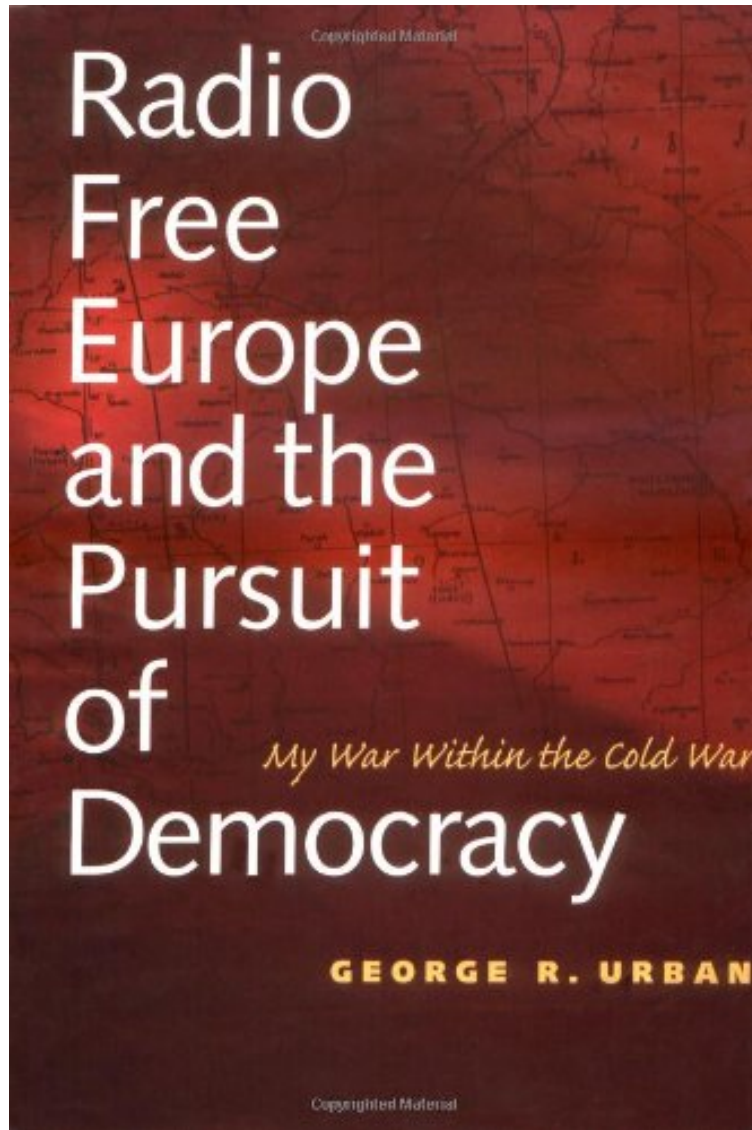


(Ebook pdf) Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy: My War Within the Cold War

Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy: My War Within the Cold War

George R. Urban

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George R. Urban : Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy: My War Within the Cold War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy: My War Within the Cold War:

From the 1950s to the aftermath of communist rule, two American-funded international broadcasting organizations - Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty - engaged in a prolonged battle of ideas. With persistence, the Radios fought against the spread of communist ideology. This book is a personal account of Cold War combat over the air waves, of psychological battles that succeeded in eroding the international appeal of the Soviet system and ultimately in helping to bring about the implosion of the Soviet empire. George R. Urban offers an insider's perspective on the history of Radio Free Europe, drawing on his service during the 1960s and his term as overall director in the 1980s. In detail Urban describes how the Radios promoted the case of liberal democracy and the free market economy for more than four decades, standing up against a Soviet system with its clandestine offshoots and fifth columns in all the countries of the west. Urban contends that a second opponent was less visible but more powerful: influential members of the American and west European left who believed the Soviet superpower should not be thwarted. The author explores the often controversial strategies and tactics employed by the staff and administrators of the Radios, shed light on their role in the tragic 1956 Hungarian Revolution, examines the ideas and convictions of key figures, and reveals how communism was intellectually unmasked in a psychological contests that also made possible reconciliation between nations and individuals.

From Library Journal Although it seldom led to shooting, the Cold War was nonetheless a hard-fought conflict that lasted over 40 years. Urban, a prolific author (e.g., *Stalinism*, 1986) and former editor of the British journal *Encounter*, has produced this memoir of his time as director of Radio Free Europe. In tandem with Radio Liberty, Radio Free Europe sought to promote Western values and causes to East European countries that fell under Communist domination after World War II. Urban's strident anticommunism comes through on nearly every page; he considers Stalin and his successors as tangible evidence of evil in the world and conducted his work at Radio Free Europe with nearly religious fervor. He is especially bitter toward Western intellectuals whom he deemed "soft" on communism. Urban is a remarkably articulate writer whose account of the struggles with the Soviets over the air waves provides fascinating reading. Recommended for all academic and large public libraries. —Edward Goedeken, Iowa State Univ. Lib., Ames Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s An unusual record of the Cold War which shows that the veterans of the intellectual war were often as brave and determined as the soldiers and spies. Urban was one of that glittering group of European intellectuals, some of them former Communists, who understood that the Cold War was as much an intellectual and moral struggle as a fight for power. Born in Hungary, he arrived in Britain after the end of the WW II, was associated with the magazine *Encounter* and the BBC European Service, and in the early 1980s became director of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty. Today, with the outcome of the ideological struggle a matter of history, it's useful to be reminded by Urban that the outcome was often in doubt--that there were times when it could be bad for one's career prospects to be known as an anti-Communist, when it was seriously asserted that the West was as bad as the Soviet Union, and when the prospect of the Soviet Union outstripping the West was widely canvassed. Urban found the "moral neutrality, and often direct hostility, of an opinion-making segment of the American intelligentsia . . . a more serious hindrance to our work" than anything the Soviets could contrive. The radio stations operated within tight constraints: They were not allowed to call for revolution in Soviet-dominated nations, for example (a reflection in part of a serious misjudgment during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, which Urban goes into at length). Nor could they call for the dismemberment of the Soviet empire, whatever its tensions and crimes. And some of the most distinguished critics of the Soviets were intermittently barred from the airwaves by the station's management, in gestures of "near- appeasement." Passionate, courageous, balanced in its assessments, Urban's book is filled with some wise and highly original reflections on the greatest conflict of our times. -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. If Radio Free Europe and the Pursuit of Democracy is not complete or definitive, it will prove indispensable for historians to come. George Urban ... deserves accolades for writing so engaging a book. -- Commentary, Gabriel Schoenfeld