The Forms of Revisionism

Historiographic knowledge aims to reconstruct events, clarify their genesis, and interpret their interconnectedness and function within a narrower or broader time frame. In considering these goals, one should differentiate between: 1) the facts chosen; 2) the way in which the events are related to each other and explained, and; 3) the different interpretations of a narrower or broader setting of an event. Every historiographic analysis takes as its point of departure a different view of social determinism which only becomes apparent in the interpretation, that is, in the endeavour to impart sense to a sequence of related events. Each step in historiographic work mentioned above is more subjective than its predecessor. Historical methodology is inductive, involving the collection of evidence, determining its nature and inter-relatedness, and finally trying to piece together a comprehensible and rational picture. All stages of a historian’s work are open to change: his choice of archival materials may be partial and his interpretation – and to an even greater degree – his synthesis may be influenced by his premise. Broadly speaking, the re-examination of a historical picture is motivated by the understandable effort to reconsider an interpretation of the past and to

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The depth and character of revisionism varies according to the extent and character of change of the various layers of historical consciousness. With regard to historical revisionism, it is necessary to distinguish between its various dimensions and social bearers, and between the different functions and manifold interests that sustain it. One should be able to tell the difference between distortion of facts and shift of emphasis, between negating and passing over or relativizing the shadows of the past, between moderate and radical revisionism.
Historical revisionism attracts the most attention on account of its different perception of massively condemned historical protagonists. At the end of the twentieth century, the weakening of criticism of Fascism in the face of revived nationalism is a relatively reliable indicator of revisionism.

Nor is language immune to revisionism. The use of political language in mastering one’s past is an important segment of the general rewriting of history. Under the influence of politics, public journalism and science are openly repudiating the terms favoured by the former regime: for instance, the term “capitalism” is giving way to “entrepreneurial society,” “exploitation” to “disregard for human rights,” “working class” to “state-building people or nation,” etc. Distancing oneself from the culture of one’s conceptual enemy by avoiding and condemning his language is a widespread linguistic-sociological phenomenon. The same is true with science. Today science and public journalism in the so-called transition countries are not only abandoning communist propaganda terms but also commonly accepted legitimate terms from the domain of Marxist thought which are otherwise not in dispute (capitalism, exploitation, class struggle, etc).

One of the characteristics of current linguistic revisionism is the disappearance of the word “comrade”; the word was not exclusively used by communists, having been a customary form of address in German social democracy following the demise of Fascism. “Comrade” was an expression of the class self-consciousness of equals. During the 1950s social democracy began using the words “lady” and “gentleman” in order to emancipate itself from this self-consciousness and “comrade” as a reminder of the
old days disappeared. A similar fate befell the enlightenment word “citizen,” introduced by the French revolution with a view to purging the country of its feudal and court etiquette; however, this form of egalitarian address soon fell out of use (it was temporarily revived by the Bolsheviks) and the feudal and court mister or “gentleman” triumphed in a linguistic-political sense over “citizen” and “comrade” at the end of the twentieth century. Linguistic revisionism is not only a symbol but also an active segment of rewriting the past.

