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## **HISTORIOGRAPHIC REVISIONISM \*** **- in Post-Socialist Regimes -**

**Abstract:** *The author presents the main and general characteristics of historiographic revisionism in Europe in the 1990s, drawing attention to the various features of revisionism in former socialist countries (Russia, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Bulgaria) and their attitude to Socialism. The necessary scientific re-examination of the past is separated from its ideological reinterpretation inspired by revived nationalism. The attention focuses on Serb and Croat revisionism, that is, on its moderate versions ('medium compass' revisionism), as found in the works of the Yugoslavia historians Branko Petranović and Dušan Bilandžić.*

**Digest:** Contemporary historiographic revisionism exhibits a number of components: a critical attitude to historiography on the part of the winner (the communists); a clearer understanding of the essence of past events owing to greater distance from them and to the availability of new sources; a pragmatic reinterpretation of the past inspired by narrow or broad party or national motives. Revisionists in former socialist countries find their principal source in revived nationalism which seeks to play down one's own fascist past by uncritically attacking anti-Communism and anti-totalitarianism. Instead of being confronted, the dark shadows from one's own past are being shown in a new light. This paper draws attention to state-sponsored and academic revisionism, and lays bare its chief motives and rhetoric in several European countries. The object of this comparative study is to show up the triviality of domestic revisionism. The revisionism in the works of B. Petranović and D. Bilandžić written in the 1990s is discussed at some length to show up the contradictions characterizing their writings before and after the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the pattern of their revision fired by awakened concern for their respective 'endangered' nations. Selective memory and orchestrated forgetfulness were major catalysts of the civil war in Yugoslavia, with revisionist historiography enlisted to justify the new national objectives. The author believes that one can master one's past only by confronting its dark aspects and hopes

that a critical appraisal by domestic scholars of own nationalism will not be overly delayed by customary tardiness.

Is contemporary historiography in former Yugoslav republics under the prevalent influence of any of the following components: a) an inevitably maturer scientific outlook on the past brought about by sounder theory and improved methods, and made possible by the discovery of hitherto unknown archival material of prime importance; b) a rather understandable shift of accent in interpreting key historical events, that is, a fuller and broader understanding of their historical function resulting from changes in the epochal consciousness and from the disappearance of the authoritarian patterns of the one-party socialist regime, or; c) a pragmatic revision of the past prompted by broader or narrower ideological, party or personal interests or motives? Which of the above components are discernible in the leading historians and can they be differentiated in more detail? In trying to answer these questions we shall take a look at: a) some general characteristics of historiographic revisionism in Europe and in former socialist regimes at the end of the twentieth century as an important aspect of reinterpreting the recent past; b) narrower regional characteristics, that is, the chief nationalistic motives of revisionism in the contemporary historiography of former Yugoslav republics, and; c) concrete revisionist components in the works of the Yugoslavia historians D. Bilandžić and B. Petranović.

### *1. 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

divest it of legend the better to comprehend the present. Historiography entails the continual re-examination of the historical picture to prevent its crystallization into a static legend. Such re-examination differs from revision in that the latter is motivated by clear or covert intentions to justify narrow or broad political objectives. Because the people in government are keenly interested in how the past is interpreted, one always discerns in the interpretation a layer of socio-integrative knowledge used to justify the order. This is why the need to revise history following a radical change of the nature of the regime and the abolition of the traditional socio-integrative thought is understandable. However, revisionists do not merely reinterpret the facts; they also twist their meaning or contradict them outright. This is revisionism in the narrow sense of the word.

Revisionists are occasionally referred to as converts, an expression denoting a rather extreme change of opinion. In Catholic dogma, converts are laymen who voluntarily relinquish their secular life and join a religious order to lead a chaste life. In patristicism they are distinguished from oblates (children dedicated by their parents to a monastic life). *Convertio* (conversion) denotes a moral transformation, the return to God or to the true religion. The term occurs in living languages in this form (e.g. the conversion of St. Paul, Constantine the Great, or St. Augustine). In the Middle Ages the term came into regular use to denote the change from the secular life to the religious life. A spiritual change from sinfulness to love of God and to pursuit of holiness is also called conversion. Most frequently the term is used to signify a shift from infidelity to the true faith, or the return of schismatics and heretics to the Catholic Church. Today the term convert, or radical dissident, is applied in political thought mostly to influential 'sobered-down communists' (e.g. Dilas, Kolakowski, Furet) whose volte-face could have acted like a worm eating away at the homogeneity and accelerating the collapse of communist ideology. The revision of any knowledge in social thought is unthinkable without a change in the perception of its genesis. A revisionism deprived of a historical component is inevitably superficial (e.g. any revision of the historical functionality and consequences of socialist revolutions is only partial without a reinterpretation of the causes of their genesis).

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. The German historian Ulrich Schneider has perceived several different contemporary revisionist trends: 1) neo-fascist historical revisionism (which denies the existence of the Nazi extermination concentration camps); 2) academic historical revisionism, which is more diverse and changeable as regards its topics, and; 3) state-sponsored historical revisionism referred to as 'historical policy', that is, an institutionalized selective policy of remembrance (at work in the territory of the former German Democratic Republic following its incorporation in the Federal Republic of Germany; Schneider, 1997).

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. The Berlin historian Vipermann has defined historical revisionism in the broadest terms as an inclination to alter the negative image of the Third Reich and to replace it with a more or less positive one. He differentiates between three patterns or degrees of revisionism using three kinds of arguments. The first group simply negates the Nazi crimes: those who treat the Auschwitz story as a lie (Rassinier, Faurisson, Tudman, Leuchter and others) insist that no mass killings took place in the concentration camps and that no gas chambers were installed there (Reich, 1996). The second group does not deny the crimes but relativizes them: they say that the gas was the only distinctive feature of the Nazi crimes which affected minorities or peripheral groups, and that the Third Reich had its positive sides (Jesse, Zittelmann). The third group does not deny the crimes but likens them to those committed in other countries (comparing Auschwitz mostly to Gulag), attributing them to a general extra-national concourse of events or as a provoked reaction (Nolte). A similar gradation of crimes is met in the controversies over the relativizing or playing down of the mass crimes in Jasenovac in 1941-45) or Nanking in 1937 (the so-called Japanese Historikerstreit).

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. Also 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). A similar tendency was in evidence following the collapse of Nazism, when the language was 'purified' and purged of terms such as 'ruling race', 'three-quarters Jew', 'space order', 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 rehabilitated 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.

## *2. 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. Radical conservative anti-Semitic revisionists are denying the existence of the Nazi camps in order to deprive the Jews of their latest Golgotha myth. Another group is substituting anti-totalitarian for anti-fascist rhetoric in order to launder its own past; as if by consensus, 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 Berlin 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 former leftism. A glance at several European countries is enough to conjure up this climate.

Following the 'Anschluss' of the GDR, state-sponsored revisionism in the FRG has been undisguised to the extent of trying to banish the word anti-Fascism from the vocabulary of the democratic state. The Bundestag in 1995 set up a second commission of inquiry to 'Overcome the legacy of GDR dictatorship in the process of creating German unity' with the object of combating justification of the GDR's past and stimulating the 'unfolding of all-German forms of memory of both German dictatorships and their victims'. The object is to knock out of the last east German any GDR nostalgia first by altering the memorials in the territory of the former state and then through 'anti-totalitarian enlightenment'. For instance, the commission chairman, R. Eppelmann, argued in favour of introducing a stylized version of the Soviet-style camp as a main type of memorial instead of the former Nazi camps. A project to alter the Buchenwald memorial has the following three objectives: 1) commemorate the National Socialist history of concentration camps; 2) accentuate the features of NKVD camps, and; 3) recall the existence of GDR internee camps. Since official revisionism of the present German state equates Nazi with Soviet camps, history and archives are becoming superfluous. The new memorials are to serve as a symbol of the following equation of the theories of totalitarianism: KZ camp=NKVD camp=GDR internee camp. In this way all distinction would have been obliterated between racial and class hatred, between the racist dreams of becoming a great power and Soviet imperial policy, and between fascist and communist ideology, the objective being to delegitimize the anti-fascist policy of the GDR and to denounce the GDR as a totalitarian state. The across-the-board denouncement of anti-Fascism is but a prelude to a far-reaching discrimination against the Left (Maur, 1998). The Historikerstreit of 1986-87 was merely an academic introduction to German state-sponsored revisionism. There is a running controversy in Germany today as to whether 8 May 1945 was a 'day of defeat' or a 'day of liberation', amid allegations that there was no difference between the crimes committed in Auschwitz and the allied bombing of Dresden. Institutes are being set up to rework the history of the GDR in line with the theories of totalitarianism. Nazism is being relativized by demonizing the GDR and propagating the formula of the 'two German dictatorships', that is, those of Hitler and Ulbricht-Honecker. The controversy going on in the West about the limitations and the scope of the notion totalitarianism is meeting with strong opposition in the former GDR, where this fundamentally inappropriate comparison is looked upon as a posthumous exoneration of Nazism through indiscriminating criminalization of the GDR (Bialas, 1998). A similar

revisionist formula coloured by local prejudices and stereotypes is employed by other eastern European regimes in dealing with their own socialist past.

