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## **HISTORY OF SERBIA FROM 19 TO 21 CENTURY OF HOLM SUNDHAUSSEN AND ITS RECEPTION IN THE SERBIAN SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY\*\***

**Summary:** The book of Holm Sundhaussen *History of Serbia from 19 to 21 century* occurred in 2009 in Serbian translation, and its provocative nature immediately aroused great attention of the scientific community. Soon after its publication eminent Serbian historians (Vasilije Krestic, Djordje Stankovic, Rados Ljusic, Slavenko Terzic, Milos Kovic and others) wrote a series of critical reviews and assessments in scientific periodicals, but also in the daily and periodical newspapers and magazines. In this paper, we analyze their views on the book of Sundhaussen, intending to determine how modern Serbian science responds to historiographical production that occurs in our time, written by Western researchers, specialized in South-Eastern Europe, and how to interpret their understanding of history of modern Serbian state.

**Key words:** historiography, Holm Sundhaussen, history of Serbia, Serbs, Yugoslavia, Balkan

At the beginning of the 2009th in Belgrade appeared the Serbian translation of the book of the German historian, an expert in South-Eastern Europe, professor Holm Sundhaussen, entitled *History of Serbia from 19th to 21 Century* (Зундхаусен, 2009).<sup>1</sup> The book arose great interest in Serbian scientific community, and thus brought a large number of critiques and reviews in scientific periodicals, as well as in the press. On the occasion of Sundhaussen's work a panel was organized at the

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Faculty of Law<sup>2</sup> and a round table on Serbian historiography at Goethe Institute (Политика: 21. II 2009, 23. II 2009; Danas: 21. II 2009), and then the German historian visited Serbia and gave a lecture at Kolarac Foundation (Политика: 4. IV 2009, 5. IV 2009).

The first information about the synthesis of Holm Sundhaussen was published by the daily newspaper *Politika*. This daily is mostly engaged in informing the public on a new book, bringing in more episodes, interviews with some Serbian historians, as well as an interview with the author himself. First, the reporter Andjelka Cvijic, in charge of this issue, announced that, thanks to the efforts of the Belgrade publishing house Clio, Sundhaussen's book was finally in front of readers. Already in this paper she has assumed that the synthesis of German historian „in our environment will cause much controversy because besides the valuable observations and conclusions it shows weaknesses of which 'suffer' historians in the world when it comes to Serbia and the Serbian people.” (Цвијић, Политика: 26. I 2009)

About Sundhaussen's book only *Politika* published interviews with Vojislav Pavlovic first, then with Dusan Batakovic and, finally, with Milos Kovic, and in a special article, spoke out Latinka Perovic. Historian Cedomir Antic gave an interview for the newspaper *Witness*. Their vision of Sundhaussen's work some historians have published in weeklies *Seal* and *NIN*, Vasilije Krestic and Djordje Stankovic in the first and Rados Ljusic in the second. Then, critics and reviews about the book were published in scientific periodicals. So Rados Ljusic in the journal *The History of the 20th century* gave significantly expanded version of the critique that was published in *NIN*, and in the same journal appeared a critique from historian Bojan Dimitrijevic. Important contribution to understanding the book of German professor gave Slavenko Terzic in *Letopis Matice srpske* also. We should not forget the afterword written by Dusan Batakovic, published in the book. We encountered also reviews of historians in journals *Spomenica Istorijeskog arhiva „Srem”* and *Currents of History*.

The first interview, which appeared in *Politika* after the publication of Sundhaussen's work followed a conversation of A. Cvijic with historian Vojislav Pavlovic. V. Pavlovic has expressed the opinion that the book of German colleague is a serious synthesis, but that it is not free from subjective and sweeping score, and even stereotypes. He objected to the author for linking the Kosovo myth and daily politics, i.e. because of the thesis that this myth was an instrument in the Balkan wars, when Serbia stepped out of its ethnic area. Pavlovic has warned on the responsibility of Austria-Hungary in this development, reminding that Garasanin in his *Nacertanije* emphasized Bosnia and Herzegovina as the first of all the provinces that should be free; only when the Dual Monarchy occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia turned to Kosovo. In other words, the Battle of Kosovo has become a fundamental component of Serbian national identity and the main goal of the Serbian national movement as a result of decisions of the Berlin Congress (1878), and not for subjugation to the imperatives of the mythic consciousness. Pavlovic also called prof. Sundhaussen as the author who follows the steps of the Austrian analysts who for

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<sup>2</sup> [www.ius.bg.ac.rs/org/o\\_seminar\\_sastanci.html](http://www.ius.bg.ac.rs/org/o_seminar_sastanci.html) [1. XII 2012]

more than a century don't deviate of viewpoint that Serbian state should not exceed the limits established by the Congress of Berlin, but needs to be developed within them. Unlike the German historian, the interlocutor of Andjelka Lucic stated that the Kosovo battle was really one of the key events of the late Middle Ages in the Balkans, because in that battle the Serbian nobility was defeated and killed, and Serbia did not have the strength to compensate for the loss of its leaders. Therefore V. Pavlovic Battle of Kosovo sees as a milestone in the history of Serbian medieval times. As for another great theme of Serbian history, the genocide against Serbs in the NDH, presented in the book of H. Sundhaussen, Pavlovic did not have any remarks, underlining that the author clearly speaks of the extermination of the Serbian people and that without hesitation presents the role of the part of the Roman Catholic clergy in the genocide. According Sundhaussen's view of the communist era, the Serbian historian was more critical, emphasizing that Tito's Yugoslavia has not offered a permanent solution of either economic or national problems, which was confirmed by the disintegration of the country after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Pavlovic challenged Sundhaussen's rough division of Serbia on the majority, which was mythological, prone to territorial expansion, and the minority which was pro-European, committed to the development of European values, noting that it might apply to contemporary Serbian political scene, but not for Serbian history. Finally, he rightly pointed out that the national movements and mythology on which they relied were typical for the epoch of the creation of nations, and Serbia in this respect did not constitute any exceptional case, but only followed the general trend (Цвијић, Политика: 27. I 2009).

