

MOLDING THE NATIONAL BODY

Intellectual History of the Interwar Yugoslav Sokol

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, **Lucija Balikić**, candidate for the PhD degree in Comparative History declare herewith that the present thesis titled “Molding the National Body: Intellectual History of the Interwar Yugoslav Sokol” is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright.

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation examines the intellectual history of the interwar Yugoslav Sokol, an organization dedicated to physical culture of the masses, originally in a national liberal key. Focusing mainly on associational periodicals, it analyzes the debates that political thinkers and scholars involved in Sokol, had over the years. Taking into account texts that pertain to strictly conceived political questions, but also those related to historical narratives and cultural canon, as well as physical education and biomedical questions, the dissertation divides the studied period into three sub-periods: 1918-1929; 1929-1934; 1935-1941. It demonstrates that in the first period, namely during the volatile 1920s, Sokol served as a platform for diverse initiatives and debates that most often conceptualized a given political community in terms of a “national body” to be molded based on positivist understanding of physical exercise and Yugoslavism. The second period, that of the Royal Dictatorship, was marked by the centralization of associational life and programmatization of its intellectual output. In this context, the dissertation showcases the etatization of Sokol thinkers’ discourses and concerns, whereby their understanding of the body rapproched the ideas around “human capital”, even if still belonging to a Masarykian liberal tradition that stressed the importance of active citizenry. Finally, the third period, following the assassination of King Aleksandar, was marked by the rise in neo-romanticist discourses on political issues and in visions of technocratic governance, in the case of physical education and biomedical knowledge production.

TABULA GRATULATORIA

What a ride! While it was visible that the world and academia were undergoing a poly- and permacrisis already at the beginning of my studies, it wasn't plausible to assume the extent to which it would materialize in this short, but for me formative, period. This calls for acknowledging foremost the resilience and solidarity of all the colleagues, within and beyond CEU, that I have had a chance to collaborate with. It is safe to say that because of them I learned much more than what the original doctoral program that I signed up for envisioned.

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1. Introduction

Inspired by a dissatisfying touristic visit to an “authentically preserved” Turkish house in the Herzegovinian picturesque city of Trebinje in 1937, a notable British publicist Rebecca West noted in her travelogue: “When we were driving out of the town I said, ‘I hate the corpses of empires, they stink as nothing else. They stink so badly that I cannot believe that even in life they were healthy.’ ‘I do not think you can convince mankind,’ said my husband, ‘that there is not a certain magnificence about a great empire in being.’ ‘Of course there is,’ I admitted, ‘but the hideousness outweighs the beauty. You are not, I hope, going to tell me that they impose law on lawless people. Empires live by the violation of law.’”² Well aware of the looming catastrophe and the role of her native, British, empire in appeasing the Third Reich’s imperialist appetite, West relied on her observations and remarks on late 1930s Yugoslavia, as gateways to discussing transhistorical ethical and philosophical questions—most of them variations on the theme of sacrificing small nations for ensuring the comfort and development of the Great Powers.

The tragedy she hereby unfolds is that much greater, since she regarded the Yugoslav culture as a precious respository of both Byzantine and Christian civilization, and thus a nexus and *pars pro toto* of European history and values. The deepening political, cultural and societal cracks she noticed in Yugoslavia, she explained by pointing to post-imperial continuities and the legacy of South Slavs’ transimperial historical experience. She continued her train of thought while narrating the journey: “Below us now lay the huge Austrian-built barracks, with the paddocks between them, and I remembered again what I had hated to speak of as we drove into

² Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey Through Yugoslavia*. New York: Penguin Books, 1982, p. 280.

Trebinye, when we were out to have an amusing morning. Here the Herzegovinians had found that one empire is very like another, that Austria was no better than Turkey. Between these barracks the Austrian Empire killed eighty people for causes that would have been recognized on no statute book framed by man since the beginning of time.”³

West evidently possessed deep sympathy for this complex history of imperial subjugation, claiming that “It is certain that the Balkans lost more from contact with all modern empires than they ever gained”.⁴ Thereby, her deeply historically informed travelogue thus recognized both her South Slavic collocutors’ transimperial perspective, but also the weight of the complex post-imperial situation they found themselves in, which demanded them to operate with an immensely different set of political cultures, expectations and visions of modernity. Despite reifying a lot of the political mythology she has been presented throughout her travels, West regularly put on her analytical hat when dissecting the stories told and places shown to her by her guides through the country.