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 (Possek, 1998). St. Petersburg was given back its old name, the Lenin museum in Moscow was closed though the mausoleum is still open, the monument to Dzerzhinski was taken down but those to Marx and Engels are still there in Moscow. Gorky Street was given back its old name of Tverskaya, but the Lenin and Leningrad prospects retain their names. Although the present generation of politicians are former members of the Communist Party of the USSR and of the Komsomol, they have clearly distanced themselves from the Communist Party of Russia and exhibit no nostalgia for the USSR. 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. The Russian Left of today is imbued with nationalism (Zyuganov-Baburin), identifying the former internationalism with a negative cosmopolitanism and rejecting it in the name of a new national socialist patriotism. Rather than disown prominent personalities from their own past, the communists are striving to make them conform to their new nationalistic perception of history. Only time will show whether this involves a strategy or a tactic on the part of the Russian Left.

Revisionism in Romania pivots on a demand to rehabilitate Ion Antonescu. A heated ‘Antonescu debate’ has been going on in that country for ten years already, involving a peculiar combination of relativization, justification of Fascism, revisionist argumentation and anti-

Semitic incidents (Totok, 1998). 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; in 1919 he marched into Budapest to show the Hungarians what lay in store for them if they went on persecuting Romanians (Totok, 1999). However, it was during the anti-Semitic Romanization under his regime that some 100,000 Jews perished, a point denied by contemporary revisionists. Since the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu streets have been renamed after Antonescu in several Romanian towns, his followers are clamouring for a monument to be erected in his honour, newspapers have been writing about his 'holy anti-Bolshevik war' on Hitler's side, and Parliament observed a minute's silence in his honour in June 1991 (amid a protest walkout by the Hungarian MPs). In 1996 the Romanian state prosecutor instituted proceedings to rehabilitate six of Antonescu's ministers. During the vacuum that occurred after the downfall of the Ceausescu regime open or covert anti-Semitism was the main link between anti-communists, xenophobes, chauvinists and revisionists (Totok, 1998). The Jews were accused of being communists and of generating economic crisis while the public was inundated with sensational discoveries, arbitrary accusations and unsubstantiated allegations. There is a tendency to explain every conceivable problem by using the classic emotion-laden formula: Jews = communists = plutocrats = free masons = capitalists. The consequences are virulent xenophobia, chauvinistic historiography, new national myths and anti-democratic and anti-Western fundamentalism (Totok, 1998, p. 47). 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 (Totok, 1998, p. 57). In their view, the communists unjustifiably called the Antonescu regime fascist because they failed to perceive its national character with authoritarian attributes. While not denying the Nazi Holocaust, Romanian revisionists are in the habit of contrasting it with the 'humane Jewish' policy of Antonescu, and it has also been suggested that the 'red Holocaust' was worse than the 'brown'. Totok has demonstrated that in this way Romanian Fascism is gaining acceptance as something quite normal. 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 – Volovici,

1998, p.13; Roth, 1997) 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 (Schauschitz, 1996, p. 33). 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 (Reinprecht, 1994) on a sample of 120 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 with 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.

Reinprecht concluded that at work in the Czech Republic was an 'exterritorialization of the past', that is, an effort to resolve the tensions embedded in the historic memory following the changes in 1989 by attributing them to changes coming from without. The demand for a 'return to Europe' is the regulator of the society's memory. The communist past is no longer looked upon as part of one's own history that has to be confronted; it is exterritorialized, that is, declared a consequence of an outside factor, the 'barbarian East' (Reinprecht, 1994). Europe is synonymous with civility whereas totalitarian Fascism and Communism came from without. In this respect too Croatian public opinion is closer to Czech than to Yugoslav. Furthermore, the simultaneous operation in Croatia of the complex of belonging to the West and the resistance to Balkan integration and to the idea of Southern Slavdom reactivated the old prejudices of there being crucial differences between the Byzantine and Roman 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. The files compiled by the 6th Department of the Bulgarian State Security service began to be discussed as early as 1990, but the Bulgarian Socialist Party is presumed to have burned the incriminating evidence against its cadres in August that year (Stein, 1996). In December 1992 Bulgaria passed a law on the 'de-communization of science' under which 'ideologically encumbered persons' were barred from responsible office for a period of five years (Stein, 1996, p. 29). 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 these 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.

However, so-called day-to-day revisionism is still evident in all eastern European countries, with many individuals rewriting their biographies to accord with the social identity they want to project, portraying themselves more or less sincerely as dissidents and victims of the former regime. One can draw a parallel with Europe 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 participation in the communist regime than those in Hungary. 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 exterritorialization 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 (Reinprecht, 1994). 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 personalities 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 (Reinprecht, 1994). According to Vladimir Ilić's survey of Serbian youth in 1999, the most popular historical figures were the Kosovo myth heroes and individually Josip Broz Tito, followed by Nikola Tesla, Mihajlo Pupin, Vuk Karadžić, Karađorđe, etc. (Ilić, 2000). In common with Reinprecht, Ilić attributed Tito's popularity to the memories of the welfare enjoyed under his rule and not to a liking for Marxist internationalism. Ilić also underlines the differences between the consciousness of Serbian youth and the historic memory of the national cultural elite and notes that the latter are more revisionistically inclined. Hungarian revisionists of today strive to divest Horthy of any Nazism and anti-Semitism and to construct an anti-communist national myth of the 1956 events (again probably with an eye to the foreign-policy needs of the country). The attitude of Romanian revisionists to Antonescu, of Serb

to Milan Nedić and of Croat to Ante Pavelić is similar to this. In Prague, the communist takeover of 1948 is looked upon as a coup brought off without popular support and a ploy of Stalin's, and too much importance is not attached even to the Prague Spring. It is not difficult to detect regularities in selective forgetfulness from one nation to another; but there are also interesting differences resulting from their different traditions and local stereotypes as well as from the ideological commitments of the ruling elites. Selective forgetfulness is augmented by social amnesia (the spontaneous repression of the past in a population caused by current problems). Reinprecht's study has drawn attention to certain important differences in approaching a national identity: the Hungarian 'Goulash Archipelago' national myth centres on the Treaty of Trianon. Patriotism is seen as the democratic virtue of the urban parts of the population while nationalism is attributed to the ethnocentric resistance of the countryside. National certitude and patriotism are not prominent in the Czech Republic, and national self-consciousness is 'fragmentary' owing to long periods of loss of national independence, the period after 1968 looked upon as an inevitable 'colonization'. Czechs refer to the expulsion of ethnic Germans in 1945 (so-called 'justified nationalism') as a historical burden and some young respondents are even ashamed of it.

Historiographic revisionism is not free from revived nationalism in Western Europe either. It is inspired by post-modernist ideas arrogated mostly by the extreme Right. Its leading theorist in France, A. de Benoist, sees equality as the chief source of evil synonymous with chaos, entropy and decadence. He even rejects Christianity as a sort of 'ancient Bolshevism' which seeks to impose a universal god as a principle contrary to nationalism (Benoist, 1997). In rewriting the past historians with post-modernist leanings glorify its purely national aspects and its resistance to 'destructive globalism'.

It appears that Switzerland is the only country in which the debate on revisionism is proceeding in the opposite direction, namely towards throwing the light on the dark moments from the country's past rather than glorifying it. The debate on the part Switzerland played in the Second World War (opened after the end of the Cold War in Europe when Switzerland's role as a neutral state began to diminish) has raised deep doubts about the neutrality, financial role and humanitarian importance of the country. Did Hitler find in Switzerland a major source of support and what were the real possibilities of a small state in a period dominated by German fascism? Critically-minded historians insist that the country was a party to the crimes while their more cautious colleagues wonder whether any resistance could have been mounted to oppose the Third Reich (Fleury, 1998). This is not merely an academic or media

debate, but something much more complex, involving accusations against such economic pillars as banks and prominent capitalist enterprises. Jews insist that the gold which belonged to the victims of concentration camps and was deposited by Nazis in Swiss banks should be returned. The effort of the historians to ascertain the truth is important because the image of humanitarian Switzerland, the great reputation of the Red Cross, and the credibility of the label 'Made in Switzerland' as a guarantee of quality and hallmark of Swiss business efficiency have been called in doubt. While media put forward the thesis that Switzerland was responsible for prolonging the war by economically cooperating with the Nazis, the historians insist that Switzerland should not be ashamed of its neutrality because it was able to extend considerable humanitarian aid to the victims of Fascism. In this case too the debate has proved how difficult it is to integrate opposing views of a living past and its enduring consequences.

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 different wings, let alone by opposing ideologues. In dealing with each revisionism one must bear in mind, in addition to internal-scientific reasons, the interests and motives of influential structures which stimulate, accelerate or slow down the study of one's own shadows of the past. Without having a grasp of the global state of revisionism one can all too easily overestimate the originality and autonomy of the process in his own environment.

