
BALKAN TRAGEDY: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War. By Susan L. Woodward. *Brookings*. 536 pp. \$42.95

When the European Community declared the former Yugoslavia dead at a 1991 peace conference in the Hague, the six republics that lived within its bounds became locked in a bitter struggle over the decedent's estate. Long after borders are redrawn in blood and the spoils of war divided, debate over the causes of what happened will rage among journalists, scholars, and policy makers.

Woodward, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, has written the most thoughtful, detailed, and lucid work on the disintegration of Yugoslavia to appear thus far. It confronts head-on what will be the crux of the controversy—the alleged inevitability of the collapse of Yugoslavia into nationalist regimes and civil war.

According to the new Western dogma, Yugoslavia was doomed from the start. It was an artificial country that never should have lasted its 73 years; a hellish place, moreover, where the end of the Cold War lifted the lid from “a cauldron of long-simmering hatreds.” The “revival of ethnic hatreds in a return to the precommunist past” has become, says Woodward, the ideological explanation of choice in the West for the disaster: the breakup was unavoidable, and only its brutality was negotiable.

An entirely different dogma prevailed during the Cold War. Yugoslavia was once the darling of the West, and the Yugoslavs were America's pet Eastern Europeans. As Woodward explains, Yugoslavia was then an important element in the West's policy of containment of the Soviet Union, and the Yugoslav regime survived Tito's clash with Stalin thanks in large part to American military aid and economic assistance.

Balkan experts who were part of the earlier consensus, and proud of it, have since gone into hiding. But not Woodward. Her book runs counter to every tenet of the new orthodoxy on Yugoslavia. She begins her account a full decade before the fall of the Berlin Wall, when economic austerity and reforms in Yugoslavia triggered a breakdown of political and civil order and a slide toward governmental disintegration. This

was the real origin of the conflict.

Woodward is determined not to take sides in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, though she is fully aware that “all those who propose instead to analyze the conflict are accused of assigning moral equivalence between victims and aggressors—or worse, of justifying actions being explained.” She rejects the predictable argument that a longstanding Serb-Croat conflict exemplifies the historical character of contemporary Yugoslav politics, and she coolly discounts as “unlikely” the fashionable American theory that Yugoslavia unraveled because Serbia's president, Slobodan Milosevic, devised a diabolical master plan for a “Greater Serbia.”

Woodward neither calls for bombings nor scrambles for the moral high ground. Her interest lies in understanding as clearly as possible why, over a prolonged period, government authority eroded. She sees the Yugoslav crisis as a “story of many small steps taken in separate scenes and locales,” and a drama to which Western governments and onlookers contributed significantly. Her exceptionally well-documented book will not buttress the dubious opinions one may acquire watching the evening news or reading the columns of the laptop bombardiers in the morning papers. But for those who care to know, it will explain why Yugoslavia perished, and why there has been so much death since its passing.

POSTETHNIC AMERICA: Beyond Multiculturalism. By David A. Hollinger. *Basic*. 210 pp. \$22

Does the debate over multiculturalism have to end at an impasse? Hollinger, a historian at the University of California, Berkeley, thinks not, and he proposes a novel way through the cultural and political tangles that obstruct any reasonable advance. His effort to tie a new civic nationalism to a vigorous endorsement of diversity will be especially welcome to readers who support cultural diversity but seek a common culture.

The problem with most defenders of pluralism, he argues, is that they don't go far enough. They erect artificial fences around each ethnic or

racial group to preserve its cultural identity or to protect its political and economic interests. Such defenders of pluralism often depict themselves as liberal or radical, but they are, in a sense, deeply conservative. They share with Euro-American traditionalists the prayer that ties of blood and family will withstand the centrifugal pressures of the modern world.

But some members of each group in the officially sanctioned American ethnic "pentagon" (whites, blacks, Indians, Latinos, and Asians) are rattling their protective fences from inside: Korean and Filipino-Americans challenge the category "Asian-American" because it connotes Chinese or Japanese ancestry; West Indian blacks distinguish themselves from African-Americans of southern U.S. origin; young people of all groups increasingly marry across ethnic and racial lines and thereby create a growing "mixed-race" population.

To those who value the free development of personality—a historic liberal commitment—over obedience to traditional prescriptions, such developments are good news. The irony of multiculturalism, Hollinger notes, is that its relentless insistence on pluralism has ended up undermining the stability of each ethnic or racial enclosure and "diversifying diversity." By so doing, multiculturalism has prepared the way for a critical cosmopolitanism that cherishes the freedom of each person to choose multiple identities. And one of those identities, Hollinger believes, should be civic, based on a decision to build up one's American self through participation in the culture and politics of the nation.

In Hollinger's view, it is time for liberals to stop belittling "patriotism," which they ceded to the Right in the wake of Vietnam. Like Marxists and other progressives, liberals have always had more difficulty than conservatives expressing their loyalty to the nation because the nation stood for something parochial. Hollinger sees the nation rather as an indispensable locus of loyalty and as the only cultural and political entity capable of advancing the historic liberal quest for equality.

Hollinger harbors no illusions that it will be easy to move beyond multiculturalism. He even concedes that, in the absence of a wide political consensus on eliminating poverty, multicultu-

ralism may be the only way to salvage a few crumbs for the poor. But his book makes a timely case for abandoning an increasingly rigid pluralism and setting out for a cosmopolitan America where cultural differences can proliferate and civic nationality deepen.

Philosophy & Religion

HANNAH ARENDT / MARTIN HEIDEGGER. *By Elzbieta Ettinger. Yale. 160 pp. \$16*

Why should it matter, other than to the gossip-hungry, that Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and Hannah Arendt (1906–75) once had an affair? The year was 1924. He was 35, married with two children, a professor of philosophy at the University of Marburg, and—most important—heir apparent to the throne of German philosophy then occupied by Edmund Husserl at the University of Freiburg. She was 18 when she first heard him lecture, a bright young German Jew with a first-class mind and an almost religious reverence for the misty labyrinths of Teutonic thought. Within a year they were launched upon an affair that would last, thanks to much discrete plotting, until 1928, when Heidegger succeeded to Husserl's chair (and found another mistress).

Ettinger, a professor of humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, mines the newly released correspondence between Heidegger and Arendt in her attempt to illuminate the relationship between a man whom some consider the greatest philosopher of the 20th century and a woman who became one of the more influential political thinkers of her time. Heidegger is important for his radical rethinking of the Western metaphysical tradition, his probing if often obscure explorations of the "existence" question (*Being and Time*, 1927), and his critique of technology and instrumental thinking. He is controversial to an almost equal extent for his involvement with the National Socialist Party. Despite his artful postwar disavowals, a spate of recent studies shows that Heidegger was a party member not merely while rector of Freiburg (1933–34) but well into 1945. And perhaps worse than his philosophical