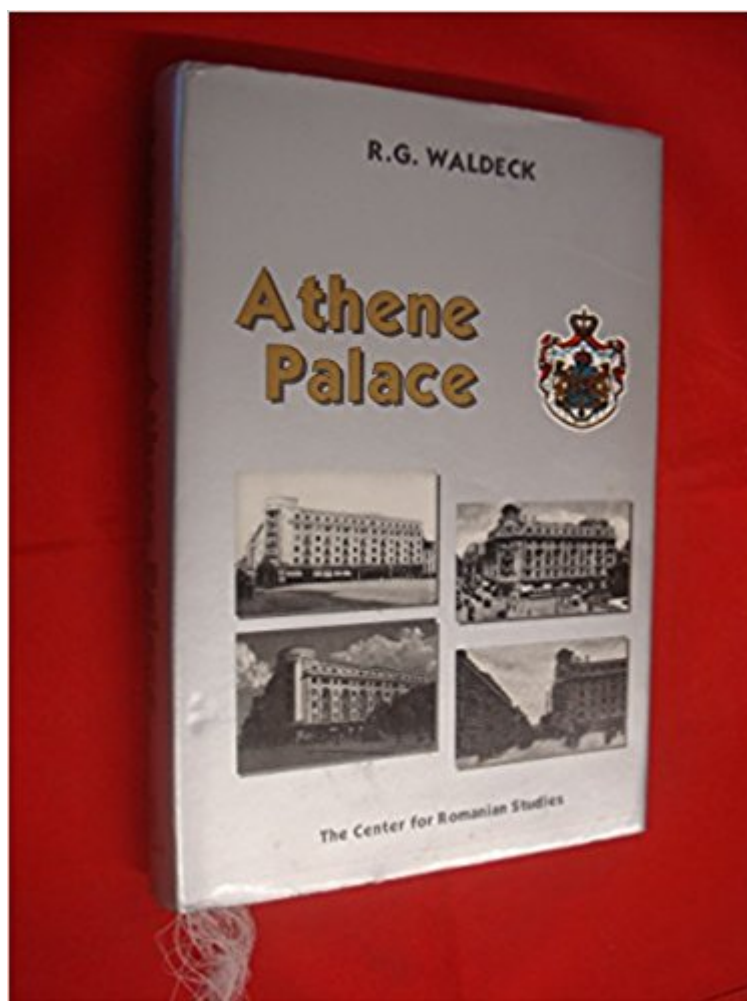


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# Athene Palace



## Synopsis

As European capitals fell during 1940 and 1941, there swarmed to the Athene Palace, Bucharest's "Grand Hotel," diplomats, generals, Gestapo spies, and demi-mondaines from all over Europe. Arriving at the crowded Athene Palace on the day Paris fell in 1940, the American journalist Rosa Goldschmidt Waldeck watched for the seven months following all the events and international figures that made Romania Europe's last sensational hotbed of intrigue and color.

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## Customer Reviews

As European capitals fell during 1940 and 1941, there swarmed to the Athene Palace, Bucharest's "Grand Hotel," diplomats, generals, Gestapo spies, and demi-mondaines from all over Europe. Arriving at the crowded Athene Palace on the day Paris fell in 1940, the American journalist Rosa Goldschmidt Waldeck watched for the seven months following all the events and international figures that made Romania Europe's last sensational hotbed of intrigue and color.

At first impression, it may seem that the "Athene Palace" is only about the situation in Romania at the beginning of World War II - therefore a very narrow subject. However, this book goes much further and deals with a much wider spectrum of WWII-related issues, especially due to Romania's strategic importance at that time - a time when Germany was, in essence, winning WWII and continued access to the country's oil resources was paramount to the German war effort. Therefore, the setting somewhat resembles that found in a Hollywood script - a place where the Axis and Allies rubbed shoulders and plotted against each other, in a country that itself was struggling with its

position between East (taking into account the Ottoman influence dating back centuries) and West (mainly Romania's great desire to be considered a civilized European nation). While not a scholarly endeavor, the "Athene Palace" may be compared to multi-part feature article, comprising the observations of an American journalist of German origin (a book along the lines of "Balkan Ghosts" which was also written by a journalist, Robert D. Kaplan). The background of the author is important as it provides perhaps a perfect mindset from which to interpret the events which took place in Bucharest during the early 1940s - a distinctly American viewpoint as seen through European eyes. Ms. Waldeck, although inexperienced with Romania prior to her arrival, is nonetheless an astute student and observer. The "Athene Palace" is not a book for the reader interested in WWII minutiae with respect to the Romanian corridor. Rather, the book presents an excellent feature story for those generally interested in Germany's role in the Balkans during WWII, as well as those interested in rediscovering a bit of what Romania once was. Ms. Waldeck's observations and understanding of the events taking place in Bucharest in the early 1940s as well as the psychology of the various players involved make for a wonderful read (as well as a great start for those interested in modern Romanian history).

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