### *3. 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. Individuals caught up in the crisis became increasingly unsure of their identity while those in power found the lack of socio-integrative content explosive. This dual vacuum was nevertheless overcome comparatively quickly by means of a national identity built up before. In addition to bolstering national pride, any revival of national history implies a relativization of violence in the name

of the national idea (in war as well as ethnic cleansing). 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 discussions of Fascism, conservative German historians continue to perceive their homeland as a country of victims and not of executioners. It is therefore felt necessary to reform those lacking in national consciousness because ignorance of history is the cause of poor integration and moral decay in a nation. Insecure individuals who seek assurance in the refuge of national identity make it much easier for those in power to manipulate their national sentiments. The more politicians appeal to the deeper layers of sentimental affiliation and are successful in activating them, the greater the potential for manipulation. However, this process is not possible without a rational content. The restoration of national historiography involves an accelerated quest for a foothold and an identity which both disoriented individuals and those in power need. Academic historians are called upon to reconstruct history and to prop this edifice with their authority. Ever since the establishment of nation states more or less mythicized history has been used as the conceptual basis for the creation of a state or national identity. As the conservative German historian M. Stürmer has observed, 'in a country deprived of history, the future is conquered by one who supplies the memory, defines the notions and interprets the past'. The vacuity of concepts and values following the collapse of European one-party Socialism has resulted in a loss of orientation and a strong quest for identity as a pillar of state and personal security. Whereas in Western Europe it is predominantly conservatives who regard the suppression of nationalism as a loss of identity, the situation in former socialist countries is more complicated in that many leftist factions too search for an identity with the help of a nationalist agenda.

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. At the end of the twentieth century the Yugoslav and socialist identities fell apart to give way to a national and confessional, individual and group self-image. At present it is hard to say which of these two attempts has been the more exclusive; it is up to future historians to assess with greater certainty the extent of discontinuity and revisionism within their own profession. The last civil war has clouded the issues and laid bare the dramatic conceptual differences 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 \*\*\* 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. Revisionist controversies were part and parcel of all intercommunal disputes (e.g. the Croatian Spring, the SANU Memorandum). After the break-up of the country, historical revisionism has manifested itself openly, that is, without the protective self-management rhetoric. Although legalized, the reconstruction of the past proceeds in a manipulatory manner under the guise of repudiating a totalitarian Socialism that stifled above all national awakening. The strong anti-communist and anti-totalitarian rhetoric are used as a smokescreen to cloud the dark periods of one's own history in an attempt to normalize it and justify it mainly in the eyes of the Western powers.

All the nations are burning the bridges between their past and their present and building them anew with the help of events frequently chosen from legend. To manifest one's conformity with the international community's aspiration to independence, state sovereignty and collective and individual freedoms, one puts forward as evidence a select choice of uprisings and revolutions, battles and campaigns, victories and defeats. At every major turn in history this choice is revised and adjusted to conform with the rhetoric of the new forces in power. At the end of the twentieth century evidence of the revival of the nation is omnipresent; the Cold War having come to an end, one has begun to ponder on the meaning of the state in a European framework in the absence of the iron curtain which gave the states entrenched in two opposing camps (Socialism vs. the free West) an ideological identity. The nation as a large solidary community held together by its memory of its past sacrifices and its readiness to make new ones (E. Renan) is inconceivable without a historical foundation, that is, a selectively reconstructed past, on which it builds as bearer of an identity transcending time and individuality. In the Balkans, the latest revision of history boiling down to an organized selective historical memory is the result of a complex interplay of several different perspectives and polarizations: Western - Eastern Christianity, Left - Right, executioners - victims. It would be fallacious to attribute the main source of tension and conflict in the Yugoslav civil war to efforts aimed at de-Bolshevization and re-Bolshevization. The marked anti-communist rhetoric of authoritarian nationalism represents a subsequent conceptual rationalization of its resistance to internationalism and Yugoslavhood and far less a critique of the state-interventionist or egalitarian component of Socialism. This is corroborated by the fact that, according to indices for 1997, Poland was the only former European socialist country to have equalled that year its 1989 gross national product (Thaa, 1999, p. 14). Former Yugoslav republics drew mainly upon their resistance to internationalism (globalization, cosmopolitanism, Yugoslavhood) 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 nation-conscious intellectuals saw their identity as a 'combination of the Kosovo legacy, Orthodox traditions, and European nationalist and liberal values (Ilić, 1998, p. 348).

The claim that one's nation is in danger is the main excuse put forward to justify the process of growing national 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 tries to blot from the memory the pogroms and Fascism of one's nation, its provincial backwardness, the political shortsightedness 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. The historians must be able to acknowledge, not merely justify, the unpalatable aspects of the identities they are building up.

#### *4. The Revisionist Work of Yugoslav Historians: D. Bilandžić and B. Petranović*

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. In Croatia in the 1990s, official state and scientific revisionism was manifested by rehabilitating various nationalist forces from the past (from Ustashism to the HSS party) and by laying claim to being 'democratically anti-Fascist' by criticizing its communist version. In Serbia too there was a process to rehabilitate the conservative national past though the resistance to the Left was not as strong. We shall first briefly discuss the external aspects of these restorative processes. At the beginning of 1993 Marshal Tito Square in Zagreb was renamed Mile Budak Square. Following protests by anti-fascists, Budak was given Đure Salaja street, only to lose it a few weeks later. Nevertheless, streets in many Croatian towns, including Split, were named after the vice president of the Ustasha state. In Serbia the main streets in most towns, formerly named after Marshal Tito, were renamed after Serbian rulers. In Croatia the HDZ regime denied any indigenous Fascism during the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) in order to woo the emigration: if there was no Fascism, there was no anti-Fascism either, so the argument ran. The dilemma was settled by President Franjo Tuđman's formulation at the first congress of the HDZ in 1990: 'The NDH was not only an ordinary quisling fascist creation but

the manifestation of the centuries-old aspiration of the Croat people after an independent state'. This contradictory formula pleased everybody. At the 1997 commemoration of the victims of the Bleiburg massacre, the academician D. Jelčić stressed that the NDH army was not imbued with Fascism but with the idea of a Croat state, and that there were more anti-fascists among Ustashas than among partisans. At a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Victory Day, V. Pavletić, the speaker of parliament, said that the struggle against Fascism 'enjoyed the support of the whole Croat people', while his predecessor N. Mihanović alleged that 'Croats were the first anti-fascists in Europe' (Gruden, Gabrić, Buljan, 1997). The next concrete consequence of this revisionism was the demolition of monuments with bulldozers. Croatia is today the only country in the world in which a properly registered party, the HOP, was founded by a Hitler ally, Ante Pavelić. Croatian revisionism has not escaped notice in the world. In the United States, Reich challenges Tuđman's revisionism in playing down the number of holocaust victims and mentions his attempt to rename the Jasenovac concentration camp (Reich, 1996). On the other hand, however, Tuđman is glorified by the US radical-revisionist periodical *Journal of Historical Review* edited by G. Raven and published by the Institute of Historical Review. They are part of the international ultra-Right and anti-Semitic wing Holocaust Denier which negates and plays down the Nazi victims. The California-based periodical in the 1990s published even three favourable articles on the revisionism of F. Tuđman (Weber, 1992; Weber, 1993; Gubić, 1993). In all these articles Tuđman is portrayed as a respectable historian. The only criticism of Tuđman's revisionism is to be found in a contribution by the Hamburg author Roth (Roth, 1997).

The main theses of radical Croat academic revisionism are as follows: 1) In modern Croat history the Ustashas and Communists are portrayed as totalitarian movements whereas the HSS is painted as democratic (Ivičević, 1995, p. 489). The Pavelić regime was admittedly a dictatorship with racist laws but innocent of Fascism (Krišto, 1995, p. 400; Jareb, 1995, p. 410; Vujčić, 1998, p. 143); the Ustasha regime was not the same as the NDH, the Croat people fought for a state and not for the Ustasha order (Jelčić, 1995, p. 521); 'the Ustasha movement encouraged rather than stifled a free spirit' (Jelčić, 1995, p. 522); the Catholic Church and Archbishop Stepinac ought to be dissociated from the Ustasha movement because the 'Ustashas were suspicious of the Catholic Church and especially of the Zagreb Archbishop Stepinac from the start' (Krišto, 1995, p. 462); 'Not only the Catholic Church but also to the Croat people had a right to be proud on account of Stepinac' (Krišto, 1995, p. 473); 'Stepinac undertook to lead the struggle against the atheist ideology of the Communist Party...and resolutely rose to the defence of

