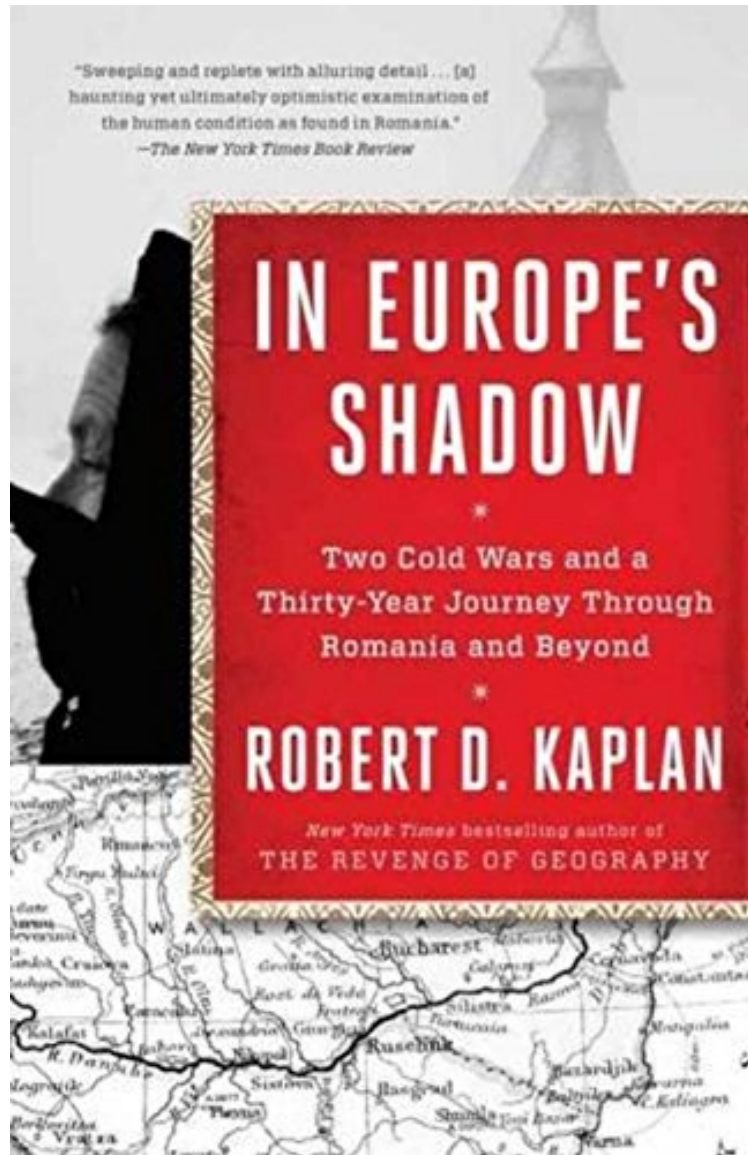


(Ebook pdf) In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond

In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond

Robert D. Kaplan

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Robert D. Kaplan : In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Deeply into Romania Its Environs, Past, Present FutureBy

Stephen N. Greenleaf When my wife accepted a position to teach in Bucharest, Romania, I went online to look for books on Romania, and at the top of the list I found Robert D. Kaplan's *In Europe's Shadow: Two Cold Wars and a Thirty-Year Journey Through Romania and Beyond* (2016). I hadn't known about it, but I certainly knew of Kaplan. I'd read his *The Coming Anarchy* (2000) and *Warrior Politics* (2001) and thought very highly of them both. I'd also read parts of *The Ends of the Earth* (2001) and *Monsoon* (2010). What a wonderful discovery! I dove in, and part way through I recommended it to my wife as we were running errands on our e-bike around Suzhou. "Do you know this guy?", she asked. "Yes, I've read his stuff. He's good. He's also written books about the Indian Ocean and India, and about China, Vietnam, and the South China Sea." "Is he following us?" "I don't know!" In checking the publication dates of *Monsoon* (2010) and *Asia's Cauldron* (March 2014), I determined that we were following him. Anyone acquainted with Kaplan won't be surprised at this. He must need a new 50-page passport every couple of years just based on the published accounts of his travels. (I wonder where he vacations?) No, we're just very lucky, especially with this book. We're especially fortunate to have this book because Kaplan hasn't just passed through Romania or considered as just another piece on the geopolitical chessboard. He's been traveling to Romania since the 1970's, and he's seen it transformed from a gray, Stalinist backwater, racked by poverty and fear, into a what is now a vibrant society that holds membership in the EU and NATO. Romania seems to have found a good place for itself. As Kaplan describes it: "History surely had not ended here, but it had for the moment become more benign." Kindle Locations 3916-3917. Kaplan displays a genuine affection for this nation, and this spurs his interest in its history and its present, as well as prompting him multiple visits to contemplate its unique place in the busy world of Eastern Europe. Kaplan first traveled to eastern Europe as a student in the early 1970s, and then he came a bit later to Romania as a young reporter. Trips back included a stint just after the Christmas Revolution in 1989 that toppled the hated Ceausescu regime and led to the summary trial and execution of Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife, Elena. His most recent trip back was in 2014, when he observed the changes that have occurred in Romania after it has mostly-completed the transition to democracy and a market economy. This long history of personal involvement allows Kaplan to include not only his trademark travel writing, history, and geopolitical analysis, but it also serves as a bit of a memoir. For instance, his observations and assessment of the brutality and waste of the Ceausescu regime prompted him to support the Iraq War, a judgment that he reports that he has come to regret. (A pointed reminder of the limits of historical analogy for decision-making.) As he notes, he didn't foresee the subsequent Sunni-Shia civil war that would break out after Saddam's demise. Romania is a fascinating country, and Kaplan's draws on the distant past, the recent past, and the present to create his portrait of this country. Romania is a Western outpost in eastern Europe. Romanian is a Romance language, closely related to Italian and Spanish (and, I'm thrilled to report, not very difficult to learn). Romania identifies with the West, yet the thread of culture passes via the Romanian Orthodox Church, anchored in the tradition of Byzantium and the cultural heritage of Orthodoxy. Also, the Ottoman, Russian, and Hapsburg empires have exerted influences on this land through which the Danube flows to reach the Black Sea. Kaplan explains that the intellectual class, including prominent figures that reached maturity in the 1930s, such as Mircea Eliade and E.M. Cioran, were attracted to the political Right, not the Left, unlike most western European intellectuals. Romania suffered the influence of the Iron Guard, a fascist movement that helped prompt Romania to ally with Hitler in the early period of war. Its authoritarian (but not truly fascist) leader, General