

Srebrenica: a 'safe' area

Appendix V

Western Perceptions and Balkan Realities

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Foreword

During the past decade, an overwhelming amount of material encompassing a wide variety of approaches and analyses has been published on the crises in Yugoslavia. When attempting to elucidate the part played by image-forming in this matter, it is important to consider two diametrically opposed standpoints. One views the wars as the result of political conflicts. The tiny differences between the various population groups could not, however, have generated such conflicts, even though they were artificially stirred up and ruthlessly exploited by political adventurers. The opposing view is that the war can only be understood by recognizing that Yugoslavia is part of the Balkans, and that Yugoslavs are therefore fundamentally different from ourselves. The countless atrocities and war crimes were the result of ancient ethnic contrasts, which are so pronounced because the area is bisected by the border between civilized Europe and the primitive Balkans.

These two viewpoints, which have been formulated and expressed in a variety of forms and numerous nuances, are at the heart of this essay. They also determine the kind of books and articles under discussion. It has been my objective to investigate to what extent such conflicting opinions about Yugoslavia are generated by traditional concepts concerning the Balkans.

The first chapter explores the problems associated with the study of image-forming processes. Chapters II and III sketch the historical development of the image of the Balkans in the West, and in the Netherlands in particular. In this context, the association between image-forming and decision-making during the western intervention in the recent Yugoslavian conflicts has been investigated. The final chapter focuses on the relationship between image and reality.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Hamlet: Do you see yonder cloud that’s almost in shape of a camel?”

Polonius: By the mass, and ‘t is like a camel indeed.

Hamlet: Me thinks it is like a weasel.

Polonius: It is backed like a weasel.

Hamlet: Or like a whale?

Polonius: Very like a whale.”¹

1. Holbrooke and the Rebecca West Factor

At a 1998 international conference organized by the Institute of Eastern European Studies of the University of Amsterdam, the Bosnian lawyer and eminent scholar of Bosnian history, M. Imamovic, described various contacts that he had had with foreigners in Sarajevo during the past several years. He remarked that the majority of these individuals had only a meagre knowledge of the historical background of the conflict. In general, those that had taken the trouble to do some research had all consulted the same books, namely those by Rebecca West, Robert Kaplan and Noel Malcolm. In *To End a War* Richard Holbrooke specifically cited these three books when proposing that a ‘misreading of Balkan history’ was one of five factors that might explain the failure of the West in Yugoslavia.² He alludes to ‘Bad History’ or the ‘Rebecca West Factor’, asserting that West’s pro-Serb stance, together with her view that Muslims were an inferior race, had influenced two generations of readers and politicians. ‘Thus arose’, writes Holbrooke, ‘an idea that ‘ancient hatreds’ [...] made it impossible for anyone outside the region to try to prevent the conflict.’³

Prior to Holbrooke’s arrival, Lord Owen had attempted (in vain) to mediate between the warring parties. Owen described ‘callousness’ as ‘the most distinctive feature of the fighting’, referring to a ‘culture of violence within a crossroad civilization where three religions, Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Roman Catholicism, have divided communities’. Owen admitted that, before he had departed for the peace conference in Geneva, he had ‘dipped into rather than reread Rebecca West’s account of her travels in Yugoslavia’⁴. According to Holbrooke, however, the idea that ethnic groups in the Yugoslavian region had always been after one another’s blood was mainly derived from *Balkan Ghosts* by the American author Robert Kaplan. Furthermore, in his book, Kaplan himself emphasized that he had been largely inspired by Rebecca West. Holbrooke confirmed that Clinton, after reading Kaplan’s book, was even more hesitant to intervene in Bosnia. *Bosnia: A Short History*, by Noel Malcolm, was published in 1994. This was a much more balanced book, which repudiated the view that Bosnia ‘was forever seething with ethnic hatreds’.⁵ However, Holbrooke felt that it had been published too late to bring about a rapid change in American policy.

Other authors feel that it is not Kaplan or West who are primarily responsible for western vacillation in the Yugoslavian conflict, but rather the elderly yet still influential George Kennan. This American diplomat, celebrated historian and widely recognized expert in East-West relations had written an introduction to *The Other Balkan Wars*. This was the rather odd title of a book that was republished in 1993. The original, which had been written by a committee working for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, was published in 1913. It dealt with the horrors of the First and Second Balkan Wars. Kennan felt that this report was still topical, since nationalism in the Balkans ‘drew on deeper traits of character inherited, presumably, from a distant tribal past [...] And so it

remains today'.⁶ In addition, centuries of Turkish rule in the Balkans had created a separate world 'which had continued to the present day to preserve many of its non-European traits'.⁷ In 1993, Kennan felt that none of the Western powers was either prepared or able to occupy 'the entire distracted Balkan region'⁸ in order to calm the agitated population groups there. In 1994, the American historian and leading specialist on Yugoslavia, Ivo Banac, therefore indignantly concluded that 'Western aloofness and indifference to the area itself and to any action or involvement in it' derived from the view of authorities such as Kennan, that the Balkans diverge too widely from Western civilization.⁹

In this way, adverse images and prejudices about the Balkans that were propagated by a few best-sellers and some authoritative authors are supposed to have had a major influence on the current policy of leading world powers. The best-seller *Balkan Ghosts* (a superficial book, written with very little objectivity) does indeed contain some rather crass statements about the character of the inhabitants of the Balkans. Kaplan even felt that 'Nazism [...] can claim Balkan origins'¹⁰. He saw in Serbia 'a spirituality and primitivism that the West knows best through the characters of Dostoyevsky'.¹¹ To further underline the exotic character of the Serbs, on the same page Kaplan cited the work of the Polish-British writer Joseph Conrad and that of the British thriller writer, Eric Ambler. Although their books are populated with sinister figures of Russian or Bulgarian origin, like Dostoyevsky neither of these authors has ever visited the Balkans, nor indeed have they carried out any in-depth research into the region¹². Literature dealing with the Balkans frequently characterizes the inhabitants of that region as being both spiritual and primitive. These are therefore clichés, and as such they are of dubious veracity.

Clinton was not the only example of a politician who, in Holbrooke's view, may have been influenced by Balkan literature. Holbrooke also cites a statement made by the former American ambassador to Yugoslavia and later Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger: 'until the Bosnian Serbs and Croats decide to stop killing each other, there is nothing the outside world can do about it'¹³. However, this statement was made in 1992, a year before the publication of Kaplan's book. It is also rather farfetched to attribute such a great influence to the erudite, exuberant and exorbitantly long (1200 pages) literary masterpiece by Rebecca West. Although it was reprinted several times from 1968 onwards, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* was originally published in 1942. At that time it was quite normal for people to state their views about other peoples and cultures in a rather frank and impressionistic way, entirely unencumbered by political correctness. West was primarily interested in the more exotic aspects of the kingdom of Yugoslavia. She did indeed have a weak spot for the Serbs, but she gave no indication of a systematic contempt for the Turks or for the Bosnian Muslims, or that she considered them to be an inferior people or race. She showed great admiration for the remnants of Turkish architecture in Yugoslavia, and in Sarajevo she also attempted (without success) to learn the art of belly dancing. She felt that the enormous empires of the Habsburgs and the Ottomans had had a lethal influence on the Balkans. She wrote, 'I hate the corpses of empires, they stink as nothing else.'¹⁴ However, her wrath at German and Austrian meddling, and their lust for power, was far greater than any feelings she might have harboured against similar actions by Turkey in the past. It is scarcely realistic to ascribe the Western powers' lack of boldness to feelings of sympathy for the Serbs or contempt for the Bosnian Muslims that may have been generated by West's work. Holbrooke admits that as long ago as 1992 the American government had reached the conclusion that ninety percent of all atrocities in Bosnia were the work of Serbs. Although it was of little help to those involved, world opinion was nevertheless very sympathetic to their Islamic Bosnian victims.

In his book, Holbrooke emphatically distanced himself from the ethnic prejudices about the Balkans that, in his view, were too often aired in books of this type. He refuses to condemn Serbs, Croats or Bosnians as a group, but instead blames the conflict on the political leaders and their hysterical nationalism¹⁵. Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic are the main culprits, immediately followed by Slobodan Milosevic and, at some distance, by Franjo Tudjman and Alija Izetbegovic. He shares this 'politically correct' view with many other authors on Yugoslavian events. However, in describing how he intervened during a quarrel between the latter two leaders, Holbrooke was unable to desist entirely from comment. He pointed out that 'An aspect of the Balkan character was revealed

anew: once enraged, these leaders needed outside supervision to stop themselves from self-destruction'¹⁶. So even Holbrooke was not fully able to shake off a belief in the primitive features of a character supposedly typical of the Balkan peoples.

Holbrooke admitted that Kaplan himself had opposed the imputation that *Balkan Ghosts* contained a justification for ethnic cleansing.¹⁷ Nor indeed does Kaplan's book contain any advice to the Western powers to refrain from intervention. Nevertheless, both Banac and Holbrooke create the impression that America's passivity prior to 1995 was partly the result of an incorrect view of the Balkans. While not denying that many other factors were involved, Holbrooke suggests that the United States only started to play a more active role once he and other like-minded politicians were able to shape policy. Since they had not read any inferior history books, such politicians were unhindered by prejudice. They were therefore able to take a common-sense approach to the situation in Yugoslavia. However, is it really plausible to imagine that the US only started to play a more active role in 1995 because American policy-makers either read other books or no books, ignored authorities such as Kennan or modified their views concerning the inhabitants of the Balkans? Is it not much more likely that, given the situation that had arisen in 1995, America's prestige as the only remaining superpower would be irreparably damaged if it failed to act with more resolve? And had America really been so passive up until then? And what of the Washington Agreement of 1993 between the US, Bosnia and Croatia, which had been prepared by American diplomats other than Holbrooke? Clearly this was a significant condition underpinning the American success that was achieved 18 months later. Was Kennan wrong when he said that the Western powers' would continue to have very little appetite for a long-term occupation of this entire, problematic region? Although a protracted air war was finally waged against Serbia, the sluggish aversion that characterized Western governments' approach to the Yugoslavian situation emerged once again in 1998, during the Kosovo crisis.

The statements made by Holbrooke, Banac and others correctly alert us to the role that opinions and prejudices about other countries and other peoples can play in international relations. Indeed, Holbrooke's 'slip of the tongue' concerning Tudjman and Izetbegovic, occurring as it did in a book that had been very carefully edited and screened by a large team of co-workers, shows how ineradicable such views are. At the same time it seems difficult to establish the exact effect of image-forming on current developments in international relations. It is remarkable that so much importance is attached to the views of an individual author or to the content of a single book, even when written more than fifty years ago. Passing over the many authors who published works on the subject of Yugoslavia before and after West, Holbrooke says that she caused two generations of authors to be misinformed about the Balkans.

Holbrooke's view regarding the innocence of Yugoslavian peoples and his remarkable statement about the Balkan mentality of the political leaders of Bosnia and Croatia give rise to a number of questions. The same is true of Kennan's opinion about the non-European character of the inhabitants of the Balkans, and Banac's indignant response to this. Are these irresponsible generalizations the product of Western image-forming, bearing no relation to reality? Or are there still traces of reality left in such images, even though they partly stem from clichéd views? Then there is 'political correctness', the refusal of those involved in Western decision-making to take into account, openly and clearly, any ethnic, cultural and mental differences between population groups. Might this have been equally responsible for the fateful developments in Yugoslavia? We will return to these questions later, especially in the final section of this study. However, we will first attempt to find a better basis for distinguishing between the 'politically correct' and the 'prejudiced' points of view in the broader context of imagology.

2. From essentialism to constructivism

It is implausible that widespread prejudices and ideas about countries and peoples are entirely due to good sales figures for a few authors. Why should so many readers of a travel book assume that it contains the entire truth about a foreign country which they have never visited? The success of such

books can best be explained by the *Aba-Erlebnisse* that they generate. The pre-existent views of a large group of readers presumably corresponded to the contents of such books. It is extremely likely that the authors also harboured pre-conceived ideas before undertaking their journeys. Image-forming almost never involves the creation of a new image, instead it is all about the continual dusting-off and freshening-up of old images.

In the last two or three decades, imagology has evolved into a specific field of study within the discipline of comparative literature. Imagologists have published a considerable amount of material, in which they show that the distinctions we draw between nations and ethnic groups are largely determined by literary traditions. They do not assert that all people and groups of people are entirely identical to one another. Cultural differences, however, are considered to be much less relevant than the images presented to us by literature.

In this respect the imagologist Joep Leerssen speaks of an ‘important epistemological shift, which has taken place over recent decades: the shift from essentialism to constructivism. What is ‘typical’ of a given nation is no longer considered to emanate from a characteristic essence inherent within that nation, but rather from a specific way of perceiving that nation.’¹⁸ Or, as couched in different terms by the same author, ‘national images are a largely self-referential and self-perpetuating poetical system which is only marginally determined by social or political reality.’ The characteristics ascribed to a given people in the literature ‘are determined by intertextual rather than empirical factors.’¹⁹

It goes without saying that the acceptance of such views drastically changes our perception of reality. It clearly contradicts the age-old belief that different peoples have distinct characteristics. In the glory days of Western European nationalism, the existence of national characters was accepted as an irrefutable truth. During the 1960s, American social psychologists were still publishing studies on the Russian ‘national character’, based on questionnaires given to Russian immigrants entering the United States.²⁰ This material allowed the British psychiatrist Henry Dicks to conclude that the ‘oral character structure’ (i.e. restless, impulsive, aggressive, resentful, demanding, tending to gluttony and obesity, but also showing a considerable appetite for reading) is typical of Russians.²¹ At the time other scientists refuted such conclusions. However, modern imagologists would emphasize that, at best, questionnaires of this kind simply reflect the views of the Russian immigrants in question about their national character. They do not provide hard facts about the way in which Russians actually behave, as a people.

Whether the approach to such a remarkable phenomenon as the character of peoples has been subject to a general switch from essentialism to constructivism is, nevertheless, very debatable. After all, the converse can also be asserted. During the Soviet period, the Communist authorities took every opportunity to deny that irreconcilable differences existed between various nationalities within the USSR. The same went for the situation in other Eastern bloc countries and certainly for Tito’s Yugoslavia. In the declining years of Communism, and especially after its fall, there was a perceptible change in this approach. Throughout Eastern Europe the character of peoples was no longer denied, instead it was embraced. Modern Russians still believe (or, more accurately, have rediscovered) that there really is such a thing as a national psyche. At the same time, they violently disagree with one another concerning the characteristics to be ascribed to their collective character. This also applies to Russian scholars, who are making every effort to link up once again with recent developments in Western scholarship. In the course of theoretical-historical debates about ‘the Russian mentality’, much is made of the enormous problems and obstacles met by those attempting to conduct research into this phenomenon. Nevertheless, the virtual, imaginary and constructivistic aspects of this topic are omitted²².

In the West, however, there is a clear interest in these specific aspects. Nonetheless, this interest does not solely derive from the activities of literary imagologists, since their approach is not exactly novel. It was the great nineteenth-century sociologist Durkheim who first drew attention to the constructivistic element in the self-image of human groups, which he referred to as ‘collective representation’. In the wake of the Second World War, social scientists applied themselves as never before to studying and combating social and ethnic prejudices.²³ Historians have also been occupied

with image-forming processes for quite some time. It is probably no coincidence that even more emphasis was placed on this when nationalism became passé and was reduced to sporadic eruptions of 'football chauvinism'. As the national past declined in importance, historians opened the assault on the patriotic elements contained therein. Many long cherished 'images' had become unworkable or even offensive. For example, it could no longer be said of the populations of former colonies that they could never measure up to the inhabitants of Europe in terms of civilization and intellect. It is this more critical stance with regard to various expressions of Western ethnocentrism that accounts for the success of Edward Said's *Orientalism. Western conceptions of the Orient*. Published in 1978, this work portrays the predominantly negative view of 'the East' as a construction of modern western imperialism.²⁴ In a situation in which a war between France and Germany had become unthinkable, it no longer made sense to keep going on about the irreconcilable contrasts between the civilizations of 'Latin' and 'Germanic' peoples. In addition, the transfer of ever more national power to supranational organs in Brussels makes traditional and flattering views about the greatness and uniqueness of one's own country look rather dated.

However, critical historical literature on the subject of nationalism has remained the preserve of Western European scholars studying the history and culture of Western Europe. Their writings are in stark contrast to the enormous stream of recent publications on the amazing vitality of ethnic, religious and nationalistic phenomena in the rest of the world. The term 'ethnicity' first appeared in handbooks and reference works in the latter part of the 1970s, when imagology was starting to develop into a distinct discipline. American scholars in particular started to write on the subject. Back in 1975, in his *Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change*, Harold R. Isaacs predicted that states and peoples would split into ever smaller units, 'bursting like big and little stars from exploding galaxies.'²⁵ Another pioneer in the area of ethnicity studies, the prominent American senator Pat Moynihan, said of his own country: 'The notion that the intense and unprecedented mixture of ethnic and religious groups in American life was soon to blend into a homogenous end product has outlived its usefulness, and also its credibility... the point about the melting pot is that it did not happen'²⁶ He believes that ethnicity has an enormous influence in the arena of international politics. The effect of this is summarized in the title of this book, *Pandemonium*, which means uncontrollable chaos.

His fellow countryman, Samuel Huntington, believes that the end of the Cold War did not signify the end of the east-west conflict. On the contrary, Western standards and values concerning democracy, human rights, the division of church and state, and free enterprise are encountering considerable resistance elsewhere in the world. The situation in the world can best be summarized by the phrase 'the West versus the rest'. It can only be understood if one is aware of certain time-honoured and virtually unchanging cultural differences. Such differences are determined by religion and have become associated with ethnic entities. This is why conflicts primarily erupt in the areas where different civilizations share a common border. 'The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.'²⁷ Yugoslavia is a perfect example of this, as the country is divided by two fault lines. One line runs between Islam and Christianity, while the other separates the Orthodox Church and Catholicism. Thus something had to go wrong.

Huntington has been subjected to a great deal of criticism because his model does not provide a definitive explanation for the development or absence of violent conflicts in the world. The most murderous genocides and the bloodiest wars of the past century all occurred within a single civilization, that of the West. He is accused of blowing up cultural differences into sharp contrasts, thereby contributing to a unilateral image-forming process that is far more likely to cause conflicts than to avert them. There is no such thing as irreconcilable differences between civilizations. After all, modern civilizations are highly complex and extremely diffuse affairs that have never before existed in unmixed form anywhere on Earth, nor do they do so today. The fault lines between civilizations are also man-made, and are largely a product of the imagination.²⁸

However accurate such comments may be, they do not prove that authors such as Moynihan or Huntington entirely lack a sense of reality. In 1993, in response to the conflict in Yugoslavia, imagologists organized a conference in Leiden. The conference theme was 'ethnic stereotypes', and

those invited included Serbs, Croats and Bosnians. However, none of these scholars attended the conference, nor could any of them be persuaded to submit written work on this topic.²⁹ This was quite understandable. Imagologists usually assume that nations are artificial things. At that time, in the Balkans, this was a highly unpopular, even dangerous standpoint. Although some courageous Yugoslavian intellectuals attempted to turn the rising tide of nationalism, another section of the intelligentsia emphasized that essential differences had existed between Yugoslav peoples for centuries. Although such assertions aggressively enhanced the existing tensions and contributed to the outbreak of war, they cannot be said to be patently false in all respects.³⁰

However, the attempts by intellectuals from the former Yugoslavia to construct separate ethnic-national identities did not always denote a lack of responsibility on their part. This became clear at the above-mentioned conference at the Institute of Eastern European Studies, in September 1998. There, the representatives of ten different Eastern European countries conducted a debate on the theme of history and identity. A historian from the former Yugoslavian federal republic of Macedonia, now an independent state, gave a presentation to the conference on the subject of his national identity. He constructed this by referring to Alexander the Great as a Macedonian. Yet, unlike the current inhabitants of Macedonia, the language spoken by this king from the fourth century was not a Slavic one. This historian also annexed Cyril and Methodius, the apostles of the Slavic peoples from the 9th century, as Macedonians. Both missionaries came from Saloniki, a city located in present-day Greece, but in an area that modern Macedonians consider to be part of the original land of Macedonia. It was at this point that a Bulgarian delegate at the conference politely but firmly objected. This is because most Bulgarians believe Macedonia to be a part of Bulgaria, asserting that the language spoken by Macedonians is really just a Bulgarian dialect. It would therefore seem that, in reality, Cyril and Methodius are figures from Bulgarian history. The delegate immediately conceded, however, that his Macedonian colleague was well within his rights in following the path taken by Bulgarian historians a century ago, when Bulgaria obtained its independence. He admitted that the creation of a new state virtually compels historians to construct something approaching a national identity, and to use historical myths as tools. A state will not be able to survive unless its national identity is given form and content. Of itself, this is neither wrong nor offensive, it is simply a question of national duty.

The Belgian anthropologist Roossens explored this process of creating ethnicity, not in the Balkans but among Indian tribes in Canada and allochthonous groups in Belgium. He found that strong ethnic feelings do not need to be based on genuine culture which has had a lengthy and uninterrupted existence. Ethnicity always leans heavily upon an idealized past. In this connection, the truth is often the first victim. Roossens wrote "The feelings of the masses are not troubled with historical accuracy."³¹ At the same time, people do not have carte blanche to allow their imaginations to run wild. Although culture and history have a certain inherent elasticity, they are by no means completely arbitrary realities. "With very little one can obtain very much [...]but there is always a minimum of incontestable and noninterpretable facts necessary..."³² And even that is sometimes not enough. Russia, for example, has a thousand years of a highly eventful history, more than enough heroic and illustrious incidents, or so one might think. And yet the current population of that country is suffering from a severe identity crisis, one that no amount of stories about a glorious past can exorcise. Sometimes, nations simply lack the will to adopt an identity of their own. Belarus is currently an independent country. It has its own language and history, and is led by a dictator who is prepared to propagate any and all nationalistic myths, no matter how fantastic they may be. However, both the head of state and the majority of Belarusians would much rather return to the arms of Mother Russia. The disappearance of Communism in Eastern Europe has by no means resulted in a universal eruption of nationalism or to a strengthening of national and ethnic identities, as was the case in Yugoslavia.

Identities can be created and repaired, they are also malleable and degradable. However, the extent and tempo of these processes vary from people to people, and are subject to circumstances. What determines peoples' resistance to a given identity or their desire for it, and their degree of susceptibility to nationalistic propaganda? In commenting on this, J.Krecí, a British historian and political scientist of Czech origin, pointed out that "The so-called awakening of national consciousness

for which philosophers, historians and poets were largely seen as responsible was in fact the awakening of something which had for a long time been potentially present and had for some time been in the process of maturation as a result of combined processes of communication and imitation.³³ Historians of nationalism, such as Anthony Smith and John Armstrong believe that nations emerge from a previously existing ethnic identity.³⁴

What then is the difference between a peoples' character and such a pre-existent ethnic identity capable of developing into a national identity? In what ways does such an identity differ from the 'mentalities', 'the collective unconscious' or '*ouillage mental*', that are studied by the history of mentality? And if such things do indeed have an 'objective' existence, then how can we come to understand them? The imagologist, Joep Leerssen, considers the attempts by social scientists such as Hofstede to establish the content of national identities through empirical research to be regrettable. Leerssen feels such attempts to be evidence of a 'naive essentialism'. His main objection concerns the 'inescapable informant-dependence' that is inherent in all characterizations of national characters. 'It is impossible to make the jump from the discursive world of informant-dependent sources to a non-discursive objectivity [...]. We will never be truly independent of our sources. All too often, research that uses informant-dependent sources while professing to enquire into *reality* is only really investigating informant-dependent *opinions* [...]'³⁵

Scholars such as Hofstede and Huntington might be open to criticism when they greatly overestimate the degree of reality and the durability of cultural differences or national characteristics. But should they be reproached for continuing to research phenomena that are, at the very least, connected in some way to numerous conflicts in today's world?³⁶ After all, knowledge is based on observation. Leerssen himself acknowledged that informant dependence is inherent to all descriptions of the past. The question remains, however, of whether this dependence is also 'inescapable'. Historians are always trying to escape from the 'prison of their sources' into historical reality. That is their profession, and despite all of the ontological, epistemological or heuristic objections to their activities, they remain industrious escapees.³⁷ Why then should social scientists remain chained to the 'informants'? The literary imagologists could, in fact, be accused of not wanting to escape from this prison. They give little or no consideration to the historical circumstances that led to the creation of nations or to the socio-psychological mechanisms that resulted in the formation of ethnic groups. They generally restrict themselves to the study of literary texts. 'The merit of the imagological approach to stereotypes such as linguistic phenomena is that it points out *topoi*, but it either falls short or overshoots the mark because it fails to take account of reality.'³⁸

The literature on nationalism, nations, national identities, *ouillages mentales* or the character of peoples is liberally strewn with 'conceptual dichotomies'³⁹, contrasts between 'objective' and 'subjective' views, and either 'essentialistic' or 'constructivistic' approaches to these topics.⁴⁰ Many imagologists tend to focus on one side of the question, while political scientists and sociologists such as Huntington or Hofstede mainly point to the other side. There are no simple solutions to these intellectual dilemmas. There remains a yawning gap between finding out how literary constructions of national identities develop and using existing ethnic contrasts to explain the outbreak of a war. Both approaches require text, but while this can be used to show that national and ethnic identities are artificial matters, it can equally well be used to demonstrate that people perceive these as absolute realities, which have far-reaching effects on their behaviour.

It is difficult to distinguish between reality and people's opinions about reality. Without the lens of prejudice, no collective differences between people can be observed.⁴¹ Aside from the language, a Dutch person can only be recognized as Dutch by those who are already familiar with what constitutes (or should constitute) a Dutch person. Even when not inspired by xenophobia or racism, images such as these (which derive from the cultural traditions of the observer) remain crude generalizations. They are never reliable or innocent, but we have little else to go on. It follows from this that it is inadvisable to allow the political relations with another nation to be determined by currently fashionable prejudices about that people. On the other hand, such prejudices often contain a grain of truth. Although the 'politically correct' standpoint seems to be the safer option, this is not the case. One would be

exceptionally naive to assume that the image has no relation to reality, and that all peoples and ethnic groups are identical to one another. This is not to say that one should believe that the character of a people is incapable of change, condemning all the members of a nation to follow the same patterns of behaviour for centuries.⁴²

Chapter 2

Western image-forming

1. The image of barbarism

Anyone wanting to know whether or not ‘the Balkan type’ really exists, or whether there are really any differences between Serbs and Croats, will first have to explore the problem of image-forming. After all, it is the image that obstructs a direct view of reality. Even if the image is an accurate reflection of reality, it is by no means the same thing. For many centuries, the West has had a marked tendency to blame the changing fortunes of Eastern Europe on the character of its indigenous peoples. Depending on the circumstances in question, this resulted in favourable or adverse characteristics being attributed to the peoples in question. Although this tendency can be perceived in a very large number of texts on Eastern Europe, no systematic study of this phenomenon has ever been carried out. As has already been pointed out, virtually no research has been carried out on the image of Yugoslavia in the West, and the literature pertaining to the image of the Balkans is very limited. In addition, few books have been published on Eastern Europe’s image in the West. Imagologists tend to focus mainly on literary texts. They often deal with relatively minor topics, ones that are clearly demarcated in time and place. In addition, they have not paid very much attention to Eastern Europe. The same goes for the social scientists, who have been intensely preoccupied with ethnocentrism, a phenomenon that is closely related to image-forming. The only national image whose historical development can be traced is that of Russia, because so much has been written on the subject by social scientists, historians and historians of literature. Conversely, the literature on other countries and areas is fragmentary at best. Nevertheless, existing studies on image-forming in general and on Eastern Europe in particular enable us to draw some broad conclusions that are also applicable to Yugoslavia.

Eastern Europe’s image in the West, as well as our modern-day ideas about the Balkans, can be seen as variations in the clichéd ideas that Europeans have traditionally held about the world and the peoples outside Europe. They are the result of traditional European reactions to the centuries-old contrast between east and west, and between north and south. The sheer continuity of these reactions is astonishing. Some of these images contain thoughts that the Ancient Greeks harboured about peoples who did not speak Greek. Because they perceived these people to be babbling something like ‘bar-bar’, the Greeks referred to them as barbarians. We are unable, here, to offer more than a thumbnail sketch of the long historical development that spans the years between Thucydides and Holbrooke.

The occupants of the Ancient World tended to associate climate with the character of a people. This tendency can be traced back to Hippocrates who, in 400 BC, published a relatively elaborate theory on the subject. Aristotle drew a distinction between the wild, primitive people found in the cold lands of northern Europe, who were fiercely independent, and the inventive and intelligent inhabitants of balmy Asia, who had a slave-like mentality. Living in the intermediate, temperate climes, the Hellenes were both civilized and free and independent. This ‘tripartite division of the oecumene’ is an extremely persistent idea. Having adapted to changed circumstances, it is still in use. During the Middle Ages, the inhabitants of the West perceived the temperate regions to correspond to the territories occupied by Christians. This was the continent allotted to Noah’s third son, Jafeth – in other words, Europe. By contrast, the continents given to Noah’s other sons, Sem and Cham (Africa and Asia), were occupied by heathens, slaves and barbarians.⁴³ The idea that the inhabited world was divided into three climatological zones enjoyed renewed popularity during the Renaissance, and persisted until the Age of Reason. Zacharasiewicz felt that the climate theory was a ‘Lieblingsidee’ of the 18th century.⁴⁴ However, the frontier separating extreme from temperate climates, and civilization from Barbary no longer lay between Europe and the other continents, now a line was being drawn within Europe itself. Political theoreticians such as Bodin or Montesquieu explained the despotism in Asia and Africa, the

autocracy of the Czar in northern Europe and that of the Sultan in southern Europe, in terms of the heat or cold that prevailed in those regions. The monarchy was associated with the temperate climate of Western Europe.⁴⁵

At the same time, some parts of this western region were more temperate than others. Initially it was mainly the Italians, Spanish and French who claimed to belong to the privileged peoples of the centre. Later, the same claim was made by the more northerly English and the Germans. Still imitating Aristotle, people assumed that the peoples of the Centre had the best of both worlds. They possessed the finer qualities of the inhabitants of the north (such as perseverance and bravery) and the south (such as mobility of mind and body). At the same time, they were not prone to the former peoples' more extreme and negative characteristics (such as the melancholy, insensitivity and rigidity of the north and the laziness and passionate sensuality of the south). In W. Stanzel's descriptions of the 'Völkertafel' (the 18th century paintings depicting representatives of the main European peoples, as well as their good and bad characteristics), the lowest ranking peoples were the Poles, Russians, Hungarians, Greeks and Turks.⁴⁶

Throughout the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, climate was still considered to exert a major influence on the development of civilizations and on the characteristics of peoples.⁴⁷ Individuals such as the positivistic historian Henry Thomas Buckle (1821-1862) and the deterministic geographer Ellsworth Huntington (1876-1947) considered it to be self-evident that England's political and economic success was linked to the country's temperate climate.⁴⁸ Although heavily criticized by fellow professionals, the work of such scholars was incredibly popular at the time. However, they are not solely responsible for the fact that people still see 'the perfect European' as a sort of 'Mittelzohnenbewohner'.⁴⁹ This study covers other historical and imagological factors that account for the apparent ease with which Central-European countries such as Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic are admitted to the Western world, while there is as yet no place for the more northerly Russia and the more southerly Balkans.

While the climatic theory enabled the barbarian realms to be geographically defined, the ambivalent attitude of 'civilized' peoples towards barbarians was even more stubbornly maintained through the centuries. This involves three mutually contradictory emotional complexes: contempt, fear and admiration for the barbarians.⁵⁰ In ancient times, the strongest emotion was contempt, and this remains the case to this very day. According to the Greeks, the barbarians were at a lower level of civilization and were therefore unworthy of respect. The same was true of the later Euro-centric approach to peoples who were considered to be un-European or non-Western.

Nevertheless, the barbarians were also feared because they were brutal, savage and belligerent, and because their incursions threatened the continued existence of Western culture and freedom. Throughout history, various events have rekindled the fear of the *Untergang des Abendlandes* as a result of assaults by barbarians. The Persian wars of the Greeks were followed by the fall of Rome and the Byzantine empire and assaults by Arabs, Mongols and Turks. Next there was the expansion of the Russian empire under the Czars, followed by the Soviet Union. In this context, China and Japan (the Yellow Peril) are also seen as a possible threat. East-West or North-South divides existed as long ago as the Middle Ages. During the first half of the 19th century, the fear of continued Russian expansion generated a tense atmosphere in Western Europe, not unlike the one which prevailed during the Cold War. By contrast, there were also protracted periods of Western military ascendancy. Such periods saw the flowering of the Roman Empire, Byzantium, the German *Drang nach Osten*, European colonial expansion and the Great Powers' continual intervention in the Balkans.

In those situations that were not dominated by fear, it was also possible for people to develop admiration for the barbarians. Although they held the barbarians' lack of political freedom in contempt, people developed a certain respect and admiration for despotic dominions. This was based on their power, stability, order and justice, and on their ability to implement large-scale, rational reforms. The Greeks had just such an ambivalent attitude to the eastern despots of their era, and they were not alone in this. The same attitude prevailed in the West during the Middle Ages, this time with respect to the Arabs and the Mongols. During the 16th and 17th centuries there was a firm rejection of the autocracy of

the Muscovite Czar and the Turkish Sultan. In the 18th century, however, there was a certain amount of veneration for despotic but reforming rulers such as Peter I and Catherine II of Russia. In this regard, Voltaire and Diderot can be seen as the predecessors of the 20th century 'fellow travellers' and western Communists who would not brook any criticism of Lenin or Stalin. As long ago as the 15th century, in addition to the usual fear and contempt, there was also a certain degree of respect for the Turks. They were seen as born rulers, able to allow their Christian and Jewish subjects freedom of religion without causing any disruption to the law and order of the enormous Ottoman empire. Respect for the Turks continued well into the 19th century, even though the Ottoman empire was regarded as the sick man of Europe at the time.

In addition, there was general admiration for the unspoiled, primitive and free character of the barbarian lifestyle. It was thought that their lack of civilization enabled the barbarians to be more relaxed about maintaining social contacts, while giving them more direct access to nature and the supernatural, as well as to the world of art. It was for these reasons that the Greeks admired the nomadic Scythians, a fierce people from the region to the north of the Black Sea. However, the motto *ex oriente lux* continued on into later eras. During the Middle Ages, the Germans exhibited enthusiasm for the moral purity of the Slavic peoples, while at the same time subjugating them. During the New Age, people were captivated by the American Indians, who were seen as *bons sauvages*, even if they did live to the west of Europe. This appreciation did not, however, stop the Indians from being exploited and exterminated. In the 18th century, the cult of China and all things Chinese was even given a special name: *Chinoiserie*. During the 19th century, Russian writers such as Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy were venerated as modern Scythians, while admiration for the savage but noble Balkan peoples gave rise to a distinct literary genre.

