British and Greek Press Reactions to the Disintegration of
Yugoslavia, 1991-1999

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Map 1: The area of the Balkans

[Map taken from World Atlas maps]

Map 2: The Yugoslav Federation

[Map taken from the University of Texas library]

ABSTRACT

This thesis comprises a survey of the reactions of the British and Greek press towards the disintegration of Yugoslavia from 1991 to 1999. It gives a detailed account of press coverage of all the major crises that resulted in the collapse of Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo), and examines the debates and the arguments used by British and Greek newspapers to explain the situation, and to support or condemn the various participants' actions. The introduction details the scope of the survey and the methodology used, and then outlines the patterns and trends revealed by the information gathered. The study deals predominantly with the period 1991-1999. Nevertheless, it was felt appropriate to begin with a resume of the image that the Balkans had held in the British and Greek imagination before that period. Chapter 1 deals with British and Greek mental perceptions of the Balkans from 1850 to 1989. Chapter 2 gives a resume of the reactions of British and Greek press firstly towards the short Ten-Days War between the still-existing Yugoslav Federation and Slovenia and then in relation with the conflict between Serbia and Croatia known as the Croatian War. Chapter 3 discusses how the press saw the dispute between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia over the name of the latter, and the implications that this had, overall, for the Greek stance in Yugoslavia. Chapter 4 details the reactions towards the long and complex Bosnian War (1992-1995), while chapter 5 looks at the reactions to the Kosovo War (1999) between Serbia and NATO. The conclusion then summaries the findings and considers the extent to which the British and Greek press did an effective job reporting the conflicts in former Yugoslavia.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation

EC: European Community

EU: European Union

FYROM: Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

ITN: Independent Television Network

JNA: The Yugoslav Army

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

RUSI: Royal United Services Institute

UN: United Nations

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

USA: United States of America

INTRODUCTION

There was once a country called Yugoslavia, as Sarajevo-born film director Emir Kusturica proclaims in his award-winning elegy *Underground* (1995), and Belgrade was its capital (see map 2, p. ii). But by the end of the twentieth century, Yugoslavia and everything associated with it had started to fade away from popular consciousness, falling more and more into the domain of scholars of the past. Yugoslavia, however, used to mean many things - both good and bad - to different generations. For many of the people that survived the Great War of 1914-1918, for example, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (as Yugoslavia was known until 1929) was an artificial creation born from the ashes of the once powerful Austro-Hungarian empire.[1] It was more or less a version of an enlarged Serbia, masquerading as a multi-national experiment, and it did indeed come very near to collapse during the inter-war years.[2] But the Nazi occupation and the emergence of a strong Communist resistance[3] during the Second World War halted this process and helped to forge a genuine faith in Yugoslavia among many people in the area. After liberation, Marshal Tito's strong rule ensured that the federation would no longer suffer from the inter-ethnic skirmishes of the past. During the Cold War years, Yugoslavia was often presented in positive terms abroad, due to the Communist regime's comparatively liberal policies and its close ties with the West. At the same time, the country's successes in a variety of sports (including football and basketball) transformed it into a household name among sports enthusiasts all over the world. But after Tito died in May 1980, Yugoslavia soon became a byword associated with a Balkan bloodbath. For the educated urban elites that used to feel 'Yugoslavian', Yugoslavia became a version of a lost Balkan *Belle Époque*. But for the emerging nationalists, it was remembered as nothing more than a Communist cage, which had imprisoned the nationalities of the area and their respective aspirations into a monstrous political unit.

This study, however, is not concerned with how the ex-Yugoslavians saw the collapse of their country. It offers instead a close examination of how the print media of two other European countries, Greece and the United Kingdom, viewed its disintegration. Although both countries were and are members of the European

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[1] Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and its Problems 1918-1988* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1988), p. 2.

[2] Sabrina Petra Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Ethnic War* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 38.

[3] Ivan T. Berend, *Decades of Crisis: Central and Eastern Europe before World War II* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), p. 401.

Union, the United Kingdom and Greece have different political traditions and cultures, factors that affected their response to the collapse of former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. Although the publics in both countries have long felt a certain detachment from the notion of 'Europe', Britain and Greece have historically both been active players in the continent's affairs, and have found themselves in the same coalitions in all the major crises since Greece's independence in 1830. Greece is located in the region of Europe normally referred to as the Balkans (see map 1, p. i), and used to have close relations with Yugoslavia, but it has nevertheless traditionally distinguished itself from its Balkan neighbours on the grounds of its distinct Classical heritage. Britain is a former global superpower, with a similarly strong belief in its cultural superiority. Both countries were actively involved in the Balkans in various historical eras, Britain as a powerful outsider, and Greece as a 'peculiar' Balkan state which gradually turned into an outsider too.

It is of course impossible in the course of a thesis such as this to provide comprehensive coverage of the way in which British and Greek public opinion responded to the collapse of Yugoslavia. The chapters that follow therefore take a much narrower focus, examining how the press in Britain and Greece responded to the events of the 1990s, both because such a study is of value in its own right and because it can cast some light on the kind of information that the British and Greek publics received about the break-up of Yugoslavia. The selection of newspapers has been deliberately designed to cover the political spectrum. The newspapers selected on the British side include *The Times*, still widely perceived as representing the voice of the establishment,[4] along with the more liberal (editorially) *Sunday Times*. The *Guardian* has been selected as a serious broadsheet serving a "progressive" readership, whilst the *Daily Mail* has been chosen to provide what can be termed a right-wing populist outlook. The papers selected on the Greek side broadly correspond to those chosen on the British side: the *Kathimerini* is perhaps the closest Greek equivalent to *The Times*, with a distinct Liberal-Conservative stance; the Social-Democratic *Eleftherotypia* (along with its Sunday edition the *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia*) is like the *Guardian* a so-called progressive broadsheet; and the *Apogevmatini* is the closest equivalent to the *Daily Mail*. However, in the context of my research, I decided to make two exceptions in the above plan, as this would serve

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[4] Stephen Koss, *The Rise and Fall of the Political Press in Britain*, 3rd edn. (Chatham: Fontana Press, 1990), p. 1097.

my thesis' purposes best. In the case of the Kosovo War discussed in chapter 5, the *Independent on Sunday* has replaced the *Sunday Times*, in order to give consideration to a newspaper that strongly opposed the Western involvement in Kosovo. The other exception occurs in chapter 3, where the *Makedonia*, a regional newspaper of Thessaloniki, has replaced the *Eleftherotypia*'s Sunday edition, in order to aid the discussion of the crisis initiated by the Macedonian name issue. The translation of the quotes that the study has taken by the above Greek newspapers has not been overly literal. I have instead prefered to emphasise plain English, as this would be less damaging to the linguistic coherence of the text. Regarding the Greek sources as they appear in the footnotes and the bibliography, I have decided to transliterate in Latin alphabet only the names of the authors, of the newspapers, and of the places of publication, and leave the titles of articles and books and the names of the publishers in Greek. This is because I expect the Greek press part of the thesis to be read mostly by Greek scholars (or academics who can read Greek), and in this way it will be easier for them to locate any reference of interest.

Although press coverage of the collapse of Yugoslavia forms the substance of the thesis, some mention also has to be made of the electronic media, in order to illuminate certain aspects of the various newspapers' analysis of key events. In addition, a certain amount of space also has inevitably to be given to coverage of the events themselves - but only as far as they provided the focus of newspaper reports about the whole crisis in the Balkans There is, though, no sustained attempt to examine in detail the policies of the British and Greek governments towards Yugoslavia. It is perhaps worth adding that the thesis deliberately eschews the more extreme contemporary dogmas of postmodernism – in the belief that it is possible to make at least some tentative judgements about how effective the British and Greek media were in actually identifying and analyzing correctly the collapse of former Yugoslavia. This does not of course mean that its framework will propose a return to positivism and the theories of total objectivity. The study recognises that total objectivity is something that can never be achieved but, on the other hand, it does not accept that every version of history is as truthful and as valid as every other. That is why it will remain in a somewhat middle ground, searching not for the absolute historical truth, but for a valid and reliable in terms of research and methodology version of the events.

The thesis is structured around three key themes. The first theme is the growing divergence between the British and Greek press in their reporting of – and attitude to – the crisis in former Yugoslavia. Although it is hard to identify any real differences in the way that British and Greek newspapers reported the war in Slovenia and Croatia in the early 1990s, the situation subsequently changed in the cases of the Bosnian War and the Kosovo War that soon followed. The British press took a critical approach towards Serbia, blaming its government for the carnage in Bosnia and Kosovo, whilst the Greek press took a far more sympathetic view of Belgrade. The second theme that runs through the thesis is that considerations of politics, rather than religion, were largely responsible for the more sympathetic portrayal of Serbia in the Greek press - an approach that calls into question the celebrated 'clash of civilizations' theory put forward by Samuel Huntington. In more specific terms, it will be argued in chapter 3 that the row between Greece and its Western Europeans neighbours over the treatment of the so-called Republic of Macedonia led to a more fundamental conflict of views about the whole question of the disintegration of former Yugoslavia. The final theme - that the thesis will introduce at length in the next chapter - is that the existence of long-standing stereotypes of the Balkans in both Britain and Greece exercised a profound effect on the way which the conflicts in former Yugoslavia were reported during the 1990s.

It is useful, in light of this last theme, to devote some paragraphs to a brief discussion of "stereotypes" and "mental maps". The long-standing perception of the Balkans as a non-Western area inhabited by backward people, with a powerful inclination towards violence, forms what in psychological terms can be named as a stereotype. We can define stereotypes as sets of identities, images or forms which ascribe characteristics to certain people on the basis of their group membership. More specifically, 'they often present homogeneous, extreme and value-laden images that define the place of groups...within a broad social system'.[5] Thus, they are social products that define particular groups in contrast to others.[6] In previous decades, social psychology regarded them as nothing more than erroneous generalisations made by prejudiced individuals. Nowadays, though, psychologists have come to

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[5] S. Alexander Haslam, 'Stereotyping and Social Influence: Foundations of Stereotype Consensus', in *The Social Psychology of Stereotyping and Group Life*, ed. by Russell Spears et. all. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 119-43 (p. 119).

[6] Richard Y. Bourhis, John C. Turner and André Gagnon, 'Interdependence, Social Identity and Discrimination', in *The Social Psychology of Stereotyping and Group Life*, ed. by Russell Spears et. all. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 273-95 (p. 273).

recognise that stereotypes provide subjective meaning to the world and can stand as useful devices facilitating our dealings with a complex environment.[7] Some stereotypes may even have a kernel of truth,[8] although they tend to exaggerate and distort this truth, justifying prejudice and discrimination.[9] Additionally, whilst stereotypes can be quite flexible they remain highly resistant to radical changes.

Closely connected with stereotypes are the ways in which people build up images of other places or, in the language of geography and psychology, the way in which they formulate mental maps. This procedure does not of course refer only to geographical maps and countries. The objective environment can be a very puzzling place. It is impossible to be aware of or absorb all the information signals that the latter transmits about virtually every aspect of existence. Although geography classifies the variety of places that exist in our planet with terms like continents, islands and deserts, such terms are, in reality, extremely relative. As Robin M. Haynes points out, 'a Scottish mountain is a mere molehill in Nepal...and a warm day in England may be too cold for a Brazilian to venture out'. Different cultures also play their part: 'The Kalahari Desert may appear barren and featureless to the European eye, but the Bushmen there know every infrequent bush over vast areas and have names for many hundred of locations'.[10]
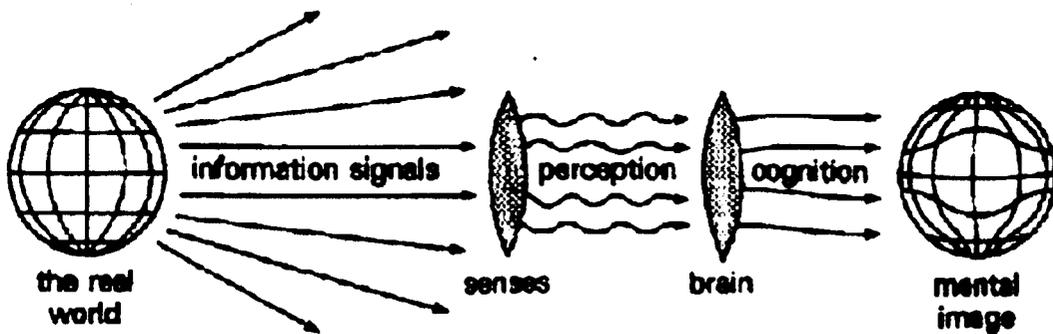
Picture 1: The formulation of a mental image (taken from Robin M. Haynes)

The above figure (picture 1) demonstrates how mental images are formed. Individuals receive the signals of the real world through their senses (perception) and then it is the

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[7] Vincent Yzerbyt, Steve Rocher and Georges Schadron, 'Stereotypes as Explanations: A Subjective Essentialistic View of Group Perception', in *The Social Psychology of Stereotyping and Group Life*, ed. by Russell Spears et. all. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 20-50 (p. 21).
[8] D. T. Campbell, 'Stereotypes and the Perception of Group Differences', *American Psychologist*, Vol. 22 (1967), pp. 817-29 (p. 824).
[9] D. Katz and K. Braly, 'Racial Stereotypes of One Hundred College Students', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol. 28 (1933), pp. 280-90 (p. 289).
[10] Robin M. Haynes, *Geographical Images and Mental Maps* (Basingtoke: Macmillan Education, 1981), p. 1.

brain's function to sort out and organize them in order to fit with personal values and general knowledge (cognition). The distinction between perception and cognition may not be always clear for the lay person. As Haynes argues, 'while we may perceive that it is raining by seeing, hearing and feeling the rain, the process of interpreting the signs that it is about to rain soon is one of cognition'.[11] The end product is the mental image of whatever aspect of the real world the original information signals came from.

The following chapter seeks to 'flesh out' some of these general points by examining how the stereotypes of the Balkans were constructed in the British and Greek imagination from the middle of the 19th Century through to 1990. The stereotypes that developed during these years exercised a profound effect on the way that public opinion in Britain and (to a lesser extent) Greece responded to the conflicts in former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. The second chapter of the thesis then examines Greek and British press' reactions to the short Ten Days War between the Yugoslav Federation and Slovenia (27 June - 7 July 1991), and towards the longer and bloodier war between Serbia and Croatia (September 1991 - January 1992). In both cases, the British and Greek reactions appear to be almost identical, since the two conflicts did not attract extensive public interest, and remained a matter of concern only among the corridors of power. Such a phenomenon clearly casts doubt on Samuel P. Huntington's opinion that '*throughout the Yugoslav wars*' [emphasis mine], the Greek government distanced itself from the measures endorsed by Western members of NATO on account of Greece's shared heritage with its northern neighbour Serbia.[12]

The situation changed, however, in the next phase of the conflict, when the British and Greek press began to view the situation in former Yugoslavia very differently. Many accounts have echoed Huntington in suggesting that a common Orthodox faith explains the Greek sympathy for Serbia visible in the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo. However, as noted earlier, this thesis questions such an analysis. It has in any case been evident throughout the history of the Balkans that Orthodoxy has not constantly influenced politics. For example, the Greeks went to war against fellow Orthodox Bulgaria in 1913, and have never felt any sympathy at all for the

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[12] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London: Touchstone, 1998), p. 284.

fellow Orthodox Slavomacedonians. It is for this reason that the thesis argues that the Greek turn against the West and in favor of Serbia was due above all to the frustration and hostility that developed during the long dispute over the Republic of Macedonia's name (December 1991-October 1995). The issue did not bother the British seriously (the *Guardian* excluded), but for the Greeks it turned out to be the single most important incident in the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation, affecting the approach that the country took to the events in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Kosovo. All the details associated with the coverage of this issue are gathered in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 then deals with the long and complex war between the Serb, Croat and Muslim populations living within Bosnia-Herzegovina, a war in which regular troops from Serbia and Croatia also participated (April 1992 - December 1995). For Britain and the rest of the West, this war was a catalyst in promoting public awareness of the situation in Yugoslavia and arousing hostility towards the Serbs. This awareness played a major part in the decision of the United States (mainly) to bring a halt to the conflict by using the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's firepower against the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Greece, however, the situation was very different. The media covered the Bosnian conflict in a markedly one-sided way, supporting openly the Serbian side and adopting an anti-Western tone. Chapter 5 is dedicated to the Kosovo War, the last of the Yugoslav Wars during the 1990s, and the one that marked the end of the violent ethnic tensions in the Balkan Peninsula (March - June 1999). The Kosovo War was not another conflict between the Yugoslav people, but a war between Serbia and the West over the fate of the province's Albanian majority, brutally persecuted at the time by the Serbs. The war attracted almost unanimous support in Britain, and almost unanimous condemnation in Greece. It created, since the events in Cyprus in 1974, the most serious rift to date between Greeks and the rest of the West.

In discussing all the above issues, the thesis will make use of the published literature on Yugoslavia. There is of course a vast literature on the various crises that erupted in the Balkans during the 1990s, but most of it focuses on questions of diplomacy and security rather than the reporting of the conflict. In Britain, the work most directly relevant to this thesis is a Cambridge Ph.D. by Joseph Sanders Pearson, which examines British press reactions to the onset of war in ex-Yugoslavia. Useful accounts containing material of relevance can also be found in the work of academics like Brendan Simms and James Gow, as well as the writings of journalists like Misha

Glenny, John Simpson, Laura Silber & Allan Little or Jannine Di Giovanni. In the Greek case there is only a handful of relevant accounts, such as a book by journalist Takis Michas on the 'unholy alliance' between Greece and Serbia, and a collective work of academics and journalists on Kosovo edited by Sotiris Dallis. None of these accounts, though, provide the kind of detailed review of the British and Greek press which is at the core of this thesis.

In conclusion, while the British press echoed a strong anti-Serb sentiment throught Yugoslavia's disintegration during the period 1991-1999, the Greek press - after an initial anti-Serb stance - became more and more sympathetic towards Serbia. This thesis suggests that the Macedonian issue helps greatly to understand why the Greek press took the approach that it did and was willing to risk the country's European credentials in order to support Serbia. The thesis also argues that in both Britain and Greece the press chose, in most cases, to take sides in the Yugoslav Wars and present the latter to the public through clear patterns of bias. Chapter 2, for example, will show that the British newspapers lost sight of the grievances of the Serb minority in Croatia, whereas Chapters 4 and 5 will show that the Greek press showed little interest for the plight of persecuted by the Serbs majorities like the Bosnian Muslims or the Kosovo Albanians. Moreover, there was a tendency in both the British and the Greek press to explain things on the basis of long-standing stereotypes about the 'nature' of the Balkans. This means that, in general, the press coverage of the disintegration of Yugoslavia in Britain and Greece was too often oversimplified and tended to ignore the area's complexities.

CHAPTER 1

IMAGINING THE BALKANS: BRITISH AND GREEK PERCEPTIONS OF THE AREA FROM THE 19TH CENTURY UNTIL 1989

HISTORY OF THE TERM 'BALKANS'

The term 'Balkans' has a long pedigree and tends to appear whenever a warlike situation develops in South-Eastern Europe. It has generally been associated with something barbarous and dangerous. The origin of the term dates back to 1490, when the Italian diplomat Filippo Buonaccorsi Callimaco (1437-1496) visited the area and sent a memorandum to the Pope.[13] The author referred to the major mountain chain that crosses Bulgaria (known today as *Stara Planina*) using the Turkish name 'Balkan', which means a chain of woody mountains. Thereafter the name reappeared in the account of the British traveller John B. S. Morritt of Rokeby,[14] and it started to be widely used in preference to the ancient name Haemus, and others such as the Hellenic, Roman or Byzantine Peninsula. By the end of the 19th Century, the term had acquired a range of social and cultural meanings, rather than a purely geographical identity. This is reflected in the uncertainty about what countries should be included under the term Balkans when compared with the more accurate and culturally neutral term South-Eastern Europe. The Encyclopaedia Britannica, for example, includes Slovenia, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Albania, Romania and Moldova.[15] The Encyclopedia Columbia includes most of [*sic*] Slovenia, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Bosnia- Herzegovina, Albania, Macedonia, continental [*sic*] Greece, Bulgaria, European Turkey, and Romania.[16]

The underlying difficulty appears to be that the notion of Europe itself has been defined in large part in cultural terms since, in a strictly geographical sense, Europe is not a separate continent but a peninsula of Asia. As Dr. Paul Coones of the School of Geography in Oxford has argued, 'although Europe is often referred to as a continent (the Continent, indeed), it in fact comprises an intricate assemblage of maritime peninsulas and islands situated on the western flank of an immense landmass, Eurasia'.[17] This makes the determination of the European borders a difficult task, since countries like Russia, Turkey and Cyprus can belong to Europe as

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[13] Damian Duraczek and Kamil Karpeta, 'The Balkan', paper within the course Central Europe as the "Other" and the "Other" in Central Europe' (August 2000), <http://studweb.euv-frankfurt-o.de/~euv-5327/papers/balkan.htm> [accessed 5 November 2001].

[14] John B. S. Moritt of Rokeby, *A Grand Tour: Letters and Journeys 1794-96*, ed. by G. E. Marindin (London: Century, 1985), p. 65.

[15] 'Balkans', <http://www.britannica.com> [accessed 10 November 2001].

[16] 'Balkan Peninsula', 6th edn. (2001), <http://www.encyclopedia.com/articles/01051.html> [accessed 10 November 2001].

[17] Paul Coones, 'The Geographic Myth of a Europe Extending to the Urals', *Guardian* (13 August 1991), p. 16.

well as Asia, both in geographical and in cultural terms. This study will use the name Balkans as an overlapping term for South-Eastern Europe, to include Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia & Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Cyprus. The use of the term will be purely geographical, even though what most concerns the study is perceptions of that region of the European continent.

SECTION 1A: THE BRITISH IMAGES

1.1 Methodology and limitations

The aim of this section is to show how the area of the Balkans that in the 20th Century comprised Yugoslavia has been constructed in the British imagination from the last quarter of the 19th Century through to the death of Tito in 1980. These British images are often based on a distinction between what is perceived as the "West" and what is perceived as an "other". For this reason it is helpful to include them within two different theoretical frameworks: one regarding the antithesis between East and West, which was developed in the controversial work of Samuel P. Huntington, and the other proposed by the defenders of "Balkanism", a theory derived from Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*. The discussion will proceed using a range of other sources, from the 19th Century onwards, to show how the popular image of the Balkans in Britain has emerged and developed in the context of various historical events, focusing particularly on the era of the Eastern Question, the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913, the First World War (1914-1918), the Second World War (1939-1945), and concluding with a short reference to Yugoslavia's place within the Cold War context. The sources include first-hand accounts of British travellers in the area, newspaper articles, politicians' memoirs, historians' accounts, and literary references. The purpose of this necessarily selective study is merely to provide a flavour of the British 'mental map' of the Balkans, and how it has changed over time. It will also indicate some persistent patterns of 'otherness' that, as it will be argued in the following chapters, were often re-used during the 1990s to explain conflicts in the region. Because these patterns first emerged during the era of the Eastern question, this period will be examined in most detail. After the First World War, the focus will shift from the Balkans in general to Yugoslavia in particular. The Greek perspectives of the Balkans will be examined

with a similar methodology, but the focus will be given to different kind of sources and different time periods.

1.2 The Balkans: between West and East

The most recent and influential (as well as controversial) account dealing with the boundaries of East and West has been published by the American scholar Samuel P. Huntington.[18] Huntington argued that, in the post-Cold War era, global politics became multi-polar and multi-civilisational, as the most important distinctions between people ceased to be economic, political or ideological and instead became cultural.[19] He then identified eight major contemporary civilisations (Sinic, Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, Latin American and African) and argued that, although the West is likely to remain dominant, eventually its power will retreat. In this analysis, the Balkan Peninsula is presented by Huntington as an area where three different civilisations (Western, Orthodox and Islamic) are involved in a situation of conflict. Yet, echoing Metternich's dictum that *Östlich von Wien fängt der Orient an* (East of Vienna the Orient begins),[20] he treats it as part of the East. Huntington thereby develops, although with different terms and scope, an idea that was already quite popular in the British thought of the late 19th Century. However, his overall theory presents some problems, the main one being the problematic assumption that civilizations control states and not vice versa.[21] Regarding the Balkans in particular, Huntington does not explain satisfactorily why the area should be treated as "East", instead of being incorporated into a unified Christian civilisation.

Huntington's line of argument, along with the persistent stereotype that treats the Balkans as a non-Western backward region with a particular inclination towards violence, bring us to the theory of Balkanism - a theory that has been introduced recently by scholars themselves of South-Eastern European origin. The term Balkanism was first used by Konrad Bercovici as a description of a particular system of government used by the Austrians in the eastern domains of their Empire,[22] but the present use of this term contained here is based on a comparison with Edward W.

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[18] Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (1998).
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[20] Patrick Leigh Fermor, *A Time of Gifts: On Foot to Constantinople from the Hook of Holland to the Middle Danube* (London: John Murray, 1977), p. 214.
[21] See Fouad Ajami, *The Clash of Civilizations? The Debate - A Foreign Affairs Reader* (New York: Foreign Affairs, 1993).
[22] See Konrad Bercovici, *The Incredible Balkans* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932).

Said's classic study *Orientalism*, and pays no regard to Austro-Hungarian internal policies.

Said, an American-Palestinian professor of Literature, presents the notion of Orient as one of the most recurring images of the "other", a European invention of a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and remarkable experiences.[23] He then argues, echoing Michel Foucault's philosophical reflections on the relation of knowledge to power,[24] that the knowledge of Orient creates the Orient: for example, by showing how Gustave Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman,[25] or how, for the British Prime Minister Arthur James Balfour, knowledge of Egypt *was* Egypt.[26] Sociologist Bryan S. Turner, an expert on Islam and the Middle East, is perhaps the most important critique of Said's theory. During his early career, Turner attempted, unsuccessfully, to create an alternative sociology of the Middle East based on Karl Marx's universalism.[27] Since then, he has focused on the epistemological problems of the Orientalist tradition,[28] suggesting that linking Foucault and politics is controversial, and that Said's concentration on textualism is problematic.[29] However, this dissertation accepts that Said's re-working of Foucault's theories was instrumental in putting the problem of the 'Other' at the top of the Western academic agenda. A more telling criticism in comparison with Turner might be that Said gathered many and different forms of Orientalism in one single tradition.[30] Said focused on how English, French and American scholars approached the Middle East and Arab-dominated North Africa. But he overlooked two important side aspects: that the scholars' approach to areas such as India, China or Persia was not similar, and that the German, Spanish, Portuguese or even Italian brand of Orientalism could not be included within the same tradition.

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[23] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 1.

[24] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. by Colin Gordon and translated by Colin Gordon *et all.* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980). See also *The Order of Things* (London: Routledge, 2001), and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[25] Said, p. 6.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 32.

[27] Bryan S. Turner, *Marx and the End of Orientalism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974).

[28] Bryan S. Turner, 'From Orientalism to Global Sociology', *Sociology*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (1989), pp. 629-38. See also 'Orientalism and the Problem of Civic Society in Islam', in *Orientalism, Islam and Islamists*, ed. by Asaf Hussain, Robert Olson and Jamil Qureshi (Brattleboro, VT: Amana Books, 1984), pp. 23-42.

[29] Bryan S. Turner, *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (London: Routledge, 1994). See also his 'Edward Said and the Exilic Ethic: On Being Out of Place', *Theory, Culture and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 6 (2000), pp. 125-9.

[30] For more details see Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (London: Cornell University Press, 1991).

The influence of Said can be seen in writers like the Greek scholar Elli Skopetea, who has described the Balkans as the west of the east,[31] or the Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova of the University of Florida, who argues that Balkanism can be presented as more than merely a variation of Orientalism.[32] For Todorova,

"Oriental" was most often employed to stand for filth, passivity, unreliability, misogyny, propensity for intrigue, insincerity, opportunism, laziness, superstitiousness, lethargy, sluggishness, inefficiency, incompetent bureaucracy. " Balkan", while overlapping with "Oriental", had additional characteristics as cruelty, boorishness, instability, and unpredictability. Both categories were used against the concept of Europe symbolizing cleanliness, order, self-control, strength of character, sense of law, justice, efficient administration.[33]

Some other proponents of Balkanism argue that Orientalism 'can be applied within Europe itself, distinguishing between Europe "proper" and those parts of the continent that were under Ottoman (hence Oriental) rule', with the result that the Balkans have represented a cultural and religious 'Other' since the Byzantine times.[34] What unifies the accounts of these writers is an attempt to present the Balkans as the "other" inside Europe, an area that although geographically European, is in cultural terms a land that has remained in medieval conditions and offers 'the appeal of medieval knighthood, of arms and plots'.[35] Examples of this perception can be found among some classic English novels of the 19th Century, such as Anthony Hope's *The Prisoner of Zenda* (1893), or Bram Stoker's Gothic masterpiece *Dracula* (1897), where the 15th Century Prince of Wallachia Vlad Tepes was transformed into the vampire archetype, Count Dracula.[36] According to Todorova, and in sharp contrast with Huntington's views, only Greece could be rescued 'from the ignoble company of the other Balkan states'due to its Classical heritage.[37] To summarize, the Balkanist accounts propose that the Balkan Peninsula held the image of a crossroads between East and West in the Western imagination. As the area was usually reported to the

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[31] Elli Skopetea, *Η Δύση της Ανατολής: Εικόνες Από το Τέλος της Οθωμανικής Αυτοκρατορίας* (Athens: Γνώση, 1992), p. 98.
[32] Maria Todorova, 'The Balkans: From Discovery to Invention', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 453-82.
[33] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 119.
[34] Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert Hayden, 'Orientalist Variations on the Theme "Balkans": Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Spring 1992), pp. 1-15 (p. 3). See also Milica Bakić-Hayden, 'Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (Winter 1995), pp. 917-31.
[35] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, p. 14.
[36] For more details, see Vesna Goldsworthy, *Inventing Ruritania: The Imperialism of Imagination* (London: Yale University Press, 1998).
[37] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, p. 135.

outside world only in times of terror and trouble, thereby reinforcing an already existing stereotype of the Balkans as a violent place.[38]

1.3 British travellers, Bulgarian atrocities and the 'Levant'

It is now time to put a little more historical flesh on this argument, beginning with a discussion of how the Balkans was constructed in the late 19th century British imagination. The end of the 19th Century witnessed a significant change in British foreign policy towards the Balkans, as the area started to loose its traditional value as a bulwark against Russian imperialism and panslavism. This can be seen in the celebrated parliamentary debates between the Conservative Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, who 'stubbornly upheld the Palmerstonian doctrine of Turkish independence and integrity', and William Ewart Gladstone, who 'saw that the future lay with the nations whom Ottoman tyranny had so long submerged'.[39] A considerable number of Britons actually travelled in the region in the late 19th century and their accounts undoubtedly helped to influence the views of many of their fellow compatriots. After all, as Todorova has remarked, travel literature was 'the preferred reading after novels over several centuries'.[40]

How did the accounts of the British travellers in the Balkans influence the creation of stereotyped images of the area in Britain during that time? Barbara Jelavich has written a fascinating article that can be extremely useful in dealing with their writings,[41] while Anthony Cross's brilliant anthology of fifty-four authors who wrote for Russia over a period of three hundred years can also help us to reflect more about the whole subject.[42] The British traveller was a literate representative of a flourishing country who was arriving in one of the most backward European areas. In general, 'he followed the pattern of the newspaper correspondent. He was principally interested in and faithfully reported what struck him most forcibly in his travels'.[43] British travellers in the Balkans were often impressed by the physical beauties of the

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[38] Theodore I. Geshkof, *Balkan Union: A Road to Peace in Southeastern Europe* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), p. xi.

[39] Robert W. Seton-Watson, *Disraeli, Gladstone and the Eastern Question: A Study in Diplomacy and Party Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1935), pp. 552 and 570 respectively.

[40] Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, p. 89.

[41] Barbara Jelavich, 'The British Traveller in the Balkans: The Abuses of Ottoman Administration in the Slavonic Provinces', *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 33, No. 81 (June 1955), pp. 396-413.

[42] Anthony Cross, *Russia Under Western Eyes 1517 - 1825* (London: Elek Books, 1971).

[43] Jelavich, p. 412.

landscape, but provided a gloomy picture of life, struck by the dirtiness and the decay of the Ottoman political and economic system.[44] What impressed them most forcefully was the position of the Christian population within the Moslem Empire, a theme that characterised their works, and 'influenced British opinion and ultimately the actions of the government'.[45] Few writers recognised that, this inferior legal status excluded, the position of the Christian population in the Ottoman Empire was not in reality that bad.[46] The grievances of the Christian Slavs or Greeks were in fact often results of a corrupt local administration, rather than a conscious attempt by the ruling Islamic elites of Constantinople to suppress and eliminate them.

On the accuracy of the assumptions of the British travellers, Jelavich noted that - because of cultural and linguistic barriers - most travellers were unable to obtain a deeper understanding of the people. The classical past of Greece, along with the philhellenic literature and the romantic death of Lord Byron in the Greek War of Independence, generally ensured a favourable treatment for the country. All Moslems, of whatever nationality, were regarded as Turks.[47] The Slavic population was in general treated with indifference. For example, if the British thought of the Croats at all, which they seldom did, it was as the elite troops of the Austrian occupation of Northern Italy, described by Anthony Trollope during his stay in Venice in 1866.[48] As Anthony Cross argued, the first travellers to a particular region 'dictated certain procedures, canonised certain topics for discussion, certain towns and areas to be visited'.[49] This means that a form of plagiarism was quite common, whilst the audiences tended to perceive the similarities as proofs which confirmed images and notions that were already popular. At a psychological level, these accounts, regardless of their correspondence to reality, helped the literate public in Britain to make a transition from the strange to the familiar, reinforcing what was generally accepted as true. They also had a major political importance, arousing awareness and a sense of responsibility for the fate of the Christian population among the British public.

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[44] See Mary Adelaide Walker, *Through Macedonia to the Albanian Lakes* (London: [n. pub.]1864). See also Asli Cirakman, From the Terror of the World to the Sick Man of Europe: European Images of Ottoman Empire and Society from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth (New York: Peter Long, 2002).

[45] Jelavich, p. 397.

[46] See for example Warington W. Smyth, *A Year with the Turks, or, Sketches of Travel in the European and Asiatic Dominations of the Sultan* (London: [n. pub.] 1854). For an academic account, see Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire 1700-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), especially the chapter titled «Nationalism and the nineteenth-century Ottoman Middle East».

[47] See George Frederick Abbott, *The Tale of a Tour in Macedonia* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), p. 121.

[48] See Anthony Trollope, *Lotta Schmidt and Other Short Stories* (London, [n.pub], 1867).

[49] Cross, p. 38.

It is useful looking at this point to see how public opinion in Britain reacted to the news of the Turkish atrocities against the Bulgarian population in the 1870s. These events happened shortly after the publication of a popular traveller's account, which strongly advocated the emancipation of the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire.[50] The British public first learned about the bloody suppression of the Bulgarian insurrection from three articles published in the *Daily News*, the leading Liberal organ, on 8, 23 and 30 June 1876. Intriguingly, although *The Times*'s correspondent in Constantinople also sent similar accounts, his editor did not print them.[51] Such a line reflected the official policy of the Disraeli government, which was generally sympathetic towards the Turkish side. The Liberal opposition, however, began questioning what had happened, and soon the Bulgarian atrocities developed into a burning issue, as thousands of people rallied in public demonstrations of sympathy for the Bulgarians.[52] Even *The Times* abandoned gradually its initial line and began launching attacks against the government:

Had it not been for our protection, the Ottoman Empire would long since have been contracted to narrower limits, and perhaps have been altogether withdrawn from Europe. But if we keep the Turk on his throne, and say that no man shall injure him, we cannot help accepting the responsibility of the use he makes of his licence.[53]

Disraeli himself demonstrated an astounding ignorance of Balkan geography,[54] and relied heavily on information provided by Turcophil diplomats, which soon proved so embarrassingly inaccurate that the Queen herself asked for the removal of Sir Henry Elliot from his post at the Porte. A *Punch* cartoon (see picture 2) shows the expectations of the public and the attitude of Disraeli. The demonstrations helped to contribute to an important, if temporary, shift in the official foreign policy towards the Ottoman Empire. Support for Gladstone was provided by a disparate coalition of Methodists, Welsh, Liberals, Puseyites, Newmanites and Wisemanites Catholics. The opposition usually consisted of Conservatives, elements of the Church of England, the English Roman Catholic Curch, the Jewish community and the Irish.[55]

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[50] See Georgina Mary Muir Mackenzie and Adelina Paulina Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe* [1876], 2 Vols., 2nd edn. (London: Daldy, Isbister & Co, 1877).

[51] Richard Millman, *Britain and the Eastern Question 1875-1878* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp.127-28.

[52] There is a report for 25.000 people at Nastell Priory, *The Times* (28 September 1876), p. 5.

[53] Editorial, *The Times* (11 August 1876), p. 9.

[54] Millman, p. 138.

[55] See Richard Shannon, *Gladstone and the Bulgarian Agitation, 1876* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1975).

NEUTRALITY UNDER DIFFICULTIES

DIZZY. " Bulgarian Atrocities ! I can't find them in the 'Official Reports'!!!"

Picture 2: Neutrality under difficulties (by Sir John Tenniel, 1876)

Reports of the *Methodist Recorder*, the leading organ of the Wesleyan Methodists, can be used to illustrate the broader non-comformist reaction to the Bulgarian atrocities. The religious press in general played an influential role in shaping public opinion in the final quarter of the 19th Century. Its attention had been attracted to the region earlier in the same year, when an insurrection of the Christian population in Bosnia-Herzegovina had been suppressed with great cruelty. Official information provided by the Marquis of Hartington claimed that the rebel provinces 'were not Christian'.[56] But this image contradicted the account of the British traveller in Bosnia-Herzegovina Arthur J. Evans,[57] and the reports of William J. Stillman,

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[56] Seton-Watson, p. 29.

[57] Arthur J. Evans, *Through Bosnia and Herzegovina on Foot During the Insurrection, August and September 1875* (London: Longman, 1877).

correspondent for *The Times*.[58] The *Methodist Recorder* did not support the insurrection, on the grounds that

the people of these provinces may think it is for liberty and Christianity that they have risen against Turkey's predominance, but the insurrection has been really fomented and fed by Russian intrigue...Eleven or twelve millions of Christians are ruled by four or five millions of Mussulmans. Now, if Turkey could be left alone by Russian diplomacy, and be subjected only to the wiser influence of the Western nations, things might adjust themselves in due time.[59]

This quotation clearly reflects concern about the suppression of the Christian population within the Ottoman Empire, while at the same time showing anxiety that much of the troubles were created by Russia's 'unwise' behaviour in the area, echoing a note of traditional Russophobia.[60]

The Russophobic attitude of the *Methodist Recorder* faded as the first news of the Bulgarian atrocities reached Britain: 'It is quite clear', noted the editor of the newspaper on 21 July 1876, 'that England will not again go to war to secure the integrity of the Turkish Empire. The Ottoman has had a fair chance, and has failed to profit by it. The years have been used only to fill up the measure of despotic intolerance and immobility'.[61] As the issue reached the Parliament, more space was given to the coverage of the events, and the government's attitude was heavily attacked, on the grounds that Britain should demonstrate actively its interest for the fellow Christians of the Balkans:

We felt some surprise that the tale of horror which thrilled the country roused no sympathy in Ministerial benches...Yet even this pitiful chronicle was powerless to touch any chord of sympathy in Mr. Disraeli...Duties to civilisation and humanity, bonds of Christian sympathy with the fellow-professors of our faith, demanded some interference on higher grounds...It was a time for action, but Mr. Disraeli showed no sign.[62]

The Porte was denounced as 'the most corrupt and unjust and oppressive Government under the sun' and the events in the region were characterised by the *Methodist Recorder* as 'hideous atrocities, unparalleled in the world's history for brutality and wickedness'. The Christian Slavs were proclaimed as 'the only elements of intelligence and activity and progressiveness' in the Ottoman Empire.[63] A little later,

[58] William J. Stillman, *Herzegovina and the Late Uprising* (London: Longman, 1877).
[59] *Methodist Recorder*, 'Turkish Affairs', Vol. XVI, No. 873, 16 June 1876, p. 345.
[60] See John Gleason Howes, *The Genesis of Russophobia in Great Britain: A Study of Interaction of Policy and Opinion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950).
[61] *Methodist Recorder*, 'Eastern Affairs', Vol. XVI, No. 878, p. 407.
[62] *Methodist Recorder*, 'The War Horrors', Vol. XVI, No. 884, 11 August 1876, pp. 480-81.
[63] *Methodist Recorder*, 'The Elevation of Mr. Disraeli to the Peerage', Vol. XVI, No. 887, 25 August 1876, p. 507.

the paper stated a clearer thesis about what exactly should be done, arguing that 'the time has come when Turkish rule should be swept out of Europe'.[64]

Another interesting feature that comes across from the numerous travellers' accounts and the history books is the perception of the Balkans as part of the Levant,[65] a bridge between the West and the East, an idea that brings us back to the earlier Orientalism-Balkanism discussion. The origin of the name Levant comes from the Italian language and has the meaning of east. The term was used since the 16th Century as a collective name for the countries and islands of the eastern shore of the Mediterranean from Egypt to Turkey. As far as the official British treatment of the Balkans is concerned, the area had been considered as part of the Levant since at least 1592, when the merging of the Turkey and Venice Companies created the monopoly of Levant Company.[66] Its agents often acted as British imperial surveyors, and it was under the auspices of the Levant Company that Richard Kemple was appointed as the first British consul in Thessaloniki (1715).
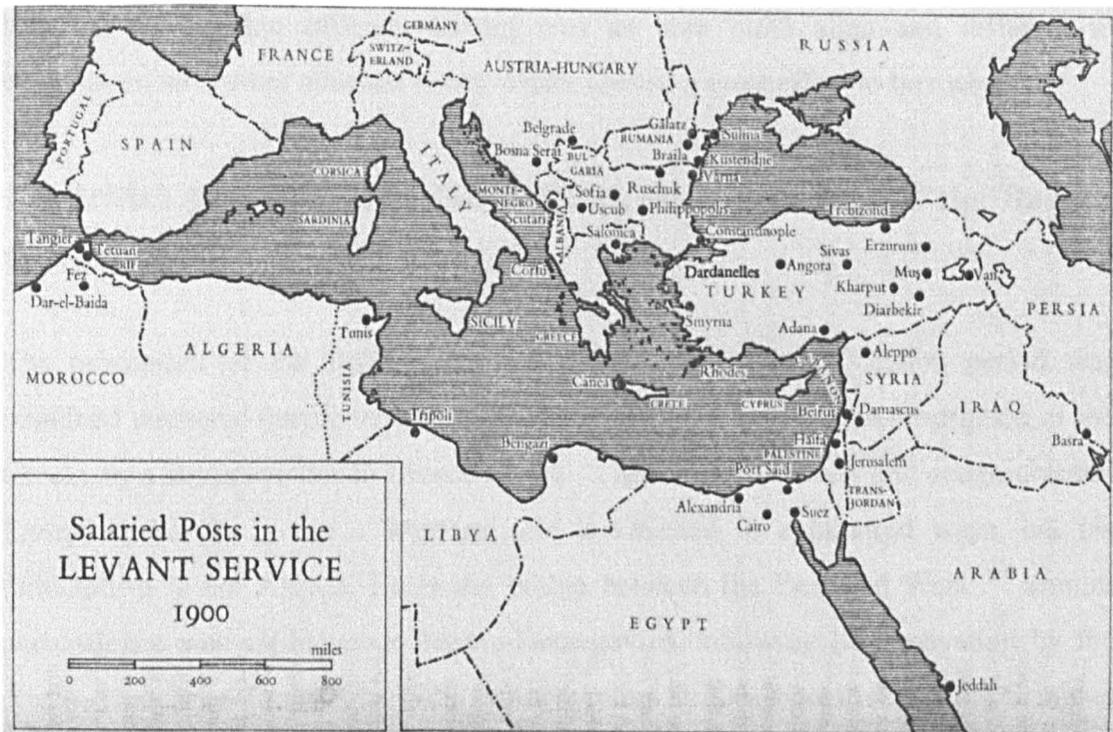
Map 3: The Levant Service (taken from David C. M. Platt, 1977)

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[64] *Methodist Recorder*, 'The Atrocities in Bulgaria', Vol. XVI, No. 888, 1 September 1876, p. 530.

[65] Seton-Watson, p. 17. See also W. N. Medlicott, 'The Near Eastern Crisis of 1875-78 Reconsidered', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January 1971), pp. 105-9.

[66] For more see Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1964) and Mortimer Epstein, *The Early History of the Levant Company* (London: George Routledge Sons, 1908).

The jurisdiction of the Consulate passed to the Foreign Office in 1825, which created a special institution called the Consular Service of the Levant. The Levantine diplomats rotated exclusively between London and the countries of the Levant. As Alexander Casella argued, 'they became the ultimate area specialists, the prototype of the scholar-diplomat who combined experience with a sensitivity for their area which reached far beyond factual analyses'.[67] A map of the Levant Consul posts (see map 3, previous page), taken from David C. M. Platt's informative account, clearly demonstrates that the Balkans continued to form part of the Levant: the consulates of Sofia, Belgrade, or Galati (in present-day Romania), are grouped together with the consulates of Aleppo (nowadays Syria), Cairo, Tunis or Tangier. Thus, for the British Foreign Office, and presumably for the political establishment and the literate public as well, the Balkans was an area that had more things in common with Syria and Tunisia than with 'Europe'. Platt notes that the Levantine consuls formed a kind of an 'elite', especially in terms of language training and selection, a detail which suggests that for the London officials Levant was an area quite alien and different in comparison with other consular posts, which needed a great effort to be mastered.[68]

1.4 British perceptions of the Balkans during the era of the Balkan Wars

The perception of the Balkans formed during the Eastern Question period was sustained unaltered during the first years of the 20th Century, as this description of the Greeks by a British visitor to Greece shows: 'The Greek is racially and geographically European, but he is not a Western...He is Oriental in a hundred ways, but his Orientalism is not Asiatic. He is the bridge between the East and West'.[69] Similar ambivalence was visible over Bosnia-Herzegovina following its annexation by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1908 an anonymous British journalist visiting Sarajevo wrote that the city's present condition

shows what can be done when the Asiatic rule of the Turk is replaced by a strong European administration. Mitrovitza, Novi Bazar, Sienitza, Priepalie, Plevlie...are typical Turkish country towns – filthy, slovenly, uncared for, ungoverned, and giving no indication of modern progress. Sarajevo, with its fine public buildings, cleanly bazaars, and sanitary streets, stands out in striking contrast.[70]

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[67] *Asian Times*, 'Intelligent Reform of U.S. Intelligence' (15 January 2003), p. 1.
[68] David C. M. Platt, *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825* (London: Longman, 1971), p. 128.
[69] Z. Duckett Ferriman, *Home Life in Hellas: Greece and the Greeks* (London: Mills & Boon, 1910), p. 132.
[70] *The Times* (8 October 1908), p. 4.

As for the rest of the Balkans, it remained an area where, according to Harry De Windt, life was valued almost as cheaply as in China and Japan.[71] With the First Balkan War in 1912, when a coalition between Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro forced the Ottomans to abandon almost every part of European soil in their possession, the imaginary borders of the Levant were pushed further to the East. The term South-Eastern Europe slowly began to emerge, while the term Near East gradually disappeared. It seems that as long as the Turks were the governors of the Balkans, this part of Europe was seen as belonging in Asia, the "Orient". When the Christian states emerged as dominant powers in the area, the perception changed. The 'European' borderline began shifting towards the area that today we recognise as the Middle East. This provides an excellent case of a 'shifting paradigm', as Thomas S. Kuhn has described it in his classic study *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.[72] For Kuhn, the scientific advancement is not evolutionary, but rather a 'series of peaceful interludes punctuated by intellectually violent revolutions'. As those revolutions occur, one conceptual image is replaced by another.

When the First Balkan War started in 1912, *The Times* presented the Balkans as a huge battlefield, and wondered 'who was to undertake the task and repress five nations armed to the teeth, thirsting for blood, and inflamed by the memories of centuries of animosity?' Furthermore, the inhabitants of the Balkans were different from and inferior to the inhabitants of the West:

We are gazing today upon peoples a large proportion of who have their racial origins in roots very different from those of more western nations. Centuries of repression have made their lines of evolution very unlikely our own. Their hatreds are deeper, the wrongs they have suffered at each other's hands more grievous, the instinct to fight when strong enough more instant in expression. [73]

But, despite such characterizations, the Balkan people were still seen as part of Europe, and the war was nothing more than 'a further attempt of the part of the peoples of South-Eastern Europe to fling back to Asia those influences of nomadism which for five centuries have hampered, and often arrested, their development'. Thus, from the editor's point of view, the Balkan people were Europeans, but Europeans of

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[71] Harry De Windt, *Through Savage Europe: Being the Narrative of a Journey, Undertaken as Special Correspondent of the "Westminster Gazette", Throughout the Balkan States and European Russia* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), p. 15.
[72] Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd edn. (London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 111-135.
[73] Editorial, *The Times* (18 October 1912), p. 7.

a different quality, who were struggling to 'clean' the Asian influences that made them so different.

It might be expected that someone who writes about the area with such a certainty must be familiar with it. This, however, does not seem to have been the case. The correspondent of *The Times* in the Balkans had unrealistic expectations of the area and was surprised by the presence of modern cars and khaki uniforms in Podgoritsa.[74] He was also amazed to find that Bulgaria was full of oxen and buffaloes.[75] For the editor of *The Times*, Greece was the country in that region that gained most admiration, being recognised as 'a respectful rank at the present state of European affairs'.[76] On the other hand, Serbia's aims were described as practically identical with those of Russia, i.e. being of a Panslavistic nature,[77] while the Montenegrins 'spoiled for a fight with their yatagans', and the Albanian clans became symbols of a wild independence.[78] As the war was portrayed in terms of Christianity vs Islam and Europe vs Asia, it is not surprising that its end found *The Times* on the side of these 'backward' Europeans:

The year 1912, which witnessed the extinction of Asiatic rule in Europe, will ever be memorable in the history of modern civilisation...The Gordian knot has been cut by the Christian races of the Balkan Peninsula; the nightmare which brooded over Europe for more than a century has vanished; and an end has been put to a secular régime of tyranny and oppression.[79]

But, at the same time, there was also a warning for the future:

It remains to be seen whether they will emerge from the present crisis as a powerful Confederation, commanding the respect of the civilised world, or relapse once more into the barbarous feuds of medieval times, which opened the gates of Europe to the Ottoman invaders.[80]

The Balkan people had achieved the praise of throwing the 'uncivilised' Islam out of Europe, but they were not yet part of the 'civilised' world.

The Second Balkan War broke out because Bulgaria was not satisfied with the division of Macedonia. King Ferdinand ordered in June 1913 the Bulgarian army to make a surprise attack on the Greek and Serb troops stationed in Macedonia. Romania, with the right of the guarantor of the status quo given to it by the Treaty of London (which ended the First Balkan War) also participated, supporting the Greeks,

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[74] *The Times*, 'Montenegrin Contrasts: Scenes in Podgoritsa' (29 October 1912), p. 6.
[75] *The Times*, 'Bulgaria in Arms: National Service and Sacrifice' (13 November 1912), p. 9.
[76] Editorial, *The Times* (19 March 1913), p. 7.
[77] *The Times*, 'The Balkan League IV: The Arrangement with Serbia' (11 June 1913), p. 7.
[78] *The Times*, 'The Balkan League V: Last Lines in the Chain of Alliance' (13 June 1913), p. 5. See also Joyce Cary, *Memoir of the Bobotes* (London: Michael Joseph, 1964).
[79] *The Times*, 'The Balkan League I: History of a Memorable Alliance' (4 June 1913), p. 9.
[80] *The Times*, 'The Balkan League VI: Present Rights and Future Duties' (16 June 1913), p. 7.

the Serbs and their Montenegrin allies. Turkey also attacked Bulgaria, in a desperate effort to regain some territories lost to it during the First Balkan War. At the time, Macedonia was such a mixture of people and cultures that anyone familiar with the French cuisine will understand why French chefs have named their famous fruit salad *Macédoine de Fruits*.[81] When a conference in London failed to solve the border problems between the former allies, *The Times* reported that they had thrown away a golden opportunity to settle the crisis 'in the tranquil atmosphere of a friendly capital under the moderating influence of the well-disposed Powers', implying that the atmosphere within the Balkans could by no means be moderate and tranquil.[82] Greece was again seen as the most 'civilised' and moderate nation, while the Bulgarians were directly accused of being responsible for the war:

Compromise has been a word unknown to Bulgarian diplomatists...instead of prudence there was imprudence, and in place of fair dealing there was the deliberate purpose of placing Bulgaria by force of arms in possession of the contested districts of Macedonia.[83]

The newspaper concluded its reportage with phrases that justify the assumption, made by the Balkanists, that the Second Balkan War was the critical point when the present stereotype of a violent and dangerous area was coined. The war

scandalous in its origin and inglorious in its conclusion...was fought out with a savagery to which it would be difficult to find a parallel even in the wars of the Middle Ages. The veneer of civilization in South-Eastern Europe is but slight...The Christian races of South-Eastern Europe are only such as 500 years of Asiatic tyranny have made them.[84]

From this point onwards, the Balkans would remain in the British imagination as an '*opéra bouffe* written in blood'.[85]

1.5 British images of the Balkans during the era of the Two World Wars and the Cold War (1914-1980)

Almost a year after the end of the Second Balkan War, the Balkan region returned to the British imagination as a place of violence and death, following the murder of the heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife in

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[81] The complex ethnic composition of the Ottoman province of Macedonia is discussed more fully in chapter 3.
[82] *The Times*, 'The Second Balkan War I: Causes of the Conflict' (23 October 1913), p. 7.
[83] *The Times*, 'The Bulgarian Disasters: Policy and Strategy' (23 July 1913), p. 7.
[84] *The Times*, 'The Second Balkan War IV: Results and Prospects of the Future' (9 December 1913), p. 7.
[85] Mary Edith Durham, *Twenty Years of Balkan Tangle* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1920), p. 53.

Sarajevo by a Serbian nationalist student.[86] As the First World War started, Britain showed a new strategic interest in the Balkans, in the context of a French plan to counter-attack Austria-Hungary from its southern borders. The government of Herbert Asquith began envisaging a Balkan confederation embracing Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. Asquith relied heavily on information provided by the Liberal MPs Noel and Charles Buxton, who embarked upon semi-official missions to the Balkans before and during the First World War.[87] The Buxtons showed an astonishing lack of understanding of local politics, believed that the major obstacle to a Balkan bloc had been removed by the death of King Carol of Romania (October 1914), and proposed a plan in which the key role belonged to Bulgaria. When the latter entered the war on the side of the Central Powers (October 1915), British policy in the Balkans faced failure, which was in part responsible for leading Britain to follow France in the catastrophic Salonica campaign of 1915. In general, policy-making in London suffered from lack of basic information about the area. When in 1915 Lloyd George called for an up-to-date map of the Balkans, the War Office supplied one dating before the first Balkan War of 1912,[88] and even in 1918 Field-Marshall Sir Henry Wilson remembers that he found Lloyd George discussing Balkan strategy using a small hand-atlas of Europe.[89]

Although a number of Britons went to the region as soldiers and as nurses,[90] their accounts did nothing to alter the dominant British image of the Balkans. Among the various memoirs, particular reference should be made to the account of Leland Buxton, a man who fought in the area, because it illustrates vividly the various stereotypes that were enhanced by this experience. Buxton describes the Balkan states as 'semi-civilised', the Greeks as a race possessing 'astonishing cleverness', the Bulgarians as 'the Scotch of the Balkans', and the Serbs as the Irish of the area - 'a particularly attractive race, simple and homely, gay and light-hearted, exuberant and passionate, sentimental and poetical'.[91] In a book dated from 1918, Robert George

[86] See Mary Edith Durham, *The Sarajevo Crime [i.e. The Murder of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand]* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1925).

[87] Thomas P. Conwell-Evans (ed.), *Foreign Policy from a Back Bench 1904-1918: A Study Based on the Papers of Lord Noel-Buxton etc.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1932).

[88] David Dutton, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Britain and France in the Balkans in the First World War* (London: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1998), p. 187.

[89] Sir Charles Edward Callwell (ed.), *Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: His Life and Diaries*, 2 Vols. (London, Cassell, 1927), Vol. 2, p. 132.

[90] See Dorothy Anderson, *The Balkan Volunteers* (London: Hutchinson, 1968) and Monica Knipper, *The Quality of Mercy: Women at War, Serbia 1915-18* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1980).

[91] Leland Buxton, *The Black Sheep of the Balkans*, with an introduction by Aubrey Herbert (London: Nisbet, 1920), p. ix., p. 84, p. 169.

Dalrymple Laffan also argued that the Serbs represented an outpost of white civilization in a non-Western world, facing perpetual danger from various barbarian threats, most notably the Islamic one.[92] Furthermore, there is a description of the Albanians by the Conservative MP Aubrey Herbert as people 'armed with the weapons of the Middle Ages, divided by religion, and united only in their individual love of freedom'.[93]

During the interwar years the dominant stereotypes were developed mainly in literature. Olivia Manning, living at the time in Bucharest with her husband, portrayed the start of the Second World War through the eyes of a couple living on the edge of the onslaught in her celebrated sequence of novels *The Balkan Trilogy* (1960-1965). Another example is Agatha Christie's *The Secret of Chimneys* (1925), which took place in the imaginery Balkan Kingdom of Herzoslovakia, where the hobby of the people was the assassination of Kings. But the single most influential account on the British 'mental map' of the Balkans was provided by Dame Rebecca West, who travelled in Yugoslavia a few years before World War II. West admitted that the only thing she knew about the Balkans before her travel was violence.[94] Her account had an honest pro-Serbian tone, and gave a vivid picture of the internal troubles of Yugoslavia.

The creation of Yugoslavia was a direct result of the First World War. It came into existence in December 1918 with the name Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, as a union of the formerly independent kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro with the territories of Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, which had belonged to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire prior to 1914. As Serbia was the dominant power behind the unification movement, the new state was led by the Serbian royal family. But the Croats, led by Stjepan Radić, demanded autonomy. When Radić was murdered inside the parliament building in Belgrade in 1928, the Croats responded by proclaiming a separate parliament at Zagreb. King Alexander was left with few choices. In 1929 he proclaimed a royal dictatorship, dissolved the parliament, and changed the state's name to Yugoslavia. Officially the dictatorship ended in 1931, but the murder of the King at Marseilles in 1934 was a sign that the internal problems with the nationalists had not been solved.

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[92] See Robert George Dalrymple Laffan, *The Guardians of the Gates: Historical Lectures on the Serbs* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918).
[93] Laffan, p. 31.
[94] Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: The Record of a Journey through Yugoslavia in 1937*, 2 Vols. (London: Macmillan, 1942), Vol. 1, p. 23.

Rebecca West was not an uninformed visitor in Yugoslavia. She was ready to confront the opinion of her guide in Bosnia that the Muslims of Herzegovina were Turks and not Slavs,[95] but in the end she helped to enhance the stereotypes of an area in turmoil. Yugoslavia for her was 'a new country that has to make its body and soul', and it cannot be doubted that 'a Greater Serbia would have been a far more convenient entity'. Although she admitted that 'few Englishmen understood Balkan conditions', West acknowledged that 'I could understand why English diplomats...hated being en poste among the Balkan peoples.[96] The familiar image of the Balkans as a bridge between the West and the Orient, discussed above in the context of Balkanism, appears in the author's description of Sarajevo as 'a Moslem, but not a Turkish town: a fantasia on Oriental themes worked out by a Slav population'. Her description of Albanians is decidedly insulting: 'No Westerner ever sees an Albanian for the first time without thinking that the poor man's trousers are just about to drop off'.[97] Her book suggested that the inhabitants of Yugoslavia did not believe that they were part of the West: a Serb describes Bosnia as 'this is truly the East, and people attach great importance to such things as girls who sing the Bosnian songs', and is also quoted saying that 'Central Europe is too near the Croats. They are good people, very good people, but they are possessed by the West'.[98]

As the clouds of World War II gathered above Europe, the British government decided that Yugoslavia, a country that had already moved closer to the Fascist camp under the premiership of Milan Stojadinović,[99] could serve as a precious ally. Suddenly, the Regent Prince Paul was perceived as the only Balkan statesman whom London could trust: he had been educated in Oxford, spoke English fluently, and had married the sister of the Duchess of Kent. But when Mussolini failed to defeat Greece, and the Greek army invaded Albania, Germany was obliged to put an end to this. Yugoslavia's neutrality was no longer acceptable and the Nazis offered her a generous place in their new order. As politicians in London were arguing that Britain could do very little in effect to help Yugoslavia, the secret services took the lead, in order to make it difficult for the Regent to join the Axis.[100] In the end, the Regency Council of

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[95] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 281.
[96] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 489, pp. 609-610, p. 617, p. 485.
[97] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 16, p. 15.
[98] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 312, pp. 66-67.
[99] For the Yugoslav politics of this period see J. B. Hoptner, *Yugoslavia in Crisis 1934-1941* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962).
[100] Mark C. Wheeler, *Britain and the War for Yugoslavia 1940-1943* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 24.