With his colleague agreed historian Milan Ristic, citing a lack of history of Serbia of 19 to 21 Century and the overemphasis of the role of mythology in the Serbian national ideology and insufficiently nuanced presentation of Serbian historiography, without pointing out the differences between the lines that develop within in. Nevertheless, M. Ristic praised the publication of this book in Serbian language, since, in his view, Sundhaussen's vision, as the view „from outside”, was a kind of corrective of our attitudes. Also, he noted that this work is a good occasion to deal with a different opinion, which, believes M. Ristic, is missing in our historiography (Цвијић, Политика: 29. I 2009).

It's really a different opinion, but one-sided, black-and-white and tendentious, concluded, in an interview in Politika, Dusan Batakovic. Not enough research-based synthesis, as the History of Serbia of 19 to 21 Century rated this historian, it cannot serve as a corrective to our positions, what makes Batakovic view significantly different from Ristic (Цвијић, Политика: 1. II 2009). With M. Ristic Batakovic, however, agreed on the issue of publication of the book in Serbian language. In the afterword of the work of H. Sundhaussen he expressed his opinion that such books should be available to Serbian readers so our environment in a specific example could be convinced that the Serbian cultural and political space is viewed with prejudice and preconceptions. Batakovic in the afterword made another series of interesting critical observations about the translated work. One of the major objections concerns Sundhaussen's division of Serbia on the real and mental, because it does not take care of the spiritual unity of the Serbian people in all state and legal boun-

daries in which, migrating over the centuries, leaving the home country under the pressure of the invading force, and later under the influence of other factors, the Serbs settled. Is it the intention of the German historian „to effectively deny a long range correlation of parts of the same nation”, wondered Batakovic and objected to his overemphasizing the role of geographic conditions, political boundaries and social environments in shaping society. Another serious objection is addressed to the account of another Sundhaussen’s division, and that’s the classification of Serbian historians in suitable and not suitable, i.e. to those whose thesis he accepts and the others with whom he disagrees. Lightly disqualifying all ideological opponents, the author of *History of Serbia from 19th to 21 Century* fails to act, as it follows from Batakovic analysis, as an expert who is, by nature of his vocation, obliged to take into consideration different views also, but acts as an autocrat who suffocates freedom of scientific expression. Moreover, rejecting the results of relevant research just because he treats them as politically incorrect, he limits his own cognitive achievements and reduces the quality of his work. The third group of objections of D. Batakovic is related to Sundhaussen’s approach to the period after World War II, i.e. to the politics of Titoist authorities to Serbian question. Serbian historian objected to his German counterpart that he did not give an explanation why in this period only Serbia has experienced such a drastic reduction, while, for example, Croatia and Slovenia were enlarged, and why for Serbia one criteria was valid and, while for other provinces another. Why, wonders further D. Batakovic, H. Sundhaussen did not take into account Milovan Djilas interview, given to the Paris’ *Le Monde* in 1971, in which Tito’s former collaborator said that the Serbs were divided into five republics because they were the biggest opponents of the communist ideology, and they should be in this way neutralized (Батаковић, 2008: 549–569).

The next Serbian historian who was interviewed for the newspaper *Politika* was Milos Kovic. Responding to questions, he noticed, such as V. Pavlovic, that Sundhaussen’s main objective is deconstruction of Serbian myths for which, allegedly, Serbia suffered in the nineties of the 20th century. M. Kovic also noted that the German professor diminishes the role of great powers in the history of Serbia, because he believes that the overemphasis of their role is the way to avoid dealing with internal causes of troubles of Serbian people. Serbian historian has questioned this Sundhaussen’s view stating conclusion of the famous explorer of the history of the Balkans Richard Clog, who is of the opinion that the influence of foreign factor in the history of the Balkan states is much more important than in the history of the great powers. Also, Kovic expressed surprise that the German colleague, explaining the disintegration of Yugoslavia, almost did not take into account the role of external factors, at the same time noting that H. Sundhaussen in this regard fell into a contradiction, because he noticed that the recognition of the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, carried out by leading members of the European Union, led by Germany, could be considered an international legal date of disintegration of the Yugoslav state. Kovic, finally, as a major disadvantage of *History of Serbia from 19th to 21 Century* pointed out plenty of value judgments, of course those which rely on the value system of the cultural and social milieu to which belongs the author. It is unacceptable, says the historian, and that H. Sundhaussen the

entire history of modern Serbian state viewed through the prism of the nineties of the 20th century, looking in the past for the causes of crimes that Serbs, he repeated emphatically, committed in our time. Such anachronisms, along with unexpectedly large number of material, factual errors, reduced, according to M. Kovic, the force of his arguments and interpretation (Цвијић, Политика: 18. II 2009).