Revisionism in Post-Socialist Regimes

Contemporary academic and state revisionism in nearly all European countries strives above all to modify the attitude to the inglorious fascist past. Because anti-Fascism is the mainstay of many ideologies intent on proving the progressive and humanistic orientation of the present regime, revisionists are trying to challenge the legitimacy of the regime by calling this content into question. Anti-communist rhetoric is used to absolve domestic quislings and fascists from past sins so that they could be projected as patriotic and anti-totalitarian forces. Since the end of the Cold War anti-fascist consonance has been replaced by almost universal anti-totalitarian unison. If European one-party Socialism is a thing of the past, anti-communism is very much alive and kicking. The German historian Wolfgang Vipermann speaks of a “necrophilic anti-Communism,” referring to a basically instrumentalized obsession with the communist past. The new regimes make a point of demonizing Socialism in order to manifest their complete break with the past, while radical revisionists-converts do the same to redeem their
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The domino-style collapse of the socialist bloc in Europe was set into motion by the party leadership of the USSR following its transformation from an anti-reform force to a generator of change (perestroika, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the decision not to intervene in Romania, etc.). In the 1980s and 1990s, the internal bearers of change in Europe included opposition groups, civic initiatives, reformed segments of communist parties and spontaneous popular movements. The nationalistic Right played a major part in this regard; it still does not think that nationalism and democracy are incompatible and looks upon Socialism as an anti-national Bolshevik conspiracy. The fall from power of communist parties gave rise to a change – however incomplete – of attitudes to the past. In Russia, for instance, the reinterpretation of the past has been stricken off the agenda without having been brought to an end.\textsuperscript{1} Critical re-examination of Soviet history reached a peak during perestroika; it was done mostly by political journalists because the archives were and still are inaccessible. The Stalin regime had been criticized before, but during perestroika the focus also shifted on Lenin and on Gorbachev himself. Following the ban on the Communist Party of the USSR revisionist work encouraged the rapid revival of various theoretical approaches in the sphere of social sciences which had undergone a period of stagnation.

former leftism. A glance at several European countries is enough to conjure up this climate.

Prопаста во домино стил на социјалистичкиот блок во Европа започна со партиското раководство на СССР, откако се трансформира од антиреформска сила до генератор на промени (перестројката, падот на Берлинскиот сид, решението за неинволвирање во Романија, итн.). Во 1980-ите и 1990-ите, внатрешните носачи на промени во Европа се состојаа од опозиционски групи, граѓански иницијативи, реформирани сегменти од комunistички партии и спонтани народни движења. Во оваа смисла, националистичката десница играше огромна улога; таа сè уште не смета дека национализмот и демократијата се некомпатибилни и го смета социјализмот за антинационален болшевистички заговор. Паѓањето од власт на комunistичките партии поттикна промена – иако само некомплетна – на односите кон минатото. Во Русија, на пример, реинтерпретацијата на минатото е исфрлена од програмата пред да биде завршена.\textsuperscript{1} Критичкото преиспитување на советската историја го достигна врвот за време на перестројката; главно беше извршено од политички новинари, поради тоа што архивите беа и сè уште се недостапни за јавноста. Сталинистичкиот режим беше критикуван и порано, но за време на перестројката вниманието беше префрлено на Ленин, па дури и на самиот Горбачов. По укинувањето на Комunistичката партија на СССР, ревизионистичката работа го поттикна брзото обновување на различни теориски пристапи во сферата на општествените науки, кои минуваа низ период на стагнација.
Revisionism in Romania pivots on a demand to rehabilitate Ion Antonescu. A heated “Antonescu debate” has been going on in Romania for ten years already, involving a peculiar combination of relativization, justification of Fascism, revisionist argumentation and anti-Semitic incidents. The revisionists assert that Antonescu was a great Romanian patriot who took Hitler’s side out of necessity in order to recover Bessarabia and who spearheaded the fight against atheistic Bolshevism. They insist that the trial of the former marshal, who ruled between September 1940 and August 1944 as Hitler’s ally and was shot in 1946, should be revised. Antonescu is hailed as “saviour of the nation” against Communism and Hungarian revisionism. Whereas radical Romanian revisionists liken Antonescu to Hitler and hail both as “authentic patriots,” the majority of historians, politicians and publicists condemn the Nazi crimes though they justify Antonescu and disassociate him from Fascism.

