



Exit into History: A Journey Through the New Eastern Europe

By Eva Hoffman

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In this arresting, intimate narrative journey, award-winning Eva Hoffman returns to her Polish homeland and five other countries—Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and the two nations of the former Czechoslovakia—historically transformed by the demise of Communism. The result is the penetrating personal odyssey across the “other Europe” and a vivid portrayal of a landscape in the midst of change. Hoffman combines the wise perspective of an outsider and the passionate concern of a native daughter to illuminate the forces informing the region’s complex politics as she captures the texture of everyday life in a world in flux.

“Indispensable for anyone who wants to seriously come to grips with the experience of Eastern Europe.”—*The Cleveland Plain Dealer*

“Complex and full of the unexpected . . . Hoffman earns our trust as an observer.”—Tina Rosenberg, *New York Newsday*

“Written with incredible literary talent and intellectual soundness . . . An indispensable clue for anyone who is keen to understand how the new Europe is emerging from the debris of the Cold War period.”—Ryszard Kapuscinski

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Hoffman (Lost in Translation) recounts her travels across Eastern Europe following the fall of communism. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

Hoffman, who emigrated from Poland to Canada when she was 13--an experience she recounted in her memoir, *Lost in Translation* (LJ 1/89)--returned to her homeland in 1989 to witness "history in the making" in Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and the splintering Czechoslovakia. She talks with citizens from all walks of life (from intellectuals to workers to dissidents-cum-leaders), and her observations are fresh and thoughtful. Like Andrew Nagorski's *Birth of Freedom* (LJ 9/1/93), Hoffman's book will most likely whet the appetites of readers new to Eastern Europe, while her observations on historical events will also satisfy readers familiar with the region. Unlike Nagorski, Hoffman is more introspective and tentative, making this much more an intellectually stimulating personal journey than a journalistic account. Recommended.

- *Joseph Parsons, Columbia Coll., Chicago*

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From [Booklist](#)

The author, an American who left Poland at age 13, is a sympathetic visitor to the countries she describes: Poland, Czechoslovakia (now, of course, split into two separate nations), Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. Hoffman is both hopeful about the prospects for democracy and nostalgic for the warmth that characterized the struggle there. Back in New York, she finds herself wishing that the new Europe would pioneer a "third way" between the abuses of two diametrically opposed economic systems. Her insights and optimism risk sounding already dated in the present climate of retrenchment and unease. Ultimately, this is an unfinished story, one of the many first-person accounts of the world in transition. It portrays people taking in stride one of the most remarkable transformations of this century. Through emotionally vivid, pictorial writing informed by historical perspective, the author guides the reader to a comparison of the different textures of life in what the former Soviet Union at one time referred to as the "hostile fraternal nations." Especially interesting are Hoffman's encounters with her acquaintances in Poland, who share a Jewish perspective on anti-Semitism in the new Europe. *Anne Gendler*

Users Review

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