Current literature shows for how long and to what extent the western perspective of the rest of the world was restricted by such emotions. The attitude of 'non western' peoples towards Europe was no less complex nor contradictory, however. Although the same feelings were involved, their exact role and the sequence in which they occurred were different. This was because the relationship between east and west, or between north and south if you will, was never particularly well-balanced. From the 16th century on, the West was increasingly in the ascendancy. Contacts with peoples from outside or from Eastern Europe were often characterized by a clashes between 'our' self-satisfied feeling of superiority and 'their' inferiority complex. The dominant feelings of fear and admiration were accompanied by insecurity, frustration, envy and wounded pride. Here too, this jumble of sentiments settled out into prejudices and traditional patterns of response which proved to be extremely persistent. Both on the 'eastern' and the 'western' side, the complex of image-forming factors contained so many internal contradictions that the attitudes of one party relative to the other varied enormously in intensity, depending on the circumstances. The images that people constructed of one another were even able to switch from black to white, and vice versa.

2. The image of Eastern Europe

The existence of an east-west dividing line within Europe itself was a complicating factor in these already complex image-forming processes. For a long period of time, Eastern Europe – in the form of Greece and, later on, Byzantium – was the most civilized part of our continent. The Greeks looked down on the Romans, and the Orthodox Byzantines considered the Latin Christians to be semi-barbarians at best. The roles were reversed, however, when the entire Balkan region and a large part of Hungary were occupied by the Turks. At about the same time Western Europe was establishing the first contacts with Muscovite Russia. From the very beginning, the Europeans considered it to be a barbaric and Asiatic country. The subjugation of the Czechs by the Habsburgs in the 17th century, and the decline and fall of Poland in the 18th century brought about a change of attitude. The whole of Eastern Europe, from north to south, could now be seen as a backward region where poverty, bondage and despotism were indissolubly bound together. The entire region was therefore quite alien to the real (i.e. Western) Europe.⁵¹ At about this time, the concepts of *Oriental Europe* and *l'Europe orientale* started

to appear in travellers' tales. From that time onwards, Europe had an East all of its own. A sort of semi-Asia right in its own backyard. Every positive and negative stereotype and prejudice about the orient that the West had cherished since time immemorial could now also be applied to Eastern Europe.⁵²

In geographical terms, Eastern Europe was still part of Europe, but in economic, political and cultural terms, it was no longer part of the continent. The general belief was that the gap between East and West in Europe could only be bridged by subjecting Eastern Europe to a protracted and intensive process that - *nomen est omen* - was referred to as westernization, Europeanization or modernization. Although that process started as long ago as the 18th century, and radically changed the face of Eastern Europe, the fact that terms such as Eastern Europe remain in common use today indicates that this region is still seen as backward and non-European. However, backwardness was not always seen as a drawback. In Eastern Europe, attempts to replace 'authentic' and 'original' regional cultures with modern western civilization have met with virtually constant resistance. Furthermore, conservatives and romantics in the West occasionally like to believe that in Eastern Europe the best European traditions were preserved from change and corruption. During the first half of the 19th century people were very envious of the Russians as they were reputed to live in accordance with the standards and values of the *ancien régime*. In the second half of the 19th century the rural population of the Balkans were considered to be very fortunate, in that they were still innocent of the ways of the modern world. They were thought to live in a sort of reservation, an 'open-air European peoples museum'.⁵³

This 'otherness' of Eastern Europe was not always viewed as backwardness. Following the development of the Soviet Union, Western progressives went on a pilgrimage to this workers' paradise and declared that they had seen the future.⁵⁴ The system of worker participation in management that was introduced in Tito's Yugoslavia also drew pilgrims and inspired positive reactions.⁵⁵ In addition, there were regular disagreements about the most extreme manifestations of 'otherness' in Eastern Europe. Did they spring from typical Eastern European traditions, mentalities or circumstances, or were they actually the product of unnatural westernization? A nationalistic Russian like Solzhenitsyn, for example, believes that Marxism and Communism were imported from the West and forcibly imposed on the Russian people. The extremely violent nationalism that was ignited by the disintegration of Yugoslavia can also be seen as a result of western influence. The Bulgarian historian, Todorova, wrote that 'It may well be that what we are witnessing today, wrongly attributed to some Balkan essence, is the ultimate Europeanization of the Balkans.'⁵⁶

The eternal question as to whether the differences between East and West really are so great and so fundamental, is being posed once again. In 1994 Willy Claes, the Secretary General of NATO, welcomed the Baltic states, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia as candidates for integration into Europe. He also included Croatia, with the words 'and let's hope'. These candidates were either already sufficiently 'European', or were rapidly becoming so. Claes then referred to Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania and Serbia as countries 'of Byzantine influence'. He felt that they were not yet ready for incorporation into Europe, due to their 'Oriental world view' and 'the latent mentality of those areas'. Vesna Goldworthy, who was raised in Yugoslavia, added: 'Ironically for an exponent of the moral virtues of the Occident, Claes had to resign from NATO over serious allegations of corruption in Belgian politics.'⁵⁷ The *New York Times* expressed astonishment at the influence of Middle Age history on Serbian nationalism and commented that, in the West, it would be unthinkable for people to slaughter one another because of something that happened five hundred years ago. The Bulgarian historian Todorova responded by pointing out that 'In Europe, with a longer span of civilized memory, they were killing because of something that happened 2,000 years ago. One is tempted to ask whether the Holocaust resulted from a 'due' or 'undue' predominance of barbarity.'⁵⁸

The West could also experience the need to place greater emphasis on affinity with Eastern Europe, rather than on the region's strangeness. This usually occurred in times of war, when alliances with Eastern European states were seen as essential for the survival of western nations. This was especially true of Russia, which from time to time was seen either as a deadly danger or an indispensable ally. Anti-Russian and pro-Russian groups, that were clearly identifiable as such, existed

as long ago as the 18th century. They were responsible for a deep division of public opinion in most Western countries. Curiously, depending on the circumstances, views sympathetic towards that country were alternately expressed by conservative and progressive circles. In this regard, prevailing attitudes towards Russia often largely determined the attitude that was adopted towards other Eastern European nations. In the 19th century, anyone who was anti-Russian was often also pro-Polish and pro-Turkish. However, Russia was widely admired as ‘the saviour of Europe’ in the battle against Napoleonic France. The western allies also considered Russian support during both world wars to be of vital importance. As a result, there was a decline in the traditional Russophobia of the French and British. It was for this reason that Serbs were able to count on their sympathy during the First World War, as were Yugoslavian partisans during the Second World War.

During the first half of the 19th century, the most extreme forms of Russophobia existed within left-wing circles in Germany. At that time, however, it was the conservative historian Leopold von Ranke who came up with an argument for definitively placing Russia outside the borders of Europe. He put forward the view that free, civilized Europe was the result of feudalism, the Renaissance and the Reformation. These were things that the German and Latin peoples had in common. Not having participated in any of these developments, Russia could justifiably be considered un-European.⁵⁹ In August 1914, it was the fear of the ‘Russian steamroller’ that united the German nation behind its government. During the First World War, German propaganda presented the Russians as dangerous barbarians. Nevertheless, German-Russian relations were not exclusively determined by mutual rejections and differences of opinion. The conservative-aristocratic elite in the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm were aware of a kinship with the other *Militärmonarchie* in the east, Russia. Furthermore, as a group, Germans in Russia wielded considerable political and economic clout and German culture and science had an exceptionally large influence, as did the workers’ movement. After 1918, Germany saw Russia as a partner. These two countries felt themselves to be victims of the Treaty of Versailles, and they signed a treaty with one another in 1922, at Rapallo. At the time, German intellectuals such as Thomas Mann pointed out the fundamental cultural kinship between the two nations.

This was, however, a deviation from the dominant historical pattern. The German-speaking peoples generally attempted to strengthen their central position in Europe by seeking a rapprochement with the peoples of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, with whom they had had strong ties ever since the Middle Ages. Since the early 19th century people have attempted to give Central Europe an identity of its own. To a varying extent, some were even in favour of making it an economic and political unit. The argument in favour of such a solution rested on assumed affinities between Hungarians, Romanians and Western and Southern Slavs who were supposedly in favour of linking up with the German-speaking peoples. This new area could then shed its connections with advanced Western Europe and backward Russia. Once the bisection of Europe into East and West had been replaced by the classical triad, Central Europe would form a separate unit, under German hegemony. This idea was undermined, however, by the disagreement concerning the formation of a Greater or Lesser Germany⁶⁰, and by the nationalism of the non-German peoples. Nevertheless, for a long time, Germans were attracted by the concept of a peaceful Central Europe, based on the harmonious collaboration of all peoples in the area. Evidence of this was the success of *Mitteleuropa*, a book on this theme by the liberal politician Friedrich Naumann, published in 1915. Ultimately, the achievement of this dream was permanently prevented by the de facto outcome of both world wars.⁶¹

In the period between the wars, non-Germans were the main proponents of the ideal of Central Europe. During the First World War, the Czech T.G. Masaryk devoted himself to a democratic, *Štedni Evropa*, which would be predisposed towards the West. His Central Europe was to consist of a number of small, independent states. This concept met with little enthusiasm in the camp of the Entente. Versailles granted independence to a variety of small countries in Central Europe, but this was merely a consequence of the collapse of the Ottoman and Habsburg empires. A note of caution was sounded concerning the admission of these new states to Europe. In the years between the wars, they were seen as a ‘squabbling mixture of races’ that represented a danger to peace on the continent. At the time, in British government circles, no distinction was drawn between Central Europe and the Balkans. Even

though democracy was working rather well in Czechoslovakia, the British ambassador considered the Czechs to be ‘arrogant pigs... suffering from persecution mania.’⁶² The continuing strength of public opinion regarding the strangeness of that country was illustrated by a radio address given by the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, during the Munich crisis of 1938. Chamberlain commented ‘How horrible, fantastic and incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing.’ Other members of Chamberlain’s cabinet felt equally strongly that what happened in Czechoslovakia had little or nothing to do with England. That country was simply ‘an unstable unit in Central Europe’, ‘a modern invention, a very artificial creation with no real roots in the past.’⁶³ Similarly, contemporary British opinion concerning Poland and Hungary was equally negative⁶⁴.

This changed during the Cold War, when Hungary (in 1956), Czechoslovakia (in 1968) and Poland (in 1980-81) aroused enormous sympathy as a result of their revolts against soviet dictatorship. From that time on, each of these nations was seen as some kind of western outpost. This situation was aptly described as ‘a captive nation syndrome, often accompanied by a glorification of dissent’⁶⁵. It ensured that, during the 1970s and 1980s, the West was extremely open to members of the intellectual opposition in these countries, who presented Central Europe as a region that had been forcibly ripped from the bosom of the West by the Soviet Union. The view taken by the Czech Milan Kundera and his sympathizers was that the dictatorial Communist regime that had been thrust upon his people was ‘eastern’, different and repugnant, while their native culture should be seen as ‘western’ in all respects. Although the shortcomings inherent to this view of things were expertly revealed by historians such as Dittrich⁶⁶, Central Europe was back on the map. Since that time, Poles, Czechs and Hungarians have been given preference by the West. As a result, Europe was once again divided into three. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, this situation was perpetuated by the real need of these three countries to rid themselves of the stigma attached both to Communism and to Eastern Europe. In the words of Václav Havel, they wanted to ‘to go home to Europe’.⁶⁷ They have indeed made rapid advances in the process of transition, joining NATO and gaining the prospect of being the first former Communist countries to be admitted to the European Union. Thus the concept of Central Europe has well and truly taken hold. This region is now generally seen as being fundamentally distinct from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.⁶⁸

3. The image of the Balkans

In the Western image of the Balkans we can once again see the traditions and ambivalences, the shifting standpoints and differences of opinion and especially the glorification and abuse of the barbarians that derive from the Western view of Eastern Europe. For Western Christians, the orthodox faith was, of course, one of the most striking features that South-East Europe and Eastern Europe had in common. From the Great Schism between Rome and Byzantium in 1054, right up to the present day, differences between the Latin and Greek churches have been presented as the major cause of divergence between Western and Eastern Europe, in terms of the development of the state, of society and of peoples’ mentality. Western literature on the subject of Russia and the Balkans consistently displays a lack of understanding of the particular nature of Eastern Christianity and contempt for its ‘heretical’ or ‘superstitious’ views. Another commonly expressed view is that orthodox clergy lack theological insight and an adequate knowledge of the Bible.

Nevertheless, this is just one side of the picture. There were also various counterweights to this rejectionist and often hostile attitude. There was sympathy for the fate of fellow Christians under the Turkish yoke, and Rome often tried to restore unity between Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Protestants too have favoured an anti-Catholic alliance with the Greek church. Orthodoxy has been praised as the only true form of Christianity, by humanists such as Melanchton in the 16th century, as well as by 18th century Pietists and by 19th century Romantics⁶⁹. Western views of the Ottoman political regime and the characteristics of the peoples of South-East Europe are no less ambivalent. Thus, sharp differences of opinion about the Balkans are a common Western European phenomenon. However, the

polarization of these views varied from country to country, as did the way in which this issue was resolved. This situation was influenced by the extremely varied situations in South-East Europe, and by the relationships between the Great Powers. Since the 18th century, these countries had been forced to fill the power vacuum that had resulted from the decline of the Ottoman empire. They sometimes collaborated in this endeavour, while at other times they opposed one another. Each country had its own particular stake in the Balkans.

Since the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Russians had felt that their fate was linked to that of Orthodox Christians living under Ottoman rule. They had been engaged in a centuries-long struggle against Islam in all of the areas to the South and East of Muscovy.⁷⁰ As far back as the 17th century, the Croatian monk Juraj Krizanic travelled to Moscow to request the Czar's support for the oppressed Slavic peoples of the Balkans.⁷¹ Well over a century later, in 1774 the peace treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji compelled the Ottomans to recognize Russia's right, from then on, to act as the protector of Orthodox Christians in the Balkans. In the 19th century, a number of prominent Russian intellectuals became obsessed with pan-Slavic ideals. The Bulgarians particularly became their 'pet nation'. At the same time, however, these same Russians adopted the attitude of 'civilized Europeans' with regard to the 'Asiatic' peoples of the Balkans. They occasionally succeeded in engaging Russian public opinion in their solidarity with the Christians who were supposedly 'groaning under the Turkish yoke'. However, knowledge of the Balkans among the Russian political, military and intellectual elite remained very limited. High-ranking Russians were much more interested in Western Europe.⁷²

During the 'eastern crisis' of the 1870s, it emerged that even an autocratic government was sometimes compelled to pay heed to public opinion. As a result, Russia went to war with Turkey, in order to liberate Bulgaria. Generally, however, Russian foreign politics in the 19th century were primarily focused on Western Europe, Central Asia and the Far East, and not on the Balkans. In addition, the Russian government was handicapped in the extent to which it could intervene in South-Eastern Europe, since it was also an outspoken advocate of the principle of legitimacy. On this basis it was compelled to oppose local rebelliousness. In the interests of restoring law and order, the Russians felt obliged to collaborate with Turkey, Austria, France and Great Britain. Although it had snapped up the northern part of the Danube principalities, Russia had no ambitions to annex the Balkans as a whole. Instead, it attempted to behave as the natural ally of the Greeks, Romanians, Serbs and Bulgarians. However, these peoples often perceived Russian assistance in winning and perpetuating their national independence as clumsy, inadequate or contrary to their interests and turned instead to Austria for protection.⁷³

The house of Habsburg compensated for its loss of power in the Low Countries, Germany and Spain by extending its influence at the cost of the Ottoman empire. In the Balkans, Russia took on the role of the powerful head of the family, who was not prepared to take the trouble to properly get to know the poorer, dependent relatives. Meanwhile, Austria played the part of the expert and extremely dominant neighbour. As far back as the 16th century, the Austrians were publishing remarkable detailed and accurate descriptions of South-East Europe, and of the peoples who inhabited that region.⁷⁴ From the modern viewpoint, the majority of the Habsburgs' non-German subjects were westerners. They were also Catholic and belonged to peoples who, to a greater or lesser extent, had been exposed to the influences of Humanism, Reformation, Counter Reformation and Enlightenment.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, considerable incompatibility remained between the Emperor's German-speaking civil servants and the Slavs, Hungarians and Romanians.⁷⁶ The statesman Metternich, who came from the Rhineland, served as chancellor to the Habsburg emperor. He thought that there was nothing to be done about the problem, due to its fundamental nature. In his opinion the larger portion of the empire he ruled was outside Europe. The 'fault lines of civilizations' drawn by Metternich differed considerably from those that were later to be set out by Huntington. In 1820, the Austrian chancellor is reputed to have remarked that 'Asia starts at the Landstrasse' (the road that runs between Vienna and Budapest).⁷⁷

The Hungarians did indeed represent a considerable danger to the empire's stability. It was only able to suppress their 1848-49 revolt with Russian help. Nor, of course, did the Austrian government have any sympathy whatsoever for the liberation struggles of the Balkan peoples. In 1867, Emperor

Franz Joseph was compelled to share the empire's power with the Magyars. His negotiator, Friedrich Ferdinand von Beust, must have commented to his Hungarian counterparts 'Keep your barbarians under control and we'll do the same with ours.'⁷⁸ This meant that the Austrians would deal with the Poles, Czechs and Slovenians, leaving the Hungarians to handle the Croats, the Slovaks and a section of the Serbs and Romanians. Much to the distaste of Serbia and Montenegro, from 1878 onwards, Bosnia-Herzegovina was groomed to be Austria's very own colony in the Balkans. In 1895, the Austrian administrator of those areas, the Hungarian Beni Kállay von Nagy-Kállay, wrote in a London newspaper that: 'Austria is a great Occidental Empire charged with the mission of carrying civilization to Oriental peoples.'⁷⁹ The occasionally impressive modernization that was implemented in the southern areas of the Habsburg empire, did nothing to improve the popularity of the local Austrians and Hungarians. Their arrogant 'divide and rule' policy aggravated the tensions in the Balkans and undermined peace in Europe. The Habsburg authorities were fearful of a revolt in Bosnia, and lacked the courage to make major changes in rural areas. As a result, large numbers of orthodox Serbian farmers continued to be the serfs of a small group of Muslim land owners.⁸⁰ Given the continued existence of social and political differences in the area, with all that this implied, historians later viewed the occupation and subsequent annexation of Bosnia as a fatal form of imperial overstretch.⁸¹

The Balkans was something familiar to Russia. Although the region fell within the natural sphere of influence of Russia's foreign policy, it was not vitally important. The continued existence of Russia as a Great Power was not dependent on the Balkans. The area was of vital importance for Austria but, despite its proximity, it remained very foreign. The remaining Great Powers considered the Balkans to be odd and insignificant. Their only involvement in the region was related to the international complications associated with the decline in Turkish power and with the competition between Russia and Austria. The anti-Turkish crusade mentality that had made such a mark on Russian and Austrian history was much weaker in Germany, France and England. Thus, they were able to be more candid in their appreciation both of the Ottomans and of the Balkan peoples' struggle for freedom.

In addition to the rebellious Poles and Hungarians, the Greeks enjoyed considerable support in liberal circles throughout Western Europe. Furthermore, such support was by no means limited to moral platitudes. Germans made up the majority of the philhellenes who joined the Greeks in their struggle for liberation. This was characteristic of the swing in German mentality that had taken place under the influence of the French revolution and the Romantic Movement. In his *Hyperion* (1797), the poet Hölderlin had already shown himself to be a philhellene *avant la lettre*. Schiller and Beethoven were inspired by the rebellious Greeks. In *Faust*, Goethe splendidly illustrated the Germans' self-satisfied views concerning the Balkan wars of the 18th century.⁸² He himself was deeply impressed by Byron's life, and his death for the resurrection of Greece. Goethe also showed great interest in and admiration for Serbian culture and rebelliousness. He was not alone in this, Jakob Grimm, Ranke and others felt the same way.

Sharply divergent views were held by Marshall Von Moltke, who at the start of his career, had spent a considerable amount of time in Turkey, as a military instructor. In his well known *Briefe aus der Türkei*, Molke had declared himself in favour of the reformation of the Ottoman empire. The German liberal and orientalist, Jakob Fallmerayer, supported Greek independence. Nevertheless, in 1830, he put the damper on the romantic philhellenism to which those with a classical education were so attached. Fallmerayer asserted that 'auch nicht ein Tropfen echten und ungemischten Hellenenblutes in den Adern der Christlichen Bevölkerung des heutigen Griechenland fließet.'⁸³ He stated that modern Greeks were of either Slavic or Albanian origin, and were certainly not the decedents of Homer and Plato. Marx and Engels also attempted to curb the 'poetic' enthusiasm in their circles for 'edle Räubervölker' such as the Serbs, Bulgarians or Albanians. Such 'Völkerabfälle', 'Völkerruinen', 'gebrochene Barbarische Reste' or 'unhistorische Völker' were simply tools in the hands of Russian pan-Slavists. Nevertheless, they later experienced a growing appreciation of the Serbs. However, this was outweighed by their Russophobia and, in the Russo-Turkish war of 1876, they allied themselves with the Ottomans.⁸⁴

The Balkans was mainly important to the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm because of his relationship with Austria. Bismarck, who took on the role of “ehrlicher Makler” at the Berlin Congress of 1878, had not the slightest understanding of the liberation struggles of the Balkan nations. ‘Diese Hammeldiebe’s role was simply to adhere, in every respect, to the arrangements of the Great Powers. They were still not worth ‘die gesunden Knochen eines einzigen pommerschen Musketiers’ to him.⁸⁵ While the German academic world boasted respectable Eastern-Europe experts, the image of the Balkans owed more to a popular author such as Karl May than it did to these scholars. Although he never visited the region, his *In den Schluchten des Balkan* (published in 1892) was just as popular as his other adventure novels. Books of this type served to enhance the exotic image of the Balkans that had taken root. This image could also be found in the pages of the authoritative Brockhaus encyclopaedia.⁸⁶

French foreign policy had a long tradition of being anti-Austrian, anti-Russian and pro-Turkish. The writings of French travellers from the 16th century onwards initially showed an appreciation of the effective administration and religious tolerance of the Ottomans. This was gradually replaced by critical reports about despotism and corruption. Yet, throughout this period, political, economic and cultural relations became ever more intensive.⁸⁷ It was especially the brief period of Napoleonic administration in Dalmatia that served to enhance French expertise concerning the Balkans and the peoples who inhabited that region. There was considerable sympathy for the Greek freedom fighters. In their imaginations, French travellers saw the rocky terrain of Greece inhabited by ancient gods. They visualized Demosthenes and Socrates strolling under the plane trees and olive trees. Leading writers such as Victor Hugo and Chateaubriand expressed their sympathy for the Greek cause. In 1824, the fashionable Delacroix painted *Scènes des massacres de Scio* (which depicted the bloodbath that the Turks inflicted on Chios in 1822). In 1826 he created *La Grèce sur les ruines de Missolonghi* to commemorate the defenders of Missolonghi, who had blown themselves to smithereens, along with the besieging Turks who had entered the city. However, a far greater number of drawings and paintings produced by this artist drew upon the exotic, martial and voluptuous Muslim Orient. This was a topic that very much occupied peoples’ imaginations during the Romantic period.⁸⁸

In his well-known *Voyage en Orient*, the poet-diplomat Alphonse de Lamartine showed that he was very much against the artificial preservation of the Ottoman empire. He expressed great admiration for the Serbian and Bulgarian peasants, indicating that he thought them capable of sustaining independence, nor were his views about the Turks -as a people - dismissive. The poet Prosper Mérimée published a collection of Serbian epic poetry from his own pen. The novelist Honoré de Balzac also incorporated Serbian themes into his work. While it appealed to the romantic imagination, such literature had little influence on the shaping of political opinion.⁸⁹ French meddling in the Balkans was not based solely on its considerable interests in the Mediterranean region. There was also a hope that the Eastern question might lead to a revision of the decisions taken at the Vienna Congress, which held out to France the prospect of revenge and of strengthening its position in Western Europe. Critics of France wrote that while the French were shouting about Greece, what they really meant was Belgium and the banks of the Rhine.⁹⁰ Despite the great enthusiasm for the banditry of rebellious peasants (known in the Balkans as *klephts*, *armatoles* or *hayduks*), as a Catholic country, France had its reservations about the schismatic, orthodox faith of the Balkan peoples. French diplomats did not have a particularly high opinion either of the Ottoman administration, or of the reigning princes of Serbia or Montenegro. Unlike Britain, public opinion concerning participation in the Crimean War was half-hearted and divided. Nor, later on, was there much support for the rebellious peoples of the Balkans.⁹¹

It was the United Kingdom, more than any other country, that made its mark on the Western image of the Balkans. In Britain, the Balkan issue caused more political division and inflamed emotions than anywhere else. Nevertheless, it was not until the second half of the 19th century that the British really became interested in the Balkans. This interest derived solely from a much older preoccupation with Russia and Turkey. In England, from the 16th century onwards, these countries had been seen as despotic and barbarian powers. Throughout the entire 18th century and up until about 1820, British government circles saw Russia as an important trading partner, a friendly power and a natural ally for Britain. Numerous travellers tales show that during this period, and even later, the British had more

respect for the Turks, as a dominant power, than for the peoples they had subjugated.⁹² In 1800, interest in Greece derived mainly from the traditions of the *Grand Tour* and from a classical education. When the Elgin marbles were brought to Britain in 1812, British tourists saw the Greeks as ‘ignorant, superstitious, factious, venal, obsequious, lazy, dirty and ungrateful’⁹³ This applied to the Turks either to a much lesser extent or not at all. Even philhellenes such as Byron had similar opinions about Greeks and Turks. However, such people were passionate about freedom, they also tended to focus on the good qualities of the Greeks and on the injustices of the Turkish administration. The philhellenic craze soon petered out, however. The main protagonists were a small group of *angry young men* from the British elite, mostly of Scottish descent. The most prominent members of English society were ‘violent anti-Greeks’ and they received the support of powerful men such as Castlereagh and Wellington. In 1830, the young Benjamin Disraeli joined the Turkish Grand Visier in Albania on a campaign against local rebels. In letters to his family, he wrote about ‘the delight of being made much of by a man who was daily decapitating half the province.’⁹⁴

Russophobia was a more important factor in the development of the image of the Balkans than was philhellenism. Anti-Russian feelings arose in Whig circles at the end of the 18th century. At the start of the 19th century, this spread out to include ever wider circles of the aristocratic elite and the well-to-do. Throughout Europe, contemporary left-wing circles were overcome by such sentiments. Those on the European mainland were fearful that the Cossacks might invade and put an end to European freedom. In England, there was an equally unfounded fear that Russian expansion in central Asia and in South-East Europe threatened British India, or the routes leading to it. Public opinion was exceptionally anti-Russian. It was mainly pressure from this quarter that caused the British government to undertake the Crimean War (1853-1856). Although the war served to highlight Russian weakness, this did nothing to assuage the exaggerated British fear of that country.⁹⁵ Since Palmerston’s government had sacrificed 25,000 British lives in the Crimea and had spent seventy million pounds to get the Turkish empire back on its feet, the Balkans continued to be an important focus for foreign policy even after 1856⁹⁶. Although the war with Russia was not a response to the repression of the Balkan peoples, further British support for the Ottoman empire was provisional upon the Turks implementing certain reforms in order to greatly improve the lot of their Christian subjects. Failure to take this action would give the other Great Powers, with Russia at their head, an excuse to intervene. Since the Turks failed to implement significant reforms, the British shifted their focus for the first time to the Balkan peoples.

The British had long been inclined to dismiss the rebellions in the Balkans as an adverse phenomenon caused by Russian intrigues. In the 1860s and 1870s, however, many became convinced that by supporting ‘the unspeakable Turk’, the British were partly responsible, possibly even partly to blame, for the barbarities taking place in the Balkans. In their book, published in 1867 and entitled *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces? of Turkey-in-Europe*, Georgina Mackenzie and Adelina Irby informed many of their fellow countrymen about ‘the sullenness, the poverty and the squalor of the Christian Slavs’. While both ladies remained firmly convinced of British superiority in all things, it was for this very reason that the British should be concerned about these peoples’ fate. They set a good example and remained in Bosnia, where they carried out many good works despite the fact that they viewed the Bosnians as barbaric, dishonest and lazy.⁹⁷ In the period from 1875 to 1878, British public opinion was shocked by the so-called *Eastern Crisis*. This involved rebellions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria and Thessaly, wars in Serbia, Montenegro and ultimately a conflict between Russia, Romania and Turkey. There was great anxiety about the savagery inflicted on the Bulgarians by irregular Turkish troops known as Bashi-Bazouks. The press devoted little attention to the slaughter of Turkish and Slav Muslims by the rebels.

However, Disraeli’s conservative government continued to pursue an anti-Russian policy. Such was the importance of a safe route to India that the British Empire would, if necessary, go to war to defend it. Given the weakness of France, the three conservative empires of Russia, Germany and Austria were capable of dominating the continent. Britain’s aim was to drive a wedge between them. As far as Disraeli was concerned, Turks and Christians were mere pawns on his chessboard. He tended to

see rebellions in the Balkans as a ‘throwback to barbarism’, and he dismissed the accounts of Turkish atrocities as exaggerated. Disraeli’s imperturbability resulted in an unprecedented explosion of moral indignation among the opposition and large sections of the population. This took the form of numerous meetings, committees and pamphlets.⁹⁸ This movement gained enormous political significance when Gladstone, Disraeli’s main liberal adversary, took on the role of spokesman for protesting intellectuals, artists, nonconformists and many ordinary citizens, who had just been given the right to vote. In September 1876, he wrote his famous pamphlet *Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East*. Two hundred thousand copies were sold within one month. This did not lead to any changes in foreign policy, however. The presence of British warships in the Dardanelles prevented the Russians from profiting from their successful operations in the Balkans. Thus, when the Great Powers met at the 1878 congress of Berlin to settle the ‘eastern crisis’, ‘der alte Jude’ (the term used by Bismarck when referring to Disraeli) triumphed.⁹⁹ Todorova takes the view that the discovery of the oppressed Christian peoples of the Balkans coincided with the discovery of the ‘Victorian poor’ in Britain itself. The domestic ‘moral issue’ gave rise to the foreign one. ‘If there is any lesson to be drawn from the Bosnian crisis of 120 years ago, it is more about the domestic imperatives in Great Power foreign policy than about ‘ancient enmities’.¹⁰⁰

4. Balkan writers and Balkan literature

The ‘Eastern crisis’ of the 1870s gave definite shape to the image of the Balkans, not just in Great Britain but in the continent of Europe as well. The Balkans was to remain a crisis area until 1914, so this image was confirmed and reinforced over and over again. Despite all of the agitation about Turkish atrocities, there was little evidence of racially or religiously motivated prejudice against Turks or Muslims. People no longer wrote about an undifferentiated mass of Christians who, because of their faith, were all conveniently labelled as Greeks. From that time on national stereotypes were used, such as ‘suffering Bulgarians, wild Albanians, martial Serbs and proud, brave Montenegrins.’ At the same time, public opinion was concerned about Russian manipulation of the Balkan peoples, who were generally considered to be incapable of independence and of conducting an efficient administration.¹⁰⁰ The numerous reports of revolutionary terror, revolts, coup d’etats, political assassinations and widespread corruption in the Balkans only served to reinforce these views. Like the image of Eastern Europe and the even older image of barbarism, however, the image of the Balkans retained certain Janus-like features. Adverse, deprecatory aspects were balanced by the positive, romantic impressions that were chiefly presented in that period’s extensive imaginative literature and travel literature on the Balkans.

The legendary figure of Byron, his selfless efforts on behalf of the Greek cause, and his death at Missolonghi in 1824 remained symbolic of ethically inspired, western interference in the Balkans. The landscapes of Greece, Macedonia and Albania reminded him of the Scottish Highlands, and the fierce clans that used to inhabit the region. The repercussions of his lyrical poetry on this subject continued for many years. The glorification of wild and noble mountain dwellers was a familiar theme in European literature.¹⁰² The untouched mountainous areas of the Balkans, whose primitive inhabitants apparently still followed a tribal way of life, therefore had considerable magnetism for western visitors. In the midst of all the uproar in England about the ‘Eastern crisis’, the poet Alfred Lord Tennyson (egged on by Gladstone) dedicated a verse to Montenegro. His poem describes a ‘rough rock-throne of freedom’ where ‘a race of mightier mountaineers’ dwelt. There was much about the numerous peoples and regions of the Balkans that appealed to the imagination. In addition to an eventful history, they had a colourful folklore, revolutionary movements, secret societies, ethnic and religious contrasts, agricultural poverty, a violent political culture and political instability. Balkan royalty was an equally exotic subject. This applied both to the native royal families of Serbia and Montenegro and to those of Greece, Romania and Bulgaria, which had their origins in Western Europe. The western yellow press gave extensive coverage to the frivolous behaviour of some of these monarchs and to the bloody deaths of others. As the 19th century neared its end, Scotland, the Iberian peninsula and post-

unification Germany and Italy, had lost much of their appeal for writers seeking new material for a novel. The Balkans appeared to be a region that had somehow managed to escape the tedium and bourgeois values that were gradually taking hold elsewhere in Europe.

The Prisoner of Zenda by Anthony Hope was published in 1894. It was a novel about a British aristocrat who closely resembled the king of an obscure Balkan country named 'Ruritania'. Their close resemblance to one another enabled this Byronic hero to save the fictitious monarch, and his imaginary kingdom, from a national crisis. Several hundred thousand copies of this novel were sold. The story was also used as the basis for plays and films. The success of this novel led to the production of dozens of adventure novels, castle novels, thrillers, detective stories, comedies, operettas and films. These were often set in imaginary Balkan states such as Syldavia, Dardania, Kedaria, Kravonia, Drynia, Vulgaria, Carpathia, Pottibakia, Herzoslovakia, Moesia, Mlavia or Silaria. Most of these are long forgotten, but some enjoyed more lasting fame. Some examples of the latter are: Bernard Shaw's play *Arms and Men* (1894); *Dracula*, Bram Stoker's Gothic novel (1897); Franz Lehár's operetta *Die lustige Witwe* (1905); *The Thirty Nine Steps*, John Buchan's spy novel (1915); Agatha Christie's detective story, *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934); Eric Ambler's thriller, *The Mask of Demitrios* (1939); Hergé's cartoon strip, *Kuifje en de scepter van Ottokar* (1947) and the film *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957), starring Laurence Olivier and Marilyn Monroe.¹⁰³

Amusements of this kind reached broad sections of the general public, and served to confirm the image of the Balkans as one of a mysterious, exotic and semi-Asian corner of Europe. Usually, their authors or producers had never set foot in that region. Their only goal was to offer Western readers a pleasant and exciting escape from their day-to-day troubles. On the other hand, some novels attracted attention because they were based on personal experiences, and were truer to reality. One example is Evelyn Waugh's comical and critical *Unconditional Surrender* (1961), about his experiences with Tito's partisans. Another is Olivia Manning's autobiographical *Balkan Trilogy* (1960-1965), about mundane life in Bucharest and Athens just before and during the Second World War. In the Anglo-Saxon world, however, Mary Edith Durham and Rebecca West already had insuperable reputations as writers on the subject of the Balkans.