The ongoing public debates about Roman Dmowski in Poland, Jozef Tiso in Slovakia, Ion Antonescu in Romania, Horthy’s massacre of Jews in Hungary in 1944, the Croatian Jasenovac concentration camp (v. President Franjo Tuđman’s book and his written apology of 20 February 1994) betray a desire to repudiate one’s own culpability and prove the innocence of the domestic pro-fascist Hitler allies. Under the pretext of mastering one’s own past the new post-socialist regimes justify their nationalistic policies of reconstructing a blemish-free national tradition.
In Hungary revisionism was inspired from above but, unlike in Romania, it failed to attract wide public interest and to stimulate radical repudiation of the communist past. In Hungary the change of system did not assume the characteristics of a massive rebellion like in the GDR and Romania, or of a “palace coup” like in Czechoslovakia; it was rather the result of a compromise between the communist and neo-communist intelligentsia. The Hungarians were not highly interested in uncovering the communist past of its new politicians (like the East Germans were), nor was there any revanchism over the events of 1956. This is demonstrated by the result of an empirical study of attitudes to Socialism, that is of collective memory, carried out by the Vienna sociologist Reinprecht on a sample of 120 people of various ages in Prague and Budapest early in 1993. Drawing on the writings of the Polish historian Martin Krol, Reinprecht distinguished between three types of attitudes to the communist past: evolutive, restorative and forgetful. The Czech “velvet revolution” belongs to the restorative (the reconstruction of capitalism) and the Hungarian to the evolutive type. Whereas in the Czech Republic former communists are exposed to greater pressure and even the leaders of the Prague spring are discredited (by official ostracism), in Hungary the old party cadres are treated much more liberally. It may be that a similar difference of treatment exists between Belgrade and Zagreb (where the HDZ elite were not recruited from the ranks of communists). It goes without saying that the degree to which the past is reinterpreted depends on such circumstances. However, remnants from the old socialist era remain active notwithstanding the change; Adorno claimed in the late 1940s that the vestiges of Fascism persisted after the fall of Fascism. That the “goulash socialism” was not as widely hated in Hungary as it was in Czechoslovakia was borne out by the empirical study cited above. Younger Hungarians regard the change of system as a continuity
without the ongoing process of transition and not as a radical break with the past, an attitude attributable to their discontent and to the crisis brought on by the introduction of the multi-party system. In the Czech Republic the picture was more black-and-white. The socialist regime was condemned with some harshness in Prague whereas in Budapest even the younger generations retained a favourable impression about the former leader Janos Kadar. Judging by the press, it appears that the population of Belgrade has a more favourable attitude to Socialism, to the former Yugoslavia, and to Tito than that of Zagreb in spite of the fact that a square in Zagreb was officially renamed after Tito while Belgrade has no square to honour him. Another explanation is that, in common with Prague, the elite (who had been moulding public opinion through state propaganda) had been purged more extensively than for instance in Hungary and the FRY.
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man Catholic civilizations, a point continually made by the late Croatian president Franjo Tuđman. In Bulgaria there was at first a stormy debate about the responsibility of the communists but unlike in Romania it was soon suppressed. 8

However, the public debate on the responsibility of the State Security service was relegated to the background by acute economic crisis, blunting the population’s critical interest in their communist past. It was Czechoslovakia and the FRG that placed the strictest legal curbs on members of the former communist police forces, the first deciding in 1991 to deny access to former state security officials to the civil service and the second criminally prosecuting members of the GDR security service (Stasi). A motion to similar effect, for instance, failed to be carried in Russia. The fates of top leaders in Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary reflect the intensity with which there countries dealt with their past: Nicolae Ceausescu was executed and Todor Zhivkov tried, but Janos Kadar (who died in 1989) was not demonized. Owing to severe economic crisis and decline in living standards under nearly all post-socialist regimes the people at large were not overly inclined to demonize their communist past because it remained in their memory as a period of relative stability. This was probably why some versions of official revisionism failed to win the massive popular support on which its proponents had counted.

