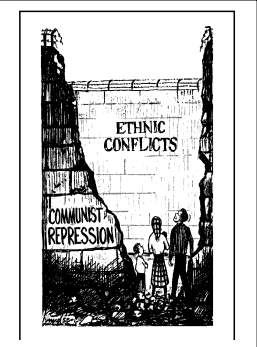
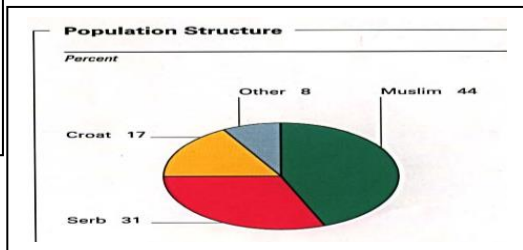
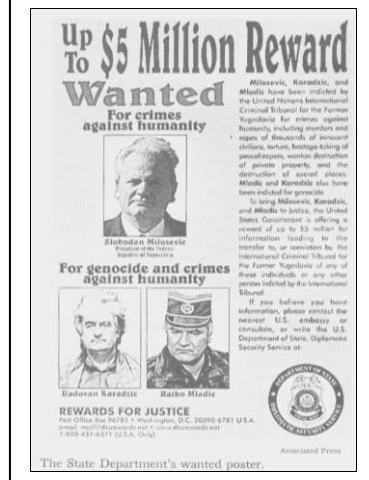
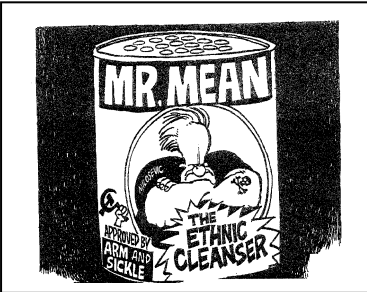
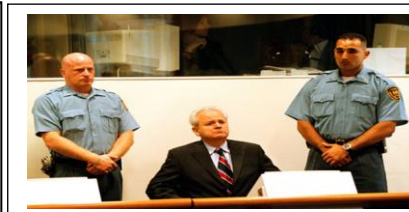


Aim #19b: How did the breakup of the former Yugoslavia impact the people living in the region?



Mini Lecture

- Less than 50 years after the Holocaust, another genocide occurred in Europe.
- Ethnic conflict drove the genocide in **Bosnia**. The end of WWI brought with it the creation of several new nations in Eastern Europe, including **Yugoslavia**. The country was home to Serbian (who were Eastern Orthodox Christians, Croats & Slovenes (Catholics), and Bosniaks (Muslims).
- **Marshall Tito** led Communist Yugoslavia from the end of WWII until his death in 1980. During his rule, the dictatorial Tito managed to suppress ethnic, religious, and separatist impulses among Yugoslavia's different regions and peoples.
- After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, so did Yugoslavia. Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia each went their separate ways and defined citizenship in terms of ethnic background and religion.
- Serbian nationalists led by the Serbian president **Slobodan Milosevic** were particularly emphatic about ethnic purity. They attempted to create a "greater Serbia" that included regions of Croatia and Bosnia where many Serbs lived.
- The Serbs committed murder and rape against Croats and Muslim Bosniaks. Their violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shocked people around the world.
- In 1995 and again in 1999, NATO forces, used bombing campaigns to successfully halt Serbian aggression.
- As fighting continued, casualties mounted. More than 300,000 people in the region perished over the course of Yugoslavia's disintegration.
- **The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY)** was established by the U.N. in 1993 and convened at the Hague in the Netherlands. This tribunal has been linked to the Nuremberg Trials.
- The tribunal was convened for a specific purpose; to indict and try war criminals from the conflict that grew out of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia between 1992 and 1995.
- In some ways, the tribunal was very successful. It showed that war could not function as a cover for illegal activity, regardless of a person's rank. Those who committed war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity would face justice, whether they were a president or a local militia commander.
- The tribunal also gave hope to victims who previously had no voice. However, justice was slow. During its 24-year existence, the ICTY brought about 161 high-level indictments. One was against former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic, who died while on trial. Another was against Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, who was found guilty of genocide and sentenced to 40 years in prison.
- Overall, 90 individuals were sentenced for genocide, crimes against humanity, and other crimes before the tribunal completed its work in December 2107.

