Labour movement, 19th century onward
- 'Maison du peuple' (Fr), 'Casa del Popolo' (It), 'Volkshaus' (D) – English??
- Assembly hall for (political) meetings, but soon multifunctional: café, ballroom, workshop, restaurant, supermarket, cinema, etc.
- Many in France, Low Countries, Germany, spreading all over Europe (426 and counting)



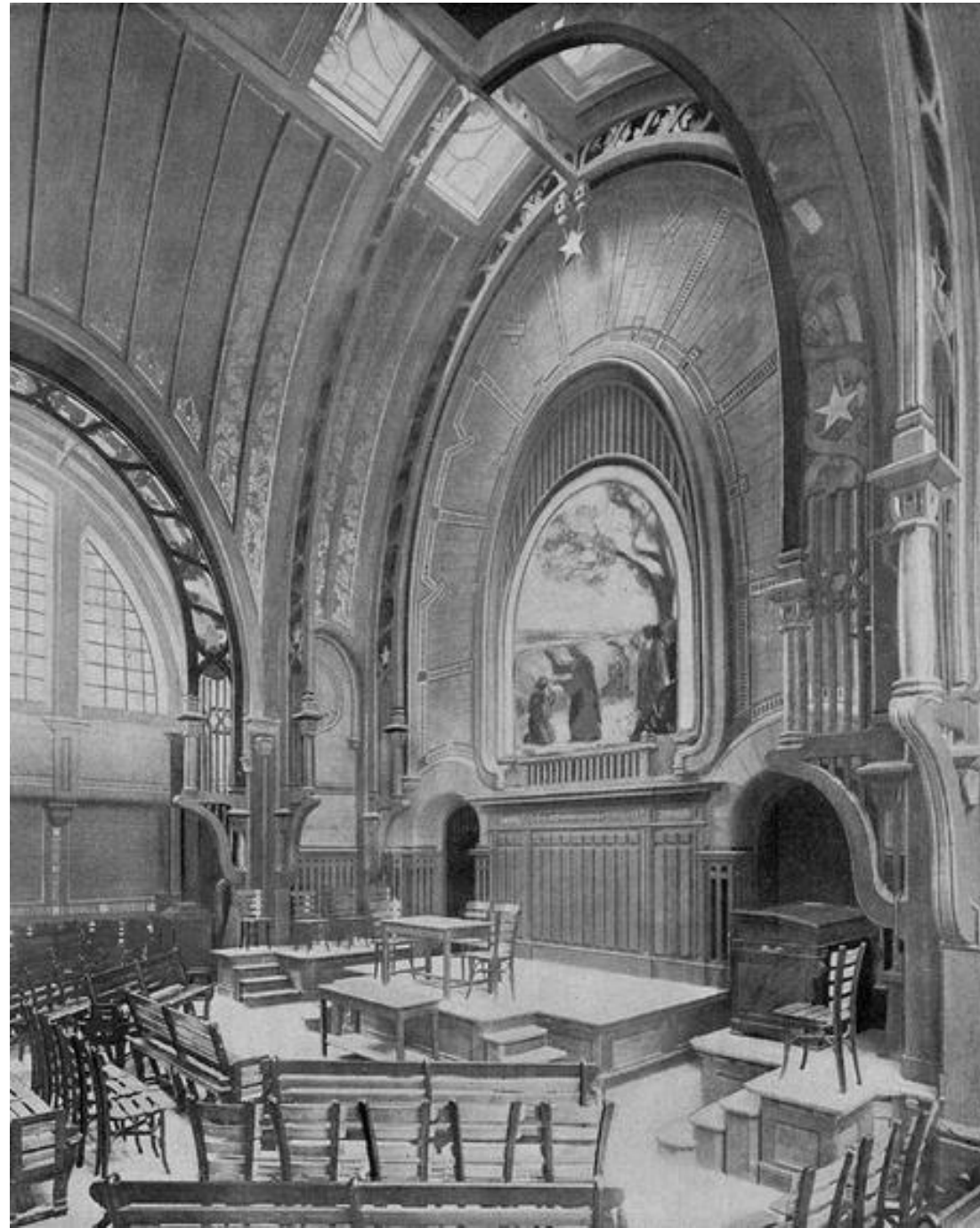
Maison du Peuple, Brussels 1899



Paasitorni, Helsinki 1908



Maison du Peuple de Montmartre, Paris 1899



Casa del Pueblo, Madrid 1930



Folkets Hus, Stockholm 1901



L'Égalitaire, Paris 1904



Project *The Spectacle of Socialism*

- Starting point: Belgian research project 2011-2014
- Maisons du Peuple as crossroads of architecture and politics
- ° Ghent University – supported by Amsab-ISH
- PhD – database – exhibition – conference
- Follow-up by Amsab-ISH: online portal of European Maisons du Peuple



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The spectacle of socialism. A transnational and interdisciplinary research on the social and architectural history of Workers? Assembly Buildings in European cities (1890-1914).

Id:UG_6727259020

Ghent University

This PhD aims to investigate the interactions and entanglements between architecture and the political culture of labour movements in prewar Europe by focusing on the architectural phenomenon of the often spectacular social democratic Maisons du Peuple or 'People's Houses' that were built around the turn of the nineteenth to twentieth century in a wide range of European cities. The objective is a clear-cut transnational and interdisciplinary study which tries to unravel the ways architects dealt with the complex interdependence between ideology, self-affirmation, aesthetics and technology.

