

**FRUITFUL INCONSISTENCIES: HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE
PRODUCTION IN LATE SOCIALIST HUNGARY AND CROATIA**

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Abstract

The dissertation investigates the historical knowledge production about recent history in Hungary and in Croatia in the 1970s and 1980s in a comparative framework. Engaging with earlier state socialist legacies as well as the survival of pre-1945 tendencies, I am analyzing the circumstances that characterized the work of professional historians of contemporary history, leading to academic and non-academic publications and other forms of dissemination, reading the institutional dynamics through the lenses of new institutionalism. I investigate convergences and differences between the two historiographies in terms of topical focus and approaches, reflecting on the international embeddedness of the respective scholarly communities. Reckoning with the fact that the historical narratives were not only conditioned by institutions and policies but by other public realms of discourse as well, I also reflect on the challenge that literature posed to historiography. In my dissertation, I compare particular instances of policy-making and their (not necessarily anticipated) results, while engaging with the agency of historians in the process of policy-making and implementation.

My dissertation's innovative aspects include the incorporation of party history into academic historiography (in the Hungarian case, as this is a more common approach in Croatia) and the explicit approaching of the question what the goal of party history was and whether it succeeded in any of the discussed contexts. The second innovation stems from the integrative approach towards academic and popular historical works, which was necessary in order to address broader questions of epistemic authority in historical knowledge production.

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CEU has been a wonderful place to pursue my PhD, which consciously built upon the original idea of the Department of History with its comparative interests in East Central and Southeastern Europe. I would like to thank my supervisor, Balázs Trencsényi for encouraging me to embark on this project, which proved to be an intellectually enriching, fulfilling experience. I was fortunate to be part of this vibrant department and I am thankful both for the scholarly input of the professors and the generous help of the administrators, Ágnes Bendik, Margaretha Boockmann, Anikó Molnár and Mónika Nagy. My colleagues in the PhD program proved to be a great source of inspiration, especially the Superwomen Collective. I have learned a lot from them and I hope I was able to transmit as much experience to the younger cohorts as I received, thanks to the dedication of my elder peers. From among former colleagues, I would like to thank Adela Hîncu especially, a fierce friend, a staunch feminist and the eternal source of constructive criticism.

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This dissertation in parts or as a whole, was read by many of my colleagues and I aimed to address all of their points. I take responsibility for all mistakes and limitations of the manuscript.

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We are but sober fanatics of reality and drudgers of good compromises.

Béla Pintér: Titkaink

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List of Abbreviations

ANVOJ – Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije/ Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia

ELTE – Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem/Eötvös Loránd University

HSWP – Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party/MSZMP – Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt

IHCLM – Institute for the History of the Croatian Labor Movement/Institut za povijest hrvatskog radničkog pokreta

JAZU – Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti/Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts

HAS – Hungarian Academy of Sciences/ MTA – Magyar Tudományos Akadémia,

HHa –Hungarian Historical Association/ MTT – Magyar Történelmi Társulat

IH – Institute of History/ TTI – Történettudományi Intézet

NDH – Nezavisna Država Hrvatska/Independent State of Croatia

PHI –Party History Institute/ PTI – Párttörténeti Intézet

SDiJ – Savez društava istoričara Jugoslavije/League of Historians of Yugoslavia

SKJ – Savez komunista Jugoslavije/League of Communists of Yugoslavia

SQC – Scientific Qualifying Committee/ TMB – Tudományos Minősítő Bizottság

Introduction

History is written by the victors – it is a commonplace that some attribute to Winston Churchill, while others accept that its origins are unknown. It is especially often uttered by members of small nations, populating East Central and Southeastern Europe: in friendly conversations, national histories are narrated as a series of betrayals, inner conflicts, and malevolent great powers whose machinations push the small nations to the verge of extinction.¹ Commonplaces, at times, contain a fragment of truth, but in this case, it begs for a correction: History is written by *historians*.

At least, this was how I thought in 2015 when I embarked on this research. But as I have read the assessments of state socialist historiographies, I realized that even when it comes to the period of late socialism, many accounts conclude that historiography was either not professional or needed to go through a new wave of professionalization – claiming concomitantly that those historians who were working for the party history institute were in fact mere propaganda workers, even if they had a degree in history. This realization made me more aware of a lingering anti-Communist bias in the bulk of the works about (historical) knowledge production in and about the region. This statement holds true for my native Hungary particularly. While not denying the restrictive nature of state socialist regimes, I decided that my analysis should problematize, investigate, and incorporate the work that was carried out in party history institutes, especially, as contrasting the Hungarian experience with that in Croatia, I saw how a comparison could contribute to the more complex understanding of the late socialist legacies of scholarship. The fact that history features importantly in the intellectual scenes of both countries, only strengthened this impression. Still, at an initial

¹ For the latest reflection on the long-term roots of regional preoccupation with the death of the nation see: John Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvm7bc1n>. 9–25.

stage the question arose again: Who was writing history? Historians and/or party historians? How is the distinction important?

The first decision to aim at an integrative approach in relation to party history brought about a second. Instead of confining my analysis to the traditional forms and spaces where historians disseminated their ideas, I decided to reflect selectively on the embeddedness of historical narratives in literature and popular history. Witnessing the post-transitional crisis of expertise, which ever reaches new heights with populist political leaders, and the great popularity of alternative histories, I considered it imperative to try to find the roots – if there were any – of the loss of primacy of experts, here historians, to their broader audiences. However, this decision brought me back again to the question: Can a novelist write history?

In the times of identity politics and triumphant illiberalism that takes pride in rewriting the past according to its own, changing taste, my quest for settling the issue of authority (who writes history after all?) seems to be even more difficult. Nevertheless, in the course of trying to ask the right question, seeking to approach the final one, an instructive intellectual journey unfolded about historians as a guild and as individuals with an agency, state socialist regimes oblivious to how much they were repeating interwar practices, and “people” and their popular education and never ceasing interest in matters of national history and identity.

In the course of the research, I established four tenets, which reflect on the most important conditions that framed, characterized and testified to the professional practices of historians of recent history in late socialism: institutional setting, polices and their arbitration, especially with regard to the national question, academic historiography, popular historiography and the literary scene where historical interpretations were contested or utilized outside of academia.

This dissertation follows the tradition of comparative history as defined by Diego Olstein: “transcend[s] the single, self-enclosed unit of analysis in order to contrast between two or more units to highlight differences and/or similarities, to test causal attributions, or to formulate a pattern or generalization.”² Two national historiographies, the Hungarian and the Croatian one, constitute the two units of analysis. Although Croatian historiography was also part of a Yugoslav, federal historiographical scene, the republican scholarship’s focus on Croatian history persisted throughout the years of state socialism, rendering it suitable for a comparison with that of a historiography functioning in a formal nation-state. On a broader level, science and cultural politics belonged to the republics and autonomous provinces, as the 1974 constitution, and several joint acts made sure to also extend the decentralizing tendencies to these realms of policy-making.

That being said, my study does not provide a comprehensive assessment of the policies concerning knowledge production about the interwar period and the Second World War at the federal level. Instead, the limited federal authority, as well as its (in)ability to influence Croatian history writing, will be critically introduced, mostly in instances when a conflict occurred with the republican level. Sporadic references will be made to other member republics when needed though. Here it is sufficient to contend that the federal bodies had little bearing on Croatian historiography during late socialism and the limited involvement of supranational deliberating organs further strengthens the viability and validity of the proposed comparative framework.

The comparison of these two particular cases brings multiple analytical benefits. First, they allow the comparison of knowledge production practices in two state socialist countries from different geopolitical configurations: Hungary belonged to the Eastern

² Diego Adrián Olstein, *Thinking History Globally* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). 59.

Bloc while Yugoslavia (and Croatia within it) headed the non-aligned movement and harbored a special identity of in-betweenness, which invites increasing scholarly attention. Rather than being an analytical invention, in-betweenness worked both as a political currency and as a means of Yugoslav self-representation both to domestic and to global audiences.³ I do not claim here that Hungarian historiography would have been in any respect typical as an Eastern Bloc historiography, rather one that occasionally overlapped with an uncommonly broad “grey zone”, but I maintain that tentative conclusions may be drawn with regard to the differences in the ways foreign power structures influenced the production of knowledge in Yugoslavia and countries of the Eastern Bloc, even if the tradition of such comparisons is quite weak.⁴

Second, Hungary and Croatia for centuries belonged to the same state, under changing names, to be separated by the peace treaties after the First World War. Being exposed to the German cultural space to a similar extent, it is worth investigating which institutions and ideas, conceived under the influence of German models, survived regime changes or lent themselves to easier reconfigurations. Since this study is particularly interested in continuities and discontinuities in the broadly defined realm of historical knowledge production, the comparative approach seems promising indeed.⁵

Third, after the respective transitions in 1989 and in 1990, the first freely elected prime ministers – József Antall Jr. and Franjo Tuđman – were historians and were surrounded

³ Vladimir Kulić, “An Avant-Garde Architecture for an Avant-Garde Socialism: Yugoslavia at EXPO ’58,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 47, no. 1 (2012): 161–84. 162–164.

⁴ One of the few examples is the monograph of Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, which provides and asymmetric comparison of the early development of historiography in Yugoslavia with a focus on Croatia, and several East Central European countries. When discussing the early socialist legacies that influenced historical knowledge production in the 1970s and 1980s, my analysis draws on her findings extensively. Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, *U skladu s marksizmom ili činjenicama? Hrvatska historiografija 1945–1960* [In Accordance with Marxism or with Facts? Croatian Historiography 1945–1960] (Zagreb: Ibis grafika, 2013).

⁵ This aspect rendered Croatia a much better candidate than Serbia, since its framework of knowledge production originated and developed under different conditions.

in government by many of their peers either in formal or in informal positions. This I regard as the (soon passing) peaking moment of the growing symbolic value of historical expertise in East Central and Southeastern Europe that this dissertation traces in late socialism. Therefore, I contend that when exploring the ins and outs of late socialist historical knowledge production in these two countries, this is an investigation into discourses which were in high demand, invoked both considerable political-administrative involvement and popular engagement, in other words: the stakes of who was acknowledged as a legitimate conveyor of historical knowledge were considerable, if not high.

Fourth, while it is common knowledge that historical discourses deeply permeated the language of dissent during late socialism, in the Hungarian case, these voices seemed to die slowly in the cacophony of the immediate post-transitional period, and up until 1993, the reburial of Miklós Horthy, these issues seemed to be dormant, or, at least, safely delegated to the realms of (at that point) moderately combatant memory politics. However, it was only a matter of decades to see interpretations of the interwar and Second World War history of Hungary become deeply polarized, with the coming of the period of illiberal memory politics from the second term of Viktor Orbán starting from 2010. In the Croatian case, the similarly triumphant nationalist dissent successfully re-channeled these discussions into wartime rhetoric and made them subservient to a deeply ethnicized discourse. Both processes, even if following different timelines, have been interpreted within the broader regional phenomenon of historical revisionism. While the roots of these discussions have been already partially recovered, the present study expands the scope of inquiry, with its integrative approach to different spheres where historical narratives were produced and internalized, thus supplying the

continuity argument, linking the late socialist and post-transitional discourses, with further evidence.

Fifth, in Croatia, from a historiographical point of view, the evaluation of the works of affiliates of the party history institute shows a less antagonistic, though in some contexts also highly politicized, picture. This might be partially because research on contemporary history was so much bound to this single institution during state socialism that unless post-transitional scholarship wanted to claim a complete *tabula rasa* on these topics, at least a great portion of their knowledge production needed to be taken into account. Furthermore, its successor, the institute that is today called Hrvatski institut za povijest [Croatian Institute for History] employed historians who were and continued to be hailed as champions of Croatian national history. My comparison seeks to apply the integrative approach that is displayed towards Croatian historiography by Croatian historians⁶ to the activities of the Hungarian party history institute without the political undertones. Instead of dismissing party history, I will focus on the particular challenges party history or the writing of contemporary history posed in general, especially in Chapters Two and Three.

I limited the pool of historical works that constituted the basis of the historiographical analysis both temporally and geographically. As the title of the dissertation suggests, I was interested in the historical knowledge production during the years of late socialism, which means works that were published between 1971–1989 in Hungary and 1974–1991 in Croatia, respectively. In both cases, the late socialist years started with a conservative backlash,, after the realignment following the New Economic Mechanism and the Croatian Spring, respectively. In the Hungarian case, this was accompanied with the publication of an important collection of essays in 1971 by the mastermind of

⁶ Najbar-Agičić, *U skladu s marksizmom ili činjenicama?*

Hungarian politics of culture, György Aczél, entitled *Eszmének erejével* (With the Power of Our Ideas). Its chapter about social sciences emphasized the hegemony of Marxism in Hungary as a status report and while it does not call for an end to the “ideological battles”, it implies the lack of – especially aggressive – efforts towards a monopolistic influence.⁷ This I regard crucial when trying to pinpoint ideological relaxation in relation to historical knowledge production.

As for the Croatian case, the federalizing constitution of 1974 had surprisingly far-reaching consequences for the institutional frameworks engaged in historiographical works, confirming and further encouraging the elaboration of a Croatian (rather than Yugoslav)-focused historiography. I perceived that the nation-centered character of Croatian historiography prior to 1974 as a feature that emanated from the inner logic of the scholarship without external (policy) validation, in fact, as something that worked contrary to the sporadic but definitely federalism-centered policies. Therefore, I interpret the decentralizing measures of 1974 (both the constitution and specific laws connected to it) as a confirmation or acknowledgement of this situation from the ideological-political level, hence as the beginning of a new period, which, in relation to historical knowledge production might be then treated as late socialism.

I made only several exceptions to these chronological delimitations, the necessity of which I explain when they occur. Geographically speaking, I included publications that were produced in Yugoslavia (by Croatian authors) and in Hungary proper. This decision has broad implications for the scope and possibilities of this dissertation, as both Croatian and Hungarian émigré historiography flourished during this period. The diasporas were active in promoting a specific view of the past, especially those groups

⁷ György Aczél, “Társadalomtudomány és tudománypolitika [Social Sciences and Science Policies],” in *Eszmének erejével* [With the Power of Our Ideas], ed. György Aczél, 2nd ed. (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1971), 248–59.

of intellectuals who left their homes during or after the Second World War.⁸ However, as it is central for the present research that it looks into instances of late socialist knowledge production, it becomes inevitable that the accommodation of different politico-cultural contexts would violate the integrity of this project. Concomitantly, it would seriously undermine the analytical benefits I seek to deliver.

I establish three main hypotheses as points of departure for my comparative study. The first hypothesis pertains to the politico-institutional setting of historical knowledge production. I hypothesize that the main elements of the institutional setting were close to identical in Hungary and Croatia, corresponding to the similar historical experiences that formed them. Despite the seemingly considerable similarities, diverging inter-institutional dynamics emerged, thus creating different though comparable landscapes of historical knowledge production. In both contexts, there were continuities with the interwar period as well as novelties, however, thorough Sovietization⁹ happened in the Hungarian case only.

Second, research into contemporary history was in certain ways delimited and kept in check in both contexts, not the least because of its sensitive nature. In Hungary, this had mainly to do with the anxieties concerning the long-lasting consequences of the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920, the failure of the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919) and the presence of Soviet troops since the end of the Second World War. In Croatia, the experience of interwar federal statehood and the events of the Second World War were intimately tied to contemporary interethnic tensions.

⁸ These specific narratives contributed to the emergence of a common narrative framework that prompted Croatian émigrés with NDH past, consequently with a separatist agenda “to cultivate a culture of abandonment, betrayal and persecution...” Mate Nikola Tokić, “The End of ‘Historical-Ideological Bedazzlement’: Cold War Politics and Émigré Croatian Separatist Violence, 1950–1980,” *Social Science History* 36, no. 3 (Fall 2012): 421–45. 423.

⁹ John Connelly, *Captive university: the Sovietization of East German, Czech and Polish higher education, 1945–1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

Third, both as a product of the state socialist idea of popular education and that of a popular demand for a historiography that is aimed at a lay audience, history in non-academic forms enjoyed a blossoming in these late socialist regimes.

The usage of two terms throughout the dissertation requires clarification here. Late socialism is a rather undertheorized concept, coined as a heuristic notion in investigations set in different former Eastern Bloc countries. Chronologically speaking, this phase usually follows the Stalinist and post-Stalinist eras, but scholars attribute different characteristics to this period. Regardless of the case study, the period of late socialism is traditionally depicted as a staggering, pragmatic one.¹⁰ However, several scholars of the region already apply this notion consistently in line with the propositions of my dissertation,¹¹ however, it is rather uncommon for works concerning the history of Hungary.¹²

Admittedly, there are also limitations to the applicability of this notion, particularly in the case of Romania, where the dynamics of social control diverged greatly. However, this dissertation found late socialism in Hungary and in Croatia a period in which the intellectual atmosphere was characterized by growing pluralism and a gradually more dynamic international engagement. Putting the first years of dogmatism and a wave of reforms and their rejection behind, these regimes were interested in the peaceful coexistence with their intellectuals, including historians.

¹⁰ Pavel Kolář, *Der Poststalinismus: Ideologie und Utopie einer Epoche*, Zeithistorische Studien, Band 57 (Köln Weimar Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2016).

¹¹ Balázs Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume II: Negotiating Modernity in the "Short Twentieth Century" and Beyond, Part I: 1918–1968*, vol. 2, 1 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019). 2.

¹² For recent references to late socialism or late communism in line with my dissertation see: Ljubica Spaskovska, *The Last Yugoslav Generation: The Rethinking of Youth Politics and Cultures in Late Socialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); Rory Archer, "'Antibureaucratism' as a Yugoslav Phenomenon: The View from Northwest Croatia," *Nationalities Papers* 47, no. 4 (July 2019): 562–80, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2018.40>; Nebojša Vladislavljević, "Revolutionary Origins of Political Regimes and Trajectories of Popular Mobilization in the Late Communist Period," *Nationalities Papers* 47, no. 4 (July 2019): 545–61, <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2018.62>. These works investigated the Yugoslav context.

Moreover, there was a palpable effort at reinvigorating certain ideological aspects, most notably a new accommodation of the national and the communist. In the Hungarian case, this effort had to do with the late reactions to surrounding national communist phenomena, while in Croatia, with the renewed emphasis on nation (republic)-based historical narratives and primary identifications, which was unambiguously supported by the new constitution in 1974, and sped up the gradual abandonment¹³ of the cultivation of a common Yugoslav cultural space and narratives.¹⁴ The death of party leader Josip Broz Tito in 1980, who for many embodied the ideology of *bratstvo i jedinstvo* [brotherhood and unity] served as a catalyzer in this process.¹⁵

Historical knowledge production is another core concept of this dissertation. I subsume all kinds of intellectual work aiming at creating, synthetizing, and disseminating historical narratives under it, hence it is an apt shorthand for referring to a whole array of activities. However, the very notion suggests an alienation from intellectual work, creating allusions with manual work or factory production, which may make its usage dubious in such a fundamentally intellectual framework. The apparent controversy, however, can be easily resolved, as late socialist science policy and administrative bodies used the same term when addressing these activities.¹⁶

The investigated period was one overshadowed by the unfolding financial crisis in both countries. Hungary and Yugoslavia were becoming increasingly indebted to Western

¹³ As Dejan Gužina points out, in the Serbian part of Yugoslavia, the supranational cognitive framework was only cultivated systematically in the 1950s and 1960s. Dejan Gužina, “Socialist Serbia’s Narratives: From Yugoslavia to a Greater Serbia,” *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 17, no. 1 (2003): 91–111. 92.

¹⁴ Sabina Mihelj, “Negotiating Cold War Culture at the Crossroads of East and West: Uplifting the Working People, Entertaining the Masses, Cultivating the Nation,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53, no. 03 (July 2011): 509–39, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417511000235>. 529.

¹⁵ Tea Sindbaek, “Die Vergangenheit nationalisieren: Kroatien, Serbien und Bosnien schreiben die gemeinsame Geschichte des Sozialistischen Jugoslawien neu,” *Jahrbuch Für Historische Kommunismusforschung* 22 (2014): 77–92. 78.

¹⁶ “Jelentés a történettudomány helyzetéről (1968–1974) [Report on the Situation of Historical Science (1968–1974)],” *Az MTA Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztályának Közleményei* 25, no. 2–3 (1976): 203–23. 204.

economies, due to a great extent to an overstretch in expenditures with regard to the raising of living standards.¹⁷ Hence, economic hardship was a common experience in scientific life, most importantly for scholarship that were considered non-productive, such as history. Austerity measures should therefore be interpreted primarily within the framework of financial crisis, instead of regulatory moves that would have tried to stir the functioning and output of the scholarships into a more desirable direction. These had considerable effect on publication (number of copies) as well as on spending connected to travelling and invitation of foreign scholars. Occasionally, paper shortage was cited as a pretext for the limitation of the distribution of dissent (or so deemed) works, but this was not part of the most frequently occurring censorship practices.

My dissertation lays the necessary ground for future research about historical knowledge production during the 1970s and 1980s. Historical knowledge production was by no means confined solely to the institutions that are discussed here. Archives, museums, trade unions and several associations beyond those mentioned dealt with different aspects of the respective nations' past or took part in the dissemination of such knowledge. However, this dissertation set out to investigate those branches of historical knowledge production that were considered instrumental in state socialist scholarship based on the visions of the ruling parties and which unambiguously declared the centers of these activities. With regard to the investigated ways of dissemination, the analysis is restricted to written and to a limited extent, oral dissemination, largely disregarding the representative realm (broadly speaking, the field of public collections) and the different forms of activism. They are included however, in cases when it yields

¹⁷ Patrick Hyder Patterson, "Needing It: The Eclipse of the Dream, the Collapse of Socialism, and the Death of Yugoslavia," in *Bought and Sold: Living and Losing the Good Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*, ed. Patrick Hyder Patterson (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2011), 294–319. 207.

analytical benefits in relation to the more extensively analyzed loci of historical knowledge production.

My dissertation decidedly goes against the still pertinent Cold War logic and refuses to situate Yugoslavia on any side of the iron curtain. Foreign politics and endogenous ideological developments both support the analytical decision to treat late socialist Yugoslavia and Croatia within it as a state socialist entity that fashioned itself as a non-aligned country,¹⁸ whose construction evidently does not fit the often-favored binary division. While leaving aside the rather inflexible foreign political implications of an uncritical usage of the Cold War framework, its politically figurative power is not underestimated in the course of the analysis. The constraints of historical scholarship – both ideological and physical – which emanated directly from the competition between ideological regimes, are duly acknowledged and scrutinized. The dissertation engages with topics of historiography though, where particular (historical) knowledge cultures emerged and under the influence of the geopolitical realities of the period.¹⁹

The Cold War as an important geopolitical condition manifested in two areas that are relevant for my research. One of them is the transsystemic and transnational cooperation while the other, related area, is the embeddedness of historiographies into the global circulation of ideas. The international embeddedness of the respective scholarship may be investigated both regarding Hungary's and Croatia's ties with the Western

¹⁸ Beloff's early work, in which she casts Tito's non-aligned position as a false perception, remained in minority ever since. Nora Beloff, *Tito's Flawed Legacy: Yugoslavia & the West, 1939–84* (London: V. Gollancz, 1985). 159.

¹⁹ There appears to be no consensus on the Holocausts' Cold War situatedness in contemporary historiography and memory studies. Those who deny the relevance of the Cold War framework, tacitly deny the need for making new attempts at integrating East Central and Southeastern European Holocaust remembrance into the referential framework that was elaborated in Western Europe, serving subsequently as a foundation of the envisioned European memory landscape. I agree with the argument of the article of Scheibner and Zombory article as they criticize this stance. Tamás Scheibner and Máté Zombory, "Holokauszt és államszocializmus. A történelem terhe a hatvanas években [Holocaust and State Socialism: The Burden of History in the Sixties]," *Múltunk Politikátörténeti Folyóirat* 31, no. 2 (2019): 4–13. 6.

scholarship and the socialist camp. While arguably there is space for discussion between Croatia and non-aligned countries as an additional channel circuit of exchange, up to this day no systematic research has been carried out on the topic and the current thesis's scope unfortunately does not allow for basic research in the area. Nonetheless, in order to reflect on the processes of limited internationalization, I give a brief outline of its main supportive structures.

This study seeks to take a fresh look at certain aspects of the complex process of Yugoslavia's disintegration of the cultural sphere in order to contribute to this broader, ongoing debate. I offer a detailed institutional-structural account of a fragment (though well-integrated) of this cultural sphere in order to highlight institutional actors whose agencies had not been systematically investigated yet and to offer new insights both from the planning process and of the daily functioning of institutions. This will help to move discussions forward about the available trajectories of republican agents in a dynamically changing federal framework, going beyond the shorthand like "flawed planning" or "uneducated cadre".

Communist parties in both contexts were preoccupied with their legitimacy and sought to rely on historiography as their natural ally in inserting their own (party) histories into the long history of their respective nations. While both leaderships faced challenges, it was arguably the Hungarian regime that faced a more serious legitimacy deficit. The nature and manifestation of this reliance on sources of legitimacy provided by the means of history went through considerable change in the period between 1945 and 1989/1991, respectively, and ideologically concerned prescriptions slowly sunk into irrelevance while certain restrictions prevailed – even if in a less and less significant manner and of decreasing topical scope. My focus on continuities and discontinuities helps avoid the uncritical advancing of the professionalization argument, which regards the post-Soviet

period as the time of a second professionalization,²⁰ putting it rather to the test in my respective contexts.

Naturally, the historicization of the interwar period required fundamental research during state socialism that in the case of the historical discipline entails the processing (though often also cataloguing) of an enormous body of archival sources, which were to be (re)distributed among traditional and newly established archives. Party history archives tended to implement rather incoherent access policies that complicated the position of historians. Based on the topic or the persona of the researcher, the amount and quality of available material varied, especially in Hungary.

The dissertation revisits one of the main contradictions that lay behind the enterprise of producing a new, mature Marxist master narrative about the respective nations' histories. While the literature tends to agree on the prevalence of the nation as the main actor of history (as opposed to class),²¹ and subsequently declare the Communist attempts unsuccessful, my analysis goes further. I provide a thorough assessment of how party historians tried to cope with the challenge of integrating their activities and works into the flow of the perceived "national" knowledge production. While I am comparing the two systems of knowledge production focusing on their institutional background, content, and manifestation in popular history, I reflect on the potentials and constraints of their attempts.

My dissertation builds on the premise that historical knowledge production under late socialism should be considered as historical knowledge production in its own right. My research shows that scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s into the interwar period and the

²⁰ Maciej Górny, *The Nation Should Come First: Marxism and Historiography in East Central Europe*, Warsaw Studies in Contemporary History (Frankfurt am Main ; New York: Peter Lang Edition, 2013), 17.

²¹ Ulf Brunnbauer, "Introduction. (Re)Writing History in Southeast Europe," in *(Re)Writing History - Historiography of Southeast Europe after Socialism*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 380. 12.

Second World War – though produced under the governance of ideologically-minded regimes – constitutes an important part of the national scholarship. Such view may be debated in today's scholarship, based on different conceptualizations of academic freedom. Despite gradual relaxation, several taboos prevailed indeed, however, after the transition, some historians of historiography²² along with historians who actively engaged in the given studies mischaracterized several topics as taboos, often internalizing irrational, retrospective impressions prevalent in public discourse and/or certain literary circles.²³ In the Hungarian context, the Trianon-complex, dubbed the national question was such an issue, along with the Holocaust, however, recently, several interventions were published that problematize this view.²⁴

Subsequently, I consider party history institutes as important constitutive elements of the landscape of historical knowledge production, which is rarely the case in works that are interested in the profession's history. Contending that propagandistic activities outweighed scholarly concerns at the time of their establishment, and that periods of regression occurred even during the late socialist years, the contribution of employees of party history institutes is important when trying to reconstruct the means, forms, and impacts of different historical narratives.

In close conjunction with the post-transitional marginalization of the knowledge production of party history institutes in historiographical works about Eastern Europe,

²² This line of argumentation was represented among others by Ignác Romsics. Ignác Romsics, *Clio bűvöletében: Magyar történetírás a 19–20. században--Nemzetközi kitekintéssel* [Under Clio's Spell: Hungarian Historiography in the 19–20th Centuries - with an International Outlook] (Budapest: Osiris, 2011).

²³ Ádám herself engaged in investigations into the diplomatic history of the interwar period and the consequences of the Treaty of Trianon, however, somewhat overwriting her own scholarly legacy, she openly denied the possibility of a sound research into the Trianon-issue right after the transition. Magda Ádám, "Tévhitek Trianonról [Misbeliefs about Trianon]," *Társadalmi Szemle* 48, no. 8–9 (1990): 106–12.

²⁴ Scheibner and Zombory, "Holokauszt és államszocializmus. A történelem terhe a hatvanas években [Holocaust and State Socialism: The Burden of History in the Sixties]." 8.

party historians themselves are often depicted as agents of propaganda,²⁵ depriving them *ab ovo* from agency and the potential of scholarly contribution.²⁶ These accounts are giving a negative moral judgement emanating from an openly, not necessarily acknowledged but nonetheless obvious, anti-Communist sentiment. I propose instead to treat their case as an opportunity to theorize about the broadly perceived (imagined) societal role of historical research and partisanship in historiography. As party history institutes were established in all state socialist regimes, understanding their inner logic serves the self-reflection of the scholarship more than simply labelling them as anomalies.²⁷

Moreover, these accounts treat party historians' profession as ahistorical, drawing their examples from the early Stalinist years where some of their claims are better substantiated, especially in relation to the autonomy and educational background of party historians. My dissertation, however, deals with late socialist times and historicizes consciously the role(s) these party historians played. While reflecting on previous institutional experiences, I engage productively with the contemporary debates about the hybrid knowledge²⁸ production that party historians facilitated, connecting the realms of history and ideology.

This dissertation does not share the widely claimed belief that methodological conservatism, that embracement of factography was in fact a way of expressing opposition towards ideological expectations.²⁹ Rather, it is viewed here as the survival

²⁵ Ignác Romsics, *A múlt arcai: történelem, emlékezet, politika* [Faces of the Past: History, Remembrance, Politics] (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2015). 353.

²⁶ Stjepan Antoljak, *Hrvatska historiografija*, Posebna izdanja / Matica Hrvatska (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2004).

²⁷ Also, the understanding of the roles of post-transitional government-funded institutions whose main mission is to support current memory politics can benefit from such an approach.

²⁸ Anna Birkás, "Party Historiography: A Scientific Experiment in Hungary around 1956," in *Social Sciences in the "Other Europe" since 1945*, ed. Adela Hincu and Victor Karády, Pasts, Inc. Studies and Working Papers 2 (Budapest: Pasts Inc., 2018), 90-116. 90.

²⁹ However, this view about the potential functions of 'positivism' or factography already appeared in late socialist discourses. Zsuzsanna Benke, "Országos Történész Vándorgyűlés Székesfehérvárott

of the most common way in which historiography was practiced since its professionalization in the second half of the 19th century. A closer look at several historians' oeuvre may indicate a correlation between a sudden change in the investigated period and a wish to refrain from commenting on politically sensitive recent issues. Also, in some cases, works that engaged with earlier periods were read as contemporary history.³⁰ However, a claim that deems research into medieval history unfit to be read as contemporary history would certainly not stand scrutiny.³¹

Both in the Hungarian and in the Croatian contexts, several historiographical works are available that deal with state socialist historiographies either as their central topic of interest or within the broader framework of national historiographies, both from before and after the transitions. This body of literature is quite heterogeneous in terms of voluminousness and methodological sophistication. However, when making use of these works and the ways in which they interpret historical knowledge production, the analyst needs to be aware of a second underlying discussion pertaining to the politics of history. By and large, interpretations of contemporary history – and the interpretation of the works of those who were and are researching it – resulted in polarized public and professional discussions. Therefore, a clarification of my own position in this debate is also essential.

My dissertation asserts that late socialist historical knowledge production was an inalienable part of Croatian and Hungarian historiographies. This statement already locates me among those historians who reject the idea that the years of state socialism

[National Travelling Assembly of Historians in Székesfehérvár],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 23, no. 2 (1977): 194–201.

³⁰ In several cases, the works could have been read as commentaries on the current political issues of the day, for example: T. Iván Berend, *Válságos évtizedek: Közép- és Kelet-Európa a két világháború között* [Critical Decades: Central and Eastern Europe between the Two World Wars] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1982).

³¹ Jenő Szűcs, “Vázlat Európa három történeti régiójáról,” *Történelmi Szemle* 24, no. 3 (1981): 313–59.

constituted a deviation from the “natural” course of national histories,³² and therefore, its legacies – among others, historical knowledge production – are void, as they were produced under the ideological constraints of a regime that is no more. Such views that are based on a version of the uncritically internalized totalitarian paradigm refuse to reflect on the inner chronologies of distinct state socialist regimes and are not willing to consider individual or group agencies.

Furthermore, my analysis intends to speak to scholars of memory politics, especially those who are dealing with state socialist and post-socialist practices. Providing an overview of diverse infrastructures that have been involved in incentivizing and policing historical knowledge production in relation to the interwar period and the Second World War through published works, I offer a complex analytical framework that may be utilized for the investigation of other case studies, including contemporary illiberal settings.

When engaging with the national, Croatian and Hungarian historians needed to take caution or indeed, try to avoid out of conviction the semblance of rekindling bourgeois nationalism with their works during late socialism. In practice though, the difficulties they faced played out differently. Croatian scholars were not to question the federal framework while their main protagonist remained the nation,³³ and their Hungarian colleagues needed to be mindful of matters of international relations. Any assessment of the history of Hungary involving the territories it had lost in the Trianon Peace Treaty of 1920 had the potential to stir international controversy with Romania,

³² Gábor Egry, “A Fate for a Nation: Concepts of History and the Nation in Hungarian Politics, 1989–2010,” in *Thinking through Transition: Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts, and Intellectual History in East Central Europe after 1989*, ed. Michal Kopeček and Piotr Wciślik (Budapest ; New York: CEU Press, Central European University Press, 2015), 505–24. 519.

³³ Dejan Jović, „Reassessing Socialist Yugoslavia, 1945–1990: The Case of Croatia”, in *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia: Key Issues and Controversies*, ed. Dejan Djokić and James Ker-Lindsay (London; New York: Routledge, 2011), 117–42. 125.

Czechoslovakia, or even Yugoslavia for that matter. Subsequently, the roots of the bulk of the sensitive issues with a bearing on contemporary national consciousness originated at the end of the First World War (in the case of Croatia: the Vidovdan Constitution of 1921). Therefore, Chapter Two elaborates on these tensions as well.

My analysis features four major topics, which are discussed in separate chapters. Chapter One deals with the comparative investigation of the institutional framework of historical knowledge production, interpreting party imaginaries and actual functioning of academies, universities, and party history institutes, through the lenses of new institutional history. In addition to that, I discuss the most important associations and professional journals that ensured the dissemination of knowledge. One subchapter elaborates on the career paths of historians in the two contexts and I also give an overview of the infrastructure that supported the international embeddedness of the two scholarships. This chapter intends to contextualize the remaining three, as it engages with the complexities of institutional determinants and incongruences. The analysis draws on mostly case study specific and to a lesser extent, comparative literature on the histories of institutions, occasionally with the inclusion of archival sources of the same organs. Apart from a few references, interviews do not feature prominently in my analysis. Although I have conducted over a dozen of interviews within the framework of my research, I realized that a proper engagement with how – often today's most influential – historians recount the early stages of their career would drastically change the course of the dissertation. Therefore, while I am grateful for my interviewees for their insights that helped me to reconstruct some of the nuances of the informal processes of the scholarship during late socialism, no systematic utilization of the interviews take place.

The chapter explores how historians of contemporary history substantially contributed to the advancement of their discipline while pursuing different professional, sometimes political, agendas. Their institutional affiliations were indicative but not decisive for the professional value of their contribution. The state socialist regime indeed imposed important restrictions on the profession, by the years of late socialism, however, the navigation among poorly defined boundaries was considerably less risky than in the years before.

The second chapter elaborates on broader policy issues of science and culture that were relevant for historians of recent history. Some of the policy issues that are brought up in Chapter One are also discussed in more detail there. I have identified the (re)invention of socialist consciousness as the main ideological undertaking of the period, although with different undertones in Hungary and in Croatia, therefore, a subchapter is dedicated to this issue. In the second part of Chapter Two, I assess policy issues surrounding the production of multi-volume national histories and censorship practices that affected academic publications. Through two selected case studies, I illustrate the mechanism of policy-making in the two contexts. In the last subchapter, I discuss the means of control over publishing that affected historians. This chapter builds more heavily on archival sources pertaining to consultative and policy-making bodies with a competence in matters of the historical scholarship.

National consciousness features as a key topic here, as it was one of the fields of ideological work that was entailed by the creation of the new socialist man. From among other types of consciousness (class, economic, etc.), the active research, design, and recreation of historical consciousness was the interface onto which tensions between state socialist ideology and national(ist) sentiments were projected. In late socialism, researchers possessing historical and sociological expertise were regularly called upon

by science and cultural policy organs and by the agitation and propaganda departments to appropriate their findings for different purposes. These included studying the current state of popular national/historical consciousness, making suggestions for more efficient ways of popular education on these matters as well as the creation/synthetization of knowledge for the purposes of redressing any distortions.

Chapter Three focuses on academic historiography about the interwar period and the Second World War. Instead of a comprehensive overview of the entire literature, I chose topics that suggested moderate or high political stakes, serving the purposes of detecting ideological pressure or relaxation. In addition, I made sure that the selection fits the purposes of my comparative research. Beyond the comparison of discourses and their supportive networks beyond those institutions presented in Chapter One, I reflect on the presence or absence of links with Western historiographical trends, contending that those historians who were prone to engage with new trends represented a tiny minority, which have not changed in terms of proportionality after the transitions either. The analysis is based on the historiographical output produced by the affiliates of academies, universities, and party history institutes in scholarly journals and other professional publications.

As the academic literature produced in late socialism shows, the inherent nation-centeredness of regional historiographies, pertinent since the birth of the scholarship, remained dominant. Despite hasty judgements of the immediate post-transitional scholarship, “communist” was never able to replace “national”³⁴ and did not even intend to do so after the initial failure during the Stalinist years. The national community remained the main point of reference in the historiographies, even if it was supposed to

³⁴ Ulf Brunnbauer, “Historical Writing in the Balkans,” in *The Oxford History of History Writing*, ed. Axel Schneider and Daniel Woolf, 1st ed., vol. Historical Writing since 1945, 5 vols., *The Oxford History of Historical Writing* 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 353–75. 359.

become a “proper” socialist one. This traditional language that was preserved in the historical knowledge production in all its important realms was retained both for methodological and communicational purposes. Indeed, no serious alternative emerged to the nation (even if paraphrased as “people”) as chief actor or primary frame of reference in history that would have initiated political, scholarly, or lay interest, apart from a limited body of Marxist literature, although often focusing on earlier periods such as the Middle Ages.³⁵

Chapter Four depicts the multiplicity of contexts where historical narratives were created, utilized, and recycled during late socialism. Reflecting on some of the divisions within intellectual circles, appropriation and negotiation strategies and authorities are introduced, analyzed, and compared. Popular history is one of the main concerns of this chapter, which disrupted somewhat the chronological boundaries of my research. Croatian developments were rapid and short-lived during the late 1960s and early 1970s although they showed striking similarities to later developments in Hungary. Venturing on a small-scale asynchronous comparison, I concluded that despite the “revolutionary” birth of the first and the evolutionary implementation of the latter, the similarities stood scrutiny.

This chapter has the most diverse source base as it incorporates popular historical and literary works, autobiographies of historians, and journalistic pieces, which are contextualized by existing literature about the broader cultural scene. With the incorporation of these scenes into the analysis, I provide an integrative picture of the most accessible spaces where historical narratives of the recent past were (re)produced and contested. Therefore, I do not venture onto proposing a comprehensive literary

³⁵ Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, ed., “*Radi se o časti hrvatske nauke ...*”: *rasprave o hrvatskoj povijesti ranoga srednjeg vijeka za Historiju Naroda Jugoslavije (1949–1950)*) [It is about the Honor of Croatian Science: Discussions on Early Medieval Croatian History for the History of Yugoslavia (1949–1950)] (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2013).

historical analysis. Instead, brief contextualizations are followed with an inquiry into when and how central issues in the memory of the interwar period and the Second World War were depicted, through a narrative-focused discussion of select pieces of art. The criteria of public accessibility was crucial in designing this chapter, as I wished to show the most visible ways of recycling, transformation, and contestation of historical narratives. This chapter is essentially a methodological experimentation, calling attention to the types of challenges historical expertise faced before the fall of state socialism.

As a utilitarian approach emerged towards sciences in the state socialist regimes, historical scholarships were pressed to demonstrate their broader societal as well as expertise-based usefulness in political decision-making. Historians needed to counter the popular image of the researcher who works in splendid isolation from the masses, whom they find poorly cultivated and unfit to mingle with. For different reasons, not all historians shared this view though. Furthermore, the writing of history as a creative process was never completely divorced from developments in literature and political thinking, therefore, an investigation that is both interested in the scientific and cultural policy aspects of historical knowledge production lends itself easily. Moreover, it enables an engagement with extra-academic contexts of historical narratives.

The title *Fruitful Inconsistencies* refers to my main goal to highlight how late socialist regimes inherited and transformed the institutional framework of historical knowledge production. More precisely, the irony that while it was supposed to serve as a progressively more reliable and embedded structure, the political visions, which gradually shaped them, provided scholars with the opportunity to create subversion under the label of “pluralization”. This subversion – however unaware of the perspective of a regime change – played neatly into the gathering intellectual tide of

dissent, most notably in the Croatian case. Historians of recent history remained a largely heterogeneous group of professionals in terms of political engagement, ideas about their own profession and topical interests.

Chapter One. The institutional framework of historical knowledge production

This part of the dissertation sets out to explore the institutional framework of late socialist historical knowledge production in Hungary and in Croatia. However, the chief concerns of this research cannot be singled out in their late socialist settings. The analysis considers developments from pre-Second World War institutional arrangements, and their transformation in the early socialist period. A *longue durée* type of view can easily accommodate the multiple political transitions that largely framed the prehistory of the late socialist institutional setting, therefore it provides a suitable approach to assess the change and survival of structures in the course of these decades (from after 1918). As articulated by Iván Berend with regard to the nature of more general changes in history: “the past is always enmeshed with the present, and as such, may weaken the ‘great’ change, and may preserve much from the past.”³⁶ This undertaking can particularly benefit from scholarship in the field of historical institutionalism.³⁷ I am going to compare institutions: academies, universities, and party history institutes with a particular interest in their inter-institutional relationships and policy-regulatory framework. This I will do within the framework of historical institutionalism in order to problematize the contingencies and discontinuities, seeking how this institutional setting evolved.

New institutionalism – an umbrella term for several closely related branches of theoretical frameworks, including historical institutionalism – has its roots in sociology, political science and economics, and entered scholarly discussions as a “critique of the

³⁶ “és a múlt mindig belemosódik a jelenbe, vagyis gyengítheti a “nagy” változást, és sok mindent konzerválhat a múltból.” See in: T. Iván Berend, *Naplementék: történelmi korszakvázlatok* [Sundowns: Sketches of Historical Periods] (Budapest: Éghajlat Könyvkiadó, 2018). 166.

³⁷ B. Guy Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science: The “New Institutionalism,”* Reprinted (London: Continuum, 2001). Introduction.

behavioral emphasis of American and comparative politics in the 1950s and 1960s.”³⁸ Since then, historical institutionalism has been utilized mostly in its disciplines of origin, yet in this dissertation, I propose that it can be applied to historical research as well. In particular, this part of the dissertation builds on B. Guy Peters’s definition of historical institutionalism: “...the policy choices made when an institution is being formed, or when a policy is initiated, will have continuing and largely determinate influence over the policy is initially initiated, will have continuing and largely determinate influence over the policy far into the future”.³⁹

As pointed out by Shu-Yun Ma, historical institutionalism does by no means absolutize institution as the sole explanatory variable. Instead, institutions themselves are put into a broader context, that of “socioeconomic changes, ideological flows, and actors’ interests and strategies...”⁴⁰ Along these lines, this part of the dissertation exploits the theoretical framework of historical institutionalism on two levels: on the one hand, as dominant approach to the comparative investigation of formal and procedural institutions in the Hungarian and Croatian landscapes of historical knowledge production. On the other hand, in the analysis in Chapter Two (on policies); its results are later integrated into the institution-focused analysis.

Two major trends emerged within the rather heterogeneous literature of historical institutionalism. While upholding the premise of enduring structures, one of the trends puts emphasis on breaks and discontinuities that are called critical junctures.⁴¹ The other

³⁸ Behavioralism itself conceived primarily as a critique of a previously dominant approach in comparative politics: rational choice theory. Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, „Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics”, in *Structuring Politics. Historical institutionalism in comparative analysis*, ed. Sven Steinmo, Kathleen Thelen, and Frank Longstreth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–32.1.

³⁹ Peters, *Institutional Theory in Political Science*. 63.

⁴⁰ Shu-Yun Ma, “Political Science at the Edge of Chaos? The Paradigmatic Implications of Historical Institutionalism,” *International Political Science Review / Revue internationale de science politique* 28, No. 1 (2007): 57–78. 63.

⁴¹ Critical junctures are „moments in which uncertainty as to the future of an institutional arrangement allows for political agency and choice to play a decisive causal role in setting an institution on a certain

trend, spearheaded by Kathleen Thelen, focuses more on institutional resilience, hence contingencies that survive the above-mentioned critical junctures.⁴² My research questions can benefit more from the latter approach, as this dissertation joins to a minority in state socialism research as it tries to identify continuities rather than discontinuities when comparing pre-Second World War and state socialist settings.

In the period under investigation, state socialist regimes had already been in power for more than two decades. Hence, the change of regimes was already history, even if a complicated one. As the structure of this chapter already shows, continuities and discontinuities were both present in terms of the basic institutional patterns of historical knowledge production in Hungary and in Croatia. However, state-science relations underwent serious change and new types of legitimacy-lending practices emerged.⁴³ By the 1970s, the novelties that were introduced after the Second World War produced new institutional experiences, which, as cumulative experiences can be subjected to an investigation into increasing returns (“the probability of further steps along the same path increases with each move down the path.”)⁴⁴ and path dependency. Sharing the views of Kathleen Thelen, the focus is diverted from critical junctures and is redirected to other forms of institutional changes; however, the results may yield important results for a research that is interested in the discontinuities between interwar, state socialist and post-transition structures.

path of development, a path that then persists for a long period of time.” Giovanni Capoccia, „Critical Junctures and Institutional Change”, ed. James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, *Strategies for Social Inquiry* 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147–79. 150.

⁴² Kathleen Thelen, „How Institutions evolve: Insights from comparative historical analysis”, in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, ed. James Dietrich and Rueschemeyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 208–40. 209.

⁴³ Michael David-Fox and György Péteri, „On the Origins and Demise of the Communist Academic Regime”, in *Academia in Upheaval: Origins, transfers, and transformations of the communist academic regime in Russia and in East Central Europe*, ed. Michael David-Fox and György Péteri (Westport, Connecticut; London: Bergin&Garvey, 2000), 3–35. 4.

⁴⁴ Paul Pierson, “Increasing returns, path dependence and the study of politics,” *The American Political Science Review* 94, No. 2 (2000. June): 251–67. 252.

Although historical institutionalism as a theoretical framework was initially tailored for and applied to democratic settings, this analysis is going to appropriate it for the sake of a deeper understanding of state socialist institutional mechanisms that structured historical knowledge production. This enterprise, albeit not at all common, is not entirely without precedent. Anna Maria Grzymała-Busse's widely acclaimed first monograph, entitled *Redeeming the Communist Past*⁴⁵ already successfully utilized historical institutionalism for the purposes of a comparative analysis of state socialist and post-socialist institutional processes. In her seminal work, she was able to uncover multiple patterns that were reproduced after the transitions.⁴⁶ Although her book is primarily an analysis of post-Communist phenomena, the institutional predecessors that survived the critical juncture of transition were parts of a non-democratic regime. The present research uses the theoretical framework in order to describe an authoritarian setting.

In what follows, first I address the most important pre-1945 institutional legacies that defined historical knowledge production in Hungary and in Croatia. Then I will move onto analyzing the roles of academies, universities and party history institutes in the late socialist settings, followed by the discussion of other parts of the infrastructure like journals and professional associations. I discuss career paths of historians and outline the tenets of international embeddedness of the scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s. Though I make comparative notes throughout the chapter, the conclusion will reiterate them and reflect comprehensively on continuities and discontinuities.

⁴⁵ Anna Maria Grzymała-Busse, *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002).

⁴⁶ Her most important finding concerns post-Communist reactions to crisis: "when responding to political crisis, elites are likely to rely on the political skills and experiences they had earlier gained, such as bargaining with the opposition, innovating and implementing policy, or emphasizing pragmatic solutions over achieving ideological goals." Grzymała-Busse.11.

1.1. Patterns and institutional legacies of historical knowledge production: An overview of interwar and Stalinist characteristics and their afterlives

While cultural ministries of the pre-Second World War time did occasionally engage with issues of tertiary education, and research, a systematic interest in creating science policies and corresponding infrastructures that would support substantially the regime arrived to East Central and Southeastern Europe with the communist takeovers. In the realm of historical scholarship, the legacy of the previous period was embodied in the historical departments of universities and the academy of sciences, whose previous roles were contested and rewritten by Stalinist policies to a varying extent. The intellectual milieu of these institutions bore the imprints of German and Austrian education, reflecting the studies of leading researchers.

Universities provided traditionally the highest level of education and were accessible only to a small segment of the population, mostly male students during the interwar period. The departments of history served as the “natural habitat” of historiography as a national scholarship, organizing curricula and main points of interest around the nation’s history in different periods.⁴⁷ The faculty was heavily involved in research alongside its teaching tasks. Also, faculties other than history employed scholars who published historical pieces (especially from the faculties of law).

The academies of sciences of the post-1918 era functioned as loosely connected research institutes ranging from the humanities to natural sciences. Their inner structures very much resembled older patterns, without meaningful bureaucratic hierarchy or any consistent framework within which they would have labored towards predefined goals. While both the Hungarian and the Croatian academy enjoyed great

⁴⁷ Ilaria Porciani and Jo Tollebeek, “Institutions, Networks and Communities in a European Perspective,” in *Setting the Standards: Institutions, Networks and Communities of National Historiography*, ed. Ilaria Porciani and Jo Tollebeek (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), 3–26. 12.

prestige, they resembled a scholarly association, which largely existed outside science and cultural policies.

In Croatia, the Stalinizing attempts in broader politics of science – including historiography and its institutional framework – started as early as the immediate post-Second World War period and were at first barely affected by the Tito/Stalin split of 1948–1949.⁴⁸ The lack of transitional years between the war and the establishment of Communist rule meant that in Yugoslavia, the implementation of certain prioritized elements (establishment of further institutes within the academy of sciences and arts) of the Soviet model went unchallenged. Agičić sees this hiatus of an “experimental” period a crucial characteristic compared to bloc countries (in his study, Poland and Czechoslovakia).⁴⁹ Even after an elaboration of a Yugoslav way in transforming historical scholarship, which occurred in the aftermath of the split, many similarities were to be observed with those structures of historical research across the bloc countries that witnessed a more systematic (self-)Sovietization of their respective scholarships.⁵⁰ These shared characteristics extended to the designation of the Academy of Sciences as the central body of research planning and coordination with regard to all disciplines, and, as the name of the institution implies (Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti), that of the field of arts.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Wolfgang Höpken, “Zwischen ‘Klasse’ Und ‘Nation’: Historiographie Und Ihre ‘Meistererzählungen’ in Südosteuropa in Der Zeit Des Sozialismus (1944-1990),” *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Und Kultur Südosteuropas*, no. 2 (2000): 15–60. 22.

⁴⁹ Damir Agičić, “Hrvatska historiografija 1990–2010: struktura i glavni smjerovi razvoja [Croatian Historiography 1990-2010: The Structure and Main Trends of Development],” in *Hrvatska Klio: O historiografiji i historičarima* [Croatian Clio: About Historiography and Historians] (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2015), 40–49. 39–40.

⁵⁰ Dragović-Soso suggested in her book that right after the split, Yugoslav historiography was off the yoke of Soviet-type control mechanisms and started a liberalizing course at once. However, recent literature on Yugoslav historiography suggests a less straightforward and considerably slower process. Jasna Dragović-Soso, “*Saviours of the Nation*”, *Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*. (London: Hurst&Company, 2002). 70.

⁵¹ The institution was renamed after 1945 – before that it had been called Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts. According to Zdenko Radelić, this move was regarded as an anti-Croatian act. Zdenko Radelić, “1945 in Croatia,” *Review of Croatian History* 12, no. 1 (2016): 9–66. 42.

Both in Hungary and in Croatia, the state socialist academy built heavily on the pre-existing institution, which rather functioned as a scholarly assembly than a central organ of the organization of science. Stalinist centralizing tendencies in terms of coordination of research were accompanied by decentralizing attempts as well, with regard to the geographical distribution of research institutes that acted as outposts of the otherwise capital-based Academy. The logic of decentralization was much more apparent in the buildup of the Croatian institutional framework. While in Hungary, affiliate organs of the HAS usually lacked any regional embeddedness and, indeed, an individual research profile, even separate institutes of history were established under the auspices of the JAZU in Dubrovnik (1949), in Zadar (1954) and an additional Adriatic institute in Rijeka (Svjernojadransko Institut, 1945) beyond its Zagreb-based, in fact, later established (1954) counterpart.⁵²

In Hungary, there was one serious attempt at a profound change concerning the structure of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which, however, predated the Communist takeover in 1948 (although Communist actors played an important role in it). In fact, this endeavor had the potential to become a critical juncture in the Capoccian sense,⁵³ although it did not yield the expected results. The HAS housed all areas of research, applied sciences were added to the traditional fields in the course of the 1949 reform. A conflict of interests between social scientists and humanities scholars with natural and applied scientists played out in a failed attempt to establish a new institution in order to separate these sections, and hence, to inaugurate a new set of methods in coordinating and organizing research. According to Péteri, this inner struggle contributed

⁵² Branimir Janković, *Mijenjanje sebe sama: preobrazbe hrvatske historiografije kasnog socijalizma* [Change from Within: Transformation of Late Socialist Croatian Historiography] (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2016). 57.

⁵³ This notion has been introduced previously. See Giovanni Capoccia, „Critical Junctures and Institutional Change”, ed. James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, *Strategies for Social Inquiry* 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147–79. 148.

significantly to the relatively smooth transformation of the Academy in 1949, as a partial realization of the Soviet model of research and higher education.⁵⁴ Ironically, the party in favor of radical reform suggested a stricter adherence to the Soviet model in terms of central planning and finances,⁵⁵ but their cause was on the long run not supported by the Hungarian Council of Science (1949), the chief organization of science policy of Stalinist Hungary.⁵⁶

Among the few research facilities that were abolished by the early state socialist regime, the Teleki Institute (1941–1948) stood out. Its research and post-gradual education on the history of Hungarians within the Carpathian Basin was unique at the time of its foundation. Most of its historians went through a Western type education and their vulnerable position was made clear already before the communist takeover. First being renamed to Kelet-európai Tudományos Intézet [Eastern European Academic Institute], following a row of intimidations and personal changes, in 1949 it was abolished.⁵⁷

The interwar (and pre-1918) model of both the university and the academy owed much to the German academic model, which served for long as a primary example for the region's similar institutions.⁵⁸ The way departments of the Academy and that of the universities were organized relied heavily on these examples, even if the number of departments expanded with the inclusion of applied sciences. As the (final) radical break with the interwar models failed or were not even attempted, parts of this structure

⁵⁴ György Péteri, “»Scientists versus Scholars«: The Prelude to Communist Takeover in Hungarian Science, 1945–1947,” *Minerva* 31, no. 3 (1993. September): 291–325. 292.

⁵⁵ Tibor Huszár, *A hatalom rejtett dimenziói: Magyar Tudományos Tanács, 1948–1949* [The Hidden Dimensions of Power: The Hungarian Council of Science 1948–1949], 1. ed. (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1995). 104–116.

⁵⁶ József Litkei, “The Molnár Debate of 1950: Hungarian Communist Historical Politics and the Problem of the Soviet Model,” *East Central Europe* 44, no. 2–3 (2017. December 11.): 249–83. 255.

⁵⁷ Ignác Romsics, “Kosáry Domokos és a Teleki Intézet [Domokos Kosáry and the Teleki Institute],” *Magyar Tudomány*, 174, no. 12 (2013): 1458–65.

⁵⁸ Bálint Varga, “The Making and Unmaking of an Austrian Space of Historical Scholarship, 1848–1914,” *East Central Europe* 44, no. 2–3 (December 11, 2017): 341–66, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18763308-04402004>.

remained influential during the late socialist period. Although this analysis does not venture into the realm of post-transition, it is remarkable how resistant to change some defining features of the German model still are.⁵⁹

In the following subchapter, I am going to analyze the role of the chief organs, which participated in historical knowledge production in Croatia and in Hungary. The selection of the investigated institutions was based on the self-descriptive and prescriptive – i.e., prescribed by the party – identification of these institutions as the coordinators of research with regard to history, being trend-setters and representing the elite of the discipline (academies), acting as the chief organs of writing and disseminating party history (party history institutes), and educating a new generation of historians for the previous two as well as to train teachers who, may disseminate the knowledge produced by them (universities).