Review Questions:

1. What led to the genocide in Yugoslavia?
2. What role did Slobodan Milosevic play in the Bosnian Genocide?
3. What was the significance of the ICTY?

Enduring Issue: Genocide, Human Rights Violation

What led to Slobodan Milošević's rule in Yugoslavia? What human rights violations were committed under his rule?

Directions: Read the excerpt below and respond to the questions.

Background on Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia was a country in Southeast Europe that came into existence after World War I in 1918. After World War II, Yugoslavia came under the influence of the USSR and became known as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, there were six republics: SR Bosnia and Herzegovina, SR Croatia, SR Macedonia, SR Montenegro, SR Slovenia, and SR Serbia. Within Serbia, there were two autonomous states: Vojvodina and Kosovo. These two autonomous states had a lower level of self-government and less representation at the federal level than the other Soviet republics.

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was home to a very ethnically and religiously diverse population. There were over 40 religions practiced including Islam, Roman Catholicism, Judaism, and Protestantism, as well as various Eastern Orthodox faiths.



1. When did Yugoslavia come into existence?
2. In this context, what was the difference between a republic and an autonomous state?

Tension in Yugoslavia and the New Constitution

While the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was designed to be a unified political state, there was mounting ethnic tension. Following the death of President Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was embroiled in intense economic and political tension that saw the growth of nationalism within the republics. Serbians made up the largest proportion of the population in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

One of the reasons that Serbian nationalism increased during the 1980s was because some Serbians believed they were losing power in Yugoslavia to the autonomous states of Vojvodina and Kosovo. Those two states were granted more powers of self government under a constitution that was adopted in 1974. Slobodan Milošević, a Yugoslav and Serbian politician, joined the political scene following 1984 with interest in restoring Serbian power to its pre-1974 state.

3. What changes were made to the 1974 constitution? How did this make some Serbians feel? Why?

Slobodan Milošević's Rise to Power and Accusations of Nationalism

Slobodan Milošević was a Yugoslav and Serbian politician who was the President of Serbia from 1989 to 1997. He was also President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1997 to 2000. Milošević entered politics in 1984 as a member of the League of Communists of Serbia (LCS) and took over as head of the local communist party organization in Belgrade that same year. By 1987, his support for Serbia and Serbian minorities in the autonomous states of Vojvodina and Kosovo became more vocal. He was accused of being a nationalist who put the needs of Serbians before everyone else. This was a serious accusation because the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's official policy and slogan was "brotherhood and unity" that encourages peaceful coexistence, interdependence, and equality instead of nationalism. He continued to control the mass media and suppressed political opponents.

Despite this criticism, Milošević continued with amendments to the constitution. By 1990 Milošević pushed through changes to the Serbian constitution that decreased the provinces' autonomy. Yugoslavia became fractured. Many people began to resist Serbian dominance and pushed to declare independence.

By April 1992, the government of one of the provinces in Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, declared its independence from Yugoslavia. Bosnia-Herzegovina had a population of 4 million, composed of three main ethnic groups: Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim, 44%), Serb (31%), and Croat (17%), as well as Yugoslav (8%). Bosnian Serbs were opposed to an independent Bosnian nation that would have a Bosniak majority. Fearing they would be in the minority and wanting to increase their power, the Bosnian Serbs launched a military campaign to secure territory and "cleanse" Bosnia-Herzegovina of its Muslim civilian and Croat population.

4. What was Slobodan Milošević repeatedly accused of? Why was this accusation so serious?
5. What happened in 1992? How did this impact unity in Yugoslavia?

Background

Directions: Watch this [ABC Video from 1992 reporting on the Bosnian War](#)

Directions: Using the information about [the Bosnia-Herzegovina from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) below contextualize the genocide by describing the geographic, economic, political, and historical circumstances of the event on a local, regional, and global scale.

