



Zlata Filipovic
in 1994

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

A Young Girl in Wartime

Zlata Filipovic (fee LEEP uh vich) was 11 years old in 1992 when she began a diary about her life in war-torn Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. Here is an excerpt:

“Today a shell fell on the park in front of my house, the park where I used to play and sit with my girlfriends. A lot of people were hurt . . . AND NINA IS DEAD . . . She was such a sweet, nice little girl.”

—Zlata Filipovic, *Zlata's Diary*

Bosnia is just one of the nations that have faced ethnic, religious, or national conflicts in recent decades.

Focus Question Why have ethnic and religious conflicts divided some nations?

Conflicts Divide Nations

Objectives

- Explain the complex causes of ethnic and religious conflicts.
- Describe how war ravaged Chechnya.
- Understand how Yugoslavia broke apart.

Terms, People, and Places

Northern Ireland	Slobodan Milosevic
Good Friday Agreement	ethnic cleansing
Chechnya	Kosovo
multiethnic	

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence Fill in a flowchart like the one below to keep track of the sequence of events in the conflicts in Northern Ireland, Chechnya, and Yugoslavia.

Sequence of Conflicts		
Northern Ireland	Chechnya	Yugoslavia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1972: Six Irish counties vote to remain in the United Kingdom. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

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Many wars and conflicts in recent decades have arisen over ethnic or religious differences. Such differences have led to civil wars within nations. Regional rivalries have also resulted in wars between nations.

Ethnic and Religious Conflicts

Ethnic and religious conflicts have often had more than one cause. The root of the conflict is often a cultural difference between two groups based on ethnicity, religion, or both. However, it takes more than cultural differences to create conflict. Malaysia and Singapore, for example, have great ethnic and religious diversity, but little internal conflict. Both countries enjoy peace because they have tried to distribute economic resources and political power fairly among their ethnic and religious groups.

War in Sri Lanka Conflicts occur when members of one ethnic or religious group feel that they face unfair treatment, or discrimination, by members of another group. For example, in Sri Lanka, where Sinhalese Buddhists are the majority, Sinhalese nationalists made Sinhalese the only official language. They ended the official use of the Tamil language. They also created government support for the Buddhist religion. Sinhalese nationalists excluded the Hindu Tamils from power. This led to the bloody civil war described in the previous chapter. Although a truce eased the violence in the early 2000s, Tamil rebels kept up their demand for a separate state, and fighting resumed as peace talks flagged.

Divisions in Canada Some countries, such as Canada, have found peaceful ways to resolve internal conflicts. Although Canada is mostly English-speaking, the province of Quebec is mainly French-speaking. At times, many people in Quebec wanted to separate from Canada. While a few separatists turned to violence, most worked within Canada's democratic system to protect their language and culture. On several occasions, voters in Quebec chose to remain in Canada, most recently in 1995.

Northern Ireland's Troubles The conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland was deeply rooted in the past. In 1922 after centuries of struggle, Ireland won independence from Britain. Six counties in the north, which had a Protestant majority, remained part of Britain as Northern Ireland. Catholics in Northern Ireland faced widespread discrimination. Tensions simmered when Protestants rejected Catholic demands for civil rights and unification with the rest of Ireland.

In the 1960s, Protestant and Catholic extremists turned to violence and terrorism. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) attacked Protestants, while Protestant militias targeted Catholics. The violence raged for three decades. In 1998, both sides finally signed a peace accord, known as the Good Friday Agreement. Since then, the two sides have moved slowly to set up a power-sharing government. After years of mistrust and violence, most Northern Irish hoped that peace had come to their land at last.

Contrasting Ethnic Relations

Nation	Political System	Ethnic Conflict
Sri Lanka	Limits rights of minority groups	Has led to violence
Canada	Protects minority groups	Resolved democratically

Chart Skills Based on the chart and the information in this section, explain why the response of the ethnic minority to discrimination in Sri Lanka differed from that in Canada.

✓ **Checkpoint** Why did conflict break out in Northern Ireland?

War Ravages Chechnya

Ethnic and religious tensions fueled conflict within Russia and in several former Soviet republics. In the mid-1990s, separatists in Chechnya tried to break away from Russian rule. The Muslim Chechens were one of many minority groups who lived in Russia. When Chechen rebels confronted government forces, Russia launched a brutal campaign to defeat them. It crushed the revolt in most parts of Chechnya but killed large numbers of civilians. During the fighting, both sides committed war crimes such as torture.

By the early 2000s, embittered Chechen rebels took their battle into other parts of Russia. Some turned to terrorism, attacking civilians in Moscow and elsewhere. With Russian troops occupying much of Chechnya, tensions remained high, and Russians feared new terrorist attacks.

In the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, Azeris are the majority. In the region of Nagorno-Karabakh, however, Armenians outnumber

Azeris. When Armenians there sought independence, fighting raged for years, leaving an estimated 30,000 people dead and at least a million refugees homeless.

✓ **Checkpoint** How has the war in Chechnya affected neighboring regions of Russia?



Grozny in Ruins

Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, lay in ruins in 2000 after Russian troops won a battle for control of the city.