Her three guides represent three political archetypes, whose disagreements during the trip illustrate broader multifaceted intellectual tensions that had evolved over first half of the twentieth century, in post-Habsburg and Balkan contexts respectively.⁵ Constantin, modelled on real-life expressionist writer Stanislav Vinaver, is a French-educated Yugoslavist Serbian Jewish government official, whose wife Gerda (in reality Elsa) does not bother to hide her ever stronger national socialist allegiances and stances. The other two guides are a young Dalmatian mathematics professor Valetta, a Croatian federalist and autonomist; and Marko Gregorievitch, an older generation Yugoslavist journalist and critic, from Croatia-Slavonia, who was an anti-

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, p. 1095.

⁵ Ivona Grgurinović “Načini konstruiranja Drugoga u putpoisu ‘Crno janje–sivi sokol’ Rebecce West” [The ways of constructing the ‘Other’ in the travelogue ‘Black lamb-grey falcon’ of Rebecca West] *Etnološka istraživanja*, vol. 12-13 (2008), pp. 147-158; Vesna Goldsworthy, “Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: Rebecca west’s journey through the Balkans” *Women: A Cultural Review*, vol. 8, no. 1 (1997), pp. 1–11.

Hungarian political activist in his youth. Sharply and generously noting their generational, spatial and intellectual differences, West reaches out for a historical metaphor to explain them: “There is the difference between them that there was between the Christians of the first three centuries, who fought for their faith when it seemed a lost cause, and the Christians of the fourth century, who fought for it when it was victorious”.⁶ In other words, West saw Constantin (Vinaver) as an epitome of Serbian latecomers to the notion of Yugoslavist modernity, and Marko as one of those who helped articulate the initial notion and fought for it in most precarious and politically unfavorable conditions, over the last years of the Habsburg rule. Beyond their diverging temporalities, she excellently elucidated the numerous intellectual, ideological and epistemic clashes that their opposing understandings of the common project caused, not least due to the differences in their (symbolic and political) geographies and political socializations.

While the travelogue’s nominally progressive outlook still operates with numerous Islamophobic stereotypes, civilizational hierarchies, and, importantly, extremely essentialized and primordialist concept of Slavdom—the stark differences between the three characters, and her explanations around them, can serve as a fertile entry point to the dissection and framing of the intellectual debates and trends within the Yugoslav Sokol, an exceptionally important organization that was among the most committed to realizing a *sui generis* Yugoslavist modernity in the interwar period. Contending with the legacy of different imperial and national projects, as well as disparate political and associational cultures that came to comprise interwar Yugoslavia, Sokol proved to represent a lasting liberal and modernist force, that was centered around promoting the human body as a starting point for a comprehensive socio-political reform. In the process, they sought to redefine the related questions of bodily ownership, sociality of the body, relationship between human body and national economy, promote a

⁶ Ibid, p. 42.

liberal notion of collective responsibility and, in more abstract terms, discuss political dimensions of selfhood. In other words, they sought to realize a unique Yugoslavist modernity through politicizing, socializing and, notably, improving the human body—one individual at a time. Similarly to West’s three guides, however, numerous intellectuals and scholars engaged in this project, spearheaded by Sokol, approached its means and goals from perspectives informed by their markedly different intellectual and political cultures of origin. This dissertation examines intellectual trends thereat, both in terms of political thought and knowledge production, demonstrating that it was the body that served as one of the key entry points for liberal thinkers who aimed at articulating and pragmatically realizing political modernity, on the embers of (multi-)imperial historical ambitions and realities. It also shows that, through their theorizing on the relationship between body and politics, these thinkers developed a citizen- and physical education-based theory of democracy, as well as numerous conceptual innovations centered around the question of supranationality, inspired by their Yugoslavist agenda.