Such criteria, however, imply that several other institutions that carried out historical research fall outside the scope of this dissertation. As mentioned earlier, those institutions with the primary task of collecting or representation (archives and museums) are not discussed in detail here. Beyond those, however, other research facilities with occasional contributions to historical knowledge production also existed, however, these did not display similar strategies of self-identification or party-designated role. Such was the case in Hungary with Központi Statisztikai Hivatal [Central Statistical Office], which produced the most sound social historical (demography) analysis in the period employing talented historians – sometimes temporarily – who were denied academic positions.⁶⁰ Military history institutes operated in both contexts, however, these are excluded from the analysis for the already

⁵⁹ In Hungary, the institution of habilitation was re-introduced, and it continues to feature as an important stage in the scholarly career.

⁶⁰ Ignác Romsics, “Történetírásunk a két világháború közötti korszakról. 1918–1945 [Our Historical Scholarship on the Interwar Period 1918–1945],” *Századok* 114, no. 3 (1980): 440–65. 449.

mentioned reasons, being relegated to auxiliary positions in the hierarchy of historical research during state socialism – which policy decision corresponded to their thematically bound and often overspecialized knowledge production.

1.2. The infrastructure of historical research: Academic and party history institutions
By the late 1980s, a memory of the post-1945 institutional framework of Hungarian historical knowledge production was already articulated and reflected upon by historians themselves. Tibor Hajdu, a Marxist historian who worked for decades in the Party History Institute and with a quite unlikely move transferred to the HAS, published an article with the very purpose in 1987. In it, he both claimed that the discipline was governed in an unprofessional way up until the 1960s⁶¹ and that the entrusted leaders of this early period, Erzsébet Andics,⁶² the first female ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1949),⁶³ Aladár Mód⁶⁴, and Erik Molnár had quite

⁶¹ According to Glatz, the émigrés of the Hungarian Communist Party, notably the strongman of Stalinist cultural politics, József Révai, were inspired greatly while in Moscow in matters of politics of history. Ferenc Glatz, “Történeti-politikai gondolkodás a felszabadulás után [Historical-Political Thinking after the Liberation],” *Történelmi Szemle* 24, no. 2 (1981): 146–56. József Révai (1898–1959) was a writer and politician. He was involved in illegal Communist activities from the 1910s onwards, which brought him into the turbulent events of 1918–1919 as well. After the fall of the Soviet Republic, he emigrated and continued to publish on émigré platforms. He returned to Hungary in 1944 and actively shaped the ideological and cultural landscape of the new state that emerged after the Communist takeover. Although he rose high in different party organs, and was in charge of science and culture (e.g. the introduction of socialist realism in Hungary), he fell from grace in 1953. The uprising of 1956 forced him to leave for the Soviet Union and his support for the fallen Stalinist leadership marginalized him until his death in 1959.

⁶² Andics (1902–1986) was involved in the state socialist reform of the Academy of Sciences from as early as 1949, when she was part of the Academic Party Collegium, the chief body for the design and execution of science policy. György Péteri, “Academic Elite into Scientific Cadres: A Statistical Contribution to the History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1945–49,” *Soviet Studies* 43, no. 2 (January 1991): 281–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668139108411926>. 292. Later, she remained the key figure of the discipline and acted as head of department in the Institute of History at the Eötvös Loránd University. Post-transitional Hungarian literature often equates the Stalinist years of historiography with her name.

⁶³ Katalin Baráth, “‘Higgyék el nekem, nem a tapsaikra vágyom’. Jelenetek Andics Erzsébet Életéből [‘Believe Me, I Do Not Wish Your Applause’: Chapters from the Life of Erzsébet Andics],” in *Hét Társulati Elnök* [Seven Presidents of the Association], ed. Adrienn Szilágyi, Századok Könyvek (Budapest: Magyar Történelmi Társulat, 2018), 175–206.

⁶⁴ Aladár Mód (1908–1973) was a politician and historian (although he got a degree in Hungarian and Latin only). Committed Communist from the early 1930s onwards, he was persecuted in Horthy’s Hungary and was imprisoned as well. During the Second World War, he participated in partisan activities in Budapest. After the war, he was a prominent figure of Stalinist cultural politics, held important offices

overwhelming political engagements that prevented them from immersing in research.⁶⁵ However, only Molnár showed real incentive with a publication activity spanning through decades. Moreover, he is known for initiating perhaps the most influential historiographical debates during the state socialist years in Hungary, known as the Erik Molnár debate, which will be touched upon later.

The interest of high-ranking party functionaries in matters of history emerged in Croatia as well, even if only to a considerably smaller extent. In the early years, the Slovene Edvard Kardelj, one of the chief ideologues showed distinct attention to this field, however, he never shared the aspirations of Andics and Molnár towards becoming esteemed members of the academic establishment. Kardelj, unlike Andics and Mód, belonged to the closest collaborators of Tito, which added yet another layer to his different positionality.

Instead of the infiltration of important ideologues into the infrastructure of historical research, Croatian (and broadly speaking, Yugoslav) party interests were expressed in a different manner towards matters of history. Party members frequented the sessions of the Yugoslav Historians' Congress, which took place nine times during the years of state socialism. Although the highest echelons were only occasionally present, particularly when the assembly was to celebrate important party anniversaries like the 20th anniversary of its foundation (Ljubljana, 1961), as Agičić argues, cadres' attendance, while they did not intervene in scholarly discussions,⁶⁶ went beyond

and published several theoretical books. From 1954 until his death, he was head of the Department of Marxism-Leninism at ELTE.

⁶⁵ Tibor Hajdu, "Történetírás a konszolidáció időszakában [Historiography in the Period of Consolidation]," *Társadalomtudományi Közlemények* 16, no. 4 (1987): 516–20. 517.

⁶⁶ Agičić mentioned one exception only. During the Prishtina session in 1987, an Albanian politician with a degree in history acted as speaker. Damir Agičić, "Kongresi Jugoslavenskih Povjesničara – Mjesto suradnje ili polje sukoba [Yugoslav Historians' Congress: A Place for Cooperation or Fights]," in *Hrvatska Klio: O historiografiji i historičarima* [Croatian Clio: About Historiography and Historians] (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2015), 21–37. 34.

formalities and suggested a genuine interest in matters of historical interpretations.⁶⁷ Beyond these occasional expressions of interest, the party had a constant presence in the lives of the investigated institutions through the basic organization and the party secretary, who was expected to facilitate seamless communication between party organs and the research institutes or universities.⁶⁸ Party secretaries were present in all workplaces and in the internal hierarchy, and were subordinate to the head of the respective institutions.

The Second World War caused losses to both scholarships,⁶⁹ although as Hungary had a more developed institutional framework than Croatia,⁷⁰ her losses were considerably greater. Also, in the first years of the regimes, there was clearly a shortage of historians who were well acquainted with Marxist literature and methodology, however, in terms of interwar predecessors, the Hungarian scholarship was in a slightly more favorable position. Still, Hungarian and Croatian institutions, in the fervor of removing ideologically unfit fellows or to staff newly established positions, were able to fill the ranks with often young, ardent Communists without relevant formal education. As Najbar-Agičić noted, in Croatia, as a group persecuted by the Ustaša, people with ties to freemasonry were also welcome in scholarly positions as antifascists.⁷¹ When pointing out the influx of young, politically committed historians who often completed their educations while already working in scholarly positions, I do not intend to idealize the interwar circumstances, as, for example, Romsics did, in his inaugural speech as

⁶⁷ Agičić. 21–23.

⁶⁸ In our period the position was filled by Ferenc Mucsi and Ferenc Glatz at the HAS.

⁶⁹ Vince Grolmusz, “A magyar kutatási-fejlesztési bázis harmincéves fejlődése [The Development of Hungarian Research and Development Base in the Last Thirty Years],” *Tudományszervezési Tájékoztató* 15, no. 5 (1975): 584–602. 584.

⁷⁰ Najbar-Agičić, *U skladu s marksizmom ili činjenicama?* 222.

⁷¹ Najbar-Agičić. 225.

ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Science.⁷² On the contrary, I have concerns, especially with regard to the vaguely characterized ‘European niveau’ of Hungarian historiography, which was only prevented from its continuous flourishing by the Communist takeover (such claims were voiced in other regional contexts as well, for example in Romania).⁷³ While interwar Hungarian historiography produced several lasting works, it would be difficult to even make measurements based on the elusive notion of European niveau. The second part of the assertion is, at best, counterfactual history.⁷⁴

However, in the Yugoslav setting, those “bourgeois” scholars who embraced the idea of Slav unity received a better treatment compared to their colleagues. Bringing scores of poorly trained youth into the field⁷⁵ was clearly an interim solution. There were considerable attempts at raising a domestic Marxist community of historians from the very beginnings.⁷⁶ Therefore, pressure was exerted on those already recruited to make up for their lack of education and to submit a work that helps them towards a degree. Also, the influx of young graduates from the universities continued, but gradually slowed down in the course of the 1970s and 1980s. The issue of non-qualified affiliates

⁷² Ignác Romsics, “A magyar történetírás gleichschaltolása. (Szovjetizált múltkutatás.) [The Gleichschaltung of Hungarian Historiography (Sovietized Historical Research)],” *Rubicon* 22, no. 5 (2011): 68–82. 73.

⁷³ Șerban Papacostea, “Captive Clio: Romanian Historiography under Communist Rule,” *European History Quarterly* 26 (1996): 181–208. 182.

⁷⁴ In 2012, a surprisingly vocal debate took place between Romsics and András Gerő, another Hungarian historian, which concerned part of the above introduced general assessment of the history of the interwar period, especially in the early years of Communism. As Romsics felt the need to emphasize the Jewish ancestry of historians who spearheaded the takeover in the historiographical realm, he provoked a systematic critique of Gerő who even called him an anti-Semite. Máté Rigó, “A Hungarian Version of the Historikerstreit? A Summary of the Romsics-Gerő Debate among Hungarian Historians,” accessed July 29, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.25626/0003>.

⁷⁵ Wayne S. Vuchinic, “Postwar Yugoslav Historiography,” *The Journal of Modern History*, 23, no. 1 (March 1951): 41–57. 43.

⁷⁶ Zdenko Radelić, “Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta/Institut za historiju radničkog P pokreta Hrvatske 1961.-1990. [Institute of the History of the Workers’ Movement/Institute for the History of the Croatian Workers’ Movement 1961–1990],” in *Pola Stoljeća Prošlosti: 1961. - 2011.* [History of a Half Century: 1961–2011], ed. Zdenko Radelić (Zagreb: Hrvatski Institut za Povijest, 2011), 13–63. 14.

– although to a far lesser extent – was still prevalent in the late socialist years. As late as 1986, an overview of the academic staff in Hungary bitterly pointed out that some seasoned affiliates without a degree are actively preventing young scholars from entering the field.⁷⁷

As state socialist years progressed, scholars' dismissal for ideological reasons – though it remained a possibility – was less and less likely. The trend of dismissals and expectation of ideological conformity showed a remarkably different picture in Hungary and in Croatia though. While in the former, universities became from very early on the guarded territories against any form of potential dissent and the Academy of Sciences housed an ideologically more heterogeneous scholarly body, in Croatia, the University of Zagreb's staff was not as meticulously selected.⁷⁸ In the Hungarian case, a teaching position at the Eötvös Loránd University was often in itself a useful marker of the extent of one's public commitment to Communist agendas. However, in Croatia such classification was not possible.⁷⁹

Institutions of historical knowledge production – similarly to other disciplines were subjected to the planning economy, proposing a production-oriented outlook resembling industrial settings.⁸⁰ In the Yugoslav scholarship, the planning economy was

⁷⁷ Lászlóné Szecsődy, "A Tudományos kutatás és a műszaki fejlesztés személyi állománya [The Personnel of Research and Technological Innovation]," in *Tudomány- és műszaki politika Magyarországon: Kutatás, fejlesztés, innováció, tudományszervezés* [Politics of Science and Technology in Hungary: Research, Development, Innovation, Science Management], ed. Péter Vas-Zoltán and Ernő Bozsó, vol. 2, 2 vols., Tudományszervezési Füzetek (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), 341–86. 370.

⁷⁸ Höpken, "Zwischen 'Klasse' und 'Nation': Historiographie und ihre 'Meistererzählungen' in Südosteuropa in der Zeit des Sozialismus (1944–1990)." 20.

⁷⁹ This difference in political atmosphere translated into a considerably more active political student body at the University of Zagreb (compared to its counterpart in Budapest, ELTE). Student activism perhaps reached its peak during the Croatian Spring in 1971. Similar tendencies of a politically minded and often staff-backed student movement thrived at the University of Belgrade as well. For an overview of characteristics of Croatian student movements see: Marko Zubak, "Omladinski Tisak i Kulturna Strana Studentskoga Pokreta u Socijalističkoj Federativnoj Republici Jugoslaviji (1968.–1972.) [Youth Press and Cultural Aspect of the Students' Movement in Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1968–1972)]," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 46, no. 1 (2014): 37–53.

⁸⁰ György Kövér, "A magyar tudomány első öt éves terve és a gazdaságtörténet-írás [The First Five-Year Plan of Hungarian Science and the Writing of Economic History]," in *Tudomány és ideológia között*.

introduced as early as 1947, making it the first country outside the Soviet Union to do so.⁸¹ In both countries, the framework-setting five-year plan was accompanied by more focused, discipline-specific plans, with considerable overlaps. In Hungary, HAS at the highest level observed on the one hand the Országos Távlati Tudományos Terv [National Long-Term Scientific Plan] as well as Országos Középtávú Kutatási-Fejlesztési Terv [National Mid-term Research and Development Plan]. In light of the two types of plan, individual academic institutes were expected to submit its plans both for 1-2 and 3-5 years intervals, until a change in 1986 that required only the latter. These played into the five-year plans submitted by HAS to the Ministerial Council.⁸²

In Croatia, after periods of centralization in the management of science, the main contours of relevant science policies were laid down in a law in 1974 (*Zakon o organizaciji znanstvenog rada*) which was revised ten years later, although in a manner that was strongly criticized for their limited applicability for humanities and social sciences.⁸³ The fundamental change resulting in the decentralization of sciences was inaugurated by this law, as it dissolved most organs with a competency in science policy at a federal level. This brought about a fragmented federal scientific field and seriously undermined the work that of the remaining few.

JAZU remained an important center of research at a republican level for Croatia, as all republics and autonomous provinces had their own academies. As a direct result of the

Tanulmányok az 1945 utáni magyar történetírásról [Between Science and Ideology. Essays about the post-1945 Hungarian Historiography] (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2012), 22–42.

⁸¹ Lazarević Žarko, “Yugoslavia: Economic Aspects of the Position between East and West,” in *Gaps in the Iron Curtain*, ed. Gertrude Enderle-Burcel et al. (Jagiellonian University Press, 2009), 218–26.

⁸² Lajos Szántó, “A tudományos kutatás és a műszaki fejlesztés tervezése és a tervek tartalma [Planning of Scientific Research and Technical Innovation and the Content of Plans],” in *Tudomány- és műszaki politika Magyarországon: Kutatás, fejlesztés, innováció, tudományszervezés* [Politics of Science and Technology in Hungary: Research, Development, Innovation, Organization], ed. Péter Vas-Zoltán and Ernő Bozsó, vol. 1, 2 vols., Tudományszervezési Füzetek (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), 177–232. 217, 228–229.

⁸³ Radelić, “Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta/Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske 1961.–1990. [Institute of the History of the Workers’ Movement/Institute for the History of the Croatian Workers’ Movement 1961–1990].” 54.

1974 law, its form of financial support as a state-funded institution became rather the exception than the rule. It remained one of the few state-funded institutions, within a network of largely self-managing research institutes. In theory, the work of the academies of the different republics and provinces was coordinated by a federal council (Council of the Academies of Sciences and Arts), but its activities had little bearing on historical knowledge production practices.

Despite the post-communist imaginary of an overtly centralized structure, both the Hungarian and the Croatian cases provide excellent examples to the dialectics of centralizing and de-centralizing efforts both in terms of the physical distribution of research and higher educational facilities and in terms of functional purposes. While academies were regarded – and entrenched – in the position of coordinating research activities nation-wide as well as to house the best researchers, not all research activity was concentrated in the respective capitals but regional centers emerged.

On the university and college level, the steadily growing number of students required significantly more institutional capacity compared to the interwar era. While in terms of prestige and the composition of the staff universities of the capitals (Eötvös Loránd University, University of Zagreb) fared considerably better than their counterparts, they were challenged by (new) universities of the countryside e.g., in Debrecen, Pécs, or Zadar, the latter being the only faculty where history was taught in Croatia outside the capital until the transition.⁸⁴ This, however, did not undermine the hegemony of the capital-based scholarship, on the contrary, mutually beneficial cooperation was established, fostering academic mobility within the countries.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Neven Budak, “Post-Socialist Historiography in Croatia since 1990,” in *(Re)Writing History - Historiography of Southeast Europe after Socialism*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 128–64. 148.

⁸⁵ An important new institution emerged in Hungary resulting from this setting, that of the ‘traveling professor’. Historians holding a cathedra at one of the universities of Budapest regularly held courses at the universities of Debrecen and Szeged. For our respective period, the Budapest-Debrecen connection

In order to highlight the differences between the financial sustenance of the Croatian and Hungarian institutional structures, a brief elaboration on the functioning of self-management in sciences in Croatia is inevitable. As opposed to Hungary, where the above listed institutions were simply included in the state budget and gained the necessary financial means from state funds, in Croatia, self-management as a constitutional base set the standards for the Croatian (and other republican or autonomous province-owned) research facilities in terms of daily functioning and source of maintenance.

Although self-management already determined the course Croatian research and development took in the previous decade, it was the 1974 Constitution that cemented the negligible share of state support and central funds (both at federal and at member state or province level) in the system of science funding. The responsibilities shifted dramatically with the dissolution of competent federal bodies to the union of self-managing communities.⁸⁶ In the late socialist years, the union's responsibilities encompassed all major areas:

it coordinates research and development programs that are of mutual interest and that of science policy, it participates in the preparation and debate of Yugoslav developmental plans, deliberates about common projects and their funding, monitors the federal processes of research and development, explores the avenues towards joint efforts that accommodate the needs of the republics and autonomous provinces, maintains and coordinates international cooperation, informs and helps its members and other institutions involved.⁸⁷

This setting resulted in the differentiation of institutions with a (partial) research profile. The following section will provide a comprehensive and comparative assessment of the institutions that were involved in historical knowledge production. Here I will provide

yielded to the most tangible results. György Ránki, de facto leader of the Institute of History was especially on the lookout for new hires, arranging employment directly or helping Debrecen-based students at a later point of their careers.

⁸⁶ "Tudománypolitika Jugoszláviában [Science Policy in Yugoslavia]," *Kutatás-Fejlesztés. Tudományszervezési Tájékoztató* 28, no. 1 (1988): 46–55.46–47.

⁸⁷ "Tudománypolitika Jugoszláviában [Science Policy in Yugoslavia]." 47.

some details about the bigger picture, where the relative position of Croatian institutions is put into a different perspective. Academies in the republics and autonomous provinces retained a coordinating role, but only at a local level. They comprised the first category of institutions. The second category was made up mostly by research institutions that were established by the academies but became independent and self-sufficient. They gave the greatest portion of the research institutes, providing the backbone of Croatian R+D. The third group encompassed the universities, which also carried out research. However, the state budget provided them allotments only to cover the costs of teaching. The self-sufficiency and the universities' additional costs were paid by industrial actors, hence mostly those academic fields benefitted from them, which had strong applied branches. This was a practice that Hungarian policy makers wished to implement as well, but state funds remained dominant throughout the period. In Croatia, beyond the contribution of industrial actors, a tax-like income increased the budget that was overseen by the association of self-managing communities.⁸⁸

1.2.1. Academies of sciences (and arts)

Academies were revered, traditional institutions in both countries, guarantees of excellence, peak organs of state-sponsored research. Their reorganization that took place after the Communist takeover in Hungary and Croatia meant profound change for its historians in two respects, in comparison with the previous period. On the one hand, a prescriptive turn occurred, involving the elevation of Marxism-Leninism to the level of official ideology and language. In Hungary, another, often neglected turn occurred, as contrary to the previous years, scholars of social sciences and the humanities were not expected to give substance to the interwar claims of Hungarian cultural supremacy

⁸⁸ “Tudománypolitika Jugoszláviában [Science Policy in Yugoslavia].” 48–51.

in the Carpathian Basin anymore.⁸⁹ Instead, just like their Croatian colleagues, their role as experts whose expertise and research results may have been used for the purposes of policy-making, popular enlightenment and the shaping of socialist national consciousness came to the fore. Furthermore, a thorough bureaucratization occurred, which Attila Pók aptly described as the Academy becoming a “ministry of science.”⁹⁰ In Hungary, after the gradual restructuring of research and higher education, a second major administrative reform was carried out in 1970 that affected the Academy only. The central principle of the reform was the creation of a separate bureaucratic body within the organization of the Academy itself, in order to alleviate the administrative burdens of scholars, within the framework of a centralized bureaucracy that was supposed to take care of all sections and departments. The backbone of this dual system, which was originally conceived as the harmonic and mutually beneficial cooperation of the community of scientists and the administrators, consisted of disciplinary committees and a set of administrative units. From among these, the Társadalomtudományi Főosztály [Social Sciences Department] was the partner of the Institute of History (in 1977, these units merged into a new body, Központi Hivatal [Central Office]).⁹¹ However, the lack of well-defined areas of responsibility and a rather protracted and insufficient inner communication earned serious critique from the part of the Institute of History – among other institutes – claiming that even their dialogue with ministries was in many ways hindered by this new design. However, such complaints were not

⁸⁹ Zsigmond Pál Pach, “Nemzeti fejlődés, nemzeti öntudat [National Progress, National Consciousness],” *Társadalmi Szemle* 41, no. 10 (1983): 23–37. 33.

⁹⁰ Attila Pók, “Eastern European Historiography in the Twentieth Century,” in *Europa Und “Wir”. 10 Jahre Europa Institut Budapest*, ed. Ferenc Glatz, Schriftenreihe Des Europa Institutes Budapest 9 (Budapest: Europa Institut Budapest, 2000), 143–56. 151.

⁹¹ The lack of established responsibilities resulted in a rather chaotic documentation, which is currently in the keeping of the Archives of HAS. It is more than challenging to navigate amidst the folders, however, as currently a previous employee of the Central Office [Diana Hay] heads the archives, she may render invaluable insights into the inner logic of the records.

channeled into a systemic critique of the 1970 reforms and apart from minor corrections, the transition found these structures (including Central Office) in place.⁹²

The Institutes of History of the academies were responsible for a well-defined range of tasks, which were occasionally complemented by further party requests. They became important stepping-stones in the career of future historians as they provided placement for doctoral students (in Croatia) and aspirants (in Hungary), or even a workplace for a lifetime. The institutes were divided according to the respective periods they have dealt with, my dissertation reflects on the works of historians who worked at departments which focused on the interwar period and/or the Second World War.

As the scientific secretary of the Academy, Miklós Stier bitterly noted in one of his activity reports of the Second Division: “The process that precedes the acquisition of the degree is a source of deep concern. The opinions of the Second Division and that of the Tudományos Minősítő Bizottság [Scientific Qualifying Committee – SQC] are occasionally differing.”⁹³ In late socialism, while in general merit-based hiring practices dominated, the process of acquiring scientific degrees bore a clear Soviet imprint that altered, although essentially did not overwrite prewar practices. The Soviet impact was most detectable in terms of transferred institutional competencies both with regard to the conferring of degrees and in the names of the available degrees.

While HAS housed departments for historical periods starting from the Middle Ages, initially both for international and for Hungarian history,⁹⁴ a certain imbalance could be

⁹² “Beszámoló a Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztályának tevékenységéről (1976–1978) [Reports of the Activities of the Section of Philosophical and Historical Disciplines (1976–1978)],” *Az MTA Filozófiai És Történettudományok Osztályának Közleményei* 28, no. 1–3 (1979): 49–74.

⁹³ Miklós Stier, “Beszámoló Az MTA Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztályának 1973–1975. évi Tevékenységéről [Report on the Activity of the Division of Philosophy and History of the HAS 1973–1975],” *Az MTA Filozófiai És Történettudományok Osztályának Közleményei* 25, no. 2–3 (1976): 240–59.

⁹⁴ “A Történettudományi Intézet helye és szerepe a tudományos-szellemi közéletben [The Place and Role of the Institute of History in Scientific-Intellectual Life],” 1980, Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, MTA II. Filozófiai-és Történettudományok Osztályának iratai, 275. Box, 1. Folder, Mixed, vol 2. 6.

observed in the case of JAZU from very early on. The predominance of earlier historical periods led on the long run to the virtual disappearance of contemporary history, while the archival law made sure that considerable resources were concentrated in the Croatian party history institute, along with responsible personnel.

The expertise of the fellows of the Academies was most often evoked with regard to the formulation of socialist national consciousness and education, and they were explicitly characterized as experts who contribute to advancement of socialist governance. The former was usually bound to commemorative projects and celebrations, which gave a certain rhythm and predictability, however, apart from notable anniversaries of party history, often historians themselves expressed the necessity to carry out special projects in order to do justice to the legacy of certain individuals or events. Commemorative projects draw on historical expertise in several forms. First, historians were expected to prepare new publications and organize conferences around the time of the jubilee of important personalities or events. Second, the public interpretations of commemorated historical events and the design of newly elected memorials were often negotiated – if not always adopted – by the politicians involved.

Beyond pursuing individual research interests and dealing with various assignments, historical expertise was needed in order to advise parties to retain a nationally minded image – usually labelled as (socialist) patriotism⁹⁵ – while not going against the Marxist premise of proletarian internationalism. Researchers of the Institute of History of HAS had educational tasks limited to supplying tertiary education with proper teaching materials, in the form of textbooks and source publications, creating little demand for a renewal of genres. Their Croatian colleagues were not systematically prevented from teaching, therefore, their educational activities were considerably broader. Otherwise

⁹⁵ Zsigmond Pál Pach, “A hazafiság néhány kérdése [Some Issues of Patriotism],” *Társadalmi Szemle* 39, no. 5 (1981): 39–51. 42.

the five-year plans served as guiding frameworks for research, allowing considerable space for maneuver for individual researchers when structuring their work. The deeper implication of historians as expert researchers placed them seamlessly into the idea of the cooperation between the working classes (peasants and workers) and the progressive intelligentsia that is supposed to participate in the building of Communism and the shaping of socialist minds.

In Hungary, following the initial years of peaceful coexistence, conflicts arose and an atmosphere of distrust and envy emerged in the aftermath of 1956 between the Institute of History and the universities and it remained characteristic for the decades to come. The strict separation of tasks led to growing resentment on both sides: many HAS fellows yearned for teaching opportunities while university staff was often jealous of the better research conditions of their colleagues. Hence cooperation – which was nonetheless expected from them in several representative projects (e.g. the ten-volume *History of Hungary*) – was rather painful and reluctant, which prompted science policies to try to intervene in amending the harm that was done by the separation-minded reforms of the early 1950s. However, this realization did not result in changes on the level of policies. In 1986, the different assigned roles of the institutions were still clear: “The basic education of researchers, the teaching of elementary methodological, theoretical, practical and language skills is the task of the universities, while the education and advanced training of scholars belongs to the HAS.”⁹⁶

In the Croatian case, such animosities did not emerge in a systemic manner. In this, probably the common practice of multiple institutional affiliations played the chief part.

⁹⁶ Márton Tolnai, “A hazai tudomány- és műszaki politika intézményi-irányítási rendszere [The Management System of National Policies of Science and Technology],” in *Tudomány- és műszaki politika Magyarországon: Kutatás, fejlesztés, innováció, tudományszervezés* [Politics of Science and Technology in Hungary: Research, Development, Innovation, Organization], ed. Péter Vas-Zoltán, vol. 1, 2 vols., Tudományszervezési Füzetek (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1986), 111–76. 143.

What was almost incomprehensible in the Hungarian case, appeared to be a well-functioning practice there: employees of the Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske [Institute for the History of the Croatian Labor Movement, IHCLM] often taught at history departments or had a job at JAZU as well.⁹⁷

1.2.2. Universities

In both the Hungarian and the Croatian cases, universities in the capital cities – Eötvös Loránd University and University of Zagreb, respectively – hosted the most numerous and, hence, best-endowed and most prestigious departments for history. Beyond these, multiple cities hosted smaller departments, which occasionally accumulated considerable specialized expertise. Such was the case in Debrecen, where István Szabó mentored important researches on agricultural history.⁹⁸

The Soviet model of research and higher education had very specific suggestions with regard to the role of universities. First, they were supposed to focus on their educational activities, distancing themselves from the idea of the German university, which considers cutting-edge research equally important.⁹⁹ Second, applied sciences were to collaborate closely with the respective industries, subordinating their developmental trajectories to industrial needs, causing overlaps in ministerial control. Third, universities were designed to act as a central mean of upwards social mobility,¹⁰⁰ enabling mostly prospective students coming from working class or peasant families.

⁹⁷ Radelić, “Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta/Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske 1961.–1990. [Institute of the History of the Workers’ Movement/Institute for the History of the Croatian Workers’ Movement 1961–1990].” 27.

⁹⁸ István Orosz, “Szabó István És Debrecen [István Szabó and Debrecen],” *Debreceni Szemle* 7, no. 1 (1999): 104–8.

⁹⁹ Agičić, “Hrvatska historiografija 1990–2010: struktura i glavni smjerovi razvoja [Croatian Historiography 1990–2010: The Structure and Main Trends of Development].”

¹⁰⁰ This policy left its mark on the late socialist student body as well, however, the selection based on class background in the university application process was officially abolished in 1962. Béla Köpeczi, *A magyar kultúra útja 1945–1985* [The Road of Hungarian Culture 1945–1985] (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1986). 130.

However, certain anomalies appeared either in the practice of these strict divisions or plans that envisioned more shared responsibilities in terms of research and between the Academy and universities. In Croatia, somewhat uncharacteristically, the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Zagreb hosted a research institute, the Institute for Croatian History until the beginning of the 1990s. However, scholars left it soon after the transition and the institute was diminished. In Hungary, there were several attempts at decreasing the isolation, and the subsequent knowledge production gap between the two types of institutions since the mid-1960s, but to no avail,¹⁰¹ even though such desires emerged both on a political level and from the part of the Academies themselves.¹⁰²

In light of this, the role of the university professor was characterized more as the engineer of young socialist intellectuals than that of an expert of history, contrary to the narrative that surrounded the figure of scholars at the academy. Although they shared responsibility in contributing to the shaping of historical consciousness and socialist patriotism, policies perceived professors more as crucial transmission devices than the very sources of the knowledge they provided. Their main scholarly contribution was often limited to participation in the collective work of writing university textbooks, in which all disciplinary research and teaching bodies were represented, although from the 1960s on, it was always the Academy that took the leading role. However, some ambiguities surrounded these activities, since the publication of a textbook did not count as a research publication. Therefore, university staff was moderately incentivized to put

¹⁰¹ Aczél, “Társadalomtudomány és tudománypolitika [Social Sciences and Science Policies].” 253.

¹⁰² Although here Berend, reigning President of the Academy of Sciences, claimed that several universities would be in favor of a complete merger, I have not found any documentation as of today that would have proved the existence of such an advocacy. Iván Berend T., “Tudományos-szellemi életünk néhány központi kérdése [Some Corollary Questions of Our Academic-Intellectual Lives],” *Magyar Tudomány*, 94, no. 6 (1987): 432–44. 432–433.

in considerable effort.¹⁰³ While some expectations were indeed novelties, or they were formulated in a novel manner (within the framework of planned research and higher education), the logic of the university with its internal power relations and informal hierarchies, remained largely intact.

In the Hungarian case, as a lasting legacy of pre- and post-1956 hiring (or rather, firing) policies, politically ambiguous scholars were hardly ever employed, as they were to be prevented from gaining access to yet unspoiled young minds.¹⁰⁴ Being banned from teaching was a way to discipline unruly scholars, based on real or attributed lack of loyalty. University teaching staff was not only expected to refrain from dubious statements, but to demonstrate partisanship in their teaching and to actively correct erroneous views. György Péteri read this as the perception of university as a threat.¹⁰⁵

The Agitation and Propaganda Committee repeatedly published calls to guard ideological conformity at the universities, similar to this call in 1982:

special care needs to be given to the intelligentsia, first and foremost in the humanities and in the social sciences and to the younger intellectual strata as well as to the political work that is carried out among university students, we should react quicker to the problems that arise in their ranks...In this environment, the more open, argumentative counter-action against inimical, oppositional views, or, in given cases, even a public debate would be especially important.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Iván Berend T. and Ottó Szabolcs, "Történettudomány – Népszerűsítés – Történelemoktatás [History – Popularization – Historical Education]," in *Történelemtudomány – Történelemtanítás–Tömegkommunikáció. Az 1973. évi Országos Történész Vándorgyűlés rövidített anyaga* [History - Historical Education - Mass Communication: Shortened Version of the Materials Presented at the National Assembly of Historians 1973] (Budapest: Országos Pedagógiai Intézet, 1973), 19–25. 23.

¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, several scholars who could either not complete their education or did not get an academic position in the Horthy era for political reasons, were admitted into academic institutions (e.g. Miklós Lackó).

¹⁰⁵ György Péteri, "Die kommunistische Idee der Universität - ein von den Erfahrungen Ungarns inspirierter Essay [The Communist Idea of University - an Essay Inspired by the Hungarian Experience]," in *Zwischen Autonomie und Anpassung: Universitäten in den Diktaturen des 20. Jhdts.*, ed. John Connelly and Michael Grüttner (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), 129–55. 154.

¹⁰⁶ MSZMP KB, "Az Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság 1982. július 27-i állásfoglalása belpolitikai, ideológiai életünk néhány kérdéséről és az ellenséges, ellenzéki, ellenzékieskedő csoportok tevékenységéről [The Statement of the Agitation and Propaganda Committee on July 27th 1982 About Several Issues of Our Domestic Political and Ideological Lives and About the Activities of Inimical, Oppositional and Quasi-Oppositional Groups]," 24 1982, Archives of the Institute of Political History, 909 Nemes Dezső személyes fondja, 25. folder. 1.p.

In Croatia, however, in line with the broader Yugoslav tendencies, universities were intellectually quite diverse. The difference in political atmosphere translated into a considerably more active political student body at the University of Zagreb (compared to its counterpart in Budapest, ELTE). Student activism reached its peak during the Croatian Spring in 1971. Similar tendencies of a politically minded and often staff-backed student movement thrived at the University of Belgrade.¹⁰⁷ By the time of the transition, pluralistic tendencies slowly started to permeate Hungarian campuses, however, as Tibor Hajdu pointed out in an interview, ELTE was the least affected by these changes.¹⁰⁸

Regional universities became important hubs for specific subfields of historical knowledge production, in part capitalizing on the institution of “traveling professors” that became truly characteristic of late socialist Hungary. Beyond those simply wishing to meet additional student bodies, some HAS fellows who were not permitted to teach at ELTE were attracted by them too. From among historians of contemporary history, notably György Ránki and Mária Ormos were able to establish decade-long presence at regional universities. For Ránki, this was but one of the myriad of opportunities. For Ormos though, who was invited to the freshly founded faculty at the Janus Pannonius University (Pécs) in 1983, this was the first chance to resume university teaching in decades.

The tertiary goal of universities – to radically transform the student body’s recruitment basis, hence the social composition of the new generations of the intelligentsia – was fulfilled only partially. In response to the needs of technological development, the scale

¹⁰⁷ For an overview of characteristics of Croatian student movements see: Zubak, “Omladinski tisak i kulturna strana studentskoga pokreta u Socijalističkoj Federativnoj Republici Jugoslaviji (1968.–1972.) [Youth Press and Cultural Aspect of the Students’ Movement in Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (1968–1972)].”

¹⁰⁸ Tibor Hajdu, Hajdu Tibor, interview by Éva Stadiesky, February 7, 1997.

of access to higher education expanded considerably. However, especially in the post-Stalinist period on, there were both local manifestations of the red bourgeoisie and renewed presence of earlier excluded students with bourgeois background. In Hungary, these tendencies were especially palpable with regard to enrollment at Eötvös Loránd University. John Connelly also reflected on this issue briefly with regard to his three national case studies. He concluded that while in East Germany and Poland a thorough change in the student body could be observed, Czechoslovakia witnessed less of a break from prewar admission practices.¹⁰⁹

1.2.3. Party history institutes: In search of ideological cohesion and contemporary historical research

Both party history institutes, the MSZMP Központi Bizottságának Párttörténeti Intézete [Party History Institute of the Central Committee of HSWP, PHI] and the IHCLM functioned as research institutions as well as archives, and in line with their primary interests, adopted a temporal focus on the period from the second half of the 19th century until the present. The primary goal of their existence was to write party history that “developed as a hybrid field of knowledge, in which narratives required both political and academic verification”.¹¹⁰ Based on their output, Birkás’s above cited characterization seems more fitting than a rather simplistic contending that everything before local Communists’ activities in the Second World War was to be re-told as a prehistory of the party.¹¹¹

The historical necessity of Communist takeover and subsequent developments was to be proven through a considerably re-worked master narrative of history

¹⁰⁹ Connelly, *Captive University*. 4.

¹¹⁰ Birkás, “Party Historiography: A Scientific Experiment in Hungary around 1956.” 90.

¹¹¹ Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and Its Problems 1918 – 1988* (London: Hurst, 1988). 129.

notwithstanding, replacing *nation* with *class* as referential community. While both claimed to include research on the international labor movement, employing it as an integrative framework when discussing the developments in the respective nations' labor movement – in Croatia's case, with the addition of the more extended Yugoslav worker's movement – events and phenomena beyond the national framework were little heeded in these two institutes. As I will show later, the organizational setup and the concrete policy proposals of responsible bodies of science or cultural policies did not exert any pressure in this regard.

PHI and IHCLM were established 15 years apart, which resulted in a fundamental difference between their accumulated procedural traditions that predated late socialist conditions. In Hungary the Munkásmozgalomtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum [Institute and Museum for the History of the Labor Movement] emerged as early as 1948, hence, existed during the years of Stalinism, in subordination to the Agitation and Propaganda Committee. In 1956 the institution was renamed to Party History Institute and it bore this name in the period under investigation. Moreover, until 1954 the institution had a secondary goal, to exhibit and popularize the Soviet Union, which goal was however discarded.¹¹² The Croatian Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske was established somewhat later, in 1964, well after the Tito/Stalin split, with a mixed structure that combined chronological and topical departments. Unlike in Hungary, where party history almost exclusively confined to the quickly established party history institute, in Croatia, after the war, all historical research institutes published materials about the history of the war of liberation and more broadly conceived party history. This difference may account partly for the relatively late establishment of the IHCLM.

¹¹² S.L., "A XX. század az 1945 utáni történetírásban [The Twentieth Century in Historiography after 1945]." *Múltunk* 44, no. 2 (1999): 223–57. 249.

The institution's emergence was part of a federation-wide drive, resulting in the establishment of party history institutes in all republics. The Zagreb-based, main Croatian party history institute was joined by two additional ones resulting from the initiatives of local and county party committees in Slavonski Brod (1962) and in Split (1965). The eras 1918, 1918–1941, 1941–1945 and the age of “building socialism” were all covered in the IHCLM, occasionally research reached back to earlier centuries. When it came to post-Second World War history, history of Marxist thought, economic and cultural history were all present.¹¹³ These party history institutes played very similar roles in the respective parties' designs, insofar as to strengthen the legitimacy of communist rule by recovering (or fabricating) the history of the party and the working masses and describe the communist's way to power as the fulfillment of the succession of class struggles.

One inevitable objective of the extensive work on labor movements was to provide a synthesis. Party history was taught within the framework of the subject of scientific socialism in all universities.¹¹⁴ In the absence of an authoritative synthesis, party school handbooks served as substitutes.¹¹⁵

The inclusion of the word ‘Croatian’ in the institution's name is very indicative, since it signaled that while it did not necessarily wish to connect to the knowledge production of the international workers' movement, even the Yugoslav framework was superseded

¹¹³ Ivan Jelić, “Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske” [Institute for the History of the Croatian Working Movement], *Historijski zbornik*, 1972. 1973, 501–8. 503.

¹¹⁴ Ferenc Nagy, “A munkásmozgalom-történetírás hatékonyságáról [About the Efficiency of the Historiography of the Workers' Movement],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 20, no. 2 (1974): 156–68. 163.

¹¹⁵ Tibor Erényi, “A munkásmozgalom-történetírás helyzete és feladatai [The Situation and Tasks of the Historiography of the Workers' Movement],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 20, no. 2 (1974): 129–43. 133. Tibor Erényi (1923–1998) experienced the various expressions of anti-Semitism in interwar Hungary. He had to delay his studies because of the numerus clausus, therefore, he became a skilled worker and subsequently in a knitwear factory. During the Second World War, he was ordered to perform labor service. After the war he finished his studies at ELTE and became first an affiliate, later deputy director of the Institute for the Labor Movement (after 1957: Party History Institute). He dealt with the history of Hungarian social democracy and was actively involved in source publications as well as international relations with other party history institutes. As a deputy director of the PHI, his was an important voice in matters of ideology.

by the interest in the distinctively *Croatian* labor movement history. This showed the discrepancy between the federal and the national as well as the lack of serious interest in connecting to the global historical discussion of party history.¹¹⁶ While the Hungarian counterpart showed likewise moderate interest in moving beyond the confines of local party history, research activity with the objective of non-Hungarian socialist movements was maintained, with a special interest in party histories of neighboring countries with Hungarian population (especially in Romania).

The literature on the institutional framework and historiography of second Yugoslavia rightly points to 1974, the federal constitution and the subsequent decentralization drive, marking there the departure from an inward-looking – i.e. focuses on the historian's respective nation or republic – but otherwise non-belligerent set of parallel discourses towards frequent clashes and unveiled nationalism.¹¹⁷ Political changes of this kind rarely translate so quickly into action in the realm of scholarship,¹¹⁸ however, as will be shown later, this change had in addition a legislative aspect, therefore partially it was facilitated by the party itself.

Nonetheless, 1974 as an acknowledged watershed fails to account for the initial design of the system of party history institutes, which was carried out during the late 50s and early 60s, when many, including the intelligentsia, embraced the Yugoslav idea.¹¹⁹

From the very beginning, republican party history institutes worked in virtual isolation from each other and became integrated into the republican structures of historical

¹¹⁶ Beyond the tension between the federal and the national, the Serbo-Croatian cleavages were also visible.

¹¹⁷ Brunnbauer, "Historical Writing in the Balkans"; Stevo Đurašković, *The politics of history in Croatia and Slovakia in the 1990s* (Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2016). 60.

¹¹⁸ Banac in his early assessment claimed, that historical narratives remained entirely within the Yugoslav framework until as late as 1979. Ivo Banac, "Yugoslavia," *The American Historical Review* 97, no. 4 (October 1992): 1084–1104. 1086.

¹¹⁹ Andrew Wachtel and Predrag J. Marković, "A Last Attempt at Educational Integration: The Failure of Common Educational Cores in Yugoslavia in the Early 1980s," in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration*, ed. Lenard J. Cohen and Dragović-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008), 203–20. 204.

knowledge production if such legacies were already in place (which was certainly the case in Croatia).¹²⁰ The Kongres jugoslavenskih povjesničari [Congress of the Historians of Yugoslavia] that took place nine times between 1954 and 1987 was unable to substitute an integrated infrastructure of federal historical research. No central institution in charge of an all-Yugoslav party history emerged and such projects that aimed to coordinate the republican institutions in order to achieve that, spectacularly failed, as it will be discussed in more detail in the historiography section.

It was not only the largely nation-centered approach that connected historians of the IHCLM and that of the PHI with their colleagues who were working for traditional institutions of historical knowledge production. The way they were expected to perform their tasks as researchers, the group discussions about each other's manuscripts as well as the routine of frequent library and archival visits made the everyday life of historians all across the discipline close to identical. Beyond that, party historians got involved in the teaching of party history within the framework of cadre education at different levels. They were also expected to supply the Marxism–Leninism programs with proper teaching materials,¹²¹ as it was shown in several reports that were written by fellows.¹²² Chapter Four will expand on their involvement in popularizing activities.

Both PHI and IHCLM struggled with the delimited collection of historical sources and the lack of ideologically reliable, trained scholars in their early years, which the

¹²⁰ However, for Macedonia and Montenegro, these were the first stages of institutionalizing historical research that deals with the history of the titular nation.

¹²¹ Péter Deme, “Ankét a Párttörténeti Intézet munkájáról és a „Tanúságtevők” című sorozatról [Session About the Work of the Party History Institute and of the Series ‘Witnesses’],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 27, no. 4 (1981): 205–10. 205.

¹²² Péter Deme (1950–) has a teaching degree in history and English from the Eötvös Loránd University. He became an aspirant in the PTI where he was employed 1973–1986. Later he worked for the Museum of the Labor Movement, and after the transition, he continued to pursue a career in cultural heritage preservation and held posts that were closely connected to governmental politics of memory. Péter Deme, Tudományos kutatásokra építve, de a közönségnek érdekesen – Deme Péter a Pulszky Társaságról és a múzeumok jövőjéről [Building On Research, But In a Way That Interests the Public: Péter Deme About the Pulszky Society and the Future of Museums], interview by Nóra Vágvolgyi, *muzeumcafe.hu*, accessed July 2, 2020, <http://muzeumcafe.hu/hu/tudomanyos-kutatasokra-epitve-de-kozonsegnek-erdekesen/>.

institutions tackled with varying success. As Holger Fischer pointed out, Hungarian party historians had a particularly hard time in fulfilling their tasks as they constantly struggled with the lack of resources; the traces of the otherwise small illegal interwar and Second World War activities were largely destroyed during the war.¹²³ Although in Hungary, compared to Croatia, Marxism already influenced more historians before the Second World War,¹²⁴ these scholars were not included in the plans for the new institute as parts of the old intellectual elite. There was a perceived overall lack of historians with a training in Marxism-Leninism in the party history institutes as well as at the Academy, and this translated into a chronic need for (preferably young) historians in PHI, similarly to its Croatian counterpart. The makeup of the first generation of party history institute affiliates showed considerable difference in one aspect though. IHCLM employed a significant number of war veterans, while in Hungary, due in part to the modest breadth of partisan activities, their share was rather small. On the other hand, PHI was able to employ several fellows who completed their professional training in Moscow in the early years of the institution, including Bálint Szabó, György Milei, István Lengyel, László Dér, Magda Imre and Ferenc Mucsi.¹²⁵

Franjo Tuđman, the head of IHCLM until 1967, in some cases, delegated the task of educating ill-prepared colleagues by those possessing the degree and the aptitude, like the economic historian Miroslava Despot.¹²⁶ He also implemented an official career

¹²³ Holger Fischer, *Politik und Geschichtswissenschaft in Ungarn: Die Ungarische Geschichte von 1918 bis zur Gegenwart in der Historiographie seit 1956*, Untersuchungen zur Gegenwartskunde Südosteuropas, Bd. 19 (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1982). 25.

¹²⁴ However, this sort of interest and background was highly individualized, the trend did not gain an institutionalized form. Ignác Romsics, "Ungarische Geschichtsschreibung im 20. Jahrhundert - Tendenzen, Autoren, Werke," in *Nationale Geschichtskulturen – Bilanz, Ausstrahlung, Europabezogenheit. Beiträge des internationalen Symposions in der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, vom. 30. September bis 2. Oktober 2004*, ed. Heinz Duchardt (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 195–219. 210.

¹²⁵ Hajdu, Hajdu Tibor. 10.

¹²⁶ Mira Kolar-Dimitrijević, "Miroslava Despot, prva ekonomska povjesničarka Hrvatske [Miroslava Despot, the First Female Economic Historian in Croatia]," *Ekonomika i ekohistorija – Časopis za gospodarsku povijest i povijest okoliša* 12, no. 12 (2016): 136–50. 138.

plan for new hires. This entailed six years of training, starting by three years of probation, which was followed by two years of research assistantship. At the end of these six years, the employee reached the status of an independent researcher who was encouraged to start working towards a doctoral degree.¹²⁷ In order to provide the institute with workforce in the meantime, Tuđman's other strategy involved the employment of external staff.¹²⁸ After his removal from the institute, Tuđman was replaced with Dušan Bilandžić¹²⁹, who inherited more of his predecessor's financial issues than that of a less-than-optimal professional presence. Still, when following through the serious restructuring of the IHCLM that involved the halving of staff, was not entirely without concerns for ideological conformity and professional standing.¹³⁰ Later the Croat Zlatko Čepo became another charismatic head of the institute. Čepo (1934–1988) was born in Vojvodina and moved to the Croatian capital for his studies. He earned a doctoral degree from the Department of Political Science at the University of Zagreb. He has been acting director of IHCLM 1969–1986 and held multiple committee seats concomitantly in expert and in political bodies.¹³¹

In the Hungarian case, the directors of PHI did not have to undertake such profound institutional alterations. Unlike in the Croatian case, where heads of the institute were

¹²⁷ Tuđman did not hold his position long enough to see one such training period to conclude.

¹²⁸ Radelić, "Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta/Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske 1961.-1990. [Institute of the History of the Workers' Movement/Institute for the History of the Croatian Workers' Movement 1961–1990]." 25.

¹²⁹ Dušan Bilandžić (1924–2015) was a Croatian politician and historian. During the Second World War, he became member of the Communist party and he was an active partisan. He studied military history in Belgrade but earned her doctoral degree at the University of Zagreb in economics. He was an ardent federalist and participated in the drafting of the 1974 constitution. Bilandžić took over the leadership of IHCLM after the arrest of Franjo Tuđman. He was often accused publicly with nationalism because of his attacks on manifestations of Yugoslavism. He published extensively on Croatia within the federation. After the breakup of Yugoslavia, he remained both politically and academically active.

¹³⁰ The timing of the structural reform conveniently coincided with the anti-nationalist measures in the aftermath of the Croatian Spring. Radelić, "Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta/Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske 1961.-1990. [Institute of the History of the Workers' Movement/Institute for the History of the Croatian Workers' Movement 1961–1990]." 39–40.

¹³¹ "Dr Zlatko Čepo (9. Travnja 1934 – 2. Travnja 1988. Godine)," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 19, no. 3 (1987): 171–72.

simply members of the party but did not necessarily rank high in the party hierarchy, both Dezső Nemes and István Huszár were members of the Central Committee. While Tuđman managed to lead the party history institute for a few years while disseminating dissent thought, such trick was not played by either of them in Hungary. On the contrary, while the knowledge production they presided over was not entirely ideologically homogeneous or apologetic, the heads themselves were the representatives of what they perceived as the party line.¹³²

Occasionally, ideological nonconformity led to the expelling of historians from these institutions; however, such measures were more common in the early years of the institutions. In the Hungarian case, for their sympathy towards social democrats – whose rehabilitation in historiography took place quite soon afterwards – János Jemnitz¹³³ and Ferenc Mucsi were removed from the PHI.¹³⁴ In the Croatian context, the last instance of such ideologically motivated removal was that of Ivan Jelić's,¹³⁵ after his entries connected to Ustaša history were published in the *Enciklopedija Hrvatske povijesti i kulture* at the end of 1980.¹³⁶

During the years of late socialism, party history institutes as inventions of state socialist regimes constituted a solid part of the institutional network of historical knowledge

¹³² In the section about historiography, the notion of perceived party line is going to be discussed in detail.

¹³³ János Jemnitz (1930–2014) studied at the Eötvös Loránd University. He started working for the PHI, concluded his work of candidacy there, focusing on recent party history and social democrats. Later he was removed from the PHI and became employed by the Institute of History of HAS where he continued working until his retirement. He was always seen as a 'cadre' though, and was shunned by his colleagues. Gábor Gyáni, *The Institute for History after 1956*, April 25, 2014.

¹³⁴ S.L., "A XX. század az 1945 utáni történetírásban." 250.

¹³⁵ Ivan Jelić (1947–2008) earned his degrees in history and in archeology; however, during his career he was also active as museologist and archivist. Many of his activities centered on his native Slavonia, including her curations and the topic of his doctoral dissertation that he defended at the University of Ljubljana. His time at the *Matica Hrvatska* at the beginning of the 1970s made him suspicious in the eyes of the most fervent anti-nationalists. Mato Artuković, "U spomen Dr. Ivanu Jeliću (1947–2008)," *Scrinia Slavonica : Godišnjak podružnice za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje Hrvatskog Instituta za povijest* 8, no. 1 (2008): 11–12.

¹³⁶ Radelić, "Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta/Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske 1961.–1990. [Institute of the History of the Workers' Movement/Institute for the History of the Croatian Workers' Movement 1961–1990]." 52.

production. Party historians, whose level of professionalization increased dynamically, collaborated with historians who worked for the traditional institutions of the discipline.

1.3. The scene of academic publicity: Professional associations and journals

Professional associations coexisted and frequently cooperated with the previously discussed main organs of historical knowledge production. This cooperation assumed different forms: membership, participation at the events of the associations and publication of professional journals.¹³⁷

In Hungary, the Magyar Történelmi Társulat [Hungarian Historical Association, HHA] was the most important association that encompassed a steadily growing membership recruited predominantly from people having a degree either in history or in teaching history.¹³⁸ Indeed, as Ferenc Glatz emphasized, the Hungarian Historical Association in the interwar period was “an institution that disseminated historical-ideological argumentations to the masses.”¹³⁹ However, the most influential agents of the association – as the Institute of History proudly asserted in one of its reports – remained fellows of the HAS, therefore the advanced studies along with popularization that the association carried out remained deeply embedded in the professional institutional infrastructure of historical knowledge production.¹⁴⁰ From the very beginning, they launched their own scholarly journal, *Századok* [Centuries], a quarterly that published

¹³⁷ While this subchapter engages with scholarly journals that were the main academic fora for historical discussion, a broad range of journals (e.g. *Valóság*, *Medvetánc*) published important interventions as well, not necessarily by historians or in an academic style. In order to retain the focus of the dissertation and that of the chapter, I excluded these journals from the analysis.

¹³⁸ The association prides itself until nowadays on being one of the first of its kind in continental Europe, as well as the oldest (founded in 1867) and still functioning scientific association in Hungary. A considerable reorganization of the association occurred after 1956 though. Romsics, *Clio bűvöletében*. 410.

¹³⁹ Glatz, “Történeti-politikai gondolkodás a felszabadulás után [Historical-Political Thinking after the Liberation].” 147.

¹⁴⁰ “A Történettudományi Intézet helye és szerepe a tudományos-szellemi közéletben [The Place and Role of the Institute of History in Scientific-Intellectual Life].” 12.

sound historical works during late socialism as well. Beside it being deeply rooted in the scholarly community, the association had strong ties to several party organs. MTT organized events both in Budapest and throughout the country. In the latter case, they co-organized the presentations, book launches or seminars with the local party councils.¹⁴¹

In federal Yugoslavia, all republics established their respective historical associations, which also formed the Savez društava istoričara Jugoslavije [SDIJ, League of Historical Associations of Yugoslavia]. The main goal of these associations was to provide universities with new textbooks, disseminating the latest results of historical research.¹⁴²

The association encouraged dialogue and cooperation among the historiographies of the member republics, especially via its annual meetings.¹⁴³ As an indication of the fragmentation of the profession by the end of the 1980s was demonstrated by the fact that the SDIJ had its last session in 1988.¹⁴⁴

The Povijesno društvo Hrvatske (Croatian Historical Association) was established in 1947 within the framework of the Five-Year Plan and the drafts about its mission contained both professional goals and tacitly popularizing tasks (e.g. in case of the idea of maintaining ties with community organizations and student research groups). It also mentioned the importance of reflecting on the histories of other ethnic groups in the federation, without specifying the geographical confines of the investigations that were to be supported by the association. Beyond that, it was clearly stated that the association

¹⁴¹ Benke, “Országos Történész Vándorgyűlés Székesfehérvárott [National Travelling Assembly of Historians in Székesfehérvár].” 194.

¹⁴² Tea Sindbaek, *Usable History? Representations of Yugoslavia's Difficult Pasts from 1945 to 2002* (Aarhus; Lancaster, Aarhus University Press ; Gazelle [distributor], 2012). 74.

¹⁴³ Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, “Osnivanje i prve godine djelovanja Povijesnog društva Hrvatske (1947–1955) [The Foundation and the First Years of the Croatian Historical Association's Activity (1947–1955)],” *Historijski zbornik* 61, no. 2 (2008): 393–421. 394–396.

¹⁴⁴ The federal cooperation truly reached its nadir that year. No other professional event or pan-Yugoslav joint undertaking were later launched either. Božo Repe, “Mesto druge svetovne vojne v notranjem razvoju Slovenije in Jugoslavije [The Place of the Second World War in the Internal Evolution of Postwar Slovenia and Yugoslavia],” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino* 40, no. 2 (2000): 95–107. 97.

ought to focus on the history of the masses and to pursue Marxist historiography.¹⁴⁵ Later, regional divisions of the association were created in Pula and in Rijeka. During the years of late socialism, the Croatian Historical Association was actively engaged in organizing academic events in cooperation with scholarly institutions and acted as one of the main agents in sending historians to major international events.

In the realm of academic journals, the Communist takeover brought about the appearance of new outlets. These journals targeted primarily a professional audience, publishing articles, smaller collections of documents with commentaries, different types of reviews, reports about major scholarly events at home and abroad and, to a smaller extent, published versions of historical debates.¹⁴⁶ A notable exception was, however, *Századok*, the historical journal that was founded in 1867 and which remained important for Hungarian historians during the years of state socialism as well. Croatian contemporary history did not have such a prestigious pre-Second World War journal to carry on.¹⁴⁷ Interestingly, *Századok* had a popularizing agenda beyond the dissemination of research results to the scientific public, nonetheless, the language of the articles usually prevented a lay audience from engaging with the texts. On the other hand, *Századok* acted as an important forum to promote popularizing events, furthermore, it regularly reported about their educational activities.

