

BOOK REVIEW

ON LE NÉGATIONNISME DE GAUCHE (2019)

By: THIERRY WOLTON

Ana SCALCĂU*West University of Timișoara, Timișoara, Romania*
anascalcau@yahoo.com

Thierry Wolton is a French journalist, writer and professor at L' École Supérieure de Commerce in Paris and he is particularly interested in the history of the communist regimes and the Soviet influence on the Western world. He has published several history books, among which *A World History of Communism* in three volumes.

His latest work, *Le négationnisme de gauche* (*The negationism of the left*) was published by Grasset & Fasquelle in 2019, translated into Romanian by Georgeta-Anca Ionescu and was published by Humanitas the same year. The book is very balanced as its author manages something extremely difficult: he remains objective and does not take a side.

Wolton defines the term *negationism* as the denial of historical facts and he identifies two types of negationism: the one of the right, which denies the Holocaust and other crimes committed by fascism and the one of the left, which denotes the refusal to accept the atrocities committed by communism. Although the book is entitled *The negationism of the left*, Wolton describes both types and condemns them equally. However, he notices the fact that society and especially intellectuals treat them differently. In fact, so far, the term *negationism* (used for the first time by Henry Rousseau in *The Vichy Syndrome*) has referred exclusively to the denial of the Holocaust or its minimisation. In many countries there are laws preventing or punishing this type of negationism, while communism has been characterised by impunity and trivialisation.

Le négationnisme de gauche is an excellent analysis of the mechanisms of negationism in all of its forms. Wolton's language is not bombastic or difficult to follow and the book can be read and easily understood even by people who are not normally interested in history books. I think this is Wolton's true gift: he writes like a journalist even when doing the task of a historian. Although the volume is written from the point of view of the French journalist who describes the situation in his country, negationism is a universal problem not limited to France.