Sokol (English: Falcon), an association dedicated to Slavic-framed physical culture, founded by the German-turned-Czech philosopher Miroslav Tyrš in 1860s Bohemia, gradually spread towards other Slavophone areas in the Habsburg context and beyond—in Russian and German empires, nascent Balkan principalities and kingdoms, such as Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as in the US, among the diaspora of the Slavic nationalities. By the turn of century it has become a widespread phenomenon with a sizeable membership and ever growing network of clubs, including in the areas of inhabited by Southern Slavs. The founder of Sokol Miroslav Tyrš, and his milieu, derived largely from the distinctly national liberal intellectual tradition that sought to use the association for promoting their political cause through proliferation of the modern body and physical culture. Specifically, given that Tyrš was particularly concerned with aesthetics and was also an art critic, he imbued Sokol with an ambition to gear its exercise

towards beautifying bodies. In contrast to Friedrich Ludwig Jahn's notable Turnverein that focused on bodily and collective strength in a *völkisch* manner, Sokol posited itself as a platform for intellectual gymnasts and aestheticizing the body. What is more, Tyrš relied on a Schillerian understanding of beauty, as one rooted in discipline and order, thus making it a part of the associational agenda to instill those values and traits into its membership.⁷ Because of that, the association's position as a site of middle-class men's (political) sociability attracted numerous sophisticated political thinkers stemming from liberal professions, to join and theorize on body, politics and Slavdom. Their published writings and debates within, and sometimes outside, the associational periodicals of the Yugoslav Sokol represent the main sources the dissertation builds on. While Sokol operated strictly as a voluntary association until 1929, it was from the introduction of the Royal Dictatorship in the same year, that the association was co-opted by the state and uplifted into the status of a quasi-state institution. This lasted until the 1934 assassination of its main patron, King Aleksandar Karađorđević, after which it gradually fell out of grace during the Stojadinović government and afterwards. Sokol's vast membership and especially its intellectual portion experienced great transformation, given their social standing and ideological allegiances, as a consequence of these dramatic events that radically changed the morphology of the organization.

As in the West's diagnosis of the driving force behind the key intellectual and political tensions in Yugoslavia, the dissertation also concentrates foremost on tracing the intellectual continuities and, inevitably, clashes and cross-fertilization between the post-Habsburg and contexts deriving from the kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro (and previously Ottoman Empire). It hereby pays special attention to broader mutually informing socio-political and intellectual contexts. It does so with an aim to provide complexity, and by way of pointing to it, an explanation to the key

⁷ Petr Roubal, *Spartakiads: The Politics of Physical Culture in Communist Czechoslovakia*. Prague: Karolinum Press, 2019, pp. 60-61.

intellectual trends and changes among that corpus of thinkers that sought to articulate and realize Yugoslavist modernity, either through synthesizing them or making a radical modernist break with the existing intellectual traditions.

The main goal of this project is thus to overcome the historiographical paradigm of the “national question” that both flattened and overwrote numerous other dimensions and stakes of the statelike, political and intellectual unification of the Southern Slavic polities in 1918. Specifically, it looks at attempts at doing away with (the nationalization of) religion, proceeding with the Vienna-initiated disenchantment of the world, creating a distinctly anti- and trans-imperial historical narrative and cultural canon, compromise-driven resolving of the question of the common language, psychological and biological framing of nationhood, as well as the centrality of the human body for their hopes of achieving a viable national and state community. Most importantly, it traces the different ways in which political community was conceptualized by different thinkers, throughout time. Relatedly, the dissertation complements the analysis of these distinctly liberal and largely positivist debates and trends, with an overview of the ever growing groups and ideas that aimed to challenge them, eventually prevailing through a process of cross-fertilization and making a lasting imprint on the way the Sokol was remembered in many historiographical and other contexts until the present day.