Unlike historians who, stepping into the public, generally disagreed with Sundhaussen's approach and his views on the Serbian history, Latinka Perovic pleaded affirmatively about the work of the German professor. In an article published in *Politika*, the author proclaimed *History of Serbia from 19th to 21 Century* a major scientific undertaking, given the effort that is necessary to invest in order to study two hundred years of history of a people and write about it a historical synthesis. In connection with Sundhaussen's book she recalled Serbian revolution and its importance for the Serbs at the time of the appearance of the work of Leopold Ranke. Perhaps dissatisfied with the reception of the synthesis of the German historian in our midst, L. Perovic reminded of the case of the Serbian expert for Polish language and culture Biserka Rajcic whose book *Poland civilization in the Polish scientific and cultural community* was received as a great gift, and the author was honored with a medal of the Polish state. L. Perovic proclaimed Sundhaussen's work „the most complete overview of the history of Serbia, both horizontally and vertically” among all, though few, the existing reviews and synthesis. The arguments enclosed in support of this claim includes the fact that the book discussed not only political, but also social and cultural history. By presenting it, L. Perovic has accepted Sundhaussen's self-justification that he did not write the book „as a German, but as a historian”, and confirmed that he did not occur either as a lawyer or as a prosecutor, at least as a judge. The author of the review, in fact, did not recognize any of the weaknesses identified by Serbian historians. She even rejected the objection of Sundhaussen's lack of awareness, justifying his determination to consult a scientific literature that is assessed as eligible by shortcomings of other similar ventures. To be precise, L. Perovic says: „None of this kind of work has such a broad research base”. Apparently, she wanted to underline the impossibility of fully overcoming all existing, countless bibliographies, what is right, but thereby was not able to acquit H. Sundhaussen that he had a selective approach to literature. Serious objections imposed on account of his synthesis L. Perovic declared „reserves”, which are only a consequence of the difference between subjective experience of the nation and objective reality.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> „These reserves” – writes the author of preview – „how Sundhaussen supposed, resulting from the difference of internal reality, that is the nation's image in the minds of individuals, and external reality, which is the result of a scientific reconstruction. But in this respect neither Serbian historiography is unison: those differences, the differences between the real and the imaginary Serbia, go through Serbia itself.” Binding concept of science to „external reality”, L. Perovic in this manner of Serbian historiography, one that accepts the „inner reality”, which is aware of the spiritual unity of all Serbs throughout history, those who have lived and are living in immediate neighborhood, in the region and in the diaspora around the world, indirectly proclaimed unscientific, perhaps even a charlatanic. Перовић, Политика: 16.

Historian Cedomir Antic, however, in an interview given to newspaper *Svedok*, positioned H. Sundhaussen among the authors who did not manage to avoid the stereotype that among the Serbs there is continuity of extreme nationalism, based on the Kosovo myth. German colleague made a lot of flaws, that is the standpoint of C. Antic. For example, he did not specify whether the starting point was to write the history of the Serbian state or Serbian people, and although the book called *History of Serbia...* did not pay enough attention to the non-Serb people living on its territory. The attempt of a multidisciplinary approach has not proved very successful, temporal and spatial context usually does not exist, the comparative method is not implemented. By some events, such as the events of the nineties, the author is extremely occupied, while much more dramatic events, such as World War I or the First Serbian Uprising, left him quite indifferent; some, however, very important, such as the student protests in 1968, he did not even mention. What are the Albanian feudal lords who took part in the Battle of Kosovo, which mentions H. Sundhaussen, asked further C. Antic, when in the Middle Ages there was no nation, and no Albanian state? And why he has double standards, and denies involvement of the Serbian feudal lords in the battle of Kosovo, when Serbia at the time, unlike Albania, still existed? As a major drawback of the book, Serbian historian noted the author's persistent comparison of Germany and Serbia in the 20th century. Thereby, H. Sundhaussen ignored the role of foreign factors in Serbian history, and for the wars of the nineties blamed exclusively Serbian nationalism and the idea of great statehood. But if it is true that Serbia masters xenophobia, nationalism and megalomania, as the German professor insists, then that would mean that the Serbs were such an extraordinary national community that is different from all other Balkan and Central European collectivity. In fact, Serbia in the 19th and 20th century developed under Central European, Western and Russian influence, reminded C. Antic, probably intending to say that all that is negative in its history, as well as positive, is not quite indigenous, but that was taken over from other areas. C. Antic also criticized Sundhaussen that he has not found it necessary to register the fact that from the political will of Germany depended the recognition of the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, which led to the breakup of Yugoslavia. Let us mention also that this Serbian historian praised the author's efforts to overcome the huge number of scientific publications. Used literature is impressive, that is the impression of C. Antic, but the way it is used is problematic. In this sense, characteristically is how he dealt with the topic of Chetniks, relying only on the elder, but not on recent scientific literature. In other words, the Serbian historian Sundhaussen's access to the literature described as selective, and did not fail to warn of the unacceptable large number of factual errors.<sup>4</sup>

Whether, given the many negative comments of prominent Serbian intellectuals about the synthesis of Holm Sundhaussen, M. Ristovic was right when he greeted the appearance of the work in our language or there are different opinions and if there are, how they are argued? One of the historians who in this regard does not agree with M. Ristovic is the academician Vasilije Krestic. This author has fo-

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<sup>4</sup> Dinić, [www.svedok.rs/index.asp?show=65802](http://www.svedok.rs/index.asp?show=65802) [1. XII 2012]

und that the German professor so maliciously interpreted Serbian past and made such mistakes that about all the weaknesses and tendentiousness could be written a new book of similar scope as Sundhaussen's. V. Krestic reminded of how common were translations from foreign languages of very high quality works only, about which values there was no dispute among experts, which made a significant contribution to the development of scientific thought, while History of Serbia... had no such features and, therefore, did not need to be translated. To Serbian historians this book is not at all necessary, because with it they did not get anything new, and if the translation is not intended to historians, V. Krestic is almost certain, it is intended for a wider audience – those who are not historians. Such Serbian readers, insufficiently informed about the phenomena that have marked the last two centuries of the past of their people, should „obfuscate consciousness” and convince them that the Serbs have long been, from the First Serbian Uprising, on the wrong way and that they are the ones to blame for the war events and crimes during the breakup of Yugoslavia. In short, the historical interpretation offered by H. Sundhaussen is nothing else but attributing collective guilt to the whole Serbian nation, explicit is academician Krestic and in the manipulation of historical facts, skillfully derived in accordance with the official policy of the government of his country, sees the reason that among the institutions that have supported the translation and publication of Sundhaussen's book was even the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Germany. His view on the book of the German professor and its appearance in our midst V. Krestic summarized by saying that it is a first-class publishing, scientific and political failure (Крестић, Печат: 24–25).

