

Berlin: City and Culture

Continuing Studies Study Tour

by Dr. Kat Sark

May 7-20, 2019



Berlin History

1871-1918 – Prussian Berlin

1918-1933 – Weimar Berlin

1939-1945 – War Berlin

1945-49 – Year Zero

1950-61 – Economic Miracle

1961-1989 – Divided Berlin

1989 – Fall of the Wall

1990 – German Reunification

1994-2005 – Reconstruction and gentrification of Berlin

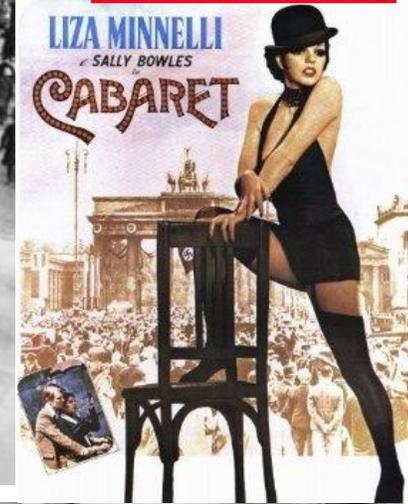
2006 – World Cup hosted in Germany and Berlin

2009 – 20th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall

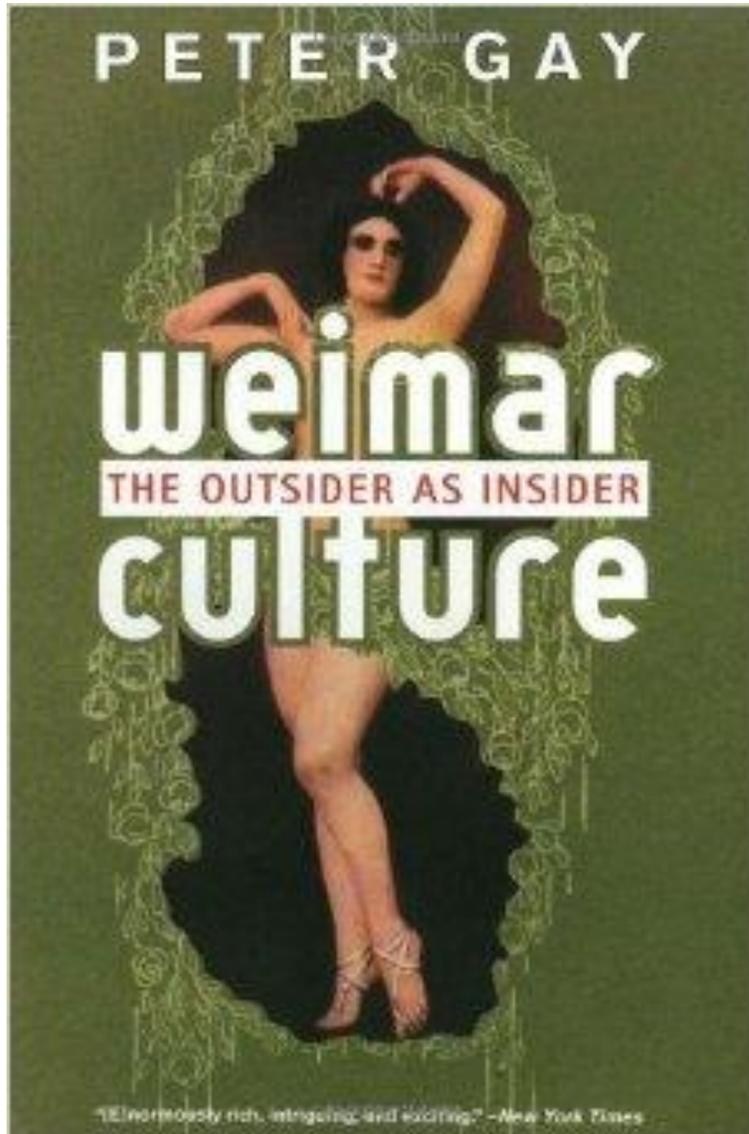
2019 – 30th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall



Weimar Berlin (1918-1933)



Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001)



