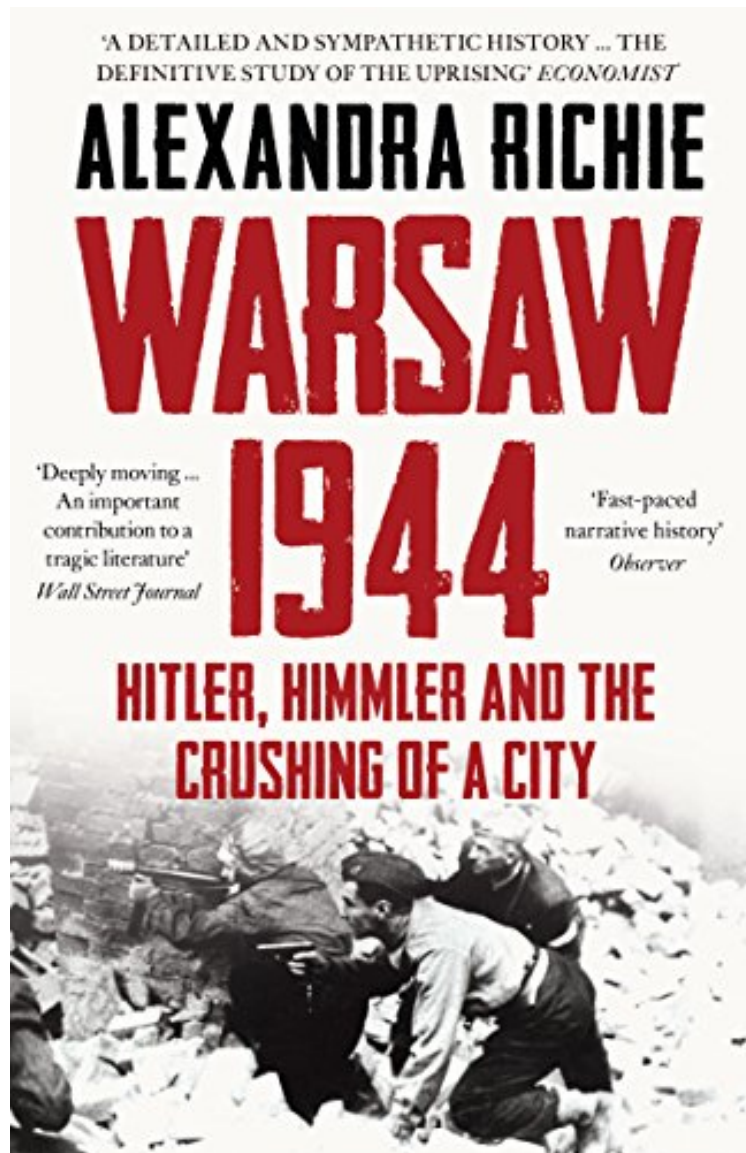


(Free download) Warsaw 1944: Hitler, Himmler and the Crushing of a City

Warsaw 1944: Hitler, Himmler and the Crushing of a City

Von Alexandra Richie

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Von Alexandra Richie : Warsaw 1944: Hitler, Himmler and the Crushing of a City before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Warsaw 1944: Hitler, Himmler and the Crushing of a City:

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"Uprising" by Alexandra RichieVon Dr. Gerhard VolzWith her book on the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 against German occupation Richie has created both a real masterpiece and a more than deserved literary monument to the heroic and

