

Yugoslavia



The country of Yugoslavia was officially formed after World War I and had eight (8) different ethnic groups: Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Slovenes, Macedonians, Albanians, Hungarians and Montenegrins. Ethnic and religious differences went back many centuries and each group was suspicious of each other.

Different Ethnic Groups

Group	Language	Religion
Albanians	Albanian	Mostly Muslim
Croats	Slavic dialect of Serbo-Croatian	Mostly Roman Catholic
Hungarians	Magyar	Many types of Christians
Macedonians	Macedonian	Mostly Eastern Orthodox
Montenegrins	Slavic dialect of Serbo-Croatian	Mostly Eastern Orthodox
Muslims	Slavic dialect of Serbo-Croatian	Muslim (converted under Ottoman rule)
Serbs	Slavic Dialect of Serbo-Croatian	Mostly Eastern Orthodox
Slovenes	Slovenian	Mostly Roman Catholic

After World War II, Yugoslavia became a Federation of six republics. Each republic had a mixed population. From 1945 to 1980 the country was ruled by Josip Tito who managed to hold the country together.



Josip Tito



Flag of Yugoslavia

History of Tito: During World War II he organized the anti-fascist movement known as the Yugoslav Partisans. His soldiers fought against the invasion force of Germany and resisted Adolph Hitler. He was recognized by the Big Three at the Tehran Conference for his resistance. Later he became the founding member of Cominform (*the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties*). Tito later resisted Joseph Stalin and his Soviet influence and became one of the founders of the *Non-Aligned Movement*.

On April 7, 1963, the country changed its official name to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Reforms encouraged private enterprise and greatly relaxed restrictions on freedom of speech and religious expression. In 1966 an agreement with the Vatican was signed according new freedom to the Yugoslav Roman Catholic Church, particularly to teach the catechism and open seminaries

On January 1, 1967, Yugoslavia was the first communist country to open its borders to all foreign visitors and abolish visa requirements. In the same year Tito became active in promoting a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. His plan called for Arabs to recognize State of Israel in exchange for territories Israel gained. Arabs rejected his land for peace concept.

Tito's greatest strength, in the eyes of the western communists, had been in suppressing nationalist insurrections and maintaining unity throughout the country. It was Tito's call for unity, and related methods that held together the people of Yugoslavia.

On May 16, 1974, a new Constitution was passed, and Josip Broz Tito was named President for Life. After the constitutional changes of 1974, Tito increasingly took the role of senior statesman. His direct involvement in domestic policy and governing was diminishing.

After Tito's death, ethnic resentments took over and the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic asserted leadership over Yugoslavia. Many Serbs opposed Milosevic and his practices and subsequently fled the country.



In 1991 two of the republics, Slovenia and Croatia, declared their independence. In June the Serbian-led Yugoslav army invaded both republics. After months of bloody fighting both republics had freedom from Serbian rule. In the first months of 1992 Bosnia-Herzegovina joined Slovenia and Croatia in declaring independence. In April of the same year Serbia and Montenegro formed the new Yugoslavia.

Population of Bosnia

Muslims	44%
Serbs	31%
Croats	17%

Bosnian Muslims and Croats backed independence but the Bosnian Serbs were strongly in opposition. Supported by Serbia, the Bosnian Serbs launched a war in 1992.

During the war, Serbian military forces used violence and forced mass emigrations of the Bosnian Muslims living in Serb-held lands. Ethnic Cleansing was used to rid Bosnia of its Muslim population. By 1995 the Serbian military controlled 70% of Bosnia. In December of that year the leaders of the three factions involved in the war signed a United Nations/United States brokered peace treaty. In 1996 the Bosnians elected a three-person presidency, one leader from each ethnic group.



In 1998 the Kosovo province in southern Serbia (mostly ethnic Albanians) saw violence and bloodshed. The Kosovo independence movement grew rapidly but also grew as a violent faction. Serbian military forces invaded the area and fought back with a harsh hand. In response to growing reports of atrocities and the failure to bring peace to the region, NATO began a bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in the Spring of 1999. After several months of NATO bombing the Yugoslav leaders withdrew their troops from Kosovo. Slobodan Milosevic was extradited to stand trial for war crimes at the World Court. Slobodan Milosevic was found dead in his cell at the Hague on March 11, 2006. His trial for war crimes and crimes against humanity has therefore ended without a verdict



In February 2003 Yugoslavia's parliament voted to replace what remained of the federation with a loose union of Serbia and Montenegro. Within a short time independence movements were created in these areas and in March 2003 the Serbian prime minister, Zoran Djindjic was assassinated.



Zoran Djindjic

Where they stood by 2008

Bosnia-Herzegovina is recovering from a devastating three-year war which accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.

The 1992-1995 conflict centered on whether Bosnia should stay in the Yugoslav Federation, or whether it should become independent.

It is now an independent state, but under international administration. Its three main ethnic groups are Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Croats and Serbs. The war left Bosnia's infrastructure and economy in tatters. Around two million people - about half the population - were displaced.

Croatia went into the new millennium recovering from a decade of authoritarian nationalism under president Franjo Tudjman and bitter war.

By early 2003 it had made enough progress to apply for EU membership, becoming the second former Yugoslav republic after Slovenia to do so.

A country of striking natural beauty with a stunning Adriatic coastline, Croatia is again very popular as a tourist destination

Kosovo, an impoverished territory with a population of mainly ethnic Albanians, unilaterally declared independence from Serbia in February 2008.

The territory immediately won recognition from the United States and major European Union countries. But Serbia, with the help of its big-power ally Russia, has vowed to block Kosovo from getting a United Nations seat.

Macedonia was spared the inter-ethnic violence that raged elsewhere in the Balkans following the break-up of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s but it came close to civil war a decade after independence.

Rebels staged an uprising in early 2001, demanding greater rights for the ethnic Albanian minority. The conflict created a wave of refugees and the rebels made territorial gains.

Montenegro emerged as a sovereign state after just over 55% of the population opted for independence in a May 2006 referendum.

The vote heralded the end of the former Union of Serbia and Montenegro - itself created only three years earlier out of the remnant of the former Yugoslavia

Serbia became a stand-alone sovereign republic in summer 2006 after Montenegro voted in a referendum for independence from the Union of Serbia and Montenegro.

When the vote was followed by a formal declaration of independence by Montenegro, a special session of parliament in Belgrade declared Serbia to be the legal successor to the now defunct union of Serbia and Montenegro.

Slovenia: A country with spectacular mountains, thick forests and a short Adriatic coastline, Slovenia also enjoys substantial economic and political stability.

It was the only one of the former Yugoslav republics to be in the first wave of candidates for membership of the European Union. It joined in May 2004.

Just a couple of months before EU entry, Slovenia became a member of NATO.

