

World War II and The Cold War:

Movies and TV Interesting Reading Berlin Tour

**from Dennis Molnar
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Movies and TV Series (* means recommended)

- The Lives of Others (2006) **
A celebrity East German writer is secretly writing an anti East Germany play and is suspected by the Stasi. Stasi Secret Police methodology is well illustrated
- The Same Sky (2017) ** (TV Series)
A Stasi agent is sent to West Berlin to seduce a lady for information. The series follows families both sides of the Berlin Wall, has Stasi informants, spy handlers, tunnel plotters, CIA employees, lots of suspense and, well illustrates ordinary life behind the wall
- Deutschland 83 (2015)
A Stasi operative infiltrates the Western military based in West Berlin and reports on the true intentions of the West during an escalating nuclear situation.
- The Ipcress File (1965)
British Actor Michael Caine investigates brainwashing of British scientists by East Germany
- Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy (1979) TV Series
Tracking down a Soviet spy high up within the British Secret Service during the Cold War. There is a 1979 miniseries and a 2011 film. I recommend the film
- Torn Curtain (1966) *
American actor Paul Newman plays an American scientist who defects to East Germany but has a surprise motive. With Julie Andrews.
- Funeral in Berlin (1966) **
British actor Michael Caine is sent to East Berlin and prepares to receive a defecting East German General in a story with many clever twists. One of the best Cold War movies

- The Spy who came in from the Cold (1965) *
British actor Richard Burton, Mi6 Agent, is sent to East Germany with a brilliant plan to convince the East German Intelligence Agency that one of their senior people is a double agent. From the John LeCarre book which means this is a very good movie
- Our Man in Havana (1959)
An amateur British man is recruited by the British Secret Service to gather information on the corrupt Cuban regime and he leads his bosses in a most creative direction. This shows the beauty and charm of Havana before the 1959 Cuban revolution
- Goodbye Lenin (2003)
An East German Mother goes into a coma and when she wakes up the Wall has fallen. But her son does not want her to know this as he fears she may die from the shock. So he builds a world around her that pretends the Wall has not fallen. A delightful film
- Topaz (1969)
A Cold War film from the Book by Leon Uris. A Soviet spy defects to America in 1962. He brings information and the action then goes to Cuba as the Cuban Missile Crisis is to develop. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock and in vibrant clear colour that projects well on your Television.
- Cuban Missile Crisis: Three Men go to War (2012)
Insightful documentary about what happened behind the scenes during the Crisis
- 638 Ways to Kill Castro (2006)
For decades, many, including the US CIA tried to kill Castro. This documents the most interesting attempts and is most convincing.
- Line of Separation (sometimes known as Tannbach) (2015)
Inspired by a real German village that was divided after WW II, this follows a village that was divided between East and West Germany from 1945 onwards as the Cold War set in. It well conveys the pain of families that were separated and the cruelty and harshness of the East German regime. With English subtitles
- Bridge of Spies (2015)
True story about the Cold War exchange of Soviet Spy Rudolf Abel who was caught in the USA for American U2 pilot Francis Gary Powers who was shot down over Soviet airspace.
- Is Paris Burning? (1966)
As the Allies approach to retake Paris from the Germans, the General in charge of Paris is ordered to destroy Paris if it will fall into the Allies hands. Black and White well conveys how Paris looked like in World War 2

- The Third Man (1949)
This thriller takes place in post WW II Berlin (late 1940s) and shows the devastation of Berlin
- A Perfect Crime (2020) TV Series
Documentary about Detlev Rohwedder, the President of the Treuhand Agency that was responsible for dealing with all the failing businesses in East Germany after the Wall came down in 1989. He sold many and closed many causing great upheaval and turmoil in East Germany. He was murdered in 1981 and this documentary investigates while revealing the condition of East German Industry
- The Zone of Interest (2023)
Rudolph Hoss, head of Auschwitz concentration camp, lives right next to the camp with his family. This is a poignant movie illustrated by contrasts and highlighted by outstanding cinematography
- Code Name: Emerald (1985)
The Germans are trying to find out where the D-Day Invasion will be in France. Calais or Normandy. Spies, Double Agents, Collaborators all trying to cleverly convince the Germans that the D-Day Invasion will be at Calais, not Normandy

