

# The Breakdown of Yugoslavia

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COMA 387

# Map of former Yugoslavia

Former Yugoslavia



# 1900

- The **Ottoman Turks** invaded the region at the end of the 14th century and the Turkish rule lasted for some 500 years.
- The **Austro-Hungarian empire** grew stronger in the north and loosened the grip of the Turks at the end of the 17th century.
- A major redefinition of the Balkan political boundaries was enacted by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878.
- Serbia, Montenegro and Romania became independent, and the principality of Bulgaria was created.





**Archduke  
Ferdinand**

# 1913

By the beginning of the 20th century, the Ottoman Empire was beginning to crumble.

A wave of **nationalism** swept through the Balkans. War broke out in 1912, when Montenegrin troops moved across the border into the Ottoman empire.

Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece joined the war a few days later. These Balkan allies drove the Turks out of Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania, which declared independence. Later the Serbs turned against the Bulgarians and occupied all of Kosovo as well as Macedonia.

In 1914 Austria-Hungary, which governed Bosnia-Herzegovina at the time, sent the emperor's heir Franz Ferdinand to quell the unrest.

He was shot in Sarajevo by a Serb nationalist, an event which triggered World War I.



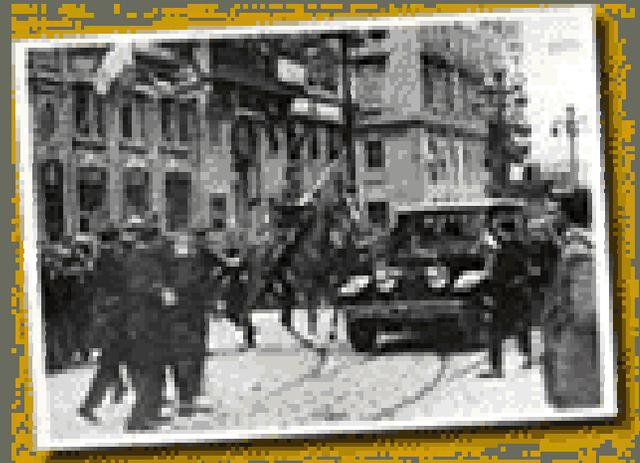
**Archduke's funeral  
1914**

# 1920's

- After Austria-Hungary was defeated in World War I, the Versailles peace treaties defined a new pattern of state boundaries in the Balkans.
- The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was founded.
- In 1929 King Alexander I changed the name of the state to **Yugoslavia**.
- The Serbs dominated the government, which gave rise to an anti-Serb movement.
- Many Croats would have preferred independence.
- Resentment led to Alexander's violent death in 1934.



The founder of the Yugoslav state



Scene of the King's assassination

# 1940's



**Tito led resistance  
to the Germans**

- World War II came.
- Hitler gave the Croats a slight independence, which incorporated Bosnia.
- The fascist Ustashe established a puppet Nazi state, which included Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- The 21st division of the German Waffen SS was recruited almost entirely from ethnic Albanians.
- Widespread atrocities were committed by all sides. In Croatia, Serbs, Jews, gypsies and anti-fascist Croats were taken to **concentration camps**.

# 1945

- Marshall Tito declared Socialist Yugoslavia in 1945.
- Tito unified the 6 republics into a communist dictatorship, independent of Russia.
- He suppressed religious and cultural rivalries.
- In Serbia the two provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina were given autonomous status.
- National and **ethnic tensions** increased due to unequal development and a growing burden of debt.



Tito in 1945



Pioneers welcome  
Tito

# 1974-1980



Tito in 1945

- Tito angered the Serbs by granting autonomy to the north-eastern province of Vojvodina and the southern province of Kosovo in 1974.
- Tito passed away in 1980.

# 1987

- In 1987, while investigating allegations that the minority Serbs in Kosovo were being attacked by the ethnic Albanian majority, Slobodan Milosevic had promised his fellow Serbs that "*No one will ever beat you again.*" Milosevic quickly became a Serbian hero, and was able to force changes to the Yugoslav constitution through its Parliament in 1989.



# 1992-1993

- Yugoslav Federation was falling apart.
- Nationalism replaced communism as the dominant force in the Balkans. Slovenia and then Croatia were the first to break away but only at the cost of renewed conflict with Serbia. By 1992 a further conflict had broken out in **Bosnia**.



A child in a Sarajevo hospital

The Serbs were determined to remain within Yugoslavia and to help build a greater Serbia. They received strong backing from extremist groups in Belgrade. Muslims were driven from their homes in 'ethnic cleansing'.

- By 1993 the Bosnian Muslim government was besieged in Sarajevo.
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Bosnia Herzegovina detention camp

# 1995

- The **Dayton agreement** of November 1995 created two self-governing entities within Bosnia - the Bosnian Serb Republic and the Muslim(Bosnjak)-Croat Federation. The settlement's aims were to bring about the reintegration of Bosnia and to protect the human rights but the agreement has been criticised for not reversing the results of ethnic cleansing.
- The Muslim-Croat and Serb entities have their own governments, parliaments and armies.
- Croatia took back most of the territory earlier captured by Serbs when it waged lightning military campaigns in 1995 which also resulted in the mass exodus of around 200,000 Serbs from Croatia



**A man carries an injured child in Sarajevo**

# 1999

- In 1998, the **Kosovo Liberation Army** - supported by the majority ethnic Albanians - came out in open rebellion against Serbian rule. The international community, while supporting greater autonomy, opposed the Kosovar Albanians' demand for independence. But international pressure grew on Serbian strongman, **Slobodan Milosevic**, to bring an end to the escalating violence in the province.
- Threats of military action by the West over the crisis culminated in the launching of **Nato air strikes** against Yugoslavia in March 1999. Within days of the strikes starting, tens of thousands of **Kosovo Albanian refugees** were pouring out of the province with accounts of killings, atrocities and forced expulsions at the hands of Serb forces.
- Returning them to their homes, along with those who had fled in the months of fighting before the strikes, became a top priority for the Nato countries.
- Relations between Serbia and the only other remaining Yugoslav republic, **Montenegro**, hit rock bottom, with Montenegrin leaders seeking to distance themselves from Slobodan Milosevic's handling of Kosovo.



**Kosovo Albanians at another peaceful demonstration in Pristina**



**Kosovo Albanian Refugees**

# 2003

- Yugoslavia has disappeared from the map of Europe, after 83 years of existence, to be replaced by Serbia and Montenegro.
- Slobodan Milosevic lost a presidential election in 2000. He refused to accept the result but was forced out of office by strikes and massive street protests, which culminated in the storming of parliament. He was handed over to a UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, and put on trial for crimes against humanity and genocide.
- Conflict between Serbs and ethnic Albanians threatened to erupt in late 2000 in the Presevo valley, on the Serbian side of the Kosovo border, but dialogue between Albanian guerrillas and the new democratic authorities in Belgrade allowed tensions to evaporate. There was, however, a major outbreak of inter-ethnic violence in Macedonia in 2001, again involving the Albanian minority. This was contained by Nato peacekeepers and ultimately resolved by political means.



**Nato soldiers try to keep the peace in Kosovo**

# Current map of the Balkans

## Central Balkan Region



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