Durham arrived in the Balkans in 1900, at the age of 37. She was to remain there for most of the next 25 years. She wrote a series of travel stories, as well as stories with an anthropological component, about Serbia and Albania. She worked in field hospitals during the Balkan wars. She also had a distinct preference for desolate, mountainous regions such as Montenegro. She saw this as 'the Lhasa of Europe', peopled by 'fearless heroes straight from the pages of Homer'. She can be seen as 'the last of the Victorian travellers in the Balkans', one of those 'English spinsters who go about adopting small countries' who, convinced of their British superiority, were on a mission to spread the light of civilization. She attempted to learn Serbo-Croat and Albanian, and spared no effort to further her knowledge and understanding. Nevertheless, she became convinced of the region's complexity, the incomprehensibility of its inhabitants and the complexity of the 'Balkan tangle'. She continued to see herself as an objective observer and eternal outsider. Her compatriots, however, saw her as increasingly Balkanized, feeling that she identified too closely with the region. In the period between the World Wars, she became a fierce advocate of Albanian independence. As a result, she also became extremely anti-Serbian.¹⁰⁴

Whereas Durham was a Spartan and seasoned inhabitant of the Balkans, West was a woman of letters. She restricted herself to three short and extremely luxurious trips to Yugoslavia in 1936 and 1937. In the introduction to her *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, she wrote disparagingly about countrymen who travelled to the Balkans, only to return 'with a pat Balkan people' for pampering. She referred specifically to 'Miss Durham who had been led by her humanitarian passion to spend almost all her life in the Balkans' and, as a result, had become the undisputed champion of the Albanians, one who was inclined to believe even the most unlikely of anti-Serbian stories. West made brief observations in the field, which were subsequently embellished and extended at great length after she had returned home. However, she was just as concerned as Durham about the enigmatic and incomprehensible nature of

the Balkans. Even though she considered herself to be an objective judge of Yugoslavian relations, she had in fact already sided with the Serbs.

In terms of her attitude to the peoples of the Balkans, Durham remained a sort of Victorian school teacher and do-gooder. West, who completed her book while German bombs were raining down on London, adopted a more humble attitude. She believed that, in their struggle against the Turks, the Serbs had shown Europe how Christian civilization must be defended against the despotic and immoral powers that were once again menacing our continent. This view turned her travel stories in Yugoslavia into 'an inward journey of self-discovery and a spiritual quest'. Yugoslavia seemed to offer her the key 'to the understanding of all mankind, all human history and God.'¹⁰⁵ In this, West was a great deal less unique than is often assumed to be the case. The belief that only primitive barbarians were capable of holding up a mirror to the civilized world, one in which people could see their true selves, dates back to Ancient Greece. She had entertained Slavophilic views for many years. In the period between the wars, like many others in Western Europe before and since, she greatly admired Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy. She tested feelings and thoughts of this kind during her pilgrimage to Yugoslavia, and in the course of her subsequent studies of that country. Other artists and intellectuals had previously seen a journey to Czarist or Communist Russia as a sort of spiritual rebirth, a liberation from the spiritual narrow-mindedness of the West.¹⁰⁶

Although many works of fiction and non-fiction have been published on the subject of Russia and other Eastern European countries, Balkan literature is quite astonishing in terms of its volume and diversity. It not only gives the impression of a region torn by centuries of enmity and hate between the various inhabitants. Its image of the Balkans is complex, and contains too many contradictory elements for this to be the case. Although ethnic differences and conflicts are regularly addressed, the majority of authors do not see these as wholly or partly responsible for the specific characteristics of the area. Indeed, they are not usually interested in explanations. A systematic analysis of the strange, unknown, exotic and Eastern nature of the Balkans would dispel its attractive mysteriousness. Nevertheless this literature often presents a marked contrast between the corrupt world of the Balkan capital cities, with their numerous political intrigues, and the purity, nobility and heroism of people in rural and mountainous areas. The real, original Balkans lay outside the cities. This was seen as 'Europe in its cradle', as a 'genuine unspoilt Europe'.

The romantic and anti-modernist tendency of much of the more dated Balkan literature is remarkable when seen against the light of contemporary literature dealing with the recent Yugoslavian civil wars. The latter highlights the contrast between the civilized, multinational, Western character of urban society and the primitiveness and ethnic contrasts of the agricultural areas. In her book on English-language Balkans' fiction, Vesna Goldsworthy notes that there was an additional tension in these older images of the Balkans. This was the discrepancy 'between the idea of the centrality of the region and that of its total marginality in the world of European politics'. The Balkans was represented as either irrelevant to Europe, or fatal to it. For the political and military elite in 1900, however, the potential hazards of the Balkans were all too clear. In 1893, a group of British military experts wrote a scenario for the outbreak of a world war. This document was entitled, *The Great War of 189.: A Forecast*. The document contains a description of the murder of a Bulgarian prince, by a Russian spy dressed as a priest. The Serbs use the ensuing confusion to create a border incident. As a result, the Austrians rapidly occupy Belgrade, which in turn leads to a Russian invasion of Bulgaria etc. *The Great War of 189.* was a popular book, especially in its German translation. This inspired Shaw to write *Arms and men*. Prior to 1914, it also caused many other authors to describe the Balkans as the powder keg of Europe.

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While the hazardous and negative aspects of the Balkans cannot be denied, the most striking feature of former Western perceptions of the region is a positive evaluation. Since contemporary opinions and prejudices about the Balkans reveal no trace of this former appreciation, it is inaccurate to assert that they are simply a continuation of past views. In the literature on the Yugoslavian conflicts, various factors have been associated with the views and attitudes of the 'international community'. Traditional views of the Balkan peoples were only one of many issues. Some importance has also been

attached to the 'traditional' character of the relations that the Great Powers maintained with the Balkan states, especially Yugoslavia. It is for this reason that, in the next section of this historical sketch of images of the Balkans and of Yugoslavia, the greatest emphasis will be placed on international relations, both past and present.

5. Traditional friendships

Writing about relations between the independent Serbia and other states, prior to 1914, the Polish-British historian, Sir Lewis Namier, stated: 'Hardly another rising, or renascent, nation had so great an array of enemies and so few friends. Habsburg, Austrians, Magyars, and Italians, were fully united in their hostility to the Serbs. [...] Russia might have been expected to befriend the Serbs: but the Bulgars, her vanguard against Constantinople, were her favourites.[...] In Great Britain [...], there were more pro-Turks and pro-Bulgars (as in 1876-8), but very few pro-Serbs.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, despite admiration for the primitive inhabitants of the Balkans, British political circles at the turn of the century mainly saw Serbia as a 'thoroughgoing nuisance' and a 'nest of violent barbarians'.¹⁰⁹ Great Britain (and the Netherlands) broke off diplomatic relations for several years, following the horrifying murder of the Serbian king and queen in Belgrade in 1903. From then on, until 1914, events only served to make Serbia even less liked in the West. Existing prejudices were confirmed by the wholesale slaughter carried out by the Serbs in Kosovo in 1913, as well as by the assassination of the successor to the Austrian throne in Sarajevo in 1914. There were exceptions, however. The renowned British historian, G.M. Trevelyan, who visited Kosovo in 1913 as a guest of the Serbian army, was receptive to the historical myths that were being used to justify the struggle to create a Greater Serbia. Thanks to the support of Russia and France, the Great Powers permitted Serbia to retain the conquered territory of Kosovo. However, the establishment of an independent Albania meant that the Great Powers were not prepared to concede to Serbia's intense desire for some Adriatic coastline.

During the First World War, the countries of the Entente developed considerable sympathy for their only true allies in South-Eastern Europe, the heroic Serbs, who were making considerable sacrifices for the common cause. In addition to the St Vitus days that were celebrated in Britain and America¹¹⁰, other campaigns were used to familiarize the populations of western countries with Serbian history. The Kosovo myth was seen as the source of inspiration for the admirable behaviour of the Serbs. They were applauded as 'the thoroughbreds of the Balkans', as 'magnificent specimens of humanity' and as 'the guardians of the Gate' of civilized Europe.¹¹¹ To some extent, the Central Powers also amended their opinion of the Serbs, who they primarily saw as regicides. Wendel, a socialist representative in the German Reichstag, stated that the Serbs were 'the most slandered people in Europe'. Germans, in particular, had made fun of them 'until 1914, when everyone suddenly stopped laughing'. During the Balkan campaigns, the Serbs proved to be highly energetic and tenacious opponents. Virtually every Serbian village was found to contain a normal school, and their inhabitants were people who conducted themselves in a civilized and dignified way.¹¹²

Nevertheless, the creation of a Yugoslavian state and the demarcation of its territories were ultimately due to the considerations of power politics and to the outcome of the war.¹¹³ The continuing Serbian outrages in Kosovo caused the American president, Woodrow Wilson, to resist Anglo-French plans for an expansion of Serbia at the cost of Albania. However, those who drew up the treaty of Versailles favoured a degree of Serbian predominance within the new Yugoslavian state, whose primary role was to act as a bastion against future German expansionism in the Balkans. Accordingly, another influential British historian, R.W. Seton-Watson, stated that 'the potent Serbian wine should not become overly diluted with weak Yugoslavian water'. During the war, this authority on Central and South-Eastern Europe had done a great deal for the Serbian cause. At the same time, he became intensely irritated by what he saw as the 'Turkish' political culture of Serbian statesmen like Nikola Pasic. In the period between the wars, Seton-Watson made even more critical statements about the dictatorial tendencies of the Serbs in Yugoslavia. Several prominent French journalists and politicians, such as Charles Rivet and Robert Schumann, had warned about this, both during and after the war.¹¹⁴

At the peace negotiations, there was a sharp conflict between Italian and Serbian interests. Any sympathy for the Serbian cause at Versailles was prompted by a desire on the part of France and Great Britain to retain a reliable ally in South-Eastern Europe. In this, they were to be disappointed. France had become a weak power and its attempts to prop up Yugoslavia with a system of alliances (the Little Entente and the Balkan Entente) met with failure. Neither France nor Great Britain were able to grant the kingdom economic prosperity or military protection. By the 1920s, Yugoslavia was primarily oriented towards Germany, Austria and Italy. Most Yugoslavian exports went to those countries. This tendency became still more pronounced during the 1930s.¹¹⁵ In 1935, a French observer noted that ‘Germans are everywhere in Belgrade these days. French is never spoken. Merchants and waiters can neither speak nor comprehend the language, but nine out of ten of them speak and comprehend German.’¹¹⁶

Such elementary facts passed unnoticed by Rebecca West, who was extremely anti-German, when she visited Yugoslavia two years later. At that time the economic and political life of the country, which was still dominated by Serbs, was almost completely dependent on Nazi Germany. West finally published her book in 1942, five years after her journey. In it she states that she saw marked similarities between Great Britain in the ‘appeasement’ period and this so-called ‘neutral’ Yugoslavia under premier Stojadinovic and the prince regent Pavel Karadjordjevic. West stated that in her own country the ‘springs of national will [were] locked fast in frost’, while members of the British upper class flirted with Hitler and Mussolini. She felt that it was only the return of Churchill to public office in 1939 that saved Great Britain’s honour.

According to West, a similar event occurred in Yugoslavia two years later. In 1941, when the treaty confirming Yugoslavia’s alignment with the Axis Powers was signed, the Patriarch condemned it as being contrary to the spirit of Kosovo. This statement was immediately followed by an anti-fascist coup d’etat led by a group of officers. The coup was supported and even inspired by the British.¹¹⁷ This coup provoked the German bombardment of Belgrade, and the kingdom’s subsequent conquest, occupation and downfall. However, West felt that the Serbs had followed the example of the British in showing their true face to the world, thereby revealing the similarities between them. Even the difference between Britain in 1939 and Serbia on the eve of the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 ‘lay in time and place and not in the events experienced, which resembled each other even in details of which we of the later catastrophe think as peculiar to our nightmare.’¹¹⁸

West was unaware that the Nazi interpreter and diplomat, Dr Paul Otto Schmidt, had made an altogether different comparison in the German press, several years previously. Schmidt claimed that there was a substantial moral affinity between the Germans and the Serbs as their age-old struggle against the Turks had caused the latter to become virtuous, militant and chivalrous. This convinced Hitler of the desirability of a close alliance between both peoples. In fact, Yugoslavia was to become the stage both of large-scale collaboration with the Italian and German occupiers, and of equally large-scale resistance to them. Serbs, Croats and the other nationalities worked closely together during the war, but they also slaughtered each other as well. In 1942, the annual commemoration of the Battle of Kosovo was held in occupied Belgrade. The collaborating press celebrated this occasion with attacks on the Communist resistance which, of course, was presented as a betrayal of the Kosovo tradition. West, as an ardent anti-Communist, continued to support the Serbian royalists during the war. The British government decided to support Tito’s partisans, since they could offer more effective resistance to the Germans than the Serbian royalist Cetniks. The king of Yugoslavia was in exile in London and, for a while, the allies attempted to match up his interests with those of Tito. But Churchill was not really interested in the political future of Serbia or Yugoslavia.¹¹⁹

In the post-war years, the Communist authorities made every effort to suppress the annual commemoration of the Battle of Kosovo. They used the defeat of the partisan movement at the battle of Sutjeska as a new Kosovo, one that was not exclusively Serbian and which could be celebrated by the whole of Yugoslavia.¹²⁰ It was indeed Communist Yugoslavia, rather than Serbia or Croatia, that acquired a good reputation in the West. As a result of Tito’s rift with Stalin, Yugoslavia was able to adopt a unique position between East and West, which made that country extremely significant and

interesting to us. Over a period of four decades, it was the only Communist country with which the West was able to maintain relatively normal and intensive contacts. Foreign labourers from Yugoslavia made an important contribution to West European prosperity. Large-scale American and international financial support generated an artificial blossoming of the Yugoslavian economy.

Yugoslavia became more acceptable to right-wing political movements in the West when it firmly distanced itself from the Soviet bloc. At the same time, the country remained the focus of attention for left-wing and progressive circles as a result of its role in the group of 'non-aligned' countries and the 'breathtaking boldness'¹²¹ of the experiments with worker self-management. Other factors were the unorthodox Marxism of some Yugoslavian theoreticians and the excellent, extremely readable books produced by members of the opposition, such as Djilas. Many Western European tourists were attracted by Yugoslavia's countryside, its climate, music, food and low prices. This was of much greater importance to the country's wider popularity. Post-war Western news coverage and scholarly literature prior to 1980 therefore projected a predominantly positive image of Communist Yugoslavia. Although the country's problems were not completely glossed over, for a long time they appeared to be less serious or more solvable than those in the rest of Communist Europe. In the divided but stable world of the Cold War, the Balkans was no longer seen as a powder keg. It seemed that the old clichés about a barbaric, violent, exotic and semi-Asian Yugoslavia were wearing rather thin. For a long time, Tito's state was seen as a relatively westernized country. It was broadly comparable to other Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Spain or Portugal, if not more prosperous. From 1948 to 1988, it occupied the position that is currently occupied by the Central European countries.¹²²

It became increasingly clear that the Communist government had not succeeded in eliminating regional antipathies. There was a distinct possibility that the republic would fall apart after Tito's death.¹²³ Foreign governments viewed such a possibility with deep concern. Military authorities even thought that this might trigger a Third World War. In spite of all this apprehension, however, no scenarios were developed to prevent the disintegration of the Yugoslavian federation.¹²⁴ No commentators, other than those in Yugoslavian emigré circles, would even consider expressing a preference for Croatian independence or the formation of a Greater Serbia, as this might reveal the unavoidable bankruptcy of the Yugoslavian state. Commentators in the West continued to sympathize with dissident groups and individuals. Their nationalism was seen as a sign of burgeoning pluralism rather than one of impending disintegration.¹²⁵

When the political and economic situation in Yugoslavia sharply worsened during the 1980s, the West's attention was no longer specifically focused on that country. The remarkable developments in the Soviet bloc and the reduction of tension between East and West caused Yugoslavia to be seen as much less important and interesting. It lost both its privileged position and American protection. The requirements that the IMF now imposed on loans accelerated the country's economic downfall and worsened the social circumstances of large sectors of the population. After 1989, Yugoslavia found it more difficult to obtain support from the European Community than did former Eastern Bloc countries such as Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. This was because the latter countries complied with all of the current definitions of European civilization, whereas Yugoslavia was unable to satisfy some of the criteria. This encouraged the separatist tendencies of Croatia and Slovenia. These Catholic countries, which before 1918 had been part of the Habsburg empire, took pride in their European roots.¹²⁶ Meanwhile, the central government had already weakened considerably. Although it was granted European financial support, this was contingent upon keeping the country in one piece and implementing economic reforms. The introduction of a market economy forced the population to tighten their belts and eroded political support for the federal government still further.

It was only on the eve of war, in 1991, that international attention once again focused on the southern Slavic region. The West felt compelled to intervene, but deep differences of opinion arose between the European powers as soon as the Yugoslavian conflict broke out. These came to a head in the autumn of 1991, when Germany (with the support of Austria) expressed a desire to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia as soon as possible. Germany's intentions generated passionate

reactions among those in the war zone. Slovenians and Croats used every channel made available by the modern communications media to express their heartfelt gratitude. Conversely, the Yugoslavian defence minister expressed the view that this was the third time that Germany had attacked his country.¹²⁷ Serbian leaders and intellectuals claimed that this was the rise of the 'Fourth Reich', a resurgence of the Danube monarchy and a new German *Drang nach Osten*.

The historical undertone in both Serbian and Croatian wartime propaganda was quite striking. There were continual, emotional references to a past with which the general public was only vaguely familiar or with which it had yet to come to terms. This mainly applied to the period of the Second World War. There was a strong tendency to think in terms of historical friendships and enmities. The Serbian media, for example, expressed their aversion to the Pope, who they saw as a traditional friend of the Catholic Croats and enemy of the Orthodox Serbs. Serbian nationalists had a similar role in mind for Islamic countries such as Turkey, Iran or Libya. They felt that these countries were the mainstay of the Bosnian, Kosovars and Macedonian Muslims. At the same time, they praised their renewed, time-honoured ties with the Russians.¹²⁸ Vehement reactions of this kind are entirely consistent with the war psychosis that had seized the Yugoslavian peoples. More surprising was the immediate focus in the West on reminiscences about the period prior to 1945. This development was not sparked by the actions of Germany and Austria alone. Western critics of the stance taken by the USA, Britain and France accused these countries of renewing their traditional alliance with the Serbs, or of practising the appeasement politics of the 1930s.¹²⁹ Warren Christopher, the American Secretary of State during Clinton's first term as President, described the war as 'a humanitarian crisis a long way from home, in the middle of another continent'¹³⁰. This did indeed revive memories of Chamberlain's comments during the Munich crisis.¹³¹

The impression that old times were being revisited owed more to the ambiguity of the West's policies on Yugoslavia than to the past itself. The responses of foreign powers to the outbreak of the Yugoslavian conflict, and the motives that underpinned them, were contradictory and complex. The intervention by the 'international community' was insufficiently related to the immediate interests of the states and supranational agencies involved. Since no country was prepared 'to take mortal risks to bring about any particular outcome', Western policies up until 1995 remained extremely obscure and hesitant.¹³² The literature on the Yugoslav crises contains a wide range of explanations and views of the West's actions (or lack of action). Many books and articles point out that the differences of opinion between the Great Powers (and between the members of the European Community) contained 'echoes of nineteenth and early twentieth century European politics'.¹³³ It is therefore necessary to investigate whether patterns of Western image-forming, as well as historical traditions in Western policies on the Balkans were involved.

Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, and even for some time afterwards, the United States and the European countries (including Germany) saw the preservation of the Yugoslavian state as their main task. They feared that the disintegration of Yugoslavia might have a domino effect, leading to the destabilization of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. They probably felt that unity within the Yugoslav federation could only be enforced by Serbia and the Serbian-dominated federal army. In this case, it would be necessary to take the Serbian view into consideration. As far as France and Britain were concerned, this would have meant returning to the politics of the period from 1914 to 1941. References are often made to the pro-Serbian stance of the French president, Mitterrand.¹³⁴ The record shows that, at that time, both the *Quai d'Orsay* and the *Élysée* repeatedly brought up the historic alliance between Serbia and France.¹³⁵

The past could indeed serve as an example. In the years between the wars, French diplomacy was primarily directed at the Serbian politicians who dominated Yugoslavia. The French considered the Croats, who opposed the centralism of Belgrade, to be difficult and unreliable. King Alexander Karadjordjevic, a Serb, was assassinated in 1934, during a state visit to France. The French Foreign Minister, Barthou, was also killed in the attack, which took place in Marseilles. Those behind the assassination were the Croatian Ustashe and fascist Italy. However, Mitterrand indicated that he was mainly referring to the period of the Second World War. In an interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*

Zeitung, he said ‘As you know, unlike Croatia, Serbia was not part of the Nazi bloc.’¹³⁶ This is a rather odd comment since Serbia, under the government of general Nedic, was collaborating with the Nazis during that period. It was no more a part of the Allied camp than was Petain’s Vichy France. Under Nedic, Serbia and Belgrade were the first European country and capital to be made completely *Judenfrei*.

It is remarkable that Mitterrand should have such a poor memory of historical events, especially in view of his own war record (when he maintained close contacts with collaborators in Vichy as well as with the Resistance). This socialist politician can hardly be accused of naivety. However, many French people had an inaccurately positive image regarding the stance taken by Serbia during the last world war. Some authors have remarked that the French even displayed ‘réprésentations collectives non seulements fausses, mais totalement inversées’.¹³⁷ It is therefore quite conceivable that the President primarily used these perceptions as a useful weapon against the pro-Croat critics of his Yugoslavian policy.¹³⁸ The ‘historic’ friendship between France and Serbia is unlikely to have had any real significance in shaping official policy. The current ‘friendship’ between France and Germany - generally regarded as the basis of European integration - was of much greater importance. France was apprehensive that the absorption of the DDR would result in a much stronger Germany. It was attempting to find a way to counterbalance this. French foreign policy was primarily aimed at maintaining *le rang de la France* at a high level. This was primarily achieved by, whenever possible, adopting a highly distinct standpoint in international discussions. Other countries would then have to take this standpoint into account. Within this policy of *différence*, as with Iraq on the eve of the Gulf War, it was appropriate for France to maintain contacts of its own with Belgrade. The French standpoint shifted in the course of 1991. From being to some extent pro-Serbian, the country switched to advocating international action against Serbia, including military action if necessary.¹³⁹

For this reason, the assertion that ‘French and British governments, as well as the media, engaged in a veritable orgy of Croatia-bashing’¹⁴⁰ would appear to be a gross exaggeration of the facts. In Britain also the Serbs continued to enjoy the image of ‘a noble and faithful ally’ during the Second World War. Some authors felt that this was because British observers such as Fitzroy Maclean had depicted the military actions of Tito’s partisans as ‘a crusade headed by Serbs’.¹⁴¹ This was not the case. In *Eastern Approaches* (1949), Maclean repeatedly mentioned the multinational nature of Tito’s forces, as well as Serbian collaboration with the Germans.¹⁴² The novelist Evelyn Waugh was also part of the British military mission in Yugoslavia during the war. His *Sword of Honour* trilogy (1952-1961) is outspokenly critical of Tito and the Communist partisans. As a devout Catholic, Waugh was inclined towards an anti-Serbian, pro-Croat standpoint. The successful writer, Lawrence Durrell revealed even stronger anti-Serbian sentiments in his well known book *White Eagles over Serbia* (1957).¹⁴³ In 1991, and for some time afterwards, the British government maintained an extremely reserved stance. In view of its experience in Northern Ireland, it had no desire to get involved in a similar conflict in the Balkans. Nevertheless, the British government unreservedly criticized Serbia. Those defending or, like Margaret Thatcher, attacking British policy paid no heed to the traditional ‘friendship’ with that country.¹⁴⁴ It is quite possible that, at the start of the 1990s, French and British government circles were somewhat influenced by Serbian propaganda and by pro-Serbian experts on Yugoslavia. In Britain, two individuals often linked to this are Nora Beloff and John (later Jovan) Zametica, who first advised the British government, and then Radovan Karadzic.¹⁴⁵

Equally, the possibility cannot be excluded that American government officials were similarly influenced. In July 1990, John D. Scanlan, the former ambassador to Belgrade, expressed concern about ‘the bad public image that Yugoslavia in general, and Serbia in particular, now tends to receive in the American media.’ Scanlan was of the opinion that *glasnost* was actually invented in Yugoslavia. The Serbs had for many years been the most important advocates of democratization. It was not until the end of the 1980s that they were overtaken by the Slovenes and the Croats. But, according to authorities such as Djilas, even under the current authoritarian regime of Milosevic ‘the intellectual atmosphere in Serbia [is] freer than it has ever been.’¹⁴⁶ Lawrence Eagleburger, the Deputy Secretary of State and former US ambassador to Yugoslavia, had views similar to those of François Mitterrand. At the start of the war in Bosnia in 1992, he admitted that the Serbs were most to blame. Nevertheless, he reminded

journalists of 'the very close historical relationship' between America and Serbia, dating from the Second World War, when both countries were 'allies'.¹⁴⁷

Statements of this kind were meant to counteract anti-Serbian sentiment in the Western media. The literature that has been investigated does not provide a definitive answer concerning the exact development of public opinion (about the belligerents) in each and every Western country. In 1991, most Western Europeans felt that the democratic right of self-determination for all Yugoslavian peoples was more important than the artificial maintenance of Yugoslavia.¹⁴⁸ Thus there was a considerable difference of opinion between public opinion and the stance of some Western governments. This was to reveal itself once again during the war in Bosnia. Long before 1995, most members of the general public in America and Western Europe were in favour of vigorous military intervention by the West.¹⁴⁹

In addition to sharp criticism of Serbian actions, the Western media also tended to overestimate the democratic content of political developments in Croatia. This tendency was most pronounced in Germany, where many Croats lived. Such a short time after the reunification of Germany, many Germans felt very sympathetic towards countries such as Croatia and Slovenia, that had managed to free themselves from Communist dictatorships. Meanwhile, in Milosevic's Serbia, it seemed to be business as usual for the old Communist style of government.¹⁵⁰ The German government yielded to this pressure and devoted itself to the speedy recognition of the independence of Slovenia and Croatia. In doing so, they thwarted the policies of negotiators who were working on behalf of 'Europe', such as Hans van den Broek and Lord Carrington. They wanted to achieve a compromise between the combatants with the aim of preserving the unity of Yugoslavia or, if this proved impossible, to at least prevent further bloodshed. The German policy toward Yugoslavia caused great commotion, not least because there was great uncertainty concerning the results of German reunification in terms of the situation in Europe. Ruling circles in Europe, afraid of a German 'Alleingang', realized that the Yugoslavian state was beyond salvation and were repelled by Serbian atrocities. This caused the governments of Britain and France, which had previously been rather deaf to Slovenian and Croatian arguments, to rapidly shift to the German standpoint.¹⁵¹

The emotions that this aroused are well illustrated by a confrontation between the British journalist Misha Glenny and a Serbian reservist, during January of 1992, in the Krajina region of Croatia. The Serb asked 'Why did you fucking English capitulate to the fucking Nazis?'¹⁵² Such statements only serve to highlight the escalating national hysteria that was a major cause of the outbreak of war. In Croatia, there was probably a rekindling of warm feelings towards former Second World War allies. However, this was not the case in Germany. The same was true of the government of Austria. Major interests were at stake for the latter country, which shared a common border with Yugoslavia. It had been the first to alert its European partners to the dangerous developments that were taking place in the south. Austria had strong historical links with Slovenia and Croatia. However, these sprang from a much more remote past than the time of the Second World War, and were by no means entirely amicable in nature. Hungary was in a similar position, since it saw Serbian political developments as a threat to the Hungarian minority in Vojvodina. From the outset, Denmark had supported the policies of Germany and Austria towards Yugoslavia, although it had no direct interests or traditional relationships in the area.

In Italy, Greece and Russia, segments of public opinion exhibited clear pro-Serbian inclinations. In the early part of the 20th century, Italy was certainly no friend of either Serbia or Yugoslavia. However, the country did have an interest in the wellbeing of the Italian minority in Croatia, and Serbia was seen as a guarantor of 'law and order' on the other side of the Adriatic. Nevertheless, the Italian government took a different stance and, together with Germany and Denmark, was one of the first to advocate the swift recognition of Croatia and Slovenia within the EU. Obviously, this can scarcely be seen as a renaissance of Mussolini's foreign policy.¹⁵³ Greece adopted a somewhat less responsible attitude. This was not solely due to a feeling of kinship with fellow Orthodox Christians, after all the history of Greco-Serbian relations includes a number of conflicts. Greece, the most southerly of the Balkan countries, opted to join the West following a bloody and brutal civil war (1944-1949). In

addition to indirect support from the Soviet Union, Greek Communists received direct military aid from Albania, Bulgaria and especially Tito's Yugoslavia. They were nevertheless defeated, as their opponents enjoyed the support of Britain and the United States. Greece has, however, retained a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the United States and to the relatively distant 'Europe'. In addition, the Macedonian question impinged directly on Greece's interests. Historical factors had a large part to play in Greek attitudes towards the Yugoslavian conflict. Yet there was no restoration of emotional alliances from the Second World War.¹⁵⁴

The same was true of Russia. Russian feelings of religious and political kinship with Serbia date back to the 15th and 16th centuries.¹⁵⁵ Yet Russia and Serbia have not always been close allies since then. The 19th century Serbian politician, Ilija Garasanin, was one of the first to designate Greater Serbia as a political objective. He set out the details in a pamphlet, entitled *Nacertanije (Sketch, 1844)*. In this treatise, he also admits that it is difficult to combine such political ambitions with acceptance of Russian leadership in Balkan affairs.¹⁵⁶ Indeed, in the 19th and 20th centuries, Russian support for Bulgaria occasionally caused Serbia to orient itself more towards Austria.¹⁵⁷ In 1914, the prominent Russian statesman Sergei Witte was opposed to Russian participation in the First World War on behalf of 'that vain Balkan people, the Serbs, who are not Slavs but Turks rechristened under a false name.'¹⁵⁸ The kingdom of Yugoslavia was notorious for its persecution of Communists. That country, which was a refuge for Russian émigrés, had poor relations with Soviet Russia.¹⁵⁹ It was not until 1940 that Yugoslavia recognized the USSR. Following the rift between Tito and Stalin in 1948, socialist Yugoslavia was reviled throughout the entire Eastern Bloc. After 1968, the threat of invasion and domination by the Soviet Union led Tito to stockpile vast amounts of weaponry and to create a large federal army, supported by strong regional people's militias. As a result, the disintegration of Yugoslavia quickly degenerated into large-scale, very bloody conflicts. President Gorbachev was extremely concerned about the disintegration of Yugoslavia, because of the possible repercussions for his own country. The relationship between Yeltsin's Russia and Milosevic's Serbia was never exactly open and cordial. This was largely due to Serbian support for the anti-democratic, pro-Communist coup that took place in Russia in August 1991. The affection for Serbia expressed by Russian nationalist politicians in the Russian parliament was mainly a result of anti-Western feelings¹⁶⁰ and of the opposition's desire to thwart the government. Traditional links with fellow Orthodox Christians and Slavs, as well as sympathy for Milosevic's policies, were relatively minor factors here. Russian specialists on the Balkans could not agree and were divided into pro-Serbian and anti-Serbian camps.¹⁶¹ Gradually, the Yeltsin government began to pay more heed to the wishes of the Opposition, but they continued to contribute to the Western interventions in Yugoslavia, and never seriously obstructed them. On the contrary, the West gained considerable benefit from the influence that Russia was able to exert in Belgrade.¹⁶²

Religious connections did not lead to powerful and effective alliances. Even the link between Muslim peoples, the 'green transversal' so feared by the Serbs, proved to be mainly a phantom. In 1968, the Communist regime recognized the Bosnian Muslims as a fully-fledged ethnic and national group. From that point on, Tito proceeded to exploit them, in order to intensify relationships with Islamic states. The Libyan dictator, Gaddafi, contributed funds for the construction of mosques in Yugoslavia. Young Bosnian Muslims completed their theological education in Arab countries. In July 1991, President Izetbegovic toured Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. Ankara subsequently opened an embassy in Sarajevo. The close and centuries-old ties with Albania played a decisive role in the recent Kosovo crisis. However, the upheaval in Yugoslavia failed to produce a powerful alliance between Islamic states and the Muslim inhabitants of Bosnia or Kosovo. During the war, Bosnia was only able to reap very moderate benefits in the form of weapons and volunteers from Muslim countries. In addition to Bosnia, Turkey also established diplomatic relations with Macedonia. Since the Muslims in Bosnia spoke a different language from those in Kosovo, there had never been much contact between these two groups. This situation remained unchanged. Even as recently as the past decade, developments in both areas proceeded quite independently of one another. During and after the wars, the fate of these two countries was almost entirely decided by the US and the European powers.¹⁶³

Chapter 3

Dutch policy on the Balkans and Yugoslavia

“Greater Serbia! Why not? A more deserving people you could not imagine. A vital and productive country inhabited by sturdy, lively and tough people. A land so rich in natural sources of life that even if the present population were to double, there would still be space and food aplenty.

Throughout the centuries, inch by inch, the Serbs have shed their blood to regain that land. They were subsequently placed in bondage by foreigners, and dishonoured. Yes, they have seen that land abused by indolent Asians.

Greater Serbia!

No desire for expansion prompted by monarchs hungry for new lands. No kings with a Napoleonic lust to expand their demesne. After all, Serbia is ultra democratic. Both the Crown and the Government must comply with the will of the people.”¹⁶⁵

1. Prior to 1800

Following the presentation of a historical sketch of image-forming in Europe as a whole, separate consideration will now be devoted to the Netherlands. With the exception of the first half of the 17th century, the Netherlands had far less to do with developments in the Balkans than the countries referred to in the second chapter of this essay. In the period prior to 1800, most of the literature on this region that was printed and read in the Netherlands was of foreign origin. Even after this time, translated books continued to play a major role. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that the image of the Balkans in literary works produced by Dutch authors¹⁶⁵ largely followed the European pattern. Nor did the Dutch stand out from the rest in terms of a markedly greater distancing or disinterest. Since the start of the 16th century, the Dutch have commented continually (and usually favourably) on the culture of the inhabitants of South-East Europe. This historic continuity over a period of almost five centuries, which is remarkable in itself, merits further consideration.

At the start of the Early Modern Period, the reputation of the Turks was as bad in the Northern and Southern regions of the Netherlands as anywhere else in Christian Europe.¹⁶⁶ But here, the usual cries of opposition were equally absent. In 1529, when the Turks were at the gates of Vienna, Erasmus felt compelled to comment. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he felt that the Turks’ success did not stem from their limitless courage and savagery, nor was it a result of mutual antagonisms among the Orthodox peoples of the Balkans. Instead, Erasmus attributed the triumph of Islam to the sins of ‘all’ Christians.¹⁶⁷ The European humanists had great respect for the Byzantine scholars and for the Orthodox faith, with which they shared a great love for the fathers of the early Christian church. This reduced the medieval enmity for the ‘heretical’ Greeks. In the Netherlands, from then on, there was considerable sympathy for the Orthodox Christians in South-East Europe.

