



## Milosevic: A Biography

By Adam LeBor

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Slobodan Milosevic, a man the world hoped it would never see again, is currently on trial at the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague for crimes against humanity. This engrossing biography documents the life of the former Serbian leader, whose policies instigated wars in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo as well as the bloody campaigns of ethnic cleansing that destroyed a once multi-national country. Drawing on his unrivalled access to many of those closest to Milosevic, author and journalist Adam LeBor describes his subject's unhappy childhood, his marriage, and important friendships. He offers details about the ascendancy of crime over politics in the new republic and the secret channels used by Milosevic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman as they conspired to carve up Bosnia. LeBor recounts the history of the negotiations between Milosevic and the Western diplomats, politicians, and businessmen with whom he dealt, and tells the tragic story of the wars. Finally he portrays the unprecedented international operation that brought down the Milosevic regime in 2001 and led to his trial at the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. A gripping account of Europe's first rogue leader in the post-cold war period, this book is also a revelatory look at the tragic story of the collapse of a country and the role played by the West.

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Drawing on pithy interviews with key players, LeBor (*Hitler's Secret Bankers*), who covered the Yugoslav wars for the *Independent* and the *London Times*, traces Milosevic's rise from a provincial childhood to leader of the Serbian Communist Party and then the Serbian presidency. LeBor absorbingly details Milosevic's self-serving strategizing in the independence movements in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia; his manipulation of Serb nationalist fervor; and his shadowy network of agents and gangsters. Firsthand interviews with Milosevic's wife and collaborator, Mira Markovic, allow LeBor to infuse his account of the Milosevic-Markovic "personal para-state" with insights into the couple's oddly contradictory ideological stances. He depicts their insular family life with obvious distaste for their seeming indifference to the tragic events around them. LeBor presents the West's attempts to abate war in the region as dynamic, if at times misguided; following his account of the peace accords negotiated at Dayton, Ohio, where Milosevic was an honored guest, he soberly remarks that between "statesman or war criminal," finally, "much of the difference, it seems, is in the eye of the beholder." Milosevic's involvement in ethnic cleansing emerges even more explicitly in the endgame of his rule, as Serbia battles the Kosovo Liberation Army. An afterword delivers further proof of Milosevic's guilt from his ongoing trial for genocide at the Hague. This disciplined, dispassionate portrait focuses on the actions of "an autocrat motivated by power." It does not attempt psychological speculation or a more theorized portrait. Highly readable, yet savvy about regionally specific realpolitik, this political biography will greatly enhance the lay reader's understanding of recent events in Yugoslavia. Illus. not seen by *PW*; maps.

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From [Booklist](#)

What manner of man is Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian leader during Yugoslavia's bloody disintegration who is currently on trial for war crimes? Not a man of principle or warmth, according to LeBor's biography, but rather one dedicated to the attainment and retention of political power. After Milosevic rigged one election too many, a popular uprising ejected him from office in 2000, a vertiginous fall from the summit for the career communist turned Serb nationalist. Outside of Milosevic's determination to keep Kosovo, however, LeBor discovers much information that casts Milosevic as an exploiter rather than a champion of Serb nationalism. His thorough research indicates how Milosevic would as easily stiff his Serbian clients doing the fighting and ethnic cleansing as toss back a brandy. Embroidering these deadly political machinations with Milosevic's domestic life, an uxorious one centered on his wife, LeBor depicts a consummate opportunist who succeeded, for a while, in riding high while a country disintegrated and an economy descended into gangsterism. A vital addition to the literature on Yugoslavia's catastrophic end.

*Gilbert Taylor*

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Review

"[LeBor] gives special vibrancy to the story... [with] brisk, uncluttered prose...." -- *Robert Legvold, Foreign Affairs*

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