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**Yugoslavia - I**

**Lead: Yugoslavia was an artifice, pan-Slavic construct in Southern Europe. It was a dream in the minds of its creators that failed to set aside the centrifugal force of nationalism.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: The Balkans are roughly ranged along the ancient tectonic line of division between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires, but the ethnic, religious and nation divisions that animated that troubled region go back even further. In the heady days at the end of World War I, with**

**empires crashing, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was formed to bring together into a national entity all the rich variety of ethnic groups in the region, eventually including Bosnians, Serbs, Croats, Albanians, Slovenes, Hungarians, Macedonians, and Montenegrins and by this hopefully tamp down some of the tensions that, in part, dragged Europe into that most terrible, and some might say useless, of conflicts in 1914.**

**Known colloquially from the beginning as Yugoslavia, for the first eleven years it was officially the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In 1929 King Alexander banned political parties and began massive suppression of nationalist**

**sentiment. His goal was to erase traditional regional boundaries and replace them with a redrawn map encompassing nine banovinas or provinces. Alexander was a Serb, however, and his actions, perceived by some as “the Serbian Dictatorship,” seemed to only enflame nationalist tendencies, and to further rip at the tender ties of Yugoslav unity. He was assassinated in 1934 in Marseille, France by Veličko Kerin who was working with Yugoslav expatriot members of banned political parties.**

**Rule then shifted to Alexander’s son, Peter II, but as he was a minor, power was held by a Regency dominated by his cousin Prince Paul.**

**Confusion and turmoil were intensified by the growth and power of German and Italian Fascist regimes which began to intrude into Yugoslav affairs. In March 1941 Paul succumbed to domestic and external pressure and signed the highly unpopular Tripartite Treaty, an alliance with the Axis powers. He was removed in a coup that gave full powers to the youthful Peter, but that reign was short-lived as German, Italy and Hungarian troops invaded in April and, after an armistice was signed in Belgrade, carved up the country again. Next time: Tito and the semblance of national unity.**

**Research by Ben Morano, at the University of Richmond, this is Dan**

**Roberts.**

## Resources

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