Yugoslavia signed the Tripartite Pact and Britain attempted to engineer a coup d'etat. As Wheeler argues, 'the British badly wanted a coup, a coup that would bring Yugoslavia into the war. But they realised that they were in no position to make one'.[101] Indeed, Britain failed to play a significant part in the almost bloodless coup that did take place in 27 March, conducted mainly by Serbian elements of the army under the leadership of General Dušan Simović,[102] an act 'very Serbian, crazily gallant and unrealistic but incontestably magnificent'.[103] As Yugoslavia was annexed by the Nazis, *The Times* referred with a friendly tone to the 'unbroken sympathy' between the two countries and the 'memories of the alliance in 1914'.[104] But an entry in the diaries of the Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office from the same year leaves no doubt that nothing had changed in the British perception of the Balkans: 'All these Balkan peoples are trash. Poor dears - I know their difficulties. They 've got no arms, and no money and no industry. But then they shouldn't have behaved as Great Powers at Geneva...'[105]

After the annexation of Yugoslavia and Greece, the British government started to organise and support guerrilla movements and sabotage action in the Balkan Peninsula.[106] As Michael Howard argued, the Balkans, in Churchill's mind, was 'an area so tantalizingly close and where so much damage could, with comparatively small expenditure of effort, be done'.[107] The British were involved in the Yugoslav civil war between the right-wing Chetniks of General Dragoljub 'Draža' Mihailović and the Communist-led Partisans of Josip Broz Tito, initially backing the Chetniks. But Mihailović proved to be an obsessed anti-Croat, anti-Moslem and anti-Communist.[108] The British government, therefore, tried to use King Peter as a unifying factor, but by 1943 it had realised that the Partisans would emerged victorious and would establish a regime allied to the USSR. However, since the area was destined again to fall in the margins of the British foreign interests after the war, Churchill did not mind. As he told to his close friend Brigadier Fitzroy Maclean, a

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[101] Wheeler, p. 52.

[102] See David Stafford, 'SOE and British Involvement in the Belgrade Coup d' État of March 1941', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 36, No. 3 (September 1977), pp. 399-419.

[103] Edward Pearce, 'Thoughts from the Partisans', *Guardian* (17 July 1991), p. 20.

[104] Editorial, *The Times* (28 March 1941), p. 5.

[105] David Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan 1938-1945* (London: Cassell, 1971), p. 365.

[106] See Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg (eds), *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

[107] Michael Howard, *The Mediterranean Strategy in the Second World War* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), p. 11.

[108] For a different view about the role of Michailović, see Michael Lees, *The Rape of Serbia: The British Role in Tito's Grab for Power 1943-1944* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990).

Conservative MP with passion for adventures who became the archetype of James Bond, 'the less you and I worry about the form of government they set up, the better. That is for them to decide. What interests us is, which of them is doing more harm to the Germans?'[109] When the Allies met at Yalta, Churchill was interested mainly in securing Greece. As he remembers,

I said 'Let us settle about our affairs in the Balkans...So far as Britain and Russia are concerned, how would it do for you to have ninety per cent. predominance in Roumania, for us to have ninety per cent. of the say in Greece, and go fifty-fifty about Yugoslavia?'...I pushed this across to Stalin, who had by then heard the translation. There was a slight pause. Then he took his blue pencil and made a large tick upon it...It was all settled in no more time than it takes to set down.[110]

The Balkans after the War remained in the popular imagination as an area of troubles, corruption and unstability. A good example of this can be found in a novel by General Sir John Hackett, in which the fighting that starts the Third World War begins once more in the Balkans, when Slovenia attempts to become independent and uprisings occur in Kosovo. [111]

The development of the Cold War naturally had an important impact on the way that Yugoslavia was viewed both by British policy-makers and by the broader public as a whole. It was in the Cold War context that Yugoslavia unexpectedly re-entered the agenda of the British foreign policy by deciding in 1948 to open its separate road to Communism.[112] At the peak of the Cold War, Western foreign policy treated Yugoslavia as a bulwark against the Soviets. Titoism was perceived as something positive, and scholars like Sabrina Petra Ramet have referred to the popularity that the above-mentioned pro-Partisan account of Fitzroy MacLean enjoyed in Britain. One of the main factors that ensured that Titoism would be seen positively in British academic circles was the presence of Sir Frederick William Dampier Deakin (who had escorted Maclean in Yugoslavia)[113] among the authorities in the wartime Yugoslav affairs, especially since he became head of St. Anthony's College in Oxford.[114] For those in Britain hostile to Soviet-style Communism, "Communism" in Yugoslavia was a guarantee against civil war, whilst left-wing

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[109] Fitzroy Maclean, *Eastern Approaches* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949), pp. 402-03.
[110] Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War, Volume VI: Triumph and Tragedy* (London: Cassell, 1954), p. 198.
[111] Sir John Hackett, *The Thirld World War: A Future History* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978).
[112] See Wayne S. Vucinich (ed.), *At the Brink of War and Peace: The Tito-Stalin Split in a Historic Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Brooklyn College Press, 1982).
[113] See his account *The Embattled Mountain* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).
[114] Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, p. 38.

supporters saw the Yugoslav experiment as a conscious attempt to transform a classic communist dictatorship of the proletariat into a real social democracy. [115]

Yugoslavia appeared indeed very different from other Socialist Republics of Eastern Europe, even if Tito's regime would never have been seen in such favourable terms outside of the atmosphere of the Cold War. As Ivan Vejvoda has commented, the "softness" of the Yugoslav brand of totalitarianism allowed certain freedoms, which were of great importance to the everyday life of private individuals. But it was an urbanised society which lacked the political institutions of a modern state through which interests and their conflicts could be mediated in a peaceful manner. [116] However, this brief, positive image disappeared with the death of Tito in May 1980. Ivan T. Berend argues that his absence destroyed the strongest pillar of a federal Yugoslavia, [117] thereby allowing the severe economic problems to be transformed into ethnic ones. Robert D. Caplan, a US journalist who was in the Balkans during the 1980s, made the astonishing remark that Adolf Hitler learned to 'hate so infectiously' because he was a resident of Vienna, 'a breeding ground of ethnic resentments close to the southern Slavic world'. [118] It seems that Tito's death had again transformed Yugoslavia into the epitome of the Balkan image, an unstable country inclined to violence and deep-rooted ethnic hate. This was not only a feature of the Western imagination. The Hungarian professor Attila Ágh described the historical legacy of Yugoslavia in the context of 'militant habits and violent patterns of solving political conflicts', something that he attributed to the Ottoman influence, [119] reviving thereby the image of the 'European' and 'civilised' Austro-Hungary in contrast to the 'Oriental' and 'barbarous' Ottoman Empire.

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[115] Ivo Banac (ed.), *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 171.
[116] Ivan Vejvoda, 'Yugoslavia 1945-91: From Decentralisation Without Democracy to Dissolution', in *Yugoslavia and After: A Study in Fragmentation, Despair and Rebirth*, ed. by David A. Dyker and Ivan Vejvoda (London: Longman, 1996), pp. 9-27 (p. 23).
[117] Ivan T. Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe 1944-1993: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 293.
[118] Robert D. Caplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. xxiii. See also the critique of the book by Henry R. Cooper Jr. in *Slavic Review*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Fall 1993), pp. 592-3.
[119] Attila Ágh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998), p. 166.

SECTION 1B: CHANGING GREEK IMAGES OF THE BALKANS

1.6 The Balkans' significance for the Greeks

In sharp contrast to the British viewpoint, the word Balkans was used by the Greeks -
at least until the 1990s - as a culturally neutral and strictly geographical term, which
defined an area that Greece has traditionally perceived as its natural economic
hinterland. While there was never any doubt about the inclusion of Albania,
Yugoslavia or Bulgaria within the Balkans, many Greeks never had a clear idea about
whether Turkey should be included. This reflects a deeper tendency to see the latter as
a non-European country. Not only was Turkey a traditional rival of Greece, but it has
also generally been constructed, in cultural and religious terms, as 'Asian'. Turkey's
possession of a small part of Eastern Thrace (which includes the old Byzantine capital
Constantinople, now Istanbul) has added to the confusion, which has been "solved",
rather clumsily, by labelling this part as 'European' Turkey in contrast with the rest of
the 'Asian' country. Such an approach is evident among geographers like A.
Eustathiou, who places European Turkey in the Balkans, but not the rest of the
country.[120] In an April 2002 survey, undertaken by the author among students of
Balkan history in the University of Ioannina in northwestern Greece, 25% placed
Turkey among the Balkan countries. But, interestingly, 12% of those who accepted
Turkey's Balkan identity did so only for European Turkey (see Table 1, p. 200).

Turkey is not, however, the only example of uncertainty about the exact
borders of the Balkans. Some Greeks appear to have been equally confused about
Romania and, more recently, Slovenia and Croatia. Whereas Eustathiou does not
include Romania among the Balkan countries, the controversial but celebrated left-
wing thinker Vasilis Rafailidis argues that the Croatians are 'Europeanised and a bit
Germanised', inhabitants of a land 'where nobody can state with any certainty if it is
German or Slavic'. He then claims that the Slovenians are even more Germanised
than the Croatians, and writes that 'in southeastern Austria, Graz and its surrounding
territory do not differ in any respect from Slovenia'.[121] Yannis Goudelis also argues -
in a piece of recent travel literature - that Slovenia belongs to the neighbourhood of

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[120] See the map of the Peninsula in A. Eustathiou, *Γεωγραφία Βαλκανικών Χωρών δια τους Υποψηφίους Ευελπίδων Στρατιωτικής Ιατρικής Σχολής και Σχολής Ναυτικών Δοκίμων*, 5th edn. (Athens: Αστήρ, 1970).

[121] Vasilis Rafailidis, *Οι Λαοί των Βαλκανίων* (Athens: Εκδόσεις του Εικοστού Πρώτου, 1994), p. 26.

the Alps and its houses are very similar with those of Austria.[122] Nevertheless, nowadays it seems that these countries are, more or less, considered as part of the area. According to *Papyros-Larousse-Britannica* encyclopaedia, the term 'Balkans' is a condensed name of the countries of the Balkan Peninsula, i.e. of the countries of south-eastern Europe...including the territories of the former Yugoslavia located north of the rivers Sava and Danube, and also - with a wider notion - the whole of Romania...assuming that from a historical, economic and political view it is linked to this space, too. [123]

The following pages will examine how the Greek image of the Balkans and its inhabitants evolved during the same timespan as in the previous section, which in this case will be expanded to cover the years after Tito's death (1980) and the collapse of the Communist regimes in the Balkans. This is due to the fact that Greece, as a country of the Balkan Peninsula, was heavily influenced by the collapse of Communism in the area. This led to a significant change in the way that the Greeks perceive the Balkans. In the Greek case there are three differences in comparison to the British approach. First, there is not such a clear stereotype of the Balkans as a place of violence and death. Second, the Greek images have in part been shaped by the Greek feeling of cultural supremacy towards the Slavs. And, last but not least, the stereotype of the area has largely developed in a way that reflects foreign policy concerns of independent Greece - especially since the latter aspired to expand into Ottoman-held territories that were also coveted by its neighbours. Since, as in the British case, the aim of this section is merely to provide a flavour of the Greek 'mental map' of the Balkans, and not an extensive analysis of the subject, only selective turning points will be considered. As the core elements of the Greek foreign policy were formulated in the second half of the 19th Century, and especially during the two Balkan Wars (1912-1912), this period will be examined in more detail than more recent ones. The First World War will not be analysed at all, as Greece participated quite late (1916) and its course did not influence the way that Greeks perceived their neighbours. Instead, the section will focus on how the Greek-Serb friendship evolved during the inter-war years, when Serbia's place was taken by Yugoslavia. After the Second World War, Greece emerged as the only parliamentary democracy with a market economy in the Balkan area. Emphasis will thus be placed on the transformation that these facts brought to the Greek self-image and the

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[122] Yannis Goudelis, *Ταξίδια και Λογισμοί: Η Γιουγκοσλαβία με τον Τίτο και χωρίς τον Τίτο* (Athens: Δίφρος, 1981), pp. 43-47.
[123] 'Βαλκάνια', Vol. 13 (Athens: Πάπυρος, 1996), p. 204.

implications that this transformation had on the way in which Greeks perceived the Balkans from then on.

The sources that will be used for this section will be confined mainly to newspaper articles, academic works (historical and sociological), and accounts of politicians or other scholars. It is noteworthy that in the Greek case there was no travel literature regarding the Balkans, in sharp contrast to the British case. While British travellers had often visited the area during the 19th Century in the pursuit of dangerous and exotic travels, the Greeks who loved to travel and could afford to do so preferred instead the great European capitals of London, Paris or Vienna, or cities on the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea with a burgeoning Greek population (Constantinople, Smyrna, Alexandria).

1.7 Greek perceptions of the Balkans during the era of the Eastern Question

After independence in 1830, the newly founded Greek Kingdom maintained close relationships with the peoples of the Balkans who, in many cases, were not only fellow Orthodox Christians but also natural allies against the Ottoman Empire. A large number of Albanians, Serbs and Bulgarians had, after all, fought side by side with the Greeks during the Independence War (1821-1830).[124] Agreements had been reached with the Serbs and the Montenegrins, by which they would join the Greek kingdom if they managed to revolt successfully, enjoying all the rights and the privileges of every other Greek-speaking citizen.[125] There was even a prevailing belief that the Albanians would also join the Greek Kingdom, in a dual monarchy inspired by the Austro-Hungarian example.[126]

All the above suggests that Greek governments sought a pan-Balkan federation under their leadership, an offspring of the Byzantine Empire in which the notions of Greek and Orthodox were almost identical. But this plan never materialised, partly for internal political reasons, and partly because of external developments. The internal reason was that this policy lost its main supporters with

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[124] Spyros D. Loukatos, *Σχέσεις Ελλήνων μετά Σέρβων και Μαυροβουνίων κατά την Ελληνικήν Επανάστασιν 1823-1826* (Thessaloniki: Εταιρεία Μακεδονικών Σπουδών, 1970), p. 20.
[125] Loukatos, p. 61.
[126] Evangelos Kofos, *Greece and the Eastern Crisis 1875 - 1878* (Thessaloniki: Ινστιτούτο Βαλκανικών Σπουδών, 1975), p. 24.

the removal in 1862 of King Otto and the Bavarian court around him. At the same time, the Slavs of the Balkan Peninsula started to develop strong national consciousnesses of their own, making territorial demands on Ottoman lands that Greece had included in its national emancipation agenda, and approached Russia to help them achieve their aspirations. The first governments of independent Greece did not trust Russia, suspecting that its Panslav machinations could be potentially hostile to Greek territorial demands.

The growing alienation of Greece from its neighbours in the second half of the 19th Century was reflected in its reaction to the two Balkan incidents that engaged British public opinion in the late-19th Century: the Bosnian uprising of 1875, and the much more serious Bulgarian insurrection of 1876. The Bosnian incident was greeted with suspicion in Greece, and received little support in the press, which saw it as a product of Russian intrigues. 'Despite all the forbidding and precautionary provisions, the Slavs' wild excitement is irrepressible. The southern Slavs have been seized by an unrestrained revolutionary paroxysm' reported the *Efimeris ton Syzitiseon*, a newspaper that expressed "establishment" ideas.[127] The same newspaper attacked the 'philoturbulent' Serbs and Montenegrins who threatened the Ottomans with war, and referred to the Albanians as an avaricious race, ready to sell its neutrality for glossy Russian roubles or shed blood for the Sultan's *teskeredes* (paper money).[128] That was quite a change towards people that the Greeks had been willing, just 16 years before, to live together with in the same state.

The distinguished journalist and author Vasilis Rafailidis wrote in 1994 that 'the onslaught against the Bulgarians following their revolt against the Turks in 1876 was such that no civilised human in Europe remained untouched'.[129] This may be true regarding British public opinion, which was deeply shocked by the news, but it does not reflect the Greek reality as shown in the press of the period. The Greek government was in a difficult position, having caused much ill-feeling among its British protectors (because of its inability to meet its financial obligations and its support of the frequent uprisings of the Greeks of Turkey),[130] and the last thing that it wanted was another Eastern crisis. Moreover, Athanasios Matalas, the Greek vice-consul in Plovdiv, had made plain to Athens that, once the insurgents established their

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[127] *Efimeris ton Syzitiseon*, 'Τα της Ερζεγοβίνης' (1 August 1875), p. 2.
[128] *Efimeris ton Syzitiseon*, 'Ερζεγοβίνη' (29 August 1875), pp. 1-2.
[129] Rafailidis, p. 49.
[130] See Domna Dontas, *Greece and the Great Powers 1863 - 1875* (Thessaloniki: Institute of Balkan Studies, 1966).

own state, they planned to ban the use of the Greek language and close all Greek schools in the area. Because of these factors, the Greek government's immediate reaction was to distance itself from the Bulgarians and improve relations with Turkey. Even Prime Minister Alexandros Koumoundouros did not dare to alter this policy, despite his well-known personal concern about the Christians of the Peninsula.[131]

The Greek newspapers of the period kept a close eye on the progress of the revolt, and published blood-curdling accounts of the brutality of the Ottoman irregular troops, along the same lines as those appeared in the British press: 'Women, elders and children have been massacred, even inside the churches and monasteries', reported the *Ora*, a newspaper which had close ties with the liberal urban elites.[132] But the news did not seem to cause alarm among the Greek public, which regarded the excesses as no more than a usual measure of suppression by the Ottoman authorities. Although the Greeks felt some sympathy for the Bulgarians, they were not willing to sacrifice Greece's policy neutrality for their sake, a view which was in accordance with the official policy and was best summarised in an *Ora* leading article:

The circumstances which developed after the end of the Cretan War were such that a peaceful and friendly policy towards the Turks was recognised by all as the only way of furthering the national ideals...The Slavs have, as the Greeks also have, their own national ideals which are honorable and should be worthy of the respect and sympathy of every Greek...But, even if Greece feels this way, it has neither the right nor the strength to come in its aid. Greece is not only exposed by sea and unprepared by land, but has international obligations, too, which it is not allowed to break.[133]

Greek public opinion was more alarmed nine years later, in 1885, by an incident that went largely unnoticed in Britain: the annexation of the autonomous kingdom of Eastern Rumelia by the Bulgarian Kingdom. Eastern Rumelia had a substantial Greek minority, and its annexation meant that Bulgaria was in a better position than Greece in the Macedonian struggle. These fears were expressed in the *Ora*, which provided a very interesting portrait of the Greek attitude towards the rest of the Balkans, as it links Albanians, Bulgarians, Romanians and Serbs with something barbarous:

Who else except the Greek nation has ranged against it all the conflicting contenders inside Turkish territory? Where the Greek language was always heard and taught, and Greek voices offered praise to God, there barbarous voices now seek to deny the rights of the Greek nation.[134]

[131] Kofos, p. 44.

[132] *Ora* (15 May 1876), p. 3.

[133] *Ora*, 'Πολιτικόν Δελτίον' (2 July 1876), p. 1.

[134] *Ora*, 'Κομάται η Ελλάς;' (9 September 1885), pp. 1-2.

Despite the furious clamouring for military action among the public, the government of Theodoros Diligiannis decided not to react, causing an outburst of anger by the *Ora*, which pointed out that 'the great historical problems have never been solved by mathematic logic, but by the words of the sword'. It went on to accuse the Bulgarians of 'waving goodbye to every logical rule and every international obligation'.[135] Nor was concern restricted to Bulgaria. There was widespread fear about the actions of Serbia, which was portrayed as a state waiting to 'dash south and settle down in the limits of the old Serbian state'.[136] Hence, a great public demonstration soon gathered in front of the Prime Minister's residence in Athens demanding war, but Diligiannis told them calmly that 'we live in peace and we wish to remain in peace',[137] a position that he firmly held until the end of the crisis.

1.8 Greek perceptions of the Balkans during the First Balkan War (1912)

As the discussion in the previous section makes clear, the unity between the various countries that combined against the Ottoman Empire during the First Balkan War was of very recent origin. And perhaps it represented little more than an alliance between governments and nations that had little trust for one another.[138] However, the Liberal newspaper *Kairoi* expressed a genuine faith in the alliance, blaming the faults of the past on invincible enemies (implying the Russians), and envisaging a promising future.[139] Another passage in the same newspaper outlined how the alliance might develop: 'With fixed bayonets, the four allied Christian states of Haemos will ensure the prevalence of complete justice and complete freedom in the East. The Turkish atrocities will become a thing of the past the subject of historical study'.[140] Public opinion celebrated the outbreak of hostilities in 1912. The Conservative newspaper *Astrapi* gives a vivid picture of this war enthusiasm:

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[135] *Ora* (18 September 1885), pp. 1-2.
[136] *Ora* (20 September 1885), p. 2.
[137] *Ora*, 'Το Συλλαλητήριον των εν Αθήναις συντεχνιών' (30 September 1885), p. 2.
[138] Leyteris S. Stavrianos, *Balkan Federation: A History of the Movement Toward Balkan Unity in Modern Times*, 2nd edn. (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1964), p. 158.
[139] *Kairoi* (19 September 1912), p. 1.
[140] *Kairoi* (18 September 1912), p. 1.

Here again is the warlike blare of Mars rallying all the vital forces of the Nation and the whole of Hellenism - the free, those in bondage, and those living abroad - all hasten to offer their blood to the Fatherland...the reserves, in a frenzy of enthusiasm, run to be placed under service to the flag.[141]

How did the newspapers present the allies and enemies of Greece during the First Balkan War? Turkey received, unsurprisingly, the most negative coverage. It was portrayed as an uncivilised nation, inhabited by Muslim barbarians who, according to the *Astrapi*, had no place inside a Christian Europe:

Timur's offspring, who for five centuries have lived in Europe alongside the more civilised people of the earth, have proven incapable of humanity, retaining all the primitive savageness of their race...They are dormice incapable of gazing at the sunlight of progress, instead remaining within the darkness of barbarity, scorpions hiding in the cavities of Europe's soil only because the club of a Christian Hercules has not yet risen to crush them.[142]

The *Kairoi* also argued that 'whoever kills Turkish soldiers is doing an act in favour of humanity. They are awful beasts who ought to disappear from the face of the Earth. Let us be merciless and implacable in front of these dreadful enemies of mankind'.[143] Equally unfavourable was the image of Albania, as the country aligned with the Turks, hoping to become independent and absorb (as it finally did) an area of Epirus with a substantial Greek presence. The *Astrapi* published a series of articles in which it argued among other things that the Muslim Albanians had no spiritual or ethical education and therefore did not understand the notions of logic and order.[144] Furthermore, the newspaper revived King Otto's policies by claiming that the plans for an independent Albania were works of the Austro-Hungarian and Italian diplomacy,[145] and that Albanians should become part of the Greek Kingdom.[146]

By contrast, the First Balkan War laid the foundations of the future friendship between Greece and Serbia, which was presented by the *Kairoi* as the only state of the Peninsula 'which has never stopped showing the most sincere and genuine love towards us'.[147] Bulgaria also received a favourable portrait in the same newspaper, which noted that its army was the best in the Peninsula,[148] and presented King Ferdinand as a calm and gallant ruler.[149] As for the Montenegrins, they seem to have

[141] *Astrapi*, 'Εθνικαί Δυνάμεις' (28 September 1912), p. 1.
[142] *Astrapi*, 'Αι Τίγρεις της Υρκανίας να Κλεισθούν εις Θηριοτροφεία' (23 September 1912), p. 1.
[143] *Kairoi*, 'Αμείλικτοι!' (15 October 1912), p. 1.
[144] Nikolaos Skotidis, 'Οι Μπεκτασήδες Αλβανοί και ο Μπαμπά Αλής', *Astrapi* (22 September 1912), p. 3.
[145] *Astrapi*, 'Το Αλβανικόν Ζήτημα: Έλλειψις Εθνικού Αισθήματος παρά τοις Αλβανοίς' (29 September 1912), p. 1.
[146] *Astrapi*, 'Έλληνες και Αλβανοί: Η Πολιτική του Ε. Βενιζέλου' (8 October 1912), p. 1.
[147] *Kairoi*, 'Ελλάς και Σερβία: Παλαιά Αισθήματα Φιλίας', (28 September 1912), p. 2.
[148] *Kairoi* (20 September 1912), p. 2.
[149] Henry Nichole, 'Οι Σύμμαχοί μας: ο Τσάρος των Βουλγάρων', *Kairoi* (8 October 1912), p. 2.

impressed the *Kairoi* a good deal as well: 'People who have forged athletic bodies and hearts of heroes thanks to the life on the mountains, the contempt for luxury and flabbiness and their impetus towards independence'.[150]

1.9 Greek perceptions of the Balkans during the Second Balkan War (1913)

After the first victories against the Turks, it became evident that Bulgaria was not satisfied with its war prize, and intended to use its supposed military superiority to supplant the Greeks and the Serbs in various positions inside Macedonia. The *Astrapi* took the lead among Greek newspapers by launching a strong attack on the Bulgarians, even while the First Balkan War was still continuing:

The Turkish officers have not studied gallantry in the same school as Mr. Tontorov who had the cowardice to bomb prisoners of war in order to gain the right to wire the Tsar of Bulgaria that he had captured Thessaloniki by his sword. Of course, the Turkish officers are not Christians, but they are not Bulgarians either. And if they are now quiet in Macedonia, they have not stopped to be men worthy of their swords by which they fought to the end.[151]

Greek hostility to Bulgaria also suggests that Orthodox links between the countries of the Balkan Peninsula have been overestimated. While the First Balkan War has often been presented as a conflict between Christianity and Islam, Orthodoxy did not achieve any special status. Furthermore, when Bulgaria started the Second Balkan War with an attack against its former allies, this common Orthodox faith failed to override conflicting national interests. Particularly illuminating is the following passage from the *Astrapi*, a newspaper that said flatly that the Bulgarians were no better than 'Hogguz thieves'[152] and did not belong to any of the known human races:

The Bulgarians were never superior in worth to venal slaves. By nature deceitful and plunderers, naked of feelings and only motivated by their wild instincts...they did not manage to become civilised *despite their Christianisation* [emphasis mine], since their savage nature proved incapable of taming.[153]

In just a few months, the *Kairoi*'s favourable image of the Bulgarians had given way to that of a boorish, crude and savage race,[154] while the once prudent King Ferdinand

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[150] *Kairoi*, 'Οι Σύμμαχοί μας: Νικόλαος' (16 October 1912), p. 1.

[151] *Astrapi*, 'Η Μόνη Αψευδής Μαρτυρία' (29 November 1912), p. 1.

[152] *Astrapi*, 'Η Επιδημία της Χολέρας και η Βουλγαρική Θεομηνία' (4 June 1913), p. 1.

[153] *Astrapi*, 'Ο Τελευταίος Αγών Εναντίον των Βουλγάρων' (20 June 1913), p. 1. See also 'Η Τακτική του Αγγλικού Τύπου', *Astrapi* (15 July 1913), p. 1.

[154] From interview of the Prime Minister Venizelos to the *Evening Postman* (Milan), re-published in *Kairoi*, as 'Δηλώσεις του κ.Βενιζέλου: Οι Βούλγαροι Άξεστοι, Βάνδαλοι, Άγριοι', 3 July 1913, p. 3.

was condemned as 'a megalomaniac pawn in the game of the Germano-Austrian diplomacy'.[155]

The Second Balkan War helped Greece to draw closer to Serbia and the Montenegrins. The war also facilitated a rapprochement of Greece and Romania. The latter was a country that once had important ties with the Greeks, mainly thanks to the existence of an important Greek political and economically powerful elite (the so-called *Phanariotes*). However, when Wallachia and Moldavia were unified within an independent Romanian Kingdom, the power of the Phanariotes diminished,[156] as the local population linked them with the Ottoman administration. The relations between the two countries soon cooled down even further, as Romania attempted (unsuccessfully) to raise the issue of the nationality of the Hellenised Vlachs, who were living in parts of the Ottoman Empire claimed by the Greeks.

As a result, when Romania decided to abandon its neutrality and attack the Bulgarians, Greek public opinion was alarmed. The *Kairoi* pointed out that that the only aim of the Romanian intervention was to create an autonomous Vlach state in the Pindos Mountains, because 'Romania has always desired Macedonia and yearns for the Aegean Sea'.[157] Thus, it is hardly surprising that the press adopted once more, as can be seen in the following passage from *Astrapi*, its usual attitude towards Greece's perceived enemies - emphasising their cultural inferiority in comparison with the Greeks:

Romanians have not yet acquired the characteristics of a Nation. Before 1866 they were divided between Wallachs and Moldavians...Only under Carol were they unified and took the common name Romanians, pretending that they are offspring of the Roman garisons of Emperor Traianus. Still they have not got literature, poetry, their own spirit, their own civilisation, elements that constitute the nationality. Their civilisation is spurious, their morals mixed and salad-like. Their political life is artificial, spasmodic and imitating.[158]

Soon, however, Romanian officials notified that their country did not have any wish to raise again the Vlach question. The Greek press therefore modified its tone. When the Romanian Foreign Minister Ionesku visited Athens in October 1913, the

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[155] Theodoros Katsoulakos and Kostas Tsantinis, *Προβλήματα Ιστοριογραφίας στα Σχολικά Εγχειρίδια των Βαλκανικών Κρατών: Επανάσταση του '21, Βαλκανικοί Πόλεμοι* (Athens: Εκκρεμές, 1994), p. 75.
[156] After the end of the Second World War there were still 500,000 Greeks in Romania. In the 1992 census, however, they had diminished to 19,594, according to Istvàn Horvàth, 'Minorities in Romania: Differences and Typology', <http://www.iie.org/flinnscholar/romminor.htm> [accessed on 19 December 2005].
[157] *Kairoi*, 'Εκ Δουνάβεως Σμήνη' (5 July 1913), p. 1.
[158] *Astrapi*, 'Η Ρωμουνία και οι Κουτσόβλαχοι' (17 July 1913), p. 1.

Kairoi expressed joy,[159] and a hope that the present coincidence of interests would provide fertile ground for closer ties between the two countries.[160] Regarding the Vlach question in particular, the newspaper argued that

in the Greek state there is a population of Vlachs speaking a language particularly close to Romanian, for whom Romania showed great interest during the time that they were under Turkish rule. Greece, as a civilised country, will provide to this population the same legal rights and protection as to the rest of its citizens.[161]

But soon relations between Greece and Romania deteriorated again, as the two countries found themselves on opposite sides during the two World Wars - and especially during the Second World War, when the then Romanian regime tried to bring the Vlach question back to the fore with Hitler's help.

1.10 The friendship with Serbia and the Second World War

The previous section of the chapter suggested that the First World War marked a critical stage in the evolution of British attitudes towards the Balkans. This was less true in the case of Greece, as has already been noticed above (page 41). This sub-section will instead focus on the years after the First World War, when the creation of Yugoslavia led to a reconsideration of relations between Greece and its northern neighbour. Greece was in a difficult situation during the time because of its defeat by Turkey in the Asia Minor War (1922). As a result, most Greeks felt surrounded by enemies, and attitudes towards the Balkans during this stage were therefore once again largely conditioned by considerations of foreign policy. The Greek government was certainly uncertain about Yugoslavia, as it had now to deal with a South Slav federation instead of the familiar Serbian Kingdom. Would Yugoslavia be as friendly to Greece as Serbia had been during the Balkan Wars?

Initially, the relationship between the two countries was cold resulting in a serious diplomatic crisis in 1924. This forced the Liberal Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos to re-approach Mussolini's Italy (a rival of Yugoslavia) and negotiate a deal by which Italy would provide military help in case Yugoslavia attacked Greece.[162] It is not surprising, therefore, that the Greek newspapers kept a close eye on Yugoslavian affairs, especially since the coalition between Serbs and Croats

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[159] *Kairoi*, 'Η Ρουμανία' (29 October 1913), p. 1.

[160] *Kairoi*, 'Η Άφιξη του κ. Ιωνέσκου' (24 October 1913), p. 1.

[161] *Kairoi*, 'Ελλάς και Ρουμανία' (25 October 1913), p. 1.

seemed extremely fragile. The proclamation of a Royal dictatorship by King Alexander in 1929 was welcomed - but as a temporary solution. As the Conservative newspaper *Kathimerini* argued,

faced by the persistence of the Croatians, the intransigence of the Liberal Old-Serbians, and the feebleness of the Parliament...the King cut the Gordian knot with his sword and surrended the government of the country to the military league...[as he] judged that it would not be wise to show favour for either the Serbs or the Croatian contestants.[163]

When King Alexander was murdered in Marseilles in 1934, the *Kathimerini* condemned the crime as a cowardly action of a gang of insane fanatics,[164] but it also took the chance to criticise military rule in Yugoslavia: 'It is not sure if the five-year dictatorial rule has completely succeeded in whatever it sought to achieve. Instead, there is the fear that the dictatorial silence of all those nationalistic and localistic claims has aggravated the divisions'.[165]

On the eve of the Second World War, Greece had developed into a Fascist state under the premiership of Ioannis Metaxas who, however, did not radically change the traditional pro-British foreign policy of the country. Thus, when Yugoslavia moved closer to the Fascist camp under the premiership of Milan Stojadinović, the Greek Fascists shared the same worry as Britain about the future of the neighbouring country. This explains why it welcomed the coup of General Dušan Simović, a decision, according to the *Kathimerini*, 'of people that were led by the very best, the Army, in order to live in their home dominant, sovereign, free'.[166]

Nevertheless, World War II did not mark a new start in Greece's relations with its neighbours, mainly due to the seizure of power by the Communist partisans in Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. The only reason why Greece avoided a similar fate was the Anglo-American determination to keep it in the Western camp, by providing valuable military and economic aid to the anti-Communist opposition during the bloody civil war of 1945-1949. When the rest of the Western world welcomed Tito's split with Moscow in 1948, the Greek government did not initially alter its hostile stand towards Yugoslavia (which was, together with Albania and Bulgaria, the main supporter of the Communist guerrilla forces during the ongoing Greek Civil War). In

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[162] See Dimitris Michalopoulos, *Ο Ελευθέριος Βενιζέλος και το Γιουγκοσλαβικό Ζήτημα* (Athens: Λέσχη Φιλελευθέρων, 1991).

[163] *Kathimerini*, 'Το Σερβικόν Αδιέξοδον' (7 January 1929), p. 1.

[164] *Kathimerini*, 'Εδολοφονήθη εν Μασσαλία ο βασιλιάς της Σερβίας Αλέξανδρος' (10 October 1934), p. 1.

[165] *Kathimerini*, 'Διατί υπέρ την Νοτιοσλαυΐαν Πλανάται η Απειλή της Ανωμαλίας' (11 October 1934), p. 2.

[166] *Kathimerini*, 'Ο Γιουγκοσλαυϊκός Λαός Επαναστατήσας Επανέφερε την Χώραν εις την Οδόν της Ελπίδος και της Τιμής' (28 March 1941), p. 1.

1944, Tito had masterminded an ambitious plan that envisaged a federation between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, to which Romania, Albania, and also the Greek parts of Macedonia and Thrace would later be incorporated, if the Communist forces emerged victorious there.[167] Thus, the *Kathimerini* criticized openly the Western approach towards Tito:

Tito, who organised the Yugoslavian mountain bandits, who covered his fatherland in blood, who dragged Yugoslavia to the Bolsheviks' feet beneath the weight of the Iron Curtain, does not suit them anymore...It serves him right! Walks and somersaults are no good, especially when they are carried out inside the cave of the [Russian] Bear.[168]

1.11 Transformation of Greek identity after the Greek Civil War 1949-1999

The previous paragraphs have shown the importance of foreign policy considerations in shaping the Greek attitudes towards the Balkans in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The same was true in the post-war period, when the Greeks began to rethink their identity in the changing context of the Cold War and the development of European integration. The fact that Greece remained the only Parliamentary Democracy in the Balkans after the Second World War enhanced the idea of a nation isolated geographically from its natural allies and surrounded by enemies. Turkey was perceived as the most dangerous threat, although the Communist countries were also suspected of seeking to revive their Panslav ambitions, with the USSR now taking the place of the 19th Century Russia. 'An inverted triangle, with its vertex at the sea and an easily conquered base that separates it from four neighbours', argued Aggelos Vlahos, 'Greece lives into a constant, precarious balance'.[169] Hence, the Greek self-image can be summarised in the left-wing intellectual Damianos Papadimitropoulos' words: 'Greece...constitutes a Western or Western-orientated islet inside an inhospitable sea where other laws are dominant. The laws of Communism dominate to the northwest and the law of Islam to the east and south.'[170]

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[167] Sasa K. Stathi, Γιουγκοσλαβία και Τίτο, 1919-1953: Τίτο-Cominform και η Διαφωνία του με τον Στάλιν (Athens: Βιβλιοπωλείον της «Εστίας», 1983), σελς. 334-35.

[168] *Kathimerini*, 'Το Παράδειγμα' (30 June 1948), p. 1.

[169] Quoted from Konstantinos Svolopoulos, Η Ελληνική Πολιτική στα Βαλκάνια 1974 - 1981: Από την Αποκατάσταση της Δημοκρατίας ως την Ένταξη στις Ευρωπαϊκές Κοινότητες, with a foreword by Georgios I. Rallis (Athens: Ελληνική Ευρωεκδοτική, 1987), p. 12.

[170] Damianos Papadimitropoulos, Η Ελλάδα στη Βαλκανική Κρίση, with a foreword by Giannis Kartalis (Athens: Πόλις, 1994), p. 18.

Relations between Greece and Yugoslavia were officially reinstated in 1950-51, as a result of United States' pressure on Athens for the formation of an anti-Soviet axis with Ankara and Belgrade. They remained extremely fragile, however, because of the Macedonian question (for more details see chapter 3). During the same period, there was also a frontier crisis with Bulgaria over a small border island in river Evros. Into this Cold War context, the traditional friendship with the Serbs had to be re-built, while the rest of the Slav neighbours were demonised. This attitude is particularly evident in the work of the prominent author Hlias I. Kyrou, writing in the Cold War years, who argued that 'the Serbs and the Montenegrins, are, in their overwhelming majority, anti-Communists, anti-Titoians, enemies of Bulgaria, and friends and allies of the Greeks. The only friends of the Greeks towards the north'.[171] By contrast, Tito was just a 'deputy of Stalin', and a mixture of Mussolini, Goering and Napoleon III.[172] Other people, like the Muslim Albanians were just 'bellicose remnants of the Ottoman army', while the Bulgarians were portrayed as a 'horde comprising many swineherds and a few gardeners'.[173]

After the overthrow of the military junta in 1974, Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis clarified the country's foreign policy and took the decisive steps that allowed Greece's entry in the European Economic Community, the forerunner of the present EU, which was rightly seen as the decisive step in the process of making modern Greece a definitive part of the Western world.[174] Greece - particularly after the incorporation of Rhodes and the rest of the Dodekanisa (1949) and the acceptance of Cyprus' independence (1960) - was a territorially satisfied country that was interested mainly in the maintenance of peace and stability in the Balkan Peninsula. Hence, Karamanlis decided to abandon the Cold War dogma of the 'northern danger', and restore the diplomatic and economic bonds with the rest of the Balkans by organising a Trans-Balkan conference of collaboration. There Bulgaria abandoned formally all its territorial claims to Greece's detriment.[175] These actions helped to alter the bitter climate between the Greeks and their Slav neighbours, which was reflected in the way the newspapers reported on Tito's death in 1980. Field-Marshal Tito was transformed from Communist dictator and enemy of Greece into 'a universal

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[171] Hlias I. Kyrou, *Μακεδονία και Βόρειοι Γείτονες* [1964], 3rd edn. (Thessaloniki: Κυρομάνος, 1993), p. 64.
[172] *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 50 respectively.
[173] *Ibid.*, pp. 26 and 24 respectively.
[174] Christos L. Rozakis, *Η Ελληνική Εξωτερική Πολιτική και οι Ευρωπαϊκές Κοινότητες: Επιπτώσεις από την Ένταξη 1981-1986* (Athens: Ίδρυμα Μεσογειακών Μελετών, 1987), p. 119.
[175] Svolopoulos, p. 50.

leader',[176] 'the last of the great World War II generation',[177] and 'one of the most radiant personalities of the international political scene'.[178]

The collapse of the Socialist regimes in the Balkan peninsula, together with the EU challenge and the Western economy's global expansion, fostered a Greek identity crisis throughout the 1990s. Suddenly, the long-standing debate between the Conservative Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis, who had argued that Greece belonged to the West, and the leader of the Social-Democrat opposition Andreas Papandreou, who had replied that Greece belonged to the Greeks, became of vital importance. As Greece's neighbours moved towards a market economy, and the Cold War role of the country as a bulwark against the Communists diminished, the Greeks had to decide which set of characteristics should be dominant in their present-day identity: European, Balkan or Greek?[179] Two different Greeces appeared to collide, one seeking to identify with the Western World, and another trying to maintain a unique cultural identity, based on its Orthodox heritage and its distance from the West. The first sign of this occurred perhaps during the Andreas Papandreou premiership (1981-1989), when his government came into power by taking advantage of the anti-American and anti-EC sentiments of the Greek public, developed especially after the experience of military dictatorship and the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. 'Within Greek identity, a major duality exists', wrote Yorgos A. Kouvertaris and Betty A. Dobratz,

one along the Western rational model, and the other rooted in Eastern culture. In the former, the identity of Greece can be seen through the eyes of Western writers and scholars who stress its Hellenic roots as the mother of Western civilization...The Eastern stresses the emotional, spiritual, and ethnic sensibilities and draws upon the Byzantine and Oriental traditions.[180]

In this climate, both the pro-Western camp and the pro-Orthodox/Greek camp sought to distance their version of Greece from the rest of the Balkans, either to show that the country had left the Balkan past way behind, or to explain why the less developed Orthodox brothers should look to the Greeks for leadership.[181] Hence, academic Stathis N. Kekridis, belonging to the pro-Orthodox camp, describes the

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[176] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Τι Θα Γίνει η Γιουγκοσλαβία;' (5 May 1980), p. 5.

[177] *Ta Nea*, 'Ο Τίτο Πέθανε ο Κόσμος Φοβάται' (5 May 1980), p. 1.

[178] *Kathimerini*, 'Ο Κων. Τσάτσος στην Κηδεία τού Στρατάρχη Τίτο' (6 May 1980), p. 1.

[179] See Van Coufoudakis, Harry J. Psomiades and Andre Gerolymatos (eds.), *Greece and the New Balkans: Challenges and Opportunities* (New York: Pella, 1999).

[180] Yorgos A. Kouvertaris and Betty A. Dobratz, *A Profile of Modern Greece: In Search of Identity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 178.

[181] Georgios D. Metallinos, 'Εθνικά Θέματα και Ορθόδοξη Συνείδηση', in *Βαλκάνια και Ορθοδοξία*, ed. by «Μήνυμα» editions, (Athens: Μήνυμα, 1993), pp. 39-53.

Balkans as the powder-keg of Europe, as a hell's province infected by the epidemic disease of nationalism, and as a battlefield between Muslims, Catholics and Orthodoxy.[182] Scholar and politician Christos Rozakis, belonging to the pro-Western camp, believes that it is an area marked by 'bad administration, bad economic management, the clientalist politics, high-handed regimes...and the subsequent elevation of dominant groups of the population into the epicentre of politics and economics'.[183] Kostas Karamanlis, leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister (2005), argued that the inhabitants of the Peninsula were too ready to accept various dark conspiratorial theories, believing that the Westerners machinated the destruction of the Balkans.[184]

In this context, the pro-Orthodox camp increasingly perceived the Serbs as Greece's closest friends in the area. According to the former Social-Democrat Minister Stelios Papathemelis, history teaches that they are by tradition friends and they 'have never made war against us'.[185] The rest of the Yugoslav peoples, however, were not treated in such favourable terms. Rafailidis described the Croatians as jingoists,[186] while Karamanlis believed that the Bosnian Muslims

complicate further by their distinctive identity the already complex conflicts between the various nation groups of the former Yugoslavia. And they also raise the prospect of active interference in Balkan affairs by Islamic influences outside Balkans or bordering the Peninsula.[187]

After the fall of the Communist regimes in the area, a lot of Albanians migrated to Greece in search for a better life, and Greek economic interests expanded towards Albania. These factors made Albanians the people of the Peninsula most economically dependent on Greece.[188] But this did not stop Rafailidis from conceiving them as inferior and primitive, characterised by their stubbornness, their pride and also their poverty:

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[182] Stathis N. Kekridis, *Η Ελληνορθόδοξη Παιδεία Ενοποιός Παράγων των Βαλκανικών Λαών* (Komotini: Dimokriteio Panepistimio Thrakis, 1994), p. 26.

[183] Christos Rozakis, 'Εθνικισμοί και Μειονότητες στα Βαλκάνια: Ευρωπαϊκές Απόπειρες για τον Κατευνασμό (των Πρώτων) και την Προστασία (των Δεύτερων)', in *Ευρωπαϊκή Ενοποίηση και Βαλκανική Πολυδιάσπαση: Ο Ρόλος της Ελλάδας*, ed. by Sotiris Ntalis (Athens: I. Sideris, 1994), pp. 163-81 (pp. 166-7).

[184] Kostas Karamanlis, 'Η Μετακομμουνιστική Αναστάτωση στην Νοτιοανατολική Ευρώπη', in *Ευρωπαϊκή Ενοποίηση και Βαλκανική Πολυδιάσπαση: Ο Ρόλος της Ελλάδας*, ed. by Sotiris Ntalis (Athens: I. Sideris, 1994), pp. 39-79.

[185] Stelios Papathemelis, *Αντεπίθεση: Προτάσεις για τα Εθνικά μας Θέματα* (Thessaloniki: Παρατηρητής, 1992), p. 9.

[186] Rafailidis, p. 133.

[187] Karamanlis, p. 55.

[188] See Charalampos Papasotiriou, *Τα Βαλκάνια Μετά το Τέλος του Ψυχρού Πολέμου* (Athens: Library of Institute for International Relations, 1994), pp. 226-27.

Whoever tries to seriously understand Albanian history will find it so complex that he would get hold of the wrong end of the stick...Until a little while before the Second World War only half of the Albanians died from natural causes. The other half were killed in vendettas...So, until the War, Albanian society was only a step away from African society'.[189]

Harvalias adds that 'with national, geopolitical and state substance under constant doubt from the time of its creation, Albania has developed an inferiority complex in its dealings with the outside world'.[190] As for the Bulgarians, Rafailidis believes that 'by tradition, they will always confuse Balkan affairs with their acrobatics between their Slav culture, their Mongolian origin...and their German social organisation'.[191] Last but not least comes Romania, whose position as the apple of discord between the totalitarian policies of Ottoman Turkey, Austro-Hungary, Germany and the USSR has resulted, according to Yeorgios Mourtos, in the development of

intense nationalistic, even jingoistic, feelings among the Romanians who see themselves as a Latin national entity surrounded by Slavs and Magyars; also, to a weakness in following the political developments in Europe and, on the other hand, in familiarising themselves with the democratic morals and customs.[192]

Rafailidis also believes that the ethnically mixed Romania is so typically Balkan, that it could afford the chaotic prototype for all the Balkan people:

The territory of Romania was and will always be a junction in the Balkans where two civilisations, the Western and the Eastern, mingle inextricably, creating a third one...Bucharest has always copied Paris in everything.[193]

SUMMARY

To briefly summarize the chapter, the Balkans have a long history of association with negative images for both the British and the Greeks. Their reasons may be different, but the result remains that the area has constantly been constructed as an "Other". For the British, the framework of this construction appears to be "Orientalist" in nature, as the Balkans were not even considered part of the European continent on the eve of the Balkan Wars. Moreover, although the expulsion of the Ottomans helped the local

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[189] Rafailidis, pp. 132-33.
[190] Yeorgios Harvalias, 'Αλβανία', in Βαλκάνια: Από τον Διπολισμό στη Νέα Εποχή, ed. By Thanos Veremis, 2nd edn. (Athens: Γνώση & Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Ευρωπαϊκής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής, 1995), pp. 105-217 (p. 105).
[191] Rafailidis, p. 22.
[192] Yeorgios Mourtos, 'Ρουμανία', in Βαλκάνια: Από τον Διπολισμό στη Νέα Εποχή, ed. By Thanos Veremis, 2nd edn. (Athens: Γνώση & Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Ευρωπαϊκής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής, 1995), pp. 629-730 (pp. 631-32).
[193] Rafailidis, pp. 20-21.

populations gain European credentials, the British continued to perceive the Balkans as a non-Western region, where the Orthodox religion and Eastern values played a far more dominant role than the values of the Enlightenment. Only Yugoslavia under Tito and Greece seem to have escaped from this image. For the Greeks, on the other hand, the framework of "otherness" appears to be closely related to their country's foreign policy towards the region. The Balkans was always something of a "natural" hinterland for Greece, closely associated with its economic and political (even imperialistic from time to time) interests. Greek prejudice seems to be more country-specific than 'Orientalist', as there is a division between friendly (Serbs, Montenegrins) and hostile (Bulgarians, Albanians) neighbours. However, the Greeks always perceived their neighbours in the peninsula as culturally inferior, and this notion appears to have become stronger after the collapse of Communism in the area. With the arrival of a large numbers of immigrants from the Balkans, and the parallel challenges of globalisation and participation in the EU, the Greeks were forced to redefine themselves. They may have given different answers to the question 'who are we?' - but a common feature was to keep a clear distance from the rest of the Balkans.

CHAPTER 2

REACTIONS OF THE BRITISH AND GREEK

PRESS TO THE CONFLICTS IN SLOVENIA

AND CROATIA (1991-1992)

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE SLOVENIAN AND CROATIAN WARS OF INDEPENDENCE

This chapter, like all those that follow, begins with a brief attempt to sketch in some historical background in order to clarify the analysis of the newspapers. The attention of the British press was first focused on Slovenia and Croatia when the two republics held their first elections after the fall of Communism in April 1990. Nevertheless, the sympathy that both attracted at the time did not help their plans to become independent states one year later. The then European Community (EC) made its views plain to everyone on 24 June 1991, one day before the scheduled Slovenian declaration of independence, by providing a credit of £552,000,000 in loans and interest subsidies to the federal government in Belgrade, on condition that Yugoslavia stayed together. As Abel Matutes, the Commissioner in charge of relations with Mediterranean countries, commented,

the Community does not underestimate the importance or the merit of national demands which are appearing in Yugoslavia as in other European countries. However, the community believes that national antagonisms can and should be overcome through conciliation.[194]

Encouraged by this, the Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković warned Ljubljana and Zagreb that the Federation would use all means available to stop the republics' unilateral steps towards independence.[195]

However, this warning fell on deaf ears and, on 25 June 1991, first Croatia (under the ex-Communist General Franjo Tudjman) and a few hours later Slovenia (under the leadership of the ex-Communist politician Milan Kučan) declared an independence that no foreign country was willing to recognise. Under these circumstances, the Yugoslav Federal troops (JNA) headed towards Slovenia's border crossings on 27 June, facing unexpected resistance from the republic's territorial defence forces. So started the Ten-Days War, which ended with the Brioni Agreement of 7 July 1991, after it had cost the lives of 59 people (8 Slovene and 39 Yugoslav soldiers, 2 civilians, 8 foreign truck-drivers and 2 Austrian photographers). Under the terms of this agreement, the JNA pulled back and Slovenia was forced to postpone its declaration of independence for three months. The Brioni Agreement was hailed as a great diplomatic triumph for the new united Europe. In fact, however, the agreement

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[194] Tim Judah, 'Yugoslavia's Rebel Republics Urged to Stay in Federation', *The Times* (25 June 1991), p. 10.
[195] Laura Silber, 'Yugoslav PM Pleads with Rebel Republics', *Financial Times* (25 June 1991), p. 2.

had stopped the war simply by putting everything on hold for a few months. Most important of all, it did not address Croatia's problems and so failed to recognise its importance to the future stability of the region.

Inter-ethnic skirmishes in Croatia had already started, virtually from May 1990, when Tudjman was elected President after he had run a controversial electoral campaign with the use of slogans like 'I am doubly happy that my wife is neither a Serb or a Jew'.[196] Furthermore, his reputation as a historian of Second World War Yugoslavia for anti-Semitism and sympathy for the Fascist Ustašas regime caused predictable anxiety amongst the Serbs of the republic. Belgrade responded by directing fierce propaganda against him. Soon, the Serbs living in the backward region around Knin in the interior of Dalmatia, and the communities in eastern Slavonia, on the border with Vojvodina, the home of Yugoslavia's Hungarian minority, started to react. Under the political leadership of the Montenegrin psychiatrist Jovan Rašković, the Serbs of Krajina (the region formed by the districts of Knin, Donji Lapac, Obrovac, Benkovac, Gračac and Titova Korenica) announced a referendum on autonomy in August 1990. Tudjman immediately declared it illegal and attempted, unsuccessfully, to block it by force.

In September 1990, Milan Babić, another psychiatrist, with a well-established network of political and military connections in Belgrade, took the initiative from the moderate Rašković. While the latter had never envisaged for the Croatian Serbs an existence outside Croatia, aiming instead for cultural and political autonomy, Babić pursued a conscious policy of secession from Croatia, similar to that followed by his sympathizer Goran Hadzić in eastern Slavonia.[197] Soon, his paramilitary organisation, the Martićevci, started shooting at trains, harassing foreign tourists, and planting bombs. Tudjman's reaction to these events showed his failure to recognize the complexity of Serbian society within Croatia. Pursuing a nationalism similar to 'the nationalisms of poets, novelists, historical mythmakers, overimaginative ethnographers, and irresponsible populist demagogues',[198] he took measures of a clear anti-Serb character. First, he performed an anti-Serb purge of the administration; then he attempted to purify the Croatian language by dismissing the Serbs' Cyrillic script,

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[196] Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Course and Consequences* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995) p. 140.
[197] For more see Branka Magaš and Ivo Zanic (eds.), *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991-1995* (London: Frank Cass, 2001)
[198] Bogdan Denitch, *Ethnic Nationalism: The Tragic Death of Yugoslavia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 73.

a move that Misha Glenny characterised as being 'as senseless as it was provocative'.[199] Finally, perhaps as a concession to the émigré communities that had links with the Ustašas and had supported him financially, Tudjman issued a proposal that all the victims of the Second World War in Croatia should be commemorated with equal dignity. As a sign of this, he symbolically renamed Zagreb's Square of the Victims of Fascism as The Square of the Rulers of Croatia.

After these moves the situation deteriorated and there followed a series of bloody incidents (Pakrac, Plitvice, Borovo Selo, Glina) and the declaration of Krajina's independence in May 1991. Henceforth, until the end of August, the pattern was one of Serb irregulars attacking villages and small towns only to be halted by the intervention of the JNA:

From their bases in Serb-dominated south-western Croatia, the guerrilla units move north into areas of mixed Serb-Croat settlement, camping out in the woods and hills, evacuating Serbs from mixed areas, then shelling villages from a distance to intimidate the Croats…Almost invariably the Serbs win, the Croatian forces scuttle, the inhabitants are evacuated, the land becomes Serb-held.[200]

Even if the JNA was initially a strictly neutral participator,[201] its attitude changed dramatically from the moment that General Blagoje Adzić emerged as Chief of Staff. From September onwards, it sided openly with the Serb rebels, helping them to advance against the ill-equipped Croatian forces. The most decisive moments of the fighting in Croatia were the destruction of Vukovar in Eastern Slavonia, where the Serbian forces levelled the whole town house-by-house,[202] and the well-known siege of Dubrovnik, seat of the medieval republic of Ragusa, which Lord Byron had once described as the Pearl of the Adriatic. Since, of its 70,672 inhabitants only 5,735 were Serbs (6.7%), this JNA move had no clear logic. Finally, after months of fruitless negotiations with the United Nations and the EC, and after the death of approximately 10,000 people and the wounding of almost 30,000 more,[203] an agreement stopped the conflict in Croatia on 2 January 1992. Under its terms, the Serbs had to give up all the territories where they did not constitute the majority, while the contested regions would be demilitarised and 14,000 peace-keeping troops would occupy them, creating a UN-protected zone. The Sarajevo agreement followed the Brioni pattern and did not

[199] Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 12.
[200] Ian Traynor, 'Croats Lose Homes and Lives to Serbs', *Guardian* (3 August 1991), p. 7.
[201] Anne McElvoy has questioned this. See 'Patriotic Serb Drills Gunmen', *The Times* (15 July 1991), p. 9.
[202] Glenny, p 123.
[203] Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*, 2nd edn. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), p. 229.

attempt to clarify the status of the UN-protected Serb-dominated enclaves. This was eventually decided by force three years later, during the Bosnian War, after a heavy Croat surprise attack on them.

SECTION 2A: BRITISH PRESS REACTIONS TO THE SLOVENIAN AND CROATIAN WARS OF INDEPENDENCE

2.1 Introduction

This section examines British press reactions to key moments of the conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia. The selection of key moments is governed by the need to merge the Slovenian Ten-Days War together with the Croatian War in a single chapter. The two conflicts were of course very different. The Slovenes fought against a still-existing federation, while the Croats had to tackle a non-existing federal system, in which the ex-Yugoslav Federal Army (JNA) openly sided with the Serb irregulars. What brings the two wars together, however, is the reaction to them of the rest of Europe - a reaction which was constructed around an ideological framework with strong roots not only in traditional Cold War views of the world, but also in well-established ideas about the 'nature' of the Balkans - ideas that tend to re-appear in the British media every time a warlike situation erupts in South-Eastern Europe.

From this perspective, we can identify the following as key events. First is the moment of secession on 25 June 1991, which presented Slovenia and Croatia as rebel republics that threatened the desired status quo of the whole region. Next come some cases of intense fighting and brutal destruction that transformed the republics from troublemakers into brutally invaded territories - among which the siege of Dubrovnik at the end of October 1991 plays a prominent role. Finally, there is the hotly debated issue of their capacity, or not, for developing into viable self-governed entities in a post-Communist world order (a process which eventually culminated in the recognition of their independence in January 1992). What unifies these selections and brings them together is a question that was posed throughout the crisis: were Slovenia and Croatia 'Central European' countries and thus entitled to the Western help and sympathy, or were they 'Balkan' and thus in need of taming within the framework of

a united Yugoslavia before they set a fissile example to post-Communist Eastern Europe and the volatile Soviet Union?

When discussing Slovenia and Croatia a good deal of their coverage by the British press only makes sense in the context of British foreign policy, which is why the thesis will give it attention, although it does not intend to provide detailed coverage. The conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia did not attract great attention from the broad public, but were instead mainly an issue for the British political establishment and informed public opinion. The only time that the mass public seemed to be interested was when the Serbs pounded Dubrovnik, a favourite holiday destination for the British on the Adriatic Sea. The sources of the study at this chapter include mainly newspaper reports (from *The Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Sunday Times* and the *Daily Mail*), supported by a short discussion of the BBC's coverage of the two wars. Parliamentary debates, articles published in the *Economist* magazine, together with memoirs and academic accounts, are also used to illuminate certain aspects of the press' coverage, where available.

2.2 The secession of Slovenia and Croatia

Before 25 June 1991, the British media had already begun to show some interest in Slovenia and Croatia, mainly because of Franjo Tudjman's appeal to Britain on 7 May 1991 to help prevent civil war in Yugoslavia. *The Times* took this appeal with a pinch of salt: 'The Croatian president draws an over-simplified picture of a battle between (Serbian) communism and (Croat) Western civilisation'.[204] For the *Guardian*, too, a newspaper not entirely critical of the Croatian cause,

Tudjman acted foolishly in provoking an enemy which, as he now admits, it is ill-equipped to resist. Mr. Tudjman's politics are dubious, and there has also been provocation by some Croat irregulars. He has not been able to express clearly what sort of independent Croatia he envisages, and his sacking of hardline ministers should have been done much earlier.[205]

The most interesting feature of the British newspaper reports on the events of 1990-1991 is not, though, the portrait of the Croatian leadership, but rather the emergence of the question of the identity of Slovenes and Croatians in comparison with that of the rest of Yugoslavians. As has already been argued in chapter 1, Balkan

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[204] Editorial, 'No to Balkanisation', *The Times* (8 May 1991), p.15.
[205] Editorial, 'Sharp Message to the Serbs', *Guardian* (3 August 1991), p. 22. See also 'Here Lies Yugoslavia', *Economist*, Vol. 320, No. 7719 (August 10th 1991), pp. 9-10.

identity in the British imagination has been identified with political instability, economic backwardness, the Oriental heritage of the Ottomans and, after the Second World War, Communism. Arguments such as the above were used by the British media of 1990-91 to demonstrate that Slovenia and Croatia were more 'European' than 'Balkan': they were wealthy, especially Slovenia, 'the smallest and economically strongest of Yugoslavia's six republics';[206] they had historical links with Austria-Hungary; and they had initiated a drive towards free market economy and a multi-party political system. Hence, Richard Bassett argued in *The Times* that Croats and Slovenes had discovered 'their credentials as Central Europeans, denied to them by four decades of communist propaganda linking them to Belgrade'.[207] The old border line, which separated the Austro-Hungarian from the Ottoman Empire, was now used by British journalists in order to justify the fact that Slovenia and Croatia were 'different', as they had a long association with Central European values, in contrast with the rest of Yugoslavia which had remained 'undeniably Balkan'.[208] None of this meant, though, that the British press was inclined to welcome the prospect of independence for Slovenia or Croatia.