the illegally arrested priests and laymen without regard to any religious, national or social differences between the victims' (Jandrić, 1996, p. 385) (Nikolaj Velimirović was rehabilitated in a similar manner in Serbia); Croatia is claimed to have had a strong anti-fascist movement and the Sisak partisan detachment was the 'first military formation in Croatia, in Yugoslavia and in occupied Europe, and the first of this kind' (Vujčić, 1998, p. 154); one should differentiate between democratic anti-Fascism and communist anti-Fascism, the latter 'actually being a national Bolshevik imperialism' (Vujčić, 1998, p. 116); Jasenovac concentration camp was a blot on Pavelić's policy (Jareb, 1995, p. 412); some 85,000 people were killed there including some 50,000 Serbs (Žerjavić, 1995, p. 556), roughly the number of those killed around Bleiburg and on the Way of the Cross (Žerjavić, 1995, p. 557); Yugoslavia's total World War Two losses were about 1,000,000 of whom 530,000 Serbs and 192,000 Croats (Žerjavić, 1995, p. 553); 'totalitarian dictatorship is king' in socialist states (Vujčić, 1995, p. 472); 'Hebrang brought the nation's revolutionary movement to a peak and earned an almost legendary reputation among the Croatian partisans', whereas Tito 'accused' Hebrang and the 'Croats of no lesser crime than separatism' (Kisić-Kolanović, 1995, pp. 432-433). Modern Croat historians, unlike their predecessors V. Novak, B. Krizman and F. Jelić-Butić, gloss over the fascist character of the NDH and the Ustasha movement (of which E. Nolte and M. Broszat have written). Every national and nationalistic historiography relegates Fascism to the background, relativizes it or more or less rehabilitates it. Modern nationalists for the most part seek to portray anti-Fascism as anti-totalitarianism. In this regard I. Goldstein is an exception to some degree; he writes about the fascistization of the Ustasha movement and describes the NDH regime as 'racist and anti-Semitic' but adds that most Croats opposed that (Goldstein, 1996, pp. 321-332). One notices that Goldstein dissociates himself from the modern Goldhagenist thesis of the collective responsibility of peoples. While most Croat revisionists do not deny the Ustasha crimes, they play them down and relativize them by comparing them to those committed by the Communists in order to project in the West an anti-totalitarian historical picture that would normalize Croatia's past.

Although revisionism is more conspicuous in its radical than in its moderate form, it is instructive for methodological purposes to study the latter. D. Bilandžić and B. Petranović as historians of Yugoslavia have been chosen for a number of reasons, above all because one can follow changes in their work on several planes, namely in their description of events, their interpretation of the relatedness of events, and their attempts at synthesis. Only by following all three planes in a historian's approach can one perceive the deep structure of a historical consciousness. One can

discern the global framework of a revisionism and its deeper connecting elements (the changes in the epochal consciousness which in turn modified the outlook on the desirable form of social organization) only by studying the examples of a well-developed historical synthesis, something one cannot see in an isolated interpretation of a process or event from a nation's past. What is more, in a comprehensive approach one finds it easier to detect a cleavage in the historical consciousness which is first shaped by public journalists, conceptualized by historiographers, and rendered absurd by ideologues. It is nevertheless still not possible fully to separate a reappraisal of communist historiography based on new information from a revision inspired by changes in the ideological climate. In keeping track of such changes, the authority of the author is not irrelevant because influential historians set the guidelines for the masses of disoriented authors who are more or less confused by the major changes happening around them.

Bilandžić wrote his *Modern Croatian History* in a climate of Croat radical state-sponsored revisionism. This voluminous work consisting of seventeen large chapters occupying over 800 pages covers Croat history between 1848 and 1998. It discusses among other things the role of Croatia under the Habsburg monarchy, the status of Croats in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and Croatia in the Second World War, focusing however on Croatia's role in socialist Yugoslavia. The last chapters are entitled 'The Aggression of Serbia and the JNA on the Rest of Yugoslavia' and the civil and 'Homeland War' of the 1990s. The author did not use foreign literature or the results of recent archival research of Belgrade historians. Incidentally, in perusing the book one sees that access to the archives is still the monopoly of Belgrade historiographers. Consequently as far as sources are concerned (foreign literature and new archival material), this synthesis leaves much to be desired. An exception is the author's partial use of the archives of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) and his recollections of his conversations with leading Yugoslav communists. One wonders that the author found no use for new archival research into Tito's policy by Belgrade historians during the 1990s (Tripković, Dimić, Borozan, Bogetić and others) to which he could have had access considering that at that time he worked for the Croatian legation in Belgrade. He may also have been suspicious about the selective use of archives. Bilandžić's long experience as party historian and the present complex situation in Croatia must have increased his caution regarding Belgrade sources. Bilandžić's work is predominantly a traditional political history of events. His information is sound, especially in the section on Socialism considering that he was a senior communist official and was well-connected with top leaders. One detects in the book

traces of the author's past communist orientation; given the new nationalistic climate, however, they should not be regarded as a flaw but as a counter-balance to the partiality enforced by the dictates of everyday politics. Bilandžić's 'medium-compass revisionism' rests on the mutual neutralization of an unmastered communist legacy and a current liberal-national orientation.

In spite of the fact that, in contrast to other Croat historians, Bilandžić has performed no volte-face, his new ideological perspective is more conspicuous than is the case with his other colleagues by virtue of his earlier committed communist work. To be fair, the absence of volte-face on the part of this committed historian and political activist would be something unusual because any political activity presupposes adjustment to the mood and political jargon of public opinion. In Bilandžić's latest book all the key events from Croatian history are re-evaluated for the purpose of amplifying Croatian statehood and national identity and their historical role reassessed. Nevertheless, the reinterpretation of history in this book differs from that inspired by the exclusive right-wing chauvinistic revisionism of the 'Pavletić-Tuđman school' and the uncritical acceptance of Croat émigré literature. 'The Homeland War' has accelerated national reconciliation in Croatia and caused a large segment of the public to regard the Ustasha movement and ideology as something normal. While Bilandžić does not condone Ustasha Fascism, he relativizes it by lumping it together with Communism in the same totalitarian group. On the other hand, Petranović does not relativize Serbian Fascism or conservative Chetnik ideology by demonizing Socialism although he makes references to a 'totalitarian' and 'degenerate' brand of Socialism (Petranović, 1994). At the focus of his critique of Socialism is the thesis of a deliberate fragmentation of Serbs in socialist Yugoslavia by the Comintern, Croat communists, Kardelj and Tito.

Both these historians were active in high forums of the LCY in charge of the history of the party and the state. Bilandžić was long a leading official historian of the LCY. In writing history he always strove to be up to date even if this entailed a synthesis devoid of distance. Access to and work in high political bodies can have a positive effect on the historian's outlook but only subsequently. At any rate, one should not always regard such circumstances as an obstacle to impartiality, but rather as a major advantage in a new situation. At the beginning of his new book, Bilandžić observes that 'the collapse of the world of Communism in Europe and the disintegration of Yugoslavia and her order created overnight a time distance essential to the study of deep social processes. If, by any chance, the old regime had had plenty of time to evolve into a democracy and a civil society, one would have had to

wait for such a distance for decades' (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 12), a statement that sums up his rationalization of revisionism. It appears, however, that the true nature of this 'sudden distance' is different. Although there is still no real time distance to speak of, it does not take much to see that in the late 1980s nationalism burst forth with impunity to set the frame for a new historical consciousness, and that not only in Croatia. The desired national imperative was the catalyst of liberation from doctrinaire communist historiography. It was the retort of one dogma to another. Petranović offers a much broader explanation of the necessity of altering the historical picture of the near past (Petranović, 1994), stressing that new vistas have been opened (Petranović, 1994, p. 48) and that prohibited émigré literature is now available. But this cannot account for some of the author's opposite verdicts. Petranović wrote in 1981 that in the late 1960s the 'LCY stood in the forefront of a process of democratization while itself undergoing significant change' (Petranović, 1981, p. 574), that the 'idea and practice of self-management transcended Yugoslavia's frontiers', and that the various ideas of worker participation 'revealed the extent to which the participation of workers in production and its organization had become established as an unavoidable issue of our epoch' (Petranović, 1981, p. 549). Some ten years later he describes self-management as an 'utterly corrupt and demagogic variant of management which placed emphasis on the technique by which the communist establishment clung to power' (Petranović, 1994, p. 284). After hearing such complete reversals of opinion, one is left to wonder whether the new material offered is truly epoch-making or whether the new exclusive verdicts are the product of disillusionment or of a desire to exonerate oneself for formerly supporting Socialism. To what extent have the most prominent historians of Yugoslavia consciously or unconsciously construed historiography as an agent of the 'raising of the new national consciousness?' The impression is that the histories written by those who emerged victorious from the Second World War are being supplanted with a new exclusivism.

