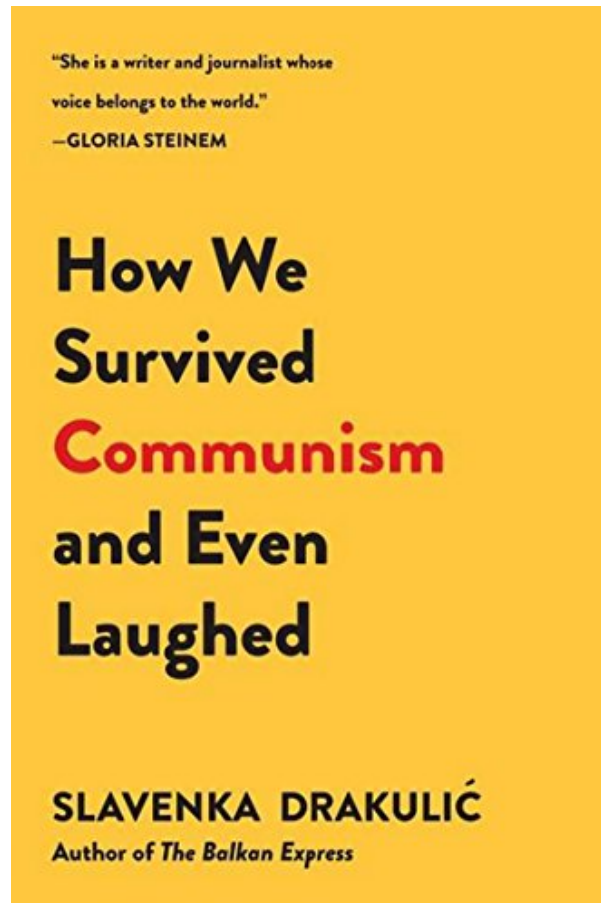


# HOW WE SURVIVED COMMUNISM & EVEN LAUGHED BY SLAVENKA DRAKULIĆ



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voice belongs to the world."

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**How We  
Survived  
Communism  
and Even  
Laughed**

**SLAVENKA DRAKULIĆ**

*Author of **The Balkan Express***

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From Library Journal

Drakulic's fine collection of essays draws strength from her keen powers of observation and sensitivity to her readers' interests. Her achievement is to depict the starkly common identity of everyday life in socialist Eastern Europe before its unlamented loss becomes irretrievable. It is a world in which party authority can create the "sudden invisibility" for an offending journalist, where public buildings share a "shabbiness and color of sepia," and one that makes the post office an impenetrable "institution of power." The essays are also about people, about the obsessive "communist eye" (*italics original*) disturbed by the injustice of New York's homeless yet neurotically envious of those wearing fur coats at home. The tragic irony lies in the book's title. Hoarding material objects enabled people "to survive communism," but hoarding wartime memories and the inability to "let the dead be dead" may destroy the author's native Yugoslavia. Recommended for all public and academic libraries.

- Zachary T. Irwin, Pennsylvania State Univ.-Erie  
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#### Review

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“Not only the first ever grassroots feminist critique of communism, it’s one of our first glimpses into real peoples’ lives in pre-revolutionary Eastern Europe. My world is twice as large as it was before I read this book.... [Drakulic] is a brave, funny, wise and wonderfully gifted writer.” (New York Times-bestselling author Barbara Ehrenreich)

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This essay collection from renowned journalist and novelist Slavenka Drakulic, which quickly became a modern (and feminist) classic, draws back the Iron Curtain for a glimpse at the lives of Eastern European women under Communist regimes. Provocative, often witty, and always intensely personal, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* cracks open a paradoxical world that through its rejection of capitalism and commoditization ends up fetishizing both.

Examining the relationship between material goods and expressions of happiness and individuality in a society where even bananas were an alien luxury, Drakulic homes in on the eradication of female identity, drawing on her own experiences as well as broader cultural observations. Enforced communal housing that allowed for little privacy, the banishment of many time-saving devices, and a focus on manual labor left no room for such bourgeois affectations as cosmetics or clothes, but Drakulic's remarkable exploration of the reality behind the rhetoric reveals that women still went to desperate lengths to feel "feminine."

*How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* also chronicles the lingering consequences of such regimes. The Berlin Wall may have fallen, but Drakulic's power pieces testify that ideology cannot be dismantled so quickly; a lifetime lived in fear cannot be so easily forgotten.

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## Features

- Great product!

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Sometimes one gets the impression that the author derives pleasure from painting a picture that was never that bad in old Yugosll

By Lidija

I don't think this book is that well written. Sometimes one gets the impression that the author derives pleasure from painting a picture that was never that bad in old Yugoslavia. Why insist on comparing countries that were so different even in those days? Why dwell on unsavoury details about Golub loo-paper

or the communist version of Tampaxes? They do nothing to help the reader understand the bygone era of so-called Communism. As for all the feminism, give us a break.....!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Thomas

Everything I expected it would be and fast shipping.

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Not entirely accurate

By Medina Medeni

In my opinion, Ms. Drakulic did exaggerate some things related to Yugoslavia (now abstract and gone). I guess this was done for the sake of keeping readers animated and interested in finishing the book. I do agree with the reader from Slovenia, as I was also born in the former Yugoslavia. Yes, we did occasionally have shortage of some items in the 80's, but not to the extent it was presented in this book. Not even close to her book "Cafe Europa", in terms of being informative about the Eastern Block (Warsaw Pact) countries, which by the way, Yugoslavia was never part of. This book will make readers, unfamiliar with the Eastern Europe, think just that.

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