suffering people of Warsaw at that time. The book blends the overall military and political aspects and the pertinent decisions made by the key players on the Polish, German, Soviet and (Western) Allied sides. It contains a rich supply of highly vivid accounts laying out the details of the actual street fighting and suffering which makes for a fascinating and most gripping read. It is a page-turner, as well it must be, as it is very long indeed (650 pages). I spent my Christmas vacation reading it. Nevertheless, the book is in some respects wanting: first, it would probably win if it was simply streamlined down a bit to, say, 400 pages (instead of the 650 it actually has). Second, the book does not go into how the Poles succeeded in building up such a huge and highly effective fighting force that could resist such overwhelming power as the Germans employed to put down the uprising right under the nose of Gestapo, SD (the SS' secret police) and all other forms of control employed by the occupation forces and how they could subsequently endure for so long. What was it, that proved both the German and the Soviet expectation, when the fighting started, that any Polish resistance against the occupation force could last a few days at best, so utterly wrong? Third: how come it was possible for the Germans to put down the uprising district by district with the Poles living in the currently not attacked areas remaining ignorant of the brutal fighting going on next door and not launching relief-attacks from there? Why, finally, did Stalin choose to delay his advance on Warsaw so much if indeed he could easily have done otherwise, as the author contends -, as such a delay would slow him down considerably in his race to reach Berlin before the Western allies and to secure as much territory within Germany for the Red Army as possible. Wasn't that a more important goal for him than waiting for the Germans to crush the insurgency and then waiting another three months to give the Germans time to blow up the whole of Warsaw? Not a word about this riddle! There are indeed many more questions of this kind, but let's leave it at that. A few formalities require also mentioning: First, the title. I can't see why Himmler is mentioned in the subtitle while Stalin is not. Surely the latter's actions or, rather, failure to take any of the actions clearly available to him to aid the uprising, were more important to the overall course and outcome of the uprising than anything Himmler could or did decide? Also, I recommend including a short time-table somewhere in the book containing the dates of the main events mentioned. Second, the book contains a myriad of German expressions, most of which (though for non-obvious reasons not all) are printed in italics. The great majority of these contain some mistake (spelling, grammar, number, gender etc.). Just to illustrate what I mean (collected from only a few pages); p.606 Goldenenschwestern ought to be goldene Schwestern, p.619: Rumungsstabe = Rumungsstab, p. 621: Reich Agent (why not printed in italics?) = Reichsagent. The best thing of all, bordering on the ridiculous, is to be found on page 589 Frankfurt-am-Oder (sic!) One seriously wonders how with such limited German language abilities - she can claim to have written the authoritative or indeed any - book on a German topic, viz., on the history of Berlin, (Faust's metropolis, her one previously published book, hailed by many as just that - authoritative)! But this only by the way! While these mistakes, as such, don't matter much here, they throw a very negative light on the ability of the author to be self-critical in general, that is, to recognise where her limitations lie: why the hell did she not ask someone more familiar with German than herself to just check? Any otherwise totally unqualified - German native would have done! This puts into doubt the expertise she assumes as a matter of course in some other respects, too. One example is when she describes battles, rambling on like the 194th German infantry division was no match for the third tank battalion of the Belorussian front supported by the 34th artillery regiment and the like. One wonders from where she derives the competence for judgements like this? Does she even know the difference between, say, a regiment, a battalion and a division? After all, most civilians wouldn't know! Or how is she able to judge with certainty, e.g., that during the first fortnight of the German counter-offensive, while the Red Army would not have been capable of taking Warsaw, it could easily have provided air cover for the Polish troops inside the city? I wonder how anyone without training as general staff plus some actual battle experience can so confidently make statements like that and she seems unlikely to be so qualified unfortunately, the cover of the book is very sparse on the details of her curriculum and on her pertinent qualifications! The Economist, in its review (November 30th), criticizes the book for what it calls its polonocentrism. While this is certainly true, it is hard to fathom how a book whose subject is an event having taken place in Poland's capital could have escaped this reproval without missing its topic? Her sympathies, it is true, clearly lie with the insurgents. If this is a weakness, it is also a strength. After all, it is hard to imagine how she or anyone else, for that matter, could otherwise have managed to sift through all this material and compose it into such a vivid book. Finally, it may be in order to briefly draw the reader's attention to the fact that the German soldiers, too, were not the fighting robots they sometimes appear to be whose only legitimate destination was to be killed. Instead, they were just as much human beings husbands, family fathers, humans! as their Polish counterparts who like them - yearned to live and were desperately afraid of having to fight in that hell. And who as individuals - bore no more responsibility for the situation they were thrown into by powers not under their control than did their Polish adversaries. Maybe this is something the actual Polish fighters were more acutely aware of (e.g., when they cared for the German wounded) than the author at times seems to be. Finally, two (out of many) brief afterthoughts - not to the book but to the events described therein: First, how grateful mankind must be to the Czechs for having abstained from taking a similar action in Prague when the Red Army approached that city almost a year later! While this abstention may have made them look less heroic than their Polish counterparts, it not only saved them innumerable sufferings, it spared at least this European architectural marvel from similar destruction! Furthermore, to the extent this decision was informed by the