This in no way precluded an appreciation of the Turks. An early example of this was the aristocrat Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (1522-1592), from the south of the Netherlands, who travelled through the Balkans to Constantinople. Once there, he negotiated with the Ottoman court on behalf of the Habsburg emperor. He published letters about his journeys, in which he compared the bad traits of Christians with the good characteristics of the Turks. Busbecq discovered important ancient

inscriptions and studied the Turkish language. He also described a wedding and a *caravanserai* in Serbia. Besides bringing back tulip bulbs to the West, his company also introduced the lilac and the chestnut. They were in contact with Clusius, the founder of the botanical gardens at Leiden, who was the first to produce a scientific description of the tulip.¹⁶⁸ De Busbecq's interest in the fate of the Orthodox Christians later led to him being described as the first of the philhellenes.¹⁶⁹ Religious and scholarly interest in the area was to blossom still further during the Netherlands' Golden Age. While this, of course, generated more knowledge, better insights and even appreciation, at the same time the clichéd images continued to exist.

The Dutch rebels who opposed Philip II were greatly encouraged by the Turkish actions against Spain in the Mediterranean area. The slogan of the 'Gueux' or 'Beggars' was 'Better a Turk than a Papist!', and Dutch Calvinists wore silver crescent moons as jewellery. Neither, however, indicated that these groups had any real sympathy for the Turks. On the contrary, the whole point was to suggest that the regime of the Spanish king was even worse than that of the Sultan. The same unflattering comparison was made with the French foe in the 17th century, with the British in the 18th century (during the fourth English War) and with the German occupier in 1940-45. In the Netherlands and in the Balkans, the Rebellion focused attention on the kinship between the oppression of Protestants by the King of Spain and of Orthodox Christians by the Ottoman Sultan. This was why Prince Maurits of Orange, during the Twelve Years' Truce (when, as commander of the State army, there was apparently little for him to do), was approached several times by Orthodox clerics and dubious adventurers from those parts. They wanted his support in their intrigues and struggles against the Turks. Although the Protestant Republic hadn't quite shed the last vestiges of the crusader mentality, the stadholder (always highly circumspect when it came to war and matters of state) did not comply with these requests. Because of the growing importance of trade with the Levant, the Dutch republic was eager to establish normal diplomatic relations with the Ottoman empire.¹⁷⁰

Nevertheless, commerce was not the only motivation for seeking such contacts. Other stimuli were studies of Ancient Greece or the collection of antiquities. The first Western history of the Byzantine Empire was written in 1652, by Jacob van Oort, an amateur historian from Zaltbommel. The early relationships with Istanbul were not strictly economic in nature, since Dutch and British Calvinists saw in the Orthodox church a potential ally against the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Cornelis Haga, a lawyer from Schiedam, was the first Dutch ambassador to the 'sublime Porte'. In one particular matter, he received great support from Cyril Lucaris, the Patriarch of Alexandria, who usually resided in Constantinople. This concerned the refutation of the rumour that Prince Maurits was assembling a great fleet with which to drive the Turks from the Peloponnese. Lucaris, who had studied in Italy, was closely associated with the Orthodox church's efforts to counteract the increasing influence of the Pope and the Jesuits. In the disputed areas (Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine and Transsylvania), the approach adopted by the Orthodox church was to seek closer ties with local Lutherans and Calvinists. Lucaris and his supporters among the Greek clergy therefore tended to look for doctrinal similarities between Orthodoxy and Protestantism. They also emphasized the common differences of both faiths with Catholicism. Lucaris also hoped that contacts with the British and the Dutch would improve the level of knowledge within the Orthodox clergy. He aimed to make the leadership of his church better able to resist Catholic influences in the court of the Sultan, primarily in the form of the French and Austrian ambassadors.

At Haga's request, various theological books, including works by Calvin and Melancthon, were purchased in the Netherlands. The ambassador presented these books to Lucaris. Revius, a Dutch poet and theologian, sent Lucaris a Greek translation of the Dutch Calvinistic creed and the Heidelberg Catechism (published by Elzevier). For his part, Lucaris began to correspond with Dutch theologians such as David le Leu de Wilhelm and Johan Uytenbogaert, the leader of the Remonstrant Church. In this correspondence, Lucaris expressed his sympathy for Protestantism. These contacts assumed great political significance in 1620, when Lucaris was elevated to the position of Patriarch of Constantinople, thereby becoming the leader of all Orthodox Christians. Together with the British ambassador and Antoine Leger (chaplain to the Dutch embassy), Haga now attempted to develop a programme that he

hoped would contribute to the Protestantization of the Orthodox church. A Modern Greek translation of the New Testament was printed in Geneva, at the expense of the Dutch parliament. In an attempt to further strengthen ties with the Protestants, Lucaris wrote a rather unorthodox creed that was also published in Geneva, in Latin. These documents caused a great commotion within his extremely traditional church. The Catholic diplomats and clergy in Constantinople, as well as those Orthodox bishops with closer ties to Rome, seized the opportunity and began plotting various intrigues against Lucaris. The Patriarch was twice deposed, exiled and (with financial support from Haga) subsequently reinstated. The Sultan ordered his arrest in 1638, however, and Lucaris was subsequently strangled by his jailors.¹⁷²

The premature demise of ‘the Calvinist Patriarch’ coincided with Haga’s departure from Constantinople. Nevertheless, the struggle between Catholics and Protestants for the favours of the Eastern Church was continued for a time by the *Congregatio de propaganda fide* in Rome and by the University of Leiden. In the 1640s, prominent Orthodox clergy and students of Lucaris studied theology at Leiden. They translated important Calvinist writings into Greek, and their expenses were partly reimbursed by the Dutch parliament.¹⁷³ Modern research has shown that Dutch and British Protestants had got rather carried away concerning the chances of an alliance with Orthodoxy. For a time, the Greek Church saw Calvinist Europe as a very interesting political option that had to be explored. However, the ties with Rome were never broken. The writings of clergy residing in Leiden reveal that, despite their public professions of solidarity with Calvinism, they continued to cling to the doctrine of their own church. These lively contacts with western Christendom were, however, not an isolated phenomenon in the history of Orthodoxy. In fact, the Eastern church has been a much less introverted institution than is often thought in the West.

In Leiden, the Eastern clergymen were also able to assist Golius, the renowned orientalist, in his studies of oriental languages. Haga had supplied Erpenius, Golius’s predecessor, with model letters and manuscripts. Golius himself resided at Haga’s embassy for two years. In addition to writing a Turkish-Latin dictionary, he also introduced the study of Turkish at the University of Leiden. Levinus Warner, one of Golius’s students, succeeded Haga as the ambassador in Istanbul. He proved to be more successful as a scholar than as a diplomat. Nor, indeed, did any subsequent ambassadors from the Netherlands measure up to Haga in terms of status and influence. The study of Turkish at the University of Leiden was not maintained at the level set by Golius. Haga had suggested that a course of study in the languages and geography of the Near East be established for young Dutch people. He felt that this would benefit trade and diplomacy in the Islamic regions. However, this suggestion was never taken up by the Dutch Parliament or the Directorate of Levantine Trade. Such courses were set up in Paris and Vienna, where the study of orientalistics reached greater heights and achieved greater continuity than in Leiden.¹⁷⁴

In the Netherlands, there was a gradual improvement in the public understanding of Balkan geography. Austria’s wars against the Sultan were followed with interest. The Dutch wrote panegyrics about the exploits of Eugenius of Sovoy in which Belgrade was even described as a city ‘without equal in Europe’¹⁷⁵. Yet the traditional, negative image of all things Turkish persevered in the Netherlands. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the characteristics attributed to Turks were generally more bad than good. Jan Luyken, who had never visited any part of the Ottoman empire, made splendid pictures of Turkish atrocities such as the impaling or crushing of condemned prisoners. Cornelis Calkoen, the Dutch ambassador to the Sultan’s court in the second quarter of the 18th century, took a different approach. He collected the work of the French artist Jean Baptiste Vanmour, who resided in Istanbul. These paintings gave an accurate picture of life in the capital of the Ottoman empire.¹⁷⁶

Turkish influences can also be seen in Dutch prints and paintings, ceramics, clothing and architecture. However, as the Ottoman threat declined in the course of the 18th century, other countries became much more receptive for ‘turquiserie’. Following the publication of *Mille et une nuits* by Antoine Galland in Paris, the image of the Turks became increasingly shaped by fantasies about harems. Such lusty imagery did not appeal to the Dutch. The ancient religious objections to Islam continued to hold sway. The collections and lotteries that were regularly held to buy the freedom of Dutch people held in

slavery in North Africa only served to exacerbate these views.¹⁷⁷ A less dismissive view was taken by the Amsterdam aristocrat, Joan Raye van Breukelerweert, in letters describing his stay in the Ottoman and Habsburg empires from 1764 to 1769. He even asserted that he had personally visited the Sultan's harem, however unlikely this may have been. Remarkably, he described the Serbs that he met as carefree 'noble savages'. Whenever he charitably threw money into their hovels, the coins were flung back out again.¹⁷⁸

There was one individual, however, who flew in the face of prevailing opinion towards the end of the 18th century. This was the independent-minded physician Pieter van Woensel, who published a great deal of material about his stay in Ottoman and Russian regions. He thought that the outcry in the Netherlands about Muslim slave-keepers was extremely hypocritical, given that the Dutch were major contributors to the international slave trade. Furthermore, he asserted that slavery in the Ottoman empire was considerably less harsh than his countrymen imagined. The atrocities committed by the Turks were greatly exaggerated. The government of Turkish regions was nowhere near as despotic as the government of Russia. Despite the dismissive stories about polygamy, the Turks were also much more chaste and virtuous than the Dutch thought. Although the Koran permitted Muslims four wives, this was a luxury that most Turks could not afford.¹⁷⁹

Ancestry, the absence of modern civilization and the fate of the Greeks were recurring themes in travel literature published and read by the Dutch after 1500. Such literature also repeatedly mentions the fierce Maniots on the Peloponnese, who were reputedly descended from the ancient Spartans and had never been fully subjugated by the Turks. It is known that the De Hochepeid family, who for many generations served as Dutch consuls in Smyrna (Izmir), sometimes hid Greek rebels who were on the run from the Turkish authorities.¹⁸⁰ In 1741, Calkoen (the Dutch ambassador) and his British colleague provided a Greek archimandrite with letters of recommendation so that he could collect funds in Protestant regions. The funds were to be used to buy the freedom of Greek Christians who had been enslaved after the Turkish-Venetian war. Then also, Western sympathizers continued to assert that the Orthodox faith had more in common with Protestantism than with Catholicism.¹⁸¹ Half a century later, Van Woensel stated that any resemblance between his Greek contemporaries and their renowned classical ancestors was limited to their appearance only. Although the prevailing view was that their cultural and intellectual degeneration resulted from the Turkish yoke, Van Woensel attributed it instead to the dim-witted, superstitious Orthodox clergy.

2. The 19th century

As mentioned in Chapter II, Western Europe's appreciation of the Turks and its lack of interest in the rebellious Balkan peoples was initially closely associated with the enormous increase in Russophobia during the first half of the 19th century. During this period, however, there was hardly any anti-Russian sentiment at all in the Netherlands. The Dutch kingdom, which had been established in 1814-15, was very dependent on the support of the Great Powers, of which Russia was a prominent member. The dynastic link of the Dutch House of Orange and the Romanovs, created by the marriage of the Crown Prince to Anna Pavlovna, appeared to be an important guarantee for the continued existence of the new state. In addition, the Dutch and the Greeks had enjoyed continuous bilateral relations since 1600, and Amsterdam has had a small Greek community since the 18th century. One of the intellectual pioneers of the Greek national revival, Adamantios Korais, had had numerous contacts with Dutch people in Smyrna. In 1771, he travelled to Amsterdam, where his Dutch friends instructed him in the concepts of the Enlightenment. Seven years later he departed for Paris, but he continued to correspond with various Dutch acquaintances. At first glance it would appear that there was little to prevent the development of a powerful philhellenic movement in the Netherlands during the early years of the 19th century.

Nevertheless, unlike Germany and Britain, no movement of note came into being. A few leading liberals and clergymen wrote pro-Greek poetry and brochures. There was a Greek Committee that met from time to time, and which managed to collect 46,000 guilders. Gijsbert Karel van

Hogendorp allowed his name to be used by the committee, although that was the limit of his involvement. In 1825, the siege of Missolonghi and the death of Byron led people in the southern part of the Netherlands to suggest that a 'Liberal legion' be set up, but nothing came of this. A small number of Dutch people participated in the conflict as individual volunteers, and at least three of them died there. Three Dutch people were later decorated by the first Greek king, for their services to the Greek cause. At home, the Dutch philhellenes had emphasized that the Greeks were our 'Christian brothers'. They also, quite naturally, drew parallels between the Greeks' struggle for freedom with the Dutch rebellion against Spain.

This tactic did nothing to silence their opponents, however. Willem Bilderdijk opposed those liberals who extolled the Greeks as heroes. In his opinion these compatriots collaborated with 'filthy thieves' who were 'the foul spawn of a wicked race of slaves'. His pupil, Isaïc Da Costa, entertained more moderate views. Nevertheless, he had little sympathy for the 'Jacobite' mentality of Greeks who 'fleece their friends and helpers, sending them home without a penny'. In 1826, Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer (another of Bilderdijk's followers) published 'Bedenkingen tegen de Oproeping tot ondersteuning der Grieken' (Objections to the call to support the Greeks). In this publication he asserted (four years before Fallmerayer¹⁸²) that the intermingling of races down through the centuries meant that the contemporary Greeks could not be seen as the descendants of the Ancient Greeks. Their faith had become so watered down that it could no longer be described as Christian. The Turks were more civilized than the Greeks. 'Mohammedanism' had been a blessing to humanity, and there was no threat to Christianity under Ottoman rule. Nevertheless, Groen felt that a reasonable solution should be found for the conflict between Greeks and Turks. He took the view that this was a job for governments rather than private individuals. In this he was pinning his hopes on Russia, and many of his fellow countrymen felt the same way.

The Dutch government was shocked by the actions of the philhellenes. The ministers of Justice and of the Interior advised the king to inform the Sultan that decrees had been passed to prevent the funds that had been collected from ever reaching the Greeks, but these measures were largely ineffective. Dutch citizens were warned that they would be stripped of their citizenship if they took up arms in Greece. For the first time since the days of Haga, a top diplomat was dispatched to Constantinople in the person of Baron Van Zuylen van Nijevelt. Although Van Zuylen did indeed contribute to the search for a solution to the Greek crisis, he had already left Constantinople when the Russian troops approached the city in 1829. Jules Polignac, the French foreign minister, then proposed to the court of St Petersburg a radical solution to the Eastern Question. Russia would have the Danube princedoms, Austria would take Serbia, Belgium would be given to France, the Netherlands would be given to Prussia and the southern portion of the Balkan peninsula would be given to king William I of Orange. None of this came to pass, but for some time thereafter those in international diplomatic circles seriously considered prince Frederick (the second son of William I) as a possible king for an independent Greece. Frederick was far from disappointed when Otto, the seventeen-year-old son of the extremely philhellenic king of Bavaria, was chosen instead.¹⁸³

As a result of the philhellenic movement, the idea of the Balkans gradually took root in the Netherlands. The imagination was stimulated by the fierce mountain peoples of that region. This period of the Romance Movement saw the publication of books such as *Abdul-Ali of De vluchteling in het gebergte van den Balkan* (Abdul-Ali or the fugitive in the Balkan mountains) by J.E. de Witte van Heemstede, which was published in 1829. N.G. van Kampen, who published several books in and around 1837, was probably the first Dutch author to adopt a more academic approach to the ethnic and religious diversity of South-East Europe. He had been one of the most ardent philhellenes. Later, he became a lecturer in German at Leiden University, and Professor of Dutch Literature at the Amsterdam Athenaeum. One of many critics, Van Kampen was the only Dutchman who sought to counter Fallmerayer's views with linguistic arguments. Yet his views about the Greeks were no longer entirely favourable. 'Modern-day Greeks still have many attributes in common with their renowned ancestors, yet the good ones have been corrupted and the bad ones are given greater emphasis.'¹⁸⁴

After an intensive study of recent western literature on the subject, Van Kampen was a great deal more positive about the other Balkan peoples. He felt that, while underdeveloped, the Bulgarians were also 'soft-natured and applied themselves to agriculture, cattle-rearing and commerce'. The majority of the Bosnians were Muslim, but were 'nothing like Turks'. They were monogamous and had 'no unmanly vices; they are seldom low and open to bribery, nor are they cowardly, yet in the face of the enemy they are often barbaric.' The Montenegrins were among 'the most courageous of mountain peoples'. Although they had never been subjugated by the Turks, they were 'averse to European civilization'. Their lives consisted of 'battle and thievery [...], while the people *swear* on the Bible and even *kiss* it, they never read it'. While Albanians in Greece had been pacified 'by a milder climate and less desolate mountains', the tribal leaders in Albania were locked into a state of eternal warfare. The population of that country was permanently prepared for battle, and was satisfied with an extremely frugal life. A widespread rebellion in Albania could pose a considerable danger to Turkey.¹⁸⁵

In imitation of Lamartine, Van Kampen saw the Serbian nation as 'most remarkable', because '*its history must be sung, not written*'. Serbian was the 'purest and most beautiful Slavonian dialect'. Their recently collected and published folksongs were quite exquisite. They contain 'songs full of grace, naivety and deeply moving poetry'. Many of these poems make reference to the *vila* and other evil spirits of nature that make people's lives miserable. This reflects the 'dark' superstition of the Serbs. However, the women mainly sang charming and virtuous love songs. The lengthy heroic songs were performed by the men. In the oldest of these, which dates back to the 14th century, the main character is Marco Kraljewitsch (Prince Marko), the 'serbian Hercules'. The most recent recounted the deeds of Black George, the leader of the Serbian revolt of 1804. Van Kampen praised the Serbs' struggle for independence, describing them as patriarchal and freedom-loving. He saw their agricultural community as extremely egalitarian and receptive to education and modernization.¹⁸⁶

Van Kampen's work marks the transition to modern Dutch literature on the Balkans and Yugoslavia. In the next one hundred and fifty years, the positive image would achieve greater dominance than it had ever done in centuries past. For the time being, however, little of substance was written about the region. The Crimean War produced an anti-Russian mood among Dutch liberals and their leader, prime minister Johan Rudolf Thorbecke. They had not become friends of the Turks, but they did support British and French policy. In his dissertation on the Eastern Question (Utrecht, 1869), August von Daehne van Varick also adopted an anti-Russian standpoint. Europe had to oppose that country's expansion and keep the Turkish empire intact.¹⁸⁷ The Protestant Anti-revolutionary Party and its leader, Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer, remained loyal to Russia. The very Protestant *Tijdgeest* praised the noble strength of character of Czar Nicholas I. The lack of similar qualities in the Sultan was ascribed to his 'premature life in the harem'.¹⁸⁸

Unlike Britain, in the Netherlands, the 'Eastern crisis' of the 1870s did not result in an explosion of emotions. The Netherlands remained as neutral as possible in the conflict. In 1877, the government only expressed official concern in Istanbul about atrocities being carried out by irregular Turkish troops.¹⁸⁹ The Dutch government was very concerned about rumours that the Great Powers planned to ask the Netherlands and Belgium to base troops in certain parts of the Turkish Balkans. They undertook diplomatic action to prevent such an invitation from being offered.¹⁹⁰ One outsider in terms of Dutch neutrality was Jeanne Merkus, the extremely wealthy daughter of Pieter Merkus, former Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies. She travelled to Bosnia where she used her wealth to purchase Krupp munitions for the rebels. Unaided, she attempted to blow up Turkish reinforcements in Herzegovina using dynamite. She also participated in the assault on Trebinje. She was captured by the Austrians, but following her liberation in 1876 she was honoured in Belgrade as a Serbian Joan of Arc. When she died in Utrecht in 1897, she was penniless and her family refused to pay the funeral expenses.¹⁹¹

The only book to be published on the conflict in the Balkans was *In den Kruiddamp* (In the gun smoke; 1880) the first novel to be translated directly from Russian into Dutch. In the book, Karazin, its second-rate author, describes the actions of Russian volunteers in Serbia in 1876. He portrayed the Serbs as extremely superstitious and unheroic.¹⁹² (They did indeed lose this war against Turkey, but

their defeat was partly due to the amateurism of the Russian detachment.) This work was translated by Hendrick Wolfgang van der Mey, the pioneer of Dutch Slavonic Studies.¹⁹³ Five years later Van der Mey restored the Serbs' positive image in a long article about Serbian folk poetry, which was published in the magazine *Nederland*. He admired this epic oral poetic art because he felt that it represented the true synthesis of realism and idealism, something that was sadly lacking in the anaemic Western literature of his day.¹⁹⁴

One year after that, he wrote an even longer and entirely uncritical article about Montenegro, which was published in *De Gids*. Van der Mey felt that 'Europe was better acquainted with the Zulus and the inhabitants of the Congo than it was with this fascinating mountain people' in 'the unknown interior of European Turkey'. Their 'heroic deeds are at least equal to those attributed to the Ancient Greeks' and their literature is 'the product of a Homeric spirit'. This was followed by a story about the Montenegrin resistance to the Turks, spanning many centuries. The unspeakable atrocities were simply seen as a source of beautiful poetry, and the folk poetry itself was taken to be a faithful and accurate account of the past.¹⁹⁵ Other Dutch commentators repeatedly imitated Van der Mey's example, producing lyrical descriptions of Montenegro.

Pure literary works decorated with impressions from the exotic Balkans were also published in the Netherlands. In 1894, the same year that Anthony Hope unleashed a minor avalanche in western fantasies about Balkan principedoms with *The Prisoner of Zenda*, Louis Couperus published *Majesteit*. This 'royal novel' was about a melancholy crown prince by the name of Othomar, who reigned over the imaginary country of Liparia. The sequel, *Wereldvrede* (World Peace), was published in 1895. Both novels, neither of which are the best of Couperus's works, give rise to reminiscences of the Romanovs, the Habsburgs and the royal families of the Balkans. They could just as well be situated in that area, as in Italy or in the Slavic regions of the Austrian empire.¹⁹⁵

3. The 20th century

Couperus never visited the Balkans. In 1901, the naturalistic novelist and playwright, Marcellus Emants visited Bosnia and Herzegovina. He later published a series of beautifully illustrated articles about the region in *Het Vaderland* (The Fatherland), one of the newspapers of The Hague. Emants was an accurate observer, but his artistic focus was primarily on the beautiful landscape, the Eastern characteristics of the population and their primitive lifestyle. While playing the tourist, Emants was not entirely unaware of the social and political tensions within the country. From time to time he found the trip to be rather hazardous and spine-chilling. Nevertheless, he mainly emphasized the geniality with which the Austrian civil servants and gendarmes saw to it that the highly disparate religious groups were able to peacefully coexist. Emants was impressed by Austria's modernization work in Bosnia. However, he regretted the fact that this would swiftly result in the loss of that country's exotic and picturesque nature.¹⁹⁷

The assassination of King Alexander Obrenovic and his wife Draga by Serbian officers in 1903 was a major shock for the general public throughout Europe. However, the only countries to break off diplomatic relations with Serbia as a result of this were the Netherlands and Britain. In 1906, the government of the Netherlands informed Queen Wilhemina that Britain had restored diplomatic relations, as the assassins had been discharged from the army. It was recommended that the Netherlands follow Britain's example.¹⁹⁸ Catherina Alberdingk Thijm (1848-1908), inspired by the death of the royal couple, produced a work of literature. She was the daughter of the renowned Catholic writer and critic, J.A. Alberdingk Thijm, and the sister of the famous Eighties figure, Lodewijk van Deyssel. Catherina wrote a great deal, and had a very broad readership. She had specialized in romantic books about royal figures. Some examples of her work are *Het geheim van den Czaar* [*The Czar's Secret*], *Een vorstelijke doornenkroon* [*A Regal Crown of Thorns*], *Een Koninklijke misdaad* [*A Royal Crime*], etc. At the start of *Koningsliefde* (*Het drama in Serbia*) [*Royal Devotion (The Tragedy in Serbia)*] the writer stated that she had spent many years travelling in Eastern Europe. She claimed that she had friends there who 'because of their position, had been able to provide her with unprecedented details concerning the relationships

at the Serbian court.¹⁹⁹ Indeed although her book has all the appeal of an up-market pulp novel, it does provide the reader with an impression of the inner lives of Alexander and Draga, as well as the passionate conflicts between Alexander's parents, King Milan and Queen Nathalie. In addition, as promised on the cover, the book is indeed 'illustrated with photographs'. One shows *Queen Draga's boudoir after the assassination* or *Queen Draga's bedroom; on the table lies the boa that she put on as she fled*. However, the book reveals very little of substance about Serbia itself. The following book from Ms Alberdingk Thijm's pen bore the title *Den harem ontvlucht: een Turksch verhaal uit onze dagen* (*Escape from the harem: a tale of modern-day Turkey*).

It was not by chance that people were so fascinated with Balkan royalty. In 1902, *De Balkan-keizerin* [*The Balkan Empress*] was translated and used as the basis for a stage play. This historical drama is set in the late 15th century, during the Turkish expansion into the Balkans. Using rather stilted verse, it deals with resistance, collaboration and treason within the medieval Zeta or Montenegro. The work was written by the reigning monarch of that country, Prince Nikita Petrovic Njegos. According to a contemporary article in the Dutch newspaper *NRC*, Nikita I was 'not only Russia's only friend and the only popular monarch of Slav blood, but also a man of letters and a journalist, who is currently just as skilled with a pen as he was formerly with a sword.'²⁰⁰

Just before the outbreak of the First Balkan War, Henri van der Mandere visited that small mountainous country. He wrote an account of his travels in what had now become a kingdom. According to the writer, the Montenegrins still displayed all the virtues and vices of the peoples described in the songs of Homer. The men's militant behaviour, their bandit-like appearance and their aversion to everyday work were closely associated with this people's biblical simplicity. Bishop Petar II (Petar Petrovic Njegos), who became the country's ruler in 1830, outlawed banditry and the decapitation of enemies, practices that had hitherto been quite common. He also initiated the construction of a modern state. Petar II had been an even greater poet than Nikita, the present king. However, *The Mountain Wreath*, the long epic poem that he produced in 1847, showed that the barbaric and noble character of the people had remained virtually unchanged. Nevertheless, their vices had been moderated and there was even a competent and free educational system. Yet women still had an extremely subservient role and pursuit of vendettas continued virtually unabated. Autocracy was therefore the best form of government for this essentially mountain-dwelling people. One advantage was that direct contacts between the king and his subjects were not obstructed by the red tape of a professional bureaucracy. Van der Mandere saw his visit to Montenegro as a dream.²⁰¹ This derived from his view of Montenegrins as an un-European people, whose folk poetry was accompanied by a 'fierce romanticism without the frills' and whose 'child-like, kindly naturalness' was coupled with 'unequaled pride and self-assurance'.

Dutch authors who published details of their first-hand experience of the bloody Balkan wars were somewhat more critical. Responding to a request for help from the Montenegrin Red Cross, H. Koppeschaar travelled to the region in 1912. There he worked as a surgeon, either at the front or at improvised hospitals in nearby towns. He was shocked by the unlimited power exercised by the sovereign. Without the personal intervention of King Nikita it was impossible to do anything. Military discipline was unknown, as was martial law. There was no administration, nor was there medical care of any kind. Everywhere people lived in filth and utter poverty, and the food was awful. The Montenegrins were suspicious and idle. Blood feuds made it impossible to lead anything resembling a normal life. What little military success they were able to achieve was entirely due to the support of the Russian monarchy, which meant that the army was at least well dressed and well equipped. They were by no means squeamish about pain, and most operations could be carried out using little or no anaesthesia. The women were just as valiant as the men. Montenegrins never complained about their fate. With better leadership they could have achieved much greater prosperity. They might even have turned their beautiful and fertile land into a version of Tyrol or Switzerland.

During the Second Balkan War, Koppeschaar served in Serbia, which he considered to be well on the way to becoming a western country. It compared favourably to Montenegro in every respect. Belgrade was an entirely modern city. The army was well organized. The Serbs were industrious farmers

and manufacturers. He developed a deep respect 'for the inner strength that emanates from this people'. He felt that because of 'its high level of development, its courage and viability it should play a leading role' in South-East Europe. For this reason, Koppeschaar heartily approved of their aspiration to found a Greater Serbia. Koppeschaar had nothing but contempt for the Bulgarians. Describing them as the 'ex-Prussians of the Balkans' and 'accomplices of the Austrians', they had made a failed attempt to establish a sort of new Byzantine empire.²⁰²

No Dutchman was more volubly enthusiastic about Serbia and its aspirations to create a Greater Serbia than the journalist Gosinus de Voogt. He visited the country in 1913, together with an industrialist from Amsterdam, to scout around for potential trading opportunities for the Netherlands.²⁰³ Thanks to the efforts of physicians like Koppeschaar, the Netherlands enjoyed an excellent reputation in Serbia. This was an opportunity that had to be seized with both hands. The Serbs were 'a good race', they were honest and candid, yet they were 'better smoking companions than wartime allies'. He disregarded the internal political situation, focusing instead on the Serbs' indomitable urge to 'unify the race', which he felt was unstoppable. 'Whenever they are driven out of Serbia, the Serbs eventually return just as surely as night follows day [...] Serbs may sometimes bend, but they can never be broken'. He provided a detailed summary of the country's economy, and reported that the 'Hungarian' plums on sale in Dutch delicatessens actually came from Serbia. His conclusion (printed in bold typeface) was: 'serbia will never perish while there is a good corn and plum harvest.'²⁰⁴

Jan Fabius was a Dutch artillery officer who worked as a journalist on the Bulgarian front during the First Balkan War. He was less unequivocally pro-Serbian. He described the Bulgarians as a young, energetic and courageous people with a great future. However, he found their rigorous military censorship intensely irritating. Fabius discovered that there was a mutual hatred between Bulgarians and Serbs. Furthermore, the Bulgarians looked down on the Serbs, who they considered to be less civilized than themselves. However, he considered the Serbs to be more candid and jovial, and altogether more pleasant company. In December 1912, Fabius travelled to northern Albania, where the Montenegrins had laid siege to the town of Skutari (Shkodër). He rapidly reached the same conclusions about this people as Koppeschaar, who he met while he was there. As a military man, Fabius certainly respected these 'fierce chaps in their fantastic uniforms' who, despite the anarchic state of the army, were nevertheless well able to use modern canon and a telegraph.²⁰⁵

These Dutchmen did not express much concern about the crimes and ethnic cleansing that took place during these wars. Fabius's reports have a tough, flippant tone. It may well be that this was what his readers expected of him.²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, in 1913, the Dutch government dispatched the warship *Gelderland* to Istanbul, in order to guarantee the safety of its embassy staff. The Great Powers found it extremely difficult to get a grip on the conflicts that were constantly erupting between the Balkan countries. At the same time, they themselves had to reconcile all manner of conflicting mutual interests. In 1913, the Russian Foreign Minister, Sazonov, proposed to give Queen Wilhelmina the casting vote in the matter of the dispute between Romania and Bulgaria, should it prove necessary. In the end it did not come to that, but the Netherlands was asked to intervene in Albania.²⁰⁷

That country's independence was recognized by the Great Powers in December 1912. An international force of naval and army units assembled by Great Britain, France, Italy, Austria, Russia and Germany compelled Serbia, Montenegro and Greece to relinquish the Albanian territory that they had conquered. The Great Powers also appointed a six-member International Monitoring Committee. This resulted in the selection of a captain in the German army, Wilhelm, Prinz zu Wied, as the future *mbret* (monarch) of Albania. He was a blood relative of the German Kaiser, of Queen Wilhelmina and the queen of Romania. The International Monitoring Committee had asked the Netherlands to take control of the establishment of a native gendarmerie, the purpose of which was to bring law and order to the chaos that was Albania. As a result, fourteen Dutch officers were sent to Albania at the end of 1913 and the beginning of 1914. Their leader was a former liberal member of parliament, Lodewijk Thomson. The team included Jan Fabius. Abraham Kuyper apparently warned the queen that this affair would end in tears.²⁰⁸ De Voogt was also opposed to it. He was appalled that Serbia's access to the

Adriatic Sea should be blocked by an independent Albania. Why was it so important that a new gendarmerie be established to tame this backwater country of highwaymen and kleptomaniacs? ‘Our Dutch officers have better things to do!’²⁰⁹

The new monarch did indeed prove to be incapable of dealing with the court intrigues of the Albanian elite and of foreigners. Various groups of rebels roamed the countryside, sometimes with support from Italians, while Greeks and Montenegrins continued to make trouble in the border areas. Furthermore, the members of the International Monitoring Committee were often unable to agree with one another. The Dutch officers became involved in skirmishes in various regions of Albania during which some of their Albanian gendarmes deserted and joined the enemy. It cannot be said that the Dutch were lacking in terms of courage. Fabius described how, under enemy fire, he commanded his battery of field artillery while calmly sipping from a glass of cold champagne. Thomson was killed by an Italian sniper and one of the other officers was wounded. Their adventure, which had involved more bravura, romance and exoticism than many a Balkan novel or operetta, was brought to a sudden end by the outbreak of the First World War.

The Dutch were proud of their officers. Two statues were erected in memory of Lodewijk Thomson. In The Hague, an avenue and a square were named after him. Fabius later wrote that their deeds had generated so much respect in international circles that this contributed to the maintenance of Dutch neutrality during the First World War. However doubtful this claim may be, it is a fact that Edith Durham accorded the Dutch officers great respect in her book about ‘plots and counterplots’ in the Balkans.²¹⁰ Fabius had first met her in Montenegro, and they encountered one another again in Albania. In addition to an admiration for the work that she did in field hospitals, he respected her detailed knowledge of the complex web of relations in the Balkans. However, he did not share her admiration for the Albanians. He considered them to be cunning and thirsty for knowledge, with a type of crafty-merchant mentality, but also entirely untrustworthy. With the exception of the Kossovars among them, at decisive moments they generally refused to fight. Their cowardice also revealed itself in the *vendetta*, which usually involved assassination. Hired assassins were two-a-penny. It was only by chance that Fabius himself avoided an ambush that had been prepared for him.

