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## Evolution to Madness: An Analysis into the Violent Disparity between 19th and 20th Century Serbian Nationalisms

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### Cover Page Footnote

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# Evolution to Madness: An Analysis into the Violent Disparity between 19th and 20th Century Serbian Nationalisms

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## **Absaract**

Through the utilization of a comparative analysis between 19th-century Serbian expansionism and the nationalistic movement of the 20th century, I argue that Serbia's late-20th century nationalistic expansion efforts were so much more violent than the earlier episode because of the content espoused by the ideologies themselves. This work seeks to develop an understanding of early Serbian imperial aspirations of the 19th century through analyzing official policy regarding territorial expansion into neighboring Balkan states. However, the egregious violence seen at the end of the 20th century demonstrates a clear divergence from said imperial beginnings. I argue that the difference in nationalistic expansion efforts of the two centuries is the proliferation of venomous rhetoric, dogma and other ideological influences characteristically belonging to the 20th century; for example, as seen in the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences Memorandum of 1986. In addition to the main comparison between the two centuries' nationalisms, I also analyze what historical conditions and events occurred in the 20th century that allowed for Serbian nationalism to rise by the 1990s\* (This section has been removed from the original work for spatial concerns\*). These conditions served as an ideological foundation for the radical nationalistic

Serbian expansionist ideology of the 20th century, which differed significantly from the nationalistic expansion of the 19th.

*Keywords:* Nationalism, Expansion, Ex-Yugoslavia, Greater Serbia, History

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As a woman who lived through the turmoil and destruction of two world wars, Naza Tanović-Miller's mother once held that men become mad in a war. "It is horrifying, but that is the truth," she would say. "They lose orientation and turn into wild beasts." The carnage wrought upon Europe during the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided ample evidence to reinforce the "Lady of Sarajevo's" observation.<sup>1</sup> During the last years of her life, Tanović would once again bear witness to the madness of war in Europe. However, at the onset of the Yugoslav Wars in 1990, Europeans had not gone to war with each other since armies rallied against the Third Reich. What then, at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, would morph mere men into 'wild beasts' once again?

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It was a thirst for expansion that motivated the devastating war that engulfed the former Yugoslavia in five years of violent destruction towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The legacy of 19<sup>th</sup> century imperialism served as the ideological basis for Serbia's war against its Balkan neighbors in order to create a long prophesized, consolidated Serb state referred to as "Greater Serbia". This goal was pursued through a combination of military action against Balkan

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<sup>1</sup> Naza Tanović-Miller, *Testimony of a Bosnian* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 3.

neighbors and the explosive fuel of impassioned nationalism. Why was the aggression that largely targeted civilian populations with indiscriminate viciousness not seen in the Serbian nationalist and expansionist policies of the previous century? Separated by time, what differences can be found between these two periods of nationalistic ideology? Can ideology explain why the egregious crimes against humanity committed during the late-20<sup>th</sup> century were not a part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Principality of Serbia's nationalistic expansion efforts? Through the utilization of a comparative analysis of 19<sup>th</sup> century Serbian nationalistic expansionism and the nationalist movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I argue that Serbia's nationalistic expansion efforts of the late-20<sup>th</sup> century were so much more violent than the earlier episode because of the content of the ideologies themselves. This work will articulate evidence that Belgrade's ideological output in the 20<sup>th</sup> century constituted a much more dire and radical message to its citizens than what was seen in the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Upon achieving an increased amount of self-governance from the imperial yoke of an imposed Ottoman Empire in the early 1830s, the fledgling Serbian state of the mid-1800s began to gaze longingly at its Southern Slav neighbors. In 1844, the Principality of Serbia instituted various policies to initiate a gradual process that sought to eventually incorporate surrounding territories into the consolidated Greater Serbian state. These expansion policies set a nationalist precedent within the popular belief of leading Serbian elites, one that meant the young monarchy was destined to rise to a status like the European empires at the time. Serbian nationalism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century would revolve around this belief coupled with the ideal that Serbs were the people destined to rule over Southern Slavs in the Balkans.