Due to its stress on the post-imperial perspective, as well as reliance on social and political geography therein, the dissertation’s agenda also includes mapping—spatially and temporally—the diluted echoes and remnants of both Vienna-born modernism and positivism, and the expansion and transformation of the Balkanist antimodernist, neo-romanticist and autochtonist package that rested on political Orthodoxy.⁸ Nevertheless, it demonstrates that the vast majority of political thought read into the body was distinctly liberal, in contrast with

⁸ More on the confluence of these trends in the interwar Yugoslav context: Maria Falina, *Religion and Politics in Interwar Yugoslavia: Serbian Nationalism and East Orthodox Christianity*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023.

other, largely authoritarian, body-centered projects that current historiography of the interwar years covers.⁹ With it, it offers one of the missing puzzle pieces of the intellectual map of the interwar Europe, in the shadow of the *fin-de-siècle* intra-imperial debates on the tenets of political modernity. It also shows how different spatial-political orientations, in this case Slavdom and the Balkans, can connote often radically opposing ideological and intellectual commitments. This ongoing antagonism between the two inherited intellectual streams, that the dissertation follows, is analogous to numerous other post-Habsburg and wider European heirs of liberal modernist project and their neo-romanticist, in the 1920s, or “third way” fascist challengers, over the 1930s.¹⁰ That is to say that, in this perspective, the Yugoslav case conforms to a much larger scheme of European post-imperial intellectual heritage that was torn between conceptualizing the political community as (royal) subjects or as one of (active) citizens, both comprising of a diverse spectrum. In each of its iterations however, citizens were not to be managed and governed, but invested in and awarded crucial political agency, in a way that radically redefined sovereignty. While numerous other examples could be pointed to, these ones serve to provide insight into the afterlives of key intellectual trends that Yugoslavia inherited—namely Vienna positivism and autochtonist Balkanism—in other postwar contexts. Beyond framing their mutual contradictions as the false dichotomy between “Westernizers” and “autochtonists”—the present study aims to nuance the story of Yugoslavist projects’ ambivalence and present a complex catalogue of hopes and agendas read into the “new (Yugoslav) man”, that Sokol thinkers and activists hoped to create through the associational activities, not least as a result of the said cross-fertilization due to shared political socialization that took place on platforms such as Sokol.

⁹ Such as that on the fascist, Nazi or communist body politics and analogous organizations for physical culture.

¹⁰ *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, vols. I-II. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 2018.

For that very reason, the purpose of excavating these debates is not to simply tell a story of “indigenization” or “spread” of different intellectual packages from the (former) metropolises to the peripheries, but rather to put their complex and synchronous afterlives on pair with one another, given that the fault lines between them and their challengers were oftentimes reducible to very similar stakes. This particularly concerns the émigrés from the Vienna circle and comparable contexts,¹¹ whereby the focus on Sokol allows “indigenous” or localized examination of the breaks and continuities with the prewar intellectual debates, in the context of their creolization with the Balkanist traditions. Given that, except Czechoslovakia, most successor states did not possess such an association that would stimulate political thinking about the body, Yugoslavia is one of the rare and idiosyncratic examples where the prewar political thought translated into a fecund body-centered intellectual production. In this way, this doctoral project also complements the otherwise historiographically central Weimar narrative, that often epitomizes the overall European interwar transformations, by pointing to an intellectually analogous collapse of the (national) liberal language and non-state reform initiatives, in favor of state interventionism, technocratic visions and, crucially, illiberal and imperialist conceptions of political community—not least due to the unresolved grievances around modernity and lasting allure of the imperial project. This is, however, not to reify or romanticize the *mitteleuropäische* view of late Austria-Hungary as a progressively self-reforming empire, but instead to remain sensitive to the extent to which its debates and traditions came to inform the Yugoslav experiment, alongside the Balkanist ones that largely challenged them.

Ultimately, the project underscores Shmuel Eisenstadt’s assertion on multiple modernities¹² and draws on ever more insightful studies on post-imperial intellectual transformations, taking Yugoslavia’s borderland position and Sokol’s social-intellectual milieu, as entry points for

¹¹ Richard Cockett, *Vienna: How the City of Ideas Created the Modern World*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023.

