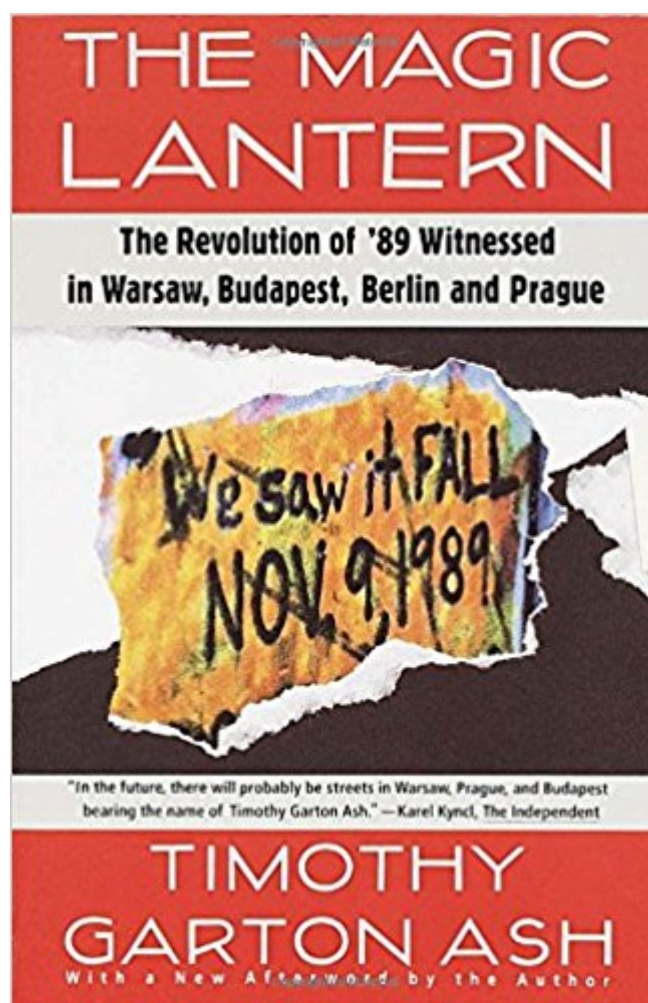


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The Magic Lantern: The Revolution Of '89 Witnessed In Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, And Prague



Synopsis

The Magic Lantern is one of those rare books that define a historic moment, written by a brilliant witness who was also a participant in epochal events. Whether covering Poland's first free parliamentary elections -- in which Solidarity found itself in the position of trying to limit the scope of its victory -- or sitting in at the meetings of an unlikely coalition of bohemian intellectuals and Catholic clerics orchestrating the liberation of Czechoslovakia, Garton Ash writes with enormous sympathy and power.

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Customer Reviews

"[Garton Ash's] own involvement in these events, intellectual and emotional, is of such intensity that he can speak...from the inside as well as from the outside. Yet the sense of historic dimension...is never lost. And the quality of the writing places it clearly in the category of good literature." --

George KennanThe Magic Lantern is one of those rare books that define a historic moment, written by a brilliant witness who was also a participant in epochal events. Whether covering Poland's first free parliamentary elections -- in which Solidarity found itself in the position of trying to limit the scope of its victory -- or sitting in at the meetings of an unlikely coalition of bohemian intellectuals and Catholic clerics orchestrating the liberation of Czechoslovakia, Garton Ash writes with enormous sympathy and power. In this book -- now with a new Afterword by the author -- Garton Ash creates a stunningly evocative portrait of the revolutions that swept Communism from Eastern Europe in 1989 and whose after-effects will resonate for years to come. "Along with the historian's

long view, Gatton Ash has an eye and an ear for the telling detail." -- Washington Post Book World

"A wonderful combination of first-class reporting, brilliant political analysis and reflection."--The New York Times Book Review

This book is a must read for all students studying the Cold War. The literature I read before, including the ones I read when I was studying the Cold War at Yale, was cold and emotionless. This book makes you understand and examine more closely the states of mind of people who went through the event in their daily lives, instead of just listing all the events and dates out.

It's dated -- written in the spring of 1990 -- but it's great first-hand coverage of the events of 1989 in Warsaw, Budapest, E. Berlin, and Prague. The Prague narrative is the best, as you see how a group of artists and dissidents went from discussing protest actions to discovering, somewhat to their own amazement, that the government was peacefully falling into their hands.

Ash is like a fly on the wall during all of the revolutions in Eastern Europe. I have no idea how he managed to be present at crucial planning meetings and to be a witness to events, but I have enjoyed reading his book!

I've never read anything quite like this. The author was present in several eastern European countries for the fall of the iron curtain and the ad hoc formation of new governments. He gives the flavor of the crowds, the leaders, the rooms in which they met, the fear and exhilaration, as well as the practical problems, the arguments and solutions offered. It's amazing journalism about an amazing time, and especially interesting perhaps now, as Russia flexes itself again.

Reading this book, you feel history come alive as never before. The writing itself is kind of journalistic, which is not my favorite style (I much prefer the literary masters), but it works. It was definitely a great time to be alive in Eastern Europe.

A journalistic account of few facts of 1989. When I bought the book I hoped in a history of 1989 revolutions but it is far from being exhaustive. The description of the events leading to the fall of Berlin wall was too short. A chapter of the event in USSR between 1985 and 1989 would have been necessary to understand what happened.

Great snapshot of history of eastern Europe.

This book was not particularly well written, and while it does include some interesting information about the 1989-90 revolutions it is too much from the "I was there" school of writing.

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