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Sekak, takana-r切cheniiot „дем за дим“ ревизионизам сё уште опстоjива во сите источеревопски земи, каде многу индивидуалци однovo ги пишува своите биографии во согласност со општествениот иден-титет што сакаат да го проекираат, прикажуваajки се повеёе или помалку искрено како одметници и жртви на поранешниот режим. Може да се направи паралела со Европа во 1945 год., кога неколкумина фашистички соучесници се обвинуваат себеси за пас-ивност и опортунизам. Според Рашнпратх, испи-таниците во Пragа биле далеку покритични во од-нос на своето националистичко минато и личното учењ во комунистичкиот режим, отолку наше во Унгарија. Чесите понестрипливо сакаат да го забора-ват своето минато отколку Унгарците. Фактот што младите Унгарци не се ниту премногу сомнивачи, ниту премногу се срамат од своето минато, може да ја припише на посилната посткомунистичка криза во нивната држава во однос на онаа во Репуб-лика Чешка. Додека во Прага „кадината револу-циja“ од 1989 год. се смета за раскин со минатото и нов почеток (екстерториялизирана на минатото), во Будимпешта искуството на либералниот соци-јализам не се разви во отворено или радикално осу-дување на историјата, или пак во болно соочување со сопственото минато, туку резултираше со истори-зација на сегашноста. Наргпопуларниите историски фи-гури во Прага се Томас Масарик, Јан Коменски, Карло IV и Јан Хус, а во Будимпешта графит Иставан Сечев, Крал Матијас и Лајош Кошуц; исто така, meёу познатите личности од блиското минато се вброjuваат Александар Дубчек, Имре Нaг и Јанош Кадар. Според некои испитаници, периодот за време на Кадар во 1970-ите бил златно доба. И покраj тоа, повеёемина испитаници сакаа да видат ревидира-на процена на улогата на Хорти, но не поради тоа што го сметаа за позитивна личност, туку затоа што

However, so-called day-to-day revisionism is still evi-dent in all eastern European countries, with many indi-viduals rewriting their biographies to accord with the social identity they want to project, portraying them-selves more or less sincerely as dissidents and victims of the former regime. One can draw a parallel with Eu-rope in 1945, when few of the fascist accessories blamed themselves with passivity and opportunism. According to Reinprecht, the respondents in Prague were far more critical of their national past and of their personal partic-ipation in the communist regime than those in Hunga-ry. The Czechs are more anxious to forget their past than the Hungarians are. The fact that young Hungarians are neither excessively suspicious nor ashamed of their past can be attributed to the stronger post-communist crisis in their country than in the Czech Republic. Whereas in Prague the “velvet revolution” of 1989 is regarded as a break with the past and a new beginning (an exterrito-rialization of the past), in Budapest the experience of a liberal Socialism has resulted not so much in open or radical repudiation of history or in painful confrontation with one’s own past as in a historization of the present. In Prague the most popular historical figures are Tomas Masaryk, Jan Komensky, Charles IV and Jan Hus, and in Budapest Count Istvan Szechenyi, King Matthias and Lajos Kossuth; also, among the most popular person-alities from the recent past are Alexander Dubcek, Imre Nagy and Janos Kadar. According to some respondents, the period under Kadar during the 1970s was a golden era. Nonetheless, most of them wanted to see a revised assessment of Horthy’s role not because they consider him a positive personality but because they distrusted communist propaganda. According to Vladimir Ilić’s recent survey of Serbian youth, the most popular histori-cal figures were the Kosovo myth heroes and individu-ally Josip Broz Tito, followed by Nikola Tesla, Mihajlo Pupin, Vuk Karadžić, Karadorde, etc. In common with Rein-
Revisionist work at the end of the twentieth century is under the influence of a complex and changed interplay of national and ideological forces across the world and of the diverse local interests of governing forces in some countries. Global changes have not always been interpreted in the same way by scientists belonging to diffe-
– припадници на различни политически фракции, не секогаш ги интерпретирале глобалните промени на
ист начин. Во поглед на секој ревизионизам, покрај интереоначки причини, мора да се имаат предвид интересите и мотивите на влијателните структури кои го симулираат, забрзуваат или успоруваат прегледот на сопствените сенки од минатото. Без да се сфати глобалната состојба на ревизионизмот, лесно е да се прецени оригиналноста и автономијата на овој процес во сопственото оштество.