Antonescu, both protected some Jews (Romanians) and helped ship others to the death camps. Romania committed over a half-million troops to Hitler's war against the Soviet Union. But before the end of the war, Antonescu led Romania to switch sides and aid the Soviets against the Nazi regime. All of this intrigue didn't do Antonescu much good. He was executed immediately after the war. Through Kaplan's efforts in ancient, medieval, and modern history, we obtain a sense of the complexities of this culture and its political fortunes. His tour of the country, as well as neighboring Moldova (also Romanian speaking) and a foray into Hungary (now under a regime administering a "diet of low-calorie Putinism") gives us a further historical perspective. But also, in the tradition of great travel writing, Kaplan provides an intense sense of the present. (Among the several travel writers he mentions, Patrick Leigh Fermor gets a special mention, "that craftsman of irreducible godlike essences whose every sentence belongs in a time capsule". Kindle Locations 732-734). I've now begun Fermor's *Between the Woods and the Water*--just the prompt that I needed to uncork this champaign of travel writing.) From churches and monasteries to castles and homes, we get an engrossing sense of these places and the people who inhabit them. When my wife and I travel in Romania, we'll consult my Kaplan as much as our Lonely Planet. In all, the publication date of this work (February 9, 2016) could not have been better timed or more welcome. Kaplan's complex layering of history, personal observation, and geopolitical analysis creates the perfect primer for anyone wanting to explore this fascinating nation and its environs. Or it's a treat for anyone who simply wants to enjoy the work of a master of observation and analysis. As Kaplan writes of Fermor, so I would of Kaplan: "to call him a mere travel writer is to diminish him." Id. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. there's a great review of travel memoirs about Romania By Customer It's about Romanian geography, history, culture, politics, geo-politics... Also a very personal travel memoir. Tucked in there, as if you could fit more into the same pages, there's a great review of travel memoirs about Romania, and a gloss over the history of Europe in the 20th Century. What Robert D. Kaplan brings out is the incredible diversity packed into a small country that is still working to discover itself and its place in

the mega-globalized world of today. For Romania to find itself, having fresh eyed perspective from the outside is essential, and Mr. Kaplan provides that. His book, in other words, may help outsiders understand Romania, and also helps Romanians understand Romania... But the best part, I think, and what stitches it all together is the very personal touch present throughout the book. The narrator describes not only what he sees but how he is touched and changed by what he's seeing, all painted onto a canvass of other past things he experienced or read - in short, a true intellectual journey, at once personal as it is universal in its reach and in its message. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Another illuminating gem from Kaplan. By Craig I've learned to turn to Kaplan for deepening my understanding of current geo-political realities by his illuminating comments and detailed descriptions of the past. I postponed reading *In Europe's Shadow* until I had first read *Balkan Ghosts*, his first examination of the Balkans with a special emphasis on Romania. I strongly recommend reading *Ghosts* first as doing so helped me put today's Romania in perspective. I was surprised by what I learned of Russia's current and on-going efforts at weakening Romania and other states that are on the West's border with Russia.

From the New York Times bestselling author Robert D. Kaplan, named one of the worlds Top 100 Global Thinkers by Foreign Policy magazine, comes a riveting journey through one of Europes frontier countries and a potent examination of the forces that will determine Europes 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, Hitlers chief foreign accomplice during World War II, and the country that was home to the most brutal strain of Communism under Nicolae Ceaucescu. Romania past and present are rendered in cinematic prose: the ashen faces of citizens waiting in bread lines in Cold War era Bucharest; the Brgan 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 Maramure. 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 travelers 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 . . . Kaplans account of the centuries leading up to the most turbulent of all the twentieths 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 Monitor* Kaplan is one of Americas foremost writers on the region. . . . In a series of deep dives into the regions past Byzantine, Ottoman, Habsburg and Soviet the finds parallels and echoes that help us understand the present. *The Wall Street Journal* Kaplan moves seamlessly from sights, sounds, and conversations to the resonance of history. *Foreign Affairs* From the Hardcover edition.

