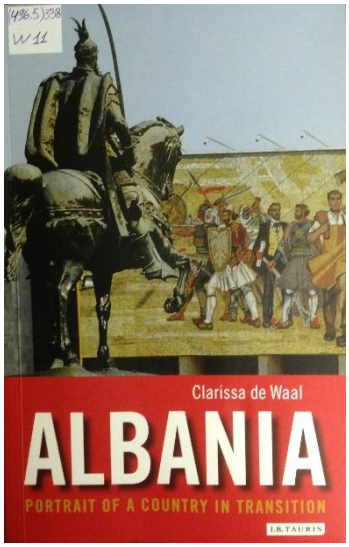
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Waal C.

Albania : portrait of a country in transition / Clarissa de Waal. - London : I.B. Tauris, 2014. - XV, 350 p. - ISBN 978-1-78076-484-9.

Catapulted from totalitarianism to free market capitalism in 1991, Albania emerged from half a century of isolation to find itself an anomaly in Europe: a third world country economically, but first world in terms of education, literature and the arts. How has Albania transformed since then? Clarissa de Waal here explains Albania's 'transition' from Communism via the experiences of a diverse range of families, highland villagers, urban elite and shanty dwellers - whose lives she has followed since 1992. De Waal shows that whilst the archaic world of customary law continues to pervade highland life, and squatters on state farmland live under constant threat of eviction, members of the ex-communist elite in Tirana embrace rentier capitalism. Albania, it seems, is a country wracked by contradictions.

With unparalleled insights into the region, this book is a unique history told from the perspective of the participants. It will inform and engage all those interested in Albania and south-east Europe, and prove essential reading for students and specialists.