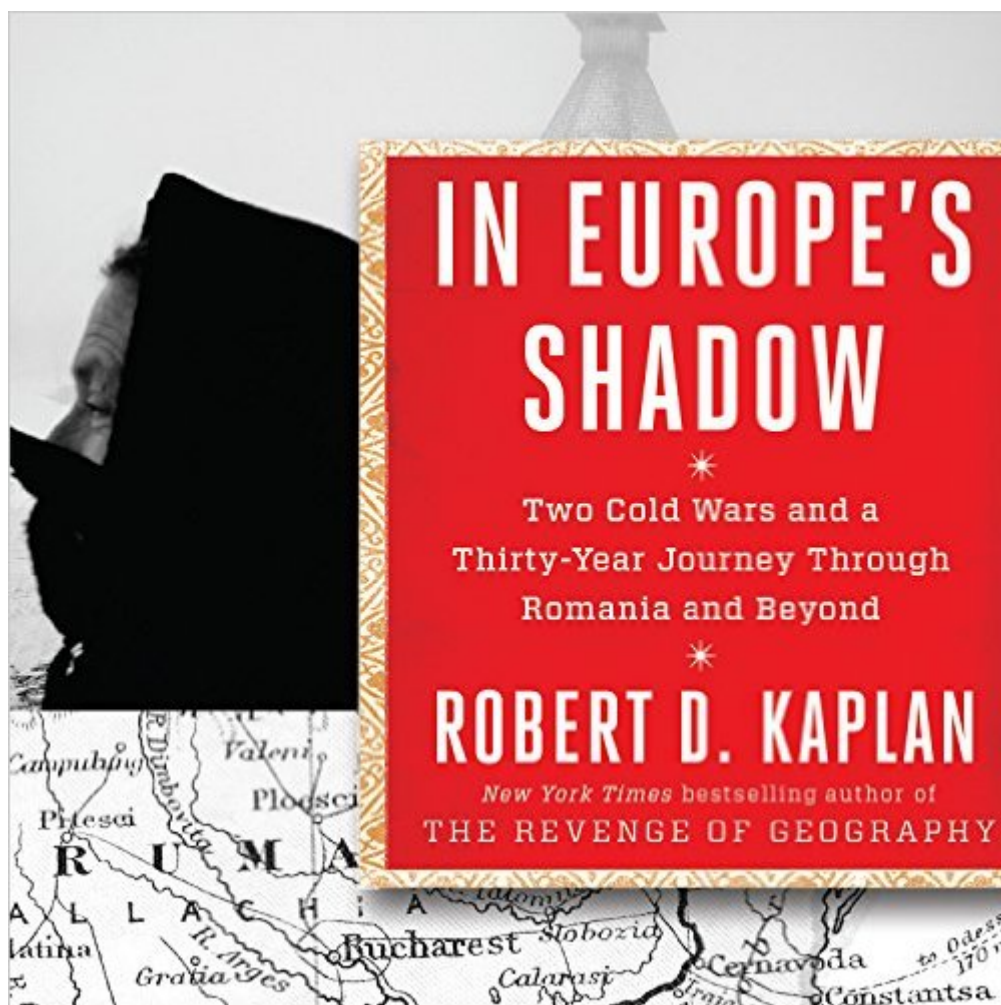


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In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars And A Thirty-Years Journey Through Romania And Beyond



Synopsis

Robert Kaplan first visited Romania in the 1970s, when he was a young journalist and Romania was a Communist backwater where "history had virtually stopped" since World War II. In Bucharest, Romania's capital, Kaplan discovered that few Westerners were reporting on the country—one of the darkest corners of Europe during the Cold War. In an intense and cinematic travelogue, Kaplan explores the history and culture of the only country in the West where the leading intellectuals have been right-wing, rather than left-wing; a country that gave rise to the dictator Ion Antonescu, Hitler's chief foreign accomplice during WWII; a country where the Latin West mixes with the Greek East, producing a fascinating fusion of cultures. *IN EUROPE'S SHADOW* is a deep and vivid immersion into one place, a country that is a metaphor for Europe's current challenge in confronting Vladimir Putin's Russia. With the brilliant, insightful Kaplan as our narrator and eyewitness, this book is a shorthand masterpiece about imperialism and a country critical to our understanding of the last century in Europe. Robert D. Kaplan is the author of 16 books on foreign affairs and travel translated into many languages, including *THE REVENGE OF GEOGRAPHY*; *Monsoon*; *Balkan Ghosts*; and *Warrior Politics*. He has been a foreign correspondent for *The Atlantic* for over three decades. In 2011, *Foreign Policy* magazine named Kaplan among the world's "100 Top Global Thinkers."

Book Information

Audio CD

Publisher: HighBridge Audio; Unabridged edition (February 2, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1681680629

ISBN-13: 978-1681680620

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.1 x 5.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (51 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,680,283 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #93 in [Books > History > Europe > Romania](#) #125 in [Books > Books on CD > History > Europe](#) #4809 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > European](#)

Customer Reviews

The author'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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