

## The Crumbling of Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia was a multinational state created after World War I. The country was led by communist leader, Marshal Tito, who was able to resist being a Soviet Satellite. In it lived many different ethnic and religious groups (Orthodox Christian Serbs, Roman Catholic Croats, Muslim Albanians, and other ethnic groups). Some areas were home to predominantly one ethnic group, while several groups shared other regions. Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina, and Macedonia separated from Yugoslavia and became independent states. The breakup of Yugoslavia, however, did not come peacefully.



*How does this map support the idea that diversity has led to conflict in the Balkans?*

### ***Calls for Independence***

Tensions between ethnic groups go back hundreds of years. In 1990, the Yugoslav republics of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina (often called Bosnia) and Macedonia began to push for independence. Slobodan Milosevic, who became the leader of Serbia in 1987, wanted to draw borders to include Serb minorities in all the republics in a new Greater Serbian state. In June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence. In September, the Yugoslavian army, dominated Serbia, began a full assault against Croatia. Before a cease-fire was arranged, Serbian forces captured one-third of Croatia's territory.

### ***War in Bosnia***

In 1992, Yugoslav president, Slobodan Milosevic (who was a Serb), also resorted to violence. He used the Yugoslav army to try to prevent non-Serbs from breaking away from Yugoslavia. The Serbs began an assault on Bosnia-Herzegovina. By mid-1993, Serbian forces held 70% of Bosnian territory. The Serbs carried

*How was Yugoslavia like other states that achieved independence as a result of the breakup of the Soviet Union?*

out **ethnic cleansing** (which is the policy of removing or killing people of a certain ethnic group) against non-Serbians. By 1995, more than 250,000 people were dead and two million were homeless. In order to restore peace, NATO and the UN took military action in the region. In 2001, Milosevic was arrested and tried for war crimes and genocide by the U.N.'s International Crime Tribunal.

### *War in Kosovo*

In Kosovo, ethnic battles continued, under the rule of Slobodan Milosevic. In 2000, Milosevic was replaced by a democratic leader. Kosovo remained under Serbian control until 2008, when it gained its independence. In nearby Ukraine, a vicious campaign for president included the poisoning of the more pro-western candidate. A new election put him into power but disagreements between factions continued to divide the government.

In 2003, Serbia and Montenegro formed a union and stopped using the name Yugoslavia.

*In what other countries did you learn about ethnic cleansing?*

*Did the nationalistic feelings of the various ethnic groups Yugoslavia help or hinder the development of this area after the fall of communism?*

## Germany United

Since WWII, Germany had been divided into a democratic western state and a communist eastern state. The Berlin Wall had been built in 1961 to keep East Germans from fleeing to the West. In East Germany, Erich Honecker became head of the Communist Party in 1971. He used the Stasi, the secret police, to rule for the next 18 years.



*What were the reasons for the fall of the Berlin Wall?*

### *Fall of the Berlin Wall*

East Germans wanted to share the prosperity and freedom enjoyed by western Germans. By 1989, East German leaders could no longer count on support of the Soviet Union. Many East Germans began to flee their country. In the fall of the same year, mass demonstrations broke out. The Communist government gave in and opened its border with the West. Thousands of East Germans rushed across it, and people on both sides began tearing down the Berlin Wall. In November 1989, the Berlin Wall was torn down by joyous Germans.

*The reunification of Germany was a joyous moment for Germans. However, what were some problems that were created?*

### *Impact of reunification*

The people of Germany welcomed reunification of their country, but there were problems. West Germans had to pay higher taxes to finance the rebuilding of impoverished East Germany. Unemployment rose in East Germany during the transition to a market economy. Social unrest followed, with some right-wing extremists trying to revive Nazi ideology. Foreign workers, many of whom came from Turkey were attacked.

## The Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe



## Poland

Poland was the Soviet Union's most troublesome satellite. Stalin had clamped down very hard on Poland and persecuted the Roman Catholics. In 1956, riots and strikes broke out. To end the turmoil, the Polish government had to make new reforms which left many unhappy.

### *Solidarity*

In the 1980s in Poland, economic hardships caused labor unrest. A worker named by Lech Walesa, organized an independent national trade union called Solidarity. With 10 million member (mainly workers), Solidarity called for political change.

At first, the Soviet Union pressured the Polish government to contain Solidarity. The government outlawed the union and arrested Walesa and other leaders. However, the power of communism was weakening. International pressure as well as internal pressure led to reform.

### *Peaceful Transition*

In 1989, the Polish government agreed to hold free parliamentary elections – the first free elections in Eastern Europe in 50 years. A new government was elected, ending the 45 years of Communist rule in Poland. When Lech Walesa became president, his program of rapid free-market reforms led to discontent and severe unemployment. Poland joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004.



Map 4 – Poland, 1980–81

*Who is Lech Walesa?*

*Explain Solidarity.*

*What was the result of electing Lech Walesa as president?*