Serbian nationalism in the 1800s purported ideals consistent with the old-world, conservative "Vienna System" style of European affairs. This form of nationalistic expansion

called for a Greater Serbia in order to acquire the economic and cultural benefits of empire, as well as an elevated imperial prestige on par with the European empires of the time. This early nationalism would later be significantly transformed to combat threats to Serbia's claim to power over Southern Slavs in Yugoslavia of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This shift in the ideology of Serbian nationalism would utilize heavy fear-mongering, one sided history, division among countrymen, ancestral pride and the intricate manipulation of popular beliefs (such as ethnic origins and allegiance to one state over another) to win the hearts and minds of Serbs across Yugoslavia. Once proliferated and adopted throughout Yugoslav society, such radical ideas espoused by this 20<sup>th</sup> century nationalism would ignite a tinderbox of violence when pushed to achieve the long-dreamt goal of Greater Serbia.

This work will venture along a chronological orientation to analyze these separate ideologies of Serbian expansionist nationalism effectively. Initially, I work to understand the motivations of Serbian Interior Minister Ilija Garašanin, the man who, in 1844, drafted policies which outlined the roadmap for Serbia's imperialistic agenda into the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Written during its imperial infancy, these policies provide crucial insight as to how Serbia perceived its position in the immediate world and the various peoples in it. Rife with the self-importance and arrogance standard of European imperial powers of the time, Garašanin provides an example of a very different nationalist ideology than what is professed by Serbia in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. His document, known as the *Načertanije*, contained intricate and calculated policies which described a course for Serbia to take in order to achieve heights similar to the already established influential powers of Europe of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Through examination of these policies and plans of action, I am able to not only establish reasoning and motive behind this initial nationalist expansionism but am provided with an example of how this ideology

planned to achieve a Greater Serbia. This example provides a springboard from which to begin deconstructing the nuances and hidden intentions of the poisonous ideologies behind the Serbian nationalist movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

I then explore the roots of 20<sup>th</sup> century Serbian nationalism during World War II and the subsequent decades leading up to the late 1980s. I seek to understand how the war's destructive impact tore holes in the social fabric of the Balkans and set a precedent of murder and genocide against fellow Southern Slavs of Yugoslavia. The historical case of persecution and murder by the Croatian fascist regime during WWII against Serbs was one strong talking point that would be exploited during the late 1980s and early 1990s to justify Serbia's war to protect her citizens. Following this brief analysis, this work will delve into the meat of Serbian nationalist ideology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through a deep examination of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences 1986 Memorandum.

### **A Foundation from Which to Build- The Inception of a Serbian Expansionist Nationalism**

In 1844 the internal minister of the Principality of Serbia, Ilija Garašanin drafted a document he named the "Načertanije" (Plan or outline). In this document, subtitled the "Plan of Foreign and National Policy of Serbia at the End of 1844", the minister exposed quite plainly the Serbian intent to become the leader and ruler of Southern Slavic peoples.<sup>2</sup> A vital piece of the Načertanije detailed how Serbian leadership viewed its surrounding neighbors. For example, Garašanin's writing identifies Bosnia as a neighboring sovereign entity and regarded Bosnians as a separate Slavic people of Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and "Mohammedanian" religions. In the progressing paragraphs of the Načertanije, 19<sup>th</sup> century Serbian nationalism was on clear display through its perceptions of other Slavic peoples in the region. While he

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 160.

acknowledged ethnically diverse and separate peoples, Garašanin still dictated that Serbian leadership was the best path toward a societal progression for non-Serb nations of the Balkans.<sup>3</sup> The nationalism showcased in the Serbia of 1844 was one of national arrogance and self-righteousness over the separate Southern Slavic peoples.