**The Main Causes of Revisionism in Yugoslavia**

Civil war in the newly independent states of the former SFRY has highlighted with considerable clarity the effects of various versions of historical revisionism. Chauvinistic reconstruction of the past has come to be accepted as normal while manipulation within theories of totalitarianism has been taken to extremes because Socialism has additionally been demonized as a fatal historical internationalist fallacy of the Balkan peoples. The none too strong Yugoslav historical consciousness imposed from above as a common basis of the individual and collective identity of the inhabitants of the largest Balkan country evaporated as the country came apart. Serbian and Croats revised history is based on a portrait of own nation as a victim. Within the context of Serbo-Croatian confrontation concerning the Second World War, against the Jasenovac (fascist camp where Serbs were killed 1941–1945) topic in Serbian memory, the Bleiburg (the place where many quislings were killed by the anti-fascist army 1945) became the main place in Croat memory, symbolizing communist atrocities. In the obsession with war centred historical memory remembering the victims of own nation was a matter of new policy of memory. As
distinct from critical patriotism, blind patriotism looks on any attempt to face the dark periods of one’s past as treason or masochism, or at least as an unnecessary and embarrassing reminder at a time when the nation must rally together.

In less than half a century Yugoslavia has witnessed two attempts to reconstruct its past: an authoritarian internationalist one in 1945 and the ongoing restorative pluralist nationalistic one which began in the early 1990s. The frozen communist Yugoslav memory on war was built in the official ideology of “brotherhood and unity” to avoid the nationalistic explosion of historical memory. At the end of the twentieth century the communist de-ethnicization of war memory fell apart to give way to a national and confessional, individual and group self-image. The last civil war has clouded the issues and laid bare the dramatic conceptual differences also between the scientists. It has also at once intensified and simplified the passions, projecting the complex reality as two extreme concepts: brotherhood and unity vs. Yugoslavia as an illusion and a dungeon of peoples; fervent Titoism vs. vehement anti-Titoism; self-management as a true democracy vs. socialist totalitarianism. As F. Furet put it, there occurred a “reversal of canonical priorities”. As is often the case, the greater the hope, the deeper the disappointment, the more painful the awakening, the more extreme the revisionism. Nationalism has assumed the form of a new obdurate and militant belief largely impervious to the facts. Psychologically speaking, exclusivity and aggression are often the signs of insecurity. In all parts of the country intellectuals fell with unbelievable gullibility for the thesis that at that particular historical
crossroads the very survival of their respective nations was at stake. The use of force was justified by the brief obscure interregnum seen as a historic opportunity to create a protective state entity. There began to spread among the intellectuals the ignoble notion that it is better to betray one’s beliefs than one’s nation. The newly-established states began to reconstruct the past almost overnight in order to lay historiographic foundations for their independence. Selective memory and organized forgetfulness were used as a conceptual weapon to trigger off civil war and national intolerance. For a long time to come the same event would be regarded by some as a crime and by others as a feat of patriotic heroism, apparently contradicting Santayana’s observation that those who do not remember the past are condemned to relive it continually. But perhaps things are just the contrary in the Balkans. In Yugoslavia memories have been “revived too vividly” and historiographic revisionism given the task of defining the new national consciousness. This revisionism has two aspects: 1) critical: developing a necessarily mature attitude and casting off old knowledge by discarding the old socialist sociointegrative content, discovering new evidence, and re-evaluating the long-neglected literature of the defeated, and; 2) ideologically-sociointegrative: reinterpreting past events under the open or covert dictate of the imperative to homogenize the nation conceptually. Ideological historical revisionism began gradually to take shape before the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, that is, under the wing of the communist socio-integrative thought of the time.
Идеолошкиот историски ревизионизам започна полека да се оформува пред распадот на поранешна Јуgosлавија, т.е под закрила на комунистичката социоинтегративната мисла на тоа време.

