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Soviet Ghosts: The Soviet Union Abandoned: A Communist Empire In Decay



Synopsis

Only the most intrepid urban explorers cross the tattered ruins of the old iron curtain to endure the excessive bureaucracy, military paranoia and freezing winds of the East to hunt for the ghosts of an empire. Rebecca Litchfield is one who couldn't resist the haunting allure of the ruins of the Soviet Union. Time and again she risked radiation exposure, experienced arrest and interrogation, and was accused of espionage while collecting the stunning photography in *Soviet Ghosts*. Join her on an adventure through the ruins of soviet bloc, never before seen by western eyes. The emotional affect of this poetic collection will keep you coming back for more, while a series of expert articles offer in-depth analysis of the historical context. Contemplate the uncanny and disturbing emotional power of the imagery. Discover the story of the rise and fall of the USSR, the empire whose ghost continues to haunt Europe even today... Features—• A breathtaking collection of images from Pripyat, Chernobyl—• Stunning imagery of a vast, ruined Bulgarian communist monument.—• A road trip through the ruined abandonment in East Germany, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Croatia and Russia featuring decaying hospitals, military barracks, prisons, spy stations and sports halls and more. Photographer Rebecca Litchfield captures many abandoned locations, which were either part of the Soviet Union or occupied satellite states during this period of history, including forgotten towns, factories, prisons, schools, monuments, hospitals, theatres, military complexes, asylums & death camps across the former communist states. These photographs deliver a compelling narrative of both moral bankruptcy and flawed ideology. Featuring stunning imagery throughout, this compelling road-trip through the old USSR, breathes new life into these forgotten places, finding both beauty and meaning in their post-apocalyptic decay. Extended essays by Tristi Brownett, Neill Cockwill and Professor Owen Evans, offer considerable contextual depth to the locations imbuing them with a wealth of connection and wonder. By virtue of its holistic approach, the book also explores how and why these once thriving communities became abandoned, whether by natural disaster, man-made catastrophe or simply through the march of time.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a disappointing book in two ways. Firstly the written part of the book is art book luvey stuff, often historically inaccurate and not at all detailed in its history of soviet architecture as proletariat art. I know this a stereotype of the writing between the pictures of 'art' books but it would be nice to have something more academic. Still it is the photos that make you buy the book- I think some were featured in the magazine 'The Week' not long ago. And it is the range and choice of buildings that disappoints me the most. Firstly about half of the buildings featured are pre soviet, many 19th century buildings which just happen to have been left empty after Soviet military departure (a common theme of the book). So they are hardly Soviet ghosts at all. As the caption points out at one point some are ghosts of three Reichs before the Russians came in...Among the later buildings some, indeed, are magnificent Soviet follies, some well worth preserving. I often stay in Bled at Tito's old palace, well preserved as an hotel. I have had the rooms used by Nkrumah, Castro and other tyrants. In the old dining hall there is a soviet style mural of Tito's achievements. And yet the manager points out how Slovene artists had cleverly incorporated Slovene national symbols and emblems..and these were people who had waited 1200 years for independence! However many of the buildings selected as simply military establishments left to decay after the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War. Some of these in the Baltic states involved the photographer in long and even dangerous journeys..say to old bases or radar stations. I could have saved her a great deal of trouble. She could have come to Scotland and found exactly the same post Cold War abandonment.

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