Evidence of what the overarching, fundamental goal for Serbian leadership of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century can be found in the Načertanije's introduction. The author outlined an ideology that claimed Serbia ought to follow basic principles outlined by a plan of action that "should guide Serbia through a long period of time."<sup>4</sup> It was this ideology, according to the author, that revealed Serbia's then condition as being one of weakness and disunity among Southern Slavs. Thus the only way for it to reverse that weak course in order to achieve a "bright future and realize her goal" of greatness was to rise above other Balkan peoples and assume the mantle of dominance in a Serbian Empire.<sup>5</sup> This introduction established a potent precedent in that the future course of Serbian foreign policy would be devoted to the creation of a Serb led empire in the Balkans. Almost acting a thesis for Serbia's plan of action, this introduction clearly does not call for the implementation of violence against Serbia's neighbors, rather establishing a set of goals and actions to take in order to bring about Greater Serbia. Therefore, the ideology professed by the Načertanije's governmental agenda would be one focused on the realization of said goals.

The Načertanije revealed the concerns of Serbia amid the decline of the Ottoman Empire in the Internal Minister's first chapter entitled, "Observations on the Division of Empire".

Garašanin wrote that should Serbia wish to continue her happy growth post-independence, it had

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 160

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 162

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

to expand and incorporate all Southern Slavs under a Serbian Empire. The influence of his time period is evident as the minister planned Serbia's rise to imperial status alongside Russia, Austria-Hungary, England and France.<sup>6</sup> However, the relevance to 20<sup>th</sup> century Serbian nationalism which would help spark the Yugoslav Wars of 1990-95 lie in the author's following statement: "If the new birth of the Serbian Empire is observed from this point of view [rising to imperial status among European powers], then this idea will be *easily understood and happily accepted* by all Southern Slavs, for in no other European country does the memory of one's own historic past live in a people so strongly as among the Turkish [Bosniak<sup>7</sup>] Slavs..."<sup>8</sup> The author went on to claim that Greater Serbia would offer Europe all the guarantees that it can stand firm as a strong state. It would usher in an era of prosperity for the Balkans alongside the massive Hapsburg and Romanov empires at the time if it exploited the assumed eagerness of other Southern Slavs to be joined with Serbia.

Garašanin's statement here is unprecedented, as his blatant assumption that the various peoples of the Balkans will *happily* accept being co-opted into a Serbian Empire painted an illusion that dominance was a welcomed pursuit. As, by the Internal Minister's logic, all the other nationalities should've been glad to see Serbia liberate them from their issues and bring prosperity. It was also from the condoning of dominance, and acceptance of official Serbian policy to expand at the expense of its neighbors that the dream of Milošević's Greater Serbia is born.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 163.

<sup>7</sup> "Bosniak" is a locally popular term that refers to people who practice the faith of Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Muslims in Bosnia were commonly referred to as "Turks" in order to demean a division away from the Orthodox Church. As if to say the people who followed Islam turned their backs on their heritage for the religion of a conquering empire (Ottoman).

<sup>8</sup> Tanović-Miller, *Testimony of a Bosnian*, 163-164 I use my own italics in this sentence to highlight the author's belief that the people incorporated into a Serbian Empire would easily understand and happily accept such imperialism. This statement is an excellent case of the arrogance and disconnect from Balkan societies on the individual level.

The document's following chapters entitled "On the Means by which the Serbian Goal Could be Achieved", "Introductory Means on how to Establish a Serbian Influence", and "On the Policy of Serbia in watching over Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, and Northern Albania", the author proposed various policies Serbia should employ if it wished to become an empire over a long period of time. Beginning with sending "...sharp-minded, nonprejudicial, and trustworthy men" to analyze the conditions of each country. These examiners would report back to the Principality with political conditions and dispositions of the people, military situations, and comprising a list of the most influential men while keeping a keen eye on those particularly vocal against a Serbian influence.<sup>9</sup>

In a following chapter of the Načertanije, "First We Define our Relationship with Bulgaria," the author again showcases a stark difference between his methods and the rallying cries commonplace to Serbian nationalism toward the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author purports that Serbia should be committing resources for "able and trustworthy Serbs [to] travel to Bulgaria spreading *friendship* toward Serbia, building the belief and hope that Serbia will come to *help* them, and that Serbia *will take care of their happiness.*"<sup>10</sup> This policy, while perhaps not executed to the letter in reality, offers crucial support in this analysis of nationalist ideologies. Ilija Garašanin demonstrates that Serbian officials dictating the direction of Serbia's future possess a friendly, almost welcomingly warm mentality to the other peoples of the Balkans, those that would make up the future Yugoslavia. The author saw that it would be best to incorporate Bulgarians into Greater Serbia by enticing them into Serbia's bosom. The ideology represented by this mid-19<sup>th</sup> century document provides a clear example of the use of persuasion

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 163-165.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. I here utilize my own italics to emphasize the plans for a warm treatment of Balkan neighbors.

in sharp contrast to the radical, xenophobic, vengeful and divisive rhetoric espoused by 20<sup>th</sup> century Serbian nationalism.