The aspiration of these 'non-Balkan' Yugoslav republics to become independent states threatened of course to bring about exactly the feature that lies at the heart of the Balkan stereotype: political instability. In a world order that was still conceived in Cold War terms, the break-up of Yugoslavia might initiate a maelstrom of hopelessly intermingled disputes that would endanger the stability of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. These fears were best summarised in *The Times*[209] and the *Economist*, the latter arguing that

Fighting, if it comes, might spill over the borders of Hungary, Albania, perhaps even Greece. More plausibly, the splitting of Yugoslavia would be an example to would-be separatists in Slovakia and the western republics of the Soviet Union.[210]

The British press was virtually unanimous in its condemnation of the two declarations of independence, and made crystal clear that Slovenia and Croatia had just stepped into an unwelcoming world. *The Times* argued that to survive economically, the

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[206] Barney Petrovic and Ian Traynor, 'Slovenes Join Democratic Ranks', *Guardian* (9 April 1990), p. 8.
[207] Richard Bassett, 'Austrians Dispatch Cavalry to Drum Up Business in Croatia', *The Times* (8 February 1991), p. 11.
[208] See Richard Bassett, 'Defiant Slovenes Vote to Secede', *The Times* (24 December 1990), p. 6 and Barney Petrovic, 'Slovenes' Vote Could Break Yugoslavia', *Guardian* (7 April 1990), p. 6.
[209] David Watts, 'European Leaders Divided on EC Role in Yugoslav Collapse', *The Times* (6 August 1991), p. 8.
[210] *Economist*, 'Yugoslavia is Such a Bother', Vol. 320, No. 7713 (29 June 1991), pp. 47-48 (p. 48).

republics would need 'fully fledged Western assistance, and this is definitely not on offer',[211] while the *Guardian* pointed out that 'the real question is not whether it is right, but whether it is wise'.[212] Their decision also came under attack from the financial world, because the external debt of Yugoslavia was huge ($18 billion) and international rules were very unclear about what should happen to such debts in cases of countries' dissolution.[213] The academic Bojko Bučar has also emphasised the fact that the disintegration of the Yugoslav market into several smaller ones was neither in the interest of importers to the country nor of investors.[214] Even in the House of Lords, Lord Bottomely referred to the Anglo-Yugoslav trade agreement, and warned that 'if Croatia and Slovenia were given independence, it would be bad for both Yugoslavia and this country'.[215]

Despite this negative coverage, Slovenia managed to attract a kind of sympathy that can perhaps be attributed to Britain's popular "plucky-little-nation phenomenon", which dates back at least to August 1914, when the first German offensive to crush France encountered strong resistance as it passed across Belgium. This generated a wave of sympathy for 'brave little Belgium',[216] and the same thing happened with Poland in 1939, with Finland during the Winter War of 1939-40[217] and, later with Czechoslovakia, following the invasion of 1968. The phenomenon has not been confined to the political arena but has also affected football, as the sympathy for the performance of the Belgian national team in the World Cup of 1986 or those of Cameroon (1990), North Korea (1966) and Bulgaria (1994) has shown. Unfortunately there is no academic study of this phenomenon to which reference can be made. This was confirmed after a personal correspodence with Dr. Anna Cienciala of the University of Kansas, who has made a similar reference (see footnote 217).

Slovenia was often described in the pages of the British newspapers in terms that bring to mind the Duchy of Grand Fenwick, the Ruritanian fantasy in Jack

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[211] Ian Traynor, 'Slovenia and Croatia on Brink of Independence', *The Times* (24 June 1991), p. 8.

[212] Editorial, 'Europe and the Splitting Image', *Guardian* (26 June 1991), p.20.

[213] Alex Brunner, 'The New Republics Can Go It Alone in Federal Europe', *Guardian* (27 June 1991), p. 12.

[214] Bojko Bučar, 'The International Recognition of Slovenia', in *Making a New Nation: The Formation of Slovenia*, ed. by Danica Fink-Hafner and John R. Robbins (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1997), pp. 31-45 (p. 35 and footnotes).

[215] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Lords*, Vol. 530, 17 June - 12 July 1991 (London: HMSO, 1991), p. 1187.

[216] *The Times*, 'The War Day by Day: The Fighting at Liege' (7 August 1914), p. 4.

[217] Anna Cienciala, *The Communist Nations Since 1917* (Chapter 6), paper supporting her course in the University of Kansas (December 1999), published on-line in <http://www.ku.edu/~ibetext/texts/cienciala> [accessed 8 February 2002]. See also Editorial, 'Time and the Balkans', *The Times* (15 May 1999), p. 7.

Arnold's film *The Mouse that Roared* (1959).[218] It was a tranquil Alpine corner, full of castles in mountainous principalities, and peaceful cottages in dreamy mountain villages, whose people formed 'a public whose one passion, apart from plum brandy, is praising their republic with patriotic songs'[219] and had an added reputation for industriousness and homeliness.[220] Its capital Ljubljana was a place with a population less than that of Manchester, where you needed only half an hour to look at the pictures in the National Gallery, where the Ministry of Agriculture had only one telephone line, and the football commentator on national television worked from Monday to Friday as a family doctor.[221] Ljubljana was also portrayed as

an ideal miniature metropolis, borrowing a top-dressing of style – but not too sedulously – from the Italians, just over the western horizon, and owing its burgherish texture to Austria...The Balkans are a world away unless you notice the curly-haired Albanians and Macedonian waiters taking orders in five languages.[222]

2.3 British press reactions to the Slovenian war of independence

When the federal tanks rolled into Slovenia in June 1991, the republic quickly emerged in the British press as a David with a sling pitted against the Goliath of the federal army,[223] with its inhabitants portrayed as mild-mannered peoples struggling to become part of democratic Europe and escape the Balkan quagmire.[224] Furthermore, the television coverage (see Chart 1, p. 201) helped reinforce this rapport, showing images of destruction and chaos caused by the JNA: a group of federal tanks firing at a barricade;[225] another tank blowing up a lorry;[226] a badly burnt soldier lying on blanket;[227] or a burnt house in the countryside with its owner moving smouldering hay.[228] As journalists Laura Silber and Allan Little argued,

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[218] Roger Boyes, 'Europe's Real Ruritania', *The Times* (5 July 1991), p. 18.
[219] Jim Fish, 'Huge Slovenian Vote for Independence', *Guardian* (24 December 1990), p. 6.
[220] *Economist*, 'Slovenia's Self-Defence', Vol. 321, No. 7714 (6 July 1991), p. 48.
[221] Mark Thompson, *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia* (London: Vintage, 1992), p. 10.
[222] *Ibid.*, p. 25.
[223] Roger Boyes, 'Slovenes Prepare Guerrilla War to Cripple the Federal Goliath', *The Times* (29 June 1991), p. 9. See also David Williams, 'David and Goliath', *Daily Mail* (4 July 1991), p. 10.
[224] Louise Branson, Ian Glover-James and Peter Millar, 'Bitter Blood on the Road to War', *Sunday Times* (30 June 1991), pp. 1/12-13.
[225] BBC Evening News, 28 June 1991, 21.00 hours.
[226] BBC Afternoon News, 2 July 1991, 18.00 hours.
[227] BBC Evening News, 2 July 1991, 21.00 hours.
[228] BBC Afternoon News, 4 July 1991, 18.00 hours.

international opinion did, indeed, turn. Television pictures, beamed around the world, suggested a plucky little nation – in the tradition of Czechoslovakia – westward-leaning, democratically-inclined and struggling to liberate itself from a reactionary, unreconstructed Communist monolith.[229]

Until then, both the EC as a whole, and its individual members, had provided unanimous support to the Yugoslav government. But from 27 June onwards, diversions emerged both among the EC's decision makers on the one hand, and within British opinion on the other. In the EC Helmut Kohl's Germany urged for the first time immediate recognition for the separatist republics, while British "informed opinion" swayed between support for a new looser confederation, the recognition of the republics' independence, and the view that nothing could be done because of the nature of the Balkans. The failure of the ill-prepared multinational conscript JNA force to deal with Slovenian resistance[230] made fears of a wider dissolution of Eastern Europe appear realistic, and British Prime Minister John Major made it plain that the first prize was to keep the federation of Yugoslavia together.[231] The British government, conscious according to the Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd that the old system was in an advanced state of decay,[232] opted for a new type of federation among Yugoslavia's existing republics. This position was supported by the EC's smaller countries, but was undermined in the course of the events by Italy and, especially, Germany. On the quest for a new federation, Lord Carrington proposed a plan to transform Yugoslavia into a looser confederation of six sovereign republics which, although labelled as an EC plan, reflected the British government's desires for the future of the country. According to Lord Carrington,

it seemed to me that the right way to do it was to allow those who wanted to be independent to be independent, and to associate themselves with a central organization as far as they wanted to. Those who didn't want to be independent, well, they could stay within what had been Yugoslavia. In other words you could do it, so to speak, à la carte'.[233]

Quite unexpectedly though, the British government's recommended policy towards Yugoslavia was undermined from the inside. In the House of Lords, the Conservative Marquess of Tweeddale asked Her Majesty's Government to reconsider

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[229] Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Revised Edition (London: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 160.
[230] Anton Grizold, 'The Defence of Slovenia', in *Making a New Nation: The Formation of Slovenia*, ed. by Danica Fink-Hafner and John R. Robbins (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1997), pp. 46-55.
[231] Silber and Little, p. 159.
[232] George Brock, 'West May Give Rebel Republics Recognition', *The Times* (4 July 1991), p. 1.
[233] Silber and Little, p. 191.

their decision not to recognise Slovenia and Croatia as sovereign states,[234] while in the House of Commons the Labour MP Ken Livingstone (East Brent) asked why the British government 'does not accept that the Slovenes and Croat peoples have the same right to their own political and cultural identity and freedom as we have demanded for ourselves'.[235] The usual official reply to such questions was that the recognition of the two republics could force the pace and create an explosion in Kosovo, Bosnia and the Republic of Macedonia.

Of the British newspapers under review here, only *The Times* firmly and constantly supported the government's policy.[236] The *Sunday Times*, on the other hand, emerged as the strongest advocate of independence for Slovenia and Croatia. The paper criticised the Foreign Office for being unable to grasp the complexity of Yugoslav politics, and accused the rest of the press of a tendency to explain recent problems by referring to anachronisms:

As far as the statesmen were concerned, Yugoslavia was infinitely preferable as a sunny, scenic, muddled, half-communist, quasi-capitalist irrelevance rather as a theatre of war... Government spokesmen reached for history books to resurrect the clichés of the Balkan crises of the early years of this century. The talk was of "powderkegs" and "tinderboxes", eloquent archaisms; journalists looked for ways of mentioning Sarajevo, in the hope that the very name of the sleepy capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina would lend a *frisson* of 1914.

The *Sunday Times*, therefore, argued that the much-desired aim of Britain's foreign policy – the continued existence of Yugoslavia – was the real threat for the region:

The Balkans today need not prove a "tinderbox", not even an electronic detonator, to update the metaphor. With the Cold War over, neither of the superpowers has any vested interest at risk in Yugoslavia...the next task for the new world order is the peaceful dismemberment of Yugoslavia.[237]

A similar opinion was voiced in the *Economist*:

By signalling in advance that it would not recognise an independent Slovenia and Croatia, the West foolishly put its faith in the powerless and unelected federal government. The Yugoslav army...assumed that if it held the country together at gun-point the West would not mind too much.[238]

Most of the British newspapers and the BBC's coverage presented an image of the Federal army as responsible for the outbreak of a civil war by executing a *Blitzkrieg* against Slovenia. How justified was this? The Yugoslav Minister of Defence Veljko Kadijević, 'a moderate and a convinced Yugoslav [whose] opposition

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[234] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Lords*, Vol. 530 (London: HMSO, 1991), p. 1186.
[235] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. 193 (London: HMSO, 1991), p. 1140.
[236] Editorial, 'End of a Federation', *The Times* (29 June 1991), p. 13.
[237] Editorial, 'The End of Yugoslavia', *Sunday Times* (30 June 1991), p. 2/5.
[238] *Economist*, 'War in Europe', Vol. 320, No. 7714 (6 July 1991), pp. 11-12.

to martial law and political meddling is on record',[239] had every right to take such a decision since the Federal Presidency was not operational at the time and his immediate superior had declared the secession to be illegal. This was also supported publicly by the British Permanent Under-Secretary of State Mark Lennox-Boyd.[240] What happened in Slovenia can thus hardly be described as an invasion. The federal army deployed 2,000 men (most of them teenage conscripts) in order to make sure that 400 policemen and 270 customs officials could reach 35 land border crossings, the capital's airport and the principal maritime port of Koper.[241] The JNA had in fact informed the Slovenes about its plans in advance of the operation, had disclosed the precise routes that the troops were to take, and had placed the forces under the command of the Slovene General Konrad Kolšek. On 27 June, it was Slovenia's Territorial Defence units that declared war when they opened fire on a JNA helicopter which carried bread to the federal troops, killing its two-man crew, and, on 2 July, it was the Slovenians again that drove the conflict towards escalation. As the *Guardian* noted

It was needless provocation for Ljubljana to prevent the federal units from withdrawing unless they left their equipment behind. It was militarily unwise, leading to the deadly use of federal airpower...the Slovenian government will quickly forfeit the considerable sympathy for its aspirations abroad unless it shows the maturity to behave like the independent state it now claims to be.[242]

2.4 A key turning point? The British press and the siege of Dubrovnik

Despite sympathy for Slovenia, it was the siege of Dubrovnik at the end of October 1991 that caused a decisive turn of the British press in favor of the rebel republics, although the siege was nothing like as brutal and deadly as that of Vukovar. But while Vukovar was described often in papers such as the *Guardian* as a place full of Croatian right-wing paramilitary units,[243] Dubrovnik had important historical monuments and was familiar to many Britons as a beloved holiday destination. As

[239] Tim Judah, 'Yugoslavia's Rebel Republics Urged to Stay in Federation', *The Times* (25 June 1991), p. 10.
[240] *House of Commons*, Vol. 193, p. 1138.
[241] Mihailo Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), p. 162 and footnote.
[242] Editorial, 'Europe is not Merely Marginal', *Guardian* (3 July 1991), p. 20.
[243] See Ed Vulliamy, 'Croatian Extremist Militia Seizes Military Initiative' and 'Wolves of Vukovar Keep Serbian Soldiers at Bay', *Guardian* (16 October 1991 and 22 October 1991), p. 8 and p. 7 respectively.

Dubrovnik grew into an important issue (admittedly more for the newspapers than television)[244], British press' reports drew a gloomy picture of a city without electricity, fresh water, or regular provisions, where rats had begun to appear in the streets.[245] It was an image that was reinforced by television pictures of damaged buildings,[246] bombs falling in the city's harbour,[247] and Federal troops firing shells into the wrecked medieval walls around the city.[248]

The change that Dubrovnik brought about in British press coverage was particularly evident in the *Guardian*'s reports, which until then had fluctuated in their editorial stance towards Croatia. At some points the newspaper had found itself in agreement with *The Times*, supporting the idea that a possible recognition of the republic would be deeply provocative to Serbia, and provide a recipe for much worse fighting: 'This is what the Croats refused from the beginning to understand – that they could not walk out of Yugoslavia with all the territory and people they held under an earlier and different dispensation without starting a war'.[249] The paper also stated firmly on occasion that it could not feel the same sort of sympathy for the Croatians which the Slovenians had aroused,[250] arguing that 'the adventurist behaviour of the Croatians has made the conflict much worse'.[251] Its columnist Edward Pearce noted that

the last thing we should do is idealise the Croats. They have an evil history in modern times. There has already been a Croat state with its own stamps and flag. It lasted from 1941 to 1945 under the protection of the *Reichsführer*, and its adherents committed crimes which made the Gestapo blanch.[252]

Nevertheless, on other occasions, the newspaper printed very different views, and found itself among the supporters of the two republics' international recognition: 'Would we stand back with arms quite so firmly folded', its editor wondered, 'if, let us say, Yugoslavia exported oil rather than imported it?'[253] This stance was reinforced

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[244] See Chart 2 (p. 201), where is clear that the BBC devoted more time to Croatia in September rather than the months of the Dubrovnik's siege.
[245] Kevin Sullivan, 'Families Appeal for Help as Port City is Besieged', *Guardian* (7 October 1991), p. 8.
[246] BBC Afternoon News, 3 November 1991, 18.25 hours.
[247] BBC Afternoon News, 13 November 1991, 18.00 hours.
[248] BBC Evening News, 7 December 1991, 21.40 hours.
[249] Editorial, 'An End to the Carnage?', *Guardian* (27 November 1991), p. 20.
[250] Editorial, 'Sharp Message to the Serbs', Guardian (3 August 1991), p. 20.
[251] Editorial, 'The Breech Birth of Two Nations', *Guardian* (16 January 1992), p. 22.
[252] Edward Pearce, 'A Land Riven by Ancient Hatred', *Guardian* (3 July 1991).
[253] Editorial, 'Now it is a Different Sort of War', *Guardian* (21 September 1991), p. 22. For a similar opinion see also Woodraw Wyatt, 'The World Should Use Military Force to Save Croatia', *The Times* (24 September 1991), p. 16.

after the dramatic events of Dubrovnik, on the occasion of which the newspaper pointed out that

in the history of the bombardments from the air this may soon rank with the savagery of Guernica and the wantonness of Vietnam. Yet somehow it is still regarded as deeply regrettable but sadly unstoppable. Last night Mr. Major was still protesting that it was "extremely difficult to see what could be done"...What is this moral numbness which in essence continues to regard Yugoslavia as a Balkan cockpit?[254]

The outcry was not restricted to the *Guardian*'s pages. *The Times* mentioned that 'people can be and are constantly replaced; historic cities are for all time',[255] whilst the *Daily Telegraph* paralleled on its front page (13 November) the attack with the Barbarian hordes advancing on Rome. A report from Dubrovnik was the only time that the fight in Croatia gained a front page in the *Sunday Times*, while even the readers of the *Daily Mail*, hitherto uninterested in Yugoslav issues, responded with letters of protest. The destruction of Dubrovnik's cultural heritage[256] was ranked with a possible destruction of Venice and the bombardment of the Parthenon by the Turks in the last century,[257] and many newspapers' readers demanded an immediate recognition of Croatian independence.[258] Others asked for a military force to preserve Croatia's integrity[259] on the grounds that the Croats were 'anticommunists with long ties to Europe via the Hapsburgs and Venice'.[260] Sir Fitzroy Maclean, by then in his eighties, also participated symbolically in a co-ordinated humanitarian mission with Bernard Kouchner, France's Minister for humanitarian relief (and founder of the Médecins sans Frontières) and Margherita Boniver, Italy's immigration Minister.

The reaction of the press helped to shape the debate in Parliament. Dubrovnik's siege caused John Major's political manoeuvres to come under fire from the ex-Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who urged the government not only to recognise Croatia, but to help it militarily, too.[261] The Liberal Democrats established an all-party Friends Of Croatia group, while MP David Alton (Liverpool) asked for the recognition of Croatia, Calum Macdonald (Western Isles) for an air blockade, and

[254] Editorial, 'A Faraway Tragedy, Blankly Observed', *Guardian* (13 November 1991), p. 22.
[255] Editorial, 'War of Art', *The Times* (3 October 1991), p. 17.
[256] See Dorde Obradovic, Pavo Urban et al., *Suffering of Dubrovnik*, 5th edn. (Dubrovnik: Dubrovacki Vjesnik, 1992).
[257] Anthony P. Suchy, 'Dubrovnik Bombing', *The Times* (26 October 1991), p. 13.
[258] 'Outrage of Attack on Dubrovnik', *Guardian* (5 October 1991), p. 22.
[259] Kathleen V. Wilkes, 'Independence Key to End of Torment in Yugoslavia', *The Times* (18 September 1991), p. 17.
[260] Conrad Jameson, 'Diplomatic Blind Spots over Yugoslavia', *Guardian* (25 November 1991), p. 22.
[261] BBC Evening News, 22 November 1991, 21.00.

Peter Fry (Wellingborough) for a naval one.[262] In the House of Lords, the Marquess of Tweeddale asked on 20 November for urgent action to help Croatia. He spoke of the Croatians' 'culturally Western attitude', and proposed the commitment of British warships to the Adriatic Sea, and British airplanes to clear Croatian airspace of Yugoslav aircrafts: 'We acted on behalf of the Kurds, a people altogether more strange and obscure. We cannot leave that entirely European people – virtually neighbours of ours – to a fate which they do not deserve'.[263] His view, however, was not supported by all. The Earl of Lauderdale said that there was little to choose between the regimes of Croatia and Serbia:

We are confronted with people who, under Communism, were largely cut off from intellectual contact with the West...the appeal of Croats and Slovenes to the principle of self-determination is a throwback to 19th Century thinking and attitudes. While Dubrovnik says that the West has deserted it, we have no obligation whatever to give military help.[264]

Lord Richard also argued that there was a Serbian minority inside Croatia that had valid preoccupations and concerns,[265] while Lord Brabason of Tara pointed out that 'the long-term stability of the region must be based on respect for minority rights. We should use the leverage of non-recognition to ensure that satisfactory mechanisms for protecting ethnic minorities are first put in place'.[266] This was similar to the official position taken by the Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd: 'Recognition of a series of small Balkan countries, without a framework allowing for cooperation and protection of minorities, would not be a recipe for future stability'.[267]

In this row in Parliament and on pages of the newspapers, very few noticed that although Serbs were clearly the aggressors, the Croatians, as the Slovenes before them, were not blameless for the escalation of the conflict. The Croat defence forces of the city were not blameless for the partial destruction of Dubrovnik's historical monuments, as they showed little interest in the fate of their own medieval heritage at least as strong as this of the Federal attackers:

They were returning fire from gun and small artillery positions on the old town walls, goading the JNA into firing on them. They were cunningly exploiting international outrage for military purposes.[268]

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[262] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. 198 (London: HMSO, 1991) p. 1207.
[263] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Lords*, Vol. 532 (London: HMSO, 1991) p. 993.
[264] *Ibid.*, p. 995.
[265] *Ibid.*, p. 1003.
[266] *Ibid.*, p. 1006.
[267] Douglas Hurd, 'Averting a Balkan Tragedy', *The Times* (3 December 1991), p. 14.
[268] Glenny, p. 136.

Misha Glenny also points out that in the climate of the times all those who were critical of Tudjman's programme were subject to poisonous attacks: 'Most shocking of all were the people I had known for many years from left and liberal circles in the United Kingdom who had fallen under the spell of Croatian nationalism'.[269] A similar opinion was put forward by the writer John Burns, who accused the Western media of partiality:

No Western commentator questioned the right of the Slovenes to attack the federal army, although this was the army of the federal state of which they were a part... Hardly any reports spoke of the suspension by the Croatian government of police and judicial authorities in the municipalities that had voted against Franjo Tudjman in 1990, nor the publication of a book listing all Serb family names in western Slavonia, preparatory to the commencement of removing Serb families from villages.[270]

2.5 British reactions to the recognition of Slovenian and Croatian independence

Croatian propaganda in 1990-91[271] had tried to arouse Western public opinion using arguments that linked Serbian atrocities to the massacres of the Bashi-Bazouks in Bulgaria.[272] But it had proved ineffective in arousing a similar wave of sympathy to the one of 1876, because the West had dismissed it as simplistic and one-sided. But after the events in Dubrovnik, even those who had a measure of understanding for the Serb position in the conflict could not withhold condemnation of 'such barbaric acts as the shelling of an ancient cultural and historic treasure protected by UNESCO'.[273] The impact of Dubrovnik caused an outcry in Germany and reached the EC through the country's officials. German arm-twisting proved successful, and on 17 December 1991 the Belgian Foreign Minister Mark Eyskens announced on behalf of the EC that 'we decided today to recognise all Yugoslav republics, as long as they meet several criteria'.[274] Although the German solution to the crisis proved catastrophic, there was (and still is) a widespread tendency to ascribe its foreign policy towards Yugoslavia to

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[269] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

[270] John Burns, 'The Media as Impartial Observers or Protagonists: Conflict Reporting or Conflict Encouragement in Former Yugoslavia', in *Bosnia by Television*, ed. by James Gow, Richard Paterson and Alison Preston (London: British Film Institute, 1996), pp. 92-102 (p. 93).

[271] Dušan Bilandžič *et all.*, *Croatia Between War and Independence*, 2nd edn., trans. by Vera Andrassy and others (Zagreb: Zagreb University, 1991).

[272] Roger Boyes, 'Atrocities by Numbers', *The Times* (16 September 1991), p. 14.

[273] Crnobrnja, p. 172.

[274] 'George Brock, 'EC Sets to Recognise Yugoslav Republics', *The Times* (17 December 1991), p. 11.

a dark and ambitious plan for future economic and political domination in the EU, a theory that lacks any empirical foundation. The German position was wrong in terms of Realpolitik, but perhaps ethically justifiable, since it was based on the same principles of self-determination that had made German re-union a reality. But it ignored the fact that the same principle of self-determination should apply to the Serbs of Croatia also.[275]

Official reactions in Britain were rather bitter, exemplified by Lord Carrington's claim that 'the only incentive we had to get anybody to agree to anything was the ultimate recognition of their independence. Otherwise, there was no carrot. You just threw it away, just like that'.[276] However, the academic Marc Weller said that 'it was unlikely that general consent to the draft agreement could be achieved as long as recognition depended on the agreement of all parties. For, in effect, Serbia could exercise a veto over the issue of recognition by frustrating the talks in The Hague'.[277] Another distinguished supporter of the German proposition of recognition was the *Economist*, which published an editorial arguing that

It was perhaps inevitable that John Major's Maastricht opt-outs would set a precedent for other big countries that feel strongly on specific issues. Germans feel especially concerned about Croatia because of historical links.[278]

For *The Times*, on the other hand, the essence of the debate about the future of Slovenia and Croatia was not so much recognition as the terms on which it would be achieved. While the formation of a state is usually a fact, recognition is a legal act that enables states to participate into the international community and establish diplomatic relations. In the British political tradition, recognition is not usually based on any moral criteria, but is instead given to any strong government that can exercise effective power.[279] Recognition 'implies neither approval nor disapproval of a government, but an acknowledgement that it has sovereign authority in a given territory'.[280] Thus, the main criteria are a clearly defined territory and a government able to exercise its control within the latter's boundaries. Slovenia, mainly because of its ethnic homogeneity (87.84% Slovenians), did indeed fulfil these criteria, whereas

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[275] For more on the issue see Michael Libal, *Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis 1991-1992* (Westport, CO: Praeger, 1997).
[276] Silber and Little, p. 200.
[277] Marc Weller, 'The International Response to the Dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia', *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 86 (1992), pp. 569-607 (p. 587).
[278] *The Economist*, 'Countdown to Recognition', Vol. 321, No. 7738 (21 December 1991), p. 58.
[279] Editorial, 'Doing What in Croatia?', *Guardian* (18 September 1991), p. 20.
[280] Editorial, 'Rules of the Game', *The Times* (6 July 1991), p. 15.

Croatia, precisely because of the existence of a substantial and hostile Serbian minority (12.16%), manifestly did not.[281] Only a few among those who advocated Slovenia's independence took notice of the resurrection of right-wing politics, the minor political skirmishes in setting the borders with Italy, or the temporary economic stagnation and increase of unemployment that accompanied the picture of the immediate years after independence.[282]

2.5 Back to stereotypes: Balkan or Central Europe?

It is appropriate at this point to conclude the discussion by returning to the analysis of the dilemma 'Balkan' or 'Central European' that emerged first in 1990-91, mainly in the reports about Slovenia (see pages 70-71 above), and which formed the core of many arguments in favor or against the two republics' cause. This dilemma had its roots in traditional British images of the Balkans, and reproduced all the essential arguments that helped the area to be re-created in the British imagination as a non-Western area (see the relevant discussion in chapter 1).

From the beginning of the Ten-Days War, the *Daily Mail* made reference to Balkanisation, i.e. the breaking up of a territory into small, hostile states,[283] and reproduced Samuel Huntington's argument about the invisible fault line that runs through Yugoslavia separating the civilization of Central Europe in the northwest from the ruined southeast corrupted by centuries of Ottoman rule. The Balkans for the *Daily Mail* was nothing more than an 'improbable multi-tribal construct',[284] a minefield where nobody's life can be safe.[285] Serbs and Croats were portrayed as neighbours who always hated each other,[286] and Yugoslavia as a potential European Lebanon,[287] a deadly mix of feudal Balkan tribes cursed by enduring hatreds.[288] It

[281] Editorial, 'Reckless Recognition', *The Times* (17 December 1991), p. 15. See also 'Recognising the Inevitable' (26 August 1991), p. 15.

[282] See Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft (eds.), *Independent Slovenia: Origins, Movements, Prospects* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994) and Frane Adam, 'Slovenia: A Success Story or Facing an Uncertain Future?', in *Yugoslavia and After: A Study in Fragmentation, Despair and Rebirth*, ed. by David A. Dyker and Ivan Vejvoda (London: Longman, 1996), pp. 213-31 (p. 224).

[283] Editorial, 'The Ballot Box or the Tank?', *Daily Mail* (28 June 1991), p. 6.

[284] Editorial, 'The Only Bandwagon That's on the Move', *Daily Mail* (9 December 1991), p. 6.

[285] Editorial, 'Dying for Peace', *Daily Mail* (8 January 1992), p. 6.

[286] Anna Pukas, 'Tense Wait for War: Ready to Do Battle in the Villages Divided by Hate', *Daily Mail* (4 July 1991), p. 10.

[287] Editorial, 'EC Must Act Firmly in Yugoslavia', *Daily Mail* (30 July 1991), p. 6.

[288] Editorial, 'Hand-Wringing Over Balkan Blood Feuds', *Daily Mail* (9 August 1991), p. 10.

would be wrong, however, to argue that the *Daily Mail* had the monopoly in such an interpretation of the Yugoslav conflicts, as very similar opinions were constantly present in all the newspapers under consideration. Louise Branson of the *Sunday Times* presented Croatia as a European Beirut,[289] Roger Boyes wrote in *The Times* that blood and the Balkans mix as freely as tonic and gin,[290] whilst some of the *Guardian*'s reporters explained the conflicts in terms of traditional rivalries[291] and 'ever-turbulent Balkan nationalism'.[292] Opinions of experts in Yugoslav issues expressed similar views in TV programmes, with Dr. Mark Wheeler arguing that 'all that's happening now is war-lordism, Lords of the valley carving out little empires, who won't be subordinated to anybody's command'.[293] Even the *Economist* made an effort to link the situation to 1914:

Thoughts inevitably flash back to 1914, when trouble in this part of the Balkans led all the way to world war...Back came the centuries-old fault-lines between the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Back came the bitter memories of the carnage of the second world war, when Serbs and Croats slaughtered one another...Yugoslavia is a potentially infectious carrier of a virus that risks becoming the AIDS of international politics.[294]

Whereas in all the other newspapers under review here opinions of this kind were the opinions of just some reporters and columnists, in the *Daily Mail*'s case they were often the views of the editor. Moreover, in January 1992, at a time when all British newspapers expressed concern for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, no paper produced an argument as controversial as the *Daily Mail*, which based its concern on the perception of a 'civilised' Europe versus the 'uncivilised' Balkans:

If they wash behind their ears, promise not to beat up their minorities and observe international frontiers, then, by January 15, we in Europe are ready to accept them as fully-fledged statelets.[295]

If these hopelessly embittered Balkan chaps, the argument seems to run, are determined to slaughter one another, there is precious little we can do about it: 'For nearly three months', wrote Richard West in a special article in the *Daily Mail* devoted to the situation in Yugoslavia, 'we have watched Croats and Serbs murder one another nightly on TV, with relief that their feud did not seem to concern us here

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[289] Luise Branson, 'Echoes of Beirut as Serb Guns Crackle', *Sunday Times* (4 August 1991), p. 1/18.
[290] Roger Boyes, 'Europeans Must Intervene', *The Times* (21 September 1991), p. 6.
[291] Barney Petrovic, 'Croatian Media Reports 35 Dead in Ethnic Clashes', *Guardian* (3 May 1991), p. 8. See also Ed Vulliamy, 'Slavic Shades of Ulster', *Guardian* (9 July 1991), p. 19.
[292] John Ardill, 'Date of Deadly Significance', *Guardian* (29 June 1991), p. 8.
[293] Quoted in BBC's Afternoon News, 5 September 1991, 18.00 hours.
[294] *Economist*, 'War in Europe', Vol. 320, No. 7714 (6 July 1991), pp. 11-12 (p. 11).
[295] Editorial, 'Germany Makes Its Weight Felt', *Daily Mail* (18 December 1991), p. 6.

in Britain...We in the British Isles like to regard the quarrels of Yugoslavia as something that is as far away as El Salvador or Cambodia'.[296] A very similar, though isolated, opinion was expressed in *The Times* by Bernard Levin, who wrote that

I am not heartless, and I shudder daily at the rising toll of death in Yugoslavia, but there is nothing I can do about it *and there is nothing anybody else can do either*...let us be selfish. Let us recognise that there will be no civil war in Britain.[297]

Closely connected with the re-emergence of the traditional British views about the Balkans is the kind of affinity that Slovenia managed to attract in the beginning of the Ten-Days War. This "plucky-little-nation" portrait was closely linked to Slovenia's non-Balkan image. Slovenia was first of all wealthy: 'The well-off Slovenes have more in common with the neighbouring Austrians than with most fellow Yugoslavs'.[298] Secondly, it had a European identity, based on its geographical proximity with Central Europe[299] and its historical links with the same region.[300] Last but not least, in contrast to Croatia, Slovenia had ethnic homogeneity, and was familiar with the institutions and practices of Western democracy, as 'a decade of liberalisation has created democratic habits, visible in vigorous parliamentary debate'.[301] The end of the war in Slovenia marks the point at which this country's fate was separated from the future of Croatia. The latter's once praised Western orientation was now as 'real as the Balkan undertow forever dragging the country south-eastwards'.[302] This distinction between the two countries, according to Jonathan Eyal, the director of studies at the Royal United Services Institute in London, played the EC right into Serbia's hands.[303]

As the evidence reviewed so far indicates, both the Slovenian and the Croatian wars were seen as issues of interest to elite opinion rather than the mass public. This provides us with reasonable grounds for arguing that Richard West was right when he pointed out that people in Britain liked to regard the quarrels of Yugoslavia as something that is as far away as El Salvador or Cambodia. This remark illuminates another interesting aspect of the conflict's coverage, as journalists accompanied their reports with maps of Yugoslavia, designed to educate their readers. Ten maps of the

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[296] Richard West, 'We're Right to Stay out of This Bloodbath', *Daily Mail* (18 September 1991), p. 6.
[297] Bernard Levin, 'Satan Laughs at Yugoslavia', *The Times* (19 September 1991), p. 16.
[298] Michael Simmons, 'Slovenes Pay Wages of War', *Guardian* (29 June 1991), p. 8.
[299] Jonathan Eyal, 'Military Crackdown Followed Well-Prepared Plan', *Guardian* (3 July 1991), p. 8.
[300] Paul Johnson, 'The Balkan Jigsaw Doomed to Failure', *Daily Mail* (1 July 1991), p. 6.
[301] *Economist*, 'Coming Apart, Coming Together', Vol. 322, No. 7715 (13 July 1991), pp. 51-52 (p. 51).
[302] Thompson, *A Paper House*, p. 287.
[303] Jonathan Eyal, 'Ignorance and Haste Thwart EC Mediation', *Guardian* (8 August 1991), p. 6.

region were used in *The Times'* coverage of the Ten-Days War from 24 June up to 10 July 1991, and another 56 for Croatia, from 12 July up to 31 December 1991.[304] This pattern was echoed in the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail* too. Both *The Times* and the *Guardian*, sophisticated newspapers albeit with different political views, did not expect their educated British readership to be able to find Slovenia and Croatia (or even Yugoslavia) on a map!

SECTION 2B: GREEK PRESS REACTIONS TO THE SLOVENIAN AND CROATIAN WARS OF INDEPENDENCE

2.7 Introduction

A brief comparison of the Greek reactions to the wars in Slovenia and Croatia with the British reactions discussed above reveals both similarities and differences. In both countries, the wars did not attract great interest among the mass public, which remained for the most part an uninterested receiver of television images and newspaper headlines. Similarly, political elites and the press in both Britain and Greece wanted Yugoslavia to remain united, and were not willing to drive another nail into the federation's coffin by supporting either Slovenian or Croatian moves towards independence. Again, as in the British section above, a good deal of the Greek press' coverage of the conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia cannot be examined without reference to the context of Greek foreign policy. For this reason the present section will give it some attention. Even Greek elite opinion was not, though, much concerned by Yugoslav affairs. The reason behind this surprising fact is the first question that this section will try to answer. It will then examine the shared reaction of politicians and journalists at the beginning of the crisis, before proceeding to discuss how the latter disintegrated into two different approaches, as the then Greek government decided that it was more prudent to side with the Serbs and Slobodan Milošević, whereas the newspapers adopted an anti-Serb line. Finally, the section will discuss the character of the Greek reports, focusing particularly on the portrait of the

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[304] According to *The Times Index Jamuary - December 1991* (Reading: Research Publications International, 1992), p. 1182 (Slovenia) and pages 1176-78 (Croatia).

Serbs and the signposting of the siege of Vukovar as the key moment of the Croatian war.

2.8 A sense of apathy

In Greece, as in Britain, the wars in Slovenia and Croatia were mainly discussed by newspapers aimed at an informed public. This phenomenon was astonishing for a country so close to the war zone, a fact that was commented on in the Greek press. In one of its leading articles at the time of the Ten-Days War in Slovenia, the *Eleftherotypia* stated that

Some powers have already sought to become active and take advantage of the situation. But we - a country that should be directly interested in what takes place around us - seem instead to lower our vigilance and fail to see anything other than our own domestic problems.[305]

The paper attacked this general lack of interest in the Croatian conflict, remarking that 'the people, lotus-eaters sunken in the nirvana of individualism and the dominant ideology of profit without effort...do not seem capable of reacting'.[306] On another occasion, following the assaults on Dubrovnik and Vukovar, the paper commented that 'the corpses, the destruction, the drama of the refugees and those who are under siege, even the savagery of the belligerents, clearly do not touch us. Everything seems to be very distant to us, as if it is not happening right beside us'.[307] The *Kathimerini* adopted a similar line, writing that 'the average Greek civilian is uninformed about what is happening nowadays in Yugoslavia...but, on the contrary, is well-informed about Mr. Papandreou's visit to the General State Hospital or Mr. Mitsotakis' high blood sugar'.[308] A similar point of view was expressed in one of the very few readers' letters that were sent concerning the war in Croatia:

Right next to us, in Yugoslavia, a massacre takes place of proportions which are unfamiliar in Europe and not a single Greek public person has raised a voice of protest! Yet, some of them, at other times, had taken the lead on demonstrations on behalf of «freedom fighters» in Chile, in Turkey, in Nicaragua. Nowadays, a deadly silence. As if Yugoslavia were as far from Greece as the Amazon jungle.[309]

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[305] *Eleftherotypia*, Ένας Βενιζέλος;' (28 June 1991), p. 6.

[306] Mihalis Moronis, 'Χωρίς Στόχους η Βαλκανική Πολιτική μας', *Eleftherotypia* (23 September 1991), p. 9.

[307] Mihalis Moronis, 'Ο Εμφύλιος στη Γιουγκοσλαβία και η Μυωπία μας', *Eleftherotypia* (25 November 1991), p. 9.

[308] Akis Kosonas, 'Ανημέρωτος ο Έλληνας Πολίτης', *Kathimerini* (22 November 1991), p. 8.

[309] Nikos Rizos, 'Μια Σιωπή Θανάσιμη', *Eleftherotypia* (2 December 1991), p. 44.

How should this apathy of most Greeks about the disintegration of a country with which Greece had borders and close historical ties be explained? A possible answer is given by the hypothesis presented in chapter 1. If the perception of most Greeks was that they belonged to a world very different from the Balkans, this would reduce the importance of geographic proximity, and imply that they lived "psychologically" very far away from the unrest in Slovenia and Croatia. This hypothesis is supported by the comments of a number of journalists during the conflicts, in whose writing the Balkans were clearly constructed as profoundly 'other'. During the time of the siege of Dubrovnik, for example, the Liberal-Conservative *Kathimerini* wrote that its bombardment 'represents the delayed revenge of Byzantine and Orthodox Serbia against Latin and Catholic Croatia.'[310] The populist Right-wing *Apogevmatini* pointed out that a unified Yugoslavia was the only way that the Balkans, the *traditional powder - keg* [my emphasis] of Europe would not burst into flames,[311] while the Left-liberal *Eleftherotypia* characterised Slovenia and Croatia as the more 'Western' parts of a mosaic of nationalities, languages and religions that had already cracked.[312]

2.9 The Greek press and the start of the crisis

Right from the beginning of the Slovenian conflict, the Conservative government of Konstantinos Mitsotakis adopted a line similar to that of Britain and the rest of the then EC, by announcing that the government of Greece would not recognise unilateral decisions by any of the Yugoslav Republics, instead regarding the present conflict as an internal problem of the Federation.[313] Most newspapers supported this point of view, baptising Slovenia and Croatia as 'naughty' or 'rebel' republics, which were heading for diplomatic isolation.[314] The Greek government did not seem to believe that the situation was about to escalate, but it grew nervous after the first battles between the Federal troops and the Slovenian Territorial Defence units. Prime Minister Mitsotakis avoided accusing any of the belligerents and pointed out the

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[310] *Kathimerini*, 'Το Ντουμπρόβνικ Επέστρεψε στο Μεσαίωνα' (1 December 1991), p. 21.

[311] Editorial, 'Εδώ είναι...Βαλκάνια!', *Apogevmatini* (3 July 1991), p. 5.

[312] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Μωσαϊκό Εθνοτήτων' (27 June 1991), p. 17. See also Menelaos Divolis, 'Ο Γιουγκοσλαβικός Γρίφος', *Eleftherotypia* (9 July 1991), p. 7.

[313] *Kathimerini*, 'Δεν Υπάρχει Θέμα Αναγνώρισης' (27 June 1991) p. 7.

[314] *Kathimerini*, 'Διεθνής Απομόνωση στις Άτακτες Δημοκρατίες' (25 June 1991), p. 7. See also 'Ρέει το Αίμα', *Apogevmatini* (27 June 1991), p. 17.

necessity of keeping some form of unity in Yugoslavia that would preserve the existing frontiers,[315] a statement very similar to that made by John Major at the same time.

The *Eleftherotypia* and the *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* directly accused the Federal Yugoslav General Staff of making things worst by mobilising troops against Slovenia,[316] and characterised the Serbian leadership as a cynical minority of nationalists who behaved anti-democratically and recklessly over the country's future.[317] At the same time, however, the *Eleftherotypia* attacked Slovenia, arguing that its nationalistic aspirations had played right into Milošević's hands, offering him the complete support of the army.[318] Equally, the *Kathimerini* accused Slovenia of unnecessary actions against the Federal units, which escalated the conflict.[319] It added that the country could not survive economically as an independent state, because its economic affluence would not be of much help outside of the Yugoslav market, especially since the EC and USA had made it crystal clear that they were not willing to offer financial assistance.[320] It was evident that Slovenia did not attract the same kind of affinity as in Britain, perhaps because Greece, as a small country itself, lacked the "plucky-little-nation" tradition.

What the newspapers proposed as a solution was in accordance with the wishes of the political leadership, and very similar to the British aspirations at the time. An editorial from the *Kathimerini* shows this clearly, and also reveals the nature of the fears about what could happen if Yugoslavia ended its existence:

History, geography, and the most elementary knowledge of the conditions that could ensure peaceful developments in the area of Yugoslavia itself, and more generally in the Balkans, leads to the view that a form of unity should exist. If unity does not prevail, then no one can prevent the creation of nationalistic movements, frontier disputes and widespread upheaval. Particularly for us, the replacement of Yugoslavia by totally independent states and statelets cannot be seen positively. Not only because it could make our road and railway connection with the rest of Europe even more problematical...but because it could allow the formation of alliances and associations - Turkey is already preparing them with its action in Albania and Bulgaria - which would isolate us even more.[321]

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[315] *Apogevmatini*, 'Παρέμβαση του Ψηλού για Εκεχειρία' (29 June 1991), p. 4.
[316] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Πόλεμο Κήρυξε ο Αρχηγός Στρατού' (3 July 1991), p. 1.
[317] Leonidas Xatziprodromidis, 'Πως Σπάει το Μωσαϊκό', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (30 June 1991), p. 14.
[318] Leonidas Xatziprodromidis, 'Ο Εθνικισμός Οδηγεί στη Βαρβαρότητα', *Eleftherotypia* (1 July 1991), pp. 18-19. See also his article 'Φουντώνει ο Εθνικισμός στις Δημοκρατίες', *Eleftherotypia*, 29 June 1991, pp. 18-19.
[319] *Kathimerini*, 'Το Λόγο Έχει Πάλι ο Στρατός' (3 July 1991), p. 1.
[320] Spyros Pagiatakis, 'Πηγή Δεινών η Διάλυση', *Kathimerini* (5 July 1991), p. 7.
[321] Editorial, 'Η Γιουγκοσλαβική Κρίση και Εμείς', *Kathimerini* (28 June 1991), p. 9.

Hence, the fears expressed in the Greek press can be summarised as: a) fear of active interference by Turkey in the Balkan Peninsula b) fear of the possibility of widespread chaos at its frontiers, which might raise minority questions and c) fear that trade with Central Europe might diminish. The anxiety about waves of immigrants, which at the time concerned Italy much more, was not yet so great.[322]

How sensible were all these fears? The second was surely distant at the time.[323] The fear of Turkey was justifiable to the extent that the latter had indeed attempted to reinforce its position in the area by using its footholds amongst the Muslims of Albania, Bulgaria and the Greek part of Thrace, at a time when relationships between Athens and Ankara were far from cordial.[324] As for the disaster that Greece might suffer economically, the figures do not leave any doubt: Ten days of rather light clashes in Slovenia cost Greece 500 million dollars.[325] The fighting damaged not only transport, as new and more expensive arrangements had to be made with Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary,[326] but also tourism in northern Greece, as flights to Thessaloniki had to be diverted away from the Yugoslavian air space.[327]

Given the fact that Athens regarded Slovenia's secession as a prelude to destabilisation of the whole Peninsula, it is not surprising that the Greek government was annoyed when Helmut Kohl's Germany started pressing unilaterally for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as independent states, without waiting for the EC to formulate a common foreign policy on the issue. While in Britain dissatisfaction with the German manoeuvres was expressed at the end of 1991, when Germany recognised Croatia, in Greece it started with the Brioni Agreement that ended the Ten-Days War. Among the newspapers, only the *Apogevmatini* saw Brioni as the end of the conflict and hailed it as the dawn of a new Yugoslavia.[328] The *Kathimerini*, on the contrary, did not hesitate to speak of Germany in bitter tones, motivated by a comment of a member of the European Parliament:

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[322] See G. Tsakiris, 'Ετοιμασίες για Πρόσφυγες', *Eleftherotypia* (4 July 1991), p. 20.

[323] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Εμφύλιος-Αίμα στη Σλοβενία' (28 June 1991), p. 1.

[324] Editorial, 'Να Συνέλθουν Όλοι', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (30 June 1991), p. 12. See also Giannis Chrysafis, 'Γιουγκοσλαβία: Και Μετά την Εμφύλια Σύρραξη Τι;', *Kathimerini* (30 June 1991), p. 7 and Panos Panagiotopoulos, 'Χωρίς Στόχο η «Παρέμβασή» μας στα Βαλκάνια', *Kathimerini* (7 July 1991), p. 4.

[325] Kostas Tsouparopoulos and Spyros Stamos, 'Ο Νέος από Βορράν Κίνδυνος', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (7 July 1991), pp. 20-21. See also Georgios E. Doudoumis, *Βαλκανικές Εξελίξεις II* (Athens: Δωδώνη, 1996), p. 133.

[326] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Δίοδο στην Ευρώπη Ψάχνει η Ελλάδα' (28 June 1991), p. 18.

[327] Giannis Kamilatis, 'Πλήγμα στον Τουρισμό της Βόρειας Ελλάδας', *Eleftherotypia* (29 June 1991), p. 20.

[328] *Apogevmatini*, 'Γεννιέται η Νέα Γιουγκοσλαβία' (8 July 1991), p. 17.

What can you do in a nearly broken marriage when, on the one hand, the husband says «Alright, I have had it up to here, but let's stay together for the sake of the children» and, on the other hand, the wife wants her freedom back at all costs? For the German Member of the European Parliament Doris Rack...there was never any hesitation: «Simply, the couple breaks up, peacefully and in a civilised way!». With the Teutonic rationality something like that could be self-evident. But what happens if the husband is a genuine Balkan type and prefers to slaughter the woman than to give her a divorce?[329]

The *Eleftherotypia*, too, accused the Germans of seeking to mobilise Slovenes, Croats, Czechs, Slovakians, Hungarians, Romanians, Austrians, and possibly Switzerland, in a political and economic alliance which, at the right moment, would allow them to leave the EC and create a new powerful pole inside Western Europe.[330]

2.10 The Greek press and the Croatian War

The unity among politicians and journalists broke-up when the fighting in Croatia erupted into a full-scale war (August-September 1991). The Greek political leadership and the press never altered their position that Yugoslavia should remain united. The differences instead emerged over how best to achieve this objective, as politicians quietly adopted a pro-Serb stand, which most newspapers (the populist Right-wing *Apogevmatini* excluded) did not like. The first sign of differentiation appeared right after the end of the Ten-Days war in July, in an article published in the Left-liberal *Eleftherotypia* by the then Minister of Trade and Industry, Andreas Andrianopoulos, one of the leading Neo-Liberal personalities of the country, who suggested a different way of achieving Balkan stability:

Germany, mainly, but also Italy, have reasons to welcome a possible independence of those Yugoslav republics which could enlarge their political influence...Thus, it is curious how Mr. Genscher, speaking on behalf of the EC, has expressed opinions that are not, in any case, in step with our country's objectives, or those of other Community states...It is in our interest to preserve the power of Serbia in the internal Yugoslav political scene...a dynamic axis of Greece-Serbia-Bulgaria should from now on be at the top of our aims.[331]

This article was carefully constructed to give the impression of expressing private thoughts and not the opinions of the government. However, its tone implied that

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[329] Spyros Pagiatakis, 'Κακό Παράδειγμα η Απόσχιση', *Kathimerini* (10 July 1991), p. 8.

[330] Leonidas Xatziprodromidis, 'Πώς Θα Δούμε το Πρώτο Ισλαμικό Κράτος της Ευρώπης', *Eleftherotypia* (15 July 1992), p. 15. See also Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, *Πολεμιστής στη Σκιά: Η Προγραμματισμένη Διάλυση της Γιουγκοσλαβίας - Στα Άδυτα της Γερμανικής Ομοσπονδιακής Υπηρεσίας Πληροφοριών*, trans. by Anthula Videnmayer (Athens: Νέα Σύνορα, 1995).

[331] Andreas Andrianopoulos, 'Αναταραχή στα Βαλκάνια και Εθνικοί Χειρισμοί', *Eleftherotypia* (11 July 1991), p. 20.

Athens could not put its trust into a common EC foreign policy, as this clearly did not exist. Greek politicians should instead fight for Greece's own interests in the Balkan neighbourhood. Such interests required a unified Yugoslavia, even if this could be achieved only with a Serbian victory, which would then re-instate the Federation. A similar view to Andreas Andrianopoulos was offered by the assistant Professor of International Relations Yannis Valinakis, who implied that even a Serb-dominated federation under the authoritarian rule of Slobodan Milošević was better than no federation at all. In his analysis Valinakis noted that Milošević, if judged by democratic standards, certainly used authoritarian means and methods, but argued that the Serb leader could serve Greece's interests by halting the aspirations of Skopje.[332]

It lies beyond the scope of the present study to examine the diplomatic manoeuvres in detail. To do so would require a study of the official documents which are not yet available, whilst the focus here is in any case on the attitude of the Greek press. The new approach of the Greek political establishment towards Yugoslavia has never been stated openly. Nevertheless, it did not escape the attention of the press, especially when the Republic of Macedonia threatened later in 1991 to become independent. The *Apogevmatini* indirectly offered its support to the government, by arguing that 'Greece is interested in the existence...of a powerful and united Yugoslavia and not in a confederation of loosely associated states influenced by the Muslim element'.[333] Writing in the *Kathimerini*, Stelios Aleifantis argued in favour of the emerging position of the Greek government, warning that Yugoslavia had either to be saved by a Serbian domination or become a new Lebanon.[334] K. I. Aggelopoulos of the same newspaper focused attention on the fact that the EC did not have a common policy regarding the situation,[335] and added that Greek foreign policy 'should not be determined by the national interests of big European countries that appear in the Community's clothes'.[336] Thus, the Greek political establishment, according to such opinions, should proceed in its close approach to Serbia, in the same way that Germany proceeded in its own approach to Croatia and Slovenia.[337]

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[332] Yannis Valinakis, 'Οι Ελληνογιουγκοσλαβικές Σχέσεις στον Πολιτικό Τομέα', in *Η Σημερινή Γιουγκοσλαβία: Προβλήματα και Προοπτικές*, ed. by Thanos Veremis and Giula Goulimi (Athens: Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Αμυντικής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής, 1990), pp. 67-76 (p. 73).

[333] Editorial, 'Τα Νέα Σύνορα και η Ελλάδα', *Apogevmatini* (28 August 1991), p. 7.

[334] Stelios Aleifantis, 'Νέος «Λίβανος» Απειλεί την Ευρώπη', *Kathimerini* (7 September 1991), p. 8.

[335] K. I. Aggelopoulos, 'Επικίνδυνες «Καραμπόλες» στο Παιχνίδι των Βαλκανίων', *Kathimerini* (22 December 1991), p. 15.

[336] Stavros Lygeros, 'Βαλκάνια: Μάχες Οπισθοφυλακής', *Kathimerini* (11 December 1991), p. 9.

[337] Nikos Simos, 'Σύγκρουση Ισχυρών στη Βαλκανική', *Kathimerini* (10 December 1991), p. 11.

Overall, however, most of the Greek newspapers maintained a hostile position towards the emerging policy of the Greek government. Both the *Eleftherotypia* and the *Kathimerini* attacked the government, accusing it of adopting a pro-Serb stand, as a counterbalance to the Republic of Macedonia's aspirations for independence. The *Kathimerini* pointed out that 'Athens had very bad advisors when it decided, at the beginning of this war, not to depart from the fixed doctrines of the Greek foreign policy: Friendship with Serbia at any cost, and persistence of Yugoslavia's indivisibility'.[338] Likewise, for the *Eleftherotypia*, this policy revealed 'provincial mentality and Balkan narrow-mindedness',[339] as

Greece alone has emphasized the historical ties with the «democratic» and Orthodox Serbia whilst failing to see the political and ideological primitivism of this dangerous regime...The determined and enthusiastic Greek efforts to develop excellent relations with the Milošević regime - in the hope that it would resolve the «Macedonian problem» that interests Greece - reveals the non-existence of a Balkan policy.[340]

What then were the newspapers' recipes for peace in the Balkans? Their ideal was identical to Lord Carrington's plan to transform Yugoslavia into a loose confederation of six sovereign republics. In their opinion, the plan was a more stable and moral solution, compared with the prospect of a new, and possibly undemocratic, Serb-dominated federation. As the *Kathimerini* argued, if the national and minority claims that had been raised in Yugoslavia could not be tackled 'in the context of *a new federation of democratic nature without anyone's hegemony*' [my emphasis], they could end up in 'Lebanon-like, uncontrolled internal strife'.[341] That is why the Greek press welcomed Lord Carrington's attempt to find a solution in the crisis: the *Kathimerini* stated plainly that Lord Carrington was 'the only international politician capable of avoiding another diplomatic defeat',[342] and the admiration that he attracted among Greek journalists can be summarised in the title of 'the Fox of the European diplomacy', given to him by the *Apogevmatini*.[343]

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[338] Tassos Telloglou, 'Η Αθήνα Είχε Πολύ Κακούς Συμβούλους', *Kathimerini* (17 January 1991), p. 8.
[339] Michalis Moronis, 'Ευρώπη και Βαλκανικός Επαρχιωτισμός', *Eleftherotypia* (9 December 1991), p. 9.
[340] Leonidas Xatziprodromidis, 'Γιουγκοσλαβία: Η Ανατομία μιας Τραγωδίας που Μας Αφορά, μέρος 3° ', *Eleftherotypia* (17 October 1991), pp. 14-15 (p. 14).
[341] Editorial, 'Τώρα!', *Kathimerini* (20 September 1991), p. 9.
[342] *Kathimerini*, 'Ο Μόνος Ικανός να Φέρει τη Λύση' (7 September 1991), p. 4.
[343] *Apogevmatini*, 'Θα Κρατήσει η Εκεχειρία;' (18 September 1991), p. 17.

2.11 The portrait of the Serbs in the Greek press and the coverage of the massacre at Vukovar

The Greek press constantly argued that the Serbs were most responsible for Yugoslavia's break-up, with the Croats also bearing some share of blame. The left-liberal *Eleftherotypia*'s opinion was that the Milošević regime longed for war, and used Croatian nationalism to materialise its plans for a greater Serbia.[344] Accordingly, the Liberal-Conservative *Kathimerini* attributed the growing tension in Croatia to 'the hegemonic inclination of the Serb-dominated central authority, but also to miscalculations and excesses of the Croatian leadership.'[345] The *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* also pointed to the Serbs' machinations for territorial expansion as being responsible for the conflict, and warned Milošević that he was in danger from the snowdrift of jingoism and hate that his demagogic policy had pushed to an avalanche.[346] When, later on, the Federal army teamed up with the rebels in Eastern Slavonia and in Krajina, the Serbs were accused of premeditated genocide.[347] The Greek press also attacked Belgrade for its repressive policy towards the Muslim element living in the territory of Sandjak, where the Serbs effectively blocked a referendum for independence.[348]

As in Britain, the anti-Serb stance reached its peak in November 1991, as the news of the Serb atrocities travelled round the world. The siege of Dubrovnik and the threat to its medieval buildings aroused fierce criticism: even the *Apogevmatini*, which so far had kept a careful and rather neutral attitude, argued that 'the situation in Yugoslavia reaches the borders of madness'.[349] The *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* pointed out that the bombardment of Dubrovnik's medieval centre was evidence that the Federal generals' purpose had not been the protection of Serb minorities or the conquest of strategical positions, but rather that Serb civilisation should prevail over

[344] Xatziprodromidis, 'Γιουγκοσλαβία: Η Ανατομία μιας Τραγωδίας που Μας Αφορά, μέρος 1°', *Eleftherotypia* (15 October 1991), pp. 14-15 (p. 14).

[345] Konstantinos Kalligas, 'Οι Πολυεθνικές Συμπολιτείες', *Kathimerini* (14 September 1991), p. 8.

[346] *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia*, 'Ο Μιλόσεβιτς, το Όραμα και η Σφαγή' (9 November 1991), p. 25.

[347] Xatziprodromidis, 'Γιουγκοσλαβία: Η Ανατομία μιας Τραγωδίας που Μας Αφορά, μέρος 2°', *Eleftherotypia* (16 October 1991), pp. 14-15 (p. 14). See also 'Ψυχορραγεί η Κροατία', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (22 September 1991), p. 25, and 'Τσέτνικ: Βία και Φανατισμός', *Kathimerini* (28 July 1991), p. 21.

[348] See 'Δημοψήφισμα-Νάρκη και στη Σερβία', *Eleftherotypia* (22 October 1991), p. 18.

[349] *Apogevmatini*, 'Διεθνής Κινητοποίηση για τη Γιουγκοσλαβία' (13 November 1991), p. 15.

Croatian.[350] The *Kathimerini* added that 'when once Venice had been in danger of sinking into the water, Europe in a body rushed into to its rescue. How could the same Europe be uninterested when mines, rockets, bombs hit the city of Dubrovnik irreparably from ground, sea and air?'[351]

As we have already seen, Dubrovnik gained headlines in the British press and managed (at least to a limited degree), to arouse the interest of the wider public. In Greece, however, despite the interest shown for Dubrovnik, it was the tragic loss of life in Vukovar - a comparatively unimportant issue for the British press[352] - which made the newspapers' front pages. The *Eleftherotypia* baptised Vukovar 'the Guernica of Croatia',[353] and published on its front page of 22 November 1991 a picture showing slaughtered corpses of non-combatants over the caption 'left-overs of our neighbours' civil war madness'. Likewise, the *Kathimerini* characterised it 'Croatia's Stalingrad',[354] while even the *Apogevmatini* showed enough interest to send its journalist Argyris Ntinopoulos to the scene, who reported back his stunned horror that something like that could have happened in Europe at the end of the 20th Century.[355]

Why did the British newspapers focus on Dubrovnik, while the Greek press signposted Vukovar as the key event of the conflict? The question has no obvious answer. Perhaps the reason was that in Britain Dubrovnik was more familiar, both as a holiday destination, and because of the fame of its elegant medieval monuments. Its siege, however, was tragic for the architecture, but not particularly deadly for the people (overall, 43 civilians appear to have died as a result of the Federal attack).[356] Moreover, its fall would not have greatly altered the balance between the Serbs and the Croats. Greek newspapers by contrast seem to have been motivated by the fact that the fall of Vukovar was strategically important, as it meant that the Serbs had control of Eastern Slavonia and could move (as they did) against Osijek, threatening to cut off Zagreb from the rest of the country. And, in addition, they were appalled by

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[350] *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia*, 'Χάνεται η Πολιτιστική Κληρονομιά' (3 November 1991), p. 26.

[351] *Kathimerini*, 'Η Ευρώπη Αδιαφόρησε για το Ντουμπρόβνικ' (28 November 1991), p. 10.

[352] In Britain only David Owen appears to have given attention to the events in Vukovar. See his article 'The Fall of Vukovar', *Granta*, Vol. 47 (1994), pp. 194-5.

[353] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Φόβοι για Σφαγή από τους Τσέτνικ' (18 November 1991), p. 17.

[354] *Kathimerini*, 'Πέφτουν το Βούκοβαρ και το Ντουμπρόβνικ' (13 November 1991), p. 7.

[355] See Argyris Ntinopoulos, 'Η «Α» στη Φρίκη του Βούκοβαρ', *Apogevmatini* (22 November 1991), p. 15, and 'Από 'δω Πέρασε ο Εμφύλιος...', *Apogevmatini* (23 November 1991), pp. 14-15.

