



Cauldron of Weimar

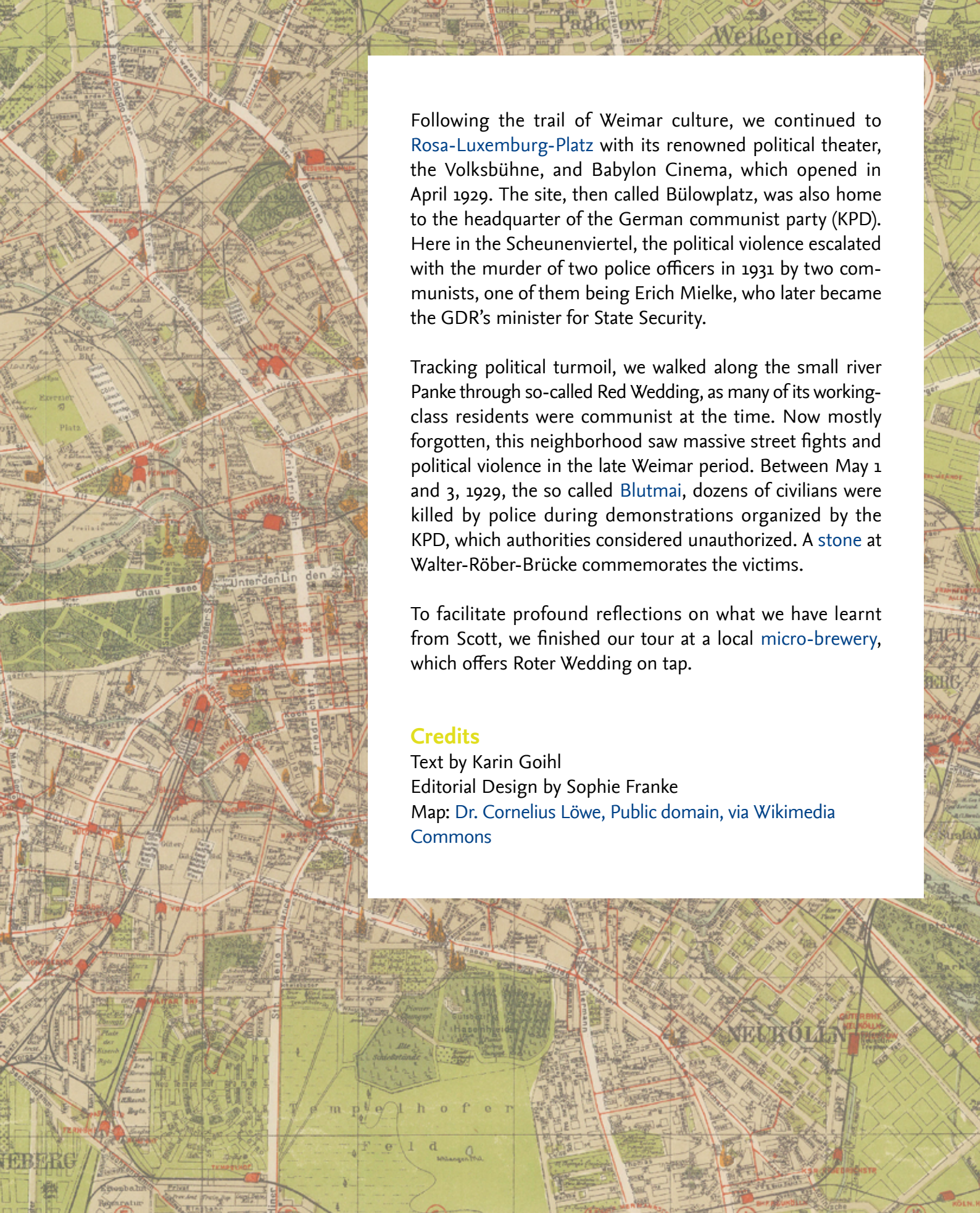
Historic city walk with Scott Krause

What better place to start a city walk tracing the *Cauldron of Weimar Modernity* through Berlin's Mitte and Wedding than at the newly-opened [Humboldt Forum](#). Curator, historian, and BP alumnus Scott Krause, Ph.D., began the tour by introducing us to this iconic location where Prussian kings once resided in the [Königliches Schloss](#) (aka Stadtschloss) and where the GDR later built the [Palast der Republik](#).

A stone's throw away, the former East German [Staatsratsgebäude](#) contains a famous spolium, the former Portal IV of the Berlin Palace. The events on November 9, 1918 with Karl Liebknecht proclaiming the socialist councils republic at the Lustgarten two hours after Philipp Scheidemann proclaimed a parliamentary republic at the Reichstag foreshadowed conflicts to come in the next decade.

Next stop Alex. During the Weimar years, Alex (as Berliners call Alexanderplatz) was a glamorous place with fancy shops, cafés, the Grand Hotel and government offices. One of them, a massive red brick structure conceptualized as Germany's Scotland Yard nicknamed the [Rote Burg](#), is now widely known again to the general public from the TV series *Berlin Babylon*.

In 1920, eight previously independent cities such as Charlottenburg and Neukölln were incorporated into [Groß-Berlin](#), a consequential development in Berlin's history, making it not only the third most populous city in the world with 3.8 million inhabitants (1.9 million in 1919) but also the second largest in terms of size with 878 km² (67 km² in 1919). Alex became the site of an extensive public transport project, which unified 16 previously independent transport companies and greatly extended Berlin's subway system. ►



Following the trail of Weimar culture, we continued to [Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz](#) with its renowned political theater, the Volksbühne, and Babylon Cinema, which opened in April 1929. The site, then called Bülowplatz, was also home to the headquarter of the German communist party (KPD). Here in the Scheunenviertel, the political violence escalated with the murder of two police officers in 1931 by two communists, one of them being Erich Mielke, who later became the GDR's minister for State Security.

Tracking political turmoil, we walked along the small river Panke through so-called Red Wedding, as many of its working-class residents were communist at the time. Now mostly forgotten, this neighborhood saw massive street fights and political violence in the late Weimar period. Between May 1 and 3, 1929, the so called [Blutmai](#), dozens of civilians were killed by police during demonstrations organized by the KPD, which authorities considered unauthorized. A [stone](#) at Walter-Röber-Brücke commemorates the victims.

To facilitate profound reflections on what we have learnt from Scott, we finished our tour at a local [micro-brewery](#), which offers Roter Wedding on tap.

Credits

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