Objectives

At the end of this unit, you will

Be aware of the following

• Preferential treatment given the Serbian Orthodox Church by Milosevic’s Socialist party of Serbia
• Serbian government’s role in suppression of human rights
• Serbian police use of arbitrary arrest and detention in Albanian dominated Kosovo
• Necessity of freedom of the press/media in Serbia
• Traditionally high level of domestic violence within Serbia
• Particularities of Montenegrin culture.

Identify

• Vracara • St. Sava’s Day • Gusle
• Kosovo • Vidovdan • Slava
• Zadruga • Kumstvo • Zadushnice

Realize

• Many Serbian Orthodox practitioners attend services mainly on holidays rather than weekly
• Close identity of religion and ethnicity within Serbia
• Suppression of ethnic Albanian human rights by the Serbian government
• Historical pattern of conflict within Montenegro over the centuries
Serbia and Montenegro has self-proclaimed itself the “Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,” but the U.S. view is that the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) has dissolved and that none of the successor republics represents its continuation. The local short form for Serbia and Montenegro is Srbija-Crna Gora (Serbia--Black Mountain).

Population 10,614,558
% under 15 years 21%

Comm

TV 1:6
Radio 1:5
Phone 1:5
Newspaper 90:1000

Health

Life Expectancy 69 male 75 female
Hospitals 1:184
Doctors 1:502
IMR 23:1000
Income $2,000 per capita
Literacy Rate 98%
1. Religious Groups:

a. Orthodox (65%)

b. Muslim (19%)

c. Roman Catholic (4%)

d. Protestant (1%)

e. Other (11%)

f. Folk practice

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For Serbian Orthodox, holiday church attendance (rather than weekly) is the normal practice.

Vracara, older women folk medicine practitioners, may be called upon to treat certain illnesses. For rural peasants, the dead continue to provide continuity to life through name recall and the solidarity of a tangible line of descendants.

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g. Freedom of Religion

(1) Preferential treatment  “There is no state religion, but the Government gives preferential treatment, including access to state-run television for major religious events, to the Serbian Orthodox Church to which the majority of Serbs belong. The regime has subjected religious communities in Kosovo to harassment. For example, a Roman Catholic parish in Klina has the money, property, and permission (including up to the Supreme Court of Serbia) to build a church for its 6,000 member parish. However, the local chapter of Milosevic’s Socialist Party of Serbia has continued to block construction. Other Catholic and Muslim communities in the province had similar experiences.”
(2) Religious minorities

"Religion and ethnicity are so closely intertwined as to be inseparable. Serious discrimination against, and harassment of, religious minorities continued, especially in the Kosovo and Sandzak regions. Violence against the Catholic minority in Vojvodina, largely made up of ethnic Hungarians and Croats, has also been reported" (Human Rights Report--1997).

(3) U.S. government actions  "The U.S. Government has repeatedly urged the Government of Serbia to respect the human rights of its citizens, and contribute to a settlement of the Bosnian conflict that ensures that human rights are respected, including religious freedom" (Report on Religious Freedom--1997).

2. Ethnic/Racial Groups:

   a. Serbs (63%)
   b. Albanians (14%)
   c. Montenegrins (6%)
   d. Hungarians (4%)
   e. Other (13%)

   f. Human Rights--Ethnic Minorities  "There were credible reports that Muslims and ethnic Albanians continued to be driven from their homes or fired from their jobs on the basis of religion or ethnicity. Other ethnic minorities, including ethnic Hungarians in Vojvodina, also allege discrimination. In Zemun the Belgrade Helsinki Committee office identified at least three instances where the city government, under ultranationalist mayor Vojislav Seselj, encouraged the illegal eviction of ethnic Croats from their apartments, after which they were replaced by ethnic Serb refugees."
The Romani [Gypsy] population is generally tolerated, and there is no official discrimination. Roma have the right to vote, and there are two small Romani parties. However, prejudice against Roma is widespread. Skinheads murdered a Roma boy in Belgrade in October. Local authorities often ignore or condone societal intimidation of the Roma community.”

g. Human Rights--Police “The government’s human rights record continued to be poor.

The police committed numerous, serious abuses including extrajudicial killings, torture, brutal beatings, and arbitrary arrests. Police repression continued to be directed against ethnic minorities, and police committed the most widespread and worst abuses against Kosovo’s 90-percent ethnic Albanian population. Police repression was also worst against the Muslims of Sandzak and detainees and citizens who protested against the government. While under the Constitution citizens have a right to stage peaceful demonstrations, the police seriously beat scores of protesters throughout the country, sending many to hospitals.”