[356] BBC News - Europe, 'Most Wanted: The Dubrovnik Four' (22 April 2002), <news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_1943000/1943414.stm> [accessed 14 September 2002].

the death toll: 1,851 people seem to have been killed there, many of whom were civilians.[357]

How successful was the attempt by Greek politicians to block the menace of a possible instability in the Balkans by supporting a strong Serbia? All the evidence suggests that this policy ended in total failure. The Greek government tried to oppose the proposed EC sanctions against Serbia in November 1991, using the convenient (if probably correct) argument that this measure would hit its own economy, since it was estimated that an embargo could cost the country 10 million dollars a day.[358] But, under German pressure and without France's support, the Greek government dreaded isolation from its partners and allies. In advance of the Maastricht Conference, therefore, it was forced to support the sanctions, in return for vague promises that Greece would be reimbursed for all the damages.[359] Finally, the Greek government overestimated Serbia's military strength, which proved insufficient to bring the conflict in Croatia into a quick end. Thus, the government of Konstantinos Mitsotakis, already driven into a corner diplomatically, reluctantly recognised the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, preferring to risk the deterioration of its relationships with Serbia rather than creating tensions with the other EU members.

SUMMARY

It is evident from the previous points that the Greek press shared a common view with the British newspapers about the wars in Slovenia and Croatia, considering the Serbs as the side mainly responsible for the escalation of the conflicts. The Greek press did not welcome the pro-Serb initiative of Greek diplomats aiming at the creation of a Serb-dominated federation through a Serb military victory against Croatia. Equally, the British press, moved by the destruction of Dubrovnik, treated favorably the Slovenian (mainly) and the Croat (to some extent) demands for independence, an option that the British government of John Major appeared to dislike. The British press coverage was on certain occasions built on existing stereotypes about the

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[357] Division of Information & Research Ministry of the Republic of Croatia, 'Civilians Massacred and Executed from the Town of Vukovar Alone' (August 1993), <http:///www.hr/hrvatska/WAR/civil_c.html> (accessed 27 September 2002).

[358] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Κόλπος Απειλεί Ξανά την Οικονομία' (4 November 1991), p. 2. See also Kyra Adam, 'Η Ελλάδα Μπλοκάρει το Εμπάργκο', *Eleftherotypia* (5 November 1991), p. 11.

[359] Kyra Adam, 'Ελληνική Στροφή για Γιουγκοσλαβία', *Eleftherotypia* (8 November 1991), p. 4.

'nature' of the Balkans in the British imagination, stereotypes that were confirmed especially in the pages of the *Daily Mail*. The anti-Serb stance of the Greek press, however, would change dramatically as the Republic of Macedonia moved towards independence, claiming a name that the majority of Greeks considered as part of their heritage. It is to this question that the next chapter will now turn.

CHAPTER 3

THE MACEDONIAN NAME ISSUE AND ITS

IMPORTANCE TO THE GREEKS

OVERVIEW OF THE CRISIS

The Republic of Macedonia constituted a distinct case in the disintegration of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.[360] While it was the only part of the federation that managed to break away without having to face the Serbian army afterwards, it found Yugoslavia's neighbours Greece and Bulgaria unwilling to recognise it as a separate nation. Furthermore, a strong Albanian minority within the country felt uneasy with the new situation and asked for autonomy, in a sensitive territory near the borders with Albania and the Albanian-populated Serbian province of Kosovo. One can only speculate about why the Serb government decided to take no action at all. Maybe it was preoccupied with Croatia, or perhaps it was counting on Greece and Bulgaria to block Macedonia's emergence as an independent state. Alternatively, perhaps it was just not interested about the most economically backward republic of the Yugoslav federation, especially since it contained only a tiny Serb minority (1.78% of the population).

The case underpinning the Greek and Bulgarian objections is far more complicated, and anyone wishing to understand them has to be familiar with the details of Balkan history during the years 1850-1950. In the course of the 19th Century, first Greece and then Bulgaria managed to break away from the Ottoman Empire, after successful revolts accomplished with the aid of the Western powers. But the Ottomans kept the area of Macedonia (broadly the same as that of the ancient kingdom of Alexander the Great), which both countries wanted for themselves. Speaking in ethnic terms, the area was populated by a mixture of Greeks, Bulgarians, Serbs, Jews, Turks, Vlachs, Albanians and Rom. At the time, however, the inhabitants of Macedonia, being overwhelmingly poor and uneducated, had not developed a sense of national identity, and this meant that the Greeks and the Bulgarians had to persuade them to adopt an identity that suited each country's territorial aims. Thus, they engaged in propaganda campaigns, sending teachers, priests and even armed paramilitary units into the Macedonian villages, trying to lure or blackmail the locals

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[360] The state's official name is FYROM. But, although it does sympathise with some of the Greek arguments, the thesis will use the name Republic of Macedonia instead, both because its recognition by the USA in November 2004 and because of the belief that a country cannot exist for more than ten years under the name of a former Republic of a no-longer existing federation. Regarding this state's inhabitants and the similar (in terms of language and culture) ethnic group that lives in Greece, I will refer to them as Slavomacedonians, as this name indicates their Slavic origins and their Macedonian local identity.

to become either "Greek" or "Bulgarian". At the turn of the century, Serbia also entered the "game". The situation was finally resolved by the two Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. The result was that historic Macedonia was divided into three parts (see map 4 below): Greece got the biggest part (51% of the territory), named Aegean Macedonia, Serbia took the so-called Vardar Macedonia (39% of the territory), while Bulgaria was left with the area known as Pirin Macedonia (10% of the territory).
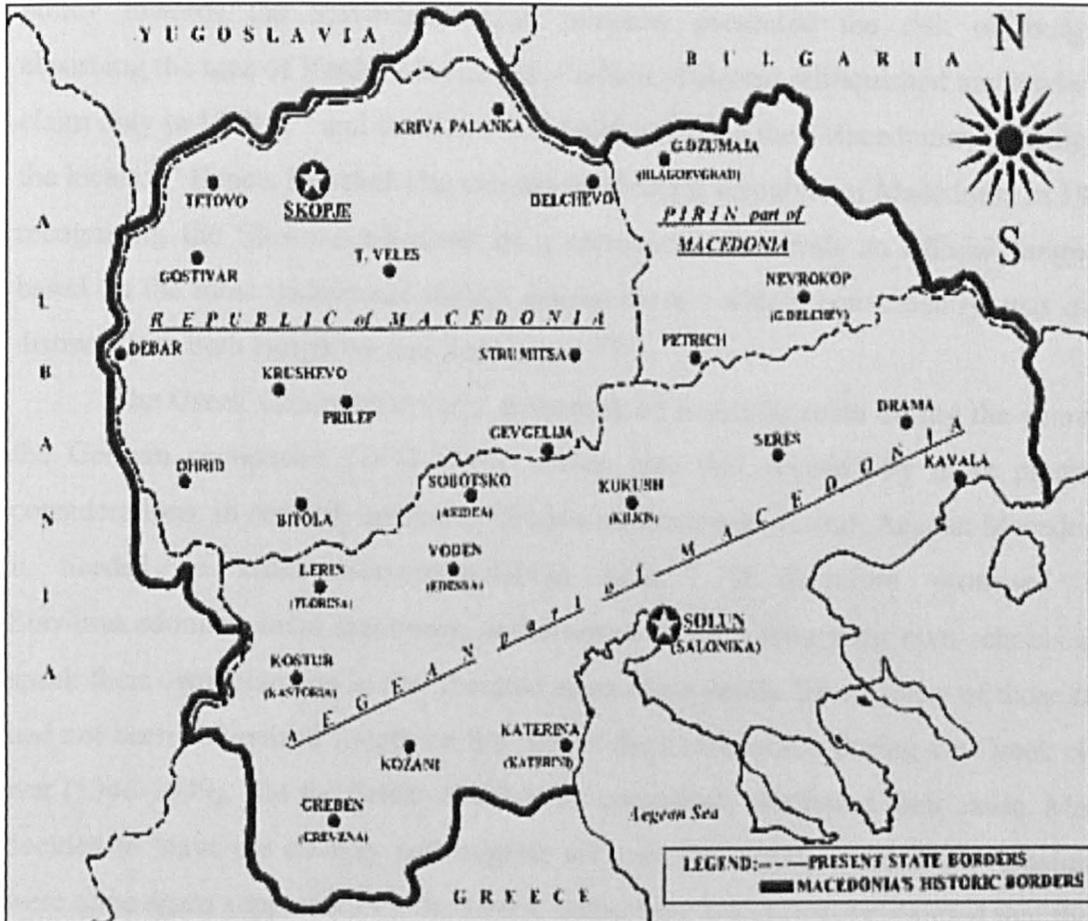
Map 4: The division of Macedonia (1913)
[Map taken from www.mymacedonia.net]

While in Pirin Macedonia most of the locals considered themselves to be Bulgarians,[361] in the areas of Vardar Macedonia and Aegean Macedonia the situation was more complex. In the case of Vardar Macedonia, the majority of Slavomacedonians seemed to incline towards a Bulgarian national identity, something that predictably worried the Serb authorities. In Aegean Macedonia, Greece possessed

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[361] Stephen E. Palmer Jr. and Robert R. King, *Yugoslav Communism and the Macedonian Question*, (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1971), p. 197.

a large Slavic population whose sense of national identity was less clear.[362] Serbia and Greece thus sought to absorb the locals into their national bodies - but without continuous success. In Greece, the Slavomacedonians who did not turn into Greeks developed a distinctive "Macedonian" national identity, which was subsequently brutally suppressed by the Fascist regime of Ioannis Metaxas (1936-1941). In Yugoslavia, the emerging Communist Party realised that the failure of the official policy towards the Slavomacedonian minority presented the risk of Bulgaria absorbing the area of Vardar Macedonia - indeed, Bulgaria relinquished any territorial claim only in 1978 -[363] and therefore decided to enhance the "Macedonian" identity of the locals.[364] Hence, Marshal Tito created the Federal Republic of Macedonia in 1944, recognising the Slavomacedonians as a separate nation with an official language based on the most widespread dialect among them - which, conveniently, was quite distinct from both Bulgarian and Serb-Croat.[365]

The Greek Communist Party embarked on a similar route during the years of the German occupation (1941-1944), driven into this decision by more practical considerations: in order to organise effective resistance in western Aegean Macedonia it needed to enlist Slavomacedonian help.[366] It therefore promised the Slavomacedonians local autonomy, and allowed them to have their own schools and speak their own language in the liberated areas. As a result, the majority of those that had not been Hellenized fought on the side of the Communists during the Greek civil war (1946-1949). But the defeat of the latter completely destroyed their cause. Many decided to leave the country and migrate all over the world, while those remaining were once again suppressed by the Greek authorities, which finally claimed that there

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[362] See Vasilis K. Gounaris, 'Οι Σλαβόφωνοι της Μακεδονίας: Η Πορεία της Ενσωμάτωσης στον Ελληνικό Εθνικό Κορμό, 1870-1940', in *Το Μειονοτικό Φαινόμενο στην Ελλάδα: Μια Συμβολή των Κοινωνικών Επιστημών*, ed. By Konstantinos Tsitselikis & Dimitris Christopoulos (Athens: Κριτική, 1997), pp. 73-118.

[363] See Konstantinos Svolopoulos, *Η Ελληνική Πολιτική στα Βαλκάνια 1974-1981: Από την Αποκατάσταση της Δημοκρατίας ως την Ένταξη στις Ευρωπαϊκές Κοινότητες*, with foreword by Georgios I. Rallis (Athens: Ελληνική Ευρωεκδοτική, 1987), p. 33.

[364] *The Economist*, 'Et tu, Scopje', Vol. 320, No. 7724 (14 September 1991), pp.63-4. See also R. R. King, *Minorities under Communism: Nationalities as a Source of Tension among Balkan Communist States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[365] For more details on these events under a calm and impartial prism, see Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict: Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[366] See Andrew Rossos, 'Incompatible Allies: Greek Communism and Macedonian Nationalism in the Civil War in Greece 1943-1949', *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 69, No. 1 (1997), 42-76

was no such a thing as a Slavomacedonian minority.[367] Even the Greek Communist Party altered its initial policy, and from 1956 recognised only a linguistic minority living in the northwestern parts of the Aegean Macedonia.[368] Similarly, Bulgaria refused to recognise the existence of a 'Macedonian' nation, claiming that these people were actually Bulgarians. Thus, when Macedonia declared its independence in September 1991, Greece refused to recognise the new state and asked the new republic to change its name, flag and constitution. Bulgaria recognised the new state, but insisted that there was no such thing as the Macedonian nation or Macedonian language.

SECTION 3A: BRITISH PRESS REACTIONS

3.1 Macedonia: A plucky little nation

In Britain, with the exception of the *Guardian*, the quarrel between Greece and Macedonia did not receive much attention in the press. For most Britons, this was a strange and complicated issue, a relic of past Balkan feuds which had resulted in a petty dispute. For the *Sunday Times*, Macedonia was 'scarcely viable as a state',[369] given the long-standing hatred between its Slavomacedonian majority and its Albanian minority.[370] *The Times* also saw the country as 'a bone contested by the terriers of Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia'.[371] There were even cases when the British correspondents revealed a distinct lack of knowledge about the area. Helena Smith of the *Guardian* referred, for example, to the disenchanted Albanian minority of Macedonia, which comprised 'at least 35 per cent of the republic's population',[372] whereas, according to the latest census and the CIA World factbook data, the minority

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[367] An impressive account of this policy of suppression is provided by Tasos Kostopoulos, *H Απαγορευμένη Γλώσσα: Κρατική Καταστολή των Σλαβικών Διαλέκτων στην Ελληνική Μακεδονία* (Athens: Μαύρη Λίστα, 2002). See also Robert A. Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs Control* (Yale University Press, 1982), Charles Tilly (ed.), *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975) and Sotiris Valden, *Ελλάδα - Γιουγκοσλαβία: Γέννηση και Εξέλιξη μιας Κρίσης και οι Ανακατατάξεις στα Βαλκάνια, 1961-1962* (Athens: Θεμέλιο, 1991).

[368] See 'Το Μακεδονικό Εθνικό Ζήτημα στο Φως των Αποφάσεων της 6ης Ολομέλειας', *Νέος Κόσμος*, No. 2 (1957), pp. 7-13.

[369] Peter Miller, 'Should We Intervene?', *Sunday Times* (9 August 1992), p. 10.

[370] Louise Branson, 'Macedonians on Brink of Bosnia-Style War', *Sunday Times* (15 January 1995), p. 19.

[371] Roger Boyes, 'Europeans Must Intervene', *The Times* (21 September 1991), p. 6.

[372] Helena Smith, 'Macedonia's Outcasts Threaten to Turn Balkan 'Fruit Salad' into a Powder Keg', 31 July 1992, p. 8.

was no more that the 25.2% of the total population.[373] In addition, Peter Millar of the *Sunday Times* argued that Greece and Bulgaria 'can be expected to threaten to mobilise in protection of their ethnic minorities across the frontier', while neither of the two countries had ever claimed that there was a Greek or a Bulgarian minority in the Republic of Macedonia.[374] Another good example is provided by Steven Doughty of the *Daily Mail*, who noted that Aegean Macedonia was the 'cradle of Greek civilisation', ignoring the fact that the area does not include either Athens or Sparta within its regional boundaries.[375]

The *Guardian*, by contrast, generally voiced its sympathy for the new state, which was often presented in its pages as a "plucky-little-nation", in search of both a future and an identity. Ian Traynor, who was responsible for a similar portrait of Slovenia in the British press (see chapter 2), described it as 'a small, defenceless, landlocked republic in the heart of the Balkans...with a population the size of Birmingham', while he referred to the capital Skopje as 'a city that reeks of Balkan intrigue'.[376] Similarly, Helena Smith referred to the lushest countryside in the lower Balkans, a place with watering fields of barley, tobacco, opium poppies and rice,[377] while John Gittings found a peaceful multiracial society living among 'orchards of ghostly blue plums, cows with their calves watering in a stream, and old men firmly clutching sheep as the buses went by'.[378] Additionally, Paul Frederick referred to it in terms of an 'impoverished state-in-waiting clinging precariously to life' amid the war in the former Yugoslavia.[379]

The Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov was portrayed in the *Guardian* as a man 'vainly knocking on the [EC] door for recognition', while the EC itself was accused of a dilatory approach, which prevented a small and weak state from adapting the name by which it was generally known.[380] Still more sympathy was given to the Skopje government when the Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou decided to impose an economic embargo on the neighbouring Republic, in February 1994. Papandreou accused Macedonia of 'not understanding the importance of normalising

[373] See <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mk.html#People> [accessed 5 March 2005].
[374] Peter Millar, 'A Deadly Balkans Game of Diplomacy', *Sunday Times* (5 January 1992), p. 10.
[375] Steven Dughty, 'Greeks Lose Name Game', *Daily Mail* (17 December 1993), p. 11.
[376] Ian Traynor, 'Macedonia Trembles in the Eye of the Balkan Storm', *Guardian* (10 June 1992), p. 10.
[377] Helena Smith, 'Macedonians Cling to a Name that Means Everything', *Guardian* (30 July 1992), p. 9.
[378] John Gittings, 'Flagged Down on Mount Olympus', *Guardian* (4 September 1992), p. 23.
[379] Paul Frederick, 'Macedonia Road to Madness', *Guardian* (4 December 1992), p. 14.
[380] Editorial, 'Death and Delay', *Guardian* (16 October 1992), p. 22. See also Editorial, 'A Disaster in Waiting', *Guardian* (9 December 1992), p. 20.

relations with Greece and the potential problems it is creating in a sensitive region like the Balkans', and was applauded by all Greek political parties, except the Communists. But in Britain (and in the rest of the EU countries) this decision was greeted with anger and amazement. The *Guardian* was very supportive of the decision made by the European Commission to take Greece to the European Court of Justice for breaching the Treaty of Rome. But this stance suffered a serious blow when the latter ruled, in June 1994, that the use of the name 'Macedonia' did imply territorial ambitions against the Greek region of the same name, and that Greece had every legal right to impose the embargo on the grounds of national security.[381]

3.2 Greece: an irrational nation

Greece received few positive comments in the British press regarding its attitude towards the name issue. Overall, it was seen as an established regional power behaving with arrogance and chauvinism, and was often portrayed as a country gripped by Macedonia mania, a surge of patriotism that had found fertile ground in deep-seated political, social and economic disenchantment.[382] The *Guardian* questioned the European credentials of Greece, and saw it as a country geographically planted in the East, 'a fact deeply ingrained in the psyche of a people that endured 400 years of Ottoman rule and neither share the same language nor religion as the rest of Europe'.[383] This argument brings to mind the earlier discussion about how the identity of the Balkans in the British imagination gradually transformed from "Levant" and "Near East" to "Southern Europe" (see chapter 1) and the stereotype that portrays them as a non-Western area in general. The *Guardian* also reminded its readers about Greece's 'chronic incapacity to meet any of the Maastricht convergence criteria', and of the fact that it was the biggest net recipient of EC funds, receiving 1p of every pound paid by the British taxpayer. And, finally, it did not hesitate to declare (indeed through its editorial) that 'if Greece were not already a member of the Community, it is hard to believe that it would qualify for admission to it'.[384]

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[381] Julie Wolf and John Carvel, 'Greek Court Win is Blow to EU Policy', *Guardian* (30 June 1994), p. 13.
[382] Helena Smith, 'Rising Nationalist Tide Divides Greece', *Guardian* (10 June 1992), p. 9.
[383] Helena Smith, 'Greece Assumes Burden of Its Gift', *Guardian* (31 December 1993), p. 10.
[384] Editorial, 'The Greeks Inherit Malign Gifts', *Guardian* (12 October 1993), p. 21.

Concerning Macedonia, the broadsheet dismissed the Greek arguments as both irrational and confusing, and argued that the sole reason behind the Greek behaviour was its stubborn refusal to accept that a Slavomacedonian minority existed within its borders. The *Guardian* was adamant that, despite the historical accuracy of the ancient Macedonians being a Greek-speaking people as Athens maintained, this did not give modern Greece exclusive rights over the term Macedonia. Moreover, it found any idea of a revanchist Skopje absurd,[385] and thought it disgraceful that the Greeks should conduct themselves as a petty nationalist Balkan state and not a modern European one. Jonathan Eyal, director of studies at the Royal United Services Institute, noted in the *Guardian* that 'far from providing stability, Greece is a full participant in a potentially lethal game of musical chairs'.[386] Helena Smith covered the imprisonment by the Greek authorities of two men describing themselves as members of the Slavomacedonian minority.[387] She also visited north-western Greece reporting back in a truly brilliant piece of journalism that

in some of the snowbound villages around Florina, there are Slavophones who like to call themselves "Macedonians." Over a glass of brandy they will tell you that they are discriminated against. Some even say they hope to form a "Macedonian" political party'.[388]

3.3 The Guardian's coverage revisited

This section will look in more detail at the way in which the *Guardian* covered the Macedonian question. The reason for doing so is that the *Guardian* was the only British newspaper which did not treat Macedonia as a "faraway place" about which the British knew nothing - with which they should not be concerned. In contrast to the rest of the British press, which was generally speaking indifferent to the whole row between Greece and Macedonia over the use of the name 'Macedonia', the *Guardian* decided to cover the issue extensively. The newspaper was certainly right in identifying the existence of a small, distinct and oppressed Slavomacedonian ethnic

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[385] Editorial, 'The Greek Blockade', *Guardian* (29 March 1994), p. 23.
[386] Jonathan Eyal, 'Greek Name Calling Mines the Road to Independence', *Guardian* (11 January 1992), p. 7. See also 'EC Blunders in Balkan Power Game', *Guardian* (20 January 1992), p. 7.
[387] Helena Smith, 'Greeks Jailed for Seeking Rights', *Guardian* (2 April 1993), p. 12.
[388] Helena Smith, 'Slav Search for Identity Stirs Historic Passions in Greece', *Guardian* (6 February 1992), p. 10.

group within Greece - and also about the chauvinistic nature of the latter's nationalism. It did, however, oversimplify the whole issue by adopting strong pro-Slavomacedonian rhetoric, overlooking in its reports some important aspects of the issue. In particular, it failed to see that there was an equally nasty and potentially dangerous Slavomacedonian nationalism, expressed by the largest opposition party VMRO, which had received 31.6% of the local vote in the elections of 1990.[389] The *Guardian* did not pay much attention to the VMRO's ambition to re-unite the historic Macedonia,[390] or to the official banknotes depicting the White Tower of Thessaloniki. The only time that it did focus on this issue was when the new state adopted a flag bearing an ancient Macedonian symbol known as 'The Vergina Star', an act that was presented as unnecessary and provocative.[391] However, later on, the *Guardian* was more willing to discuss some sinister aspects of the VMRO, when the party was connected with a failed attempt to murder President Kiro Gligorov, which had been designed to sabotage the Greek-Slavomacedonian talks that had started taking place after Greece had lifted the economic embargo.[392]

With reference to Greece, what the *Guardian* failed to understand was that whilst the country may have reacted with a hysteric, old-fashioned nationalism, it did have some grounds for concern over Slavomacedonian irredentism. Mark Mazower, lecturer at the time at the University of Sussex, drew some parallels with Britain and the Falklands. He condemned the tendency to present Greece as a degenerate and backward country, which had betrayed its glorious past and should never have been admitted into the EU. His article in the *Guardian* was perhaps the best-informed account of the Greek-Slavomacedonian row that appeared in the British press. Mazower stressed the fact that Greece should behave more cautiously, and that Greeks should develop a more confident and critical sense of themselves and their recent past. But he also argued that the West should take into account that Greece was a comparatively new country, with recent borders, and a vivid memory of past confrontations with its neighbours. As a result, it should be made to feel more, rather than less, secure by the international community. Lord David Owen, former Foreign

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[389] Attila Ágh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998), p. 213.

[390] Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*, 2nd edn. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), p. 148.

[391] 'The Greek Blockade', *Guardian*. See also Jonathan Eyal, 'EC Recognition of Macedonia Contains the Seed of War', *Guardian* (16 October 1992), p. 22.

[392] Editorial, 'The Squeeze on Macedonia', *Guardian* (5 October 1995), p. 18.

Secretary of Great Britain, who subsequently played an important role during the Bosnian crisis, was of the same opinion. He believed that the row about what name the Republic of Macedonia should have was a very delicate issue that many European governments dismissed too lightly:

Even if that claim owed more to past history than present intentions, it had become an issue of such importance that the Greek government's policy had to be accepted as a legitimate national interest within the scope of the Luxemburg Compromise that General de Gaulle had imposed on the then five other members of the European Community in 1966.[393]

The British press failed to understand this, however, either by dismissing the row over Macedonia as a silly thing not worthy of attention (*The Times* and the *Daily Mirror*), or by supporting openly the Slavomacedonian side (the *Guardian*). This attitude was not of course confined to Britain, but was widespread among most Western commentators. And the result was, as this study will argue, that Greece felt misunderstood and unsupported by its new EU partners. This attitude played a key role in changing the Greek approach to the Yugoslavian crisis, encouraging the country to cling to the old friendship with Serbia and, eventually, to turn its back on the West over Bosnia-Herzegovina and later Kosovo. If the rest of the West were not willing to safeguard the security of Greece in the Balkans then, for many Greeks, it seemed that the only way to achieve this would be through a Serbian victory. This, in the ordinary Greek's mind, would isolate the Turkish influence over the Balkans, withhold the dreams of the Albanian ultra-nationalists, and stop the Slavomacedonians from messing further with Thessaloniki and the legacy of Alexander the Great.

SECTION 3B: GREEK PRESS REACTIONS

3.4 Introduction

For Greece, as has been suggested, the prospect of an independent state on its northern borders bearing the name 'Macedonia' was perhaps the single most important consequence of the disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation. It affected its approach during the next steps of the crisis, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and especially in Kosovo. The landlocked state was declared independent on 8 September 1991, after a

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[393] David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (London: Indigo, 1996), p. 80.

referendum, with the name Republic of Macedonia. Greece objected and managed to delay its recognition by the international community. Macedonia was admitted to the United Nations in April 1993. It was recognized as FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) by six EU members in December 1993 (Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Denmark), and by the United States in February 1994 (in November 2004 George W. Bush's government recognised the country as Macedonia, bypassing the UN). Greece, which in 1994 held the Presidency of the EU, reacted with the imposition of a trade embargo (which suffocated Macedonia), and was subsequently taken to the European Court of Justice for this action. The embargo was lifted in October 1995. Greece recognized the republic as FYROM, and the two countries started official talks over the name. Meanwhile, the Greeks became the biggest import partners of the Slavomacedonians.[394]

The focus here will be on the most important period of the whole Macedonian name issue for Greece, that is from December 1991 to February 1994. It will start by examining how the Greek press viewed Macedonia's attempt at independence, focusing on the key events of the Thessaloniki rally (February 1992), the UN membership of Macedonia under the name FYROM (April 1993), and the Papandreou embargo (February 1994). It will then analyze how Greeks saw the Slavomacedonians, and particularly how they mythologised the recent history of the Balkans and their role in it. The focus in this section is on Greek perceptions of the existence of the Slavomacedonians and their distinct culture, Greek nationalistic claims for a suppressed Greek minority within Macedonia, as well as the intergovernmental rift between the Conservative Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis and his Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras (April 1992). Last but not least, consideration will be given to how the Greeks viewed the reaction of the rest of the West. This reaction has transformed the Macedonian name issue into a source of anti-Westernism and created a psychological distance between Greeks and the West, which can be used to explain why the Greeks suddenly became such strong Serb sympathizers during the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. The Macedonian issue would appear to be a more plausible cause of this transformation than the often-cited Greeks' and Serbs' common Orthodox faith, since religious matters have rarely influenced political alliances in the history of the Balkans (see introduction and chapter 1).

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[394] See <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/mk.html#Econ>.

3.5 'Macedonia is Greek'

The Greek public - preoccupied both with the bad state of the economy and Andreas Papandreou's trial for the economic scandals that his government was involved during the late 1980s - did not show much interest in Macedonia's declaration of independence. Greece's attention was diverted to the area in December 1991, when the then EC started talks over whether to recognize or not the breakaway ex-Yugoslav republics. The Greek government demanded from Skopje four things, which became accepted by the EC as terms of recognition: changing two constitutional articles (3 and 49) which were unclear on whether the new state would respect the established borders with Greece, acceptance that there was no Slavomacedonian minority within Greece, and changing their state's name and flag.[395] The Slavomacedonians, however, only abolished the two constitutional articles in question, and refused to comply with the remaining terms. Moreover, in January 1992 they released a bank note depicting Thessaloniki's White Tower which, together with signs posted around Skopje reading *Solun je naš* (Thessaloniki is ours),[396] infuriated Greek public opinion even further. 'Our White Tower, our docks, our port, our city itself, our Thermaikos, to be imprinted on another country's bank note', wrote Thessaloniki's newspaper *Makedonia*, 'if this is not a prelude to expansionism, then it could certainly be called a clear provocation, a threat against our country's territorial integrity, or, in other words, a prelude to a coming invasion'.[397]

Macedonia's refusal to accept the demands put forward by the Greek government transformed the new-born state into a dangerous neighbor in the eyes of many Greeks, who saw it as a potential agent of Turkish interests in the Balkans. 'The idea of an autonomous Skopjan state has been suckled in Pan-Turkism's bosom, which seeks an organ helping it achieve its goals, i.e. the revival of the Ottoman vision', noted the *Makedonia*,[398] while the populist *Apogevmatini* also worried about increased Turkish influence in the area.[399] The Social-Democrat *Eleftherotypia* argued that the Slavomacedonians were seeking to create a falsely-named state with

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[395] 'Unanimous Acceptance for the Greek position on Skopje', *Eleftherotypia* (18 December 1991), p. 4.
[396] Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995), p. 441.
[397] Editorial, 'Το Θράσος των Σκοπιανών', *Makedonia* (26 January 1992), p. 2.
[398] Editorial, 'Σκύμνοι Ωρυόμενοι', *Makedonia* (21 January 1992), p. 2.
[399] Editorial, 'Οι Μύωπες της Ευρώπης δεν Βλέπουν την Αλήθεια', *Apogevmatini* (18 February 1994), p. 2.

expansionist aspirations, thereby distorting reality and falsifying history.[400] The Liberal-Conservative *Kathimerini* noted that Greece 'has never objected to the recognition of this problematic statelet'.[401] Furthermore, a columnist in the newspaper added that the prospect of a head-on collision between the Albanians and «Macedonians» of Skopje could bring the whole area into a state of war.[402] In a similar manner, the Slavomacedonian President Kiro Gligorov, although a moderate politician, was pictured as provocative and uncompromising: 'Greece offered him not only an olive-branch, but important economic support, too...only asking in exchange that his statelet would not use the age-old Greek name of Macedonia. Gligorov preferred tension and aggravation in the Balkan area'.[403]

In 14 February 1992, a mass rally of protestors gathered in Thessaloniki, with the main slogan 'Macedonia is Greek'. The choice of this simplistic slogan was indeed very unfortunate and - since Macedonia had been divided into three parts in 1913 - it even implied some territorial aspirations.[404] The Greek Communist Party and the party of the Alternative Greens were the only political formations with Parliamentary representation that boycotted the rally.[405] A number of journalists, including Panos Loukakos, Yiorgos Votsis, Sotiris Kouloglou, Takis Michas, Richardos Someritis and Nikos Dimou did warn of the danger of Greeks jumping from national lethargy to ultra-nationalism.[406] However, the rest of the political world, the press, the Church and the vast majority of the public welcomed the rally. The *Eleftherotypia* wrote that Thessaloniki's people 'accomplished their national duty' and saw the demonstration as 'an invitation for peace, security, good neighborhood, co-operation and development'.[407] For the *Kathimerini*, the rally was 'a normal, healthy and nation-worthy reaction',[408] while for the *Apogevmatini* it was one of those moments in a nation's life that 'justify its existence, condense its historical course and confirm its dynamism and perspective'.[409] As for Thessaloniki's *Makedonia*, it too

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[400] Editorial, 'Να Ξυπνήσουμε', *Eleftherotypia* (24 January 1992), p. 8.

[401] Editorial, 'Σε Σωστό Δρόμο...', *Kathimerini* (8 May 1992), p. 9.

[402] *Kathimerini*, 'Εκρηκτικές οι Διαστάσεις της Κρίσης στα Σκόπια' (11 November 1993), p. 9.

[403] G. A. Leontaritis, 'Θύματα οι Ίδιοι οι Σκοπιανοί', *Kathimerini* (16 May 1992), p. 8.

[404] Damianos Papadimitropoulos, *Η Ελλάδα στη Βαλκανική Κρίση* (Αθήνα: Πόλις, 1994), p. 69.

[405] Political parties with no Parliamentary representation that also opposed it were OAKKE, OSE, Antiwar-Antinationalism Coalition, and KKE Internal-Renovating Left.

[406] See for example Panos Loukakos 'Η Μεγάλη Παγίδα', *Kathimerini* (14 February 1992), p. 1, and Yiorgos Votsis, 'Τα Αυτονόητα Υπονομεύονται Διεκδικούμενα', *Eleftherotypia* (17 February 1992), p. 9.

[407] Editorial, 'Τώρα, οι Αρχηγοί', *Eleftherotypia* (15 February 1992), p. 8.

[408] Editorial, 'Ξέσπασμα Εθνικής Οργής', *Kathimerini* (14 February 1992), p. 9.

[409] Editorial, 'Το Μεγάλο Δίδαγμα', *Apogevmatini* (15 February 1992), p. 2.

welcomed it,[410] and did not hesitate to label those who opposed it as 'voracious mice that tear up the nation's flesh'.[411] Indeed, in the midst of this nationalistic fever, the non-participating Communist Party was treated as a traitor, especially by the Conservative press.[412]

In April 1993, the Greek government accepted a French compromise formula that allowed the neighboring Republic to be accepted in the United Nations under the temporary official name FYROM. 'A difference has arisen over the name of the State', ruled UN resolution 817, 'which needs to be resolved in the interest of the maintenance of peaceful and good neighborly relations in the region'.[413] Confident that the EU and the United States would not recognize the new state before its name changed, the Greek government apparently decided that no harm would come from Macedonia's acceptance into the UN. However, the press and nationalistic circles saw the whole issue quite differently, and spoke of a diplomatic defeat. Christodoulos Giallouridis, assistant Professor of International Relations in Panteios University, had already suggested in the *Kathimerini* that Greece ought not to focus on the name, but should try instead to prevent the independence of the neighboring statelet on the grounds of Balkan security.[414] Hence, according to the *Kathimerini*, Macedonia had now become an equal of Greece, both as an UN member and as an equal interlocutor.[415] Its fears soon materialized when Russia and China recognized the new state as 'Macedonia', and a lot of Western media started to use that name to refer to it as well. Indeed, wrote the *Eleftherotypia*, 'it seems that mechanisms of pressure are moving in the international scene, aiming at the recognition of Skopje, ignoring Greek reactions, but also underestimating the dangers that exist in the Balkans'.[416] The temporary name FYROM, as the *Kathimerini* pointed out, seemed doomed to remain active only within the United Nations' building.[417]

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[410] Editorial, 'Η Ελληνική Ψυχή', *Makedonia* (14 February 1992), p. 2.

[411] Editorial, 'Μήνες Δοκιμασίας', *Makedonia* (7 June 1992), p. 2.

[412] See G. A. Leontaritis, 'Όταν τα Λάθη Επαναλαμβάνονται', *Kathimerini* (22 February 1992), p. 8, and Titos Athanasiadis, 'Κι Άλλο Επιτυχές Μας Βήμα κατά των Σκοπίων', *Apogevmatini* (11 January 1992), p. 2.

[413] United Nations Security Council Resolution 817 (S/RES/817, 7 April 1993), in *The 'Yugoslav' Crisis in International Law - General Issues, part I*, ed. by Daniel Bethlehem and Marc Weller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 34.

[414] Christodoulos Giallouridis, 'Εγκλωβισμένη η Πολιτική Μας', *Kathimerini* (20 February 1992), p. 9.

[415] Editorial, 'Η Ταυτότητα των Σκοπίων', *Kathimerini* (9 April 1993), p. 1.See also Panos Loukakos, 'Η Ελληνική Σφραγίδα', *Kathimerini* (8 April 1993), p. 1.

[416] Editorial, 'Ύπουλες Πιέσεις', *Eleftherotypia* (21 May 1992), p. 9.

[417] *Kathimerini*, 'Η Ταυτότητα των Σκοπίων' (9 April 1993), p. 1.

Frustrated by the endless diplomatic delays and dead-ends, the Greek newspapers welcomed the imposition of an embargo on Macedonia by the Social-Democrat government of Andreas Papandreou. The *Eleftherotypia* saw it as a necessary measure in order to bend the intransigence of the neighboring country.[418] The *Kathimerini* offered its critical support, whilst even the *Apogevmatini*, usually hostile towards the Social-Democrats, defended the decision, noting that the behavior of Greece's European partners on the issue was unhelpful.[419] Among those who disagreed with the measure (obviously for very different reasons) were Christos Rozakis, at the time professor of International Law in Athens University (and later deputy Foreign Minister), and the well-known populist right-wing journalist Christos Pasalaris. Rozakis believed that the embargo led to further victimization of Macedonia.[420] Pasalaris by contrast put forward an absurd conspiracy theory, arguing that the embargo was an action secretly agreed between Papandreou and the Americans, in order to hurt Serbia and Slobodan Milošević.[421] The distrust of Greek public opinion towards the Slavomacedonians has been cleverly expressed by a

Picture 3: Antonis Kalamaras' cartoon from the *Kathimerini* (11-1-1994)

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[418] Editorial, 'Η Νέα Φάση', *Eleftherotypia* (17 February 1994), p. 8.
[419] Editorial, 'Η Προπαγάνδα Βλάπτει την Εθνική Υπόθεση', *Apogevmatini* (23 February 1994), p. 2.
[420] Christos Rozakis, 'Ιππότης σε Αδιέξοδο Δρόμο', *Kathimerini* (25 February 1994), p. 2.
[421] Christos Pasalaris, 'Ποιο Μυστικό Κρύβει Απ'Όλους ο Ανδρέας;', *Apogevmatini* (18 February 1994), p. 2.

cartoon (see picture 3), which depicts a phone conversation between Theodoros Pagalos, Greece's Foreign Minister, and Kiro Gligorov. Pagalos complains that Gligorov has referred to his state as New Macedonia, and asks him to abolish the Vergina Star from their flag. Gligorov replies that they have already done it. In the background we see a new flag, with no Vergina Star on it, but with the Whiter Tower of Thessaloniki in its middle.

3.6 Macedonia in the Greek national mythology

Since the conquest of Macedonia in 1912-1913, every Greek child in school learns that this campaign was a brave struggle for the 'liberation' of the Greek-speaking people of the area from Ottoman and Bulgarian machinations. It is not therefore surprising that the *Makedonia* carried an editorial (April 1992) referring passionately to 'those whose fathers and grandfathers shed blood to save this part of Macedonia from the knife, the noose and the stiletto of the Bulgarian partisans'.[422] Nor is it surprising that Professor Emeritus of the University of Macedonia Ioannis Xirotyris noted that 'it is everyone's duty to make sure that this heritage of the Macedonian Struggle... will be handed down to our children, the generations of the coming generations, because it is a divine spirit'.[423] For obvious reasons, this national myth does not tell us that before their 'liberation', a lot of Macedonia's 'Greeks' had to be persuaded of their Greekness by a carefully planned nationalistic campaign. The Bulgarians of course did the same from 1870 onwards, but the Greek public viewed this as an anti-Hellenic machination. What is more important, though, is that this myth does not allow any space for those Slav-speaking Christians who were not transformed into Bulgarians, Serbs, or Greeks, but retained a separate identity. For Greek public opinion, those people were invented as a nation by the inter-war Yugoslav Communists, and never existed as a linguistically and culturally distinct ethnic group within Greece.[424] It is striking that Archbishop Christodoulos said that

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[422] Editorial, 'Εκείνοι Έργα, Εμείς Λόγια', *Makedonia* (19 April 1992), p. 2.
[423] Ioannis Xirotyris, 'Αξεπέραστος Παραμένει στους Αιώνες ο Ηρωισμός των Μακεδόνων Αγωνιστών', *Makedonia* (9 February 1992), p. 4.
[424] For an opposite view see Vlassis Vlasidis and Veniamin Karakostanoglou, 'Recycling Propaganda: Remarks on Recent Reports on Greece's «Slav-Macedonian Minority»', in <http://www.hri.org/docs/mpadocs/last.html> [accessed 3 October 2004].

'Macedonians never existed as a nation, this is the big lie of Tito's regime', in his speech during the event «The Macedonian Struggle and Pavlos Melas - 100 years from his death» in Athens (18-10-2004).

Yet this national myth has been challenged in various ways through the years, both by Greek writers and by foreign visitors. Indeed, even Pavlos Melas, the hero of the 'Macedonian liberation', referred to the 'Macedonian language' in his letters,[425] while, in 1945, a Professor of Medieval History, Dionysios A. Zakythinos, claimed that the Slav speaking people of northern and western Macedonia were Slavomacedonians and quite distinct from the Serbs and the Bulgarians.[426] Other examples can be found in abundance in the cases of Evangelos Kofos,[427] Charalampos Papasotiriou,[428] Dimitris Lithoxoou,[429] George Mavrokordatos,[430] and Konstantinos Mazarakis-Ainian[431]. Among other Europeans, the existence of people who claim to be 'Macedonians' and speak a Slavic language of their own distinct from Bulgarian, has been noted by linguist Horace Lunt,[432] by Hristo Andonovski,[433] by the British intelligence officer Captain P. H. Evans,[434] by the British journalist Allen Upward,[435] the French Jacques Ancel,[436] and others. Even in recent years, in 1987, the Social Democrats in Greece approved a publication, by the General Secretariat for the Youth, on the Fascist youth organizations of Greece during the period 1936-1941, in which the author referred to the 'violent hellenization of Macedonia'.[437] Moreover, in 1992, the Conservative Minister of Education Giorgos Souflias had to order that the

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[425] See Natalia Mela (ed.), Παύλος Μελάς (Athens: Σύλλογος προς Διάδοσιν των Ελληνικών Γραμμάτων, 1964), pp. 239, 241, 244.

[426] Dionysios A. Zakythinos, Οι Σλάβοι εν Ελλάδι: Συμβολαί εις την Ιστορίαν του Μεσαιωνικού Ελληνισμού (Athens: Αετός, 1945), pp. 85-86.

[427] Evangelos Kofos, Nationalism and Communism in Macedonia (Thessaloniki: Ινστιτούτο Βαλκανικών Σπουδών, 1964).

[428] Charalampos Papasotiriou, Τα Βαλκάνια μετά το Τέλος του Ψυχρού Πολέμου (Athens: Παπαζήσης, 1994), p. 96.

[429] Dimitris Lithoxoou, 'Η Μητρική Γλώσσα των Κατοίκων του Ελληνικού Τμήματος της Μακεδονίας Πριν και Μετά την Ανταλλαγή Πληθυσμών', Θέσεις, Vol. 38 (1992), 38-66.

[430] George Mavrokordatos, Stillborn Republic: Social Conditions and Party Strategies in Greece 1912-1936 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), p. 247.

[431] Konstantinos Mazarakis-Ainian, Η Λύσις του Βαλκανικού Ζητήματος (Athens: [n. pub] 1919), pp. 16, 24.

[432] Horace Lunt, 'Some Sociolinguistic Aspects of Macedonian and Bulgarian', in Language and Literary Theory, ed. by Benjamin Stolz, I. R. Titunik & Lubomir Dolezel (Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan Slavic Publications, 1984), pp. 83-132.

[433] Hristo Andonovski, 'The First Macedonian Primer Between the Two World Wars - The Abecedar', Macedonian Review, Vol. 6 (1976), 64-69.

[434] See Andrew Rossos, 'The Macedonians of Aegean Macedonia: A British Officer's Report, 1944', Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 69 (1991), 282-309.

[435] Allen Upward, The East End of Europe (London: John Murray, 1908), pp. 204-5.

[436] Jacques Ansel, Les Comitadjis ou le Terrorism dans les Balkans (Paris: Albin Michel, 1932), p. 49.

[437] Eleni Mahaira, Η Νεολαία της 4ης Αυγούστου (Athens: Γενική Γραμματεία Νέας Γενιάς, 1987), pp. 42-3.

geography book for the third class of Gymnasium be corrected, in order to omit a reference to 'Yugoslavian Macedonia' - at the same time when the President of the Republic Konstantinos Karamanlis pointed out that for Greece there was only one Macedonia and that this was Greek. When Aleka Papariga, Secretary-General of the Greek Communist Party, referred to the Slav-speaking people of Macedonia later in 1992 she was met with an instant hostile reaction from all other political parties and from a furious press.[438] 'Her case was worthy of contempt and unworthy of comment', wrote the *Apogevmatini*, 'because in this critical moment betrays our nation into the hands of our various enemies'.[439] Panagiotis K. Georgountzos, honorary President of the Educational Council, denied the existence of ethnic Macedonians, arguing that while they speak Slav, they are Greeks,[440] recycling the official Greek position on the issue. Despite the furious protests raised against Papariga's opinion, it is estimated that there are about 10,000 bilingual people living in the western parts of Aegean Macedonia who do not necessarily feel themselves Greek, and are indeed being mistreated.[441]

At this point the thesis will examine an argument often made during the 1990s by those who denied the existence of a distinct Slavomacedonian ethnic group within Greece. The latter claimed that in reality it was the other way round, i.e. there was a suppressed Greek minority within the Republic of Macedonia. A striking example comes from the present (2005) Prime Minister of Greece Kostas Karamanlis, who referred in 1994 to the existence of a Greek and a Hellenized Vlach-speaking minority in the Republic of Macedonia.[442] Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, Professor of History in the University of Thessaloniki, spoke of 'a blooming minority' of 200,000 people.[443] The Conservative MP and ex-minister of Macedonia & Thrace, Giorgos Tzitzikostas, raised their number to 300,000.[444] The *Kathimerini* spoke of a Greek minority of

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[438] See for example G. A. Leontaritis, 'ΚΚΕ: Ένα Λάθος Αναβιώνει', *Kathimerini* (6 February 1992), p. 8.

[439] Editorial, 'Η Πρόκληση της κ. Παπαρήγα', *Apogevmatini* (31 January 1992), p. 2.

[440] Panagiotis K. Georgountzos, 'Ελληνική Συνείδηση και Δίγλωσσοι', *Kathimerini* (12 February 1992), p. 8.

[441] See Danforth, and Kostopoulos. Other authors mention 180,000 Macedonian speakers, but they seem to think that every Slavomacedonian living in Greece is bilingual, which is not accurate. See for example John Shea, *Macedonia and Greece: The Struggle to Define a New Balkan Nation* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997), p. 105.

[442] See Karamanlis, 'Η Μετακομμουνιστική Αναστάτωση στην Νοτιοανατολική Ευρώπη', in *Ευρωπαϊκή Ενοποίηση και Βαλκανική Πολυδιάσπαση: Ο Ρόλος της Ελλάδας*, ed. by Sotiris Ntalis (Athens: I. Σιδέρης, 1994), pp. 39-79 (p. 57).

[443] Konstantinos Vakalopoulos, 'Επιτέλους, τα Σκόπια Ομολογούν', *Eleftherotypia* (17 December 1991), p. 9.

[444] Giorgos Tzitzikostas, 'Ο Ελληνισμός της Ν. Γιουγκοσλαβίας', *Kathimerini* (20 December 1991), p. 9.

250,000 people,[445] and the *Makedonia* also supported this number, adding that the so-called Slavomacedonians are Bulgarian-speaking and Bulgarian-thinking.[446] The most imaginative of all certainly was Christos Pasalaris of the *Apogevmatini*, who calculated that there were 250,000 Greeks in the Republic of Macedonia, 100,000 in Bulgaria and Romania, and another 500,000 in Russia, all

compatriots and of the same religion, for the sake of whom we could spare a few divisions in order to save them from the nails of the tyrants...[who] were and still are barbarians, uncultured, non-religious, down at heel, slaves of totalitarianism, ready to stick a knife between their teeth and imitate the triumphs of the Asian hordes.[447]

On closer inspection, though, the so-called Greek minority of the Republic of Macedonia is a Vlach minority living around Bitola, Resen and Krusevo. Vlachs, pastoral people of uncertain origin, who speak a dialect of Romanian, used to live all over the Balkans but, as a rule, were easily assimilated by the 19th Century nation-states.[448] Greece has absorbed a large number of them, but this does not give it the right to consider all the remaining Vlachs of the neighbouring states as Greeks. The so-called Greek minority is in reality a Vlach minority of 8,467 people (0.4% of the total population), which receives aid from the Romanian government and is represented in the Slavomacedonian Parliament, enjoying both cultural and linguistic autonomy.

Among the members of the Greek Conservative government a rift was soon created between the moderates, who sought a compromise formula with Macedonia, and the hardliners, who saw any such compromise as treason. Nothing illustrates ithe conflict better than the clash between Prime Minister Mitsotakis and Foreign Minister Samaras. The moderates were willing to let Macedonia go if it added an adjective in front of Macedonia, in order to distinguish it from the Greek province. The others, however, argued that the neighbouring Republic had no right at all to the name Macedonia, and insisted on the Greekness of Alexander the Great, feeding the EU with the romantic national myths of modern Greece and stories about its ancient glamour. In an interview with the TV station Antenna on 23 March 1992, Samaras argued that 'the Skopje challenge is a one-way road for Greece. And I want to tell you

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[445] Editorial, 'Οι «Σχέσεις» Μας με τα Σκόπια', *Kathimerini* (4 January 1992), p. 9.

[446] Editorial, 'Τι Πρέπει να Ξέρουμε', *Makedonia* (16 January 1992), p. 2.

[447] Christos Pasalaris, 'Ίσως Είναι Ωρα να Διαβούμε τον Ρουβίκωνα', *Apogevmatini* (2 February 1992), p. 2.

[448] See T. J. Winnifrith, *The Vlachs: The History of a Balkan People* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), and Nicholas S. Balamaci, 'Can the Vlachs Write Their Own History?', *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, Vol. 17 (1991), pp. 9-36.

that I consider it inconceivable to put a signature under the name Macedonia for Skopje…because, in my opinion, this ridicules the Greek nation'. The *Kathimerini*'s Stavros Lygeros expressed the same opinion: 'if they name their statelet «Skopje Macedonia» or «Slavic Macedonia», the name that will prevail would be that of Macedonia alone. They would be called «Macedonians» by the whole world and their language would be «Macedonian»'.[449] The whole issue was finally resolved, after much hesitation and uncertainty, on 13 April 1992, when Mitsotakis dismissed Samaras on the grounds that the government could not have two different policies. The next day, the new junior Foreign Minister Ioannis Tzounis warned against a nationalistic frenzy that might increase anti-Americanism in Greece, and could cause an anti-European movement.[450]

This action, however, did not bring any relief to Mitsotakis. The leader of opposition Andreas Papandreou increased the political tension by offering his support to Samaras and his views.[451] Meanwhile, hundreds of Samaras' supporters gathered in front of the Ministry, shouting slogans in his favor. Moreover, it appears that 12-14 MPs of the Conservative Party favoured him as well. 'Mitsotakis is being driven to a new political and diplomatic defeat', reported the *Eleftherotypia*,[452] while the *Kathimerini* choose a middle position:

It is without precedent for a foreign minister to appear in front of the whole political leadership of his country and to dictate his policy to the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition and the leaders of the parties. Equally without precedent, however, is the fact that the Prime Minister was surprised by such an action and dismissed his minister in anger, in front of the whole political leadership of this place.[453]

Mitsotakis took over the Ministry himself for a while, before handing it to Michalis Papakonstantinou. It appears that the latter had orders to negotiate a compromise with Gligorov. But elements within the Conservative Party warned Mitsotakis that, if a name containing the term Macedonia was agreed, they would resign from their posts. Mitsotakis backed down, as he calculated that his government could not survive such a rebellion. Greece went ahead with elections, but Mitsotakis suffered a heavy defeat at the hands of Andreas Papandreou. Samaras was elected to Parliament as a leader of his own political party.

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[449] Stavros Lygeros, 'Από την Ευρώπη τα Θετικά', *Kathimerini* (19 December 1991), p. 9.
[450] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Αναγνώριση Θέλει ο Τζούνης, ντε Φάκτο' (14 April 1992), p. 16.
[451] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Ανδρέας: Συμφωνώ με τα Σημεία Σαμαρά' (15 April 1992), pp. 4-5.
[452] Yiorgos Karelas, '«Μητσοτακισμός», «Σαμαρισμός» και Ευθύνες', *Eleftherotypia* (17 April 1992), p. 9.
[453] Editorial, 'Από Εδώ και Μπρος...', *Kathimerini* (14 April 1992), p. 11.

3.7 Bloody foreigners: Greece and the West

Greece had high hopes of its Western allies concerning the Macedonian name issue, but its hopes were dashed. As early as February 1991, the Greek government had to cope with a US State Department's report talking of the mistreatment of a 'Slavomacedonian minority' within Greece. Then the Pope used Slavomacedonian among other languages in his traditional Christmas greeting, in December 1991. Foreign Minister Samaras characterized this as unfortunate, but journalist Spyros Alexiou of the *Kathimerini* saw it as intentional, in an article depicting the supposed anti-Orthodox machinations of the Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Europe.[454] The *Apogevmatini* accused the Vatican of pursuing an expansionist policy towards the Balkans,[455] whilst the *Eleftherotypia* accused the USA and Britain of manoeuvres aimed at the acceptance of the name Macedonia for the new state.[456] But the next Western challenge to Greece's position came from Italy in February 1992, when the President of the Italian Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Affairs, Flaminio Piccoli, demanded autonomy for Thessaloniki. The Italian government, enraged, accused him of being frivolous, but for the Greeks the damage was done. The *Kathimerini* talked about the 'smallness of Picoli',[457] and emphasized his Catholic connections. Meanwhile, the Continuous Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, under the then Archbishop Serafeim, asked the government to sever diplomatic relationships with the Vatican as a sign of protest. It was certainly a turbulent era for the relationships between Greece and the rest of the West.

By March 1992, Greece had lost its trust in its European partners. Italy and the Netherlands were seen as mavericks placing their narrow interests above historical truth and Greek rights. The first sign of anger among public opinion was expressed with a boycott on Italian and Dutch products in February 1992, which used the slogan «Product of the Netherlands (or Italy), a country against Greece on the Macedonian name issue». 'It is time to defend the interests of this place, to consume whatever we

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[454] Spyros Alexiou, 'Ρώμη και Σκόπια', *Kathimerini* (9 January 1992), p. 8.

[455] Titos Athanasiadis, 'Κι Άλλο Επιτυχές Μας Βήμα κατά των Σκοπίων', *Apogevmatini* (11 January 1992), p. 2. See also editorial, 'Οι Όροι της ΕΟΚ Μονόδρομος για τα Σκόπια', *Apogevmatini* (3 January 1992), p. 2.

[456] 21 December 1991, p. 1.

[457] 8 February 1992, p. 1.

produce and to snub those who provocatively snub us',[458] noted the Social-Democrat *Eleftherotypia*, adding that the Netherlands and Italy 'seriously offended the Greek

Picture 4: Diogenis Kammenos' cartoon from the *Kathimerini* (28-2-1992)

people's sense of honour and provoked its sensibility on national issues with the position they have taken'.[459] The Liberal-Conservative *Kathimerini* found the boycott a 'logical and, in general, justified' reaction',[460] whilst the Right-wing *Apogevmatini* also supported it.[461] The popular feeling was summarized by a cartoon in the *Kathimerini* bearing the inscription 'The Greek stomach cannot digest falsifications' (see picture 4).

Other journalists took a similar line. Titos Athanasiadis of the *Apogevmatini* described Italy as a traditional enemy, and warned of American machinations behind the Dutch actions.[462] He thus confirmed the analysis made by the academic Thanasis Diamantopoulos, who said that the usual scapegoats of Greek nationalistic hysteria remained the imperialist Pope and the dark centres of the transatlantic establishment.[463] The situation became even worse when the Western press started to

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[458] Editorial, Ὅπλο το Μποϋκοτάζ', *Eleftherotypia* (26 February 1992), p. 8.
[459] Editorial, 'Τους Πόνεσε', *Eleftherotypia* (28 February 1992), p. 8.
[460] *Kathimerini*, 'Ο Πελάτης Έχει Πάντα Δίκιο...' (27 February 1992), p. 9.
[461] Editorial, 'Τιμήστε το Λόγο Σας', *Apogevmatini* (29 February 1992), p. 2.
[462] Titos Athanasiadis, 'Η Αλλαγή των Ισορροπιών στα Βαλκάνια και η Αντίδρασή Μας', *Apogevmatini* (1 March 1992), p. 6.
[463] Thanasis Diamantopoulos, 'Ανθελληνισμός, Μακεδονομάχοι και...Μπάλα', *Eleftherotypia* (22 April 1992), p. 9.

publish articles attacking Greece. The *Economist* took the lead, asking for Greece's expulsion from the EU, followed by the *New York Times* recommending the immediate recognition of Macedonia. The Greek press reacted with anger - Babis Metaxas of the *Eleftherotypia* characterized the *Economist*'s article as 'openly hostile',[464] the *Apogevmatini* accused the *NY Times* of having no knowledge of history,[465] and the *Eleftherotypia*'s Victor Netas bitterly criticized John Palmer's articles in the *Guardian*. 'Our famous international and community ties', argued the *Makedonia*, 'have proven weaker than we had ever imagined',[466] a newspaper that demanded 'no more humiliations from foreigners'.[467]

As a result of all this, Greece felt isolated, disappointed and threatened. The *Apogevmatini* summarized the feeling writing that

by now it is evident that the International Community is likely to offer recognition to Skopje, neglecting our national rights...Our national interests are continuously being undermined by the great powers...Hellenism has suffered quite a few hardships and serious injuries during the post-war era and cannot suffer more.[468]

From that point on, the Greek media in general showed a constant distrust of the Western actions. The EU partners and the USA were always under suspicion, whilst the press started to remind the readers of the great powers' role in various Greek humiliations of the past (Asia Minor, Northern Epirus, Cyprus).[469] Slowly but steadily, the image of a nation in peril, surrounded by enemies and traitors, emerged in the pages of the right-wing press.[470] Even the Social-Democrat *Eleftherotypia* wrote that Europeans should understand that for Greece 'Macedonia's name is our soul, a sacred notion and non-negotiable'.[471] A few calm voices tried to resist the anti-Western tide sweeping the Greek media. Ino Afentouli of the *Kathimerini* reminded her readers that Greeks were also Europeans for obvious historical and cultural reasons;[472] Yiorgos Votsis of the *Eleftherotypia* argued that Greeks were in danger of

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[464] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Αποβολή από την ΕΟΚ της Ελλάδας Συνιστά ο «Economist»!' (9 May 1992), p. 45.
[465] Editorial, 'Ποιους Κοροϊδεύουν οι Ανιστόρητοι', *Apogevmatini* (6 April 1992), p. 2.
[466] Editorial, 'Η Πολιτική της Ελλάδος', *Makedonia* (2 May 1992), p. 2.
[467] Editorial, 'Όταν Έρθει η Ώρα', *Makedonia* (25 June 1992), p. 2.
[468] Editorial, 'Ενωμένοι στον Κίνδυνο', *Apogevmatini* (9 April 1992), p. 2.
[469] Christos Pasalaris, 'Όταν Έχουμε Τέτοιους Φίλους, τι Θέλουμε τους Εχθρούς!..', *Apogevmatini* (30 May 1992), p. 2.
[470] Titos Athanasiadis, 'Καημένη Ελλάδα, Περιβάλλεσαι από Εχθρούς και Εφιάλτες...', *Apogevmatini* (9 June 1992), p. 2.
[471] Editorial, 'Θα Στιγματιστούν', *Eleftherotypia* (10 June 1992), p. 8. See also Victor Netas, 'Μονόδρομος τα Μέτρα Πίεσης κατά των Σκοπίων', *Eleftherotypia* (22 February 1994), p. 9.
[472] Ino Afentouli, 'Ένα Εσφαλμένο Δίλημμα', *Kathimerini* (8 January 1994), p. 2.

portraying their country as a victim of others' machinations.[473] Antonis Liakos, Professor of History in the University of Thessaloniki, warned that 'an image of international conspiracy against Greece is being created, which is co-related with a narrow Greek-centred perception of international problems, with very unfavorable consequences abroad as well as within'.[474] But such opinions were nothing more than isolated calls in the wilderness.

It has often been argued - especially in U.S. accounts that echoed Samuel Huntington's theory for the clash of civilizations - that the Greeks rediscovered Orthodoxy as a result of all those developments, something that helped them to forge an alliance with fellow Orthodox Serbia, thereby defying the anti-Serb feelings of their EU partners. The preceding discussion, however, suggests that this is not what actually happened in early 1993. Orthodoxy did indeed make a comeback in the early 1990s, largely due to the enormous changes that afflicted Greek society, associated with the influx of immigrants and the challenges of globalisation and the EU membership. However, this appeal was largely confined to the right-wing circles that in this study are represented by the readers of the *Apogevmatini* and the *Makedonia*.[475] Feeling betrayed once more by the Western powers and gripped by the old fear of hostile neighbours, what most Greeks rediscovered during this period was not so much Orthodoxy as nationalism. After all, the Slavomacedonians were fellow Orthodox too, but this did not make them appear sympathetic to the Greeks at all. Pantazis Terlexis, Professor of Sociology at the University of Thessaly, identified a deep disenchantment among a majority of Greeks, who perceived the whole issue as the consequence of national treachery on the part of the foreigners.[476] It is exactly this feeling that forged the Greek-Serb alliance. The Greeks had learned through a deeply nationalistic educational system that the only friend they ever had was Serbia. Slobodan Milošević took advantage of that feeling, and with careful rhetoric reawakened it among the Greek public,[477] something that conveniently overlapped with a traditional foreign policy doctrine which assumed that peace and stability in the Balkans required a strong Serbia. It was on these grounds - and not on grounds of a shared Orthodox heritage - that Victor Netas of the *Eleftherotypia* asked for the

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[473] Yiorgos Votsis, 'Εκτός Παιδιάς η Εξωτερική Μας Πολιτική', *Eleftherotypia* (2 March 1992), p. 9.