Timeframe: 1 Jan 2011 → 31 Dec 2014

Keywords: workers? assembly building, people?s house, volkshuis, maison du peuple, socialism, labour movements, architecture

Discipline codes: HUMANITIES (H)

History and arts

Contemporary history (since 1914)

Contemporary history (ca. 1800 - 1914)

TECHNOLOGICAL SCIENCES (T)

Construction technology

Architecture, interior design

Classifications: Ph. D.

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Researchers

[Gita Deneckere](#)

Promotor Since 29 Oct 2009

[Fredie Floré](#)

Co-promoter Since 29 Oct 2009

[Christel Stalpaert](#)

Co-promoter Since 29 Oct 2009

Organisations

[Department of History](#)

Co-ordinator Since 29 Oct 2009

Funding programmes

[FWO Research project](#)

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

BUILDINGS WITH A SOCIAL MEMORY

STRATEGIES OF CONSERVATION, REUSE AND RECONVERSION

KEMPE THILL ARCHITECTS (NL)

ALAIN MÉLO (FR)

MARGARETA STÅHL (SE)

LOUISE KARLSKOV SKYGGEBJERG (DK)

PATRICK PRIMAVESI (DE)

KATY ARCHER (UK)

VOORUIT, A UNIQUE STORY?

six international experts on the
heritage and second life of buildings
designed for social gathering

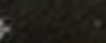
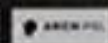
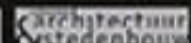
Introduction: Hannes Pieters (UGent/FWO)



FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER - 2 p.m. - VOORUIT ARTS CENTRE

