

Reworking the Grand Narrative

A Review of Recent Books on the Dutch Revolt

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Peter Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts & Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, New York [etc.]: Cornell University Press, 2008, XIV + 352 p., ISBN 978 0 8014 4681 8);

Oscar Gelderblom (ed.), *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, XIII + 329 p., ISBN 978 0 7546 6159 7);

S. Groenveld e.a., *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog. Opstand en consolidatie in de Nederlanden (ca. 1560-1650)* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2008, 432 p., ISBN 978 90 5730 537 5).

Reworking the Grand Narrative. A Review of Recent Books on the Dutch Revolt

This essay provides an overview of three recent works on the Dutch Revolt; Peter Arnade's *Beggars, Iconoclasts & Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, New York [etc.] 2008); S. Groenveld e.a.'s *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog* (Zutphen 2008); and Oscar Gelderblom's *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic* (Farnham 2009). The essay discusses their contributions to the evolving grand narrative of Dutch history in the world.

In a recent lively little essay, Willem Frijhoff suggests that the contemporary Dutch have found themselves in the midst of an identity crisis. This unsettling atmosphere has led educated Dutch men (and women), he argues, to look to their past for confirmation of long-held values that provide the framework for reinforcing their shaken self-conception.¹ Concurrently, the events of 9/11 in the United States challenged the insular patriotism of

1 Willem Frijhoff, 'Dutchness in Fact and Fiction', in: Joyce Goodfriend e.a. (eds.), *Going Dutch. The Dutch Presence in America, 1609-2009* (Leiden 2008) 327-328.



Dirck van Deelen, *De Beeldenstorm*, 1630.
Bron: Rijksmuseumstichting Amsterdam.

Americans and pushed them to re-imagine their own social history in light of a broader world whose presence U.S. historians are only just beginning to recognize. In both places, contemporary challenges have facilitated a reexamination of the use and scope of historical inquiry. The unfolding of the Dutch Revolt has perennially been one of the grand narratives of Western history, but that story is being retold in light of recent events and new scholarship.

A different scope

In conventional treatments of the history of modern Western Civilization, the Dutch case is often portrayed as the outlier, the exception that either proves or disproves the rule for European history as a whole. Similarly, when writing about the Revolt, historians have tended to emphasize the distinctively Dutch elements and to downplay commonalities with other political uprisings in the time period. In his recent treatment of the Dutch Revolt, Peter Arnade turns the perspective on its head, using an array of evocative primary sources to show that the Dutch borrowed from an existing toolkit of cultural representation that would have seemed familiar to most Europeans, but they fashioned those symbols, rituals, and tropes in such a way to fit the particular political circumstances they found themselves in following the death of their favorite son and ruler, Charles V. He begins and ends *Beggars, Iconoclasts and Civic Patriots* with vivid and detailed descriptions of the Joyous Entries (*Blijde Inkomsten*) of, respectively, Charles V and Alexander Farnese, the Duke of Parma. In Charles' case, the ceremony celebrated the rule of a much-beloved ruler while for Farnese it marked the end of the aspirations of religious and political independence for the southern Low Countries. Though the two differed markedly in circumstance and purpose, Arnade delineates the representational similarities in the performance of the two ceremonies, from the use of allegorical tableaux to the spanning of triumphal arches, all bedecked with figures drawn from classical antiquity.

Arnade also departs from the traditional chronological and geographical parameters of Revolt historiography. Treatments customarily begin with the onset of dissent, most often sometime in the 1560s (the Eighty Years' War is customarily dated from 1568) and then cast their sights forward to the eventual Revolt. Arnade, on the other hand, looks backward and begins the book by establishing a deeper understanding of the long-term context of that Revolt. The first chapter is devoted to identifying the various ways in which the inhabitants of the Low Countries experienced politics during the Burgundian period, including the blending of religious and political imagery, the glamorous pageantry of frequent processions, and the evocation of the elite members of the Order of the Golden Fleece. By using this period as his baseline, Arnade is able to carefully trace the subtle changes in symbolic

discourse that evolved following the ascent of the absentee ruler Philip II. Philip's weakness in the Low Countries can be at least partially attributed, Arnade argues, to his inability to control and/or embody the political message sent to his subjects.