The historian's self-image is a characteristic that should be taken with a pinch of salt. We are not talking about historians who wrote public histories and who at the same time carried secrets that were to be made public only after their death (for instance, the memoirs of Rodoljub Čolaković). We are talking primarily about historians with a conviction, though both Bilandžić and Petranović would disagree. Bilandžić is convinced that he was a dissident, and Petranović that he was not a Marxist. Bilandžić no longer conceals the fact that he was educated by Franciscans, and Petranović no longer seems ashamed of his middle-class forefathers and the Chetnik sentiments of his near relatives (Petranović, 1994, p. 193). The Croat historian describes himself belatedly as a former

dissident, claiming that ‘...in my head there was a germ of doubt about the movement, the ideology and the policy to which I belonged and which I served’ (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 14). Petranović for his part alleges: ‘In spite of all, I have never considered myself a Marxist historian; basically I was not in the Party out of an ideological determination’ (Petranović, 1994, p. 23). In his rather jumbled book *The Historian and the Modern Epoch*, Petranović writes: ‘I was a communist, a Yugoslav attached to a reformatory wing within the communist movement’ (Petranović, 1994, p. 246). In the same book one notices contradictions also between his pronouncements; on the one hand he talks of communist totalitarianism (Petranović, 1994, pp. 232, 253) whereas on the other he alleges that ‘there was not a gathering I attended in the country and abroad—they were actually too many to keep count of—at which people did not polemize, proffer explanations or, in some cases, admit “errors”’ (*ibid.*, p. 247). How can there be constant polemic in a totalitarian state of affairs? Both these historians consider themselves domestic dissidents; such rational revisionist formulas are in evidence from Đilas to Furet; they may not always betray a deliberate attempt to justify an about-turn but an unconscious and distorted self-image. The author is convinced that he is ideologically consistent rather than a convertite. Revisionists among scientists in particular are disinclined to admit to labouring under illusions and to publicly denounce their earlier works; on the contrary, they will look upon these as the source of their present consistent position. It is generally difficult to confront oneself in one’s historical memory. In suppressing such memory one does not deny the unpalatable events or their truthfulness, but one’s own commitments, emotions and hopes. For this reason revisionists deal with an unpopular past in much the same manner in spite of their different experience. Scientific workers find this problem much more complex because they cannot disown their anachronous doctorates and books that earned them their titles. In revisionist psychology it is difficult to find examples of open confrontation with an affective concept of one’s own role. The institutional framework for facing up to one’s communist past is most often one of justification and avoidance of confrontation with oneself (personal fallacies are blamed on an authoritarian system or the utopia of one’s youth). Many former Marxists have come to regard their commitment to the extinct regime as something unreal, finding no connection between it and their present affiliation. Nevertheless, ‘the truth of a lost reality’ cannot be eradicated and a biography cannot be completely remade. But if one cannot blot out one’s past, one can at least alter it. Hence many an activist is happy to see and paint himself as a dissident.

Both Bilandžić and Petranović were rather well informed and enjoyed a high vantage point from which to write about socialist Yugoslavia; on the other hand, they had to take account of the official position of the LCY. However, the advent of the multi-party system did not eliminate the epistemological obstacles to impartiality because with it hatred of Yugoslavia, Socialism and Tito burst forth in full rage. The civil war pushed Croat historians even deeper into revisionism. Bilandžić wrote the *History of the SFRY* in 1979 and the *Modern Croatian History* in 1999. The very title of the second book signals terminological revisionism and a revision of content. As a high-ranking functionary of the LCY, he wrote in 1979 that the ‘capitalistic structure of pre-war Yugoslavia was doomed to ruin’ (Bilandžić, 1979, p. 27) and that the ‘force of historical necessity had set the society on the path to revolution’ (1979, p. 81). In 1999, however, he wrote that ‘in 1945 the CPY advanced upon the fundamental values of civic society such as multi-partyism, private ownership, free market, religion and even national traditions’ (1999, p. 204). In the first book he states that through the revolutionary act of exploiting the bourgeoisie the working class became free from the old wage relations (1979, p. 116) and that the ‘once unequal nations in particular were given satisfaction’. Twenty years later he described Yugoslavia as an ‘artificial state creation’ (1999, p. 55) and equated Socialism and Totalitarianism (1999, pp. 134, 174). He describes the decision of the CPY to mount an uprising in 1941 as adventurous (1999, p. 128) and the NDH as a typical one-party dictatorship (1999, p. 124) in an apparent attempt to divest Croatia’s past of Fascism. In the *History of the SFRY* he writes of the ‘humanistic attitude of the CPY to domestic traitors’ and the ‘integrity of the National Liberation Movement’ (1979, p. 91), while in the *Modern Croatian History* he subscribes to the view of the émigré historian Vinko Nikolić that the Yugoslav partisans were the ‘chief culprits’ in the ‘Bleiburg tragedy’ (1999, pp. 187-188). In the same book, the Ustasha racial genocide is presented in aphoristic terms (1999, p. 125): the author mentions the number of exterminated Jews (1999, p. 125), no longer conceals data on the number of expelled ethnic Germans (1999, p. 183), writes about the ‘Bleiburg tragedy’ (1999, p. 187), but avoids discussing the Croat holocaust in Jasenovac and the genocide against Serbs. New killing fields such a Bleiburg are unearthed to suggest that Croats as a whole are nothing but victims, and the metaphor ‘the Way of the Cross’ to create a myth about a nation of murderers (the Serb communists). Zagreb newspapers write that Slovenia is strewn with mass graves and ‘Katyn forests’ (v. Croatian History Page on Internet). On the other hand, the dissociation of the Ustasha movement from the NDH is meant to banish all thought of the collective guilt of a people.

The evolution of Petranović's verdict on the SFRY is only superficially similar, though he too stresses with good reason the need to investigate Bleiburg (Petranović, 1994, p. 113) and the use of émigré literature in order to correct the historical picture (1994, pp. 109-110). Although Petranović's revisionism has different perimeters, it is possible that some of it, and of Bilandžić's revisionism too, is under the influence of émigré literature. Although such literature was not beyond their reach before, the new anti-communist climate has rendered its use imperative. As Petranović asserts, most reassessments of the history of Socialism are not so much a product of new knowledge, but rather of the new ideological climate. Though there are a number of interesting details shedding a new light on certain important processes, there are still no spectacular discoveries to destroy the 'communist mythology'. The Serb historian wrote in 1981 that 'by introducing new dimensions into the cultural development CPY stimulated: creative freedom, abandoning the socialist-realist formula, opening the culture to the world...The Party on the one hand worked for the equality and comprehensive development of national cultures while on the other it promoted a critical acceptance of the cultural heritage. The bringing together of various cultures and the acceptance of progressive cultural accomplishments suited the democratic development of Yugoslavia' (Petranović, 1981, p. 516). In 1993, he thought differently and wrote that Yugoslavia was 'characterized by a democratic facade of government, a basically authoritarian system' (1993, p. 9). Petranović's assessment that 'by creating a federation the CPY solved the national question already during the National Liberation Struggle' (1981, p. 332) and established a 'democratic, federal community of equal peoples' (1981, p. 395) evolved into the verdict that the 'negative historical experience of the seven decades' long development of Yugoslavia far outweighed its positive aspects' (1993, p. 30) and the assertion that the 'communist forces in the Yugoslav state, in keeping with their national policy, stimulated the programmes of the neglected peoples, which objectively worked to the detriment of others, above all the Serbs as the majority people' (1993, p. 17). The author writes critically about the 'pro-Yugoslavia narcosis of the Serb communists' (1993, p. 130) and that 'in the last decades the communists tore Yugoslavia to pieces' (1993, p. 131). The evolution of his views is even more pronounced with regard to the role of Tito, and this is where he is more radical than Bilandžić. Whereas in 1981 he praised the crucial roles of Tito and the eighth conference of Zagreb communists in 1928 'which condemned the destructive effects of factionalism and sectarianism' (1981, p. 73) and ventured the opinion that Sima Marković was removed as a 'standard-bearer of factional infighting' (Ibid., p. 74), in 1993 he saw Marković as a 'victim of Stalinism' after whose 'fall

Yugoslav communists drifted into the orbit of influence of Bulgarian communists influential in the Comintern' (1993, p. 41). Petranović first wrote that in the 1960s Tito 'drew attention to the imperative of ideological-political and action unity' (1981, p. 574) and 'regarded as pernicious the mutual confrontation of the federation and the republics, two inseparable halves of our self-managing organism' (1981, p. 577), and that in the struggle against Croat nationalism in 1971 the 'president of the LCY called for the most determined action' (1981, p. 581). At the height of the civil war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s, he portrays Tito as a charismatic (1993, p. 86) and a charismatic leader (1993, p. 131) who harmed and broke up Serbia and was to blame for the Kosovo crisis (1993, p. 108). What is more, 'Tito had a phobia about Serbs'; 'in striving to create a polycentric Balkan federation, he worked to the detriment of the concept of Yugoslavia' (1993, p. 120); and 'he intervened only if and when he sensed that he and his power were in danger' (1993, p. 131). Petranović's conclusion is that Tito's mode of government was irresponsible and voluntaristic (1993, p. 132). It was at that time that he fell in with Dobrica Ćosić's inappropriate and sweeping descriptions of Tito as a ruler characterized by 'poor taste, spiritual poverty and poor education', 'a simple man with a will of iron', 'a demagogue, bon vivant, pragmatic', 'a collector, a grabber who would not miss out on anything, a man with an insatiable lust for possessions' (Petranović, 1994, pp. 208-209). The facts that Tito adhered to his principles and to doctrine, that he was not given to nepotism, and that he bequeathed everything to the state do not seem to weigh in his favour here. In balancing Tito's accomplishments, Petranović tends to be one-sided, which is in contrast with his otherwise manifest efforts to put forward many-layered appraisals. When one encounters sweeping assertions on the part of an erudite historian such as Petranović, one wonders whether his conformity to the anti-Titoist climate is not the product of some other motives as well. At the centre of Petranović's revision of history is his view of the communists' national policy, evolving from the verdict that it was a consistent policy of national equality to the pronouncement that its deliberate aim was to split up the Serbs into several federal units and to break up Serbia by introducing autonomous provinces. In Petranović's work, the socialist past is still alive, not as a model to be imitated, but as a constant warning against, and a reminder of, the weakening and fragmentation of the national identity. The personification of this negative picture is Tito, and that more among Serb than Croat historians. Tuđman was being pragmatic when he warned Croat anti-communists that Croats could not afford to disown Tito because his enormous international prestige should be capitalized on to promote the young Croat state.