1. What events took place outside of the country/region that led to the genocide?
2. What historical events led to the genocide?
3. Why was there conflict between the groups involved?
4. What events led the group in power to have power?
5. What events occurred close to the start of the genocide that sparked the conflict?

Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992–1995

In 1991, Yugoslavia's republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnia) had a population of 4 million, composed of three main ethnic groups: Bosniak (Bosnian Muslim, 44 percent), Serb (31 percent), and Croat (17 percent), as well as Yugoslav (8 percent).

On April 5, 1992, the government of Bosnia declared its independence from Yugoslavia. The creation of an independent Bosnian nation that would have a Bosniak majority was opposed by Bosnian Serbs, who launched a military campaign to secure coveted territory and "cleanse" Bosnia of its Muslim civilian population. The Serbs targeted Bosniak and Croatian civilians in areas under their control, in what has become known as "ethnic cleansing."

During the subsequent civil war that lasted from 1992 to 1995, an estimated 100,000 people were killed, 80 percent of whom were Bosniaks. In July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces killed as many as 8,000 Bosniak men and boys from the town of Srebrenica. It was the largest massacre in Europe since the Holocaust.

Fighting ended after a NATO bombing campaign forced Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table, and a peace agreement, the Dayton Accords, was signed in 1995.

History of Ethnic Tensions

After WWII, Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia unified to form the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, comprised of a number of ethnic groups, including: Serbs (Orthodox Christians), Croats (Catholics), Bosniaks (Muslims) and ethnic Albanians (Muslims).

There had long been a history of tensions in the Balkans between these groups. During World War II several armed forces committed abuses. For example, Croats collaborating with Nazi Germany killed several hundred thousand Serbs, Roma ("Gypsies"), and Jews.

Yugoslavia's president, Josip Tito, governed with an iron hand and was able to keep ethnic tensions in check. But when he died in 1980, Yugoslavia spiraled into chaos, and some of the republics and ethnic groups expressed the desire for independence. Yugoslav republics began declaring their independence in 1990. During the Croatian war of independence (1991), the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army supported Serb separatists in Croatia and committed atrocities against Croatian civilians.

There was also a growing sense of nationalism among some of the republics' leaders, which gained momentum in the mid-1980s after the rise of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic. Milosevic seized these nationalist feelings to engineer changes that strengthened Serbia's position in the Yugoslav constitution. He transformed the military so that it became 90 percent Serbian and extended his control over the country's financial, mass media, and security structures to support Serbian nationalists in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia. He and Serbian separatists in Croatia and Bosnia used their influence to foment ethnic tensions by convincing Serbian civilians across the former Yugoslavia that their Croatian, Bosniak, and Albanian neighbors would threaten their rights.

Violence

Directions: Using the information about [the Bosnia-Herzegovina from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) below, check off the articles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights that were violated during this genocide.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 26. Everyone has the right to education.

Serbian Forces Target Civilians

In June 1991, the republics of Slovenia and Croatia declared independence from Yugoslavia, beginning the country's break up. The next month, the Yugoslav army—largely composed of Serbs and controlled by Slobodan Milosevic—invaded Croatia, justifying the act as a means to protect the Serbian minority there. The city of Vukovar fell, and the Serbs conducted mass executions of hundreds of Croat men, burying them in mass graves. When Bosnia's independence from Yugoslavia was recognized by the United States and the European Union on April 7, 1992, Bosnian Serb forces backed by the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army immediately launched offensives to control areas they coveted. Behind the front lines, Bosniak and Croatian civilians bore the brunt of Serbian assaults in what became known as "ethnic cleansing": torture, rape, murder, robbery, and forced displacement.

The Bosnian government army tried to defend its territory, at times in alliance with, and other times in opposition to, Croatian forces. While all sides committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, Bosnian Serb forces systematically perpetrated abuses throughout the areas they controlled. The conflict included an intensive bombing campaign of Bosnia's capital in "the Siege of Sarajevo"—in which snipers in hills around the city shot at civilians as they tried to get food and water—as well as roundups and mass executions, confinement in concentration camps, torture, and systematic rape.