His geographical approach avoids the usual temptation to focus attention on the province that would (eventually) become the center of the Revolt, Holland, in favor of a more ecumenical treatment of the seventeen provinces, with particular attention to those in the southern Low Countries destined to fall back under Spanish dominion. While an extensive literature on the history of the southern Low Countries exists, it is largely published in Dutch or French and so has escaped the attention of most scholars in the English-speaking world. Arnade corrects that imbalance by setting the geographical center of the early Revolt in the south and showing how the events that transpired in the South served as a bell weather for the growing crisis of political representation. Antwerp, for example, posted some of the first handbills that inaugurated a lively program of visual dissent, experienced Iconoclasm targeted against its most sacred civic spaces, saw the erection of the symbol of tyrannical Spanish authority in Alba's citadel, endured the worst of the military injustices in the form of the Spanish fury, and was one of the last of the southern cities to capitulate to Spanish authority – the last poignantly symbolized by the replacement of the statue of Brabo, a mythical figure associated with slaying dragons, with that of the Virgin Mary on the central façade of the town hall.

By conceptualizing the scope of the Revolt differently, Arnade is able to provide his most penetrating analysis of the series of events known as the Iconoclasm (*Beeldenstorm*). In two chapters sandwiched between his reading of grand political culture, he argues that the common folk who participated in the breaking of religious images were neither naïve nor indiscriminate. Rather, by reading the signs, he portrays the actions of workers such as Philips Moreel as evidence of their conscious participation in the events that surrounded them. 'The riots' Arnade says, 'were no sideshow to the great constitutional and theological debates of 1566, but their dynamic interlocutor' (93). In Ypres, for example, the rioters deliberately chose to begin on Tuindag, and by doing so 'impugned this sacred-cum-political pinnacle of the Yprian public calendar, leaving a fragile commune to pick up the pieces in their wake' (132). Motivated not simply by material or religious issues, Arnade contends, the rioters in various cities across the southern Low Countries directed their attentions at times and to places that made significant statements about the relationship between church and state. And these actions had consequences on the broader stage of events, as the arrival of Alba and the emergence of new leaders would show. Almost ironically, in this period of some of the most intense internal divisions between citizens of the Low Countries (and later between historians), Arnade embeds conflict in the framework of a unifying narrative.

The current state of scholarship

In the Netherlands itself, Dutch history benefits from the existence of a tightly-knit community of practice among scholars, both institutionally-based and independent, whose work is supported by the existence of a broad-based public interest in their own history. The existence of these multiple audiences for Dutch history is apparent in the publication of the Dutch-language text, *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog. Opstand en consolidatie in de Nederlanden (ca. 1560-1650)* (Zutphen 2008). Written by a group of scions in the field of early modern Dutch history, *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog*, is a venerable tome; oversized, weighty, and lavishly illustrated. Even in its construction, in other words, it provides a testament to the meaningful history it contains. In the first lines of the introduction, S. Groenveld characterizes the Revolt as relevant to the current state of the Netherlands. He calls this history, and perhaps by extension the book itself, a *gemeengoed*, or common property, thus reflecting its purpose as well as its intended audience. This is Dutch history for Dutch people, designed to evoke reflection on the meaning of the history presented. This is not to say that the book lacks scholarly depth. On the contrary, the book situates the events and significance of the Dutch Revolt in a nuanced and sophisticated social framework.

Collectively, the authors present a thorough yet highly readable picture of the current state of scholarship in a broad number of fields that relate to the history of the Revolt and associated events. The book eschews the kind of lengthy historiographical discussions that tend to leave non-scholars behind, but rather incorporates recent scholarship more tightly into its narrative structure. For example, the book includes discussions of the modern character of the Dutch economy, the significance of the mother trade for economic growth, the creation of a distinctive burgher culture, the influence of foreign affairs on the trajectory of Dutch history, and the influence of religions groups other than the Calvinists, all of which reflect recent debates and breakthroughs in the writing of the history of the Revolt and/or Dutch history more broadly. By opening up the grand narrative of the Revolt to new insights, the authors present a dynamic picture of both the history and the historiography of this eighty year period.

Though there is this emphasis on the dynamic qualities of the Revolt, one of the underlying and profound messages of the book is of continuity. For example, the authors argue that older medieval forms of political and social association remained prevalent even after the political changes wrought by the Revolt took effect. While these older threads do not disappear, the authors suggest that the circumstances of the Revolt allowed them to be rewoven in new ways. The chapters show in successive ways how the Dutch rid themselves, albeit slowly, unevenly, and often unintentionally, of the obstacles, from Habsburg absolutism to rigid religious policies, which had kept them from forging their own historical path. In the hands of these authors, this



HET GROOT BALET

Ghedanst door de Coninghen ende Potentaten, Vorsten ende Republicken op den Zael van 't bedroefde Christenrijk.