Government interference “The government used its continued domination of Parliament and the media to enact legislation to manipulate the electoral process. In practice, citizens cannot exercise the right to change their government. The judicial system is not independent of the government and does not ensure fair trials. The authorities infringe on citizens’ right to privacy.”

Media “The government used police and economic pressure against the independent press and media and restricted freedom of assembly and association. The government infringed on freedom to worship by minority religions and on freedom of movement. The government continues to hinder international and local human rights groups and reject their findings.”
Discrimination  “Discrimination and violence against women remained serious problems. Discrimination against ethnic Albanian, Muslim, and their Romani minorities continues. The regime limits unions not affiliated with the government in their attempts to advance worker rights.

Police use of arbitrary arrest and detention was concentrated primarily in Kosovo and to a lesser degree, in Sandzak.”

Police  “Police often apply certain laws only against ethnic minorities, using force with relative impunity. In Belgrade during student protests in late September and early October, police arbitrarily arrested dozens of citizens, including some who were not even participating in the protests. Police also beat several journalists, photographers, and television camera people. Laws regarding conspiracy and threats to the integrity of the government and state secrets, are so vague as to allow easy abuse by the regime.”

Arrest abuses  “Federal statutes permit police to detain criminal suspects without a warrant and hold them incommunicado for up to three days without charging them or granting access to an attorney. Serbian law separately provides for a 24-hour detention period. Police often combine the two for a total of a four-day detention period. After this period, police often beat people without ever officially charging them and routinely hold suspects well beyond the three-day statutory period. However, observers report that the problem is not as pronounced in the rest of Serbia-Montenegro as in the past.”

Courts  “Defense lawyers and human rights workers complained of excessive delays in filing formal charges and opening investigations. The ability of defense attorneys to challenge the legal basis of their clients’ detention often was further hampered by difficulties in gaining access to detainees or acquiring copies of official indictments and decisions to remand defendants into custody.”
In some cases, judges prevented the defense attorneys from reading the court file. The investigative judges often delegated responsibility to the police or state security service and rarely questioned their accounts of the investigation even when it was obvious that confessions were coerced.

According to human rights observers, many of these problems were in evidence with respect to the ethnic Albanians arrested over the winter and convicted in the late spring in Pristina.”

Selective law enforcement  “In a country where many if not most of the adult males in the Serbian population are armed, the police, according to some members of minorities, selectively enforced the laws regulating the possession and registration of firearms so as to harass and intimidate ethnic minorities, particularly Albanian Kosovars and Bosniak Muslims. The most frequent justification given for searches of homes and arrests was illegal possession of weapons.

Observers allege that in Kosovo the police are known to use the pretext of searching for weapons when in fact they are also searching for hard currency. Local police authorities more easily approve the registration of legal weapons for Kosovo Serbs and frequently turn a blind eye to Serbs’ possession of illegal weapons.”

Displacement  “Exile is not legally permitted, and no instances of its use are known to have occurred. However, the practical effect of police repression in Kosovo and Sandzak has been to accentuate political instability, which in turn had limited economic opportunity. As a result, many ethnic Albanians and Bosniak Muslims go abroad to escape persecution, although only in a few cases should direct links to police action be identified.”
h. Human Rights--Freedom of the Press  “Federal law provides for freedom of speech and of the press, but in practice the Government strongly influences much of the media. In July several weeks before the Serbian elections, the Milosevic regime temporarily closed scores of private radio and television stations throughout Serbia.

The FRY Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications, which controls broadcast frequencies, worked in concert with the criminal and financial police to pressure independent media outlets that had not been able to regularize their legal status. Many broadcasters applied for frequencies but were left in a state of limbo by the regime. Serbia’s broadcast laws remain murky, and licenses are not issued in any fashion that can remotely be described as transparent.

While the regime harassed the independent media, a ...study showed that the Government violated the agreement on the presentation of political parties, signed before the election season. During the campaign season in August, state-controlled Radio and Television Serbia (RTS) openly campaigned for Milosevic’s ruling coalition. According to the HLC monitoring, all the other political parties received only one-quarter of the broadcast time allocated for political parties, while the RTS regularly opened the evening news broadcasts with campaign promotion pieces for the regime.”

