

CZECHOSLOVAK — YUGOSLAV RELATIONS IN THE
YEARS 1935—1939

Summary

The basis of the relations between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia in the mentioned period was the alliance of the Little Entente. This alliance stimulated the mutual relations, and gave them a form and content. Besides this official form also other connections existed which were independent of the political liability of the individual governmental garnitures, and had, especially in the second half of the thirties, an increasing tendency.

The important changes having taken place in the European policy at the beginning of the thirties were markedly reflected also in the Czechoslovak — Yugoslav relations, and influenced them negatively. Especially in the time of the regentship and rule of M. Stojadinović the mutual conflicts deepened, and the traditional links among the countries of the Little Entente loosened markedly. The reasons for this lay in the different understanding and estimation of the international situation, and of the international development, as well as in the different development of the inner policy of both states.

At the very beginning of Stojadinović's rule marked splits appeared in the Czechoslovak — Yugoslav relations. As the Czechoslovak government considered the alliance with Yugoslavia to be the basis of the Little Entente, it was eminently interested in the removal of the existing conflicts. So as in the course of the years 1936—37 the conceptions of the solution of various problems of the foreign policy and of the development of the inner policy became more and more different, the Czechoslovak policy searched for a way to reach an agreement. The result of these attempts had little effect because from the spring of the year 1937, after the conclusion of the Yugoslav — Italian agreement, the policy of the Yugoslav government deviated markedly from the traditional line, and loosened its relations to the friendly Czechoslovakia. The year 1938 introduced a deep crisis in the Czechoslovak — Yugoslav relations that culminated in the time of Munich. In spite of the fact that Czechoslovakia was aware of the deep changes in the Yugoslav policy, it did not want to break the alliance. It proceeded from the presumption that Prince Pavel's and Stojadinović's political line was only temporary, and in the changed situation it would turn better. This view was confirmed also by the great sympathy of the majority of the population and of the opposition during the Czechoslovak crisis. For this reason Czechoslovakia built up its political background also apart from the Yugoslav governmental circles. As far as the relations to Germany were concerned, the Yugoslav government advised Czechoslovakia to settle its conflicts with Germany in a bilateral way, and not to rely upon the West. Yugoslavia stood aside in the

problem of the Sudeten region, and as far as the obligations to Hungary in the framework of the Little Entente were concerned, Stojadinović's government endeavoured to create such a situation that would make possible for them not to intervene in favour of Czechoslovakia which was however at variance with the majority of the public opinion. In the time of Munich the progressive forces in Yugoslavia were activated, and urged the government not to leave the allied Czechoslovakia alone. The Munich arbitration meant not only a break in the mutual relations but influenced in many ways also the situation in Yugoslavia. Stojadinović's government endeavoured to prove the correctness of its political line, and wanted to make use of the situation also in the inner policy before the approaching election.