¹² Shmuel Eisenstadt, *Multiple Modernities*. London: Routledge, 2002.

discussing the interaction between the outstandingly diverse intellectual traditions and ambitions of the thinkers engaged thereat. It aims to complement literature such as Natasha Wheatley's tracing and historicizing of the long-term impact of the Habsburg legal debates and practices, in relation to (composite) statehood and construing of sovereignty through complex approaches to legal subjecthood.¹³ Yet, it does so in relation to a number of other pertinent questions, among which the intellectual history of the body takes the most prominent place. In that sense, one of the key ambitions of the present study is to promote and situate such inquiry as highly relevant for both supplementing and bridging the modern (regional) intellectual history's *lacunae* in regard to body as a social (con)text and the blindspots of social, cultural and political history of the body, in terms of ideological and political thought-driven content read into it.

Finally, by bringing together the centrality of the body for political thinking, regard for the post-imperial continuities and the mutually-referential social and intellectual developments, the present dissertation aims to showcase the brief and turbulent interwar Yugoslav context, as an unique, intellectually immensely productive and original source of political thinking, and enactment of different initiatives, aimed at conjointly creating the modern body and viable, democratic, political community. That body, however, was unique in the sense that it thereby sought to mend the ills of Western industrial modernity, capitalism, but also those of nominally primitive peripheral labor- and living conditions. Well aware of their world-systemically semi-peripheral position, most post-Habsburg Sokol thinkers nevertheless attempted to conserve and realize their positivist and progressive hopes through training the Yugoslav Sokol bodies into their vision of modernity and thus emancipating them, as the first step towards the emancipation of the whole humanity. The extremely essentialized, romanticised, racialized and mythologized

¹³ Natasha Wheatley, *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023.

notion of the Slavdom that Rebecca West relied on to process her own guilt and contempt for her native context's complicity in Yugoslavia's underdevelopment and coming dismemberment—was, however, a result of the radical change in the framing of the Yugoslavist modernity, owing to the ultimate eclipse of the Balkanist strain of thinkers, the rise of the Vinavers, but equally more detrimentally, the triumph of the Valettas in the late 1930s.

1.1. Structure

The dissertation is structured in a chronological and thematic manner, comprising of three research chapters that represent three distinct periods in the associational history of the interwar period. Within each chronological portion, three thematic units are covered: 1) associational history, 2) political discourses (including Yugoslavist historical narratives and cultural canon) and 3) expert discourses, the latter most often pertaining to biomedical and physical education-related ones. In addition, the challengers to the dominant stream of thought in each of these, whether originating from within or outside of the association, are examined and their positions outlined. The period from 1900 to 1914 is covered in a brief contextual section within the “Introduction” and it examines Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian and Muslim Sokol associations from the Habsburg realms respectively, together with their largely symbolic nationality politics. It also presents the Dušan Silni¹⁴ Society in the Kingdom of Serbia, in its tight affiliation with the state's military and the dynasty. This section serves to provide a brief “pre-history” of the associational culture and intellectual production within the South Slavic Sokol clubs—to those of the interwar years that are presented and analyzed in the three respective research chapters.

¹⁴ Dušan the Mighty.

The first period that falls within the interwar years, and corresponds to the first research chapter, encompasses the years between 1918 and 1929, the latter marking the introduction of the Royal Dictatorship by King Aleksandar. In it, the main Yugoslavist Sokol association, namely the Yugoslav Sokol Union¹⁵ is analyzed in regard to its intellectual production and associational setup and culture. Furthermore, the second period, the one of Sokol's co-optation by the state and transformation into the Union of Sokols of Kingdom of Yugoslavia,¹⁶ comprises of the years between 1930 and 1934, concluding with the assassination on King Aleksandar. Finally, the years of associational disarray and collapse, from 1935 to 1941 and the Third Reich's invasion of Yugoslavia, are tackled in the third research chapter. Despite the fact that the legal person of the association changed in these distinct periods as indicated above, the methodological choice to consider continuity between them is justified given their personal continuities, intellectual production and, most importantly, Yugoslavist orientation that other, competing Sokol or similar associations, did not possess or use as a main framework. In some contexts, however, the writings of the competing associations are included and their arguments considered, so as to better contextualize the stakes of the given debate and the alternative or counter-projects devised by Yugoslav Sokol's political and intellectual competitors.

