



Serbia: The History Behind the Name

By Stevan K. Pavlowitch

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Serbias have come and gone, and their boundaries have moved about. This text, rather than being a history, is an attempt to look at the historical forces, actors, ideas and periods which have moulded the entities that go by the name "Serbia". These are the mediaeval rulers and the church; the principality and the kingdom of modern times; the imperial rule of Ottomans and Habsburgs; the two world wars; the unification with other Slav populations and territories; the ideology of the three-named Yugoslav kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes; that of the brotherhood-and-union of Yugoslav nations in the communist federation; and the disintegration of Yugoslavia and its aftermath. Following Serbia's emergence from the ruins of Tito's Yugoslavia and of Milosevic's regime, Stevan Pavlowitch strives to get away from both the "doomed-to-violence" and the "doomed-to-martyrdom" explanations favoured respectively by some Western and some Serbian interpreters. He seeks to pose questions rather than to provide answers, and to move forward from the past rather than to look back to idealized ages or read history backwards.

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