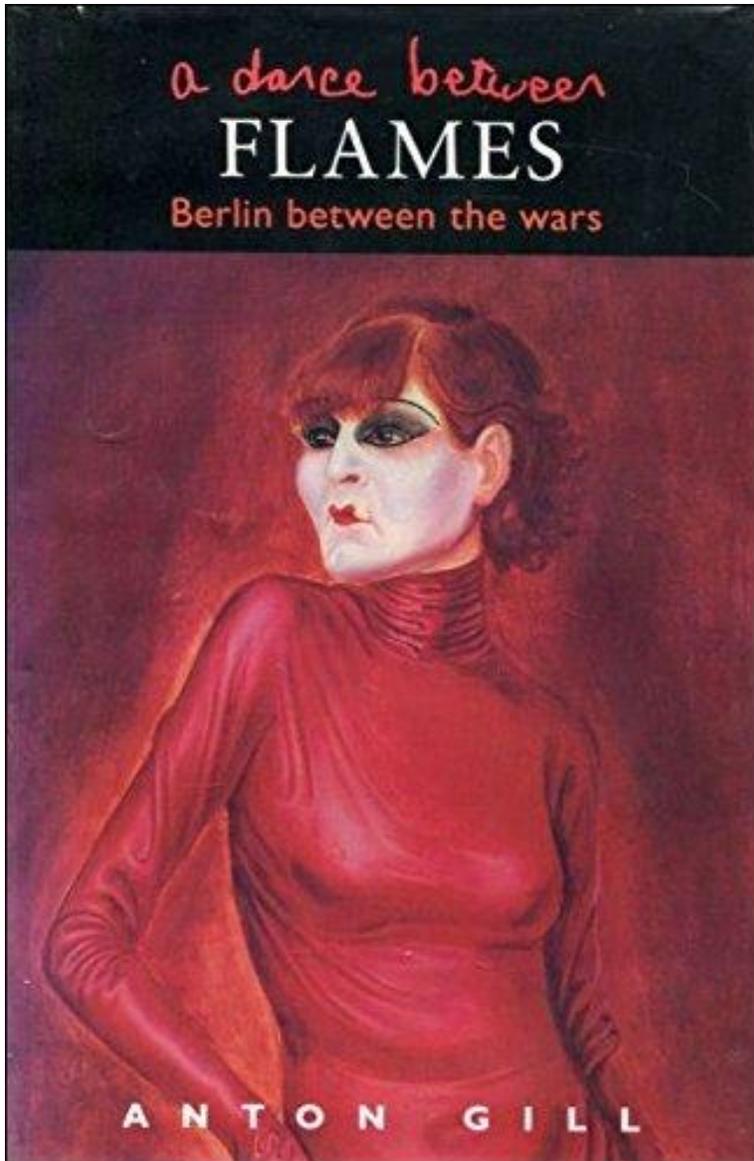
p.v – the Weimar Republic was a breathless era of cultural flowering that drew the world’s attention to German dance, German architecture, German filmmaking, German fiction, German theatre, German art and music.

p.vi – in the Weimar Republic outsiders – democrats, Jews, avant-garde artists, and the like – became insiders, decision makers in museums, orchestras, theatres, private centers of scholarship.

p.vii – It was precisely the largely untroubled cooperation of Jews and gentiles in their common pursuit of modernism that made the Weimar Republic so remarkable a phenomenon.

p.xiii – When we think of Weimar, we think of modernity in art, literature, and thought; we think of the rebellion of sons against fathers, Dadaists against art, Berliners against beefy philistinism, libertines against old-fashioned moralists; we think of *The Three Penny Opera*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *The Magic Mountain*, the *Bauhaus*, Marlene Dietrich.