Yugoslavia Breaks Apart

Ethnic, nationalist, and religious tensions tore Yugoslavia apart during the 1990s. Before 1991, Yugoslavia was multiethnic, or made up of several ethnic groups. These groups included Serbs, Montenegrins, and Macedonians, who were Orthodox Christians; Croats and Slovenes, who were Roman Catholics; and the mostly Muslim Bosniaks and Albanians. A majority of Yugoslavians—including the Serbs, Montenegrins, Croats, and Bosniaks—all spoke the same language, Serbo-Croatian, but these groups had different religions. Albanians, Slovenes, and Macedonians spoke minority languages.

Yugoslavia was made up of six republics, similar to states in the United States. These were Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (often known as Bosnia for short), Montenegro, and Macedonia. Each republic had a dominant ethnic group but also was home to ethnic minorities. Serbs formed the majority in Serbia but were an important ethnic minority in several of the other republics. Serbs dominated Yugoslavia, which was held together and controlled by its Communist Party.

Republics Break Away The fall of communism fed nationalist unrest throughout Yugoslavia. The Serbian-dominated government tried to preserve the country. In 1991, however, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence. This move triggered fighting between Croats and the Serbian minority within Croatia. Macedonia and Bosnia soon broke away from Yugoslavia as well, leaving only Serbia and Montenegro. In 2006, Montenegro also went its own way, separate from Serbia.

Civil War Devastates Bosnia When Bosnia declared independence in 1992, civil war erupted among Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. Bosnian Serbs wanted to set up their own government. They received money and arms from Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic (mih LOH shuh vich), an extreme Serb nationalist. The largest group in Bosnia, the Muslim Bosniaks, lived scattered across Bosnia. They did not want the country divided into ethnic regions.

During the war, all sides committed atrocities. Bosnian Serbs conducted a vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing. This meant killing people from other ethnic groups or forcibly removing them from their homes to create ethnically "pure" areas, in this case for Serbs. Tens of thousands of Bosniaks and Croats were brutalized or killed, sometimes in mass executions. Croat and Bosniak fighters took revenge. Croats launched an ethnic cleansing campaign to drive ethnic Serbs from parts of Croatia.

Finally, NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serb military forced the warring parties to the peace table. Guided by the United States, the rival groups signed the Dayton Accords, ending the war in 1995. An international force helped maintain a fragile peace in Bosnia.

Vocabulary Builder

dominate—(DAHM uh nayt) *v.* to control or have power over



Map Skills The former nation of Yugoslavia had broken apart into six new nations by 2006. During the mid-2000s, the region of Kosovo moved toward greater independence from Serbia.

1. **Locate** (a) Sarajevo (b) Serbia (c) Kosovo
2. **Location** Which new nation does not share a border with Serbia on any side?
3. **Make Inferences** How did the location of Bosnia and Herzegovina put it at risk of becoming involved in conflicts between Serbians and Croats?

The Fight for Kosovo As Bosnia reached a tense peace, a crisis broke out in the Serbian province of Kosovo. Over the centuries, many Albanians, mostly Muslim, had settled in Kosovo. By the 1990s, they made up about 90 percent of Kosovo's population. The rest of the population was mostly Serb.

In 1989, Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic began oppressing Kosovar Muslims. Peaceful protests led to more repression. In the mid-1990s, a small guerrilla army of ethnic Albanians began to respond with armed attacks on Serbian targets. Milosevic resisted international peace efforts. In 1999, NATO launched air strikes against Serbia, and Serbian forces attempted ethnic cleansing of Albanian civilians.

However, NATO air strikes eventually forced Milosevic to withdraw Serbian forces from Kosovo. UN and NATO forces then supervised a tense peace. As Kosovo rebuilt, tensions remained high between ethnic Albanians and Serbs. In response to the desire of the majority ethnic Albanians, the region slowly moved toward independence in the mid-2000s. Serbia, however, opposed this process. Serbs saw Kosovo as part of their country, and new violence threatened to break out if Kosovo became independent.

Albanian Guerrillas in Kosovo

These ethnic Albanian guerrillas were moving into an area after Serbian-dominated Yugoslav forces withdrew in 1999. What does this photograph suggest about relations between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo?

- ✓ **Checkpoint** How did the breakup of Yugoslavia lead to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-3211

Terms, People, and Places

1. What do many of the terms, people, and places listed at the beginning of the section have in common? Explain.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Recognize Sequence**
Use your completed flowchart to answer the Focus Question: Why have ethnic and religious conflicts divided some nations?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Synthesize Information** Based on the peaceful example of Malaysia, what might bring lasting peace to Northern Ireland?
4. **Predict Consequences** Based on your knowledge of the causes of ethnic conflict, how effective do you think Russia's methods will be in resolving the conflict in Chechnya?
5. **Draw Conclusions** Why did the breakup of Yugoslavia lead to increased ethnic conflict?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Explore a Topic To write a research report, you first need to frame questions that will help you to explore your topic. Choose one of the conflicts in this section and write a series of questions that you could try to answer through research. For example, if you choose the Northern Ireland conflict, you might ask why the IRA has been reluctant to turn over weapons, or who has been responsible for recent attacks in Northern Ireland.

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