По распадот на мултиетничка Јуgosлавија, историскиот ревизионизам отворено се изразува, без заштитната реторика на самоуправувањето. Моно-полската комунистичка интернационалистичка приказна, ориентирана единствено кон моралната супериорност на партијата на Тито, беше заменета со новиот историски автостереотип – националистички и шовинистички приказни како извор на политичката легитимност на новите балкански држави. Најрадикалната ревизија на меморијата од Втората светска војна се гледа во хрватските постсоцијалистички учебници (дури и дорехабилитација на фашистичкото усташко минато), додека режимот на Милошевиќ својата легитимност ја градеше не само на национализмот туку и на наследството од партизанската традиција и социјализмот. По падот на Милошевиќ во Србија очевиден е нов антифашистички правец. Иако легализирана, реконструкцијата на минатото се одвива на манипулативен начин, под маската на одбивање на тоталитарното социјализам, кој, пред сè, го задушуваше националното освестување. Силната антикомунисмука и антиȚоталитарна реторика се користи како превез кој го заткрива мрачниот период во историјата на еден народ во обидот да го нормализира и да го оправда тој народ главно во очите на западните сили.

На Балканот, сведувањето на последната верзија на историјата на организирана селективна историска меморија е резултат на комплексното заемно дејствување на неколку различни перспективи и поляризации: западно – источно христијанство, заистоечиво.
Todor Kuljić. Revised History and New Identity in East Europe

to attribute the main source of tension and conflict in the Yugoslav civil war to efforts aimed at de-Bolshevis­
ization and re-Bolshevization. The marked anti-commu­
nist rhetoric of authoritarian nationalism represents a
subsequent conceptual rationalization of its resistance
to internationalism and Yugoslav-ism and far less a cri­
tique of the state-interventionist or egalitarian com­
ponent of Socialism. This is corroborated by the fact that,
according to indices for 1997, Poland was the only for­
mer European socialist country to have equalled that
year its 1989 gross national product.¹⁵ Former Yugoslav
republics drew mainly upon their resistance to inter­
nationalism (globalization, cosmopolitanism, Yugoslav­
ism) to construct their official identity and reconstruct
the past. In Croatia, where opposition to a Yugoslav state
was strong, an official clerical Catholic national identity
incorporating values of the European law-governed state
was imposed from above; on the other hand, Serbian na­
tion-conscious intellectuals saw their identity as a “com­
bination of the Kosovo legacy, Orthodox traditions, and
European nationalist and liberal values.”¹⁶

The claim that one’s nation is in danger is the main ex­
cuse put forward to justify the process of growing na­
tional consciousness in which the dark aspects of one’s own
past are repressed, passed over in silence or relativized.
Only those memories which strengthen one’s national
identity are cherished (such as the glorious imperial past,
the suffering of one’s people, the glorification of the cult
of one’s national leaders and cultural figures, etc.). One

Тврдњето дека нацијата е во опасност е главен
изговор за да се постави или пак да се оправда про­
cесот на растечката национална свет каде мрачните аспекти на минатото се потиснуваат, молкум се пре­
mостуваат или се релативизираат. Се негуваат само
оние сеќавања што го зајакнуваат националниот
идентитет (како на пример величественото импери­
јално минато, страдањата на народот, глорификаци­