Coning van Frankryck, & Hertog van 't Babel.

EERSTE STANCE.

Kom Orangen sien het danfens
 'k Sie alre de zeghe-krantien
 Op ons veder hoort gheleit
 Door de wijnt van dit Balet.

2. Stance.
Cardinale en Pöbiliteten
 Sullen onse voeten ferten
 Na de Flust en Duytsche-met,
 Daer de hoete dinst op gaet.

3. Stance.
 'k Sie de Eerghenoec te winnen
 Door us' wel gherloren flinten
 Swedens Vort die Heide Guitaef,
 Sprengt sijn keuzelen brant.

4. Stance.
 En Savoy die quam leeren
 Want ick becht hem tot begheeren
 Heffen haer sin voer gheleit
 Hadt Atrop hier niet beleit.

5. Stance.
Sprengens ende hooren ghesal-erde.
 Hey! Noutjes, ick sal het waghen,
 En die Speelman los behagen
 Da ick sijngh een grooter prijs
 Als den moedighen Louwys.

6. Stance.
 Sou den Fransman mijn braverf
 Noem: ick sal hem dandon leeren
 Want ick heb ten lichte voer
 Wel met Deuzoon ghechoet.

7. Stance.
 'k Heb ghesingh een goet serrouw
 Mich heb 't demandat hooven (wen)
 Inaers vens Oedhensjck
 'k Wul dat ick de winnigh Brilck.

8. Stance.
Switthen Beyens onde leders,
 Dat en is niet selder reden
 Hoekt het die een corre floot,
 Soo en hebben wy ghezen nood.

Polen an den dinst.

10. Stance.
 'k Hadt in 't springhen laugh behagen
 Maer ick doerf het noch niet waghen
 Swedens was her die my dwongh
 Mits hy vort te moedigh sproongh.

9. Stance.
Swedens Doud.
 Hier ley in den oockstien svingers
 Dien vermaerden Koonstichten dwingers
 Die noch in sijn lichte daas
 Won een groete zeghe-krant.

11. Stance.
Coning van Bohemen.
 Ick was d'crtich wel van allen
 Schoon het quajick is bevalen
 Door ghebreck van onderhande
 Goben 't my mijn Groon en Lande.

12. Stance.
Kon-inkendburgh.
 I aer een ander vyr beginnen
 'k Sie voorn my ghezen kans te winnen
 'k Heb den dinst noch mans' gheleert
 En ick ben alre beleert.

13. Stance.
Kon-ink-Ser.
 Hult ick 't noe wat eer gheslatten
 'k Sou gevis mijn vry was baten
 Den het is nu beel gheslutt
 Tijde en Lee en Stant vooquid.

14. Stance.
Hertog van Beyeren.
 Damit die 't ipelen kan bokorot
 Icken sal dier niet na hooren
 'k Is voer mijn noch al te vreegh
 Lichtlijck voort men tijds ghenoegh.

15. Stance.
Coning van Denemarcken.
 Ick loerttoem niet mee ooghen
 Om niet meere te zijn bedroghen
 'k Was voo-der al om 't geen
 Daerom hoer ick 't ipel was een.

19. Stance.

Eleonora en Genevoys.
 Florentijn die heert voer dien
 Met den Genevoys tewedien
 Hoe hoo hart trock tot den dinst
 Doch Louys belet de lant.

14. Stance.
Luitheringhen.
 En den Luitheringhen mede
 Schrage sich tot ghewilde treide;
 Doch de thoon wie gaet wat hoogh,
 'k Is hem niet wel in 't vermoogh.

16. Stance.
Rouffous Stant.
 'k Moet op vaders voeten letten
 En daz na mijn bouren letten
 Wie ick te het beste gaet
 Daer na voegh ick oock de maat.

22. Stance.
Cerdanen.
 Wie ons 't merfse niet kan feren
 Wy oock tot sijn vooordeel speler
 Want na cracht van 't brave ghesit
 Werk om ipeetvogh 't haerg ghesleit.