In the summer of 1995, the Bosnian Serb army prepared to [capture and "cleanse"](#) the three towns in eastern Bosnia that remained under Bosnian government control: Srebrenica, Zepa, and Gorazde. Planning for these offensives occurred even though the international community in 1993 had declared these enclaves "safe havens" to be disarmed and protected by UN peacekeeping forces.

Massacre at Srebrenica

On July 11, 1995, Bosniak civilians fled the Serbian advance on Srebrenica and sought shelter at the UN base north of Srebrenica at Potocari. A column of Bosniak men, including some armed, decided to try to walk to Bosnian government-held territory. By late afternoon, Serbian forces arrived at the gates of the UN base and that night terrorized, raped, and killed some Bosniak civilians sheltering by the UN compound.

On July 12th, buses began arriving at Potocari. The crowd was separated: women and children were allowed to board the buses and were transported to Bosnian government-held territory. During the trip, the buses were stopped several times and searched. More men and some women were taken off to be killed or raped. Men and boys taken from the crowd at Potocari were held by Serbian forces. Some were killed immediately. Others were bused to mass killing sites. On July 13th, the Dutch soldiers expelled the remaining refugees from the UN base.

The column of Bosniak men fleeing through the forest encountered Serbian military units, and intense fighting occurred. Some men made their way to government-held territory; others died; and others surrendered to the Bosnian Serbs. The captured men were taken to execution sites and murdered. The killing operation continued for days. Only after Bosnian Serb forces overran the UN safe haven at Zepa and dropped a bomb in a crowded Sarajevo market did the international community respond forcefully. In August 1995, NATO launched three weeks of bombing on Bosnian Serb positions in conjunction with a Bosnian government and Croatian ground offensive that helped push the Serbs back to negotiations. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina ended in December 1995 with a peace agreement negotiated in Dayton, Ohio, and known as the Dayton Accords.

By the end of the fighting, more than 100,000 civilians had been killed, more than 20,000 were missing and believed to be dead, and two million had become refugees.

Response

Directions: Using the information about [the Bosnia-Herzegovina from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) below, answer the questions below pertaining to the genocide you are researching.

1. What brought the genocide to an end or lessened the intensity of the conflict?
2. How did the international community (other countries, the United Nations, international non-governmental organizations) react to the conflict? Did they act? If so, how? If not, why not?

Focus on Humanitarian Aid

The Dayton Accords, negotiated under the auspices of the United States in Dayton Ohio ended the war, and established two state “entities”—the Serb Republic and the Bosnian Federation—joined by a weak central government.

While the NATO campaign proved decisive in ending the conflict, this intervention did not have the imprimatur of the full international community. Since the beginning of the conflict, the UN and international leaders had refused to confront the Bosnian Serbs, fearing strong action would complicate peace negotiations or jeopardize humanitarian aid efforts; the central focus of the international response to the conflict in Bosnia was providing humanitarian aid, led by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Even when it became clear that the attacks in Srebrenica were being planned, the international community did not offer the UN peacekeepers stationed there additional support or assistance. And although individual policymakers at times took strong stands against human rights abuses in Bosnia, in general the UN, the European Union, the United States, and Russia minimized the aggressive nature of the conflict and treated the Serbs, Bosniaks, and Croats as equal “warring parties.”

Providing humanitarian aid instead of confronting atrocities against civilians was the central focus of the international response to the conflict in Bosnia. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees led an enormous aid operation offering assistance to those displaced, malnourished and needing medical treatment as a result of the war.

Aftermath

The Yugoslav government arrested Milošević in 2001. He was then turned over to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and charged with genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The trial began in February 2002. On March 11, 2006, he was found dead in his prison cell. Milošević died before the trial ended. He was never convicted of the charges brought against him.



Slobodan Milosevic during his trial

1. Who brought charges against Milošević?
2. What crimes was he charged with?
3. Was he found guilty? Why or why not?

Summary

1. Explain the historical circumstances that led to Slobodan Milošević’s rule in Yugoslavia.
2. Identify two human rights violations committed under Slobodan Milošević.
3. Describe how the human rights violations committed under Slobodan Milošević came to an end and explain if anyone was held accountable for the human rights violations.