Finally, as an additional example of the manifestation of 19<sup>th</sup> century Serbian expansionist nationalism, the Načertanije discussed various ways to break into the minds of Southern Slavs and bring them closer to Serbia over time. The author detailed several methods on how to carry out this goal, such as the creation of history books with the intent to add a Serb influence into Bosnian society. Garašanin wanted non-Serbs to be subtly manipulated by an unseen hand of influence, as Bulgarian priests were to be trained in Serbian monasteries and young Bosnians educated in Serbian schools and administration. The author prophesied that the fruit of this labor was to be harvested once these Serbian influences are taken back to non-Serb homelands.<sup>11</sup> A development of Serb identities among the various ethnicities of the Balkans arguably originated from the policies put forth by the interior minister in his Načertanije. Despite Ilija Garašanin's efforts to create Greater Serbia through peaceful and somewhat consensual means, he still fiercely stood behind the creation of a Serbian empire ruled by Serbs, setting a historical precedent for the century to come.

### **Pride's Culmination- Ideologies Behind the Violence of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Serbian Nationalism**

Eventually rising to become president of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (Srpska Akademija Nauka i Umetnosti, SANU), Ćosić oversaw a cohort of Serbian thinkers which produced a memorandum that sought to outline many of the fears and rising tensions that had begun to swell as cracks grew in the Yugoslav state foundation.<sup>12</sup> While an exacerbation in Serbian paranoia began to stem from the above-mentioned lessening of centralized authority in

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 164-166.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

the Serb nation, it is through this SANU memorandum that the call for proud Serbs to rise is sounded, to forcefully act and preserve their threatened identity, if not survival.

To ask the question “How can this be happening again?” while the world watched the atrocities committed against humanity in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war, is to ask a powerful question eight years too late. A world which solemnly professed to never again allow genocide, would react in silent abhorrence to the carnage playing out across Bosnia. Mankind cannot successfully ensure that genocide will “Never Happen Again”, should it look the other way when symptoms begin surfacing, feigning ignorance as the subtle increase of radical ideas and propaganda begin to trickle into society. Seldom does nationalism lead to genocide, as in the case of the Principality of Serbia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the latter half of the 1900s, that same Serbian nationalistic pride would be twisted and weaponized to achieve both the expansionist goals of post-Tito governmental leadership and the creation of a purified Greater Serbia: one free from the ethnic corruption which brought about the economic and political death of Yugoslavia.<sup>13</sup>

Under the pretext of lost Serb influence and authority within Yugoslavia, the 1986 Memorandum painted a vivid picture of a suffering state, one rife with economic difficulties, a stagnant social development, rampant social tensions and open ethnic-clashes.<sup>14</sup> Upon reading the document itself, SANU influential authors (such as Dobrica Ćosić, Milorad Ekmečić, Ivo Andrić) quickly established a sense of mistrust or a lack of confidence in Yugoslavia’s governmental functions and bodies. They claimed that “a serious crisis” had boiled over and affected the country’s political, economic and entire system of law and order in a drastically

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<sup>13</sup> Here I speak utilizing the perspective of the SANU Memorandum authors to highlight a stark difference between 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century expansionist nationalisms: according to the authors, the Serbia of the 1980s had to fight for its survival.

<sup>14</sup> Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Memorandum 1986*, 1986, Haverford College

negative manner. The Serbian Academy argued that if no action was taken, the Yugoslav reality would thus be one of collapse and fragmentation brought about through “unforeseeable consequences”.<sup>15</sup> From the onset of this document, the Memorandum established an ominous warning that should no action be taken to cure the disease that festered in Yugoslavia, the nation which Serbs called home would be devastated. This assertion acted as a clear deviation from Garašanin’s ideology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as instead of predicting a Serbian rise to greatness in Europe, the leading intellectual authority in Serbia forewarned a dangerous future if Serbs did not band together under one nationalism.