Anton Gill, *A Dance Between Flames – Berlin Between the Wars* (London: John Murray Publishers, 1993)

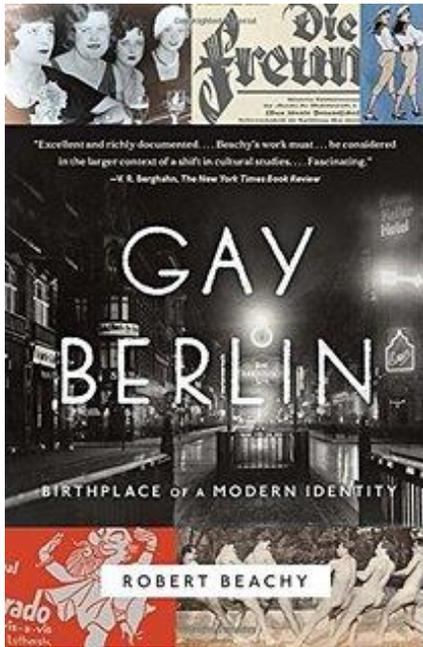


p.8 – By Monday 28 January 1918, the workers of Berlin had had enough; they began a new strike, one such as the city had never seen before. Four hundred and fourteen strikers' representatives were elected, and these in turn nominated an eleven-strong action committee. Their demands included an immediate peace negotiation on all fronts, the release of all political prisoners, improved provision of foodstuffs, and immediate democratization of the political system.

p.17 – The artistic flagship of the Weimar Republic, the Bauhaus, was foreshadowed in some of its ideas by *Jugendstil* – the German art nouveau. *Jugendstil* took its name from the Munich magazine *Jugend* and advocated the joining of forces and blending of disciplines of architects, artists, artisans, and technicians.

p.118 – When Dickens was writing of London and Balzac of Paris, Berlin was still a provincial town. The first novel to feature Berlin appeared in 1929. Alfred Doebelin *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is a picaresque epic written by a doctor who worked among the poor, the dispossessed, and the petty criminal classes he describes. Attracting comparisons with *Ulysses*, which Doebelin found mildly irritating, *Alexanderplatz* is a rambling book, sometimes stumbling, like its hero, confused but keeping hold of its own integrity, and concealing in its looseness an extraordinary constructive skill. The atmosphere evoked is intensified by the fact that it is written in Berlin dialect.

Robert Beachy, *Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 2015)



“Look at me!” blared the capital of the Reich. “I am Babel, the monster among cities! We had a formidable army: now we command the most riotously wicked night life. Don’t miss our matchless show, ladies and gentlemen! It’s Sodom and Gomorrah in a Prussian tempo. Don’t miss the circus of perversities! Out department store of assorted vices! An all-out tale of brand new kinds of debauchery!” (Klaus Mann, *The Turning Point*, 1942)

p.ix – After discovering the city for themselves, W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood became apostles for Berlin’s uninhibited sexuality, luring a wide circle of English authors, poets, and curiosity seekers. In his own autobiographical account, Isherwood described how Berlin’s openness freed him now only to explore his homosexuality but ultimately to accept and embrace what he came to think of as a sexual orientation and identity. This was a freedom, moreover, that Isherwood – like his compatriots – never felt in London.

p.160 – In March 1919, just six months after the November armistice that ended the Great War, Magnus Hirschfeld opened the **Institute for Sexual Science** in an opulent villa at the Northern edge of Berlin’s Tiergarten Park. The first such facility in the world, the institute was supported by the Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld-Stiftung, a nonprofit foundation with an endowment of thirty thousand marks. Even before the war ended in May 1918, Hirschfeld gained support for his plan from Berlin’s police president, who then promoted the idea to the Prussian minister of the interior. The institute offered medical and psychological counseling on a range of sexual issues to thousands of individuals, including heterosexual men and women, homosexuals, cross-dressers, and intersex individuals. The institute also represented the first attempt to establish “sexology,” or sexual science, as a topic of legitimate academic study and research. Nowhere else in the world was there so much as a university department or chair devoted to the subject, much less an entire institute. Hirschfeld’s reputation as a sexologist also helped to attract medical doctors and psychiatrists, who visited the institute for research or to participate in seminars and conferences.

