

# Twilight of Impunity: The War Crimes Trial of Slobodan Milosevic

*by Judith Armatta*

*Reviewed by Robert Legvold*

## In This Review



**A**rmatta, a lawyer, journalist, human rights activist, and expert on the Balkans, sat through three years of excruciating testimony in The Hague for the first trial of a head of state since Admiral Karl Dönitz at Nuremberg -- the trial of Slobodan Milosevic for 66 counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. By her own confession, she was scarcely an impartial observer, having witnessed much of what served as the basis for the charges, but she provides more than a fair analysis of the proceedings' fumbblings and ill-advised decisions. Hers is the front-row view of a first-rate court reporter, giving the reader a TiVo-like version, culled of dead space and repetition, that is still exhausting in its arduous pace and detail. Diligently, she watched and recorded as the court probed all three charges from Kosovo, back through the Croatian and Bosnian wars, tediously piling up the evidence as Milosevic bobbed and weaved. One comes away half heartened by the effort to answer unspeakable cruelty and suffering with justice but, in a way, more saddened by Milosevic's slippery success in persuading his partisans and many of his countrymen that they, not he, were on trial, the victims of great power bullies. And then there is the whimper with which it was all ended, by a heart attack that left him

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