



The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape

By Brian Ladd

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In this compelling work, Brian Ladd examines the ongoing conflicts radiating from the remarkable fusion of architecture, history, and national identity in Berlin. Ladd surveys the urban landscape, excavating its ruins, contemplating its buildings and memorials, and carefully deconstructing the public debates and political controversies emerging from its past.

"Written in a clear and elegant style, *The Ghosts of Berlin* is not just another colorless architectural history of the German capital. . . . Mr. Ladd's book is a superb guide to this process of urban self-definition, both past and present."—Katharina Thote, *Wall Street Journal*

"If a book can have the power to change a public debate, then *The Ghosts of Berlin* is such a book. Among the many new books about Berlin that I have read, Brian Ladd's is certainly the most impressive. . . . Ladd's approach also owes its success to the fact that he is a good storyteller. His history of Berlin's architectural successes and failures reads entertainingly like a detective novel."—Peter Schneider, *New Republic*

"[Ladd's] well-written and well-illustrated book amounts to a brief history of the city as well as a guide to its landscape."—Anthony Grafton, *New York Review of Books*

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Ladd (Urban Planning and Civic Order in Germany, 1860-1914, Harvard Univ., 1990) approaches the new Germany and its handling of memory in an interesting manner. Memory, Ladd points out, also extends to the urban landscape. The leaders of the new Berlin have begun massive architectural projects to restore the capital to its former greatness. To build this future, however, they must see the past. Can a new Berlin be built on the ruins of Hitler's bunker, asks the author? Ladd covers a number of architectural features in Berlin and the many political controversies arising from its past. For example, what should be done about the Berlin Wall? Ladd makes the point that Berlin's buildings are indeed some of the ghosts haunting the city. A valuable addition to academic libraries. -- Dennis L. Noble, North Olympic Lib. Sys., Port Angeles, Wash.

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Review

With erudition, insight and restraint, Brian Ladd ... carries off the dangerous task of analyzing architecture and urbanism in the once and future capital of Germany in terms of its horrific political past. He convincingly argues that architecture embodies ideological meaning more powerfully than other artifacts of a society. -- *The New York Times Book Review*, Martin Filler

From the Back Cover

Berlin is once again the official capital of a united Germany and, perhaps, the metaphorical capital of a new Europe. In accordance with its received status, a series of massive architectural projects has been initiated, intended to restore, reveal, and reinvent both the physical and the symbolic city of Berlin. But to build a future, one must first examine the past. And Berlin's past is particularly troubling. In this elegant and compelling work, Brian Ladd examines the ongoing conflicts radiating from the remarkable fusion of architecture, history, and national identity in Berlin. How is reunified Germany confronting a divisive and authoritarian past rendered tangible by the Berlin Wall, the Reichstag, Hitler's bunker - even the Brandenburg Gate? How can the rich culture of the past, the artistic and intellectual heritage of Berlin's avant garde, be rescued from the Cold War blight of Potsdamer Platz? And can the Neue Wache, Berlin's monumental remembrance of the horrors of tyranny and war, become the structural centerpiece and the symbolic guardian of this once and future capital? With keen insight and exacting scholarship, Ladd surveys the urban landscape, excavating its ruins, contemplating its buildings and memorials, and carefully deconstructing the public debates and political controversies emerging from its past. In the end, it becomes clear that the ghosts of Berlin may never, indeed should never, fade away.

Users Review

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