In 1915, a surgeon by the name of Van Tienhoven wrote a book about his experiences in Serbia in 1914, during the First World War. He published photographs of serious war crimes committed by the Austrians at the start of the war against the Serbian civilian population. Another ‘modern means of propaganda produced by the Central European Culture’ were their explosive bullets, which caused ghastly wounds. Van Tienhoven admitted that he had developed a great fondness for the Serbs. They were anything but the ‘people of savages and murderers’ that the Austrian press made them out to be. They were ‘simple farmers who just wanted to be left in peace’. There were no large landowners in Serbia. The farmers farmed their own land and were usually illiterate. They lived in patriarchal families, and were both brave and patriotic. They were usually big men with few needs, who only used strong drink in moderation. This is why their militias were able to manage with very light equipment in contrast to the heavily loaded Austrians. They were also tougher. Among Van Tienhoven’s patients, the Serbs had a much higher survival rate than the Austrians. ‘It may sound odd, but it is much easier to operate on Serbs.’ The Serbian elite was highly civilized, and their physicians made an excellent impression. On the other hand, the middle-class, the lower-ranking officers and the civil servants were often corrupt schemers who cow-towed to their superiors and walked all over their inferiors. Yet, all things considered, the Serbs were nevertheless an ‘extremely pleasant people’ with an ancient culture. Their folk songs ‘sung in the evening, to the accompaniment of a single-stringed musical instrument resonate [...] to the depths of one’s soul.’²¹¹

In 1914, Woislav Petrovic, an attaché at the Serbian embassy in London, translated an extensive anthology of Serbian folk poetry into English. In 1915, this collection was also published in Dutch.²¹² In the years between the wars, Dutch people were inclined to be somewhat pro-Serbian. This is exemplified by Felix Rutten’s highly detailed and lyrically adorned travel story about Yugoslavia, which was published in 1937. This account describes 19th century Serbia as ‘the predominant power in the Balkans’. There ‘burns the holy flame that ignites the hope of other Slavic peoples’. At the end of the

world war, this young country was 'bursting with resilience, and ready to assume the leadership' of the new Yugoslavia. Following the death of 'the genial king' Alexander in 1934, the regency fell to Prince Paul, 'the astute thinker' who was also 'highly artistic' and was adored by his subjects. King Petar, who was still under age, was 'used to the most exacting discipline' and was 'tutored by eight professors'. In this modern Serbia 'everything is different. Here a different civilization was carving a notch in the Turk-like Muslim area.' The Serbs were 'a people who had achieved some prosperity, but who were not afraid of austerity and who always had something of the soldier about them.'²¹³

Nevertheless, Van Rutten actually preferred the more exotic Bosnia. Rather trifling Balkan romance also featured in the stories published by the art critic, J.B. de La Faille, about simple and superstitious people in Yugoslavia. The same was true of the perceptions of G. Monnick, who toured wild and vendetta-ridden Montenegro and Albania alone, equipped with nothing more than a bicycle and a small tent.²¹⁴ S.A. Reitsma also expressed a 'great admiration for everything Balkan'. Writing for the magazine *Spoor en Trammwegen* [Track and Tramways], he reported extensively about the narrow gauge trains that he used during his many travels in this region. Reitsma had once written a short study on Jeanne Merkus. He regretted that Serbian folk songs were virtually unknown in the Netherlands while the German public had been familiar with them for many years, thanks to the efforts of Goethe and Jacob Grimm. Nevertheless, he was extremely critical of the nationalism exhibited by Balkan peoples and of the atrocities committed in its name. He acknowledged that the Serbs bore their share of guilt in this respect. While tourists were largely unaffected, 'those who travel in the Balkans cannot help but notice the widespread risk of eruption, the almost palpable tensions and the highly charged atmosphere.' With the author's permission, he illustrated the point by quoting extensively from the works of his 'old friend' Edith Durham, who he had visited in London, in 1937.²¹⁵

In his published work, Reitsma repeatedly made reference to the work of A. den Doolaard. This was the literary pseudonym of Cornelis Spoelstra (1901-1994).²¹⁶ While wandering through France in the early 1930s, Den Doolaard's attention was caught by newspaper headlines such as 'Belgrade ... Bombings ... Bulgarian border ... shoot-outs'. As a result, he could no longer resist the call of the Balkans.²¹⁷ He subsequently visited the area at regular intervals, and Yugoslavia eventually became his second home. Den Doolaard had no preference for any given Balkan people. In novels such as *De herberg met het hoefijzer* (1933) [The Inn with the Horseshoe], *De Oriënt Express* (1934) [The Orient Express], *De bruiloft der zeven zigeuners* (1938) [Marriage of the Seven Gypsies] of *Het land achter Gods rug* (1956) [The Country Behind God's Back], which were all set in south Slavic mountain areas, he attempted to portray what he felt was the true nature of the inhabitants of the Balkans. These books reveal to the reader the simplicity, generosity, hospitality, passion, bravery and violence of the southern Slavs. Like many Dutch authors before him, Den Doolaard propagated traditional, clichéd images of the Balkans. He also idealized the mountain dwellers. He didn't get too carried away, however. In his work, his own perceptions and extensive knowledge of the area are always interwoven with an apparently sober, seemingly typically Dutch view of people and events.

While not possessing great literary quality and often lacking in character development, these novels were written with journalistic flair and pace. They appealed to a wide readership and were often reprinted. As a result of his realistic yet sympathetic approach, Den Doolaard made a greater contribution than any other author to the maintenance of a positive image of the Balkans and Yugoslavia in the Netherlands. In his non-fictional work *Het land van Tito* [Tito's Country] (1954), Den Doolaard emphasized the unique character of the southern Slavs. He concedes that, of course, not every individual Yugoslavian possessed these characteristics in equal measure. He was not entirely uncritical of these qualities. There were some very rough edges to their quick-tempered nature, and Den Doolaard did not attempt to gloss over the cruel and bloody aspects of their history. Even in the peaceful round of daily life, he found that they were not always easy to deal with. 'No, I'm not completely blind – they are no saints. Their lethargy and slovenliness and dirty habits are often intensely irritating. You often wonder whether they have any brains at all. In the same way, they must sometimes wonder whether we have any hearts ... they are simply different.'

Den Doolaard was often critical of their inability to organize, of their naive idealism in some respects and of the cult of personality associated with Tito. Nevertheless, he did see some advantages to the irrational tendencies of the Yugoslavs. These included their excessive sense of independence, their tough nonconformism, their amazingly original artistic sense and especially their natural humanism and innate love of their fellow man, which meant that they preferred to give rather than to receive. Since the people were unburdened by Dutch pettiness and small-minded materialism, socialism seemed to have a better future in impoverished Yugoslavia. This was all the more so since the country was governed by Communists like Tito, who were the very embodiment of these unbourgeois tendencies. He was well aware that Yugoslavia was not exactly a parliamentary democracy. Nevertheless, he felt that 'social democracy' in that country was better developed than in the Netherlands or Britain, where 'a bureaucratic semi-dictatorship mitigated by ingrained parliamentary habits' held sway.²¹⁸

Den Doolaard was an influential and authoritative author, but he cannot be held responsible for the positive publicity about the Balkans in the Netherlands between 1950 and 1980. While not totally uncritical, this literature projected a more or less identical and highly optimistic vision of Yugoslavia.²¹⁹ Hans Alma was almost strangled in his sleep by Albanian thieves while staying at a shabby, dilapidated hotel in Novi Pazar. Nevertheless, in 1953, he noted that 'Even if I had started out with the intention of blackening Yugoslavia's name with my writing, I would have been quite unable to do so.'²²⁰ Marinus Schroevers thought that Tito was 'the friendliest dictator in the entire world.' In 1961 he wrote 'In Yugoslavia one can actually believe in the dream that one has found paradise.' Affluent western countries had their 5-day working week, 'but paradise, the poor destitute paradise is there...'²²¹ This image was confirmed by more than fifty guide books (and cook books) published in the Netherlands between 1955 and 1990. Naturally, these devoted little or no attention to Yugoslavia's political and economic problems.²²²

However, even when such matters received extensive coverage, the criticism was circumspect and the tone sympathetic. This was true of the first Dutch scholastic study of post-war Yugoslavia published in 1955 by the Slavist Tom Eekman. He believed that the Slavs' ancient 'collective instincts' were probably at work in contemporary Yugoslavia and could explain the people's support for Tito's socialist experiment. The Communist regime appeared to have found a workable and lasting solution to the nationalities issue. Thus, any assessment of Tito's dictatorship could not be based on western standards alone. Before the Second World War, the parliamentary system that had been adopted from Western Europe had never worked properly in this region. Even now it would be quite unable to unite the diverse peoples of the area.²²³

The left-wing journalist Anton Constandse, although more superficial, adopted the same approach to Yugoslavia in his biography of Tito (1962) and in his book on country, people and culture (1964). In view of the peasants' resistance to the collectivization of agriculture, Constandse found it inadvisable to account for the suitability for a life under Communism in terms of what was frivolously referred to elsewhere as a 'people's character'.²²⁴ Since Yugoslavia contained twelve different nationalities, the construction of such a character was a hopeless task, but 'it should not be forgotten that large areas of Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, southern Italy, Greece) were quite backward in comparison to Yugoslavia.'²²⁵ Of course, comparisons were more often made with the USSR and other Eastern Bloc countries, which were of course advantageous to Yugoslavia. During the repression of the Prague Spring in 1968, Milo Anstadt had reported from Yugoslavia, Romania and Czechoslovakia. He commented that while rebellious students had become a normal phenomenon in capitalist and Communist countries, it was only in Yugoslavia that the head of state was actually on their side.²²⁶

Western admiration for the Balkans arose from a nostalgic and romantic longing for an idealized past, for a world that was as yet untouched by modern civilization. People felt that such a place still existed, in South-East Europe. However, once it became clear that our dreams of the future could no longer be projected onto the Soviet Union, many 'political pilgrims' headed for Cuba, China and Yugoslavia in search of solutions for major current issues. Yugoslavia's system of worker participation in management in particular seemed to point the way for many wealthier and more highly

developed capitalist societies. In the Netherlands, during the 1960s and 1970s, a great debate arose concerning the further democratization of society. As a result, many Dutch people began to look at Yugoslavia quite differently. Of course the country retained its charm as a poor and backward – thus cheap and exotic - tourist destination. In addition, it began to be seen as a model and an example. This view was not restricted to left-wing intellectuals, it began to be shared by trade unions, politicians and even some captains of industry.²²⁷

In 1965, the Productivity Committee of the Socio-Economic Advisory Council visited Yugoslavia to find out whether the increased productivity of Yugoslavian enterprises was linked to the powers wielded by their workers. The committee, which also included delegates from employers' organizations, concluded that the circumstances in the two countries could not be directly compared. Nevertheless, it felt that the Netherlands should imitate Yugoslavia's greater willingness to implement socio-economic experiments. It was essential that the Netherlands find out more about Tito's socialist system. To this end, a Dutch social scientist would be permanently stationed in Yugoslavia. The Institute of Eastern European Studies and the Industrial Democracy Working Group of the University of Amsterdam were encouraged to intensify their studies of Yugoslavia.²²⁸

However, that country's system of worker participation in management proved to be a very difficult subject to study. The situation differed from one industrial sector or geographical region to the next. It was affected in various ways by legislation, the party apparatus and market mechanisms. Furthermore, the shape of the Yugoslavian political and economic system was constantly shifting. A member of the Institute of East European Studies, the slavacist Marius Broekmeyer, was very enthusiastic about Yugoslavia in the 1960s. According to him South Slavic Communism was moving 'above and beyond a form of economic democracy, to the start of political democracy'. Nevertheless, in his 1968 thesis, Broekmeyer revealed how overly complex the system was and how poorly it still functioned. Worker participation in management was, in fact, totally incompatible with a one-party regime that still exhibited dictatorial tendencies. Reforms in Yugoslavia were sabotaged 'by an elusive, invisible but nevertheless highly influential opponent who was everywhere and nowhere at the same time'.²²⁹ Broekmeyer did not believe that the Yugoslavian model could be successfully transplanted into the Netherlands. Nevertheless, in 1969, he co-authored a book with Igor Cornelissen which compared the situation in Yugoslavia to that in the Netherlands. This was because both authors were convinced that the democratization of companies in both socialist and capitalist countries had become an unstoppable process.²³⁰ At the time, this view was shared by Labour Party politicians such as Van Lier or Dankert, trade union leaders like Boon, Hugenholtz or Kloos and many other Dutch people.²³¹

In 1970, Broekmeyer organized an international symposium on Yugoslavian proletarian self-management in Amsterdam. This was attended by well-known experts on Yugoslavia and prominent Western scholars such as Jan Tinbergen, T.B. Bottomore and Shlomo Avineri. At this meeting, the entrepreneur A. Stikker of AKZO asserted that many western companies were also keen to promote 'participative management'. He professed to having the greatest respect for Yugoslavia, where this concept was first developed.²³² Since 1967, the Dutch trade unions NVV, NKV and CNV had engaged in regular contacts with their Yugoslavian counterparts. Delegations also visited each other's countries. In 1970, a delegation from the Consultative Committee of Netherlands Trade Union Federations travelled to Yugoslavia to study the system of worker participation in management. Eleven of the sixteen delegates who went on this trip were from denominational trade unions. The delegation returned home with the 'distinct impression that Yugoslavia's economic democracy exerted a democratizing effect on social and political relations outside the realm of industry. There is reason to expect that the achievement of worker participation in management in the Netherlands would have a reanimating effect on that country's fossilized political democracy. [...] The trade union movement in the Netherlands will have to make the achievement of worker participation a clear priority.'²²³

Accordingly, the trade union movement must make more frequent trips to Yugoslavia, in order to carry out further studies of the Yugoslavian system. The delegation also emphasized the need for extensive documentation of this system in the Netherlands. The Institute of East European Studies did indeed set up a catalogue of more than 10,000 titles on this very subject. With the support of the ZWO

(the Dutch Organization for Academic Research) the Netherlands Universities Institute for Co-ordination of Research in Social Sciences (SISWO) began a long-term research project. The work was carried out by R.M. Boonzajer Flaes and J.J. Ramondt. In 1974, however, they concluded that, in Yugoslavia, there existed 'a total discrepancy...between the stipulated degree of worker participation and its realization'. There were numerous strikes, particularly in poor companies, and labour conflicts were often brutally suppressed.²³⁴

At the start of the 1970s, Broekmeyer became increasingly convinced that worker participation in management in Yugoslavia simply did not work. His critical stance was not appreciated by the Dutch trade union movement, and he was no longer invited to give lectures. Boonzajer too accused him of cynicism, although in his 1978 dissertation he was forced to conclude that there was no such thing in Yugoslavia as 'genuine worker domination of decision-making'²³⁵ One industrial trade union, the NVV, which was headed by Arie Groenevelt, stayed true to the ideal of worker participation in management for many years. However, at the start of the 1980s, a worsening economic situation in the Netherlands and the desertion of members from its ranks compelled Groenevelt's successor, D. Visser, to switch the union's policy to 'those things that the members believe to be really important.'²³⁶

Times had changed and, in the Netherlands, it was also necessary to change the idealized image of Yugoslavia. On Christmas Day 1973, Slobodan Mitric killed three of his compatriots in Amsterdam. He was sentenced to a term of 18 years in prison. Mitric, alias Karate Bob, was a professional assassin who had deserted from the Yugoslavian secret service. Three years later, he had his sentence reduced when it emerged that he had acted in self-defence, in an attempt to prevent his own execution. At the time, the story was in all the papers. In 1982, Mitric was once again in the news, as a result of some books that he had published while in prison. One was an unremarkable manual on karate, but the other two were strange books about his sexual escapades and about the bloody operations carried out by Tito's security services, both inside Yugoslavia and abroad.²³⁷

At that time, however, Dutch public opinion was more captivated by the struggles of Solidarity, the Polish trade union, than by developments in Yugoslavia, which had long ceased to be a source of good news. This was highlighted by a study published by the Utrecht-based geographer De Rijk, in 1980, shortly before the death of Tito. He felt that the experiment with worker participation in management had petered out, without producing any increased political freedom. Unemployment in Yugoslavia was the highest in Europe. The policy of decentralization had revived nationalism among the various peoples of Yugoslavia. Although the federal government had made an attempt to restore its authority, it appeared to have completely lost its grip on the economy. De Rijk was unable to answer the question *Quo vadis Yugoslavia?* The country could go in any of a variety of directions,²³⁸

In a book published in 1985, Broekmeyer asserted that prognoses were still dangerous, since developments remained contradictory, while Yugoslavia was passing through 'the deepest and most severe crisis since 1945'. According to him, the greatest villains were the Communist leaders of the various republics and provinces. They had dismantled the federal state, were responsible for the economic chaos and countered all forms of opposition with the machinery of a 'totalitarian state'. While the state of Yugoslavia had almost no friends beyond its own borders, dissident members of the intelligentsia did receive considerable moral support from the West. Amnesty International immediately offered its support to Alija Izetbegovic who, as the author of a relatively moderate *Islamic declaration* in Sarajevo, was a candidate for persecution.

Amnesty also supported Vojislav Seselj, a young Sociology professor in the Bosnian capital, who had criticized the corrupt practices of the authorities, thereby incurring their wrath. Seselj was advocating a Greater Serbia and the division and annexation of Bosnia by Serbia and Croatia. Broekmeyer emphasized that regional nationalism was rapidly gaining momentum in Yugoslavia, however this worrying development was also connected with attempts to achieve greater openness and democracy. Various influential figures such as Djilas, the authoritative Serbian novelist Cosic and the Croatia politician and historian, Tudjman seemed to be in favour of 'national reconciliation'. If this could be achieved, the dictatorship of the party would fade away.²³⁹

Very few copies of this study (which was published by *Clingendael*, the Netherlands Institute of International Relations) were sold.²⁴⁰ Following Gorbachev's rise to power in the Soviet Union, interest in Yugoslavia declined even further. At the time, no Western observers could foresee the roles that Izetbegovic, Tudjman or Seselj were to play. During this period, most Yugoslavia-watchers thought that the omens favoured a hopeful political multiformity rather than violent disintegration. Two years later, when the USSR and the entire Eastern Bloc were in the same situation as Yugoslavia, there was still much optimism among most of the experts on Russia and Eastern Europe. The dramatic turn of events in 1989, when the countries of Central and Eastern Europe regained their independence, caused general euphoria in the Western world. The subsequent disenchantment was all the more bitter as a result. 'Just a short while ago', wrote journalist Raymond van den Boogaard at the start of 1992, 'Yugoslavia was a rich and variegated country, full of different peoples and landscapes, virtually a modern Arcadia. Now most of it lies in ruins, and the budding democracy has become a playground for those who worship violence.'²⁴¹

The necessary brevity of this essay precludes a detailed account of how the disintegration of Yugoslavia was covered in the Dutch media. That in itself would require a separate study. However, it can be determined that this caused a huge shift in Dutch views about the region. The admiration (often bordering on glorification) for the inhabitants of that region had persisted for almost five hundred years, but the savagery and duration of the wars in southern Slavia, coupled with the incessant and sometimes highly detailed reporting of these events, shattered this positive image forever. Some things remained the same, though. Dutch public opinion about Yugoslavia was still strongly influenced by other countries. For the first time, the Netherlands had an intimate, large-scale political and military involvement in western interventions in the Balkans. Dutch journalists were in the area to collect information, but the European and American press and television remained of overriding importance. Flemish and Dutch writers produced excellent books about the latest developments in Yugoslavia. Yet their contribution was a mere trickle, compared to the torrent of primarily Anglo-Saxon literature that washed over European readers.²⁴²

Accordingly, the Dutch image of Yugoslavia in particular and of the Balkans in general again largely conformed with Western ideas on the subject. Since the previous chapter examined the extent to which more traditional modes of thought concerning the Balkans influenced recent image-forming and decision-making, such trends should also be investigated in the Netherlands. Did the Netherlands take sides in the conflict? What remained of past sympathies for Serbia? In the 1980s, Broekmeyer was still able to appreciate the position of the Serbs within Yugoslavia, both during the Tito era and thereafter. In 1991, Europe was initially in favour of retaining the political integrity of Yugoslavia. This position favoured the Serbs much more than it did Slovenia and Croatia. The western world feared that, if it conceded to every nation's (or ethnic group's) desire for independence, there would be disintegration and chaos throughout Eastern Europe. With the Netherlands holding the chairmanship of the European Union, the Dutch Foreign Secretary, Hans van den Broek, was scarcely in a position to deviate from the general viewpoint. Within his ministry there were few illusions about the chances of keeping Yugoslavia in one piece.²⁴³ While no one sympathized with Milosevic's efforts to build a Greater Serbia, there might have been a more pronounced antipathy towards the Croats.

This possibility was examined by Norbert Both, in his book on Dutch involvement in the Yugoslavian crisis. He wrote that 'In 1991, West European politicians and diplomats looked at Croatia with little or no more sympathy than they reserved for the Serbs'. The Dutch in particular were influenced by the legacy of the Second World War, during which Nazi Germany had occupied the Netherlands for five years and murdered most of its Jewish population. For decades after the war, anti-German feeling ran deep among the Dutch. The fascist Croatian *Ustashe* regime had been a staunch ally of Nazi Germany and had methodically murdered hundreds of thousands of its Serb, Gypsy and Jewish inhabitants. [...] From the Dutch point of view, Croats and Serbs were equally bad. Hence, the communis opinio inside the Dutch Foreign Ministry at this stage was that for any solution to be both effective and fair, it would have to be even-handed.'²⁴⁴ Both offers no evidence in support of this interpretation. To some extent, it contradicts the previous few pages of his book, in which he shows

that reports by Eastern European experts at the ministry and diplomats at the Dutch embassy in Belgrade during 1990 and 1991 continually urged the Netherlands to take a stand. In their view, taking a stand for or against the disintegration of Yugoslavia was tantamount to expressing a preference either for a future democracy in Slovenia and Croatia, or for maintenance of the authoritarian government in Belgrade. In 1991 and 1992 Henri Wynaendts, Van den Broek's right-hand man, conducted negotiations with all of the parties in Yugoslavia. He considered Milosevic's Greater Serbia policy to be the main cause of Yugoslavia's disintegration. Nevertheless, without referring to the Second World War, he made some ascerbic statements concerning Tadjman's dubious policies.²⁴⁵

Nina Peternel also asserted that there was 'an anti-Croatian campaign in 1991-92 [...] that centred on Croatia's collaboration during the Second World War'. She also claimed that the western and Dutch media served as 'an extension of Milosevic's propaganda mills'.²⁴⁶ This author, once a Dutch Yugoslav, had been converted, becoming a Dutch Croat. Her book played down the less palatable aspects of Croatian nationalism. A similar trend was also apparent in Dutch journalism. Milo Anstadt asserted that Dutch journalists also laboured under the misapprehension that the combatants could be neatly divided into reactionary Serbian Communists on the one hand and democratic Slovenes and Croats on the other. In this context, he referred to an article written in 1991 by Paul Scheffer pleading for the recognition of both northern republics. Anstadt felt that Croatia's democratic credentials were 'no better than those of Syria, for example'. He actually attempted to shield the Serbs, to some extent, from the more virulent attacks.²⁴⁷ Any investigation of the Dutch reports and analyses produced during the wars in Yugoslavia will doubtless reveal subtle nuances and differing opinions. While there was certainly criticism of Tadjman and Croatia, there was no predominantly anti-Croatian tendency fuelled by Dutch experiences during the German occupation.²⁴⁸ In the Netherlands, as elsewhere in the world, the general tenor of opinion was anti-Serbian. Milosevic and his adherents in Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia were picked out as the principle villains in the conflict. They were held mainly, but not solely, responsible for the outbreak of the war and for the bloody way in which it was fought. In the Netherlands, as elsewhere, the greatest sympathy was for the Bosnian Muslims. This did not mean, however, that writers simply turned a blind eye to the Muslims' actions. In the Netherlands it also created a general groundswell of public opinion in favour of humanitarian intervention and peacekeeping in Bosnia, to prevent any further ethnic cleansing or exacerbation of human suffering.

The Dutch soldiers in Srebrenica, whose job it was to implement this national intention, were a striking exception to this pattern. Their isolation, coupled with an almost total dependence on Mladic and his henchmen, played no small part in this. Nevertheless, a parallel can be drawn between the views of a Dutch physician like Koppeschaar in 1913 and the views of the Dutchbat soldiers in 1994 and 1995. Koppeschaar's favourable opinion of the Serbs and the Dutch soldiers' appreciation of the Bosnian-Serb army were mainly based on a respect for the other party's discipline, good organization and military capabilities. Koppeschaar's contempt for the Montenegrins and the Dutchbatters' contempt for the Bosnian Muslims in the enclave stemmed largely from an aversion to the disorderly, chaotic, dirty and impoverished conditions under which both autochthonous population groups lived. In earlier times, as now, this was considered to be the result of an ethnic culture that deviated from European norms.²⁴⁹ In both cases, such Dutch short-sightedness is quite astonishing. Nevertheless, any similarities between 1913 and 1994-95 are mainly coincidental. They do not indicate the existence of a continuous tradition of pro-Serbian sympathies in the Netherlands.

Vacillation on the part of the international community, and limited Western involvement during the first four years of the conflicts worked primarily to the advantage of the Serbs. But it cannot be said of the Netherlands or of other Western countries that ancient emotional bonds with a particular ethnic or national group influenced image-forming and decision-making with regard to the conflicts in Yugoslavia. Of much greater political significance, both in the Netherlands and elsewhere, is the switch from a positive to a negative image of the Balkans. Peternel indignantly described an 'immense arrogance and condescension' towards the 'primitive, blood-spilling' Balkan peoples. She quoted C.J. Visser who, writing in the Dutch daily *NRC Handelsblad*, described the situation as a 'tribal settling of scores'. Another quote was taken from Anet Bleich and Ewoud Nysingh who reported in *De*

Volkscrant that: ‘serbs and Croats have been enthusiastically smashing one another’s heads in for more than six months’.²⁵⁰ In addition to well-known foreign examples such as Kaplan and Kennan, the journalist and academic expert in international relations, Bart Tromp, quoted from a radio interview with Joost Hilterman in which the latter described ‘the pent-up hatred of tribes who refuse to live together any longer.’ Tromp also made reference to the views of Dutchbat veterans who thought that the best solution would be to fence in this ‘country fit only for goats, and populated by chicken slaughterers’.²⁵¹ Statements of this kind are common, and many more examples can easily be found. Even a diplomat like Weynandts wrote about Milosevic: ‘Le côté suicidaire, présent chez tant de Serbs, semble l’avoir emporté.’²⁵² In 1993, Van den Boogaard stated that ‘all of the warring parties [...] display an apparently indestructible, almost irrational belligerence.’ They ‘want war, there is no other possible conclusion’²⁵³ Anstadt talked of a specific ‘southern Slav mentality’, of people who ‘still need danger to feel truly alive’ for whom ‘the lust for survival [...]’ had become ‘a lethal adventure’. He therefore scoffed at Dutch people such as Mient Jan Faber who represented the peace council of the Dutch churches and wanted to send western soldiers and civilian personnel to the Balkans ‘to provide real help in solving the underlying problems’.²⁵⁴

Tromp was also a fervent advocate of more effective western intervention and saw these views of the former Yugoslavia as patently transparent excuses for doing nothing. Together, these formed the ‘myth of Balkan man’, a clearly identifiable mode of thought in public opinion, which was also exhibited by politicians, commentators and diplomats. According to this reasoning, the wars in Yugoslavia had broken out simply because the inhabitants of the Balkans are uncivilized barbarians. Such catastrophes were unthinkable in our society. Since the southern Slavs were not open to reason, any attempt to intervene in their mutual conflicts would be quite pointless.²⁵⁵ Tromp disputed such views by denying that there was any such thing as ‘Balkan man’.

Nevertheless, those who opposed such prejudices were still able to put forward a series of reasoned arguments in support of intervention. In addition, both politicians and the media appealed to our compassion for our fellow man, in the form of the southern Slavs. There was no systematic campaign by the anti-interventionists to propagate this view of the bloodthirsty *Homo balkanensis*. These and many other like-minded individuals made all sorts of superficial, arbitrary statements about the less palatable aspects of the inhabitants of the Balkans. However, they rarely or never took the trouble to provide a more detailed description of ‘Balkan Man’ nor did they carry out a thorough psychoanalysis of this modern barbarian. Not long ago, however, detailed discussions of the Dutch national character, or that of other peoples, had by no means been unusual. Initially, contemporary statements about the ‘fierce’ inhabitants of the Balkans were simply the rudiments of a much older image. As the previous pages have shown, in times past the Dutch took great delight in characteristics that these days give people the shivers. Whatever the case, ‘Balkan Man’ was not simply a concept invented during the last decade of the 20th century to prevent Western intervention in Yugoslavia. Only at the end of the 1990s was a comprehensive explanation conceived for the adverse course of events in eastern and South-Eastern Europe. This led to a new image of Eastern Europe, one in which far greater importance was attached to the mentality of its population. In the first chapter of this essay I explained how the images of other peoples consist of peculiar combinations of observations, opinions and emotions. They cannot simply be dismissed as ‘a pack of lies’. Such images are in fact reflections of reality in a series of distorting mirrors. Although this is not always the case, they often contain elements of the truth. Image and reality can never be completely separated. Images should nevertheless be subjected to critical analysis, and their level of truth assessed. In the next chapter, we shall attempt to do so.

Chapter 4

Image and reality

1. Eastern Europe, its modern image and its past

The previous chapters have primarily focused on the historical development of the western image of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. This chapter is entirely devoted to contemporary views of the situation that has developed in eastern and South-Eastern Europe. We will focus mainly on the emphasis (or lack thereof) given to the connection with what, in the past, was openly referred to as race or as the character of a people. These days it is more euphemistically described as ethnicity, culture or, most candidly, as mentality. That connection is most apparent in the currently prevailing perception of Eastern Europe. The present-day image of the Balkans and the adverse views of the region's inhabitants are all part of this.

Religious differences in particular have been identified as the main cause of the many and varied developments that have taken place since the fall of the Berlin Wall. This primarily concerns differences between Western and Central Europe on the one hand and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe on the other. According to many observers a rather fundamental contrast exists between two types of people. One has emerged from the Latin Christian tradition while the other is the product of the Orthodox Christian ideology. The latter finds it more difficult to keep up with the rapid pace of change in our modern world. Many reasons can be found, however, for rejecting this interpretation as either too one-sided or just plain wrong. Accordingly, we will go on to review explanations for the disintegration of Yugoslavia in terms of factors that have nothing to do with ethnicity, mentality, religion or the existence of a type of 'Balkan Man'. Next it will be the turn of those authors whose views cannot be directly linked to traditional prejudices about the Balkans but which, nevertheless, subtly draw our attention to the important part that may have been played by collective mind-sets in the outbreak and development of the Yugoslavian conflicts.

Yugoslavia and its people, which were once held in such high esteem, are now largely viewed with contempt. On the other hand, there is Central Europe, which has undergone a complete *facelift* since the 1980s and has once again been elevated to the status of a distinct European zone. As we have seen in previous chapters, there have been many such changes in the history of western image-forming with regard to Eastern Europe. In the past, as now, these changes were always prompted by major current events. At the same time, people usually felt the need to search for more profound explanations, by re-examining the past. This is now happening all over again. The events that have occurred in Central European countries since 1989 have been relatively favourable, certainly when compared to the vicissitudes of other former Communist states. However, the course of the process of transition in Central Europe cannot only be explained by the situation that has prevailed during the past decade, but also by re-vitalizing 19th century views about the special position of this region. After many years in obscurity, such traditional interpretations were suddenly very topical once again, because they seemed to provide a convincing explanation for very recent events.²⁵⁶

During the last few years it has often been asserted that Communism concealed the 'real' dividing line between Eastern and Western Europe for the past fifty years. With the fall of Communism, this line has once again become visible, it is none other than the 'ancient' border between Rome and Byzantium, between Latin and Orthodox Christianity.²⁵⁷ To the west of this line, the Central European countries have, during the past decade, largely completed the transition to a market economy, democracy and a multiform society. To the east of this line, in regions where the Orthodox faith holds sway, the economic situation is worsening rather than improving. Power is increasingly gravitating into authoritarian or criminal hands. Such a disparity in terms of development is explained by the difference in faith and by the associated mentalities of the populations involved. According to this view of things, Orthodoxy is a religion of rigid rules and rituals. It is a church entirely lacking in

social engagement, which slavishly submits to any type of political authority. The Orthodox regions were never oriented towards the West. As a result, they were left untouched by feudalism, the Gothic age, Humanism, the Reformation and the Age of Reason, all defining aspects of our civilization. This is why the current process of modernization and westernization is making such faltering progress in this region.

This, in brief, is the latest image of Eastern Europe.²⁵⁸ Any attempt to formulate criticism of this image will take up considerably more space. After all, it is not reasonable to assert that society has been entirely unaffected by at least one thousand years of exposure to a given form of Christianity.²⁵⁹ The main objections focus on the way in which this long and highly complex history has been reduced to a simple formula, which can then supposedly be used to provide the only true insight into the past, present and future. It would seem that the civilized, politically correct approach is to explain current situations in terms of ancient cultural differences. Nevertheless, such 'culturistic' views are no less repugnant than older concepts which identified race as the cause of the differences between East and West. The arguments that are being used to re-orientalize Eastern Europe and to permanently demote its 250 million inhabitants to the status of second-class citizens of our continent are far from sound. Nevertheless, they have gained wide acceptance. This is probably because they fit snugly into the long tradition of western ethnocentrism, and because they seem to explain away so many problems. As part of this, the Balkans are firmly placed within the sphere of the Byzantine East. Since Serbia is usually labelled as the greatest villain of the Yugoslavian wars, the latter can simply be attributed to Serbian Orthodoxy and to the character of the Serbian people, which has been shaped by their faith.

After thinking it through, almost everyone will acknowledge that this is too simple an explanation to be true. For this reason it is important to judge the 'culturistic' image of Central and Eastern Europe on its historical merits, even though this has already been dealt with above, in a different context. The previous chapters contain comments that are intended to put the contemporary use of Ranke's cultural 'canon' and Huntington's fault line theory in perspective. Mention is also made of the arbitrary way in which our continent was divided up in the past, into two or three parts. We have seen how the position of the 'centre' was always shifting. As a consequence of this, during the Cold War, Yugoslavia was an exception to the east-west divide, and was valued as a small, separate Central or 'in-between' Europe.

There is little reason to attach such enormous importance to the symbolic dividing line between 'Rome' and 'Byzantium'. During the five centuries that separated the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the fall of Communism (1989-1991), this border only played a minor part in European history. It is certainly true to say that the Orthodox world made little or no creative contribution to the spiritual movements in the West that mark the transition between the Middle Ages and the early modern period. However, East and West were not separated by watertight bulkheads. As the main repository of Greek classical civilization, Byzantium was an extremely important source for the western Renaissance and Humanism. The difference between Orthodoxy and Catholicism is smaller than that between Protestantism and Catholicism. The contrast between Eastern and Western Christianity did not generate a bloody and destructive series of conflicts like those that arose within Western Christianity itself. It can also be concluded that the Age of Reason, the Romantic movement, and subsequent movements in western spiritual life did not leave the Orthodox regions untouched, but rather had an ever increasing effect on them. This is why, in cultural terms, these countries are less strange and foreign than is generally thought.

It is by no means unusual to see relationships between religious and economic developments. Few historians will deny that Britain and the Netherlands became the leaders of Europe because the flowering of their economic and political systems was fostered by voyages of exploration and by the Reformation. However, the Central European countries did not benefit from this and, as a result, they failed to keep up with Western Europe. The Reformation and the Counter Reformation had disastrous repercussions for Germany, Bohemia, Slovakia and Hungary. It is therefore odd that this religious past is now proudly put forward as proof of the European character of the Central European countries. Countries such as Spain, Portugal and France also sustained economic damage by expunging religious

minorities such as Jews, Moriscos and Huguenots from their societies. Conversely, the economy of the Ottoman Empire profited from the religious tolerance that was permitted by the Sultans. Even the Czarist government, which practised the repression of non-Orthodox religions, never adopted an expulsion policy. As a result, the activities of Muslims, Jews, Armenians, Catholics, Protestants or religious separatists such as the Old Believers continued to be of decisive importance to the economic development of the Russian empire. Thus the adverse economic effects of religious conflict and intolerance were greater in the Catholic western and central regions of Europe than in the Orthodox east or south-east.

