



The Wretched of the Earth and Me

Minerva Davis

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A lively and poignant memoir, *The Wretched of the Earth and Me* tells of Minerva Davis's life as a young immigrant and Communist activist. In the wake of World War I and the death of her father, Minerva, known as Minnie, boards a ship with her mother and sisters for the life-changing journey from Romania to Canada. They settle in Toronto, where twelve year-old Minnie starts work in a paper box factory. With the Depression looming, her schooling is cut short by the need to earn her keep. A spirited teenager with a love of learning, Minnie finds new friends and a cause to fight for with the Young Communist League. Against the wishes of her family she throws herself into organising rallies, supporting striking workers and dodging the attentions of the Mounties. It's a hand-to-mouth, all-consuming existence. But as the original revolutionary dream of the Soviet Union becomes bloodied by Stalin's purges, can Minnie hold on to her ideals? First published at a time when the Communist superpowers were crumbling, *The Wretched of the Earth and Me* gives a clear voice to the real people behind the politics, those who lived through a turbulent yet hope-filled period of 20th-century history.

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