17. Stance.
Kon-ink-Gaen, & Man? in Trier.
 'k Danden kan ons niet vermakten
 Groote onhey! sal ons raken
 So de Hoer die 't al regere
 Duytschlandes plighen niet en leere.

21. Stance.
Twijflockenrijde.
 Weel O Vorlent! Wee alstamen,
 Wile u voor den Hemel schamen,
 Mijn I wijk op ten die ick ghesit,
 Maecte da alles sicut en beel.

20. Stance.
Sraf dreyghden Engel.
 Hoed! O Princen lant u raed;
 Ghy wroet na u eyghen schal;
 Waarindien ghy niet loedert,
 Drecht ick Hoogher, Poff en 't Swaert.

Taer de Vrede weder groeyen,
 Wilt u met gheen tollen moeyen,
 Yeder ween met 't ghezen vermoegh
 Dat hem Godt licht toogheveoght
 Dan sal veder mensich in lullen
 Men een vol-vermoeghen rullen
 Want het woeden 't Swaert verint
 'k Gheen de Heyligh Vrede wint.

Restijer der namen van de Coninghen ende Potentaten, Vorsten ende Republicken, die alre gheprofetoren worden ende tot dit Balet ghevoert sijn.

- A De Coning van Frankryck,
- B De Prin van Orangen,
- C De Coninc van Savoyen,
- D De Coning van Hispanien,
- E De Keyser Ferdinandus,
- F De Hertog van Savoyen,
- G De Prin-Cardinale,
- H De Coning van Sardinien,
- I De Hertog van Saxonen,
- K De Coning van Polen,
- L De Coning van Danemarcken,
- M De Hertog van Luxemburg,
- N De Mark-Graef van Brandenburg,
- O De Hertog van Lotharingen,
- P De Coning van Bohemen,
- Q De Prin van Roman (Vahan den VIII),
- R De drey Ghebruycklyc Keyser-Princen,
- S De Hertog van Venetien,
- T De Hertog van Sierden,
- V Een Raedt-Her der Republick van Gynna,
- X De bestendighen Engel yeghevoert den Vrede,
- Y De Nide ghevoert met 't verghapels onder de Hoogen ende Herren,
- Z De gheschickte Republick,
- AA Zyn de Cardinalen.

▲ Het groot balet, Ghedanst door de Coninghen ende Potentaten, Vorsten ende Republicken op den Zael van 't bedroefde Christenrijk. Zinneprint op de vredesonderhandelingen van 1632-1633. Bron: Atlas van Stolk, Rotterdam.

historical trajectory is by no means assured by 1650, but readers are enjoined to draw their own lines from the past to the present.

The balance between change and continuity is reflected in the overall organization of the text. The two halves are separated at the year 1609, which marks the beginning of the Twelve Year's Truce, a largely welcome respite from the violence to which the various conflicts had turned. More incisively, the division marks a turning point in how outsiders perceived the Dutch and how the Dutch perceived themselves, as is reflected in the proverbs that make up their titles. *De kogel door de kerk?* (for the period from 1559 to 1609) roughly translates into English as 'the bullet through the church', meant to indicate that 'the die is cast'. The events that transpired pushed the residents of the seventeen provinces to make decisions and take sides, which, in turn, created new situations, new decisions, and new sides. The second half, entitled, *De bruid in de schuit* (for the period 1609 to 1650), which translates literally as 'the bride in the ship', and figuratively, as 'holding all the cards', marks a period of stabilization, consolidation, and, as the title suggests, increasing leadership both within and outside of their newly-created borders.

The two halves are then further divided into subsections. There are three sections, drawn from 1559, 1609 and 1650 respectively, that provide snapshots of the social, political, economic and religious life of the provinces at these critical junctures in history. The snapshots include quantitative and qualitative information as well as a treasure trove of illustrations, including paintings, photographs, maps, tables, and especially informative cartograms. In both form and substance, they present multi-faceted portraits, showing both triumphs and losses, paths taken and not taken, rich and poor, city dwellers and farmers, Calvinists and Catholics, theory and practice. From these sections, it is clear that the events of the Revolt did not affect all those who lived in the Netherlands equally and to hear the voices of those often excluded from the Revolt's grand narrative provides a refreshing perspective as well as a constructive one. By working across all levels at all three time periods, the authors uncover important gaps in the historical records and are able to enjoin historians to fill them. For example, the economic contributions of the Anabaptists, while clearly more significant than might previously have been believed, require further study to connect them to specific initiatives going on in the burgeoning Republic. These snapshot sections also provide a baseline for evaluating the degree and extent of change brought on by the Revolt itself.

