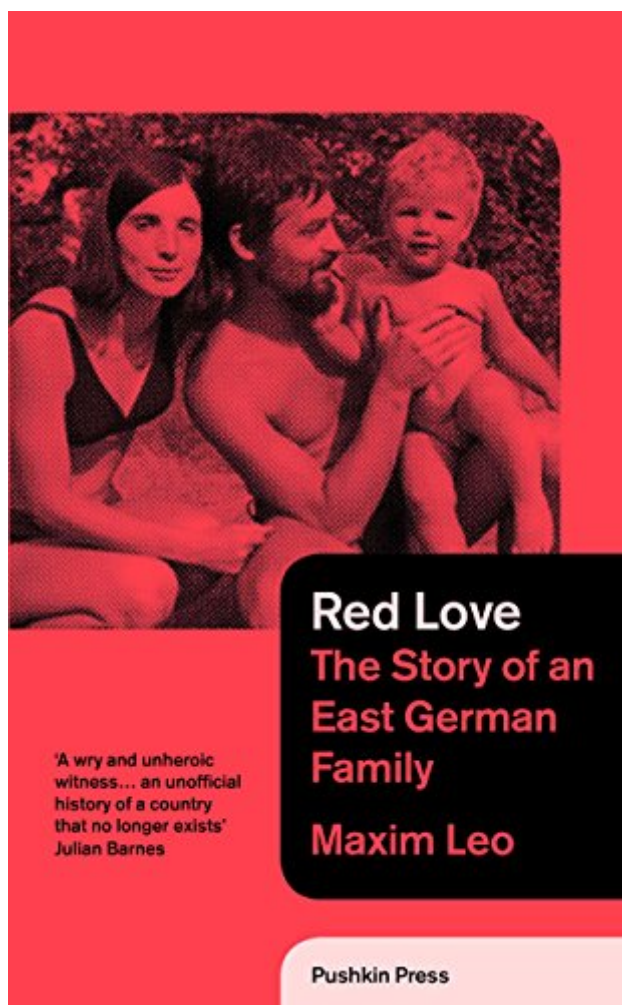


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# Red Love: The Story Of An East German Family



## Synopsis

Now, married with two children and the Wall a distant memory, Maxim decides to find the answers to the questions he couldn't ask. Why did his parents, once passionately in love, grow apart? Why did his father become so angry, and his mother quit her career in journalism? And why did his grandfather Gerhard, the Socialist war hero, turn into a stranger? The story he unearths is, like his country's past, one of hopes, lies, cruelties, betrayals but also love. In *Red Love* he captures, with warmth and unflinching honesty, why so many dreamed the GDR would be a new world and why, in the end, it fell apart. Growing up in East Berlin, Maxim Leo knew not to ask questions. All he knew was that his rebellious parents, Wolf and Anne, with their dyed hair, leather jackets and insistence he call them by their first names, were a bit embarrassing. That there were some places you couldn't play; certain things you didn't say.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Maxim Leo is editor of the *Berliner Zeitung*. He was born in East Berlin in 1970, in the middle of the GDR's short life. This memoir covers more than those four decades. It takes us back to the eve of the First World War to the farm of his greatgreatgrandfather. We pass through the

generations – his grandfather Werner and then his own father, Wolf. He traces maternal ancestors to Dagobert and Wilhelm, then Gerhard and then his daughter and Maxim's mother, Anne. To recover them the book uses published memoirs, unpublished diaries, interviews and even Stasi files. These people certainly lived through interesting times. The book is certainly readable as you would expect from an established journalist. Some of the memories – I suspect are, if not invented, then embellished. However, there are bigger issues. Firstly, where are the women? Wolf was brought up entirely by his mother, Sigrid, who receives just a page or two. She fares better than Gerhard's wife, Norah – who barely gets a mention. Anne is discussed almost entirely through her relationship with her father and his alter ego, the East German state. Secondly, as Maxim does admit, his parents were more privileged than most East Germans, his family not typical. When Anne resigns from her magazine she is funded to do a doctorate on Spanish trade unionism. It is painfully ironic that when Maxim is rejected for the Abitur, his mother is utterly distressed because her son is fated to be a worker. In Maxim's East Germany we notice the working class but fleetingly – sleep walking their way to the factories with pale faces and distant eyes. Thank God for the intelligentsia!! The author retails familiar anecdotes [true/false/exaggerated?

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