events in Warsaw, this would suggest that it is indeed possible sometimes - to draw useful lessons from events of the past. Second, the experiences described in the book once and for all put to rest an idea advocated by some Western pacifists during the Cold War: the idea, that, in case of an all-out Warsaw Pact military attack, a better alternative to defending itself militarily would be for the West to surrender and put up a civilian resistance (whatever exactly was meant by that term) against enemy forces thereafter instead. As the Polish Uprising clearly shows, such a civilian resistance would have stood no chance whatever against a well-equipped occupation force determined to use any means at its disposal! (Civilian resistance against an occupation force that has sufficient qualms to do so, is quite another matter, as was shown by the events around the fall of the Berlin wall!). I consider the book to deserve three-and-a-half stars out of five. Since this grade cannot be given, I will be generous and give it four!! 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A Great Book Von Alfred LUGERT This extremely well written book is an important historical, socio-cultural and political source. It is a reminder about brave citizens in Warsaw 72 years ago, fighting against brutal foreign aggression, for their community, honor and also for freedom for future generations. The book by Alexandra RICHIE is intensively researched. Her 'message' is very clear and easy to read. despite her detailed historical approach. A 5-star book! Alfred LUGERT, Vienna

Kurzbeschreibung As Antony Beevor cast new light on the Battle of Stalingrad, Alexandra Richie here unearths the traumatic story of one of the last major battles of World War II, in which the Poles fought off German troops, street by street, for sixty-three days. The Warsaw Uprising of 1944 was a shocking event in a hideous war. This is the first account to recall the tragedy from both German and Polish perspectives and asks why, when the war was nearly lost, Hitler and Himmler returned to Warsaw bent on murder, deportation, and destruction. For the only time in European history a capital was entirely razed. Hundreds were thrown from windows, burned alive, shot and trampled to death. 40,000 were murdered on 5th August the largest battlefield massacre of the war. Using the vast archive of her combatant father-in-law Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Alexandra Richie interweaves testimonies from all sides. Charting the crimes of the SS and then their final break-down of morale, Warsaw 1944 reveals how the Nazis had hoped that Allied divisions over Warsaw would lead to a Third World War, while Stalins refusal to help changed the fate of post-war Europe. But above all else Warsaw 1944 is the story of a citys unbreakable spirit, in the face of unspeakable barbarism. Pressestimmen 'Unusually well-placed to research and rehearse the story of that terrible event ... [Richie] offers a comprehensive narrative of the Polish experience' Max Hastings, Sunday Times 'Richie's detailed and sympathetic history ... draws heavily on private archives and recounts many unpublished stories. Such survivors' testimony make it the definitive study of the uprising' Economist 'Chronicled with astonishing precision by historian and Warsaw resident ... this grim and chilling book delivers exhaustive and unforgettable details of this gruesome chapter of World War II' Publishers Weekly 'A detailed, if harrowing, narrative history of the rising. Richie has mastered an immense range of material in both German and Polish ... There are powerful first person accounts ... impressively accomplished in terms of research and narrative ... Readers ... will gain an understanding of an extraordinary event' BBC History Magazine 'Fast-paced narrative history' Observer 'Most impressive. She explodes many myths, and is more balanced and judicious than some previous writers ... Richie brings it magnificently alive' Rodric Braithwaite, author of 'Afgansty' 'Beautifully written and judicious, this is by far the best account of the Warsaw Uprising to date' Christopher Szpilman 'Must be the most detailed and harrowing account of the uprising staged by the Polish Home Army ... ever published, and is likely to be of lasting value to scholars and general readers alike ... this extraordinarily detailed account of a two-month bloodbath creates a vast monument to an often neglected event' TLS 'A sympathetic portrait of the struggle waged by Polish insurgents and the civilians caught up in it ... As a detailed narrative of the brutal crushing of the uprising as seen through civilian eyes ... 'Warsaw 1944' is an important contribution to a tragic literature' Wall Street Journal Kurzbeschreibung As Antony Beevor cast new light on the Battle of Stalingrad, Alexandra Richie here unearths the traumatic story of one of the last major battles of World War II, in which the Poles fought off German troops, street by street, for sixty-three days. The Warsaw Uprising of 1944 was a shocking event in a hideous war. This is the first account to recall the tragedy from both German and Polish perspectives and asks why, when the war was nearly lost, Hitler and Himmler returned to Warsaw bent on murder, deportation, and destruction. For the only time in European history a capital was entirely razed. Hundreds were thrown from windows, burned alive, shot and trampled to death. 40,000 were murdered on 5th August the largest battlefield massacre of the war. Using the vast archive of her combatant father-in-law Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, Alexandra Richie interweaves testimonies from all sides. Charting the crimes of the SS and then their final break-down of morale, Warsaw 1944 reveals how the Nazis had hoped that Allied divisions over Warsaw would lead to a Third World War, while Stalins refusal to help changed the fate of post-war Europe. But above all else Warsaw 1944 is the story of a citys unbreakable spirit, in the face of unspeakable barbarism.