free registration & more info on

www.buildingswithasocialmemory.ugent.be



Online database

The European Map of People's Houses

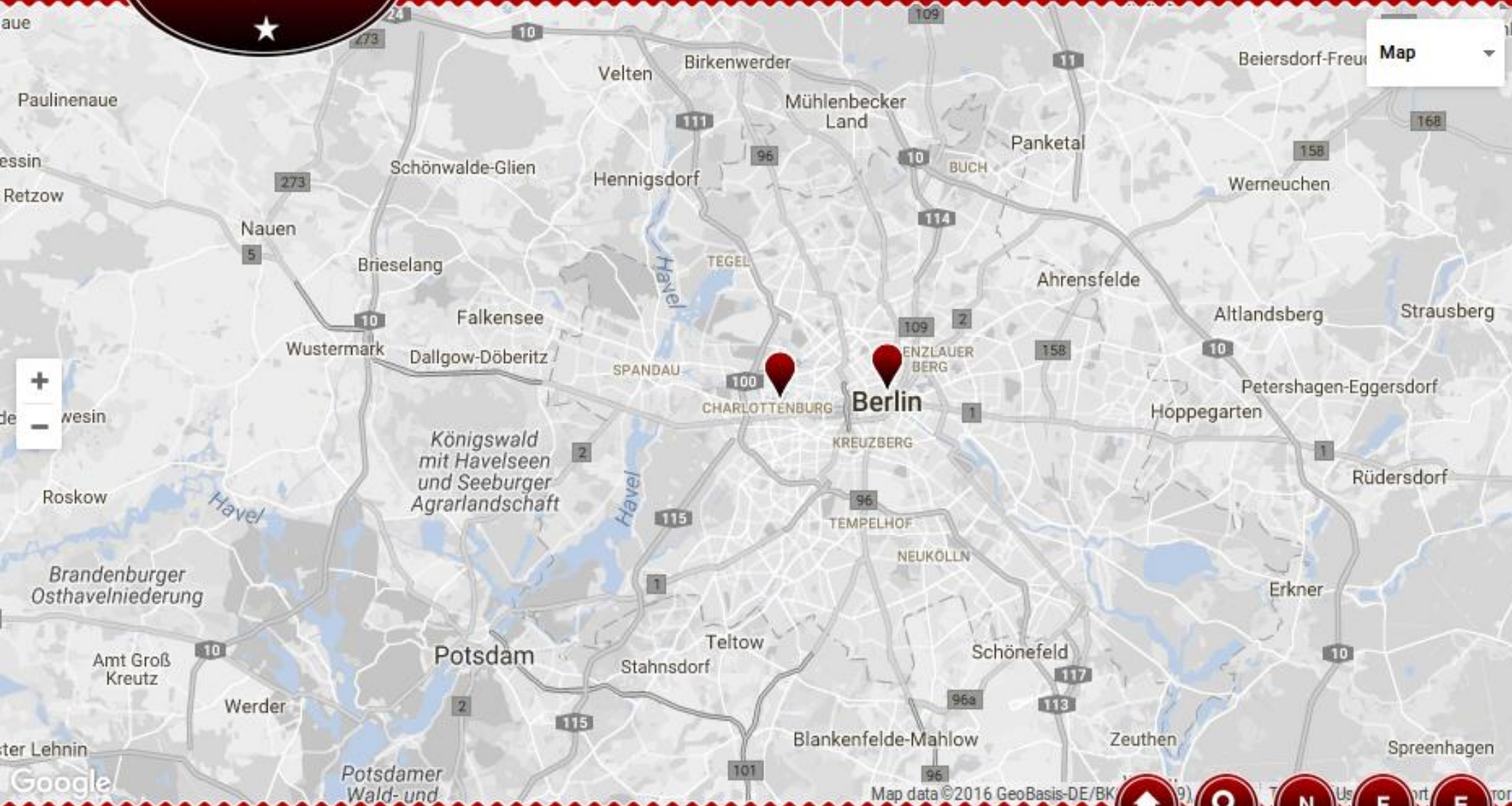
- <http://peopleshouses.eu>
<http://maisonsdupeuple.eu>
- Map and database of the People's Houses of Europe
- Geodata, historical info, images
- Interface in 3 languages (Eng/Fr/Dutch)
- Work in progress