However, it is difficult to demonstrate the existence of a connection between a population's religious mentality and the process of economic growth or decline. During the first half of the 20th century, many western historians and sociologists were fascinated by the idea that the Calvinistic mentality was one of the major driving forces behind modern capitalism. This was the best explanation for the post-1600 economic prosperity of the Protestant North of Europe and the decline of the Catholic South. Nevertheless, even Max Weber (the leading writer on this issue) did not dare to put into words the idea that the religious mentality directly influenced the economy. He described the relationship between both phenomena as a 'Wahlverwandschaft'.²⁶⁰ The doubt surrounding this issue has continued to grow since Weber's time, since a given religious mentality can also have an economic background.

For these reasons, the low level of economic development in the Orthodox regions can not simply be ascribed to the religion or religious mentality of the population. During the past few centuries, their faith never stopped Greek merchants, ship-owners and seamen from playing a dominant role in the economy of the whole of south-east Europe and the Near East. Within the European Union, modern-day Greece – which is still extremely Orthodox – is equal in rank to Catholic Portugal. Nor did Orthodoxy impede the amazingly rapid take-off of Russian industrialization in the 1890s.

Historians often commented that serfdom has been a hindrance to the rise of modern forms of capitalism, which are highly dependent on a free labour market. From this point of view in particular, as has already been pointed out in this study, the dividing line between East and West was previously situated much further to the west. After 1500 it was mainly serfdom that caused Central Europe to appear so different to western eyes. Bondage, however, did not exist in the Balkan countries of Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro. Farmers in Croatia were bound to the land from the 16th century onwards, whereas Serbian immigrants in the Krajina region of Croatia – while no less poverty-stricken – were free and armed.²⁶² A fawning, subservient attitude to authority was more typical of the Habsburg Slavic areas than of the Ottoman Slavic areas. It characterized the societies of Austria, Poland, Bohemia and Slovakia for much longer than it did those of Serbia or Montenegro.²⁶²

The relationship between governments and Orthodoxy, between political culture and religious mentality is also less one-sided and simple than that which is put forward in 'culturistic' debates. The Eastern church is indeed conventional and conservative. It had a tradition of anti-western and anti-intellectual movements, and this is still true today. However, it was never a religious community that attempted to shut out the outside world completely. As in the West, the Orthodox church could not escape the influence of society. It was even more exposed to the power of the state which in the post-1800 East, was usually oppressive and arbitrary in nature. Nevertheless, the balance of power between church, society and state authority in Eastern Europe has also been very unsettled and changeable. As defenders of the faith, the emperors of the Eastern Roman Empire had considerable influence on the administration of the church. In the final centuries of Byzantium, however, their influence was on the wane while the prestige of the patriarch and the power of the church was on the rise. Even under the *millet* system of the Ottoman empire, the Patriarch of Constantinople continued to exert a relatively autonomous authority over all Orthodox Christians. Under Turkish rule, the patriarchate remained in contact with Catholic and Protestant circles in the West.²⁶⁴

In Russia, the church was indeed subjected to worldly authority by Peter the Great. Prior to that, however, it had played a major role in the process of shaping the state. Prominent clergymen had

forcefully resisted the government, had functioned as heads of state in times of crisis and even aimed to render the state subordinate to the church. On occasion, the Serbian church had also been highly critical of Serbian politics. The national churches and monasteries played a major part in the independence struggles of Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians and Romanians. Priests and monks joined in the fight against the Turks.²⁶⁵ As has already been mentioned, at that time western public opinion strongly sympathized with the rebellious Balkan peoples, who were seen as being oppressed by an Islamic Turkish (thus, non-European) regime. At that time the emphasis was on the fact that these countries were Christian and that they therefore had an affinity to the West. These days, the main emphasis is on their Orthodox character, and their consequent 'otherness'.

In terms of the relationship between church and state, there is less difference between East and West than is often alleged. In the West also, there was a distinct inclination towards *Caesaro-Papism* (the state dominates the church). Medieval monarchs wanted the right to nominate their own bishops. Even after the Reformation, worldly governments attempted to retain their power over religious affairs. In 1555 the Religious Peace of Augsburg was based on the rule *cuius regio eius religio* (*whose the region, his the religion*, in other words, subjects are obliged to accept their monarch's faith). All British monarchs since Henry the Eighth have been the head of the church. There is also a long tradition of state churches in Western Europe. In the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, where the Reformed Church was the dominant faith within the state, many within the reigning bourgeois elite felt that this church also should be subjected to their political authority. Intellectuals like Hugo Grotius provided a suitable legal and political doctrine for this point of view. In all Western countries, the division between church and state occurred quite late and was generally never fully completed. In the Danube Monarchy, the state quite forcefully imposed Catholicism on the Protestant segment of the population. Hungary was the only country where the Habsburg rulers were less than completely successful in this regard. However, they continued to use the Roman Catholic state church as 'an instrument of spiritual control, yes – as a sort of auxiliary police force'²⁶⁶. There was a very good reason why Stjepan Radic (leader of the Catholic but anti-clerical Croat Peasant Party in the years between the wars) opened all of his political speeches with the slogan 'Hvaljen Isus, dolje s popovima' (Believe in Jesus, get rid of the priests).²⁶⁷

On the other hand, education in Orthodox countries was mainly a secular activity before it became so in the West. Nor did denominational political parties ever play a major role in Eastern Europe. It is also doubtful that the faith of the Russian or Serbian peasant ever had much to do with the official religions of their respective countries. They often adhered to one of the many religious sects and had little respect for the Orthodox village priests and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Although religion underwent something of a revival following the fall of Communism, it is doubtful whether the mental attitude of more than 250 million East Europeans is still so strongly influenced by religious traditions. Eastern Europe has been equally affected by the processes of individualization and secularization.

It is easier to summarize the deficiencies of the current image of Eastern Europe than to briefly point out the actual roots of the differences between Eastern and Western Europe. If one was forced to single out one historical factor, then the discovery of America would rank above the Byzantine or Orthodox mentality. This event caused the economic centre to move from the Mediterranean areas to the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean and the North Sea. The resultant economic gap between the wealthy West and the impoverished East proved difficult to bridge.

It is even more difficult to identify the deeper historical roots of various current developments in Central and Eastern Europe. Even in centuries past, the eastern half of Europe was no less varied than its western counterpart. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the Jesuits worked hand in hand with governments to provide an effective and modern educational system in Catholic regions. In this regard, they contributed to the creation of a Western-minded elite in Central Europe. Miroslav Hroch stated that, at the start of the 19th century, the average level of literacy of the population (including all of the German-speaking peoples) in this area was higher than in the rest of Europe.²⁶⁸ Prior to 1900, in Orthodox regions, neither the church nor the state was able to make any substantial impact on illiteracy within the population. Serfdom was retained in Russia for decades after it had disappeared elsewhere. In that country, as in the Balkans, social modernization

was slower and less complete than in large areas of Central Europe. Furthermore, any changes in those regions took place under Habsburg and Prussian authority. While these regimes also had authoritarian qualities, unlike the Russian and Ottoman empires after 1800, they had accepted the rule of law and their civil service was generally more competent and less corrupt. However, the lead that Central Europe enjoyed over Eastern and South-Eastern Europe at the start of the 20th century was of little benefit to that region in the years between the wars. Things went badly wrong in the Centre, the East and the South. The worst affected country was the most western of all, Germany.

The relatively favourable situation currently enjoyed by Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary can perhaps be better understood by examining the more recent past. They were the only Eastern Bloc countries where there was resistance to Soviet domination, on a national scale. After the Second World War, these states were characterized by an ethnic homogeneity that was quite exceptional in the Eastern part of Europe. This may well have made it easier to stage such revolts.²⁶⁹ The revolt and opposition was fuelled by the rejection of Communism as foreign and 'Eastern'. This, in turn, served to reinforce existing national solidarity and the perception of their national identity as a western people. Poles, Hungarians and Czechs were determined to be Western. The possibility cannot be excluded that, after 1989, this mentality contributed substantially to the development of a socio-psychological climate in which economic and political changes were able to proceed at a faster pace than in other formerly Communist European countries. The majority of the population and the political elite in Russia, Ukraine and most Balkan countries had little or no interest at all in becoming Western. It is difficult to describe this as anything other than a mental phenomenon, but it is impossible to prove that such a mentality is closely linked to religious traditions. If this were true, it would imply that the situation is virtually unchangeable. Temporary circumstances probably played a more important role. In 1945, Greece differed little from countries such as Bulgaria or Serbia. Taking advantage of the more favourable circumstances in which it found itself, however, it has been able to modernize. The country's position today is quite different from what it was then.

Conceivably, the current transition might have been much easier in the Eastern Europe of three or four decades ago. At that time there was much talk of a 'convergence between East and West', as represented by the welfare state and the construction of a 'mixed' economy in the West, and by powerful reformist tendencies in the post-Stalinist East. Modern neo-liberal Capitalism, together with the exacting demands imposed on former Communist countries by supra-national financial institutions and the EU make it difficult to implement the changes that are required. It may also be that, a few decades into the future, Central European countries will still not have caught up with the West because the international economic climate has worsened while the European Union has been weakened by administrative impotence. Disappointment with the Western course, which is already being experienced by large sectors of the Central European population, may lead people to conclude that the gap between Central and Eastern Europe has narrowed while that between Central and Western Europe has widened. The perception of Central Europe as a region radically different from the Orthodox East, which is now popular in the West, may then have to be modified once again, to take the changed situation into account.

2. Are circumstances alone the deciding issue?

Circumstances change drastically over time. It is hard to identify a moment in the past on which to base the mythology of the current image of Eastern Europe, which presupposes a profoundly significant border between regions using either the Cyrillic or the Latin alphabet. During the Soviet era, all Communist countries were pretty much alike. Although the Central European countries have all made great efforts to distance themselves from that past reality, they have still not been able to convince either themselves or the West of their European credentials. For reasons that have already been discussed, the part of the 20th century that preceded the pre-Communist era was equally unsuitable in this regard. The same goes for the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. In order to prove their western character and essence, the Central Europeans had to make a great leap back in history, to the years leading up to

1500 and shortly thereafter.²⁷⁰ Only in that period does Leopold von Ranke's argument about the common heritage of Western and Central Europe (feudalism, Gothic architecture, the Renaissance, Humanism and Reformation) seem to have any validity.

However, such a leap back in history says as much about the similarities between Central and South-Eastern Europe as about their differences. After all, in shaping their national identity, the Serbs also used historical myths from a dim and distant past, before the time of Turkish rule. We seem to consider it quite normal when we use the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period to identify ourselves as Central or Western Europeans. At the same time, however, we view the Serbian preoccupation with the late Middle Ages as unhealthy. We even point to it as one of the causes of their excessively violent actions during the Yugoslavian conflicts. This observation should make us cautious. We may well be wrong to attempt to construct or de-construct links between behaviour in crisis situations and the history, culture, religion or mentality of a nation. If we want to explain the origin and course of the Yugoslavian crisis, it would be wiser to first look for other, more objective causes. In the following pages we will discuss literature in which the question of guilt is not linked to ethnic, religious or mental factors. Although this examination is far from complete, an attempt has been made to demonstrate the validity of a 'politically correct' point of view.

Firstly, there is constant confirmation of the observation that the use of force is a general human behaviour, and that it is not restricted to particular ethnic groups. This is borne out by the socio-psychological experiments of researchers such as Milgram and Zimbardo in the United States, and Mees and Raaijmakers in the Netherlands. Their work has shown that people of all levels of intelligence, educational achievement, character, social standing or national background can be induced to cause severe injury or pain to their fellow human beings. Such behaviour can be evoked within a short period of time and without the use of any physical coercion. To the astonishment and dismay of the researchers, only a small minority of the test subjects totally refused to engage in such activity.²⁷¹ As it was made increasingly clear to the test subjects that their behaviour could well lead to unpleasant repercussions (such as the possibility of legal liability), more of them refused to engage in such activity.

Given that the anticipation of punishment or correction has an important part to play here then it is not so surprising that the Netherlands, one of the oldest and most stable constitutional states in the world, should also be one of the least violent countries in the world. Murder and manslaughter are far less common here than in the United States, Russia or Brazil. Nevertheless, in 1994 there were 65,900 crimes of violence in the Netherlands. According to official estimates, there is a hard core of 23,000 young people between the ages of twelve and eighteen who regularly commit acts of violence.²⁷² How would the size of these groups and their activities be affected if, within a period of ten years, the economy were to collapse almost completely, the central government became incapable of maintaining law and order, the state disintegrated and power devolved into the hands of local potentates who openly encouraged the use of force? In other words, if the same were to happen in the Netherlands as happened in Yugoslavia from 1980 to 1991, could we be so sure that no 'serbian'-type events would take place there?

In addition, it has often been pointed out that modern wars are almost always accompanied by crimes and atrocities against the civilian population. This argument, also, makes it much more difficult to ascribe the excesses of the war to specifically Yugoslavian circumstances or to a sort of primitive Balkan mentality. The horrors of war can also be explained by the authoritarian command structures that are the mental and organizational essence of any army. These can cause soldiers to become totally estranged from the prevailing standards and values of civilian society. Under such circumstances, the principle of *Befehl ist Befehl* has a much greater influence than nationalism, ethnic hatred or other ideological motives. There are many examples that can be used to illustrate this point. When reporting the Bosnian wars, the Western media devoted a considerable amount of time to reporting the case of a Sarajevan soldier by the name of Borislav Herak. He learned how to cut throats by practising on pigs. Later, when ordered to do so, he exercised this 'skill' on Muslims. His father was a Serb, his mother a Croat, and his sister was married to a Muslim for whom he had the greatest respect. In the course of several interviews, he stated that he had nothing against Muslims.²⁷³ H. Tromp was certainly not the

only person to conclude from this that: ‘The mass murders of Croats by Serbs in Vukovar in 1992, or the mass murders of Muslims by Croats in Ahvinici in 1993 are not the symptoms of a specific Balkan culture – neither are the mass murders by Germans in Lidice or by Americans in My Lei symptomatic of the degree of civilization in Germany or the United States’. [...] It is the culture of war that prescribes such killings, and committing ‘war crimes’ is therefore inevitable.’²⁷⁴

We can add to this that there was more to the wars in Yugoslavia than the slavish obedience of soldiers like Borislav Herak. Disobedience was no less important, in fact it may well have been even more significant. Even under the most trying conditions, some intellectuals and journalists continued to resist disinformation and incitement to ethnic hatred and violence. ‘Ordinary’ people did more than just shoot at one another, they also held peace demonstrations.²⁷⁵ Several instances were reported of Yugoslavs who attempted to prevent the ill-treatment, deportation or liquidation of their fellow villagers or neighbours, even if the former were people of a different ethnic group. Such courageous people were frequently murdered by people of their own ethnic group. There was wholesale evasion of national service. One hundred and fifty thousand to two hundred thousand young men either went into hiding or emigrated. Many others were coerced into joining up, and it was common for men to be violently pressured into service. As a result the Yugoslavia army was eighteen divisions short at the start of the war against Croatia.²⁷⁶ This meant that the only action that the army could take against towns such as Vukovar was to subject them to protracted artillery barrages. In order to capture towns and to carry out ethnic cleansing, it was necessary to use irregular troops.

It was primarily bands of this type that were responsible for widespread crimes against the civilian populations of Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. Such actions were responsible for the extremely violent character of these wars. As early on as June 1991, when it became clear that the normal process of conscription would not yield sufficient numbers of recruits, the army decided to train paramilitary forces in special training centres and to deploy them in battle. The Croat and Bosnian armies also used units of this type to carry out their dirty work. In all, some 40 to 60 units of this type were active at that time. The most infamous were the ‘Tigers’ headed by Arkan (a criminal wanted by Interpol, who had worked as a hit man for the Yugoslavian secret service) and the Cetniks headed by Seselj, a pathological intellectual. Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb general, often worked with these groups. The literature on this topic often emphasizes the ‘lower class’ content of these units: criminals, marginal figures, the *Lumpenproletariat* of the towns and cities and especially boys from peasant families with no work and no future, who were used to handling weapons. Joining these bands gave them a purpose in life, considerable power and ample opportunities for plunder. Accordingly, enrichment by terror is the sole motive attributed to these men.²⁷⁷

A much larger group of people played no part, either as volunteers or as conscripts, either in the battles or in ethnic cleansing. Yet it was this group that, either as demonstrators or voters, supported Milosevic or Tudjman. They represented the power base of such politicians, and it was they who made the violent dismemberment of the Yugoslavian state possible. Their behaviour is often explained in terms of ‘a switch in mass psychology’. This was supposedly brought about by the virtually absolute control of the media, together with all the other techniques of mass mobilization that Communist regimes had always used. These tools were now successfully applied by the new rulers in post-Communist Croatia and Serbia. Television had an almost hypnotic effect. This was particularly so in Serbia, where the population became too poor to buy newspapers. In the course of the media war, viewers were bombarded with propaganda day after day. This included images and messages exploiting ancient nationalist myths and Second World War events with which people had not come to terms. The primary objective was to demonize the enemy. Impartial observers were staggered by the one-sidedness of the news coverage. Nevertheless, sixty percent of the viewers considered such propaganda to be completely true. The ‘dizzying repetition of pseudo-patriotic terminology’ had a ‘shamanistic’ and ‘paralyzing’ effect on a population that was ‘trapped in radically deteriorating economic, cultural and social conditions’. Almost ten years of confinement in the ‘media gulag’ had made these people completely apathetic.²⁷⁸

This supports the view (which crops up time and again in the literature) that the various population groups had managed to live together for the greater part of the 20th century in spite of the considerable differences in language, religion, culture, regional development and a protracted series of internal conflicts. The only large-scale violence occurred as a result of the highly exceptional situation caused by the Second World War. At the start of the 1990s, it was a unique combination of circumstances that brought them into conflict again. This involved the crisis and downfall of the Communist system, economic decline, the loss of Yugoslavia's exceptionally favourable international position and, primarily, manipulation by unscrupulous politicians. These rulers wanted a state of their own, with a population whose composition would be as homogeneous as possible. This would, of course, entail a certain amount of ethnic cleansing. This activity was left to the criminal and antisocial elements that are present in any population, and it was facilitated by the dehumanizing effect that results from war. Other countries with multinational societies, such as Belgium or Switzerland, have not suffered Yugoslavia's fate only because they were able to develop under much more favourable circumstances. The collapse of the Yugoslavian federation was not an inevitable consequence of ancient ethnic animosities.

Authors who hold this point of view tend to emphasize the cosmopolitan and multicultural character of cities such as Sarajevo and Belgrade. Such commentators also point out that, in most rural areas, different ethnic groups managed to live peacefully alongside one another (even if not, generally, in the same village) for long periods of time. Experts who regularly visited Tito's Yugoslavia, concluded that the country at that time gave the impression of being a single, national entity. This was not only due to the collaboration between different ethnic groups during the partisan struggle and to Tito's charismatic leadership. At that time, the inhabitants of Yugoslavia were also very proud of their country's independence, of its unique position between East and West, of the relative freedom that they enjoyed, of their increased prosperity and of the Yugoslavian variant of socialism that was worker participation in management. The antagonism between Serbs and Croats appeared to have subsided to the level of 'a harmless local patriotic rivalry'.²⁷⁹

During the 1980s, more and more people in multi-ethnic regions such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Vojvodina felt that they were first and foremost Yugoslavs. Young people in particular increasingly found that interethnic contacts posed no insuperable problems. Cohen concluded that 'such Yugoslavism indicated the existence of a reservoir of support for the country's cohesion at approximately the same time that ethnic tensions and economic problems throughout Yugoslavia were becoming more serious.'²⁸⁰ No referendum was held about whether or not Yugoslavia should continue to exist, possibly in the form of a new confederation.²⁸¹ It is by no means certain that the majority of people would have been opposed to the retention of the united state.

3. The importance of ethnic mentalities

The views set forth above make it clear that the Yugoslavian conflict cannot simply be described as inevitable. The problem with the 'politically correct' standpoint, however, is that while it is based on various indisputable facts, it is still open to contention and is one-sided in nature. Taken as a whole, the literature on Yugoslavia does not support the conclusion that the disintegration of Yugoslavia was entirely due to the specific circumstances of the 1980s and 1990s. The opinions expressed are too contradictory and varied to support the view that all statements about profound ethnic tensions and the special mentality of the region's inhabitants are entirely the product of western prejudice and of inaccurate images of the Balkans.

Firstly, a number of authors feel that the population as a whole did not have a strongly Yugoslavian identity. No more than 6.6% of citizens ever registered themselves as Yugoslav, a high point that occurred during the 1991 census. These individuals were generally the children of 'mixed' marriages.²⁸² As long ago as the 19th century, Serbs and Croats were expressing ideas and feelings about their strong mutual relationship, and about the desirability of unity. However, *Jugoslavenstvo* was a relatively recent phenomenon, and could not be compared to the much older and highly charged

‘emotional poignancy’ of *Italianità* among Italians or *Deutschtum* among Germans.²⁸³ Subsequently, neither the kingdom nor the Communist republic were able to create a form of ‘Yugoslavianism’ that was attractive and convincing to all of the country’s citizens. As a result, few Croats, Serbs and Slovenes gave up their own, pre-existing national identities. Among Macedonians, Bosnian Muslims and Muslim Kosovars, regional and ethnic consciousness gradually increased in strength. Yugoslavia is by no means unique in this regard. Multiethnic populations elsewhere in 20th century Europe were confronted with the same difficulties when they tried to create a unified state and nation.

Andrej Simic states that a modern nation has a common ethical code that gives its citizens a clear idea about what is good, decent, natural or God-given. This code, that Simic dubbed a ‘moral field’, only governs behaviour within the group. Different nations inhabit different ‘moral fields’, while mutual behaviour between nations falls into the ‘amoral’ realm. Ramet took Simic’s concept and applied it to Yugoslavia, concluding that the Yugoslavian veneer that the Communist regime had used to paper over the gaps of ethnic diversity (the mythology of the partisans, or the projects for worker participation in management) was too thin, and wore out too quickly. ‘The Titoists failed to create a common moral field in which all the Yugoslavs would be included. Instead moral fields remained coincident with ethnic communities, heightening the risks and dangers of political disintegration.’²⁸⁴

Wachtel also emphasizes the major repercussions of faulty Yugoslavianism. The country would not have disintegrated ‘had a robust vision of the Yugoslav nation been in place’. This was predominantly the case in rural areas. Socio-psychological studies carried out during the 1970s showed that city dwellers, and especially the well-educated young people among them, were less susceptible to ethnic nationalism. However, it was already clear that the best approach for power-hungry, nationalistic politicians was to appeal to the poorly educated, rural elements of the population. ‘An autocratic party with strong ties to the church and to traditional values would be able to garner significant support for a programme based on Serbian nationalism, particularly in the countryside, the provinces and among the lumpen-workers of Belgrade. Anti-Croat, anti-German propaganda would work as well.’²⁸⁵

At that time, such developments were blocked by the existence of a Communist one-party state, but fifteen years later this obstacle disappeared and events swiftly followed their predicted course. Wachtel feels that the wars that subsequently occurred were probably conflicts between country and town, rather than between ethnic or national groups. ‘It was to my mind the successful challenge to any supranational Yugoslav vision by particularist nationalist ideals that drove the country to destruction and led to the rise of figures such as Milosevic and Tudjman, rather than the other way around.’²⁸⁶ Statements of this kind just serve to demonstrate how any number of facts can be interpreted in many different ways. A slight shift of emphasis is all that is needed to reach an entirely different set of conclusions.

The wars conducted by Milosevic and Tudjman in the media were not necessarily successful attempts to gain support for criminal policies from uninformed and gullible citizens. They were only successful because the views of such political leaders coincided with those held by large sectors of the population, or with ideas that had been long dormant. So these bloody and highly destructive wars were not only the result of recent developments. The mentality of certain sectors of the population may have played a more fundamental role. This even applies to the gangs that were guilty of the most vile forms of ethnic cleansing. In the literature on this subject they are not only presented as a random bunch of criminals and riffraff of the kind that occur in all societies, but reference is also made to their primitive nationalism and ethnic racism. They delighted in expressing this by their speech, behaviour, exotic costumes and enthusiasm for ‘turbo folk rock’ and all other forms of ‘ethno-kitsch’. Some authors also point out that many of these individuals were from *doslavi* families. These immigrants from mainly mountainous areas had colonized other areas or cities in post-1945 Yugoslavia. They were reputedly more receptive to ethnic paranoia than the *starosedeoeci*, people who had lived in the same place for generations.²⁸⁷

It is no simple matter to evaluate the true merit of such statements. There have been no in-depth socio-psychological studies on the contemporary Balkan mentality or the national character of the Serbs. There is a general recognition of the important role played by historical myths in the ethno-

nationalism of Serbs or Croats. However, there is also a marked tendency to deny the existence of a relationship between the violence of the Yugoslavian wars and the existence of a type of 'Balkan Man'. Few recent academic studies have attempted to characterize the inhabitants of mountainous regions of the Balkan peninsula, but Dennis Hupchick for instance stated that they are characterized 'by extremes in their expression – communal generosity and stubborn territoriality; overt hospitality and brutal atrocity, bouts of fun loving enjoyment and irrational violence. All exhibit one common characteristic: a sense of passionate, tenacious, microcultural pride'.²⁸⁸ Such a characterization is strongly reminiscent of Jovan Cvijic's 'Dinarian Man'. Cvijic (1865-1927) was a famous Serbian geographer who taught at the Sorbonne and who was highly respected throughout Western Europe. According to Cvijic, the Dinarians (the original inhabitants of the Dinaric Alps) were a distinct human race, to which the Serbs belonged. They were energetic and impulsive, devoted to the traditions of their ancestors, filled with patriotic zeal, prepared to kill large numbers of Turks and to recapture Kosovo. Cvijic used his academic studies to 'prove' the rightness of the Serbian claim to Macedonia.²⁸⁹

As we have already seen, Cvijic's enthusiasm for the southern Slav mountain-dwellers was shared by many contemporary Western travellers and writers. It is strange, however, that around 1900 the same combination of extreme traits of character was also attributed to the Russians, who lived in wide open spaces. The latter were said to possess a 'sirokaja natura' or 'wide nature'.²⁹⁰ Cvijic's racist and nationalistic theories, together with contemporary Western attempts to construct a sort of *Homo balcanicus* influenced serious scholarship up to and even after the Second World War²⁹¹. Although such concepts also had their critics,²⁹² the literature on Yugoslavia published in the decades before its disintegration reveals that 'a Balkan mentality' is not only an academic construct, a literary topos or an imaginary image, but that it does to some extent really exist.

A number of serious historical and ethnographic studies of the clans or extended families of living Serbs and Montenegrins described their martial behaviour (*junastvo*) and their code of honour (*obraza*), part of which was their tremendous hospitality. The harshness of their impoverished and constantly threatened existence produced a society with markedly egalitarian values where only the males' abilities as warriors counted. These extended families were much larger than our modern nuclear families and were ruled by a system of patriarchal authority, with women and children at the bottom of the pecking order. Infanticide, patricide and fratricide occurred on a regular basis. In certain parts of southern Serbia, the practice of *lapot* persisted into the 20th century. This was the public liquidation, at the hands of their own children, of parents who had become surplus to requirement.²⁹³ Like Albania, Montenegro also had a strong tradition of blood feuds. The Serbs' and Montenegrins' long history of extremely violent raids and rebellions is well known, as are their activities in *haiduk* gangs or as mercenaries in the pay of Byzantium, the Ottoman Empire, Venice, the Habsburg Empire and Russia. Their lengthy folk poetry endorsed their militant lifestyle. These poems kept alive the hatred for the Turks, the traditional enemy, and the memory of regions such as Kosovo that had once been inhabited and administered by Serbs. They also inspired individuals to acts of manly heroism (*coistvo*). In this vein the Montenegrin poet, prince and bishop Petar Petrovic Njegos wrote his *Gorski vijenac* (*The Mountain Wreath*, 1847). This epic poem is a glorification of the 18th century mass murder of fellow-countrymen who had converted to Islam.²⁹⁴ It is still venerated as the most important literary product of the Serbs and Montenegrins.²⁹⁵

It remains difficult, however, to determine the significance of Serbian social habits and culture, and its influence on the history of the Balkans. Other Balkan peoples were also the victims and perpetrators of terror and barbaric instances of ethnic cleansing. Although no precise figures are available, it is estimated that the victims and refugees of the 1875-78 crisis numbered about one and a half million. With regard to the 1912-1970 period, a figure of 12-14 million out of a total population (for Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece and Bulgaria) of about 50 million has been mentioned.²⁹⁶ The Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians and Croats also had an agricultural lifestyle coupled with a tradition of folklore dominated by the struggle against the Turks and sometimes also the same heroes (such as Prince Marko). However, the literature consulted gives the impression that ancient oral epic traditions

have not shaped the latter countries' national consciousness to the same extent as they have that of the Serbs and Montenegrins.

The only other European people to have been so deeply influenced by such folk poetry are the Finns. A comparison between Finland and Serbia in this respect is instructive. The region of East Karelia, which since the Middle Ages, has been a part of Russia has had the same emotional significance for Finnish nationalism as does Kosovo for the Serbs. The *Kalevala*, the Finnish national epic poem published in 1835, was a compilation of epic songs sung by illiterate Finnish bards in Russian Karelia. It was only here, among Finnish Orthodox Christians, that this oral tradition was still alive and kicking as recently as 1800. In the western areas, among Lutheran Finns, the tradition had largely been lost. For this reason, the Finns have come to see East Karelia as the cradle of Finnish culture. Such was the power of the *Kalevala's* romance and the myth of Karelianism that the Finns allied themselves with the Germans in both world wars in an attempt to recapture this region from the Russians.

The differences between Serbian and Finnish nationalism are no less striking. Prior to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Serbian nationalists complained that their people always tended to win the war but lose the peace. The Finns lost both wars for East Karelia, and for many years after 1945 their sovereignty was restricted by the Soviet Union (Finlandization). However, they did manage to win the peace. Finland had been one of the poorest countries in Europe, it received no Marshall aid and was also obliged to pay substantial reparations to the Soviet Union. The successful modernization of the country was therefore a victory of political realism over romantic nationalism. This may have been easier for the Finns than it was for the Serbs, since their folk poetry was not permeated with hate for the Swedes or the Russians, who had ruled over them for so long. In the *Kalevala*, heroes such as Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen are just as dominant as the robber prince Marko or Obilic the sultan-slayer in Serbian folk poetry. However, the epic poem of the Finns lacks the excessive savagery of its Serbian counterpart. Its leading themes are sorcery and animism, rather than battle and violence. Furthermore, the events take place in a vague and unrecognizable past.²⁹⁷

How can we account for this difference? North-West Europe is a region of great linguistic diversity. Here, extremely divergent families of languages exist in close proximity to one another. Orthodoxy has existed alongside Catholicism and Lutheranism for centuries. Political boundaries in these regions are the result of centuries of power politics and sabre rattling. The criminal politics of Stalin and Hitler have left an indelible mark here. Yet this region's history contains few, if any, episodes of ethnic cleansing. It is far from being the regularly repeated phenomenon that it is in the Balkans. The Finns have never been guilty of this. This may be due to the fact that most of the peoples in the north-west have lived in a given area for thousands of years, and they still inhabit these areas today. This territory was thinly populated, and the subsequent penetration of Germans into the Baltic countries and of Russians into Finnish-Ugric-speaking regions meant that the original population was not driven out en masse.²⁹⁸

If any such stability was ever present in the Balkans it was destroyed by the Turkish conquests and, later, by Austrian military campaigns. Ottoman rule resulted in the destruction of the native aristocracy, thereby compelling Serbian and Montenegrin peasants to adopt new social structures, such as tribes or clans. The large-scale displacement of populations as a result of warfare is a particularly characteristic feature of Serbian history. Even though the Serbs later tended to exaggerate the scope and drama of these events, this may nevertheless be the root cause of their militant attitude and folk culture. The Montenegrins also adopted such characteristics, because the only way in which these mountain-dwellers could hold out against the Turks was by permanent military mobilization.

The differences between Finnish and Serbian folk poetry are easier to understand when the divergent histories of North-West and South-East Europe are examined. It may be true that, as a result of this, the Finns do indeed differ from the Serbs in some ways. However, we would be confusing cause and effect if we were to take genocidal actions as evidence of Balkan peoples' savage and warlike nature and the lack of such actions as proof that northerners are essentially peace-loving. In general, the waves of ethnic cleansing that occurred in the Balkans during the 19th and 20th centuries were not

spontaneous initiatives undertaken by the local population. They were state-sponsored campaigns prompted by imported western notions of romantic nationalism, which presupposed a homogeneous population within the borders of a state.

Nevertheless, it can at least be concluded that the mentality and culture of a people like the Serbs certainly did not help to moderate the violent developments in the Balkans.²⁹⁹ It is no coincidence that Gavrilo Princip, the man who assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914, had learned Njegos's *Mountain Wreath* by heart. At that time, most Serbs lived in rural areas, with a lifestyle that had not changed in generations. Even Princip, a young intellectual, had this type of background. The Montenegrin peasants lived in a harsh and cruel world, and were always armed. They were still around during the youth of Milovan Djilas, who was just 17 years younger than Princip, and his memoirs contain accurate descriptions of these soldier/brigands.³⁰⁰ This Communist leader also knew *The Mountain Wreath* inside out and wrote a reverential study about Njegos. In addition to personally cutting prisoners' throats and showing himself to be a passionate proponent of executions without trial, he made black marketeering and similar offences punishable by death.³⁰¹

Of course, examples of such unusual characters shed little or no light on the behaviour of all Serbs or Montenegrins. Although Den Doolaard reported that portraits of Njegos still adorned many a farmhouse wall, and that even humble shepherds read his poem,³⁰² their characteristic lifestyle was a reaction to a given set of temporary circumstances. It was, therefore, subject to changes and swings in intensity, especially during the 20th century, under the influence of urbanization, industrialization, the mechanization of agriculture, increased social mobility, contact with Western tourists and trips abroad. All of these, together with the propaganda for Yugoslavian and Communist versions of national values, myths and symbols, resulted in the erosion of traditional local cultures and ways of doing things. The literature that has been examined contains contradictory reports concerning its magnitude and extent. According to Eekman, by the start of the 1950s 'oral epic poetry was as good as dead', even though many elderly village peasants were still able to recite many of these songs. Eekman expressed the view that the ancient squabbles between Serbs and Croats had become quite harmless.³⁰³ However, Doder writes that the inhabitants of Serbian villages in the Krajina region immediately started arming themselves during the 'Croatian spring', the nationalist revival of 1971, which was forcefully suppressed by Tito.³⁰⁴

Studies of Serbian and Montenegrin villages, carried out by Boehm and Halpern during the 1960s, reveal the persistence of ancient social patterns and nationalist sentiments. Even though the size of peasant households in the Sumadija³⁰⁵ almost halved between 1860 and 1960 (from an average of 8.3 to 4.5 family members), this did not amount to a real dissolution of the extended family. The ancient songs about Kosovo were still known (or had been rediscovered) by young and old. Furthermore, most families held the traditional annual celebrations in commemoration of their ancestors (the *slava*), although this sometimes occurred in the guise of the May Day celebrations. Among villagers there was still an intense patriotism (an 'ongoing sense of pride') and a need to identify themselves with a tradition of heroic struggle. They retained lively recollections of the tragedies that had taken place during the Second World War. Sound fieldwork carried out by the anthropologist Mart Bax drew attention to the *mali rat* (the little war) between Serbs and Croats (and between Croats themselves) in Medjugorje, the Bosnian place of pilgrimage. This consisted of long-established and virtually uninterrupted traditions of rivalry, vengeance and murderous violence.

