

Wissenschaft als nationaler Beruf: die Serbische Akademie der Wissenschaften 1944-1992 : Tradierung und Modifizierung nationaler Ideologie. By Nenad Stefanov. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen Bd. 52, 2011. 388 pp. Bibliography. Eur 91.50, hard bound.

Many accounts of the surge of nationalism in Serbia/Yugoslavia in 1980s used to begin with the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences' (SANU) Memorandum of 1986. This conspiratorial approach to history which always seeks a "document" and important "men" behind it is misleading and erroneous in ways too numerous to dwell here. Its two key flaws are that it does not explain 1) how the ideas evoked in Memorandum appeared so suddenly; and consequently 2) how in the span of couple of years they were able to attract and mobilize so many led by Serbia's ex-Communist president Milošević. The latter was in the meantime a topic of a number of monographs ranging from structural deficiencies of Yugoslav federation, economic slump to political mobilization. A number of works dealt precisely with Memorandum, its authors and agency (Audrey Budding in *Serb intellectuals and the national question*, 1998; Olivera Milosavljević in "The Abuse of the Authority of Science" in *The Road to War in Serbia*, 2000; Jasna Dragovic Soso in "*Saviours of the Nation*", 2002; and Nick Miller in *The nonconformists: culture, politics, and nationalism in a Serbian intellectual circle, 1944-1991*, 2007). With Stefanov, we finally got a long awaited volume that deals with the former. The book under review traces the tragic delusions of a significant group of Serbian academicians, followed by venomous responses they devised and shared with a significant portion of the Serbian intellectual elites, ruling party and eventually, with the help of media, the masses. It is a history of the SANU from 1945, describing a process whereby it became the speaker and guardian of Serbian interests whereas its key figures pronounced causes and ways to redress the alleged Serbian victimhood in 20th century. After reading it one realizes that Memorandum was the peak of an iceberg of ethno-nationalism rather than its first drop.

The merits of this book are too many to mention. Its meticulously research and profound analysis goes much beyond its abovementioned task and offers the first attempt at a comprehensive history of ideas in Serbia after World War Two. Unlike most surveys of this period who insist on the Communist rule as caesura, Stefanov, detailing the institutional history of the Academy and then analysing the set of ideas occupying its members, shows amazing continuities with the pre-war period. Certainly, there were changes were too, such as Soviet inspired policies that inaugurated SANU into the most important scientific establishment by 1950, after Yugoslav leadership made a pact with key academicians. The privileged position of SANU within an authoritarian and ideologically monist system helped nourish a particularly critical intellectual atmosphere but also provided asylum for political dissidence. Furthermore, Stefanov examines how inherited forms and representations were put to new use in different circumstances and how relationships between scholarship and state were negotiated. It tracks key ideas from famous geographer Jovan Cvijić, via Vasa Čubrilović Vladimir Dedijer and yet another Partisan Dobrica Ćosić. Finally, it elaborates how by now ominous text was prepared by a group of prominent Academy members,

expressing the grave concern of Serbian intellectuals over the contemporary state of affairs in Yugoslavia—most notably the status of the Serbian nation—and proposing a solution through contradictory means.

Unfortunately, the book's extensive confrontation with his main protagonists and their ideas leaves little room for presenting the echo SANU enjoyed in society at large. Similarly, we learn little about alternatives to ethnonationalism in this whole period as author himself admits at the end. For example, throughout the book the personality and work of historian Sima Ćirković comes up in opposition or stark difference with the rest of academicians but this is only mentioned in passim.

The book contains only few minor errors and repetitions (pp. 150 and 332). Justin Popović was not a bishop (p. 308); Belgrade Liceum was transformed in Velika Škola only in 1863 and not 1835 as suggested (p. 38); Stojan Novaković was ambassador in Constantinople after 1900 and not the chief of the Propaganda department for Macedonia (p. 40); names of Zaharije Orfelin and Georgije Ostrogorski are misspelled throughout. What is more lamentable however is not the fault of author but that of editors (Holm Sundhaussen und Hannes Grandits) and the publisher. Namely, the book is without index or any visual assistance. More importantly, it is about time German editors and publishing houses rethink their policy of publishing doctoral thesis intact. While publishing dissertations is praiseworthy tradition that distinguishes German academy the benefit of having them in their entirety is doubtful and threatens to exclude many potential readers.

Bojan Aleksov

SSEES UCL London