SANU also argued that no proud Yugoslav could close their eyes to such a large issue, lest s/he wish to betray the survival of their nation. This demand for Yugoslav ‘patriotism’ is a subtle yet recurring theme within the 1986 Memorandum, which is of portentous import for the future basis of Serbian nationalism in the late-20<sup>th</sup> century. Within the years following the publication of this document, Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević and other key ideologues pushed hard to establish that Serb led predatory actions or domineering moves against other republics will be justifiable under a grandiose Movement for *Yugoslavia*<sup>16</sup>. Far from an actual “fierce love for Yugoslavia”<sup>17</sup>, crucial Serb rhetoric will seek to motivate its people to radical action not to protect the obsolete Yugoslav state, but rather to protect the interests of a strong, Belgrade centered Yugoslavia (which was just a façade for fierce Serbian nationalism). An efficient guise to rile up Serb bases of support for movement against any potential threats to Serb hegemony, as well as operating with Serbian goals of expansionism hidden by the notion of

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Tanović-Miller, *Testimony of a Bosnian*, 23-40 I use italics on the word Yugoslavia to emphasize the irony that Milošević sought to cement Serbian power structures, expand his nation’s realm of influence, and effectively create a ‘Greater Serbia’ expunged of other ethnic burdens through a dying concept of inclusion. The Yugoslavia of Tito’s ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ no longer existed within the rump Yugoslavia of the late 1980s, early 1990s.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

“protecting our Yugoslavia”. In contrast to Serbian expansionist nationalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, SANU authors disguise their desires to establish a pseudo “Greater Serbia” within the states of a dying Yugoslavia. However, a key difference between the two centuries’ ideologies was that Garašanin highlighted specific steps for Serbia to follow in order to create the overt Serbian Empire. The SANU utilization of vague calls to protect a Serb orthodoxy in Yugoslavia produced a gray area that would allow violence to escalate, as Serbs could then define what actions constituted defending their state.

With words that dripped with irony, the memorandum went on to outline the cause of tensions evolving to a critical level within Yugoslavia, which it claimed were the nationalistic beliefs of non-Serbian ethnic populations. The authors claimed that through the manipulation of language and restriction of scientific and cultural professions within republics, particularism had been given free rein to run rampant within the hearts of ethnic groups. Not wishing to see the nationalities which live beneath the yoke of a Serbian Yugoslavia disseminate ideals of separatism and individualism, which would potentially sow instability within the country, the authors undermined even the possibility of such discussion by portraying all ‘new’ ethnogeneses as:

-unfortunate products of locally *closed, religious ideologies* and *shackled logic*, and they are also symptomatic of a retreat from a common past, a common present, and a common future. It is as if everyone wished to flee as fast and as far from a collapsing house.

Mental attitudes warn us that the political crisis has reached a critical point, threatening the complete destabilization of Yugoslavia.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Memorandum 1986*

By delivering a message which deliberately attacked the historical foundations of ethnic groups, the Serbian Academy sought to dismantle the legitimacy of said groups. Thus, groups such as Albanian Kosovars were depicted to be mere superficial creations of radical religious doctrine and closed off, shackled logic, which cannot comprehend the greatness of a complete “Yugoslavia” (the Serb nation). SANU sought, further on in the above quote, to paint ethnic identifications as a misguided, panic laced hysteria pushing others to quickly “flee from a collapsing house”. Furthermore, the groups of people and leaders who coopt and promulgate these ideologies, wishing to be consolidated as one nationality, are in turn branded as blind from the ‘truth’; showcasing that such lines of thought were fundamentally incorrect. Such statements served as the groundwork to begin tearing down histories belonging to the various republics and peoples which had been well entrenched for centuries.<sup>19</sup>