Történelmi Szemle [Historical Review], on the other hand, a strictly professional journal both with regard to style and content. It was established in 1958 and is published today as a quarterly. The publisher of the journal is the Institute of History of HAS and from

¹⁴⁵ Najbar-Agičić, “Osnivanje i prve godine djelovanja Povijesnog društva Hrvatske (1947–1955) [The Foundation and the First Years of the Croatian Historical Association’s Activity (1947–1955)].”

¹⁴⁶ Béla Köpeczi, “A társadalomtudományi kutatás néhány kérdéséről [About Some of the Issues of Social Science Research],” *Népszabadság, Vasárnapi Melléklet*, August 12, 1973. 6.

¹⁴⁷ The lack of a historically significant journal stems from an earlier pattern of less institutionalized historiography. As Varga has shown in his article, Croatian historiography was considerably less institutionalized during the great Gründerzeit of historical scholarship compared to other composite nations in the Habsburg space. Varga, “The Making and Unmaking of an Austrian Space of Historical Scholarship, 1848–1914.” 351–352.

early on, it was supposed to serve first and foremost as a platform for the publications of the works of its affiliates. The editorial board did not exclude external authors completely, but the tendency to accept manuscripts of externals changed considerably only after the transition. The inner structure of the issues was rather conventional, featuring research papers, reviews and debate pieces alongside occasional introductions of select groups of archival sources.

The Croatian *Historijski zbornik* [Historical Anthology] was established in 1948, the Povijesno društvo Hrvatske published it twice a year. In that sense, *Historijski zbornik* had a similar structural place in Croatian historiography as *Századok* did in the Hungarian context, being the journal of the HHA. The early issues of the journal were created during the first Stalinist years and the immediate aftermath of the split with Moscow. The main purpose of this journal was to demonstrate how Marxist historiography should be written, however, it did not become the source for theoretical or methodological innovation in this sense.¹⁴⁸ It featured heterogeneous topics ranging from pre-Medieval times to contemporary history. However, similarities seem to end here, hence, as I pointed out earlier, the latter had a considerably longer prehistory, also, *Századok* have been published as a quarterly while *Historijski zbornik* have been a biennial.

The PHI published its own outlet, called *Párttörténeti Közlemények* [Party History Review] that appeared four times a year and was dedicated solely the increasingly broadly perceived party history, starting from the age of the Dual Monarchy up until very recent times. Most of the authors were affiliated with the institute itself. The inner structure of the journal retained most of the features of *Századok* and *Történelmi Szemle*. Somewhat contrary to expectations, the post-1945 topics were not particularly popular

¹⁴⁸ Janković, *Mijenjanje sebe sama*. 55.

with authors. A report for the Agitation and Propaganda Committee in 1982 provided a catalogue of underlying problems, including difficult access to archival materials, unwillingness to engage in multidisciplinary cooperation, moreover, scholars' and students' reluctance to specialize in the period. As a potential solution, the authors of the report proposed the establishment of a specific study track at universities and successive schemes of support in the form of aspirantura, language courses and international exchanges, in order to attract more historians to the field.¹⁴⁹

The journal *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* [Journal of Contemporary History] that was issued by the Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta from 1969 onwards had no topical parallel in the Hungarian context, as this journal – going beyond publishing articles concerned with party history – became the chief forum of contemporary historical research. Although it claimed to cover the period from the mid-19th century onwards, in fact topics pertaining to twentieth century history outweighed the contributions about earlier decades. The journal appeared three times a year and featured research pieces, reviews and activity reports as well. However, due to paper shortages, several issues were published together, combining two or even three issues.¹⁵⁰ As a continuation of *Putovi revolucije* (published from 1963), *Časopis* fulfilled the role of a specialist journal on contemporary history, leading to the complete abandonment of the period in *Historijski zbornik*, which anyway published only a handful of publications concerning recent history.

¹⁴⁹ MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztály, “Jelentés az Agitációs és Propagandabizottságnak a felszabadulás utáni korszak történeti kutatásának néhány időszerű kérdéséről és feladatairól /Tervezet/ [Report for the Agitation and Propaganda Committee About Some Timely Questions and Tasks of Research Into the Period After the Liberation (Draft)]” (Budapest, January 13, 1982), Archives of the Institute of Political History, 909 Nemes Dezső személyes fondja, 22. folder. 4–8.

¹⁵⁰ Zdravka Jelaska Marijan, “Pedeset godina Časopisa za suvremenu povijest: Bibliometrijska analiza (1969. – 2018.) [Fifty Years of the Journal for Contemporary History: A Bibliometric Analysis (1969–2018)],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 51, no. 1 (2019): 59–96. 62.

The published contributions were accompanied with summaries in English, seldom in French or in German.¹⁵¹ Aiming at a more elaborate inner structure, the editorial board of the journal introduced categories for the research-based contributions. From time to time, the journal published articles that were submitted by historians from other republics, or in rare cases, from abroad.¹⁵² A surge in the former can be observed from 1983 on, especially the appearance of Macedonian authors (e.g. Risto Kiriazovski, Aleksandar Hristov, Ivan Katardžiev) was a novelty. The author of the most comprehensive analysis of the past decades of *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, Zdravka Jelaska Marijan noted that the subtle differentiations were not fully internalized by the contributors though.¹⁵³ Based on her bibliometric analysis, it also became clear that the most productive contributor had been women in the period of my investigation: Mirjana Gross (1969–1978), Bosiljka Janjatović (1979–1988), Mira Kolar Dimitrijević (1989–1998).¹⁵⁴

Beyond their topical emphases that shaped the content of most issues, the above listed journals brought out special issues as well, which often reflected upon upcoming anniversaries in line with current memory politics. Subsequently, the journals directly provided resources or reinforcement for the current politics of history of their respective regimes, however, the actual impact of this knowledge production remains difficult to measure. In addition to the historical pieces, the journals published party resolutions, ideological or policy essays, accounts of conferences at home or abroad and reflected on the news of the profession, most importantly the conferring of new titles. Notably,

¹⁵¹ Marijan. 65.

¹⁵² According to the statistics that was provided in the article, out of 480 contributions of different genres, only eight articles were submitted by foreign authors. “Deset Godina ‘Časopisa za suvremenu povijest’ [Ten Years of the Journal ‘Časopisa za suvremenu povijest’],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 11, no. 1 (1979): 5–6. 5.

¹⁵³ Marijan, “Pedeset godina Časopisa za suvremenu povijest: Bibliometrijska analiza (1969. – 2018.) [Fifty Years of the “Časopis za suvremenu povijest” (“Journal of Contemporary History”): A Bibliometric Analysis (1969–2018)].” 76.

¹⁵⁴ Marijan. 82–83.

these journals published pieces that either dealt with or reviewed other works of ‘minority research’. This interdisciplinary field was dominated by sociologists, who have worked alongside historians, lawyers and other social scientists. The field itself focused on minority-majority relations, minority cultures, the histories and contemporary lives of minorities, had intimate ties to the Hungarian as well as the Croatian national question, and, depending on the context in which they were discussed – usually in a historical perspective as most of the authors were historians –, had an explosive potential.

These analyses often departed from contemporary, socialist minority politics that was depicted in opposition to the bourgeois policies of minority protection that failed in their attempts to solve the ‘minority question’, i.e. the peaceful coexistence of peoples in the ethnically heterogeneous area of East Central and Southeast Europe.¹⁵⁵ Exemplary to these analyses was the article of Endre Arató, the Bohemist, about minority research in socialist Czechoslovakia. He surveyed the recent literature and scholarly events, and gave an assessment of those conclusions that concerned the Hungarian minorities. In his piece, the above listed common elements have all appeared. Arató discussed how the Czechoslovak Communist Party supported the bourgeois suppression of minorities in the 1920s, later, their change in minority policies in the 1930s and how the Prague Spring brought about a negative evaluation of that policy change. Arató also summarized the ways in which socialist minority policies are superior to other solutions.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Dániel Csátri, “A kelet-európai nemzetiségi kérdés történetének hazai kutatásáról [About the Domestic Research on the History of the National Question in Eastern Europe],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 20, no. 2 (1974): 144–55. 153.

¹⁵⁶ Endre Arató, “A nemzetiségi kutatások fő irányai és eredményei Csehszlovákiában az utóbbi öt esztendőben [The Main Directions and Results of Minority Research in Czechoslovakia in the Past Five Years],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 22, no. 3 (1976): 144–64.

1.4. Career paths and working conditions

Historians' recruitment patterns during the years of late socialism bore much more resemblance to the interwar mechanisms than that of the Stalinist period. In the early years of state socialism, the losses of the Second World War and ideological cleansing brought about serious changes in the academia. As there was a pressing need for manpower – especially in the universities and the newly established party history institutes – the time was most opportune to realize the vision of destroying class privileges in academia through substituting previous university staff with people of working class or peasant background.¹⁵⁷ Such appointments were rarely accompanied by professional background; new hires often started their studies only after taking up their jobs, and some of them fell short of obtaining academic titles during their careers. Still, as Katalin Baráth's study of these recruitment processes has shown, the applications for the different support programs of the Academy of Sciences that aimed to solve the shortage of manpower – within the framework of scholarships, aspirantura or simplified degree acquisition processes – were not evaluated against this double set of criteria (professionalism and ethics) in a coherent manner. There was much room for maneuver.¹⁵⁸ That being said, while considerable proportion of the appointments were thus made on a basis other than professional aptitude, hiring via “the old way” – i.e. inviting the most promising graduates to join the respective institutions – never wholly ceased.

¹⁵⁷ Szabad mentioned a later example with regard to the obtaining of the first scientific degree, hinting on the long-term presence of this practice (the case of János Varga's candidature). See in: György Szabad and Miklós Pavlovits, *Aradtól az Országgyűlésig: Pavlovits Miklós interjúja Szabad Györggyel 1991–1992* [From Arad to the National Assembly: Miklós Pavlovits's Interview with György Szabad 1991–1992], ed. László Csorba, *Tények és tanúk* (Budapest: Magvető, 2017). 60.

¹⁵⁸ Analyzing application and evaluation materials, Baráth cited numerous examples for cases where obvious political incompatibilities do not hinder a candidate's acceptance while sound publication record and years of engagement in party work did not grant the approval for another. Without aiming at giving a comprehensive overview of influential factors, Baráth contended that informal relations may have played decisive role as well. Katalin Baráth, “Történeti identitáskonstrukciók 1947–1968 [Historians' Identity Constructions 1947–1968]” (Budapest, Eötvös Loránd University, 2013). 91–98.

In the years of late socialism though, when mostly the dynamics of retirement and expansion of research activities dictated the logic of new hires, hiring based on qualification prevailed. In Hungary, by the end of the 1980, a detailed career model for researchers was published, which was very clear about the stages of progression within the profession and made relevant university degree a precondition of employment in tertiary education and research institutions. While in the interwar period, conferring degrees belonged to the competencies of universities, however, the reconfiguration of the relations between HAS and the universities transferred this responsibility to the academy of sciences.

The Croatian praxis had been considerably different, largely due to the earlier discussed relative underdevelopment of historiography's infrastructure before state socialism. The size of the scholarship itself appears to be an important factor here as well: few dozens of historians were employed by the JAZU and the university altogether alongside the fluctuating number of the later established party history institute whose staff never exceeded 130 employees. As a minimum condition to embark on a research career, JAZU and the universities required the completion of eight semesters at the university. During their studies, the applicants needed to demonstrate excellence in their field as well as great potentials as future colleagues, earning the recommendation of a professor who would have vouched for their performance later on. The latter shows the importance of informality in gaining entrance to the ranks of the scholarship, a phenomenon that was rooted in the pre-1945 period. The party history institute, on the other hand, relied on a different set of criteria in relation to employment, and the early majority of veterans with poor scholarly background proved to be difficult to overcome

in later decades, however, fellows were encouraged to finish their studies and earn a doctorate with multiple measures (especially stipends).¹⁵⁹

In terms of attainable scientific degrees, the impact of Soviet patterns was much more prevalent in the Hungarian case. Departing from the earlier system of doctor of science, followed by habilitation, a new system of qualifications was introduced after 1949. Aspirantura became the first scientific degree (the term itself is interchangeable with postgraduate studies). Aspirants were expected to write a work of candidacy in order to become candidates of history, which process entailed in theory more work than the previous first degree. The expected results from ongoing research in the Institute of History extended to basic research, source publication, and comprehensive works as well as popularization of their respective fields.¹⁶⁰ The next degree was “doctor of history” as a version of doctor of science, which by and large replaced habilitation and signified an established scholar.¹⁶¹ The universities did not have the right to assess the merits of doctoral dissertations either. In 1984, university doctorate (dr. univ.) was introduced as a doctoral degree that is granted by the university, but was not acknowledged by the Academy, rendering it to be a lower-ranking title as compared to candidacy.

Although several aspects of the regulation of (historical) research were subjected to the first five year plan in Croatia already,¹⁶² during the brief period between the Second

¹⁵⁹ I am grateful to Damir Agičić for illuminating these details of the hiring process in Croatia, which would have been otherwise difficult to approach, lacking secondary literature on the subject.

¹⁶⁰ Attila Pók, “Scholarly and Non-Scholarly Functions of Historical Research Institutes”, in *History-Making. The Intellectual and Social Formation of a Discipline. Proceedings of an International Conference, Uppsala, September 1994*, ed. Rolf Torstendahl and Irmline Veit-Brause, Konferenser 37 (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets Historie och Antikvitets Akademien, 1996), 169–77. 170.

¹⁶¹ This had been the case, even though the first plans suggested a loose equation between candidacy and habilitation in terms of associated positions at faculties or in research institutes. Dávid Péntes, “A tudományos fokozatszerzés átalakulása 1948–1953 között Magyarországon [The Transformation of Earning Scientific Degrees in Hungary 1948–1953],” in *A neveléstörténet változó arcai [The Changing Faces of the History of Education]*, ed. Gabriella Baska, Judit Hegedűs, and Attila Nóbik (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2013), 69–80. 78.

¹⁶² Najbar-Agičić, “Osnivanje i prve godine djelovanja Povijesnog društva Hrvatske (1947–1955) [The Foundation and the First Years of the Croatian Historical Association’s Activity (1947–1955)].” 394.

World War and the split¹⁶³ from Stalin the adaptation of the aspirantura system was not considered, leaving the interwar course of obtaining research degrees intact.

In Hungary, the competency to oversee scholarly qualifications was assigned already in 1951 to the SQC, which was entrusted with conferring candidature and doctor of sciences. The former was to be granted upon the condition of a university degree, experience in research activities, exams (professional, philosophical, and language), as well as the successful defense of a thesis. Earning the title Doctor of Science (DSc) required the possession of a candidacy, at least 3 years of work on the same field, active presence in the scientific public, and a public defense of a comprehensive, synthetic dissertation.¹⁶⁴ This committee was established in 1951, replacing the Aspirantúra Bizottság [Aspiranture Committee], marking a clear extension of responsibilities – before that, only the process leading up to the first scientific degree and its conferment belonged to this body. The way SQC functioned during late socialism developed gradually up until about 1960, witnessing only minor changes later.¹⁶⁵

However, SQC belonged primarily to the “bureaucratic” hierarchy of the HAS (even though it comprised both scholars and clerks). In this dual structure, that reached its full-fledged form after the reforming of the HAS in 1970, the “scientific” side was represented by the assembly of the Second Division (a scholars-only body), which gave a detailed opinion on the written works that were handed in by historians in the process

¹⁶³ Initially, a separate association existed in order to secure seamless cooperation with the historians of the USSR (*Društvo za suradnju s SSSR-om* [Association for Cooperation with the USSR]) as well as to smoothen the circulation of matters of science policy. After the split in 1948, the association ceased to exist. The most influential Croatian historian among its members was Jarošlav Šidak.

¹⁶⁴ Szecsődy, “A tudományos kutatás és a műszaki fejlesztés személyi állománya [The Personnel of Research and Technological Innovation].” 356–359.

¹⁶⁵ For a detailed account of the early developments of SQC see: Mónika Kozári, “A tudományos minősítés rendszere Magyarországon az 1940-es évek végétől 1960-ig, az új minősítési rendszer stabilizálódásáig [The System of Scientific Qualification in Hungary from the End of the 1940s to 1960, the Stabilization of the New Qualification System],” *Múltunk Politikatörténeti Folyóirat* 60, no. 2 (2015): 148–98.

of applying for a higher degree. Cooperation between these two bodies was not without difficulties.

In Croatia, the Soviet type of qualification system has not been implemented, which was in conjunction with the absence of the type of division of labor between the academy of sciences and universities that was adopted in Hungary, along with other countries of the Eastern bloc. Therefore, the right to confer scientific degrees remained at the universities similarly to pre-Second World War times, even if the candidates were affiliated with the party history institute or with JAZU.

Working culture of late socialist historians showed indeed little difference from their interwar predecessors in terms of the daily routines that characterized their lives, dividing their time among libraries, archives, occasional manuscript debates and professional-social events. While the Stalinist period witnessed an influx of ill-prepared scholars, who were indeed much dependent on ideological directives and guidance, this phenomenon was rather to be observed in party history institutes even in this period. Fellows of academic institutions, while dialed down on those narratives and explanatory frameworks deemed to be “bourgeois”, followed very similar research routines to those in the prewar times. Such reservations – encouraged from above or simply perceived – progressively disappeared in the years of post-Stalinism and late socialism.¹⁶⁶ On the other hand, the proportionality of research and teaching activities shows a remarkable difference to the interwar period. Until the Second World War, historians tended to have both considerable teaching and research activities regardless of their institutional affiliation. However, the division of labor that emerged from the establishment of new institutions and redefinition of the role of preexisting ones during the late 1940s and

¹⁶⁶ This is not to say that political considerations stopped to play into certain hiring decisions altogether. Furthermore, nepotism – part of the pre-1945 academic setting as well – came to the fore occasionally. However, after a brief period of a few years, they lost their primacy.

early 1950s assigned different core tasks to the institutions, which I will discuss later on in this chapter.

Historians continued to lead a rather solitary working style, conducting research in libraries and archives, writing articles and monographs, contributing to source publications. Internal hierarchies dictated the course of manuscript debates,¹⁶⁷ a regular but non-mandatory element of the academic environment. Research activities were only secondary to the university staff, as an important departure from the German image of the researcher-teacher; however, in theory they were expected to publish as well. Before submission, junior fellows had to provide some of their peers with texts and to have an internal session, which gave them the opportunity to present their articles and to get feedback.¹⁶⁸ While only on rare occasions were minutes of these gatherings made, which were often confined to a single department, those documents that I was able to recover testify to the regularity of these events.¹⁶⁹ The working culture which late socialist historians were socialized into indeed resembled that of the interwar times much more than the general working conditions of the years 1945/48–1956.

1.5. The international embeddedness of historical knowledge production: State socialist and transsystemic influences

The 1970s and 1980s signified a period of progressive opening (with some setbacks on the way) towards the West in Hungarian historiography. This slow opening was heralded by the creation of ties to France from the 1960s onwards. As the contacts became more diverse, the initial primary importance of France declined accordingly.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ They are parts of the documentation of the Institute of History of the HAS, stored in the Archives of HAS. However, there are not in an organized state as of yet.

¹⁶⁸ One may think of it as a public version of peer review, however, those suggestion made by the editors after submission were more binding in terms of publication.

¹⁶⁹ For one of the several published records see: János Varga F., “Magyarország két világháború közötti történetéről. Vita a Magyarország története VIII. kötetéről [About Interwar History of Hungary. Debate About the 8th Volume of History of Hungary],” *Történelmi Szemle* 17, no. 4 (1974): 655–63.

¹⁷⁰ For a short overview of Hungarian-French relations see: Gábor Czoch, “Az Atelier – egy francia-magyar műhely megalapítása [The Founding of the French-Hungarian Atelier],” *Budapesti Könyvszemle*, no. 3–4 (2019): 226–30.

Both intellectual and physical conditions for forging stronger ties with Western scholarship significantly improved.¹⁷¹ However, for Hungarian historians this considerable amelioration in conditions was most perceptible within the Institute of History that experienced already a greater space of maneuver in comparison to other institutions of historical knowledge production.¹⁷² In contrast to that, Croatian scholarship witnessed a serious halt after the Croatian Spring. As many historians became entangled within the events of the series of demonstrations, their critique aiming to reevaluate the position of the Croatian nation and national heritage within the federal framework was rendered nationalist without distinction, resulting from the general assessment of the unrest. In the aftermath of Croatian Spring, a course of “normalization” akin to, but less severe than the post-1968 Czechoslovak policies took place that caused a setback in the entire cultural-intellectual sphere. These steps affected the internationalization process negatively, limiting exchanges largely to individual arrangements. The most frequent forms of gaining international experience were fellowships, study trips and participation at international conferences, both in terms of interacting with the state socialist and the Western bloc.¹⁷³

Between Hungary and other state socialist countries of Europe – all of its neighboring countries and some more – the institutionally most visible type of exchange of ideas and cooperation rested on the system of so-called mixed committees of historians.

¹⁷¹ The increase of interactions may be read in a broader framework as well; as Hobsbawm pointed out on the basis of a contemporary historiographical survey, by the late 1970s, “Marxist historians have succeeded in entering the professional guild”. Eric John Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World: Reflections on Marx and Marxism* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2011). As Marxist approaches – especially that of economic history – were encouraged to be represented in international fora, the fact that Marxism (of the New Left and that of Eastern Bloc countries) were readily acknowledged as scientifically legitimate theoretical framework, was of crucial importance.

¹⁷² For an overview of the Hungarian situation in the 1970s see: Tibor Frank, “A magyar történettudomány és nyugati kapcsolatai az 1970-es években [Hungarian Historiography and Its Western Relations in the 1970s],” *Múltunk Politikátörténeti Folyóirat* 28, no. 4 (2016): 72–83.

¹⁷³ Perhaps the symbolically and academically most important common undertaking was launched within the framework of a cooperation between Hungary and the USA. A Hungarian Chair was established at the central campus of the Indiana State University in Bloomington, which continues to function as a visiting professorship until today.

Interestingly, a Hungarian-Austrian mixed committee was also established, which added a Western partner to the network. The membership of the committees composed of members of Institutes of Histories of national Academies of Sciences. Arguably, the more strained diplomatic relations were between the respective states at a given moment, the greater was the importance of the mixed committees as their meetings could have provided much needed space for addressing inter-ethnic matters. Great trust was put into these mixed committees by Hungarian policymakers, as they were not only imagined as an ideal format to foster cultural-scientific relations, but an effective format to combat the innate nationalism of the neighboring historiographies¹⁷⁴ – as well as Hungarian one.¹⁷⁵

In the realm of contemporary history, on a methodological basis, Hungarian economic history, notably György Ránki and Iván Berend gained the greatest international visibility both in terms of the number and length of academic visits and references of their works in literature. Their international career started already in the late 1960s and the methodological language they spoke enabled them to have a meaningful discussion with their Western colleagues.¹⁷⁶ Ránki and Berend managed to produce sound results regarding the economic history of Hungary from 1867 until the post-Second World War period. Since the two were deemed politically trustworthy – as a proof of that, Berend became president of HAS in the second half of the 1980s - as Kövér puts it, Ránki and Berend “became – so to say – faithful representatives of the liberalizing and later

¹⁷⁴ Unlike in the case of other mixed committees, the national question was raised in the Hungarian-Czechoslovak sessions fairly regularly. For an overview of its activity during the late socialist years see: Vladimír Matula and Emil Niederhauser, “A magyar-csehszlovák történész vegyesbizottság negyedszázada [The Quarter of a Century of the Hungarian-Czechoslovak Mixed Committee of Historians],” *Századok* 121, no. 6 (1987): 1199–1211.

¹⁷⁵ Ferenc Rottler, “A történettudományi kutatások helyzete [The Situation of Historical Research],” *Századok* 111, no. 1 (1977): 3–10. 8.

¹⁷⁶ Maxine Berg, “East-West Dialogues: Economic Historians, the Cold War, and Détente,” *The Journal of Modern History* 87, no. 1 (March 2015): 36–71, <https://doi.org/10.1086/680261>. 36.

reform-minded Kádárist sixties.”¹⁷⁷ As Croatian scholars had a very different configuration of foreign relations with Yugoslavia’s leading role in the non-aligned movement and closer ties to the West, speaking a common language – economic history – did not present itself as an opportunity for dialogue with the ideological adversary.

There was remarkably little mobility among scholars within the Eastern bloc, especially teaching and long-term research mobility. One of the few contingent examples of institutionalized mobility was facilitated by the Academy of Social Sciences in Moscow that advertised aspirantura opportunities year by year in Hungarian journals. The applicants were asked to send their materials to the Társadalomtudományi Bizottság of the HSWP.¹⁷⁸ The other main framework was provided by the bilateral committees, mixed committees comprised of Hungarian and Eastern bloc scholars. Another form of cooperation was realized at party historians’ meetings, which were organized by party history institutes and institutes for Marxism-Leninism.¹⁷⁹ As the late socialist years progressed, the opportunities became more diverse, which was the result of the connection to preexisting large-scale transsystemic exchange programs or more restricted, institutional cooperation.

The establishment of the Hungarian-Yugoslav Mixed Committee in 1972 created in fact one of the few transnational points between the two Hungarian and Yugoslav scholarships, along with the Mogersdorfer symposium, that took place in the village of

¹⁷⁷ Gábor Gyáni, “Történetíró a diktatúra korában. Ránki György élete és munkássága [Historian in the Times of Dictatorship: The Life and Work of György Ránki],” in *A felhalmozás míve. Történeti tanulmányok Kövér György tiszteletére* [The Work of Cumulation. Essays in the Honor of György Kövér], ed. Károly Halmos et al. (Budapest: Századvég, 2009), 539–51. 546.

¹⁷⁸ The applicants needed to demonstrate sufficient Russian skills and their ability to conduct research independently. Moreover, their proposed project needed to be „timely both in scholarly and ideological terms.” MSZMP Központi Bizottság Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság [Agitation and Propaganda Committee of the HSWP], “Pályázati felhívás aspirantúrára az SZKP KB mellett működő Társadalomtudományi Akadémián Az 1982/83-as tanévre [Call for Applications for Aspirantura: To the Academy of Social Sciences Operating Along the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, Academic Year 1982/1983],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 26, no. 3 (1980): 181.

¹⁷⁹ Miklós Gaál, “Magyar-NDK-beli párttörténész találkozó [Meeting of Hungarian and GDR Party Historians],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 30, no. 2 (1984): 185–86. 185.

Mogersdorf in Austria, near the borders of Austria, Yugoslavia and Hungary. Contemporaries as well as researchers today seem to attribute more significance to the latter when discussing the professional relations between Hungarian and Yugoslav historians in the period. In his assessment in 1995, Miklós Stier praised the symposium as a phenomenon that “even amid incessant and rapid changes are able to display dominantly the...relative stability and continuity.”¹⁸⁰ At the beginning, Yugoslavia was represented by Slovenian historians, their Croatian colleagues started to attend the sessions in 1972. Stier also emphasized the importance of the multilateral and regional nature of the symposium that provided a platform for exchange for the scholarly representatives of different political regimes.¹⁸¹

1.6. Conclusions

This chapter provided an analysis of the activities and relative positioning of the chief institutions of historical research and tertiary education during late socialism, and looked at changes and contingencies both in relation to the interwar and the Stalinist years. Beyond discussing the role of state socialist addendums, I was interested in the ways science policies treated the institutional legacy of previous periods. In Hungary, the (self-)Sovietization that took place in the historical sciences, caused a greater rupture as compared to the Croatian case. These changes pertained mostly to the system of earning scientific degrees and the clear-cut division of labor between the academy and the universities. In Croatia, the latter was experienced only until 1948, after which a gradual restoration took place. As for scientific degrees, no lasting transformation

¹⁸⁰ Miklós Stier, “A ‘Mogersdorf’ Nemzetközi Kultúrtörténeti Szimpózium első negyedszázadáról [About the First Quarter of a Century of the ‘Mogersdorf’ Cultural Historical Symposium],” *Századok* 129, no. 6 (95): 1412–24. 1412.

¹⁸¹ Stier. 1414.

occurred either. The fact that the academy of sciences (and arts) became a central coordinating organ, brought about an important change in both scholarly milieus.

Still, as the chapter has shown, this was not merely a story of discontinuities. The old formal institutions were not abolished but their place in the envisioned state socialist scholarship was redefined, along with the tasks of their employees. In Croatia, the title “doctor of science” also survived in its pre-Second World War form. German influence, which had been formative during the interwar years, was significantly downplayed in the years of Stalinist reforms but crept back in the course of de-Stalinization, which was exemplified in Hungary with the re-hiring of earlier dismissed historians.

Party history institutes came to play largely identical, though partially different roles in Hungary and in Croatia, which was especially apparent in relation to research into contemporary history. Both were entrusted with the contradictory tasks of writing party history and integrating it into the preexisting master narrative. The Croatian institute practically monopolized contemporary historical research while in Hungary, there were overlapping competences.

It can be established that the forms of knowledge production, especially its German orientation, in the late socialist period had significant pre-1945 contingencies, complemented state socialist additions. The dominant media of historical knowledge production remained articles, collective volumes, monographs, and when it came to popular education, talks. While there were coordinated attempts to utilize new media – radio, television – in order to the potential audience, these came to be rather favored by popularizing activities, certainly, their extended application is usually suggested in such contexts. Perhaps only the post-transitional information revolution was able to challenge seriously the monopoly of these genres. Hence, the media of knowledge dissemination may be treated as the most resilient of all the investigated aspects.

I have identified the strongest continuities in the realms of informal institutions. The broadly defined working culture of historians remained fairly similar to that in the interwar period and the years of Stalinism. During the years of late socialism, the young generation of historians was socialized into a milieu whose self-image was largely identical with those active in the interwar period: based on a certain body of sources and through engagement in academic debates, contribution to the knowledge about the nation's history. Essentially, historical arguments that were either sustained or created by these historians, continued to be in high demand, hence the external expectations towards them did not change significantly either, but this issue will be addressed in the following chapter as well.

Concerning the international embeddedness of the two historiographies, I analyzed the dominant structures that testified to connections between Hungarian and Croatian historiographies, other state socialist and Western historiographies, however, these remained limited. Post-transitional opening followed the tracks of late socialist ties but until today cheated the hopes of those scholars who anticipated the inevitable integration of these historiographies into the global scholarship.

Chapter Two. Historical knowledge production at the intersection of politics of science and culture

State socialist regimes conceived of the role of historians in society as social science experts, therefore, as researchers who have the competence to contribute to the better understanding of the contemporary challenges of socialist societies in their own field and to substantially contribute to the intellectual shaping of the citizens of the socialist future. Historians engaged repeatedly with these issues both in the Croatian and in the Hungarian context. Mirjana Gross,¹⁸² in her rather solitary pursuit to advocate for the applicability of structuralism, argued in favor of its agenda to push historiography in search for the laws of social sciences.¹⁸³ In Hungary, historians and policy-makers elaborated on the problem of history as a social science in diverse fora, but such appropriation of this policy issue for the purposes of advancing another historiographical trend within the profession did not take place in a manner as explicit as in the Croatian case. Indeed, instead of problematizing the ways in which history (should have) become a social science, its functions – *ideológiai-tudatformáló* and

¹⁸² Mirjana Gross (1922–2012) emerged as the most methodologically minded representative of Croatian historiography after surviving hiding and Nazi labor camp during the Second World War. She was persecuted because of her Jewish heritage. Immediately after the war she started to work for the state administration first in social policy, later she was employed by the Ministry of Education. Her academic career started at JAZU but she transferred to the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Zagreb in 1959. There she later became full professor and spent her remaining active years. She became the first female president of the *Povijesno društvo Hrvatske* and she was one of the internationally most visible historian during the late socialist period. Her students carry on her work with regard to the studying of Croatian historiography. Drago Roksandić, “In Memoriam – Mirjana Gross,” *Hrvatski povijesni portal: Elektronički časopis za povijest i srodne znanosti*, March 8, 2012, <https://povijest.net/in-memoriam-mirjana-gross/>.

¹⁸³ Gross skillfully avoided the main political criticism of the application of structuralism, a Western ideological current in the Yugoslav setting. Mirjana Gross, “Na putu k budućoj historijskoj znanosti [Towards the Future of Historical Science],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 9, no. 2 (1977): 37–65. 38.

valóságfeltáró [ideological–consciousness-shaping and reality-revealing] were brought to the fore.¹⁸⁴

Complementary to the analysis of institutional framework of historical knowledge production in the previous chapter, Chapter Two sheds light on four areas where different branches of the Communist parties expressed interest and exerted pressure on historians of recent history to a varying extent. These areas are addressed in separate subchapters concerning transmission bands between the Central Committees and the main institutions of historical research, involvement in ideological work, the need for a comprehensive Marxist syntheses and censorship practices. As my subchapters demonstrate, political pressure could, but did not necessarily entail the contestation of epistemic authority or downright conflict. The degree of success of political interventions varied greatly, which may be taken for an important feature of late socialist policy making and implementation.

Historical expertise was practiced on various fields ranging from the ideal typical research tasks to education, writing of textbooks, popular engagement, and contribution to certain acts of memory politics. Historians' role, along with other scientists, was in general narrated within the framework of consciousness-shaping [*tudatformálás*] that was characterized as a primarily educative activity (and not necessarily indoctrination). The content to be delivered through consciousness-shaping, in the case of scholars, emanated from their original research and a partisan interpretation and dissemination of these results, in a joint effort to raise ideological consciousness as well as the knowledge of the everyman about a specific subject or larger contexts.¹⁸⁵ This perception on behalf

¹⁸⁴ Dénes Kovács, "Társadalomtudomány és gyakorlat [Social Sciences and Praxis]," *Népszabadság*, November 18, 1979.

¹⁸⁵ This shaping of minds is not a Communism-specific phenomenon. Vass argued that capitalist regimes also employ it, however, in their case it should be named manipulation. Therefore, in this interpretation, there is a different moral and ideological quality to the Communist enterprise. Henrik Vass,

of policy-makers, including trained historians – which will be later illustrated by two case studies – indeed met with comprehension and reciprocation, both on the institutional and on the personal level. One telling example for the former can be found in the earlier cited report of Miklós Stier:

Their relations [that of the historians – R.K.] with the domestic and international public is realized not only through their narrowly perceived professional work and publications, but through their influential, or one may say, leading role in the professional public, that manifests through their educating influence, the interplay with related sciences and a participation in public debates; and it includes the participation in the academic tasks set by the state and party organs, the shaping of the thinking of the broader domestic audience, as well as active involvement in the popularization of science and in the international scholarly community.¹⁸⁶

On the personal level, one may find traces of a growing sense of responsibility – professional and moral – on behalf of historians, which went hand in hand with the growing public appreciation of historical expertise, as discussed in Chapter Four.

György Szabad,¹⁸⁷ the influential historian of 19th century Hungary noted, that

Nowadays... the role of the historians is expanding, and if they labor in a professional and responsible manner, their credibility will increase as well. Revelations rooted in our transforming world are to testify to the increasing significance of historians working responsibly on the thought-shaping [of people–R.K.].¹⁸⁸

Szabad, who was among the few historians in late socialist Hungary who had a loose circle of students gathered around him, can hardly be charged with a mindless or opportunistic parroting of imagined or broadly perceived expectations. Known for his staunch independentist views with regard to the history of Hungary within the Austro-

“Munkásmozgalom és tudatformálás [Workers’ Movement and the Shaping of Minds],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 20, no. 1 (1974): 21–48. 21.

¹⁸⁶ “A Történettudományi Intézet helye és szerepe a tudományos-szellemi közéletben [The Place and Role of the Institute of History in Scientific-Intellectual Life].”1.

¹⁸⁷ György Szabad (1924–2015) became an acclaimed historian of 19th century Hungary after escaping labor service and Soviet forced labor. Upon his return, he earned a degree in history (teaching) and archival studies. From the mid-1950s onwards, he taught at ELTE and became one of the most popular professors at the faculty. He became founding member of the party Magyar Demokrata Fórum [Hungarian Democratic Forum] and was speaker of the National Assembly in the first half of the 1990s.

¹⁸⁸ György Szabad, “A Történészfelelősségéről [About the Responsibility of Historians],” *Tiszatáj* 28, no. 6 (1974): 3–7. 4.

Hungarian Monarchy (which put him into a minority position at the time) and his sweeping lectures that earned him great popularity at ELTE, Szabad certainly was not in need of such lip service. Therefore, we may simply take his statement as a genuine realization of the changing status of historians, a realization that some historians alongside Szabad attained themselves while the attention of others could have been drawn to it by earlier published policy documents. That being said, I can not exclude the possibility that some historians were indeed only parroting these views.

Interestingly, in the same piece, Szabad gave more specific instructions as to advise historians on how to assume the required level of responsibility.

...all forms of distorting evocation of historical forces and figures, the shading as well as covering with wildfire, heroization and deheroization, just like narrow-minded exclusion and usage as a cover, appropriation for current purposes, or false homogenization in the name of the real necessity of generalization, threatening the destruction of the possibility of real interpretation of socio-historical base and political change are to be avoided.¹⁸⁹

In Hungary, a report was prepared for the Agitation and Propaganda Committee that evaluated the current situation of the field of historiography, reflecting on the period between 1968 and 1974 (the report was published in 1976 and in 1977).¹⁹⁰ In this, an important shift in the administrative imagination of historians occurred. As one of the main points of this document, Ferenc Rottler highlighted the changing proportionality of different functions that historians were expected to fulfill: "...while the emphasis fell earlier on the ideological-thought-shaping function of historiography, since 1969, greater attention was paid to the unity of the ideological-consciousness-shaping and reality-revealing functions."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Szabad. 5.

¹⁹⁰ Those works that were ordered by the Committee were dubbed as '*Agitprop témák*' [Agitprop themes].

¹⁹¹ Rottler, "A Történettudományi Kutatások Helyzete [The Situation of Historical Research]." 3.

Such assessments are often addressed in the literature about East Central and Southeastern European historiography within the framework of a second professionalization.¹⁹² This notion implies a radical break with pre-Second World War professional practices, driven by the ideological zeal and lack of trained cadres of the early socialist years. However, it allows that by the years of late socialism, the scholarship recovered and returned to an ideologically less determined approach, with the exception of Romania, where, as Petrescu and Petrescu claimed, the years of state socialism brought about a period of de-professionalization that historians could only escape after the transition.¹⁹³

As my analysis will show in Chapter Three, the historical knowledge production of the late socialist years indeed showed more plurality in terms of approaches and semantics as compared to earlier decades in Croatia and in Hungary, even though the pluralization of the discourses of several topics started already in the 1960s. Still, the argument behind the notion of second professionalization can derail an analysis if taken to the extreme, leading to the idealization of interwar practices. That would entail a disregard for the less developed infrastructure of the interwar scholarship, unclear career paths in the scholarship in terms of formal education and acquiring degrees, furthermore, an underestimation of the power of interpersonal relations in influencing institutional and scholarly practices.

¹⁹² Górný, *The Nation Should Come First*. 17.

¹⁹³ Cristina Petrescu and Dragoş Petrescu, “Mastering vs. Coming to Terms with the Past: A Critical Analysis of Post-Communist Romanian Historiography,” in *Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, ed. Sorin Antohi, Balázs Trencsényi, and Péter Apor (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 311–408.

2.1. State policies and writing contemporary history

State policies were executed by the responsible (republican) ministries, however, the way in which policy proposals were made and weighed against each other, let alone accepted, was much more convoluted. In the Hungarian and Croatian contexts, multiple bodies existed that had the right to propose policies either pertaining to policies concerning the historical scholarship or broader fields of culture and science. The membership of these committees showed great variance with the presence of ministry delegates, affiliates of universities and research institutes. In some cases, the representatives of the ministries had training in the given subject, but this was not a prerequisite, resulting in debates that showed a remarkable variety in terms of complexity and focus (intellectual or fiscal).

These general observations can be drawn from the archival materials stored by the HAS, based on the analysis of the minutes and notes that were made at the sessions of specific proposing bodies in which employees of HAS participated. In Croatia, sources of these policy-setting activities can be found in the Hrvatska državna arhiv, among the holdings of the specific commissions. Based on the meager literature on science organization and the archival sources, I will illustrate the working mechanisms of the main commission involved at different stages of consulting and policy-making in relation to writing contemporary history, alongside with a Hungarian case study.

In what follows, I lay the ground for a necessary mapping of policy-making in Hungary and Croatia. This is meant to bridge the gap between the institutional analysis and the more discourse-focused chapter on academic historiography and to continue the series of works, which have been experimenting with an integrative analysis that is able to reflect on more than one aspect of the history of historiography in the region.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ For such an analysis see for example: Magdalena Najbar-Agičić, *Kultura, znanost, ideologija. Prilozi istraživanju politike komunističkih vlasti u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1960. na polju kulture i znanosti*

Two major types of state or party intervention transmitted the regime's demands to historians during late socialism. Party resolutions were signed by the respective Central Committee and gave broad instructions or criticized specific phenomena. The other type of intervention was in the form of drafted policy elaborated – or finalized – on a ministerial level. In theory, this guidance would have set the boundaries and direct the work of the main sites of knowledge production, however, not all policies and research plans were seen through (for political, administrative, or other reasons). The resolutions and policies were published in the usual party outlets – *Magyar Közlöny* [Hungarian Gazette] – and in the journals of the two academies: *Akadémiai Értesítő* [Academic Herald] or *Magyar Tudomány* [Hungarian Science] in Hungary, and *Rad* [Proceedings] in Croatia.

1971 constituted a turning point in the Yugoslav federal cultural policy. On the eve of the Croatian Spring, authorities prepared a showdown for the coalition of nationalist and liberal intelligentsia. Despite the resulting restrictive measures,¹⁹⁵ soon the Yugoslav cultural framework – including a unitary historical view – was abandoned by the political leadership, giving way to openly embracing national cultures in the individual member states. The new line was confirmed in the federal constitution of 1974, which discussed federal autonomies with regard to all state functions.¹⁹⁶ This step had important implications for historians of contemporary history: the production of a common history, which yielded modest results until then, was no longer prioritized.

The subject of contemporary history – how the people or the nation should be characterized – was a controversial issue in both countries, although for very different

[Culture, Science and Ideology: Contribution to the Research on the Politics of Communist Rule in Croatia In the Fields of Culture and Science 1945–1960] (Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 2013).

¹⁹⁵ Jill A. Irvine, “The Croatian Spring and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia”, in *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia's Disintegration*, ed. Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso, Central European Studies (Purdue University Press, 2008), 149–78. 169.

¹⁹⁶ Mihelj, “Negotiating Cold War Culture at the Crossroads of East and West.” 529.

reasons. In Croatia, despite the spectacular failure of creating a common Yugoslav history,¹⁹⁷ scholarship about the recent periods remained undecided about a unanimous line in narrowing Croatian history down to the history of ethnic Croats. Beyond those with serious political commitment to carry on the idea of *bratstvo i jedinstvo*, the issue of minorities without their own republic (most notably Albanians and Hungarians) was occasionally – though very rarely – articulated.

The single most influential Hungarian policy document from the years preceding 1974 is the Science Policy Directives of 1969 in relation to historical scholarship and other social sciences.¹⁹⁸ This document inaugurated the shift in how the state socialist regime expected sciences to function for the betterment of society. The emphasis was extended from the obligation of ideological-consciousness-shaping to ideological-consciousness-shaping and reality-unfolding.¹⁹⁹ Although there was no elaboration of the ideological shift in this document, many reflections following it highlighted the “unnatural” nature of separating these two types of functions with regard to the social sciences, and refused the allegations of reality-unfolding functions being alienated from practical issues.²⁰⁰ In addition, the directives included a thorough assessment of the research base, which shows very symptomatically the rather incoherent embeddedness of party-bound institutions into the network of “traditional” research institutes. The follow-up assessment of the implementation of the directives relied on an analysis of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office concerning institutes that were involved in social

¹⁹⁷ A new core curriculum was accepted in 1983, however, implementation did not follow. See: Wachtel and Marković, “A Last Attempt at Educational Integration: The Failure of Common Educational Cores in Yugoslavia in the early 1980s”. 207.

¹⁹⁸ MSZMP KB, “A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottságának Tudománypolitikai Irányelvei 1969, Június 26. [The Science Policy Directives of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party],” in *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt Központi Bizottsága Tudománypolitikai Irányelveinek végrehajtása és további feladatok* [The Execution of the Science Policy Directives of the Central Committee of HSWP and Further Tasks], by MSZMP KB PTI and MSZMP KB Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztály (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1978), 11–23.

¹⁹⁹ Rottler, “A Történettudományi kutatások helyzete [The Situation of Historical Research].” 3.

²⁰⁰ Kovács, “Társadalomtudomány és gyakorlat [Social Sciences and Praxis].” 9–10.

science research. The party institutes, most notably the Party History Institute and the MSZMP KB Társadalomtudományi Kutatóintézete [Social Science Institute of the HSWP CC] were missing from this assessment.²⁰¹

From the second half of the 1970s, Hungarian party resolutions addressed the researchers of a single discipline, replacing the former ones that were issued to broad academic fields.²⁰² Policy propositions often reflected on the results of the (lack of) implementation of previously drafted policies. In the Hungarian context, the Agitation and Propaganda Committee repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the non-compliance of the Institute of History, which nonetheless launched smaller projects under the framework of pre-established and approved broader policies, even if those did not necessarily fulfill the grand designs of the committee.²⁰³

The Tudománypolitikai Bizottság [Science Policy Committee] was an expert and cadre mixed committee that advised the Central Committee on specific issues pertaining to science and cultural politics. A delegated deputy minister acted as its head and drew its membership from ministries, leaders of the scientific community, delegates of committees involved in R+D and of cultural committees and institutes.²⁰⁴ The body held sessions regularly 4–7 times a year.

²⁰¹ The assessment in question was undertaken in 1972. “Az MSZMP KB Tudománypolitikai Irányelvei megvalósításának tapasztalatai és időszerű feladatai [Experiences and Timely Tasks of the Realization of the Science Policy Directives of the Central Committee of HSWP],” *Magyar Tudomány* 84, no. 9 (1977): 641–55.

²⁰² Drabancz and Fónai, *A magyar kultúrpolitika története* [The History of Hungarian Cultural Policy]. Budapest: Csokonai Kiadó, 2005. 213.

²⁰³ Tudománypolitikai Bizottság, “A pártszerveknek a kutatóintézeti hálózat továbbfejlesztésére vonatkozó javaslatokkal kapcsolatos véleményező munkája [Party Organs’ Evaluating Work with Regard to the Propositions for the Development of the Network of Research Institutes],” október 1980, MSZMP Központi Szervei Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság - HU-MOL M-KS 288-41/355.ő.e.174.

²⁰⁴ These included the President and Secretary of HAS, President and Vice-President of the Országos Műszaki Fejlesztési Bizottság (OMFB) [National Committee for Technological Innovation], Mezőgazdasági és Élelmezésügyi Minisztérium (MÉM) [Ministry of Agriculture and Catering], Egészségügyi Minisztérium (EüM) [Ministry for Health], Művelődési Minisztérium (MM) [Ministry of Culture], Építésügyi és Városfejlesztési Minisztérium (ÉVM) [Ministry for Construction and Urban Development], under-secretary of Országos Tervhivatal (OT) [National Planning Office], under-secretary of the Ipari Minisztérium [Ministry of Industry], the director of the MSZMP Társadalomtudományi Intézete [Institute for Social Sciences of the HSWP], representatives of MSZMP

The documentation of the proceedings of the Science Policy Committee are currently held in the Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The documentation is somewhat incoherently arranged and the minutes show varying professional merit. However, it becomes clear from the records that humanities and social sciences, although they presented a much smaller proportion on the agenda compared to natural and applied sciences, were very much present, and that leaders of relevant institutions – Institute of History, department chairs from ELTE, Party History Institute fellows - attended these meetings and often significantly shaped the discussion. While looking at the archival material, it became clear that a great number of the issues that were raised or even confirmed with a resolution brought about no tangible results – actual historical knowledge production about contemporary history. However, a closer look into the self-recorded working mechanisms of this committee may shed light on new types of top-down interest in historical research and related public perception. Furthermore, a limited but existing sphere of self-advocacy of historians emerges from these accounts.

The Croatian science policy-making bodies carried out the bulk of the planning and execution of science policies. The 1974 law, which has been discussed in Chapter One, effectively eliminated federal authority as it dissolved the single responsible federal body. However, three other committees with overlapping and, for this study, often irrelevant competencies, were: the Secretary for Law and Organization, Federal Committee for Energy and Industry, International Bureau for the International Cooperation in Science, Education, Culture and Technology.²⁰⁵

Tudományos, Köznevelési és Kulturális Osztálya [the Economic Committee and that of the Scientific, Public Education and Cultural Department of the HSWP], and the secretary and vice-secretary of the Tudománypolitikai Bizottság. Tolnai, “A hazai tudomány- és műszaki politika intézményi-irányítási rendszere [The Management System of National Policies of Science and Technology].” 125.

²⁰⁵ László Csuzi, “Tudománypolitika és tudományos kutatás Jugoszláviában [Science Policies and Research in Yugoslavia],” *Tudományszervezési Tájékoztató* 22, no. 2 (1982): 132–44. 134.

In Croatia, the most important mixed committee whose decisions had a significant impact on historical knowledge production was Komisija Presjedništva CK SKH za historiju SH [Commission for the Presidency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia for the History of Socialist Croatia]. Its name indicates two important distinctions as compared to the Hungarian case. First, it was in immediate subordination to the republican Presidency and the Central Committee and included members that were directly appointed by it; second, it was established as a discipline-specific body. The first meeting of this body took place on 29th March 1978 and it was led by Dušan Bilandžić, the head of the IHCLM at the time. The transcripts of the session provide a very detailed account of the mission and purposes of this new body. Although transcripts of later sessions are also available, the level of thoroughness varies greatly.²⁰⁶

Bilandžić characterized the mission of the newly founded commission in his introductory speech. He claimed that they did not set out to act as an authority over the entirety of historiography, but for the history of the Croatian republic only.²⁰⁷ With that statement, Bilandžić immediately preempted any speculations about the commission acting as a republican subordinate of the federal Komisija za historiju SKJ [Commission for the History of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia], which was otherwise represented by one of the body's members, Boška Biljegović, in this inaugural meeting. As a further specification, Bilandžić refused to engage with education-related issues. Somewhat ambiguously, however, he immediately added: "On the other hand, still, I think the commission can never be prohibited to meddle in any problems... which

²⁰⁶ Magnetofonski zapisnik se 1. sjednice Komisije Predsjedništva CK SKH za historiju SK [Tape Recordings of the First Session of the Presidential Commission for History of the Communist Party of Croatia of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Croatia], održane 29. ožujka 1978 u 10 sati, dvorana na 2 katu. p.1.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. 2–3.

concern historiography.”²⁰⁸ After outlining in general what he would not consider to be the responsibility of the commission, Bilandžić explained that while the amount of republican and regional institutions should be considered favorable, the commission needed to coordinate their work, as this had not been done properly before.²⁰⁹ Furthermore, the commission ought to have influence over the programs of these institutions, in other words, it was supposed to come up with its own politics of history that they implement without further party or administrative intermediaries. Bilandžić had in fact several issues in mind already, but at this point highlighted how the history of the federation should be written from the perspective of Croatia, which, considering that the future policies proposed by this body were binding for the party history institute, hinted already at the tensions and the futility of setting up a federal party history narrative.

The issue of collecting memoirs of the party recurred very often in the minutes of the commission. Notably, the organ, which had primarily coordination-related tasks, took over the responsibilities of the Historijsko odjeljene CK SKH (Historical Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia), another republican organization. The department was established in 1949 with the purpose of building a great collection of memoirs that could serve as a basis for writing the history of the party in the interwar period and during the Second World War. Upon the creation of the party archives, these holdings were transferred to them in 1957 and the institution later adjoined the IHCLM.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Magnetofonski zapisnik se 1. sjednice Komisije Predsjedništva CK SKH za historiju SK [Tape Recordings of the First Session of the Presidential Commission for History of the Communist Party of Croatia of the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Croatia], održane 29. ožujka 1978 u 10 sati, dvorana na 2 katu. 3.

²⁰⁹ The slow progression of several publications and the expectation that this commission should speed up these processes was formulated by the second speaker, Zlatko Čepo.

²¹⁰ By the time Šlibar published her article, the archive was in possession of the greatest collection of memoirs in Croatia, which was mostly compiled by county committees. The accounts discussed the period 1919–1957 and many of them followed a standardized questionnaire format. Samples about the

Beyond historians, literary figures continued to feature among those intellectuals who engaged in debates concerning the demarcation of the national self from other groups. In Hungary, writers fell out of grace after the 1956 revolution and ceased to function as the vanguard of Hungarian intelligentsia from the point of view of the party. The writers as a community lost their prominence in mediating between the party and other artistic circles or intellectual groups, but they were not rendered entirely irrelevant. Select individuals, most notably Gyula Illyés,²¹¹ occasionally acted as chief mediators. This process brought about a sudden growth in appreciation towards researchers – historians among others.²¹² In Croatia, where no group of artists or scientists was treated as first among equals,²¹³ the intellectual milieu was only slowly recovering from the restrictive measures that followed the end of the Croatian Spring in 1971, even though some of the demands of the protesters found their ways into the federal constitution of 1974. In fact, the period has been dubbed the “Croatian silence.”²¹⁴

This subchapter outlined the main policy-making bodies that exerted influence on late socialist historical knowledge production during the 1970s and 1980s in Croatia and in Hungary. It became clear that both administrative systems showed both continuities and discontinuities with the previous decades, but the most important policies that shaped

events that took place in the Zagreb area outweighed all other regions and there were very few references to anything that had happened outside the boundaries of Croatia. Ana Šlibar, “Memoarska građa u Arhivu Instituta za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske [Memoirs in the Archives of the Institution for the History of the Croatian Labor Movement],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7, no. 3 (1975): 108–15. 109–110., 111–114.

²¹¹ Gyula Illyés (1902–1983) was born into a humble family in rural Hungary and became a critically acclaimed writer both within and outside the country. From the years of the First World War onwards, he was involved in illegal leftist activities. During the 1920s he spent several years in Paris and without entering any party, he remained politically active and belonged to the agrarian populist writers who labored on revealing the misery of Hungarian peasantry and advocating for their interests. After the marginalization during the years of Stalinism, Illyés became the doyen of agrarian populist writers and an esteemed (although sometimes censored) writer and poet from the 1970s until his death.

²¹² Melinda Kalmár, *Ennivaló és hozomány: a kora kádárizmus ideológiája* [Food and Dowry: Ideology of the Early Kádár Era] (Budapest: Magvető, 1998). 168.

²¹³ Still, Miroslav Krleža’s mediating position was comparable to that of Illyés. One of the main difference lied in their proximity to the top level: Krleža and Tito were reportedly close while Illyés always needed to rely on the mediation György Aczél.

²¹⁴ Đurašković, *The politics of history in Croatia and Slovakia in the 1990s*. 56.

the investigated period were drafted between the late 1960s and the mid-1970s. Both regimes needed to reckon with the ideological challenge of the persistence of the nation as main point of reference. Most importantly, I presented examples of institutions that acknowledged and sought to work around this phenomenon instead of trying to fight it.

2.2. Theorizing the symbolic glue: Ideologues about socialist national consciousness

By the years of late socialism, state socialist governments contended that the importance of national belonging persevered. In the realm of historiography, despite early attempts at refocusing histories to abandon a national focus for the sake of class, the nation remained the main point of reference. Even those works that tried to apply the straitjacket of a simple history of class struggles did so within given national frameworks, addressing internationalism superficially at best. In the course of late socialist planning, the promise to provide a Marxist synthesis was rather modest in comparison to earlier claims, which envisioned a complete rewriting of preexisting histories. The wish to revolutionize historical thinking of the masses: de-centering their national histories and depicting classes as chief actors of history in a way that could offer easy identification and a convincing implementation of other main tenets of historical materialism lost their appeal. The ultimate sign of abandonment of such pursuits was the nation-centered approach of the multivolume histories both in Yugoslavia (Croatia) and in Hungary. However, sporadically some historians carried on with this sense of mission until the transition.

Instead of pressing for the break with the most characteristic historical tradition of nation-centeredness, in the course of the 1970s and 1980s, renewed attempts were made at countering, and if possible, substituting bourgeois nationalism with an ideologically non-antagonistic variant. This would, at the same time, enable citizens to express their

positive identification with the homeland. For this reason, it was necessary to engage with the potential ideological implications of the preference for national histories. In doing so, some historians joined the efforts of party ideologues, on the one hand to prove that the notion of nation was corrupted by the bourgeoisie, on the other hand to depict socialism as the representative of the nation in its uncorrupted form, without the distortions of historical consciousness. This subchapter engages with theorization attempts in connection with socialist consciousness, the involvement of historians in these attempts and compare the stakes of (re)defining national consciousness in Hungary and in Croatia.

When assessing the challenges of the building of national consciousness after the Second World War, two tendencies, two types of distortion were identified, which posed threat to the effective dissemination of the ideas of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism. First, national nihilism, a term that was used to describe the attitude of those who, mostly based on their experiences in the Second World War, opposed the propagation of patriotism of any sort. The second type of distortion was represented by "popular patriotism." Its representatives aimed to invent a new kind of patriotism, through which they could delineate themselves from the discredited interwar nationalist ideas, but one that remained inward-looking and put the titular nation into the focus. In doing so, the criticism went, it excluded any connection to internationalist ideas.²¹⁵ Zsigmond Pál Pach claimed that the main issue at stake was to do justice to the "double demand: to link motherland and progress....nowadays, the historical mission to link Marxism and Hungarianness, socialism and national consciousness."²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Ottó Szabolcs, "A magyar értelmiség nemzeti tudatának kérdéséhez [About the Issue of the National Consciousness of the Hungarian Intelligentsia]," *Történelmi Szemle* 19, no. 3 (1976): 509–18. 516–517.