Media bias “The most striking example of media bias came in reaction to the mass demonstrations from November 1996 to February 1997 that followed widespread government theft of the municipal elections. The government-controlled media downplayed the size of crowds, sometimes ignoring demonstrations altogether--despite numbers of demonstrators in the tens of thousands. When state-run television did cover demonstrations, it was in an effort to label protesters as ‘hooligans’ and ‘traitors’ determined to destroy Serbia” (Human Rights Practices--1997).
3. Languages  Serbs speak mainly the Ekavian subdialect of the Stokavian dialect of Serbian and Croatian. Montenegrins speak the Ijekvain subdialect of Stokavian. 5% of the population speaks Albanian.

4. Gender Issues  While Federal and republic laws provide for equal rights for all citizens, regardless of ethnic group, religion, language, or social status, and prohibit discrimination against women, in reality the legal system provides little protection to such groups.

   a. Domestic violence  "The traditionally high level of domestic violence persisted. The few official agencies dedicated to coping with family violence have inadequate resources and are limited in their options by social pressure to keep families together at all costs. Few victims of spousal abuse ever file complaints with authorities. The Center for Autonomous Women's Rights offers a rape crisis and spousal abuse hot line, as well as sponsoring a number of self-help groups. The Center also offered help to refugee women, many of whom experienced extreme abuse or rape during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia."

   b. Equality  "Women do not enjoy status equal to men in the FRY, and relatively few women obtain upper level management positions in commerce.

Traditional patriarchal ideas of gender roles, which hold that women should be subservient to the male members of their family, have long subjected women to discrimination. In some rural areas, particularly among minority communities, women are little more than serfs without the ability to exercise their right to control property and children.

Women in the FRY, however, legally are entitled to equal pay for equal work and are granted maternity leave for 1 year, with an additional 6 months available. Women are
active in political and human rights organizations. Women's rights groups continue to operate with little or no official acknowledgment” (Human Rights Report--1997).

5. Conflicts International disputes: Disputes with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia over Serbian populated areas. The Albanian majority in Kosovo seeks independence from the Serbian Republic.

6. Holidays/Observances
   a. Religious Events

   (1) Orthodox Christmas (7 Jan) and New Years (14 Jan).

   (2) Easter Celebrated in the spring, this is the most important religious celebration for Serbian Orthodox practitioners.

   (3) Zadushnice (zah-doosh-nee-tseh) Four times a year, Orthodox Serbs set aside a day to honor their dead. Near 1 November, Catholics and Protestants have a similar memorial day.

   (4) Slava These feast days for a patron saint vary from family to family. A clan often may receive assistance from their particular saint.

   (5) St. Sava’s Day (5 Dec) This commemoration of St. Sava (1174–1237), the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church, may be accompanied by special church services, speeches and choir presentations.

   (6) Holy Day of Letters (11 May) Some Orthodox faithful may observe this day honoring Saints Cyril and Methodius, the Orthodox missionaries to the Slavic countries. St. Cyril invented the Cyrillic alphabet in 855.
b. Public holidays

(1) New Year  (1 Jan)
(2) Women’s Day  (8 March)
(3) Worker’s Day  (1 May)
(4) Vidovdan  (vee-dohv-dahn, 28 June) This celebration commemorates the Battle of Kosovo in 1389.

7. Customs

a. Settlements  A strong movement to urbanization occurred in the past decades for Serbs. Three of every four now live in urban areas. Country settlements include:

(1) Peasant villages--Each house is surrounded with orchards, fields and assorted buildings.

(2) Clustered villages--Houses cluster along narrow, crooked streets (eastern and southern Serbia).

(3) Cross-road village--Houses are evenly spaced with a planned appearance.

(4) Walled villages--Ciflik, created by Turkish landlords during Ottoman domination, are found near the Macedonian border.

b. Family

In mountainous regions, the zadruga, extended family household, continues to carry influence. Also, family ties descending from male ancestors receive great attention. A common ancestor, last name and patron saint identifies many. Some rural men are able to accurately recite several hundred living and deceased relatives extending over some eight to ten generations.
In addition, ties by godfatherhood (kumstvo) and blood brotherhood (pobratimstvo) are important in some regions. Though changing, the extended rather than nuclear family (husband, wife and children) is the norm.

c. Montenegrin particularities Though closely identifying with the Serbs, Montenegrins also possess important differences (See Unit 9, Ethnic Groups). Due to the mountainous region they inhabit, most Montenegrins are rural.

(1) Settlements Small windowed one-or two-story houses are the norm. Loopholes, designed for protection against Ottoman or blood feud attackers, may still be seen. Modern buildings still incorporate this old pattern. The extended family, centered around patriarchal figures, are common.

(2) Marriage Traditionally, marriages were arranged by parents. Family reputation, and virginity by the woman continue to be high values. Historically, the most common causes of divorce were sterility or failure to bear a male offspring.