[A] haunting yet ultimately optimistic examination of the human condition as found in Romania . . . The author delves into the ancient roots of Romanias culture and religion. . . . [Robert D.] Kaplans account of the centuries leading up to the most turbulent of all the twentieths both sweeping and replete with alluring detail. . . . The rich characters who wander through these pages . . . dispense wisdom from book-lined homes, cafes, or chapels old and new. . . . Kaplans *Romania* offers lessons on the value of malleability, and what endures. Alison Smale, *The New York Times Book* 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. That tension between an aesthetic sense of wholeness and the intellectual acceptance of complexity is the real subject of the book, both as autobiography and as geopolitics. Timothy Snyder, *The Washington Post* A serious yet impassioned survey of Romania . . . [Kaplans] method is that of a foreign correspondent, firing off dispatches from the South China Sea to North Yemen to the darkest corners of Eastern Europe when it was still Iron Curtain country, and his approach has a Thucydidean texture: a gimlet-eyed realism as gathered by evidence, and guided by an understanding that the knee-jerk of history is self-interest. . . . Kaplan is a regional geographer par excellence undeniably, whatever you think of his conclusions a big-picture man. *The Christian Science Monitor* Kaplan is one of Americas foremost writers on the region. . . . In a series of deep dives into the regions past Byzantine, Ottoman, Habsburg and Soviet the finds parallels and echoes that help us

understand the present. The Wall Street Journal Kaplan moves seamlessly from sights, sounds, and conversations to the resonance of history. . . . In Kaplans hands, Romania emerges as no mere footnote, but as a historical and political pivot. Foreign Affairs Kaplans work exemplifies rare intellectual, moral and political engagement with the political order and disorder of our world. . . . Kaplans writing is like the places he visits. Its a terrain, a concentrated expression of a particular part of the world as he sees it. . . . In Europes Shadow amounts to a kind of historical anthropology plus geopolitics, a deep study of a particular country and people. . . . It shows how, at one and the same time, Romania is distinctive and a key to a broader and deeper understanding of contemporary Europe. The Huffington Post Kaplans is travel writing at its contemporary finest, weaving in the sights and sounds of a faraway land alongside interviews with its philosophers and politicians. . . . [In Europes Shadow] provides an incisive, tactile introduction to the politics and potential prospects of Central and Southeastern Europe a region that finds itself once again caught in the headwinds of history. RealClearWorld A masterly work of important history, analysis, and prophecy about the ancient and modern rise of Romania as a roundabout between Russia and Europe . . . I learned something new on every page. Robert D. Kaplan is a master. Tom Brokaw A tour de force of cultural and political travel writing in which Romanias complex past and uncertain present become vivid and newly urgent. Colin Thubron, author of Shadow of the Silk Road and co-editor of Patrick Leigh Fermors The Broken Road Robert D. Kaplan has the remarkable ability to see over the geopolitical horizon, and he now turns his attention to Europes marchlands the former Greater Romania lying between the Balkans and a resurgent Russia. In a triple journey through books, landscapes, and histories, he tackles the meaning of geography, the influence of intellectuals, and the daffiness and power of nationalism. . . . Timely, insightful, and deeply honest. Charles King, professor of international affairs, Georgetown University, and author of Midnight at the Pera Palace: The Birth of Modern Istanbul For an appreciation of contemporary Romanian attitudes, Robert Kaplans book has no equal. As an outsider, yet within, the author offers an analysis of Romania that combines erudition and authority. His