The remaining sections of the book, sandwiched between these social portraits, emphasize the course of events and the forces of change and chance. Like Arnade, the authors choose to present the events of the Revolt in a wider tableau than simply the northwestern corner of Europe. The Thirty Years War takes center stage in several chapters and many begin and end with considerations of the how the events in the Republic influence or are influenced by European, even global affairs. Particularly noteworthy is

the inclusion of sections on the Dutch Atlantic, particularly Brazil, an aspect often left out of traditional histories of the Revolt. These chapters attest that the challenges of the Revolt provided opportunities for the residents of the seventeen provinces to work together in different, often shifting coalitions. In his conclusion, Groenveld suggests that the various stages of the Revolt allowed those who lived through them to form a kind of *monsterverbond*, a grand coalition (397). As the chapters attest, people may have supported the Revolt for various, even conflicting, reasons, the struggle against a common enemy served led to the creation of distinctive practices and processes that united these disparate interests without necessarily supporting one viewpoint over another. These processes were neither complete nor assured by 1650, but they form the basis of a working society and polity.

A thematic view

Not all approaches to the Revolt are as encompassing as the narratives of Arnade and Groenveld e.a.. *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic*, a collection of essays drawn from papers presented at a conference in Utrecht in 2003, suggests that a thematic view of the Revolt can also be constructive. Economic history has a venerable history in Netherlandic studies and the field has been a particularly productive for scholars working in many different contexts. In the case of the Netherlands, both those interested in the blossoming of the provinces of the Low Countries as its Golden Age and those interested in using history as a laboratory for the explanatory efficacy of economic theorems, have found Dutch economic history equally satisfying. The volume focuses on the seventeenth century and not the Revolt per se, though clearly the influence of the Eighty Years war on the formation of state finance looms throughout many of the essays. A notable exception is the final contribution, an interesting analysis of the role of political factions in the reworking of public finance of the Dutch state during the Revolutionary period, which will not otherwise be referenced in this essay. For those wishing to read more about the political economy of the Dutch Revolt in particular, James Tracy's recently published *The Founding of the Dutch Republic. War, Politics, and Finance in Holland 1572-1588* (Oxford 2008), is an in-depth monograph on the subject, a taste of which is provided by his contribution to the current volume.

Political economy is itself a hybrid study that marries economic and political history. As Oscar Gelderblom explains in the introduction, the collective aim of the contributors to the volume is to 'explore the interaction between political and economic developments' (2). A little over half of the essays focus on tax policies, particularly in relationship to financing the war, and the remainder cover a variety of different interactions between state and economy, including tariffs, prices, water management, loans, and

trade policies. The relationship between the two entities is complex and that complexity compounded by the decentralized nature of the Dutch state, but the contributors reveal a surprising degree of shared focus on the interface between the two. Not dissimilar to the contributors to the *Tachtigjarige Oorlog*, these contributors concentrate their efforts on practice over policy and processes over outcomes. In Milja van Tielhof's contribution, for example, she reveals the complexity of the juggling act between the income and expenses of the regional water boards that was facilitated by the steward, whose largely ad hoc practices compensated for deficiencies in the formal accounting system. The piece combines careful and intensive archival scholarship with an interesting rehabilitation of historical actors vilified by previous scholars.

The larger purpose of the contributions to the volume also reflect its hybrid quality. While Gelderblom nods his head towards present-day issues by stating that the cumulative weight of these processes led to 'the particular trajectory of the Dutch Republic' (2) he also acknowledges that understanding these processes more clearly allows for their application in other national and historical contexts. Bas van Heuvel, for example, compares the patterns of rural land holding in Holland and other regions in Europe. While the precociousness of agricultural development in Holland is generally acknowledged to be a critical factor in its later economic success, historians had not been able to agree on the exact reasons for its switch to commercial farming. Van Heuvel's comparison not only isolates the timing of the switch, but it also allows for some potential explanatory factors (peasant innovation) to be ruled out and others hitherto unconsidered (such as collateralization) to be included. Thus, his explanation both shows the origins of the modern Dutch occupational structure while at the same time demonstrating the wider applications of the Dutch example to the early modern period.