²¹⁶ Zsigmond Pál Pach, "A nemzettudatról napjainkban [About National Consciousness Today]," *Társadalmi Szemle* 44, no. 1 (1986): 20–33. 25.

The theorization and practical attempts showed great variety throughout the Eastern bloc but were only able to succeed moderately and temporarily.²¹⁷ In East Germany, Jan Palmowski analyzed the propagation of the concept of *Heimat* as opposed to *Vaterland* and the intention to project socialist patriotism into it. Palmowski's conclusion seems to apply to all regional cases: "...there is no evidence that socialist Heimat, and the nationhood it defined, ever came to define private meanings of community and belonging."²¹⁸ Such conclusions, though, are often based on the apparent discontinuity of explicit identification with feelings or ideas pertaining to socialist patriotism and socialist internationalism, as these notions belonged to a vocabulary which quickly vanished after the transitions, only to be remembered and recited by increasingly marginalized Communist or disillusioned liberal thinkers. However, such approach fails to account for temporary successes and often undervalue the effort that went into the work of theorization, which, although it had its sources in the works of Marx and Lenin (as well as Stalin, for that matter), were born also as reactions to the complicated contemporary ethnic heterogeneity (Yugoslavia) and historically strained neighborly relations (Hungary). In Croatia, unlike in most of the bloc countries where the last attempts at reinvigorating the idea of socialist patriotism dated back to the mid-1960s, resulting from debates at the federal level, the collective withdrawal of republics from the project of meaningful ideological work on a supranational consciousness and identity, occurred not much later.

²¹⁷ Wojnowski in his analysis of the Ukrainian case presents an original and much more complex set of notions in the broad field of available patriotisms, in relation to pro-Soviet identification after the Second World War (conservative patriotism, reformist patriotism). However, his case is tied to the Soviet Union, therefore it cannot be easily compared to bloc cases. Wojnowski also highlighted an explicit aspect of othering in relation to Czechs and Poles (staged patriotism), hence emphasizing the Soviet ties further. Similar practices of accentuating ethnic othering was missing from the Hungarian theoretical works. Zbigniew Wojnowski, *The Near Abroad: Socialist Eastern Europe and Soviet Patriotism in Ukraine, 1956–1985* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017).191. Wojnowski's line of argument connected these identities to issues of post-Soviet Ukrainian self-positioning as well.

²¹⁸ Jan Palmowski, *Inventing a Socialist Nation: Heimat and the Politics of Everyday Life in the GDR, 1945–1990*, 2013. 308.

In Croatia, the latest important event that influenced the political environment for theorizing about a federal or republican history and historical consciousness was the Croatian Spring. The main concern of the movement was to reassess the place of Croatia and the Croatian nation within Yugoslavia. It started out as a cultural movement on the basis of the *Deklaracija o nazivu i položaju hrvatskog književnog jezika* [Declaration on the Name and Status of the Croatian Literary Language] that was published in 1967 and demanded the equal status of national language for all nations that had a republic (with the exception of Montenegro). The movement drew considerable support base from students. However, the declaration was rejected, and the decentralizing overtones of the movement were deemed to endanger the political tenets of the federation. Consequently, strict measures were taken to put an end to the unrest. Matica Hrvatska, the central organ of Croatian cultural activities (and chief publisher), with a network of over fifty regional offices, was shut down in 1971.

Franjo Tuđman, former head of IHCLM, was imprisoned on the charge of playing a leading role in nationalist activities during the same event. Despite Tuđman's early cooperation with party chairman Vladimir Bakarić, thus, despite the early appreciation of the highest circles, he was put into prison. Tuđman later suggested that the acclaimed writer Miroslav Krleža used his friendly ties with Tito in order to mitigate the sentence. Despite his fall from grace, Tuđman and other historians who openly pursued the re-nationalization of Croatian history as a counter-current to federal attempts, retained a growing support base throughout his years in dissent until the end of the 1980s.²¹⁹ Still, no gradual restructuring occurred in the field of communication between the republican party elite and intellectuals.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Đurašković, *The politics of history in Croatia and Slovakia in the 1990s*. 64.

²²⁰ Many of his colleagues also criticized Tuđman's historiographical practices. Later I will discuss Slavko and Ivo Goldstein's specific critique with regard to Tuđman's approach to the Holocaust; here I would briefly mention Ljubo Boban's vocal critique of him that targeted Tuđman's lack of

This subchapter reflects on the approaches to the national-nationality question in its late-socialist setting, when the immediate post-Second World War years that were characterized by a backlash against nationalist thinking were over. Although the interventions that aimed to overcome national sentiment in historiography were occasionally quite aggressive, leading to the loss of jobs, they did not achieve the replacement of the national or the disappearance of the concern for the national community and adjacent national-nationality question(s). From today's perspective, it is difficult to establish whether there was a genuine attempt that failed in this sense or real impetus was lacking either on the policy or on the professional level.

In what follows, I will show that the more relaxed years of softening dictatorships were characterized by reckoning with the pertinence of the 'national' instead of the negation of its importance. As narratives of contemporary history were important to any discussion in relation to the desired content of socialist patriotism, an overview of theorization attempts is necessary here. This will be accompanied by the outlining of the main stakeholders in these debates, focusing on personalities and the institutions behind them, so as to shed light on the institutional competitions and entanglements that shaped these discussions.

Indeed, in the activity of consciousness-shaping, the discussion of the national-nationality question in relation to the notions of socialist nation and socialist patriotism had a pivotal role – even if, admittedly, its exact content was being under discussion.

Shaping national consciousness the right way is one of the most complex tasks of consciousness-shaping. For the bourgeois nation, the national idea became the ideological foundation for the totality of the state, it became the main device to unmask the class essence of the bourgeois state. Such general notions as nation, homeland, freedom won their pathetic power in the currents of the bourgeois revolutions – as Erik Molnár wrote [in 1966 – R.K.]. An important ideological task

professionalism in conducting and publishing research. Damir Agičić, "Ljubo Boban i Zanat Povjesničara [Ljubo Boban and the Historian's Craft]," in *Ljubo Boban i istraživanje suvremene povijesti* [Ljubo Boban and Contemporary Historical Research], ed. Damir Agičić and Marica Karakaš Obradov (Zagreb: FF Press, Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu, 2017), 49–72. 57.

of the period of building socialism is to make socialist national thought into such a cement.²²¹

In the Hungarian context, after the Erik Molnár debate, referring to the concepts of socialist patriotism and socialist national consciousness became almost inevitable whenever cultural or educational policies were discussed.²²² For that reason, I will briefly introduce the main points of the debate, as late socialist approaches to the location of the nation in Marxist historiography, even though it happened considerably earlier.

Molnár, long-time member of the Hungarian Communist movement, represented an important continuity between interwar and post-Second World War Marxist thought in historiography. After 1945, he was minister in several governments but never abandoned fully his primary area of interest. He became head of the newly founded Institute of History in 1949, although this was rather nominal, Pál Zsigmond Pach acted mostly in his stead. Though he remained a committed internationalist and communist for life, he took special care of historians who fell victim to the Stalinist hiring policies or even imprisonment and made the institute into a safe haven that scholarship today duly acknowledges.²²³ After 1956, the party slowly found its voice in matters of policies of science and history and proclaimed nationalism (in the aftermath of the uprising) as the greatest danger that historians have to fend off.²²⁴ Shortly after this, a conference was held at the HAS in 1960, which neatly set the stage for Molnár's article in the same

²²¹ Sándor Farkas, "A szocialista nemzetté fejlődés kérdései [The Questions of the Development Towards Becoming a Socialist Nation]," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 16, no. 4 (1970): 159–85. 179.

²²² Miklós Lackó, "Molnár Erik és a 60-as évek történészvitája [Erik Molnár and the Historikerstreit of the 1960s]," *Századok* 142, no. 6 (2008): 1483–1536.

²²³ Such 'distribution of functions' occurred in other bloc countries as well. For the Romanian case see: Papacostea, "Captive Clio: Romanian Historiography under Communist Rule." 183.

²²⁴ *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt művelődési politikájának irányelvei* [Directives of the Cultural Policies of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1958).

year, entitled *A nemzeti kérdés* [The National Question].²²⁵ Miklós Lackó summarized Molnár's main points as following: "'Nation' is a political notion, its content is neither eternal nor unchanged. Different social forms have characteristic structures and communal ideologies."²²⁶ From among the constituent elements of a nation based on Stalin's definition – common language, territory, economic structure, and a spiritual buildup – Lackó observed that Molnár denied the necessity of the latter. "Political patterns of a nation is not explained by any national characteristics, national consciousness should be investigated instead, as this has a political content. Instead the love for one's home country, Molnár suggested the notion of love for the homeland (socialist patriotism)."²²⁷ The debate contributed to the crystallization of cultural frontlines dividing intellectuals, historians, other researchers, and politicians. Although Molnár was criticized by many, he only mildly toned down some of his points. New waves in the debate emerged long after his death (1966), showing how aptly he caught – to the current knowledge of the scholarship, on his own initiative – the corollary problem of any Marxist historiography of the time.

Beyond the Molnár Erik debate, late-socialist theorization about socialist national consciousness had two further sources for inspiration: the Marxist-Leninist literature about the national question and Hungarian history as a set of case studies.

...as opposed to all kinds of nationalisms, Marxism-Leninism treated the national question as a question that is determined by class struggle, not a dominant but a secondary type of human solidarity, a group interest that is subordinate to human and societal interest, instead of being a chief goal.²²⁸

²²⁵ Erik Molnár, "A nemzeti kérdés [The National Question]," *Magyar Tudomány* 67, no. 10 (1960): 571–87.

²²⁶ Miklós Lackó, "Molnár Erik és a 60-as évek történésvitája [Erik Molnár and the Historikerstreit of the 1960s]," *Századok* 142, no. 6 (2008): 1483–1536. 1511.

²²⁷ Lackó. 1511.

²²⁸ István Király, "Hazafiság és internacionalizmus. A szocialista hazafiság és a magyar szabadságharcos hagyományok [Patriotism and Internationalism: Socialist Patriotism and the Hungarian Freedom-Fighter Traditions]," *Magyar Tudomány* 80, no. 6 (1973): 345–62. 351–352.

Although such approach may have been more inviting for historians, especially if the notion of historical consciousness was involved, it did not become their sole dominion. The key participants in the evolving discussion were HAS employees Pál Zsigmond Pach and Ferenc Glatz²²⁹ (historians), Béla Köpeczi (historian) as Minister of Culture, István Király (literary scholar based at ELTE), and György Aczél, the mastermind of cultural policy until the mid-1980s. On the one hand, the ongoing discussion harkened back to Molnár and engaged in the careful assessment of each major turning point in Hungarian history, regarding the presence of progressive and reactionary forces – concomitantly, their (counter)revolutionary nature – and hence tried to identify their due places in the envisioned communist historical canon. On the other hand, depending on their place in the professional and party hierarchy, their contributions determined, influenced, or criticized current broader cultural policies. On the pages of the party's theoretical journal *Társadalmi Szemle* and in historical journals, episodes of Hungarian history were evaluated on the basis of their progressive features, with special attention to the legacy of 1848 and 1867. With all their attempts at reinvigorating the idea of socialist patriotism considered, these ideologues often felt the need to clarify that “we cannot oppose nationalism with a kind of counter-nationalism.”²³⁰ These contributions both fed into state-level memory politics in terms of helping define the messages communicated at commemorative events, and provided explanations for how socialist patriotism could be depicted as a historically rooted phenomenon.

²²⁹ Ferenc Glatz (1941) earned a degree in teaching history and started to work in the Institute of History of HAS in 1968, where he dealt with the sources of the history of modern Hungary and historiography. His ties within science policy and the party aided his administrative career within the IH. From 1975 onwards he also started lecturing at ELTE. After he rose to the highest ranks within the institute, with considerable administrative experience, he was appointed president of the HAS in 1996–2002. He was an active member of the editorial boards of several journals and he established the first popular historical journal, *História*, in 1979.

²³⁰ Pach, “Nemzeti fejlődés, nemzeti öntudat [National Progress, National Consciousness].” 34.

Connected to the issues of the development and application of ideology and thought-shaping functions, partisanship translated differently into party memberships in the Hungarian and in the Croatian context. Party secretaries were delegated to all institutions and the party history institutes expected a level of ideological involvement from all fellows. Because of the Croatian specificity of concentrating all research on the 20th century in the IHCLM, as Tea Sindbaek pointed out, all historians of the period were party members.²³¹ In Hungary, while similarly, all fellows of the PHI were party members, the Institute of History hosted mostly scholars who were neutral at best towards the regime, while some were even known for their anti-communist sympathies, such as Miklós Szabó.²³²

In a less polemic manner, the Croatian past has been revisited too in order to identify such figures who could stand as earlier representatives of progressive or revolutionary thought. Similarly to the Hungarian case, often groups and figures with an independentist agenda were chosen for this role. While in Hungary this independentist feature came to be downplayed with time in favor of appreciation of the advantages that a larger (imperial) framework provides for a (small) nation, in Croatia it prevailed. First, the foreign policy implications for such an agenda did not endanger important interstate relations as in Hungary.²³³ Second, it could have been further utilized for the purposes of prefiguring the Second World War partisan activities. In the Hungarian case, overt emphasis on the achievements of independence were read as implicit critiques of Hungary's current relations with the Soviet Union, while accounts that focused on the

²³¹ Sindbaek, "Usable History?" 74.

²³² Miklós Szabó, Szabó Miklós, interview by Ervin Csizmadia, book; *A magyar demokratikus ellenzék (1968–1988)* [The Hungarian Democratic Opposition 1968–1988], 1995.

²³³ György Szabad was one of the most vocal institutionally embedded (teaching position at ELTE) representative of the anti-Habsburg/independentist camp. György Szabad, *Kossuth politikai pályája: ismert és ismeretlen megnyilatkozásai tükrében* [The Political Career of Lajos Kossuth: In Light of His Known and Unknown Declarations], ed. Mária Farkas (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1977).

(primarily economic) prosperity that was engendered by larger frameworks of cooperation (in historical references, imperial, under Habsburg rule) were encouraged. There was relatively little elaboration on socialist patriotism in the context of minorities, which seems curious in light of the large number of Hungarians who lived in neighboring countries, whose very existence contributed to the progressively growing ideological challenge to which socialist patriotism itself was imagined as a potential panacea. One of the few contributions to this angle of the debate featured Dániel Csatári's article, which highlighted that a minority's insistence on its right to use its mother tongue actually contributes to the development of socialist patriotism within the given group, as it reinforces the minority community's commitment to their current homelands and discourages separatist thought.²³⁴ This approach, which had only limited presence in print, was somewhat reflected on the political level in the preference for the notion of *kettős kötődés* [dual attachment], underscoring the claim that support for the cultural rights of Hungarian minorities was not a destabilizing effort that targeted the country in which the minority community lived.²³⁵

The MSZMP KB Kulturális, Oktatási és Tudományos Osztálya [Department of Culture, Education and Science of HSWP CC] requested Lajos Für, a young historian to survey the state of the art of Hungarian studies and make propositions to its development in 1979. However, judging from the fact that Für's book concerning his findings, which was finished at the beginning of the 1980s but only allowed to be published in 1989, leaves doubts about the purpose of this request from the beginning.²³⁶

²³⁴ Csatári referred to the distinction between natural and violent assimilation, following Lenin's categorizations. Csatári, "A kelet-európai nemzetiségi kérdés történetének hazai kutatásáról [About the Domestic Research on the History of the National Question in Eastern Europe]." 153.

²³⁵ György Földes, *Magyarország, Románia és a nemzeti kérdés: 1956–1989* [Hungary, Romania and the National Question 1956–1989] (Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2007). 256.

²³⁶ Lajos Für, *Kisebbség és tudomány* [Minority and Scholarship], *Gyorsuló idő* (Budapest: Magvető, 1989).

In the Yugoslav context, the stakes of socialist patriotism lied elsewhere. Instead of engaging with the problems created by ethnic tensions that the multinational federation faced both within and among its member republics, the debate between federalists and centralists emerged as the main site of contestation. Furthermore, the centrist position was often perceived as being ethnically determined (Serb). Significant prehistory existed to these debates, surrounding first the tacit adoption of the aim to create a community of Yugoslavs as a supranational reference group transcending ethnic affiliation at the beginning of the 1950s. Later, this idea was gradually abandoned (although for a part of the population, it remained a desirable form of identification, as several sociological surveys suggested).

In its original form, Yugoslav national consciousness was supposed to be a form of socialist consciousness, but by 1964, even official calls for its elaboration ceased.²³⁷ Subsequently, theorization about, or rather, engagement with socialist patriotism was largely confined to the federal level instead of the nation-state. Croatian intellectuals did not necessarily take the lead in the federalist-centrist debate, as the most important exchange occurred between Serbian writer Dobrica Ćosić and Slovenian historian and philosopher Dušan Pirjevec.²³⁸ In this debate at the beginning of the 1960s, Ćosić argued for a strong federation, without the particularistic overtones of the 1980s. Pirjevec, however, stressed the rights of republics under the pretext that all republics are legitimate representatives of the will of their constituent nations, without taking into consideration that several republics had a heterogeneous population.²³⁹

²³⁷ Steven L Burg, *Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia*, Princeton Legacy Library 510 (Princeton University Press, 2016). 26.

²³⁸ The debate took place in the 1960s, before the federalizing constitution of 1974. Nick Miller, "Return Engagement: Intellectuals and Nationalism in Tito's Yugoslavia," ed. Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso (Purdue University Press, 2008), 179–200. 183–184.

²³⁹ Audrey H. Budding, "From Dissidents to Presidents: Dobrica Ćosić and Vojislav Koštunica Compared," *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 2 (May 2004): 185–201, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S096077730400164X>. 186–187.

2.3. Flagship projects concerning the national question: Party initiatives

The previous subchapter discussed matters of national consciousness in the late socialist years, while the current one investigates historiographical undertakings, which were supposed to benefit the most from a clarified ideological stance: comprehensive Marxist histories. Therefore, it is important to address here the late socialist quests for new syntheses in Hungary and in Croatia.

Ministries and other central organs were involved in policy-making activities, which entailed ideological considerations, cadre issues, broader suggestions for the inclusion of entire fields of research into the agenda of research institutions, and the planning of specific projects. In the case of the latter, the renewed interest in publishing a multivolume Marxist synthesis of people's histories emerged. Notably, the projects pertaining to grand national and federal histories were for long underway in the Croatian and the Hungarian contexts. Both the magnitude and the ideological complexities surrounding the undertakings contributed to their protracted progress. While interwar national histories featured as important representative works on all educated persons' shelves, state socialism was yet to provide its own, comprehensive view on national history, ideally explained within the Marxist theoretical framework. Such expectations were less idealistic in the Hungarian case, as there was a tradition of Marxist historical thinking – even if weak. That legacy was taken up by rapidly trained historians in the early fifties, who were later joined by properly schooled, communist scholars. In comparison, Croatian historians had barely any intellectual predecessors to turn to, other than their poorly trained colleagues of the early communist years, as there was no indigenous Marxist tradition in place from before the Second World War. Moreover, their work was supposed to contribute to a federal synthesis in cooperation with

colleagues from other republics, which would have necessitated the transcendence of the long-term isolation in which republican scholarships existed. Translations from Soviet literature, recently re-published works of Marx and Engels and ideological education remained the main sources of navigation in matters of writing history in line with Marxism-Leninism.²⁴⁰

Ever since the takeover of the respective Communist parties, they prioritized the creation of a new narrative about national history that ultimately progressed towards the building of socialism as an articulation of historical necessity. The respective countries already reached this stage, therefore, it had to be aptly demonstrated how this stage was preceded by the stages of historical development and to insert time-specific class struggles into this narrative based on the tenets of Marx's historical materialism.²⁴¹ This section is going to focus on the place of the attempts at creating late socialist multi-volume national histories from the perspective of ideological and policy concerns instead of their historiographical merits, thus linking the planning process and the activities of different party organs directly to historical knowledge production.

While early attempts to write new histories replacing bourgeois accounts were clearly made under the impression that more elaborate and extensive versions of these narratives are to be expected soon, in fact, these first works bordering on political pamphlet and popular (and selective) history became truly important in several realms.²⁴² First, they came to dominate the education of party history in party schools

²⁴⁰ Najbar-Agičić, *U skladu s marksizmom ili činjenicama?* 227.

²⁴¹ These attempts are mainly depicted in two ways in Hungarian literature on historiography. Some, as Péter Gunst, describe the attitude of the main figures of early Stalinist historical narrative creations as vulgar Marxist, implying that the interpretative framework of historical materialism, rightly applied, would have yielded analytical benefits. Péter Gunst, *A magyar történetírás története* [History of Hungarian Historiography] (Debrecen: Csokonai, 2000); 250. Others, like Ignác Romsics, are content in labeling the knowledge production of the period as propaganda. Ignác Romsics, *A múlt arcai: történelem, emlékezet, politika* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2015). 353.

²⁴² Aladár Mód, *400 év küzdelem az önálló Magyarországért* [400 Years of Struggle for the Hungarian Independence], 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Budapest: Szikra, 1947).

for decades to come. Second, in lieu of a textbook more in line with scholarly standards, they were used for long in tertiary education. In that capacity, they had considerable impact on the history textbooks in primary and secondary education as well, aiming both to educate students and their teachers.

In Croatia, these books served the purposes of creating a supranational Yugoslav identity and they disseminated a simplified and idealistic depiction of South Slav common belonging. The first such early work was the book of Bosnian historian Anto Babić (*Istorija naroda Jugoslavije* – History of the People of Yugoslavia) that was published in four editions in the period between 1946 and 1949, however, after it was comprehensively criticized by Milovan Đilas, its circulation ceased.²⁴³ Before the years of late socialism though, smaller-scale cooperation brought about the production of these very books, although they were met with criticism. In fact, the 1960s witnessed the last successful federal project that resulted in the publication of a common history of Yugoslavia. The two volumes of *Istorija Jugoslavije* appeared in 1972, authored by Croatian and Serbian historians.²⁴⁴

Aladár Mód's monograph *400 év küzdelem az önálló Magyarországért* [400 Years of Struggle for Hungarian Independence]²⁴⁵ was the prototype of Marxist interpretation of national history. The first edition was published in 1943 and it was revised and republished seven times after. The book came to dominate the curricula both in public and in party education for decades to come, and in that sense, the shadow of Mód's book loomed considerably larger in the state socialist historiographical tradition than that of Babić. The defining characteristics of Mód's book lied in approaching

²⁴³ Najbar-Agičić, *U skladu s marksizmom ili činjenicama?* 303.

²⁴⁴ However, the absence of scholars with different ethnic background was held against the project. Ivan Božić et al., *Istorija Jugoslavije [History of Yugoslavia]* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1972).

²⁴⁵ Mód, *400 év küzdelem az önálló Magyarországért* [400 Years of Struggle for the Hungarian Independence].

(Hungarian) history as a process of class struggle and one in which the so-called independentist tradition – usually the anti-Habsburg forces – was proclaimed the representative of progress. However, this approach originated not from Mód but from József Révai's interwar publications, who later became the key figure of cultural policy during the years of Stalinism (1948–1953), and hence, can be seen as the main theoretician behind the Hungarian expression of national communist thought in historiography. Still, the subsequent syntheses that were published²⁴⁶ were unable to match the impact of Mód's book, which was not easy to criticize from a theoretical point of view. However, its pro-independentist agenda became increasingly incompatible with one of the few concrete ideological tenets of the consolidated Kádár regime, namely its compromise-based attitude and its unwillingness to enable a tacit critique of Hungary's dependence on the Soviet Union through such interpretation (suggesting a parallel between the Habsburg Empire and the Soviet Union). While the ambiguity of Mód's interpretation hindered a balanced discussion of the dualist period, some of its schematic depictions were rendered obsolete.²⁴⁷

Following the publication of the two-volume *Magyarország története* [History of Hungary] in the 1960s,²⁴⁸ the representative 10-volume *Magyarország története* was indeed subjected to great expectations. In the activity report of the preceding plan period of the Institute of History, it was stated that:

After putting the greater part of the work behind, we may say that the greatest cultural political gain of the History of Hungary lies in giving an account of our

²⁴⁶ Iván Berend T. et al., *Magyarország története* [History of Hungary], ed. Erik Molnár, Ervin Pamlényi, and György Székely, vol. 2, 2 vols. (Budapest: Gondolat, 1964).

²⁴⁷ “The 1867 compromise and the subsequent unparalleled decades of economic growth had to be depicted as the era of downfall and treachery of national interests, in a good ‘kuruc’-sectarian manner, even though Hungary as a nation hadn’t witnessed such favorable conditions since the reign of Matthias Corvinus. The history of the labor movement was taught, on the one hand, as the peak of progress, on the other hand that 90 percent of its leaders and activists were Trotskyite–Bukharinite–revisionist social democrats, also sneaks. The picture one needed to provide about the years of the Horthy regime was so schematic that it was necessarily contradicted even by the memories of people in their twenties.” Hajdu, “Történetírás a konszolidáció időszakában [Historiography in the Period of Consolidation].” 518.

²⁴⁸ Berend T. et al., *Magyarország története* [History of Hungary].

land's history so far in the most extensively reasoned and detailed form in a Marxist spirit. Professionally – for the greater public less visible – its greatest benefit is that no synthesis has been published before that would go into so much detail and would encompass the interpretation of all sources of national history as well as re-evaluate it.²⁴⁹

A more political reading of the purpose of the synthesis was voiced by Ferenc Glatz in his introduction to the summaries of recent historiographical debates concerning the publication of the first three volumes of the synthesis. Just like Pach and others claimed independently, the need for the synthesis materialized in the 1960s. The main expected novelties were supposed to make the series provide:

1. The narration of Hungarian history with a proportionate account of socio-political circumstances, based on the Marxist social perception that is purged of dogmatism;
2. One that undertakes an in-depth discussion that goes beyond previous achievements of the scholarship in terms of factual knowledge;
3. One that presents the Marxist viewpoint in great detail and in a highly readable manner, in order to make it a handbook of Hungarian history for the broadest readership possible.²⁵⁰

Naturally, the representative, multivolume series were conceived as a large-scale coproduction of all significant institutions that engaged with historical knowledge production in any form, in the spirit of popular front (including museums, libraries, and archives).²⁵¹ In the Yugoslav context, this expectation was complemented with the inclusion of all nationalities to represent their respective communities in due manner. However, those who were charged with overseeing the individual volumes were usually affiliated with one of the institutions that were introduced in the previous chapter.

²⁴⁹ „TTI beszámoló 1976–1980 [Report of the Institute of History 1976–1980]”, 1980, Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, MTA II. Filozófiai-és Történettudományok Osztályának iratai, 278. Box 2. File. 43.

²⁵⁰ Ferenc Glatz, “Számvetés. Eredmények, tanulságok a Magyarország története eddigi munkálataiban [Reckonings: Results, Lessons In the Works of the History of Hungary],” *Századok* 115, no. 6 (1981): 1244–63. 1245.

²⁵¹ A new four-volume series was in the making in at the end of the 1980s in Hungary, entitled *Magyarok Európában* [Hungarians in Europe] that intended to narrate Hungarian history within the history of Europe, but not all three volumes that were eventually finished came out before the transition. The fourth volume concerning the post-1867 years remained unfinished (the author was Ferenc Glatz).

In the course of the collaboration, methodological concerns were constantly raised by historians themselves that were often connected to the idea of how they as historians should serve their respective national communities. The renowned Croatian scholar Ivo Goldstein concluded in an article that addressed the lack or shortage of real synthesis about NOB that the old school – i.e., the one that is only interested in a factographic enumeration of events – is waning and a new, more integrative approach has to take over. All the more so, as he deemed that historiography is further hindered by the lingering old school in fulfilling its societal functions.²⁵²

In Hungary, initially Erik Molnár headed the editorial committee, who left his mark in Hungarian historiography with initiating one of the few, major debates of the Kádár era. He was head of the Institute of History at that time. The Molnár debate²⁵³ – concerned the ideas of proletarian internationalism and socialist patriotism, engendering a fertile atmosphere for arguments regarding the ways to accommodate national sentiments with communist ideas in historical research and the applicability of Marxism-Leninism to national history.²⁵⁴ As Molnár passed away in 1966, he could not witness the long career of his intervention that resulted in a dynamical polemics stretching over decades and often transcending disciplinary boundaries.

Beyond specific theoretical and methodological considerations, multi-volume national histories of the late socialist years were supposed to embody the seamless incorporation

²⁵² Ivo Goldstein, “Metodološke značajke sinteza povijesti narodnooslobodilačke borbe u Jugoslaviji [Methodological Characteristics of Synthesizing Works about the Struggle for National Liberation in Yugoslavia],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 11, no. 2–3 (1979): 137–46. Ivo Goldstein (1958–) graduated from the University of Zagreb in 1979 and started teaching there at the Department of Medieval History. Starting from the field of Byzantinology, his research interest gradually oriented towards the history of Jews in Croatia, which redirected his attention to 20th century history. He also co-published with his father Slavko Goldstein (1928–2017).

²⁵³ As Litkei had shown, the debate had an important prelude in the 1950s. Litkei, “The Molnár Debate of 1950.”

²⁵⁴ Ignác Romsics, „Ungarische Geschichtsschreibung im 20. Jahrhundert - Tendenzen, Autoren, Werke. [Hungarian Historiography in the 20th century], in *Nationale Geschichtskulturen - Bilanz, Ausstrahlung, Europabezogenheit. Beiträge des internationalen Symposions in der Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur, Mainz, vom. 30. September bis 2. Oktober 2004*, ed. Heinz Duchardt (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006), 195–219. 215.

of the history of the workers' movement into the national historical narrative. This is a definite departure from earlier claims to replace national history with the history of the people. Indeed, Erényi contended that as party history was present in the respective volume about the interwar period, being depicted as an integral part of the grand narrative, and not in isolation, one might consider this goal accomplished.²⁵⁵

Yugoslav and Hungarian attempts in the 1970s and 1980s failed at delivering large syntheses. In Yugoslavia, the ultimate halt in the production of *Historija naroda i narodnosti Jugoslavije* [History of the Nations and Nationalities of Yugoslavia] occurred in 1986.²⁵⁶ Primarily, professional antagonism among the historiographies of the republics, especially Croats and Serbs, precluded the completion of the series, practically giving up working towards a consensus about Yugoslav history from the beginnings of the first Yugoslav state. After the publication of the first two volumes in 1953 and 1959, the preparations of the third volume (that was supposed to cover the history of the 19th century) staggered and for a while, ceased. Following years of silence, the project was reinvigorated in 1985 but the subsequent debates did not bring about the publication of the volumes about modern history. Branimir Janković drew attention nonetheless to the importance of theoretical and methodological suggestions, which appeared in the course of the debates.²⁵⁷

Croatian scholarship failed to produce a synthesis of the history of the Croatian people as well, and it was yet again the modern period, which was missing from among the published volumes (however, in this case, 1914 proved to be the watershed as opposed to the federal attempt). Moreover, as Janković pointed out, the published volumes of

²⁵⁵ Erényi, "A munkásmozgalom-történetírás helyzete és feladatai [The Situation and Tasks of the Historiography of the Workers' Movement]." 141.

²⁵⁶ The first two volumes bore the title *Historija naroda Jugoslavije* and the working title for future volumes had been changed in the course of the lengthy debates. However, this shift in concept – a discursive gesture towards the nationalities – contributed to the further escalation of professional conflict.

²⁵⁷ Janković, *Mijenjanje sebe sama*. 100.

the synthesis, which was the project of the Institute for Croatian History at the University of Zagreb, did not appear to have the necessary coherence. Two of them were published as single-author monographs; these were the book of Dragovan Šepić entitled *Povijest Hrvata u ranom srednjem vijeku* (History of Croats in the Early Middle Ages) from 1971 and that of Nada Klaić under the title *Povijest Hrvata u razvijenom srednjem vijeku* (History of Croats in the High Middle Ages) that was published in 1976. Multiple authors brought of the third volume; it resulted from the collaboration of Jaroslav Šidak, Mirjana Gross and Igor Karaman and it came out in 1968 (*Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860–1914 – The History of the Croatian People 1860–1914*).²⁵⁸

In Hungary, scholars succeeded to bring out the volume on the interwar period (1976) and the surrounding debates resulted in several additional publications. One of the volumes about the Middle Ages and a separate volume about historiography remained in torso just like the one that was supposed to address post-1945 history. While the failure to produce the former two was largely due to problems in coordination, the latter simply lacked sufficient manpower as scholars were rather unwilling to deal with the early state socialist period.

Similarly to other state socialist regimes, both the Yugoslav and Hungarian governments invested heavily in reshaping the worldview of their constituency, which on the one hand would have meant the elimination, later slow (assisted) withering away of branches of false consciousness and replacing them with notions that may even retain some elements of the “bourgeois” ideas. If so, these new notions still had to be rooted firmly in the communist ideological framework. As an act of consciousness-shaping, in a somewhat contradictory manner, late socialist multivolume histories were supposed to reflect on the current state of consciousness while actively shaping it.

²⁵⁸ Janković. 99., 160.

Nationalism, more precisely bourgeois nationalism, was considered one of the most important forms of false consciousness. Acts of expression of nationalist sentiments betrayed the resilience and relevance of the national category in what was supposed to be a class-based society. In Croatia, the unresolved federal national question(s) made the issue even more burning, while in Hungary, the implications were farthest reaching in relation to Hungarian communities that lived in neighboring countries, on former Austro-Hungarian territories. In both cases, the commonly triggered grievances – or those that were postulated by officials behind the diverse expressions of “nationalist sentiment” – started at the beginning of the interwar period and peaked one more time during the Second World War.

In the envisioned process of helping the populations to unlearn their previous course of thought, historians had their designated places in state socialist policies of culture and science. By the 1970s, the ideological offering was quite straightforward. Socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism were juxtaposed to their bourgeois nemeses: bourgeois nationalism and cosmopolitanism.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Agitation and Propaganda Committee in Hungary showed great interest in those aspects of contemporary socialist consciousness that were rooted in people’s perception of national history. In order to be able to assess the current state of historical consciousness of the society, several smaller-scale surveys and a larger research were conducted by sociologists.

As part of the research and development plans for the 1981–1984 period, at HAS, historians were finally assigned a project that had been the subject of rumors for years.

The main goal of the research project was outlined as follows:

The concept of the research topic suggested by HSWP CC Agitation and Propaganda Committee under the title “The national-nationality question today” establishes that the main objectives of this undertaking are the following: what and how does the population of Hungary think about the national question, with what and how does it identify itself, what are the controversial elements in its thought

and emotions; what does national consciousness mean today, what is the essence of Hungarian thought today and the tendencies of its development. Researchers seek to investigate the national consciousness of contemporary Hungarian society embedded in its economic, social, and political relations.²⁵⁹

Beyond establishing the main directions of the proposed research project, the Agitation and Propaganda Committee specified the tasks of the participating institutions (IH, Institute for Literary Studies, Mass Media Research Center of the Hungarian Radio and Television) in great detail:

- a) Some instances of the displays of national question in developed capitalist states (gathering materials and study)
- b) Some instances of the displays of national question in the developing world (gathering materials and study)
- c) The development of historical and political thinking, the breakthrough, distortion, and rejuvenation of Marxist historical thought in Hungary 1945–1980 (assembling the materials of political press, edition of a collective volume of two parts)
- d) Issues of patriotism and internationalism in the press in the past ten to fifteen years (in mass media), with an emphasis on given political (cultural) anniversaries, celebrations, and particular important events of domestic and international political life (gathering materials and study)
- e) Issues of patriotism and internationalism in primary and secondary education in the course of the past ten to fifteen years (based on textbooks, inspectorial reports, school-leaving exam records, etc.)
- f) Issues of patriotism and internationalism in the neighboring socialist countries (in the past ten to fifteen years), with special attention to their own historical anniversaries and the anniversaries of Hungarian history (gathering materials and study)
- g) literature, movies, and arts about Hungarian history after the liberation (gathering materials and study)
- h) public opinion, social psychology, and historical consciousness (gathering materials and study).²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ Zsigmond Pál Pach, “Tájékoztató a Társadalomtudományi Koordinációs Bizottság 1984. szept. 17-i üléséről. A nemzeti tudat hazánkban, a nemzeti-nemzetiségi kérdés korunkban. A 7. sz. Központi Kutatási Téma zárótanulmány-tervezete [Prospectus About the Session of the Coordinating Committee of Social Sciences on September 17th 1984: The National Consciousness in Hungary, the National-Nationality Question of Our Age: The Draft of the Closing Study of the 7th Central Research Topic],” 1984, Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 901 TPB 31. box, 1984. Szept. 28–1984. Nov. 29.. 5. folder, 1984. Nov.29.

²⁶⁰ Agitációs és Propaganda Bizottság, “A MTA kutatási-fejlesztési terve az 1981–1985 közötti időszakra [The Research and Development plan of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in the period 1980–1985]” Bp, 1981. 71.p. and “Agit-Prop. T/7. Témakör A nemzeti tudat és a nemzeti kérdés korunkban” [Agitation and Propaganda T/7 Topic, National Consciousness and the National Question in Our Time], 1981, Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 901 Tudománypolitikai Bizottság 23. box, 1981. Dec.19–1982. March. 12. 1. folder vol.2.

According to the recommendations of the Agitation and Propaganda Committee, historians of the Institute of History were supposed to collaborate with literary historians and psychologists (all affiliated with the HAS) in the course of the project. As external contributors, employees of the MRT Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont [Mass Media Research Center of the Hungarian Radio and Television] joined them. Indeed, as a result of years of work, a collective volume was prepared and submitted to the committee in 1979 by the historians involved.

Although the main end product remained in the archives of the Agitation and Propaganda Committee, several studies were published, most importantly, the final study based on a sociological survey, conducted by the Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont Pszichológiai Csoportja [Psychology Group of the Mass Media Research Center of the Hungarian Radio and Television] in 1971. This particular study was completed by 1976. The sample was representative in terms of age, occupation, and place of living. Sociologists analyzed 458 full samples in order to investigate how the 20th century is remembered in Hungarian families and to learn how people perceive the synchronic or asynchronous nature of “official” (i.e., unbiased, well-researched, taught) history and their family history and how they cope with possible differences. Another important expectation was to learn about the subjective evaluation of different historical periods in conjunction with family history.²⁶¹ The survey was not interested, however, in the level of knowledge of historical facts, which figured only as a minor addition.²⁶² Methodologically, researchers preferred to work with methodologies that

²⁶¹ György Hunyady and Katalin Pörzse, “Vélekedések a XX. század történetéről és a családok múltjáról [Beliefs about the History of the Twentieth Century and Families’ Pasts],” in *Tanulmányok 1976, 11–15*, *Tanulmányok / Tömegkommunikációs Kutatóközpont*, 0230-2284 ; 8/14. [Studies, Mass Communication Center, 0230-2284 ; 8/14.] (Budapest: TK, 1976), 1–168.

²⁶² György Csepeli, *A nagyvilágon e kívül: nemzeti tudat és érzésvilág Magyarországon 1970–2002* [No Other Spot In All The World: National Consciousness and Feelings in Hungary 1970–2002], Jósöveg Hiánypótló (Budapest: Jósöveg Műhely K, 2002). 93.

did not include open-ended questions. The first important conclusion of the study was, that

40% answered that general theses and the memory of their family are in perfect harmony. 14% was of the opinion that the two in general coincide, but that does not apply to all details. 12% talks about only a partial overlap, 5% claims that experience shows usually a different story from that which is stated in history textbooks. Finally, 2% claims that the two narratives are in fact opposing each other.²⁶³

These results were determined to a degree by the source of reference that the interviewees preferred. Less than a third of those relying primarily on family history claimed “perfect harmony” between readings and family history; the percentage was much higher among those who preferred books (63%).²⁶⁴

Despite the concerted efforts of cultural policies and state and adult education, in the Hungarian context the notions of socialist patriotism and proletarian consciousness never attained the level of identification that bourgeois national consciousness had secured. As the closing report of one survey pointed out, it was not the fervent manifestation of nationalism that was behind the failure; criticism was instead directed at the theorization of socialist national consciousness.

The problem lies...within the absence of a conceptual apparatus of socialist patriotism that is precise and measured according to the needs of everyday consciousness. Without it, the present everyday consciousness – if not actually, then potentially – can be filled any time with the elaborate terminological framework of nationalism or any other group ideology, as there is nothing that would make it immune to it. Hence one may not talk about an interiorized set of values. With regard to internationalism, the interviewees are aware of the official nature of the slogan and of it being positively sanctioned; however, they are unable to understand and interpret it on the level of everyday life. They can not perceive the class content of this slogan and its genuine links to socialism.²⁶⁵

²⁶³ Those replies which are not accounted for here were either missing or the participants explicitly abstained. Hunyady and Pörzse, “Vélekedések a XX. század történetéről és a családok múltjáról [Beliefs about the History of the Twentieth Century and Families’ Pasts].” 31.

²⁶⁴ Hunyady and Pörzse. 31.

²⁶⁵ “MSZMP KB Agitációs- és Propaganda Bizottsága 1979. augusztus 28. ülés. ‘A szocialista tudat fejlődése’ c. kutatási téma. zárótanulmány [HSWP CC Agitation and Propaganda Committee 28 August 1979 Session. Research Area Entitled ‘The Development of Socialist Consciousness’. Closing Report],” n.d., HU-MOL M-KS 288-41/330. ő. e. 92.

The discussion of the national question was not limited to sociological surveys and policy propositions that were supposed to steer national consciousness into a more desirable direction. *Párttörténeti Közlemények* and other journals regularly published on topics in historiography that tapped into sensitive areas of national consciousness or explicitly engaged with theoretical or methodological propositions that would enable historians to participate in the processes of consciousness-shaping.

Sociology bore the potential to disentangle the intricacies of the national-nationality question in conjunction with national consciousness in Croatia also. Similarly to Hungary, Croatian sociology struggled for its interdisciplinary autonomy. Its pre-Second World War traditions were even weaker, mostly focusing on rural sociology.²⁶⁶ The first sociologists of socialist Yugoslavia were in fact trained philosophers and despite their small number, their theoretical orientations were quite diverse. Their appreciation by the party grew as they were seen as scholars who will both further the achievements and advocate for the excellence of the system of self-management. Concomitantly, in the course of the 1960s, a gradual liberalization was experienced in this field, lasting until 1968. After *Maspok*, sociologists turned to the issue of social and ethnic conflicts, and some of them even joined the nationalist platforms of their respective republics at the end of the 1980s.²⁶⁷

Surveys that were relevant to the contemporary “national question” were to a large extent conducted before 1974, mostly focusing on interethnic relations (e.g., ethnic distance).²⁶⁸ The leading role of sociologists remained uncontested in this field of

²⁶⁶ Cvetko Kostić, “Sociology in Yugoslavia,” *International Review of Modern Sociology* 13, no. 1–2 (1983): 375–95. 382.

²⁶⁷ Mladen Lazić, “Sociology in Yugoslavia: Correlation Dynamics between Critical and Integrative Social Theory in Liberal Socialism,” in *Sociology and Ethnography in East-Central and South-East Europe: Scientific Self-Description in State Socialist Countries*, ed. Ulf Brunnbauer, Claudia Kraft, and Martin Schulze-Wessel, Bad Wiesseer Tagungen Des Collegium Carolinum. 31 (München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2011), 87–106. 90–93.

²⁶⁸ Burg, *Conflict and Cohesion in Socialist Yugoslavia*. 45–50.

inquiry. Science policy did neither frame nor integrate their activities within a larger, interdisciplinary cooperation with historians.

Both regimes acknowledged the pertinence of the national-nationality question and wanted to rely on expert knowledge in order to assess and ameliorate the situation. In Hungary, this led to several large-scale surveys and ideological work, however, the realization of plans was never complete and policymakers did not necessarily decide to utilize the results. In Croatia the state did not order similar surveys during the late socialist years, abandoning earlier practices. Scholarly interest in the topic was not entirely restricted though; sociologists could pursue their interests individually.

The tension between the communist and national narratives, which were allowed and encouraged to coexist, was most prevalent in education, one of the main markets for the results of historical scholarship. In Yugoslavia, the responsibility for the field of education always belonged to the republics, which secured institutional encouragement for the transmission of national narratives (in history as well as in literature) even in the earlier decades, when cultural policies would have prescribed otherwise.²⁶⁹ This setting foreshadowed the conflict of potentially different national communisms in the same country.

In Hungary, historical textbooks faced a different methodological challenge, albeit with similarly close ties to national communism. While Hungary was in fact very close to the ideal type of a nation-state, hence the main actors of taught histories were less ambiguous, millions of Hungarians were subjected to neighboring national communisms, often in a victimized position (especially in Romania and to a lesser extent, in Czechoslovakia). This methodological issue was sorted out simply as omission during the first post-Second World War decades. Historical textbooks never

²⁶⁹ Wachtel and Marković, “A Last Attempt at Educational Integration: The Failure of Common Educational Cores in Yugoslavia in the Early 1980s.” 206.

ventured on including those Hungarians in the curriculum who were not citizens of the country in the years of late socialism either. Thus, their post-1918 stories were not told in the most accessible format: in primary and secondary education.

Although there was no federal ministry of education, Croatia had difficulties to shape the educational agenda in a way that would be (partially) compatible with other republics. Several catchphrases appeared in all republican programs, but different emphases emerged in history education policies as well, for example in the case of the history of interwar and wartime Yugoslavia. In 1983, a common core of history education was accepted, but implementation did not follow, and the debates surrounding the writing of the new synthesis of Yugoslav history virtually did not affect teaching materials.²⁷⁰

Hungarian history textbooks were often observed with suspicion by historians from neighboring countries, especially Czechoslovakia and Romania. Apart from the pseudo-historical debate about the Dacian-Romanian continuity, this suspicion was usually provoked by textbooks that addressed modern history, from the times of the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. While all parties communicated the need to remove the remnant of bourgeois thought from the way current domestic historiography depicted this period, Hungarian scholars expressed continuously that they felt that their efforts were not reciprocated.²⁷¹ This sense of dissatisfaction was in most cases mutual. Despite the fact that Hungarian historians in general limited their investigation of territories that were previously under Hungarian rule to those specific periods of history (from the establishment of the Hungarian state until the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the end of the Great War), neighboring

²⁷⁰ Wachtel and Marković. 206–208.

²⁷¹ “Emlékeztető: Für Lajos: A Kárpát-medencében élő magyarság történelmi tudatáról c. tanulmányával kapcsolatos Agitációs- és Propaganda Bizottsági állásfoglalás végrehajtásával összefüggő teendők megbeszélése végett 1971. január 11-én tartott értekezletről [Memo: In Conjunction with the Meeting About the Executional Tasks Emanating from the Statement of the Agitation and Propaganda Committee about Für Lajos’s Essay Entitled ‘About The Historical Consciousness of Hungarians Living in the Carpathian Basin’, January 11, 1971.),” January 11, 1971, Archives of the Institute of Political History, 909 Nemes Dezső személyes fondja, 33. folder. 1.p.

historiographies were prone to regard even these undertakings as manifestations of irredentist thought.

By the 1980s, critical voices strengthened with regard to the representation of the national question in history textbooks both in Croatia and in Hungary, alluding to the escalation of ideological and interethnic conflicts. The dissatisfaction did not emerge out of nowhere. Lajos Für published an overview of the presence – or rather, absence – of Székelys in post-1948 textbooks and noted that Székelys were removed from “the living history of the state”²⁷² out of concerns for the sensitivities of Romania. On the other hand, more than a decade later, Mrs. Bíró Ferenc’s history textbook explicitly linked the territorial and population losses of the Trianon Peace Treaty to the contemporary discrimination towards Hungarians outside Hungary proper.²⁷³ The critical moment arrived earlier in Croatia with the death of Tito in 1980, which is a consensual watershed in the relations among Yugoslav republics. The early 1980s signaled the times when the intention to maintain amicable relations among historiographies that were otherwise confrontational disappeared. Unlike in the field of literature, even those attempts were swiftly marginalized that sought to define a common core of history to be taught in public education.²⁷⁴

In the Croatian textbooks, the depiction of the Ustaša and that of the NDH were the most problematic, and remained so throughout the 1990s. As Srđan Cvijić argues, instead of promoting problematic content, the strategies of the textbook writers relied more on omissions and disproportionate representation, especially of Croatian war

²⁷² Lajos Für, “Milyen nyelven beszélnek a székelyek? [What Language Do the Székelys Speak?],” *Tiszatáj* 26, no. 8 (1972): 57–66. 63.

²⁷³ Róbert Balogh, “Nightmares of the Little Mermaid. Indoctrination and Representation of Trianon Treaty in Hungarian History Textbooks 1920–1988,” in *Die Pariser Vororte-Verträge im Spiegel der Öffentlichkeit*, ed. Harald Gröller and Harald Heppner, *Transkulturelle Forschungen an Den Österreich-Bibliotheken Im Ausland* 7 (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2011), 147–63. 159.

²⁷⁴ Wachtel and Marković, “A Last Attempt at Educational Integration: The Failure of Common Educational Cores in Yugoslavia in the Early 1980s.”

crimes.²⁷⁵ While it was still safe to criticize interwar Yugoslavia based on ideological claims, the Croatian grievances about suffering at the hand of the dominantly Serbian bureaucracy gave definite ethnic overtones to the narrative. Furthermore, textbooks allotted only limited space for the discussion of other republics, let alone the global socialist movement. By the second half of the 1980s, both Croatian and Hungarian historians seemed to give up on the internationalist representation of history in textbooks. In part, this was due to the lack of access (language skills and literature) and interest in creating an internationalist account. In addition to that, internationalism or rather its bourgeois version, cosmopolitanism, was seen as a potential pitfall. In Hungary, Károly Irinyi was quite explicit when he wrote “down with textbook internationalism,”²⁷⁶ as internationalism in Irinyi’s reading was close to the loss of identity which would pose just as much of a threat as nationalism.²⁷⁷

2.4. Policing publication: Expression of (historical) thought under constraints

After discussing three areas where the Communist party’s ability to assert its interests was rather marked by limitations, the fourth subchapter about prevailing and reformed censorship practices in relation to historical knowledge production shows a still unpredictable but more oppressive practice. In this subchapter, I illuminate some of the specificities of censorship and introduce cases of severe transgressions of authors, comparing their consequences in the Hungary and in Croatia.

²⁷⁵ This remained true for the first decade of post-Communism: instead of denying Ustaša crimes, their significance was downplayed as detailed descriptions of Četnik crimes surpassed that of the Ustaša in length. Srđan Cvijić, “Swinging the Pendulum: World War II History, Politics, National Identity and Difficulties of Reconciliation in Croatia and Serbia,” *Nationalities Papers* 36, no. 4 (2008): 713–40. 717.

²⁷⁶ Károly Irinyi, “Tudatsere Kellene [We Need a Change of Thought],” in *Tanulmányok Erdély Történetéről. szakmai konferencia Debrecenben: 1987. október 9–10*. [Essays about the History of Transylvania. Scholarly Conference in Debrecen: October 9–10, 1987], ed. István Rácz (Debrecen: Csokonai Kiadó, 1988), 23–30. 28.

²⁷⁷ Irinyi. 28.

Aversion to free public discourse was an important common element in state socialist regimes. The reasoning for some type of content control and the application of systematic filters was commonly justified with the defense against external malicious influence and their domestic allies.²⁷⁸ State socialist regimes developed multilayered organizations for surveilling and policing knowledge production in its different phases. During late socialism, the practice of delegation was favored in general: usually publishing houses and reviewers were tasked with identifying, rectifying, or sanctioning publications unfit for appearance. Drastic post- production interventions were to be avoided if possible. While the “freedom” of Yugoslav media is often misunderstood in comparison to other state socialist countries, the unrestricted import of foreign press materials definitely meant a qualitative difference.²⁷⁹

In late socialist cultural regimes, control mechanisms of publication affected the spheres of literature, broadly conceived cultural production, and the realm of public information. These organs either were in direct contact with the highest echelons of the party state – directly with the Propaganda and Agitation Committee – or were connected to it through an intermediary body. The supervising structures were therefore fragmented, and their spheres of influence were ambiguously defined. This setting resulted in overlapping competencies that were further undercut by the agency of individual publishing houses.

The Croatian media system, in accordance with cultural policies in general, was more relaxed during late socialism in comparison to Hungary, in part due to its decentralized nature – both with regard to the federal framework and the republican one. Croatian

²⁷⁸ Jan Claas Behrends and Thomas Lindenberger, „Underground publishing and the public sphere: Some introductory remarks”, in *Underground Publishing and the Public Sphere*, Wiener Studien zur Zeitgeschichte 6 (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2014), 3–27. 7.

²⁷⁹ Gertrude Joch Robinson, *Tito's Maverick Media* (Urbana [usw.]: Univ. of Illinois Pr, 1977). 42.

authors were often able to find new publishers for their previously rejected material.²⁸⁰ However, this was certainly not an unrestricted public sphere either. The fact that there was no censorship office did not mean the overall lack of censorship practices. When it came to publications, in theory, every galley proof had to be submitted to the Ured državnog tužitelja [Office of State Prosecutor] before published. In practice, the fact that the institution was understaffed²⁸¹ made its efficiency and capacities questionable. In general, Yugoslav authorities had neither the will nor the capacities to enforce full-fledged censorship, however, occasionally bans and destruction of materials occurred. Moreover, as opposed to late socialist Hungary, prison sentence remained a possible outcome of censorship activities in this period.

Csapody summarized the Hungarian institutional setting. The group of central bodies for controlling tasks included the MSZMP Tudományos, Közoktatási és Kulturális Osztálya [Scientific, Public Education, and Cultural Department of the HSWP Central Committee], the Politikai Bizottság [Politburo], the Művelődési Minisztérium [Ministry of Culture] (although the exact name and the fields of responsibility of the latter changed dynamically throughout the period), and János Kádár himself. Consultations were often held furthermore with the Művelődésügyi Minisztérium Irodalmi Főosztálya [Department for Literature of the Ministry of Culture] and the Kulturális Kapcsolatok Intézete [Institute for Cultural Relations] if foreign contacts were involved. While the above described system seems chaotic at best, further decentralization was exercised in the execution of established policies as county and local councils participated in these processes as well.²⁸²

²⁸⁰ Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1996). 63.

²⁸¹ Ramet. 63–64.

²⁸² Miklós Csapody, *Az "irányított nyilvánosság" és a "szerkezet megváltozása" Magyarországon. Hat kultúrpolitika-történeti esettanulmány az 1970–80-as évek irodalmi közéletéből* ["Controlled Publicity" and the "Structural Change" in Hungary: Six Case Studies about the History of Cultural Policies in the

Both contexts produced their own controversial history book recalls. In Croatia during the Croatian Spring, Trpmir Macak's monograph *Povijest hrvatskog naroda* [The History of the Croatian People] was called back by the publisher, as it was perceived to display Croatian ethnonationalist bias.²⁸³ A truly scandalous federal case was the recall of Veselin Đuretić's book entitled *Saveznici i jugoslavenska ratna drama* [The Allies and the Yugoslav War Drama] that rehabilitated the Četnici.²⁸⁴ Nevertheless, Ivo Banac claimed that attempts at rehabilitation were only systematically appropriated for political purposes with the rise of Slobodan Milošević.²⁸⁵

In Hungary, the publication of a biography of Béla Kun (leader of the failed Hungarian Soviet Republic)²⁸⁶ by Party History Institute affiliate György Borsányi caused a controversy in 1979. After one day, the copies of the book were recalled from the shops, as the author was accused of an inaccurate depiction of the revolutionary leader. In a critical review, it was underscored that Borsányi made a mistake by trying to appeal to his audience based on scientifically untenable conclusions. "For historians" – as Józsa and Milei asserted – "it is far from novel that certain views that would not withstand scholarly scrutiny or even blatantly irrational thoughts may become forces of consciousness-shaping or, they have the potential to become one."²⁸⁷ Borsányi,

Literary Public Life of the 1970s and 1980s], Médiatudományi Könyvtár 33 (Budapest: Médiatudományi Intézet, 2018). 8.

²⁸³ Robert Stallaerts, "Historiography in the Former and New Yugoslavia," *Belgisch Tijdschrift Voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 29, no. 3–4 (1999): 315–36. 325.

²⁸⁴ Veselin Đuretić, *Saveznici i jugoslovenska ratna drama* [The Allies and the Yugoslav War Drama] (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1985).

²⁸⁵ Banac, "Yugoslavia." 1099.

²⁸⁶ Borsányi György, *Kun Béla: politikai életrajz* [Béla Kun: A Political Biography] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1979). György Borsányi (1931–1997) was a historian who was affiliated with the Párttörténeti Intézet from 1960 until his death. He fled from a ghetto and survived the Second World War in hiding. He studied Marxism-Leninism and participated in the crushing of the 1956 uprising. He was a committed party historian who could only defend his dissertation in 1990s as the consequence of the scandal around his Kun biography.