sparkling, suggestive reflections, drawing upon history and landscape, capture the DNA of the country and its inhabitants. Dennis Deletant, Ion Rău Visiting Professor of Romanian Studies, Georgetown University, and emeritus professor, University College London A moving book an illuminating and compassionate guide through the labyrinth of Romanias immensely convoluted and often traumatic past . . . In spite of the many dark, distressing moments that no one should ignore, In Europes Shadow conveys a sense of hope, promise, and continuous renewal. Vladimir Tismaneanu, professor of politics, University of Maryland, and author of The Devil in History: Communism, Fascism, and Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century Kaplan illuminates the extraordinary journey of the people of Romania, as well as millions of other East Europeans, from the tragic Soviet despotism of the decades after the Second World War to their more hopeful and democratic future as members of NATO and the European Union. Kaplans ability to weave together complex histories, religion, memory, and political thought is nearly unmatched. Nicholas Burns, professor, Harvard Kennedy School, and former undersecretary of state for political affairs A favorite of mine for years, Robert D. Kaplan is a thoughtful and insight-driven historian who writes clear and compelling prose, but what I like most about him is his political sophistication. In Europes Shadow makes you look up and think about whats on the page a true pleasure for the reader. Alan Furst From the Hardcover edition. About the Author Robert D. Kaplan is the bestselling author of sixteen books on foreign affairs and travel that have been translated into many languages, including *Asias Cauldron*, *The Revenge of Geography*, *Monsoon*, *The Coming Anarchy*, and *Balkan Ghosts*. He is a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security and a contributing editor at *The Atlantic*, where his work has appeared for three decades. He was chief geopolitical analyst at Stratfor, a visiting professor at the United States Naval Academy, and a member of the Pentagons Defense Policy Board. *Foreign Policy* magazine twice named him one of the worlds Top 100 Global Thinkers. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter I Bucharest 1981 The motion of travel relieves sadness. The novel look of streets in novel countries . . . The peace they seem to offer for our sorrows, remarks the early-twentieth-century Portuguese poet and existentialist writer Fernando Pessoa. New surroundings prompt forgetfulness of old ones, and thus speed up the passage of time. The moment I left the plane at Bucharests Otopeni airport, I exchanged a world of loud, intense colors in the sun-blinded Middle East for one of a black-and-white engraving in the shivery, November-hued Balkans. Only hours removed, Israel was, nevertheless, already part of a distant, earlier existence. Otopeni was a marble and dirty glass blockhouse with passport officers in slummy cubicles. A red star and photo of the dictator hung from the otherwise lonely walls. I waited half an hour in the cold for a plywood seat in a bus to take me downtown. Bare wiry branches beeches, poplars, and large-leaved lindens crackled in the steppe wind breaching the bus windows, signaling winter in the dead afternoon light under an iron vault of clouds. The forest of deciduous trees hardly known in the Eastern Mediterranean I had just left and here dominant only sharpened the sense of distance I had traveled. So did the steep-roofed houses that emerged as we entered a grand boulevard of the city, with their northern baroque influence and expectations of snow. For six years I had not traveled beyond North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. The times I had left Israel had only been for extended trips to Greece. The return to what in comparison was the north had a sudden and dramatic effect on me. Nothing discourages thought so much as this perpetual blue sky, writes Andr Gide in *The Immoralist*. It is said that when we think seriously, we think abstractly: Gide suggests that a cold northern clime of leaden clouds encourages abstraction, and by inference, analysis and introspection. For years I had held out the

