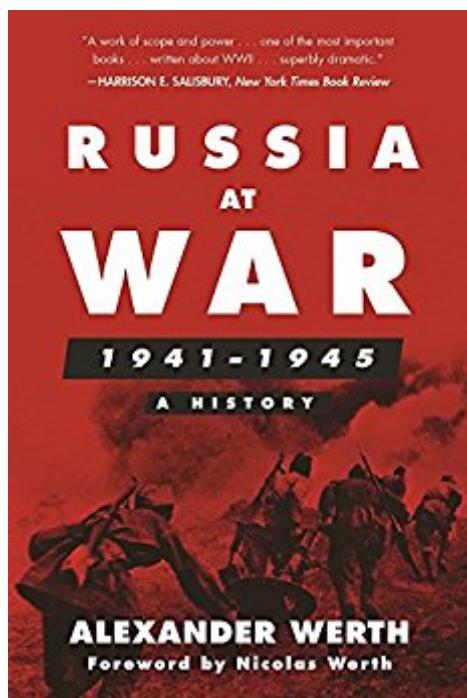


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# Russia At War, 1941–1945: A History



## **Synopsis**

In 1941, Russian-born British journalist Alexander Werth observed the unfolding of the Soviet-German conflict with his own eyes. What followed was the widely acclaimed book, *Russia at War*, first printed in 1964. At once a history of facts, a collection of interviews, and a document of the human condition, *Russia at War* is a stunning, modern classic that chronicles the savagery and struggles on Russian soil during the most incredible military conflict in modern history. As a behind-the-scenes eyewitness to the pivotal, shattering events as they occurred, Werth chronicles with vivid detail the hardships of everyday citizens, massive military operations, and the political movements toward diplomacy as the world tried to reckon with what they had created. Despite its sheer historical scope, Werth tells the story of a country at war in startlingly human terms, drawing from his daily interviews and conversations with generals, soldiers, peasants, and other working class civilians. The result is a unique and expansive work with immeasurable breadth and depth, built on lucid and engaging prose, that captures every aspect of a terrible moment in human history. Now newly updated with a foreword by Soviet historian Nicolas Werth, the son of Alexander Werth, this new edition of *Russia at War* continues to be indispensable World War II journalism and the definitive historical authority on the Soviet-German war.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

This is one of the best war books I have ever read.

Anyone interested in the Eastern Front during World War II should read this excellent book by Alexander Werth, a Russian-speaking BBC correspondent who was present in Russia for most of the war. It is important to note that this is NOT a military history of the campaign, with a comprehensive description of the various battles, troop movements, etc. Rather, the title says it all--this is an account of Russia at war. While Werth provides a rather episodic history of the war (briefly describing many key developments), this book chiefly consists of his many descriptions of his experiences on the ground in Russia during the war, based on his conversations with everyone from railway workers and common soldiers to Soviet generals to foreign diplomats, etc. While often based in Moscow, Werth also visited recent battlefields and recently-liberated towns, etc, where he sees first-hand the ravages of the war and the results of the German occupation. His interviews with many of the people in these towns--how they survived the war--are fascinating. I should also mention that while this book is very long--1000 pages--it is very readable and moreover is organized into chapters on particular topics, so you can skip any that sound too boring.

This account gives an interesting insight into the depths of suffering experienced by the Russian people during the war and the unmitigated brutality of the German army. It makes the revenge of the Russian army more understandable as well as their desire to be the first to enter Berlin. What continues to amaze is the enormous loss of life experienced by both armies as well as the civilian population. Numerous battle encounters are reviewed but the maps presented to show the army movements are confusing and very hard to understand. A greater number of maps in a more simplified format would have been helpful. Finally, Stalin was no saint, but many of his more heinous acts are simply glossed over (e.g. the purge of the Russian army officers prior to the start of the war, the destruction of the Russian peasant, the treatment of Poland, as well as the treatment of Russian prisoners of war upon their return to Russia. None-the-less, well worth reading!

This book by Alexander Werth is a complete package on Soviet WW2 history. I especially like the fact that the author was actually there during the war as a correspondent and saw first hand the

aftermath of the war on the Russian people. This he also conveys in his book with first hand accounts and interviews. Some other readers have commented that this history might be lacking since it was written so long ago especially before Russian release of information after the end of the Soviet Government. I do not find this to be absolutely true. The author does make note of Soviet statistics, but follows up with his own and near accurate numbers and makes no blind assumptions to data supplied by the Soviet government. I also liked the fact the book was written very well and did not read like "instructions" like so many histories of the Soviets of WW2. The book is full of human accounts and not just raw data. I also think that in reading this, I understand Russia better as a nation and have some grasp on Russian cultural process too. If you study WW2 history and want a more holistic education, I would suggest reading this book.

A monumental work. Werth's observations of, and interviews with, Russian leaders, decision-makers, generals and privates. Politics and battlefields. Given the constraints and censorship under which the author surely must have labored, he nevertheless tells a valuable story.

In an old radio program, I think it was "Duffy's Tavern", a character told a fantastic tale. Charlie, one of listeners, would say something like, "Oh come on! That's the craziest thing I ever heard. Do you expect us to believe that?" To which the character, I believe it was Baron Munchausen would reply, "Was you there, Charlie?" It was a signature line. The audience howled. Werth was there. I've been reading a lot about the Eastern front lately. Most books concerning the Eastern front, sooner or later, quote or cite Alexander Werth. Werth was born in St. Petersburg and lived there until he was 16. He spoke fluent Russian. From 1941 to 1948 he reported for the Sunday Times and the BBC. Other reviewers have compared Russia at War with Shirer's The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. It's a good comparison -- the books are similar. (Shirer praises the book.) Perhaps amateur historians in the West, such as myself, are beginning to realize that, to a large extent, against all odds, Russia defeated Nazi Germany. New information from Russian archives may kindle a new interest in an unknown, but fascinating story. Russia at War is a well written, first hand account of what happened on the Eastern front.

Am glad i purchased this. Am so happy it's in hardcover. The condition is not the greatest but for a book fifty years old, I'm not complaining at all. Wish they'd reprint this. They reprinted William Shirer's 'RISE AND FALL' on it's fiftieth anniversary. Why can't they reprint this classic also?

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