²⁸⁷ András Józsa and György Milei, "Megjegyzések Borsányi György Kun Béláról szóló biográfiájához [Comments on György Borsányi's Béla Kun Biography]," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 25, no. 4 (1979): 185–221. 221.

however, remained in the PHI and did not experienced further persecution for his views.²⁸⁸

Samizdat literature – self-publications that were issued in order to avoid state organs – was present in the Hungarian context only, due to the structural differences in the publishing scene. Hungarian samizdat emerged somewhat belatedly compared to the Polish and Czechoslovak networks and with a considerably lower impact.²⁸⁹ Although scholarly publications and those printed in a small number of copies enjoyed greater flexibility, some of the works of historians or other intellectuals concerning or using historical narratives often appeared in such outlets. Although the emerging opposition was quite diverse at this point, at the time of its emergence in the early 1980s samizdat was the project of the small liberal group, which carried out the bulk of its activities in Budapest.²⁹⁰ As a sign of attempts to unite the two major players, the liberal opposition and agrarian populist, members of the latter group, which was substantially more numerous, started to contribute to *Beszélő*, the chief organ of this scene.²⁹¹

Melinda Kalmár’s broader framework about the ideology of the Kádár regime is easily applicable to the field of cultural and historical knowledge production. The Central Committee would remain the guardian of the communist ideas in this scheme while

²⁸⁸ For more details of the controversy see Tibor Hajdu, “Kádár és köre [Kádár and His Circle],” *Mozgó Világ* 28, no. 8 (2002): 247–51; Péter Sipos, “Vass Henrik emlékére [In Memoriam Henrik Vass],” *Századok* 138, no. 6 (2004): 1501–3. From these two contributions, one may learn that the main criticism emanated from the descendants of Kun and their circles who have waged a war of denunciation against Borsányi. It also becomes clear that Henrik Vass as head of the PHI was unable to defend the publication of the biography, although he was convinced about its scholarly merits. Dezső Nemes, another leader of PHI was involved in the recalling of the book, but published his expert opinion (‘lektori vélemény’) in order to preempt such allegations.

²⁸⁹ H. Gordon Skilling, *Samizdat and an Independent Society in Central and Eastern Europe*, St Antony’s/MacMillan Series (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, London: The MacMillan Press LTD, 1989). 30–35.

²⁹⁰ “In a provocatively open manner, they opened a “samizdat office” in a private flat; they managed to secure great publicity to their opening hours and price list, using the Western propaganda centers and flyers.” In: “Tájékoztató és feladatterv az ellenséges, ellenzéki, ellenzékieskedő csoportok tevékenységével kapcsolatban [Information and Action Plan Concerning the Activities of Hostile, Opposition and Opposition-Minded Groups] 1982, Archives of the Institute of Political History, 909 Nemes Dezső személyes fondja, 25. folder. 1-5.

²⁹¹ *Beszélő* featured pieces on recent history (including the 1956 uprising) regularly.

execution was delegated to state organs. The system was supposed to rely on subsidiaries to keep administrative-operative action as a last resort. In the realms of publishing houses and theatre, such executive tasks were given to editors and dramaturgs in Hungary, to try to find a language in which ideological concerns were presented as a professional critique.²⁹² Plainly, the aim was to separate the party leadership from the “dirty work” of censorship without letting go of the hand of the regulatory system completely.²⁹³ Even though self-censorship supposedly prevented even the attempt to publish many subversive materials, state socialist regimes had other means to play with the outreach of printed copies. The limits of paper supply were regularly cited in argumentations for a small number of copies,²⁹⁴ but this excuse appeared frequently in Croatia as well.

One of the indicators of the extent to which free speech was allowed is the number of political trials and political prisoners. In Hungary, the yearly sentences did not exceed a few dozens, although those who were not granted amnesty in 1963 from among participants of the 1956 uprising remained in jail until the 1970s. In Yugoslavia, the frequency of political trials did not decrease considerably in the last decades, amounting to over 500 per year during the 1980s. Citing the numbers of the Amnesty International, Knežević and Mihaljević stressed in addition that Yugoslavia had the largest percentage of political prisoners among state socialist countries in 1989.²⁹⁵ The authors noted that although almost every accused was found guilty, their sentences were later often mitigated, as media outlets tended to cover the first trial anyway and the political

²⁹² Ferenc Kőszeg, “Könyvkiadói cenzúra Magyarországon II.” [The Censorship of Book Publishers in Hungary II.], *Beszélő* 1, no. 7 (1984): 518–32. 525.

²⁹³ Kalmár, *Ennivaló és hozomány*. 147.

²⁹⁴ John D. H. Downing, *Internationalizing Media Theory: Transition, Power, Culture ; Reflections on Media in Russia, Poland and Hungary, 1980–95*, The Media, Culture & Society Series (London: SAGE, 1996). 70.

²⁹⁵ Domagoj Knežević and Josip Mihaljević, “Political Trials Against Franjo Tuđman in Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,” *Review of Croatian History* 14, no. 1 (2018): 353–81. 354.

message was hence effectively communicated (and the public tended to have little information about the evolution of the cases).²⁹⁶

Taking Jansen's approach when investigating the nature of censorship in the field of contemporary historiography, the Croatian mechanisms seem to qualify as both restrictive and prescriptive in the period, similarly to the case of the Soviet Union.²⁹⁷

Restrictive censorship limited the topics, approaches, or form disseminated, while prescriptive censorship gave specific instructions with regard to (some of) these aspects of knowledge production. In Hungary, it is perhaps more beneficial to preserve this double qualification for the historical knowledge production that was carried out within PHI and to conclude that fellows of the IH encountered only restrictive censorship, if any, during late socialism.

Academic publicity was not solely conditioned by policies that reflected (presupposed) domestic party expectations. Several historical events were conceived so differently in distinct national contexts that in the Yugoslav case, within the federation, or, in the Hungarian case, within the Eastern bloc – political tensions built up. While this study is not concerned with the uncovering of the relationship between theorizing international relations and contemporary histories of the respective Hungarian and Croatian contexts, it should be pointed out that alliances – within a federal or the Warsaw Pact framework – put their own constraints on several fields of historical knowledge production.

²⁹⁶ Knežević and Mihaljević. 367.

²⁹⁷ Sue Curry Jansen, *Censorship: The Knot That Binds Power and Knowledge* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991). 101.

2.5. Conclusions

This chapter compared the ideological and policy framework that influenced the most important sites of historical knowledge production in late socialist Croatia and Hungary. The main interest of this analysis lied in the uncovering of those policies that bore significant influence on the research of contemporary history. First, I pointed to the conflicting interests among party and mixed committees or bodies whose area of responsibility was not clearly. Second, I discussed key points of select policies affecting research and theorization about national consciousness, along with interdisciplinary cooperation with sociologists. This was necessitated by the integrated strategies of Hungarian historians and sociologists in studying contemporary historical consciousness. In Croatia, the collaboration was not so significant and the urgency of acquiring knowledge about historical consciousness played out on a different level and chronologically somewhat preceding the Hungarian case. The comparison between the two cases shows that planned economy was difficult to marry with trajectories of historical research, and that specific coordinating work was more effectively carried out than the rigidly established framework of general directions, or else the directions were given in such an unspecified manner that they lost all significance.

Historians themselves were part of the drafting process in the course of many policy proposals. In that capacity, they acted as scholars, experts, and in several cases, as cadres, as Croatian historians of contemporary history were all party members and many of their Hungarian colleagues too. It is difficult to establish the manner in which individual historians exercised their agency, and whether the realization of certain policies should be tied to their proactive attitudes. Still, the very fact that (often leading) scholars were invited by the parties to participate in the work of bodies with the right to

make proposals signals an acknowledgement of their expertise and the willingness to listen to their input as representatives of leading institutions of historical research.

In the course of the analysis it became clear that an understanding of state socialist historical knowledge production necessitates a non-totalitarian approach. The sheer magnitude of parallelisms, the discrepancies between drafted policies and their execution, as well as the repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction of high party organs testify to the rather incoherent paper trail, which ultimately bore important yet not definitive consequences for the work of historians.

This apparent inconsistency may in part account for the very divergent – and, of course, filtered – memories of historians, allowing for the accommodation of experiences that are primarily narrated within the framework of restriction and prescription along with those that depict the daily work rather unconcerned and undisturbed by any policies. All the more so, as the working environment subjected to vague policies and policy-making was far from a “free” one, but often encouraged timid strategizing and reinforced reliance on informal structures within the respective institutions and a rather traditional attitude in both academic settings.

Chapter Three. Where is the party? Where is the nation? Research interests and narratives about the interwar period and the Second World War

State socialism posed a great challenge to historians with regard to the subject of history. Master narratives up until the Second World War centered without doubt around nations, however, historical materialism dictated the primacy of class as the most relevant social category and hence referential group, therefore, class was to be brought to the fore. In the Croatian case, the multinational composition of the federal state posed a second dimension of challenge, along with the engagement of Tito in early attempts at interpreting Yugoslav history in line with Stalin's *Short Course*. Still, the nationally bound Communist movements dominated the field of research that dealt with party history, while nation often remained the key point of reference in the bulk of historiography. Therefore, historical knowledge production in this vein may have served only as a potential source of republican Communist historiography, instead of the federal one, consequently, limiting its utility for the all-Yugoslav project. Such limitations naturally followed the logic behind the structure of the investigated institutions of historical knowledge production. In Hungary, these attempts simply left the frame of reference unchanged.

Late socialist historical scholarships worked under gradually globalizing intellectual conditions. On the one hand, within the Eastern bloc, policies of the previous decades that suggested a more meaningful engagement with the historiographies within the bloc (in Hungary, especially with neighboring and Soviet historiography) recurred quite often. On the other hand, the increasing cultural and scientific transfer across the iron curtain – revitalizing previously existing Anglophone and Francophone interests and ties – showed that if historians were to look for intellectual trends beyond their

respective national historiographies, they tended to favor the Western centers over Moscow.²⁹⁸

This is not to say that Hungarian and Croatian historiographies were *dominated* by an outward-looking attitude, when it came to (re-)interpreting the events of the interwar period and that of the Second World War. As this chapter will demonstrate – in line with already existing literature on other national case studies or syntheses on the issue – the Hungarian and Croatian approaches displayed a nation-centered conservatism, where master narratives of the nation's past were not substantially re-written. The methodological challenges posed by new Western trends in historiography, most importantly, structuralism, did not make a great impact that would have upset these frameworks.²⁹⁹ The late socialist period had its own dynamics, though; previously neglected or schematically interpreted topics were reinvigorated and revisited, several taboos were broken, and to a limited extent, Marxism as a theoretical framework (instead of poorly understood set of uncritically applied notions) gained footing. Marxism did not become dominant among theoretical approaches to the history of the interwar period either. Croatian and Hungarian scholars showed a varying depth of engagement, struggling both with limited interwar predecessors (although rather diverse in the case of the latter) and the already discussed lack of training.³⁰⁰

Multiple attempts have been already made to investigate the historiographical output of the period after 1945 (without a special focus on the late socialist years), including that

²⁹⁸ The picture was further complicated by the 'Third World' and the increasing interactions with it, which led to the realization that post-colonialism produces different types of national questions, and that a progress towards communism has a profoundly different set of conditions in countries where the working class is virtually absent.

Hobsbawm, *How to Change the World*. 358.

²⁹⁹ Many works were translated though and structuralism had a considerably greater impact on research concerning early modern history compared to *Zeitgeschichte*.

³⁰⁰ Balázs Trencsényi and Péter Apor, "Fine-Tuning the Polyphonic Past : Hungarian Historical Writing in the 1990s," in *Narratives Unbound : Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*, ed. Sorin Antohi, Balázs Trencsényi, and Péter Apor (New York: Central European University Press, 2007), 1–99. 4.

of the interwar period and the Second World War. Katalin Baráth suggested in her dissertation to approach them from the point of view of implied horizon of expectation, which would produce two categories historiographical works: one is aiming at the totality of information (encyclopedic), while the other is organized along topics. Her main critique of the first targets the subordination of the narrative to political history as it relies on it in terms of chronologies and linguistic choices (e.g. metaphors), downplaying personal and intellectual continuities. Furthermore, she claimed that tying historiographical analysis so closely to the sphere of politics can only result in the narrow perception of historiography as but one projection of power.³⁰¹

In the following, I will introduce broad topics that either invited an exceptional amount of publications in both contexts or bore special importance in terms of the legitimacy of the ruling Communist parties. Chapter Two and already discussed broader thematic areas of political intervention and showed the different ways in which the Communist parties perceived and tried to act upon the pressing need to engage with the nation at the ideological level in a more relatable way. This special importance was largely provoked by topics of recent history that had implications for the national question. Applying these criteria, I will analyze and compare works that have dealt with four thematic areas: the birth of the postwar state, the political nature of the interwar regimes, the history of the workers' movement, participation in the Second World War. Taking into account great breadth of the latter, I have introduced sub-topics in order to provide a more detailed and structured account.

A comparative analysis of Hungarian and Croatian scholarship on these topics can reveal the (correlation between the institutional affiliation of scholars or the lack thereof, and the extent to which historians engaged with potentially ideologically

³⁰¹ Baráth, "Történeti identitáskonstrukciók 1947–1968 [Historians' Identity Constructions 1947–1968]." 56–60.

sensitive topics. Furthermore, it can show whether Western scholarship had any impact on the discussions that were so intimately tied to the legitimacy-related anxieties of state socialist regimes. Third, a comparative analysis into how party history was approached in the Hungarian and Croatian contexts can reveal both shared and differing concerns. The temporal dynamics of the publications might also be of interest, however, a more comprehensive assessment of the historiographical output of the era would allow for more robust conclusions in that regard.

3.1. Topical emphases and controversies concerning recent history

Based on their prominence, controversial nature, or legitimacy-related characteristics, I identified four broader fields of research interest. Due to its magnitude and complexity, the fourth topic – participation in the Second World War – is comprised of three subtopics: collaboration and participation in the Holocaust; the partisan movement: attempts at (self-)liberation; and inter-ethnic violence on the territory of Yugoslavia. The latter focuses solely on Yugoslav issues, which goes somewhat against the logic of comparison followed so far. Still, it is necessary to make this exception both because of its gravity and importance in tracing the roots of the memory-war concerning the Second World War in the post-1991 period. This topic provides further links between the state socialist and post-socialist narrative traditions.

Regarding the general assessment of their respective interwar periods, state socialist scholarship in Hungary and in Croatia contended that oppressive, fascist regimes held their respective nations back on the road to progress. More detailed critique addressed usually how interwar regimes sustained and created new inequalities, did not give adequate answers to the issues modernization posed to the peasantry, and neglected the representation of the industrial proletariat, whose advocacy could not have been carried

out legally as the interwar regimes also banned Communist parties.³⁰² At the same time, however, the two state socialist regimes had to maintain the legitimacy of the same states that were created in the course of the post-Great War setting, since they were confined to the same territories, in Croatia's case, even to the same federal frameworks. Therefore, the dysfunctionality of these predecessors was depicted as the result of the policies of malevolent elites while the territorial settings themselves were not subjected to substantial criticism. Early short histories of liberation were rushed out and either themselves or their conclusions found their ways into different branches of education as well, contributing to the long shadow of these simplified narratives. In comparison to Hungary, the body of literature produced on the interwar period (on stara Jugoslavija, as it was addressed in the state socialist parlance) was significantly smaller. Damir Agičić listed only a handful of historians who dealt with the period, noting that before Ljubo Boban's doctoral project on the Cvetković-Maček Agreement³⁰³ that Boban carried out in the early 1960s, barely any publications appeared that would have problematized Tito's initial guidance on interpretations that he gave in the late 1940s and early 1950s.³⁰⁴

The rather static picture of the interwar period, which had been challenged more and more from the 1960s onwards, increasingly eroded during late socialism. Certain topical interests encouraged researchers to deconstruct some of the terminological templates

³⁰² An overview of the hardening Hungarian legislation between 1919 and 1944 is provided in Pintér's article, showing the plight of illegal Communists that culminated during the war. István Pintér, "A Horthy-rendszer II. világháború alatti antifasiszta meghurcoltjai és áldozatai [Antifascist Persecutees and Victims of the Horthy Regime during the Second World War]," *Múltunk* 53, no. 1 (2008): 58–79; Enikő A. Sajti, "Útkeresés. A Jugoszláv Kommunista Párt nemzetiségpolitikai koncepciójának formálódása az 1920-as években [Seeking Ways: The Formation of the Yugoslav Communist Party's Concepts with Regard to Nationality Politics in the 1920s]," *Századok* 113, no. 3 (1979): 375–420. 383.

³⁰³ The Cvetković-Maček Agreement was concluded in 1939 and made an attempt at settling the Croatian question in Yugoslavia by creating a Banovina of Croatia, a large state-like entity within the interwar state.

³⁰⁴ Agičić, "Ljubo Boban i zanat povjesničara [Ljubo Boban and the Historian's Craft]." 50–51.

that determined the narratives about the interwar period. Knowledge transfer with (dominantly Western) scholars abroad contributed to a varying extent to these changes. Hungarian publications about party history were clearly dominated by investigations into the interwar period,³⁰⁵ however, the narrative of party history in the investigated literature started from the history of the Social Democrats and of the rural proletariat from the end of the 19th century. The history of the Second World War was only of secondary interest, not least because of its contemporary political consequences – the presence of Soviet troops within the country. In the Croatian case, however, the centrality of the liberation struggle in the creation and legitimacy of the second Yugoslav state ranked the events of the war ahead of interwar times. This difference is well displayed both in the amount of published works and of conferences held on the topic.

My analysis can only venture to identify and interpret historiographical trends or controversies that found their way into print. While historians had both formal and informal occasions to discuss their ideas, it is impossible to reconstruct all their arguments. Bearing this limitation in mind, it is reasonable to presuppose that those controversies that had significant impact on the further development of the discipline were ultimately published.

The large-scale publication of source collections was corollary to researching period. Naturally, historiographies of other epochs also relied heavily on annotated source publications, but it is important to point out that the amount of relevant documents in foreign archives increased immensely when the attention of historians of contemporary history turned to the interwar period. Under the constraints of restrictive travelling policies, the appearance of translated foreign sources gained further importance.

³⁰⁵ Fischer, *Politik und Geschichtswissenschaft in Ungarn*. 41.

3.1.1. The birth of the postwar state

Although for thoroughly different reasons, the birth of the new states after the Great War – the first Yugoslavia for Croatia and Hungary as an independent, small state – was marked by disillusion. The interwar Croatian political elites felt that Serbs betrayed them when shaping the contours of the new federal state, putting Croatia into a disadvantageous and subordinate position, even if that sense developed only after some time.³⁰⁶ This subordinate position was expressed first with the disproportionate distribution of seats in the Ustavotvorna skupština [Constitutional Assembly] among the constitutive nations and in the gradual transferring of regional rights to the center in Belgrade, which culminated in the proclamation of the royal dictatorship in 1929. The Serbian politician Svetozar Pribičević³⁰⁷ played a prominent role in the process, although he came to criticize the centralizing decisions in retrospect, without reflecting on his own role in it.³⁰⁸ What started as a federation – according to the desires of Croatian politicians involved – became a constant source of interrepublican friction until the breakup of the first Yugoslavia. The prominent role Serb politicians and military leaders played in the centralized state provided the basis for a well-entrenched narrative critical of centralizing tendencies in state socialist Yugoslavia, when centralizing efforts were often equated with Greater Serbianism.³⁰⁹ Irredentist thought survived the Second World War too. Within Croatia, it was largely a regional tradition

³⁰⁶ Tihomir Cipek, “The Croats and Yugoslavism,” in *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea (1918–1992)*, ed. Dejan Djokić (London: Hurst & Company, 2003), 71–83. 74–75.

³⁰⁷ Pribičević had a complicated background as a Serb coming from Dalmatia.

³⁰⁸ Tomasevich provided many examples of Croatian grievances in the interwar period, among these the fact that there was only one non-Serb prime minister during the two decades, a Slovene Catholic priest, Anton Korošec. Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945: Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001). 11–15.

³⁰⁹ Slobodan Stanković, *Titos Erbe: Die Hypothek der alten Richtungskämpfe Ideologischer und nationaler Fraktionen*, Untersuchungen zur Gegenwartskunde Südosteuropas 18 (München: R. Oldenbourg, 1981). 191.

confined to Istria (and from within the federation, Littoral Slovenia was an important center as well), but the emigration also worked on keeping the idea of territorial rearrangement at the expense of Italy alive.³¹⁰

In the case of Hungary, the breakup of the imperial framework within which Hungary's territory was thrice as big as after the Trianon Peace Treaty was considered one of the lowest points of history in the traditional nation-centered historiography,³¹¹ a shock and a fateful turning point.³¹² It was very difficult, however, to reflect on the territorial losses that turned into gains for the new states of the little entente – Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia – without tapping into the sensitivities of the historiographies of the neighboring state socialist countries. However, in the 1980s, Hungarian historiography became much more assertive.³¹³ Beyond the reluctance to aggravate bilateral tensions – especially in the case of Romania – an ideological issue was also at stake: for all post-First World War countries, Marxist interpretations of national histories saw the post-First World War political settlement as a step in the progress of historical development. Moreover, while it could have been claimed that the Soviet Union did not approve of these peace settlements, it was among the signatories of the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947, which left the territorial arrangements of Versailles and Saint-Germain largely intact.³¹⁴

³¹⁰ Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume II: Negotiating Modernity in the "Short Twentieth Century" and Beyond, Part I: 1918–1968*. 289.

³¹¹ Although it took several years for interwar Hungarian historiography to engage with the breakup of the Monarchy in historical analysis, notions that signaled the gravity of the event in the course of Hungarian history took root quite early, in parallel with general public discussions. One of the most often used expression was “new Mohács,” as in Márki's article: Sándor Márki, “Petőfi a történelemről [Petőfi about History],” *Századok* 57–58 (1924): 1–16. 10. Mohács refers to the end of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary in 1526, due to the tripartition of the country between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empires and the Transylvanian Principality. Thus, the consequences of the Trianon Peace Treaty were equated with foreign conquest and the loss of autonomy.

³¹² Ferenc Glatz, “Trianon és a magyar történettudomány [Trianon and Hungarian Historiography],” *Történelmi Szemle* 21, no. 2 (1978): 411–21. 413v

³¹³ János Angi, György Kovács, and Porcsin, Zsolt, “Próbakő Volt. Interjú Köpeczi Bélával [It Was a Touchstone: Interview with Béla Köpeczi],” *Egyetemi Élet*, November 2, 1987.

³¹⁴ Ignác Romsics, *Az 1947-es párizsi békeszerződés [The Paris Peace Treaty of 1947]* (Budapest: Osiris, 2006). 249.

If the Serbs were the “traitors” in the Croatian context, in Hungary it was the West, the leaders of the entente that were seen as dishonest and malevolent dealmakers. Revolutionary Russia was not part of the concert of Great Powers that established the peace treaties after the Great War, moreover, as an unfavorable settlement ascertaining territorial losses of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty,³¹⁵ it was from early on criticized and bitterly condemned by Lenin. Therefore, echoing Lenin, the ideologically imbued criticism of the Trianon Peace Treaty – as being part of the “bourgeois burglar peace” – was present in multiple historical works and policy papers.³¹⁶ While this formula was an obvious novelty in post-1948 Hungarian historiography, the frequent use of the notion “peace dictate” (békediktátum) also underscored the perceived arbitrariness of the peace settlement.³¹⁷

Despite the availability of narrative frameworks within which Hungarian historians could elaborate on the history of the peace treaty, they have done this only in moderation, although from the 1960s on there was a surge in interest. As Mónika Kalmár suggests, one might trace two main reasons behind this lingering uneasiness. One is the fact that the relations between the peace treaties of 1920 and 1947 that concluded the world wars were not at all clarified (including the role of the Soviet Union, which had not challenged the treaties in relation to the settlements relevant for Hungary). Second, the possibilities to formulate claims with regard to the nationalism of neighboring nations (especially Slovaks in Czechoslovakia and Romanians)

³¹⁵ The Bolshevik government signed this treaty to put an end to Russia’s participation in the First World War, on March 3, 1918. As a result of the treaty, the country lost control over the Baltic states as well as of Cars Oblast. Moreover, it acknowledged the independence of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Bessarabia was given to Romania.

³¹⁶ Berend T., “Tudományos-szellemi életünk néhány központi kérdése [Some Corollary Questions of Our Academic-Intellectual Lives].” 443.

³¹⁷ While it might appear nonsensical to emphasize the disadvantaged situation of a government that ended the war on the losing side, this notion reflected the broadly perceived uniqueness of the Paris Peace Treaties in their explicit goals to incapacitate the losers. Indeed, the amount of territorial and population losses of postwar Hungary stood out. Pach, “A hazafiság néhány kérdése [Some Issues of Patriotism].” 49.

remained equally unclear.³¹⁸ I complement these conditions with the issue of unclear, often imagined and unconsciously internalized party line as discussed in Chapter Two, which is in line with the observation of Mária Ormos.³¹⁹

However, I strongly disagree with arguments – both from before and after the transition –, which maintain that the topic of the peace treaty was taboo.³²⁰ In fact, a proper argument is rarely made in these works, rather it is treated as evident.³²¹ From the mid-1960s on, historical works in growing number engaged specifically with the peace treaty, after decades that simply treated it as part of the chronology but not as an issue that would invite further inquiries. A modified claim that would point to the lack of an emotionally engaged, grieving tone – that emerged to be the only publicly acceptable language in which the issue of Trianon may be formulated after the transition – is more defensible. Even with this modified claim though, a further inquiry is still necessary to clarify the extent to which the hiatus of such a discourse resulted from official or self-censorship during the years of late socialism. Moreover, in writings from across the landscape of historical knowledge production, the peace treaty was often referred to as “burglar peace” and from the late 1970s onwards, an emotionally more invested approach started to appear in popular historiography (see Chapter Four) beyond dissent writings as well.

³¹⁸ Melinda Kalmár, *Történelmi galaxisok vonzásában : Magyarország és a szovjetrendszer, 1945–1990* [Gravitating among Historical Galaxies: Hungary and the Soviet System 1945–1990] (Budapest: Osiris, 2014). 154.

³¹⁹ Mária Ormos, *Történetírás az államszocializmus éveiben* [Historiography During the Years of State Socialism], interview by Réka Krizmanics, October 4, 2017.

³²⁰ Ádám, “Tévhittek Trianonról [Misbeliefs about Trianon].”

³²¹ Ágnes Józsa, “A közös sorsot nehéz tudatosítani: Beszélgetés Kiss Gy. Csabával [It Is Difficult to Raise Awareness about Our Shared Fate: Interview with Csaba Kiss Gy.],” *Kritika* 24, no. 3 (1995): 11–13; Pál Fodor and Attila Pók, “A magyarság Európában: Ezer év a határon [The Hungarians in Europe: A Thousand Years on the Borders],” *Történelmi Szemle* 60, no. 4 (2018): 509–29.

The first monograph that focused on the Trianon Peace Treaty as one of its core topics was authored by Zsuzsa L. Nagy,³²² and it proved to be an early herald of multiple works throughout the late socialist period, mostly written within the framework of diplomatic history. Beyond the monograph, several other articles of hers dealt to varying extent with the circumstances under which the independent Hungarian state emerged following the First World War.³²³ The second key book, Mária Ormos's monograph, relied heavily on archival research conducted in the West, provided thorough analyses of the negotiation process from the ceasefire to the peace treaty.³²⁴ Furthermore, she published smaller pieces on the topic, however, not all her articles had much interpretative offerings. While some indeed provided in-depth analysis,³²⁵ others remained meticulous albeit factographic narrativizations of archival sources.³²⁶ Magda Ádám wrote several important articles, with the chief concern to investigate the interests of the Little Entente from the times of negotiations until the 1930s.³²⁷ The Little Entente was central to her career indeed, as she wrote both her dissertation for candidacy and for a doctorate on issues connected to Hungary's new neighboring states after war: Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia. The former dissertation was entitled *The*

³²² Zsuzsa L. Nagy, *A párizsi békekonferencia és Magyarország 1918–1919* [The Paris Peace Conference and Hungary 1918–1919] (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1965). Zsuzsa L. Nagy (1930–2010) was employed by the Institute of History of HAS until the late 1980s. In 1987, she took a teaching position at the University of Debrecen. She dealt with liberals and political history more generally in the first half of the 20th century.

³²³ Zsuzsa L. Nagy, "Az Egyesült Államok és a Duna-medence 1919–1939 [The United States and the Danube Basin 1919–1939]," *Századok* 110, no. 1 (1976): 51–76.

³²⁴ Mária Ormos, *Padovától Trianonig, 1918–1920* [From Padova to Trianon 1918–1920] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1983).

³²⁵ Mária Ormos, "Még egyszer a Vix-jegyzékről [Once More On the Vix-records]," *Századok* 113, no. 2 (1979): 314–32.

³²⁶ Mária Ormos, "Francia-magyar tárgyalások 1920-ban [French-Hungarian Negotiations in 1920]," *Századok* 109, no. 5–6 (1975): 905–49.

³²⁷ From among her most frequently cited studies, see „Dunai konföderáció vagy kisantant [Danube Confederation or Little Entente]," *Történelmi Szemle* 20, no. 3–4 (1977): 440–84; Magda Ádám, "A két királypuccs és a kisantant [The Two Coup d' Etats and the Little Entente]," *Történelmi Szemle* 25, no. 4 (1982): 665–713. Magda Ádám (1925–2017) was affiliated with the Institute of History of HAS during her entire career. From the mid-1980s on, she also taught at ELTE. She spoke several regional languages (including Slovak, Czech, Ukrainian, and Yiddish) that set her apart from her colleagues in the field of diplomatic history. Furthermore, she led several grand scale source publication projects.

Little Entente and Hungary in the 1930s, while the latter bore the title *The Little Entente and Europe, 1920–1929*. As it had been pointed out earlier, due to the limited access to collections of Western archives, source publications were of great importance. The positivistic accounts that were occasionally produced based on these materials should be read against this backdrop as well.

Beyond these lengthier works that had a core interest in the trajectory of post-First World War Hungary and its complex relations with the neighboring states, brief yet explicit elaborations on the fate of Hungarian minorities in the Carpathian Basin were also published. Enikő A. Sajti's article about the minority politics of the interwar Yugoslav Communist Party argued that there was a parallel between the treatment of Albanian and Hungarian minorities: "The Belgrade government pursues a de-nationalizing policy towards the Albanian people. The situation is similar in the Hungarian parts of Northern Vojvodina, which was annexed by Yugoslavia with the Trianon Peace Treaty."³²⁸

Croatian national grievances were more frequently aired in early state socialist historiography, as they were mostly carefully laced with the ideological critique of the interwar state. In Hungary, the turbulent aftermath of the First World War with two revolutions – the democratic revolution of 1918 and the subsequent establishment of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919 – and a counterrevolution complicated further the ways in which historical reflections on the emergence of post-Versailles Hungary could be narrated.³²⁹ Therefore, this topic remained on the agenda of contemporary historians and featured as part of the Hungarian *nemzeti kérdés* [national question]. In the Croatian context, the same notion was preserved for the purposes of addressing the issue of historically coexisting nations within the multiethnic Yugoslav state (*nacionalno pitanje*).

³²⁸ A. Sajti, "Útkeresés. A Jugoszláv Kommunista Párt nemzetiségpolitikai koncepciójának formálódása az 1920-as években [Seeking Ways: The Formation of the Yugoslav Communist Party's Concepts with Regard to Nationality Politics in the 1920s]." 414. A. Sajti (1940–) earned her degree at the József Attila University in Szeged and after years of teaching in secondary school, she returned to her alma mater from where she retired in 2014 as professor emerita. She has been a scholar of the modern history of Vojvodina.

³²⁹ Földes claimed that a clear change in terms of openly approaching the national question in Hungarian historiography occurred around 1966–1967, as a direct result of change in high politics. Földes, *Magyarország, Románia és a nemzeti kérdés*. 114.

In Croatia grievances related to territorial arrangements also existed in relation to the post-First World War settlement, although they concerned comparatively smaller territories. Jadransko pitanje [the Adriatic issue] pertained to Eastern coastal areas of the Adriatic Sea that used to belong to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and Italy successfully laid claims on them. Because of these disagreements, the deputies of the Kingdom of Serbs and Croats and Slovenes initially refused the signing of the Saint Germain Peace Treaty that was supposed to settle Austrian-Yugoslav border issues. Finally, the Treaty of Rapallo (1920) brought about a settlement of coastal territories, to the detriment of Yugoslavia (Croatia), not least because the protection of minorities was considered dissatisfactory. Despite all reservations, the treaty was signed, as the fear from a Habsburg restoration while prolonging the fluidity of borders seemed very hazardous for Yugoslav decision-makers, as Bogdan Krizman pointed out based on federal archival sources.³³⁰

Somewhat departing from the traditional framework of diplomatic history he usually employed, Dragovan Šepić made an attempt at depicting the moment of the birth of the first South Slavic federation and some of the constraints of interwar diplomacy through the lens of the changing notion of Italian irredentism. Based on extensive Italian literature, Šepić traced the idea of irredentism back to the 19th century, when it was formed as part of the intellectual and armed struggles for Italian unification. His argumentative arch follows the evolution of the notion from a liberating, democratic idea to the tool of fascism and aggressive expansion, as it played out against the

³³⁰ Bogdan Krizman, "Jugoslavija i Austrija 1918–1938," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 9, no. 1 (1977): 5–23. Bogdan Krizman (1913–1994) was the doyen of Croatian political and diplomatic history. The latter specialization was not only reflected in his studies (in Paris) but also in his brief employment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgrade during the war and his consecutive employment by the new regime. Soon after the war, he worked for the state archives and had a position in the Jadranski Institute of the JAZU as well. Later he started teaching at different faculties of the University of Zagreb and continued publishing long after his retirement in 1983.

(emerging) Yugoslav state, especially Croatia – with its contested territories in the littoral area. His analysis ran deep into the Cold War, elaborating on the progress and setbacks of the manifestations of Italian irredentism towards Yugoslavia.³³¹

An important yet largely invisible topic lingered in the background of strict politico-historical approaches to the creation of the first Yugoslav state, the issue of the South Slavic veterans of the Great War. This hiatus is especially apparent in comparison to the treatment of post-Second World War veterans. This invisibility was, beyond doubt, due to its potential to put additional strain on deteriorating Croat-Serb relations as opposed to the immediate political benefits of the latter in strengthening the regime's legitimacy. With the centennial of the end of the Great War, research about veterans of the Great War gained new impetus and provided fresh insight into the reintegration of veterans into society. This issue had a particular relevance in the Yugoslav context, as veterans of the Habsburg and of the victorious Serbian army “needed to come to terms with sharing a state with soldiers formerly of an opposing army,” as John Paul Newman pointed out in his study.³³²

In close conjunction with historical works that discussed the emergence of the post-First World War states, several publications engaged with attempts at revising the new order. Although the dissatisfaction was far greater in interwar Hungary, there were voices of discontent in Croatia also, even if the latter was only represented during the Second World War by potent actors openly. Works on revisionist thought or attempts were usually confined to political or diplomatic historical accounts, including works of Gyula

³³¹ Dragovan Šepić, “Talijanski iredentizam na Jadranu: konstante i transformacije [Italian Irredentism in the Adriatic: Constants and Transformations],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 7, no. 1 (1975): 5–30. Dragovan Šepić (1907–1997) was a lawyer and historian, with considerable experience in diplomacy and politics. He had been working for the federal Ministry for Science and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s. From 1969 on, he taught at the Department for Political Science in Zagreb.

³³² John Paul Newman, “Forging a United Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes: The Legacy of the First World War and the ‘Invalid Question,’” in *Yugoslavia: Key Issues and Controversies*, ed. Dejan Djokić and James Ker-Lindsay (London: Routledge, 2010), 46–61. 48.

Juhász,³³³ István Pintér with a special focus on the late 1930s and early 1940s,³³⁴ and Vojmir Kljaković, who discussed the National Liberation Front's ideas for redressing the territorial losses emanating from the Treaty of Rapallo.³³⁵

The circumstances under which the states emerged after the First World War prompted a burgeoning historical literature in state socialist Hungary and in Croatia. A search for the predetermined failure of these systems influenced more the publications of the early years of the regimes, but the non-apologetic stance prevailed throughout the late socialist period. Both Hungarian and Croatian historians identified external actors as responsible for the unfavorable conduct around the establishment of new states, which showed undisturbed continuity with interwar assessments, especially in the case of Hungary.

3.1.2. The political nature of the interwar regimes

As postwar state socialist regimes defined themselves and their proposed communist project in diametrical opposition to the interwar and Second World War political settings, Hungarian and Croatian historians initially rarely engaged in historical theorization of the political nature of the previous regimes. From early on, the labels “fascist” and “reactionary” became *epitheton ornans* in any discussion featuring or simply mentioning this period. During the first decades of state socialism, little effort was made to differentiate between authoritarian, corporative, or Nazi puppet regimes, preempting any attempt at a sophisticated, critical assessment.

³³³ Gyula Juhász, “A nagyhatalmak háborús propagandája és Magyarország [The War Propaganda of the Great Powers and Hungary],” *Történelmi Szemle* 22, no. 3–4 (1979): 484–504.

³³⁴ István Pintér, “München és az első bécsi döntés hatása a Magyarországi Szociáldemokrata Párt politikájára [The Effect of Munich and the First Vienna Award on the Politics of the Hungarian Social Democratic Party],” *Történelmi Szemle* 19, no. 3 (1976): 407–38.

³³⁵ Vojmir Kljaković, “Problemi zapadne granice Jugoslavije u narodnooslobodilačkom ratu [Problems of the Western Border of Yugoslavia in the Liberation War],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7, no. 1 (1975): 141–51.

While in both contexts, the departure from a single orthodox position – which was upheld on the level of narrative but hardly ever analyzed – occurred by the mid-1970s,³³⁶ a pluralistic descriptive language prevailed up until the collapse of state socialist regimes, without a profound change of paradigm. However, most works of the late socialist period refrained from lumping together the entire interwar and Second World War establishment in their categorizations.

The “fascism debate”³³⁷ that was initiated by Ernst Nolte’s monograph³³⁸ offered an important potential for state socialist scholarship to engage in a transnational discourse about the nature of fascism and – as Nolte focused solely on Western European cases like Germany, France, and Italy – to relate local fascist experiences to this theoretical framework. In Hungary, the first review of the book was published quite soon, although with a mixed conclusion about the book’s deemed explanatory potential.³³⁹

From among Hungarian historians, Miklós Lackó and Mária Ormos demonstrated aptitude and willingness for theoretical engagement. Lackó dealt with both the ideological underpinnings and the social base of fascist movements in Eastern Europe from the early 1960s on. The latter topic emanated from his earlier interest in the social history of Hungarian workers in the interwar period, providing an important source of

³³⁶ By this time, there was a consensus about the necessity to approach the Horthy era’s political characteristics in a more nuanced manner. Püski provides a summary of developments from the mid-1960s onwards that led up to this discursive realignment: Levente Püski, “Demokrácia és diktatúra között. A Horthy-rendszer jellegéről [Between Democracy and Dictatorship: Concerning the Nature of the Horthy Regime],” in *Mitoszok, legendák, tévhitek a 20. századi magyar történelemről* [Myths, Legends and Misconceptions about 20th Century Hungarian History], ed. Ignác Romsics (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2002), 206–33. 208–212.

³³⁷ Although the debate in historiography started at the beginning of the 1960s, diverging perceptions of fascism appeared as early as the beginning of the 1940s. However, at that time these theorizations were more confined to philosophical debates. Schäfer gives an ample overview of these tendencies in the following article: Michael Schäfer, “A kritikai elmélet korabeli fasizmus-elméletei [Contemporary Fascism-Theories of Critical Theory],” *Magyar Filozófiai Szemle*, no. 5–6 (1995): 945–75.

³³⁸ Ernst Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche. Action Française – Italienischer Faschismus – Nationalsozialismus*. (München: Piper, 1963).

³³⁹ István Herrmann, “Ernst Nolte: A fasizmus és kora (Recenzió) [Ernst Nolte: Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche (Review Essay)],” *Valóság* 7, no. 4 (1964): 88–89. Interestingly, neither *Historiojski zbornik*, nor *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* published review about the monograph.

inspiration for later research. In his collective volume, Lackó published a landmark study on Eastern European (mostly Hungarian, Romanian, and Polish) fascisms, which is considered as one of the first unambiguous breaks from schematic engagements. The comparative framework proposed therein came to dominate this subfield of study in Hungary, although this approach had otherwise little popularity in the scholarship. Lackó in his essay refrained from giving an authoritative definition of fascism and he was more concerned with pointing out its local variations in the different national contexts. Beyond its flexible approach, the significance of Lackó's contribution lies in his subtle break with one of the implications of previous interpretations: by claiming that fascism came to act as the closing stage of the belated process of embourgeoisement, he partially restored the revolutionary potential of fascism, which had been completely denied in earlier accounts.³⁴⁰

Mária Ormos also tried her hands first in political history and did not abandoned for long her interest in diplomatic relations, as an emerging field of study with growing access to foreign archives. Yet, her attention also turned to a comparative theorization of fascism. In her nominally co-authored³⁴¹ seminal book of 1976, Ormos noted how in the interwar period "fascist features were sometimes stronger, sometimes rather modest. The system remained in a sense rather mobile and plastic, and its constituencies fluctuated... It constructed with the help of new reactionary powers...a new form of

³⁴⁰ Miklós Lackó, "A fasizmus Kelet-Közép-Európában [Fascism in East Central Europe]," in *Válságok-Választások. Történeti tanulmányok a két háború közötti Magyarországról* [Crises-Choices: Historical Studies on Interwar Hungary], ed. Miklós Lackó, Társadalomtudományi Könyvtár (Budapest: Gondolat Könyvkiadó, 1975), 298–317. 312. Miklós Lackó (1921–2010) graduated and earned a degree in history in the second half of the 1940s, after surviving two and a half years of labor service during the Second World War. As a young man, he joined first the social democratic party and later the communist party, and participated and taught in party school. He worked for the Institute off History of HAS since 1954 and soon became known for his research in the social history of Hungarian workers as well as for his interest in the intellectual history and social base of Hungarian far-right movements. His work is also renowned in relation to the agrarian populist movement.

³⁴¹ Her co-author, Miklós Incze, had more competence in matters of economic history and industrial history. Also, as the autobiographical book of Ormos reveals, their professional relationship was complicated by Incze being an agent of the secret police. See in Mária Ormos, *Remények és csalódások* [Hopes and Disappointments] (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 2017). 110–111.

governmental system.”³⁴² Ormos, thanks to her language skills, was able to follow Western literature about the “fascism debate” and to read archival sources in German, Italian, and French, which made her interventions well-informed, and, indeed, warmly welcomed by Western readers – in that, her depth of insight was comparable to that of Lackó. One of the reviewers praised Ormos and Miklós Incze for delivering the necessary revision of communist approaches to fascism, and not the least for their genuine theoretical elaboration that entailed a new categorization of fascist regimes, acknowledging the difference “between conservative fascist movements and radical anti-capitalist ones...and warns against classifying every military takeover or royal dictatorship as fascist.”³⁴³ Lackó and Ormos belonged to the most innovative historians of the interwar period during late socialism and the fact that they had a considerable overlap of interest in the subfield of regional European fascism studies made their work uniquely embedded in transnational discussions.

Európai fasizmusok and the academic discourse surrounding it made a decisive impact on the pluralization of terminologies and acceptable languages in conjunction with interwar regimes in Hungarian historiography. Having a ready-made synthesis of European fascisms in Hungarian, historians continued to focus on particular interwar governmental practices that were usually evaluated on the ideological scale, which was now in flux and more open to interpretation than earlier. Towards the second half of the 1980s, the Horthy regime was increasingly described as authoritarian and conservative rather than fascist. An important proponent of this notion was the young Ignác Romsics, who was later to become the doyen of modern Hungarian history. While the discursive

³⁴² Mária Ormos and Miklós Incze, *Európai fasizmusok 1919–1939* [European Fascisms 1919–1939] ([Budapest]: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1976). 153–154.

³⁴³ Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, “Mária Ormos and Miklós Incze. *Európai fasizmusok*, 1919–1939 [European Fascisms, 1919–1939]. Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó. 1976. Pp. 309. 30 Ft,” *The American Historical Review* 83, no. 2 (1978): 426–27, <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/83.2.426>.

change that occurred in the replacement of the schematic and overused notion of fascism with the combined term of autoritaire and conservative (in some cases, even went as far as to qualify it as limited parliamentarism), this approach itself was not the invention of Romsics or its other supporters in late socialism. István Bibó already described the ideological setting and the functioning of the different governments during the Horthy regime in a similar manner in one of his main works.³⁴⁴

Exemplary of the studies about the political nature of the Horthy regime was László Márkus's article that singled out the ways in which the stability of the Bethlen government ("Bethlen dictatorship") was secured – most importantly a systematic weakening of the anyway incapacitated remnants of the left and right oppositions and of the public voting.³⁴⁵ György Ránki's article concerning the elections of 1939 was also a landmark study as it concluded that in the analyzed districts, greater constituency with working class background indicated more votes for the Arrow-Cross, hence refuting the myth of the Arrow Cross's lack of appeal for workers.³⁴⁶

The most important pushback in re-assessing the nature of the political regime came from Dezső Nemes, whose main work on the subject was published in 1976 under the title *A fasizmus kérdéséhez* [To the Issue of Fascism].³⁴⁷ In his book, Nemes categorically rejected any revisiting of the issue, emphasizing the exculpatory (and

³⁴⁴ Bibó was a politician and an influential political thinker of the 20th century whose thoughts and works were appreciated across ideological divisions. István Bibó, *Eltorzult magyar alkat, zsákutcás magyar történelem* [Deformed Hungarian Character and the Cul-de-Sac-like Hungarian History], Bibó István Munkái Centenáriumi Sorozat 7 (Budapest: Argumentum Kiadó ; Bibó István Szellemi Műhely, 2012). 157–158.

³⁴⁵ László Márkus, "A kormányzati erők a bethleni uralmi koncepció szolgálatában [Governmental Powers in the Service of Bethlen's Conceptions of Rule]," *Történelmi Szemle* 14, no. 3–4 (1971): 465–82. László Márkus (1920–2011) started as a journalist and changed careers after graduating from the ELTE in history. He became affiliated with the Institute of History of HAS, earned his candidacy there, and stayed employed until his retirement in 1984. His main focus was the history of Hungarian social democracy.

³⁴⁶ Before his article, the literature, if it engaged with this issue at all, underestimated the proportion of workers' votes and deemed that only a small number of misguided workers voted for the party. György Ránki, "Az 1939-es választások [The Elections in 1939]," *Történelmi Szemle* 19, no. 4 (1976): 613–30.

³⁴⁷ Dezső Nemes, *A fasizmus kérdéséhez* [To the Issue of Fascism] (Budapest: Magvető, 1976), <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/api/volumes/oclc/3379118.html>.

therefore, undesirable) agenda of any work that departed from the monolithic and simplistic approach to the concept. Although he has not published works that systematically addressed the same issue, Nemes made sure to reiterate his unchanged stance over time.³⁴⁸ Ormos made a point in her memoir that their book with Incze was a deliberate act of confrontation with these views.³⁴⁹

In Croatia, no monograph was published about the ideological underpinnings of the interwar regime during state socialism. Mirjana Gross authored a monograph on the beginnings of the rightwing ideological tradition in 1973, she focused on the 19th century (*Povijest pravaške ideologije* – The History of Rightwing Ideology). Despite the lack of specific studies, other publications tended to avoid labeling the interwar regime as a fascist one, although, similarly to the Hungarian case, the notion did not disappear entirely from historiography.

Just like their colleagues in other state socialist regimes, neither the Croatian nor the Hungarian historians were incentivized to discuss the revolutionary nature of the governments under German occupation, as Judt noted.³⁵⁰ Therefore, while the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a decreasing usage of the term "fascist" in literature, which was increasingly confined to publications of several PHI affiliates, "reactionary" as an overused adjective survived.

Both the Yugoslav and the Hungarian interwar governments claimed that they persecute all radical movements, however, both tended to persecute Communists more eagerly as

³⁴⁸ András Siklós, "Nemes Dezső (1908–1985): Nekrológ," *Századok* 121, no. 1 (1987): 244–48.

³⁴⁹ Ormos, *Remények és csalódások* [Hopes and Disappointments]. 219–221.

³⁵⁰ "The Communists deemphasized the revolutionary nature of Nazi occupation, the fact that Eastern Europe's social revolution, completed under the Soviet aegis after 1947, was in fact begun by the Germans, sweeping away old elites, dispossessing a large segment of the (Jewish) urban bourgeoisie, and radically undermining faith in the rule of law. But the historical reality, that the true revolutionary caesura in modern Eastern European history came in 1939 and not 1945, could not be acknowledged." Tony Judt, "The Past Is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Post-War Europe," in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe*, ed. Jan-Werner Müller and Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 157–83, <http://ebooks.cambridge.org/ref/id/CBO9780511491580A016>.

compared to the ultranationalist Ustaša or the Sickie–Cross³⁵¹ and the Arrow–Cross in Hungary.³⁵²

Late socialist historiography displayed greater plurality and distinction in its engagement with the political nature of interwar regimes. With limited influence on how politicians conveyed their legitimacy-seeking messages, part of Croatian and Hungarian historians sought to question the straightjacket of fascism, trying to elaborate interpretation instead of a simple label. Their interventions ranged from a re-narration of political history with focus on specific institutions of the political establishment to social historical inquiries. Others with less theoretical inclination or a greater emphasis on partisanship insisted on the uncritical usage of the word. However, the pressure of earlier decades to adhere strictly to the usage of the label “fascist” disappeared for good.

3.1.3. History of the workers’ movement in the interwar period

Party history and the history of the workers’ movement – although these concepts were often used interchangeable and unreflected by contemporaries –were distinct narrative frameworks and their practical pursuit signaled either tendencies leaning towards self-referentiality and self-contingency or the readiness to perceive progressive thought in broader terms and hence to have a greater potential to link party history to “national history”.

Tibor Erényi’s article from 1974 is one of the rare cases of structured attempts at clarifying the distinction between the history of the workers’ movement, party history, and the history of revolutionary workers’ movement.

Obviously, the [history of the] workers’ movement encompasses all labor movements, including all spontaneous movements, as well as different

³⁵¹ The party’s name was Nemzeti Szocialista Magyar Munkáspárt [National Socialist Hungarian Labor Party], but it was often dubbed as Sickie-Cross Party, alluding to its insignia. They opted for this specific insignia after the usage of the swastika was banned. The party existed 1932–1937.

³⁵² Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945*. 37.

economically, politically charged struggles. Party history, which is a considerably narrower notion, hints at explicitly party-like, Communist movements. The history of the revolutionary workers' movement includes the class struggle-like social democratic and Communist movements.³⁵³

The extent to which these otherwise straightforward distinctions were overlooked in practice is best signaled by the names of the Hungarian party history institute, the profile of which extended well beyond the history of the Communist party. In the Croatian context though, the naming of the institution (Institute for the History of the Croatian Labor Movement) was in harmony with the actual scope of work carried out there. As most of the party historians never engaged with the problem of which genre they are actually pursuing, I apply a flexible approach here, accommodating the broadest possible corpus of publications.

Despite the fact that the HAS – in the realm of historiography, the Institute of History – acted as a chief coordinating organ, the PHI had its own projects, where the responsibility of guiding the collaboration among multiple institutions lay with them. These undertakings were connected to party history, such as different syntheses of party history and the subsequent editions of the *Munkásmozgalomtörténeti Lexikon* [Lexicon of Party History]³⁵⁴ and the *Enciklopedija hrvatske povijesti i kulture* [Encyclopedia of Croatian History and Culture].³⁵⁵

As Najbar-Agičić noted, up until the 1960s, barely any work was written on the party history of KPJ apart from its involvement in the liberation of the country³⁵⁶ and the situation did not improve much until the beginning of the 1970s. Nonetheless, the immediate post-First World War times were considered the earliest point of Croatian

³⁵³ Erényi, “A munkásmozgalom-történetírás helyzete és feladatai [The Situation and Tasks of the Historiography of the Workers' Movement].” 129.

³⁵⁴ Henrik Vass, ed., *Munkásmozgalomtörténeti Lexikon* [Lexicon of Party History], 2nd ed. (Budapest: Kossuth, 1976).

³⁵⁵ Igor Karaman, ed., *Enciklopedija hrvatske povijesti i kulture* [Encyclopedia of Croatian History and Culture] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1980).

³⁵⁶ Najbar-Agičić, *U skladu s marksizmom ili činjenicama?* 376.

party history,³⁵⁷ even though the Komunistička Partija Hrvatske (Croatian Communist Party) was established in 1937 only. Until the mid-1930s, the idea of the establishment of separate national communist parties within the federation was repeatedly rejected. As Ivan Jelić pointed out, the main argument in favor of the creation of national branches asserted that regionally embedded party structures had a better understanding of local issues and were hence better prepared to articulate the needs of local workers. The support for this viewpoint was growing at a time when inter-ethnic tensions were yet again on the rise in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. These frictions were repeatedly pointed out in KPJ sessions, in which they were framed them as the results of conflicts between the mostly Serbian and Croatian bourgeoisie, based on the premise that the interests of working people (workers and peasant) across the state aligned.³⁵⁸

Tito was also hailed as the creator of the modern Communist party in Croatia upon his return from exile in Moscow in 1936. (He left the country a few months after the assassination of King Aleksandar in 1934.) Tito was an important opinion leader when the KPJ finally decided to establish separate Croatian, Slovenian, and Macedonian parties. Elsewhere, his reform efforts towards the modernization of the Communist youth organization Savez komunističke omladinske Jugoslavije – SKOJ [League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia] were also praised.³⁵⁹ In Hungary, the history of the Communist movement during the interwar period was mostly confined to the history of a handful of communists who were forced to work underground.

³⁵⁷ Magnetofonski zapisnik se 1. sjednice Komisije Predsjedništva CK SKH za historiju SK [Tape Recordings of the First Session of the Presidential Commission for History of the Communist Party of Croatia of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Croatia], održane 29. ožujka 1978 u 10 sati, dvorana na 2 katu. p.6. Sibe Kvesić was appointed director of the Institut za radničkog pokreta Dalmacije in Split. He dealt with the regional history of the labor movement focusing on the War of Liberation.

³⁵⁸ Ivan Jelić, "Tito i osnivanje Komunističke Partije Hrvatske [Tito and the Establishment of the Croatian Communist Party]," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 9, no. 3 (1977): 7–17. 10.

³⁵⁹ Vojo Rajčević, "Titova uloga u reorganizaciji SKOJ-a 1937. [Tito's Role in the Reorganization of SKOJ in 1937]," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 9, no. 3 (1977): 19–28.

In interwar East Central Europe, social democrats tended to be more successful in urban environments with considerable workers' population. While Hungary lost in 1918–1920 a great portion of its industrial capacities, Budapest, a metropolis, together with several industrial hubs as well as administrative centers with bourgeoisie remained, housing a capital-centered, small, but not insignificant social democratic movement. Croatia, however, with its lower level of industrialization and urbanization, harbored even weaker social democratic traditions, rendering them easy to merge into the history of the Communist Party later on. In Hungary, the social democratic forces traded in their more revolutionary agenda for the sake of continuous legal functioning during the interwar period – a move that constituted the basis for harsh criticism for decades to come – to be swallowed up by the Communist Party in 1948.³⁶⁰

The social democrats were to a degree coopted into the respective interwar regimes. This put them into a vulnerable position when faced with critique from the left, despite their insistence on the importance of being part of the establishment in order to influence the work of the Parliament, as many other social democratic parties of the region did as well. In Hungarian state socialist historiography, social democrats were for long decades seen as collaborators of the Horthy regime, traitors of the original cause of class struggle.³⁶¹ However, by the beginning of the 1970s, a new approach emerged from within the ranks of party historians that started to rehabilitate social democrats and gradually included other bourgeois-radical traditions into the progressive canon.³⁶² This

³⁶⁰ István Pintér, "Az antifasiszta munkásegység problémái Magyarországon az 1933–1935-ös években [Problems of Antifascist Union of Workers in Hungary 1933–1935]," *Századok* 109, no. 2 (1975): 337–72. István Pintér (1929) spent his career as an affiliate of the Party History Institute (after 1989: Institute of Political History). He dealt with the interwar history of Hungary, more specifically with the history of social democracy in that period.

³⁶¹ György Ránki, "Az ellenforradalom kora Magyarországon [The Age of Counterrevolution in Hungary]," in *Magyarország története* [History of Hungary], ed. János Varga et al., vol. 2, 2 vols. (Budapest: Gondolat Könyvkiadó, 1964), 361–464. 375.

³⁶² However, Erényi claimed that the rehabilitation of social democrats already occurred between 1953–1956. Erényi, "A munkásmozgalom-történetírás helyzete és feladatai [The Situation and Tasks of the Historiography of the Workers' Movement]."

trend was coupled with the rehabilitation of the bourgeois radical tradition as well, which affected the narratives surrounding the events of 1918–1919 as well.

The main Hungarian protagonist of this rehabilitation was Tibor Hajdu, a historian of the Party History Institute, later the Institute of History.³⁶³ First as an archivist of the PHI, later as full-time researcher, he slowly expanded the interpretative framework of the Hungarian Soviet Republic (1919) to the direction of the preceding democratic revolution, scrutinizing the involvement of non-communist groups in the social turmoil in Hungary at the end of the Great War in a refreshingly unbiased manner.³⁶⁴ Although his revisionist pieces started to appear from the end of the 1960s, the long-term effects of his pursuit started to unfold only in the next decade. His approach brought about a change in the way 1918–1919 was perceived within party history, offering a more inclusive account that was ready to acknowledge the contributions of liberals and social democrats. His agenda was supported by other historians as well, such as János Kende (1936–2019). The shift towards a pluralistic approach of the history of the Soviet Republic occurred earlier though, as Péter Apor claims, already at the end of the 1950s,³⁶⁵ thus the scholarship discarded the linear narrative about the inevitable failure of the attempt to create the first Soviet Republic outside the Soviet Union.