Theologian and church historian Radovan Pilipovic is also of the opinion that H. Sundhaussen with his work is not addressing historians, but that with this publication is accomplished something else: Serbian liberal social thought and anti-ecclesiastical NGO sector received another „bibliographic tool”. He ranked the synthesis of the German professor in the corpus of books writers such as Noel Malcolm, Tim Judah and those similar to them who by historiographical method defended the stereotype forced in western media of the nineties about Serbs, Serbia and Serbian politicians as the sole perpetrators of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Reading H. Sundhaussen R. Pilipovic realized that the main theme of his work was „Serbian question”, and not the history of the country, as stated in the title, and that he condemns in advance any attempt of solving the Serbian question as ethically unacceptable (Пилиповић, Православље: 32–33).

While most scientists, the ones we have mentioned and those whose works will be considered in what follows, had a lot of justified objections to History of Serbia..., historian Zoran Janjetovic was somewhat restrained in odium, although not exaggerate in praise. Going through the middle, neither praising nor challenging, this author did not remain indifferent to all that is on the page of the book of the German professor. The protest encompasses Sundhaussen's perception of the Balkan wars (because he did not list the Albanian crimes that preceded the crimes against the Muslim population), the number of victims of the genocide in NDH (because he did not take into account new researches that give a more accurate and probable number of casualties), the chapter of the socialist period (because it is completely

dedicated to Yugoslavia, and is almost entirely absent the presentation of the situation in Serbia and because the role of Aleksandar Rankovic and, with him, in this respect, the situation in Kosovo in 1966. is given too tersely and one-sidedly), chapter on the reign of Slobodan Milosevic (also because it neglected Serbia, on account of the events in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), highlighting the principle of self-determination on which in the nineties insisted the Serbian elite, apparently only when it was suited (because he ignored the fact that the same principle was advocated by the Croatian and Albanian elites and elite of BH Muslims, but also when it went in their favor), neglecting the influence of foreign powers in the process of decomposition of Yugoslavia, the overemphasis on the role of extreme right-wing groups in Serbia. However, although he did not provide „full support of the entire contents of the book”, Z. Janjetovic ranked *History of Serbia...* among the significant works, worth reading. In his opinion, it deserves attention because it shows that the past of the Serbs is in no way unique, that it does not differ from the history of other nations of the world, that the Serbs were not the people of heroes or the people of criminals, but people with the same virtues and vices which are characteristic of the rest of humanity (Јањетовић, 2009, 331–334).

Much sharper toward the synthesis of H. Sundhaussen is Dragoslav Opsenica. He listed a whole series of blunders of the German professor, created, considered D. Opsenica, because of tendentious use of scientific literature. This viewer of *History of Serbia...* noticed, among other things, that the author did not pay attention to the new results of Serbian and Croatian scientists, showing that Josip Juraj Strossmayer was a supporter of the Croatian national idea, but rather sided with the outdated and incorrect interpretations according to which the bishop of Djakovo was a Yugoslav ideologue. Then, that he takes for granted the political pamphlet of Rudolf Bićanić about the economic exploitation of the Croats in the Kingdom of SHS / Yugoslavia, although Bicanic contemporaries answered it, as well as economists, and subsequent researchers, that in his work he incorporated the views of the British traveler of pro-Albanian orientation Meri Edit Durham, bypassing the famous travel book *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* of British writer Rebecca West, that, as the authority, calls for the author who at the time of the bloody events in the Balkans in the nineties of the 20th century, put his pen to the service of politics, not science, Noel Malcolm, while skipping serious and reliable experts like Jelena Guskova, as well as all those independent intellectuals who, in this tumultuous time, spoke out in defense of demonized Serbs and Serbia – Noam Chomsky, Ron Harwood and Harold Pinter or, if they are worthy to be mentioned, writes about them – and this is confirmed by the example of the Austrian writer Peter Handke – with ridicule and irony. Overall, D. Opsenica is very disappointed with the book of H. Sundhaussen, noting with regret that its author, as opposed to the doyen of German historiography, Leopold Ranke, failed to remain at the height of the given task and create a proper work (Опсеница, 2009: 288–291).

*History of Serbia ...* criticized the historian Rados Ljusic, first publishing a shorter version of his views in NIN (Љушић, НИН: 48–49), intended for a wider audience, and then a comprehensive version in the scientific journal *History of the 20th century* (Ljušić, 2010: 213–248). Like C. Antic and D. Opsenica, he also poin-

ted to the selective approach of the German professor to the sources and literature, declaring him because of this the originator of the new direction in the historiography, so-called historiography of „selecting”. By this definition of Sundhaussen’s access to the past R. Ljusic came with the help of his phrase „selecting a boy,” which means „blood tax” (collecting children from conquered Christian countries in the Ottoman Empire as a form of regular taxation of the subjugated Balkan population). In this regard, R. Ljusic considered incongruous highlighting of the book *Serbia from 1804 to 2004*. Three sightings or call for dialogue, the demolition of one of its authors, Ljubodrag Dimic and glorification of other authors, Dubravka Stojanovic and Miroslav Jovanovic. Serbian historian reacted, as well as the writer of the epilogue to the *History of Serbia...*, to the division on two Serbias, finding that its sense is in the understanding of H. Sundhaussen – based on modern globalist attitudes – that Serbia is only the Belgrade pashalik. Bothered him also the identification of Serbia with the Serbian state, where he saw the author's bias: not applying the same criteria to all cases he writes of Montenegro having in mind its present boundaries, even though Montenegro, not only Serbia, in the past occupied a smaller territory. That H. Sundhaussen narrowed Serbian history to the history of Serbia, stems, according R. Ljusic, from the fact that he neglected the Serbs in the Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Montenegro. Also, Serbian historian is not to miss German colleague represents contradicting views: first, disagreeing with the view that the conflict of Christian and Islamic worlds in Kosovo and Metohija is clash of civilizations, elsewhere in the book he stressed that the conflict between the European and old Balkan civilization led to the division of the Serbian elite on Westerners and the opponents of the West (Ljušić, 2010: 213–216).