Cold War Books (* means recommended)

- Behind the Wall* by Patrick Major
- Stasi* by John Koehler
The best book published on how the Stasi worked to keep the State in control of the people
- The Tunnels* by Greg Mitchell
- God's Spies by Elisabeth Braw
Well researched to tell the story of how the Stasi infiltrated the Lutheran and Catholic Churches and how the Stasi patience paid off well.
- Forty Autumns
A lovely life portrait of a large family in East Germany from the end of WW 2 until the Wall fell in 1989. It includes the story one daughter who escaped to the West Germany in the 1950s
- Six Months in 1945 by Michael Dobbs
- Berlin 1961 by Frederick Kempe

- The Race against the Stasi by Herbie Sykes
Famous East German bike racer defects
- Iron Curtain by Anne Applebaum
- Red Love by Maxim Leo
Born in 1970 and raised behind the Wall, he finally asks his East German parents the questions he wanted to ask. Very insightful into one family's life behind the Wall

World War I Books (* means recommended)

- Paris 1919 by Margaret MacMillan
Chronicles the meetings following WW I that decided the conditions and reparations of Germany
- Dreadnought * by Robert Massie
The German/British naval race leading up to the outbreak of WW I and how this led to Britain built the first, game changing, Battleship called Dreadnought in 1905
- Castles at Sea by Robert Massie
Starts at the outbreak of WW I and presents the Naval Battles in highly readable form

World War II Books (* means recommended)

- Hitler's Warrior by Danny Parker*
This is the true story of SS officer Colonel Jochen Peiper who was an assistant of Himmler, a favourite of Hitler and who later led a group of soldiers who committed war crimes. He was convicted and this story goes all the way to the 1970s.
- In the Garden of The Beasts** by Erik Larson
Fascinating story taken from the 1930's diary of the American Ambassador in Berlin who initially did not believe the Nazi program was as bad as it turned out to be.
- Nazi Billionaires by David de Jong
Follows how wealth was created and increased in WW2 Germany and what families hold that wealth now.
- Operation Paperclip by Annie Jacobsen
How German scientists were spirited off to America after WW II

- Burning the Reichstag by Benjamin Hett
There was always suspicion that the Nazi party lit the fire and blamed extremists in order to assume dictatorial powers. This book uncovers the true story
- Chasing Gold* by George Taber
How various countries in WW II spirited their Central bank gold away before the Germans invaded
- Wine and War** by Don and Petie Kladstrup
How did the Germans get French wineries to co-operate in order to send up to 400,000 bottles a week back to Germany?
- Champagne (in War) by Don and Petie Kladstrup
- The Wages of Destruction by Adam Tooze
How Germany smartly managed their currency and economy in WW II and were always able to purchase imports and finance the war
- The Taste of War by Lizzie Collingham
How America, Britain, Soviet Union and Japan fed both their civilians and their armed forces in WW II
- Hell's Cartel** by Diarmuid Jeffrey
How German Industry, incentivized by profit, formed cartels and delivered levels of armaments needed by their Armed Forces in WW II
- The Invention that changed the World by Robert Buder
How radar was invented and very quickly applied by the British and Americans to help in WW II
- A Woman in Berlin* by Anonymous
A young Lady in Berlin kept a diary from April to June 1945 and vividly captures what it was like to live in Berlin in the depth of its destruction. Food, water, fuel, housing and work were critically absent while the occupying Russians treated her and those around here terribly. By end of June 1945 you experience her joy as life starts to inch towards normality – very, very slowly.
- Battle of Britain by James Holland
- Iron Coffins * by Herbert Werner
Written by a man who ended up being a Captain of a U-Boat in World War, he vividly documents his adventures, shows how everything declined as Germany started to lose the war, has surprises, and is a much better story than seen in the Movie “Das Boot”