³⁶³ Hajdu's career was quite unusual in this respect. The transfer of researchers between the two institutions was very limited throughout the entire period of late socialism.

³⁶⁴ See for example: Tibor Hajdu, "Az 1918 októberi polgári demokratikus forradalom és a Tanácsköztársaság története kutatásának újabb eredményei [New Results of the Research Concerning the Democratic Revolution in October 1918 and the Soviet Republic]," *Századok* 103, no. 2–3 (1969): 287–305; Tibor Hajdu, *Károlyi Mihály: Politikai életrajz* [Mihály Károlyi: A Political Biography] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1978); Hajdu, "Történetírás a konszolidáció időszakában [Historiography in the Period of Consolidation]." Also, Hajdu was the author of the chapter on the revolutions and the Soviet Republic in the respective volume of the History of Hungary.

³⁶⁵ In post-1956 Hungary, the Kádár regime recognized the potential narrative functions of the Soviet Republic and the White Terror in conceptualizing the "counterrevolution." Péter Apor, "A bizonyosság bizonytalansága: elbeszélés és bizonyítás a Tanácsköztársaság történetében 1959–1965 [Uncertainty of Certainty: Narration and Proof in the History of the Soviet Republic 1959–1965]," *BUKSZ*, no. 12 (December 2010): 342–52. 342. Earlier narratives centered on the personal deficiencies of Béla Kun, the leader of Hungarian Communists. It was essential to sort out the issue of why a proletarian revolution could have failed when it was to be seen as a stage in historical development.

The revaluation of the interwar activities of social democrats had understandably important political repercussions. Beyond individual studies, the monograph of István Pintér³⁶⁶ appeared to be the most comprehensive attempt at a new narrative, which he started to write in the second half of the 1970s. Its importance was signaled by the fact that János Kádár was involved in the discussions that preceded the monograph's publication. Kádár asked Dezső Nemes to review the manuscript, but he only did so because Kádár did not have time himself to give feedback and suggestions to the author.³⁶⁷

Dezső Nemes also published works that signaled the rehabilitation of certain figures or groups. In 1972, he published an article about Ervin Szabó, librarian and director of the Metropolitan Library and revolutionary socialist. In his article, Nemes criticized Szabó in detail, suggesting that it was more conceivable as the career of an anarcho-syndicalist, but he also stated that “Despite all that, we honor in him the true believer of socialism, the helper of the workers’ struggles, the towering figure of criticism towards social democratic opportunism, and the unshakeable anti-militarist.”³⁶⁸ Nemes’s evaluation - being director of the Party History Institute – was one of the most explicit examples of re-admittance of select nonconformist progressive thinkers into the canon of party history.

³⁶⁶ István Pintér, *A Szociáldemokrata Párt története, 1933–1944 [History of the Social Democratic Party 1933–1944]* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1980).

³⁶⁷ Dezső Nemes, “Nemes Dezső levele Kádár Jánosnak [Letter of Dezső Nemes to János Kádár],” April 22, 1981, Archives of the Institute of Political History, 909 Nemes Dezső személyes fondja, 29. folder. Dezső Nemes (1908–1985) was an upholsterer by training. He spent three years in prison for his affiliation with the illegal Communist party in 1929–1932 and left for Moscow after his release. While away in the Soviet Union, he finished high school and earned a degree in history. Upon returning to Hungary, he held posts in publishing and in the party school. He gradually rose on the party ladder as well, and eventually became a member of the Central Committee. He was director of the Party History Institute in the first half of the 1960s, from there he went on to lead the party school, only to return to PHI in the early 1980s until his death. In his capacity as a researcher, he was interested in the political features of fascism and source publications.

³⁶⁸ Dezső Nemes, “Szabó Ervin ideológiája és kapcsolata a forradalmi szocialistákkal [The Ideology of Ervin Szabó and His Connections with the Revolutionary Socialists],” *Századok* 106, no. 3–4 (1972): 892–916. 916.

Hajdu, Pintér, Nemes, and others pursued a more inclusive agenda, one that went beyond party history with the inclusion of social democrats and other progressive traditions—their attempts manifested mainly in the different definitions of the subject of their studies. Gyula Mérei proposed a different approach, one that tried to capture the history of the workers' movement from a *Geistesgeschichte* point of view (calling it Marxist *Geistesgeschichte*). This approach was also able to contribute to the two fronts fight with a specific focus on the

nuanced reconstruction of the class roots of revisionism, the philosophical foundations of those ideas that stemmed from them, in order to be able to shed light on the ideological background of the political views of revisionism as well as that of the political praxis that us built upon it.³⁶⁹

Still, it remained important to search for the representatives of the classic working classes and to conclude that only members of the Communist party could have acted as such.

The history of Yugoslav trade union movements provided some narrative space for the integrated discussion of social democratic and communist interwar activities as parts of republic-wide processes. While the share of peasants within the Croatian population tripled during interwar times, their proportion in political life remained small. Beyond several fragmented organizations under the influence of various social democratic and communist factions, the *Hrvatska seljačka stranka* – HSS [Croatian Peasant Party] and the Catholic Church also had their own branches. Trade unions continued to be legally

³⁶⁹ Gyula Mérei, “Eszmetörténet – Munkásmozgalom-történet [Intellectual History: The History of the Worker's Movement],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 21, no. 3 (1975): 80–126. 104. Gyula Mérei (1911–2002) received his degree in history and Latin from Pázmány Péter University (later: ELTE) in 1934 and earned a doctorate in history in the same year. After a detour in the employment of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Budapest, he became a *Privatdozent* in 1946. He was the head of the Department of Contemporary Hungarian History at the University of Szeged. Later, he became pro-rector of the Faculty of Humanities. He was active in editorial work and reform processes of the university administration as well. He became ordinary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1979. Mérei's research interests included the history of Hungarian progressive movements since the times of dualism and the history of rural Hungary. His publications about Hungarian radical thought and activism in the times of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy are the most relevant for the purposes of my research.

approved organizations that represented the interests of workers throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Bosiljka Janjatović's article successfully pointed to the situation of peasant workers – radnici-seljaci – as a great indicator of the types of engagements that the different trade unions showed towards them.³⁷⁰

Beyond several lengthy articles, Janjatović dedicated a monograph to the topic of HSS's role in organizing workers as well.³⁷¹ As I have already highlighted, Croatia was less industrialized as compared to Hungary after the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which meant that an even greater portion of its workers belonged in fact to first-generation workers who did not necessarily harbor a strong class consciousness. Their close ties to the peasantry, however, did not make them an obvious target initially for the trade union that was backed by the HSS, showing moderate interest towards them until the mid-1930s. The peasant party's trade union bore the name Hrvatski radnički savez (HRS) [Croatian Workers' Union]. Even then, as Janjatović argued, it was only the KPJ (through its involvement in different trade unions) that represented the true interests of workers, while HSS in fact tried to sabotage the progression of class struggle.³⁷²

In another article, she highlighted how the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes treated social democrats as compared to Communists. The social democrats were able to maintain a party throughout the 1920s, Socijalistička partija Jugoslavije [Socialist

³⁷⁰ Bosiljka Janjatović, "Sindikalni pokret u Hrvatskoj u razdoblju između dva rata i radnici-seljaci [The Trade Union Movement in Interwar Croatia and the Peasant Workers]," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 6, no. 1 (1974): 27–37. Bosiljka Janjatović (1936–2006) earned her doctorate from the University of Zagreb. Her first job was in the museum of Šišak, from where she transferred to the IHCLM in 1961. She has been affiliated with the latter until her retirement in 2004. She acted as editor-in-chief of the *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* in 1981–1988. She dealt with the history of the interwar period with a focus on Šišak, the littoral territories of Croatia, and the history of the trade union movement.

³⁷¹ Bosiljka Janjatović, *Politika HSS prema radničkoj klasi: Hrvatski Radnički Savez 1921.–1941. godine* [The Politics of the HSS in Relation to the Working Class: Croatian Labor Union 1921–1941] (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1983).

³⁷² Janjatović, "Sindikalni pokret u Hrvatskoj u razdoblju između dva rata i radnici-seljaci [The Trade Union Movement in Interwar Croatia and the Peasant Workers]." 36.

Party of Yugoslavia], while the other was declared illegal in 1920. The most important trade union under the influence of the former were the Socijalistička partija Jugoslavije [General Workers' Union] that was active between 1917–1939 and the Ujedinjeni radnički sindikalni savez Jugoslavije [United Workers' Union of the Federation of Yugoslavia]. Social democrats played the leading role in the latter from 1925 to the mid-1930s.³⁷³ They may have not been described in equally harsh terms, but social democrats were often similarly seen here as in the Hungarian context, compromising revolutionary ideas for financial or political gains. Social democrats were not really given credit for what Janjatović called mitigation (as opposed to advancing class struggle). Communists, the true representatives of workers' interests, were on the other hand constantly harassed by the regime.³⁷⁴

The series *Tanúságtevők* [Witnesses] published a series of recollections of veterans of the Hungarian labor movement. Under the leadership of Katalin Petrák, the Visszaemlékezés-gyűjtő Csoport [Recollection Gathering Group]³⁷⁵ worked on the volumes that were utilized primarily in cadre education. However, the relatively broad utilization of the series was a rather unique phenomenon, as the complaint was repeatedly voiced by leading party historians that it takes a long time for their works to find their way into syllabi.³⁷⁶

The two decades after the communist takeover in Hungary during which historians only engaged with the interwar past of Social Democrats to criticize them, maintained the isolated status of party history in relation to the interwar master narrative. Despite the

³⁷³ Bosiljka Janjatović, "Sindikalni pokret u društvenom životu Hrvatske između dva svjetska rata [Trade Union Movement and Social Life in Croatia between the Two World Wars]," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 10, no. 1 (1978): 15–23. 19.

³⁷⁴ Janjatović.

³⁷⁵ The group was established under the aegis of PHI in 1962 and was active for about fifteen years.

³⁷⁶ Deme, "Ankét a Párttörténeti Intézet munkájáról és a „Tanúságtevők” című sorozatról [Session about the Work of the Party History Institute and of the Series 'Witnesses']" 205.

success of the rehabilitation in academic historiography, it became progressively difficult to convince the broader public about the inseparable nature of party and national history, adumbrating the struggle for historical legitimacy of post-transitional left wing formations.

In contrast, Croatian accounts of trade unions with diverse political backgrounds were investigated in a more integrative manner. While the authors never failed to attribute more importance and ideological maturity to the Communist-led trade unions, their treatment of other trade unions without affiliations with either the Social Democrats or the Communists was less harsh, hence only mild changes in modality occurred and there was no need for rehabilitation. The distance between a distinct party history and a broader national history was not implied in these narratives in a way that could have been observed in the Hungarian case. Naturally, anniversaries gave additional impetus for publications pertaining to the most important events in the parties' histories, commemorating most frequently the establishment of the party³⁷⁷ and the liberation at the end of the Second World War. However, these tended to be non-polemic and accommodated narrative changes only with a considerable overlap.

3.1.4. Participation in the Second World War

In the decades of state socialism, the historiography of Hungarian participation in the Second World War had been producing similarly simplified narratives and terminological clichés as on the subject of the political nature of interwar regimes: Hungary being the last satellite of Nazi Germany.³⁷⁸ However, during the late socialist decades, this label was increasingly acknowledged as unjust or even insulting by various

³⁷⁷ See for example the previously discussed article of Jelić: Jelić, "Tito i osnivanje Komunističke Partije Hrvatske [Tito and the Establishment of the Croatian Communist Party]."

³⁷⁸ Berend T. et al., *Magyarország története* [History of Hungary]. 463.

stakeholders,³⁷⁹ and György Ránki reassessed³⁸⁰ and ultimately rejected this notion in an essay at the beginning of the 1980s.³⁸¹ Furthermore, at the end of the decade, he published a popularizing monograph on the, which I will introduce later in this chapter.³⁸²

In his key essay, Ránki distanced himself from both radical views; he rejected the self-absolving position that entailed the concept of unwilling satellite as well as the stigmatizing label of last ally. He stressed the presence of two decisive factors in Hungary's trajectory leading to the Axis alliance: the external pressure and the Hungarian elites' interest in this cooperation, as an internal cause. He listed the following components of the latter condition: an economic interest, the hope to gain support in revising the Trianon Peace Treaty, and the similarity of the ideological background.³⁸³ Importantly, Ránki used the contextualization of the ideological similarities to emphasize his own position in the terminological discussion about the political nature of the Horthy regime:

...it is hardly doubtful that it would be a gross simplification to say that the politics, ideology, and power structure of the two systems [Hungarian and German – R.K.] were identical. However, under the given historical circumstances, one ought not ignore the fact that both were antiliberal and antidemocratic, and, even if we do not treat the Horthy regime as fascist – although it contains key elements of fascism – it was rather a fundamentally conservative, autocratic system...³⁸⁴

³⁷⁹ Béla Köpeczi, "Történelem és közgondolkodás [History and Public Thinking]," *Népszava*, June 22, 1982.

³⁸⁰ Ránki himself used the notion of the last satellite in his earlier works during the 1960s. György Ránki, *Emlékiratok és valóság Magyarország második világháborús szerepéről* [Memoirs and Reality: On Hungary's Role in the Second World War] (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1964); György Ránki, *1944. március 19.: Magyarország német megszállása* [March 19th 1944: The Occupation of Hungary] ([Budapest]: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1968).

³⁸¹ György Ránki, "A vonakodó csatlós – vagy az utolsó csatlós? A német-magyar kapcsolatok néhány problémája, 1933–1944 [The Reluctant Satellite or the Last Satellite? Some problems of the German-Hungarian Relations 1933-1944]," in *Mozgásterek, kényszerpályák. Válogatott tanulmányok* [Margins, Trajectories: Selected Essays], ed. György Ránki (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1983), 475–524.

³⁸² György Ránki, *A Harmadik Birodalom árnyékában* [In the Shadow of the Third Reich] (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1988).

³⁸³ Ránki, "A vonakodó csatlós – vagy az utolsó csatlós? A német-magyar kapcsolatok néhány problémája, 1933–1944 [The Reluctant Satellite or the Last Satellite? Some problems of the German-Hungarian Relations 1933-1944]." 476–479.

³⁸⁴ „Ránki. 479.

In Yugoslavia, after the very first pamphlet-like initial accounts, in 1948 the aim of writing a “de-Sovietized” history manifested. Corresponding to the great political and symbolic value of veterans in socialist Yugoslavia, this was mostly to be achieved based on their accounts,³⁸⁵ and due to the hiring policies of IHCLM, often in their own (re)interpretations. Some Croatian historians also tackled the charges of the extension of Ustaša crimes to the entire Croatian population, rendering it a sinful one. Therefore, the narrative interventions concerning the Second World War in the late socialist years included an even greater emphasis on Croatian achievements (departing further from the depiction of AVNOJ as an all-Yugoslav undertaking) in the liberation. The clear preference for this framework demonstrated the dwindling potential of contemporary historiography to supply the federal party with further historical claims for legitimacy. However, the strengthening republican party could have benefitted from the same tendencies. Furthermore, sporadic attempts at rehabilitating some Croat units (especially domobrani³⁸⁶) were made. Third, approaching a long-standing taboo, the first challenges to the narrative of partisans’ innocence in the Yugoslav civil war found their ways into print. Tito’s central role and an uncritical approach towards his deeds was retained by many throughout the late socialist years, however, after his death, several publications started to question his objectives and legacy.

1.4.1. Collaboration and participation in the Holocaust

In recent Eastern European historiographies, a great number of historians used to claim that state socialism silenced the history and memory of the Holocaust.³⁸⁷ As it had

³⁸⁵ Jovan Byford, “‘Shortly Afterwards We Heard the Sound of the Gas van’: Survivor Testimony and the Writing of History in Socialist Yugoslavia,” *History and Memory* 21, no. 1 (2010): 5–47. 27.

³⁸⁶ Domobrani [Home Guards] were an armed unit that was authorized by the occupying German forces to fight against domestic or foreign enemies of the puppet state. The less numerous but more reliable Ustaše were their rivals in terms of resources. Domobrani fought the partisans as well, therefore their activities were similarly judged in state socialist historiography to that of the Ustaša.

³⁸⁷ Andrea Pető, “Utójáték [Aftergame],” *Egyházforum* 2–3 (2014): 71–75.

already been pointed out in the introduction, the situation is more complex, however, the topic was seldom discussed, and these discourses, more often than not, were expressed in non-professional outlets, and not necessarily by historians.³⁸⁸ This uneasiness stemmed from the difficulty which non-political victims – here, Jews, who were not primarily persecuted during the Second World War on the basis of their political convictions – posed to the general state socialist interpretation of the war as a struggle between fascist and anti-fascist forces.³⁸⁹ The long Arab-Israeli conflict and the long shadow of the Nuremberg Trials provided further sources of ambiguity, however, these affected the emerging (non-)remembrance-cultures of the countries of the Eastern Bloc more as compared to Yugoslavia. The pre-Second World War Jewish community of Hungary was much larger than the Croatian one, which meant that larger segments of the society were affected by the events of the deportation and annihilation of Jews.

The topic of the systematic deprivation of Jews,³⁹⁰ the system of sending Jewish men to labor service during the war, and the loss of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Jewish population of Hungary³⁹¹ was rarely discussed in Hungarian historiography until the mid-1970s. This situation was partly due to the lingering anti-Semitic sentiment that marred the immediate post-1945 political landscape of Hungary,³⁹² and partly to a public that was not so much

³⁸⁸ András Szécsényi, “Holokausz-reprezentáció a Kádár-korban. A hatvanas évek közéleti és tudományos diskurzusának emlékezetpolitikai vetületei [The Representations of Holocaust in the Kádár Era: The Repercussions of Public and Scholarly Discourse on Memory Politics during the Sixties],” in *Tanulmányok a Holokauszról* [Studies about the Holocaust], ed. Randolph L. Braham (Budapest: Múlt és Jövő, 2017), 291–329. 291–293.

³⁸⁹ Kata Bohus, “Not a Jewish Question? The Holocaust in Hungary in the Press and Propaganda of the Kádár Regime during the Trial of Adolf Eichmann,” *Hungarian Historical Review* 4, no. 3 (2015): 737–72. 737.

³⁹⁰ For a detailed account about the progressively anti-Semitic and discriminatory politics of the Horthy regime see: Krisztián Ungváry, *A Horthy-rendszer és antiszemitizmusának mérlege: diszkrimináció és társadalompolitika Magyarországon, 1919–1944* [The Balance of the Horthy Regime and Its Anti-Semitism: Discrimination and Social Policies in Hungary 1919–1944], 3rd ed. (Budapest: Jelenkor, 2016).

³⁹¹ Jews who lived on the territories that returned to Hungary in the course of 1938–1941 are included in this figure.

³⁹² Erik Molnár, “Zsidókérdés Magyarországon [The Jewish Question in Hungary],” *Társadalmi Szemle* 1, no. 5 (1946): 326–33.

exposed to anti-Jewish crimes on a large scale, certainly not until the broadcasting of the Eichmann trial. Anti-Semitism remained such an important issue well after the Communist takeover, that Mátyás Rákosi, the first Communist leader of Hungary, seriously considered a series of show trials akin to the doctors' plot in the Soviet Union.³⁹³ In Croatia, the situation was more favorable in this sense, as in the course of trials in people's courts Jewish victims were given more emphasis and people of Jewish background held posts at all levels of the new regime.³⁹⁴

Before the 1970s, the only significant publication pertaining to the Holocaust in Hungary was the source collection of Elek Karsai about the experiences of those returning from labor service.³⁹⁵ Another collection intended for an international audience, by Jenő Lévai,³⁹⁶ was published at the same time as the Eichmann trial. Since the involvement of the Hungarian authorities – and oftentimes, that of the everyman – was not an openly discussed issue, there was a certain unease regarding the topic. Blatant anti-Semitism was strongly discouraged, however, this line of sensitivity was often interpreted within the context of the urbanite–agrarian populist debate (see Chapter Four), since a considerable part of the former had Jewish ancestry. These source publications were important as they provided the basis for further research and signaled the transition from a homogeneous victim body narrative (that of the political victim) to focusing on the losses of Hungarian Jewry during the Second World War. The

³⁹³ The “doctors’ plot” was an anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist campaign, staged in the last years of Stalin’s rule in 1952-1953. Several Moscow-based doctors were accused of conspiring for the murder of party leaders. One of the accused who only avoided execution because of the death of Stalin published a monograph about the experience in Russian and in English: Jakov L. Rapoport, *The Doctors’ Plot* (London: Fourth Estate, 1991).

³⁹⁴ Mark Biondich, “Representations of the Holocaust and Historical Debates in Croatia since 1989,” in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, ed. John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic (Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 131–65. 135.

³⁹⁵ Elek Karsai, ed., *“Fegyvertelen álltak az aknamezőkön...” Dokumentumok a munkaszolgálat történetéhez Magyarországon*. [“They were standing unarmed on the minefields...” Documents of the history of forced labor in Hungary], vol. 2., 2 vols. (Budapest: A Magyar Izraeliták Országos Képviselőlete Kiadása, 1962).

³⁹⁶ Jenő Lévai, *Eichmann in Hungary: Documents* (Budapest: Athaeneum, 1961).

journalist György Száraz proved to be the herald of a new period in researching the Holocaust. He published his important piece *Egy előítélet nyomában* [Tracing a Prejudice]³⁹⁷ in 1976, which brought the Holocaust into the public discussion and gave an important impetus for further research.³⁹⁸ The first major, synthesizing work about the Hungarian Holocaust was published outside Hungary by US historian Randolph L. Braham in 1981,³⁹⁹ a fact that was often lamented by historians and the lay public in Hungary at the time. György Ránki wrote an essay on the Hungarian Holocaust in a literary journal a year later, which both gave a review of Braham's work and delivered his own reflections. As he was deeply involved with the dilemmas of collaboration in occupied Hungary, Ránki's approach was to a great extent framed by the changing situation in foreign politics, the tightening pressure of Berlin on Budapest and the inner power struggles between the far right and the governor's circle. Still, he did not lose sight of the implications of social history either, ultimately arriving at the Eastern European Jewish assimilation projects. Ránki pointed out that Hungarian Jews suffered a unique tragedy that was not properly captured by Braham.

The fronts were all but clear in the case of the Western European Jewry. Their annihilation was part of a longer historical process, that was perceived, for example, by the majority of French society as external attack on the nation as a whole, as the humiliation of French national pride. Their fate [that of the Jewry –R.K.] was not set apart from the fate of the nation, whose part they come to be in the course of the past

³⁹⁷ György Száraz, *Egy előítélet nyomában* [Tracing a Prejudice] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1976). Literary works addressed the Holocaust earlier already. However, they did not manage to stir broader discussions.

³⁹⁸ Importantly, the researchers who got involved were mainly interested in the events of the Holocaust under German occupation, which could be only slowly overcome after the transition.

³⁹⁹ Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

hundred-hundred and fifty years. In Eastern Europe Germans, though – either as allies or enemies – degraded the separation to the level of medieval ghettos.⁴⁰⁰

Ránki immediately clarified in the following sections that he ascribes much of the responsibility for the fate of the Hungarian Jewry to the Hungarian authorities. He claimed that without their active collaboration, the deportations could not have been carried out in such an organized and quick manner as they were, especially as the bulk of Hungarian Jewry was interned in the late phase of the war.⁴⁰¹ This approach was a decisive change in how responsibility of Hungarians was depicted in the deportations. While the earlier trope of the “last satellite” rendered the entire population of Hungary an effective ally of Nazi Germany, it also absolved them from any crime, attributing the crimes to the occupiers and perhaps the Arrow-Cross collaborationist leadership instead. These implications of Ránki’s arguments were not unanimously internalized in historiography though, and no consensus has been reached on the matter of Hungarian responsibility until nowadays, which is clearly manifest in current politics of memory. In a similar vein, initially, Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia were generally lumped together with other victims of the war in historiography. It was the easier to do so, as ethnic hatred-motivated killings (Serbs at the hand of Croats and vice versa) targeted other groups as well in the partitioned Yugoslav territory. Both historiographies failed to account for the cleansing of the Roma population in this respect.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ György Ránki, “Magyar Holocaust [Hungarian Holocaust],” in *A Harmadik Birodalom árnyékában* [In the Shadow of the Third Reich], ed. György Ránki, Gyorsuló idő (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1988), 195–210. 200.

⁴⁰¹ Ránki. 206.

⁴⁰² In Hungary, the first comprehensive accounts were not published before the 2000s. See: János Bársony, “A magyarországi Pharrajimos, a roma holokauszt feltáratlan területei és utóélete [The Hungarian Porrajmos, undetected fields and afterlife of the Roma Holocaust],” in *A Holokauszt Magyarországon európai perspektívában* [The Holocaust in Hungary in European perspective], ed. Judit Molnár (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2005), 399–411; Ágnes Daróczi and János Bársony, eds., *Pharrajimos: The Fate of the Roma during the Holocaust* (New York, Amsterdam, Brussels: International Debate Education Association, 2008). In Croatia, such monographs are long overdue.

Unlike in the Hungarian case, which might be described as a slow but generally favorable development towards assessing the issue of the Holocaust, the Croatian case remained quite controversial with occasional anti-Semitic backlashes.⁴⁰³ In Tuđman's book that Goldstein and Goldstein labeled as a key publication of Croatian revisionism, the future president displayed startling anti-Jewish bias when assessing the issue of the Holocaust in the second section of the early editions.⁴⁰⁴ Beyond reciting old anti-Semitic tropes, Tuđman also tried to underplay and factually decrease the involvement of Ustaša perpetrators in Jasenovac, claiming that many Serbs were in truth killed by Jewish inmates. In order to support his claims, Tuđman was willing to give up on the critical usage of his sources and was ready to make false claims for the sake of political gain, namely, to lessen Croatian culpability.⁴⁰⁵ While in a response to this very article criticizing Tuđman's approach, Slobodan Drakulić convincingly problematized some of its main points, Goldstein and Goldstein's contribution remains important when highlighting lingering anti-Semitic tendencies in Tuđman's work.⁴⁰⁶ Tuđman's book stirred an international controversy that resulted in major revisions of the book's later editions, which excluded the most problematic parts. The decision of Tuđman to adhere to the majority of Western objections can be understood as part of his concern for Croatia's image, as he needed to avoid Croatia being portrayed negatively in the media war that accompanied the ongoing armed conflict in the region.

⁴⁰³ This is not to say that late socialist Hungary was rid of anti-Semitism in general, but historical publications did not employ overt or covert anti-Semitic rhetoric in this period.

⁴⁰⁴ The book was published three years after its completion in 1986. Franjo Tuđman, *Bespuća povijesne zbiljnosti: Rasprava o povijesti i filozofiji zločina* [Wastelands of Historical Reality: Discussion on History and Philosophy of Agressive Violence] (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice Hrvatske, 1989).

⁴⁰⁵ Ivo Goldstein and Slavko Goldstein, "Revisionism in Croatia: The Case of Franjo Tudman," *East European Jewish Affairs* 32, no. 1 (June 2002): 52–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501670208577963>. 57–58.

⁴⁰⁶ Slobodan Drakulić, "Revising Franjo Tudman's Revisionism? A Response to Ivo and Slavko Goldstein," *East European Jewish Affairs* 32, no. 2 (2002): 61–69.

The narratives around the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia [Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH] as a Nazi puppet state under the leadership of Ante Pavelić proved to be especially controversial. The state emerged upon the breakup of Yugoslavia and paved the way for the implementation of fascist policies, giving a new impetus to interethnic violence. At the same time, it was a multinational, but dominantly Croatian state, which was often cited in polemics by both the Croatian and the Serbian sides before and after 1991, with different undertones.⁴⁰⁷ Fikreta Jelić-Butić reflected on the new developments in research about the Ustaša and the Independent State of Croatia during the late 1960s and early seventies. First, she noted that the discourses became more diverse and extensive and that scholars tended to focus on the year of 1941. After that, Jelić-Butić introduced recent monographs and articles that either addressed the history of the puppet state or dedicated much attention to it in a larger narrative about the occupation and partition of the first Yugoslavia in the course of the Second World War.⁴⁰⁸ Some of the reviewed works analyzed the organizational structures within the NDH,⁴⁰⁹ while others concentrated on the relations with Italy and Germany (many of them authored by fellows of the Institut za radničkog pokreta Dalmacije). While Jelić-Butić provided short summaries and to an extent compared them, she did not make any deeper observations. Nonetheless, she created a valuable overview about literature on the Croatian far right during the Second World War, which can be used to trace narrative continuities and discontinuities in comparison to late

⁴⁰⁷ Raguz looked at radical Serbian publications after 1991, which were nevertheless published by professional historians. Jakša Raguz, ““The Croats Have No Rights to a State” - Serbian Historiography, Autobiographers, and Publicists on Croatian State Independence,” *Review of Croatian History* 7, no. 1 (2011).

⁴⁰⁸ Fikreta Jelić-Butić, “Novi prilozi o Ustašama i NDH [New Contributions about the Ustaše and the NDH],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 6, no. 2 (1974): 141–51. 141–143.

⁴⁰⁹ Ferdo Čulinović, *Okupatorska podjela Jugoslavije [Yugoslavia's Division by the Occupators]* (Belgrade: Vojnoizdavački zavod, 1970).

socialist publications, when those works that investigated the NDH within the framework of the Second World War continued to dominate.

Nada Kisić-Kolanović claimed that two trends of narratives emerged until 1991, a leftist Marxist narrative and an apologetic and nostalgic one within the circles of Croatian emigration. However, instead of claiming that the former provided a coherent Marxist analysis, Kisić-Kolanović suggests that those works that stressed the class struggle dimension of the War of Liberation rather used ideological denominators, sticking to the application of a set of labels (e.g., racist, fascist, genocidal), resulting in reductionist accounts.⁴¹⁰ As a main representative of this trend, Kisić-Kolanović referred to the monograph of Ivan Jelić.⁴¹¹ Fikreta Jelić-Butić's monograph signaled a departure from this descriptive tradition, focusing on institutions and an explanation of Pavelić's rule from developments dating back to 1918.⁴¹² According to Kisić-Kolanović, despite his publication on the subject, Bogdan Krizman's inclination to narrativize sources dominated his writings on the NDH as well. Therefore, he did not contribute significantly to a deeper understanding of the NDH rule.⁴¹³

In Hungary, one single monograph was published about the collaborationist Arrow-Cross regime in 1974, under the title *Nyilas uralom Magyarországon 1944. okt. 16.-1945. ápr. 4.* [Arrow-Cross Rule in Hungary October 16th 1944-April 4th 1945].⁴¹⁴ The rather neutral and balanced book was the first major publication of Éva Teleki, whose promising career was tragically cut short.⁴¹⁵ Interestingly, none of the main journals

⁴¹⁰ Nada Kisić-Kolanović, "NDH kao predmet istraživanja [NDH as a Subject of Research]," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 34, no. 3 (2002): 679–712. 683–684.

⁴¹¹ Ivan Jelić, *Hrvatska u ratu i revoluciji 1941.-1945.* [Croatia in War and Revolution 1941–1945] (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, Zagreb, 1978).

⁴¹² Fikreta Jelić-Butić, *Ustaše i NDH* (Zagreb: Školska knjiga, 1978).

⁴¹³ Bogdan Krizman, *Pavelić između Hitlera i Mussolinija [Pavelić between Hitler and Mussolini]* (Zagreb, Globus Zagreb).

⁴¹⁴ Éva Teleki, *Nyilas uralom Magyarországon 1944. okt. 16.-1945. ápr. 4.* [Arrow-Cross Rule in Hungary October 16 1944 – April 4. 1945] (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1974).

⁴¹⁵ Éva Teleki (Knall Józsefné) graduated from ELTE after years of working in a sewing plant and a shoe factory, earning a degree in history. Upon graduation, she was hired by the publishing house Szikra (later

whose contents are under scrutiny here published any related contributions between 1974 and 1989, except for the book reviews of Teleki's monograph.

It is worth mentioning though that Teleki's work did not have many previous works to rely on. Most of her references were made to recently published source collections, which were complemented by brief reflections but were not aiming for providing thorough analysis. The second group of her sources were autobiographical accounts, mostly of political leaders. Third, Teleki made references to various Western publications about the Horthy era, however, beyond being a testimony to her thorough research, they added little to her own analysis. Teleki's task was also difficult when searching for previous Hungarian publications about interwar rightwing parties and ideologies: beyond several factographic, smaller works of political history, which were often published with the primary purpose of party education, she could only consult Kálmán Szakács's monograph (1963),⁴¹⁶ which discussed the history of the first National Socialist movement in Hungary, and Miklós Lackó's essay with a focus on the social basis of the extreme right in the last ten years of Horthy's rule.⁴¹⁷

The collaboration of the Catholic clergy with the interwar regimes as well as with the Ustaše and the Arrow-Cross used to be a recurrent topic in the historiography of the first years following the Second World War. Beyond the obvious reasons – discrediting the mightiest ideological enemy based on its past deeds, proving how it did not advocate

Kossuth), rising to the rank of division leader. From 1969 on, she worked as the leader of the Department of History of the Szakszervezetek Elméleti Kutató Intézete [Theoretical Research Institute of Trade Unions]. She died in 1981, at the age of 52. Her later publications showed that her interest evolved in the direction of postwar trade union activities. Ágnes Kenyeres, ed., "Teleki Éva, Knoll Józsefné," in *Magyar Életrajzi Lexikon*, 2001, mek.oszk.hu.

⁴¹⁶ Kálmán Szakács, *Kaszáskeresztesek* [Sickle-Cross] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1963). The first national socialist party in Hungary that enjoyed broader popular support was originally called Nemzeti Szocialista Magyar Munkáspárt [National Socialist Hungarian Workers' Party]. It was established by the journalist Zoltán Böszörmény and functioned as a party between 1932 and 1937 (although the movement behind it crystallized somewhat earlier). At the beginning, NSZMP used the insignia of the NSDAP, but once the swastika was banned in Hungary in 1933, they created their own symbol, which is called sickle-cross.

⁴¹⁷ Miklós Lackó, *Nyilasok, nemzetiszocialisták 1935–1944* [Arrow-Cross, National Socialists 1935–1944] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1966).

for the real interest of the people – in both contexts, several circumstances lent a greater significance to the role of the Catholic confession. In Yugoslavia, confessional belonging continued to signify (to a large extent) ethnic affiliation as well, regardless of the actual observation of the faith. Catholicism was equated with Croatianness,⁴¹⁸ therefore, overemphasizing or consciously downplaying the engagement of clergy in ideological activities or even the atrocities bore far-reaching consequences. The controversies were often centered on the persona of Alojzije Stepinac (1898–1960), the archbishop of Zagreb from the mid-1930s and during the war, who had a mixed record in his ambiguous relation to anti-Semitic propaganda and the Pavelić regime.⁴¹⁹

The difference in Hungarian and Croatian approaches to the interwar and Second World War activities of the Catholic Church emanated not only from the missing ethnic-signifying dimension in the Hungarian case. In late socialist Yugoslavia, the Catholic Church and the federal authorities had more conflicts in comparison to their Hungarian counterparts, although these clashes were most vivid not in relation to Croatia but to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where Međugorje, the alleged place of a miracle, functioned as an important pilgrim destination and harbored vivid monastery life. The significance of Međugorje reached such levels that even in the last decade of state socialism, members of the church and students faced imprisonment – which would have been unimaginable in Hungary by that time.⁴²⁰

Historians (re)discovered some aspects of collaboration and the Holocaust but critical engagement with pre-existing narratives occurred only episodically. The resilience of

⁴¹⁸ Irvine, “The Croatian Spring and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia.” 158.

⁴¹⁹ Stepinac’s persona continued to function even at church diplomacy level long after his death in 1960s. As a martyr of Communist persecution, he was beatified in 1998.

⁴²⁰ Ilica Lučić, “Duvno kao žarište ‘hrvatskog nacionalizma i katoličkog klerikalizma’ u zadnjem desetljeću komunističke vlasti [Duvno as the Focal Point of ‘Croatian Nationalism and Catholicism Clericalism’ in the Last Decade of Communist Rule],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 44, no. 3 (2012): 571–602. 574.

the “clerico-fascist” narrative in relation to the Ustaše in Croatia proved to be so great that serious debates about its relevance only surfaced from the 2000s onwards. Jews featured often as members of a victim group of secondary importance as compared to persecuted and deported communists, and although the issue of active cooperation in the deportations was raised, no change of paradigm occurred.

1.4.2. The partisan movement, (attempts at) self-liberation

The centrality of the history of Croatian partisan activities in the Second World War remained unchallenged throughout the years of state socialism. For already discussed political reasons, research into the activities of AVNOJ was encouraged in general, although the increasingly republic-bound focus helped little the maintenance of the partisan heritage as a federal source of legitimacy. Still, historians with various backgrounds felt incentivized to contribute to this literature either believing that they are in fact strengthening the federal narrative or because they felt compelled to highlight republican or local contributions in order to support a distinct Croatian identity, being deeply inspired by the nation-centered traditions of the scholarship.

In Hungary, the weak partisan presence was at the heart of the problem of producing an extensive literature on the subject.⁴²¹ Although there was interest and good will to encourage research into the partisan movement, after the rather fervent invention of partisan stories in the 1950s, the topic was increasingly neglected. Some memoirs were published, but hardly any serious historical work appeared. From the archival materials of the Department of Philosophical and Historical Sciences it becomes obvious that there was only one person at the time who dealt with Hungarian soldiers in the

⁴²¹ István Deák, “A Fatal Compromise? The Debate Over Collaboration and Resistance in Hungary,” *East European Politics & Society* 9, no. 2 (1995): 209–33. 210.

Czechoslovak resistance in 1945, but even his works were deemed non-professional – as the rejection of his request to be considered for a doctoral degree in 1979 attests.⁴²² Beyond meager partisan activities, it was quite difficult to prove the existence of potent illegal Communist resistance activities during the 1930s and the Second World War in Hungary. There was an anti-Nazi resistance movement, but neither this, nor the unsuccessful attempt to withdraw from the war (October 15th, 1944), which was headed or carried out by Communist actors. Non-Communist resistance faded in the early historical account though, and partisans gained more attention at their expense. Nonetheless, the already mentioned works of György Ránki⁴²³ were central to the reassessment of the issue of Hungarian resistance as well.

The Yugoslav nation's united effort for the liberation of the country within the framework of the Communist-led ANVOJ [Antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Jugoslavije/Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia] became the single central ideological element legitimizing state socialism in Yugoslavia, from which the slogan of *bratstvo i jedinstvo* derived. This inclusive narrative explicitly included the peasantry on its own right as well, hoping to reconcile the diverse war memories, which were especially dividing among the rural population.⁴²⁴

In contrast to the event-centered Hungarian historiography, the grand narrative of Yugoslav (self-)liberation had an important central character, Tito. Despite all claims

⁴²² Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztálya, “2. Témavázlat. Név: Pozsonyi Tivadar, doktori eljárásra Jelentkezik. Cím: Magyar honvédek a csehszázgi ellenállásban 1945 tavaszán [2. Research Proposal. Name: Tivadar Pozsonyi. Title: Hungarian Honvéds in the Resistance in the Spring of 1945],” 1979, Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, MTA II. Filozófiai-és Történettudományok Osztályának iratai, 275. Box.

⁴²³ Ránki, “A vonakodó csatlós – vagy az utolsó csatlós? A német-magyar kapcsolatok néhány problémája, 1933–1944 [The Reluctant Satellite or the Last Satellite? Some problems of the German-Hungarian Relations 1933–1944]”; Ránki, *A Harmadik Birodalom árnyékában* [In the shadow of the Third Reich].

⁴²⁴ Bokovj Melissa K., “Collectivization in Yugoslavia: Rethinking Regional and National Interests,” in *The Collectivization of Agriculture in Communist Eastern Europe: Comparison and Entanglements*, ed. Constantin Iordachi and Beuernkämper Arnd (Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press, 2014), 293–327. 298–299.

to a different Yugoslav path of socialism that was allegedly devoid of the cult of personality (at least from 1948 onwards), the amount of literature that reproduced an embellished image of Tito's wartime engagement undermines such assertions. While Tito admittedly had decisive leadership and military achievements, his own role was often exaggerated at the expense of other key actors.

Therefore, Croatian and Hungarian historiographies of the recent past developed very different relationships towards the contemporary political leaders, which is most amplified by the comparison of the depictions of the figures of Tito and János Kádár in the above analyzed historical accounts. This difference stemmed in part from the diverging contexts of the respective Communist parties of the time, especially that of the extensive and effective national liberation movement (Tito) and the small-scale, clandestine *Machtergreifung* that was only possible with the assistance of Moscow on the ruins of a crushed revolution. Also, Kádár was twenty years younger than Tito and was not yet in the first line of Communist leaders during the Second World War, hence he could not dream of such a strong source of legitimacy as being the founder and liberator of state socialist Hungary. On the other hand, Kádár had better claims for a criticism and transcendence of the cult of personality, however that could not overshadow the fact that he came to power after a crushed uprising as the candidate of Moscow.

János Kádár's figure never became central to historical accounts apart from several biographies. It did not happen either in the immediate aftermath of his ascension to power, nor during the late socialist years. In contrast to that, Tito's historical figure constantly coexisted with the aging leader, and while some of the tropes and emphases

changed over time, the image of the omnipresent great strategic mind and military leader was constantly reinforced by (party) historians.⁴²⁵

As an implicit support for the idea of state socialism independent of Moscow, the focus on the act of self-liberation and the downplaying of the role of the Soviet Union in the military operations was a recurrent trope in Croatian accounts. Fabijan Trgo, one of the veteran affiliates of IHCLM, provides a good example for such a logic, as he highlighted the temporality of Soviet assistance in the military operations, which was in accordance with previous agreements between Tito and the Red Army. He also pointed out that the task of liberation did not lie with them, but would have been concluded eventually without Soviet engagement as well.⁴²⁶

Due to the extensive and well-organized nature of the Yugoslav (Croatian) partisan movement, voluminous literature emerged that sought to provide a detailed reconstruction of local, regional, and republican (to a lesser extent, federal) party activities in the liberation. The remaining sources of the political and military activities showed great regional disproportionality (with a focus on Zagreb), as many documents perished in war operations already. In their overview of about 350 archival boxes of sources, Ana Feldman and Liljana Modrič underscored the damage that has been done to the already catalogued sources, ranging from incomplete dossiers to missing or unreadable identifiers.⁴²⁷ However, the systematic collection of sources was rather protracted as well – according to a stenographic record of a session of Komisija za

⁴²⁵ Stanislav Sretenović and Artan Puto, “Leader Cults in the Western Balkans (1945–90): Josip Broz Tito and Enver Hoxha,” in *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*, ed. Balázs Apor et al. (Basingstoke, Houndmills, Hampshire, London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 208–23.

⁴²⁶ Fabijan Trgo, “Oslobođenje Jugoslavije 1944–1945. [The Liberation of Yugoslavia 1944–1945],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7, no. 3 (1975): 29–37.

⁴²⁷ Ana Feldman and Liljana Modrič, “Građa KP Hrvatske 1941–1945. u Arhivu Instituta za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske [The Sources of the Croatian Communist Party between 1941–1945 in the Archives of the Institute for the History of the Croatian Labor Movement],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7, no. 3 (1975): 97–107. 97.

historiju – the inconsistency of the source gathering resulted in the dispersion of sources among a variety of institutions, including party history institutes, archives, and museums of the labor movement. Exemplary to these source publications was the series of *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođena Hrvatske*, which was started in the 1960s and featured two new volumes in 1975 and in 1985.⁴²⁸

The publications that resulted from such collections were rather uninventive, providing usually institution-centered, provincial, factographic accounts that rarely aspired to be preliminary studies of synthetizing works. However, this genre proved to be an important link to non-professionals who were interested in local histories, making it especially apt for the purposes of popular history.

As I have already established, synthetizing monographs were a rarity. In her contribution in *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, Nada Kisić-Kolanović expostulated that although it was the “central organ of revolutionary power,”⁴²⁹ no comprehensive monograph had been written on the activities of ZAVNOH [Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođenja Hrvatske/State Anti-fascist Council for the National Liberation of Croatia]. While praising the engagement of the IHCLM in the systematic publication of sources, her article is a clear call to go beyond these and some initial

⁴²⁸ Hodimir Sirotković, *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođena Hrvatske – Zbornik dokumenata 1944 (Od 10. svibnja do 31. prosinca)* [The Country's Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Croatia: Collection of Documents 1944 (from May 10th to December 31st)] (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1975); Hodimir Sirotković, *Zemaljsko antifašističko vijeće narodnog oslobođena Hrvatske – Zbornik dokumenata 1945 (od 1. siječnja do 25. srpnja)* [The Country's Anti-Fascist Council of the National Liberation of Croatia: Collection of Documents 1945 (from January 1st to March 25th)] (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1985). The editor-in-chief of the series, Hodimir Sirotković (1918–2009) was a lawyer and legal historian. He taught at the University of Zagreb and acted as the head of Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU [Institute for the Historical Sciences of the Croatian Academy of Sciences] between 1982 and 1995.

⁴²⁹ Nada Kisić Kolanović, “ZAVNOH u našoj povijesnoj literaturi u povodu 30-godišnjice III Zasedanja ZAVNOH-a [Zavnoh in Our Historical Literature: On the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Third Session of ZAVNOH],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 6, no. 2 (1974): 115–23. 115. Nada Kisić-Kolanović (1949) has a degree in law and earned a doctorate in legal-historical studies. She has been working at the IHCLM (under changing names) since 1973. During the 1970s and 1980s, she focused mostly on the interwar period and aspects of the War of Liberation. After the collapse of Yugoslavia, her attention turned to the NDH.

attempts of the 1950s. She admitted to the existence of important studies, especially the works of Fredo Čulinović, whose two-volume monograph on the history of interwar Yugoslavia was of great importance for late socialist historiography in general.⁴³⁰

In his assessment of previous synthesizing attempts that aimed to provide a comprehensive history of the NOB, Ivo Goldstein paints a rather discouraging picture. Reviewing works of the previous decades, he established that most of the self-proclaimed syntheses fell short of their promises as they did not meet the basic criteria of the genre that he defined as following: “the study of the subject as a whole, in unity and interconnection with all its parts.”⁴³¹ More specifically, Goldstein wished for more integrative approaches, able to reflect on “military, literary, economic, social, ideological problems, and the issue of the commitment of the masses.”⁴³² Instead of doing that, most of the publications were concerned with a chronological listing of events, perhaps with a military historical background, but otherwise no concern for a complete depiction of other relevant processes. The fact that Yugoslav historiography was yet to produce such a “real” synthesis – which would necessarily go beyond the otherwise useful but by no means sufficient encyclopedias – caused a demand yet unmet on the side of interested foreign researchers, Goldstein argued. Furthermore, he pointed to the disproportionate discussion of the periods of NOB: while the events of 1941 were usually discussed quite exhaustively, the later years received significantly less attention.⁴³³ According to him, Ivan Jelić’s book could be considered the only genuine attempt at synthesis.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ Ferdo Čulinović, *Jugoslavija između dva rata [Yugoslavia between the Two Wars]*, vol. 1–2, 2 vols. (Zagreb: JAZU Zagreb, 1961).

⁴³¹ Goldstein, “Metodološke značajke sinteza povijesti narodnooslobodilačke borbe u Jugoslaviji [Methodological Characteristics of Synthesizing Works about the Struggle for National Liberation in Yugoslavia].” 137.

⁴³² Goldstein. 138.

⁴³³ Goldstein. 142.

⁴³⁴ Ivan Jelić, *Jugoslavenska socijalistička revolucija 1941.-1945.* [Yugoslav Socialist Revolution 1941–1945] (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska socijalistička revolucija, 1979).

As these subchapters have shown, Hungarian and Croatian historiographies were only moderately polemical. Nonetheless, in the period's historical knowledge production, I could identify several controversies. In Hungary, these debates dominantly crystallized around the writing of the interwar volume of the ten-volume History of Hungary series. The stages of the controversies were duly documented on the pages of *Századok*, allocating space both for the critical comments – that were otherwise voiced at given public discussions – and for the replies of the editors.⁴³⁵ Smaller-scale debates such as the one about Hungary's diplomatic activities on the eve of the Second World War between Magda Ádám and Pál Pritz also took place.

Croatian and Hungarian historians both had to deal with the issue of situating the wartime deeds of their respective referential communities in relation to the Soviet Union. In the Hungarian case, the picture was rather simple and straightforward: the Soviet troops liberated the country and helped to establish the conditions for a social transformation. The Red Army crushed the last remnants of fascist occupiers and their local collaborators and coordinated the moves of the rather modest local resistance, still trying to emphasize the involvement of Hungarian Communists.⁴³⁶ This narrative went virtually unchallenged during the period of state socialism, however, the attempts at exaggerating the involvement of Hungarian political leaders in these processes or the size of the resistance movement, which often occurred in the early 1950s, slowly disappeared with time.

Croatian historians had a more complex situation on their hands, especially as a result of the Tito–Stalin split of 1948. Although the Soviet Union participated to an extent in

⁴³⁵ Glatz, “Számvetés. Eredmények, tanulságok a Magyarország története eddigi munkálataiban [Reckonings: Results, Lessons in the Works of the History of Hungary]”; György Spira, ed., *Vita Magyarország kapitalizmuskori fejlődéséről* [Debates about the Development of Hungary in the Age of Capitalism] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1971).

⁴³⁶ György Ránki, *Magyarország története 1918–1919; 1919–1945* [History of Hungary 1918–1919; 1919–1945] (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976). 1202–1207.

the liberation of Yugoslavia, it was not involved in operations on Croatian soil. Apart from that, the narrative of the liberation of Yugoslavia was perhaps the most likely to push Croatian historians towards dealing with the histories of other member states of the federation beyond the activities of Četnici. This did not change the fact that most of the liberation-related accounts were local histories and for that reason the largest referential community was that of the dominant nation of the republic.

Several historians considered it apt to try to account for the later event of severing the ties with the Soviet Union, tracing the seeds of discontent during wartime collaboration already. Vojmir Kljaković analyzed Soviet-Yugoslav Communist relations during the war, explaining how the Soviet Union tried to take some of the revolutionary zeal of the Yugoslav movement in order to please his Western ally, Great Britain. While Kljaković's major conclusions pertain to the successful act of balancing of Tito between the two great powers, it is easy to read his text as a critique of Soviet opportunism.⁴³⁷ He was especially critical of the activities of the Cominform and provided two short case studies to illustrate the clear disconnect between the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and the Soviet coordinating organ.

1.4.3. Inter-ethnic violence on the territory of Yugoslavia. Terminological considerations and collective and competitive victimhood

The Second World War brought about an immense death toll on the territory of Yugoslavia. The official number of casualties amounted to 1.7 million in state socialist historiography.⁴³⁸ However, the number of victims was only partially produced in battles against foreign aggressors. The de facto state of civil war that up to a point meant a competition for the favors of the Allies between the partisans and the Četnici, as well

⁴³⁷ Vojmir Kljaković, "Jugoslavensko-britanski odnosi i Komintern 1941–1943 [Yugoslav-British Relations and the Comintern 194–1943]," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 9, no. 2 (1977): 5–15.

⁴³⁸ Sindbaek, "Usable History?" 42.

as conflicts with the Ustaše contributed to it greatly. As for the characterization of these processes, the usage of the term “genocide” was quite common in the writings of late socialist Croatian authors, when describing the violent acts of Četnici.⁴³⁹ Still, in Yugoslav (especially Serbian) historiography, while the fascist nature of the Ustaša was stressed, the ambiguity that surrounded the activities of the Četnici – collaborators though not necessarily fascists – resulted in them being more favorably portrayed as compared to the Ustaše, which required elaborate strategies from the voluntary historian apologists of the NDH at the beginning of the 1990s.⁴⁴⁰

The Jasenovac concentration camp featured and continues to feature as the most important site for Croatian and Serbian historiographical controversies. Set up by the Ustaša state, this was one of the largest concentration camps in Europe, run solely by the Croatian administration. The victims of this camp were imprisoned dominantly on ethnic and political basis, thus Jews, Serbs, Roma, and different political adversaries of the Ustaša state were among the casualties. But perhaps this is the minimum on which Croatian and Serbian historians have been able to agree, as the number, and thus, the proportion of different groups within the masses of victims remain disputed. From the immediate years after the Second World War onwards, both sides had different stakes in establishing these facts. So much so, that David B. MacDonald suggested that precisely the difference of approaches – stemming from the divergent agendas: for Croats, to decrease the effects, for Serbia, to aggrandize it and to highlight Serbian losses – was perceived as a controversy.⁴⁴¹ Christian Axboe Nielsen proposed the term collective and competitive victimhood to describe this struggle between communities

⁴³⁹ The Četnici were Serb monarchists with a coherent anti-Communist, hence anti-Partisan stance. After the war, some of its leaders were tried and executed.

⁴⁴⁰ David Bruce MacDonald, *The Balkan Holocausts? Serbian and Croatian Victim Centered Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002). 140.

⁴⁴¹ MacDonald. 161.

that wish to achieve a relative higher moral status by proving that the losses inflicted on them by the other group exceed the grievances caused by them.⁴⁴²

Concerning the genocidal nature of the Ustaša and the Četnik movements, there was a consensus in late socialist historiography, or, as Hoare calls it this was the “orthodox Titoist viewpoint.”⁴⁴³ As Hoare rightly points out, the tenets of this outlook were elaborated in detail most importantly in the authoritative works of Vladimir Dedijer and Antun Miletić. Beyond the classification of both movements as genocidal, a direct equation was suggested by these collections of documents and edited volumes, which discussed the genocidal activities of all parties,⁴⁴⁴ while the conflicts with partisan forces were excluded from this framework.

Arguably, the chief goal of these carefully crafted discourses was to create a sense of balance and to suggest that such an ultra-nationalist impasse that involved mass casualties and the danger of the federal country’s disintegration could have been only transcended by the partisans. The promises of territorial integrity were espoused with a vision of a more pluralistic state that would not threaten the existence of any nationality for the sole purpose of ethnic homogenization. The guarantee for not repeating the mistakes of the first Yugoslavia, which culminated in the endorsement of Greater Serbian schemes at the expense of other nationalities, was supposed to be the social

⁴⁴² Nielsen focuses on the Serbian historiography and the post-1991 period, his analysis is well applicable to this context as well. C. A. Nielsen, “Collective and Competitive Victimhood as Identity in the Former Yugoslavia,” in *Understanding the Age of Transnational Justice: Crimes, Courts, Commissions and Chronicling*, ed. Nancy Adler, 175–193. (Rutgers University Press, 2018).

⁴⁴³ Marko Attila Hoare, “Genocide in the Former Yugoslavia before and After Communism,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 7 (2010): 1193–1214. 1203.

⁴⁴⁴ These works meticulously recounted the genocidal acts of the Ustaše and of the Četnici, providing graphic descriptions of their violent acts. Vladimir Dedijer and Antun Miletić, eds., *Genocid nad Muslimanima, 1941–1945: Zbornik dokumenata i svjedočenja* [Genocide against Muslims 1941–1945: Collection of Documents and Testimonies], Biblioteka “Refleksi” (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1990); Vladimir Dedijer, *Vatikan i Jasenovac: Dokumenti* [The Vatican and Jasenovac: Documents], ed. Vladimir Dedijer, Biblioteka Svjedočanstva (Beograd: Izdavačka radna organizacija “Rad,” 1987); Antun Miletić, *Koncentracioni Logor Jasenovac 1941–1945. Dokumenta* [The Jasenovac Concentration Camp 1941–1945. Documents], 4 vols. (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1986).

revolution that ran in parallel with the liberation, bringing about the building of socialism, and preempting the resurgence of nationalistic and class-based privileges.

However, the partisans themselves were not innocent in this heated conflict either. Although there was little historiographical coverage of their misdeeds during the years of state socialism, in the course of the acts of civil war, the partisans committed war crimes comparable to their enemies. From among these, the Bleiburg massacre stands out in the Croatian context, as the victims of these partisan actions were Ustaše and Domobrani. As Pål Kolstø observed, state socialist politics of history prevented the balanced, public assessment of the events in two ways: first the massacre was made into a taboo, while later the number of victims of Ustaša atrocities were deliberately embellished in order to decrease the relative casualties caused by the partisans.⁴⁴⁵

Liljana Radonić went even further, claiming that the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Croatian transition were unable to bring about pluralistic discourses on this topic.⁴⁴⁶

While Jasenovac remained an important recurring topic, one that became part of the grand narrative of the history of the Second World War throughout the late socialist years in Croatia, although showing a tendency of pluralization, the topic of Bleiburg remained rather marginal. Despite the obvious ambiguity they shared, the political implications of discussing the Bleiburg massacre showing partisans as perpetrators rendered it risky. Its sheer assessment would grant the status of dissent for authors who engaged with it.

Dejan Djokić suggested that it is also worth looking into instances when instead of further exacerbation of narrative tensions, the parties tried to use Second World War

⁴⁴⁵ Pål Kolstø, "Bleiburg: The Creation of a National Martyrology," *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 7 (September 2010): 1153–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2010.497024>. 1154.