(3) Social Control A sense of honor, duty and shame serve as informal means of control. Gossip and violence (blood feuding) also remain.

(4) Conflicts Internal and external conflict is an established pattern.

Between 1850 and 1918, Montenegro fought seven wars. During the Ottoman empire, revolt was continuous. The mountainous region served as a staging area for revolts against the Ottomans in other areas of the Balkans. Kin group feuding (like the Hatfields and McCoys) continues.

(5) Religion Orthodox Christianity is fused with pre-Christian practice. Saint Elijah and local patron saints are key religious figures. Folk epics recount vampires, ghosts and nature spirits. Local “popes,” lay priests who often were ignorant of written doctrine, traditionally served as leaders.
(6) Ceremonies  Establishing godfatherhood (kumstvo—the sponsorship of a child as at baptism) is an important rite. Extended families also value the slava or feast of a given clan’s patron saint.

(9) Music  In mountainous regions, the single-horsehair wooden instrument (gusle), stroked with a horsehair bow, accompanies the singing of oral epic poetry.

(10) Manners and Customs  The following information, adapted from From Da to Yes, applies to Montenegrins.

- “Mountain Serbs”  This designation for Montenegrins shows the close identification they have for Serbian peoples. Though closely linked, many Montenegrins regard themselves as a separate nation.

- Love of freedom  As the tallest and most heavy-set people in Europe, Montenegrins are also known for their independence and love of freedom. Honesty, physical courage, bravery and pride are common traits.

- Honor  Having the reputation as tough fighters, Montenegrins historically settled issues between families, tribes and clans by means of blood feuds.

8. Cultural Literacy Concepts/Terms/People

a. Danilo Kis (1935–1989)  This author published novels and short stories describing the horrors and oppressions experienced by victims of war. He wrote Grobnica za Borisa Davidovica (A Tomb for Boris Davidovich) in 1976. Two books express devotion to his father, Basta, Pepeo (Garden, Ashes [1965]) and Pescanik (Hourglass [1972]). Danilo Kis was one of the few members of his family to survive the World War II Jewish persecution.
b. Americans of Serb origin

(1) Michael Pupin    Columbia University professor who helped develop telephones and wireless telegraph systems.

(2) Nikola Tesla    Pioneer in electric motor development for Westinghouse.

(3) Charles Simic    Poet and Pulitzer Prize winner

(4) Karl Malden and John Malkovich    Actors

(5) Pete Maravich    NBA basketball star
Vocabulary List: Country Area Studies--Serbia and Montenegro

Gusle  One-stringed, wooden instrument, popular in mountainous Balkan regions, which accompanies singing of oral epic poetry.

Kosovo  Province of Serbia which has a high ethnic Albanian population. It is a region of great importance to Serbian Orthodox Church history.

Kumstvo  (koomst-voh) Godfatherhood ties established early on in childhood which carry significant importance in many parts of Serbia and Montenegro.

Slava  Feast days for Serb patron saints. Extended families often have a specific saint for their clan.

St. Sava’s Day  Day set aside to honor the founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church (5 Dec).

Vidovdan  (vee-dohv-dahn, 28 June) Celebration commemorating the Battle of Kosovo in 1389

Vracara  Older women folk medical practitioners who may treat certain Serb illnesses.

Zadruga  (zah-droo-gah) In mountainous Balkan regions, this extended family household pattern continues to carry influence. Males and patriarchal heads of households carry great authority.

Zadushnice  (zah-doosh-nee-tseh) Remembrance days, held four times a year, where Serbs honor their dead.
Review Quiz: Country Studies-Serbia and Montenegro

Part 1--True/False

Place a T or an F in the blank provided.

1. _____ The current Serbian government’s human rights record is poor.

2. _____ Despite a record of human rights abuses elsewhere, Serbs practice genuine freedom of the press.

3. _____ Feast days set aside for patron saints of Serbian families are called Zadushnice.

4. _____ Saint Elijah is a key figure in the Orthodox practice of Montenegro.

5. _____ Within Orthodox practice of mountainous Montenegro, Christianity is often fused with pre-Christian ways of life.

6. _____ Establishing godfatherhood is an important rite for many Montenegrin Orthodox peoples.

7. _____ The Haiduks are Serbian heroes who historically waged guerrilla warfare against the Ottomans.

8. _____ When talking with most Serbs, it is good to speak indirectly and with a “beat around the bush” manner.

9. _____ According to the US State Departments’ 1997 Human Rights Report, the Serbian judicial system is independent of the government and ensures fair trials for its citizens.