A belated disappointment over the breakdown of Yugoslavia is the source of Petranović's revisionism, as distinct from Bilandžić's partly triumphalist justification of Croat sovereignty. The spirit of the day has left its mark, so radical revisionism is more pronounced in Croatia than in Yugoslavia. In addition to Bleiburg, a myth about Jazovka (as the opposite of Jasenovac) was created in Croatia by the HDZ and launched after it came to power. At first, there was talk of 10,000 victims of a partisan reprisal, then of 60,000; in fact, a total of 245 Ustashas were killed in combat near Kراسић at the end of 1942, as acknowledged by Josip Manolić (Gruden, Gabrić, Buljan, 1997). There were attempts to rename the Jasenovac memorial museum into a Museum of All Croatian Victims (on the model of Bitburg), but the idea was given up following strong protests, especially in the United States (Reich, 1996). Mate Granić used to warn that the rehabilitation of the Ustasha movement and ideology was an obstacle to Croatia's admission to the European Union; consequently, in order to normalize relations with Israel, there was a partial acknowledgement of the quisling character of the NDH (Gruden, Gabrić, Buljan, 1997).

One does not see in Bilandžić (and for that matter in Petranović) the kind of radical revisionism and extensive use of émigré literature one perceives in Croatia in the works of F. Tuđman, D. Jelčić or H. Šošić. Nonetheless, as evidenced by his silence about and underratement and reinterpretation of inglorious episodes from the national history, the Croat historian has swung more to the right than his opposite Serb number has in the general drift of the epochal consciousness; what is more, his theoretical explanation of this turn-round is transparent and clumsy. Bilandžić's incorporation in his reinterpretation of Croat history of the modern and fashionable theory of totalitarianism—that is, the critique of communists and Ustashas as extremists as opposed to the democratic HSS party (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 172)—is rather superficial and unconvincing, though sufficient emphasis is laid on Croat anti-Fascism as a major component of the new Croat historical identity. Petranović's appraisal of the National Liberation Struggle is less modified. Petranović writes that although the victorious partisans 'absolutized the treachery in publishing and in the judiciary', he makes clear that they, not the Chetniks, were vindicated by history for their strategy of fighting the occupier and were for this reason accepted in the world anti-Fascist league (Petranović, 1994, pp. 167-169). He also openly challenges the rehabilitation of Nedić (Petranović, 1994, pp. 179-180). This is the internal boundary of his revisionism and this is why radical Serb revisionists cannot accept him, for in spite of his imposing and substantial opus, Petranović has not been admitted to the SANU. The study of the

evolution of his views is interesting precisely because they are devoid of utilitarian or irrational populist sentiments.

No version of modern revisionism will deprive itself of the anti-fascist moral capital although anti-Fascism is seen as being of many kinds—communist, Chetnik, Domobran, democratic or anti-totalitarian—as the case may be. As every government in Europe is well aware, anti-Fascism is a very useful argument in support of one's own legitimacy—it is always the enemy who was on the side of Fascism, never one's own regime. Although Bilandžić relativizes the partisans' anti-Fascism by comparing Bolshevik to Ustasha extremism, he takes care to mention that the partisan units in Croatia comprised 60.4 per cent Croats (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 182). Aware of the fact that Europe continues to value anti-Fascism, he strives to dissociate Croat partisan anti-Fascism and communist totalitarianism. Here too his reinterpretation of history is selective because he bears in mind the new allies' sensitivity to certain aspects of the past. Truth to be told, Yugoslav revisionist historians also brand domestic Socialism as totalitarianism for similar reasons. Generally speaking, the demonization of the socialist past in East Europe is a major component of the new governments' 'democratic' legitimacy. This demonization is of no use to science because it is gradually growing into a myth about a public enemy, that is into a potential legend—and a mainstay of the homogenization of state-sponsored national ideology—about a defeated dangerous internationalism. The critique of totalitarianism is a universal and unspecific formula used by many 'sobered up' communist intellectuals in reinterpreting history and in developing a 'democratic national self-consciousness'. Balkan historians in particular are even more dramatically torn between two centuries, two types of epochal consciousness, two different kinds of patriotism, old and new orientations, and old and new allies. Leftists who remained true to their beliefs after 1990 and continued to advocate democracy and social justice and to criticize nationalism are relatively few. A consistent ideological-political commitment implies the correction, ripening and continual revision of attitudes, as well as a continuity of fundamental viewpoints.

As regards the repudiation of his former convictions, the Croat academician is quite specific: 'Both totalitarian ideologies—the Ustasha relying on fascist Italy and Hitler's Germany, and the communist looking to Stalin's Russia—were two colossal fallacies that broke up the HSS (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 134). He discovers the real historical mainstay of new democratic Croatia in the HSS; in his last book the brothers Radić and V. Maček are perhaps the most positive personalities. The author's sympathy for the Home Guards and the HSS, while not for the Ustashes and Pavelić, betrays an attempt to reinforce Croatia's new pro-Western

line in historiography by strongly condemning both the extreme Left and Right. Has the rehabilitation of the HSS been chosen as a prerequisite for successful integration into the European Union and for the normalization of Croat past and its dissociation from totalitarianism? In the new conditions of Croatian, not Yugoslav, sovereignty, one should both criticize totalitarian Bolshevism and look for a new democratic ideal in the past. According to Bilandžić, this new ideal is Maček's pro-Western HSS; although it was not much of a political success, it resisted totalitarianism successfully. By describing the Ustasha and socialist dictatorships as totalitarian, and the HSS as their democratic victim, Bilandžić lays emphasis on the continuity of Croatia's ill fate. This is evidenced by the chapter entitled *The Infiltration of Nazi-Fascist and Bolshevik Ideology of Croatia Between the Two Wars* (Bilandžić, 1999, pp. 107-120). Lest one should get wrong impressions, the author finds it necessary to develop an appropriate picture of history and make it conform to the tastes of the new powerful allies. Bilandžić's paragons in Croat tradition differ from those of the HDZ, the latter regarding as the greatest sons of the Croat people, namely Tomislav the unifier, Starčević the father, Radić the victim, Šturmec the saint, Tuđman the renovator. Today as during the NDH the extreme conservatives seek to trace the ethnogenesis of the Croat people back to the prophet Zarathustra and insist that they and the Serbs have completely different roots. The Croats are said to be at least 4,500 years old, and academician D. Jelčić wrote the epilogue for the memoirs of Ante Pavelić (Gruden, Gabrić, Buljan, 1997). In Petranović's work, there are even fewer points of contact with radical Serb revisionism. Serb academicians rank Nedić as one of the 100 most prominent Serbs, and the Serb cultural elite regard (according to a 1997 survey) St. Sava as the most prominent national figure of all time, followed by Karađorđe, Njegoš and Karadžić (Ilić, 1998, p. 35). A cursory look at two secondary school history textbooks reveals that there is far less revisionism in the Yugoslav than in the Croatian (Gaćeša, Živković, Radović, 1994; Vujčić, 1998). In the Yugoslav textbook the appraisal of the essence of the National Liberation Struggle and of communist anti-Fascism remains unchanged; the Chetnik movement and Nedić are not rehabilitated on account of their policy of collaboration with the occupying forces; the crucial contribution of the Red Army to the liberation from Fascism is stressed; and Tito is paid tribute for his war-time and partly peace-time accomplishments though his personality cult, extravagant habits and irrational borrowing abroad are criticized (Gaćeša, Živković, Radović, 1994). In Croatia, radical revisionism is developing as part of a living re-clericalization, and missionary Catholicism has been declared a component part of the national identity. In Serbia, the most influential nationally-minded intellectuals see in the

orthodoxy of St. Sava a key component of the national identity, and Patriarch Pavle was regarded as the most prominent Serb in 1997 (Ilić, 1998, p. 362). The Monastery of Chilandar has been proclaimed the fountainhead of Serb spirituality, and some academician historians are giving serious thought to the thesis that the Serbs are the oldest of all peoples. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the extent of clericalization in Serbia is less, whereas the popularity of the Patriarch has been attributed by Ilić to the absence of a secular leader who could fulfil the expectations of the nationally-minded intellectuals in the new situation.