[474] Antonis Liakos, 'Βαλκάνια και Εθνική Πολιτική', *Eleftherotypia* (25 June 1992), p. 9.

[475] See for example, Editorial, 'Η Αντεπίθεση της Ορθοδοξίας', *Apogevmatini* (10 March 1992), p. 2 and Editorial, 'Το Φαινόμενο Ορθοδοξία', *Makedonia* (26 February 1992), p. 2.

[476] Pantazis Terlexis, 'Η Κρίση Εδώ, η Συνταγή Πού;', *Eleftherotypia* (17 February 1994), p. 9.

[477] Yiorgos Kapopoulos, 'Απρόσμενη Προσέγγιση', *Kathimerini* (4 March 1992), p. 9.

revival of the old friendships and alliances,[478] and that Nikos Kouris, junior Defence Minister, spoke of the need for an axis between Russia, Belgrade and Athens.[479] Milošević had become Greece's only ally in the Balkans.[480]

Examples of the above-mentioned nationalistic frenzy can be found in abundance in the pages of the newspapers consulted in this study. Christos Pasalaris of the *Apogevmatini* noted that the struggle for Macedonia 'is a struggle of existence for the whole of the nation'.[481] He proposed, shockingly, that Greek youth should be educated 'in the skilful use of guns, to wear the military uniform with pride, to be touched when hearing the national anthem and to envisage Hellenism far beyond its present-day borders'.[482] Themos Anastasiadis, a popular journalist, drew a racist and arrogant picture of a nation in peril, surrounded by Albanians trying to create a Greater Albania, by Slavomacedonians seeking to steal the Greek identity, by Bulgarians and Turks, who had always been Greece's enemies, and by European 'partners' who 'did not understand or like us'. And he added that 'if we continue to walk the road of Franco-Levantine compliance, next century we will need a passport to visit Kavala (a Greek city in the north).'[483] The Thessaloniki-based newspaper *Makedonia* blamed peace movements, and the betrayal of traditional spiritual and family values for sending the Greeks' national conscience to sleep:

We have accepted having teachers in Greek universities who support officially, from their chairs, anti-Hellenic views, who print books in favour of the «Skopjans», who praise the murderers and torturers of the Northern Epirots, who speak of a Macedonian minority, and other ludicrous and stupid unscientific things.[484]

As for the bitterness felt towards the rest of the European states, this was reflected in an article by Christos Giannaras, Professor of Philosophy at Panteios University, which appeared in the *Kathimerini*:

They have isolated us and vilify us on a daily basis. They have provocatively recognised the Skopje statelet, humiliating Greece. They ask for the Greek Presidency of the EU to be put «in tutelage». Like this, crudely, without mincing their words. They do not trust us. The name Greece is everywhere greeted with jeers and contempt.[485]

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[478] Victor Netas, 'Πληρώνουμε την Άγνοιά Μας για τα Βαλκάνια', *Eleftherotypia* (28 April 1992), p. 9.

[479] See Nikos Kiaos, 'Το «Εμπάργκο», οι Διαδικασίες και η Ουσία', *Eleftherotypia* (24 February 1994), p. 9.

[480] Akis Kosonas, 'Επέτειος Εθνικής Αφύπνισης', *Kathimerini* (25 March 1992), p. 9.

[481] Christos Pasalaris, 'Όλες οι Ελπίδες στα Ελληνικά Νιάτα', *Apogevmatini* (22 March 1992), p. 2.

[482] Christos Pasalaris, 'Ας Τυπώσουμε κι Εμείς Νόμισμα με το Μοναστήρι', *Apogevmatini* (26 January 1992), p. 2.

[483] Themos Anastasiadis, 'Χίλιες Φορές Υπερ-Πατριώτες', *Eleftherotypia* (23 February 1994), p. 9.

[484] Editorial, 'Κίνδυνοι εκ Βορρά', *Makedonia* (14 January 1992), p. 2.

[485] Christos Giannaras, 'Ο Εξευτελισμός των Ελλήνων', *Kathimerini* (5 January 1994), p. 2.

3.8 The impact of the Macedonian name issue on Greek views towards former Yugoslavia

The Macedonian name issue completely altered the Greek approach to the Yugoslav crisis. The hitherto indifferent public, and the hitherto anti-Serb media, were transformed into Serb sympathizers and passionate anti-Westerners. This sentiment was first expressed in various incidents that took place during the long war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and subsequently reached its peak during NATO's involvement in Kosovo. The Greek public, unable to confront their own national myths in order to find a better understanding of themselves, retreated into national hysteria, and rediscovered "Greekness" as a form of defensive nationalism. Skopje became a byword for evil, and Europe and the West started to seem distant from Greek needs and psychology. Prime Minister Mitsotakis tried in vain to seek a compromise formula and to keep the European profile of the country intact. Unable to discipline his own party or to reform the economy, he too was swept away by the nationalistic tide and ended up loosing power to Andreas Papandreou, always keen to manipulate popular feelings and grievances. Largely ignored by the British press, and only superficially examined by most Western scholars, the Macedonian name issue proved to be one of the most important incidents in the development of Greek anti-Westernism in the 20th Century. And, inevitably, it influenced subsequent Greek reactions to events in former Yugoslavia.

CHAPTER 4

THE BRITISH-GREEK RIFT OVER THE

BOSNIAN WAR (1992-1995)

BACKGROUND OF THE BOSNIAN WAR

As with the previous chapters, it is necessary to review some of the main events associated with the Bosnian War of 1992-1995, before going on to examine the reactions of the British and Greek press. The Federal Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina held its first multi-party elections in November 1990. The Party of Democratic Action, developed in order to defend the interests of the Muslim element, and led by Alija Izetbegović, gained 37.8% of the votes. The Serbian Democratic Party led by the Montenegrin psychiatrist and poet Radovan Karadžić and the Croatian Democratic Union of Stjepan Kljuić came second and third with 26.5% and 14.7% respectively.[486] Izetbegović became President of the Republic, and it was agreed that the presidency should rotate among the parties every two years. But the organization of the three biggest parties along ethnic lines, and their determination to stand for the interests of particular communities, was an ominous sign for the future. It was a fact that only a handful of scholars and journalists recognised at the time.[487]

In March 1991, Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milošević met at Karađorđevo, and agreed to divide Bosnia.[488] Probably as a result of this meeting, so-called Serb autonomous provinces started appearing all over the Republic during the autumn of 1991, while the Croats also established two autonomous *oblasts* in November, followed by the entrance of Croatian paramilitary units into western Herzegovina.[489] But the international community paid little attention at the time, pre-occupied as it was with the growing Croatian crisis. After Croatia's recognition as an independent state in December, Izetbegović embarked upon secession from Yugoslavia too, without, however, taking into consideration the wishes of the Serbs or Karadžić's warnings that if the Muslims proceeded with independence it would make Northern Ireland look like 'a seaside holiday'.[490] The immediate response by the Serbs was to unify all their autonomous regions into the Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Republika Srpska), of which Karadžić became President. The Croats followed in

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[486] Figures from Attila Ágh, *Emerging Democracies in East Central Europe and the Balkans* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998), p. 217.
[487] Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), p. 146.
[488] Glenny, p. 149.
[489] Glenny, p. 156.
[490] Quoted in Roy Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide: The 1993 Pulitzer Prize-Winning Dispatches on the "Ethnic Cleansing" of Bosnia* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), p. 13.

their footsteps, by declaring the separate state of Herceg-Bosna, led by the hardliner Mate Boban, a former supermarket manager.

In early 1992, Izetbegović abandoned the EC-organized peace negotiations and held a referendum, in which 62.68% of the Bosnian population voted in favor of independence. The Serbs boycotted it, while the Croats supported it only because they wished to be disassociated from Yugoslavia before proceeding with the plans to incorporate a part of Bosnia into Croatia proper. Immediately after, Serb-led violence erupted in Sarajevo, and an incident in the northern town of Bosanski Brod developed into a proper battle, widely considered hereafter as the start of the Bosnian War. On 6 April, the EC recognized the independence of Bosnia, hoping that this would forestall conflict over that region.[491] Concerning the responsibility of the EC on this occasion, there are two conflicting opinions: on the one hand, scholars like Geoffrey and Nigel Swain believe that once Carrington's Yugoslav-wide scheme had been wrecked by German overreaction, war in Bosnia was inevitable,[492] while authors like John V. A. Fine and Robert J. Donia accuse all those who support this theory as being pro-Serbian or having an anti-German orientation.[493] The immediate response of the Serbs to the EC action was to shell Sarajevo and move forces from Serbia proper into Bosnia. The evidence suggests that the Serbs were not ready to accept peace except on their own terms and, therefore, if the EC thought that offering independence to Bosnia would force them to reconsider it had made a grave mistake.

In May 1992, Slobodan Milošević ordered the withdrawal of the Federal units from Bosnia but, in reality, only 14,000 of the total 90,000 men returned: the rest were renamed to the Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia, under the command of General Ratko Mladić. Thus the Serbs quickly dominated the battleground, forcing their opponents into an alliance of necessity. At this stage, the lead was taken by various paramilitary organizations, the most notorious being the Serb Tigers of Željko 'Arkan' Raznjatović, an ex-ice cream salesman-turned-gangster who had fought in the Croatian War, and the anti-Western Muslim Seventeenth Brigade, which was

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[491] *Keesing's Record of World Events*, formerly *Keesing's Contemporary Archives* (1992, p. 38848).
[492] Geoffrey and Nigel Swain, *Eastern Europe Since 1945*, 2nd edn. (London: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 227. See also Francine Friedman, *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a Nation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 225.
[493] Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, *Bosnia-Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (London: C. Hurst, 1994), p. 233.

connected to fundamentalist Islamic groups and attracted a number of Mujaheddin volunteers from the Arab world.[494]

Perhaps the single most important incident in bringing the Bosnian War to the attention of the wide world was the revelation of the existence of several PoW camps run by the Serbs in late July 1992. This transformed the conflict into a major media affair, unleashing enormous pressures on Western governments to respond in some way. Roy Gutman of the New York tabloid *Newsday* first reported the camps, but it was not until early August, when Penny Marshall of the British Independent Television Network (ITN) transmitted the first pictures, that the general public all over the Western world started to react. In the wake of the revelations, the British government held the London conference (September 1992), at the end of which Lord David Owen was appointed to replace Lord Carrington as the EC's representative.

In January 1993 Lord Owen presented, together with the UN representative Cyrus Vance, a peace plan that was eventually rejected by the Bosnian Serbs. In April, United States intervention in the Bosnian crisis began, as the fall of the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica provoked an international outcry against the Serbs. As the Croat-Muslim alliance started to collapse, Owen, together with Norway's ex-foreign minister Thorvald Stoltenberg, presented a new peace plan in August 1993. This time it was Izetbegović who rejected it, an action that started a small-scale civil war between the Muslims, when the politician and entrepreneur Fikret Abdić declared the Bihać enclave in northwestern Bosnia as the independent Republic of Western Bosnia and accepted the Owen-Stoltenberg plan.[495] In March 1994, Bill Clinton succeeded in bringing peace between Croats and Muslims, who were encouraged to form a new political entity, the Croat-Muslim Federation. In April 1994, NATO made the first air strikes against Serbian targets, in response to General Mladić's attack on Goražde.[496]

In July 1995, a significant milestone in the fate of Bosnia took place when Milošević, under Western pressure, and increasingly annoyed by Karadžić who was refusing his calls for a settlement, imposed an embargo on the Bosnian Serbs and closed the borders with Serbia. This proved to be the beginning of the end: Serbia did not react when, in August 1995, the newly formed Croatian army put an end to the

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[494] See Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, p. 287, and Ed Vulliamy, *Seasons in Hell: Understanding Bosnia's War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p. 294.
[495] For more see Brendan O'Shea, *Crisis at Bihać: Bosnia's Bloody Battlefield* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998).
[496] More details on this safe area on Joe Sacco, *Safe Area Goražde: The War in Eastern Bosnia 1992-1995* (Seattle, WA: Fantagraphics Books, 2000).

existence of the Krajina Republic, in violation of UN resolutions but with the backing of the United States, nor when NATO war planes began bombing Serb targets throughout Bosnia. Finally, in September 1995, the Bosnian Serbs agreed to the US terms and in December 1995 the Bosnian War was officially ended with the signing of the Dayton Agreement, which established Bosnia as a unified confederation of two separate entities, Republica Sprska and the Croat-Muslim Federation.[497]

SECTION 4A: BRITISH PRESS REACTIONS

Of all the wars that shook the former Yugoslavia from 1991 to 2000, the Bosnian War was by far the bloodiest and most complicated. It came to embody the Yugoslav drama for the wider public across Europe and the United States,[498] in sharp contrast to the two previous conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia. Before an analysis of the war's coverage, however, terms like 'Bosnians' and 'ethnic cleansing' must be analysed. Although they were much used by the Western media, they remained highly problematic. The rest of the section will be devoted: firstly, to an attempt to sketch (and demythologise, where necessary) the portraits of the three belligerents drawn in the selected British media; secondly, to the presentation of media reactions to the attempts by the international community to resolve the conflict; and, last but not least, to the debate in the British press over possible Western intervention in support of the Muslims.

4.1 Muslims, Bosnians and ethnic cleansing

It is perhaps not unreasonable to expect that a country named Bosnia-Herzegovina would be populated by Bosnians and Herzegovinians. But according to the last Yugoslav census (1991), the Republic comprised 43.5% Muslims, 31.2% Serbs, 17.4% Croats, and 5.6% Yugoslavs,[499] a rather bewildering ethnic portrait, with a religious group representing the dominant component, a phenomenon certainly unique

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[497] See Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000).

[498] See Richard Sobel and Erik Shiraev (eds.), *International Public Opinion and the Bosnia Crisis* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003).

[499] For the latter see Duško Seculić et al., 'Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 59 (1994), pp. 83-97.

in Europe, and possibly in the rest of the world too. This paradox created much confusion among the reporters and the public during the Bosnian War, and a variety of names like 'Bosnians', 'Bosniaks', and 'Bosnian government' were often used in conjuction with 'Muslims', in order to distinguish them from the Serbs and Croats on more 'ethnic' grounds.[500]

However, it is doubtful if this practice contributed to a better understanding of the Bosnian conflict on the part of the British public, which appeared to imagine the 'Bosnians' as a Muslim nation of obscure Turkish/Arabic origin, struggling against Serb and Croat invaders. An interesting case study of the confusion can be found in a *Daily Mail* article, in which the author John Casey speculates 'who would go into action to stop the Serbs and Croats and *Bosnians and Moslems* [emphasis mine] killing each other?'[501] Particularly revealing of the misuse of the name 'Bosnian', and of the consequent misunderstanding, is a story that Lee Bryant, former press officer for the Bosnian embassy in London, told to the *Guardian*'s journalist Francis Wheen.[502] Bryant had managed to persuade a Bosnian friend of his, ethnically Croat, to appear in BBC's *Newsnight*, but despite the fact that he had personally told the producers that his friend was a Croat, the presenter referred to her interviewee as a Muslim. When Bryant protested, he was told that the majority of British viewers believe that the terms 'Bosnian' and 'Muslim' are synonymous, and the fact that Bosnians could also be Croats or Serbs would only confuse them. For these reasons, every attempt to study the Bosnian War should start by stating clearly that the notion of the war being one of Serbs fighting the Bosnians is erroneous. The Bosnian Muslims were ethnically Slavs - mainly Serbs and Croats (although doubtless with a rich mix of Turkish and Albanian blood). Hence, the ethnic identities of the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina were complex and often overlapping. There is a need to understand this well, before examining the attempts of the British media to 'simplify' the situation and present it to the public in a more digestable way.

'Ethnic cleansing' was another ambiguous term widely used by the media during the Bosnian War, especially following the discovery of the Serb-run camps. It can be defined as a policy that aims at the purification of a supposed 'homeland', by

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[500] See for example Martin Woollacott, 'Raise the Siege or Quit the Field', *Guardian* (17 June 1995), p. 24, and William Rees-Mogg, 'New Age of the Barbarian', *The Times* (14 January 1993), p. 14.
[501] John Casey, 'Why We Should Walk Away from This Bloody War: With Talk of Balkan Conflict in the Air, The History Lesson We Ignore at Our Peril', *Daily Mail* (29 June 1992), p. 6.
[502] Francis Wheen, 'Winner in a War of Words', *Guardian* (2 August 1995), p. T7.

resettling or eliminating a part of population which is perceived not only as alien, but also as a threat to the security of the desired state. The first thing to be noted is that this is by no means a novel concept in history.[503] The earliest known historical example occurred in the Assyrian Empire (8th Century BC), while the earliest incident in the content of modern European states took place in England in 1290, with the expulsion of the Jews.[504] A second point to note, concerning the use of 'ethnic cleansing' in the Bosnian case, is that in the majority of cases the term referred more to expulsions and forced migration rather than murder. And when murder occurred, it was often portrayed as conducted on a mass scale as part of a government's policy. However, it is debatable whether this should be labelled as ethnic cleansing or genocide, another popular but controversial term.[505]

Nevertheless, in the minds of the general public, especially in Britain and the United States, the meaning of 'ethnic cleansing' has become synonymous with 'Holocaust'. Yet, though of course arrests and expulsions are highly unpleasant, they can not be equaled with murder on a genocidal scale. The term 'cleansing' even implies something that can be presumed to be beneficial, 'an activity that it is harmless, ordinary, and even good'.[506] Moreover, there were well-documented cases of Serbs who refused to participate in atrocities and who were brutally murdered in cold blood,[507] as well as reports of a body of officers among the JNA (albeit small) who tried to adhere to the Geneva Convention,[508] facts which blur the moral universe even further. What happened in Bosnia can perhaps better be described as atrocities which definitely deserved punishment as war crimes.[509] But to claim genocide risks the danger of over-simplification, and a black-and-white perception of the Bosnian

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[503] See Ervin Staub, *The Roots of Evil: The Origins of Genocide and Other Group Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analysis and Case Studies* (New Haven: 1990).
[504] Andrew Bell-Fialkoff, 'A Brief History of Ethnic Cleansing', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (1993), pp. 110-21.
[505] See the discussion in Samuel Totten and William S. Parsons, 'Introduction', in *Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons and Israel W. Charney (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), pp. xi-lv. See also Helen Fein, *Genocide: Sociological Perspective* (London: Sage Publications, 1993), and, for Yugoslavia's case, Susan L. Woodward, 'Genocide or Partition: Two Faces of the Same Coin?', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (1996), pp. 755-61.
[506] Keith Doubt, *Sociology after Bosnia and Kosovo: Recovering Justice* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), p. 15.
[507] See Michael Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1996), p. 73.
[508] Glenny, pp. 175-76.
[509] See a description of the 'ethnic cleansing' procedure in Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, revised edn. (London: Penguin Books, 1996), pp. 244-45.

crisis, between 'good victims' (Muslims) and 'bad aggressors' (mainly Serbs, but Croats too).

There is no reason to pretend that the Serbs were not responsible for the majority of the appalling war crimes that occured in Bosnia, crimes which cannot be excused by the fact that the Muslim and Croat communities were equally responsible for the initial breakdown of ethnic relations. But one should always bear in mind that the Serbs, thanks to the Federal army's support, were the most successful in pursuing policies that Croats and Muslims also favoured, with the result that their crimes were more visible. Croats might well have committed crimes on a similar scale if they had possessed the same firepower. Malcolm Rifkind told the House of Commons that 'the Croatians have been seeking to control as much territory as possible...and I have no doubt that the Bosnian Muslims, given the opportunity, would also be seeking to do so'.[510] As the BBC correspodent Martin Bell has rightly argued, 'easily overlooked in all this, was the fact that the Serbs also suffered. Serb villages too were torched, whole communities massacred, and tens of thousands made homeless'.[511] Any serious examination should thus treat with great care terms like 'genocide', 'Holocaust', and 'ethnic cleansing', when they applied to the Bosnian conflict.

4.2 Portraits of the belligerents: the Bosnian Serbs

'If in 1876 it was the hapless Orthodox peasantry being raped and massacred by bestial Turkish soldiery', wrote the Cambridge scholar Brendan Simms, 'today it is the Muslim civilians who were at the mercy of crazed Serbian Chetniks'.[512] This picture, surprisingly oversimplified, shows clearly the attitude adopted by the general public towards the Bosnian Serbs, who were often portrayed by the British media in terms of the wild men from the hills. To a certain extent, of course, these reactions were justified by the crimes committed by the Bosnian Serbs. They went to war for self-determination using paramilitary forces ready to commit atrocities, and failed to understand that the creation of an ethnically pure state was impossible, especially

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[510] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. 216 , 14 December 1992 - 15 January 1993 (London: HMSO, 1993), p. 1066.
[511] Martin Bell, *In Harm's Way: Reflections of a War-Zone Thug*, revised edn. (London: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 131.
[512] Simms, 'Bosnia: The Lessons of History?', in *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia*, ed. by Thomas Cushnan and Stjepan G. Meštrović (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 65-78 (p. 70).

since the West was not ready to turn a blind eye to their methods. 'Woodrow Wilson would have understood their aim', remarked Douglas Hurd, Britain's Foreign Minister at the time, 'while being appalled by their methods'.[513] But to the extent that this understandable anger of the Western public was used in order for the Bosnian War to be presented and explained by the British press as a simple case of bad Serbs attacking good Muslims and not-so-good Croats, it proved dangerous.

Fresh from the huge success of the coverage of the First Gulf War, the Western media, and especially the television networks, were anxious to repeat it. And a large-scale war inside Europe provided a perfect opportunity. The First Gulf War had set a successful example for the media, as the Western public spent endless hours watching the live reports from Iraq and Kuwait including live bombardments, which for the first time brought a distant war to virtually every household around the globe. But the Bosnian War was far more complicated than Saddam Hussein's invasion in Kuwait, and the reporters had to provide a context for domestic consumption. In simple terms, they had simplified the plot and neatly divided the cast of characters into 'goodies' and 'baddies'. Hence, it was easy for the Serbs, already labelled as the bullies of the Balkans since the Croatian War, to be demonised even further, as their military supremacy made them the worst sinners. Moreover, some influential British reporters seem to have been motivated by genuine interest and concern for the plight of the Bosnian Muslims, and identified with their cause, letting the atrocities to which they had been exposed infiltrate their work and force them to abandon their neutrality.

One may of course argue that in war total objectivity is the privilege of those who are not there. There were however those like Misha Glenny, John Simpson, Martin Bell or Laura Silber, who made a determined attempt to examine the origins and issues of the complex war they had to report. 'There were two kinds of journalists in Bosnia', wrote Martin Bell, 'those, such as Maggie O'Kane of the *Guardian* and John Burns of the *New York Times*, who went on crusades…and those like me, who did not', adding that in war reporting we are not in the business of liking or disliking but only of understanding.[514] John Simpson also argues that 'it was certainly true that there was a powerful pro-Muslim lobby among the British and the American

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[513] Hurd, *The Search for Peace: A Century of Peace Diplomacy* (London: Warner Books, 1997), p. 105.
[514] Bell, *In Harm's Way*, p. 39.

journalists in Bosnia. Reporters from well-known newspapers habitually wore the badge of the Bosnian government in their lapels'.[515]

By the end of April 1992, the *Guardian*'s reports from Yugoslavia had become quite anti-Serb, forcing Dr. David A. Norris of the University of Nottingham to write in protest.[516] The same anti-Serb stand had been adopted by *The Times* as well.[517] The *Sunday Times* argued, more cautiously, that blame should not be apportioned to Serbia alone, as forces from Croatia were fighting to grab territory, while armed Muslim forces were also provoking many clashes.[518] As the conflict developed, there were voices in the *Guardian* which distanced themselves from the negative image of the Serbs.[519] However, as the Serbs started to besiege Sarajevo, and the Western outrage at the indiscriminate shelling of civilians began to grow, those voices were silenced. Journalists like Hugo Young instead took the lead, presenting the Bosnian Serbs as an immediate and pressing threat to the interest of the whole world.[520] In a similar manner, the *Daily Mail* argued that the Serbs were the best-armed and most relentless aggressors, and should be subjected to humiliating isolation.[521]

What destroyed the image of the Bosnian Serbs was the revelation of the camps that they ran in areas under their command. Right across the planet, people saw ITN's footage from the Bosnian Serb prison camp at Trnopolje, showing an emaciated prisoner staring out at the camera from behind a barbed wire fence. The ITN report was careful not to label the Serb prison as a 'concentration camp', but other journalists, out to exploit a fine piece of first-hand reportage, proved less meticulous, thereby reinforcing the view that the camps belonged in the same pedigree as Auschwitz or Dachau. No evidence has yet been produced to show that these camps were indeed functioning as systematic centres of death. Furthermore, there were allegations that the emaciated figure who was perceived and transmitted as Muslim was in reality a 37-year-old Serb named Slobodan Konjević, who had been

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[515] John Simpson, *A Mad World, My Masters: Tales from a Traveller's Life*, updated edn. (Basingtoke: Pan Books, 2001), p. 322.

[516] David A. Norris, 'World Politics and the Balkans' (letter), *Guardian* (29 April 1992), p. 18.

[517] *The Times* , 'Bosnia on the Brink' (10 April 1992), p. 14.

[518] Louise Branson, 'Breakaway Yugoslavs Face a Modern 100 Years' War', *Sunday Times* (19 April 1992), p. 1/17.

[519] Jonathan Eyal, 'Rewriting the Rules for a New Balkan Settlement', *Guardian* (18 June 1992), p. 10.

[520] Hugo Young, 'To Intervene or Not to Intervene?', *Guardian* (16 June 1992), p. 22.

[521] Editorial, 'Slaughtered in the Bread Queue', *Daily Mail* (28 May 1992), p. 6.

arrested for looting and suffered from tuberculosis and not starvation.[522] Soon, similar detention camps housing Muslims, but this time operated by the Croats, were reported at Dretelj and Gabela. But, surprisingly, there was no media interest in them, leaving fertile ground for scepticism. Was it due to the lack of easy access, or were they, too, excluded in order to 'simplify' the plot?

Whatever the case, the emotional impact on Western public opinion was enormous. *The Times* noted that 'since the Nazi concentration camps and Stalin's deportations of entire nations, Europe has seen nothing remotely matching in horror what is happening in the Balkans'.[523] The *Daily Mail* reported that

like the victims of the Third Reich, many of these Croatians and Moslem Bosnians have been transported into captivity in stifling trucks without food, water or sanitation. They have not fought. They are held as part of the Serbs' programme of 'ethnic cleansing' - that phrase so chillingly reminiscent of the Nazis' earlier racial war. Their only 'crime' is that they are not of Serbian origin.[524]

Under the influence of such revelations, Serb leaders were presented as reincarnations of evil, with Slobodan Milošević being portrayed as a monster of postwar Europe gloating over his bloody triumphs (*The Times*), a ruthless leader who was responsible for Europe's biggest bloodbath in 50 years (*Sunday Times*), and a dictator (*Daily Mail*). Radovan Karadžić was presented as a fanatical and corrupt nationalist, General Mladić was pictured as a Serb Napoleon who thought bad guys lived longer, while the Vice-President of the Bosnian Serbs Professor Biljana Plavšić was labelled, in a piece of tabloid journalism, 'Professor Necrophilia', a once brilliant Fulbright scholar who had turned to genocide to compensate for an empty sex life.[525] Even the usually calm and cautious *Sunday Times* was dragged into biased characterizations, classifying the Serb regime as 'Fascist'[526], a term also used by Paddy Ashdown, leader at the time of the Liberal Democrats.[527]

From that point onwards, the Serbs were left with few friends among the British media. There were some, however, who insisted that the Serbs while undoubtly guilty were not the only culprits. Among those were some politicians, like

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[522] John Burns, 'The Media as Impartial Observers or Protagonists: Conflict Reporting or Conflict Encouragement in Former Yugoslavia', in *Bosnia by Television*, ed. by James Gow, Richard Paterson and Alison Preston (London: British Film Institute, 1996), pp. 92-102 (p. 94). See also Jacques Merlino, *Les Verites Yougoslaves ne Sont pas Toutes Bonnes a Dire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1993).

[523] Editorial, 'Quibbling over Misery', *The Times* (30 July 1992), p. 10.

[524] *Daily Mail*, 'Echo of Auschwitz' (28 July 1992), p. 10.

[525] *Daily Mail*, 'Miss Necrophilia' (12 May 1993), p. 10.

[526] Editorial, 'The Shame and the Slaughter', *Sunday Times* (18 April 1993), p. 1/24.

[527] See his article, 'Abandoning Bosnia to Its Fascist Fate', *Guardian* (17 December 1993), p. 22.

the MPs Julian Brazier, Sir Peter Tapsell (Conservative), Tam Dalyell and Tony Benn (Labour), Lord Peter Carrington, the Minister of Overseas Development Baroness of Wallacey Lynda Chalker, Douglas Hurd and Malcolm Rifkind. Lord David Owen also portrayed in his memoirs Milošević and General Mladić not as mad butchers, but as political personalities driven by ruthlessness and a pursuit of power for its own sake.[528] Among the journalists, the bravest article that tried to challenge the oversimplified view of the Bosnian War was written by the *Daily Mail* columnist Ann Leslie:

Whenever there is a massacre of Serbs, the world's media largely ignore it: after all, the Serbs - even their old grannies - deserve everything they get, don't they? Whenever a Serb village is 'cleansed' (and I have seen many such, just as I have seen many Moslem villages 'cleansed'), the world turns away. The only 'politically correct' victims are Moslems...By constantly telling the world that the Serbs - nasty, brutish and arrogant though they may be - have no genuine grievances, and never have had any, the media (especially the American media, safe in their air-conditioned eyries across the Atlantic) have encouraged the 'something-must-be-done' school to whip up a bizarre frenzy of war-fever.[529]

4.3 Portraits of the belligerents: the Muslims

The way that the British media portrayed the Bosnian Muslims was in sharp contrast with the portrait of the Serbs. One of the first images from Bosnia transmitted in Britain by the BBC showed a shop selling Turkish-style copper jugs[530]. One day later, *The Times* correspondent Roger Boyes published the following description of the country:

Out of a typical central European landscape of dense forest and green valleys, one stumbles into a city dominated by minarets and the calls of the muezzin. Architecturally, the mosques of Sarajevo rank among the world's best.[531]

At the time, it was quite natural for the journalists to focus on the Muslim character of Bosnia, since it was (and still is) the only European state, together with Albania, with a Muslim majority. As the war progressed, however, the persistent focus on the Muslims created the idea that Bosnia was a Muslim country. The catalyst for the Western affection towards Muslims was the discovery of the Serb camps. Of course, some Bosnian Serbs did their unwitting best to reinforce this situation, especially

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[528] David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (London: Indigo, 1996), p. 135.
[529] Ann Leslie, 'Time to Get Out of the Bloody Balkans', *Daily Mail* (20 July 1995), p. 8.
[530] BBC Afternoon News (3 March 1992).
[531] Roger Boyes, 'Haunted by the Past', *The Times* (4 March 1992), p. 15.

General Mladić, who did not hesitate to declare publicly that 'if you make way for one of them, he will come along with five wives and before you know what is happening, you have a village'.[532]

In general, the war in Bosnia was regarded among the best-reported of the 20th Century, and it is the one that claimed the lives of many journalists killed in action. The siege of Sarajevo was extensively covered by both press and television. And yet, the image that emerged in the British media was misleading: the Republic's multi-ethnic capital was pictured as a Muslim city, as very few journalists bothered to mention that there were approximately 90,000 Serbs who decided to remain in the city and suffer its fate, or that Sarajevo had the highest proportion of those 5.6% of the population who had declared themselves Yugoslavs in the 1991 census. Martin Bell, for example, refers to how various stories from Sarajevo reinforced the prevailing image, turning a blind eye to the city's Serbs, who were also being sniped at and mortared and wounded - but not under the eye of the TV camera.[533]

Although this thesis analyses the coverage of the Yugoslav conflicts by the press, at this point it is useful to look shortly on some key points of the TV coverage of the Bosnian conflict. The decade 1990-2000 showed a dramatic increase in the preference of the mass public for relying on TV news rather than newspapers for information. For example, in a survey submitted to the Radio Society of Great Britain's weekly omnibus, 54% of the sample thought that they found out enough about Bosnia by watching the news.[534] The hitherto dominant press has declined slowly but steadily in influence. This of course does not necessarily mean that earlier generations did read about Bosnia. But since all the wars that this study examines took place during the 1990s, it is inevitable that there were cases when the TV reports largely set the tone for the opinions reflected in newspaper coverage, especially during the Bosnian War and the Kosovo War, as those two conflicts attracted the interest of the mass public.

In reference to the British TV coverage of the Bosnian War, the initial lead had been taken by the ITN, which was the channel responsible for the detention camps reports, and also by Sky News. But by mid-1993, both ITN and Sky News,

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[532] Quoted in Vulliamy, p. 47.

[533] Bell, *In Harm's Way*, p. 99.

[534] Ian Brough-Williams, 'War Without End?: The *Bloody Bosnia* Season on Channel Four', in *Bosnia by Television*, ed. by James Gow, Richard Paterson and Alison Preston (London: British Film Institute, 1996), pp. 19-33 (p. 27).

'having had their fill of both pretty Muslim virgins sobbing out their tales of sexual violation and British couples cradling the Bosnian rape babies they have adopted',[535] appeared to have lost their interest in Bosnian affairs, leaving the ground to BBC (mainly) and Channel 4 (to a lesser degree). In general, the BBC managed to live up to its reputation and produced some fine pieces of journalism, the most notable being Martin Bell's report for *Panorama*, in the programme Rose's War (23 January 1995), and a documentary titled *Sarajevo: A Street under Siege*. But while BBC's special programmes rose far above the general standards, its news did not alter the lines that had been established, maintaining the picture of heart-rending stories of Muslim tragedy, in which the camera duly lingered on tears of despair.[536] Rare was the news bulletin that did not carry a report of an atrocity, before moving on to film the protagonists of the war sitting around a finely polished table, surrounded by yet more cameras.[537]

Channel 4 decided, in August 1993, to devote 15 hours of prime television time to Bosnia, starting a week-long season titled Bloody Bosnia, broadcasting 28 programmes designed to explain the background of the crisis and interview the main parties of the conflict. The aim was to provide the average Briton with an easily digestible historical and political context. It was the most ambitious coverage of the Bosnian War and, in general, the documentary was received well by the press. But some commentators suggested that it failed to challenge the prevailing stereotypes about 'good Muslims' and 'bad Serbs'. Ian Brough-Williams characterised it as a programme 'entertaining while it lasts, soon over, easy to forget and ultimately disposable', that eventually clouded the history it sought to elucidate.[538] The documentary in any case failed to attract more than 4% of total terrestrial viewing, giving the channel its lowest 1993 peak-time viewing share.[539]

For a newspaper reader the war in Bosnia came across quite differently in comparison to the TV reports. But, in general, the same image of the innocent Muslim prevailed, thanks to powerful writers like Maggie O' Kane of the *Guardian* or Janine di Giovanni of the *Sunday Times*. Both journalists were keen to express the drama and the barbarity of the atrocities, and embarked on fierce pro-Muslim crusades, striking a

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[535] Linda Grant, 'Anyone Here Being Raped and Speak English?', *Guardian* (2 August 1993), p. 10.
[536] See for example BBC News (13.00), 24 February 1993.
[537] Craig Brown, 'Bloody but Unbowed', *Sunday Times* (8 August 1993), p. 1/13.
[538] Brough-Williams, p. 24.
[539] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

chord of melodrama with their heart-rending narratives of misery.[540] A letter selected form the *Guardian* reflects the appeal that such stories had to the average Briton:

I do not think of myself as a naive person. I know there are atrocities and horrors perpetrated around the world every day...However, Maggie O'Kane's report from Bosnia has penetrated my layer of self protection.[541]

O'Kane retained the same line in all her reports, going so far in her sympathy for the Muslim cause that she actually appeared to justify the ferocious paramilitary organization Seventeenth Brigade, writing that its men are 'the survivors of the detention camps. Routed from their homes, wrenched from their families, they have lost everything but the will to live and the forlorn hope of a multi-ethnic Bosnia.'[542]

It is interesting to note that when the British press reported that Muslims had commited atrocities, the latter were seen in a much more favourable light, as more or less justifiable actions of revenge and despair, a tendency particular evident in the *Guardian*.[543] Even when the UN threatened NATO air strikes for the first time against the Muslims (10 August 1994), and Reuter reported murders and rapes of civilians committed by the Muslim troops that had captured the rebel enclave of Bihać (24 August), the *Guardian*'s editor was once more pre-occupied with the Serbs (29 August), wondering some months later,

why rely on limping international diplomacy to reverse Serb aggression if the cause can be achieved on the ground? Why not carry on rolling back the Serbs till - in the words of one Sarajevo general - we recover all the territory which had a majority of Muslims before the war?[544]

Of particular importance was the image of the Bosnian President and Muslim leader Alija Izetbegović, who was widely portrayed in the British press as a 'moderate', committed to the notion of a multi-ethnic Bosnia. It is true that, up to a point, Muslim politicians did stand for a multi-ethnic Bosnia, certainly until October 1993. When the foreign minister Haris Silajdžić became Prime Minister - an act that reflected the Bosnian government's increasing Muslimization - the 'Muslim government' (as it was often called by the media) contained nine Muslims, six Serbs, and five Croats, while one third of the Territorial Defence Forces of Sarajevo,

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[540] See for example the two books published by Janine di Giovanni, *The Quick and the Dead: Under Siege in Sarajevo* (London: Phoenix, 1994) and the more recent *Madness Visible: A Memoir of War* (London: Vintage, 2005).

[541] Gill Taylor, 'Slamming the Door on Bosnia's Refugees', *Guardian* (31 July 1992), p. 18.

[542] Maggie O' Kane, 'Bosnia's Last Stand', *Guardian* (23 December 1993), p. 4.

[543] Editorial, 'Carnage and No Haven', *Guardian* (10 June 1993), p. 23.

[544] Editorial, 'Negotiation still the Key', *Guardian* (8 November 1994), p. 21.

including the second in command, were Serb.[545] Equally true, however, was the fact that the Bosnian Muslims were divided into a conservative and a liberal wing, with the first entertaining thoughts of a Muslim Bosnian state with strong Islamic outlook, and the second committed to a secular and multi-ethnic state. Izetbegović belonged to the conservative wing, clearly representing its party's more clericalist attitudes.[546] A rather strange fact, mentioned by a few only authors, was that Izetbegović was appointed President despite the fact that Fikret Abdić received most of the votes: 'A popular Muslim politician with a long track record of working successfully with both Croats and Serbs', commented Steven L. Burg, 'was supplanted by a leader with a more narrow basis of appeal, and no experience in interethnic accommodation.'[547]

In the international arena, Izetbegović's policy aimed to exploit the popularized image of the Muslims in the Western media in order to drag the United States into the war on his side.[548] That is why Lord Carrington characterized him as 'a dreadful little man',[549] while David Owen wrote that 'any quite legitimate pressure on the Bosnian Muslims to compromise was all too often depicted as unfair bullying'.[550] Throughout the war there were rumors, with no evidence to support them apart from scant UN reports, saying that the Muslims committed atrocities against their own people in order to provoke the international outcry in their favor.[551] When on 5 February 1994 a bomb dropped in Sarajevo hitting the city center's market, killing 69 people and wounding more than 200, the French President Francois Mitterrand told his cabinet that it was a Bosnian provocation.[552] Furthermore, when the Serb forces moved against Goražde, the British commander of the UN troops Lieutenant General Sir Michael Rose suggested that the town's defenders might have deliberately caved in to force the UN to bomb its Serb attackers: "They think we should be fighting the

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[545] John V. A. Fine, 'The Medieval and Ottoman Roots of Modern Bosnian Society', in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, ed. by Mark Pinson, 2nd edn. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 1-21 (p.1).
[546] See Alija Izetbegović, 'The Islamic Declaration', *South Slav Journal*, Vol. 6 (1983), pp. 56-89.
[547] Stephen L. Burg, 'Bosnia Herzegovina: A Case of Failed Democratization', in *Politics, Power, and the Struggle for Democracy in South-East Europe*, ed. by Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 122-45 (p. 133).
[548] John Simpson, 'A Good Man out of Bosnia', *Guardian* (23 January 1995), p. 20.
[549] Quoted in Simms, *Unfinest* Hour, p. 20.
[550] Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, p. 99.
[551] See for example BBC's Evening News (21.00), 21 July 1992.
[552] Laure Adler, *L'Année des Adieux* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), p. 175.

war for them. Sod them. How the hell did they let tanks down that goddamn route? One bloke with a crowbar could have stopped the tanks".[553]

Muslim sympathizers, together with authors like Sabrina Petra Ramet (who has published extensively on Yugoslavia) and Samuel P. Huntington, have further suggested that the policy of inaction and equidistance adopted by John Major's government was based on a hypothetical British Islamophobia.[554] It is true that one can trace elements of Islamophobia in the *Daily Mail*'s columnist John Laffin,[555] even in the way that Margaret Thatcher attempted to mobilize the West against the Serbs.[556] But apart from these cases, the evidence reveals no other statements that support the notion of a widespread Islamophobia among the British. On the contrary, as it has been shown above, the British media tended to favour the Muslims. Any claim of British Islamophobia during the Bosnian War, henceforth, is highly problematic and does not seem to reflect the general feeling among the journalists and the British public at large.

4.4 Portraits of the belligerents: the Bosnian Croats

Although, as discussed in chapter 2, the Croats had aroused sympathy during the Croatian War (especially with the siege of Dubrovnik), Franjo Tudjman's regime had rapidly acquired a negative reputation in the West. This reputation followed the Croats in the Bosnian War, too, although their part in the latter was largely overshadowed - they were the least visible side in the conflict. This can perhaps be explained by media attempts to simplify the cast of characters to 'aggressors' on the one side and 'victims' on the other. With the Muslims portrayed as the victims and the Serbs as the aggressors, there was little space left for the Croats. They were clearly treated as aggressors, too, but in sharp contrast with the Serbs their actions ebbed and flowed in the headlines, as both press and television were not willing to give sustained attention to them. 'Clearly Croatia has been lucky to avoid public censure', said

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[553] Steve Doughty, 'Sir Michael Attacks "Runaway" Moslems', *Daily Mail* (28 April 1994), p. 5. See also BBC's Evening News (21.00), 27 April 1994. For more see General Rose's memoirs, *Fighting for Peace: Bosnia 1994* (London: Time Warner, 1999).
[554] Huntington, p. 28.
[555] John Laffin, 'Jihad! Could It Now Explodes in Europe's Heart?', *Daily Mail* (1 September 1992), p. 6.
[556] Margaret Thatcher, 'We Must Act Now Before It's Too Late', *Guardian* (7 August 1992), p. 19.

Michael Foot, former leader of the Labour party, 'but their participation has been more opportunistic than ideological.'[557]

Throughout the war, Franjo Tudjman remained for the British press a rather clumsy, authoritarian and self-regarding ruler whose political pedigree was bedded in anti-Belgrade nationalism and whose democratic credentials were thin.[558] In reference to the Bosnian Croats, the *Sunday Times* noted that they voted in favour of Bosnia's independence 'only to wrest their own territory away from the Serbs. They are no more willing than the Serbs to give back to an independent Bosnia the land they now hold. It will, de facto, be incorporated into Croatia.'[559] Mate Boban was portrayed by *The Times* as a thug,[560] and the newspaper was particularly keen to attack the actions of his HVO army,[561] naming it as 'a bunch of neo-Nazis'.[562] As for the mini-state of Herceg-Bosna, it was, according to Ed Vulliamy, nothing more than an incoherent mêlée of militias.[563] A similar portrait was painted in Channel 4's *Dispatches* programme (5 January 1994) by Belinda Giles, who argued that Herceg-Bosna 'has a terrible, short history involving concentration camps and ethnic cleansing'.

Through press and television, the British public was made aware of various Croat savageries. In April 1993 Croats entered the Muslim village of Ahmići, murdering dozens of women, children and elders less than a mile from the British base of the UNPROFOR. Lieutenant-Colonel Bob Stewart, the Cheshires' 22nd Regiment of Foot commanding officer, was shown on air by the BBC in a surprising - for an officer trained to deliver measured responses to the media - outburst against the Croatian forces. 'Croats massacre Muslim villagers', was reported by the BBC in October,[564] but the gruesome stories coming from the Croats' siege of Mostar did not receive any significant television coverage. This was mainly attributed to the danger of getting there, until the BBC's Jeremy Bowen managed to reach the city, and produce a 45-minute documentary for *Assignment*, with excerpts for news coverage.

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[557] Quoted in John Marsh, 'Greater Serbia Emerging from Sleazy Belgrade', *Guardian* (13 August 1992), p. 16.

[558] 'Profiles', in *Bloody Bosnia: A European Tragedy*, ed. by Noll Scott and Derek Jones (London: The Guardian and Channel 4 Television, in association with the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, 1994), p. 32.

[559] Editorial, 'Together into Bosnia', *Sunday Times* (20 December 1992), p. 1/1.

[560] Editorial, 'Corridors of Embarrassment', *The Times* (26 August 1992), p. 10.

[561] Adam LeBor, 'Croats Remove Boban from Talks', *The Times* (12 January 1994), p. 12.

[562] Michael Evans, 'Age-Old Hatreds Spur Killers in a Peaceful Landscape', *The Times* (11 November 1992), p. 1.

[563] Vulliamy, *Seasons in Hell*, p. 219.

[564] BBC Evening News (21.50), 30 October 1993.

Yet all these incidents, although they temporarily diluted the general picture, proved to have a relatively short life. Whilst the British media reported them, they were hesitant to focus on them. As a result, they were soon forgotten and the Serbs quickly regained their position 'as sole evil party in the war'.[565]

While the media showed no sympathy for the Croats as long as they were fighting the Muslims, the picture changed dramatically when they started attacking the Serb positions in Croatia, in a well-planned attempt to win the Croatian War by transporting it to the the Bosnian conflict. The first move was made in May 1995, with the target being Western Slavonia, the most militarily vulnerable chunk of Serb-occupied territory. Despite the UN's anger at the move, the British press treated it rather lightly. Martin Woollacott of the *Guardian* wondered, rather cynically:

What do we want? Do we want to continue to chase the chimera of a peace based on recognition of Serbian primacy? Or do we want the Serbs to lose the war they should never have started and the monstrosity that is Greater Serbia to bite the dust?[566]

The next move took place in August and was even more controversial, as it involved a full-scale Croatian operation against the self-styled Republic of Krajina, an operation that appeared to have been given the green light by the United States, which saw it as an opportunity to exercise military pressure on the Bosnian Serbs.[567] Britain together with Russia and France protested loudly at this action, and Michael Portillo said on behalf of the Major government that 'where people are driven from their homes and where they have lived in those places for generations, that amounts to ethnic cleansing'.[568] But Martin Woollacott of the *Guardian* offered his whole-hearted support. He presented the Croatian attack as an operation of war that should, with due qualification, be welcomed: 'the world has been desperately looking for some check to the Serbs...It has to stop, and if the United Nations cannot stop it, then the armies of Croatia and Bosnia must do so'.[569]

Hence, first under Germany's protection, and then with the United States' support, Croatia managed to fight in Bosnia using many of the same methods as the

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[565] Nik Gowing, 'Real-Time TV Coverage from War: Does It Make or Break Government Policy?', in *Bosnia by Television*, ed. by James Gow, Richard Paterson and Alison Preston (London: British Film Institute, 1996), pp. 81-91 (p. 88).

[566] Martin Woollacott, 'Nowhere to Hide our Mistakes', *Guardian* (20 May 1995), p. 22.

[567] Editorial, 'We Knew It Was Coming', *Guardian* (5 August 1995), p. 22.

[568] Patrick Wintour, 'Portillo at Odds with US in Attacking Croat 'Cleansing'', *Guardian* (8 August 1995), p. 1. For a similar view coming from an academic see Robert M. Hayden, 'Schindler's Fate: Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Population Transfers', *Slavic Review*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (1996), pp. 727-48 (p. 737).

[569] Martin Woollacott, 'Another Move into Check', *Guardian* (5 August 1995), p. 22.

Serbs, but without risking any serious punishment or international condemnation. Instead, it was rewarded with the ousting of the Serb minority, which made the Croatian state more homogeneous ethnically, and managed to keep its powerful position in Bosnia. As Misha Glenny wrote, if there was a winner in the Bosnian conflict, then the winner was definitely Croatia.[570] The Western media's approach to the Bosnian War helped to contribute to this outcome. Many British journalists were well-informed about the Croatian atrocities, but proved reluctant to turn their attention away from the Serbs, worrying perhaps that the general public might lose its interest if things started to appear more complicated.

4.5 The Vance-Owen plan and other international responses

When the Bosnian crisis erupted into an open conflict, the first act of the UN was to impose an arms embargo on all sides, emphasizing their decision to treat the belligerents as equally responsible. Later on, when the Serb atrocities were exposed by the Western media, the international community imposed economic sanctions on Serbia proper, and dispatched UN troops to offer humanitarian aid and establish "safe heavens" for unarmed civilians. Simultaneously, negotiations were launched to resolve the conflict, which resulted first in the Vance-Owen plan, and then the revised Owen-Stoltenberg plan. Both, however, failed to achieve their objectives. In the end it was the Dayton Accord, supported by NATO's immense firepower, that succeeded in putting an end to the Bosnian War. These were the key diplomatic acts that aimed at the resolution of the conflict. The British media's perceptions of the role of the international community in the Bosnian War will now be examined.

The arms embargo was generally supported by the British Government (with the persistent exception of Iain Duncan-Smith), but it was highly criticised by the press. Many commentators argued that while the Serbs had the former Federal army at their disposal, the Muslims had virtually nothing, with the result that the embargo ensured a Serbian domination and victory. 'It is a fantastic, extraordinary story. On the one side, we have the Yugoslav army; on the other, civilians, hardly armed',

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[570] Misha Glenny, 'Croats are the Clear Winners in Struggle between Muslims and Serbs', *The Times* (2 September 1995), p. 14.

argued the distinguished scholar Norman Stone writing in the *Sunday Times*.[571] There was some substance to this claim, as the embargo did in practice favour the Serbs. On the other hand, if the international community had let the Muslims and the Croats arm themselves freely, it might soon have escalated to a Lebanon-like situation. In any case, both Croats and Muslims did manage to break the embargo and buy weapons. In August 1993 the *Guardian* reported that large quantities of eastern European weapons had been supplied to Muslims via Slovenia,[572] while in October it was revealed that Bolivia had also supplied guns to both Croats and Muslims.[573]

The economic sanctions that were imposed to Serbia on May 1992 were seen in an equally unfavorable light by the British press, with the *Sunday Times* describing them as 'gestures by weak diplomats who want to avoid doing anything'.[574] British newspapers rushed to condemn the sanctions, although this is a measure that usually needs some time to work effectively.[575] By May 1993 sanctions had, indeed, worked: Serb imports were down by 54%, exports down by 74%, and prices had risen by 4,400%, while the official rate of the Yugoslav new dinar to the US dollar was 1$ to 13,700,000.[576] However, the attitude of the press remained ambivalent, not least because sanctions had such adverse effects on the economies of the states neighbouring Serbia. Hungary, for example, cited a bill of $ 1.5 billion, as did Bulgaria,[577] while the fragile Greek economy had to cope with their impact too.[578] Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that countries like Greece, the Republic of Macedonia and Romania broke the embargo on various occasions.[579] Other countries, too, like Iran, Ukraine, or even Denmark and Britain appear to have done the same.[580]

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[571] Norman Stone, 'Blame the Somnolent Man of Europe for the Yugoslav Horror Show', *Sunday Times* (31 May 1992), p. 1/24.

[572] Yigal Chazan, 'Received Arms via Slovenia', *Guardian* (18 August 1993), p. 8.

[573] *Keesing's Record of World Events* (1993, p. 39683).

[574] Norman Macrae, 'UN Must Strengthen Its Hand to Slap Down the Tyrants and Killers', *Sunday Times* (9 August 1992), p. 2/4.

[575] See David Cortright and George A. Lopez (eds.), *Economic Sanctions: Panacea for Peacebuilding in a Post-Cold War World?* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995).

[576] *Keesing's Contemporary Archives*, (1993, p. 39471).

[577] Ian Traynor, 'Poor Neighbours Bear the Burden', *Guardian* (4 August 1994), p. 10.

[578] Mark Milner, 'Serbia Sanctions Squeeze Greece', *Guardian* (1 May 1993), p. 39.

[579] Tim Judah, Dessa Trevisan and Chris Eliou, 'Greece Caught Breaking UN Sanctions on Serbia', *The Times* (4 June 1992), p. 11; Vulliamy, p. 247; BBC News, 1 February 1993, 13.00 hours.

[580] James Meek, 'Ukraine Lets the Sanctions Busters Sail By', *Guardian* (10 August 1992), p. 8; Barnabas Wetton, 'Denmark Breaching Yugoslav Sanctions', *Guardian* (20 March 1993), p. 11; Peter Victor, 'UK Firm Linked to Pounds 65m Bosnia Arms Shipment', *Sunday Times* (18 July 1993), p. 9.

The dispatch of UN troops, on the other hand, was something that initially received wide support in the British media. Soon, however, the limitations of the UN became evident, not only to the journalists dispatched in Yugoslavia, but also to the Bosnian Serbs.[581] Many journalists turned against the UN, together with some politicians, with Paddy Ashdown taking the lead among them.[582] According to Hugo Young of the *Guardian*, precious humanitarian aid 'reaches its targets only by grace of the belligerents who made the aid necessary in the first place, unthreatened by any mild show of force from the UN whose authority is being flouted'.[583] The UN was characterised as a 'bureaucratic behemoth suffering from inefficiency and corruption',[584] and as 'inept in Bosnia as it was in Rwanda, Somalia, Angola and the Lebanon'.[585] David Rieff of *The Times* accused it of issuing lies and obfuscations,[586] and of letting the Bosnian Serbs play them as a pipe.[587] General Rose protested at articles of this kind, arguing that 'the mandate, and therefore the mission, is principally one of peacekeeping, not peace enforcement'.[588] Moreover, Marrack Goulding, the Under-Secretary General of the UN responsible for peacekeeping operations, replied with his own article in *The Times*, saying that:

The extent to which success depends on the co-operation of the parties is too often overlooked. When parties do not co-operate (like the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia or everyone in Bosnia and Herzegovina) the UN's ability to do what the Security Council has asked it to do becomes severely constrained. The UN can cajole, argue, bluster, mobilise diplomatic support from powerful countries. But it cannot compel.[589]

In March 1993, Srebrenica, a town in Drina Valley with 37,000 people (75% of whom were Muslims), drew the attention of the Western media when the UN Force commander, General Phillipe Morillon, managed to visit it, making big promises on behalf of the UN.[590] It is still unclear if Srebrenica had by then been transformed into a flourishing centre of Muslim paramilitary activity, as the Serbs have claimed. When the media rushed into the area they showed little interest on the reasons behind the

[581] Simpson, *A Mad World, My Masters*, p. 90.

[582] Paddy Ashdown, 'The Ghost of Europe's Future', *Guardian* (5 August 1993), p. 18.

[583] Hugo Young, 'Double-Balk in the Balkans Leaves a Bigger Hurdle', *Guardian* (1 June 1993), p. 18.

[584] James Bone, 'When in Trouble Blame the UN', *The Times* (17 August 1993), p. 13.

[585] Editorial, 'A Tragic Future Failure by the West', *Daily Mail* (20 April 1994), p. 8.

[586] David Rieff, 'No More Lies', *Sunday Times* (6 February 1994), p. 1.

[587] Editorial, 'With NATO's Hands Tied Bosnia's Serbs Play the UN Like a Pipe', *The Times* (2 November 1994), p. 12.

[588] Sir Michael Rose, 'Prime Mission of UN in Bosnia', *The Times* (2 November 1994), p. 15.

[589] Marrack Goulding, 'The Price of Peace', *The Times* (1 October 1992), p. 14.

[590] See BBC News (13.00), 17 March 1993.

Serb wish to neutralise the enclave. They were preoccupied instead with General Mladić's attack on the city, revealing to the whole world that the Serbs were actually shelling civilians gathered in the densely packed streets of the town, while the UN stood by helpless. Srebrenica caused such an outcry internationally that the UN was forced to establish it along with Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Goražde and Bihać as 'safe heavens', i.e. areas free from armed attacks and from any other hostile acts that might endanger the well-being and the safety of their inhabitants.[591] With Resolution 836, the UN authorized 'the use of force, in reply to bombardments against the safe areas by any of the parties or to armed incursion into them'.[592] David Owen warned that these areas 'could well turn into Muslim garrisons from which they would launch attacks which would not go unanswered',[593] but his warning was paid no heed. Soon, one by one, the 'safe areas' were attacked by the Bosnian Serbs who called the UN's bluff, causing the following sarcastic comment by Norman Macrae of the *Sunday Times*: 'the United Nations has guaranteed safe havens, which nobody has kept guaranteed or safe once Bosnian Serbs have said "bang, boo"'.[594] 'Humiliated: UN Credibility is Blown Away as Serb Tanks Roll into Town', was the *Daily Mail* front page a few months later, in April 1995, when the Serbs hit Goražde, while in July the BBC reported that 'Srebrenica, one of the so-called safe areas, has fallen to the Bosnian Serbs. Four hundred Dutch UN troops stationed at the two main entrances to the town were no match for Bosnian Serb tanks.'[595]

In the diplomatic field, the replacement of Lord Carrington by David Owen was generally welcomed by the British press, perhaps because another British politician was selected for the post of the representative of the EU. Initially, Lord Owen was an advocate of the use of military force use against Bosnian Serbs. Lord Carrington remembers that 'he went in with the idea that the Serbs were the demons...And being a highly intelligent man, he wasn't there for more than ten minutes before he realized that it was a great deal more complicated than he realized,

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[591] United Nations Security Council Resolution 824 (S/RES/824, 6 May 1993),), in *The 'Yugoslav' Crisis in International Law - General Issues, part 1*, ed. by Daniel Bethlehem and Marc Weller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 40-41.
[592] United Nations Security Council Resolution 836 (S/RES/836, 4 June 1993), in *The 'Yugoslav' Crisis in International Law*, p. 44.
[593] Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, p. 189.
[594] Norman Macrae, 'Toothless Lions Must Follow the Bear', *Sunday Times* (11 December 1994), section B3, p. 4.
[595] BBC Evening News (21.00), 11 July 1995.

and that they were all as bad as each other'.[596] Anyone with any knowledge of how the ethnic/religious groups of Bosnia were scattered, immediately realized the difficult task lying ahead of Lord Owen. However, he managed to present, in collaboration with Cyrus Vance, a peace plan in January 1993. The plan divided Bosnia into 10 ethnic cantons in such a way that, for example, Muslim cantons would be separated from other Muslim cantons, etc. The Serbs would have the majority in 3, the Muslims in 3, the Croats in 2, one would be Croat-Muslim, and Sarajevo would remain the seat of a central government with minimal powers. Decisions would be based on consensus and not on a system of majority voting, as that could be used by Croats and Muslims to out-vote the Serbs. Immediately, the plan was accepted by Mate Boban (as it conceded blocks of territory adjoining Croatia proper), but not by the other parties. The Bosnian Serbs rejected the amount of the territory they received as insufficient, while the Muslims believed that central government should be more powerful, otherwise the ten provinces would end up as semi-independent statelets.

The British media, along with a large part of the British academic and military establishment, were highly critical of the Vance-Owen plan. 'Its map is being rendered ever more redundant as the Moslems are blitzed and terrorised from their remaining enclaves',[597] said an editorial in the *Daily Mail*, while the *Guardian* noted that 'this agreement does undeniably reward the Bosnian Serbs.'[598] For the *Guardian*'s correspodent Ed Vulliamy, the plan 'played fairy godmother to the Croats, whom it treated with illogical and gratuitous magnanimity',[599] while for William Pfaff it 'could only intensify insecurities.'[600] Only *The Times* argued in favour of it, saying that 'on close examination, [the plan] is much more detailed and coherent than its critics wish to believe'.[601] Among the post-war academic judgments, the most damning criticism came from Brendan Simms, who argued that the Owen mission was a fiasco based on poor judgment, 'a mistimed exit, a lack of synchronicity between means and aims, and, above all, an obsessively paternal relationship with his progeny, the Vance-Owen peace plan'.[602] Moreover, the

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[596] Quoted in Simms, *Unfinest Hour*, p. 140.
[597] Editorial, 'Should We Wage War against the Serbs?', *Daily Mail* (19 April 1993), p. 6.
[598] Editorial, 'The Serbs and the Moment of Decision', *Guardian* (13 January 1993), p. 18.
[599] Vulliamy, *Seasons in Hell*, p. 249.
[600] William Pfaff, 'Invitation to War: The Modernity of Ancient Hatreds', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (1993), pp. 97-109 (p. 106).
[601] Editorial, 'Forces for Peace', *The Times* (26 January 1993), p. 12.
[602] Simms, *Unfinest* Hour, p. 138.

