

Basque and kosovo: a quest for freedom

[Philosophy](#), [Freedom](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In the latter part of the 1990s, the region of Kosovo gained international media attention when the armies of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic were deployed with the purpose of crushing the desire of the majority Albanian initiative for independence. In the chronology of the 20th century, the two opposing sides in the country, Serbs and the native Albanians had launched attempts to wrest control of the volatile region. Yugoslavia was then known as the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes before the onset of the First World War. In 1929, the state was reconstituted to the name Yugoslavia. Though an ethnically diverse autonomous state, tribal irritation was still very prevalent. During the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, the province of Kosovo and Vojvodina was accorded autonomy by the government. But after Tito's demise, the country began to disintegrate. It should be noted that the Serbians constituted only a small fraction of the entire population, the province of Kosovo was held in high reverence by the Serbs.

To the Serbs, Kosovo was the bassinet of the heritage, erudition and identity. In the constitution of the former Yugoslavia, the fundamental law set the parameters of the state of Kosovo as a semi-independent province of Serbia. The movement for independence began to gain steam in the 1980s with the demise of the Yugoslav dictator Josip Broz Tito. The portents of trouble in the Kosovo province started in the powder keg town of Mitrovica. Two hand grenades were lobbed at the two world bodies' buildings. The first grenade exploded in the vicinity of a United Nations edifice, the other failing to explode at the new offices of the European Union delegation. In the former Yugoslav capital city of Belgrade, protestors hurled rocks and destroyed windows in the United States embassy office as crowd control forces

attempted to defend against an estimated 1, 000 protestors. The US embassy was not totally caught off guard. The American diplomatic building was empty at the time the rioters began their assault on the complex. Many foreign states had been wary that the security authorities in the country would do much of anything to try and establish control of the situation. The primary factor that became the trigger in the minds of the protesters was by twin events. First, the rioters were incensed by the promulgation of the Kosovo province of their independence

The other was the rapid action of the United States and many other countries to officially recognize the new nation. In a moment, history was made for the people of Kosovo. Premier Hashim Thaci declared that the newly independent nation would be founded on respecting the rights of all native groups in the province. In the 1990s various movements for the securing of independence were established on the principles of nonviolent aggression. In 1991, tribal Albanian leaders had on their own declared independence for their state. In the summer of 1998, many Albanians were beginning to stage protest actions against the authority of Serbia. As the increasing protests grew, Milosevic sent police and army contingents in the region to destroy the independence movement. 1999 saw the international trying to broker and finalize an accord for the restoration of order in the troubled region. The accord was accepted with reservations by the tribal Albanians but was turned down by Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic.

Basque: protecting a language and a way of life

If the struggle in Kosovo was centered on the conflict of losing a cultural and national center, the Euskera-speaking Basques have been trying to defend

<https://assignbuster.com/basque-and-kosovo-a-quest-for-freedom/>

their use of their language. For many millennia, the people of the Basque region in Spain have focused the main primer of their struggle on the preservation of their language and culture. But the history of the Basques as a people has been a mystery to many. Even their language, Euskera, is not connected with any of the Indo-European language groups spoken in the rest of the European continent. Not only is the preservation of their native language at the core of the struggle of the Basque people, but also its defense. When democracy was revived in Spain after the 1975 demise of Spanish dictator General Francisco Franco, the language has since begun to thrive and flourish. Of the estimated 2.5 million Basques, Euskera is spoken by 30 percent of the population. An overwhelming majority of Basque children take up the language at schools teaching Eukera. The earliest history of the Basque people pictures them as hardy and belligerent warriors. They fought off many invading armies from their territories. This they accomplished against the mighty Roman Empire, the ferocious Vikings and the Germanic tribe of the Visigoths, as well as Muslim trespassers. Hence many of the invading forces chose to steer away from the region. Also, Basques have developed the image of fearsome fisherfolk. They were believed to have constructed vessels that they used to travel large swaths of ocean to fish for whales and codfish. It was also believed that the Basques landed on the North American continent centuries before the discovery of the continent by Christopher Columbus. Ironically, a great number of the crew of Columbus' ships was comprised of Basques. The struggle for an independent homeland began during the incumbency of Spanish strongman General Francisco Franco. In the Spanish Civil War during the 1930s, the

Basques opposed the Nationalist armies of Franco sent to crush them. In anger, Franco declared the regions and its provinces as renegades. Franco found the task of crushing the nation difficult, and this is where the armed schismatic group, the ETA, or Euskadi Ta Azkatasuna, was formed. The ETA began as a student protest group in the 1960s fiercely opposed to the stifling military rule. During the rule of General Franco, the Eureka language was interdicted, their unique culture was outlawed and members of the academe were incarcerated and persecuted. In the ensuing years of the struggle of the ETA, 820 people, many of them members of Spain's police and politicians at odds with the demands of the ETA.

Reference

1. BBC (2008). Kosovo MPs proclaim independence. Retrieved January 13, 2009, from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7249034.stm> BBC 2. (2008).
2. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7258842.stm> BBC 3. (2008).
3. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7251376.stm> BBC 4. (2006).
4. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5165042.stm> BBC 5. (1999).
5. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/548545.stm> BBC 6. (2008).