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Published in 2023 by the Institute for Recent History of Serbia, *Trends in Contemporary Serbian Historiography* offers an assessment of the current state of Serbian historiography in the early twenty-first century, as noted by the editor Mile Bjelajac. The volume addresses the challenges facing domestic historiography, explores its most significant issues, and examines how the field aligns with worldwide trends and scholarly developments.

In addition to the preface, the collection comprises eleven papers covering a range of topics. Mile Bjelajac's contribution examines the relationship between contemporary historiography and the findings of earlier generations of scholars. He argues that the political climate and ideological constraints of their time led some researchers to perceive their work as marginalized, criticized, or even obstructed. Particularly noteworthy issues include Miša Leković's studies on the March negotiations in 1943 and Venceslav Glišić's efforts to update the figures of those executed in Kraljevo and Kragujevac in 1941. Some academics have intentionally avoided particular topics due to concerns about potential criticism. Beyond its unquestionable intellectual worth, the contribution sends an encouraging message, inviting new scholars to pursue their work without fear and to engage with delicate subjects without regard for external reactions.

Mihael Antolović and Biljana Šimunović-Bešlin explore the impact of digitalization and modern technologies on the humanities, with a particular focus on historiography. Antolović discusses

the advantages of digitalization for the discipline, including enhanced accessibility and efficiency, while also presenting key works of Serbian historiography in the field of digital history. He explores the situation of Serbian historiography in an increasingly media-driven era, noting the obstacles created by altering standards of academic performance evaluation. According to the author, these norms contribute to the overproduction of substandard scholarship. The history of digital technologies and the evolution of digital history represents only one aspect of Biljana Šimunović-Bešlin's contribution. She emphasizes the significant impact of the availability of digital sources and literature online, which has considerably simplified historical research. However, she argues that these advancements have not yet surpassed the importance of traditional research methods conducted in archives and libraries. Professor Šimunović-Bešlin underlines that, despite the growing prevalence of digital resources, historians still primarily rely on these conventional institutions for their research procedures.

The complex personality of Nikola Pašić, a statesman and politician who played a significant role in Serbian and Yugoslav history, is examined by Gordana Krivokapić-Jović. The importance of studying Pašić as an ideologue, a politician, and a private citizen is made explicit by her contribution. Instead of only providing a brief manual for creating Pašić's biography, her text offers a thorough framework that may be used to analyze any important historical figure in contemporary Serbian history. By depicting powerful people as active actors influenc-

ing historical processes rather than just as players in the geopolitical agendas of superpowers, the author shows the significance of comprehending their multifaceted nature.

Over the last three decades, one of the most important concerns in Serbian historiography has been the revision of history, particularly in regard to the First and Second World Wars, as well as the socialist Yugoslav era. Following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the newly established states, such as Montenegro, sought to validate their existence by emphasizing their differences from their former compatriots. In his article, Aleksandar Raković critically deconstructs the efforts of Montenegrin historiography and journalism, which he terms “quasi-science,” to assert the uniqueness of Montenegrin identity in contrast to Serbian identity. He examines the origins and evolution of attempts by certain Montenegrin publicists and historians to distance the people of Montenegro from their Serbian roots, history, and culture.

Paramilitary formations and organizations have emerged as a prominent topic in public discourse, particularly in the decades since the Cold War’s end. Dmtar Tasić, who has been researching this subject for nearly two decades, delivers his findings on paramilitary organizations globally and in the Balkans. Tasić’s paper traces the history of paramilitary groups in the region since the start of the First World War. He defines paramilitary groups as violent, militarized units formed not only by state authorities but also by other power centers with a purpose of complementing or replacing regular armies in situations when they cannot be deployed for a variety of reasons.

The next three papers look at the relationship between Russian/Soviet, German, and French historiographies and Serbian historiography. Aleksej Timofejev and Zoran Bajin investigate the history of interactions between Soviet and Yugoslav historians during the period when the USSR and socialist Yugoslavia existed. The key finding of the research is that, despite sharing identical ideologies, state structures, and a Marxist view of history, the two countries had distinct perspectives on specific historical events, with some of these differences being fundamentally opposed.

Natalija Dimić Lompar examined how contemporary German historiography has approached topics related to Serbian and Yugoslav history, while Dušan Bajagić explored the French perspective on Serbian history and historiography in recent decades. By analyzing several significant works on recent Serbian history from the past twenty years, the authors demonstrate that the revision of history, particularly in relation to the Serbs, has gained momentum in both German and French historiography. The fact that the Serbian side in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s was blamed by the West for the commencement of the hostilities had a significant impact on historians’ perspectives and opinions. Unfortunately, such conditions have led the majority of Yugoslav history’s problems to be regarded in a simplistic manner and re-examined through the prism of Yugoslavia’s disintegration.

Boris Mosković discussed the roots of Yugoslavia in Serbian historiography during the 1970s and 1980s, as well as how interwar Yugoslavia was perceived during the communist period. The author emphasized the KPJ and Josip Broz Tito’s lasting effects on historians’ per-

spectives. As Serbian historians began to express more independent views on the first Yugoslavia, they were met with strong criticism by historians in Zagreb, Skopje, and Sarajevo who adhered to earlier interpretations. The historiographical dispute reflected the Yugoslav peoples' disagreements over economic, national, and other problems.

The edited volume *Trends in Contemporary Serbian Historiography* makes an important contribution to the field by assessing the historiographical treatment of various current topics and providing an overview of foreign historians' perspec-

tives on Serbian and Yugoslav history and historiography. The variety of themes covered enriches the book, serving as an indicator of recent development in Serbian historiography while also emphasizing its current challenges. This publication has a twofold significance: it not only reflects the achievements of domestic historiography to date, but it also serves as a roadmap for the future, offering essential guidance that will definitely assist the next generation of historians in navigating the obstacles they are likely to face.

Dušan MILJKOVIĆ

COVID-19 and the Left. The Tyranny of Fear, eds. Elena Louisa Lange, Geoff Shullenberger. Abingdon-New York: Routledge, 2024, 192.

Since March 2020, the global phenomenon known as COVID-19 was bound to become a legitimate subject of scholarly study as independent judiciaries still hesitate to react in many instances. Its potential involvement in the controlled demolition of the existing social, economic, and political order, as well as orchestrated "emergencies" and crises such as health, climate, food, migrants, energy, and regional wars, guarantees that it will remain a central focus in both natural and social sciences across various disciplines. As skilled interpreters of the past and contemporaries, historians, along with social scientists and other humanities researchers, are in charge of responding promptly to current events and, at the very least, providing valuable records to assist future generations in understanding recent developments.

However, beyond professional duty and ethical responsibility, personal courage is still essential. Elena Louisa Lange resigned from her comfortable po-

sition at the University of Zurich due to moral concerns and chose to pursue the uncertain path of a free intellectual, opposing the passive observation of the decline of educational programs shaped by unelected, obscure entities. Something similar happened to David A. Hughes of the University of Lincoln, who is a fierce opponent of the expansion of "techno-feudalism" and "biodigital totalitarianism", both of which opened the door for unconventional class conflict that he termed "omniwar". Meanwhile, Fabio Vighi continues to resist at Cardiff University despite his heresy regarding the convulsions of "senile capitalism", sustained only through a permanent state of emergency.

The book's editors, Elena Louisa Lange and Geoff Shullenberger, argue that authoritarian measures like lockdowns, mandated vaccinations, and enforced mask-wearing have led to the biopolitical disenfranchisement of human rights and allowed state-corporate institutions to en-