⁴⁴⁶ Liljana Radonić, "Equalizing Jesus's, Jewish and Croat Suffering - Post-Socialist Politics of History in Yugoslavia," in *Of Red Dragons and Evil Spirits: Post-Communist Historiography between Democratization and the New Politics of History*, ed. Oto Luthar (Budapest; New York: CEU Press, Central European University Press, 2017), 33–57. 34.

narratives to pave the way towards reconciliation. In his essay, he convincingly argued that such attempts usually occurred in the Croatian and Serb contexts at an intra-ethnic level, meaning that they were more preoccupied with facilitating consensus among e.g. Ustaša and Croatian partisan account instead of Croat-Serb dialogues. Furthermore, in his analysis Djokić highlighted the active role Franjo Tuđman played in these processes, contrasted to the rather disinterested Slobodan Milošević.⁴⁴⁷

According to Tea Sindbaek, inter-Yugoslav massacres became an important topic in Serbian historiography, picking up on Vladimir Dedijer's notion in the *Istorija Jugoslavije* (1972) deliberately using and thematizing the concept of genocide, which was alien to Croatian historiography at that time.⁴⁴⁸ The debate about the applicability of the notion of genocide is far from being over. Marko Attila Hoare suggested that in this specific context, the concept may be exploited for the analysis of "the Ustaša genocide of Serbs, Jews, and Gypsies; and the Četnik genocide of Muslims and Croats."⁴⁴⁹

During the late socialist years, the topic of German minorities in Croatia and in Hungary⁴⁵⁰ and their depiction as the fifth column, helping Adolf Hitler's advancement in the region from within, a common trope in state socialist historiographies, was seldom reflected upon. Yugoslavia's German minority was native dominantly to those parts of the federation that belonged to Serbia. Therefore, it is no wonder that those few books that addressed the activities of German minorities were authored by Serbs and

⁴⁴⁷ Dejan Djokić, "The Second World War II: Discourses of Reconciliation in Serbia and Croatia in the Late 1980s and Early 1990s," *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans* 4, no. 2 (2002): 127–40. 135–136.

⁴⁴⁸ Sindbaek, "Usable History?" 10.

⁴⁴⁹ Hoare, "Genocide in the Former Yugoslavia before and After Communism." 1195 (emphasis in the original).

⁴⁵⁰ The remnants of these minorities were driven out from East Central and Southeastern Europe. The "evacuation" had been started already during the war, and Germans, who feared the approaching front, fled on their own initiative as well. The most organized wave of forced relocation followed the relevant resolutions of the Potsdam Agreement (1945).

Slovene historians (Josip Mirnić, Dušan Biber, Petar Kačavenda). As an exception, Vladimir Geiger was a Croatian scholar who started to publish on the history of Germans in Yugoslavia from 1985 onwards.⁴⁵¹ In the Hungarian context, the expert of the topic has been Lóránt Tilkovszky. Tilkovszky published extensively on specific politico-historical aspects of the activities German communities in interwar and wartime Hungary,⁴⁵² occasionally, he reflected upon broader issues of minority politics as well.⁴⁵³

3.2. New trends and marginality: Theoretical and methodological innovations in Hungarian and Croatian historiography

Before concluding this chapter on academic historiographies, I provide here a brief assessment of developments in historiography, which emanated from the limited though existing interactions with foreign (especially Western) scholarships. Instead of institutional channels, the circulation of ideas took place mostly in interpersonal relations or was completely individualized. While the previously analyzed discourses gave little opportunity to discuss such developments, in order to avoid downplaying their importance, I will briefly discuss the most innovative trends: economic history and

⁴⁵¹ Although they provide examples of publications about Germans in Yugoslavia during the years of state socialism, the authors asserted at the same time that the topic had been a taboo in Yugoslavia. This is yet another example of cognitive dissonance with regard to taboo practices in state socialist historical knowledge production. Michael Antolović and Saša Marković, “Executioners and/or Victims—German Minority in Serbian, Croatian and German Historiographies (1945–2010),” *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 19, no. 2 (2017): 209–24.

⁴⁵² Lóránt Tilkovszky, “Németország és a magyarországi német kisebbség (1921–1924) [Germany and The German Minority in Hungary (1921–1924)],” *Századok* 112, no. 1 (1978): 3–48; Lóránt Tilkovszky, “Törekvések a magyarországi német mozgalom radikalizálására (1932–1933) [Attempts to Radicalize Germans of Hungary (1932–1933)],” *Századok* 113, no. 3 (1979): 421–77.

⁴⁵³ Lóránt Tilkovszky, *A Szociáldemokrata Párt és a nemzetiségi kérdés Magyarországon, 1919–1945* [The Social Democratic Party and the Nationality Question in Hungary, 1919–1945] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1986).

social history, whose intellectual heritage provided foundations for the further evolution of historiography after the end of state socialism.⁴⁵⁴

The format of cooperation in the realms of historiography fitted well into the broader framework of cultural opening, both towards the other state socialist countries and the West. As Róbert Takács argued, Western and Eastern ideas about the course of the process of broadening dialogues differed profoundly, as state socialist countries preferred the rigid bilateral frameworks with their guarantees, as opposed to Western attempts at working around the limitations of inter-state agreements.⁴⁵⁵

Certain representatives of Hungarian and Croatian historiography actively advocated for a greater willingness to accommodate structuralism or Western social history. In Croatia, Mirjana Gross spearheaded this group, which largely comprised of her own students. As she put it, from the 1960s on, “the issue of the day is how to turn history into a social science.”⁴⁵⁶ Gross’s proposition was difficult to criticize from a science policy point of view, however, her vision about the eventual marginalization of both historicism and positivism remained unfulfilled. In Hungary, first the economic history of Ránki and Berend, and later, in the second half of the 1980s the establishment of the Hajnal István Kör [Hajnal István Circle]⁴⁵⁷ displayed continuous interest towards the historiographical turns that took place in Western historiography. Hajnal István Circle was a professional association that was established from below from the 1970s onwards and had close ties to the library of the Central Statistical Office. The founders of the group were mostly young and/or marginalized historians.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵⁴ For a discussion about the formats in which exchange of ideas could take place, see Chapter One.

⁴⁵⁵ Róbert Takács, “A magyar kultúra nyitottsága az 1970-es években [The Openness of Hungarian Culture in the 1970s],” *Múltunk Politikatörténeti Folyóirat* 61, no. 4 (2016): 24–56. 27.

⁴⁵⁶ Gross, “Na putu k budućoj historijski znanosti [Towards the Future of Historical Science].” 39.

⁴⁵⁷ Gyáni himself was member of this circle and gives a detailed account of the circumstances of its establishment, which was a rather protracted process as official organs repeatedly hindered it. Gábor Gyáni, “Miért és hogyan született meg a Hajnal István Kör? [How and Why Was the Hajnal István Circle Created?],” *Korall* 64 (2016): 181–97.

⁴⁵⁸ Several founding members of the circle were the students of Berend and Ránki.

Similarly to the role of Mirjana Gross as the most visible face of Croatian historiography at the international stage, economic historians György Ránki and Iván Berend gained the greatest international visibility both in terms of the number and length of academic visits and references of their works in literature. Instead of pursuing pure theoretical works – as Gross did after a few initial publications – Ránki and Berend carried out limited theorization and focused on demonstrating the usefulness of the methodological offerings of economic history. That outlook, combined with the comparative approach (within the East Central and Southeast European region) rendered their work especially influential when similar research projects were seldomly undertaken. Most of their works dealt with the history of (Austro-)Hungary from 1867 until the post-Second World War period.

While Ránki and Berend clearly benefitted from the détente-competent undertones and implications of their research, similar tendencies did not emerge among Croatian scholars. In his historiographical survey, Zdenka Šimončić complained about the scarcity of economic historical publication in the state socialist period, while noting that proper Marxist economic history has barely any roots in Croatia.⁴⁵⁹ She attributed this lack of transfer to the fact that interwar economic history was only done by bourgeois scholars and their knowledge production may does not even qualify as ‘scientific’.⁴⁶⁰ In her critique, she did not take into consideration those works of Ránki and Berend, which in fact dealt with Southeastern Europe.⁴⁶¹ Janković’s elaboration on the early economic historical publications somewhat rectify these claims in retrospect. He considered the

⁴⁵⁹ Rudolf Bičanić (1905–1968), a trained lawyer and economist did pursue a certain kind of economic history, but he was active before the 1970s and he was rather lonely in his intellectual endeavors.

⁴⁶⁰ Zdenka Šimončić, “Pregled literature i štampanih izvora o industrijskom razvoju Hrvatske u razdoblju između dva svjetska rata [Review of Literature and Printed Sources On Industrial Development of Croatia In the Period Between the Two World Wars],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7, no. 2 (1975): 101–31.

⁴⁶¹ T. Iván Berend and György Ránki, *Közép-Kelet-Európa gazdasági fejlődése a 19–20. században* [The Economic Development of Central Eastern Europe in the 19th and 20th Century] (Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó, 1976).

topical innovations (the inclusion of topics pertaining to economic and social history), which were observable in Croatian historiography from the early 1950s onwards, important. Although he admitted that often they did not bring about a breakthrough in theoretical and methodological terms.⁴⁶² It is also clear that these topical innovations took place largely in the context of earlier periods such as the Middle Ages or the 19th century, leaving most of the field of recent history largely intact.

By and large Hungarian and Croatian historiographies – just like any other historiographies – remained focused on the respective nation and historical works targeted primarily the domestic audience. Gross and her circle, Berend, Ránki and a handful of other historians considered it important to contribute to the international dialogues. On the one hand, they strove to provide fresh analysis on the region, second to aid the work of Western historians who published on East Central and Southeastern Europe either as full-fledged case studies or as shorthand to demonstrate their theoretical frameworks.

Lack of visibility of Croatian and Hungarian scholarship to the international scene was a frequently voiced concern during the years of late socialism. However, especially historical journals often reflected the dissatisfaction of historians as they found foreign authors ignorant about the East Central and Southeast European contexts, not to mention the fact that they wrote about issues concerning the regions without speaking any of the local languages. International conferences counted among the usual triggering events, as it was in the case of Mirjana Gross, who published a short piece in *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* upon her return from San Francisco, where the ICHS congress took place in 1976. While her article praised the famous British Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, somewhat annoyed, Gross pointed to the fact that Hobsbawm generalized

⁴⁶² Janković, *Mijenjanje sebe sama*. 166.

many of his findings especially in relation to revolutions without reading any of the works of Southeastern European historians that were not written in a major Western language.⁴⁶³

3.3. Conclusions

Diplomatic history and a factographic approach dominated Hungarian and Croatian historiographical discussions throughout the years of late socialism. In terms of unearthing sources of the recent past and conducting basic research, the efforts pertaining to the interwar period and the history of the Second World War should be appreciated. These publications, especially source collections, were created with the intention to provide material for further research in a period when access both to domestic and foreign archives was limited. Such undertakings, however, rarely led to effective theorization and was often confined to the (re)production of political histories. Beyond the ongoing process of collecting documents pertaining to the history of the labor movement, Hungarian and Croatian researchers frequently consulted the holdings of archives in Budapest, Zagreb, and Belgrade. In the Hungarian case, unequal access to these materials was partially determined by the diverse institutional affiliations of interested scholars. In Croatia, most of the competent scholars were hired by one of the party history institutes and had more similar access options amongst each other. The dominance of factographic historiography did not go unreflected in either context. Both the policy level and individual historians raised their voices from time to time calling for a more interpretative and more theoretical approach. Nada Kisić-Kolanović went as far as to claim that many historians – presumably, most of them veterans – are

⁴⁶³ Mirjana Gross, “O novim pristupima istraživanju revolucija [Concerning New Approaches to Researching Revolution],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 8, no. 2–3 (1976): 47–50.

only willing to deal with a narrow context of their personal experiences.⁴⁶⁴ According to her, they were reluctant to extend the scope of their research, occasionally even to remain critical readers of their sources, let alone to experiment with new interpretative schemes or theoretical frameworks.⁴⁶⁵ On the other hand, historians like Mirjana Gross,⁴⁶⁶ who published multiple programmatic articles about the need to follow the lead of Western historiographies by internalizing the same historiographical turns, often ignored the fact that those exemplary historiographies had not been thoroughly transformed either, and that provincial tendencies prevailed in Western historiographies as well.

A form of intellectual history also emerged, mostly with regard to analyses that aimed at positioning the interwar and war regimes in an ideological coordinate system. The most innovative approaches emanated from the influence of foreign literature of fascism, especially with regard to Germany and Italy, as well as from a drive to move forward from a rigid ideological explanatory framework while not abandoning completely either its phraseology or its argumentative arch.

Both historiographies were tasked to serve the nation with an illuminating, educative, but also comforting narrative, as it had been pointed out in Chapter Two. Most importantly the accusation of a “sinful nation” needed to be rectified. This accusation was to be effectively challenged and disproved for a domestic audience and for an outside group as well. In terms of the domestic audience, this calling or demand may be interpreted within the framework of socialist patriotism and proletarian

⁴⁶⁴ Kisić Kolanović, “ZAVNOH u našoj povijesnoj literaturi u povodu 30-godišnjice III Zasjedanja ZAVNOH-a [Zavnoh in Our Historical Literature: On the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Third Session of ZAVNOH].” 119.

⁴⁶⁵ Nada Kisić-Kolanović, “O dosadašnjim istraživanjima narodne vlasti u Hrvatskoj 1941–1945. [About Research into the National Authorities in Croatia in 1941–1945 until Today],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 7, no. 3 (1975): 69–96. 70–71.

⁴⁶⁶ Gross’s academic career started as assistant to Jarošlav Šidak. This connection helped her greatly later in her career too. Filip Šimetin Šegvić and Nikolina Šimetin Šegvić, “Mirjana Gross (1922–2012): In Memoriam,” 2013. 298.

internationalism, as it was supposed to fend off both the bourgeois nationalism that may have arose in people who found such assertions insulting and the cosmopolitanism that denied any significance of the national.

However, the “other” to whom these results were to be communicated differed in the two contexts. In Hungary, these outer references were constituted both by the historiographies of those neighboring countries that had considerable Hungarian minorities, and, to a certain extent, by a Western audience. Croatian historians – sometimes only tacitly – argued against their Serbian colleagues, perpetuating the already mentioned pattern of competitive victimhood within the federation. Moreover, this conscious separation of republican historiographies that was rarely overcome by the sporadic attempts at temporary cooperation was acknowledged from the outside as well. The confinement of these debates to individual republics reinforces the hypothesis I put forward in this dissertation that parallel national historiographies existed within a federal framework. They represented units of analysis similar to the historiography of a nation-state. In this sense, the professional discursive space in which Croatian historiography positioned itself corresponded to the perceived purposes of the institutional design that served best the purposes of an independently functioning republican scholarship.

The separateness among republican historiographies was expressed both at the level of knowledge production and inter-institutional relations (as I have shown in Chapter One and Chapter Two). Still, the duality of the federal and the republican/national was perceived in transnational interactions often in an ambiguous way. When Hungarian journals published their reports on joint sessions with their colleagues, regardless of their republican affiliation, they were referred to as “Yugoslavs.” However, on closer scrutiny it becomes obvious, based on the topics of the presentations or written

contributions, that Hungarian historians were well aware that for “Croatian topics” they need to invite a colleague from Croatia. Along the same lines, it would have never occurred to them to discuss issues pertaining to Vojvodina, hence from the sporadic Hungarian-Croatian dialogues never connected to issues of Hungarian minorities and their historical coexistence with the dominant national groups. This is rather strange as the relationship of Hungarian historiography with neighboring Czechoslovakia and Romania was to a great extent determined by similar anxieties. Apparently, Hungarian historians did perceive Croatian scholars as the representatives of their republican scholarship, a role that was not complemented by a federal concern.

When choosing the historiographical topics and controversies discussed in this chapter, I aimed at including those that either allowed for the detection of commonalities or proved to be instrumental in highlighting differences. Naturally, both Hungarian and Croatian historiographies of the period 1919–1945 had other, more diverging points of interest, but a detailed analysis of these would not have served the purposes of comparison in a meaningful way. Several other topics were also excluded from the analysis despite the fact that they appeared in both contexts, as the related output was very small and/or they did not contribute to or provoke any controversy. Most prominent of these topics was the activity of the Catholic Church during the interwar period, which was accompanied by studies of political Catholicism, most notably Christian socialism.⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶⁷ Zlatko Matijević, “Jugoslavenska povijesna literatura o političkoj djelatnosti katoličke crkve u Hrvatskoj 1918–1945 [Yugoslav Historical Literature on the Political Activities of the Catholic Church in Croatia 1918–1945],” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 13, no. 2 (1981): 73–103; Jenő Gergely, *A politikai katolicizmus Magyarországon: 1890–1950* [Political Catholicism in Hungary: 1890–1950] (Budapest: Kossuth, 1977). After the transitions of 1989/1991, both authors branded themselves as eminent scholars of Church history and published on the domestic histories of the Catholic Church extensively. Gergely (1944–2009) was based at the Eötvös Loránd University since 1968, joining the faculty after earning his degrees from the same university. Zlatko Matijević (1955) earned a degree in philosophy and in history from the University of Zagreb. From early on, he focused on the history of the Catholic Church in Croatia as well as the Hrvatska pučka stranka [Croatian People’s Party]. He started working for the IHCLM in 1980 and remained employed in the renamed institute since then.

As I have shown, the quest for a thorough integration of party history into national history failed. I contend that the lack of success on the level of academic discourse was to a great extent a logical outcome of the fragmented institutional setting that has been introduced in Chapter One. The transnational embeddedness of the respective historiographies remained limited during the period under investigation. There was an opening towards new theoretical and methodological approaches though, however, not necessarily in relation to the topics that were analyzed above. Both scholarships had several key figures in translating and introducing these changes. Mirjana Gross in Croatia in fact created a school around herself that continues her work until today. In Hungary, György Ránki and Iván Berend did not have a steady circle of committed students or younger colleagues and the early death of the former and career choices of the latter did not help the case. However, Hajnal István Circle, as a grassroots professional circle proved to be successful in advancing social history in Hungary and its members contributed to the extended institutionalization of economic and social history in Hungarian higher education after the transition. Still, these initiatives remained on the margins of national scholarships during the 1970s and 1980s and had a hard time influencing mainstream scholarship ever since.

Chapter Four. Recent history beyond the confines of academia: New lives and afterlives of historical narratives

Historical interpretations have never been solely confined to academic discussions. The very professionalization of scholarship presupposed the creation of boundaries separating the discipline from different forms of story-telling and (collective) remembrance. At the same time, a broader popular demand for an easily consumable format and narrative of the past was articulated, which posed a constant challenge to historians who felt increasingly hindered by their very professional standards in delivering such narratives. Péter Hanák summarized quite aptly the incessant regional interest in history, historical explanations, and the subsequent responsibility of historians:

For the people of Central and Eastern Europe, history is not and has never been a mere study, a subject of patriotic upbringing, but passion and consolation, the verification of the validity of old rights and desires. This historicizing predisposition of public opinion has always been a hotbed for illusory imaginaries and hindered modern scientific endeavors. Nonetheless, it does not suffice to simply refuse historicism on a doctrinaire, rational basis, we need to analyze its true functions as well. Linking the past to the future is an organic part of our view of history and only one question remains: whether we are establishing historical laws and use them for the purposes of preparing alternative decisions, or, we are trying to verify certain phenomena in a retrospective manner.⁴⁶⁸

In this chapter, I argue that beyond popular history, academic historians were aware that the narratives they produced were in dialogue with other fields of knowledge and with the arts. The notion of dialogue is of key importance here: instead of historians being mere “suppliers” of historical knowledge, they were consulted, challenged, or even provoked either as public intellectuals or as experts. In order to shed light on some of the complexities of the appearance of historical narratives about the interwar period and

⁴⁶⁸ Benke, “Országos Történész Vándorgyűlés Székesfehérvárott [National Travelling Assembly of Historians in Székesfehérvár].” 201.

the Second World War beyond the academic sphere, I will proceed with a comparative analysis of the case of popular history and literary reflections.

The notion of popular history has been historically contested, and the period of state socialism was no exception. There was no universally acknowledged delineation of popularizing activities carried out by those with or without a degree in history. This posed less of a problem in those outlets that were closely tied to research institutes, as they were trustworthy in choosing their authors. However, a lay reader could not always assess the scientific merit of newspaper articles, which led to frustration among historians. This chapter deals mostly with the former category, as its focus is on the demonstration of how the bulk of popular historical knowledge production was intimately tied to research institutes in this period, a phenomenon that was swept away by the transition. Bearing these ambiguities in mind, I consider it important to formulate a mission statement for popular history in order to clarify the stakes for historians in these activities. One such statement was written by Henrik Vass, the director of the Párttörténeti Intézet: “...in reality, doing research and disseminating the results of science are to a certain extent different, yet *deeply intertwined, inseparable, they are impossible to delineate and are in constant interaction with each other*, they are but two sides of the same coin”⁴⁶⁹ (Emphasis in the original).

Iván Berend responded to Vass’s slightly ambiguous approach. While claiming to share Vass’s views, he added that the artificial juxtaposition of historical journalism and historiography is false, as they share the responsibility to communicate research results to a broader audience. Berend named popularizing genres done by non-professionals

⁴⁶⁹ Henrik Vass, “A vándorgyűlés célja és feladatai [The Aims and Tasks of the Assembly],” in *Történelemtudomány – Történelemtanítás – Tömegkommunikáció. Az 1973. évi Országos Történész Vándorgyűlés rövidített anyaga* [History – Historical Education - Mass Communication: Shortened Version of the Materials Presented at the National Assembly of Historians 1973], ed. Ottó Szabolcs (Budapest: Országos Pedagógiai Intézet, 1973), 13–18. 16. (emphasis in original)

“indirect” ones, but was quick to clarify that these authors should be aided by historians.⁴⁷⁰

In the course of my research, it became clear that a completely synchronous comparison of popular historiographies would yield few results, other than contending that late socialist Hungary harbored a dynamically growing, structured popular scene, while in Croatia, the “Croatian silence” prevented any serious parallel developments. Instead, inspired by the article of Tomislav Brđolica and Filip Šimetin Šegvić, in which they have convincingly argued that popular historical activities peaked during the Croatian Spring in Croatia, I found striking similarities between later concerns and conflicts in the Hungarian scholarship and Maspok-time Croatia. Therefore, the section focusing on popular history proceeds with different timelines.

In what follows, I will show that the locus of popularizing science remained a contested issue throughout the entire period. While repeated measures were taken to convince professional historians to disseminate the results of their research to a lay audience, parallel structures were equally encouraged. Most notably, appointed “popularizers” and small communities of amateurs with local patriotic incentives gained support. As a result, a new contestation of academic expertise emerged, opening another battlefield in professional historians’ struggle to fend off non-academics from historical knowledge production.

4.1. Popular history in its many forms: The locus and importance of expertise

From very early on, state socialist regimes put an emphasis on the popularizing tasks of researchers, in order to bring (expert) knowledge close to the masses.⁴⁷¹ Scholars of the

⁴⁷⁰ Benke, “Országos Történész Vándorgyűlés Székesfehérvárott [National Travelling Assembly of Historians in Székesfehérvár].” 193.

⁴⁷¹ MSZMP KB and Henrik Vass, “Az MSZMP Központi Bizottsága Agitációs- és Propaganda Bizottságának állásfoglalása a történettudomány helyzetéről [The Resolution of the Agitation and

humanities and social sciences were especially pressured, as their research was characterized in state communication as non-productive, and therefore they had to repeatedly prove their ‘usefulness’ for their respective societies.⁴⁷²

Historians in late socialism faced a controversial situation. While they both self-identified and were acknowledged – by the regimes and their respective societies – as experts, their work continued to be seriously challenged. When it came to questioning myths attached to the national past, the audience tended to prefer literature or movies, even as these works continued to produce a non-critical narrative. Occasionally, the public even reprimanded historians for their “unpatriotic” attitude. Powerful figures of the art scene capitalized on their favorable position and voiced their critiques, claiming to represent the very same “popular voice.” Even more frequently, sensitive topics that either constituted taboos or historians deemed them uncertain territory, invited wild journalistic or artistic speculations, causing real headache to cultural politicians or, occasionally, an efficacious pretext to threaten scholars into a greater engagement with popularizing activities.⁴⁷³

A growing popular interest in late socialist societies was palpable, though. The Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztálya [Department of Philosophical and Historical Sciences of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences] contended in its 1979 activity report the generally growing public interest, linking this to the increase of

Propaganda Committee of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers’ Party on the Situation of the Historical Scholarship],” in *A Magyar Szocialista Munkáspárt határozatai És dokumentumai, 1975–1980* [The Resolutions and Documents of the Hungarian Workers’ Party] (Budapest: Kossuth Kiadó, 1977), 361–372. 368.

⁴⁷² At times, the demonstration of usefulness took quite strange forms. Vass proposed that one should take a look at the amount of surplus books that were produced – i.e., the number of copies that were not sold yet, which would indicate how efficiently the demand of the audience was estimated (in his example, quite well). Henrik Vass, “A Párttörténeti Intézet tudományos munkájáról [About the Research in the Party History Institute],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 22, no. 3 (1976): 3–35. 6–7.

⁴⁷³ Berend T. and Szabolcs, “Történettudomány – Népszerűsítés – Történelemoktatás [History – Popularization – Historical Education].” 22–23.

societal prestige of history. The author of the report cited numerous examples to provide evidence for this claim:

the popularity of publications (second edition of the 8th volume of *Magyarország története*, the great number of sold copies of the *Magyar História* series, etc.), the huge increase in membership of the Magyar Történelmi Társulat, the great increase in the number of historical lectures of Tudományos Ismeretterjesztő Társulat [TIT – Association for Popularizing Sciences], especially in comparison with previous decrease and stagnation. Non-disciplinary journals and weeklies, dailies, the television, and the radio all request and need the contribution and viewpoints of historians in historical and other social scientific matters.⁴⁷⁴

Historians – those who dealt with contemporary history were no exception – relied on their professionalism as an important source of intellectual legitimacy, hence they had a clear interest in guarding their guild. Those who were more willing to engage in popularizing activities could only conceive this as a concession in terms of format, but not content. This attitude remained dominant in Hungary throughout the years of late socialism, however, some historians experienced the 1980s as a deep politicization of their profession. In their popularizing efforts, Hungarian historians could rely on a steadily expanding infrastructure that could be used to disseminate their findings to a lay audience.

Yugoslavia provides a markedly different picture, especially in terms of chronology. Božo Repe suggested in his study about the changing perceptions of the Second World War in the Slovenian and the broader Yugoslav public, going beyond the Hungarian experience of politicization of the sphere of popular history, the boundaries of professional historiography and popular genres started to fade already from the early 1980s onwards.⁴⁷⁵ In Croatia, after the Croatian Spring, the major organs that supported

⁴⁷⁴ “Beszámoló a Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztályának tevékenységéről (1976–1978) [Reports of the Activities of the Section of Philosophical and Historical Disciplines (1976–1978)].” 57.

⁴⁷⁵ Repe, “Mesto druge svetovne vojne v notranjem razvoju Slovenije in Jugoslavije [The Place of the Second World War in the Internal Evolution of Postwar Slovenia and Yugoslavia].” 97.

popular historical activities closed down along with the small infrastructure of popular history that had been hastily established during Maspok, leaving Croatian popular history largely disorganized for the better part of late socialism. No wonder, therefore, that in the Croatian context the transition brought about a dramatic increase of non-professional historiography only.⁴⁷⁶

Popular history in a published as well as oral form remained very close to mainstream historical knowledge production in this period. The bulk of popular historical literature was produced by professional historians, who wished to disseminate their results to an audience beyond the confines of academia. This may have been a true vocation for them, as part of the community of historians showed a certain aptitude for public speech, while producing engaging and informative texts. Furthermore, there was a clear political incentive, as history had been repeatedly referred to as a non-productive science and historians sought in formal and informal ways to prove their utility for the building of communism.⁴⁷⁷ The most common popular engagements included participation at various events for teachers, university students, students of the party school, and those with a general interest in history.⁴⁷⁸

Scholars' willingness to engage in producing and disseminating popular history varied greatly. Beyond different scholarly self-perceptions, personality traits and the deemed popularity of their respective topics influenced these choices. Although the fact that activity reports of the Institute of History of HAS duly listed all popular engagements, not all scholars seem to have internalized the need to participate, and there is no

⁴⁷⁶ Mladen Ančić, *Što "Svi znaju" i "sto je "Svima jasno": historiografija i nacionalizam* [What "Everybody Knows and What Is "Truth for Everybody": Historiography and Nationalism] (Zagreb: Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 2009). 56.

⁴⁷⁷ "A Történettudományi Intézet helye és szerepe a tudományos-szellemi közéletben [The Place and Role of the Institute of History in Scientific-Intellectual Life]." 20–28.

⁴⁷⁸ In the Hungarian context, these included the Summer Academy of History Teachers, the Summer University For the Youth, the assembly of the World Federation of Hungarians [Magyarok Világszövetsége], "Az MTA Történettudományi Intézetének hírei (1981–1984) [News of the Institute of History HAS (1981–1984)]," *Történelmi Szemle* 29, no. 1 (1986): 165–91. 185.

evidence of retributions for staying out of such activities. Nonetheless, calls for more extensive popularizing work were regularly published and the already existing body of popular history was subjected to constant criticism, notably for its aristocratic manner.⁴⁷⁹

Some of these critics also admitted that it might be more difficult for scholars to write a popular article in which the readers need to be met at their level of factual and theoretical knowledge as opposed to a regular scholarly article that was intended for peers. This additional intellectual work, moreover, was remunerated only modestly. In Hungary, this changed with the appearance of the journal *História*, which was in a position to pay a handsome honorarium to its authors. As another obstacle to larger-scale popularizing activities, the potential dislike of historians who did not consider popular history to be a valid genre was also listed among the concerns.⁴⁸⁰ The other trend of criticisms was based on the public perception that history should (continue to) function as an emotionally relatable, identity-making or reinforcing pool of knowledge.⁴⁸¹

The main genres of popular history were represented by journals, book series, documentaries, and in Croatia, journalistic pieces. Their role may be interpreted within the framework of popular enlightenment as well as a reaction to a growing public demand for historical knowledge in an accessible form and with special topical interest, with competing underlying policy concerns. In this manner, popular history and

⁴⁷⁹ Nagy, “A munkásmozgalom-történetírás hatékonyságáról [About the Efficiency of the Historiography of the Workers’ Movement].” 157.

⁴⁸⁰ László Bán, “Népszerű-e a népszerűsítés? Csányi Vilmos válaszol [Is Popularization Popular? Vilmos Csányi Answers],” *Magyar Tudomány* 84, no. 3 (1977): 691–94. 691–693.

⁴⁸¹ Tomislav Brandolica and Filip Šimetin Šegvić, “Historiografija i popularna historija u vremenu Hrvatskog proljeća,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 51, no. 3 (December 16, 2019): 699–740, <https://doi.org/10.22586/csp.v51i3.9261>. 712.

academic historiography faced strong contenders from the fields of cinema and literature (and journalism).

The Croatian moment of institutionalization arrived during a liberalizing period that led up to public unrest in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Therefore, the new journals (with nationwide or local profiles) that were hastily set up and carried out the bulk of dissemination of popular history were created in a time of crisis. From among these journals, *Kritika* was the most important, however, similarly to other periodicals, it was not dedicated solely to popular history.⁴⁸² Renowned scholars such as Mirjana Gross or Ljubo Boban published in the pages of these short-lived journals. As all these fora were shut down along with *Matica Hrvatska*, it is unclear how their undeniable popularity would have survived in “peace time.” The best-known figure of the popularizing scene who frequently published in the journals and dailies was Zvonimir Kulundžić (1911–1994), a journalist and literary critic, whose interest in Croatian history spanned through the ages and resulted in a rather diverse oeuvre. From the beginning of the 1970s onwards, popular history was largely relegated to local journals *Kaj* (in the Hrvatsko Zagorje region) and *Krčki zbornik* (in the Kvarner region).⁴⁸³ The nation-wide news scene remained without a designated journal for popular history or one that would have dedicated a considerable portion of its content to it on a regular basis.

Although extensive institutionalization of popular history occurred during the Croatian Spring and the late socialist period respectively, this is not to say that no popularizing work had been carried out in the interwar period or during the first decades of state socialism. However, this resulted either from a conscious science policy or from a constant, adamant scholarly engagement. The publications were rather sporadic and

⁴⁸² Brandolica and Šimetin Šegvić. 719.

⁴⁸³ Special thanks to Tomislav Brandolica, who drew my attention to these two outlets in the course of our correspondence.

followed no topical focus. They were usually authored by amateurs (i.e., without a formal education in history, often coming from the fields of journalism or literature). In this respect, the system that emerged in late socialism is set apart with yet another characteristic.

This is not to claim that non-academics were not parts of the discourse about the past in the 1970s and 1980s, quite the contrary.⁴⁸⁴ However, I adopt here the distinction made by István Nemeskürty,⁴⁸⁵ a typical representative of literary-minded outsiders who thrived in a genre that claimed to rely on historical research but was written primarily as a literary work. He suggested that “we ought not mix up the so-called popularization, the all-too fashionable and useful activity of our times with writing, film-making, or painting in an artistic manner.”⁴⁸⁶ With regard to the latter segment of the public sphere, this section will only introduce the relevant works of the most influential figures – including Nemeskürty – locating them in the broader discussion. In the Croatian context, more complaints were voiced concerning the meddling of journalists in matters of scholarship. Jaroslav Šidak was especially known for his declarations on the importance of maintaining recognizable boundaries between the two fields.

⁴⁸⁴ “a vacuum starts to enfold between historiography and the public, into which a host of uncontrollable, emotional, dilettante production flows in, which originate from bad traditions.” In: Domokos Kosáry, “Kosáry Domokos hozzászólásának összefoglalója [Summary of Domokos Kosáry’s Contribution],” in *Történelemtudomány – Történelemtanítás – Tömegkommunikáció. Az 1973. évi Országos Történész Vándorgyűlés rövidített anyaga* [History – Historical Education – Mass Communication: Shortened Version of the Materials Presented at the National Assembly of Historians 1973], ed. Ottó Szabolcs (Budapest: Országos Pedagógiai Intézet, 1973), 54–55. 54.

⁴⁸⁵ István Nemeskürty (1925–2015) was a literary and film historian. He published more than fifty books. From among them, those books earned him popularity that dealt with rarely discussed episodes of Hungarian history. He was extremely productive as a screenwriter as well, and contributed to the production of multiple historical movies.

⁴⁸⁶ Despite his succinct distinction, Nemeskürty had been aspiring for an equal authority with scholars. István Nemeskürty, “Művészet És Történelem [History and the Arts],” in *Történelemtudomány – Történelemtanítás – Tömegkommunikáció. Az 1973. évi Országos Történész Vándorgyűlés rövidített anyaga* [History – Historical Education – Mass Communication: Shortened Version of the Materials Presented at the National Assembly of Historians 1973], ed. Ottó Szabolcs (Budapest: Országos Pedagógiai Intézet, 1973), 26–28. 28.

Similar reservations prevailed with regard to research into local history, although in this latter case the proportion of those possessing formal education among the participants of the discussion was considerably higher.⁴⁸⁷ In Croatia, local history continued to enjoy a greater respect, as the decentralized network of institutions assembled a large amount of historical sources that served the entire community of scholars (even if the collections still tended to focus on partisan activities only, and oftentimes they were poorly organized).

Party history institutes with more (Hungary) or less (Croatia) limited publicity dominated the research on recent history for long, and popular history was also a shared concern for them. The sort of picture of the past they disseminated, however, found little if any resonance in broader society. Such mismatches were occasionally painfully obvious,⁴⁸⁸ while sometimes they remained a matter of silent annoyance –sociological research pointed to the seriousness of this issue. Party history and personal histories often presented two irreconcilably different narratives (especially regarding changing property relations, the native population’s involvement in activities during occupation, clashes with the state socialist authorities, etc.), and more and more people hoped that they would be able to insert their family stories into a different, broader narrative. This tension was recognized by state socialist regimes, mostly in the form of complaints regarding the ineffective dissemination of the ideas of socialist patriotism and proletarian internationalism, and – considering it as part of the long-term socialist acculturation policies and the design and dissemination of new historical consciousness

⁴⁸⁷ József Vonyó, “A vidék története, a helytörténet a Századok hasábjain (1867–2016): A fő trendek és változások vázlatja [History of the Countryside, Local History in the Journal Századok (1867–2016): Outline of Major Trends and Changes],” *Századok* 150, no. 5 (2016): 1117–46. 1136.

⁴⁸⁸ János Kádár chose to commemorate the victims of the siege of the party headquarters during the 1956 uprising, which the regime considered counterrevolution until its collapse. While many more participants of the uprising fell victim to the Soviet troops and the workers’ militia, official commemoration was restricted to the „communist” casualties. M. János Rainer, *Az 1956-os magyar forradalom: Bevezetés* [The Hungarian Revolution of 1956: An Introduction] (Budapest: Osiris, 2016). 139.

– popular history may have been seen by many as an apt means to navigate the controversies that affected the individual and collective memory of the turbulent 20th century. With ambitious goals in mind, popular history’s allotted space for maneuver was limited with regards to policies. What the public thought about certain historical issues should be taken into account but could not serve as a benchmark – as was pointed out by Béla Köpeczi, Minister of Culture, in a speech in 1982.⁴⁸⁹

Popular history in late socialism remained intimately tied to the core of academic scholarship. This close connection was demonstrated both by the authors – amongst whom accomplished, trained historians constituted an overwhelming majority – and by the form in which popular history appeared. Books and journals were the most important media through which historical knowledge was communicated to the broader audiences. Beyond that, lecture series open to the public were launched at universities, notably at ELTE in Budapest and at the University of Zagreb. Furthermore, in both countries, historical associations (Hungarian Historical Association and the Historical Association of Croatia) were set up. These associations served as important fora where university professors and researchers of the academies made acquaintance and lectured history teachers, making an indirect impact on secondary-level history education. Although several non-academic works stirred controversies in the Croatian public as well, they remained considerably outnumbered and lacked institutional embeddedness, which negatively affected their impact.

Several institutions outside academia emerged in this period to coordinate or carry out different types of popularizing activities in Hungary. Some of them originated from earlier periods and simply extended their portfolios, while mergers also occurred in order to counter some of the (perceived) parallelisms in the field. In 1974, with a

⁴⁸⁹ Köpeczi, “Történelem és közgondolkodás [History and Public Thinking].” 3–4.

resolution, the HSWP designated the Hazafias Népfront [Patriotic Popular Front] responsible for the coordination and dissemination of *honismereti* knowledge.⁴⁹⁰ The concept “*honismeret*” covered different types of knowledge about Hungarian culture, ethnography, geography, and history and became an important keyword of late socialist cultural policy,⁴⁹¹ intimately tied to learning about and maintaining Hungarian traditions.⁴⁹²

The Hazafias Népfront Országos elnöksége [National Presidium of Patriotic Popular Front] founded the Magyar Honismereti Bizottság [Hungarian Honismereti Committee] in 1972, hence gave way to the institutionalization of the movement on a national level, building on preexisting networks. In 1972, encouraged by the Ministry of Culture, the Országos Helytörténeti Bizottság [National Committee for Local History] merged into this committee, broadening the institutional background of the movement.⁴⁹³ Népművelési Intézet [Institute for People’s Education] joined the National Presidium in providing support for the newly emerging institutions from the beginning and remained the main source of methodological development and (additional) education

⁴⁹⁰ Szentistványi Gyuláné, “Műveltség, hazaszeretet, honsimeret [Erudition, Patriotism, Honismeret],” *Honismeret* 4, no. 1 (1977): 3–5. 3.

⁴⁹¹ András Knopp, “A felnővekvő generáció azonosuljon a nemzet múltjával, jelenével és szocialista jövőjével [The Next Generation Should Identify with the Nation’s Past, Present and Socialist Future],” *Honismeret* 8, no. 5 (1980): 26–27. 26.

⁴⁹² The career of the Honismereti Movement, which built on the traditions of German Heimatskunde and several Soviet examples, did not end with the transition. The Honismereti Egyesület [Honismereti Association], which came into being in 1990, is committed to continue the legacy of the movement. The concept influenced primary education policies as well. At the peak of its popularity, *honismeret* featured as a mandatory course for 5–8th classes of primary school. The subject was supposed to familiarize pupils with traditional ways of living, including religious customs.

⁴⁹³ In a somewhat controversial manner, the Hungarian Historical Association took over the research profile of the National Committee for Local History at the time of the merger. Hazafias Népfront Országos Elnöksége Honismereti Bizottság, “II. Országos Honsimereti Konferencia, Kecskemét, 1976. Február 13–14. A Hazafias Népfront Országos Elnöksége Honismereti Bizottságának beszámolója a Honismereti Mozgalom helyzetéről és feladatairól [III. National Conference of Honismeret, Kecskemét, February 13–14th, 1976. Report of the Honismereti Committee of the National Presidium of Patriotic Popular Front about the Situation and Tasks of the Honismereti Movement],” *Honismeret* 4, no. 2–3 (1976): 3–16. 4.

for local leaders of the movement – similarly to the case of the coordinators of local historical activities.⁴⁹⁴

The institutional framework, which included a journal (*Honismeret*, 1972–), local organizations, and frequent events, provided a platform with great outreach for popular enlightenment. The fact that some of the movement’s leaders even occasionally used *honismeret* and local history interchangeably, however, makes the task of disentanglement more difficult for the analyst.

The mission of *honismereti* movement was from time to time refined by its mother organization, Patriotic Popular Front, notably its designated (sub)committee,⁴⁹⁵ in accordance with the resolutions of the HSWP or changing cultural policies. In a report in 1980, a comprehensive mission statement was given by the subcommittee:

With the coordination of the Patriotic Popular Front, the *honismereti* movement serves public education, familiarization with our social relations, the homeland and the patria, intellectual-emotional bonds on clear ideological grounds. Fulfilling the statement of the 6th Congress of Patriotic Popular Front, it is working hard towards the amelioration of socialist patriotism and socialist historical consciousness, tending to the friendship among peoples, unfolding of the centuries long struggle of the Hungarian working class and the working people for national progress, it demonstrates the links between progressive past and socialist present. It strengthens unceasingly citizens’ devotion to the socialist homeland, to the building [of socialism – R.K.], to the issue of social progress. The creative activities aiding different disciplines and accumulating knowledge expanded. The participation of *honismereti* movement is needed and appreciated by more and more public collections and disciplines. The ways and possibilities of *honismereti* activities became so diverse that they enable all age groups and strata to take part.⁴⁹⁶

Historians with affiliation to the main institutions of historical research were engaged in the activity of the movement, authoring articles or giving presentations at its events.

⁴⁹⁴ Zoltán Kovács, “Honismereti Szakkollégium [Honismereti Special Colloquium],” *Honismeret* 8, no. 5 (1980): 49–50.

⁴⁹⁵ Up until 1980, *honismeret* was represented by a committee in Patriotic Popular Front. However, reorganizations occurred, which resulted in the establishment of a subcommittee for that purpose. Imre Töltési, “A Honismereti Mozgalom a népfrontkongresszusok tükrében [The Honismereti Movement in Light of the Congresses of the Popular Front],” *Honismeret* 17, no. 5 (1989): 3–12. 10.

⁴⁹⁶ A Hazafias Népfront Országos Elnökségének Honismereti Albizottsága, “A Hazafias Népfront Országos Elnöksége Honismereti Albizottságának jelentése [Report of the Honismereti Subcommittee of the National Presidium of the Patriotic Popular Front],” *Honismeret* 8, no. 5 (1980): 3–12.3.

Historians outside the capitals of research also joined the cause, along with people with an interest in history. In fact, local history was for long – and largely, remained – within the framework of the cultural space that *honismereti* movement represented.⁴⁹⁷ The distinctly political nature of the movement was repeatedly underscored by those who participated in it, explicitly acknowledging the role it wished to play in shaping people's (historical, national) consciousness.⁴⁹⁸ However, as in the case of popular history that I will discuss later, professional concerns were raised amidst the optimism.⁴⁹⁹ They emanated mostly from those circles that contributed to the perpetuation of labeling scholars' popularizing activities as alien to the ethos of the profession, while those historians who themselves were heavily involved in popularizing activities were less worried about the value and scholarly merits of their contributions. They were rather convinced, in accordance with the party's perception, that lacking scholars who were willing to engage in popularizing history will only further encourage non-academics whose preparedness and intentions might be questionable.⁵⁰⁰

Although a more extensive elaboration would go beyond the limitations of this dissertation, the *honismereti* movement and its conceptualization as a means of socialist consciousness-shaping may also be read through the lenses of the youth question. Policy papers as well as other works that theorize the societal functions of *honismeret* were often quite explicit about their interest in reaching out to vocational, secondary school,

⁴⁹⁷ Vonyó, "A vidék története, a helytörténet a Századok hasábjain (1867–2016): A fő trendek és változások vázlata [History of the Countryside, Local History in the Journal Századok (1867–2016): Outline of Major Trends and Changes]." 1136.

⁴⁹⁸ Ferenc Pölöskei, "A Honismereti Mozgalom időszzerű kérdései [Timely Issues of the Honismereti Movement]," *Honismeret* 8, no. 5 (1980): 48–49.

⁴⁹⁹ When commemorating the past two decades of the movement, Béla Köpeczi emphasized the importance of observing professional standards as well as disseminating knowledge solely based on the latest results of research. Béla Köpeczi, "A Magyar Tudományos Akadémia És a Honismereti Mozgalom [The Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Honismereti Movement]," *Honismeret* 8, no. 5 (1980): 23–24.

⁵⁰⁰ Gábor, "Történelem és közgondolkodás. Ki, mit és hogyan közvetít? [History and Public Opinion: Who Disseminates What and How?]," *Heves Megyei Népujság*, June 19, 1982.

and university students. Such measures aimed at integrating *honsimeret* into the structure of patriotic education, in order to make young people more political and more invested in public matters.⁵⁰¹ In its popularizing efforts, the association was aided by the Association for Popularizing Sciences, an interdisciplinary network dedicated to the dissemination of popular scientific knowledge, which also carried out *honismereti* activities throughout the period.⁵⁰²

The *honismereti* movement – despite its principally unambiguous formulation as a tool of socialist patriotic activism – was also seen as a potentially subversive network. Accordingly, the documents of the leading committees never ceased to emphasize the importance of cultivating “healthy local patriotism,” alluding to the opportunity *honismeret* could provide for nationalist agendas.⁵⁰³

Matica Hrvatska, the central organ that coordinated and published works of popular history in Croatia, was established in 1842 in Zagreb as the central institution of Croatian culture and national identity. The organization had an ambiguous relationship with state socialist authorities from the start, promoting Croatian national consciousness. However, Matica was allowed to function, and in terms of popularizing activities it peaked during the Croatian Spring, as Tomislav Brandolica and Filip Šimetin Šegvić showed in a recent article.⁵⁰⁴ The organization was shut down until 1990 exactly based on its deep involvement in the events of the Croatian Spring. As no other

⁵⁰¹ A Hazafias Népfrent Országos Elnökségének Honismereti Albizottsága, “A III. Országos Honismereti Konferencia állásfoglalása [Resolution of the III. National Honismereti Conference],” *Honismeret* 9, no. 3 (1981): 3–6. 4–5.

⁵⁰² Hazafias Népfrent Országos Elnöksége Honismereti Bizottság, “II. Országos Honsimereti Konferencia, Kecskemét, 1976. Február 13–14. A Hazafias Népfrent Országos Elnöksége Honismereti Bizottságának beszámolója a Honismereti Mozgalom helyzetéről és feladatairól [III. National Conference of Honismeret, Kecskemét, February 13–14th, 1976. Report of the Honismereti Committee of the National Presidium of Patriotic Popular Front about the Situation and Tasks of the Honismereti Movement],” 13.

⁵⁰³ György Székely, “A Honismereti Mozgalom eredményei és feladatai [The Achievements and Tasks of Honismereti Movement],” *Honismeret* 8, no. 5 (1980): 15–19. 19.

⁵⁰⁴ Brandolica and Šimetin Šegvić, “Historiografija i popularna historija u vremenu Hrvatskog proljeća.”

systematic article has been published beyond Brandolica and Šimetin Šegvić's, I rely on their analysis considerably, contrasting it with my own findings in the Hungarian context – in terms of chronology, actors, and outlets.

In Hungary, one single popular historical journal functioned as the main outlet of popular (contemporary) history. *História*, at the peak of its popularity, had over 8,000 subscribers across the country, including enthusiastic high school students and their teachers, along with interested intellectuals and libraries. *História* worked with a board that comprised professional historians affiliated with the central institutions of historical knowledge production. The editor-in-chief was the young Ferenc Glatz, party secretary of the Institute of History of HAS, and secretary of the prestigious Hungarian Historical Association. Some episodes of the negotiations between Glatz and science policy-makers can be reconstructed based on the archival materials that are stored by the HAS. Glatz's proposals were well-crafted and persuasive (they reflected on already identified challenges of historiography and seemed to offer a solution), displaying their author's skill in formulating his ideas in a language similar to that of the policies, as the excerpt below shows:

Within diverse layers of our society, historical works of different genres, popular book series, historical pieces of dailies and journals attract a broad readership. This phenomenon – beyond the urgent task to meet a pronounced need for public culture that should be met, also offered an opportunity in terms of consciousness-shaping. As is well known, the political public thinking in Hungary is traditionally history-centered. The answers to historical questions both on the level of political ideology and that of public thinking are and used to be in close conjunction with current sociopolitical, even daily political statements, the way in which they are approached. There is no need therefore to go into detail about the ideological-political significance of providing Marxist ideological-professional tenets to the building of historical knowledge that reaches broad segments of society. In order to fulfill this function, it seems necessary for a popular historical journal to come into being, which, based on the up-to-date results of historiography and related sciences,, approaches the different periods of Hungarian and world history in an easily perceptible manner, while it manages to get closer through its interesting,

heterogeneous topics to such fields of historical public thinking that is unavailable for scholarly journals, printed and electronic fora of popular history as well.⁵⁰⁵

História managed to create an infrastructure of its own. Beyond the appearance of the magazine from 1979, the event series *História Club* was also initiated in 1980.⁵⁰⁶ In cooperation with the Nemzeti Múzeum [National Museum], the sessions took place once a month and the topics were advertised in HSWP's official daily, *Népszabadság*. The invited historian(s) spoke to the audience about their research interests according to the unwritten rules of popular history. The series became as popular as to expand to other cities; there are mentions of *História Club* sessions for example in Szombathely and in Veszprém.⁵⁰⁷

The most popular books in Hungary featured either in the *Magyar História* [Hungarian History] or in the *Tények és tanúk* [Facts and Witnesses] series. Their profiles differed considerably. The former published small monographs on all periods of Hungarian history, including János Kende's piece about the democratic revolution and the Soviet Republic⁵⁰⁸ and Ignác Romsics's book that dealt with the establishment of the Horthy regime and the history of the 1920s.⁵⁰⁹ These volumes were edited in the Institute of History of HAS and were authored by young scholars.

Tények és tanúk, on the other hand, featured egodocuments, diaries, and autobiographies that were often subjected to thorough editing that included manipulation of the original text, omissions, or fictional addenda, according to the instruction of the editor in charge

⁵⁰⁵ Ferenc Glatz, "Glatz Ferenc levele Stier Miklóshoz, Az MTA tudományos titkárához [Letter of Ferenc Glatz to Miklós Stier, Scientific Secretary of HAS]," 1979, Archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, MTA II. Filozófiai és Történettudományok Osztályának iratai, 268. box, 1. folder. 1.

⁵⁰⁶ "Lovas Márta a História Klubban [Márta Lovas in História Klub]," *Népszabadság*, February 24, 1980.

⁵⁰⁷ "Az MTA Történettudományi Intézetének Hírei (1981–1984) [News of the Institute of History HAS (1981–1984)]." 165.

⁵⁰⁸ János Kende, *Forradalomról forradalomra: Az 1918–1919-es forradalmak Magyarországon* [From Revolution to Revolution: The Revolutions of 1918 and 1919 in Hungary], Magyar História (Budapest: Gondolat, 1979).

⁵⁰⁹ Ignác Romsics, *Ellenforradalom és konszolidáció: A Horthy-rendszer első tíz éve* [Counterrevolution and Consolidation: The First Ten Years of the Horthy Regime], Magyar História (Budapest: Gondolat, 1982).

or the so-called *lektor*, an (alleged) expert of the given topic who was authorized to suggest substantial corrections in the manuscript.⁵¹⁰ Most of the authors wrote about their experiences in the 20th century, and among them male politicians dominated. The most relevant volumes for my analysis included Gyula Kádár's work with its insights into the fate of the Second Hungarian Army on the Eastern Front,⁵¹¹ the diaries of Borbála Szabó describing her experiences in occupied Budapest,⁵¹² and Ágnes Rózsa's book about the horrors of the concentration camp.⁵¹³ Beyond monographs that were written with the specific purpose of popularization, in fact multiple academic books about recent history sold a large number of copies.

The series *Népszerű történelem* [Popular History] was the third important book series with a similar purpose, publishing over 80 volumes from dominantly Hungarian but also foreign authors, addressing different periods of Hungarian and world history. The series was launched in the late 1950s but its production intensified visibly during the 1970s and 1980s. In response to the great interest, some of the works witnessed second, third or even fourth editions. A significant portion of the books concerned recent Hungarian history, including those of György Borsányi,⁵¹⁴ Tibor Hajdu,⁵¹⁵ György

⁵¹⁰ Kőszeg, "Könyvkiadói cenzúra Magyarországon II. [Censorship in Publishing in Hungary]." 525.

⁵¹¹ Gyula Kádár, *A Ludovikától Sopronkőhidáig* [From Ludovika to Sopronkőhida] (Budapest: Magvető, 1978).

⁵¹² Borbála Szabó and Judit Elek, *Budapesti napló: 1944 november-1945 január* [Diary in Budapest: 1944 November – 1945 January], *Tények és tanúk* (Budapest: Magvető, 1983).

⁵¹³ Ágnes Rózsa, *Nürnbergi Lágernapló, 1944-45* [Lager Diary in Nuremberg 1944–45], *Tények és tanúk* (Budapest: Magvető, 1978).

⁵¹⁴ György Borsányi, *Válságévek krónikája: 1929–1933 ; Az 1929–1933-as gazdasági világválság hatása Magyarországon* [Chronicle of the Years of Crisis: 1929–1933: The Impacts of the 1933 Economic Crisis in Hungary], *Népszerű Történelem* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvk, 1987).

⁵¹⁵ Tibor Hajdu, *Március huszonegyediké* [March 21st] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1979).

Ránki,⁵¹⁶ Lóránt Tilkovszky,⁵¹⁷ Magda Somlyai⁵¹⁸ – just to highlight a few from among those that are relevant to the scope of my study.⁵¹⁹

The most important non-academics who extensively published about recent national histories in the period were István Nemeskürty, György Száraz (Hungary), and Zvonimir Kulundžić (Croatia). Apart from Száraz, whose literary and popular historical works usually addressed 20th century events, Nemeskürty and Kulundžić published on a broader range of topics, especially the former, with his books about the 16th century.⁵²⁰ Kulundžić often focused on specific figures of recent Croatian history – or contemporaries, in the case of Miroslav Krleža⁵²¹ – treating their writings as a literary critique and often, as editor and publisher of essays and other works.⁵²²

Beyond designated book series, several academic works also enjoyed great popularity with the lay audience. This had either to do with the choice of topic or with a more accessible style, sometimes both in Hungary, Ránki and Berend were widely read, and Mária Ormos's book on the Trianon Peace Treaty proved to be exceptionally sought after, while in Croatia, the works of Ljubo Boban and Bogdan Krizman sold very well generally.

⁵¹⁶ György Ránki, *1944: Március 19* [March 19, 1944], 2nd ed., (Budapest, 1978).

⁵¹⁷ Lóránt Tilkovszky, *SS-toborzás Magyarországon* [SS recruitment in Hungary] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1974).

⁵¹⁸ Magda Somlyai, *Nagy csaták után: az új élet kezdete Magyarországon 1944–1945* [After Great Battles: The Beginnings of New Life in Hungary 1944–1945] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1975).

⁵¹⁹ While Hungarian publishing houses were state-owned, the gradually decreasing state subvention prompted them to be more mindful of publishing works that appeal for a broad audience. Popular history proved to be a quite lucrative genre, not only concerning contemporary history. For example, Katalin Péter (1937–2020), the renowned early modernist, published a popularizing book that was printed in 80 thousand copies. Katalin Péter, *A csejtei várúrnő: Báthory Erzsébet* [The Lady of Csejte: Erzsébet Báthory] (Budapest: Helikon Kiadó, 1985).

⁵²⁰ István Nemeskürty, *Krónika Dózsa György tetteiről. Híradás a Mohács előtti időkről* [Chronicles about the Deeds of György Dózsa: Reports on the Times before Mohács] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1972); István Nemeskürty, *Ez történt Mohács után* [This Had Happened After Mohács] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1966).

⁵²¹ Just to name a few: Zvonimir Kulundžić, *Tajne i kompleksi Miroslava Krleže – Koje su ključ za razumijevanje pretežnog dijela njegova opusa* [Secrets and Complexes of Miroslav Krleža: Those Which Are Essential To Understand His Work] (Ljubljana: Emonica, 1988).

⁵²² Zvonimir Kulundžić, *Slavko Kolar i njegovo vrijeme* [Slavko Kolar and His Time] (Zagreb: Nezavisno autorsko izdanje, 1977); Zvonimir Kulundžić, *Stjepan Radić i njegov republikanski ustav* [Stjepan Radić and His Republican Constitution] (Zagreb: Nezavisno autorsko izdanje, 1989).

As Chapter Two concluded, the ideological offerings of socialist patriotism – aiming to create a substitute for positive identification with the nation, eliminating nationalist elements – ultimately failed. Consequently, historians of contemporary history who continued to frame their discourses as a primarily scholarly content intended for their peers or as writings that wished to fit in the offered ideological framework (out of fear for what may happen if nationalism resurfaced) experienced a growing distance between themselves and their lay readership. The interest of non-specialist intellectuals turned, on the one hand, to the historical experiences of the everyman and an emotionally more relatable narrative style. Péter Sipos,⁵²³ fellow of the Hungarian Party History Institute, made his observation regarding a specific event of recent Hungarian history – the fate of the Second Hungarian Army in the Second World War – but his point can be generalized to the existence of an increasing interest in interwar and Second World War-related topics among the broader public throughout the region.