- Bomber Boys by Patrick Bishop
- The Volunteer by Jack Fairweather
About the Polish Army Captain who decided to become prisoner in the Auschwitz Concentration camp so he could do two very important things. This insightful book reveals the workings of the Camp and shows how people did manage to escape
- Operation Willi by Michael Bloch
The 1940 Nazi plot to kidnap The Duke of Windsor (who had abdicated as King Edward of Britain VII in 1936)
- London War Notes by Molly Panter-Downes
She was 33 when World War II broke out and kept a brilliant and insightful diary of World War II life in London. Successfully published, she wrote over 800 articles for the New Yorker magazine. This book can only be ordered direct from Persephone books of London (<https://persephonebooks.co.uk>) and is well worth its modest price. Their catalog of books published will offer you many interesting titles.
- Tapping Hitler's Generals edited by Soenke Neitzel
This is the companion book to the lecture Amazing People Stories of WW2 including the captured the Generals who lived on British Estates, had tailored suits from Saville Row and dined at the Ritz. The book contained the recorded conversations Between captured German Generals held in England who did not know they were being recorded. Much is revealed including who was pro Nazi and anti Nazi.
- The New Yorker Book of War Pieces
This has about 70 articles published in the New Yorker from 1939 to 1945 that recounts life during the War with highlights being the Letters from London and Paris
- Codename Tricycle by Russell Miller
The biography of Dusko Popov who was an active double agent in WW2 and who became the inspiration for the James Bond Character

Other Books (* means recommended)

- Leadership by Henry Kissinger
In his late 90s, Kissinger wrote a book that looks at what makes six leaders Great. He covers how Konrad Adenauer, Germany's first post war Chancellor decided How West Germany should face the world. Fascinating is the story of Singapore's Prime Minister who turned an island with no resources into a strong nation state.
- Putin's People by Catherine Belton
Amazing chronology of the rise of Vladimir Putin and exposé on how he restructured the Oligarchs and all business to fuel his power. Also detailed is the reach of his network

throughout the west. A must read!

- Germany: Memories of a Nation by Neil MacGregor
This book gives tremendous insight into the Culture that then formed the History of the German speaking people
- Stealth at Sea by Robert van der Vat
History of the Submarine
- The House by the Lake** by Thomas Harding
Fascinating true story of a summer cottage outside of Berlin with 100 years of different ownership.
- War and Gold by Kwasi Kwarteng
A look at the role gold played with respect to financing various wars. For example, Spain financed its expansionary wars with Gold and Silver from the New World but with the consequence of a phenomenon never seen before: Inflation.
- Vienna 1814 by David King
After the Napoleon was defeated, a Congress was held in Vienna to decide on the fate of France. Amazingly, Talleyrand, the French Foreign Minister, manoeuvred himself into a position of great influence and participated in the Congress in a depth one would never imagine given France's defeat.

City of Berlin Tour Suggestions (* means recommended)

- The Berlin Wall Memorial and Documentation Center**
Excellent and worthwhile
- The Berlin Wall Museum at Checkpoint Charlie*
Documents many of the Escapes
- The Trabant Car Museum
This is a short walk from the Berlin Wall Museum
- The Stasi (Secret Police) Museum**
The museum's guided tour is highly recommended and the schedule will show when English and other language tours are held
- Hohenschoenhausen (Stasi) Prison Museum**
The museum's guided tour is highly, highly recommended and the schedule will show when it is held in English and other languages. If you are lucky, your guide might be an prisoner who was held there so you can get deeper

insight into living conditions and daily schedule.

- The Allied Museum
Interesting aircraft, displays and film about the Berlin Airlift
- Deutsches Historisches Museum*
German History Museum with excellent exhibits on the Weimar Republic, WW 2 and Cold War E(ast/West Germany)
- The Television Tower
- A Boat Cruise on the River Spree*
Be sure to pick a boat that has the tour guide speaking the language you wish to hear
- The Reichstag**
It is usually sold out for regular visit admission, but if you make a lunch reservation in advance by Internet, you go past the lineups for lunch and can tour the Reichstag after.

Berlin Wall Tour Guide

- Ralf Gruender ralf.gruender@berlin.de

Ralf is a Berlin Wall Documentary Journalist and Author.

My suggestion is for a 3 hour tour that covers

Berlin Wall Memorial

Ghost Railway Station

Remnants of the Wall

Berlin Wall Victims

Also highly recommended is for Ralf to take you to The Stasi Head Quarters Museum and the Stasi Hohenschoenhausen Prison for an intimate tour.