In Bilandžić, one sees no clericalism, Party-of-Rightism or pan-Croatism. He does not look upon the continuity of Croat history as a bulwark of Catholicism and makes considerable effort to discover the turning points of Croat history during its socialist phase. The author's endeavours to discuss the various processes on several planes is evident. But even here his appraisals are not free from contradiction: whereas in 1979 he described the purges carried out by Tito as the 'denouement and the solution of the political crisis' (Bilandžić, 1979, p. 426) 'which was accompanied by ever stronger conflicts that began to compromise the evolutive process of constructing self-managing, federal and non-aligned Yugoslavia' (Bilandžić, 1979, p. 441); in 1999 he condemned the same act as one in a string of party-state coups that 'cut short the democratization and established strong-arm rule (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 629). The 1999 book accords the event a central place. The controversial tenth session of the LCY Central Committee in 1970, which officially confirmed the course of Croat nationalism (a policy Tito at first supported, only to condemn it later under Kardelj's influence), is described as a crucial 'historic event' and treated in a separate chapter (Bilandžić, 1999, pp. 557-568). Bilandžić writes that the 'tenth session opened the gates to a freer political life and spiritual output' and 'politics became open for the citizens' (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 579). Some Serb historians describe in a similar way the equally risky 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' in Serbia in the late 1980s seen as 'the happening of the people'. Bilandžić's appraisal of the tenth session in his *History of the SFRY* is much more reserved. Even less convincing is his fashionable position that the absence of a middle class caused the rise of totalitarianism in Yugoslavia. 'The liquidation of private ownership, the purges of top and high-ranking civil servants from the state apparatus and their substitution with semi-educated personnel from partisan ranks, the drastic reduction to 3:1 of wage differences between minister and labourer, the emigration and death in combat of a segment of the middle class, caused the disappearance of the middle class from the structure of society, which had a very negative effect on the social life, especially on

the prospects for democratization and on the limiting of tendencies towards totalitarianism' (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 224). Two decades earlier, he wrote critically about a 'process of growing social differences and enrichment coming into being. Some sort of so-called middle class was in the making' (Bilandžić, 1979, p. 411). These contradictory views are as fashionable as they are questionable: was it possible in a country of peasants for a middle class to emerge overnight as a bastion of petty bourgeois democratism, especially at a time when leftist consciousness was epochal in ecumenical proportions? Also, what party does not shake up the key administrative personnel upon coming to power? What is there to say in the defence of the middle class as the source of manpower and the voting base of fascist movements? The historian here clearly manifests an unhistorical attitude. Bilandžić is not the only one guilty of a clumsy effort to rewrite the past of his nation in order to make it conform to an epochal consciousness that has clearly moved to the right. The critique of totalitarianism is a good material with which to construct an anti-totalitarian national identity as a precondition of acceptance by the European Union. What matters less is that in doing so the author contradicts the very works he wrote during his leftist phase which earned him his distinctions and prestige as a scholar. He has sacrificed his personal consistency to a new Staatsraison.

It would be wrong to believe that the foregoing critical remarks relate only to the Croat historian. They are of a general nature, just as historiographic revisionism in Eastern Europe is a universal and rather consistent phenomenon. It would be even more wrong to interpret these critical remarks as an outright negation of the scientific contribution of Bilandžić's book, which is not in question either as a whole or in detail. The synthesis is the product of much effort and the revision offers a whole range of interesting observations, subsequent appraisals and cautious hypotheses with regard to Yugoslav political history. The new circumstances have encouraged a useful, necessary and important reassessment of the official illusions, perceptions and deliberate omissions on the part of communist historiographers. As Bilandžić puts forward in this respect many pertinent observations that prove earlier appraisals wrong, certain parts of his book represent a serious scientific revision in a positive sense of the word. Besides, it is hard to believe that the book will receive the official approval of Croat nationalistic politicians. The book is basically a moderate revision characterized by more or less successful attempts to offer a multi-layered interpretation of certain events and periods from the Croat past. This is best illustrated by the author's attitude to Socialism which is not undifferentiated. Bilandžić is clearly torn between his past as a communist official historian and his present realization that Croatian sovereignty must rest on a

historiographic foundation. However, the resulting tension is fruitful in certain aspects. On the one hand, the author unjustifiably reduces communist totalitarianism to a generation problem (explaining it as an inclination towards adventurism and Utopia, something that attracts every young generation) (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 197) and not as the epochal consciousness of the century; on the other, one cannot deny his successful attempt here and there to paint a judicious picture of Croatia's socialist past. However, his rehabilitation of the nationalist opponents of Socialism detracts from this attempt. The author's observations about the relations in the communist leadership are interesting. Bilandžić has a sound knowledge of this thanks to his personal experience of high party bodies and his talks with top communist leaders. The impression is that there are no subsequent additions or subtractions in the reconstruction of these conversations. In the present situation, this is no small virtue in a historian. But Bilandžić's attitude to the communist past of Croatia is ambiguous and somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, the author presents exhaustive information on the modernization performance of Yugoslav Socialism (Bilandžić, 1999, pp. 630 ff.) and takes a judicious view of the difficulties in this development stemming from the abundance of contradictions weighing down the country. The historian here shows wariness of sweeping qualifications and one-sided verdicts. Furthermore, he clearly distances himself from the Ustasha movement although in modern Croat social thought this movement is being rehabilitated in various ways and relieved of its fascist burden. It would be wrong to construe the author's partisan past as the only obstacle to a radical revision of history because that would unjustly underestimate his motives as a scientist. Bilandžić presents a fairly balanced appraisal of Tito's role though he occasionally exaggerates his pro-Croat affiliation and somewhat plays down his manoeuvring and his shifting emphasis on this affiliation. The author does not stress sufficiently Tito's facility to present himself to every environment precisely as that environment would like to see him (to the Army as a Yugoslav, to the Serbs as their wartime leader, to the Croats as a Croat, etc.). Krleža's pro-Yugoslav orientation is underrated in a similar fashion. One understands the author's decision to include in his reinterpretation of the past a picture of the nation's leaders painted in national hues because that would be in keeping with his vision of the Croat question. Whereas in 1979 he was clearly in favour of strengthening the community of the Yugoslav nations and nationalities, two decades later he complained that in the 1970s 'one had to live in a common cage' (Bilandžić, 1999, p. 684). Serb policy is evidently what changed the author's attitude to Yugoslavia. On the other hand, Petranović asserts that the 'Serbs and Croats were able live together in Yugoslavia on condition that one did not talk about the genocide against

the Serbs' (Petranović, 1993, p. 100). Both authors are preoccupied with greater-Serb hegemony. But while Bilandžić sees this hegemony as the main obstacle to a life together and to Croatian sovereignty, Petranović alleges that it was a communist myth created to dismember Serbdom. One might think at first that Bilandžić's views are the necessary packaging for a deeper unchanged core, a 'diplomatic passport' as it were without which every historiography in Croatia today would be condemned as Yugoslav nostalgia. What is more probable is that Bilandžić believes today, as he did before, that one can influence the scientific public with greater success if one adjusts his way of thinking to the current ideological imperatives rather than if he remains openly dissident. One is of the impression that although Bilandžić has never considered socio-integrative thought as an obstacle to scientific discovery (neither in his communist nor in his nationalistic phase), by toeing the line he has succeeded in remaining provocative. From the point of view of the tensions between his purely scientific motives and his bent for socio-integrative thought, the contradictions in his scientific opus are partly hermeneutically understandable.

Bilandžić's book represents a new synthesis of modern Croatian history written from the point of view of the independent Croat state. Bilandžić writes clearly and vividly, though the work as a whole is theoretically and methodologically not sufficiently thought-out. The book is dominated by the traditional presentation of events in reconstructing the political side to a historical trend, there is much chronology in the account, and the reconstruction of the processes is not wholly successful. Though the readability of the book is no small feat, one would like to see in it more description of everyday events, mentalities and stereotypes, more attention to social history, and greater differentiation of processes evolving at different tempos. The book lacks comparative historiography and is dominated by the traditional monographic approach, whereas the easy publicistic style of writing is devoid of a solid theoretical basis. To be fair, there is no radical departure in this regard in other historians from former Yugoslav republics, all of whom rely on the traditional event-by-event presentation in their historiographic revision. It would be interesting to make a comparative analysis of the radical and moderate revisionist historiographies in the former Yugoslav republics written in the first decade following the collapse of Socialism and the SFRY and to establish the correlation between the degree of revisionism and the theoretical depth of the approach. It appears that it is easier to revise the past in the sphere of events than in the domain of social or ideological history. Furthermore, a systematic comparison of the new national historiographies could reveal the extent to which exclusive approaches feed on each other, for instance when a book is written in reply to another

book. Exclusive monographic presentation of this or that version of history is of necessity incomplete because nearly all the versions in existence trace their roots to the scientific-political culture of the 'liberators'. All these versions have a strong patriotic charge and tend to vacillate between two extremes, namely Communism and nationalism. The 'new Bilandžić' cannot be understood without drawing a parallel with the 'nationally sobered' Serb historians, nor can they all be understood without reference to the collective 'patriotic' intoxication with the 'liberation' and to the new projects of national integration of society. At the emotional core of Serb and Croat revisionism is the belief that the nation is in danger. On both sides the history of socialist Yugoslavia is being rewritten in the spirit of revived national romanticism to conform to the formula of a confrontation between a totalitarian communist past and a sobered pluralist democracy and nation. In doing so, many former leftist intellectuals want to keep abreast of the new epochal consciousness and the emphasis it puts on national exclusivity, confessional identity, human rights, pluralist democracy. The severity of their critique of Socialism may be attributed to, among other things, their efforts to redeem themselves for their erstwhile unreserved apology of it. It appears that the highest scientific institutions of present-day Croatia are not rewriting history chiefly to neutralize any nostalgia about Yugoslavia (this was done by the civil war in 1991-95) or to rid the Croats of their Titoist past (the notorious NDH is a much greater problem on account of the Jews and the European Union); their fundamentally anti-Yugoslav stance is aimed at portraying the support of the Yugoslav idea among the Croats as an incidental phase in their search for national and state independence. The young state finds it important to root the continuity of its statehood, if only limited, in history.