The contributions diverge, though, in their assessment, implicit or explicit, of the processes and institutions that developed in this rather tumultuous period. The economic success of the upstart Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century is undeniable but its failure to continue that level of success in later centuries is equally incontrovertible. The majority of contributors to the volume choose to view the economic decisions made in this period in a positive light, i.e. as examples of how the Dutch did it right when others did not. Marjolein 't Hart, for examples, looks at the building up of trust in credit institutions, Wantje Fritschy, the efficiency of taxation, and Maarten Prak and Jan Luiten van Zanden, the relatively high level of tax morale. A minority, however, choose to focus on ways in which the economic regime of the seventeenth century either presaged the fall from grace to come or simply utilized processes that did not result in the most favorable outcome. Richard Yntema argues that provincial tariffs led to the collapse of the Dutch brewing industry and that the touted integration of the republic's economy did not necessarily extend to all sectors.

The assessment of other contributors is not as clear cut. Erik Reinert, for example, sees both sides. On the one hand, he suggests that the perception of Dutch economic success by contemporaries provided an important, and often overlooked, engine of growth for other European economies. On the other hand, that same recipe for success led to their undoing as these other economies learned to emulate and then surpass Dutch practice. In a subtle comparison, Oscar Gelderblom acknowledges that the English did eventually surpass Dutch international trade through emulation, but he focuses on the reasons why they failed to do before 1650. Both James Tracy and Jan de Vries argue that particular economic policies caused both benefit and harm. In the case of bread prices, De Vries shows that the republic's innovative price-setting policies led to high prices for bread, especially at the expense of the 'middling sort' of consumer, but benefitted the stability, and later the income, of the state. If the authors of *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog* portray this period as one of continuity and change, the contributors to *The Political Economy of the Dutch Revolt* use a thematic approach to show related streams of convergence and divergence.

Collectively, these texts lay bear the subtle complexities of shifting cultural perceptions, social and political attitudes, and economic practices during the eighty year period from approximately 1568 to 1648. While the grand narrative of the Revolt has become increasingly refined and complex, it has also become less unified. The convergences and divergences of these texts attest to differences in the purpose and conceptualization of these eighty years. Perhaps the history of the Dutch Revolt is itself instructive here. As all three volumes discuss, the Dutch did not reach consensus by requiring a common set of values and beliefs to which all participants adhered. Rather, they created processes, both formal and informal, by which those who approaches differed could productively co-exist for a common good. If the common good in question here is the elucidation of Dutch history and its significance for the contemporary world, then it certainly seems historians could learn from the history they themselves create. ◀

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De nasleep van Somalië, Rwanda en Srebrenica: overeenkomsten en verschillen

THIJS BROCADES ZAALBERG

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The Aftermath of Somalia, Rwanda and Srebrenica: Parallels and Differences

Christ Klep has written an impressive and highly accessible thesis on the aftermath of three unsuccessful peace operations. By using a bold comparative approach and an ambitious tone of enquiry he places the traumatic Dutch Srebrenica experience in the context of two broadly similar processes of finger-pointing and evading responsibility in Canada and Belgium following their respective interventions in Somalia and Rwanda. He thus exposes many fascinating parallels, yet the historian Klep pays little attention to the differences between his case studies. This is regrettable, as this would have strengthened rather than weakened his otherwise compelling argument. The Somali case in particular differs from 'Srebrenica' and 'Rwanda', since the murders perpetrated by Canadian soldiers – horrific as they may have been – and the subsequent cover-up in no way constituted a defining moment in the collapsing international mission as a whole. Unlike the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica the death of the two Somalis was the result of a purely national Canadian failure, which helps explain why the Somalia Inquiry could identify guilty compatriots far more decisively than, for example, the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) in its Srebrenica report.

Drie ontspoorde missies onder de vlag van de Verenigde Naties (VN) in de periode 1993-1995 vormen een scharnierpunt in de turbulente geschiedenis van vredesoperaties na de Koude Oorlog. In Somalië, Rwanda en Bosnië ging het namelijk mis – volledig mis – en de drie 'middelgrote' Westerse naties Canada, België en Nederland werden nog jarenlang achtervolgd door hun bijdrage aan deze missies. Begin jaren negentig investeerden deze drie landen zwaar in vredesmissies als een middel voor hun buitenlands beleid. Dat maakte de *policy failures* of *policy fiasco's*, zoals Christ Klep de uitzendingen