War Berlin (1939-1945)



Berlin, July 1945



“Yesterday I had the opportunity to drive through the city from one end to the other. It was like a ghost town. We got used to the debris in our own area and what we see on our way to work, but I suddenly realized how little of Berlin is left. Then I drove past a board plastered with announcements of plays, operas and concerts. In the newspaper I found advertisements for almost 200 places which were putting on plays – in all parts of the city. I mean it. There are at least half a dozen concerts a day – in all parts of the city. Two opera houses are giving regular performances. What other city in the world can say as much?” (Friedrich Luft, drama critic, February 1946, in Ronald Taylor, *Berlin and Its Culture, A Historical Portrait*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1997)

Rubble Women (*Trümmerfrauen*)



Ruth Andreas-Friedrich, *Battleground Berlin, Diaries 1945-48*, transl. by Anna Boerresen, (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1990)

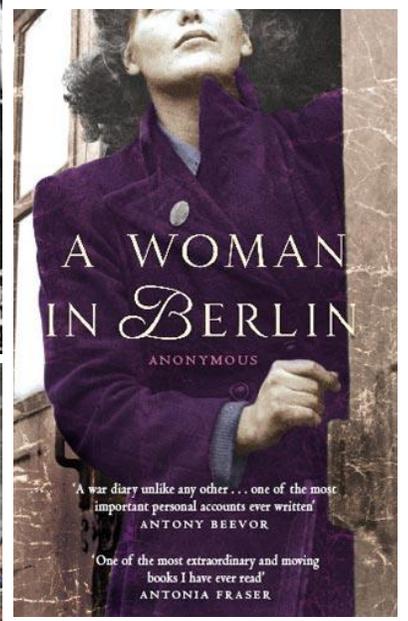
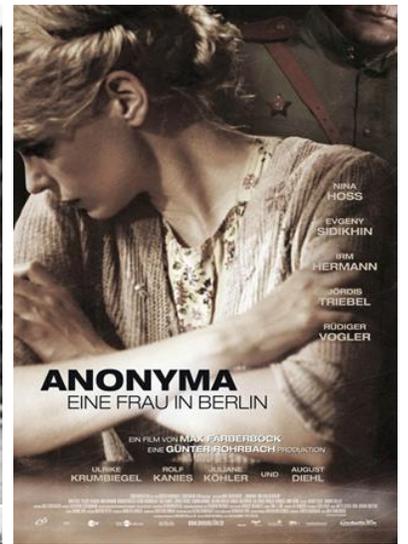
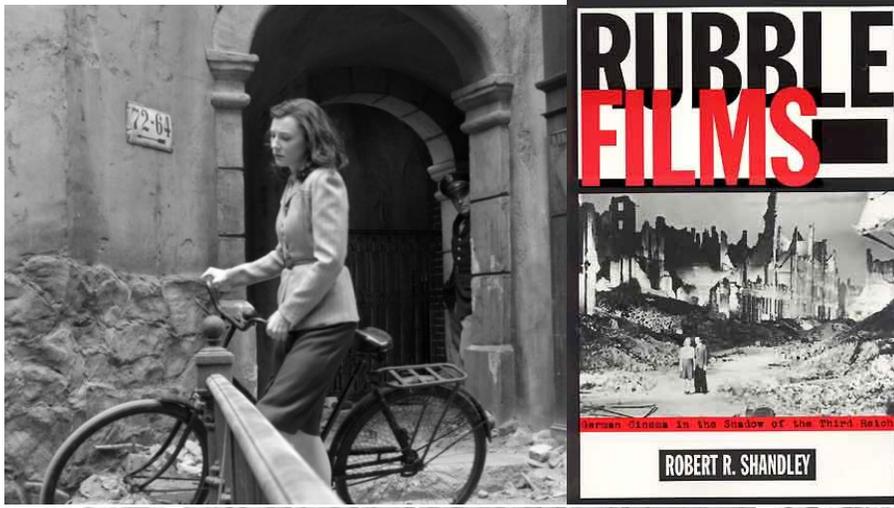


p.20 – Wed. May 9, 1945 – The world goes wild **celebrating victory**. Meanwhile Berliners ponder where to find something to eat. There are **no stores yet**. They are either closed or looted. Most of what's missing from the stores has been taken by Germans. Only the **bakers are already at work**. Crowds gather in front of their doors. The bread is black and wet. It feels like lead in the stomach. Nevertheless, it is bread.