Further portraying this ethnic sense of independence as a scheme supposedly invalid and misguided, which should not be taking place, the authors outlined it as being symptomatic of a “retreat from a common past, common present and common future.” The Serbian Academy herewith argued that, by carefully using the word “ethnogeneses”, nationalities such as Bosniak, Albanian, Slovene, etc. were meagre figments of ethnic imaginations, and they did not truly exist, only through artificial fabrication. Crucial to future nationalist principles Serbian ideology will frequently maintain that these falsely generated ethnicities lacked a right to exist within Yugoslavia. This line of thought will justify future aggression and conquest attempts against Croatian and Bosnia-Herzegovinian sovereignty. Establishing that if a nation has no legitimate existence, it can easily be assimilated into ‘Greater Serbia’. Through an examination of this ideology itself it becomes apparent that 20<sup>th</sup> century Serbian nationalism differed from the 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Tanović-Miller, *Testimony of a Bosnian*, 105-113

through attempts to divide and crush sympathies for ethnic minorities. Garašanin showed that the nationalism of his time sought to use a Serb sense of greatness to incorporate minorities into Greater Serbia, however, SANU in the 20<sup>th</sup> acted entirely different. Instead of a peaceful inclusion of minorities, as was seen in the 1840s, Serb nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century dictated that these minorities had no right to exist and were to blame for Yugoslavia's atrophy.

The Memorandum progressed to draw a figurative line in the sand as authors claimed that there was no place in a modern society for discrimination or political oppression based off the notion of nationality. Done immediately after a basis of thought that articulated the fraudulence of ethnic identification, this contradiction clearly demonstrated the Academy's bias and manipulation.<sup>20</sup> While this false image of tolerance is projected to shield Serbia from potential accusations of prejudicial fear mongering, young nationalistic Serbs and Serbians clearly become the targeted audience should the reader dig deeper into the article's true intentions. Despite the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, the Serbian Academy argued that not all republics were equal in socioeconomic potential allotted by the state. In addition to being stymied in this manner, SANU paints the Serb people an image that Serbia had been barred from a cultivation of their own nation across Yugoslavia. Claiming the right to a Serbian nation, the authors asserted that Serbs who lived in large numbers within other republics were denied rights such as the utilization of their own language and alphabet. An emphasis was made in highlighting an inability for Serbs to organize politically and culturally, nor access to developing their own unique culture.<sup>21</sup> This 'purposefully conspired' deprivation of Serb liberties could have been interpreted by an intrigued (even *frightened*) reader to mean that the nation which s/he proudly calls their own, is owed a debt. A debt which has remained stubbornly unpaid, while the other nationalities of Yugoslavia enjoy benefits that foster healthy economic and political growth. This image of a

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<sup>20</sup> Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Memorandum 1986*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

deprived, beaten down and assaulted Serb nation will be utilized as a foundational concept in future nationalist constructions.

These assertions would tacitly warrant aggressive action to seize what rightfully belonged to Serbia. In addition, a gleeful acceptance of ‘being saved’ by Serbian military units (as would be the case for Belgrade’s excuse to invade Croatia in 1990) would be acceptable by populations that were led to believe their Serb people were being oppressed. These claims differed strongly from the ideology of the Načertanije as the nationalism of 1844 advocated not for vengeance against ethnicities, but the use of Balkan peoples to strengthen Greater Serbia’s claim to the regions in which they lived. The import of the above accusation is unprecedented, as it is with these inflammatory words that the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s nationalism sowed the seeds of anger and mistrust within a Serb population that believed their people had been wronged. Once people were firmly indoctrinated to believe that demonized ethnic minorities needed to be paid a justly due retribution, an order to kill defenseless civilians in the name of Serbia became much easier.

The fear and anger inducing rhetoric continued as the Memorandum discussed *why* Serbia had been substantially held down. The document accused the republics of Yugoslavia of collusion in order to create the relationship of “A weak Serbia, a strong Yugoslavia”; for if the largest nationality (Serbs) were permitted to seek out economic growth, they would pose a threat to the other republics of Yugoslavia.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, by this logic, all possibilities were taken to constantly place obstacles in Serbia’s path to obstruct the possibility of reaching political consideration and economic development. It is here that SANU scapegoated Yugoslav governmental structures and other republics in the federation for maliciously holding down Serbia and her people to prevent Serb prosperity. This brand of nationalism claimed that Serbs’ only allotted source of power was the

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<sup>22</sup> Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Memorandum 1986*

Executive Council (the body of the republic's assembly), however, it was still constructed to be a limitation that silenced the collective voice of Serbs outside of Serbia proper's borders.