dream of living in a house on a Greek island in summer. My first hours in Bucharest began a psychological journey that would culminate decades later in the quest to live in Maine in darkest winter. With it would come a break in reading habits: exchanging the glittering Mediterranean sensuality of Lawrence Durrell for the cold, economical passion of Thomas Mann; leaving behind the occasional half-baked, Grecian ecstasies of Henry Miller and discovering anew the realist discipline of that most essential Greek, Thucydides, and by progression, his twentieth-century inheritors, Hans Morgenthau, Kenneth Waltz, and Samuel Huntington. You don't grow up gradually. You grow up in short bursts at pivotal moments, by suddenly realizing how ignorant and immature you are. Bucharest, as I rode in from the airport and saw the ashen, moldy faces of the bus driver and other Romanians aboard, crushed in their overcoats and winter hats with earmuffs and their worries, made me instinctually aware of all the history I had been missing the last half decade. Here was a whole category of suffering foreign to the Levant. The gargantuan Scentia building, grand in a Stalinist sort of way named after the Communist Party daily, The Spark heralded the entrance to the city. The 1950s Stalinist architecture with the courtyard statue of Lenin on a high plinth spiritually defeated everything around it. Here, the next day, I would visit a Mr. Tuiu in an empty concrete office to the right of the entrance: this official of the Communist wire agency AgerPres advised me to be careful about anyone you talk to except whom he approved. Eroilor Aerului (To the Heroes of the Air) were the words emblazoned on the soaring monument on Piaa Aviatorilor (Aviators Plaza), dedicated in 1935 to World War I fliers and other aviation pioneers, which I caught a glimpse of as the bus rumbled by. I grasped immediately the word, making the connection with Beethoven's Eroica (Heroic) or Third Symphony. From the travel guides I knew that Romanian was a Latin language. But the words on the monument made me abruptly, palpably aware of it: just as the altogether bleak, wintry surroundings and virtually empty streets and boulevards made me palpably aware that I was in a part of the world not ordinarily associated with Latinity. (True, an exotic geography provided Romanian with elements of Slavic, Hungarian, Turkish, Greek, and Roma, in addition to a Thracian substratum and yet the Latin basis was dominant.) Soon the bread and fuel lines began: beyond Piaa Roman on Bulevardul General Gheorghe Magheru. The silence of the streets was devastating as I alighted from the bus with my backpack on Strada Academiei. The city had been reduced to a vast echo. There were few cars, and everyone was dressed in the same shapeless coats and furry hats that evoked internal exile somewhere on the eastern steppe. People clutched cheap jute bags in expectation of stale bread. I looked at their faces: nervous, shy, clumsy, calculating, heartrending, as if they were struggling to master the next catastrophe. Those clammy complexions seemed as if they had never seen the sunlight. This was the beginning of a decade that would be among the worst in Romanian history, even if the political repression was actually more suffocating in the 1950s, when the Communists under Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej had to establish total thought control over an ideologically hostile population. A distinguished British historian would later write that in the 1980s Romanians had been reduced . . . to an animal state, concerned only with the problems of day-to-day survival. The situation would deteriorate by stages: with food, fuel, water, and electricity shortages worse than during World War I. In late 1982, there was a widely circulating rumor that bread was deliberately held in the bakeries for twenty-four hours before selling, so it would become stale and the population would buy less. A local joke of the era: If only the Russians invaded, then we would get to eat like the Czechs and get passports like the Hungarians. By the middle of the decade, the buses would no longer run on diesel, but on the much cheaper and more dangerous methane gas, with tanks attached to the roofs. I had chosen the Hotel Muntenia on Strada Academiei from a budget guide: it was downtown and cheap enough, less than twenty-five dollars per night. All I can remember about the room was that it was brown with one bare lightbulb, with a common toilet and shower at the other end of a yawning and drafty hallway. I turned on the black-and-white television: speeches of the leader interspersed with folk dancing. The room had a phone with a corroded cord which required going through the hotel switchboard. In such mournful surroundings, I began to feel liberated from my previous life. Of course you can come in tomorrow for a briefing, and maybe we can get you in to see the ambassador, a friendly and welcoming second secretary or