

## Introduction

In January 1992 the European Community countries recognized the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. This happened after a six-month war in Croatia in which thousands of people had been killed, 600.000 made homeless and entire villages and towns throughout the republic destroyed.

Yugoslavia's break-up into sovereign states meant the end of two endeavours to create a solid Yugoslavian state. The first one was born after World War I as the 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes'. It was the era of President Wilson's principle of national self-determination. But this Yugoslavia was neither an ethnic, nor a geographical unity. Its several regions had quite a different historical and cultural past, having been parts of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires. Although the idea of a Yugoslav state was accepted throughout the interbellum by many influential political leaders all over the country, a real political unity did not develop. The most important reason for this was the dominant and authoritarian behaviour of Serbian politicians and bureaucrats.

The second, communist Yugoslavia adopted a general structure designed to avoid the reemergence of Serbian domination. The 1974 Constitution created a federation of six republics and two

autonomous provinces, to keep the balance between the numerous ethnic groups. By this decentralisation, power passed increasingly from Belgrade to the republics. Even the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) was split up during this decentralisation process. In the end the federal army was the only true pan-Yugoslav institution still functioning.

In November 1991, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' organized a symposium 'The Uncertain Future of Yugoslavia'. In this volume we are publishing some of the papers presented at this symposium. It was above all things our intention to look at explanation for the collapse of the Yugoslavian state, and for this it was often necessary to go quite a long way back into history.

Ivo Banac (Yale University, New Haven) in his paper looks at 'The origins and developments of the concept of Yugoslavia' up to 1945. In his opinion, the idea of south Slavic unity and reciprocity was promoted by the non-Slavs and undermined by the South Slavs themselves. The Yugoslav idea, he concludes, has never been kinetically alive.

Geert van Dartel (Foundation Communicantes, The Netherlands) looks in his paper at the relationship and the confrontation between nationalities and religions. He emphasizes the close relationship between the Serbian orthodox church and the Serbian state. This church, in his opinion, played a role in the genesis of the aggressive policy of the Serbian republic under Milošević.

Paul Shoup (University of Virginia) traces the nationality question in Yugoslavia up to 1980. In his opinion, the prevention of all frank discussions of the national question was a major failure of the Titoist system. Because of this national values became a 'forbidden fruit'. The contribution of Predrag Simić (Institute for International Relations, Belgrade) deals with the political and economic origins of the Yugoslavian crisis.

Willem Vermeer (University of Leyden) combines philological and historical data to give an insight into the position of Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. Robert Aspeslagh (Institute 'Clingen-

dael') in his contribution gives special attention to the Hungarian community in Yugoslavia.

Radovan Vukadinović (University of Zagreb and temporarily visiting scholar at the 'Clingendael' Institute) writes about 'Yugoslavia and the East: from non-alignment to disintegration'. In September 1989, the 9th Conference of Non-Aligned Countries was held in Belgrade. Two years later, both non-alignment and the concept of neutrality had become totally irrelevant for Eastern Europe.

The two last contributions are both from Dutch authors, the first a diplomat, the second a scholar. Maarten Lak (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Hague) gives an overview of the endeavours made by the European Community during the Dutch presidency to stop bloodshed and reach ceasefire accords. Koen Koch (University of Leyden) in a general paper about nationality problems, presents a number of ideas which could well serve as a basis for future policy.

In our closing remarks we touch on some missing links and possible scenario's for the future.

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The Hague, January 31, 1992