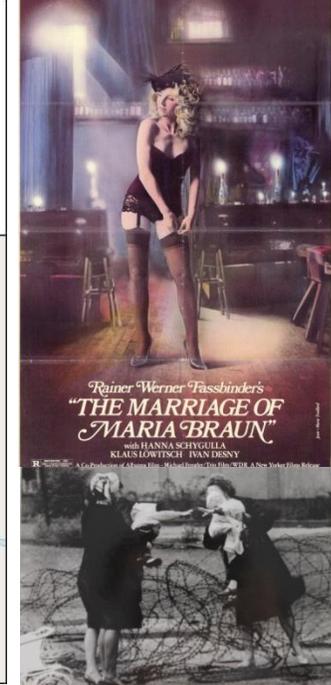
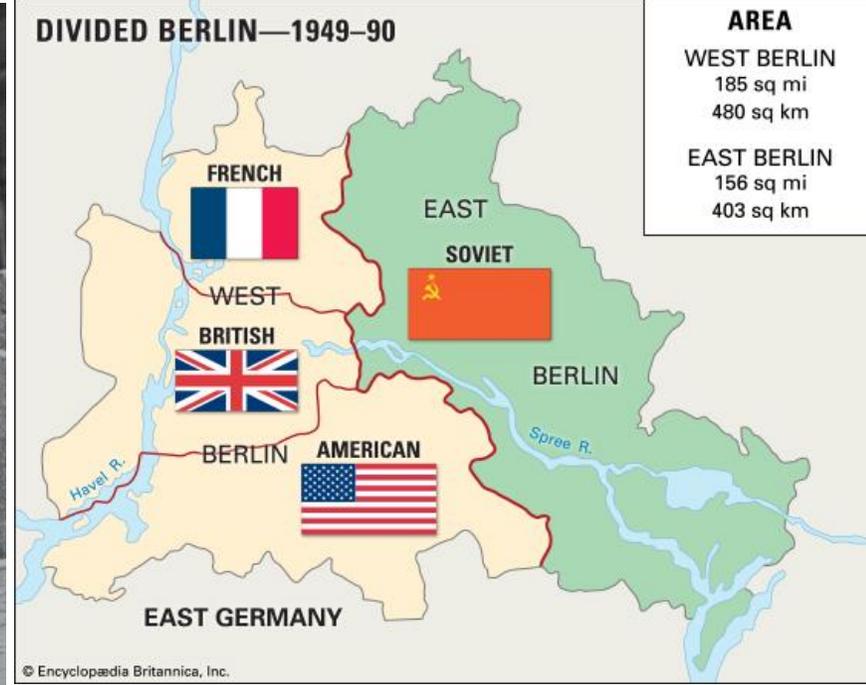
p.23 – Sat. May 12, 1945 – Between Linkstrasse and Margaretenstrasse there stretches a **large pond**. Bombs have torn up the underground pipes and turned this residential area into a lake. Gasoline cans float on the surface. Rubbish from the war and filthy paper. In between, **two girls wearing grass-green bathing suits** frolic in the filthy water. Laughing and splashing **as if they were at Wannsee Beach**. The ruins of Linkstrasse giving on that questionable lake are mirrored on its shimmering surface. The girls laugh. Like the chirping of birds their laughter sounds through the dusty air.

p.28 – Thu. May 17, 1945 – The first **ration cards** have been distributed. Real cards with real coupons. Bread is written on them, meat, lard and tea. Salt, flour, potatoes and real coffee. We feel as if we have been showered with presents.

