



Lost in Transition: Ethnographies of Everyday Life after Communism

Kristen Ghodsee

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Lost in Transition tells of ordinary lives upended by the collapse of communism. Through ethnographic essays and short stories based on her experiences with Eastern Europe between 1989 and 2009, Kristen Ghodsee explains why it is that so many Eastern Europeans are nostalgic for the communist past. Ghodsee uses Bulgaria, the Eastern European nation where she has spent the most time, as a lens for exploring the broader transition from communism to democracy. She locates the growing nostalgia for the communist era in the disastrous, disorienting way that the transition was handled. The privatization process was contested and chaotic. A few well-connected foreigners and a new local class of oligarchs and criminals used the uncertainty of the transition process to take formerly state-owned assets for themselves. Ordinary people inevitably felt that they had been robbed. Many people lost their jobs just as the state social-support system disappeared. *Lost in Transition* portrays one of the most dramatic upheavals in modern history by describing the ways that it interrupted the rhythms of everyday lives, leaving confusion, frustration, and insecurity in its wake.

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