The increasing similarity between urban and rural societies not only resulted in the disappearance of a 'distinctive rural subculture'. The 'urbanization of the villages' was accompanied by the 'peasantization of the towns', caused by the massive movement of rural populations to the cities, a phenomenon also characterized as 'rurbanization'. There was a drastic reduction in the influence of magical practices and religious customs, while daily life became more modern, more commercialized and more luxurious. Many people found this less satisfying than their previous existence and, during the 1960s, they started to rediscover their own past. At first this was all quite innocent, involving the opening of museums, the setting up local monuments and the more frequent singing of ancient songs. 'Kinship and ethnicity, never discarded and now reinforced, remained vital.'³⁰⁷

Thus there was a revival of traditional standards and values among the Serbian population, together with renewed interest in their own culture and history. This all took place twenty years before the nationalistic ‘backlash’ by Serbian intellectuals in the 1980s that features extensively in virtually every book on the disintegration of Yugoslavia. This whole development tends to reinforce the above-mentioned interpretation by Wachtel. In the intervening years, Tito’s state had given up its attempts to create a single, unified national culture. The Communists had to accept that Yugoslavia was genuinely multicultural in nature. Naturally, they made a virtue of necessity and presented cultural variety as a sign of strength under the slogan ‘unity in diversity’.³⁰⁸

However, in reality this led to a huge increase in the autonomy and mutual rivalry of the various Yugoslav states. All government posts were carefully assigned in accordance with an ethnic key. At the same time the individual prosperity that had been so laboriously achieved began to unravel, and life became increasingly uncertain. As mentioned above, these developments caused some people to realize that they were Yugoslav, first and foremost, but it is more logical to assume that the majority of their countrymen were inclined towards the opposite reaction. In that case, Serbian intellectuals made no attempt to push the people in a new direction. They simply reflected the widespread ethnic consciousness that had returned after a long period of absence or had, perhaps, always been present.

Their activities were nevertheless of crucial importance, since they smashed the Communist-Yugoslavian taboos. Ivo Andric, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature, was elevated by Tito’s regime to something of a national cultural icon. It didn’t matter that he wasn’t a Communist and that his work dealt primarily with the painful, tragic and often violent aspects of a society driven by ethnic differences. He was considered acceptable because he incorporated ‘a central, nation-building message’ into books such as *The bridge over the Drina*. Andric suggested that it would ultimately prove possible to overcome the differences and that the unpleasant past could be accepted in a de-mystified form through ‘the existence of an overarching truth that links peoples and groups who think they have no common ground’. Initially, virtually all Croatian and Serbian writers conveyed this type of Yugoslavian message. From the 1970s onwards, however, they developed into nationalists who were devoted to the destruction of supra-ethnic values. That was the end of the Communist ideal of ‘brotherhood and unity’. From then on their own people came first.³⁰⁹

Serbia went further than the other nations in this regard. Its literature came to be dominated by themes such as the violence and injustice that had been inflicted on Serbia (especially between 1941 and 1945), the Croats’ hatred of the Serbs (which was exceeded only by that of the Yugoslavian Muslims) and the glorification of ancient Serbian traditions. The novel *Nož (Knife)*, by Vuk Draskovic, resembles a version of *The Mountain Wreath* set in the Second World War, although it lacks the literary quality of the original. Such books were well received by a wide range of ‘low- and middle-brow readers’. This was especially true of the work of a well-known and established novelist like Dobrica Cosic. He also played a leading role in the infamous, ultra-nationalistic statement issued by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1986. In works like *The Chazar Dictionary*, typically ‘high-brow authors’ like Milorad Pavic demonstrated, in a veiled and post-modernistic way, the impracticability of Yugoslavian unity. Draskovic and Cosic were soon to occupy important positions in Serbian politics, and even Pavic openly expressed his support for Milosevic.³¹⁰

In this way, the tables were turned and times changed in the Serbian cultural and political landscape. To use Simic’s terms, a new ‘normative zone’ had been created, which was used to determine who was ‘good’ and who was ‘bad’. Here was the entire gamut of past nationalistic traditions, symbols, attitudes, political views and mythological interpretations of the past, all restored to their former glory. Culture and power, the elite and the common people were united with one another by favourable sentiments concerning their own ethnic group and by unfavourable views concerning outsiders. The objective was a larger, more powerful Serbia. The minority who opposed this development were politically and socially marginalized. Anyone expressing a dissenting view encountered an increasingly unpleasant backlash. This climate favoured the fomentation of a hysterical mood in response to the perilous position of the Serbs in Kosovo. This in turn helped to bring Slobodan Milosevic to power.

The new political leader and his cronies made use of their supporters in the population to seize power in Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro, and to strengthen their control of the federal army. Serbian society was whipped into a state of national psychosis by a series of events, most of which were carefully staged. The simultaneous victory of nationalist/separatist movements in Croatia and Slovenia made war virtually inevitable. Large-scale, highly intensive political manipulation was required to achieve a situation in which all parties were prepared to resort to force. However, this would not have achieved the desired effect if citizens had been less receptive to the ethnic/nationalistic message.

The Serbs and Croats had a marked propensity for distancing themselves, as civilized Europeans, from the 'semi-Asian' Serbs. However, this was more than equalled by the way in which the Serbs, as Christian Europeans, wanted to distinguish themselves from the 'barbaric' Yugoslavian Muslims.³¹¹ At the same time, the Serbs continued to impress upon foreign visitors that Serbian identity and history were just too different to be comprehensible to Western Europeans. 'Obstinate otherness', or the deep-seated need to be different from other ethnic groups³¹², was widespread among Serbs. It must therefore be accepted as a major element in the fatal developments that occurred prior to 1991, and thereafter. During the 1980s, the erosion of the totalitarian system in Yugoslavia meant that citizens could no longer be compelled to toe the line. The Yugoslavia one-party state was in an advanced stage of decay. Strong public support was needed if the country was to discard this system and switch to an entirely different political situation. Appeals to ethnic solidarity proved to be an extremely effective means of winning over a majority of voters in Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia.

The release of accumulated ethnic tensions in Yugoslavia, in eruptions of excessive violence, was by no means unique in the history of this peninsula. The fact that this has occurred at regular intervals to some extent justifies statements about 'ancient hatreds' and 'deeper traits of character presumably from a distant tribal past'³¹³. In a sense, it also supports the 'Balkan Man' school of thought. However, such generalized qualifications tend to gloss over both the complexity of the region's past and the elusive phenomenon of ethnic identity. Many Western observers consider merciless nationalism to be the true characteristic of the Balkans. History shows, however, that this phenomenon usually 'has only ever been sustainable for brief periods by governments before it begins to soften, then fragment and finally decay.'³¹⁴ In other words, from time to time, violence-prone Balkan Man suddenly pops up all over the place, only to disappear again. During the intervals between these upheavals, the various ethnic groups live relatively peacefully with or alongside one another.

For this reason, the notion that ethnicity is purely a question of a rigid tradition, unalterable dependence and deep conviction on the part of numerous, clearly demarcated groups of people needs to be amended. The enormous contrasts and fluctuations that characterize the history of the Balkans result from the complex distribution of different population groups throughout the area, from the Ottoman heritage and from the incomplete Europeanization of the region. In comparison to Western Europe, the Balkans has remained a poverty-stricken region, most of whose inhabitants are condemned to a harsh, hand-to-mouth existence. Although the state assumed Western parliamentary forms, a truly democratic *civil society* failed to develop, and the citizens lacked a decent system of legal security. They were confronted with the dictatorial abuse of power, with suppression, clientelism, patronage, bribery, corruption, extortion, incompetence and inefficiency. The mainly peasant population therefore had to pay a very high price for the poorly implemented modernization of the Balkan countries.³¹⁵ Respectful civil obedience is based on the confidence that the government is serving the general interests of the nation. This characterized the pillared and segregated society of the Netherlands during the first half of the 20th century, but could not develop in the Balkans. The population of South-Eastern Europe continued to display the characteristics that so typified people's relationships with the official bodies of church and state during the Ottoman period: *bachsıs* (distrust), *iavaslık* (lethargic submissiveness) and *kismet* (fatalism).³¹⁶

The uncertainty of everyday existence caused people to identify strongly with the interests of their own family and to adopt a defensive, if not xenophobic, attitude to outsiders. Loyalty to one's own small group of relatives was always more important than ethnic solidarity. Ethnicity was very strongly rooted in some groups, while others had only a faint awareness of it, or paid it lip service for

utilitarian reasons. Dishonesty, deception, lies and deceit were all permissible tools in the struggle to survive in a hostile outside world. In practice, ethnic and religious boundaries were sometimes frayed and vague. Many marginal groups arose who had integrated the habits and practices of various cultures into their daily lives. Religious syncretism was much more common than doctrinal piety. Among the Serbs there was also a striking mixture of heathen magic and Christian practices. The church served as the most important repository of national culture, but its saints could also offer protection to Muslims, Catholics or gypsies. The literature repeatedly makes reference to the fact that, as a religious institute, the church played a rather insignificant role in the spiritual life of Serbs and Montenegrins during the 19th and 20th centuries. Village churches were unobtrusive and small, and they were not regularly attended. Village priests had little authority, and people were as distrustful of the senior incumbents of the state church as they were of worldly authorities. An opinion poll held in 1985 showed that no more than eleven percent of the population of Serbia, Montenegro and Vojvodina stated that they were religious.³¹⁷

In times of profound change, increasing uncertainty and danger, people seek any means of protection and tend to 'go with the flow'. Large groups of citizens are immediately prepared to renounce the symbols and practices of a discredited regime or leader, and to offer their support to a new patron, preferably the most powerful individual. 'In modern conditions, with the mass media, this means that they will carefully emulate what the 'most' authoritative voice – His Master's Voice – tells them to think and believe.'³¹⁸ This results either in a greater emphasis of dependence on traditional ethical values or a more ostentatious display of adherence to a given religion. In order to avoid persecution or being driven away from their village, people will (if possible) adopt an entirely different ethnic or religious identity. This behaviour does not necessarily have much to do with these people's genuine feelings or religious conviction: '... the more menacing the power, the thicker the mask.' Such chameleon-like behaviour has been a regularly-recurring feature in the history of the whole of Eastern Europe. Elsewhere also, sudden changes at the top of the political pyramid were associated with the continuation of despotism, poverty and dependence. It was essential to make the correct political choices, and to do so quickly.³¹⁹

It seems, therefore, that many inhabitants of the Balkans are capable of considerable adaptive flexibility. However, anyone who supposes that this characteristic would enable the rapid reconstruction of healthy, multicultural societies in Kosovo, Bosnia and Macedonia under international supervision would probably be in for a disappointment. The ability to use ethnic and political mimicry is directly related to the destruction and violence that characterized so many Balkan conflicts. Nothing is more important in this world of pretence and sham than the national symbols, ethnic marks and religious beacons. It is these things that delineate and fill the 'normative zone'. They provide direction and clarity. It is imperative that both this abstract territory and the nation's actual physical territory be clear and pure. They must be free of any confusing or contaminating elements. This is why Serbs are not permitted to live on Croat land and why all mosques on Serbian soil must be destroyed. Many individuals were willing and able to demonstrate their loyalty to their fatherland by assisting with the cleansings. They have seldom been carried out as thoroughly as in the most recent of the Yugoslavian conflicts.

These conflicts were much worse than many previous eruptions of ethnic violence, primarily because they lasted much longer. The Balkan wars at the start of the 20th century were bloody, but the first lasted only for a couple of months and the second for no more than a month. In terms of their nature, duration and scope, only the events of the Second World War were of a comparable order of magnitude. The population was never given the opportunity of properly coming to terms with the tragic events that occurred between 1941 and 1945. This would have required lengthy and thorough historical research. Such studies were initially impeded by the Communist regime, and subsequently by the nationalist hysteria that succeeded Tito's administration. However, the Second World War taught all Yugoslavs that ethnicity can be a very perilous thing indeed. Half a century later the ongoing fear of a possible repetition, coupled with the need to be permanently alert to such developments, had the effect

of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Now people have to come to terms with the repetition of these events as well. This is an enormous barrier to the restoration of normal social and political relations.

At the end of this account, the break-up of Yugoslavia appears to have been caused by a remarkably tangled series of diametrically opposed forces. These included the conflicts between traditional indigenous cultures, the unbridgeable gap and constant interplay between mountain dwellers, rural and urban populations, or between *doslaci* and *starosedeooci*, as well as attempts to introduce westernization and modernization in all these population groups. Other factors were the interweaving of internal political conflicts and international meddling, or the significance of political manipulation of the population by unbridled political powers on the one hand and the dependence of such rulers on the mentality and opinions of their common supporters on the other. Finally, closely-knit family life and ancient village communities existed within an extremely dominant state. This led to a situation in which highly stable forms of ethnic dependence and political loyalty existed side by side with highly changeable, bizarre variants of these characteristics.

We will just have to be satisfied with the fact that determining the origins and effects of complex events is not the strong suit of the historical profession. In the Netherlands, four centuries of historical study have failed to identify the 'real' causes of the Dutch rebellion against Spain. In this context, one commentator pointed out that 'Large-scale historical events are generally so complex and polysemantic that causal explanations are not merely inadequate, they are utterly pointless. The only thing that we can do when confronted with phenomena of this kind is to study those factors that seem to have contributed to the development of the historic event. It is wrong to give the impression that we can indicate whether they caused the event in question and, if so, the extent to which they were responsible.'³²⁰ Accordingly, it has never been my aim to identify all of the riddles of the Yugoslavian conflict, let alone solve them.

Similarly, I do not believe that it would be useful - or even possible - to cut through the Gordian knot of image and reality once and for all. I have thus attempted to unravel these tangled webs a little bit. I also trust that I have been able to make clear that it is not necessary to decide whether or not to accept the existence of 'Balkan Man', or whether or not to accept the existence of 'ancient ethnic hatreds'. What is vitally important, however, is to realize exactly what we want such terms to mean. The distinctive history of the Balkans has led to the development of sharp ethnic contrasts. It has also given rise to a mentality (or mentalities) in large sections of the population that differs from the Western European frame of mind. In attempting to visualize this, we usually fail to allow for their enormous range of variation and for the fact that they are in a state of constant flux. The image is reality fossilized into a stereotype. Whenever those using a particular image feel that it has been overtaken by events, and is therefore unsound, they simply opt for a new cliché. However, such choices are also determined by certain habits and historical traditions. Although direct observation of objective reality remains impossible, the study of image formation allows one to recognize such clichés as platitudes, and to distinguish between them and genuine attempts to adopt a more candid approach to reality.

Notes

¹ Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene II.

² Holbrooke, *War*, 21.

³ *Ibidem*, 22.

⁴ Owen, *Odyssey*, 3, 5.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 23. Western observers were not alone in believing Bosnia's ethnic conflicts to be unbridgeable. Long before the outbreak of the Bosnian conflict, Yugoslavs referred to this area as 'krava Bosna' or 'Bloody Bosnia'.

⁶ *Other Balkan Wars*, 7.

⁷ *Ibidem*, 13.

⁸ *Ibidem*, 14.

⁹ Quoted by Todorova, *Balkans*, 185.

¹⁰ Kaplan, *Ghosts*, xxiii.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, xvi.

¹² For details about Ambler see: Goldworthy, *Ruritania*, 109.

¹³ Holbrooke, *War*, 23.

¹⁴ West, *Black Lamb*, 280. See also pages 288, 302, 309 and 316-7.

¹⁵ Holbrooke, *War*, 23-24, 366-68.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, 165.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, 22.

¹⁸ Leerssen, 'The allochronic periphery', 285.

¹⁹ Leerssen, 'L'effet de typique', 131.

²⁰ See: Bauer, *Soviet system*, 157 onwards

²¹ *Ibidem*, 161.

²² See Gorskij, *Mental'nost'*. (also for additional references)

²³ The notion that our understanding of reality is based on a construction, was popularized by Berger and Luckman in *Social Construction*.

²⁴ See: Said, *Orientalism* and Said, *Culture*. For a reliable follower see: Kabbani, *Myths*. For a different vision, see: Sharafuddin, *Islam*. Said's one-sided position and indignant tone generated a great deal of criticism. See, for example: Daniel, 'Edward Said', 211-222. My main objection is that Said restricts himself too much to the 19th century and to the Near East, and that his interpretation of the concept of *orientalism* is too narrow. Said tends to gloss over the fact that 'orientophilia' existed even in Ancient times. He also passes over the fear of Eastern barbarians that has existed ever since. He does not appreciate that Eastern Europe was also orientalized by the West, and that in the case of Russia (which was never subjugated by the West) the connection between orientalization and imperialism is hardly relevant. For details of this, see Chapter II below. For details of the inadequacy of Said's views, in terms of providing a better understanding of the Western image of the Balkans, see: Allcock, 'Constructing the Balkans', 173 onwards.

²⁵ Cited by Friedman, *Bosnian Muslims*, 1, 5.

²⁶ Moynihan, *Pandaemonium*, 22.

²⁷ Huntington, 'Clash of civilisations', 22-49.

²⁸ See, for example: Naarden, 'Het Westen' ('The West'), 331-2; Boer, 'Reactie' ('Reaction'), 390-1.

²⁹ See: Barfoot, *Beyond Pug's Tour*, 2.

³⁰ The following statement by Tudjman is symptomatic. 'The Yugoslav experience showed that the cultural and geopolitical divides and constraints turned out to be decisive - so strong that the common state proved not viable. The current fault-line overlaps with those of the Roman Empire (Theodosian line), between Rome, Byzantium, and Islam, as well as with the region where this divide of civilizations is most palpable, Bosnia-Herzegovina, which produced one of the most serious power crises of today.' Views concerning the superior, Catholic and western civilization of a country such as Croatia were

rivalled by the opinions of Serbian intellectuals such as Milorad Pavic, concerning the excellence of the Orthodox culture. Similar sentiments were being expressed by Islamic clergymen and intellectuals in Bosnia. See: Tindeman's, *Unfinished Peace*, 16. See also Kaplan's account of his conversation with the Croat journalist Slavenka Drakulic about the clash of civilizations in Yugoslavia. (Kaplan, *Ghosts*, 6-7).

³¹ Roosens, *Creating Ethnicity*, 123.

³² *Ibidem*, 156.

³³ Cited by Kamp, 'De weg naar complementariteit' ('The road to complementarity'), 176.

³⁴ Formulation of Benthem van den Bergh, 'De kracht van het symbool' ('The power of symbols'), 228. Leerssen, 'Over nationale identiteit' ('On national identity'), 420.

³⁶ Hofstede achieved this with his Institute for Research on Intercultural Co-operation at the University of Limburg, the Netherlands. The same was true of Tilburg University where, in 1990, a European values study was carried out into the cultural similarities and differences between 16 countries. See: Stokvis, 'Beeldvorming, stereotypen en karakteristieken' ('Formation of images, stereotypes and characteristics'), 279-288; Schnabel, 'God in vele landen' ('God in many countries').

³⁷ It is no coincidence that objections of this kind are mainly made against the history of mentality, which examines topics that are related to the common character of a people or to national identity. This is 'one of the most difficult branches of historiography', because it 'requires empathy [...] a deliberate attempt to set aside one's own cultural assumptions that is not easy to attain.' Furthermore, mentalities are extremely 'volatile' research topics, and cannot be measured directly. The source material provides only their 'partial and coloured reaction to culture'. See: Frijhoff, 'Impasses en beloften' ('Impasses and promises'), 407 and 409. See also: Bertels, 'skepsis' ('scepticism'), 155-166. The importance of the study of mentalities is also recognized by socio-economic historians, who work with 'hard' data. One of the comments made on this issue by David S. Landes, the author of the book *The wealth and poverty of nations*, was 'If we have been able to learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes an enormous difference (in this regard, Max Weber was quite right).' Witness the entrepreneurial zeal of exiled minorities - the Chinese in East and South-East Asia, the Indians in East Africa, the Lebanese in West Africa, Jews and Calvinists throughout almost the whole of Europe, etc. Academics tend to be deterred, however, by culture in the sense of the inner values and mentality that direct a people. It reeks of race and origins - as if nothing can ever be changed [...] The technicians prefer the concrete approach: changing interest rates and exchange rates, freeing-up trade, changing political institutions, governance. In addition, when we criticize someone's culture they may feel that their ego, identity and self respect are under attack.' David S. Landes, *Arm en Rijk*, (The wealth and poverty of nations) 542-543.

³⁸ Stokvis, 'Nationale identiteit' ('National identity'), 287.

³⁹ Van den Kamp, 'De weg naar complementariteit' ('The road to complementarity'), 180-1.

⁴⁰ Benthem van den Berg, 'De kracht van het symbool' ('The power of symbols'), 228-230. With regard to Anderson's view of nations as an 'imagined community' Daniel Kofman comments that: 'However 'creative' imagination can be, an underlying assumption lingers that there is a 'real' substratum of nationless individuals against which one 'imagines' the mental construct of national identity. But one would have to imbibe a heavy dose of materialism [...] to take nationless individuals as less 'imaginary' than the thickly described and self-identifying people we know.' D. Kofman, 'Israel and the War in Bosnia', 120.

⁴¹ One work that provides a unique and instructive attempt to examine Russia without such prejudice is *Kontakt met de vijand* (Contact with the enemy) by Kees Verheul.

⁴² Leerssen once appealed to E.H.Kossmann to be able to describe a people's characteristics as 'historical artefacts'. It is therefore remarkable that the latter also points out actual differences between the Belgians and the Dutch. During a series of lectures dedicated to the Belgian, Johan Fleerackers, he denied that a national identity can arise spontaneously from history. He also made the following remark about Fleerackers 'if he had been Dutch he would perhaps have been caught up by that people's longstanding, supreme optimism that the state would be able to fundamentally reform society by means of legislation. He was Belgian, however, and he knew that Belgians have good historical reasons for

distrusting the government. As a highly placed administrator in the civil service he considered such a distrust misplaced, but accepted that it was compellingly present. E.H.Kossmann, *Een tuchteloos probleem* (An unruly problem), 10.

⁴³ Hay, *Europe*, 2, 5, 10, 14, 21. According to the English chronicle writer, William of Malmesbury, on the occasion of his call for the First Crusade Pope Urbanus II addressed the faithful as follows 'You inhabitants of temperate regions'. (Vos estis gens in temperationibus mundi provinciis oriunda). Hay, *Op.cit.*, 32.

⁴⁴ See: Zacharasiewicz, *Klimatheorie* (Climate theory), 16.

⁴⁵ Febvre, *Terre*, 2-10, 108-111. Martin and James, *All possible Worlds*, 102-105.

⁴⁶ Stanzel, *Europäer*, 28-33, 44-55.

⁴⁷ See: Febvre, *Terre*, 12-34, 58-73, 112-135. Claval, *Geschiedenis aardrijkskunde* (Historical geography), 29-36.

⁴⁸ For Huntington see: Martin, *Huntington*. For details of his ideas about climate and Britain, see: Huntington, *Principles*, 408-416, 722-723, for example.

⁴⁹ Stanzel, *Europäer*, 95-99.

⁵⁰ For a summary and further references, see: Naarden, *Socialist Europe*, Chapter 1, and Naarden, 'Dutchmen', 1-20.

⁵¹ It should be noted here that serfdom prior to 1800 was still common in the Habsburg countries and in parts of Europe to the east of the Elbe. It was far less common in the Balkans, however. Todorova mentions 'the existence of a relatively free peasantry' as one of the beneficial results of Ottoman rule, which was characteristic of all Balkan societies on the eve of their independence. She cites Romania as an exception, but Bosnia should also have been included, since bondage continued to exist in that country right up until its incorporation into Yugoslavia. Todorova, *Balkans*, 172. See also note 81.

⁵² See: Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*.

⁵³ Jahn, *Russophilie*; Todorova, *Balkans*, 111.

⁵⁴ See: Hollander, *Political pilgrims*.

⁵⁵ See, for example: Soergel, *Arbeiterselbstverwaltung*; Schrenk, *Yugoslavia. Self-management Socialism*; Lilge, *Arbeiterselbstverwaltung*; Meister, *Où va l'autogestion yougoslave?* For details of the responses in the Netherlands, see Chapter III below.

⁵⁶ Todorova, *Balkans*, 13.

⁵⁷ Goldworthy, *Ruritania*, 9.

⁵⁸ Todorova, *Balkans*, 6.

⁵⁹ See: Malia, *Russia under Western Eyes*, 127-130.

⁶⁰ In other words, the difference of opinion that existed in the 19th century between the proponents of a future united Germany without Austria, and those who opposed this view, who felt that the Habsburg empire should also be included.

⁶¹ See: Droz, *Europe centrale*; Schöpflin, *In Search of Central Europe*; Lord, *Central Europe*.

⁶² He also wondered 'Can we get back to the state of affairs in which the Slovaks return to their natural job of scrubbing windows, the Romanians are confined to the exercise of their only national industry (which, according to Lord D'Abernon's statement in an official memorandum, is fornication), the Poles are restricted to piano playing and the white slave traffic, and the Serbs are controlled in their great national activity - organizing political murders on foreign territory?' Cited in: Burgess, *Divided Europe*, 54-55.

⁶³ Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security*, 190. Simms, 'Bosnia', 74.

⁶⁴ About Poles: 'J.M. Keynes, the theorist of modern capitalism, called it 'an economic impossibility whose only industry is Jew baiting'. [The historian] Lewis Namier called it 'pathological'. [The historian] E.H. Carr called it 'a farce'. [The former British Prime Minister] Lloyd George talked of 'a historic failure'. [...] In 1939 he announced that 'Poland had deserved its fate'.' Davies, *God's Playground*, Vol. II, p. 393. See also: Forster, 'Britain and East Central Europe', 112 onwards.

⁶⁵ See: Craig Nation, 'Balkan Images', 30, 32.

⁶⁶ Dittrich, *Midden-Europa?* See also: Naarden, 'De identiteit van Centraal-Europa' ('The identity of Central Europe'); Roobol, 'Central Europe'.

⁶⁷ See: Kinsky, 'Central Europe', 155 and Renner, 'Midden-Europese paradoxen' (Central European paradoxes).

⁶⁸ For further details, see Chapter IV below.

⁶⁹ See, for example: Ebels-Hoving, *Byzantium*. Petkov, *Infidels*. Naarden, *Spiegel*, 15, 17.

⁷⁰ See, for example: Naarden, 'Education' and Naarden, 'Ljev Goemiljov'.

⁷¹ For Krizanic see: Eekman, *Slavische dromen* (Slavic dreams); Eekman, *Juraj, Krizanic*

⁷² See: Milokovic-Djuric, *Panslavism*. Todorova, *Balkans*, 83-88.

⁷⁴ Jelavich, *Establishment*; Thaden, *Russia*.

⁷⁵ Todorova, *Balkans*, 69.

⁷⁶ For further details on this matter, see Chapter IV below.

⁷⁶ See: Kann, *Peoples*, 3-22, 476-492.

⁷⁷ Taylor, *Habsburg monarchy*, 11. According to Alan Palmer, Metternich liked to repeat this 'slightly tedious joke' in various forms. He even considered his own summer residence, which was situated in an eastern suburb of Vienna, to be the 'ultimate frontier of civilized Europe'. Palmer, *Metternich*, 286. In a letter to Princess Mélanie written in 1836 he made the following statement about Hungary: 'Les pays, les lois qui le régissent, les moeurs, les usages sont en arrière de plusieurs siècles du reste de l'Europe.' Erzébet Andics who uses this quote, comments: 'Eine der Hauptquellen von Metternichs Irrtümern in Bezug auf Ungarn war die irrealer Wertung, d.h. die überstiegene Geringschätzung des Landes.' Andics, *Metternich*, 82.

⁷⁸ Dittrich, 'Oost-Europa' (Eastern Europe), 421-2.

⁷⁹ Donia, *Islam*, 14.

⁸⁰ The extent to which actual serfdom existed in Bosnia, in the formal and legal senses, is a matter of debate for historians. There is no discussion, however, concerning the burden of the *kmets*' obligations to the *begs*, and the backwardness of agrarian relationships. See, for example: Donia and Fine, *Bosnia*, 75-79, 96.

⁸¹ Other historians, however, feel that the fall of the Habsburg empire, like its German and Russian counterparts, was a result of the First World War, rather than a consequence of ethnic contrasts. See, for example: Goudoever, 'Nationaliteiten vraagstuk' (The issue of nationalities), 440-441.

⁸² J.W.von Goethe, *Faust*, I Theil:

Vor dem Tor: ANDRER BÜRGER:

Nichts Bessers weiss ich mir an Sonn- und Feiertagen,

Als ein Gespräch von Krieg und Kriegsgeschrei,

Wenn hinten, weit, in den Türkei,

Die Völker auf einander schlagen.

Man steht am Fenster, Trinkt sein Gläschen aus

Und sieht den Fluss hinab die bunten Schiffe gleiten;

Dann kehrt man abends froh nach Haus,

Und segnet Fried' und Friedenszeiten.

⁸³ Leeb, *Fallmerayer*, 55.

⁸⁴ Todorova, *Balkans*, 70-3; Rosdolsky, *Engels*.

⁸⁵ Craig, *Deutsche Geschichte*, 108; Dittrich, 'Bismarck und Rumänien', 38.

⁸⁶ Grimm, 'Balkan-Bild des Brockhaus'.

⁸⁷ See: Müge Göcek, *East Encounters West*.

⁸⁸ See: *Delacroix*, 62-81.

⁸⁹ Todorova, *Balkans*, 73-82; Goldsworthy, *Ruritania*, 23-4.

⁹⁰ Bartstra, *Handboek*, deel III, 93; Sas, 'Europese statenstelsel' (European state system), 243.

⁹¹ Cobban, *History of modern France*, Vol. II, 172; Pattinger Saab, *Crimean Alliance*, 146-7.

⁹² Anderson, *Britain's Discovery*, 124; Todorova, *Balkans*, 90-5.

⁹³ Woodhouse, *Philhellenes*, 37; See also: Angelamatis-Tsougarakis, *Greek Revival*, 85-100.

⁹⁴ Blake, *Disraeli*, 65.

⁹⁵ Gleason, *Russophobia in Britain*, 164-204.

⁹⁶ Thomson, *England*, 158.

⁹⁷ Todorova, *Balkans*, 97-8; Hadziselimovic, 'Two Victorian Ladies', 1-7.

⁹⁸ '...there occurred in Britain one of the deepest, most varied, and most prolonged outbursts of public feeling ever to manifest itself in a people not usually given to extravagant display of private feeling.'

Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question*, 176.

⁹⁹ See: Seton-Watson, *Disraeli*; Shannon, *Gladstone*.

¹⁰⁰ Todorova, *Balkans*, 103.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, 102.

¹⁰² Stanzel, *Europäer*, 29.

¹⁰³ For a more extensive discussion of this literature see Goldsworthy, *Ruritania*, *passim*.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibidem*, 161-171; Todorova, *Balkans*, 120-1; Hodgson, 'Edith Durham. Traveller and Publicist' and June E. Hill, 'Edith Durham as a Collector' in: Allcock, *Black Lambs*, 8-35.

¹⁰⁵ Hall, *Impossible Country*, 9.

¹⁰⁶ Goldsworthy, *Ruritania*, 171-184; Naarden, *Spiegel* (Mirror), 26-27.

¹⁰⁷ Goldsworthy, *Ruritania*, 71.

¹⁰⁸ Namier, *Facing East*, 53-54.

¹⁰⁹ Crankshaw, *Fall of Habsburg*, 377.

¹¹⁰ The Serbian day of remembrance (28 June), which commemorates the defeat by the Turks at the Battle of Blackbird Field in Kosovo, in 1389.

¹¹¹ The Entente camp glossed over the fact that Serbian detachments (and even a Serbian Field Marshal) fought on the Austrian side. Grmek, *Nettoyage ethnique*, 23; Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 149, 153; Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 253-4; *Other Balkan Wars*, 151; Jelavich, *Establishment of Balkan States*, 191; Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha*, 121 onwards.

¹¹² Seleskovic, *Serbie dans l'opinion allemande*, 8.

¹¹³ See, for example: Dutton, *The Politics of Diplomacy*.

¹¹⁴ For details of Seton-Watson's views, see: H. and Ch. Seton-Watson, *Making of a New Europe*, 61, 121, 140, 152, 175, 212-215, 300-302, 312, 323, 341. For France, see: Grmek, *Nettoyage ethnique*, 135-149.

¹¹⁵ For details of this, see: Grenzenbach, *Germany's Informal Empire*.

¹¹⁶ Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 155.

¹¹⁷ Rothschild, *East Central Europe*, 8-11, 201 onwards; Tomasevich, *The Chetniks*, 3-21; West, *Black Lamb*, 1115-1117.

¹¹⁸ West, *Black Lamb*, 1119.

¹¹⁹ Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 156; West, *Black Lamb*, 1115 onwards; Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 102 - 103.

¹²⁰ Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha*, 140-141. However, in 1947, a commemoration was held to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of *Gorski vijenac* (The Mountain Wreath). The renowned epic poem by Petar Petrovic Njegos about the 18th century slaughter of southern Slavs who had converted to Islam. The fact that Njegos was a Montenegrin rather than a Serb or a Croat made it possible for this work to be honoured and annexed as the most important book in Yugoslavian literature. Furthermore, Tito's partisans could be portrayed as 'updated versions' of Njegos's freedom fighters. See: Wachtel, *Making a Nation*, 142-146. See also Chapter IV, below.

¹²¹ Rijk, *Yugoslavia*, 7.

¹²² Stojan Cerovic, the renowned journalist employed by the Belgrade weekly *Vreme*, commented that in many ways Communist Yugoslavia was closer to Europe than the republics that succeeded it, 'however much these may take pride in their democracy and European orientation.' Paul Panin quoted Cerovic in describing Tito's state as 'politisch, kulturell und ideell von dem durchsetzt, was Mitteleuropa ausmacht.' *Europa im Krieg*, 31.

¹²³ See: Ströhm, *Obne Tito*, for example.

¹²⁴ See: Hackett, *Third World War*. See also: Both, *From Indifference to Entrapment*, 80.

¹²⁵ Broekmeyer, *Joegoslavië*, 38-42, 46-48; Allcock, *Yugoslavia*, 119-120, 167-168, 294-296, 437-440.