Bilandžić's reinterpretation of the past will no doubt add to the present efforts in Croatia to deny the historical legitimacy of multi-national socialist Yugoslavia (by projecting it as a totalitarian crime-ridden state and by equating the communists with the Ustashas) in spite of his care to give a multi-layered account of Croatia's socialist past and not to embellish the media-favoured overall anti-communist picture. Bilandžić neither insinuates nor twists the main chronological information and events. What is less reliable, however, is his association and causal interpretation of events; especially unconvincing and premature, as far as the young state is concerned, is his synthetic vertical of Croat history against a backdrop of chaotic Balkan affairs. It is important to note that this book belongs to the twentieth century; it has not outgrown it because the author's passions reflect on the one hand a Cold-War perception of Socialism as totalitarianism, and on the other Croatia's present aversion to Balkan integration. It is hard to believe that

such pivotal attitudes can be useful in envisioning a twenty-first century society. Although the author tried not to be affected by the exclusiveness of his own environment, he nevertheless remains prisoner of the revived global romanticism characteristic of twentieth-century national historiography throughout the former Yugoslavia. Also, he has not risen above the predominant passions of his age: one notices that he tries to suppress the dark aspect of the past of his own nation and fails to resolve the crucial conflicts of recollection.

Generally speaking, the revisionist work of the historians of Yugoslavia reviewed here should be hermeneutically understood and ideologically-critically interpreted not in order to relativize it but to establish the ratio of its two basic segments: the necessary maturation of scientific appraisal on the one hand and the conscious or unconscious changes brought about under the influence of the epochal consciousness on the other. Conversion is not infrequently an unconscious process. The impression is that the two historians have judged socialist historiography too harshly by regarding it as the usual ideology of the victors. Such exaggerated pronouncements are evocative of similar revisionist attempts by Ernst Nolte and Francois Furet to demythologize anti-Fascism, a project that met with considerable resistance from European historians. Participants in the German Historikerstreit in 1986-87 vigorously resisted the efforts to rehabilitate Fascism by equating anti-Fascist literature with history books written by the victors, as well as strongly pointed out the unique character of Auschwitz. The import of this heated scientific controversy ought not to be lost on domestic historians because one is apt to be less critical of Fascism at a time of reviving nationalism and to depreciate anti-Fascist thought as victorious rhetoric. If we were to dismiss nearly everything written about Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1990 as trivia concocted by the victors, then we could also relativize defeated Fascism and treat it as an ordinary crime that fades with the passage of time, as well as allow the apologists of Fascism to pass judgements on history as equal arbiters. There is however no danger of such a thing happening because the world is largely agreed on the essence of Fascism and the unprecedented hideousness of its crimes. There is less doubt with regard to Fascism than with Socialists as far as their condemnation is concerned. Now matter how much historiography in socialist Yugoslavia was encumbered by ideology, it played a major part in debunking chauvinism of all kinds and was part of the anti-fascist consciousness of the time. To reduce it to the mere rhetoric of the victorious side is to justify the new revisionism by means of transparent trivialization.

Bilandžić's and Petranović's historiographic revisionism bears out their efforts to confront their past orientation critically, as well as lays

bare major contradictions in their adjustment to the new epochal consciousness. In spite of the foregoing turn-rounds by both historians, it would be an exaggeration to conclude that our 'history only teaches us not to trust historians'. What is more probable is that the amplitudes of historical consciousness are broader and more dramatic in the Balkans than in other less seismic regions. In contrast to other Marxist historians, e.g., E. Hobsbaum, P. Anderson and I. Wallerstein, who have not changed their views in spite of the epochal change that has taken place, the historians of Yugoslavia have found it not easy to rise above the 'extreme passions of the epoch' (Hobsbaum) and to transcend the vacillations of their ideological consciousness (between internationalism and nationalism, Communism and anti-Communism, etc.). In the Balkans it has not been easy for social thought to transcend the prevalent contradictions of the region; its scientists have frequently wavered in broad amplitudes between the apology of the present and the demonization of the previous regime and its ideology. This is only partly explainable by the risks the historian takes when he decides to 'strike while the iron is hot' rather than wait until things have cooled down. Also, lack of a firm ideological-political stance is a major source of vacillation between a pragmatic and a fashionable approach. One does not readily abandon well thought-out standpoints that rise above the routine, verbal and utilitarian. The fact that many a scientist has been divorced from Marxism by sudden concern about his nation in the form of overt or covert nationalism can be attributed precisely to such circumstances (Kuljić, 1997). This does not mean, however, that one does not perform volte-face as a result of a traumatic experience, a profound disappointment, or a wish to redeem himself by throw the weight of his authority behind a new vision of society. Nevertheless, it is extremely difficult to find a scientist who is ready to sacrifice his consistence openly for the sake of a higher ideal, that is, to own up in public that he has laboured under illusions and that the main premises of his work are wrong; and those who disown their earlier works in public are even rarer. Scientists are more inclined to rationalize their volte-face consciously or unconsciously so as not to destroy the image of the consistence of their orientation and call into question the purpose of their profession or their personal dignity. One should always be circumspect about rationalizations because they are part of the scientist's self-image. However, with regard to prominent scientists in particular, one should also be very careful in analysing their personal revisionist motives because a reversal of a strongly individual attitude cannot always be attributed to trivial conversion.

##### *5. Historiographic Revisionism and Blind Patriotism*

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 (Habermas). 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. Ever since 1968, the alternative to the right-wing concept of the nation in West Germany has been the liberal Left with its insensitive constitutional patriotism and the slogan 'Deutschland denken heisst Auschwitz denken'. In a country preoccupied with a genocidal past, a controversy over identity between a non-conformist cosmopolitan Left and a 'patriotically awakened Right' has proved useful because it has crystallized a non-chauvinistic identity alternative. Habermas has demonstrated that the degree of attention paid to Auschwitz is an indicator of how the republic is civilized, as well as that integration on the nineteenth-century nation state model is anachronous and hazardous. The situation is just the opposite here, where at work is the normalization of the nation state through emphasis on others' crimes and own victims. 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.

All revisionism rests on selective forgetfulness. This paper demonstrates this by discussing the main changes of attitude on the part of the two historians of Yugoslavia. The light thrown on modern revisionist trends was to show up the triviality of the domestic versions. The task would have been easier with reference to historians concerned with narrower topics from the national past. 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 rise 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. In the interpretation of the aforementioned turn-rounds the preponderance of the history of structure and process over event historiography is noticeable.

Many historians do not look on the past as a key to the understanding of the present, but look on the needs of the present as a key to rewriting the past. For this reason the fundamental differences between Croat and Serb historians in their appraisal of key events from the common past cannot be as theoretically fruitful as the Lamprecht-Streit between the proponents of event and social history at the beginning of the twentieth century. They are not even as ideologically-critically nuanced as the intra-German Historikerstreit of 1986-87 or the international Goldhagen debate of 1996-97. The Croat-Serb differences are more reminiscent of the controversy imbued with national revanchism between German and French historians (Theodor Mommsen and Fustel de Coulanges) regarding the historical right to Alsace following the Franco-Prussian War. It should nevertheless be borne in mind that the differences between Serb and Croat historians mentioned in this article are the result of the confrontation of moderate rather than radical versions of Serb and Croat revisionism, that is, moderate in the sense of equally contradictory but not so sharp turn-rounds in scientific attitude, not in the sense of judicious appraisals. The moderate versions of revisionism are neither typical or dominant: radical, exclusive versions are both more numerous and influential. It would be wrong to assume that the ongoing radical national-restorative reinterpretation of history has rendered anachronous its critique from the point of view of the post-national identity. On the contrary, the critical reappraisal of the national identity as the sole or ultimate scientific strategic goal of historiography is more topical today than ever before.

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