

OCCUPATION PHILATELY OF SERBIA

Definitive Serbia stamps first appeared in 1866, a crucial time in Serbian history. Serbia had been a semi-independent principality within the Ottoman Empire since 1804. They expelled the last of the Ottoman troops from their territory and declared their independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1867. By the treaty of Berlin in 1878, the international community formally recognized the independence of the Principality of Serbia, and Serbia became a constitutional monarchy in 1882.

The Axis Powers State 1941-1945. The Territory of the Military Commander in Serbia (German: Gebiet des Militärbefehlshabers in Serbien) was a strategic portion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia placed under a Wehrmacht government on 22 April 1941. The Germans used Bulgarian troops to assist in the occupation, but they were at all times under German control. Sources variously describe the territory as a puppet state, a protectorate, a "special administrative province", or describe it as having a puppet government.

The German military commander in Serbia appointed two Serbian civil governments to carry out administrative tasks according to German dictat. The first, Commissioner Administration, established on 30 May 1941 was short-lived. The second, the Government of National Salvation under Milan Nedić replaced the other on 29 August 1941. The Nedić regime had no status under international law, no powers beyond those granted by the Germans, and was simply an instrument of German rule. It remained in place until the German withdrawal in the face of the combined Red Army, Bulgarian People's Army and Partisan Belgrade Offensive.

During the occupation, the German authorities killed nearly all Jews residing in the occupied territory, by shooting the men as part of reprisals conducted against partisans in 1941 and gassing the women and children in early 1942. After the war, several of the key German and Serbian leaders in the occupied territory were tried and executed for war crimes.

The German occupied territory of Serbia is represented in this healthcare collection by two sets of stamps issued in 1942-43, that is during the German Occupation.