

BOSNIAN GENOCIDE, 1992 - 1995

In the 1990s during the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, systematic campaigns of ethnic cleansing affected all sides.



Where?

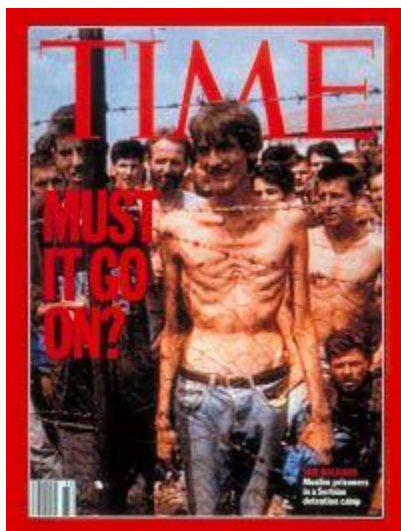
The former Yugoslavia's six republics were united for more than fifty years. As Josip Tito, Yugoslavia's President from 1953 to 1980, once said, "I am the leader of one country with two alphabets, three languages, four religions, five nationalities, six republics, surrounded by seven neighbors, with eight ethnic minorities." Under Tito's dictatorial control, the country was prosperous and peaceful.

When?

In 1980, Tito died. The economy began an economic slide that continued into the mid-1990s. Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia rose to power, based on campaigns of propaganda and nationalism. Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia declared independence from Yugoslavia. War broke out in the former Yugoslavia, lasting from 1990 to 1995.

Who?

Milosevic and Tudjman used public media to turn television and radio into effective propaganda tools that intensified tensions between Serbs and Croats while demonizing the Muslims. Serb paramilitary units began a campaign of terror using force, intimidation, and provocation against Bosnians and non-Serbs. They murdered defenseless civilians and drove the rest from their homes and businesses, which were then looted and destroyed. All sides of the conflict committed ethnic cleansing, but the scale and intensity of Serb actions against Muslims became genocidal. Serbs specifically targeted intellectuals, professionals, and political leaders in an attempt to eradicate the Bosnian Muslim culture.



How?

Bosnia suffered the highest death tolls, displacement, and gender-based violence among the republics. After Bosnia declared independence, Serb militants opened fire on thousands of peaceful demonstrators in Sarajevo. All roads into Sarajevo were blocked and the airport was shut down, cutting off over 400,000 residents from basic necessities like food, medicine, water, and electricity. In the longest siege in modern history, nearly 10,000 people died in four years, including 1,500 children.

In 1995 in Srebrenica, Bosnia, over 20,000 women, children, and elderly were forcibly transferred into Muslim-controlled territory while 8,000 men and boys were separated from their families, systematically slaughtered, and buried in mass graves.

During the war, there was a network of over 200 concentration camps in Bosnia where tens of thousands were incarcerated in inhumane conditions. Violence against women occurred in massive proportions: Serb authorities were told to impregnate the women as a means of destroying the Bosnian Muslim people. Women and young girls were subject

to rape in front of their own parents and family members, and women were held captive for use as sex slaves.

The Aftermath

NATO dropped 1,026 bombs to bring all parties to the peace table. In 1995 in Dayton, Ohio, a peace agreement was signed. Today, most places in the countryside are littered and in ruins. Hundreds of thousands who fled have not yet returned. Economic hardship and corruption continue to affect Bosnia, and unemployment remains at a shocking 43 percent. Many educated people have left for better opportunities abroad; this 'brain drain' further weakens prospects for economic and social recovery in the region. The annual Srebrenica Remembrance Day is July 11, when the Mothers of Srebrenica preserve the memory of the Srebrenica Genocide and honor those killed.