левица – десница, ќелат - жртва. Би било погрешно
gлавниот извор на тензија и конфликт во југосло­
венските граѓански војни да им се припише на на­
порите за деболшевизација и реболшевизација. П
Препознатливата антикомунистичка реторика на ав­
tоритарен национализам претставува дополнителна
cонцептуална рационализација на нејзиниот от­
пор кон интернационализмот и југословенството, а
многу помалку е критика на државните интервен­
ционисти или на егалитарната компонента во соци­
јализмот. Ова е поддржано со фактот дека, според
показателите од 1997, Полска беше единствената
европска социјалистичка држава што таа година го
издадна својот бруто национален производ со оној
од 1989.¹⁵ Поранешните југословенски републики
gлавно црпеа од нивниот отпор кон интернационализ­
мот (глобализација, космополитизам, југословен­
ство) за да го конструираат својот официјален иден­
tитет и да го реконструираат минатото. Во Хрватска,
каде што постоеше силен отпор спрема државата
Југославија, однозгора беше наметнат официјален
свештенокатолички национален идентитет со вред­
nостите на европските правни држави; од друга
страна, српските национално-свесни интелектуалци
гледаа на својот идентитет како „комбинација од
косовското минато, православната традиција, и ев­
ропските националистички и либерални вреднос­
ти“¹⁶.
tries to blots from the memory the pogroms and Fascism of one’s nation, its provincial backwardness, the political short-sightedness of one’s aggressive chauvinistic policymakers, etc. Such selective forgetfulness prevents one from mastering the past and is dangerous for many reasons. The suppression of the dark side of the past in the name of nationwide reconciliation and homogeneity does not help one to come to terms with the past. The cherishing of memories augmenting the national identity only pays in the short term. Just as the age of a uniform Yugoslav outlook on history is over, so will the phase of exclusive polarization of the historiographies of the newly-created Balkan states come to an end. Historians must be able to acknowledge, not merely justify, the unpalatable aspects of the identities they are building up.

**Historiographic Revisionism and Blind Patriotism**

After every major turn in history and social and national confrontation the victors dethrone the previous government by various means (by changing the names of towns and streets, pulling down old and erecting new monuments, rewriting textbooks, etc.) in order to spread the belief that authentic history starts with their act of liberation. The character of the ideological break with the past is imparted by the ideology of the winners as well as by the general political culture of the region.