¹²⁶ Tudjman's party saw its victory in the 1990 elections as the decisive step for the inclusion of Croatia in Central Europe, 'the region to which it has always belonged', except in the most recent past, when Croatian territory was subjected to 'an Asiatic form of government'. The same rhetoric was employed in Slovenia: 'We Slovenes have difficulty identifying ourselves with the pro-Asian or pro-African Yugoslavia. We cannot identify with such a Yugoslavia so long as we have the character that we have acquired in a thousand years of history. The symbolic fact that the rulers of the Slovenes were Charlemagne, Charles V, and Napoleon is less important: it is more important that we embodied the way of life that was created in central-western Europe.' For details of these and other citations, see: Bakic, 'Orientalist Variations', 10-11.

¹²⁷ Tindemans, *Unfinished Peace*, 19.

¹²⁸ Silber, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 198; Glenny, *Fall*, 26-27; Vasic, 'Black Hand, White Rose', 38.

¹²⁹ Furguson, 'Europa Nervosa', 127-132; Meyer, *Jugoslawien verspielt*, 423; Sadkovich, 'American Media and Balkan', 134; Mestrovic, *Balkanization*, 43,51; Conversi, 'Moral Relativism' 244-281; Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 22, 24, 259, 264; Hoffman, 'Yugoslavia: Implications for Europe', 114-115; Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 104-195, 156-157, 176-177; NRC, *De verwoesting* (The devastation), 7, 36-37; Rohde, *Endgame*, 24-25.

¹³⁰ Cited by Merrill, *Old Bridge*, 12.

¹³¹ See above, in the section entitled 'The image of Eastern Europe'.

¹³² Ullman, 'The Wars in Yugoslavia', 16.

¹³³ G.F. Treverton, 'The new Europe', 105.

¹³⁴ See: Mestrovic, *Genocide After Emotion*, 18-19, 170; Mestrovic, *Balkanisation*, 31; Holbrooke, *War*, 65; Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 161; Franchet, *Casque bleu pour rien*, 126; Glucksman, 'Le Rouge et le Brun', 69.

¹³⁵ Howorth, 'The debate in France', 112; Lukic, *Europe from the Balkans*, 266-267.

¹³⁶ Cited by Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 161. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, one of the most important newspapers in Germany, is considered to be largely responsible for creating a pro-Croatian and anti-Serbian mood there. See: Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 149.

¹³⁷ Grmek, *Nettoyage ethnique*, 190, note 2.

¹³⁸ One of them, Alain Finkelkraut, was – with good reason – referred to as 'Finkelcroat'. *Europa im Krieg*, 69.

¹³⁹ Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will*, 158-166. Mitterrand's famous lightning visit to Sarajevo in 1992 was also intended to stimulate the international community to greater activity. It was certainly not an anti-Serbian gesture. His visit coincided with St Vitus' day and the President had originally planned only to meet with Izetbegovic. The Croats and the Bosnians might have taken that as a deliberate affront. At the insistence of the UN commander (General L. MacKenzie, a Canadian who was also accused of being sympathetic to the Serbs), shortly before his departure, Mitterrand shook hands with Karadzic and Koljevic. Silber and Little, *Death*, 225.

¹⁴⁰ Mestrovic, *The Balkanisation of the West*, 46.

¹⁴¹ Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 158-159.

¹⁴² Maclean, *Eastern Approaches*, 293, 326-331, 448, 447, 494, 517, 523, 527.

¹⁴³ For an extensive discussion, see: Goldsworthy, *Ruritania*, 137-159.

¹⁴⁴ Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will*, 174-183.

¹⁴⁵ Conversi, 'Moral relativism and Equidistance', 258-260. The evidence that Conversi puts forward in this article, to support the existence of a pro-Serbian tradition in Great Britain, is very flimsy indeed. With regard to Zametica, see also: T. Judah, *The Serbs*, 220, 222.

¹⁴⁶ 'Banquet Address by U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia John D. Scanlan July 22, 1990' in: Dragnich, *Serbia's Historical Heritage*, 111-115. This book is an undeniably pro-Serbian publication, produced by elderly Serbian academics in the US. However, their patriotic writings preceded the outbreak of war, and express no support for Milosevic's policies. According to V. Meier, American policies were undeniably pro-Serbian until W. Zimmerman arrived in Belgrade. Scanlan became a branch manager in Belgrade for the Serbian-American businessman Milan Panic, who became Prime Minister of the new Yugoslavia in 1992. Meier, *Jugoslawien verspielt*, 77. Many other, more objective, authors, put forward the notion that *glasnost* was originally conceived in Belgrade rather than Moscow. See, for example: Udovicki, *Burn this House*, 82. Ramet also confirms that Milosevic initially 'restored grace to many Serbian dissidents, including Milovan Djilas' (who was not actually a Serb). Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 27.

¹⁴⁷ See: Mousavizadeh, *The Black Book*, 134. For a summary of the activities of Serbian groups in the US (who were generally rather amateuristic and not particularly influential) see: Blitz, 'serbia's War lobby', 187-243. It must also be said that, in 1991, the Croatian authorities were highly incompetent in their use of the western media. The Slovenes had a better feel for such matters. See: Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*, 162-163 and Gow, 'After the Flood', 457-458.

¹⁴⁸ See: Cohen, *Broken Bonds*, 235. For America see: Bert, *Reluctant Superpower*, 79 onwards.

¹⁴⁹ Sobel, 'U.S. and European Attitudes', 146.

¹⁵⁰ According to Bogdan Denitch, an American sociologist of Serbian extraction who was highly critical of Serbian policies, the image of Serbian culture and history that was presented in the German media could 'only be described as racist.' Denitch, *Ethnic Nationalism*, 52. See also Gow, *Triumph*, 166-174. According to Van den Boogaard, the Yugoslavia specialists at the German embassy in Belgrade opposed the recognition of Croatia. See: R. van den Boogaard, 'The civil war cannot be ended' in: NRC, *Verwoesting* (Devastation), 57.

¹⁵¹ For critical evaluations of the German position, see, for example: Wynaendts, *L'engrenage*, 187; Walsum, *Verder met Nederland* (Further with the Netherlands), 65-66; Glenny, *Fall*, 112, 188-190, 280; Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 183 onwards. For the opposing standpoint, see: Meier, *Jugoslawien verspielt, passim*.

¹⁵² Glenny, *Fall*, 25.

¹⁵³ For Italy see: *Italy and the Balkans*. See also: Both, *From Indifference to Entrapment*, 104, 120, 132, 134, 135.

¹⁵⁴ For a brief summary and for modern literature on the Greek civil war, see: Klok, 'Griekse burgeroorlog' (Greek civil war), 392-396, 414. For a Greek response, see: Veremis, *Greece, the Balkans and the European Union*.

¹⁵⁵ 'The Serbian kingdom, during its golden age under Stephen Dushan (1331-55), represented in many ways a dress rehearsal for the pattern of rule that was to emerge in Muscovy' (Billington, *The Icon and the Axe*, 56). In the *Archangelskij Sobor*, a 16th century church inside the Kremlin, the Czars preceding Peter the Great are buried. The church contains frescos depicting the ancestors of Ivan the Terrible, as well as four foreign rulers and saints. The latter include the Byzantine emperor Michael VII Palaeologos and three Serbs, including Saint Sava and Saint Lazar (the hero of Kosovo). Lazar and Kosovo also occupy a prominent place in Muscovite chronicles. Conversely, in Serbia at that time, the cult of Lazar was localized to the area around the monastery of Ravanica where his relics are housed. See: Mihaljcic, *The Battle of Kosovo*, 58-60.

¹⁵⁶ Romanenko, 'Russia in the Balkans', 32.

¹⁵⁷ Jelavich, *Establishment of Balkan States*, 185 onwards.

¹⁵⁸ Hersh, *Verraad, Lafheid en Bedrog* (Treachery, Sloth and Sham), 186-187.

¹⁵⁹ Djakov, *Slanjanskaja ideja*, 37.

¹⁶⁰ See: Romanenko, 'Erfenis van het verleden' (Legacy of the past), 40-48. Such Russian views are, to some extent, reinforced by Western attitudes and prejudices. For example, by Huntington who sees

Russia as an un-European power and a natural quality in the 'Orthodox Slavic alliance', an alliance between Russia and its congenators, such as Serbia. See: Kardelj, 'Huntington's Clash', 25-41.

¹⁶¹ One outspoken defender of the Serbian standpoint is Elena Guskova of the Institute of Slavistics and Balkanistics at the Russian Academy of Sciences. See, for example, her work *Jugoslavenskij krizis*.

¹⁶² See, for example: Gobble, 'Dangerous Liaisons', 182-197. For a more extensive study see: Lukic, *Europe*.

¹⁶³ Dania, *Bosnia and Hercegovina*, 172, 178; Friedman, *Bosnian Muslims*, 223; Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 176-177; Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 185-186.

¹⁶⁴ Voogt, *In den Balkan*, 10-11.

¹⁶⁵ I have not investigated any other sources. The only study on this subject that has been completed to date is the dissertation of Novakovic-Lapusina, *Srbi i Jugoistocna Evropa*.

¹⁶⁶ Theunissen, 'Barbaren en ongelovigen' (Barbarians and infidels), 37.

¹⁶⁷ Petkov, *Infidels, Turks, and Women*, 185-186.

¹⁶⁸ See also: Wijnands, 'Tulpen naar Amsterdam' (Tulips to Amsterdam), 97-106.

¹⁶⁹ Theunissen, *Topkapi*, 40; Roding, 'Die met dit zoort van volk wil verkeeren' (*Who mixes with people like that*), 56-57; Novikovic, *Srbi*, 30-34; Koster, *To Hellen's Noble Land*, 44; Huussen, *Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq*.

¹⁷⁰ Theunissen, 'Barbaren en ongelovigen', 43 (Barbarians and infidels), 53; Westerink, 'Liever Turks dan paaps' (Rather Turkish than Papist), 75-80.

¹⁷¹ Groot, *Ottoman Empire and Dutch Republic*, 181-189.

¹⁷² Groot, *Ottoman Empire*, 202-205; Heeringa, *De eerste Nederlandsche gezant (The first Dutch envoy)*, 116-139; Runciman, *The Great Church*, 259-288; Hadjianthoniou, *The Protestant Patriarch*, 47 onwards.

¹⁷³ See: Rozemond, *Archimandrite Hierotheos Abbatios*.

¹⁷⁴ Groot, *Betekenis Nederlandse ambassade (Significance of the Dutch embassy)*.

¹⁷⁵ Novikovic, *Srbi*, 107.

¹⁷⁶ Luttervelt, 'Turkse' schilderijen ('Turkish' paintings).

¹⁷⁷ Boon, *Westfriese zeeman (West Frisian sailor)*.

¹⁷⁸ Flinkenflögel, *Entre perruques et turbans*, 42-43.

¹⁷⁹ Woensel, *Staat der geleerdheid (The level of scholarship)*; Wesselo, *Pieter van Woensel*; Reve-Israël, 'Een Hollandse arts (A Dutch physician)', 91-111; Novikovic, *Srbi*, 96-97; *Topkapi & Turkomanie*, 51-52; Koster, *To Hellen's Noble Land*, 120.

¹⁸⁰ *Topkapi & Turkomanie*, 15.

¹⁸¹ Koster, *To Hellen's Noble Land*, 104, 108.

¹⁸² For details about Fallmerayer, see Chapter II.

¹⁸³ For details of Dutch philhellenism see: Koster, *To Hellen's Noble Land*, 8-10, 164-195; Renting, 'Nederland' (The Netherlands), 21-50.

¹⁸⁴ Kampen, *Griekenland en Europeisch Turkije (Greece and European Turkey)*, 62-63.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, 294, 300-307.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, 295-300.

¹⁸⁷ Daehne van Varick, *Bijdrage (Contribution)*.

¹⁸⁸ See: Naarden, 'Nederlanders' (The Dutch), 22-23.

¹⁸⁹ Woldring, *Bescheiden (Documents)*, 447-448.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 343-344.

¹⁹¹ Reitsma, 'Jeanne Merkus'; West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, 271-273.

¹⁹² Karazin, *In den kruiddamp (In the gun smoke)*. Original title: *V porochorom dymu*.

¹⁹³ For details of Van der Mey, see: Willemsen, 'Hendrik Wolfgang van der Mey'.

¹⁹⁴ Mey, 'servische Epos' (Serbian epic poetry).

¹⁹⁵ Mey, 'Montenegro'.

¹⁹⁶ For details of a study on these books, see: Koch, *Koningsromans (novels about royalty)*. According to Koch, the numerous 'novels about royalty' in French literature were the main source of inspiration for Couperus. She failed to notice the similarities to the romantic Balkan genre initiated by Hope.

¹⁹⁷ Emants, *In Bosnië (In Bosnia)*.

- ¹⁹⁸ Smit, *Bescheiden* (Documents), Third Period, Second part, 723-724.
- ¹⁹⁹ Alberdingk Thijm, *Koningsliefde* (Royal Devotion, The Tragedy in Serbia), 5.
- ²⁰⁰ *Balkankeizerin* (The Balkan Empress), 101.
- ²⁰¹ Mandere, *Montenegro*, 194.
- ²⁰² Koppeschaar, *Montenegro en Servië* (Montenegro and Serbia), 68-71.
- ²⁰³ See the quotation at the start of this chapter.
- ²⁰⁴ Voogt, *In den Balkan*, xii, 9,11, 13, 107, 178, 195.
- ²⁰⁵ Fabius, *Met Bulgaren en Montenegrijnen* (With Bulgarians and Montenegrins).
- ²⁰⁶ Bartstra wrote the following about this: ‘The newspaper-reading public in Europe derived frivolous enjoyment from the sensational reports about the Balkan war: a result of the dimming of their humanitarian ideals. Victories, charges with fixed bayonets, it was all great fun, but nobody realized how little was needed to kindle the flare-up in the Balkans into an inferno that would engulf the entire world’. Bartstra, *Handboek*, deel IV, 299.
- ²⁰⁷ Smit, *Bescheiden* (Documents), Third Period, Third part, 695, 830, 989, 993. Smit erroneously states that the Netherlands was not officially involved in sending the Dutch officers to Albania. He was also mistaken about the number of officers involved.
- ²⁰⁸ Goslinga, *The Dutch*; Fabius, *Albanië* (Albania).
- ²⁰⁹ Voogt, *In den Balkan*, 200.
- ²¹⁰ Durham, *Balkan Tangle*, 258, 261-262, 264-265, 268, 274- 275.
- ²¹² Petrowitch, *Heldensagen* (Sagas). The book has 388 pages.
- ²¹³ Rutten, *Joegoslavië* (Yugoslavia), viii-xi, 172.
- ²¹⁴ Faille, *Flitsen* (Flashes); Monnik, *Gastvriend* (Guest friend).
- ²¹⁵ Reitsma, *Zwerftochten* (Wanderings), 80, 82, 83, 87, 88, 119,128-132.
- ²¹⁶ For details of Den Doolaard, see: Doolaard, *Gesprekken* (Conversations).
- ²¹⁷ Doolaard, *Wilden* (Savages), 69.
- ²¹⁸ Doolaard, *Land van Tito* (Tito’s country), 8, 32, 55, 76, 121, 149, 152, 163, 164, 166, 171, 214, 250.
- ²¹⁹ This also occurred in books by foreign authors that were sold here in the Netherlands. Four years before the publication of *Het land van Tito* (Tito’s country), a Belgian, Paul Speyer, asserted that the party and people of that country were ‘fearlessly blazing new trails towards the fulfilment of their ideal’. See: Speyer, *Zuid Slavië* (Southern Slavia), 127. The British Yugoslavia expert, Bernard Newman, believed that the regime had become extremely liberal, following the breach with the USSR, and could therefore depend upon the genuine support of the population. See: Newman, *Rood Joego-Slavië* (Red Yugoslavia).
- ²²⁰ Alma, *Waar Europa eindigt* (Where Europe ends), 53.
- ²²³ Schroevers, *Op zoek* (Searching), 24, 113, 114.
- ²²² Here also, Den Doolaard was something of a trend-setter. He wrote three travel books. See: Doolaard, *Joegoslavië. Kaleidoskopisch reisland* (Yugoslavia – kaleidoscopic destination); Doolaard, *Dit is Joegoslavië* (This is Yugoslavia) and Doolaard, *Vakantieland Joegoslavië* (Yugoslavia – holiday destination). Prior to the Second World War, most tourists visiting the area were from Central European countries. In 1933, about 1000 Dutch people visited Yugoslavia, while in 1932 German tourists to the country numbered about 79,000. In 1954, 8,000 to 9,000 Dutch people visited the country (source: Eekman, *Joegoslavië* (Yugoslavia), 249). During the 1960s and 1970s, huge numbers of Dutch tourists visited Yugoslavia. They mostly spent their holidays on the Dalmatian coast, and got to know only a small part of Croatia, in a very superficial way.
- ²²³ Eekman, *Joegoslavië* (Yugoslavia), 143, 144, 175, 186, 200, 211, 218.
- ²²⁴ Constandse, *Joegoslavië* (Yugoslavia), 209, 210.
- ²²³ Constandse, *Josip Broz*, 97.
- ²²⁶ Anstadt, *Yugoslavia*, 50.
- ²²⁷ This is shown, for example, by the critical focus on Yugoslavia in an extensive study produced by the former KVP (Catholic People’s Party) minister, Van den Brink, who was one of the architects of Dutch post-war industrialization: Brink, *Zoeken naar een Heilstaat* (Searching for Utopia), 277-297.

- ²²⁸ *Samenwerking* (Collaboration), 72-75.
- ²²⁹ Broekmeyer, *Arbeidersraad* (Worker's council), 360 onwards.
- ²³⁰ Broekmeyer, *Arbeidersraad of ondernemersstaat* (Worker's council or entrepreneurs' state), 13.
- ²³¹ *Ibidem*, 9; *Interlinks*, 13, 28, 73.
- ²³² Broekmeyer, *Yugoslav Workers' Self-management*, 196, 198.
- ²³³ *Baas in eigen bedrijf* (Being the boss in your own company), 2, 3, 50, 51.
- ²³⁴ Boonzajer Flaes, *Autoriteit en democratie* (Authority and democracy), 268, 269, 285, 287. Studies by leading Yugoslavian intellectuals whose work was translated into Dutch also had a very critical tone. See: Vidakovic, *Het tweede decennium* (The second decade); Markovic, *De revolutionaire weg* (The revolutionary path). A comparative study of the steel industry in the Netherlands and Yugoslavia came to the conclusion that there was actually very little basis for comparison. See: Dekker, *Planning*, 172 onwards.
- ²³⁵ Boonzajer Flaes, *Macht in overvloed* (Power in abundance), 9, 231.
- ²³⁶ Cited by: Brink, *Zoeken naar een heilstaat* (Searching for Utopia), 297.
- ²³⁷ Mitric, *Geheim agent* (Secret agent); Mitric, *Tito 's moordmachine* (Tito's murder machine).
- ²³⁸ Rijk, *Joegoslavië* (Yugoslavia), 7, 54, 55, 58, 68, 100, 143, 185-189.
- ²³⁹ Broekmeyer, *Joegoslavië in crisis* (Yugoslavia in crisis), 12, 14, 17-18, 38, 47, 57, 61, 63-64.
- ²⁴⁰ In the course of an interview, Joris Voorhoeve, the Dutch Minister of Defence during the tragedy of Srebrenica, stated that: 'When I was the director of the Clingendael Institute, I found piles of books in the cellar - all of which predicted the current tensions. That warning was given in 1984 [in fact it was 1985]' See: NRC, 7 March 1995.
- ²⁴¹ Boogaard, *Gewijde grond* (Consecrated ground), 178.
- ²⁴² Dutch or Flemish books on the recent history of Yugoslavia (such as: Stallaerts, *Afscheid* (Parting); Heuvel, *Het verdoemde land* (The cursed country) or Detrez, *De sloop van Joegoslavië* (The break-up of Yugoslavia) were, of course, largely based on secondary, foreign literature. For discussions of a somewhat arbitrary selection of these, see: Naarden, 'Het Joegoslavisch labyrint' (The Yugoslavian Labyrinth); Gow, 'After the flood'; Kent, 'Writing the Yugoslav Wars'.
- ²⁴³ Walsum, *Verder met Nederland* (Onward with the Netherlands), 69-78. Van Walsum, who at the time was the Director-General, Political Affairs at the ministry, put forward the concept of modifying the internal borders of Yugoslavia to comply with the ethnic proportions of the population. However, the European community wanted to retain the existing borders and the ideal of a multi-ethnic society (which had meanwhile become unattainable in Yugoslavia). Nevertheless, it is scarcely conceivable that it would have been possible to create a just and practical division of Yugoslavia along ethnic lines, without armed conflict and only as a result of peaceful pressure by Europe.
- ²⁴⁴ Both, *From Indifference to Entrapment*, 106.
- ²⁴⁵ Wynaendts mistakenly assumed that the red and white chequered flag, the symbol of Tudjman's Croatia, was derived from the coat of arms of Ante Pavelic's fascist Croatia. In fact, it is a traditional Croatian symbol. Wynaendts, *L'engrenage*, 33.
- ²⁴⁶ Peternel, *Voorheen Joegoslavië* (Previously Yugoslavia), 103, 105.
- ²⁴⁷ Anstadt, *Scheuren in de beksenketel* (Cracks in the cauldron), 128.
- ²⁴⁸ The Netherlands-Croatia Foundation gave Dutch people a clear opportunity to express criticism. See: Dosen, *Verlangen naar Vrijheid* (Yearning for freedom).
- ²⁴⁹ Some sources of information on the attitude of Dutchbat are: Honig, *Srebrenica*, 187; Westerman, *Srebrenica*, 14, 121, 123, 225.
- ²⁵⁰ Peternel, *Voorheen Joegoslavië* (Previously Yugoslavia), 97, 105.
- ²⁵¹ Tromp, *Verraad* (Treason), 209.
- ²⁵² Wynaendts, *L'engrenage*, 57.
- ²⁵³ NRC, *Verwoesting* (Devastation), 88.
- ²⁵⁴ Anstadt, *Scheuren in de beksenketel* (Cracks in the cauldron), 38, 42, 43.
- ²⁵⁵ Tromp, *Verraad* (Treason), 209.
- ²⁵⁶ For a critical discussion of this debate, see: Todorova, *Balkans*, 140-160.

- ²⁵⁷ See, for example: Schöpflin, 'Central Europe. Definitions Old and New' in: Schöpflin, *In Search*, 10-15. Or, more recently: Michielsen, 'Rome versus Byzantium'; Garton Ash, 'The Puzzle of Central Europe'. For an opposing view see: Detrez, 'Over de grootspraak van Europa' (About Europe's bragging).
- ²⁵⁸ During the Cold War, views of this kind were common among conservative Central European émigrés in America. See, for example: Wagner, 'Introduction to the History of Central Europe' and Buc, 'Croatia'. For a contemporary and highly detailed account, which is undoubtedly presented as a correct depiction of reality, see: Hupchick, *Culture and History*.
- ²⁵⁹ See: Dittrich, *Uitgestelde bevrijding* (Delayed liberation), a book which emphasizes the similarities between the Catholic and Orthodox countries in Eastern Europe. See also: George Schöpflin, 'Discontinuity in Central and South Eastern Europe' in: Lord, *Central Europe*, 57-66.
- ²⁶⁰ See: Tellegen, *Max Weber*, 33-37.
- ²⁶¹ See Chapter II above, notes 52 and 81. See also: Kann, *Peoples of Habsburg Lands*, 92, 97, 175, 259; Wandycz, *Lands of Poland*, 6-7, 13, 16, 18-19; and Udovicki, *Burn this House*, 17.
- ²⁶² See Dittrich, *Uitgestelde bevrijding* (Delayed liberation), 18.
- ²⁶³ This was the system introduced by the Ottomans, under which the Christian and Jewish religious communities could be autonomously administered by their own spiritual leaders.
- ²⁶⁴ For details of these contacts, see Chapter III.
- ²⁶⁵ See, for example: Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 169 onwards.
- ²⁶⁶ Dittrich, *Uitgestelde bevrijding* (Delayed liberation), 28.
- ²⁶⁷ Rijk, *Yugoslavia*, 14.
- ²⁶⁸ Hroch, 'Central Europe: The Rise and Fall of an Historical Region' in: Lord, *Central Europe*, 30.
- ²⁶⁹ In 1920, Hungary was compelled to relinquish two thirds of its territory, with the result that one in three ethnic Hungarians ended up living outside Hungary proper. These three countries almost completely lost their important Jewish minority during the Second World War. Aside from this, Poland was ethnically cleansed as a result of Stalin's re-drawing of frontiers and the resultant mass migrations. After 1945, the Czechs and Slovaks kicked out their German fellow citizens. In 1993, they agreed on a friendly parting of the ways. This vision can of course be countered by the observation that there were no such national revolts in ethnically pure East Germany. In post-1945 DDR, however, a native national-socialist system was replaced by a totalitarian Communist one. Furthermore, only a minority of the German nation lived in the territory of the DDR.
- ²⁷⁰ In other words, to the time when Poland-Lithuania was the most important political formation in East Europe (long before it was wiped off the map in the 18th century), when the Bohemian-Czech nation had not yet been subjugated by the Habsburgs at the beginning of the 17th century and before most of Hungary was conquered by the Turks at the beginning of the 16th century.
- ²⁷¹ Milgram, *Grenzeloze gehoorzaamheid* (Limitless obedience); Zimbardo, 'The human choice'; Zimbardo, 'On the ethics of intervention'; Mees, *Gewoon gehoorzaam* (Simply obedient).
- ²⁷² See: Hoogerwerf, *Geweld in Nederland* (Violence in the Netherlands), 8, 34, 36. See also: Bolen, *Racistisch geweld* (Racist violence).
- ²⁷³ See works such as: 'Banislav Herak: Ik draaide me om en haalde de trekker over' (Banislav Herak: I turned round and pulled the trigger) in: NRC, *Vernedering* (Devastation), 95.
- ²⁷⁴ Tromp, 'On the Nature of War', 118-131.
- ²⁷⁵ See, for example: I. Torov, 'The Resistance in Serbia' and S. Bala, 'The Opposition in Croatia' in: Udovicki, *Burn this House*, 245-278.
- ²⁷⁶ Udovicki, *Burn this House*, 109, 142, 188, 195, 203.
- ²⁷⁷ Denitch, *Ethnic nationalism*, 74-75, 153; Udovicki, *Burn this House*, 141; Silber, *Death*, 246; Benett, *Yugoslavia 's Collapse*, 164; Judah, *Serbs*, 186-187.
- ²⁷⁸ Milosevic, 'The Media Wars: 1987-1997' in: Udovicki, *Burn this House*, 108-129.
- ²⁷⁹ Verbal communication from Dr M. Broekmeyer to the author. See also: Eekman, *Joegoslavië* (Yugoslavia), 58, 252.
- ²⁸⁰ Cohen, *Broken Bonds*, 49.

²⁸¹ In March 1991 such a plebiscite did take place in the Soviet Union, which had comparable political-economic problems and similar ethnic conditions. Eighty percent of the voters (almost 149 million people) voted and 76.4 percent voted in favour of retaining the union. Nevertheless, on 8 December 1991, the presidents of Russia, the Ukraine and Belarus declared the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Thus the actions of nationalist politicians meant that this state suffered the same fate as Yugoslavia. See, for example Gorbatsjov, *Mijn Rusland* (My Russia), 143.

²⁸² Hall, *Impossible Country*, 9.

²⁸³ Lederer, 'Nationalism', 398. With regard to this problem see also: Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms*.

²⁸⁴ Simic, 'Obstacles to Development', 31. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 321-322.

²⁸⁵ Wachtel, *Making a Nation*, 196.

²⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, 17, 192-197, 229.

²⁸⁷ Van de Port compares their 'barbarian' appearance with the 'wild' poses and 'savage' scenarios of ordinary citizens out of control in the gypsy cafés of Vojvodina. See: Port, *Einde van de wereld* (End of the world), 311. In my view, Denitch's characterization is a better one, when he speaks of a 'bastardized version of the new post-modern youth culture' and about the western influence of skinheads, motorcycle racists, Rambo and ninja films. This all tended to make these young people resemble the Second World War Cetniks in some ways. See: Denitch, *Ethnic nationalism*, 74-75, 178. However, Judah states that Arkan was very insistent that his troops have a neat appearance. See: Judah, *Serbs*, 184-190, 256, 274. See also: Udovicki, *Burn this House*, 141, 150, 207, 213, 288. Bennett, *Collapse*, 164, 165, 183, 211. Glenny, *Fall*, 5, 8, 10, 107-108, 168-170.

²⁸⁸ Hupchick, *Culture and History*, 48.

²⁸⁹ The 'Dinarians' were primarily identified as Serbs, however Cvijic considered Montenegrins, Bosnians, Macedonians, Slovenes and Croats to be Serbs, to a greater or lesser extent. He acknowledged that each population group was able to make its own contribution to a higher form of the Yugoslavian-Dinarian culture. The Serbs were full of idealism, imagination and intuition. They tended to favour self-sacrifice, but were entirely without discipline. The Croats were more highly developed, more self-controlled, and they excelled in art and science. The Slovenes were rational, hard workers, etc. The Bulgarians and Albanians, on the other hand, were non-Dinarian. This distinction was not inspired purely by the concept of Greater Serbia, to which Cvijic subscribed. In comparison to Serbia, Bulgaria circa 1900 was richer and more bourgeois. The Bulgarians had no lengthy revolutionary tradition, nor were the peasants used to handling guns. They regarded themselves as hard working, thrifty, sober and well-organized in comparison to the 'reckless, romantic' Serbs, who lived in accordance with the Haiduk tradition. They also felt that the Romanians and Greeks were 'sly and unreliable', with a much more commercial mentality. Foreigners referred to the Bulgarians as 'The Prussians of the Balkans' or the 'Japanese Slavs'. While there were marked similarities between the lifestyles of Albanian and Montenegrin mountain dwellers, Albania was more poverty-stricken and more primitive than Serbia. Rothschild describes King Zog's regime in the years between the wars as 'a mixture of the styles of a tribal chieftain, a haiduk brigand, an Ottoman pasha and a modernising despot'. This characteristic would also have applied to the rulers of Serbia one hundred years previously, but it did not apply to Zog's contemporary, Alexander Karadjordjevic. See: Rothschild, *East Central Europe*, 331-332, 366; Glenny, *Balkans*, 117-120. For details about Cvijic see: Grmek, *Nettoyage ethnique*, 127-132; Judah, *The Serbs*, 65-66; Wachtel, *Making a Nation*, 92-93.

²⁹⁰ See, for example: 'Breite Natur — heute' in: Mehnert, *Sonjetmensch*, 45 onwards.

²⁹¹ For example, in the work of Gerhard Gesemann during the 1930s and 1940s on 'Dinarier' and 'der montenegrinische Mensch', in which reference is also made to Cvijic. Gesemann emphatically rejected racist views, instead adopting a strictly academic, literary-sociological approach. As a result, during the Nazi period, he was compelled to accept early retirement. Gesemann's work was still valued in academic circles after the war, and his principal work was republished in 1979. See: Gesemann, *Heroische Lebensform*.

²⁹² See, for example: Todorova, *Balkans*, 181.

- ²⁹³ The Serbian director and writer Zivojin Pavlovic wrote about this phenomenon in a novel entitled *Lapot*. See: R. van den Bogaard, 'Wie niet jagen kan, gaat moorden' (Those who can't hunt, murder) in: NRC, *Vernwoesting* (Devastation), 85.
- ²⁹⁴ See, for example: Boehm, *Montegrin Social Organisations*; Halpern, *Serbian Village*; Vucinich, 'serbian Military Tradition' in: Kiraly, *War and Society*; Djordjevic, *Balkan Revolutionary Tradition*; Jelavich, *South Slav Nationalisms*; Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 45-68; Judah, *The Serbs*, 29-48, 81-85, 121-125; Agoston-Nikolova, *Immured Women*; Popovic, *Prince Marko*; Mihajcic, *Battle of Kosovo*; Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha*.
- ²⁹⁵ For details of Dutch responses to Njegos, see above Chapter III. See also note 120.
- ²⁹⁶ Sundhaussen, 'Nation und Nationalstaat'.
- ²⁹⁷ Concerning the history of Finland and Finnish folk poetry, see for example: Mazour, *Finland*; Kirby, *Finland*; Vosschmidt, *Kalevala*; Ahonen, *Kalevala*; *Kalevala 1835-1985*; Naarden, 'Kalevala'; Branch, *Uses of Tradition*.
- ²⁹⁸ The compact and large scale emigration of Russians to the Baltic countries after 1945 was something of an exception in this regard. Even today, this still generates considerable tension.
- ²⁹⁹ This is convincingly demonstrated in documents collected by individuals like Gmrek in *Nettoyage ethnique*.
- ³⁰⁰ Djilas, *Land without Justice*.
- ³⁰¹ Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 61-63. See also: Broekmeyer, *Joegoslavië in crisis* (Yugoslavia in crisis), 27-28.
- ³⁰² Doolaard, *Land van Tito* (Tito's country), 50.
- ³⁰³ Eekman, *Joegoslavië* (Yugoslavia), 58, 252.
- ³⁰⁴ Doder, *Yugoslavs* (Yugoslavs), 37-38.
- ³⁰⁵ The region south of Belgrade and the area in which the first successful rebellions against the Turks took place, at the start of the 19th century.
- ³⁰⁶ Bax, 'Medjugorjes kleine oorlog' (Medjugorje's little war) and Bax, *Medjugorje: Religion, Politics and Violence*.
- ³⁰⁷ Boehm, *Montegrin Social Organization*, 73-75; Halpern, *Serbian village*, 26, 43, 64, 66, 74, 110, 118, 123-124.
- ³⁰⁸ Wachtel, *Making a Nation*, 174.
- ³⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, 156, 174, 176. See also: Bakic, 'Orientalist Variations', 18-20.
- ³¹⁰ Wachtel, *Making a Nation*, 197-220. Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 99-146. Judah, *The Serbs*, 75-80.
- ³¹¹ See: Bakic-Hayden, 'Nesting Orientalisms'; Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*. 257 onwards.
- ³¹² In particular, see: Port, 'It takes a Serb'.
- ³¹³ See above Chapter I.
- ³¹⁴ Glenny, *Balkans*, 241-242.
- ³¹⁵ See, for example: L.S. Stavrianos, 'The Influence of the West on the Balkans' in: Jelavich, *Balkans in Transition*, 184-222.
- ³¹⁶ See: W.S. Vucinich, 'some Aspects of the Ottoman Legacy' in: Jelavich, *Balkans in Transition*, 61-114; Vucinich, *Ottoman Empire*, 120-121.
- ³¹⁷ Duyzings, *Religion and Politics*, 1-36; Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, 26-27; Boehm, *Montenegrin Social Organisations and values*, 87; Halpern, *Serbian Village*, 114; Vucinich, 'Ottoman Legacy', 96; Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia*, 366-376.
- ³¹⁸ Duyzings, *Religion and Politics*, 35-36.
- ³¹⁹ Dittrich, *Uitgestelde bevrijding* (Delayed liberation), 19, 29.
- ³²⁰ Kossmann, 'Volkssouvereiniteit' (Sovereignty of the people), 59.

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