After these observations of the general character, R. Ljusic analyzed the views of H. Sundhaussen on Serbian history before the creation of a modern Serbian state and came to some interesting discoveries: that the German historian reduced Serbian medieval statehood only to the period of Nemanjic dynasty and subsequent epoch, until the fall under the rule of the Ottomans, suggesting to readers that before 1170. the Serbs did not have the state, that the centuries of occupation he presented as a time of peaceful coexistence between Serbs and Turks during which the blood tax was collected at a voluntary basis, not by violence, that the differences between Western and Eastern Christianity he presented as deeper and more serious than the differences between Christianity and Islam, though – as science reliably determined, migrations to territories of the Habsburg Monarchy and the Venetian Republic Serbs perceived as winning the freedom, that to the chapter on banditry devoted considerably more space than is necessary, just pointing out its negative side (Ljušić, 2010: 216–218).

Hereinafter R. Ljusic has focused attention on Sundhaussen’s outlook on important moments of the 19<sup>th</sup> century among the Serbs. Rightly he criticized him for not accepting the term Serbian revolution, which was introduced in the historiography by Leopold Ranke and then was widely accepted in science, for ignoring the fact that the Serbian state already existed at the time of the First Serbian Uprising, tying a modern Serbian statehood for the outbreak of the Second Serbian Uprising, writing of gaining autonomy and independence quite superficially and

mentioning it in a package with other Balkan nations, probably in an attempt to reduce significance of key events in Serbian history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for easily passing over the reign of Prince Milos, especially over the abolition of feudalism 1835<sup>th</sup> and, in this regard, overemphasizes the transformation of Serbia under constitutionalists, although primarily the Serbian revolution and the first rule of Prince Milos made the deepest changes in Serbia. Positive ratings R. Ljusic gave to the section of the book about the creation of nations, still objecting to author, among other things, for giving too much importance to the ideas of Svetozar Markovic and the false claim that the Montenegrins were undecided on the issue of their own national self-determination. Serbian historian also registered that the German counterpart jumped all Serbian national programs except Nacertanije of Garasanin, and held that the acquisition of the sovereignty of Serbia at the Berlin Congress, an extremely important event in Serbian history, deserves only one sentence in the book (Ljušić, 2010: 218–223).

R. Ljusic highly appreciated the chapter in the History... about Serbian society, criticizing, however, loading the text with politically colored interpretations permeated with anti-Serbian spirit, which is to the detriment of really important questions, given impermissible much space. Thus, for example, on the sidelines remained even Serbian rulers, as well as major political figures like Milutin Garasanin or Milan Pirocanac. In a word, „selection” of the facts that H. Sundhassen chose and the manner of their interpretation, without contextualization and without desires to perceive events and developments from the past comprehensively, objectively and unbiased, were carried out, according to R. Ljusic, so that just Serbs attributed the role of villains, the „bad buys” in this part of Europe. The sympathies of the German historian are on the side of the Albanians, so he booked for them the role of victims of the Serbian army, making up that in the First Balkan War killed 20 000 of their members. At the same time, Serbian migrations and sufferings in Kosovo and Metohija in the second half of the 19th century are touched only slightly, while the period after the 1898th is not even mentioned. Although the First World War, according to R. Ljusic, is shown correctly, he notices with how little interest H. Sundhassen approached the topic of „Serbian Golgotha”, recording only so that the Serbs were killed due to the Albanian ambush also. When this is compared to overemphasizing the „Golgotha of Albania”, i.e. the suffering of the Albanians in the First Balkan War, obtained, according to Serbian critic, another irrefutable evidence for the claim that the favorites of the author of History of Serbia... are – Albanians. The writer of the book has not found it necessary, noted further R. Ljusic, even to remind of 20 000 Serbs killed in the uprising of Toplica (figure around which there is no dispute in science), or to, at least in a word, retain on this event, the only uprising of a people against the invaders in World War I (Ljušić, 2010: 223–230).

With Sundhassen’s views on the history of the first Yugoslavia R. Ljusic mostly agree, except with the thesis that the mistakes committed by the creation of the Yugoslav state, after twenty years of its existence the Serbs intended to correct by ethnic cleansing, mostly Albanians (Ljušić, 2010: 230–234). Image of World War II is also, considers this critic, balanced. However, a major omission is made in connection with the genocide in the Independent State of Croatia, reducing the num-

ber of Serbian victims. The bias has come to the fore, to name one example given by R. Ljusic, in the not to be forgotten cooperation between Chetniks and occupiers, but skips collaboration of partisans and Germans (Ljušić, 2010: 234–237).

For R. Ljusic certainly the most controversial part of the book is the chapter about the last decades of the 20th century in which, as we are assured, H. Sundhausen clearly took anti-Serb positions. His attacks on the Memorandum of SASA and the Serbian intellectuals this critic interpreted as a deprivation of the right of Serbs to defend their own national interests and drew attention to „selecting” of facts of the recent past, according to the position taken in advance. Thus, Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic is represented in the darkest tones and on him has thrown all responsibility for ethnic cleansing, while on Rugova, Haradinaj, Thaci, Tudjman, Izetbegovic and other political leaders from the former Yugoslavia, for the same enterprise, he has never pointed his finger; the main warmongers and criminals were named Zeljko Raznatovic Arkan and Vojislav Seselj, while Thaci, Haradinaj, Oric, Glavas and other culprits for Serbian suffering are spared of such accusations; Serbian opposition organization DEPOS, composed of national political parties and individuals, which was largely independent of influence from abroad and as such unsuitable, did not find a place on the pages of the book, unlike DOS, dependent on foreign factors, and therefore eligible, and more (Ljušić, 2010: 238–243).

R. Ljusic has called H. Sundhausen for the uncritical acceptance of the thesis of „the spirit of provincial” from the homonymous work of Radomir Konstantinovic, by which the author of the History of Serbia... suggested to Serbs to open up to European influences. Why H. Sundhausen has not applied the comparative method that shows that the provincial spirit is characteristic of all Balkan nations, not only for Serbian and why he failed to mention that the Serbian society from the mid-19th century until the arrival of the Communists to power was very much open to foreign influences, asks R. Ljusic (Ljušić, 2010: 243–244).