It is still too early to expect of academic historiographers to deal with matters such as collective guilt or shame because the conviction is still strong on all sides that they were in the right in the recent civil war. The majority
of Serb historians too are yet to rise above the heated Balkan passions characteristic of the last years of the twentieth century. Instead of being uneasy and critical of their own nationalism, the writers of history are still blindly “patriotic”; a prominent thesis in their work is that the fateful impossibility of reconciliation will always be a potential source of conflict in the Balkans. Instead of acknowledging and investigating the culpability of their own politicians or the collective intoxication of their own nation (leading to the question of collective guilt), they play this down and seek to project their own nation as victim. Social scientists must have compassion for the victims of other nations as well as dissociate themselves from the “patriotic” offenders from the ranks of their own nation. Any critical attitude to one’s own national heritage is a source of concern to the conservatives who hold that only blind adherence to tradition and solid values render the people fit for the future, as well as that criticizing shameful events and periods from one’s past is recreant moralizing. The public interest of the new generations is not the embellishment of the past but confrontation with the dark chapters from the nation’s history to see which segments of their tradition ought to be changed. There is before us a long period of learning how to bear the unpalatable truth and to resist the temptation that our own nation is always right because it has always been the victim. Neither historians who want to write impartially nor people who want to live in ethnically mixed environments can do so unless they learn this. Otherwise we may end up living with suppressed traumas and occasionally dishonouring our innocent victims, just as the Germans are today encumbered with the memory of their Fascist past. Furthermore, the attitude to responsibility is changing in the world today: the old belief that some gave the orders and that others merely obeyed them is no longer valid and the question of collective support for a hazardous policy is becoming increasingly topical. There is more and more talk of both
individual and collective responsibility, the latter on the part of intellectuals, voters, participants in mass rallies. To what extent was the recent civil war a war of leaders and political elite, and to what extent of the people as voluntary executors and of intellectuals as the creators of historical consciousness? Can one exempt from the network of responsibility the academicians who rewrite the past in order to homogenize the nation’s historical consciousness? We cannot confront a painful and embarrassing segment of our history, that is, the crimes committed by our own people which will haunt us into the next century, with the help of historiography, because its main task is to shape the collective consciousness by selective reinterpretation of the past. Is the conventional notion of national identity in modern historiographies of Yugoslav nations the only starting-point for illuminating the past? How fit are historiographies written so soon after a civil war to search for a post-national universal civil identity as the epistemological basis of scientific impartiality? Of all social sciences in the world today, modern German social science perhaps faces the most problems in confronting the dark past. In our regions constitutional patriotism is a dangerous utopia, while the new revisionist swing to the right (from historiography to the new monuments) brings back to mind nineteenth-century attitudes. There is no criticism of one’s own chauvinism; the new monuments are erected to shame the victims and not the perpetrators of the crime; and the politicians in office – yesterday’s hazard-loving liberators – are exonerated by vengeful public journalists and history writers.
Целиот ревизионизам се базира на селективно заборавање. Поради тоа што ревизионизмот во основа е реинтерпретација на минатото, т.е прилагоѓување на историската слика кон потребите на оние на власт или на несигурната јавност, тој не помага во справувањето со минатото, т.е во потиснувањето на стимулантите коишто ги поттикнаа ирационалните конфликти. Реинтерпретацијата не помага во соочувањето со минатото: наместо да се прикажуваме како жртви и да си ја именуваме собствената агресија како оправдана одбрана (сите националисти ги сметаат војните започнати од нивната нација како ослободителни војни), треба да го поставиме прашањето за личната, групната и колективната одговорност на нашата нација во катастрофалната воена политика. Овој текст го поцртува обичајот да се пренебрегнат срамните епизоди од минатото на собствената нација со цел да се одредат можните конфликти во меморијата на следните генерации, а во исто време претпоставува каде ќе се расплине синтезата на историчарите од 21. век, кои, да се надеваме, нема да бидат толку идеолошки обременети како нивните колеги од двадесетиот век. Со други зборови, постои надеж да се види помалку ексузивна левица, која, како по правило, се претвора во исто толку ексклузивно антикомунунистичко и антиtotalsitarianisto движење, најчесто преку сиров шовинистички „патриотизам“. Брзите реставративски промени во историската свет, истакнати овде, ја претставуваат силата во континуитетот на бавно менувачките длабоки структури на еден исто-

All revisionism rests on selective forgetfulness. Because revisionism is basically reinterpretation of the past, that is, adaptation of the historical picture to the needs of those in power or of a wavering public, it does not help one to master his past, that is, to suppress the stimuli which gave raise to irrational conflicts. One cannot master the past by reinterpreting it: instead of portraying oneself as victim and calling one’s own aggression legitimate defence (all nationalists regard the wars waged by their nation as wars of liberation), one must raise the question of the personal, group and collective responsibility of one’s own nation for a disastrous policy and war. This paper highlights the practice of passing over the inglorious episodes from the past of one’s own nation in order to identify the possible conflicts of memory in the succeeding generations, as well as to suggest where the syntheses of twenty-first century historians, who will hopefully not be as ideologically encumbered as their twentieth-century colleagues, will diverge. In other words, one hopes to see less of exclusive left-wingery which, as a rule, turns into equally exclusive anti-Communism and anti-totalitarianism most frequently through rabid chauvinist “patriotism”. The swift restorative changes in historical consciousness identified here manifest the strength of the continuity of the slow-changing deep structures of a historical trend that persist in spite of the major upheavals in the twentieth century.
риск тренд кој опстојува и покрај големите метежи на дваесеттиот век.

Превод од англиски јазик: Румена Бужаровска

Notes:


3. Ibid., 57.


7. Ibid.

8. Detlef, Stein, (1996), “Die Diskussion über die Dossierfrage der VI Abteilung der Staatssicherheit (DS) in Bulgari-

9. Reinprecht.

10. Ibid.


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