American scholar Lenard J. Cohen believed that 'Owen and Vance studiously ignored the contradiction between the constitutional entrenchment of three ethnic groups as the state's governing actors and the administrative fragmentation of the state into ten multiethnic provinces.'[603] Additionally, military experts like Colonel Bob Stewart or the British liaison officer Captain Stancovic believed that it gave the Croats a green-for-go.[604]

Such judgements, coming either from the media or academics, were perhaps unnecessarily harsh. Owen and Vance had to formulate an acceptable balance out of a chaotic situation. They did indeed make compromises that seemed unacceptable to an idealist like Lee Bryant, who provided the most comprehensive critique on the plan in the pages of the *Guardian*.[605] But, to a realist, such compromises were necessary if the international community wanted to sustain Bosnia as a single state with a multi-national character, and reflected the tradition of British foreign policy to accept power on the ground. Overall, it was a plan that reflected deep understanding of the situation, in which there was little room for manoeuvres since Owen and Vance had to satisfy both Serb and Croat expectations of ethnic autonomy, as well as the Muslims' desire for a unified and centralised state. Undoubtedly, the Croat position was the plan's weakest point. But if the Croats were left well-positioned to secede, this was not due to Vance-Owen provisions themselves, but due to the facts of Bosnian geography.[606]

Shortly after the rejection of the plan by the Bosnian Serbs, the international community dropped it, and the UN replaced Vance with Thorvald Stoltenberg. 'The international community has finally accepted that the Vance/Owen peace plan is dead, precisely because it was so distant from the reality of what has occurred on the ground in Bosnia', wrote Sir Edward Heath, one of David Owen's most persistent critics.[607] The Owen-Stoltenberg plan that followed provided for a confederal union composed of three republics (Sprska, Herceg-Bosna, Bosna). 52% of the Republic's territory was given to the Serbs, 30% to the Muslims, and 18% (this time most of the

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[603] Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*, 2nd edn. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 253-54.

[604] See Stewart, *Broken Lives: A Personal View of the Bosnian Conflict* (London: HarperCollins, 1993) and Stankovic, *Trusted Mole: A Soldier's Journey into Bosnia's Heart of Darkness* (London: HarperCollins, 2000).

[605] Lee Bryant, 'Owen and Vance Fail the Bosnian Reality Test', *Guardian* (6 March 1993), p. 11.

[606] Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (Armonk, NY: M. A. Sharpe, 1999), p. 230.

[607] Sir Edward Heath, 'Cover Story: Undone', *Guardian* (10 July 1993), p. 6.

southwest) to the Croats, while Sarajevo was placed under UN administration and Mostar under EU control. But the British press did not like the new short-lived plan, either, and soon Stoltenberg became a caricature of 'the stolid and upright Scandinavian'.[608] According to Martin Woollacott writing in the *Guardian*, it punished those who were least responsible for the war and rewarded those who are most responsible.[609] In the end, when David Owen's mandate ended in June 1995, the *Guardian* commented that he would be remembered 'with even more loathing by Bosnians than by his former Labour Party colleagues.'[610]

After Owen-Stoltenberg's failure, the diplomatic initiative passed to the United States. While British policy had been based on the notion of equidistance, recognising that the causes of the Bosnian conflict were multifarious, US policy was ready to take the side of the Bosnian Muslims (heavily influenced, perhaps, by TV pictures of Serb atrocities). However, the US diplomatic action, headed by Richard Holbrook and including the use of air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs, was not welcomed by the editors of the British newspapers. The editor of *The Times* argued that 'Clinton makes the world a more dangerous place',[611] the *Guardian* warned that the dispute with the US could reach Suez-like dimensions,[612] and even the *Daily Mail* refrained from providing support.[613]

This view, however, was not shared by all. 'It would clearly be fatal for "Europe" to quarrel seriously with America over Bosnia, wrote Lord Gladwyn in the *Guardian*:

What is certain is that "Europe" (which, to paraphrase Dean Acheson, has now, perhaps, found a role, though by no means an Empire) cannot by itself impose a solution of this Balkan crisis. Only America, the sole remaining Superpower, and the leader of NATO, could with its allies do just that.[614]

The same opinion was reflected by academics with regular columns in the British newspapers. The Oxford historian Mark Almond wrote in the *Daily Mail* that he believed that 'this old Etonian' Douglas Hurd's 'legendary unflappability' should be

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[608] 'Profiles', in *Bloody Bosnia*, p. 42.
[609] Martin Woollacott, 'A Pitiful Peace for Bosnia', *Guardian* (23 August 1993), p. 18.
[610] Ian Black, 'Lord Owen has Just been Beaten by Bosnia as Were Lord Carrington and Cyrus Vance', *Guardian* (3 June 1995), p. 25.
[611] Editorial, 'Prince of Perhaps', *The Times* (13 April 1993), p. 13.
[612] Editorial, 'Too Little, too Late', *Guardian* (13 April 1993), p. 21.
[613] Editorial, 'When Friends Fall Out', *Daily Mail* (19 October 1993), p. 8.
[614] Lord Gladwyn, 'The Deep Divisions in Bosnia' (letter), *Guardian* (15 May 1993), p. 26.

blamed for the breakdown in the British-American relations,[615] while Norman Stone remarked in the *Sunday Times* that

If there is a chance of the Yugoslav mess being cleaned up it is because, at last, they swept away the nonsense of European mediation and international community alphabet soup. Three years too late, force was used and a productive plan worked out.[616]

In the end, the United States took the credit for stopping the Bosnian War, when the Dayton Accord was signed by Izetbegović, Milošević and Tudjman in December 1995. The Dayton agreement provided for Bosnia to remain a unified state, as a confederation comprised of two separate entities: a Croat-Muslim Federation (which controlled the 51% of the Republic) and Republica Srpska (which controlled 49% of the Republic). Each national group would keep its army, while NATO would dispatch an Implementation Force of 60,000 men. What Dayton created was a decentralised state with a government that had limited powers. Republika Srpska had the right to establish special parallel relationships with neighbouring states [Article III, paragraph 2(a)], while a rather complex Croat-Muslim federation under Krešimir Zubak was required to function in an atmosphere of extreme intergroup hostility. Indeed, after Dayton, the Croat and Muslim leaders 'engaged in a political struggle for supremacy within those areas of Bosnia under their respective control'.[617] Another negative aspect was that Dayton left, in effect, Milošević and Tudjman as the sole guarantors of the Balkan stability. As Tudjman died shortly afterwards it is possible to argue that Dayton paved the way for Milošević's stand in Kosovo.

The agreement proved to be unpopular among most British press commentators. Martin Bell commented that its map

rewarded ethnic cleansing to an extent that the Vance-Owen plan never did...What they [the Americans] failed to note in their triumphalism was that Sarajevo was the united capital of a partitioned country; the dream of a multi-ethnic Bosnia was gone.[618]

In similar view, Jonathan Eyal of the RUSI wrote in *The Times* that

The Muslims accepted the deal because they hope that the West, and particularly the Americans, will be committed to restoring their control over most of Bosnia, while the Serbs and Croats accepted it

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[615] Mark Almond, 'Deliver Us All from Dear Old Douglas', *Daily Mail* (29 November 1994), p. 8. See also his book *Europe's Backyard War: The War in the Balkans* (London: Heinemann, 1994).

[616] Norman Stone, 'US Brings Hopes of Bosnian Peace Where Europe Failed', *Sunday Times* (13 March 1994), p. 21.

[617] Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, p. 373.

[618] Martin Bell, *In Harm's Way*, p. 294.

because they suspect that nothing of the kind will happen. In years to come, Bosnia's constitutional arrangements will only ever be read by academics writing doctoral theses.[619]

Other views, however, were not so negative. For *The Times*, 'Mr Clinton surprised his European partners and perhaps himself by finding his touch in foreign policy at the end of his third year as President.'[620] Two years after the war James Gow also wrote that while the Vance-Owen plan was better, 'Dayton did secure the absolute minimum for the international community: agreement on the territorial integrity of Bosnia and its continuing independent political and legal international personality'.[621] However, the general feeling reflected in the British newspapers in reference to the Dayton agreement was one of disappointment.

4.6 To intervene or not to intervene?

Before proceeding to examine the debate that raged in the British press about a possible military response to the Bosnian War, it is useful to clarify that Britain was already involved in a form of intervention in Bosnia-Hercegovina. Throughout the crisis in Yugoslavia, the UN maintained 31,344 troops in the area (UNPROFOR), of which 14,594 were stationed in Croatia, 14,433 in Bosnia and 1,048 in the Republic of Macedonia.[622] By the end of the Bosnian War Britain had contributed around 8,000 troops and army personel, which made it the largest UNPROFOR contributor.[623] These servicemen and servicewomen took part in peace-keeping operations with humanitarian aims which, it can be argued, is itself a form of intervention. This intervention was generally accepted by the British press, although the *Daily Mail* did begin to question it after a certain point, arguing against the mobilisation of further British forces in a far away region of no immediate British concern (see the discussion below). This section of the thesis, however, will analyse a different debate that was going on about military intervention on one side - that is against the Bosnian Serbs.

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[619] Jonathan Eyal, 'A Step in the Balkan Quicksand', *The Times* (12 October 1995), p. 16.

[620] Editorial, 'Bosnian Business', *The Times* (4 December 1995), p. 12.

[621] James Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (London: C. Hurst, 1997), p. 313.

[622] Simon Tisdall, 'US Veto Cuts Extra Troops for Balkans', *Guardian* (1 April 1992), p. 12.

[623] *Statement on the Defence Estimates 1996*, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence by Command of Her Majesty (May 1996, chapter 2: Activity Under the Military Tasks) <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/mod/defence/c2tx4.htm> [accessed 10 June 2005].

Reference to the British participation in UNPROFOR will thus be made only when it will help to illuminate this debate.

The undeclared war between those who wanted Britain to be involved in a military response to the Bosnian crisis and those who opposed it raged in the British media between journalists, politicians, academics and military men from the very first stages of the conflict. The ITN's report on Serbian camps produced a wave of sympathy for the Bosnian Muslims. Soon an active War Party was formulated in Britain, which called for military intervention in Bosnia whenever ghoulish pictures were transmitted by television. This party had a very coherent position, based solely on moral arguments, which was presented as part of Britain's (or Europe's) long-term interests. In contrast, their opponents were divided. On the one hand, there was John Major's government, whose members argued constantly that they were doing everything that was realistically possible. On the other hand, there were those who argued that Britain did not have vital interests in stake in former Yugoslavia - and hence had no reason to commit troops there. And, finally, there were those who argued that intervention was futile given the 'Balkan' nature of the Bosnian War. The pro-interventionist stance will be considered first.

As a recent Cambridge doctoral thesis examining British press responses to the onset of war in former Yugoslavia has shown, the discovery of the Bosnian Serb camps led to an initial consensus in favour of Western military intervention.[624] This consensus, however, did not last long. Only the *Sunday Times* argued constantly for military intervention. The broadsheet had adopted this line even before the discovery of the camps. In May 1992 Norman Stone wrote that

of course, these situations do occur in the Lebanons and Ethiopias of this world, and foreigners are reluctant to intervene. Non-intervention, even when there is a clear right and a clear wrong, is the rule in these affairs. The case of Yugoslavia is rather different. In the first place, if "Europe" does nothing, it will get floods of refugees. And there is another point: "Europe" is responsible for a good part of this mess. We have semi-intervened for the better part of a year, and have made things far worse than they needed to be.'[625]

After the ITN report on the camps, the *Sunday Times* adopted a consistent anti-Serb stand, which it maintained unaltered throughout the war:

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[624] Joseph Sanders Pearson, 'British Press Reaction to the Onset of War in Ex-Yugoslavia', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (University of Cambridge, 2001), pp. 222-3.
[625] Norman Stone, 'Blame the Somnolent Man of Europe for the Yugoslav Horror Show', *Sunday Times* (31 May 1992), p. 1/24.

Serbia should be given the following ultimatum: Unless the government in Belgrade brings its Bosnian satraps to heel, co-operates with the emptying of the detention camps under UN and Red Cross supervision and allows for the unimpeded distribution of humanitarian aid on a massive scale to reach all those who need it, the NATO allies (acting under UN mandate) will use their air power to hit Serbia where it hurts by destroying military targets and supply lines inside Serbia itself.[626]

For the rest of the British media, the revelation of the camps provided the catalyst that altered their initial hesitant stance. Even the usually neutral BBC declared the ceasefires agreed in Bosnia to be nothing more than a joke.[627] Moreover, on 8 February 1993 the BBC *Panorama* programme on the Bosnian War ended with Martin Bell asserting that 'to intervene will cost lives; not to intervene will cost more. It is fundamentally a question of whether we care.' In all the newspapers studied, it was made clear that the stimulus for intervention came from the powerful television images. For *The Times*,

when television nightly brings the world evidence of atrocities, destruction and suffering in the Balkans, governments cannot stand aside. The pressure for intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina is growing inexorably. Western public opinion wants a swift end to the killing in Sarajevo, and has, understandably, little patience for cumbersome diplomacy or faith in the slippery promises of local warlords. Governments that stand out against a quick dispatch of troops to the area are accused of appeasement, and politicians who dwell on the difficulties are dismissed as mere cowards.[628]

The arguments used by the press to advocate intervention had, as noted above, a strong moral core. Britain, the argument ran, should intervene not because it had a special interest at stake, but because it had the means to put a stop to the tremendous loss of life. For the *Guardian*, countries that claim great power status and maintain expensive defence and diplomatic establishments should be able to deal with crises decisively as they occur.[629] Often, this moral chord was struck in comparison with the still fresh memories of Iraqi Kurds, or Kuwait:

If Kuwait had tomatoes instead of oil, the cynics said, there would have been no Gulf war. Nonsense, replied the Bush administration and its loyal allies, a principle was at stake: naked aggression and an attempt to change frontiers by force could not go unchallenged. That was the essence of the New World Order. Well, Bosnia grows fine juicy paprikas, but sadly it has no oil wells. Until a few weeks ago it was a poor, broadly democratic society, proof that Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics and

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[626] Editorial, 'Strike Serbia', *Sunday Times* (9 August 1992), p. 2/1.

[627] BBC News (18.00), 31 July 1992.

[628] Editorial, 'Benevolence not Enough', *The Times* (7 September 1992), p. 8.

[629] Editorial, 'Fiddling whilst the Children Perish', *Guardian* (5 August 1992), p. 18.

Muslims could live peacefully together. Now one has only to switch on a television set to see how the Yugoslav army, at the service of Serbia, has ruined cities and lives.[630]

The *Guardian*'s pro-interventionists often emphasised the "Europeaness" of the belligerents. 'We know the Serbs and the Croats because they are part of us', wrote Hugo Young, 'this is not an Asian war or an African war, bloody but a million miles the other side of the global village. It's happening where we go on holiday'.[631] Peter Preston noted in the same newspaper that

the real chill of Bosnia, as you watch those endless television bulletins, is that they feature people like us. People in jeans and T-shirts. People in cafes. People with CDs and Top Tens and double espressos. People Bill Gates would like to sell new Windows to. Because these are people like us, they are supposed to behave like us. But they don't: and as they kill and are killed they ask us, in turn, whether we too may not be like that deep down?'[632]

Sir John Nott, Defence Secretary during the Falklands War, was also in accord with these views:

The besieged people of Bihac in Bosnia are not residents of some distant Balkan country; they are European citizens of a town that is closer to London than Rome or Stockholm. The Bosnian Muslims, who have been painted as some sort of ill-educated religious sect engaged in a vicious civil war, are mostly secular, educated and peace-loving people, who bring credit to European civilisation...I am ashamed to say that the British Government, by a huge miscalculation, has been an unwitting accomplice to the destruction of these people.[633]

Politicians opposing the government soon took the lead. Prominent among them was the former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who had first criticised the manoeuvres of John Major's cabinet in Yugoslavia at the time of the Croatian War (see chapter 2). With John Smith's Labour Party seriously divided over Bosnia between "pacifists" (Tony Benn, David Winnick) and "interventionists" (Audrey Wise, Max Madden),[634] Paddy Ashdown emerged as the most persistent challenger to government policy throughout the crisis. But his policy was swamped in empty rhetoric, lacked a concrete strategy and was often confused about the origins of the war, approaching the latter only in humanitarian-sentimental terms. Ashdown advocated constantly that something should be done without, however, making that "something" more specific. 'What is striking', argues Brendan Simms, 'is that

[630] Roger Boyes, 'A War to Win Balkan Peace', *The Times* (22 May 1992), p. 12.
[631] Hugo Young, 'When Leadership Fails in the Face of Hitlerism', *Guardian* (15 April 1993), p. 18.
[632] Peter Preston, 'A Faraway Country of Which We Know a Lot', *Guardian* (25 August 1995), p. 17.
[633] Sir John Nott, 'America is Right about Bosnia', *The Times* (1 December 1994), p. 15.
[634] Patrick Wintour, 'Prolonged Agony Divide MPs and Splits Parties Along Unusual Lines', *Guardian* (29 April 1993), p. 12.

Ashdown *never* called for military intervention, limited or otherwise, to re-establish a multi-ethnic Bosnia within its internationally recognized boundaries'.[635] The government usually reacted with anger, with Malcolm Rifkind referring, in mocking terms, to remarks of this kind as no more than 'words of a windbag'.[636]

Baroness Thatcher was still more florid than Ashdown. She argued that what was happening in Bosnia was reminiscent of the worst crimes of the Nazis.[637] In an interview with the BBC, she argued that 'we can't go on feeding people, then leaving them to be massacred', suggesting that the Bosnian Muslims should be allowed to arm themselves, and be supported by full air cover, with ground attack if need be.[638] The Conservative MP Robert Adley called on the Prime Minister to ignore 'this former Finchley fishwife', while equally mocking terms appeared in the press, with the *Guardian* accusing her of simple remedies,[639] historical ignorance, and sanctimonious truculence.[640] Overall, however, she was praised for her stand. 'Even people who cannot normally stand her', noted David McKie in the *Guardian*, 'people into whose minds even now there crept, as she foamed, the thought: this woman is bats, found in her words a curious mixture of comfort and exhilaration. We can, she was telling us, break out of this mire of doubt and perplexity.'[641] *The Times* also argued that her shame at the West's failure to stop the carnage is widely shared. Her contention that this region is within Europe's sphere of influence and 'should be within Europe's sphere of conscience' cannot be dismissed, as it was in Malcolm Rifkind's cheap rejoinder, as 'emotional nonsense'.[642]

After it became evident that Britain was unwilling to be involved militarily, the pro-interventionists directed their hopes at another foreign power, namely the United States. When Bill Clinton finally proved willing to proceed with air strikes, and authorised such an operation under the wing of NATO and direction of Admiral Leighton Smith, there was widespread rejoicing in the press. 'These air strikes may be a tragedy for the political eunuchs in Brussels, but it means hope for millions of people living in fear in Bosnia',[643] noted Mark Almond in the *Daily Mail*, a

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[635] Simms, *Unfinest Hour*, pp. 296-7.
[636] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. 241, 12 April 1994 - 22 April 1994 (London: HMSO, 1994), p. 648.
[637] Quoted in Alan Travis, 'Thatcher Turns Fire on Major with Appeal for Bosnian Action', *Guardian* (6 August 1992), p. 7.
[638] BBC Afternoon News (18.00), 13 April 1993.
[639] Editorial, 'The Way to Intervene', *Guardian* (11 August 1992), p. 16.
[640] Edward Pearce, 'P.S.', *Guardian* (21 April 1993), p. 22.
[641] David McKie, 'Voices Off Take Centre Stage', *Guardian* (19 April 1993), p. 18.
[642] Editorial, 'Taking Bosnia Seriously', *The Times* (15 April 1993), p. 20.
[643] Mark Almond, 'Why Bombing May Be the Best Hope for Peace', *Daily Mail* (12 April 1994), p. 8.

newspaper that had so far constantly argued against the British military involvement in Bosnia, but was ready now to welcome the show of force: 'British Big Guns Blast the Serbs', was the proud front page of the newspaper, signed by David Williams, in 31 August 1995. The *Guardian* adopted a rather critical view of the operation, confirming its ambiguous stand throughout the war. Constantly asking for something to be done on the one hand, it was, in the other, very critical of every action adopted, forcing one of its readers to protest:

What an amazing newspaper you are! After weeks of articles implying the need for positive action in Bosnia, and the day after the UN finally and positively acts to counter the appalling situation there, your leader vacillates with negativism and doubt. Suddenly all your published letters to the Editor indicate opposition to the UN action...Get off the fence some time and be a little braver.[644]

Of those who had not supported the option of a military intervention against the Serbs, the British government was in the most delicate position, as its policy of equidistance was seen as pro-Serb. 'Within the European Community, Greece, France, and Britain were the most fervent supporters of a Serbian-dominated Yugoslavia',[645] wrote the academic Daniele Conversi. Another strange fact that helped reinforce this view further was that while Britain, along with its European partners, recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent state in April 1992, it did not name an ambassador to Sarajevo until July 1994, when Robert Barnett was appointed to the post. The British government, the argument runs, having foreseen the Serb reaction and knowing that the arms embargo would leave the ex-Federal army as the only power on the ground, did not bother to name an ambassador because it anticipated a quick Serbian victory. The government's arguments, on the other hand, were based on a calculation of interest. As Douglas Hurd said, by the test of the narrow national interest Bosnia could not rate high for the British. The only British interest in this situation was to prevent a general Balkan War. Hurd was always careful to draw a line between what Britain should do and what it actually could do:

I do not believe and have never used rhetoric that would lead anyone to believe that it was part of Britain's interests to pretend that we could sort out every man-made disaster in the world...It is in our interest to do our bit, but we should not over-pretend, or let rhetoric get in the way of reality.[646]

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[644] Roderick Bridge, 'The Day They Dropped the Bombs' (letter), *Guardian* (1 September 1995), p. 14.
[645] Daniele Conversi, 'Moral Relativism and Equidistance in British Attitudes to the War in the Former Yugoslavia', in *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia*, ed. by Thomas Cushnan and Stjepan G. Meštrović (New York: New York University Press, 1996), pp. 244-81 (p. 241).
[646] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons* (oral answers), Vol. 228, 5 July 1993 - 16 July 1993 (London: HMSO, 1993), p. 967.

What the British government did not expect, however, was the impact of television. Having in mind perhaps that the two previous Yugoslav conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia had not attracted the interest of television or the general public, it expected Bosnia to be no different, and therefore did not have any reason to formulate a clearer policy. As Kofi Anan, the UN Under Secretary-General said,

when governments have a clear policy, they have anticipated a situation and they know what they want to do and where they want to go, then television has little impact. In fact they ride it...When there is a problem, and the policy has not been thought out, there is a knee-jerk reaction. They have to do something or face a public relations disaster.[647]

When ITN transmitted the pictures from the Serb camps, Douglas Hurd admitted that public opinion could powerfully influence the judgment of the government, but denied that something like that happened in the Bosnian case. Hurd recalled that

there was shock and anger...Groups among the public and individuals in the media strongly advocated particular steps to help the underdog, namely the Bosnian Muslims. It seemed possible that the general indignation and the individual advocacy of particular measures might fuse into a powerful pressure for intervention. It never happened. The fuse spluttered but the explosive was never detonated.[648]

Another British official, however, covered behind the cloak of anonymity, said to Nik Gowing, the diplomatic editor of Channel 4 News, that in Bosnia 'TV almost derailed policy on several occasions, but the spine held. It had to. The secret was to respond to limit the damage, and be seen to react without undermining the specific policy focus'.[649]

A case study of this damage-limitation response was Operation Irma. By July 1993, the heat from the media's outcry against UN policies had also reached the Major government.[650] But when in August the BBC devoted more than half of one of its main news programmes to the plight of 5-year-old Irma Hadzimuratović, who had been sent into a life-threatening coma by the Serbian shell fragments that had already killed her mother, the tabloid press took it pretty seriously. The government was forced to intervene, and John Major authorized Operation Irma, which spent much money from the public purse to transport Irma to Britain. 'The five year old whose suffering has come to symbolise the agony of Bosnia, has been flown to Britain for treatment', was reported in the BBC, which devoted three minutes and nine seconds

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[647] Quoted in Nik Gowing, 'Real-Time TV Coverage from War: Does It Make or Break Government Policy?', in *Bosnia by Television*, ed. by James Gow, Richard Paterson and Alison Preston (London: British Film Institute, 1996), pp. 81-91 (pp. 85-86).
[648] Hurd, *In Search for Peace*, p. 99.
[649] Quoted in Gowing, 'Real-Time TV Coverage from War', p. 83.
[650] 'Backbone of the Struggle to Keep Bosnians Alive' (letter), *Guardian* (2 July 1993), p. 25.

of its Evening News to Irma.[651] Her emaciated body with its battery of tubes and bandages, and her staring, unseeing eyes hit the front pages in nearly all the British broadheets and tabloids, prompting hundreds of people to call the BBC and the national press inquiring how they could help her.

Despite the public appeal, however, Operation Irma also met fierce criticism. 'How bitter this must be for the thousands of other less well publicised Bosnians, whose suffering grows daily, ignored by Western governments', wondered some of the *Guardian*'s readers,[652] while the *Sunday Times* labelled Irma as 'a footnote to the larger drama'.[653] The *Daily Mail* argued that 'at a time when thousands of Irmas are dying unknown, unnoticed and dumped in makeshift graves, the show of emotion and limitless aid seems almost obscene'.[654] Furthermore, *The Times* wrote that 'she ceased to be a true Sarajevan when the West was shamed into noticing her suffering by the horrific pictures which appeared in the media yesterday. Thousands of her fellow citizens face an even worse fate'.[655] However, the most powerful article against Operation Irma was written by Maggie O'Kane in the *Guardian*, who argued that

If she dies, her life will have been shorter than that of 5-year-old Dina, who died when the shrapnel tore into her stomach as she ran with her mother along a dark road from the town of Zepa five months ago; a life less marked than 3-year-old Samira's, found with blood streaming between her legs after she had been raped in a Serb camp. A death lacking the romantic tragedy of the Sarajevo lovers, who died in each others arms on an afternoon in early summer, running for the last bridge out of the city.[656]

The possibility of the government changing its anti-intervention policy was virtually non-existent. As a minister told the *Sunday Times*, 'public opinion may be in favour of action now, but it could change very quickly once British soldiers are brought back in body bags.'[657] But, after the media decided to champion the Bosnian Muslims, ministers had to find new arguments to defend their policy, arguments that would be able to respond to their critics in the same moral terms that were set by the latter. This was not particularly difficult, given that at the same time as the Bosnian crisis, bloody civil wars were raging all over the globe (Cambodia, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, etc). Thus, Malcolm Rifkind said to the House of

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[651] BBC Evening News (21.00), 9 August 1993.
[652] Peter Byrne, Gill Taylor and Dorin Gafu, 'What About the Other Irmas Still in Bosnia?', *Guardian* (letter) (11 August 1993), p. 17.
[653] Editorial, 'The Threat to Us All', *Sunday Times* (15 August 1993), p. 17.
[654] Lynda Lee Potter, 'Now, Let's Save the Other Irmas', *Daily Mail* (11 August 1993), p. 9.
[655] Editorial, 'A Child not a Symbol', *The Times* (10 August 1993), p. 9.
[656] Maggie O' Kane, 'Giving Thanks for Little Irma', *Guardian* (10 August 1993), p. 16.
[657] David McKie, 'Voices Off Take Centre Stage', *Guardian* (19 April 1993), p. 18.

Commons that he was not aware of any 'ethical distinction between a war in Bosnia and a war in Angola or Cambodia'.[658] Additionally, Hurd argued, attacking the British media, that

we see little on our screens of the tragedies in Liberia, in Angola and in Sudan; they feature little in debate in the House, they feature little in the editorials of our papers, they bother British citizens only occasionally. If it costs more to maintain the correspondent in southern Sudan than in Bosnia then the world will know less of the fighting there - and care less. The public debate is run not by events but by the coverage of events. Bosnia has been selected by Europeans from among the world's tragedies for television coverage. This is natural for it is a European tragedy - so long as we realise that several other, bloodier, tragedies are being played elsewhere in the world without an audience.[659]

This was, indeed, a very powerful argument, that those who were advocating that something should be done could not leave unanswered. 'We have nothing to be apologetic about', said Michael Grade, chief executive of Channel 4 a few days later in the Royal Television Society's convention in Cambridge,[660] while *The Times* noticed that Hurd 'pours scorn on the "something-must-be-done" school of journalism because it is he, not the commentators, who must do something. But that is what he and his fellows in government are elected to do. Democracy pays its leaders to lead, not to read the press cuttings.'[661] John Simpson, on the other hand, was brave enough to admit that 'when the BBC and ITN decided independently to go to Angola a couple of weeks ago, we found a situation far worse in every way than that in Bosnia', and added that the media's approach to the world is indeed random. But, he argued, television is a very curious beast:

it has huge muscles, poor eyesight and a disturbingly short attention span. But what I suspect Mr Hurd especially dislikes is the way television alerts people so graphically to what is going on in a place like Sarajevo, because it makes his job of edging away from involvement so much more difficult...It is, by the way, an infallible sign that a government is getting rattled when it starts attacking the media.[662]

The British government proved capable of maintaining its policy and pushing it to the limit, even endangering the special relationship with the United States. Sir Robin Renwick, UK's ambassador in the USA, wrote that 'the Bosnia crisis provoked sharp transatlantic differences and one of the most serious disagreements between the

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[658] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. 222, 29 March 1993 - 16 April 1993 (London: HMSO, 1993), p. 838.
[659] From his speech in the Travellers' Club, 9 September 1994.
[660] Quoted in Andrew Culf, 'Press Accused by Ex-Minister of Biased Coverage of Bosnia', *Guardian* (18 September 1992), p. 8.
[661] Editorial, 'At War with the Media', *The Times* (11 September 1993), p. 14.
[662] Edited extract from his Royal Television Society Huw Wheldon lecture, broadcasted on BBC2, 22 September 1993, 20.00 hours.

British and American governments since Suez',[663] while John Major's foreign policy advisor Sir Percy Cradock argued that Yugoslavia was one of the first instances when Britain sided with the rest of Europe against the United States.[664] The same view was also held by the US ambassador in London, Raymond Seitz, a sympathizer of the British government's position.[665] Richard Holbrook also remembers that Bosnia defined the first phase of the post-Cold War relationship between the USA and the EU: 'Dealing with the Europeans was delicate and nettlesome throughout the Bosnia crisis, and put an unprecedented strain on NATO and the Atlantic Alliance just when the Cold War ties that had held us together had also disappeared.'[666] It seems clear that when the USA started to bomb the Bosnian Serbs, John Major authorised the use of violence, not because he had changed his mind, but because there was no point in Britain destabilising the international balance even further, thus causing a serious rift between the USA and France.

Closely connected to the British government's approach were the arguments of those who did not wish the country to be involved in any kind of military intervention so long as there was no clear British interest at stake in Bosnia. One common feature that tied all these journalists together was the Hobbesian view that life is nasty and brutish, whether in the long term or the short, and must be accepted as such. The most fluent proponent of the view was Simon Jenkins of *The Times*. 'Sooner or later a soldier will get killed. What conceivable British interest will be served by his death?', he wondered in a front page article as early as November 1992,[667] recycling John Casey's earlier comment in the *Daily Mail*, that 'the civil war in the Balkans is horrible and shameful, but it is not worth the bones of one British soldier.'[668] Following the same pattern, the *Daily Mail*'s editor argued that

if we send in our troops and aircraft in overwhelming force to impose a solution, substantial numbers of our own men would undoubtedly be killed. How would the public feel about these deaths when no one could point a finger and confidently say which was the 'good' side we were fighting for and which the 'bad'?[669]

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[663] Sir Robin Renwick, *Fighting with Allies: America and Britain in Peace and War* (Basingtoke: Crown, 1996), p. x.

[664] Percy Cradock, *In Pursuit of British Interests: Reflections on Foreign Policy under Margaret Thatcher and John Major* (London: John Murray, 1997), p. 191.

[665] Raymond Seitz, *Over Here* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), p. 327.

[666] Richard Holbrook, *To End a War*, revised edn. (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), p. 83.

[667] Simon Jenkins, 'Playing at Soldiers in Bosnia', *The Times* (25 November 1992), p. 1.

[668] John Casey, 'Why We Should Walk Away from This Bloody War: With Talk of Balkan Conflict in the Air, The History Lesson We Ignore at Our Peril', *Daily Mail* (29 June 1992), p. 6.

[669] Editorial, 'Changing Mood Rigid Realities', *Daily Mail* (7 April 1993), p. 6.

Moreover, the *Guardian*'s David Fairhall noticed that 'when the military hears calls for intervention in Sarajevo, their minds flash back not to the triumphs of Kuwait, but to the humiliations of Beirut or, in the British case, to 20 years of dangerous drudgery in Northern Ireland.'[670] The same line was also followed by Keith Waterhouse of the *Daily Mail*.[671]

What may have inspired Douglas Hurd's attack on the random selection of world crises by the media, was Jenkins' most famous comment during the Bosnian crisis, that was made right after Martin Bell's plea in BBC's *Panorama* (see above, page 131):

I, too, might use emotional images of the accidents of thoughtless intervention: corpses in the Congo, dead marines in Beirut, Chouf villages smashed by naval gunfire, the fried bodies of Iraqi civilians. I could play the drumroll over the bodybags. I could protest at the only-whites-matter hypocrisy. Why no *Panorama* about this week's atrocities in Kabul or Nagorno-Karabakh or southern Sudan?..If Mr Bell made nothing else plain on Monday, it was that this is a classic civil war and one that has by no means achieved the point of exhaustion.[672]

Patricia Holland and Edward Pearce made similar comments in *The Times* and the *Guardian* respectively. Holland, in particular, noted that pictures of desperate Somali children coming at the same time as Bosnia had made the front pages far less often.[673] It is interesting to note here that this "selective sensitivity" was not a new thing. When, for example, the Western media had focused on the Ethiopian food crisis during the 1980s, their reports had created a wave of sympathy among Western public opinion and had determined the action taken by the Western goverments. But the media showed less interest to report the equally horrible Mozambique famine happening at approximately the same time.

Of a completely different nature were the arguments that focused on the Balkan nature of the conflict, arguments that made use of (and simultaneously reinforced) the widespread stereotype discussed in chapter 1, and evident in some reports on the Slovenian and Croatian conflicts (see chapter 2). In Bosnia's case, even men like General Rose slipped into this mode when referring publicly to the Bosnians as 'savages'. When he was asked to explain why he had done so, when the Bosnians were Europeans like himself, he said: 'I refrained from replying that, in my view, after the way they had slaughtered each other it would take them at least 500 years to

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[670] David Fairhall, 'Nightmare in a No-Go Zone', *Guardian* (2 June 1992), p. 19.

[671] Keith Waterhouse, 'The Case for Dither', *Daily Mail* (10 August 1992), p. 8.

[672] Simon Jenkins, 'The Swamp of Civil War', *The Times* (10 February 1993), p. 8.

[673] Patricia Holland, 'Taking a Picture of Pain', *The Times* (25 August 1992), p. Life & Times 5.

achieve that status'.[674] Similar comments were also made by Colonel Tim Spicer, Rose's press officer, who said that 'in the Balkans all are as bad as each other',[675] and Major Vaughan Kent-Payne of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment. The latter wrote in his memoirs that 'the region was where the hot-blooded Latin merged with the brutal Slav and the results were often odious'.[676] Academics too sought refuge in this line of reasoning, attempting to explain the conflict scientifically as the result of ancient hatreds unleashed at the end of the 20th Century.[677]

While the rest of the anti-interventionists recognised that, from a humanitarian point of view, something should indeed be done (but it was not feasible for Britain to do it), the commentators who emphasized the "Balkan nature" of the Bosnian War often seemed to have a deterministic view. The verdict was that the war in Bosnia was the atavistic product of a perverse time warp, in which fourteen-century hatred was unloaded at the edge of the Europe of Maastricht.[678] Hence, things in the Balkans would be the same until Kingdom Come and there was no point in talking about intervention. 'I am a veteran of 17 United Nations peace-keeping missions and never before have I seen so much hatred', noted Lewis McKenzie, the Canadian UN commander in Bosnia, writing in the *Daily Mail*:

We're talking about people who cannot stand each other at this particular stage. Not only that, we're talking about hatred that goes back hundreds of years and has now exploded. We're talking about a manifestation of cruelty in the extreme...When two sides will not talk to each other, I don't know how you solve the problem - unless one side wins and one side loses, and a lot of innocent people, and that is the characteristic of this war, get killed in the meantime.[679]

Examples of such an attitude could be found in abundance in the columns of the British newspapers: 'Only one thing is certain', claimed Peter Miller of the *Sunday Times*: 'Like an earthquake zone along the juncture of two tectonic plates, the Balkans have for the whole of recorded history been the fault line between Europe and Asia. They will leave the 20th century as they entered it, in a bloody mess.'[680] 'These wars

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[674] Sir Michael Rose, *Fighting for Peace: Bosnia 1994* (London: Harvill, 1998), p. 72.
[675] Tim Spicer, *An Unorthodox Soldier: Peace and War and the Sandline Affair* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2000), p. 130.
[676] Vaughan Kent-Payne, *Bosnia Warriors: Living on the Front Line* (London: Robert Hale, 1998), p. 353.
[677] See Simms, *Unfinest Hour*, pp. 335-6, as well as Edgar O' Ballance, *Civil War in Bosnia, 1992-1994* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. vii and Paul Mojzes, *Yugoslavian Inferno: Ethnoreligious Warfare in the Balkans* (New York: Continuum, 1994), pp. 43 and 52 respectively.
[678] William Pfaff, 'Invitation to War: Modernity of Ancient Hatreds', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (1993), pp. 97-109 (p. 97).
[679] Lewis McKenzie, 'I Have Never Seen Hatred Like This', *Daily Mail* (6 August 1992), p. 6.
[680] Peter Miller, 'Should We Intervene?', *Sunday Times* (9 August 1992), section B, p. 4.

have old origins, rooted in ancient quests for independence and nation states in a region too small to accommodate peacefully the competing territorial aspirations', noted Ian Traynor in a book written jointly by journalists and academics.[681] Tony Craig wrote in the *Guardian* that 'the war in Bosnia has been raging for two years, but the Balkan peninsula has been a cauldron of ethnic and religious unrest for centuries',[682] whilst Louise Branson referred in the *Sunday Times* to the 'deeply macho culture' of the Yugoslav men.[683] Furthermore, the *Daily Mail* said that 'the conflict is of *Byzantine* [my italics] complexity, ferocious and historic hatred and appalling savagery on all sides'.[684] Its columnist Ann Leslie commented that 'once you cross the Drina River into Bosnian-Serb territory, you feel as though you're falling into a looking-glass land, a dizzying nightmare Lewis Carroll fable where everyone is in the habit, like the Red Queen, of believing six impossible things before breakfast...We cannot, indefinitely, continue trying to save them from themselves.'[685]

By the signing of the Dayton Agreement, approximately 278,000 people had been killed or were missing in Bosnia (6.37% of the pre-war population), 140,800 of them Muslims, 97,300 Serbs, and 28,400 Croats. Nearly 1,370,000 had been displaced and an unknown number of people had been raped and tortured. The United Nations lost 214 men and Britain, which had contributed 3,565 soldiers in total, lost more men in the fighting than in 40 years of Cold War confrontation with the Warsaw Pact.[686] As argued above, it was the media, and especially television, that generated public interest in Bosnia - an interest that was kept alive by the exposure of Bosnian Serb war crimes - but was left largely in the dark regarding the reasons behind the conflict.[687] After Dayton, with the zeal of the media blunted, Bosnia rapidly faded from the headlines. Even the serious conflict that nearly erupted in 1997, when the President of Republica Sprska Biljana Plavšić attempted to arrest her old patron Radovan Karadžić and hand him to the International Court of Justice, did not attract much attention. Left-wing authors like David Chandler argued that Bosnia-

[681] Ian Traynor, 'The Tragedy Unfolds: Descent into Barbarism', in *Bloody Bosnia: A European Tragedy*, ed. by Noll Scott and Derek Jones (London: The Guardian and Channel 4 Television, in association with the School of Slavonic and Eastern European Studies, 1994), pp. 24-29 (p. 25).

[682] Tony Craig, 'Tragic History Repeats Itself', *Guardian* (28 February 1994), p. E10.

[683] Louise Branson, 'Men Tell of Sexual Abuse', *Sunday Times* (25 July 1993), p. 14.

[684] Editorial, 'Croatia Lets Slip the Dogs of War', *Daily Mail* (5 August 1995), p. 8.

[685] Ann Leslie, 'These People are Hell-Bent on Murdering Each Other, the Truth is We Cannot Stop Them' (8 February 1994), p. 9.

[686] Editorial, 'Speak for Britain', *The Times* (31 May 1995), p. 14.

[687] Misha Glenny, 'Reading Between the Front Lines', *The Times* (22 September 1992), p. Life & Times 4.

Herzegovina had developed into a Western-sponsored protectorate with an unclear future, based solely on the Western financial aid, instead on the will of the local population to bury the hatchet.[688] But with the conscience of public opinion salved by NATO's punishment of the Bosnian Serbs, it seems that the media no longer had reason to keep Bosnia high on the agenda.

SECTION 4B: GREEK PRESS REACTIONS

As in Britain, it was the war in Bosnia which made mass public opinion in Greece become fully aware for the first time of the seriousness of the events that were taking place in Yugoslavia. But this increasing awareness was accompanied by a serious split with the rest of the Western world, as many Greeks adopted a strong pro-Serb position, which culminated in a frenzied anti-Western crescendo at the time of the NATO bombardments. Of course, this was not the first time that Greece had found itself at odds with Western policies. It had, for example, previously provided diplomatic support to the Palestinians in the Middle East crisis, and to the Jaruzelski regime in Poland during the 1980s. It was, though, the first act of this kind in the post-Cold War era, when traditional alliances and dividing lines had become blurred. In terms of the press coverage of the Bosnian War in Greece, this thesis will argue that the reports of the Greek newspapers were unbalanced, favouring the Bosnian Serbs and showing constant hostility to the Bosnian Muslims. As in the British section of the chapter, the emphasis will again be less on government policies and more on attitudes and media images. Government policies are relevant to this study only to the extent that they link pro-Serb feelings with the changes in the geopolitical role of Greece. The discussion will, therefore, begin by outlining Serbia's position in Greek foreign policy in the post-Communist Balkans. It will then consider the way in which the media portrayed the Bosnian Serbs, Muslims and Croats, which was significantly different from the British newspapers. It will then conclude with an examination of the opinions of the Greek press on Western diplomatic and military initiatives to resolve the crisis.

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[688] David Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), p. 2.

4.7 The place of Serbia in Greek foreign policy

As discussed in chapter 2, the Greek Foreign Office did not like - although it did not definitely oppose - the EU's recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as independent states in December 1991. It certainly disliked the subsequent recognition of Bosnia in April 1992. Traditionally, Greece had perceived Serbia (and later on Yugoslavia) as the key to peace and stability on the Balkan Peninsula, and it found itself as unprepared as other Western European countries for the emergence of a rump federation, where a bloody civil war was raging with unpredictable consequences. When Bosnia erupted into a serious three-sided conflict, it was obvious to all that the EU had failed to take a decisive and effective stand over Yugoslavia. But while the other Community countries could afford to ignore the Bosnian bloodbath until their public opinion begun to put pressure on them to do something, Greece did not have the same luxury. For Greece's political elites the crisis was too near, it was closely connected with the sensitive Slavomacedonian issue, and it threatened the established equilibrium in a fragile area where nearly 2,000 Greek enterprises had economic interests.[689] As Christos Rozakis has argued, for small countries like Greece the maintenance of a standard policy with known players is always easier than the quest for new policies with new partners.[690] This political doctrine, together with the diplomatic background of the Bosnian crisis, helps to explain the Greek political elite's actions. On the one hand, Greek politicians did not want to risk the country's European credentials. They preferred to persuade their European partners that, because of the traditional friendship between Greece and Serbia, they were best placed to act as mediators. On the other hand, though, they envisaged a Serbian victory as the only way of preserving Yugoslavia in some form, which would not only be guarantor of peace and stability in the area, but also part of a political and cultural axis that could counter-balance Turkey's interests and reduce the latter's influence in the area.

Examples of the sympathy that the Greek officials maintained for the regime of Milošević and the Bosnian Serbs can be found in abundance. During the Bosnian War, Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis (New Democracy, Conservative) voiced

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[689] *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis*, 'Ελληνικές Εταιρείες Κατακτούν τα Βαλκάνια' (20 March 1994), p. 1.

[690] Christos Rozakis, 'Η Κρίση στη Γιουγκοσλαβία: Ένας Αποκαλυπτικός Διάλογος Ανάμεσα στην Ελληνική Εξωτερική Πολιτική και στην Πολιτική της Ευρωπαϊκής Κοινότητας', in *Βαλκάνια: Από τον Διπολισμό στη Νέα Εποχή*, 2nd edn, ed. by Thanos Veremis (Athens: Γνώση in collaboration with Ελληνικό Ίδρυμα Ευρωπαϊκής και Εξωτερικής Πολιτικής, 1995), pp. 27-71 (p. 61).

his admiration for Slobodan Milošević, as did the deputy Foreign Minister Virginia Tsouderou.[691] Mitsotakis' successor, the leader of the Social-Democrat party (PASOK) Andreas Papandreou (elected in 1993), seems to have had an equally favourable attitude towards Milošević. This was highlighted by the official invitation to the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić to make a visit to Athens in the summer of 1993, when he met leading PASOK and New Democracy politicians, as well as the then Archbishop Serapheim. The only voice of protest against Karadžić's visit was from the tiny far Left party OAKKE, four members of which were arrested precisely because they had put up posters against his visit in Athens. The same scenario was repeated with the visit to Greece of the Serb Bishop of Novi Sad Dr. Eirinaios Bulović (1993), whose speech was attended by the Archbishop and a number of MPs.[692] The Social-Democrat MP Dimitris Vounatsos even called on his compatriots in Greece to prepare to fight alongside the Serbs and Russians to prevent Turkish-led Muslim forces gaining a foothold in Central Europe.[693] Additionally, when General Ratko Mladić was indicted as a war criminal, it was a Greek that took the brief to defend him, the well-known criminal law jurist and future Conservative MP Alexandros Lykourezos. Moreover, when during August 1995 the Croats started to attack the Serb-held areas of Krajina and Eastern Slavonia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs opened bank accounts for the relief of the refugees, and collected humanitarian aid, something that had never happened for the Muslim or the Croat refugees in the past.[694] Last but not least, during the NATO campaign there were rumors, never confirmed, that the Papandreou government was leaking NATO's military secrets to the Bosnian Serbs.[695]

4.8 The image of the Bosnian Serbs in the Greek press

The Bosnian Serbs were generally seen in a favourable light by the Greek media from the time of the first skirmishes in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992. They were typically

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[691] *Apogevmatini*, 'Τους Εντυπωσίασε ο Σέρβος Πρόεδρος' (2 May 1992), p. 4.
[692] Eirinaios Boulović, 'Το Σημερινό Δράμα της Σερβίας και η Δοκιμασία της Ορθοδοξίας', in *Βαλκάνια και Ορθοδοξία*, ed. by «Μήνυμα» editions, (Athens: Μήνυμα, 1993), pp. 102-116.
[693] Malcolm Brabant, 'Greeks Summoned to Arms against Islam in Bosnia', *The Times* (19 December 1994).
[694] See *Eleftherotypia*, 'Και 7° C-130 Φεύγει για το Βελιγράδι' (11 August 1995), p. 14, and 'Έκκληση για Βοήθεια στους Σέρβους της Κράϊνα' (10 August 1995), p. 6.
[695] Takis Michas, *Unholy Alliance: Greece and Milosevic's Serbia* (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 2002), p. 39.

portrayed as a people with heroic history and a strong national conscience, as fellow Orthodox believers, and as guarantors of Balkan stability. For the Liberal-Conservative *Kathimerini* - which was strikingly pro-Serb throughout the Bosnian War - the isolation and weakening of Serbia could only lead to the re-emergence of the Balkans as the powder-keg of Europe.[696] Similar sentiments were expressed by both by the press and TV stations until the end of the war. Among the other broadsheets under consideration, the *Eleftherotypia* and the *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* kept a policy of careful equidistance from the belligerent parties. The *Apogevmatini* voiced its support for the Serbs, hoping that the Athens-Belgrade axis 'would function as a factor of stability to avert any expansionist intention of countries within or around the Balkans'.[697]

In general, if the British media simplified the Bosnian War as a conflict between 'good' Muslims and 'bad' Serbs, the Greek media opted for an equally simplified picture of wronged Serbs against brutal Muslims (and occasionally Croats, too). They protested when Serbs were being slaughtered, but remained silent or offered unconvincing justifications when the Serbs were slaughtering others. Overall, the Greek media appeared more interested in the views of the Belgrade regime than the actual events in Bosnia. And, when they did show some interest in actual events, their reports reached the public filtered through a carefully constructed prism. In reports of the almost daily shelling of Sarajevo in 1993, for example, the fact that the victims were mostly unarmed citizens and that the attacks were initiated mainly from Serb-controlled areas was conveniently ignored. A significant exception was a documentary aired on the state-run TV station ET-2 on 19 June 1995, which was produced in France, and revealed the tragedy of the ordinary people of Sarajevo. As Aris Mousionis, President of the Greek-Serb Association, said in an interview with Takis Michas, the Greek reporters were looking for 'stories of Serb bravery, not of Muslim suffering'.[698] Their partiality even caused an angry protest by the Croat embassy in Athens, which noted sarcastically that if the rest of the Europeans who accused Karadžić of war crimes were all deaf and blind, the Greeks were the only ones who honored and rewarded him.[699] But what was particularly noteworthy was

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[696] Editorial, 'Αποκλεισμός της Σερβίας', *Kathimerini* (3 June 1992), p. 9.
[697] Editorial, 'Ο Κόσμος Ευγνωμονεί την Ελλάδα, το ΠΑΣΟΚ Χειροκροτεί τον Μαυρίκη', *Apogevmatini* (6 May 1993), p. 2.
[698] Michas, p. 32.
[699] Aleksandar Sunko, 'Η Τραγωδία της Γιουγκοσλαβίας' (letter), *Kathimerini* (7 October 1995), p. 2.

not so much the fact that the Greek media had blindly sided with the Serbs - most of the rest of the Western media had sided equally blindly with the Muslims - but that they had sided with the Milošević regime. When, for example, the liberal and pro-Western candidate Panić was defeated by Milošević in Serbia's Presidential elections in December 1992, the *Kathimerini* was ecstatic: 'The Western powers' blackmail of Serb people fell on deaf ears…The brutal involvement in the electoral campaign, with the threat of a military campaign, brought exactly the opposite results.'[700]

One of the most interesting features visible in the Greek newspaper coverage of the Bosnian conflict was the way in which they collected information. The *Eleftherotypia* had dispatched a correspondent to Sarajevo at the beginning of the war, but it withdrew him as the conflict progressed, and replaced his reports with dispatches submitted by correspondents stationed in various European cities (Paris, Geneva, Munich). The reports in the *Kathimerini* and its Sunday edition were initially based on information from the Associated Press. A correspondent was sent to Sarajevo in September 1993 but, by the beginning of 1994, he had been relocated to Belgrade. The few other journalists that the *Kathimerini* sent to Bosnia had clear pro-Serb views: Dimitris Nollas, for example, referred to 'the Orthodox power underestimated by the West, which holds its ground on rocky terrain.'[701] The broadsheet often published articles signed by Serb journalists, but it never bothered to extend such hospitality to Croat or Muslim journalists in order to provide its readers a more complete picture. The *Apogevmatini* never had a reporter in Bosnia, and its references to the war there were usually descriptive reports located in its World news sector. Overall, the result was that even some of the most important newspapers of Greece were reporting the war almost exclusively from the Serb side, thereby reproducing the Serb view of the events, something that resulted in extremely one-sided coverage of the Bosnian crisis.

Even these facts, however, cannot explain the surprising indifference that the Greek media showed about the Serb atrocities that were dramatically revealed worldwide in August 1992. As shown earlier in the chapter, the Serb detention camps were front-page news for most of the serious Western newspapers, and stirred up much discussion both in Britain and elsewhere. But in Greece the camps were seen as

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[700] Editorial, 'Μετά τη Νίκη του Μιλόσεβιτς', *Kathimerini* (24 December 1992), p. 9.
[701] Dimitris Nollas, 'Η Σαβανωμένη Πολιτεία: Οδυνηρό Οδοιπορικό στις Οδούς του Μαρτυρικού Βούκοβαρ', *Kathimerini* (12 March 1993), p. 7.

an insignificant phenomenon. Only the *Eleftherotypia* and the Sunday edition of *Kathimerini* bothered to comment on them, with the *Eleftherotypia* writing, cautiously, that the TV images were reminiscent of the Nazi horrors,[702] and the *Kathimerini*'s Sunday edition warning that the Bosnian Muslims might end up as the Palestinians of Europe.[703] The right-wing *Apogevmatini*, on the contrary, did not show any sustained interest, while the daily *Kathimerini* took the lead in supporting the Serbs. The reports were described as unsubstantiated and a front page article on 18 August had the title 'Serbian women are being raped too'. The paper's editor rushed to condemn the Holy See's plea for intervention in a sarcastic tone:

The Vatican's spokesman…advised the European states to intervene (at last) in the former Yugoslavia, now that the existence of camps has been revealed, where the "Serb Nazis" torture and murder the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. As is known, the Vatican has never protested against the millions of dead in Hitler's camps or against the oppression that the Kurds suffer in Turkey.[704]

This indifference in the Greek press about the detention camps was not an isolated incident. As the acclaimed journalist Takis Michas wrote in his account of the 'unholy alliance' between Greece and Serbia, throughout the war in former Yugoslavia it was hard to see any mention of the crimes against the Bosnian Muslims in the editorials of the Greek newspapers.[705] Reports on Serb atrocities were constantly hidden away in small columns in the inside pages, and were largely dismissed as "Western propaganda". Simultaneously, a steady diet of horrid Muslim acts dominated the front pages. The *Kathimerini* provides the clearest examples of this attitude, portraying Bosnia as a place full of Mujaheddin volunteers who, equipped with new guns and artillery, were fighting the Serbs.[706] Moreover, the paper twice proposed on its front page the idea of an anti-Orthodox axis between Rome and Ankara against Serbia (1 October 1992, 12 January 1993). 'Serbs are our friends', declared its columnist Spyros Alexiou,

They are genuine Orthodox, faithful to the Byzantine heritage, i.e. of the Hellenic empire that the West from the 15th Century onwards named Byzantine and that we mistakenly denied…in order to play the game of the Western big powers…The Serbs, who suffered together with us under Ottoman slavery,

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[702] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Αποτροπιασμός', (8 August 1992), p. 17.

[703] *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis*, 'Η Φυγή: Η πιο Μεγάλη Έξοδος από την Εποχή του Χίτλερ' (13 September 1992), pp. 14-15.

[704] Editorial, 'Ενώ Όλα Αυτά Συμβαίνουν Γύρω Μας', *Kathimerini* (8 August 1992), p. 9.

[705] Michas, p. 21.

[706] *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis* (29 November 1992), p. 28.

remained constant friends and admirers of Greece and our people...Our country has every reason to wish for Milošević's success.[707]

The culmination of the pro-Serb sympathies of the Greek media coincided with the NATO bombardments against the Bosnian Serbs, which were loudly criticized by the *Kathimerini* and the *Apogevmatini*. This criticism was in line with the majority of public opinion. In a May 1994 poll, 72% supported the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Bosnian soil. This was exemplified by an *Eleftherotypia* reader's letter, which noted that 'in the brave Serb fighters, all Greeks see our ancestors' struggles for freedom against the various international rodents.'[708] The *Kathimerini* pictured the NATO campaign as a result of anti-Serb hysteria that the Clinton administration and other Western governments had nourished,[709] labelling it as a 'phenomenal and almost irrational exhibition of power.'[710] Assistant Professor of International Relations at Panteios University, Panagiotis Ifaistos, argued in an article in the *Eleftherotypia* that in a war situation you could not ascribe blame by saying that the Serbs are the culprits because they committed 51 atrocities and the Muslims only 49.[711] In similar vein, the well-known columnist of the *Kathimerini*, Panagiotis Boukalas, implied that the West had pre-planned the attack.[712] Of the newspaper's contributors, only Nikos Kiaos expressed a different view, arguing that the Serbs might indeed have some right on their side, but that this right could not be achieved by slaughtering thousands of innocent people. For Nikos Dimou, one of the leading journalists in Greece, it was understandable that Greece needed to make Serbia central in its Balkan policies, although he added that there was no need to applaud barbarity in order to achieve this aim.[713]

The Left-Liberal *Eleftherotypia* was the only newspaper that frequently published views hostile to the Bosnian Serbs. Pavlos Nathanail said that the control of 70% of Bosnian soil (plus Krajina in Croatia) was more than the Serbs had a right to, with the result that any final solution should include some reduction in this percentage. He also hoped that the NATO bombardments would promote

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[707] Spyros Alexiou, 'Οι Σέρβοι και μεις', *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis* (3 January 1993), p. 8.

[708] Konstantinos Avouzouklidis, 'Εμείς και οι Σέρβοι', *Eleftherotypia* (21 August 1993), p. 34.

[709] Editorial, 'Οι Πληγές μιας «Τιμωρίας»', *Kathimerini* (29 April 1993), p. 13.

[710] *Kathimerini* (13 September 1995), p. 1.

[711] Panagiotis Ifaistos, 'Ανόητες Παρεμβάσεις στη Βαλκανική', *Eleftherotypia* (20 April 1993), p. 19.

[712] Pantelis Boukalas, 'Ερωτήματα', *Kathimerini* (4 October 1995), p. 3.

[713] Nikos Dimou, 'Υστερόγραφο για τους Σέρβους', *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis* (6 August 1995), p. 2.

compromise.[714] Nikolas Voulelis pointed out that the majority of the victims in Bosnia were Muslims and the aggressors mainly Serbs,[715] while Giorgos Yannoulopoulos wondered whether 'we support the Serbs because they are good and right, or whether they are good and right because we support them'. He then added that pro-Serb arguments were being expressed with a sentimental and simplistic rhetoric.[716] Michalis Moronis also argued that the Greeks were giving the appearance of a bellicose and imperialistic people, stuck in a policy similar to that of the Greater Serbia.[717]

4.9 Portraits of the Muslims and the Bosnian Croats in the Greek press

While the Greek newspapers showed great interest in the Bosnian Serbs, the Bosnian Croats remained largely in the shadows and the Muslims took the place that the Bosnian Serbs had in the rest of the Western media - i.e. they were demonised. The Greek press predictably displayed a high degree of Turcophobia, warning that the presence of a Muslim state in the heart of Balkans would serve as a Turkish Trojan horse and would increase the role of Turkey in the area - with a subsequent decrease of Greek influence.[718] According to Elias Katsoulis, Professor of Political Science at Panteios University, this image helped the average Greek to perceive every crime against the Bosnian Muslims as being more or less justified. Before the recognition by the EU of Bosnia as an independent state, Stella Pagartani-Hoida, writing in the Liberal-minded *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia*, argued that a possible act of this kind would 'mean the creation of the first Muslim state within Europe...The followers of Allah in Kosovo, Skopje, Bulgaria and Albania wait patiently.'[719] For the *Kathimerini*, an independent Islamic Bosnia would result in an Islamic bomb inside

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[714] Pavlos Nathanail, 'Βοσνία: Η Αρχή του Τέλους', *Eleftherotypia* (1 September 1995), p. 10.

[715] Nikolas Boulelis, 'Σεράγεβο: Ο Αργός Θάνατος μιας Ιδέας', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (18 July 1993), pp. 24-25 (p. 24).

[716] Giorgos Giannoulopoulos, 'Το Γήπεδο, οι Σέρβοι και το Μεταμοντέρνο', *Eleftherotypia* (9 August 1995), p. 10.

[717] Michalis Moronis, 'Το Νέο Τοπίο στα Βαλκάνια και η Ελλάδα', *Eleftherotypia* (4 September 1995), p. 9. See also his 'Ακροβασίες στα Όρια του Εθνικισμού', *Eleftherotypia* (18 May 1992), p. 9.

[718] Argyris Dinopoulos, 'Βοσνία: Οθωμανικό Προγεφύρωμα', *Kathimerini* (25 March 1994), p. 9. See also Kostas Iordanidis, 'Βοσνία: Η Τουρκική Παρουσία και η Ελληνική Απουσία', *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis* (27 March 1994), p. 11.

[719] Stella Pagartani-Xoida, 'Ένα Μουσουλμανικό Κράτος στην Ευρώπη', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (8 March 1992), p. 23.

Europe,[720] a consequence for which Tito was to blame, as he was accused of creating this Muslim identity in order to balance the antagonism between Serbs and Croats within Yugoslavia.[721] Overall, the Muslim nation was seen as an artificial fabrication rather than a real community worthy of respect.[722] All this meant that the Greek media had lost its grip on the complex Bosnian reality. Their image of the Bosnian Muslims was created more in terms of Greece's fear of Turkey and fundamentalist Islam, rather than on a pragmatic consideration of the circumstances in the area of former Yugoslavia.

Of course, various voices warning against this one-sided media image were not absent. The *Kathimerini*'s Sunday edition argued that, in contrast to the arguments of certain Serb nationalists, the Bosnian Muslims were not religious fanatics and did not envisage a theocratic state.[723] Kostas F. Loukeris, writing in the *Kathimerini*'s daily edition, said that the attempt to link all Muslim elements in the Balkans with the Turks might jeopardize the traditional friendship between Greece and the Arab world.[724] In a similar way, Christos Rozakis criticized Greece's obsession with the Tuskish threat,[725] while Giorgos Kapopoulos appeared afraid of the possibility of a Muslim defeat in Bosnia, believing that it could transform Bosnian Muslims into 'Balkan Palestinians'.[726] The two state-controlled television stations (ET-1, ET-2) also presented the events in Bosnia in reasonably balanced terms, and did not hesitate to challenge the pattern of good Serbs/bad Muslims that dominated the privately owned (and far more popular) TV stations. The result can be seen in the angry letter of an *Eleftherotypia*'s reader, who protested that the ET-1 and the ET-2 were reproducing the anti-Serb lies of Westerners, 'while they should transmit only things good for Serbia', carrying his arguments so far that he actually suggested that 'even in the extreme case that these did not exist, they should fabricate them'.[727]

Overall, however, crimes against the Muslims were largely absent from most of the Greek media, or were presented in a way that rationalized the Serb atrocities.

