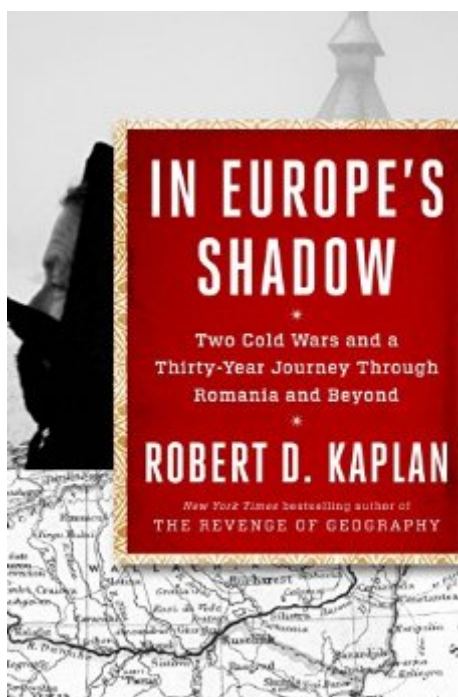


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# In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars And A Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania And Beyond



## Synopsis

From the New York Times bestselling author Robert D. Kaplan, named one of the world's Top 100 Global Thinkers by Foreign Policy magazine, comes a riveting journey through one of Europe's frontier countries and a potent examination of the forces that will determine Europe's fate in the postmodern age. Robert Kaplan first visited Romania in the 1970s, when he was a young journalist and the country was a bleak Communist backwater. It was one of the darkest corners of Europe, but few Westerners were paying attention. What ensued was a lifelong obsession with a critical, often overlooked country—a country that, today, is key to understanding the current threat that Russia poses to Europe. *In Europe's Shadow* is a vivid blend of memoir, travelogue, journalism, and history, a masterly work thirty years in the making—the story of a journalist coming of age, and a country struggling to do the same. Through the lens of one country, Kaplan examines larger questions of geography, imperialism, the role of fate in international relations, the Cold War, the Holocaust, and more. Here Kaplan illuminates the fusion of the Latin West and the Greek East that created Romania, the country that gave rise to Ion Antonescu, Hitler's chief foreign accomplice during World War II, and the country that was home to the most brutal strain of Communism under Nicolae Ceaușescu. Romania past and present are rendered in cinematic prose: the ashen faces of citizens waiting in bread lines in Cold War-era Bucharest; the barren Afghan Steppe, laid bare by centuries of foreign invasion; the grim labor camps of the Black Sea Canal; the majestic Gothic church spires of Transylvania and Maramureș. Kaplan finds himself in dialogue with the great thinkers of the past, and with the Romanians of today, the philosophers, priests, and politicians—those who struggle to keep the flame of humanism alive in the era of a resurgent Russia. Upon his return to Romania in 2013 and 2014, Kaplan found the country transformed yet again—now a traveler's destination shaped by Western tastes, yet still emerging from the long shadows of Hitler and Stalin. *In Europe's Shadow* is the story of an ideological and geographic frontier—and the book you must read in order to truly understand the crisis Europe faces, from Russia and from within. Praise for *In Europe's Shadow* [A] haunting yet ultimately optimistic examination of the human condition as found in Romania . . . Kaplan's account of the centuries leading up to the most turbulent of all—the twentieth—is both sweeping and replete with alluring detail. —Alison Smale, *The New York Times Book Review* This book reveals the confident, poetical Kaplan . . . but also a reflective, political Kaplan, seeking at times to submerge his gift for romantic generalization in respectful attention to the ideas of others. —Timothy Snyder, *The Washington Post* A serious yet impassioned survey of Romania . . . Kaplan is a regional geographer par excellence. —The Christian Science

Monitorâ œKaplan is one of Americaâ™s foremost writers on the region. . . . In a series of deep dives into the regionâ™s pastâ”Byzantine, Ottoman, Habsburg and Sovietâ”he finds parallels and echoes that help us understand the present.â•â”The Wall Street Journal âœKaplan moves seamlessly from sights, sounds, and conversations to the resonance of history.â•â”Foreign AffairsFrom the Hardcover edition.

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## Customer Reviews

The authorâ™s credentials are outstanding, but I found the book to be only mildly to my liking. In my opinion, It is more of a scholarly piece of work and relies on an academically inclined reader to enjoy the work. I did not like how the author kept me looking up words that I rarely encounter when a more commonly used word would advance the story just as well. I also did not enjoy having to look up personal backgrounds and other information that the author places into the book in a manner that assumes the reader is already familiar with the people and histories. Unfortunately, this work did not meet my personal objectives as a reader. But, I am glad that I read the book. My own family has its long ago roots in the lands studied in the book. Robert D. Kaplan, the author, is well-qualified to write about the geopolitical history, borders, and evolution of nationalities, cultures

and countries in the general area of Romania and surrounding lands. He is unquestionably an expert in this region. He has worked for thirty odd years as a foreign correspondent and holds credentials including visiting professor at the US Naval Academy and chief geopolitical analysts at Stratfor, a provider of security and international intel located in Austin, Texas. Kaplan pours his heart and a lot of experience into this book. Most Americans know very little about Romania and the Balkans and Carpathian region of Southeastern Europe. This book most definitely broadened my knowledge of the region, its nationalistic and tyrannical leaders, and its history and future potential. The writer will educate the reader who is willing to treat this manuscript more as a college course and less as a piece of casual reading. It is anything but casual.

I had previously read three of Kaplan's books *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, *An Empire Wilderness: Travels into America's Future* and *The Ends of the Earth: From Togo to Turkmenistan, from Iran to Cambodia, a Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy*. I found each to be informative and well-written. So, when the Vine Program offered me this work, which focused on an area that was a gaping lacuna in my geographical and historical knowledge, I had to say "Yes." Kaplan immediately drew me in with his description of his library: the well-thumbed fading paperbacks, full of notes from his youth. "Hardcovers are for the sedentary life. I have relatively few of those." Indeed, Kaplan is one of the most peripatetic of modern writers, with a penchant for the out of the way corners of the world, as the title to the last of his books named above implies. He further drew me in when he said that the first time that he crossed Yugoslavia by train was 1971, and the first time he traveled in Eastern Europe was 1973, precisely the same dates that I did both, though Kaplan lingered in the area MUCH longer, to the reader's benefit. When Kaplan, an aspiring journalist, was discharged from the Israeli Army in 1981, he saw certain areas of the world crowded with journalists; others virtually uncovered.

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