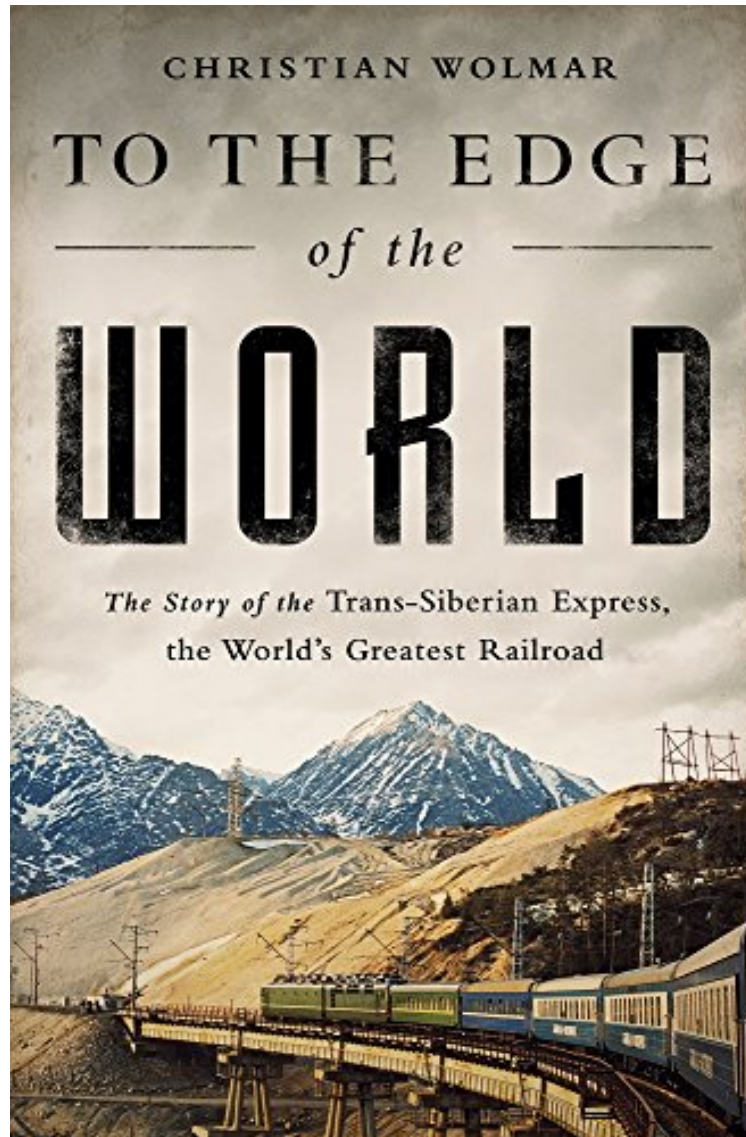


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To the Edge of the World: The Story of the Trans-Siberian Express, the World's Greatest Railroad

Christian Wolmar

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Christian Wolmar : To the Edge of the World: The Story of the Trans-Siberian Express, the World's Greatest Railroad before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To the Edge of the World: The Story of the Trans-Siberian Express, the World's Greatest Railroad:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must-Read for Anyone Interested in Trans-SiberianBy N. J. WilliamsIf you like well-written history, if you're interested at all in 20th-century Russia/Soviet Union, if you're into

trains the histories thereof, this book is for you. Thoroughly researched, elegantly written, measured fair in its judgments, "To the Edge of the World" was a fascinating account of the history of the Trans-Siberian Railway. I rode the length of the railway this summer and took this book along, although I didn't end up reading it till after I was home. I wish I'd read it beforehand (or during), as I would have had a better appreciation for the monumental achievement that it is and for just how much history, much of it grim, played out along this line. One more thing: I read the Kindle version. I wish I'd had the hard copy, as the maps images on Kindle were just not user-friendly. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. A fine general treatment By Cournot This is a great book describing much about the Trans-Siberian Railway. The best parts involve the political consequences of the project. I found the stuff about the Russo-Japanese war (and the railway's role in it) very interesting as were the parts about the Russian revolution. For my tastes there was too little about the technical problems of building the railway. But if you're interested in a sweeping overall view, this is a nice compromise. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. I enjoy history very much and revel in the minutia of ... By Delinda Sue I enjoy history very much and revel in the minutia of how things get done. So this book delivered on those points. I think I would have liked to know more about the actual construction of the railroad as well as the politics of the construction of the railroad. I guess history buffs are never satisfied. It is very apparent that public works projects always get bogged down in bureaucracy. Times haven't changed that much! I enjoyed reading this book and only the jumping around the timeline made it not 5 stars for me.

To the Edge of the World is an adventure in travel—full of extraordinary personalities, more than a century of explosive political, economic, and cultural events, and almost inconceivable feats of engineering. Christian Wolmar passionately recounts the improbable origins of the Trans-Siberian railroad, the vital artery for Russian expansion that spans almost 6,000 miles and seven time zones from Moscow to Vladivostok. The world's longest train route took a decade to build—in the face of punishing climates, rampant disease, scarcity of funds and materials, and widespread corruption. The line sprawls over a treacherous landmass that was previously populated only by disparate tribes and convicts serving out their terms in labor camps—where men were regularly starved, tortured, or mutilated for minor offenses. Once built, it led to the establishment of new cities and transformed the region's history. Exceeding all expectations, it became, according to Wolmar, “the best thing that ever happened to Siberia.” It was not all good news, however. The railroad was the cause of the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War, and played a vital—and at times bloody—role in the Russian Revolution and the subsequent Civil War. More positively, the Russians were able to resist the Nazi invasion during the Second World War as new routes enabled whole industries to be sent east. Siberia, previously a lost and distant region, became an inextricable part of Russia's cultural identity. And what began as one meandering, single-track line is now, arguably, the world's most important railroad.

“Overall, however, the message of this absorbing book is convincing. Its ecological cost—including permanent damage to the fragile permafrost—may lead some readers to question whether the Trans-Siberian was truly the “best thing that ever happened to Siberia,” as Mr. Wolmar suggests. But he is surely right to say that its creation helped to shape the destiny of Russia and with it, that of Europe and the modern world.” —Wall Street Journal “If the world's railways have a laureate, it is surely Christian Wolmar. Don't let his keen interest in track, specs, and rolling stock put you off — railroads are not dull. For this seasoned transportation maven and author — he has covered transport for major British newspapers and has written several excellent works of rail history including “Blood, Iron and Gold” — railroads are not only engineering marvels, they are also social and political acts. Nowhere was this more the case than the building of the Trans-Siberian railway, the subject of Wolmar's excellent new account, ‘To the Edge of the World.’... Wolmar misses no detail as he outlines station design, employment practices, and other aspects of the rail business... You can take the Trans-Siberian today, but be sure to pack Wolmar's book if you do.” —Boston Globe