

From Ceausescu's Romania to Today's America

Dear Epoch VIP,

I'm Steve Ispas and I serve as the Northwest edition's general manager here at The Epoch Times.

As always, it's support and faith from readers like you that keeps me going every day, and I can't thank you enough for that. In return, I want to share with you the story of my family, and the story of why I'm committed to getting you the truth every week.

I grew up in Romania under the former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu—the “king of communism,” who was executed on Christmas Day in 1989. But before that day, life was bitter.

My grandfather belonged to a faction that opposed the communists who took over in Romania after World War II. As punishment, he was sent to a labor camp in Siberia and was a defeated man after he came back. My father, his son, was also blacklisted and forbidden to attend college.

I remember my father making the decision for all of us to leave Romania in order to look for a better life; we decided on the United States. He filled out all the paperwork and then waited, and waited. We would be denied nine times over the next five years.

The day before my 16th birthday, my father decided to protest in front of Ceausescu's motorcade. He did not tell us, so we wouldn't worry.

He took a day off from work, and that morning walked to a place where he knew the motorcade would pass in the morning. Once the motorcade approached, he stepped onto the street with a sign and a few words for the dictator.

“Let us go! Respect the Geneva Convention and approve our application to leave Romania!”

He was thrown in jail and told that he was lucky he was not shot on the spot. He was detained for a few days, where he had to sign a guarantee statement swearing not to protest like that again before they released him.

I did not see him that birthday, but his efforts seemed to have paid off in the end: After a month or so, we got a phone call from the emigration department saying that our paperwork had been approved. Nine months later, we were on our way to New York via Rome, Italy.

I still remember how amazed I was to walk the streets of Rome, as we were not allowed to travel anywhere when I was in Romania.

But what perhaps amazed me even more was when I began to see the media of the Free World romanticizing the concept of communism—the **very thing that my family had fought so hard to escape.**

Growing up in a communist country, I was fully aware of the fake news published daily by the communist propaganda organs. As time went on, I realized how the corruption of the media has extended beyond communist borders and how fake narratives have become front page news worldwide. Many true stories were being hidden away as the media cherry-picked facts to spin their own stories.

I was then very fortunate to come across The Epoch Times in 2004, when the Northern California edition was just about to be launched.

I gladly took the chance of working for a media that was focused on presenting the true stories at all costs—especially stories that exposed the crimes of communism, something that I was so aware of.

What motivates me every day is my desire to bring the truth to our readers regardless of the current hype or narrative, and to see the amazing appreciation from our readers. Though there are still challenges, I look forward to coming to the office every day and working with the absolutely amazing people who share in this mission to deliver the truth to you.

In Truth and Tradition,

Steve Ispas
The Epoch Times

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