Each of the chapters also uses the categories of “liberal-positivist” and “neo-romanticist” stream of political thought—that represent two groups of thinkers, each with distinct intellectual commitments, that had developed in parallel to one another, but from the early 1930s on also experienced intensified mutual intellectual cross-fertilization. These two categories are used to structure the main argument of the dissertation and serve as a sort of “red thread” throughout the different chapters. While the period until the early 1930s saw almost absolute dominance of

¹⁵ Serbo-Croatian: *Jugoslovenski sokolski savez*; Slovenian: *Jugoslovanska sokolska zveza* (JSS/JSZ).

¹⁶ *Savez Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije* (SSKJ).

the former group, the period after 1934 gave rise to the arguments and associational culture established by the latter one instead.

The liberal-positivist group comprised primarily of Vienna- and Prague-educated thinkers from the (post-)Habsburg space, who joined Sokol in the 1890s or early 1900s. They typically stemmed from the liberal professions (physicians, lawyers, teachers) and belonged to a distinctly positivist, modernist, progressivist intellectual tradition, usually displaying evolutionist approach to social change. They understood Yugoslavism and Slavdom as an intermediary step to universal emancipation of humanity and used Sokol for their attempts at “molding the national body” through education, research, systematization of exercises and terminology, as well as limited social welfare. Given that they experienced disappointment by the volatile party politics of the 1920s (seeing it as continuation of the Habsburg “nationality politics”) and outbreak of the Great Depression; they gradually left or disengaged from the association around mid-1930s, in part due to the introduction of Royal dictatorship and co-optation of Sokol by the state and for the purposes of the state.

The neo-romanticist group, on the other hand, derived mostly from the former kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro and in some cases from Bosnia and Herzegovina. They typically joined Sokol from the early 1920s onwards and thus lacked previous liberal national associational tradition. Those who have been part of Sokol or analogous societies before the war (e.g. Dušan Silni in Belgrade), experienced a different sort of associational culture, that was markedly more virile, militarized and state-affiliated, than it was the case in the Habsburg context whereby it instead relied on symbolic nationality politics. Moreover, they were mostly Paris- or Belgrade-educated with background in military or medical professions. Due to this set of circumstances and intellectual traditions they were exposed to and socialized into, they belonged to neo-romanticist, antimodernist, autochtonist, essentialist and primordialist intellectual traditions, rooted in narratives on anti-Ottoman national struggle, later notably

translated into language of “national character”. In contrast to their liberal-positivist counterparts, they oftentimes espoused Balkanist cultural agenda, as well as revolutionary approach to social change. For these reasons, their main activities within Sokol included literary production, symbolic performance, militarization of the association, as well as limited social welfare. While they represented a silent minority until the association’s co-optation by the state, they became more prominent with the introduction of the 1929 Royal dictatorship and largely overtook the association from 1935 onwards, attempting to fashion the membership as model royal subjects and patriotic state protectors. The competitive and, at times, complementary dynamics between these two groups make up a significant portion of the argument on the overall intellectual developments and tensions between their understandings and conceptualizations of the body’s role in politics and political community alike.

The two groups are conceived primarily as archetypal and as devices for organization of a vast number of thinkers who appear throughout the dissertation, meaning they are not mutually exclusive and these indicators serve to designate where on the spectrum a particular Sokol thinker falls, in a given debate or situation. As is visible in many cases, both in the 1920s and 1930s, members of one group occasionally employ the language, arguments or the tropes of the other – or gravitate towards one or the other pole of the spectrum throughout their Sokol careers. The relationship of their spatiality and intellectual traditions that are implied in the descriptions of the two groups – liberal positivists being from the post-Habsburg space and neo-romanticists from the former Kingdom of Serbia – also derive from their places of initial political socialization and study. These distinctive political, associational and intellectual cultures, namely the Habsburg and Serbian (or post-Ottoman) ones, are devised not to essentialize or ethnicize the two groups, but rather to use social constructivist approach to their formation and, by thus situating their formation, explain the differences in their positions on the said spectrum.

