



## BERLIN: PICTURES FROM THE GARRISON CITY

Like Chicago after the Great Fire of 1871, Berlin was destroyed and rebuilt from the ground up after it was repeatedly bombed and burned to ashes during World War II. Earlier this year, Taschen, which is based in Cologne, released *Berlin: Portrait of a City*, "the most comprehensive photographic study [of the city] that has ever been published." The elaborate, large-format, 670-page coffee-table companion encapsulates the history of Berlin since its modern founding in 1860 and includes some 280 photographs by the likes of Henri Cartier-Bresson, Helmut Newton, René Burri and Robert Capa, as well as Berlin "photo-chroniclers" Friedrich Seidenstücker, Erich Salomon, Willy Römer and Heinrich Zille. The book, written by Hans Christian Adam and produced and directed by Benedikt Taschen, transports you through the latter half of the 19th century, the First World War, into the postwar inflation (when "workers took their wages home in rucksacks, and found that their money would not buy so much as a pound of meat"), into the Golden Twenties and early Thirties (when "heady hedonism took people to nude dance shows, night clubs, and gambling dens," and produced a drug and film culture like no other, brilliantly chronicled in Christopher Isherwood's *Berlin Diaries*), through the rise of fascism in Nazi Germany, the Second World War and the war's aftermath.

After WWII, Berlin's population was cut in half (from 4.3 million to 2.3 million) and the city was divided into four zones, which eventually led to the building of the Berlin Wall, constructed by the Russians in the early Sixties to limit access to foreigners — and the rest of free Germany — and to keep East Berliners from fleeing Communism. "After 1961," writes Adam, "Berlin had been an absurdity amongst the cities of Europe, perhaps, indeed a surreal phenomenon." But by October 1990, the Wall had finally come down with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Illustrated in the final chapter, Berlin today stands proudly rebuilt and unified as one of the world's most stunning and creative cities, one given a second chance to live.

— JC Gabel