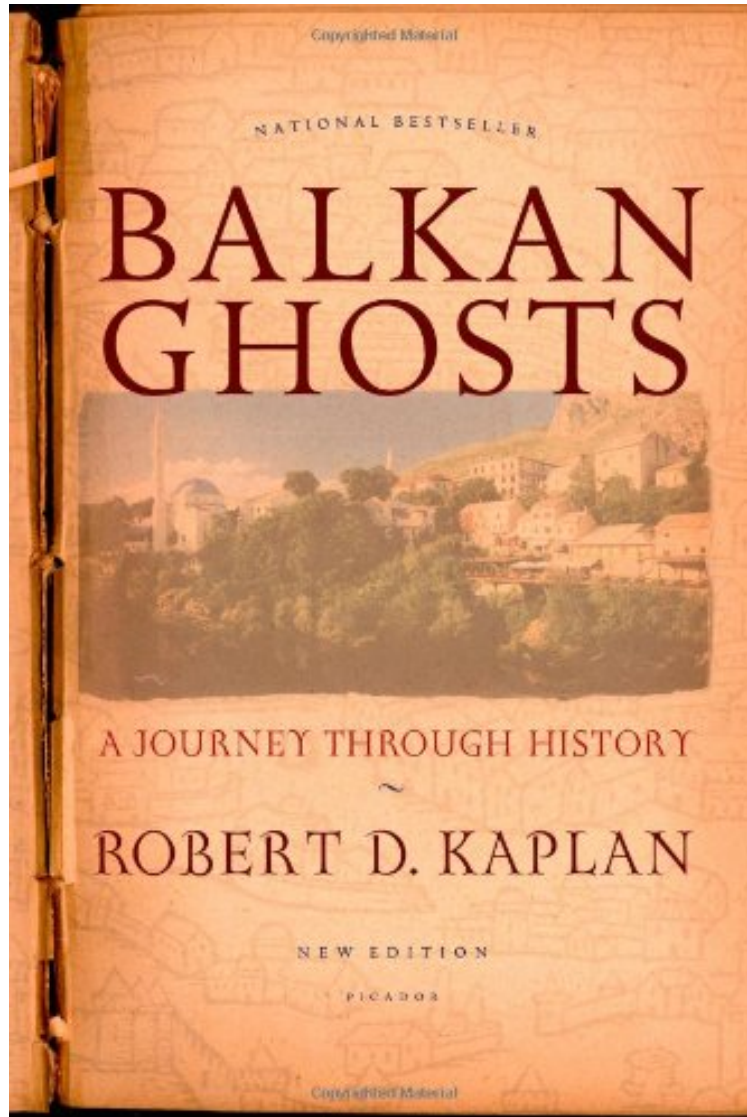


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## Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History

*Robert D. Kaplan*

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**Robert D. Kaplan : Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History:

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From the assassination that triggered World War I to the ethnic warfare in Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia, the Balkans have been the crucible of the twentieth century, the place where terrorism and genocide first became tools of policy. Chosen as one of the Best Books of the Year by The New York Times, and greeted with critical acclaim as "the most insightful and timely work on the Balkans to date" (The Boston Globe), Kaplan's prescient, enthralling, and often chilling political travelogue is already a modern classic. This new edition of the Balkan Ghosts includes six opinion pieces written by Robert Kaplan about the Balkans between 1996 and 2000 beginning just after the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords and ending after the conclusion of the Kosovo war, with the removal of Slobodan Milosevic from power.

.com From the assassination that triggered World War I to the ethnic warfare now sweeping Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia, the Balkans have been the crucible of the twentieth century, the place where terrorism and genocide first became tools of policy. This enthralling and often chilling political travelogue fully deciphers the Balkans' ancient passions and intractable hatreds for outsiders. For as Kaplan travels among the vibrantly-adorned churches and soul-destroying slums of the former Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece, he allows us to see the region's history as a time warp in which Slobodan Milosevic becomes the reincarnation of a fourteenth-century Serbian martyr; Nicolae Ceaucescu is called "Drac," or "the Devil"; and the one-time Soviet Union turns out to be a continuation of the Ottoman Empire. From Publishers Weekly Kaplan, an American journalist who lived in Greece for seven years, is a gifted writer with a marvelous feel for the exotic, woolly, mountainous Balkan peninsula. This vividly impressionistic travelogue splices a long trip in 1990 with sojourns in the '80s and forays into history, resulting in an unpredictable adventure that illuminates the Balkan nations' ethnic clashes and near-anarchic politics. Kaplan dwells on Greece's modern political culture, which, he shows, has much closer ties to the multiethnic Balkans than is generally acknowledged. He views Romania's history as a long, desperate compromise with a succession of invaders, marred by decades of Turkish rule, Nazism and Communism. He talks with Gypsies, scales steep Baroque cities, tours Transylvania, Bulgaria and Albania and visits the remnant Jewish community of Salonika, which was decimated by the Nazis. Kaplan ( Soldiers of God: With the Mujahidin in Afghanistan ) sheds light on the Serb-Croat dispute, which he traces in part back to Croatia's fascists of WW II and to the Vatican's perceived stirring up of anti-Semitic feelings among Croats. He finds seeds of civil war germinating in Yugoslavia, where he confronts "the principal illness of the Balkans: conflicting dreams of lost imperial glory." Photos. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Though travelogs from the world's troubled spots are now legion, seldom if ever do they possess the historical insight and literary style of Balkan Ghosts. The product of over a decade of travel and research, this is one of precious few works that allows a Western reader a look into the tortured soul of the Balkan peoples. Focusing on the former Yugoslavia and on Rumania, Bulgaria, and Greece, Kaplan takes the reader on a marvelous tour through the peninsula, using as his own guides the writings of John Reed, C.L. Sulzberger, and Rebecca West. In each nation he encounters characters who are both fascinating and frightening and accompanies each adventure with a concise and powerful historical sketch that makes for a superior narrative. Thoroughly captivating, the sections on Serbia, Rumania, and Greece are of special interest, particularly in light of recent developments in the region. Kaplan is a master of this genre, having written extensively for several major magazines as well as producing the acclaimed Soldiers of God: With the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan ( LJ 12/89). A fine work recommended by all interested in the development of nationalism in the Balkans.- Joseph W. Constance Jr., St. Anselm Coll. Lib., Manchester, N.H. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.