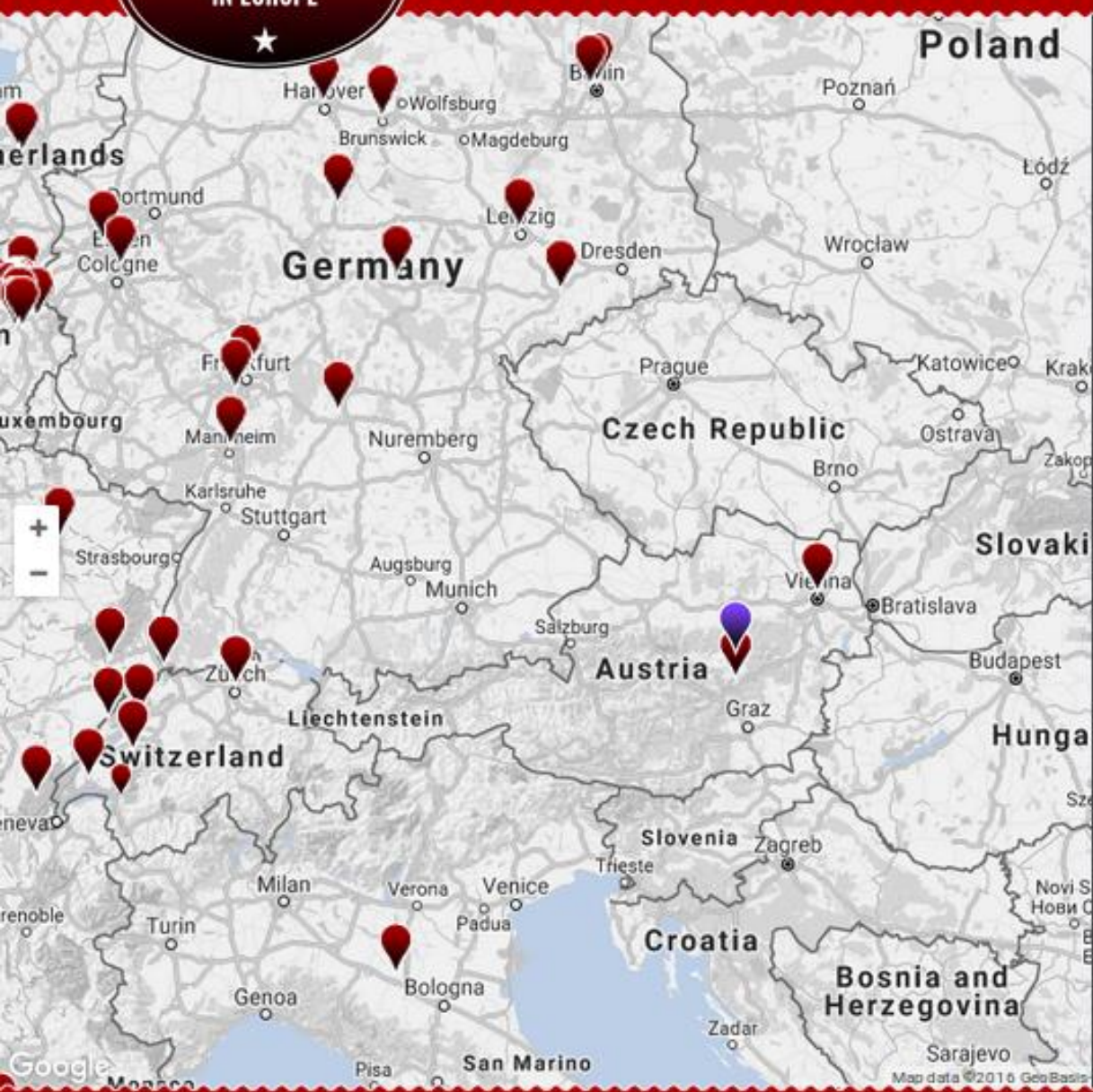
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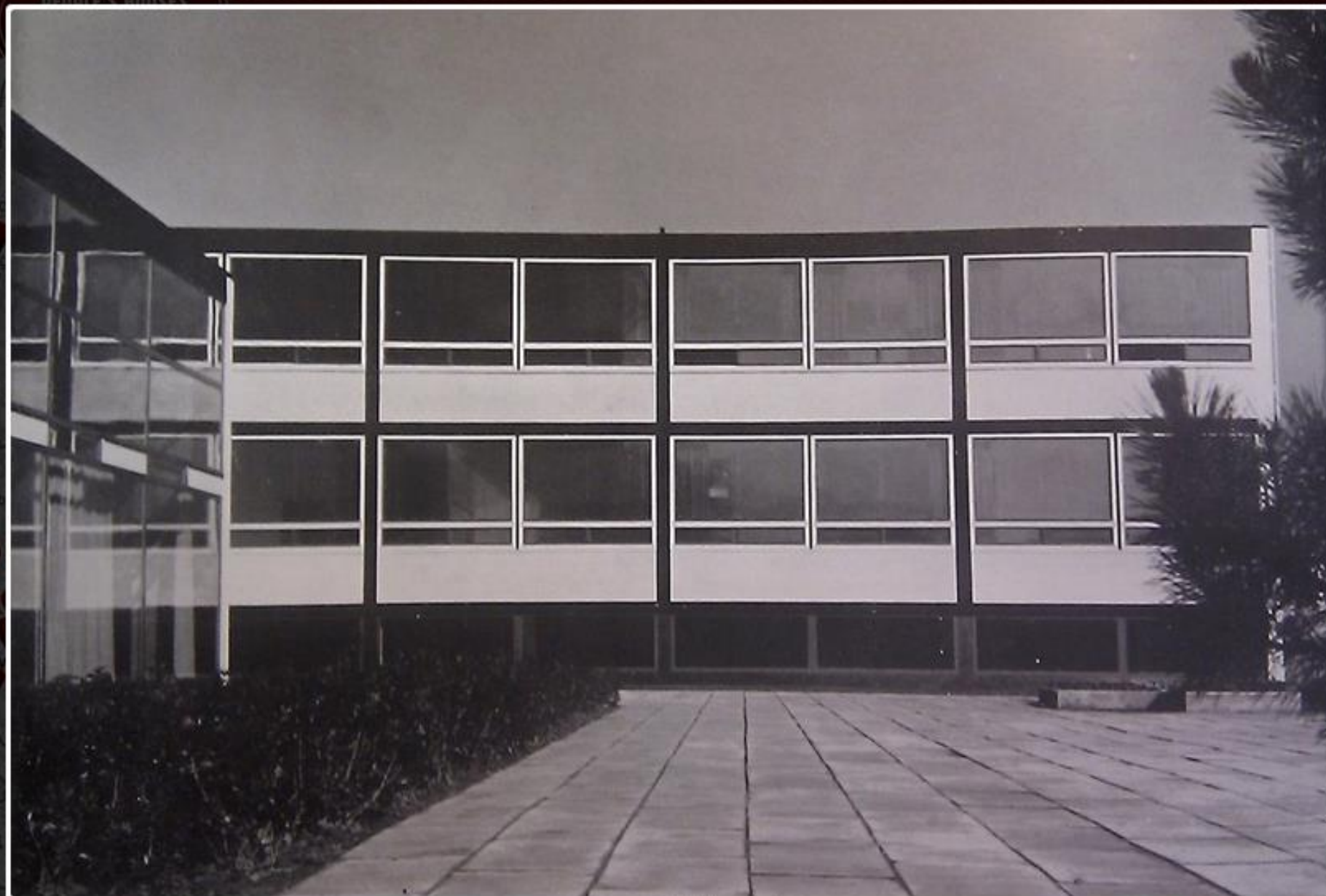


Kapfenberg

People's House Kapfenberg

One of the few post-war people's houses was founded in 1958 in the Austrian industrial town of Kapfenberg. For the design of this *Volkshaus*, the architect Wolfgang Windbrechtner was able to join an elaborate set of functions with a contemporary design. The building consisted of two wings connected by a wide entrance hall. One wing had an assembly hall that could seat 300 spectators and a cafe with terrace and the other combined offices for the party, trade unions and the health insurance company, with a library and various meeting and hobby rooms.





The People's House in Kapfenberg in Austria, built after World War II and designed by architect Wolfgang Windbrechtinger, From: Architecture, 1962, 62/44, p. 64.

Call for Cooperation!

We are looking for lists of people's houses per country or region, photographs, images, short histories of these houses, along with more comprehensive studies.

Please contact luc.peiren@amsab.be if you have any information about people's houses in your country (sites, photographs, short histories, etc).

info@amsab.be

Thank you !