While it can be said that the liberal-positivist group initially established dominance within the association and that of the neo-romanticist one only gained ground in the later period, after 1935, it is important to note that the liberal-positivist group never fully retired from the association. Their debates on civic education and attempts to preserve the liberal approach to physical education continued even under very unfavorable conditions for both the association and the country. Some of those who relied on the positivist or nominally liberal repertoire before the war and in the immediate afterwar period, however, began gravitating towards essentialist, *völkisch* and neo-romanticist language very soon, already from the mid-1920s. While this was a more dominant trend, there were also converts who went in the opposite direction and who saw the appeal of the positivist attitude, translating it into technocratic-authocratic pleas towards the state, later on.

In any case, this dynamic re-positioning on the spectrum and changing discourses very much co-existed not only in the same spatial or linguistic context, but also in the writings of the very same thinkers, at different points in time. The overall interpretation that seeks to explain this dynamic is the one of cross-fertilization between the two groups who were both committed to articulation and realization of some sort of Yugoslavist modernity, but came from distinct political, social and intellectual contexts and cultures, the main wedge between which was the imperial border of the Habsburg Monarchy. In other words, the dissertation poses their Yugoslavisms as the distinct in regard to whether they were developed within the political and intellectual culture of the Dual Monarchy or in conversation with political actors and thinkers from the Kingdom of Serbia.

It is hereby necessary to clarify the specific manner in which the more abstract concepts these two categories are based on, particularly positivism, liberalism and neo-romanticism that are otherwise central to the study's main argument—are understood and employed throughout the dissertation. In line with Franz Fillafer's, Jan Surman's and Johannes Feichtinger's assertions

in *The Worlds of positivism*,¹⁷ the dissertation does not rely on the diffusionist model of explaining positivism that would intuitively center Vienna, but instead focuses on localizing it and centering those actors who appropriated positivist discourses, argued against “autarky of contexts”, focused on uncovering of the laws of development and who shared a secularist commitment whose eschatology was embodied in the “unity of humankind”. Importantly, they repeatedly stated this goal, which they saw as achievable first through the creation of Yugoslav, then the Slavic political community, and finally the one of the entire humanity. This vision of Slavdom as an emancipatory and progressive cause was rooted in their early involvement in the Neo-Slavist movement, as well as political socialization into the Masarykian realist agenda.¹⁸ In this sense, and following the above-mentioned authors’ assertions, the dissertation also makes a contribution to the reconstruction of the “brokered worlds of positivism” and positivist “world-making”. Moreover, based on Fillafer and Feichtinger’s study on the particular brand of Austrian positivism (1804-1938),¹⁹ it does not operate with a normative concept of Austrian positivism nor liberalism, recognizing the coexistence and complex relationship between their different strains over the 19th and early 20th century. Nevertheless, it uses their argument on eventual liberals’ claims to scientific supremacy for the purpose of supporting their individual national projects, placing it at the core of the “liberal-positivists” category it relies on.

¹⁷ *The worlds of positivism: a global intellectual history, 1770-1930*, eds. Franz Fillafer, Jan Surman, Johannes Feichtinger. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

¹⁸ Claire E. Nolte, “‘All for One! One for All! The Federation of Slavic Sokols and the Failure of Neo-Slavism’” in Pieter Judson, Marsha L. Rozenblit, eds., *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2004, pp. 126–140; Irena Gantar Godina, “Neoslovanska ideja in Slovenci” [The Neo-Slavic Idea and the Slovenes] *Zgodovinski časopis*, 43, 4 (1989), 513–546, here p. 515; Kopeček, Michal. “Czechoslovak Interwar Democracy and Its Critical Introspections.” *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift Für Moderne Europäische Geschichte / Revue d’histoire Européenne Contemporaine* 17, no. 1 (2019): 7–15; Thomas Ort, *Art and Life in Modernist Prague. Karel Čapek and his Generation, 1911–1938*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in Europe, 1914–1948*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; Eva Schmidt-Hartmann, *Thomas G. Masaryk’s realism: Origins of a Czech political concept*. Munich: R. Oldenburg Verlag, 1984.