The last pages of the extensive Ljusic review are completed by specifying a number of factual errors committed by the German historian and detailed reference to the bibliography, with the conclusion that its backbone consists of works of the authors dealing with the „other” Serbia, modernization and Europeanization, which fit into the Sundhausen’s ideological system, while some important scientific studies and monographs ruthlessly bypassed or superficially and insufficiently used in a manner inappropriate to serious and scrupulous researcher (Ljušić, 2010: 245–248).

Unlike R. Ljusic, who searched History of Serbia... in general, Bojan Dimitrijevic focused, as an expert on war and the latter period, only on the period after the 1941st. His reading has shown that in the book of H. Sundhausen there are many gaps in the case of the Second World War: he does not want to understand the dramatic events that took place in Serbia at the beginning of the war and a delicate mission of General Milan Nedic, the mission of establishing peace in rebellious Serbia which German troops tried to pacify by reprisals, deals mainly with Nedic ideology, not finding it necessary to mention that Serbia was managed by the German authorities, not Nedic, and unjustly equate Yugoslav movement Zbor and the Ustasha movement. B. Dimitrijevic also mentioned that, when it comes to the Ravna Gora Mo-

vement, in the first plan put ideology, while there is no trace of an analysis of the military effectiveness of the Movement. Serbian historian complained, then, H. Sundhaussen because he missed an opportunity to reconstruct the history of Serbia under German occupation through the German sources, emulated the older Yugoslav historiography which, instead of the lot of Serbian people, showed interest in other parts of Yugoslavia, where was a civil war between communist and nationalist forces. In short, H. Sundhaussen created the image of the Second World War as a civil, religious and national war of Yugoslav nations or ideologically opposing factions within the same nation, assures B. Dimitrijevic, a picture in which the Germans are barely discernible, thus protecting his own country that in this war was the occupying force (Dimitrijević, 2010: 249–252).

Serious omissions B. Dimitrijevic observed when it comes to the socialist period, as the book does not cover key issues from the history of this period, such as the recovery of the country after the ravages of war, economic development, relations with other provinces and more. Serbian historian is particularly surprised that among the issues that remain beyond the reach of H. Sundhaussen, although an important part of the history of Serbia, is even the fate of his compatriots, the German minority, which is outlined in a few sentences, and that he is not at all attracted by the history of Serbian-German relations that German readers would enable to better understand the Serbs and Serbia. While some important phenomena completely ignored, others which do not belong in this synthesis, the author has overstated – B. Dimitrijevic has rightly drawn attention to – engaging, for example, in a detailed retelling of the contents of certain literary works and films. H. Sundhaussen is extremely biased, totally convinced is the Serbian historian, proving his point of view with the author's choice for the main elements, which help to shape the image of the nineties in Serbia with the rise the Chetnik movement of Draza Mihajlovic, bishop Nikolaj Velimirovic and turbo-folk, leaving no room for Serbian democratic opposition and civil protests. Neither the changes that have occurred after 5 October 2000 impressed H. Sundhaussen, and the period after the assassination of Zoran Djindjic re-painted with the colors of right, nationalism and clericalism. All in all, prejudices with which the German historian approached writing of his book does not differ much from those who led the Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy, and with which Vienna entered the war in 1914, according to B. Dimitrijevic (Dimitrijević, 2010: 252–254).

Similarly resonates historian Djordje Stankovic, focusing particularly on the subject of concentration camps in the occupying countries, where during World War II tens of thousands of Serbs were killed, and that's just unspoken. Serbian scientist has even stated that the distinguished professor would have contribute more to his own people and to the Serbian people if he had researched and published a comprehensive book on the camps. Dj. Stankovic is also bothered with a too brief overview of the First World War, only 7 pages, given the importance of the war in the history of Serbia and the Serbian people, the enormous human and material losses suffered by the Serbs in the bloodshed and that Stankovic, criticizing Sundhaussen, accurately counted (Станковић, Печат: 8–11).

In order to make demythologization of Serbian history in which, for allegedly unprofessional approach of Serbian historian, interwoven mythical and legendary with correctly and objectively, to the detriment of the latter, H. Sundhaussen in his work went so far as to, relying on Benedict Anderson and his definition of the nation as a construct, even denied the existence of Serbian nation in the Middle Ages. Rejecting this mechanical application of concepts of one theorist to interpret Serbian history, political scientist Marinko Vucinic in his detailed analysis explained that, although we can not talk about a formed Serbian nation in times of Nemanjic dynasty, on their state territory still existed consciousness which precedes the national, and that the Serbs made a stable and clearly defined community that has been linked to certain customs, language and religion. Serbian nation is formed only due to the fact that it had a foothold in the Serbian people and its state tradition, resolute is this author. Argument of H. Sundhaussen against dynasty of Stefan Nemanja as Serbian, which is based on the fact that the wives of the rulers of this house were foreigners, M. Vucinic has challenged with the counterargument: Nemanjic dynasty was no exception – the rulers of all the dynasties originated from mixed marriages, so it is important only the extent to which certain dynasty expressed the state and national interests. And if we were to believe the German professor that there was no Serbian nation in the time of Emperor Dusan and his predecessors, he would not be able to convince us that the legal and cultural monuments from the time of Nemanjic, and even the monastery of Chilandar, were „regional embodiment of a comprehensive Middle Ages, primarily Byzantine Orthodox culture and civilization, which goes beyond narrow national boundaries.” Because, wonders M. Vucinic, how can one talk about transcending national boundaries, when H. Sundhaussen, contradicting himself, insists that they at that time did not exist?