An additional key point of the SANU Memorandum of 1986 can be found in its analysis of Serb treatment by Croatia. Utilizing a relatively small decrease of the Serb population from 1948-1981, it stated that at no other point in history (excluding the genocide committed against Serbs by the NDH during WWII) had the persecution of Serbs within Croatia been worse.<sup>23</sup> The decrease which, according to the Serbian Academy, is evidence of genocidal levels of persecution is a reduction of less than 2% of the whole Croatian Serb population. The Memorandum does not analyze the possible causes for the reduction, which are plentiful. Population trends over 33 long years can vary substantially, ranging from but not limited to, shifting movement patterns caused by employment opportunities elsewhere, displacement of industry, a decline in birth rates, (which in of itself can be brought about for many reasons), or a variety of other socioeconomic/political factors. In fact, during the decade between 1960 and 1970, thousands of people left Croatia primarily for Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Western Europe. Large migratory patterns, as revealed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Integration of Croatia, included 65,000 leaving in the 1960s, and 150,000 emigrating elsewhere by the mid-1970s.<sup>24</sup> By claiming Serbs in Croatia were under an unprecedented persecution without offering concrete evidence, SANU manipulated these numbers to insinuate that Serbs had been threatened on a level not seen since World War II. This manipulation is evident as no analysis into the potential causes of such a population decline was given. By limiting their analysis and writing, the authors of the 16-man SANU committee put forth an ideology that created a filter through which readers saw their people under siege in Croatia and potentially elsewhere in Yugoslavia as well. Such an intentional fear mongering is dangerous, as this ideology

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration (Croatia), *Hrvatsko iseljništvo u Kanadi*, 1965

carried a potential to radicalize Serb populations to “save” their brethren.”<sup>25</sup> The authors of the memorandum go on to assert that, “-Serbs in Croatia have never been as persecuted as they are now. The solution to their national position must be considered an urgent political question.”<sup>26</sup> Leaving this subject with an ominous warning, the Serbian Academy warned that should this pressing political issue go unanswered, the results could be disastrous for Croatia and Yugoslavia as a whole. A potential foreshadowing threat as to what would occur in a few years’ time to Croatian cities like Vukovar and Osijek in 1990.

Overall, the inflammatory rhetoric of the Memorandum is written with the intent to ignite a fire within Yugoslav hearts. A call to action for Serbs outside of Serbia proper to defend and advocate for a Serbian nation under siege. The Memorandum’s rhetoric directly equated the future success of Yugoslavia with Serbia’s ability to stand on equal footing, in terms of political decision making, with the other republics. While the Serbian Academy wrote to create a sense of inclusion within the Yugoslav community, this inclusion would be used as an excuse to expand the Serb domain in the years of turmoil to come after 1986. This guise of inclusion was utilized to try and force the other republics to remain within the rump Yugoslavia during independence movements, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina’s independence referendum on February 29, 1992.

Ilija Garašanin advocated for the creation of an explicit Serbian Empire in 1844, however, in 1986, the Serbian Academy sought to usher Greater Serbia into existence by hiding it beneath the husk of Yugoslavia. According to the ideology of 1986, Yugoslavs across the country would be most benefited if Serb dominance was kept intact. As the document closed, SANU dictated to its audience that up until this point (1986), the entire period of the Yugoslav community’s existence had ended in an old and worn out ideology, economic stagnation, and repression of cultural growth.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Memorandum 1986*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, *Memorandum 1986*

Serbs were henceforth charged with the creation of a new Yugoslavia that could survive long into the new age by means of a dedication to a total mobilization of the country's human resources to social reform<sup>28</sup>. Through the Memorandum of 1986, the Serbian Academy primed its people for war by cultivating an ideology of superiority, division, retribution and the dangers of ethnic independence from Serb dominance. Evidence of this dangerous rhetoric was found in several key ideological points: the exaggerated history of past outrages (such as the claim that Serbs were under constant genocidal threat since the end of World War II), the scapegoating of ethnicities for the downfall of Yugoslavia, an illegitimate and inferior claim to non-Serb nationalities and finally the supposed suppression of the Serb nation. The above-mentioned talking points demonstrated a clear divergence from Serbia's erstwhile nationalistic expansionism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as they sounded a call for armies to ride into war in the name of Serbia's takeover of Yugoslavia. Violence, at this point in the Memorandum's ideology, was practically inevitable and outright encouraged.

