

Document name: Source 2: Christopher Isherwood, 'At the Nowaks, Wassertorstrasse'

Document date: 1935

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OpenLearn Study Unit: Roaring Twenties? Europe in the interwar period

OpenLearn url: <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/roaring-twenties-europe-the-interwar-period/content-section-0>

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## Source 2

**Christopher Isherwood (1935) 'At the Nowaks, Wassertorstrasse' in A. McElligott (ed.) (2001) *The German Urban Experience, 1900–1945*, London and New York, Routledge, pp. 72–3.**

The entrance to the Wassertorstraß was a big stone archway, a bit of old Berlin, daubed with hammers and sickles and Nazi crosses and plastered with tattered bills which advertised auctions or crimes. It was a deeply shabby cobbled street, littered with sprawling children in tears.

[...]

The living room had a sloping ceiling stained with old patches of damp. It contained a big table, six chairs, a sideboard and two large double-beds. The place was so full of furniture that you had to squeeze your way into it sideways.

[...]

My first evening as a lodger at the Nowaks was something of a ceremony. I arrived with my two suit-cases soon after five o'clock, to find Frau Nowak already cooking the evening meal. Otto whispered to me that we were to have lung hash, as a special treat.

'I'm afraid you won't think very much of our food,' said Frau Nowak, 'after what you've been used to. But we'll do our best.' She was all smiles, bubbling over with excitement. I smiled and smiled, feeling awkward and in the way. At length, I clambered over the living-room furniture and sat down on my bed. There was no space to unpack in, and nowhere, apparently, to put my clothes. At the living-room table, Grete was playing with her cigarette-cards and transfers. She was a lumpish child of twelve years old, pretty in a sugary way, but round-shouldered and too fat. My presence made her very self-conscious.

[...]

In these tenements each lavatory served for four flats. Ours was on the floor below. If, before retiring, I wished to relieve nature, there was a second journey to be made through the living-room in the dark to the kitchen, skirting the table, avoiding the chairs, trying not to collide with the head of the Nowaks' bed or jolt the bed in which Lothar and Grete were sleeping. However cautiously I moved, Frau Nowak would wake up: she seemed to be able to see me in the dark, and embarrassed me with polite directions: 'No, Herr Christoph – not there, if you please. In the bucket on the left, by the stove.'