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[720] *Kathimerini*, 'Χάσμα Μεταξύ Εθνοτήτων στη Βοσνία' (4 March 1992), p. 1.

[721] *Kathimerini*, 'Το «Μωσαϊκό» της Βοσνίας', *Kathimerini* (3 March 1992), p. 6.

[722] Panagiotis Kalogeratos, *Το Κοινωνικοπολιτικό Σύστημα της Γιουγκοσλαβίας: Από την Αυτοδιαχείριση στην Αποσάρθρωση;* (Athens: Νέα Σύνορα - Α. Α. Λιβάνη, 1989), p. 62.

[723] *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis*, 'Επτά Απαντήσεις Διαφωτίζουν το Παρασκήνιο' (19 July 1992), p. 18. See also *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis - Epta Imeres*, 'Η Ιστορία: Γιατί Μισούνται Τόσο Αυτοί οι Λαοί;' (13 September 1992), p. 8.

[724] Kostas F. Loukeris, 'Η Θρησκευτική Ταυτότητα', *Kathimerini* (24 July 1993), p. 9.

[725] Christos Rozakis, 'Η Τουρκία στη Βοσνία', Kathimerini (1 April 1994), p. 2.

[726] Giorgos Kapopoulos, 'Η Υποθήκη του Συμβιβασμού', *Kathimerini* (22 June 1993), p. 11.

[727] Grigoris Tranatos, 'Σέρβοι και ΕΡΤ' (letter), *Eleftherotypia* (2 February 1993), p. 52.

The plight of Sarajevo did not reach the Greek public,[728] the detention camps were largely dismissed as a Western overreaction, and even in the coverage of Srebrenica's conquest the emphasis was placed on the approximately 100 Greek paramilitaries (most of them neo-Fascists) who helped the Serbs.[729] In many cases, the Muslims were accused of committing atrocities themselves in order to provoke the Western public concern (an accusation not altogether without substance).[730] Alija Izetbegović was portrayed in very different terms in comparison with the way the British press presented him. For the British press, as stated above, the Bosnian leader was a "moderate", while for the Greek newspapers he was 'cast-iron'[731] and 'two-faced'.[732] Despite the fact that most Bosnian refugees were Muslims, the Greek authorities, when inviting children from Bosnia to Greece as a humanitarian gesture, brought only Serbs. For example, in March 1993, Dimitris Avramopoulos, the popular ex-mayor of Athens (and at present Minister of Tourism), invited 500 Serbs from Bosnia and Krajina to spend six months in Greece. Only the *Eleftherotypia* had a headline about the plight of the Muslims of Srebrenica (14 July 1995), although Nikos Dimou dared to write in the *Kathimerini*'s Sunday edition that

The images of the miserable refugees of Srebrenica and Zepa are beginning to touch even the Greek commentators. Of course, they are Muslims, but they are humans, too. But when the time comes for responsibilities to be attributed for so much brutality and misery, suddenly things become unclear. The victims are visible - but the culprits? Every attempt to put the blame on the Serb conquerors is being rejected as "anti-Serb hysteria".[733]

His column was followed by angry letters from the newspaper's readers, one of them accusing him of advocating Western policies aimed at the destabilisation of the Balkan Peninsula.[734]

The Croats, on the other hand, remained nearly as invisible as they had been for the British media. In the Greek press, as in the British, they were perceived as the third party that could confuse the viewer/reader by destroying the simplistic image of 'goodies vs baddies'. In general, Croatia was presented as a pro-German and Catholic

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[728] For a significant exception see Spyros Tsakiris, 'Εδώ Παντού Μυρίζει Αίμα', *Eleftherotypia* (14 June 1993), pp. 34-35 (p. 35).

[729] For more on this see Takis Michas, 'Greek Complicity in Bosnian Crimes', *Bosnia Report*, New Series No. 29-31 (June-November 2002), <http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report.format.cfm?articleid=906&reportid=155> [accessed 9 February 2005].

[730] *Kathimerini*, 'Μουσουλμανική «Προβοκάτσια»' (23 August 1992), p. 1.

[731] *Kathimerini*, 'Η Αδιαλλαξία Υποχωρεί λόγω Χειμώνος' (30 September 1992), p. 7.

[732] Yannis Rizopoulos, 'Το Μονοπάτι της Ειρήνης', *Kathimerini* (21 January 1993), p. 7.

[733] Nikos Dimou, 'Σερβική Υστερία', *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis* (23 July 1995), p. 2.

[734] Vasilis Tsirkinidis, 'Σερβία και Ελλάδα' (letter), *Kathimerini* (29 July 1995), p. 2.

country, where the neo-Fascists were particularly strong,[735] and where citizenship 'is granted on the basis of detailed questionnaires concerning the national purity of applicants, reminiscent of Nazi racial laws'.[736] The Croatian President Tudjman was labelled by the *Kathimerini* as the Mussolini of the Balkans,[737] a bold as brass ex-Communist general, whose aim was to carve out a greater Croatia.[738] Despite the above comments, however, the Croats did not receive any serious coverage, not at least until their counter-attack on the Serb enclaves in Krajina and Eastern Slavonia.[739] Even then, however, the emphasis was given to to the alleged sponsors of this counter-offensive (Germany and the USA) and not to the Croats themselves.

4.10 The international community's measures as seen by the Greek press

In general, the Greek press was highly critical of every attempt by the international community to halt Serb aggression. Every measure was perceived as a hostile act, designed to force the Serbs to abandon their justified cause. The initial UN embargo, for example, was seen in this way even by the editor of the Left-Liberal *Eleftherotypia*, who claimed that the break-up of Yugoslavia had already been decided by the same forces that now had rushed to impose the sanctions.[740] Nikolas Voulelis proposed that the West should invest the embargo money in order to finance an independent TV station, which could then transmit different news from Milošević's propaganda machine.[741] More realistically, the *Kathimerini* questioned the effectiveness of the embargo,[742] and noted the damage for the Greek economy, which was estimated at more than 500,000,000 drachmas.[743] It was not accidental, therefore, that Greece was soon listed among the countries that apparently violated the embargo. Prime Minister Mitsotakis commented, in an interview with the TV-station

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[735] *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis*, 'Οι Πρωταγωνιστές της Μεγάλης Σφαγής' (19 July 1992), p. 18.

[736] Giorgos Kapopoulos, 'Ο Υπαρκτός Σωβινισμός', *Kathimerini* (7 August 1992), p. 7.

[737] *Kathimerini* (9 August 1995), p. 9.

[738] *Kathimerini*, 'Κροατία: Από Θύμα Έγινε ο Νέος Θύτης' (11 July 1992), p. 7.

[739] *Eleftherotypia*, 'Κροατική Θύελλα με 2 «Νονούς»: ΗΠΑ-Γερμανία Ευλογούν Λύση de Facto' (7 August 1995), p. 1.

[740] Editorial, 'Όπου Συμφέρει', *Eleftherotypia* (1 June 1992), p. 8.

[741] Nikolas Voulelis, 'Κίνδυνος Επιστροφής στο Χθες', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (3 January 1993), pp. 26-27 (p. 26).

[742] Giorgos Kapopoulos, 'Κυρώσεις χωρίς Αντίκρυσμα', *Kathimerini* (7 May 1992), p. 7.

[743] *Kathimerini*, 'Διεκδικούμε Αποζημίωση' (2 June 1992), p. 1.

MEGA Channel in 12 July 1992, that Greece could not behave like a 'crazy country', which pursued its own policies contrary to the decisions of its European partners. As the *Karthimerini* noted, the government, 'while it adopts a careful pro-Serb rhetoric, which expresses the feelings of the vast majority of the Greek people, in practice follows Western choices'.[744]

The diplomatic efforts to resolve the Bosnian crisis were seen more favourably than the economic sanctions, but the Greek press was nevertheless quite hostile towards the proposed peace plans. The Vance-Owen peace plan found much support from the Greek government, which saw it as a realistic solution to the Bosnian conflict that would also allow the existence of a strong Serbia. Indeed, Prime Minister Mitsotakis personally attended the talks in the Pale Parliament, in order to pressure the Bosnian Serbs to accept the plan. Yet the press was, in general terms, more sceptical than the politicians. Christos Pasalaris of the populist Right-wing *Apogevmatini* thought that the plan would lead Bosnia to a fragmented and unstable political future.[745] For Giorgos Kapopoulos of the Conservative-Liberal *Kathimerini*, Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance were representatives of a blackmailing international "order", which had been formed because of German pressure in support of Slovenia and Croatia, and their plan validated the end of a unified Bosnia.[746] The editor of the *Kathimerini* was, by contrast, supportive of the plan, seeing it as a contribution to greater stability in the region. But he accused the Americans rather than the Bosnian Serbs of sabotaging the plan.[747] Even when the Bosnian Serbs rejected the plan, their decision was attributed to their desperation, 'a kind of desperation that makes easier *pre-planned* bombardment [my emphasis] and foreign military intervention.'[748] On the contrary, Pavlos Nathanail of the Left-Liberal *Eleftherotypia* felt that although David Owen came into the Balkans carrying the usual Western stereotypes about the area, he managed to understand a lot and did his best to find a fair solution.[749]

As for the revised Owen-Stoltenberg plan, this attracted virtually no interest at all, apart from a column in the *Kathimerini*, which stated that it left the Serbs as

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[744] Editorial, 'Έλλειψη Εθνικής Στρατηγικής', *Kathimerini* (14 April 1993), p. 9.
[745] Christos Pasalaris, 'Πού 'σαι Μακιαβέλλι να τους Καμαρώσεις', *Apogevmatini* (18 January 1993), p. 2.
[746] Giorgos Kapopoulos, 'Η Δύναμη των Τετελεσμένων', *Kathimerini* (31 October 1992), p. 7 and 'Η Άτυπη Αναγνώριση', *Kathimerini* (4 May 1993), p. 11.
[747] Editorial, 'Η Τελευταία Ευκαιρία', *Kathimerini* (10 February 1993), p. 9.
[748] Panos Loukakos, 'Το «Όχι» των Σέρβων', *Kathimerini* (7 May 1993), p. 1.
[749] Pavlos Nathanail, 'Βοσνία και Ντέιβιντ Όουεν', *Eleftherotypia* (16 June 1995), p. 10.

absolute winners of the war.[750] Neither did the Dayton peace deal attract much interest. For the *Kathimerini*, the door of peace opened only because the NATO air power spread terror and death among innocent civilians,[751] while for its columnist Dimitris Kastriotis the Dayton accord was nothing more than a series of rough deals, without realism or viability.[752] In sum, the Greek media failed to show any serious interest in the international efforts to solve the Bosnian crisis and the Greek public seems to have echoed this lack of interest. The Westerners, the argument run, were responsible for the mess in Bosnia, and all these peace efforts were a way to mask their pre-planned decisions (which were by definition anti-Serb and anti-Orthodox) under the cloak of the UN.

4.11 The growth of anti-Westernism

For the rest of Europe, it was the Greeks who behaved "irrationally" in Bosnia. But for the Greeks, it was the other way round.[753] The academic St. Papathanasopoulos, commenting on the articles on Bosnia that appeared in the British and American newspapers, noted that Anglophone journalists did not have adequate knowledge of the area.[754] Christos Giannaras, a distinguished member of the left-wing neo-Orthodox intelligentsia, was even more hostile towards the West:

Let us make it clear: They are neither friends nor allies. They have been opponents for centuries... Their "philhellenic" humanism is false and fraudulent...They reveal again their need to humiliate the Greeks. They reinforce Islam again, in order to overpower their religious-cultural enemies in the Balkans. Renaissance and Enlightenment have never rescued them from Medieval times.[755]

Even newspapers like the *Eleftherotypia* and the *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia*, which reported the Bosnian War more carefully, shared the anti-Western feeling. The *Eleftherotypia* ended up using an undocumented theory published in Germany to explain Yugoslavia's break up as determined,[756] while it called on the USA to

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[750] Andreas Belibasakis, 'Αποδέχονται το Σχέδιο και οι Δύο', *Kathimerini* (18 September 1992), p. 9.

[751] *Kathimerini*, (10 September 1995), p. 1.

[752] Dimitris Kastriotis, 'Ξέρουμε Εμείς', *Kathimerini* (28 September 1995), p. 9.

[753] Christodoulos Giallouridis, 'Η Εικόνα Αυτής της Χώρας', *Kathimerini* (19 January 1994), p. 2.

[754] St. Papathanasopoulos, 'Ο Ευρωπαϊκός Τύπος κι η Ελλάδα', *Kathimerini* (20 January 1994), p. 2.

[755] Christos Giannaras, 'Βαρβαρικός Αμοραλισμός', *Kathimerini* (2 March 1994), p. 2.

[756] Editorial, 'Ένα Σκίτσο Μιλάει', *Eleftherotypia* (9 August 1995), p. 8. See also Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, *Πολεμιστής στη Σκιά: Η Προγραμματισμένη Διάλυση της Γουγκοσλαβίας - Στα Άδυτα της Γερμανικής Ομοσπονδιακής Υπηρεσίας Πληροφοριών*, trans. by Anthula Videnmayer (Athens: Νέα Σύνορα, 1995).

abandon its 'cowboy' tactics.[757] The *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* was given to predicting calamities, arguing that after Yugoslavia the Americans would move to impose their new order in the Aegean Sea.[758] The *Kathimerini* also referred constantly to the American plans for the area,[759] as well as German and Italian intrigues,[760] while blaming the Western media for deliberately deceiving public opinion.[761] Among its columnists, only Ino Afentouli dared to point out that all this anti-Western hysteria was totally unfounded, and revealed more about the Greeks who were ready to believe such absurdities than it did about the Westerners themselves.[762] As for the right-wing *Apogevmatini*, the following passage is particularly revealing of the way in which Western intervention in Yugoslavia was portrayed to its readers:

The Balkans have once more become the powder-keg of Europe. Because that was the wish of the Germans who exhibited phenomenal lack of wisdom, having learned nothing from the international tragedy that they have caused. Because they found helpers in the Italians, who are constantly irresponsible politically. Because they were accommodated by the constant anti-Orthodox intrigues of the Pope. Because the Danish and Dutch, always disciplined and always afraid of Germany, said, "As you wish, boss!"... Turkey, the Anatolian hyena, which always bides its time and plots against us, began to lick its lips. The smell of blood has wakened the wild instincts of the Ankara wolves, who see their plans for the creation of a choking Muslim arc over Greece's northern frontiers becoming a reality.[763]

At the other end of the political spectrum, but equally simplistic, was the logic of many left-wing sympathizers. Although they acknowledged some blame on the part of Serbs,[764] they believed that Western imperialists were responsible for the Yugoslav tragedy. According to such views, the financial crisis in Yugoslavia during the 1980s

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[757] Editorial, 'Η Επιδρομή', *Eleftherotypia* (16 January 1993), p. 8.

[758] Editorial, 'Ακολουθεί το Αιγαίο', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (3 September 1995), p. 8.

[759] See for example Alexis Papahelas, 'Προσεκτικά Βήματα Κλιμάκωσης: Το Κογκρέσο Προωθεί Σχέδια Επέμβασης στη Γιουγκοσλαβία και Πιέζει τον Επιφυλακτικό Μπους', *Kathimerini* (12 June 1992), p. 7.

[760] See for example, K. I. Aggelopoulos, 'Εντείνεται η «Απομόνωση» της Ελλάδας στα Βαλκάνια', *Kathimerini* (21 June 1992), p. 11, and 'Απέτυχε ο Κάρρινγκτον: Οι Ιταλοί Έτοιμοι για Αποκλεισμό του Μαυροβουνίου', *Kathimerini* (4 July 1992), p. 1.

[761] Editorial, 'Ένα Αγόρι από το Bihac', *Kathimerini* (11 August 1995), p. 3. See also Yannis Zervos, 'Θρησκευτικός Πόλεμος κατά της Βαλκανικής Ορθοδοξίας', in *Βαλκάνια και Ορθοδοξία*, ed. by «Μήνυμα» editions, (Athens: Μήνυμα, 1993), pp. 54-63 (p. 59).

[762] Ino Afentouli, 'Η Ελλάδα Ανήκει στη Δύση;: Το Μάαστριχτ Δίνει την Αφορμή για Οροθέτηση των Επιλογών Μας', *Kathimerini* (23 July 1992), p. 8, and 'Ο «Ανθελληνσμός» και Εμείς...', *Kathimerini* (24 December 1993), p. 2.

[763] Editorial, 'Σταματήστε τα Βρώμικα Παιχνίδια στα Βαλκάνια', *Apogevmatini* (25 April 1993), p. 2. See also Christos Pasalaris, 'Μην το Τολμήσετε Ανόητοι Σύμμαχοι', *Apogevmatini* (4 January 1993), p. 2.

[764] Hlias Altinoglou and Sissy Vovou, 'Βοσνία: Για να Σταματήσει ο Βάρβαρος Πόλεμος της Καπιταλιστικής Παλινόρθωσης! Για τη Νίκη της Πολυεθνικής Βοσνίας', in *Βοσνία-Ερζεγοβίνη: Η Μάχη της Πολυεθνικής Κοινωνίας*, ed. by Sissy Vovou (Athens: Εκδόσεις «Δελτίο Θυέλλης», 1996), pp. 55-72 (p. 61).

had been caused by 'the system of international imperialistic domination', while the partition of Bosnia was attributed to the same forces:

The "peaceful" exploitation of the markets in the Balkans and Eastern Europe presupposes the existence of effective and stable state machines, which, according to the experience of Western imperialistic states, function best when they govern a cohesive and "ethnically" allocated people.[765]

The Greek Orthodox Church hurried to add its authority to the anti-Western voices. The Orthodox Church did not create the pro-Serb and anti-Western mood in Greece, but it jumped on the bandwagon of distrust towards the West,[766] as this developed in Greece after the international row over the name of the Republic of Macedonia. According to an ICAP opinion poll about the institutions that Greeks trust most, the Church ranked second (29.9%), after the Armed Forces (34.4%), close to the legal system (29.4%), and far above the Government (9.6%) or the Media (9.2%).[767] However, such rapport for the Church seems to reflect more a "traditional mindset" than something that most modern Greeks feel emotionally related to. According to a research by EKKE (National Centre for Social Research), only 12.9% of the Greeks went to church every Sunday, whilst 22.9% went twice or three times a month. By contrast, 55.2% went sometimes during the year (presumably during important religious festivities) and 8.8% never went.[768] In countries like Italy, Spain, or Portugal the percentage of people that go to the Church is much higher (27%, 28% and 32.9% respectively),[769] yet, nobody could seriously argue that Catholic belief in these states plays a role similar to the one attributed to Orthodoxy during the war in Bosnia (or later in Kosovo). This suggests that the Greek Orthodox Church was in no position to create a pro-Serb and anti-Western climate in Greece. But it did command enough respect to influence public opinion in such a direction from the moment that circumstances became favourable for such a development.

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[765] Andreas Kloke, 'Ο Βοσνιακός Πόλεμος, η Πολιτική της Δύσης και το Ντέϊτον', in *Βοσνία-Ερζεγοβίνη: Η Μάχη της Πολυεθνικής Κοινωνίας*, ed. by Sissy Vovou (Athens: Εκδόσεις «Δελτίο Θυέλλης», 1996), pp. 14-54 (p. 33). For a similar view coming from the right-wing camp, see Christos Pasalaris, 'Οι Κονκισταδόροι της Βαλκανικής', *Apogevmatini* (12 July 1992), p. 2. For a British equivalent, look at Kate Hudson, *Breaking the South Slav Dream: The Rise and Fall of Yugoslavia* (London: Pluto Press 2003). Also, George Fison, Argyris Malapanis and Jonathan Silberman, *Γιουγκοσλαβία - Οι Ρίζες της Σύρραξης: Γιατί οι Εργαζόμενοι Πρέπει να Αντιταχθούν στην Επέμβαση*, trans. by Babis Misailidis (Athens: Διεθνές Βήμα, 1993).
[766] Damianos Papadimitropoulos, *Η Ελλάδα στη Βαλκανική Κρίση* (Αθήνα: Πόλις, 1994), p. 60.
[767] See *Eleftherotypia* (1 August 1995), p. 2.
[768] *Η Κοινή Γνώμη στην Ελλάδα 1999-2000* (Athens: Ινστιτούτο Vproject Research Consulting & «Νέα Σύνορα» Εκδοτικός Οργανισμός Λιβάνη, 1999), p. 225.
[769] *Ibid.*, p. 225.

Living in a universe where the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans or the schism with the Catholics were far more vivid and important than the cultural and political realities of the 20th Century, the Greek Orthodox Church chose to side with the Serbs, by virtue of the religious and historical links with them. The Orthodox Church in modern Greece is of course a complex organisation with different views among different prelates. It is nevertheless possible to identify a general theme of sympathy for the Serbs in the writings and pronouncements of senior members of the Church. For the Westerners, there was only contempt, as shown by the following passage from a letter to the *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis* written by a cleric:

Nowadays, our EC partners want profit, welfare, power. They have only kept the lessons learned by the ancient Roman Empire and it is the latter that they try to imitate...For these reasons Europe - and consequently - America and Asia, misled by them, hate Greece and its spirit. For these reasons they want to wipe it away.[770]

Opinions like the latter were not restricted to the lower clergy alone, but were also expressed by the hierarchy. According to Archbishop Serapheim, Greece's ties with Serbia should be the critical element determining Greece's foreign policy, even if the latter conflicted with that of the EU. His successor Christodoulos, then Bishop of Dimitrias, argued that the Vatican had sided 'with the international forces of Evil in order to implement the New Order of things which prefigure Antichrist'.[771] As Archbishop, Christodoulos became instrumental in the mobilization of Greek public opinion against the USA and the NATO during the war in Kosovo (see chapter 5).

It is clear from the above arguments that a significant part of the Greek public viewed the West with profound distrust during the Bosnian crisis. The first question that one should raise here is why some Greeks felt that they were neither Westerners nor Europeans. And if they did not feel Europeans, then what did they believe they were? How valid is Kostas Papahrysanthou's assessment that 'East and West have been engaged into a continuous fight for the possession of the Greek soul'?[772] Chapter 1 discussed at some length the transformation of the Greek self-image at various historical turning points, in order to examine the way in which the Greeks perceived the Balkans. Since its independence Greece, isolated by geography from Western Europe, and possessing a Classical heritage that differentiated it from its neighbours, built a separate identity and culture with a strong Eastern flavour. This derived both

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[770] Timotheos K. Kilifis, 'Ούτε που τους Αγγίζουν', *Kathimerini tis Kyriakis* (2 January 1994), p. 9.
[771] Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, pp. 21 and 35.
[772] Kostas Papahrysanthou, 'Η Επαφή με τη Δύση', *Kathimerini* (8 September 1992), p. 10.

from its geographical position and from nearly 400 years of Ottoman occupation. Of course, the Greek elites, largely living in various European capitals before the creation of an independent Greek state (1830), had from the beginning a strong Western European outlook. But for the average person Western Europe remained more distant than the Orthodox East. After the Second World War, Greece took some decisive steps that brought it more into a Western European context, and more people started to feel closer to the West. But, since the more isolated parts of Greek society did not experience any challenge forcing them to change their perspective, most Greeks continued to keep to themselves.

But in the 1990s, the situation was altered dramatically. The fall of Communism, the inflow of immigrants, the transformation of the EC into the EU, and the globalisation of the Western economy meant that Greek society was bound to change. Many Greeks, however, seemed to feel that these changes would destroy what was special about Greek culture. The Macedonian issue, already discussed in chapter 3, revived historical insecurities that had been perpetuated through an educational system which perceived any neighbour as a potential threat, and had stubbornly focused on Greek rather than European history. 'It is true', noted Spyros Moshonas, a Greek literature expert,

that since our childhood we have been influenced with the idea of the Greek superiority, we have been almost engulfed by the idea that we are the history's chosen people, and we have been brought up in a climate of widespread admiration for everything Greek.[773]

The Greeks felt that the West acted over Macedonia and Bosnia in a way that was offensive to Greek history and sensitivities.[774] At the same time, the Orthodox Church managed to express all these fears - that the Greek culture would be swallowed up and destroyed by the West, an enemy since Byzantine times. According to a report presented by Theodora Mexa at the Panhellenic Youth Congress, 'more and more young people nowadays feel the need to come closer to the divine through the church and show intentions to return to religion.'[775] Hence, the answer that some Greeks gave to the identity question posed above was that they felt more Greek than European. As a culture, wrote journalist Tassos Telloglou,

We are unique and alone in the West. The only ones in the community who do not derive from the world of the Latins and Western Church, the only community member geographically isolated from the

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[773] Spyros Moshonas, 'Αντιπαραθέσεις' (letter), *Kathimerini* (2 October 1994), p. 11.

[774] Editorial, 'Αποκλεισμός της Σερβίας', *Kathimerini* (3 june 1992), p. 9.

[775] Quoted in Dionysios Makris, 'Οι Νέοι Αναζητούν την Εκκλησία', *Kathimerini* (23 May 1992), p. 4.

rest of its Western partners. If we want to remain Westerners...this will not be that simple...It demands that we make changes to the way that we live, which would make the modern Greek's physiognomy unrecognisable.[776]

SUMMARY

To summarize this chapter, the media in both Britain and Greece covered the Bosnian War in such a one-sided way that it can be doubted whether the average Briton or Greek ever properly understood what was taking place in Bosnia or Yugoslavia as a whole. As demonstrated above, there was a strong tendency among the British newspapers and TV journalists to 'simplify the plot', a tendency that only a few of the journalists resisted. The war in Bosnia was thus largely presented as a war where 'bad' Serbs armed to the teeth were attacking 'good' and defenceless Muslims. The Croats were almost absent from the whole picture. Their presence could be found in newspaper articles or TV reports, but their actions remained largely in the shadows. Moreover, the complex ethnic identities of Bosnia-Hercegovina were confused: Muslims became 'Bosnians', but the local Croats and Serbs were denied the right to be Bosnians as well, and were instead identified with people living in Croatia and Serbia proper. There was also a fierce debate about Western intervention in Bosnia, in the context of which (on the non-interventionist side) appeared arguments that perpetuated the enduring stereotypes about the Balkans, discussed in chapter 1.

In the Greek case the circumstances were different, but the result was equally one-sided. The Greek media also simplified the plot, but reversed the order of the protagonists, presenting the Bosnian crisis as an affair between 'wronged' Serbs engaged in a justified war against 'greedy' Muslims. The Croats were again largely absent. The Greek political elites had their reasons for supporting the Serbs, as they preferred a strong Serbia either to a rump federation or to a number of new states with uncertain sympathies towards Greek economic interests in the area. In the wake of the crisis over the Republic of Macedonia's name, this preferrence for a strong Serbia increased substantially, and the Greek media supported it wholeheartedly. The reasons for Greek sympathy towards Slobodan Milošević and the Bosnian Serbs were, therefore, largely a reflection of political circumstances rather than a product of

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[776] Tassos Telloglou, 'Εμείς Είμαστε Δυτικοί;: Για Ένα Παλιό Ερώτημα Απαιτούνται Νέες Απαντήσεις μετά το 1989', *Kathimerini* (20 May 1992), p. 9.

common Orthodox links or/and historical friendship. The latter were of course used as an 'added bonus', but they were side effects and not the main reasons for the Greek public's drive towards the Serbs.

For the British public, it was the Serb detention camps that first directed attention towards Bosnia. In sharp contrast, the camps did not preoccupy the Greek public, which only really became concerned about what was happening in Bosnia when NATO decided to intervene militarily. This catapulted the Greek public's sympathy for the Bosnian Serbs, and reinforced a climate of anti-Westernism that had emerged previously during the row over the Republic of Macedonia's name. The Greek press reported the war in such a manner that it was presented almost as a war between the Bosnian Serbs and the USA, rather than a war within Yugoslavia into which the West was forced to intervene. As Christos Rozakis pointed out, what the Greeks failed to understand was that Western politicians were fully aware that the Serbs were not the only ones committing crimes. Their actions were not undertaken in order to ascribe justice, but rather in order to eliminate the main source of violence.[777] The same pattern emerged with the case of Kosovo a few years later, as it will be demonstrated in chapter 5.

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[777] Rozakis, 'Η Κρίση στη Γιουγκοσλαβία', p. 63.

CHAPTER 5

THE KOSOVO WAR

INTRODUCTION

The Kosovo war was the last of the Yugoslav wars to break out during the 1990s. It also, in a way, marked the end of - or at least a halt in - violent ethnic conflict on the Balkan Peninsula. And yet, when compared with the other conflicts, the Kosovo case shows certain fundamental differences. In the cases of Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the wars were between people who wished to break away from the federation and the Serbs (or a Serb-dominated rump federation, to be more precise). But the Kosovo war was between the Serbs and the West.

Following the pattern of the previous chapters, chapter 5 will examine the reaction of the British and the Greek press to the war in Kosovo between Serbia and NATO. But before doing so it is necessary not only to review the main events associated with the war, but also to explain why Kosovo was so important to the Serbs, who seemed at times to be almost obsessed with the territory. In order to do this, the chapter will begin with a short discussion designed to illuminate why Kosovo has such an important place within Serb national mythology. It will continue with an overview of the events that resulted in Western intervention in 1999, and then examine the coverage of the war by selected British and Greek newspapers. Although its focus will be, as in previous chapters, on the press, the chapter includes a section on the television coverage of the Kosovo war in Britain, as it was often the television images that fuelled the discussion over the Kosovo war in British newspapers. It will also examine the 'ethical foreign policy doctrine' that Tony Blair's government used in order to justify the need for NATO to become involved in Kosovo. The reason for this is that the notion of an 'ethical foreign policy' greatly influenced the discussion for and against military intervention in the British newspapers. This intervention debate is particularly important, since the Kosovo war represented a fundamental parting of the ways for British and Greek newspapers, even stronger than the one presented in chapter 4 over the Bosnian War. Because of its importance, I have replaced in this chapter the *Sunday Times* with the *Independent on Sunday*, in order to give voice to a British newspaper that strongly opposed the Western involvement in Kosovo and, subsequently, the ethical foreign policy doctrine of the Blair Government.

Kosovo and Serb national myths

In the Serbian imagination, the area of Kosovo has traditionally formed a heartland with an almost sacred character, bound up with the Serbian heroic last stand against the advancing Ottomans in 1389 which, according to popular mythology, led to the end of the mediaeval Serb empire. This interpretation is over-simplified, as it is widely accepted by historians that the Serb empire started to decline after Stefan Dušan's death in 1355, and by the time of the battle it had been reduced to little more than a series of semi-independent principalities loosely tied together. And yet, in the popular imagination, this battle became a kind of talisman of national identity.[778]

This talismanic status prompts the question of how the Serbs managed to be reduced to a national minority in an area so important for them, which leads to a further deep-rooted national myth, known as *Velika Seoba* (The Great Migration). According to this myth, in 1689, during a war between the Ottomans and the Habsburgs, the Austrian army occupied Kosovo and was welcomed by the local population. The Austrians, though, proved incapable of maintaining control of the area, and soon the Ottomans returned, and committed a large-scale massacre that forced the Serbs to flee in their thousands. The vacuum that was created was then filled by Albanians, thereby altering once and for all the demography of the region. Western historians have been cautious in accepting such an interpretation. On the one hand, it seems that the Serbs did indeed flee in large numbers, something that perhaps can be attributed to the Ottoman policies of intimidation. But, on the other hand, the number of the fleeing Serbs was not as large as some Serb historians claim. Moreover, it was not in the interests of the Ottoman administration to allow the depopulation of an area under their control, while to repopulate it with Albanians would not be a solution, since the latter - as Muslims - were excluded from a number of taxes.[779]

One way or another, when the Serbs re-conquered Kosovo in 1912 during the First Balkan War, they found their historic heartland densely populated by Albanians. In the West, the belief that the Serbs would introduce a higher civilisation in the area

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[778] For a concise statement of the role of Kosovo in Serbian thought, see Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998).
[779] For more see Linda T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire 1560-1660* (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1996).

masked the atrocities that they committed against the Albanians.[780] The atrocities did not, though, escape the attention of a young Leon Trotsky, then correspodent for the Ukrainian newspaper *Kievskaia Mysl*, who reported that the Serbs 'in their national endeavour to correct data in the ethnographical statistics that are not quite favorable to them, are engaged quite simply in a systematic extermination of the Muslim population.'[781] After 1912, Kosovo's Albanian population was submitted to a systematic suppression, which ended only after the Second World War, when Tito came to power, offering Kosovo the status of an autonomous province of Serbia. While his policies towards the area were less favourable than they appear at a first glance, they were far more balanced than the policy that the federal authorities followed after his death in 1980. In 1987, Belgrade dispatched to Pristina the young and ambitious Slobodan Milošević in order to pacify the Serb demonstrators in the area. But Milošević grasped the opportunity and sided with them, exploiting the crisis for his own political goals. In 1989, as leader of Serbia, he dismantled Kosovo's autonomy, and in 1990 he initiated a programme designed to shore up the position of the Serb population in the area by, among other things, encouraging Albanians to seek employment in other parts of Yugoslavia.[782]

Overview of the events that led to Western intervention

During the conflicts in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, the Western media rarely showed any sustained attention on Kosovo, although occasional articles in the press warned that it could become a new theatre of blood. After the Dayton Accord pacified Bosnia in 1995, a period of relative calm followed, which ended in February 1998 when inter-ethnic violence erupted again in Kosovo. Belgrade responded by sending in special forces that used brutal tactics of repression. The EU and the USA, fearing the possibility of a new Bosnia, initiated a diplomatic effort which in the event proved fruitless. It not only faced the obstacle of a stubborn Milošević, but also had to

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[780] G. M. Trevelyan, 'The Serbian Army and Its Turkish Victories', *The Nation*, Vol. 13, No. 16 (19 July 1913), pp. 601-03.

[781] George Weissman and Duncan Williams (eds.), *The War Correspondence of Leon Trotsky: The Balkan Wars 1912-1913* (New York: Monad, 1980), p. 286.

[782] Malcolm, p. 346. For a concise account of the origins and implications of the Kosovo conflict see also Michael Waller, Kyril Drezov and Bulent Gokay (eds.), *Kosovo: The Politics of Delusion* (London: Frank Cass, 2001) and Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War and the Great Powers 1804 - 1999* (London: Penguin, 2001).

contend with a divided Albanian leadership (with Ibrahim Rugova and Hashim Thaci being the key figures), in which hardliners who envisaged independence and the creation of a Greater Albania were constantly gaining ground. The international community imposed sanctions on Serbia in April, hoping that this would halt Belgrade, but the situation remained explosive.

On 24 March 1999, the West decided to reinforce its stance in the diplomatic field by ordering NATO to deliver a limited show of force against the Serbs (Operation Allied Force), in the hope that this would persuade them to become more flexible at the negotiating table. Russia called for an immediate end to NATO's action, but in the UN Security Council its proposal was defeated by 12 votes to 3. But what started as a brief bombing campaign soon developed into a full-scale war, forcing NATO to continue bombing Serb military and economic assets (bridges, oil refineries, factories, televison and radio towers, chemical industries) for a total of 11 weeks. Some 1,300,000 people were forcibly removed from their homes, and around 800,000 were pushed out of the area entirely.[783] The situation was made more complex by NATO's mistakes, such as bombing a convoy of Albanian refugees (14 April), hitting a Serb bus loaded with women and children (3 May), and bombing the Chinese embassy in Belgrade (7 May). On 27 May, an International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia indicted Milošević and four other senior Serbian officials for murder, persecution, and ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Finally, on 3 June 1999, the Serbian government and NATO reached a peace agreement. NATO halted its campaign on 10 June and the Serb units withdrew completely from Kosovo ten days later. The West presented the campaign, the cost of which was estimated at about £4.8 billion,[784] as highly successful on the grounds that it had not only succeeded in its goals, but also had cost a minimum of lives: NATO's only casualties were 2 American soldiers killed in an accident during a training mission in Albania. The same positive approach was also taken by Milošević in Belgrade, who said to his people that Serbia had defended its territory and survived, since Kosovo was still an integral part of the Serbian state.[785]

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[783] Ivo H. Daalder and Michael E. O' Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo* (Washington, D.C.: Bookings Institution Press, 2000), p. vii.

[784] Nicholas Watt and Richard Norton-Taylor, 'NATO Counts Pounds 4.8bn Price of Campaign', *Guardian* (11 June 1999), p. 4.

[785] *Guardian*, 'We Have not Given Up Kosovo' (11 June 1999), p. 5.

SECTION 5A: BRITISH PRESS REACTIONS

5.1 An ethical foreign policy

The notion of a new Western foreign policy, based on universally applied ethical values rather than national interests, was initiated during the Kosovo campaign by Tony Blair and the then Foreign Secretary Robin Cook. It subsequently became known by such names as "New Interventionism", "Military Humanism", or "the Blair doctrine". Although it was designed for the post-Cold War world order, the logic behind it reflected more deep-rooted British ideas about foreign policy. Traditionally, two different schools of thought have been in conflict in this regard. On the one hand, stands a 'realist' school based on the calculation of strict national interest. On the other, is a school which believes that Britain can use its position in the world politics in order to promote humanitarian causes. In the context of the British foreign policy we can trace this division at least as far as the case of the Bulgarian insurrection in 1876 (discussed in chapter 1), when the Conservative Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and the leader of the opposition William Gladstone presented two fundamentally different views on how the Empire should tackle the issue.

Few academic sources have examined how these two doctrines have evolved, and it is beyond the limitations of this project to attempt such a detailed presentation. Suffice to say here that more immediate problems arose from the fact that the specific policy suggested by Tony Blair had not been set down officially (there was nothing of this kind in the New Labour manifesto of 1997 for instance), and one has to reconstruct its basic structure from speeches and newspaper articles. Furthermore, apart from some Left-wing thinkers like Noam Chomsky, who have tried to counter the notion of such a policy with anti-imperialistic arguments, few academic sources deal with the implications of Tony Blair's proposals. The British government's response to the terrorist attack in New York by Al-Qaida in September 2001, and its determination in supporting the USA in the Second Gulf War, suggest that British foreign policy has shifted back to the pursuit of hard national interests.

Tony Blair in effect challenged certain features of the UN charter, which specified that no country had the right to intervene militarily in the internal affairs of another sovereign state. The main argument was that genocide and oppression, which inevitably led to massive flows of refugees, should no longer be regarded as an

internal affair. He therefore called for international co-operation to deal with such problems, advocating a new internationalism that would reduce the brutal repression of whole ethnic groups, and would seek to bring to justice those responsible for such crimes. When Operation Allied Force began, Tony Blair made (on 26 March) a nationwide broadcast to explain to the British people why Kosovo was such an important issue.[786] In this carefully constructed speech, he firstly sought to strike an emotional chord regarding the suffering of fellow human beings.[787] He then appealed to Realpolitik by arguing that Kosovo is part of Europe - 'a short sea journey from Italy, a short drive from Greece' - and argued that any failure to deal with the problem would spiral into a conflict creating hundreds of thousands of refugees. The Prime Minister ended though with a purely moral argument, calling for "a world that must know that barbarity cannot be allowed to defeat justice".

In later speeches and articles both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary changed the balance between morality and Realpolitik. As Milošević hardened his resolve, and drew NATO into a much longer campaign than initially expected, the rhetoric of the British officials concentrated more and more on the morality of the conflict. The Kosovo conflict was presented as something more than a military conflict, but rather as a battle between good and evil, civilisation and barbarity, freedom and fascism. This was evident in the triumphalist tone adopted by the British Prime Minister when the Serbs finally accepted the NATO terms in June. Blair mentioned that the war had been fought to uphold civilisation, and declared that 'good has triumphed over evil, justice has overcome barbarism and the values of civilisation have prevailed'.[788] Whilst the conflict was still raging, in an article published in the *Independent on Sunday*, Blair had defended his policy by drawing a line between the 'medieval' world of Milošević and the values of modern Europe, claiming that 'NATO has a responsibility to act to defend these values for the future'.[789] Government spokesmen also frequently drew parallels with World War II and the Nazi regime. Examples of this attitude are abundant. When, for instance, Robin Cook opened the second full-scale Commons debate on the Kosovo crisis, in

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[786] See the whole text in the *Guardian*, under the title War in Europe: "It Is Simply the Right Thing to Do" (27 March 1999), p. 4.

[787] "Old women humiliated, young men massacred, just for being Albanian, just for being there when the Serb killing machine arrived. Our fellow human beings".

[788] Quoted in Ewan McAskill, 'Sigh of Relief at No. 10', *Guardian* (11 June 1999), p. 5.

[789] Tony Blair, 'What Kind of Europe Do We Want for Our Children?', *Independent on Sunday* (30 May 1999), p. 19.

19 April, he said that the 'NATO was born out of the defeat of fascism. Fifty years later we cannot tolerate the rebirth of fascism in our continent.'[790] A few weeks later, on 5 May 1999, he signed an article in the *Guardian* entitled 'It Is Fascism That We Are Fighting',[791] in which he argued that there were two Europes competing for the soul of the continent, one based on the race ideology that blighted it under the fascists, and another that emerged fifty years ago from the shadow of the Second World War. 'The conflict between the international community and Yugoslavia', he argued, 'is the struggle between these two Europes. Which side prevails will determine what sort of continent we live in. That is why we must win.' Last but not least, in an article published in *The Times*, Blair argued that Milošević

has made the horrors our parents saw in their youth part of our lives today. By doing so, he has inspired another generation to fight, in every way, to banish his tyranny from the Europe of the next millennium. We will win - as our parents did 54 years ago.[792]

Overall, the mainstream media, argued Mark Curtis, research fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affiars, 'revealed themselves as more a part of the campaign than independent commentators'.[793] It can be argued, therefore, that the Labour government attempted to "sell" the Kosovo war to the public via the press and the electronic media by using a simplistic and easily digested moral framework, which was based on the clash between good and evil. This does not of course imply that there were no genuine humanitarian concerns among the motives of Tony Blair, Bill Clinton and their colleagues. A new crisis inside Europe, initiated once more from Belgrade, was simply worrying enough to persuade the West to act. This did not mean that the West was in favour of regime change in Serbia or of Kosovo's independence. But it means that the West was risking its own credibility in the area of the former Yugoslavia. The main characteristic of the doctrine of ethical foreign policy lies exactly in the fact that it keeps all these realpoltik concerns in the shadows and puts in their place a grandiose universal idea that can easily crumple under the weight of events. It was easy, for example, for critics to point out that while during 1998 some 500,000 people were uprooted in Angola, 550,000 in Sierra Leone, 250,000 in Congo, and 300,000 in Colombia, the needs of the Kosovar Albanians

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[790] See Mike Hume, 'Nazifying the Serbs from Bosnia to Kosovo', in *Degraded Capability: The Media and the Kosovo Crisis*, ed. By Philip Hammond and Edward S. Herman, with a foreword by Harold Pinter (London: Pluto Press, 2000), pp. 70-78.

[791] Robin Cook, 'It Is Fascism That We Are Fighting', *Guardian* (5 May 1999), p. 20.

[792] Tony Blair, 'It Will Be Peace in Our Terms', *The Times* (7 May 1999), p. 22.

[793] Mark Curtis, *Web of Deceit: Britain's Real Role in the World* (London: Vintage, 2003), p. 150.

were labelled as more important. The Defence Secretary George Robertson replied to such charges in strictly Realpolitik terms, arguing that Britain had an interest in ensuring peace in Europe but could not act as a global policeman.[794] Equally easy to criticise was also the portrait of the Serbs as the Nazis of 1999, which forced Vanora Bennett of *The Times* to argue that 'the case for intervention is not helped by exaggeration. Truth may be the first casualty of war, but a sense of proportion should not be next for the bodybag.'[795]

When Tony Blair decided to make his TV broadcast to the nation on 26 March, it was clear that he was addressing a divided Britain, confronted by a genuine dilemma between a desire to bring an end to the massacres in Kosovo and scepticism about the ability of bombing to achieve that aim.[796] Nevertheless, Tony Blair was successful and the British public opinion responded very favorably to his moral crusade. In the House of Commons, the Conservative shadow Foreign Secretary Michael Howard backed the Prime Minister, arguing that NATO's action met the requirements of a just war. The Liberal Democrat Foreign affairs spokesman Menzies Campbell said that NATO's involvement did not contravene the UN laws.[797] The only politician who broke the British political consensus over Kosovo was the Scottish National Party leader Alex Salmond, who saw this decision as an 'unpardonable folly.' Regarding the British public, the first ICM poll on the war found the public opinion satisfied, as 65% backed Blair's decisions, although it was evident that the majority had not followed the events in Kosovo carefully. The percentage dropped after the accidental bombing of a refugee convoy by NATO's smart weapons, on 14 April, but still remained high (57%) according to another ICM poll for the *Guardian*. The same level of satisfaction (57%) appeared in a MORI poll for *The Times* conducted in 23-26 April.[798] In general, support was stronger among the working class, while the middle class appeared more sceptical.

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[794] *Guardian*, 'I Say to the Left: Our Bombs Are not Making It Worse' (16 April 1999), p. 18.

[795] Vanora Bennett, 'If Our Democracy Is to Prove Itself as Sophisticated as Our Weaponry, Public Support Will Be Best Served by Honest Dialogue', *The Times* (2 April 1999), p. 24.

[796] Ewan MacAskill, 'War in Europe: Unease at the Home Front', *Guardian* (27 March 1999), p. 2.

[797] Both quoted in Jill Sherman and Mark Inglefield, 'We Had No Choice, Cook Tells MPs', *The Times* (26 March 1999), p. 9.

[798] Peter Riddell, 'Public Support for War Remains Firm', *The Times* (30 April 1999), p. 18.

5.2 Supporting intervention

After presenting the philosophy behind the British government's "ethical foreign policy" doctrine, this chapter will now move on to analyse the reaction of the British press. As Michael Ignatieff noted, the Kosovo crisis proved that the wars waged in the name of values often turn out to be more controversial than wars waged for national interests. As for the public opinion, it became more, rather than less, sceptical towards the war as it progressed.[799] On the whole, however, British newspapers maintained a pro-war line in their editorial columns, with the marked exception of the *Independent on Sunday*. But support for the war fell into two distinct types. On the one hand, there was the *Guardian*, which stood firmly by Tony Blair in controversial issues like the bypassing of the UN or the selection of Kosovo from other world crises. On the other hand, *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* supported the British military campaign whilst remaining more sceptical about Blair's moral rhetoric.

Before NATO's decision to declare war on Serbia, the *Guardian* coverage of the Kosovo crisis projected the image of an area where the ethnic tensions were continuously pushed towards a boiling point. Three days before NATO's first air strikes, the *Guardian* stated that although the EU and the USA were not yet ready for such an option, the use of military force was the only honourable course.[800] The editor of the broadsheet did not accept that British involvement in Kosovo was driven by purely humanitarian reasons. Regional stability in the unstable Balkans, the need for a vital economic reconstruction of the post-Communist Eastern Europe, the need for NATO to find a new role, even the Italian pressures regarding the flow of the Albanian refugees were also taken into consideration. But more importantly, the paper defended Tony Blair's bypassing of the United Nations, arguing that its constitution should not provide an excuse for inaction. It also defended the selection of Kosovo from amongst the world's troublespots in largely Realpolitik terms: stability in Europe, military logistics, Cold War alliances, the recent Gulf War, even capitalism, were identified as factors for such a selection. One way or another, concluded the editorial, the Kosovo challenge was a test for all the democracies.[801]

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[799] Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), p. 72.

[800] Editorial, 'The Sad Need for Force', *Guardian* (23 March 1999), p. 19.

[801] Editorial, 'Why Kosovo Matters: It's a Test for Our Generation', *Guardian* (26 March 1999), p. 21.

As a result, the *Guardian* became the target of hundreds of angry letters protesting about its pro-war line.[802] Tony Benn and Denis Healey questioned whether NATO had an alternative strategy, and if all other peaceful means had been exhausted.[803] Healey in particular painted a worst case scenario in which intervention would seriously damage Western relations with Russia and China, and would drag Italy, Turkey and Greece into the Yugoslav mayhem.[804] The *Guardian*'s columnist Jonathan Freedland dismissed this attitude, attacking such isolationism and calling on Healey and others who agreed with him to wake up to a real world.[805] Besides, asked Francis Wheen, another of the paper's columnists,

what is the alternative? Summon yet another conference at a French chateau, plead the pacifists; send in yet more jet-setting mediators, monitors and special envoys. This is, of course, precisely the policy that the international community has followed for the best part of a decade, and what do we have to show for it? Hundreds of broken ceasefires and promises, and thousands of corpses in Srebrenica, murdered under the very noses of blue -helmeted UN soldiers.[806]

The Times argued that Kosovo presented real problems that should be tackled carefully: in the diplomatic field, the consensus of Russia, France and Italy was not guaranteed; on the strategic field, there was a possibility that air raids would strengthen Milošević's position inside Serbia. But, on the other hand, the paper recognised that NATO's credibility was on the line and acknowledged that the alternative was further massacres by the Serbs.[807] While *The Times* recognised that there were countless awful conflicts across the globe, it favoured intervention in Kosovo because it was taking place in Europe's stage.[808] 'None but the completely cynical has a credible alternative to armed intervention', argued its editor, 'not to have intervened would have done far graver damage to international law than the action that is now under way'.[809] After the Prime Minister's broadcast, the paper's line echoed the comparisons of the Serb regime with the Nazis, claiming that the only difference was one of scale, and that if NATO failed the whole moral system upon

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[802] *Guardian*, 'War and Pieces: The Readers' Editor Onbalancing the Opposing Views on Yugoslavia' (15 May 1999), p. 7.
[803] See Tim Youngs, *Kosovo: The Diplomatic and Military Options*, research paper (London: House of Commons Library, 1998).
[804] Denis Healey, 'Wrong Move', *Guardian* (26 March 1999), p. 19.
[805] Jonathan Freedland, 'The Left Needs to Wake Up to the Real World', *Guardian* (26 March 1999), p. 19.
[806] Francis Wheen, 'Why We Are Right to Bomb the Serbs', *Guardian* (7 April 1999), p. 4.
[807] Editorial, 'The Brink of Bombing', *The Times* (20 March 1999), p. 23.
[808] Editorial, 'NATO and Kosovo', *The Times* (24 March 1999), p. 21.
[809] Editorial, 'War over Kosovo', *The Times* (25 March 1999), p. 25.

which the Western civilisation was constructed would be in doubt.[810] This was the turning point for a bolder line in the papers' columns in favour of intervention, which was highlighted by the view expressed on 7 May, at a time that there was much talk about a peaceful agreement with the Serbs: 'It has never been clearer that the best prospect for a peace worthy of the name is to give war a chance'.[811] From the above, it is evident that *The Times* accepted the need for intervention in Kosovo as real, but at the same time they were hesitant about approving NATO's declaration of war on Serbia, fearing international implications and the future commitment of the West in the area. However, the paper gradually adopted a more favorable line, and by early April it became openly supportive.

The *Daily Mail* was initially even more cautious than *The Times*, envisaging a grim future for NATO forces after victory, requiring vast cost, which would put a heavy new burden on Britain: 'While our hearts tell us that there is the strongest humanitarian case for helping the refugees, our heads warn us that there is a huge danger of wandering into a morass from which it will be difficult to escape.'[812] The paper's attitude softened after the Prime Minister's speech, although it remained cautious in comparison with *The Times*. 'The Mail shares the Prime Minister's revulsion for Slobodan Milošević and his murderous henchmen', we read in next day's leading article, 'if air strikes can indeed force them to stop the slaughter and sue for peace, the case for NATO's action becomes very difficult to resist. But everything hinges on that little word "if".[813] These sensible reservations soon gave way to the newspaper's usual bellicose attitude, as was evident in headlines such as: 'We are going to hit hard and fast', or 'Fire in the skies as our air power is unleashed.' As the campaign proceeded, the *Mail* stood firmly by the British troops and stopped questioning the future of Operation Allied Force. But it remained cautious overall, and was certainly alarmed by Tony Blair's vision of ethical foreign policy, noting that he was in danger of taking a step too far:

Superficially, the idea has its attractions. A new world order where dictators could be brought to justice and oppressed peoples rescued from their tormentors would undoubtedly be an advance for civilisation. But a serious attempt to turn that noble vision into enforceable reality would be both naive and full of risk. The pursuit of such a policy could inevitably plunge Britain into small wars all over the

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[810] David Hart, 'Target Milosevic', *The Times* (8 April 1999), p. 18.
[811] Editorial, 'Give War a Chance', *The Times* (7 May 1999), p. 23.
[812] Editorial, 'The Doubts and Risks as NATO Goes to War', *Daily Mail* (25 March 1999), p. 12.
[813] Editorial, 'Tony Blair Has not Allayed the Doubts', *Daily Mail* (27 March 1999), p. 12.

globe...we no longer have an Empire. We no longer arbitrate the destiny of nations. Our armed forces are small and already badly overstretched. Our allies are not as united as they might be. Mr Blair has the potential to be a truly great Prime Minister. But the thought that we should be part of some kind of world police operation, intent on imposing Western values by force, smacks of self-delusion.[814]

As the initial bombing ended in failure, with Milošević continuing to pursue his policy towards the Kosovo Albanians, scepticism arose on a variety of issues: What would happen to the new flow of refugees? How long would NATO be involved in the area? What if ground troops had to be used? Regarding the refugees, those in favor of intervention were usually in favor of welcoming as many refugees as possible. The most astonishing example of this attitude is found in the *Daily Mail*, a newspaper that throughout 1998 had carried a series of reports and leading articles attacking the tide of bogus asylum-seekers that were fleeing to Britain, threatening to trigger an immigration crisis. However, a leading article in 1 April 1999 came as a surprise to many:

Aid by itself is not enough. Many of the refugees will never be able to return to their devastated homeland. They can only hope that the nations of Europe will eventually give them permanent refuge. That is why the Mail today urges the Government to ensure that Britain takes in its fair share of these tragic people. That may seem an unusual view from a newspaper which has campaigned so long and so hard for a more robust approach to bogus asylum seekers. But this is a very different case. The Kosovars are unquestionably genuine refugees fleeing in terror. They are not, as is so often the case, economic migrants seeking simply to exploit Britain's generous welfare system. More pertinently, we have a moral obligation to these huddled masses on the borders of Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro, because NATO air strikes have certainly worsened their plight. Since we were prepared to go to war for these oppressed people, can we in all conscience shut the door on them now?[815]

Such was the surprise that, according to the *Guardian*'s columnist Roy Greenslade, some people thought that the editorial was an April Fools' Day joke.[816] But the newspaper maintained this policy to the end, often with clever headlines that aimed to trigger their readers' pride for their country, such as 'Abandon the refugees and you'll shame our country.'[817] The other newspapers that supported intervention were equally in favor of refugee-friendly measures. The *Guardian* bitterly attacked the NATO leadership for lack of preparation, stating that this showed how feckless Europe and

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[814] Editorial, 'Tony Blair and the Destiny of Nations', *Daily Mail* (23 April 1999), p. 10.
[815] Editorial, 'Why Britain Must Offer Sanctuary', *Daily Mail*, p. 10.
[816] Roy Greenslade, 'On the Press: When is a Refugee not a Refugee? Ask the Daily Mail...', *Guardian* (12 April 1999), p. 6.
[817] Lyndia Lee Potter, *Daily Mail* (7 April 1999), p. 11.

America have been in their approach to this crisis.[818] The only one who did not share this opinion regarding the refugees was John Laughland, who claimed, in an article in *The Times* in 6 May, that by 'spontaneously opening our hearts to these Kosovan refugees, we are opening our country to organised criminality.'

The refugees quickly became a vital part of the British government agenda on Kosovo. By the time this had happened, however, the media, which initially were so ready to charge to their rescue, had lost interest and barely covered the issue. This forced Tony Blair to openly accuse them, on 10 May (in a speech delivered to the annual Newspaper Society's lunch), of refugee fatigue. With a large map of Kosovo behind him, the Prime Minister listed twenty incidents of deaths and violent disposals of ordinary Albanians since March, and noted that although the government had published the map a week ago, it had made very little impact. 'Once you've reported one mass rape, the next one's not so newsworthy', the Prime Minister said. The *Daily Mail* dismissed Blair's arguments saying that they only reflected the NATO's frustration in the field of propaganda war. The *Guardian*'s editor wondered how a journalist could engage the reader/viewer day after day in a story horrific but relatively unchanging, or how important were factors like rarity or surprise in the formulation of the news agenda.[819] Apart from the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mail*, however, the rest of the British media barely reported the Prime Minister's speech.

Among those in favour of the campaign, there was unanimous support for the prospect of a long war and the possibility of the use of ground troops, even if this meant the certainty of casualties. There were of course criticisms, and it is true that the government helped those voices to be raised. As Robin Cook had publicly stated, at the time of the first bombings, there were no circumstances in which Britain would put in ground troops. Later, however, Cook admitted, in a BBC Radio 5 interview on 6 April, that the statement had been a mistake. Both *The Times* and the *Guardian* were ready to accept such a possibility, on the grounds that failure or a rather humiliating deal with the Serbs that would easily break down in the future were not acceptable alternatives. Even the *Daily Mail*, which is usually negative concerning the prospect of British ground troops dispatched to far-off places (see for example its

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[818] Editorial, 'The Human Cost', *Guardian* (31 March 1999), p. 17.
[819] Editorial, 'War of the Words: Blair has a Point when He Accuses the Media of Refugee Fatigue', *Guardian* (12 May 1999), p. 15.

attitude in the chapter about the Bosnian War), admitted that while such an operation would be appallingly costly both in lives and money, it was the only option left.[820]

The situation for those in favour of the intervention became less tenable following the mistakes of NATO's so-called smart bombs, which often killed ordinary civilians, especially people they were supposed to protect. Tony Blair angrily rebutted charges that the allies were to blame for the bloodshed. The *Guardian* stood firmly by his side:

The pictures are appalling, all the more so because the victims are the very people Nato is bent on saving. Confusion persists...What happened on Wednesday does not alter the fundamental facts of this war. If the case was right before, it's still right now. There is no easy way to make the point without sounding callous, but no war comes without risk.[821]

The *Guardian*'s attitude is typical of the stand that the three newspapers which supported intervention held towards all NATO mistakes. Even when NATO hit the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, *The Times* labelled the accident as 'unfortunate', but noted that Beijing had opposed NATO's intervention from the start, with an intensity that made Moscow's concerns seem 'relatively modest'.[822] The only serious challenge came with NATO's decision to hit the Serb national TV station in Belgrade on 23 April. The hit caused a temporary rift among the NATO members, as Italy immediately condemned the action. Tony Blair took the defensive, replying that television stations were part of the apparatus and power of Milošević, and that NATO was entirely justified in damaging such targets.[823] His view, however, did not find much support among British journalists. There were voices who started wondering if, by applying the same logic, the much-discussed Libya-initiated bombing of PanAm 103 in 1988 was legitimate if its aim was to deter countries like the USA and the UK from acts like shooting down an Iranian Airbus (July 1988) or bombing Gaddafi's residence in Tripoli (1986). Even the strongly supportive *Guardian* expressed the worry that maybe the air campaign was running out of targets and there had been an 'irresponsible rush' to find new ones.[824] The whole thing, however, proved short-lived and was quickly forgotten.

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[820] Editorial, 'The Stark Choice Now Facing NATO', *Daily Mail* (22 April 1999), p. 10.

[821] Editorial, 'The Moment NATO Feared', *Guardian* (16 April 1999), p. 19.

[822] Editorial, 'Britain's Burden', *The Times* (10 May 1999), p. 21.

[823] Quoted in Alex Brummer, Martin Kettle and Martin Walker, 'Cracks in NATO Unity', *Guardian* (24 April 1999), p. 1.

[824] Editorial, 'Right to Reject the Serb Offer; Wrong to Target TV and Power Stations', *Guardian* (24 April 1999), p. 19.

5.3 Opposing intervention

As was the case in the previous three Yugoslav wars, opposition to British armed intervention was not united. In general, it is possible to see three distinct arguments, which reached the same conclusion, but from different premises and via different logics. Some of the arguments came from the Left, where there has always been a strong tradition of pacifism; others came from Liberal circles, and were not opposed to armed solution in principle, but disagreed with the logic and the steps of this particular intervention. There was also the argument (often used by those on the right) that Britain had no reason to spend money and send troops to far-off regions where no national interest was at stake - especially in the Balkans with their tradition of quasi-medieval feuds.

One common feature of the anti-interventionists was the rejection of Tony Blair's new moral order, along with a firm support for the role played by the United Nations. This was a serious argument, not easily dismissed. NATO followed its own course of action in the Kosovo war, bypassing the UN, since the Russian government and the Chinese government would have used their veto to block such a decision. This would of course have left the Kosovo Albanians at the mercy of their persecutors (an unacceptable option for the supporters of intervention). On the other hand, it was true that without UN approval, NATO was 'behaving like the sheriff in the OK Coral', as General Sir Michael Rose, fresh from the Bosnian experience, noted in *The Times*.[825] According to the principles of international diplomacy, the rump Yugoslavia was still a sovereign state, of which Kosovo was a province. Since the UN had not recognised Kosovo as an independent state, what was happening there was technically a domestic Yugoslav affair. Although it was legitimate for the West to use its diplomatic and economic power in order to stop the persecutions, it had no right, according to International Law, to interfere militarily. This, of course, would save lives. But, in global terms, it meant that whenever a state or coalition of states possessed sufficient military strength, they could jointly intervene. And this, as the *Independent on Sunday* noted, would make the world a far more dangerous place,[826] a place without widely accepted rules and safeguards, where every action could create a potentially ominous precedent.

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[825] Sir Michael Rose, 'Bombing No Match for Moral Fervour', *The Times* (26 March 1999), p. 4.
[826] Editorial, 'Now for the Ground War', *Independent on Sunday* (6 June 1999), p. 26.