The public is no longer content with sheer descriptive reconstructions that are only interested in high politics and investigate what happened in the Buda castle, in the ministries, in the governmental quarters of European capitals. It is also interested in the political views of lower social strata and how they felt.⁵²⁴

In his comparative study of Trianon-depictions in Hungarian and Slovak historiography, László Vörös used the interwar national topos – his own terms – of the Trianon tragedy as a yardstick to measure the progress in the opening up of Hungarian historiography towards the question. He furthermore emphasized the “sterile” and neutral language that was employed. However, as he identified the recurrence of the

⁵²³ Péter Sipos (1935–2017) studied history and literature at ELTE and spent his *aspirantura* in the of HAS . Upon completion of his candidacy, he was employed by the Party History Institute where he worked until 1991. He returned to the IH between 1991–2007 and remained involved in the work of the renamed Institute of Political History. During the existence of the journal, Sipos acted as editor of the 20th century columns of *História*.

⁵²⁴ Péter Sipos, “Pergőtűzben. Sára Sándor Filmsorozata a 2. Magyar Hadseregről [In Drumfire. The Series of Sándor Sára about the 2nd Hungarian Army],” *História* 5, no. 1 (1983): 18–19. 18.

topos in the 1980s, he considered the decade to be already part of a renaissance of the topic.⁵²⁵

Party history institutes also had popularizing ambitions and activities. In Hungary, they carried out the bulk of their popularizing work within the frameworks of assemblies of the Hungarian Historical Association and other events that were supposed to contribute to the further training of history teachers. Party historians often presented at the same trainings for history teachers as their colleagues from the HAS and the universities, they often held talks at cultural events of trade unions, and had many opportunities to share their findings with non-professional audiences within the framework of cadre education in general. In terms of publishing popularizing materials, Hungarian party historians also submitted articles to *História*. The idea of establishing a separate popular historical journal for party history was never considered seriously.⁵²⁶ Occasionally, the need to use the stylistic offerings of popular history was voiced concerning party history specifically, although with less disciplinary rigor.⁵²⁷

Events threading the fine line between professional and popular often provided a good overview of the state of the scholarship, in addition to an insight into the extent to which politicians were willing to rely on these results and their discursive implication. As I pointed out in Chapter Three about academic historiography, the pluralization of discourses about the political nature of the Horthy regime took place at the beginning of the 1980s, while earlier depictions and labels survived. As the following example demonstrates, the popular scene was also prone to discursive heterodoxies.

⁵²⁵ László Vörös, “A történelmi Magyarország szétesése és Trianon. Az 1918–1920 közötti események megjelenítése a magyar és szlovák történetírásban [The Breakup of Historical Hungary and Trianon: The Depiction of the Events of 1918–1920 in Hungarian and Slovak Historiographies],” *Limes* 24, no. 1 (2011): 5–36. 6.

⁵²⁶ Deme, “Ankét a Párttörténeti Intézet munkájáról és a „Tanúságtevők” című sorozatról [Session About the Work of the Party History Institute and of the Series ‘Witnesses’],” 207.

⁵²⁷ Ernő Gondos, “A munkásmozgalmi ismeretterjesztés (Jegyzetek Vadász Ferenc munkássága kapcsán) [Dissemination of Knowledge Concerning the Workers’ Movement (Notes On the Works of Ferenc Vadász)],” *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 23, no. 1 (1977): 176–82.

4.1.1. Blurred boundaries: A case study about the confluence of historical and broader public debates

In order to illustrate how research on contemporary history could channel into public debates, I provide here an account of a conference that was assembled for the sake of celebrating the approaching 40th anniversary of the liberation of Hungary in the summer of 1984. Its participants were required to reflect on the year 1944 either in their professional capacities or as representatives of institutions that played an important role in Hungarian state life during the Second World War. Beyond the presenters, commentators were invited alike. The event was opened by Gyula Kállai, a former prime minister (1965–67), who had been the president of the Hazafias Népfront Országos Tanácsa [National Council of the Patriotic Popular Front] for decades. His speech was not without personal reflections, as Kállai participated in the resistance during the war. He repeatedly described Miklós Horthy and his system of governance – mostly in relation to the Second World War only – within a politically loaded conceptual framework. He called the governor a fascist and the person responsible for leading Hungary into ruin [országvesztő], a man who would “have rather bathed in the blood of workers” just to avoid collaborating with them for the sake of rescuing the country.⁵²⁸ He also mentioned the controversy around Hungary being the last satellite of Hitler’s Germany, suggesting that the notion should not be applied to the people but to the ruling classes.⁵²⁹

The historical profession was represented by affiliates of the major institutions. György Ránki, with his impressive record of writings about the German occupation and fascism in Hungary in general, referred to all his main findings in the language that he and some

⁵²⁸ Gyula Kállai, “Elnöki megnyitó [Presidential Greetings],” in *Magyarország 1944-ben. Tudományos Tanácskozás Budapest, 1984. Június 14.* [Hungary in 1944: Scientific Meeting Budapest, June 14th, 1984.], ed. Sándor Orbán (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1984), 5–10. 7.

⁵²⁹ Kállai. 8.

other colleagues – including Mária Ormos – had shaped for the sake of a nuanced depiction of the interwar and war regime(s). Ránki used various terms to describe the entirety, or parts of the twenty-five years of Horthy’s rule: right-wing, conservative, known for its revanchist obsession, authoritative political system.⁵³⁰ The term “conservative” was also favored by another contributor, György Száraz, whose presence alongside Ránki, István Pintér (PHI, and Sándor Tóth⁵³¹ (Hadtörténeti Intézet [Institute for Military History]) showed the prestige he earned in matters of collective memory.

In a quite unusual manner, the representatives of the most influential confessions, Catholic, Calvinist, Lutheran, and Jewish, also participated in this conference. They were commentators by design, but their contributions were in fact compact speeches. The representatives of Christian churches, one after another, tried to show that the respective institutions should not to be remembered as single units when reminiscing about the Second World War, pointing mostly towards single dissent activities, usually pertaining to the hindering of the deportations and saving Jews. The Holocaust and the deportations had been an important, recurrent topic during the event; for the first time, it did not center only on the Jewish victims. A Roma intellectual (engineer and writer), Menyhért Lakatos, spoke about the striking lack of research into the sufferings of the Roma community, and he gave a brief account of the nature of the persecution to which his community was subjected.⁵³²

⁵³⁰ György Ránki, “A német megszálláshoz vezető út [The Road to German Occupation],” in *Magyarország 1944-ben: Tudományos tanácskozás, Budapest, 1984. június 14.* [Hungary in 1944: Scientific Meeting in Budapest, June 14th, 1984], ed. Sándor Orbán (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1984), 13–23.

⁵³¹ Sándor Tóth (1924–2015) was a military officer and historian. The latter qualification he was granted by a party declaration in the early 1950s after his years of studying history at the evening courses of ELTE and working in the Institute for Military History. He earned his candidacy in military history in 1975. His research focused on the activities of Hungarian armies during the Second World War.

⁵³² Menyhért Lakatos, “A cigányok sorsa 1944-ben [The Fate of the Roma in 1944],” in *Magyarország 1944-ben: Tudományos tanácskozás, Budapest, 1984. június 14.* [Hungary in 1944: Scientific Meeting, Budapest, June 14th, 1984], ed. Sándor Orbán (Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1984), 54–58.

In terms of the historiographical stakes, it was quite clear that the event was not intended for public discussion of a brand-new interpretation of research results. It was rather a confirmation or a cementation of the paradigmatic change about the approach to Hungary's German occupation and the issue of collaboration in general, which occurred in the preceding years, bringing about the change of position of György Ránki, the most important historian who worked on this issue. In his closing words, Pál Zsigmond Pach summarized this approach as following:

We sought to understand the German occupation within a context in which Hungary's international situatedness, the inner structure of Hungarian political and governmental system, and last but not least the lack of concept all played their part. In this framework, the inner and external powers and individual historical figures entered into an interrelation with objective processes, in which the German occupation cannot be merely seen as a clear logical consequence of the main tendencies of the Horthy regime. At the same time, it should not be considered accidental, the result of subjective human errors or solely as a consequence of external pressures.⁵³³

Some aspects of party history were arguably even better covered in popularizing work than that of professional ones. Nada Kisić-Kolanović voiced her critique with regard to the discussions of ZAVNOH, comparing the meager scholarly work to the abundance of popularizing ones.⁵³⁴

Popular history, in most instances, offered neither an alternative *Weltanschauung*, nor did it cater to the need of a specific subculture that would call into question the professional consensus on different aspects and events of history. While there were quite esoteric historical works also available, their presence and social impact were marginal, only to witness a period of steady growth after the end of state socialism. My study treats them according to their share in the market of ideas concerning recent history. Content-wise therefore, popular history was in line with mainstream

⁵³³ Zsigmond Pál Pach, "Zárszó [Closing Remarks]," in *Magyarország 1944-ben. Tudományos Tanácskozás, Budapest, 1984. Június 14. [Hungary in 1944: Scientific Meeting, Budapest, June 14th, 1984.]* (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1984), 142–46. 142.

⁵³⁴ Kisić Kolanović, "ZAVNOH u našoj povijesnoj literaturi u povodu 30-godišnjice III Zasjedanja ZAVNOH-a [Zavnoh in Our Historical Literature: On the Occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Third Session of ZAVNOH]." 116.

scholarship; it was set apart by its style, the choice of topics taking popular interest into account, the targeted audience, and the outlet/venue in which it was presented.⁵³⁵

The *honismereti* movement fitted smoothly among the actors of socialist consciousness forming. As the movement gained new momentum in the 1970s, their institutional expansion was further supported by the paradigm change in cultural politics, which was signaled by the adoption of the concept of *közművelődés* instead of *népművelés*. While the latter assigned a rather passive role to the audience, *közművelődés* was supposed to express the mutual engagement of educator and audience, preferably their collective work.

4.2. Historiography in dialogue with literature: Dynamic interactions

Although communism was inherently a future-bound project, the general interest in historical topics prevailed as an important continuation from before 1948,⁵³⁶ which also meant that historical scholarship, while claiming the expert knowledge for itself, remained in dialogue with other fields, often drawing inspiration from, or lending expertise to the creation of different works of art. In both Hungary and Croatia, numerous instances can be cited when historical depictions in different genres prompted historians to react in their research. The opposite mechanism occurred as well; historians lent their scholarly knowledge to theater directors, writers or filmmakers, in theory, in order to enhance the authenticity of their work. Interwar period antecedents set the stage early for one of the most important dividing lines in regional intellectual circles. The so-called agrarian populist-urbanite debate was, in a narrower sense, confined to the field of literature, however, as it has been deeply engaged with social

⁵³⁵ Vass, “A vándorgyűlés célja és feladatai [The Aims and Tasks of the Assembly].” 16.

⁵³⁶ Marie-Janine Calic, *Geschichte Jugoslawiens im 20. Jahrhundert*, Europäische Geschichte im 20. Jahrhundert (München: C.H. Beck, 2010). 285.

consciousness and the essence of individual and collective identity, its influence reached way beyond such boundaries. Historians as contributors to the formation of historical consciousness – a crucial ingredient of social consciousness – were easily drawn into it. The genesis of the agrarian populist-urbanite debate is intimately tied to the way and speed in which modernity unfolded in East Central and Southeastern Europe. Therefore, it would go way beyond the scope of the current investigation to give an exhaustive overview of this defining intellectual tradition. Instead, what follows is a prehistory and analysis of how the previously mentioned junctures with historical consciousness played out in the 1970s and 1980s, concerning the depictions of the history of the respective nations between 1918 and 1945.

During the interwar period, rural populations were increasingly seen as the authentic expression of unique spirits of the respective nations in the two regions, although not completely idealized.⁵³⁷ The peasantry, on the one hand, was suddenly perceived as a community that needed political representation while it was being misunderstood and poorly known. Social scientists, writers, and politicians of rather eclectic political horizons (but with a predominance of HSS membership in Croatia)⁵³⁸ chose to engage with rural societies through visits and research, advocating for the need to elevate the peasantry while preserving its essentialized characteristics.⁵³⁹ Hence, sociographic description served naturally as the most important genre,⁵⁴⁰ providing the opportunity

⁵³⁷ Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume II: Negotiating Modernity in the "Short Twentieth Century" and Beyond, Part I: 1918–1968*. 153.

⁵³⁸ Joel M. Halpern and E. A. Hammel, "Observations on the Intellectual History of Ethnology and Other Social Sciences in Yugoslavia," 1969, 17–26. 23.

⁵³⁹ Trencsényi et al. proposed to think about the agricultural populists as following: "rather than a homogeneous ideological movement, interwar agrarian populism can be considered a highly situational ideology, drawing on a plurality of local and transnational resources and responding to local exigencies but occasionally attempting supranational cooperation." Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume II: Negotiating Modernity in the "Short Twentieth Century" and Beyond, Part I: 1918–1968*. 143.

⁵⁴⁰ The prose of "populist writers" relied heavily on these descriptions as well.

to connect with the everyday struggle of the peasantry, the embodiment of the spirit of the nation both on a scholarly and on an emotional or personal level.

Peasantry as a national “class” was often juxtaposed to the alienated or downright alien urban population whose prosperity was allegedly based on the usurpation of the work of the countryside. Calling their patriotism into question on the basis of the lack of spiritual attachment to the land – which peasants supposedly innately had – the urban population was depicted as one which is unable to serve as the source of national rejuvenation. This attributed inability was used to prove their inferiority in comparison to the peasantry. This set of axioms synthesized several pre-existing narrative traditions while incorporating time-specific anxieties in the form of (latent) anti-German and anti-Semitic sentiment.

Both in Hungary and in Croatia (Yugoslavia), the intellectuals who advocated for the above principles are referred to as agricultural populists, although their activities were loosely organized, and many of the actors who were considered members of these movements explicitly refused such classifications. Trencsényi et al. compiled a long list of detectable intellectual trends within their works, including technocratic social reformism, ethnicist peasant socialism, intellectualist “quality socialism,” populism espoused with avant-gardism, radical democratism, ethnically loaded national radicalism, peasantist modernism, and crypto-Communism.⁵⁴¹

This wide array of ideas, which still mostly contended that both socialist collectivism and liberal capitalism should be transcended, made the agrarian populists predisposed to support (even if only temporarily) various political groups, ranging from the far left to the far right. Peasantism was present in the interwar political landscapes of Hungary and Croatia, and its relationship with the governing parties changed quite frequently. In

⁵⁴¹ Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe: Volume II: Negotiating Modernity in the “Short Twentieth Century” and Beyond, Part I: 1918–1968*. 148.

terms of literary presence, the Hungarian *Napkelet* and *Kelet Népe* as well as the Croatian group *Zemlja* [Earth]⁵⁴² and the journals *Kritika* and *Literatura* provided fora for these ideas along with several publishing houses. These interwar currents survived the Second World War and agrarian populist intellectuals continued to express their concern for the rural population, in addition to various aspects of the national question during different periods of state socialism.

In her illuminating study, Zorica Stepić focused on the organic (Gramsci) nature of the Yugoslav left intelligentsia, but she also touched upon the way in which some of these thinkers were connected to the illegal Communist party in a fashion that was later-called fellow-traveler. Understandably, she discussed Miroslav Krleža's position in most detail. In the second half of her article, Stepić engaged with the issue of how this heterogeneous group of intellectuals all had the peasantry as their central point of reference.⁵⁴³ While avoiding a definition, she added the following common characteristics: anti-elite attitude and keen interest in social issues.⁵⁴⁴ Just as in the Hungarian case, the political biographies of Croatian agrarian populist intellectuals showed great variety, ranging from becoming a Minister in the Ustaša government to those who later opted for the revolutionary agenda of the party.

In Hungary, until the 1956 revolution, writers, among them many agrarian-populist writers, were preferred by the state socialist regime as partners in dialogue concerning contemporary politics of culture. However, the active involvement of writers in the revolution brought about the agrarian populist writers' fall from grace – this decision

⁵⁴² The group was established in Zagreb in 1929. The founding artists refused the Communist doctrine of socialist realism but advocated for dialectical materialism and socialism. Irina Subotic, "Concerning Art and Politics in Yugoslavia during the 1930s," *Art Journal* 52, no. 1 (1993): 69, <https://doi.org/10.2307/777304>. 69.

⁵⁴³ Zorica Stepić, "O pojmu lijeve inteligencije u Hrvatskoj u tridesetim godinama [On the Notion of Left Intelligentsia in Croatia during the Thirties]," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 11, no. 1 (1979): 113–29.

⁵⁴⁴ Stepić.

was made apparent in the directives of the MSZMP KB Kultúrpolitikai Munkacsoport [Working Group of Politics of Culture of the HSWP CC], which was published in *Társadalmi Szemle*, the theoretical journal of the party, in 1958.⁵⁴⁵ Even though other clusters of the intelligentsia – including historians – came to the fore as potential allies, the traditional influence of writers that cut across social strata secured the importance of pivotal literary figures in cultural politics. The atmosphere of literature was deeply imbued with the bitter clashes emanating from the opposition between agrarian populist and urbanite [cosmopolitan] writers that had a long prehistory dating back to the interwar period. State socialist politics of culture headed by Aczél sought to strike a balance between the two, and to ally them with dedicated Communist writers. His renewed attempts reflected the influence that this debate bore over the literary field and beyond.

When it came to contemporary historical topics, both “sides” were represented by books of varying success,⁵⁴⁶ however, Miklós Szabolcsi’s note on the exceptionality of the Hungarian literature in terms of national self-reflection was exaggerated.⁵⁴⁷ Agrarian populist writers were especially keen on pushing contemporary historians to turn their attention to the “national cause.” This entailed unfavorable demographic developments (falling birth rate, increasing number of suicides), a concern for the future of Hungarian communities living in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia and incorporated such historical tropes and topics into their own narratives that they held to be under-researched. The agrarian populist group was never closed to intellectuals outside the

⁵⁴⁵ Melinda Kalmár, *Történelmi galaxisok vonzásában: Magyarország és a szovjetrendszer, 1945–1990* [Gravitation to Historical Galaxies: Hungary and the Soviet System, 1945–1990], (Budapest: Osiris, 2014). 146.

⁵⁴⁶ Notably, Tibor Cseres: *Hideg napok* [Cold Days] and the later Nobel Prize laureate Imre Kertész: *Sorstalanság* [Fatelessness].

⁵⁴⁷ Miklós Szabolcsi, “Magyar irodalom, kritika, valóság a hetvenes években: Bevezető előadás” [Hungarian Literature, Critique, Reality in the Seventies: Introductory Lecture], *Tiszatáj* 32, no. 10 (1978): 36–48. 43.

literary circles though. Historians, especially agrarian historians, were in linked to this network, such as the already mentioned Lajos Für, the legacy of István Szabó, István Orosz⁵⁴⁸ (disciple of the former) and others.

In Croatia, as a central figure of progressive interwar left, Miroslav Krleža proved to be a key connection between Tito and the literary circles until the death of the latter.⁵⁴⁹ Member of the Communist party since 1919, Krleža represented the revolutionary wing of Croatian progressives before the Second World War. However, his anti-Stalinist critique culminated in his expulsion from the party in 1939, after being accused of revisionism by Milovan Đilas and Tito among others. Still, after the war he was rehabilitated and became a close ally of Tito. As Krleža managed to revitalize his political ties as early as the 1950s, through this act, it can be argued that the agrarian populist trend that Krleža in part represented allied itself much earlier with the party in comparison to Hungary. Hungarian agrarian populist writers were at that time sidelined with their “untimely” agenda of a national communism, and only some fellow travelers with agrarian populist ties were tolerated.⁵⁵⁰ Following from behind-the-scenes discussions of the late 1960s and the early 1970s, especially with Gyula Illyés, one of the earlier coopted fellow travelers, semi-official collaboration crystallized by the mid-1980s.

4.2.1. Literary depictions of historical thought and events: Two cases

As was previously pointed out, Krleža was a leading figure of Croatian writers after his rehabilitation in 1950 and he leveraged this role in his political relations. He held posts

⁵⁴⁸ István Orosz (1935–) is an agrarian historian. After earning his degree in literature and history, first he taught at a secondary school, but he soon earned a junior position in his alma mater, the University of Debrecen. There he remained until the transition, later he taught at ELTE also. Orosz specializes in urban and agrarian history in the modern era.

⁵⁴⁹ Krleža frequently published in Belgrade-based journals as well, most notably in *Pečat* [Seal] and *Danas* [Today].

⁵⁵⁰ Éva Ständeisky, “A népi írók és a hatalom az 1950-es években [Agrarian Populist Writers and the Regime in the 1950s],” *1956-os Intézet és Oral History Archivum* (blog), accessed March 12, 2020, http://www.rev.hu/ords/f?p=600:2:::::P2_PAGE_URI:tanulmanyok/1945_56/nepiurok.

in various central cultural institutions during his years as one of the main Croatian public intellectuals: he established Jugoslavenski leksikografski zavod [Yugoslav Institute of Lexicography] in 1950, collaborated in the issuing of JAZU's literary journal, and he was also chairman of the Saveza književnika Jugoslavije [Writers' Association of Yugoslavia] from 1958–1961. In these capacities, the way in which he conveyed a narrative of Croatian (recent) history was influential without doubt. In the following, I will introduce two literary works that heavily built on historical narratives. Krleža's novel sequel shows an attempt at a broad reflection on twentieth century Croatian and Yugoslav history, under the impression of the viability and desirability of harmonious multinational coexistence. From the Hungarian context, I chose an example that shows the complex interplay of different genres dealing with history, ultimately bringing about a narrative novel. These examples illustrate the various ways in which reliance on historical narratives emanating from scholarly and non-scholarly publications fed into the literary imagination and led to the creation of a new historical narrative of different quality.

Krleža's unfinished magnum opus *Zastave* [Banners] functioned as the most powerful articulation of his views on modern Croatian history. With a chronological arch stretching from the 1910s to the establishment of state socialist Yugoslavia, his grand narrative necessarily engaged with most critical points of Croatian historiography concerning the interwar period.⁵⁵¹ Although Krleža wrote the series in the course of the 1960s, it remained unparalleled in the late socialist years, rendering it the single most influential literary depiction of modern Croatian history. It also served as a testimony to the legitimacy of state socialism as Krleža directed the narrative in a way which suggests that the attempt to establish a socialist – hence more just – Yugoslavia was a

⁵⁵¹ Dubravka Juraga, "Miroslav Krleža's 'Zastave': Socialism, Yugoslavia, and the Historical Novel," *South Atlantic Review* 62, no. 4 (1997): 32, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3200744>. 33.

historical necessity, and the series attempts to narrate the prehistory of this experiment. The novel follows protagonist Kamilo Emericki, who is becoming disillusioned with political pragmatism (often simply in the form of bourgeois life) and is gradually drawn first to national, then to revolutionary ideas.

Throughout the five published volumes, the tension between Emericki's personal relations and the public sphere remain tangible.⁵⁵² His relationship with his father, his love affairs (and marriage) and friendships had their parts to play in the evolution of his political views. The figure of Emericki's childhood friend, 'Joja', signaled the fact that Emericki had been in contact with anti-establishment ideas from an early age onwards, even if he was hesitating for long to embark on a truly radical turn himself. Also, he was the one who convinced Emericki to join the cause of Communism at some point. 'Joja's role in helping the protagonist to realize how oppressed Balkan nations, including Croats should be liberated, made him the most important conveyor of Krleža's underlying message, sometimes in a quite didactic way.

In Hungary, more recent literary works had decisive impact on late socialist historical thinking. The re-assessment of the history of the Second Hungarian Army in historiography was introduced and prepared through the publication of several memoirs and amateur works. Research into the topic was on the one hand hindered by the restrictions concerning archival access, as well as by the broader political implications of approaching Hungarian occupation of Soviet soil and focusing on Hungarian grievances suffered on the Eastern Front. As was already discussed in Chapter Three about historiography, up until the beginning of the 1980s, historical analysis – if it indeed paid any attention to the issue – retained a simplistic and teleological view.

⁵⁵² Juraga. 38.

The most important literary works with regard to this process were the memoir of Colonel Gyula Kádár⁵⁵³ and András Simonffy's collage-novel (his own definition),⁵⁵⁴ which heavily built on interviews with survivors, and on contemporary and immediate postwar accounts. Notably, there was considerable overlap among those involved in the making of the most important cinematographic depiction of the fate of the Second Hungarian Army, entitled *Pergőtűz/Krónika*. Kádár's memoir was published in the previously discussed *Tények és tanúk* series, and the manuscript was subjected to considerable modifications, because of some of its political implications. Moreover, the author, along with another prominent survivor and expert on the issue – and an important contributor to Simonffy's book, Kálmán Kéri, former member of the Chief of Staff, was recruited by the state security services.⁵⁵⁵ Beyond the circle of survivors and survivors' families, however, several central literary figures, primarily Sándor Csoóri, expressed their own interests in having a more open discussion about this chapter of Hungarian involvement in the Second World War.

Kompország katonái [Soldiers of Ferry-Land] has multiple narrators. The author, András Simonffy wished to explore in depth both the activities of the Hungarian Army in the Second World War and the circumstances of the failed attempt to discontinue the German allegiance in 1944. In the novel, he was in dialogue with his father who participated in this failed diplomatic mission. Their musings and the father's memories were complemented by the accounts of other high-ranking veterans, and Simonffy

⁵⁵³ Kádár, *A Ludovikától Sopronkőhidáig* [From Ludovika to Sopronkőhida].

⁵⁵⁴ Simonffy András, *Kompország katonái. Történelmi kollázsregény* [Soldiers of Ferry-Land: A Historical Collage-Novel] (Budapest: Magvető, 1981).

⁵⁵⁵ According to the Ungváry-Tabajdi duo that uncovered the implication of these former high officers of Horthy's army in the state socialist secret services, the two did not engage in any meaningful agent activities (arguably they even outsmarted their superiors), which would have entailed writing reports on each other (the two men were also friends). Gábor Tabajdi and Krisztián Ungváry, *Elhallgatott múlt: a pártállam és a belügy ; a politikai rendőrség működése Magyarországon 1956–1990* [Silent Past: The Party-State and the Interior: The Operation of Political Police in Hungary 1956–1990] (Budapest: 1956-os Intézet [u.a.], 2008). 270–271.

weaved them together with contemporary records, diaries and historical works. Somewhat similarly to György Száraz's broader claims about "taking possession of the past",⁵⁵⁶ Simonffy was chiefly preoccupied with bringing light to rarely discussed issues, claiming to be without biases and to pursue the question of how his present and future as the member of a younger generation had been influenced by those events that he aimed to recover.

By the mid-1970s, novels dealing with the painful experience of the Holocaust started to appear in Hungary,⁵⁵⁷ however, their appearance did not result in a broader appreciation of their literary merits or the importance of the issues they had raised. Based on personal experience, novels focused on the deportations, life in the concentration camps, and liberation. In that sense, literature was quicker to discover and assess yet another topic of contemporary history. In the canon of Hungarian literary history, Mária Ember's *Hajtűkanyar* [Hairpin Curve]⁵⁵⁸ is considered to be the first among such novels (it was published in 1974). This novel was soon followed by Imre Kertész's⁵⁵⁹ book entitled *Sorstalanság* [Fatelessness],⁵⁶⁰ which also chose a boy as narrator, similarly to *Hajtűkanyar*. In Croatia, the first novels appeared only well after the breakup of the federation. In Serbia though, Alekšandar Tišma published three novels that centered on the events of the Holocaust in Yugoslavia. The books were

⁵⁵⁶ "that, what we may call historical introspection or revaluation, but, what I would prefer to call the process of taking full possession of our history." György Száraz, "Történelmünk birtokbavétele," *Társadalmi Szemle* 40, no. 1 (1982): 21–30. 25.

⁵⁵⁷ Literary historian and critique Béla Pomogáts emphasized in one of his reviews that the experience of the Holocaust only re-emerged after some time had passed. "The painful experiences only started to show their effects later: their lead weights accumulated in the depths of the soul and from time to time, as if in an unexpected and incomprehensible manner, they braked the impetus of free soul." Béla Pomogáts, "Kerényi Grácia: Utazások könyve [Grácia Kerényi: Book of Travels]," *Jelenkor* 23, no. 7–12 (1980): 853–55. 855.

⁵⁵⁸ Mária Ember, *Hajtűkanyar: regény* [Hairpin Curve: A Novel] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1974).

⁵⁵⁹ After the democratic transition, Kertész's work was rediscovered and he won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2002. In 2005, a movie was released under the same title, for which Kertész himself wrote the screenplay.

⁵⁶⁰ Imre Kertész, *Sorstalanság: regény* [Fatelessness: A Novel] (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1975).

published between 1971 and 1987 (*Knjiga o Blamu* – The Book of Blam, *Upotreba čoveka* – The Use of Man, *Kapo*).

4.3. Conclusions

The investigation into popular history in Hungary and Croatia showed that at different points of time – in Croatia, at the end of the 1960s while in Hungary, only ten years later – a broad public interest in the matter of history was finally met (if only briefly in Croatia), with publications. In the Hungarian case, this interest from below met several party expectations, indeed, party encouragement as well, which created ideal circumstances to launch *História*, a journal that came to function as the chief forum of popularizing history for the decade to come. In Croatia, though, such journal was not born out of a surge of interest during the Croatian Spring, which may have simply resulted from its clear ties to the unrest.

On the other hand, it is not clear why such institutionalization did not occur later, despite the fact that the generally favorable predisposition towards the popularization of sciences was just as much characteristic of Croatian (Yugoslav) state socialism as it was to its neighbor. I can offer two tentative (partial) answers. First, although no nationwide available journal existed, some local journals were published, hence, the genre was not entirely missing. Second, the Croatian Spring was associated with Croatian nationalist claims by the regime, and with the banned *Matica Hrvatska*. Due to the fact that leading Croatian cadre remained part of the intellectual network around the *Matica*, which could have hardly been left out of the launching of a nationwide available journal, launching a popular historical journal may have appeared rather risky. It could have not only endangered interethnic relations within the federation should a potential Croatian focus prevail, but could also have served as a source of recurring conflicts within the party.

The hands of historians were not forced when they could choose to participate in non-academic debates or to give up the solitude of the archives sometimes for the sake of a popularizing presentation. Those favoring popularizing and broader intellectual engagement and those not were equally surprised by the aftermath of the transition. While research structures remained largely intact, the market of historical narratives exploded in several waves and beyond the reunion of radical émigré literatures with the domestic ones, throngs of intellectuals and non-intellectuals joined in debates about historical narratives, even if they were relegated to the peripheries (from the point of view of a researcher). Esoteric literatures emerged that occasionally function as cults, playing into the hands of identitarian politics.

This chapter mapped literary interventions concerning contemporary history, as it fostered intensive dialogue and contestations of historical narratives beyond the academic sphere. The comparison is necessarily limited and somewhat fragmented, but that does not compromise the vibrant picture that shows the broad resonances that (re)framing recent national histories were able to stir. While these tensions were in some cases productive, the attitude of professional historians, who did not intend to acknowledge non-academic debate partners as equal, neither to engage in popularizing activities, experienced growing resentment. Beyond the educational and semantic distance, the image of the detached, consciously self-isolating historian survived the propagandistic, and later, more sophisticated state socialist attempts at a profound change in this attitude.

Literary works also engaged with issues of the recent past. Tracing individual and collective experiences, these spheres intensely engaged with existing historical narratives or tried to create themselves if they deemed the existing one insufficient or simply missing from the horizon of the scholarship. These tensions between the

academic sphere, literature (and journalism) were intimately tied to existing intellectual alliances and anxieties, continuing into the 1990s.

The transitions terminated the state socialist restrictions that regulated the public sphere (only to be replaced with other types of measures as the war started in Yugoslavia), therefore, previously dissenting voices gained publicity or greater visibility in both contexts. Old animosities within intellectual circles prevailed though, but their ties to politics in the newly emerging multi-party systems needed some time to crystallize.

All these spheres participated in revisiting some key historical issues in the nations' pasts, and the violent breakup of the Yugoslav wars once again brought the memory of the Second World War to the forefront both on the level of symbols and narratives. In Hungary, sporadic events such as the reburial of Governor Miklós Horthy and publications aiming to rehabilitate him showed that there were communities of remembrance, including historians, who were unhappy with the image of the past that was inherited from the state socialist regimes.

Conclusion

Three decades have passed since the transitions in Hungary and Croatia and in the broader region and at the time of writing, intensive state interventions are underway that attempt to forge a uniform, uncontested, right-leaning memory of the past that is often supported by recently established quasi-research institutes. Although Hungary seems to spearhead this phenomenon by its ever expanding institutional network (e.g. Veritas Intézet [Veritas Institute], Magyarságkutató Intézet [Institute of Hungarian Studies] and Rendszerváltás Történetét Kutató Intézet és Arhívum [Research Institute and Archives for the History of Regime Change]), this is part of a region-wide phenomenon ranging from Poland to the countries of the Balkan peninsula.⁵⁶¹ Therefore, studies that aim to understand the type of knowledge production that occurs under direct and indirect political pressures is very timely. In this vein, this dissertation wishes to contribute to the understanding of late socialist hybrid knowledge production and institutional practices that supported it, in order to understand the patterns that might inform the visions of this new – in Hungary, illiberal – memory politics, engendering a dialogue about the role of partisanship in narratives about the 20th century of the respective nations.

The institutional landscape of historical knowledge production during late socialism displayed interwar and Stalinist characteristics in addition to the imprints of domestic developments both in Hungary and in Croatia, which I addressed within the theoretical framework of new institutionalism. In line with the main premises of Branimir Janković's monograph in relation to the theoretical and methodological developments

⁵⁶¹ Oto Luthar, "Introduction: 'Red Dragon and the Evil Spirits,'" in *Of Red Dragons and Evil Spirits. Post-Communist Historiography between Democratization and New Politics of History* (Budapest ; New York: CEU Press, Central European University Press, 2017), 1–10. 2–3.

in Croatia,⁵⁶² I found it more beneficial to focus on continuities rather than discontinuities in the late socialist institutional context of the scholarship, especially in the case of informal institutions. Previous literature tends to focus on the – very important – discontinuities, which are not called into question here but are complemented with my findings concerning resilient and adaptive structures.

While the main elements of the institutional framework were identical in the two countries, they came to play different roles. In the case of the academies, the fact that the Hungarian one indeed became the central coordinating organ of (recent) historical research was the consequence of the more thorough adaptation of the Stalinist model in this regard. ELTE and other Hungarian universities could never challenge the leading role of the Institute of History of HAS in terms of theoretical and methodological innovation, while in Croatia, economic history had an important center at the Faculty of Philosophy in addition, and the bulk of Mirjana Gross's activities were carried out at the University of Zagreb.

When addressing historiographical studies that deal with historical knowledge production in East Central and Southeastern Europe, the reductionist conceptualization of the activity of party history institutes provides an ideal point of engagement. While understandably post-transitional historiographies tried to create a distance from their chronological predecessors, this attempt resulted in the general devaluation of the historical knowledge production of the preceding decades, occasionally even obfuscating the differences between Stalinist and post-Stalinist circumstances. This anxiety has multiple sources, however, the remarkable resilience of the (informal) institutional structure may be the most important counterargument to those attempts.

⁵⁶² Janković, *Mijenjanje sebe sama*. 4.

Moreover, the personal continuity was close to intact – even today, many of the fellows – even if nearing retirement – maintain their affiliations.

Subsequently, party history institutes seldom feature as key subjects of historical investigations. Even that literature, which engages with them, often seriously lacks an in-depth analysis or demonstrates a clear anti-Communist bias.⁵⁶³ Important work has been done on the early years of party history though in the Croatian (Magdalena Najbar-Agičić)⁵⁶⁴ and in the Czechoslovak (Vítězslav Sommer) contexts. My dissertation provides an inclusive account investigating the 1970s and 1980s, which is interested in the discursive and articulated identities of late socialist historians of contemporary history, especially in relation to the type of knowledge they produced and the way in which they choose to disseminate it. Opting for a non-teleological view on the output of party historians, I started my analysis from the self-proclaimed definition of the place and role of the history of the workers' movement in historiography. It was supposed to be an integral part of the entire historical knowledge production in general, and the same professional standards should have applied to them, however, with unspecified distinct features.⁵⁶⁵ This view is only taken as a starting point though. In Chapter Two, I revisited its context and the most important contestations of this idea, additionally, I looked into the ways in which diverse professional trajectories lend themselves to interpretations within the framework of socialist expertise, both with regard to policy discourses and historiographical engagement.

⁵⁶³ For a recent study see: Francesco Zavatti, "Writing History in a Propaganda Institute - Political Power and Network Dynamics in Communist Romania" (PhD Dissertation, Huddinge, Södertörn University, 2016).

⁵⁶⁴ Najbar-Agičić, *Kultura, znanost, ideologija. Prilozi istraživanju politike komunističkih vlasti u Hrvatskoj od 1945. do 1960. na polju kulture i znanosti* [Culture, Science and Ideology: Contribution to the Research on the Politics of Communist Rule in Croatia In the Fields of Culture and Science 1945–1960]; Najbar-Agičić, "Osnivanje i prve godine djelovanja Povijesnog društva Hrvatske (1947–1955) [The Foundation and the First Years of the Croatian Historical Association's Activity (1947–1955)]."

⁵⁶⁵ Vass, "Munkásmozgalom és tudatformálás [Workers' Movement and the Shaping of Minds]." 25.

The historical knowledge production of the Hungarian Party History Institute was not an outsider to national historiography, quite the contrary. First, they wrote their works overwhelmingly within the national framework and not in a class-based one. Even the narratively disconnected works placed Hungarian people, the Hungarian working classes into the center and were in fact – without success – trying to create an alternative language, which would, ultimately tell the same story nation-centered historiographies did. Second, they interacted with their colleagues who were employed in different institutions occasionally resulting in meaningful collaborations and cross-referencing each other's work. Still, party historians often felt the need to prove their professionalism and that their contribution is important for the sake of Hungarian historiography.

In Croatia, the connection between national and communist was more straightforward in publications about recent history. The partisan narrative constituted part of both party history and national history without ambiguities, which in part might be due to the late establishment of the institute – the years of Yugoslav Stalinism were already over by the time the party history institute was opened. The fellows of the IHCLM were at the beginning dominantly veterans who dealt with the history of the Second World War and they shared the agenda of advocating partisan heroism imbued with nationalism. Despite the obvious opportunity to contribute to a federal narrative, they often limited themselves to the investigation of Croatian partisans, disregarding both the federal framework and the contemporary multinational composition of their member state. Only a minority of researchers connected deliberately to a federal discussion, which was part of a broader problem that I duly addressed in Chapter Two.

There was yet another circumstance that prevented the isolation of party and nation-centered histories in Croatia. Unlike in Hungary, contemporary history was done by

fellows of the IHCLM only. Research into this period was scattered and meager in other institutional contexts. Therefore, there was no such composite literature produced which might be juxtaposed as the production of more traditional institutions of historical scholarship.

The institutional framework has never transformed historians into a uniform guild. This was, on the one hand, the consequence of the inner contradictions of the institutions themselves, on the other hand, due to the lack of arbitration that would have constantly and effectively pushed historians towards political conformity. However, I do not want to mitigate the restrictive and essentially authoritarian nature of state socialist regimes; the absence of continuous pressure did not preclude the persecution of individual researchers. Neither did it entail a lack of historians' participation in explicitly ideological undertakings. However, instead of focusing on the restrictions, I invite the reader to think about the room for maneuver and potential agency of historians while taking into consideration the official and presupposed political boundaries to it.

After the transition, and, in Croatia's case, independence, the slogan of "bringing back" or "re-animating" national history automatically rendered all institutions of an "anti-national" regime and their legacies a regrettable detour that should be redressed as soon as possible. Post-transitional memory politics further complicates the picture. In Hungary, the activity of the PHI was narrated by many as pure propaganda, and the successor institution, the Politikatörténeti Intézet [Institute of Political History] has been targeted by aggressive political moves by the Orbán governments because of its genealogy and ties to post-socialist political circles. In Croatia, however, research into contemporary history remained concentrated in the renamed Institut za suvremenu povijest (until 1996) [Institute for Contemporary History], now called Hrvatski institute

za povijest [Croatian Institute of History]. Until a more robust right-wing politics of history emerged, the institution's role was thus not contested seriously.

Chapter Two analyzed multiple aspects of how historians of recent history worked in the institutional framework and how they were affected by politically driven interventions. State socialism, doubtless, brought about an unprecedented statist interest in sciences,⁵⁶⁶ including the field of historiography, lasting until the dissolution of these regimes. Historians were expected to behave as parts of the progressive intelligentsia and to lend their services to their respective societies through the utilization of their manifold expertise. Depending on the task ahead, historians were called to demonstrate different aptitudes: they lent advice in the advent of commemorations, edited textbooks, popularized their discipline in various forms, hence contributing to the mission of popular education or, in most cases, to carry out research that may also inform any of the tasks listed above. Just like in the case of other aspects of state socialist planning, plenty was done beyond the confines of these prescribed tasks, some even contrary to expectations. Individual abilities or willingness, different leadership styles within the institutions as well as bare chance shaped considerably the historical knowledge production during late socialism.

Shared ideological concerns in Hungary and in Croatia underlined the importance to complicate the framework of Cold War binary further. Leading ideologues in the 1970s and 1980s pondered the potential abandonment of the (Marxist-Leninist) ideological framework as one of the greatest dangers to the people. The process of deideologization was depicted as something that simply ran contrary to the need of the people in a developed socialist society whose basic characteristic was a conscious way of life that was supported by the ideological work of those intellectuals who were entrusted with

⁵⁶⁶ David-Fox and Péteri, "On the Origins and Demise of the Communist Academic Regime." 4.

its elaboration.⁵⁶⁷ The logic of party interventions followed smoothly from this basic assumption. Despite a general relaxation of ideological control compared to the Stalinist and early post-Stalinist years (complicating chronologies with the Croatian Spring), it is clear that multiple infrastructures existed, testifying to the wish of the party to influence historical research. These political-administrative potentials influenced the working conditions of historians even if it was repeatedly argued that the intervention would only occur at the stage of enabling the broader utilization of research outcomes and not in the process of research itself.⁵⁶⁸

As my analysis showed, the efficacy of the Communist parties in Hungary and in Croatia was not necessarily high. The convoluted structures that supported policy-making in relation to historiography worked rather slowly in both contexts and it was customary not to see through a project. Here I also provided glimpses into historians' advocacy and conceptualized their roles primarily as experts. In addition, I engaged with the different stakes of reinvigorating the idea of socialist national consciousness, pointing out the limits of such theorizations by historians and how they subsequently failed to become a connecting thread in new Marxist historical syntheses.

The dispersed nature of Croatian (Yugoslav) sources presented a constant difficulty. While the idea of decentralization seemed to serve best for the encouragement of writing local histories (especially that of the party) based on sources that are preserved near the place of their creation, the high expectations of policy-makers were not met. This execution of this initiative brought about a rather chaotic situation when yet again the

⁵⁶⁷ Béla Köpeczi, "A társadalmi tudat fejlődése hazánkban az utóbbi másfél évtizedben [The Development of Societal Consciousness in Hungary During the Past Fifteen Years]," *Párttörténeti Közlemények* 21, no. 3 (1975): 39–50. 50.

⁵⁶⁸ György Aczél, "Tudomány és politika (Vázlat a Magyar Rádió 'A Tudományos Közélet Fóruma' című kerekasztal-beszélgetéshez. 1971. Január) [Science and Politics (Outline for the Roundtable Discussion of the Hungarian Radio 'The Forum of Scientific Public Sphere', January 1971)," in *Eszmének erejével* [With the Power of Our Ideas], ed. György Aczél, 2nd ed. (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1971), 266–79. 273.

lack of delimitation of competences among different institutions – museums, archives, research institutes – prevented the establishment of a comprehensive inventory and a transparent and effective access system.

Although this analysis concludes that ideological expectations had less impact on the working condition of Croatian historians, this does not mean that nationalist dissent was in a considerably better position compared to Hungary (or to Czechoslovakia or Poland, for that matter).⁵⁶⁹ Instead of simply treating this as yet another corroboration of the consensus in the literature with regard to the more relaxed intellectual atmosphere, I propose to consider this result within the framework of inconsistency, which was only aggravated but not originally caused by the federative structures.

Importantly, politically relevant does not necessarily mean *politically directed*. As I argued, historical scholarship about the recent past running up to the communist takeover – with all its valuable resources in terms of educating socialist minds – was hardly a strictly instructed enterprise during the 1970s and 1980s. While more or less coherent policies existed, these were either concerned with larger frameworks or centered on requests in order to supply commemorative events with new – or at least, fashionable – publications. An ideological control over the produced content – as Chapter Two shows, was delegated to the institutions or editorial boards and no clear guidelines existed. Therefore, the restrictions that prevailed in the realm of historical discourses were subject to individual interpretations, which nonetheless resulted often in self-censorship.

Indeed, historians' identification with consciousness-shaping – regardless of the fact whether they have concomitantly agreed with the principle that 'science is never fully

⁵⁶⁹ Dragović-Soso, "Saviours of the Nation". *Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism*. 5–6.

void of ideology’ that otherwise have gradually faded from public discourse – played very conveniently into the hands of post-Communist critiques.

Everything was forever, until it was no more – Alexei Yurchak’s famously incisive book title⁵⁷⁰ describes aptly the atmosphere in which historical knowledge production was carried out in late socialist Hungary and Croatia. The ill-defined limitations of historical interpretations and the different scales of publicity were given systematic features by the time the majority of active historians were socialized into their profession – and the notion of radical change in the structure of discourse of publicity arose only towards the very end of the investigated period. Hence, the majority of the analyzed works emerged from under the hands of researchers who imagined their careers coming to an end in a socialist state, and presented their findings to a like-minded audience. In the course of my dissertation research, I aimed at understanding the late socialist period in these terms, to approach this chapter in the history of the scholarship as an open-ended one, instead of a one-way street that was bound to end in the transitions.

Academic historiography about recent history reflects many of the conditions that I investigated in Chapter One and Chapter Two. However, I maintain that while research was to a varying extent conditioned by the specific institutional and policy setting, it was not completely determined by them.

In line with mainstream anti-Communist memory politics, secondary literature on state socialist historical knowledge production often implies disregarding the largely unsuccessful attempts at replacing nation-centered master narratives with a Marxist one, that the period between the Communist takeover and the transition signified a deviation from a normality. They are quick to add that the deviation had been amended after the transition. While maintaining that the national reference framework seems to be the

⁵⁷⁰ Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, Information Series (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2005).

most resilient since the professionalization of historiography at the end of the 19th century, I looked at the years of late socialism as a period of experimentation with an alternative language of history, moving beyond the programmatic rigor of the Stalinist and immediate post-Stalinist years. This experimentation, after all, succeeded neither in supplanting the nation-centered narrative, nor in fundamentally reshaping the semantic landscape of the scholarship. By the time late socialism arrived, several, divergent narrative languages were available, however, the immediate postwar plans about a class-based history never appealed to a critical mass of historians. This apparent failure prompted my curiosity: I wished to analyze the reason and process of the failure rather than considering it as inevitable.

Perhaps the most important methodological challenge to early party historians in the 1940s and 1950s was the fact that they had no predecessors who would have been systematically engaged in writing (any) party history.⁵⁷¹ However, by the late socialist period, there was a growing legacy to build on, in parallel with a gradual decrease in direct party control, granting a more relaxed and pluralistic atmosphere.⁵⁷² In Hungary, the post-1956 party expectation was made quite clear in ideological terms, both dogmatic and explicitly anti-Marxist views were strongly advised against – although not completely absent – observing the logic of “two-way fight” in the realm of historiography. In cultural policy, this change was dubbed as an aim for securing ideological hegemony instead of monopoly.⁵⁷³ However, as leading ideologues hastened to emphasize, the aim for hegemony meant simply the acknowledgement of

⁵⁷¹ Károly Urbán, “A munkásmozgalom-történetírás eredményei és időszerű feladatai [Results of Historiography of the Workers’ Movement and Timely Tasks],” *Századok* 107, no. 5–6 (1973): 1309–27. 1313.

⁵⁷² Tibor Hajdu, “Történetírás a konszolidáció időszakában” [Historiography in the Period of Consolidation], *Társadalomtudományi Közlemények* 16, no. 4 (1987): 516–20. 518.

⁵⁷³ Aczél, György, “Művelődéspolitikánk és a marxizmus hegemoniája” [Our Cultural Policy and the Hegemony of Marxism], in *Eszménk erejével* [With the Power of Our Ideas] (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1971), 95–116.

still existing remnants of other views and not a renouncement of winning over the entire society to proper Marxism-Leninism or the encouragement of furthering pluralization in the political scene.⁵⁷⁴ In party history, the period brought about the redress of several exaggerations and omissions, most notably a gradual rehabilitation of social democrats and the inclusion of bourgeois radicals into the broad tradition of progressive movements in the nation's history. In the Croatian case, the shift in terminology occurred more subtly, without entire publications being dedicated to the issue. Simplistic terminologies of the early state socialist years silently became marginalized. Despite some of the theoretical and methodological innovations that Janković discussed,⁵⁷⁵ the great majority of both Hungarian and Croatian publications on recent history focused on a meticulous reconstruction of events and processes, often relying on archival sources. This strand of research may be closest to the Rankean idea of historiography with its conservative focus on editing rather than creating a narrative that is completely subordinate to the accurate depiction of those details that are deemed important. While it is often asserted in literature that this attitude is to be interpreted as “resistance through science”, I would refrain from internalizing this stance uncritically. I am ready to accept that some historians made the conscious methodological choice in order to avoid real or imagined retaliation, however, evidence for such choices emanates mostly from post-transitional self-reflections, which may not be the most reliable sources to assess such issues.

The general disinterest in innovation emanated from diverse sources. Their studies and work experience at universities and academic or party history institutes supported the focus on events and the limited amount of analysis. Although several subdisciplines,

⁵⁷⁴ György Aczél, “Tudománypolitikánk irányelveiről [About the Guidelines of Our Science Policy],” in *Eszménk erejével* [With the Power of Our Ideas], ed. György Aczél, 2nd ed. (Budapest: Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1971), 217–38. 225.

⁵⁷⁵ Janković, *Mijenjanje sebe sama*.

most importantly, economic and social history, brought new theoretical horizons, these went largely unreflected. Only a few scholars pursued anything other than political history. While the limited opportunity to travel – hence to connect to the international transfer of ideas – might account in part for these trends, today’s general state of regional historiographies testifies to the rather inconclusive relationship between the theoretical-methodological revolution of historiography and the amount of external influences. That being said, the issue of generations should be considered here also. Those historians who started their careers in the 1970s showed greater flexibility compared to their older colleagues. The activities of György Ránki and Iván Berend however, are somewhat contradictory in this sense – both were born in 1930 and were already established scholars by the time late socialism arrived in Hungary, but, based on their previous performance that they achieved as some of the most innovative Hungarian historians, they retained their high status until the transition.

A small proportion of publications engaged with the principles of historical materialism and dialectical materialism to a varying extent. This strategy had only a thin historiographical and institutional prehistory, relying on several interwar representatives and the structures that were provided by state socialist regimes after their takeover. Freshly established party schools, Marxism-Leninism departments, and seminars supported this trend to take roots. The Stalinist and post-Stalinist years, however, led to the formulation of such attitudes that resulted in the difficulty of applying these categories in a meaningful manner. “Red tail” still remains an important point of reference, meaning those parts of any writing that are not organically linked to the inner logic of the text itself but were added for the sole purpose of fulfilling (imagined) ideological expectations. Even during the 1970s and 1980s, there were cases when the intention of the author was clear in terms of wanting to provide a Marxist

analysis in his or her study, the end result often showed how superficial his or her understanding of Marxism in fact was.

An emotionally relatable, even pleading narrative approach – emerged in its clear-cut form in the Croatian context only, although potential forerunners were present in Hungary as well, gaining a broader footing after the transition only. I consider these academic and non-academic historical works as parts of this narrative tradition that focused on grievances and losses that were suffered by the dominant nation. The authors of these works aimed to uncover conspiracies behind these attacks, engaged in wars of numbers and often claimed that they had a mission to call due attention to these grievances which were allegedly insufficiently addressed by other historians, by politicians or by official historiography (from a non-academic's point of view). In Croatia, the central topic that inspired most of these activities was the fate of the domobrani and partisan violence against Croatian nationals in general. In Hungary, in its embryonic state, a discourse of grievance emerged in relation to Hungarians who became citizens of the neighboring countries after 1920. Émigré authors, both Hungarians and Croats maintained ties with the representatives of this narrative tradition.

Party history occupied a different position in the Hungarian and in the Croatian historiographical landscapes, which partially accounts for their different afterlives. In Hungary, the separation of party history from “general history” to a great extent prevailed until the transition. After the Second World War, Communist regimes, just like their predecessors, conceived of historical narratives as a source of legitimacy. The problematization of the obvious lack of research into the past of progressive movements, however, was followed by an aggressive, concentrated campaign to amend this gap in the course of the first decades of state socialism, especially during the years

of Stalinism. The years of late socialism were able to detach themselves from the Stalinist narratives to a great extent, although they left tiny islands of ‘orthodoxies’ behind (notably the limited problematization of the level of collaboration with occupying forces both in Hungary and in Croatia).

My analysis has shown that the half-success of integrating party history into national history was the result of multiple processes, and that its results should not be reduced to one of the knowledge-production related outcomes, which concerns the nation remaining the main actor of history. In fact, I would propose to reconsider similar reductive assessments, which do not consider such a scenario where the replacement of nation with class in this role might not have been desirable. Stalinist historiography indeed voiced such demands, however, these voices faded with time and were considered alongside the idea of building Communism in a single country, which was understood to be the nation-state or the federal state of multiple nations. The argument for a profound change or return in historiography after Stalinism that resulted in a historiography resembling the pre-Second World War setting, remains powerful though, and I am ready to accept it with qualifications, especially its repercussions for the language of several Communist party-related articles.

Although the 1970s and the 1980s brought about more interaction and more transfer, the sense of disconnection that is all too often weaponized by post-1989 accounts of state socialist historiography was well-founded. It is worth highlighting furthermore that regional historiographies before the Second World War were considerably less internationalized than their Western counterparts, therefore, the difference in embeddedness in international knowledge transfer was an inherited condition. Surely, this gap dynamically grew as the globalization of intellectual transfers exponentially increased on the other side of the iron curtain.

Historical narratives functioned outside academia as well, and a state-supported popularizing enterprise might occur today as an obvious answer to the need to find a relatable way of communication with the masses about (recent) history. This idea would have fitted the scientific self-image of state socialist regimes and there were experts to be trusted with the task. However, the Hungarian and Croatian case studies did not present such a straightforward line of development. In Croatia, popular history peaked during the Croatian Spring and its freshly established institutions almost entirely disappeared as the movement was repressed at the beginning of the 1970s. In Hungary, the process of institutionalization sped up at the end of the 1970s and it was driven largely by a single person with significant political embeddedness, however, this did not prevent Ferenc Glatz from publishing a much sought-after, high-level journal that was broadly read by intellectuals.

The strong linkage between academic and popular historiography – institutional, personal and content-related overlaps – may serve as a useful reminder in the ongoing general crisis of the expert, when a scholar's contributions to public debates weigh just as much as any lay opinion. During the 1970s and 1980s, the boundaries of the disciplines were guarded by means that in other contexts were often rightly considered undemocratic. However, it is also clear that the majority of scholars indeed wished to keep a distance from popularizing activities and felt in fact offended in the case journalists or literary figures voiced critique. The question lingers whether this unwillingness to engage in popularizing activities in these protected environments further aggravated the situation of historians after science and cultural policy almost entirely withdrew from these fields, restricting itself to instigative actions.

In Chapter Four, beyond engaging with the role and place of popular history of late socialism, I mapped an additional sphere where historical narratives about the recent

past were presented. Unlike in the case of popular history, the surveying of the most important literary depictions of recent history in Hungary and in Croatia, with the addendum of journalists provided a glimpse into challenges that late socialist historiographies faced from outside the scholarship.

The general uneasiness and suspicion of historians with regard to the transgressions of journalists and writers remained palpable during the years of late socialism. In it, beyond guarding the boundaries of the profession, epistemic anxieties were often invoked, as historians who navigated between sensitive topics – even if they did not constitute taboos – perceived their growing vulnerability. On the other hand, genuine concern with regard to distorted national consciousness with nationalist tendencies that carried a threatening potential was often voiced in policy papers and historians from different institutional backgrounds. In the Croatian case, the often alarmed tone of criticism towards journalistic activities seem to have been justified by the wartime discourses of the 1990s, where utterly simplified nationalistic narratives supplied leading politicians' hate speech in each republic.

Literature had often a different take on the interpretation of the political restrictions affecting historical narratives. The artists' frustration by "timid" historians often derived exactly from these alternative readings. While censorship had different – although again, indirect – working mechanisms in these realms, important new topics were first proposed in artistic depictions. Scholarship and literature (even a branch of journalism) were able to constructively engage each other in gradually opening up to new stories and new questions.

There has been no systematic attempt to recover the agency and responsibility of historiography in the process of the devaluation of (historical) expertise and potentials for intervention. The definition of its relations to non-academic loci of historiography

remains one of the greatest challenges of historical scholarship. Those in favor of popularization, however, never failed to emphasize during late socialism that dilettantism can be best fought with popularization and they continue to speak up in the cacophony of misunderstood anniversaries, memory brokers and influencers. Maybe it is time that their colleagues took them more seriously.

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