Contradictions are encountered also elsewhere in the book of H. Sundhaussen. Further examining his understanding of the nation, M. Vucinic retained in one more: if it is true what believes the German professor, that in the time when Vuk Karadzic placed the famous slogan „Serbs All and Everywhere”, in mid-19th century, it was still quite unclear who makes the Serbian people, who belongs to it and how far it spreads, how it is possible to do what exactly did H. Sundhaussen – write its history? In addition to numerous contradictions, there are no random failures, such as the position of the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija and the violence against them by Albanians, which, assures us M. Vucinic, in the History of Serbia... not a word. Presenting us Sundhaussen's perception of the Kosovo myth, the same author corrects the German professor reminding that the Kosovo orientation did not have only a devastating impact and importance for the Serbs, that this is not about any kind of „imperative of revenge” about which speaks H. Sundhaussen, using ideological stereotype with which Serbs get label of savages, primitives and barbarians, but a tough fight for the establishment and maintenance of the Serbian state to which the myth of the battle of Kosovo was the great and precious national inspiration. Therefore the celebration of the five hundred years of the Battle of Kosovo was no exclusive nationalist stage event but, says M. Vucinic, a sign of national maturity and restoring of the dignity of the Serbian people. As the German historian sees Serbia as a disturbing factor if she comes out of the Belgrade pashalik, i.e. the terri-

torial expansion of the Serbian state is what bothered him most (although it was not uncommon in the political practice of other countries) – and that is the correct conclusion to which came M. Vucinic – the final liberation of Kosovo, Sandzak and Macedonia after centuries of Ottoman dominance H. Sundhaussen labels as „conquest” by which Serbia has emerged from its ethno-national framework.

A sharp eye of M. Vucinic stopped wherever the German professor incorrectly, with ridicule wrote about the Serbian efforts, victims and sufferings, even where the term Serbian Golgotha, by which in the historiographical literature marks the withdrawal of the Serbian army through Albania during World War I, ruthlessly put in quotation allegations. Vucinic is neither satisfied with Sundhaussen’s picture of the period between the two world wars, because he shifts the blame on the Serbs for all the problems that faced the first Yugoslav state, accusing them of hegemony over other peoples of Yugoslavia and in the superlatives showing leaders and ideologists of Great Croatia Josip Juraj Strossmayer and Stephen Radic. In the same token biased and subjective German historian has described the fate of Yugoslavia during World War II, emphasized Vucinic, making a parallel between the glorification of Djakovo bishop and leader of the Croatian peasantry on the one hand and reducing the suffering of Serbian Orthodox Church Patriarch Gavrilo Dozic and Bishop Nicholas Velimirovic on the other hand. Vucinic is, in fact, shocked by the fact that the patriarch and bishop in the History of Serbia... were promoted to the status of „honorary prisoners” of Dachau.

The same yardsticks H. Sundhaussen applied when it comes to the history of socialist Yugoslavia and the disintegration of the state in the nineties of the 20th century, we find in the preview of M. Vucinic: all the troubles that befell the Serbs, such as emigration from Kosovo and Metohija, are the consequences of their wrong policies, their nationalism and the striving to create a Great Serbia; disintegration of Yugoslavia have started the representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Serbian intellectuals, while all the other actors of breaking the community of Yugoslav nations acted only as victims of Serbian effort to resolve the Yugoslav problem by war.

By giving the final word on the History of Serbia..., M. Vucinic is quite clear: it is not a serious scientific synthesis because its author, burdened with prejudices and stereotypes, „plunged in the nonobjectivity, ideological exclusiveness and political tendentiousness.” It is a testament that the writing from the ideological and political perspective adversely affect the value of the work, resulting in an achievement of dubious quality.<sup>5</sup>

A large critical article about the book of H. Sundhaussen was published by the historian Slavenko Terzic. His impression was that the „main function of the book is to subsequently legitimize the breakup of Yugoslavia and the political architecture created after that, all draconian measures taken against Serbia and Serbs, and perhaps a hint of what will come in the future.” (Терзић, 2010: 149) S. Terzic revealed the names of the top experts of Serbian, Yugoslav and German science, slavists, Balkanologists and historians, who are not represented in the bibliography of this

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<sup>5</sup> Вучинић, [www.napredniklub.org/naprednjaci/.../index.php?...id...](http://www.napredniklub.org/naprednjaci/.../index.php?...id...) [10. II 2010]

German professor (or, at best, only present with one, but not the most representative work), starting from George Statmiller, Joseph Matl and Alois Smauc through Stojan Novakovic, Jovan Radonic, Viktor Novak, Ferdo Culinovic and Bogdan Krizman to Vasilije Krestic, Cedomir Popov, Mihajlo Vojvodic and Dragoljub Zivojinovic. Systematically presenting Sundhaussen's synthesis, Serbian historian for a moment paused to communicate to the reader that he is, already after the first few pages, puzzled by its lack of precision in determining the subject of the book, which is between the history of the Serbian state and the Serbian people. S. Terzic cannot escape the impression that by the History of Serbia... H. Sundhaussen actually tried to call into question all previous knowledge about Serbia and Serbs, and to reduce to Belgrade pashalik Serbian ethnic and state space. Therefore, he sought at all costs to construct Kosovo's political-territorial and ethnic identity, separating it from the name of Serbia as a peculiarity that has been around since the Middle Ages. S. Terzic, however, by a number of solid evidence disproved this arbitrary and unfounded setting.

Serbian historian is surprised that H. Sundhaussen the entire cultural and historical heritage from the time of Nemanjic, and even the very dynasty of Stefan Nemanja declared to be conditionally Serbian, although all the national cultures, not only Serbian, are result of interaction and influence of different cultures and civilizations. He is also surprised by the fact that the period of Ottoman rule over the Serbs is considered with extreme preference to the Turks, without the slightest attempt to understand the position of the Serbs under the Ottomans. Far would lead us if we repeat all the other false information and malicious interpretations which S. Terzic recognized in the History of Serbia... Therefore let us cite only a few: uprising in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1875. mentioned as a Christian uprising, rather than as an uprising of the Serbian population, Prince Milan Obrenovic as a prominent war profiteer, celebration of the Battle of Kosovo in 1889. as the first major „staging of Serbian nation”, although the whole Serbian folk epics imbued Kosovo issues, as well as literature from Orfelin and Musicki through Sterija, Branko Radicevic and Djura Jaksic, or fine art from Ambrose Jankovic and his large composition in the refectory of the Ravanica monastery from the 1776; liberation of Old Serbia and parts of Macedonia is the Serbian annexation, which had nothing to do with the right to self-determination, but it also does not recognize the same right of the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia, the St Sava was in the early 19th century largely an unknown orthodox saint in the Serbian people, even though the Turks still in 1594. burned his relics on Vracar because of the strength of the cult of St. Sava, Albanians are second-class citizens in Yugoslavia, although with 8.1% of their members in the total population of Serbia according to the census from 1948. got the autonomous region, unlike the Serbs in Croatia, who with 15% of the population in the total population of the republic, after suffering a genocide, and the majority of 90% in some areas, did not get the province and more.