10. _____ Within Serbia, religion and ethnicity are so closely intertwined that they can be said to be inseparable.
Part 2--Multiple Choice  Place the
letter of the most correct answer in the
blank provided.

1. ____ Many Serbian Orthodox practitioners attend church
   a. weekly.
   b. once a month.
   c. mainly on holidays.

2. ____ The Serbian government gives preferential treatment
to this religious body.
   a. Roman Catholic Church
   b. Muslin community
   c. Serbian Orthodox Church

3. ____ In Serbia, the ________ often are instruments of
human rights abuse.
   a. educational establishment
   b. police
   c. nongovernment organizations (NGOs)

4. ____ Serbian law enforcement officials routinely harass
and intimidate which ethnic minorities?
   a. Croats and Bulgarians living in Kosovo
   b. Albanian Kosovans and Bosniak Muslims
   c. Hungarians and Greeks living in Pristina

5. ____ The state controlled Radio and Television Serbia,
during recent elections,
   a. openly campaigned for Milosevic’s coalition.
   b. gave equal time to all political parties.
   c. took care to produce unbiased informative election
guidance.
6. ___ Ethnic Albanians are a majority (some estimates project a 4:1 ratio) in which region of Serbia?

   a. Vojvodina
   b. Belgrade
   c. Kosovo

7. ___ The most important religious celebration for Serbian Orthodox faithful is

   a. Christmas.
   b. Epiphany.
   c. Easter.

8. ___ The Serbian public holiday Vidovdan remembers

   a. the founding of the Serbian Orthodox Church.
   b. the battle of Kosovo in 1389.
   c. family members who have recently died.

9. ___ Walled villages (ciflik) created by Turkish landlords during the Ottoman era, are found near the __________ border.

   a. Croatian
   b. Macedonian
   c. Albanian

10. ___ In mountainous, rural regions of Serbia, the __________ family remains the norm.

    a. nuclear
    b. extended
    c. fragmented

"See problems as opportunities."
Resources for Further Study

a. Books and articles


Cohen, Philip J.  *Serbia’s Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History*.  College Station: Texas A & M University Press. 1996.  Also: Scr 940.54-- 864971 C678


Collection of Serbian poetry intended “to present a central poetic tradition of the Balkans in its full historical perspective.”


A collection and analysis of the paintings of Janez Bernik.


A collection of oral history through epic songs.


Part of the Panorama of World Art series. Especially helpful chapter on the spread of Byzantine art in the east: Serbia, Macedonia, and Romania.

b. Books--Yugoslavia in general


"Focuses primarily on the operational aspects of OSS [Office of Strategic Services] work in...Yugoslavia. Shows the kind of work American liaison officers did...and the extent to which their efforts either advanced or influenced the goals of allied policy there.”


A collection of short stories by Yugoslavian authors, who often use satire to present their views on the society around them.

Proceedings and report of the Commission of Inquiry of the Committee for a Fair Trial for Dlaja Mihailovich. General Mihailovich fought against the Communist movement until his capture by Tito; thereafter he was tried as a traitor and collaborator.


Book is broken into the following sections: Country/People, Past, Foundations/Limits, and Today/Tomorrow.


An analysis/overview of the progress and struggle in the movement for the equality and emancipation of women in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.


Using the situation in Yugoslavia, the author attempts to provide a general knowledge of political and social change and the "relationship of the politics of nationalism to democracy."


An academic analysis of the political and social environment of Yugoslavia.


c. WWW Sites

Srbija Info. “Welcome to Serbia-info.”
http://www.serbia-info.com/
Date of Visit: 15 April 1998

Site devoted to knowledge about Serbia. Contains numerous links, some of which include: Economy, Important business deals, Banks and stock, Fairs and exhibitions, Culture, Science, Population and family, Religion, and political sites.

http://www.hic.hr/books/mladen/ethnic.htm
Date of Visit: 15 April 1998

A short essay about the history of the terrorist group Mlada Bosna, social reform and the ethnic cleansing that has taken place.

Serbian Orthodox Church
http://www.spc.org.yu/index03.html
Date of Visit: 20 April 1998

Homepage and links to Serbian Orthodox history, theology, museum, library and periodicals. The history link provides a ten page overview of Serbian Orthodox history.

"The strength in joint operations and jointness as an entity is that everybody brings their own core competencies and core capabilities to the table or to the operation, and you pick from those the strengths you need to meld together for whatever specific task you’re asked to carry out. I’m very, very much committed to that.”

Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Jay L. Johnson