other at the U.S. Embassy told me over the phone, as if lightening all the brown in my room. I had suddenly gone from being a nobody in a crowded journalistic field in Jerusalem to a person with more status, simply by showing up in this Cold War backwater. You're staying at the InterCon, aren't you? she asked. My reply was nervous and noncommittal. The coming years would be about perfecting the technique of so-to-speak interviewing the prime minister while staying at the youth hostel. The next morning I walked past the dirty cream-and-white, run-of-the-mill modernist hulk of the InterContinental Hotel, towering upward in a half arc, completed in 1970 and the epitome of luxury in late-Communist Bucharest. Behind the hotel lay Tudor Arghezi, the street named for the inexhaustible twentieth-century poet and writer, whose literary aesthetic and prodigious modernity had managed to survive Communist rule. Here the white and steep-roofed baroque mansion that housed the U.S. Embassy was located. Inside, the gleam of tooled dark wood; the neat, state-of-the-art file cabinets and photocopy machines of the era; and the strict Washington dress code of the occupants made for what in my eyes then was a pampered atmosphere of safety, elegance, and efficiency, an extraterritorial refuge from the prison-yard surroundings in nearby streets. I remember the mansion fondly because I was instantly embraced by a team of diplomats who entrusted me with not only their analyses but their frustrations. They treated me as a professional journalist, a small but crucial revelation, since in Israel I always felt that my professionalism was suspect because I was a freelancer and a member of the local

armed forces, and therefore prone to be sympathetic to the right-wing nationalist government of the day. On repeated visits to Bucharest in the 1980s, I would be reduced to relying on Western diplomats. The sheer terror that ordinary Romanians felt about confiding anything substantive to a foreign journalist, as well as the unwillingness of Communist officialdom to venture much beyond propaganda, left one with few alternatives. The Securitate, or secret police, were seemingly everywhere. The Romanian officials I did manage to interview would actually say such things as, We never promised our people a rose garden, or, quoting President Nicolae Ceauescu, we are making the passage from the bourgeois-landlord society to the multilaterally developed Socialist society. While after 1989 the U.S. Embassy in Bucharest was an afterthought for a correspondent, before 1989 it was the central dispatch point for information and analysis on what was happening in this pulverized, half-forgotten country. Here, along with the American embassies in Sofia, Belgrade, Budapest, and so on, I received briefings remarkable for their insight, lucidity, and unsentimentality that, nevertheless, did not undermine an overarching idealism. For in that white baroque mansion, I met an American diplomat and Balkan area specialist, Ernest H. Latham Jr., who had made it his passion to collect the memoirs and other writings of visitors to Romania prior to the onslaught of the Communist ice age. His point was that by preserving the memoir of a pre-Communist past, one would be able to conceive of a future beyond Communism. In the early and mid-1980s, when Ceauescu Romania bore the mood of Stalin's Russia, and the paramount assumption of the age was that the Cold War had no end, this was the best sort of prophecy. The Cold War in the Balkans and Central Europe was a golden age for Western embassy reporting. In such settings I began to live history as it happened, at a time when none of these capitals were journalistically fashionable: for this was the decade of Beirut, Managua, San Salvador, and Peshawar, with the media preoccupied with wars in Lebanon and Central America, and to a lesser extent in Afghanistan. I then began acquiring the habit of separating myself from the journalistic horde, looking for news in obscure locations, that is. For example, on a later trip to Bucharest in 1984, Latham casually told me that Ceauescu was blasting a vast area of the capital into oblivion, with security forces plundering and then blowing up whole neighborhoods of historic Orthodox churches, monasteries, Jewish synagogues, and nineteenth-century houses: ten thousand structures in all, many with their own sylvan courtyards. Residents were given hours to clear out with their life possessions before explosive charges were set. The blast site, where an austere Stalinist-style civic center and apartment blocks were to be built, was being called