Like other critics, S. Terzic has expressed outrage at the way H. Sundhaussen approached the history of Serbia after World War II: Instead of writing about the domestic political, social, economic and cultural life, he focused only on Serbian nationalism, mythology, „Greater Serbianism”, the history of mentalities and

characterology of the Serbs, and the lowest is the final stage, which relates to the Yugoslav crisis. Serbian historian broke down the German colleague at the test of scientific research and historical methodology because he did not take into account any of the serious work of foreign experts (Diana Johnstone, Jelena Guskova, Marek Valdenberg, Hannes Hofbauer, Rafael Israel, John Laughland ...) that interpreted the Yugoslav crisis in a manner quite opposite from the standpoint chosen by H. Sundhaussen. Summing up the impressions of his book, S. Terzic classified it, according to the elements on which he came, among the propaganda pamphlets based on clichés and prejudices about Serbs and Serbia as a disturbing factor in the Balkans (Терзић, 2010: 148–169).

Exactly in this kind of publication the synthesis of the German historian also included views of Milos Kovic, who spoke about it again in an article in which he tried to draw a picture of the history of the Serbs in the 19th century in the latest foreign historiography. As a revisionist of the Serbian history H. Sundhaussen, claims Kovic, fit into the overall current of the world academic literature that, because the Serbs in the late 20th century found themselves on the „wrong side”, embarked on a quest for the roots of „Serbian misapprehensions”. Relying on the theory of modernization, he (from the part of the Serbian historiography) took a rough division of Serbian society in the 19th century in the village, Russophile and primitive majority, represented by the radicals, and its smaller, progressive, westward facing part, attributing the former, traditional and antimodernizationally minded, because of the rise of the Kosovo tradition, piratical ethics, collectivism and violence, the blame for the supposed Serbian conquest and ethnic cleansing in the 20th century. Disagreement with this Sundhaussen’s extremely simplified picture of the past on which the Serbs have become the „aggressors” because of the slow modernization, M. Kovic corroborated by the opinion of historians of totalitarianism and mass atrocities of the 20th century, indicating their modern origins: modern racial theories have provided support to the Nazis in the extermination of Jews, while their modern technologies provided the means for achieving this monstrous plan (Ković, 2011: 407–409; Ković, 2012: 334–337).

Finally, a few notes on the History of Serbia... made Mile Bjelajac, in the work of the instrumentalization of Kosovo's recent history: it does not list the works that call into question the writing of Edit Durham, Leon Trotsky and the report of the Carnegie Commission, does not mention the role of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in encouraging the Albanian revolt, nor the role of Germany in the outbreak of the First World War, does not take into account the chronology of events after the First World War, from 1918th until 1921, nor take into account the subversive activities of Italy in this period, the entire Muslim population of Kosovo and Metohija, as well as of the other parts exempted from 1878. to 1913th incorrectly identifies with the ethnic Albanians (Bjelajac, Krivokapić–Jović, 2011: 304).

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Serbian science has, no doubt, readily met another attempt to revise the Serbian history. In a series of articles that have appeared about the book of German professor Holm Sundhaussen *History of Serbia from 19th to 21 Century*, it was pointed out to the numerous flaws that were therein made, on most of its weaknesses, political intentions, prejudice and abuses committed by its author. With the help of these critiques Serbian readers can resolve all doubts and questioning that occur when reading Sundhaussen's synthesis. It is certain, however, that readers from abroad will not have a chance to become acquainted with her bed sides. Citizens of the German-speaking countries and other countries to whose languages it has been translated or will be translated, deprived of reliable guides in their communities, which would draw attention to the fact not to take for granted what lies between the covers of *History of Serbia...*, will believe upon his word the respected expert in history of Southeast Europe. Misconceptions and lies, in all likelihood, will survive and continue to form across generations of Europeans a distorted image of Serbs and Serbia.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This paper is a translated version of the article „Историја Србије од 19. до 21. века Холма Зундхаусена и српска научна заједница – одједи и реаговања”, published in Serbian in *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 88 (2013), 141–161.

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## ИСТОРИЈА СРБИЈЕ ОД 19. ДО 21. ВЕКА ХОЛМА ЗУНДХАУСЕНА И СРПСКА НАУЧНА ЗАЈЕДНИЦА

**Сажетак:** Књига Холма Зундхаусена Историја Србије од 19. до 21. века појавила се 2009. године у српском преводу и, својом провокативношћу, одмах је изазвала велику пажњу научне јавности. Убрзо по њеном објављивању еминентни српски историчари (Василије Крестић, Ђорђе Станковић, Радош Љушић, Славенко Терзић, Милош Ковић и други) написали су низ критичких осврта и оцена у научној периодици (Историја 20. века, Летопис Матице српске, Токови историје, Сремски архив), али и у дневним и периодичним листовима и часописима (Политика, НИН, Печат, Православље...). У раду смо анализирали њихове ставове о Зундхаусеновом делу, с намером да утврдимо како савремена српска наука реагује на историографску продукцију која у наше време настаје из пера западних истраживача, специјализованих за Југоисточну Европу, и на који начин тумачи њено схватање историје нововековне српске државе.

**Кључне речи:** историографија, Холм Зундхаусен, историја Србије, Срби, Југославија, Балкан