

# The Life and the Death – The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceaușescu

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## Movie Reviews

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I went to see **The Autobiography of Nicolae Ceaușescu** fearing I was about to watch terrible things. It was not the case. The archive footage brought to light by Andrei Ujică has been turned into a very watchable montage: Ceaușescu, just as I knew him from television, from the walls of the classroom where I used to study, from the first pages of the school books, from the famous grids where you were not allowed to cover your pioneer uniform even in stone cold weather. The rest was easy to imagine, living large, the famous estates where he use to go hunting, things that would make some of our capitalists of today envious.

Andrei Ujică was more than honest when he said that this montage was something between a film and a documentary. Indeed, had it been a film, perhaps it would have also showed the dreadful things that took place in the communist prisons, the active members of the State Security doing field work or mothers telling their children not to repeat at school the political jokes they had heard at home and by all means not to talk about the fact that their grandparents were listening to Free Europe Radio.

Had it been a documentary, we would have learned how the will to control the other, to survive by compromise, moves on from the highest structures of the party to the last market stand, we would have heard a story about the black market capitalism, we would have seen the midwives sticking knitting needles or the end of a toothbrush into unwanted children or we would have seen the handicapped, malnourished and dying children hidden from the eyes of the healthy society.



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We would have learned about the blatant lie, the rampant careerism, the rudeness, the greed and the betrayals reaching levels we could never surpass today, no matter how hard we tried. We would have found out about endurance through culture, about the bonds of friendships strengthened by cold, darkness and hunger, we would have learned about true friendships as tiny mystical dominions.

I have seen the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the bad, the terror and the loosening, concepts which today, in 2010, tell us a whole different story.

I have seen the life and the death.

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