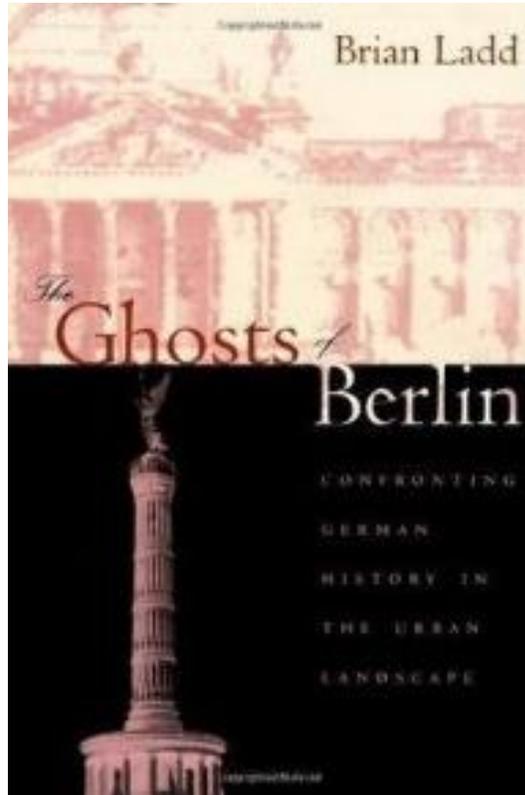
p.81-82 – Wed. Aug. 15, 1945 – In front of the Hebbel Theatre on Stresemannstrasse – formerly known as Saarlandstrasse – people are crowding. In a continuous succession, cars carrying prominent members of the occupying forces pull up. The **theatre** is opening with a new production of the *Threepenny Opera*. The **beggar's opera, what coincidental symbolism**.



Post-War Berlin (1945-1961)



Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*
(Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997)



p.29 – The most celebrated visit to the walled city was probably that of President **John F. Kennedy** on June 26, 1963. After reviewing the Wall, he proceeded to the Schöneberg Town Hall, home of the West Berlin government, where he gave a speech famous for the German phrase with which he concluded. His words underscored the political symbolism of Berlin: “All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin. And therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words, ‘Ich bin ein Berliner.’”

p.33 – In his novella of divided Berlin, *The Wall Jumper* (1982), Peter Schneider had prophesied that ‘tearing down the Wall inside our heads will take longer than any demolition job on the visible Wall.’

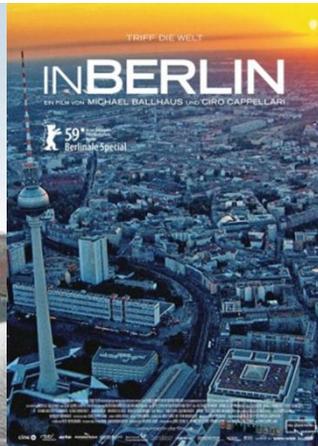
p.120 – Along the hundred miles of the Berlin Wall, nowhere was it more clearly revealed as a physical and symbolic barrier stemming the motion of modernity. Wim Wenders’ 1987 Berlin film *Wings of Desire* evokes this discontinuity. In one scene, an old man wanders across an expanse of weeds – recognizable as Potsdamer Platz in the 1980s – and laments that he can’t find Potsdamer Platz.



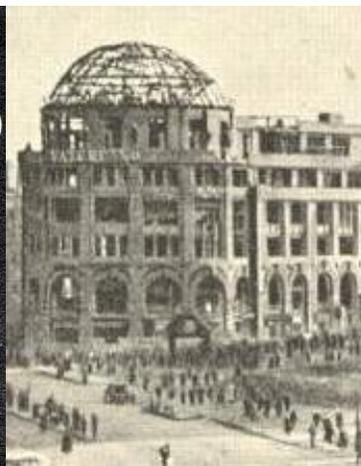




Reunified Berlin (1990-now)



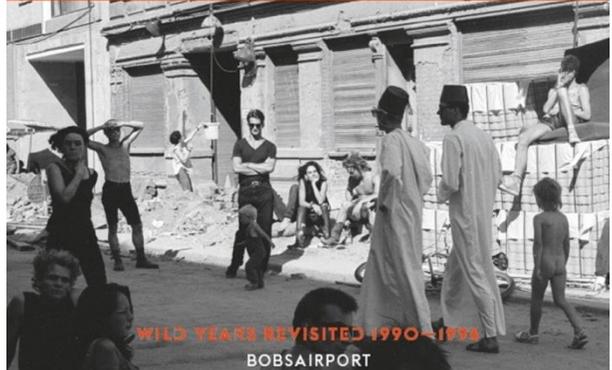




 **haus Vaterland**
BETRIEB KEMPINSKI
AM POTSDAMER PLATZ



BERLIN WONDER LAND





Thank you! – Danke!

