

Indisputably Indispensable Info™ #10

End of Communism & the Yugoslav Wars

A Basic Chronology:

1965		Nicolae Ceausescu becomes top man in Romania
1968		Prague Spring (Czechoslovakia) crushed by Warsaw Pact intervention
		Articulation of "Brezhnev Doctrine"
		Albania leaves Warsaw Pact
		Introduction of "New Economic Mechanism" in Hungary
1970		Polish workers revolt against price increases
1977		Establishment of "Charter 77" (on human rights) in Czechoslovakia
1978		Karol Wytola elected Pope as John Paul II
1979		Pope John Paul II visits Poland
1980		Polish attempts to raise prices leads to protest & creation of Solidarity union
1981		Wojcech Jaruzelski declares martial law (Dec); suspended in Dec, 1982
1981-2		Further market reforms in Hungary: an attempt at "regulated market"
1982		Death of Leonid Brezhnev in USSR, replaced by Yuri Andropov
1983		Solidarity's Lech Walesa receives Nobel Peace Prize
1984		Death of Andropov in USSR, replaced by Konstantin Chernenko
		Jaruzelski proclaims general amnesty to those imprisoned under martial law
1985		Death of Chernenko; Mikhail Gorbachev becomes General Secretary of CPSU
1986		Nuclear disaster in Chernobyl (USSR)
1987		Demonstrations in Vilnius, Riga & Tallinn marking anniversary of Soviet-Nazi pact
1988		Formation of Lithuanian "Sajudis" movement, critical of Communist Party
1989	Feb	Solidarity re-legalized in Poland; roundtable discussions begin
	March	Congress of People's Deputies elected in partly democratic elections (USSR)
	April	Gorbachev announces plan to withdraw from Afghanistan
	May	Hungary opens its western borders with Austria
	June	Reburial of reformist Imre Nagy (executed after 1956) in Hungary
		First quasi-free elections in Poland ¹
	Aug	Tadeusz Mazowiecki becomes head of first non-communist gov't in Poland
		Human chain across Baltic states protesting 50 th anniversary of Soviet-Nazi Pact
	Oct	Gorbachev officially renounces "Brezhnev Doctrine" at Warsaw Pact meeting
		Erich Honecker forced into retirement in GDR, replaced by Egon Krenz
	Nov	"Fall" (opening) of Berlin Wall (9 Nov 1989)
		Creation of Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia
		Petar Mladenov's "palace revolution" topples Todor Zhivkov in Bulgaria
		Ceausescu unanimously re-elected leader of Romanian Communist Party
	Dec	"Velvet Revolution" in Czechoslovakia; Vaclav Havel becomes president
		Demonstrations against Ceausescu begin in Timisoara
		Revolt against (and execution of) Ceausescu & wife (25 Dec 1989)
1990	March	Lithuanian Supreme Soviet declares Lithuanian independence
	June	Yeltsin & his supporters leave the Communist Party
	July	West German Deutschmark extended to East Germany
1990	Summer	Various republics of USSR declare themselves "sovereign"
	Sept	"Final Settlement" on Germany signed in Moscow allows German reunification

¹ Non-communist were allowed to run, but a certain number of seats were reserved for communists.

	Oct	GDR "accedes" to the Federal Republic and ceases to exist
1991	Jan	Soviet attempts to restrain Lithuanian & Latvian secession
	March	Referendum on the Soviet Union (76% vote for a new & better union)
	June	Yeltsin elected President of the Russian Federation ²
	Aug	Attempted (and unsuccessful) coup by conservative communists Estonia & Latvia declare independence just after coup attempt
	Dec	Reps of Russia, Ukraine & Belarus renounce Soviet Union Treaty of 1922 Resignation of Gorbachev; formal dissolution of USSR
1992	July	Reps of Czech lands & Slovakia agree to division of the country on 1 Jan 1993
1993	Jan	Czechoslovakia replaced by Czech Republic & Slovakia

Political Outcomes in East & East-Central Europe

Disappeared from map	USSR Yugoslavia Czechoslovakia GDR (East Germany)
GDR	Annexed to FRG and ceased to exist (1990)
Czechoslovakia	Divided into Czech Republic & Slovakia (1993)
Yugoslavia	Broken apart into Slovenia (1991), Croatia (1991), Macedonia (1991), Bosnia (1992), Montenegro (2006), Kosovo (2008), ³ and Serbia (left after all these secessions)
USSR	Succeeded by the 15 "Union Republics" of the USSR: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan & Russia ⁴

² This made Yeltsin the first democratically elected Russian leader in history.

³ Not recognized by all countries.

⁴ Several of these states were faced with separatist movements of their own. Thus Chechnya sought to break with Russia and has been only conditionally retained after wars of 1994-96 and 1999-2006. "Transnistria" declared independence from Moldova. Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Ajaria have also sought to break from Georgia. These declarations have not been broadly recognized by the international community.

The Break-Up of Yugoslavia: A Chronology

- 1918 Creation of first Yugoslavia.⁵
- 1941 Yugoslavia invaded & partitioned by Nazis
Separate Croatian Ustasha state established
- 1945 New Yugoslav government formed with Tito as prime minister
- 1960s Nationalist agitation by non-Serb groups against unitarism
- 1971 Muslims officially recognized as a national group throughout Yugoslavia
- 1974 New constitution decentralizes Yugoslavia substantially
- 1980 Tito dies; awkward rotating presidency introduced
- 1980s Growing nationalist agitation, esp. between Serbs & Albanians over Kosovo
- 1987 Slobodan Milosevic incites Serbs against Albanians in Kosovo (again in 1989)
- 1989 Fall of communism throughout Eastern Europe
Milosevic becomes President of Serbia
- 1991 Slovenia, Croatia & Macedonia declare independence from Yugoslavia; war begins.⁶
End of USSR
- 1992 Bosnia declares independence from Yugoslavia
Bosnian Serbs proclaim creation of Republika Srpska
Montenegro combines with Serbia to form Federated Republic of Yugoslavia
- 1993 International Tribunal for War Crimes established in The Hague
United Nations forces (UNPROFOR) begin to establish "safe havens"
Civil war breaks out between Muslims & Croats of Bosnia
- 1994 Muslim-Croat Federation created within Bosnia
- 1995 Mass murder of Muslims at Srebrenica (worst mass murder since WWII)
Croatia recaptures Krajina & expels large numbers of Serbs
Dayton Accords end Bosnian war—in effect quasi-partition of Bosnia
- 1999 NATO bombings in response to Serbian ethnic cleansing of Albanians in Kosovo.⁷
- 2001 Slobodan Milosevic delivered to The Hague for war crimes trial
- 2003 Looser union of Serbia & Montenegro replaces Yugoslavia
- 2004 Slovenia becomes first part of Yugoslavia to enter European Union (EU)
- 2005 EU begins negotiations for accession with Croatia
- 2006 Slobodan Milosevic dies while in prison at The Hague
Montenegro declares independence from union with Serbia.⁸
- 2008 Kosovo declares independence, but not universally recognized.

⁵ Originally known as "Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes" (renamed "Kingdom of Yugoslavia" in 1929).

⁶ Belgrade made comparatively little effort to keep Slovenia in Yugoslavia, but Croatia's declaration was much more serious.

⁷ Or the other way around – ethnic cleansing in response to NATO bombings?

⁸ The EU set a standard of a 55% vote in favor to recognize.