Ceaushima by Romanians brave enough to talk to foreign diplomats. Latham, who had seen the plans for the new Party complexes and ceremonial avenues, compared it to something Albert Speer might have designed for Adolf Hitler, had the 1,000-year Reich become reality. When I revealed what was happening in a magazine article a few months later, I was made persona non grata in Romania for five years, until Ceauescu fell. In neighboring Bulgaria in the mid-1980s, another American diplomat told me that, by the way, the Communist regime was forcing all 900,000 ethnic Turks, 10 percent of the Bulgarian population, to change their names to Slavic equivalents, even as mosques were being closed and the Turkish language forbidden. In 1984, yet another American diplomat, Dan Fried, this time in Belgrade, strongly recommended that I henceforth concentrate my energies on Yugoslavia, where, as he put it, ethnic, political, and economic divisions were worsening and therefore this country has a great future in the news. The 1980s, which professionally began for me that first morning at the U.S. Embassy on Tudor Arghezi, would constitute an onrush of current events, primarily in the Balkans, that I had more or less to myself save, of course, for the relatively small number of dedicated foreign correspondents based in capitals like Vienna and Warsaw, themselves struggling to get their own stories prominently placed and appreciated, in the face of more cinematic events in the Middle East and Central America. In all of Eastern Europe, only Poland because of Solidarity, martial law, and a Polish pope figured prominently in the headlines. Passion was usually lacking in my freelance dispatches: sent by airmail with self-addressed return envelopes, using post offices and occasionally diplomatic pouches. The facts alone were sufficient to communicate the extent of the nightmare, to which an air of unreality frequently hung. On one occasion I even saw the tyrant close up at a Communist Party congress. He had stridden up to the podium, and the four thousand Party members in attendance rose to their feet, chanting loudly Cea-u-es-cu, Cea-u-es-cu . . . The tyrant, his chin jutting forth, watched impassively for a full three minutes with his wife, Elena, beside him. Then he slightly raised his arm in a gesture vaguely reminiscent of a Hitler salute, the sight of which immediately silenced the great hall. Standing directly below a giant picture of himself, he began a speech interrupted five times: each time by several minutes of hand-clapping and chants of Cea-u-es-cu, Cea-u-es-cu . . . until he silenced them. He spoke for a full ninety minutes about socialist economics. After a break, he would speak for a further ninety minutes on socialist theory and ideology. The faces in the audience looked terrified throughout. Nobody dared stop clapping and chanting until he raised his arm. I learned how to be a journalist in Bucharest. Not all at once, not always intentionally, and, again, not altogether consciously, for Bucharest in 1981 was not only powerful at first sight, but powerful in retrospect as the years went on. I would ponder Bucharest often as a reaction to the books I later read. Learning to be a journalist happened as much in reflection as it did in real time. By learning to be a journalist, I do not mean learning the commonplace but crucial mechanics of accurate note-taking, newswriting, or developing sources, which I had been taught in elementary form earlier in college and at a small newspaper. Instead, I refer to understanding the true character of objectivity. For what is taught in journalism schools is an invaluable craft, whereas properly observing the world is a matter of deliberation and serious reading over

decades in the fields of history, philosophy, and political science. Journalism actually is not necessarily, whatever the experts of the profession may claim, a traditional subject in its own right. Rather, it is a means to explore and better communicate subjects that are, in fact, traditional areas of study: history and philosophy as I've said, but also government, politics, literature, architecture, art, and so on. I've never altogether trusted what journalists say about themselves. As Robert Musil, the great early-twentieth-century Austrian novelist, observes: high-mindedness is the mark of every professional ideology. That's why the image of a profession in the minds of its practitioners is not too reliable. (Thus journalism schools have the particular responsibility of looking at their profession from the vantage point of outsiders.) From the Hardcover edition.