While the Serbs have experienced persecution in the past, the history portrayed by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences is one of continuous victimization, spanning from the times of the Ottoman Empire into the present. Its memorandum consistently argued from a one-sided and heavily distorted perspective, ignoring the instances of Serbian-led victimization against other peoples of Yugoslavia.<sup>29</sup> The portrayal of other nationalities such as Croats playing the role of constant aggressors and Serbs, the victims, by SANU contributed heavily to the Serb nationalism that future Serbian president, Slobodan Milošević would tap into beginning in 1987. The goal of the 1986 Memorandum was to indoctrinate a nationality to believe a 'Greater Serbia' was owed to Serbians and Serbs at the expense of nationalities living within other republics. The notion that Serbia had been wronged throughout the ages by these peoples would motivate Serbs across

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Doris Gödl, *Challenging the Past: Serbian and Croatian Aggressor—Victim Narratives*, (International Journal of Sociology, 2007), 43-57.

Yugoslavia to maliciously seek retribution for all the trespasses committed against their people. This document serves as a crucial example that, when wielded recklessly, history becomes as powerful a weapon as any army; as the distorted and heavily one-sided history written in its pages motivated Serbs all over Yugoslavia for a horribly destructive war in the years to follow 1986. The pieces for Serbia to wield a powerful army against her perceived enemies were now in place, and all Milošević needed was a spark to ignite his crusade. The stage for a vicious war had been set.

## **Epilogue**

If one looked at the Serb led assault upon Croatia and Bosnia with an uninformed eye, it would be quite difficult to understand why Serbia had unleashed the full might of the Yugoslav People's Army, paramilitary groups and even everyday former friends, neighbors and coworkers against their fellow countrymen. In a distinct turnabout from the nationalism seen during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Serbian nationalism which ran rampant in the 1990s sparked an expansionism that destroyed the social fabric that held together a frail Yugoslav state. A profoundly different set of ideologies were responsible for the disparity between the calm outcome of Serbian nationalism in 1844 (one which advocated for a mostly peaceful aggregation of Balkan peoples into a consolidated Greater Serbian Empire), and the nationalistic expansion responsible for the atrocities committed during the Yugoslav Wars.

As discussed in the pages of this work, it was the radical and hateful ideology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that would be the responsible ingredient in morphing Europeans into violent, 'wild beasts'<sup>30</sup>. I have argued that this ingredient was indisputably found within ideology espoused by

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<sup>30</sup> The countless cases of atrocity against unarmed, civilian populations during the war are immense. Here, I use an eye witness' testimony to depict a deliberate, targeted attack upon a simple gathering of young people. The Tuzla massacre showcased the fall of yet another "Safe Area" with the gruesome murder of approximately 68 people and 237 wounded; Andre Lommenbr, *Eye-Witness Report of the Tuzla Massacre*, Tuzla: May 25, 1995.

documents like the 1986 SANU Memorandum, as the Serbian nationalism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (represented by the Načertanije) called for actions nowhere similar to the Memorandum. Additionally, nor did 19<sup>th</sup> century Serbian nationalism result in the same egregious violence that was seen during the 20<sup>th</sup>. Naza Tanović-Miller's mother would appear to have been correct in her assertion that men become mad during a war, as the evolution to madness was made complete thanks to the dangerous ideologies of 20<sup>th</sup> century Serbian nationalistic expansion.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> See *Surviving the Bosnian Genocide: The Women of Srebrenica Speak* by Selma Leydesdorff for a gripping social history of one of the worst atrocities to have taken place during the war at Srebrenica.

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