The *Independent on Sunday* was the most consistent voice warning against such a possibility - and the only widely-circulated British newspaper that opposed the war in its editorials. Whilst acknowledging the benefits which would come from confronting ethnic cleansing, the paper argued that this should be according to International Law. It also argued that the UN should take the lead in organizing international action in order to defend the defenceless, enforce justice and thwart tyranny, as Tony Blair envisaged: 'Only a genuinely neutral and virtually universal organisation can be trusted to say when. In today's world, the United Nations, with all its faults, is the only such organisation we have, and the only global guardian backed by international law.' The *Independent on Sunday* therefore maintained that the best way to support British troops in Kosovo was to bring them home.[827] The paper even accused Tony Blair later on in the war of using British servicemen to silence domestic criticism, condemning supposed elements of 'moral blackmail as well as hysteria' in his speeches.[828] The newspaper's view was shared by some columnists in other newspapers, like John Laughland, who argued in *The Times* that the Serbs' refusal to allow foreign troops on their soil was within 'the logic of a system of sovereign states, which for the past 350 years has formed the basis of Western politics, liberalism and the rule of law.[829] The distinguished historian Corelli Barnett wrote in the *Daily Mail* that 'Kosovo is legally an integral part of the sovereign state of Serbia, however thuggish the present Serbian government may be. This sovereign state has been offered a choice between a foreign army of occupation on her soil if she did sign a deal, or being bombed if she did not.[830]

Another strong argument put forward by opponents of intervention focused on an apparent inconsistency in Tony Blair's moral new order. John Pilger wrote in the *Guardian* that if Britain and the rest of the Western countries claimed to be protectors of civilisation and justice by fighting against the tyrants of this world, how could the Prime Minister justify the fact that Britain was doing nothing to stop similar disasters elsewhere across the globe? In the weeks preceding NATO's attack on Serbia, the

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[827] Editorial, 'This Is Not a Just War', *Independent on Sunday* (28 March 1999), p. 26.
[828] Editorial, 'Worse than a Mistake', *Independent on Sunday* (16 May 1999), p. 24.
[829] John Laughland, 'The War is Being Fought to Destroy the Very Principles Which Constitute the West', *The Times* (22 April 1999), p. 24.
[830] Corelli Barnett, 'Ethical Policies, a Foreign Secretary Who's too Big for his Boots, and the Ultimate in Victim TV: Kosovo's True Tragedy', *Daily Mail* (23 March 1999), p. 10.

Indonesian army, which was buying arms from Britain,[831] had massacred hundreds of civilians in the illegally occupied East Timor, in order to prevent a UN-organised referendum on independence. Turkey had for many years followed a policy very similar to that of the Serbs towards its Kurdish population, and had illegally occupied half of Cyprus. Israel was continuing its aggressive policy towards the Palestinians and the sovereign state of Lebanon in violation of a string of UN resolutions. Such a catalogue could be continued almost indefinitely. So, what credibility could there be in a policy which claimed to be based on a moral imperative, but only punished ethnic cleansing and human rights abuses by regimes that refused to toe the Western line, Seamus Milne aptly wondered in the *Guardian*'s columns?[832]

Others saw in Tony Blair's vision a powerful imperial drive. 'Two significant historical strands in national life, the military and the missionary, are still very much to the fore', Richard Gott wrote in the *Guardian*, 'and Tony Blair has clearly received a strong dose of both. We want to tell foreigners who to worship and how to behave, and we still want to use our strong right hand to smash them into submission if they disobey. That is old-fashioned imperialism resurrected.'[833] The Balkans might no longer seem too far away, but still the British knew little and cared less for the area, as Mick Hume argued in *The Times*. And that, he argued, was why New Labour's moral purpose should be understood in a domestic context, giving to Tony Blair and his government an air of morality and a sense of mission, by projecting an image of an ethical new Britain bestriding the world. In this light, New Labour had appointed itself 'saviour of civilisation, on a noble mission to re-educate the barbarians.'[834]

Finally, there were the arguments of those who believed that since Britain had no vital national interest at stake in Kosovo, it should not become involved in the region. These arguments were mainly found in the *Daily Mail*, or in the columns of Simon Jenkins in *The Times*, who had since the Bosnian War been the principal advocate of this school of thought. The pattern is familiar from the previous chapters: Why Kosovo? Why, of all the current civil wars and humanitarian horrors, is it Kosovo that now summons British troops to the colours?...I cannot find a single strategist to give me a level-headed

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[831] *Guardian*, 'A Worse Slaughter: Blair Makes Much of 'Humanitarian Values' but Sells Arms to Indonesia which Are Used Against East Timor' (1 June 1999), p. 14.
[832] Seamus Milne, 'War in Europe: And as for the Kurds?', *Guardian* (15 April 1999), p. 20.
[833] Richard Gott, 'The Drive to Intervene', *Guardian* (20 May 1999), p. 21.
[834] Mick Hume, 'The War Against the Serbs Is About Projecting a Self-Image of the Ethical New Britain Bestriding the World: It Is a Crusade', *The Times* (15 April 1999), p. 19.

outline of Britain's war aims in Yugoslavia. Everything said by Tony Blair and others in the Commons yesterday amounted to fine words and posturing,

argued Jenkins in an article that would be recycled with different words right through until the end of the conflict.[835] For Stephen Glover, Tony Blair's world vision was 'a piece of lunacy', which would transform Britain into a modern-day Sparta, a state on a permanent war footing.[836] His colleague in the *Daily Mail*, Simon Heffer, also maintained that this was a war in which no vital issue of British national security was at stake: 'Since we stopped being a world power, the purpose of our armed forces has been to maintain that security. That is not, however, why they are being asked to put their lives on the line in the Balkans.'[837] Two other columnists in the same paper pushed this line of argument even further, claiming that if the West wanted to build a lasting peace in the Balkans, it should 'have had the moral courage to stand aside as Milošević behaved like a butcher, and allow the Serbs to take over Kosovo, after all.'[838]

5.4 The television coverage

Wars are usually considered 'beneficial' for the circulation of newspapers. But the Kosovo war destroyed this old newspaper adage, and during its duration *The Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Sun*, and the *Daily Mail*, all lost readers or failed to see their circulations rise.[839] This can perhaps be explained by the lack of a ground war and its associated casualties, which reduced the readers' appetite for a more in-depth analysis than that provided by a brief daily television war bulletin. But the Kosovo war proved a difficult task for the Western TV stations too. As Desmond Christy rightly noted in the *Guardian*, Kosovo may have been on every journalist's lips, but in reality it was 'a far off place in which we have no television cameras'.[840] Television crews from NATO countries were not allowed to broadcast even from Belgrade, and had to file their reports with film from Serbian TV. Indeed, Western viewers had never watched so much Serbian TV!

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[835] Simon Jenkins, 'The Real Catastrophe', *The Times* (24 March 1999), p. 20.
[836] Stephen Glover, 'Does Blair Wants Us Permanently at War?', *Daily Mail* (13 April 1999), p. 13.
[837] Simon Heffer, 'Could This Be Blair's Big Mistake?', *Daily Mail* (27 March 1999), p. 15.
[838] Edward Heathcoat-Amory and Steve Doughty, 'Timebomb with a 600-Years Fuse', *Daily Mail* (25 March 1999), p. 6.
[839] David Lister, 'Media: Dailies Battle-Scarred in the Circulation War', *Independent* (15 June 1999), p. 11.
[840] Desmond Christy, 'Now Over to Our Man with Nothing to Say', *Guardian* (29 March 1999), p. 12.

As stated in the introduction of the present chapter, the focus of this study is on newspaper coverage of the Kosovo war. Nevertheless two important incidents related to British TV coverage of Kosovo should be considered, because the first of them was debated by the press, while the second was strangely neglected. The first is the clash between the government and the BBC over John Simpson's reports from Belgrade, and the second is a documentary entitled 'Belgrade Blitz', screened by Channel 4 on 22 May. Regarding the BBC, it seems that a clash between government officials and the network has become a kind of tradition in Britain, as in nearly every war where British troops are involved there has been at least one crisis of this kind (for example, the Falklands War in 1982). The network has a much cherished world-wide reputation for impartiality, even if, on this occasion, it sought a careful balance between appearing impartial and actually supporting the state. During the campaign, there were some decidedly curious reports, which might be perceived as mistakes - or as indirect support for the government's line on the crisis. On 22 April, for instance, the six o'clock news reported that ground troops would not be sent to Kosovo, but what Robin Cook had actually said was that 'at some point ground troops will be required in Kosovo.' Other examples coming from the BBC news include reports stating that the Serbs had 'occupied' Kosovo (late March), that looting by ethnic Albanians was expected 'rough justice' (15 June), and that Kosovo Serbs were people 'bent on mayhem and self-destruction' (17 June). Furthermore, the flight of the local Serbs was unanimously ignored by all the British media.

It is, however, equally true that BBC journalists generally take very seriously this mission of impartiality. While, for example, NATO had claimed not to have bombed civilian areas of Pristina, and that it bore no responsibility for the death of nearly 70 refugees in a convoy near Djakovica in 14 April, the BBC exposed NATO's lies in a quite embarassing way. In the same spirit, John Simpson's reports from Belgrade - although presenting the situation there in very accurate terms - alarmed the British government, as they undermined its stated view that Milošević was losing power. The government subsequently denounced through Blair's official spokesman Alastair Campbell Simpson's reports as pro-Serb. The issue reached the House of Commons, where the Conservative MP Edward Garnier confronted the Prime Minister over it. 'He's entitled to present what report he likes', answered Tony Blair, 'and we are perfectly entitled to say that these reports are provided under the guidance

and instruction of the Serbs. That is the proper way to conduct a democracy.'[841] But, as Charles Lewington, former press chief for the Conservatives noted, Simpson had done nothing more than state the obvious: that the bombing of Belgrade had hardened support for Milošević rather than weakening it,[842] something that had also been stated straight forwardly by *The Times* since late March.[843] However, *The Times* itself sided with the government on this issue, delivering a harsh criticism of John Simpson. Mark Lawson writing in the *Guardian*, on the other hand, defended John Simpson and characterised *The Times* criticism of him as 'the most deliberate political attack on the integrity of an individual journalist since Norman Tebbit's targeting of Kate Adie over her reporting of the American bombing of Libya'.[844]

Channel 4 provided extended coverage of the conflict as well. In one instance it was forced to counter the angry response of its viewers, as it challenged their stereotypes regarding the Kosovo refugees, in an incident that sheds some light on the attitudes of the general public. As Alex Thompson, working for Channel 4 News, testified, the bulletin had run an interview with a woman refugee called Nettie:

Partly, we interviewed her at length because her impeccable English, nail varnish and jewellery confounded the usual notion of how we expect our television refugees to be...Viewers called the programme accusing her of being an actress, a fake. How could a refugee have her nails varnished? She looked like a Croat, not an Albanian, complained another. It seems that the peasant-type Kosovars fleeing on tractors conform to the notion of what a refugee should be - anything closer to home is disconcerting.[845]

The network's biggest journalistic success was the above-mentioned Belgrade Blitz documentary, a video shot by a Belgrade woman called Snjezana about the way she and her friends were reacting to NATO's bombing of their country. The documentary provided a first-rate account of how the ordinary Serbs perceived the Kosovo crisis and the Western reaction. It was obvious that they did not understand why it was happening. For them, Kosovo Albanians were nothing more than a bunch of thieving criminals (they live in tents anyway, said one of the persons interviewed), who were running from one border to another in order to be filmed by the BBC and be presented

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[841] *The Parliamentary Debates: House of Commons*, Vol. 329, 13 April 1999 - 23 April 1999 (London: HMSO, 1999), pp. 901-2.

[842] Quoted in 'In Times of War, Should the BBC Support the Allied Cause?', *Guardian* (17 April 1999), p. 2.

[843] Editorial, 'Facts on the Ground', *The Times* (30 March 1999), p. 19. See also Tom Walker, 'Sorry - We Didn't Know the Plane Was Invincible', *The Times* (29 March 1999), p. 2.

[844] Mark Lawson, 'War in Europe: Stopping Simpson', *Guardian* (17 April 1999), p. 20.

[845] *Guardian*, 'The Truth War' (12 April 1999), p. 6.

as refugees. Under no circumstances would they believe that what has been done to Kosovo was anything like as bad as the rest of the world was claiming. While the documentary was quite thought-provoking and presented another side to the war, there was virtually no reference to it in the newspaper pages. Unlike John Simpson's report, which was mentioned and debated, the Channel 4 documentary was strangely neglected by the British press, perhaps due to the fact that the BBC has a very different role and status than Channel 4.

The Kosovo war was controversial, and although it undoubtly ended the persecution of the Kosovo Albanians and saved numerous lives, it left a lot of questions unanswered. NATO had found a new role in the post-Communist world, but at the expense of the UN; Kosovo regained its autonomy, but it was only US pressure that blocked the popular demand for independence; Serbia remained a politically alienated and unreconstructed society, and, although Slobodan Milošević was finally arrested and put on trial in the Hague, the Serbian political landscape remains grim, as it is still dominated by nationalistic politics. But this really did not concern the British media. Kosovo, like Bosnia before it, disappeared from the public consciousness and was restored as a far-away place about which most people know nothing.

SECTION 5B: GREEK PRESS REACTIONS

5.5 The unanimous stand against the war

Whilst in Britain the ethical foreign policy doctrine declared by Tony Blair persuaded a majority of the public to maintain a pro-war attitude during the Kosovo conflict, Greek opinion followed a completely different path, backing the Serbs and condemning the war as nothing more than a brutal imperialistic act on the part of the USA. The Kosovo war was a watershed for Greek interest in the events in Yugoslavia. From passive spectators with virtually no interest at all (Slovenia-Croatia), the still largely uninterested Greeks started to sympathise with the Serbs during the Bosnian conflict, before finally and definitely backing Serbia's side in Kosovo. In the Greek case, there was no debate and no newspapers took NATO's side. The few, isolated, voices that dared to support Western actions and explain to the layperson what had been happening in their neighbourhood since the start of the 1990s were vilified as stupid or, even worse, as traitors and paid employees of foreign

interests. Examples of this attitude are the cases of the former Conservative minister Andreas Andrianopoulos and journalist Richardos Someritis, about whom the newspaper *Rizospastis* (organ of the Greek Communist Party) wrote (14 April) that he was possibly an American agent.

The following discussion will start by presenting the arguments against the NATO action used by the selected Greek newspapers. It will then focus on the image of the Serbian and Albanian sides presented in the Greek press as well as on the way in which the newspapers responded to the actions of the Greek government. It will conclude with a closer look at those anti-war arguments that used a strong anti-American rhetoric. This will make it possible both to examine if those arguments were just anti-American or more widely anti-Western, and to investigate if they did represent a general tendency, or were rather minority views, which happened to gain widespread publicity because of the intervention in Kosovo.

Despite their different positions on the political spectrum, the Greek newspapers chosen for this study presented a common line of argument during the Kosovo war, which was based on two essential features: that the humanitarian rhetoric of the American and British leadership in favour of the campaign was an elaborate political lie, and that the war was in reality an American operation, into which the rest of Europe had been foolishly dragged against its long-term interests. Initially, both the Social-Democrat *Eleftherotypia* and the Liberal-Conservative *Kathimerini* treated the Western threats against Serbia as nothing more than harsh rhetoric used for diplomatic purposes, and were inclined to leave Kosovo's coverage to the foreign news agency dispatches. As the *Kathimerini*'s columnist Giorgos Kapopoulos wrote, 'an agreement between Washington and Belgrade appears to be the necessary prerequisite for stability in Kosovo and for the fortification of American interests in the Balkans'.[846] When NATO did indeed deliver the first strike, the *Eleftherotypia* and its Sunday edition reacted with a sense of shock and anger and condemned the use of force. For both newspapers, the American disregard of UN regulations opened up a new era of uncertainty, while the failure of the EU to solve a European political problem without American help was a serious blow against its very concept.[847] The *Kathimerini* remained faithful to its view on Kosovo that it had

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[846] Giorgos Kapopoulos, 'Βαλκανική Περιπλοκή', *Kathimerini* (18 March 1999), p. 4.
[847] Editorial, 'Η Ταπείνωση της Ε. Ε.', *Eleftherotypia* (26 March 1999), p. 8. See also the editorial 'Παίγνιο των ΗΠΑ η Ευρώπη', *Kyriakatiki Eleftgherotypia* (10 April 1999), p. 14.

expressed since the days of the Bosnian War, i.e. that any form of international pressure or intervention in an area belonging to Serbia would represent a serious destabilising precedent for any European country with minority problems.[848] It therefore argued in a similar way to the *Eleftherotypia* that the decision for military action had been taken by NATO and not by the UN, which meant that it was the USA that took the initiative and then imposed it on its allies.[849] Additionally it commented that the EU should have been able to manage the crisis on its own and provide a political solution to the Kosovo problem.[850] As for the populist Right-wing *Apogevmatini*, it saw the intervention as an American plan intended to transform the Balkan Peninsula into a region of weak and dependent statelets, which could then be used in any way that the superpower judged as useful for its own interests.[851] This view was in accordance with the analysis of some of the *Eleftherotypia*'s left-wing columnists,[852] but it also appeared in the comments of the *Kathimerini*'s correspondent Stavros Lygeros.[853]

All the newspapers under discussion kept to their anti-war line firmly until the end of the war, and they used (apart from the *Kathimerini*) extremely harsh language against Bill Clinton and the EU leadership. Clinton, for example, was labelled in the pages of the *Eleftherotypia* and the *Apogevmatini* as 'Hitler 1999' and as a 'sad and immoral saxophonist'.[854] Tony Blair was portrayed as a bellicose warlord and as a foppish and incapable politician who, together with the rest of NATO's leaders, should be tried at a new Nuremberg.[855] The broadsheets were also keen to exploit any deadly NATO mistake with melodramatic front-pages and aggressive editorials,[856] in order to question the humanitarian character of the NATO mission. The *Eleftherotypia* in particular denied that such incidents were really mistakes, and

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[848] Editorial, 'Η Τελευταία Ευκαιρία', *Kathimerini* (10 February 1993), p. 9.

[849] Editorial, 'Η Στάση των «Μεγάλων»', *Eleftherotypia* (25 March 1999), p. 8.

[850] Editorial, 'Η Ευθύνη της Ε. Ε.', *Eleftherotypia* (31 March 1999), p. 8.

[851] Editorial, 'Άμεσος Κίνδυνος για Γενίκευση της Ανάφλεξης', *Apogevmatini* (24 March 1999), p. 2.

[852] Takis Fotopoulos, 'Η Εγκληματική Ευρωπαϊκή Κεντρο-«Αριστερά»', *Eleftherotypia* (27 March 1999), p. 9.

[853] Stavros Lygeros, 'Τα Κίνητρα των ΗΠΑ', *Kathimerini* (2 April 1999), p. 4.

[854] See '1941 Χίτλερ 1999 Κλίντον', *Eleftherotypia*, 31 March 1999, p. 1 and G. Velahoutakos, 'Τα Ανθρωπάκια δεν Μπορούν να Σκεφθούν!', *Apogevmatini* (27 March 1999), p. 6.

[855] See Editorial, 'Οι «Δίκαιοι»', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (15 April 1999), p. 14 and Editorial, 'Τους Αξίζει Νέα Νυρεμβέργη', *Apogevmatini* (16 April 1999), p. 2.

[856] See for example 'Οι «Ανθρωπιστές»', *Eleftherotypia* (9 April 1999), p. 8, 'Τόση Δουλικότητα;', *Eleftherotypia* (21 May 1999), p. 1, 'Κτηνωδία - Συζητούν για Λύση, Δολοφονούν και Αρρώστους!', *Eleftherotypia* (8 May 1999), p. 1, or 'Κτηνώδες Χτύπημα Κομμάτιασε Αθώα Γυναικόπαιδα', *Apogevmatini* (15 April 1999), p. 1.

referred to them as 'allegedly erroneous crimes against civilians'.[857] Of all the NATO mistakes, the strike against the Chinese embassy in Belgrade received the greatest publicity in Greece. The *Eleftherotypia* labelled it as a 'suspicious mistake' and saw it as an attempt to undermine the Russian peace initiative.[858] Its columnist Victor Netas emphasised the Chinese threat to the American 'empire' and expressed the view that the strike was a deliberate test of Chinese patience.[859] All this suggests that while the Greek newspapers did a better job than the British papers in highlighting NATO errors, they also adopted an inappropriate and high tempered language and even embraced conspiracy theories about 'suspicious' mistakes. This reflected the heated political discussion about Kosovo, but it also marked the failure to present the war to the public as another episode in a continuing Yugoslav crisis. In this way, they created a hostile climate for those who were in favour of the intervention, preventing them from expressing their views freely on the conflict, and allowing their opponents to label them as people who just reproduced NATO propaganda.[860]

Perhaps the single most important issue discussed in Greece in relation to the Kosovo events was the risk of depleted uranium for the country's atmosphere. The general danger produced by the bombing of Serbian chemical factories also received some short-term publicity, mainly because of geographical proximity, although the issue soon died out.[861] The rumours about the use of weapons tipped or packed with depleted uranium in Kosovo, which since the Gulf War had been blamed for the Gulf War syndrome and also for birth defects and forms of cancer,[862] did not however die out so easily. Specialists like the President of the Greek Committee on Atomic Energy, Leonidas Kamarinopoulos, Harvard's Professor Dimitrios Trichopoulos, and the President of the Institute Democritos, I. Bartzis, gave their assurance that there was no such risk for Greece. But other scientists like S. Rapsomanikis and X. Zerefos disagreed and the newspapers (again with the *Kathimerini*'s notable exclusion) opted to support their version, which while it might not have had much supporting evidence, was nevertheless in accord with the newspapers' anti-war line. The *Eleftherotypia*

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[857] Editorial, 'Η Διεθνής των Δολοφόνων', *Eleftherotypia* (15 April 1999), p. 8.
[858] Editorial, 'Στόχος η Ειρήνη', *Eleftherotypia* (10 May 1999), p. 8. See also I. Papadopoulos, 'Χτυπούν τη Σερβία για να «Πονέσει» η Ρωσία', *Apogevmatini* (3 April 1999), p. 4.
[859] Victor Netas, 'Τα Κολεγιόπαιδα Προκαλούν Τώρα και το Πεκίνο', *Eleftherotypia* (11 May 1999), p. 9.
[860] Victor Netas, 'Παίζουν τον Πόλεμο εκ του Ασφαλούς τα Κολεγιόπαιδα', *Eleftherotypia* (20 April 1999), p. 9.
[861] Georgia Molosi, 'Η Προσφυγιά κι ο Τρόμος δεν Είναι οι Μοναδικές Επιπτώσεις στα Ζωντανά Θύματα των Επιδρομών στη Σερβία', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (4 April 1999), p. 5.
[862] See Paul Brown, 'War in Europe: Uranium Risk at War Zone', *Guardian* (13 April 1999), p. 4.

preferred merely to voice its doubt concerning the validity of the no-risk assumptions,[863] but the *Apogevmatini* argued that there was an attempt to hide the truth from the public.[864] It devoted a whole front page to the subject, arguing (without conclusive evidence) that a toxic cloud had fallen on Greece,[865] and that there was a whiff of a new Chernobyl.[866] The newspaper carried on spreading this type of inconclusive misinformation throughout the NATO campaign, and insisted that the authorities were hiding the truth.[867] The issue never received a clear and satisfactory answer from the scientific community, but in the consciousness of the vast majority of the Greek public, the rumours about atmospheric pollution by NATO's depleted uranium remained (and still remains) a well-established fact.

At this point is necessary to examine the grounds on which the Greek newspapers defended their view on Kosovo, and what proposals they made to relieve the crisis. The Greek newspapers did not openly side with the Serbs. Their main concern was the violation of International Law, a point that was brought forward by distinguished academics and members of the Supreme Court.[868] Parmenion N. Tzifras, for example, argued that the intervention violated both the UN articles which laid down that only the Security Council had the authority to command a military action in order to maintain the international peace, and the North Atlantic Treaty articles, which allowed an armed response only when a non-NATO country was about to attack a NATO member.[869] This provided the theoretical basis for the stance of the Greek press opposing the Kosovo war, seeing with horror a new world order where the USA would use its superpower position to replace the UN, imposing its own version of International Law and transforming the planet into an endless 'Wild West'. All newspapers agreed that the only acceptable course of action would be one decided in the UN, and that the West should seek to preserve the post-1945 global order, however unpleasant Milošević's actions in Kosovo were.[870] Only a few columnists

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[863] Editorial, 'Ποιός Ανθρωπισμός;', *Eleftherotypia* (6 May 1999), p. 8.

[864] Veni Papadimitriou, 'Διοξίνες Πάνω από τη Βόρεια Ελλάδα', *Apogevmatini* (21 April 1999), p. 14.

[865] *Apogevmatini*, 'Έπεσε Τοξικό Νέφος στην Ελλάδα' (22 April 1999), p. 1. See also Dimitris Koufokostas, 'Ραδιενεργά τα Όπλα του NATO', *Apogevmatini* (20 April 1999), p. 14.

[866] Editorial, 'Έγκλημα Χωρίς Ελαφρυντικά', *Apogevmatini* (9 April 1999), p. 2.

[867] See 'Αργός Θάνατος από το Νέφος του Πολέμου - Θα Θερίσει ο Καρκίνος τα Επόμενα Χρόνια', *Apogevmatini* (5 April 1999), p. 1 and 'Τοξικό Νέφος - Κουκουλώνουν την Αλήθεια', *Apogevmatini* (7 April 1999), p. 1.

[868] Kostas E. Beis, 'Όταν ο Πόλεμος Χτυπάει την Πόρτα μας', *Eleftherotypia* (7 April 1999), p. 9.

[869] Parmenion N. Tzifras, 'Πόσο Νόμιμη Είναι η Επέμβαση του NATO στην Γιουγκοσλαβία;', *Eleftherotypia* (7 April 1999), p. 9.

[870] Editorial, 'Παγκοσμιοποίηση της Παρανομίας', *Kyriakatiki Eleftherotypia* (28 March 1999), p. 14.

like Dimitris K. Papaioannou of the *Eleftherotypia* or the *Kathimerini*'s Stavros Lygeros differed from this position.[871]

The above near-unanimous opinion of the Greek press reflected a logical concern for a small and weak country dependent on the existence of certain definite safeguards, like the International Law or the UN, in order to secure its independence and borders. The Greek press did little, however, apart from protesting in a high tone. It never presented a quick and effective solution to the drama of the Kosovo Albanians, who felt they did not have the luxury to wait for a UN agreement. The logic of the Greek newspapers' was that the international community had certain priorities, which ranked higher than the unfortunate massacre of the Kosovo Albanians. Once established, this stance became nothing more than a sophisticated argument in favour of the Serbs, who throughout the conflict received much more sympathetic coverage than the Albanians.

5.6 Portraits of the Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians

The newspapers used in this study did not present a common view regarding Slobodan Milošević, who for the British and American media was of course the equivalent of a 1990s Nazi. The *Eleftherotypia* helded him responsible for the persecution of the Albanians in Kosovo, and for the acts that it labelled as ethnic cleansing.[872] Surprisingly, however, the broadsheet failed to stigmatise Nikos Konstantopoulos, the President of Synaspismos (the Greek coalition of the democratic Left), for being the only NATO politician who officially visited Serbia during the Kosovo war (6 April 1999). Konstantopoulos never mentioned anything about the brutal repression of the Albanians while he was in Belgrade. Additionally, when Milošević was indicted by the International Court for crimes against humanity, the *Eleftherotypia* spoke of 'a legal and political madness' and an 'act of unprecedented hypocrisy'.[873] There were also quite a few columnists who reacted passionately against attempts to demonise the Serbian President. For the *Kathimerini*'s Stavros Lygeros, this was a Western plot in order to disguise the fact that the NATO was

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[871] See Dimitris K. Papaioannou, Όταν ο Πόλεμος Αναπαράγει τη «Λογική» του', *Eleftherotypia* (17 April 1999), p. 9 and Stavros Lygeros, 'Η Λύση της Διχοτόμησης', *Kathimerini* (30 April 1999), p. 4.
[872] Editorial, 'Αιώνια Ντροπή', *Eleftherotypia* (16 April 1999), p. 8.
[873] Editorial, 'Παράπλευρη Δίκη', *Eleftherotypia* (28 May 1999), p. 8.

solving a historical crisis between Serbs and Albanians in favour of the latter,[874] while the *Apogevmatini*'s G. Velahoutakos argued that the Greek Prime Minister and his Foreign Minister should be forever ashamed for placing their signature in a text naming Milošević as a 'murderer'.[875] The *Eleftherotypia*'s George Karelas and Kostas Nikolaou expressed the view that the NATO brutalities made the Serbian leader's actions seem less evil.

During the Kosovo campaign, the popular tendency among the Greeks was to make a clear distinction between the Serbian people and the Milošević regime. A popular chant of the demonstrators against the NATO intervention in Kosovo was 'Serbs, our little brothers, have courage; we are going to stop them'. This was an attempt to purify the Serbs, to distance them from Milošević, and to portray them as a heroic nation which, after it had reacted against its repressive government, should now fight the Americans for the control of the Serb 'sacred cradle'. Nowhere was that more evident than in an article for the *Eleftherotypia*, signed by Kostas Nikolaou, who presented the Serbs as a little boy being punched by the world champion boxer.[876] The *Kathimerini*, on the other hand, preferred to stand by the Serbs using a political argument, saying that if Serbia was to accept NATO's troops in Kosovo the area was going to break away and become independent.[877] The *Apogevmatini* noted that the 'spontaneous popular feeling towards the brotherly people of Yugoslavia was justified and must not be neglected',[878] although it, too, condemned Milošević's actions.[879] The presentation of the bipolar good Serbs-bad Milošević reflected, it would seem, a simplistic approach to the disintegration of Yugoslavia, reflecting the ignorance of the Greek press (and public) concerning the situation in their neighbourhood. Milošević had after all been elected by not-entirely-innocent Serbian voters. It also illustrates the contradictions and confusion that characterised much of the reaction against the West. Of all the journalists in the newspapers under discussion, only Stamos Zoulas of the *Kathimerini* dared to openly criticize Greek public opinion for its reaction.[880]

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[874] Stavros Lygeros, 'Ο Δαίμων και οι Ευδαίμονες', *Kathimerini* (31 March 1999), p. 4.
[875] G. Velahoutakos, 'Τα Ανθρωπάκια δε Μπορούν να Σκεφθούν!', *Apogevmatini* (27 March 1999), p. 6.
[876] Kostas Nikolaou, 'Ποιός Ταύτισε τον Φιλοσερβισμό με τον Μιλόσεβιτς;', *Eleftherotypia* (14 May 1999), p. 9.
[877] Editorial, 'Ολέθριο Λάθος', *Kathimerini* (24 March 1999), p. 2.
[878] Editorial, 'Νηφάλια Σκέψη γιατί οι Στιγμές είναι Κρίσιμες', *Apogevmatini* (5 April 1999), p. 2.
[879] Editorial, 'Δεν Εξετάζουμε την Ταυτότητα του Θύτη!', *Apogevmatini* (7 April 1999), p. 2.
[880] Stamos Zoulas, 'Περί Λαϊκού Αισθήματος', *Kathimerini* (14 April 1999), p. 4.

The Kosovo Albanians, on the other hand, did not receive much coverage or sympathy. The *Kathimerini* presented the conflict as a side effect of the insurrection that had taken place in 1997 in Albania proper, and of the uncontrollable spreading of weapons among civilians and paramilitary groups.[881] The *Eleftherotypia* presented the Kosovo Liberation Army in all its sinister dimensions, noting that the freedom fighters were in reality a corrupted mafia getting rich by selling drugs. It also referred to the KLA's connections with Osama Bin Laden's terrorist network, a fact that was already known to the head of Shik (the Albanian secret service) Fatos Klosi, as the latter said to the *Sunday Times*.[882] Nowadays, only the mention of Bin Laden's name would have been enough to condemn the KLA. Back in 1999, however, nobody paid much attention to such links. Finally, the *Apogevmatini* cynically stated that some of the expelled Albanian refugees were 'trained agent provocateurs'.[883]

5.7 The position of the Greek government

It is now time to address the issue of the stance that the Greek government kept during the war in Kosovo, a stance that came under fire from most Greek newspapers. To fully understand the difficult position of the Social-Democrat Prime Minister Kostas Simitis in developing Greece's official policy on Kosovo, one should be aware of the figures produced by opinion polls during the campaign. According to a V.PRC poll for the Social-Democrat newspaper *Ta Nea* on 17 April 1999, 96% of Greeks opposed the NATO actions, while another poll conducted in the same period by ALKO for the Right-wing newspaper *Typos tis Kyriakis* raised the percentage to 98.6%. Only 0.9% were in favour of NATO intervention, while at least 55% thought that Simitis should keep some distance from the West's decisions and had failed to do so.[884] In another V.PRC poll conducted a week later, 86.6% stated that the Greek government's decisions were being influenced by the USA.[885] In more thorough research conducted by the Department of Psychology of Panteios University, 56.3% of the sample said that Simitis should veto NATO's decision, and only 8.3% thought that he was acting

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[881] Giorgos Kapopoulos, 'Τα Σταθερά Δεδομένα', *Kathimerini* (23 March 1999), p. 4.
[882] Chris Stephen, 'Bin Laden Opens European Terror Base in Albania', *Sunday Times* (29 November 1998), p. 23
[883] G. Velahoutakos, 'Ο Πανικός Θα Οδηγήσει σε Νέα Σφάλματα', *Apogevmatini* (3 April 1999), p. 4.
[884] Editorial, 'Λαϊκή Καταδίκη των Χειρισμών της Κυβέρνησης', *Apogevmatini* (20 April 1999), p. 2.
[885] *Apogevmatini*, 'Καταδικάζουν τον Σημίτη' (28 April 1999), pp. 18-19.

correctly. In the same research, 91% sided against the attack. When asked why NATO started bombing Yugoslavia, 84.7% replied 'in order to demonstrate American power', while to the question who should be put on trial for crimes against humanity in Kosovo, 69.7% replied Bill Clinton, 35.2% Tony Blair and only 14% Slobodan Milošević. Even PA.SO.K's youth (i.e. Simitis' own party) took part in the first organised demonstrations against the war in Athens, on 26 March.

Apart from the public, Simitis had to face political opposition from the Conservative Party, as well as the Church of Greece, which had also sided with the Serbs. Although the then Conservative leader (and Prime Minister in 2005) Kostas Karamanlis gave his cautious support for the government's manoeuvres,[886] the Conservative ex-Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis said in an interview with the French newspaper *Le Figaro* that the rebellion of the Kosovo Albanians had been financed and orchestrated by the USA. The Conservative ex-Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras claimed that Greece had unthinkingly authorised destabilising actions in the Balkans, while the party's ex-Parliamentary deputy Tasos Krikelis wrote that Kosovo's separation from Serbia had been planned by those who have the power in the new world order.[887] Even the President of the Republic Kostis Stephanopoulos spoke against NATO in a speech in Larissa (16 May), and openly questioned the humanitarian character of its mission.

In the face of this unanimous reaction by the vast majority of the Greek public, Simitis kept a firm stance in support of NATO throughout the operation. He defended his actions in a television broadcast (29 March 1999), in which he declared that his first and foremost priority was Greece's national interests, noting that 'our participation in NATO offers rights, but it also means obligations...Greece is against the continuing Serbian operations in Kosovo, which should be terminated immediately'. The *Eleftherotypia* and its Sunday edition, papers with close links to the Social-Democrat Party, accepted that Greece was a small nation without the power to alter the decisions of the big powers. They nevertheless did not offer full support to the government, noting that 'despite the suffocating pressures, there is always room for peace initiatives from a country that wants to claim the role of being

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[886] For his opinion on Kosovo, see his article 'Η Μετακομμουνιστική Αναστάτωση στην Νοτιοανατολική Ευρώπη', in *Ευρωπαϊκή Ενοποίηση και Βαλκανική Πολυδιάσπαση: Ο Ρόλος της Ελλάδας*, ed. by Sotiris Ntalis (Athens: Ι. Σιδέρης, 1994), pp. 39-79.
[887] Tasos Krikelis, 'Εθνικός Κίνδυνος...Προσοχή', *Apogevmatini* (17 March 1999), p. 10.

a stabilizing force in a burning territory'.[888] The *Kathimerini* kept the same line of critical support, but the *Apogevmatini* started a full-frontal attack against Simitis and his Foreign Minister George Papandreou, consistently accusing them of humiliating Greece by shallow political decisions.[889]

5.8 Anti-Americanism and anti-Westernism

This section will analyse the arguments that appeared in the Greek newspapers during the Kosovo war and had a strong anti-American character or/and a wider anti-Western orientation. The thesis' point is that there was not only an anti-American sentiment in the Greek reactions to Kosovo war as these were reflected to the press, but also a wider anti-Western feeling. The Western accounts that at the time presented Greece as an anomaly in the Western world and as a country fuelled by Orthodox solidarity with Serbs lost sight, however, of the real sources of this anti-Westernism.[890] Their tendency was to automatically equate expressions of anti-Americanism with anti-Westernism, betraying, in this way, a superficial knowledge about Greece's affairs and mentality. After all, if this were the case, it could be argued that there was an anti-Western feeling growing in Britain, Germany or France, because of their public's opposition to American operations in Iraq in 2003, or that US foreign policy was identical to the totality of Western values and civilization. There were indeed expressions of anti-Westernism in Greece during the Kosovo war, but, as the thesis will show below, their character was very often distinct from anti-Americanism and their presence not so easily detectable at a first glance.

A close examination of the anti-American rhetoric used by the Greek press during the Kosovo campaign reveals that there was little evidence of an anti-Western orientation in Greek public opinion. The *Eleftherotypia* and its Sunday edition - newspapers with a strong pro-European profile - often attacked the US actions, but their arguments were of a political nature. They never implied that Greece should, culturally or historically, be considered as a non-Western country. Such arguments

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[888] Editorial, 'Γιατί Ξέχασε τον ΟΗΕ;', *Eleftherotypia* (6 April 1999), p. 8. See also editorial 'Να τους τα Πεί', *Eleftherotypia* (14 April 1999), p. 8.

[889] See 'Η Εθνική Ντροπή στην πιο Ένδοξη Μέρα για την Ελλάδα', *Apogevmatini* (26 March 1999), p. 2, 'Οι Ατυχείς Χειρισμοί Έστρεψαν Εναντίον μας τους Εμπλεκόμενους', *Apogevmatini* (2 April 1999), p. 2 and 'Τελευταία Ευκαιρία για την Εθνική Αξιοπρέπειά Μας', *Apogevmatini* (22 April 1999), p. 2.

[890] See for example 'Where NATO's Members Stand', *The Times* (22 April 1999), p. 20. Similar opinions were expressed in some US newspapers during that time.

did, however, make their appearance elsewhere in Greece during the Kosovo war. Excluding arguments from the Left, which were not so much anti-Western as anti-capitalist,[891] their main source was the Church of Greece. The Church, under the leadership of Archbishop Christodoulos, started an attack on globalization and Western values, calling instead for a cultural identity for modern Greeks based on Greekness and the Byzantine-Orthodox heritage. This was in accordance with ideas that Christodoulos had already expressed in the past, when he was still Bishop of Demetriada.[892]

Speaking to the church of St. Panteleeimon in Abelokipoi, Thessaloniki, on 28 March 1999, Chistodoulos ascribed the reason for NATO's intervention as Western hatred of Orthodoxy:

Because they hate the Orthodox. Because they hear Orthodox and their hair stands on end. Because we Orthodox do not easily succumb to foreign wishes.[893]

A few days later, on a visit to Evangelismos hospital (4 April 1999), the Archbishop attacked the USA by noting that its government had created a new order, masking 'illegal interests'. In another speech in Aigio a few days later he argued that this world suffers from 'Devil's agents, whose characteristic sign is the US dollar'. Additionally, on 19 April, he gave a speech to the Association of Owners of Periodic Press' meeting, where he said that the only crime of the Serbs was their Orthodox beliefs. Examples of this kind can be found in abundance, but for the purposes of our study it is more important to underline that Christodoulos presented the Greeks as having nothing to do with the evil and arrogant West. They were, by contrast, people who together with the other Orthodox nations of the Balkans, especially the Serbs, had been imbued with the values of Orthodoxy and thereby constructed different mentalities from those of the Latin West.[894]

The Archbishop has become one of the most popular personalities in contemporary Greece, although this may be less due to his views, and more a by-product of the attention paid to him by the media. His anti-Western outbursts during the Kosovo war may have reflected the views of those conservative elements of the

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[891] See for example Takis Fotopoulos, 'Μεταξύ Δυτικής Σκύλλας και Ελληνο-Ορθόδοξης Χάρυβδης', *Eleftherotypia* (5 June 1999), p. 9.

[892] See his book *Ο Τέταρτος Πυλώνας* (Athens: Κάκτος, 1997).

[893] See Vasilis Kontogouridis, 'Πυρά Χριστόδουλου κατά ΗΠΑ-Δύσης', *Apogevmatini* (29 March 1999), p. 11.

[894] See Giannis Papamihail, 'Η Βαλκανική μας Ταυτότητα και τα Νατοϊκά War Games', *Eleftherotypia* (2 April 1999), p. 9.

Greek society who were closely identified with the church, but all the evidence suggests that the majority of the Greeks followed his logic only for its anti-American elements rather than its anti-Western aspects.[895] For most of them, it was the bombing of a friendly country that counted, and not the issue of shared Orthodox religion.[896] It may indeed be interesting to examine how the historically pro-American Greek conservatives started to become passionate anti-Americans in the post-Communist world order, but such a task is beyond the limitations of this study. For the latter, the important thing is that while anti-Americanism seems to have taken hold among the majority of Greeks, and united the Left-wing supporters with their Right-wing opponents, there were only a few voices that argued for the non-Western character of Greece.

When the *Apogevmatini*'s editor wrote that 'the Christian West writes another black page in the history of its civilization',[897] it is evident that he did not consider Greece to form part of it. The same thing can be said about the comments of its columnist K. Moshonas about the 'Westerners' giant mechanisms of mendacity'[898], or Titos Athanasiadis' comments about the 'unsettled bills' between East and the West.[899] Moreover, the *Apogevmatini*'s columnist Xrysa Tavoulari said openly that Greeks were Balkan people, and because of that could not be fooled by humanitarian operations like Western audiences, because they knew better and they remembered the lessons of history.[900] The latter view was also expressed in an editorial column in the *Kathimerini*, which made a distinction between the people of the Balkans, who had a consciousness of the history of tragedies, and Westerners who remained sublime in their ignorance and were easily manipulated by their leaderships.[901]

If arguments of this kind were concentrated in the *Apogevmatini*, a newspaper very close to Christodoulos' main target group, i.e. the less-educated conservative elements of the Greek society, it would be reasonable to suggest that the anti-Western feelings were isolated among a minority among the traditional supporters of the

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[895] Nikos Kiaos, 'Αντιαμερικανισμός Τώρα με Βάση Διευρυμένη!', *Eleftherotypia* (1 April 1999), p. 9.

[896] Editorial, 'Διπλωματίας Αφύπνιση', *Eleftherotypia* (13 April 1999), p. 8. See also Michalis Moronis, 'Η Βαρβαρότητα της Pax Americana και η Ελλάδα', *Eleftherotypia* (3 April 1999), p. 9.

[897] Editorial, 'Στα Καταφύγια δεν Υπάρχουν Ελπίδες Ανάστησης!', *Apogevmatini* (8 April 1999), p. 2.

[898] K. Moshonas, 'Κρύβουν από την Ευρώπη την Φοβερή Αιματοχυσία', *Apogevmatini* (24 April 1999), p. 7.

[899] Titos Athanasiadis, 'Το Στρατηγικό Αποτέλεσμα Βομβαρδισμών 75 Ημερών', *Apogevmatini* (7 June 1999), p. 6.

[900] Xrysa Tavoulari, 'Αρέσει δεν Αρέσει, Γνωρίζουμε', *Apogevmatini* (19 April 1999), p. 6.

[901] *Kathimerini*, 'Αντιδράσεις Γειτόνων' (20 April 1999), p. 6.

Conservative Party. The fact, however, that they appeared in an editorial in the *Kathimerini*, which had kept a pro-West profile since its foundation, and appeals to the most educated conservatives, reflects the possibility of a wider tide of anti-Westernism among modern Greek conservative sympathizers. This is a judgement that should be examined further, together with the possibility that a similar tide might exist among the lower strata of Social-Democrat voters. Such feelings were not born with the Kosovo campaign and were not created by the press. They were present at least since the Bosnian War and they were simply reflected by the press. To a certain degree, they might continue to reflect Greek frustration and anger about the issue of the name of the Republic of Macedonia or, more plausibly, the insecurities of some Greeks concerning globalization and the transformation of their society into a multi-cultural one. Whatever the reason, however, such feelings appear to be more deep-rooted than a pro-Serb reaction based on a common religion. But only further research can reveal how widespread this anti-Western element is and to which sections of modern Greek society can it be traced.

SUMMARY

The Kosovo War proved a major issue for both British and Greek public opinion, and it preoccupied the press in both countries. In Britain, it gave the Blair government an opportunity to launch its ethical foreign policy doctrine, which found almost unanimous support on the part of the newspapers. The reasons were various, with the *Guardian* adopting the Prime Minister's line and *The Times* and the *Daily Mail* being more sceptical about the latter. There was criticism of the way that NATO conducted the campaign, but there was almost unanimous support for its principles. The only major newspaper that kept a persistent anti-war stance was the *Independent on Sunday*, which protested about the way that NATO and the USA bypassed the UN, carving a dangerous new order based on supreme firepower.

In Greece the picture was completely different, as there was unanimous opposition to the war, with only some isolated voices supporting the NATO bombardments. The main logic behind this approach did not appear different from that of the *Independent on Sunday*, i.e. it focused on the long-term results of NATO intervention for international stability. On closer examination, however, the Greek

media cared for human rights only when the victims were Serbs and reacted with indifference to the drama of the Albanian majority of Kosovo. Following a pattern established in the Bosnian War, the Greek press presented again a one-sided version of what was going on in Kosovo, and gave way to an almost hysterical burst of anti-Americanism which, at certain points, had a whiff of a wider anti-Westernism. There is need for more thorough research on both anti-Americanism and/or anti-Westernism in modern Greece, which cannot be achieved within the limitations of the present thesis. It is perhaps worth mentioning as an epilogue that the only scientific account written so far in Greece on the Greek response to the Kosovo war (an ambitious book signed by well-known journalists, politicians and academics) presented a similar picture. Thirty-five of the fourty-two contributors condemned the NATO intervention, without providing (in most cases) an alternative and easily achievable way out for the persecuted Kosovo Albanians.[902]

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[902] See Sotiris Dallis (ed.), *Η Κρίση στο Κόσοβο: Η Ελλάδα, η Διεθνής Κοινότητα και τα ΜΜΕ* (Athens: Παπαζήσης, 1999).

CONCLUSION

After examining the reactions of the British and Greek press to the crisis that resulted in Yugoslavia's break-up, this brief conclusion will now review the main themes of the previous chapters. As stated in the introduction, three main themes have run through this study. The first is the existence of long-standing stereotypes about the Balkans in both Britain and Greece, with a particular focus on the role that they played in the press coverage of the events in Yugoslavia from 1991-1999. The second is the growing division between the British and Greek newspapers over their approach to the lengthy Bosnian War (1992-1995) and especially NATO's campaign in Kosovo (1999). The third theme is the conviction that the reason behind Greece's pro-Serb stance in Bosnia and Kosovo was political and had little to do with the Orthodox faith shared by both Greeks and Serbs.

The first chapter looked at the issue of stereotypes, using a variety of sources (travellers' accounts, journalistic reports, novels) to highlight how the area of the Balkans was constructed in the British and Greek imagination over a long timespan, from the mid-19th Century through to the years following the death of Tito in 1980. The stereotypes were strongly associated with negative images in both cases - but were different for Britain and Greece, reflecting their different histories. In the British case the Balkans were not even considered to form part of Europe until the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. Even after the expulsion of the Ottomans, the Balkans remained in the British mind as a non-Western area, backward and inhabited by warlike people who had an almost 'natural' inclination towards violence. Greek stereotypes, on the other hand, were more country-specific and reflected the country's foreign policy considerations towards the area. The Greeks generally perceived all their neighbours in the area to be 'barbarians', culturally inferior people that not even Christianity had managed to transform into 'civilized'. These stereotypes did evolve in response to the complex events in former Yugoslavia during the 1990s, and they continued to exercise an underlying influence on reports in the British and Greek press. Their presence was particularly strong in the reports of the *Daily Mail* in Britain and of the *Apogevmatini* in Greece. In the other newspapers studied, journalists tended to 'retreat' to stereotypes when they had no other way of explaining the situation in former Yugoslavia.

The second theme of the study, as noted above, has been that the attitude of the Greek and British press towards the crisis in former Yugoslavia began to diverge markedly in the mid-1990s. There were comparatively few differences in the

reporting on the Slovenian and Croatian crises - in both cases the Serbs were heavily criticised - whilst the Greek and British publics in any case showed little interest in developments at this stage. It was only when the Bosnian War broke out that it became possible to discern sharp differences in the way that newspapers in the two countries reported the conflict in former Yugoslavia. Whilst the British press generally took a strong anti-Serb approach during the Bosnian and Kosovan wars, the Greek press in both cases adapted a strong pro-Serb stance, especially during NATO's military involvement in Kosovo. This growing divergence formed the subject-matter of chapters 4 and 5. It should be noted here that this whole pattern casts doubts on Samuel Huntington's claim in *Clash of Civilisations* that religion necessarily helps to shape international politics in the post Cold War era. Whilst it is true that the British were habitually hostile to the Orthodox Serbs - who in Huntington's scheme are representatives of an alternative civilisation - the Greek hostility towards the Serbs during the early stages of the conflict in former Yugoslavia suggests that a shared religious identity does not necessarily lead to close political co-operation.

This last point highlights the third theme of the thesis, namely that although Orthodoxy may have played some subordinate role in helping to mobilise the support both of the Greek press and the Greek public behind the Serbs, it was far less important than the narrower question of the Republic of Macedonia's name. The dispute over the latter's name ocurred between the wars in Slovenia and Croatia and the start of the conflict in Bosnia. The issue was lightly dismissed in Britain and the rest of the West, but for the Greeks it was a subject of great importance. Indeed, it can be argued that for most Greeks it was the critical episode resulting from the break-up of Yugoslavia. Due to the complex factors analysed in chapter 3, Greece ended up feeling isolated, with its national pride injured by the actions of its Western partners and allies. It was this more than anything else that drove the Greeks to re-heat their old, and largely forgotten, friendship with Serbia, the only country in the Balkan Peninsula that seemed to understand their fears and anxieties.

This conclusion will now try to reflect on whether the press in Britain and Greece did an effective job in reporting the conflict in former Yugoslavia. There were, inevitably, clear patterns of bias in the way that the Yugoslav wars were reported in the British and Greek press. Some journalists sought to maintain their neutrality and report the conflicts without picking sides. In the British case, one can mention John Simpson, Misha Glenny, Martin Bell or Laura Silber among others. In

the Greek case the names of Takis Michas, Nikos Dimou, Yorgos Votsis or Richardos Someritis come first into mind. Such objectivity was, though, the exception rather than the rule.

During the early years of the crisis, the British press presented Slovenia as a 'plucky little nation', while showing a real interest in what was going on in Croatia only when the Serbs attacked Dubrovnik, a favourite British holiday resort on the Adriatic Sea. This, however, triggered a general sympathy for Croatia and a dislike of the Serbs living in the country, despite the fact that they had some serious grievances, as chapter 2 has argued. The British newspapers ignored also the Macedonian name issue, treating it as something that was happening in a far away country about which they cared little. Such an approach showed the extent to which the British press failed to understand the Balkans and the sensitivity that particular issues had for the inhabitants of the Peninsula. The *Guardian* was the only newspaper that showed serious interest in the matter, but it decided to blindly back the Slavomacedonians, ignoring their brand of aggressive nationalism and failing, as Mark Mazower has argued, to understand that the Greek attitude was not completely illogical and sentimental.

British press reports on the war in Bosnia also followed a line that often resulted in an oversimplified plot of 'good Muslims' vs 'bad Serbs'. The importance of stereotypes increased during the coverage of the events in Bosnia, with the *Daily Mail* writing about the 'Byzantine complexities' of the conflict, and even journalists from *The Times* and the *Guardian* attributing its origins to a typically Balkan legacy of past hatreds and ancient feuds rather than the specific political actions of the period 1990-1992. The British press also constantly overlooked some of the less pleasant aspects of the Bosnian Muslims, and gave little coverage to the suffering of the Bosnian Serbs. Moreover, the atrocities commited by the Bosnian Croats received hardly any attention. Finally, in the case of the Kosovo War, while the British press demonstrated a genuine wish to report the plight of the Kosovo Albanians, it ended up supporting an oversimplified doctrine of the 'ethical foreign policy'. The most notable exception to this attitude was the *Independent on Sunday*. Yet, even in this case, while the newspaper deconstructed effectively the ethical foreign policy dogma, it failed to answer the question of what would happen to the Kosovo Albanians if the West did not charge to their rescue.

The Greek newspapers, like their British equivalents, generally achieved a balanced coverage of the wars in Slovenia and Croatia. Most papers kept a careful distance from all belligerents, and even questioned some of the Greek government's manoeuvres that appeared to favour a quick Serb victory, designed to allow Yugoslavia to continue its existence as a Serb-led Federation. But when the problems with Macedonia emerged, the Greek press rapidly lost its sense of even-handedness. Its arguments became sentimental, even hysterical in the cases of the *Apogevmatini* and the *Makedonia*, seeking to justify Greek national myths in the broader context of recent Balkan history. Many newspapers promoted myths like the 'liberation of Macedonia'and the denial of a Slavomacedonian minority's existence in parts of northern Greece. Such myths were not only far removed from the truth, but betrayed a serious failure by the Greek press to behave rationally towards the dark pages of the country's recent history.

The Greek coverage of the Bosnian War was equally oversimplified and one-sided as the above-mentioned British coverage. In this case, however, it was the 'good Serbs' vs the 'bad Muslims'. The Greek newspapers championed the cause of the Serbs, and - together with the television coverage of the war, the Greek Orthodox Church and some sort-sighted politicians - are largely to be blamed for the public's support for Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević. In other words, as in the British case, the newspapers both reflected and created public opinion. The press did little to explain the complexity of the war's origins, failed to educate its readers about the people living in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and distorted reality by presenting Western intervention as the result of a dark conspiracy woven in the transatlantic centres of power and aimed at destroying the Serbs. The same pattern was repeated in the Kosovo War. The Greek newspapers did not show any concern for the persecution of the Kosovo Albanians, but they were deeply preoccupied with the human rights of the Serbs. A few of them presented some serious arguments about the diminishing of UN authority and its long-term results, but were unable to provide an alternative solution that would have saved the lives of the Kosovo Albanians.

Perhaps the most enduring common feature between the British and the Greek press was not their one-sided coverage or their lack of understanding of the area's complexities. It was rather their tendency to explain things on the basis of persistent and long-standing stereotypes regarding the Balkans and their inhabitants. Hence, in all the conflicts examined in this study, there were examples of British journalists

arguing about the "special nature" of the Balkans and their backward inhabitants who were inclined to violence. Equally, there were Greek commentators who took every opportunity to remind the public of the cultural superiority of the Greeks vis-à-vis the trouble-making hordes of Slavs, or of their modern-day brave struggles against jealous neighbours (mainly Bulgarians and Turks) and treacherous Western allies.

The above points paint an unfavorable picture for the journalistic coverage of Yugoslavia's collapse in Britain and in Greece. The attempts to explain the crisis in the area based on cultural perceptions of the Balkan people, together with the tendency of most British and Greek journalists to select sides among the belligerents (especially in Bosnia and Kosovo) resulted into an unbalanced coverage. The latter presented, on the whole, a limited and distorted version of the events in Yugoslavia during 1991-1999, misinforming, at the end of the day, public opinion in both EU countries.

APPENDIX: TABLES AND CHARTS

APPENDIX: TABLES & CHARTS

TABLE 1

The Balkans according to the sample of 59 students taken from the University of Ioannina. Survey by the author, April 2002

COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO PLACED THEM IN THE BALKANS
Albania	59
Bulgaria	59
Greece	59
Romania	52
Serbia	43
Croatia	31
Bosnia-Herzegovina	26
Republic of Macedonia	16
Turkey	15*
Yugoslavia	15
Montenegro	12
Slovenia	11
Moldavia	05
Walachia	05
Estonia	02
Italy	02
Balkans	01
Czech Republic	01
Czechoslovakia	01
Kosovo	01

* Seven of the fifteen students accepted that Turkey belongs to the Balkans, but only for the country's part known as 'European Turkey'

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CHART 1

DURATION IN MINUTES OF BBC'S COVERAGE OF THE TEN-DAYS WAR, 27 JUNE - 10 JULY 1991
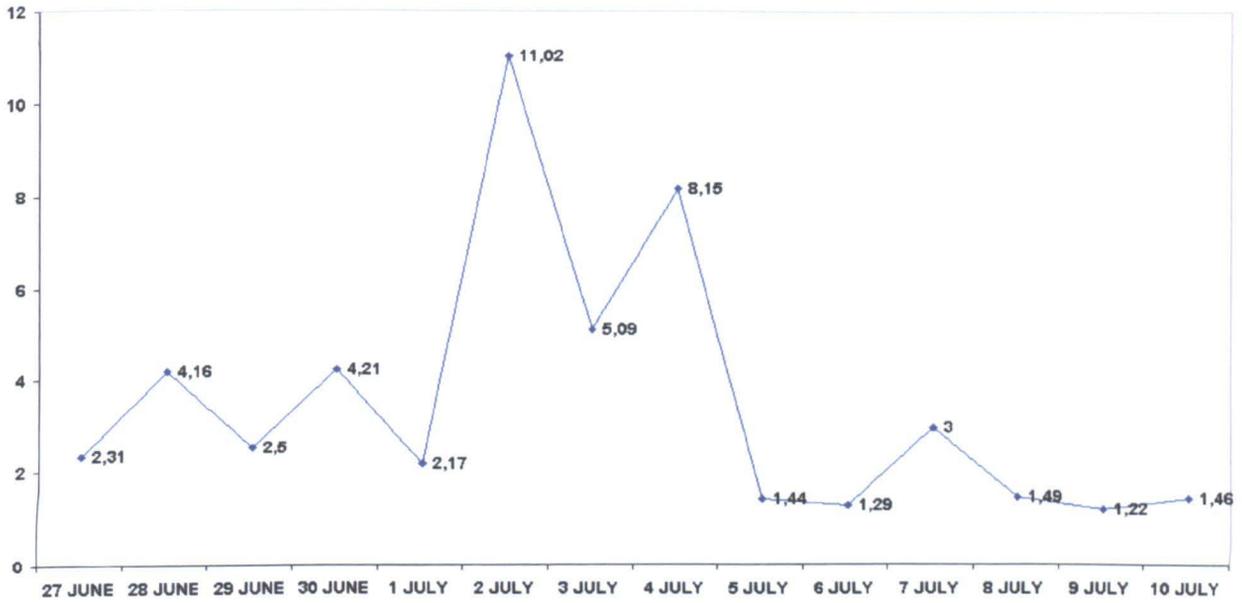
CHART 2

DURATION IN MINUTES OF BBC'S COVERAGE OF THE CROATIAN WAR, 5 JULY 1991 - 16 JANUARY 1992
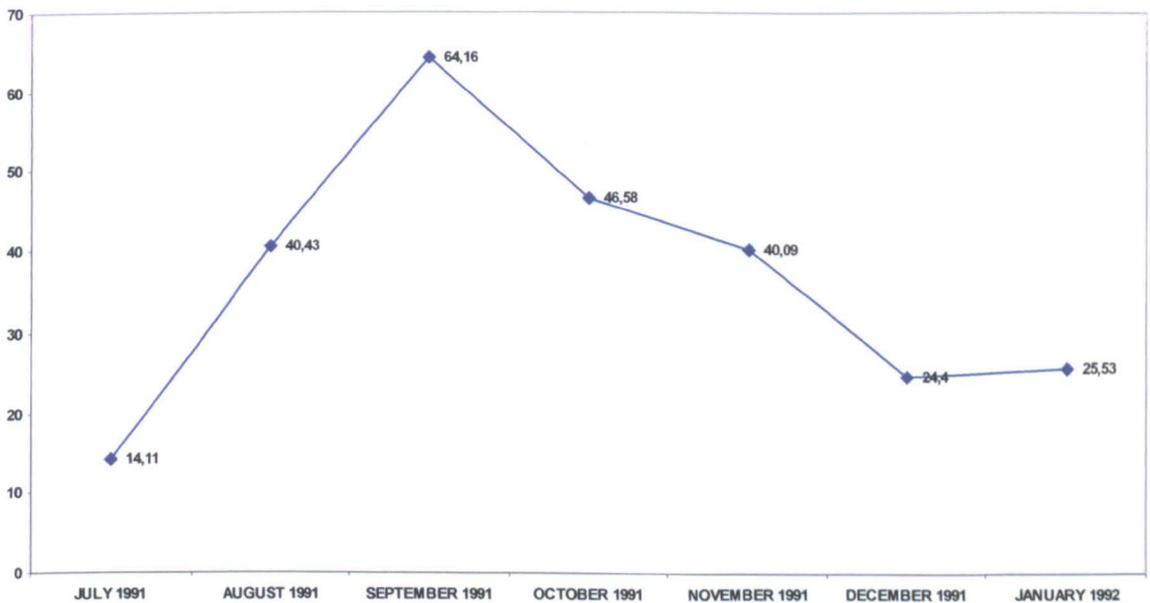
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