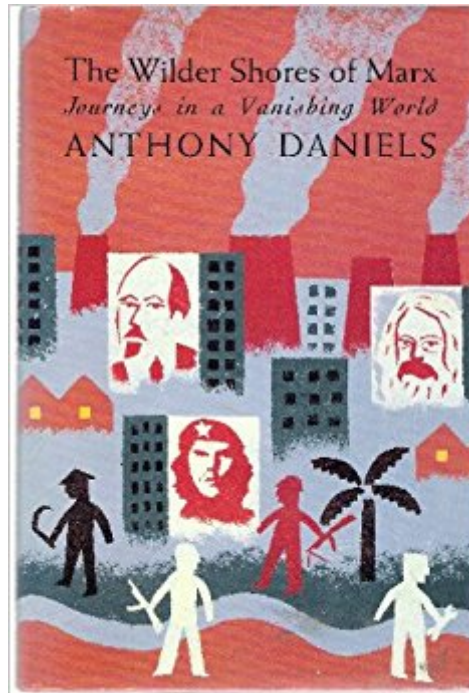


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The Wilder Shores Of Marx: Journeys In A Vanishing World



Synopsis

The author, whose father was a member of the Communist Party, decided to travel to five countries that are still avowedly Marxist. His journeyings took him to three continents and have produced a book that is both travel literature and a commentary on Marxist politics.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #3,523,401 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in Books > Travel > Asia > North Korea #48 in Books > Travel > Middle East > Yemen #120 in Books > Travel > Europe > Romania & Moldova

Customer Reviews

After reading this I put it out on loan to a friend; it's just too good to be left unshared. Anthony Daniels' (better known by his pen name Theodore Dalrymple) brilliant prose--which had me laughing several times--is paired with his incredible adventures to countries which, when all others were fleeing communism, had chosen to steer into the skid and double down on the brutal ideology. Nobody does a better job of finding the big picture in little situations (or in big ones), or finding misanthropically/curmudgeonly humorous ways to describe his encounters. The point of view is not entirely unnuanced, however--he is able to appreciate the tradeoff (however minor) of the existential simplicity and the absence of commercialism in these communist countries, and presents a relatively balanced view. PS I had the good fortune to order a used copy from the UK which was autographed and dedicated by Daniels himself.

The description of the North Korean department store alone is worth whatever you have to pay to secure this gem. But there's far more. Daniels is a prose artist, and here he beautifully illustrates the vicious ironies inherent in socialism.

This book, published just as much of the established communist bloc was collapsing, gives a valuable insight into the absurdities and hypocrisies of Marxist regimes. The lack of freedom, the drab monotony, the deathly sapping of life these regimes have on their inhabitants are clearly delineated by Dalrymple who visits a range of countries where the Marxist experiment has been tried, and found severely wanting. Highlights include a visit to a North Korea department store: fascinating in its depiction of a socio-economic system that has long taken leave of basic human needs and occupies a surreal hyper-reality well along the 'wilder shores of Marx'. Those brave pioneers of the Russian revolution, not to mention Marx himself, have a lot to answer for.

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