¹⁹ Franz L. Fillafer, Johannes Feichtinger, “Habsburg Positivism: The Politics of Positive Knowledge in Imperial and Post-imperial Austria, 1804-1938” *The Worlds of Positivism: a global intellectual history, 1770-1930*, eds. Franz Fillafer, Jan Surman, Johannes Feichtinger. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 191-238.

It presumes that it was precisely because those Yugoslavist thinkers whose intellectual package could be described as liberal-positivist, socialized into this intellectual setup in turn of century Vienna, that they sought to merge the liberal and positivist agendas in their initial competition with other national or ideological projects of late Austria-Hungary and later in interwar Yugoslavia. Crucially, this formative intellectual environment and their adoption of this particular combination, set them up for struggle with those groups that had insisted on Hegelianism, romanticism and historicism more broadly—to frame their national and other claims. Analogous to Polish 19th century positivists, most South Slavic thinkers in a distinctly modernist project such as Sokol, rejected Hegelianism, romanticism, spiritualism and metaphysics more generally, not least because of their traditional association with the German project and intellectual tradition, opting instead for social pragmatism, under the guise of the loose, reason-driven positivist discourse.²⁰ For these very reasons, as well as due to the fact that Yugoslavia had no legal-historical antescendents, those liberal-positivist Yugoslavist Sokol thinkers who stemmed from the (post-)Habsburg contexts, chose not to rely on legal or historicist arguments. Instead, they embraced geography, anthropology, linguistics, biology and psychology, in their quest to eventually universalize their agenda that Yugoslavism was only a first step in achieving of. In other words, instead of searching for sources of legitimacy in historical documents, proclamations, legal elements of statehood and sovereignty in the bygone eras, they opted for delving into the complex microcosm that was the human body, with all the implications it carried.

In the same vein, they rejected religion's potential to mediate between their agenda and the masses, adopting instead a loose, yet locally relevant modernist program based on religious tolerance. The liberal program of these thinkers could best be described as national liberal,

²⁰ Jan Surman, "The Contexts of Early Polish Positivism, 1840s-1900s" *The Worlds of Positivism: a global intellectual history, 1770-1930*, eds. Franz Fillafer, Jan Surman, Johannes Feichtinger. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 239-272.

following Oskar Mulej’s argument on the changing conceptual weight of this ideological setup, across the interwar political transformations, from more “liberal” to more nationally pronounced one.²¹ Ultimately, their language of nationhood was not only liberal in the initial phase due to its democratism or drive towards societal and imperial reform, but precisely because of its encompassing of the class question, which was relevant given that the South Slavic speakers largely comprised of lower social classes, as did most representatives of other Slavic nationalities in the late Habsburg context, formative for these thinkers.²²

The neo-romanticist group, on the other hand, sought to particularize and enclose their inquiries into the national or other culturally-framed confines, as well as challenged the normative Western political modernity mediated through the Czech Sokol model. It thus aimed to merge the idea of creating alternative modernity and the already existing romanticist tradition. This also meant challenging the concept of the nation-state that stood as a shorthand for (liberal) democracy in most of the post-Habsburg contexts. Due to the fact that the representatives of this group mostly derived from the Serbian and specifically Karađorđević dynasty-affiliated context, their main arguments comprised of Hegelian, Herderian and overall historicist and statist claims—characteristic of that national movement and intellectual milieu. Specifically, the question of legal-historical continuity between the medieval Serbian Empire and modern Kingdom of Serbia, as well as the former’s relationship with Byzantium, represented key tenets for the making of their intellectual package and determining their entry point into the Yugoslavist modernity. Crucially, the question of Serbian Empire’s—and in some iterations Serbian culture’s—emulation of the Byzantine culture and civilization, as well as legal

²¹ Oskar Mulej, *Liberalism after the Habsburg Monarchy, 1918-1935: National Liberal Heirs in Czech Lands, Austria, and Slovenia*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024.

²² Miroslav Hroch, “The Social Interpretation of Linguistic Demands in European National Movements” *EUI Working paper EUI No. 94/1*. Florence: European University Institute, 1994, p. 31.

subjectivity, stood at the fore of these debates.²³ While the famous historiographical clash between the “old” mythologizing and “new” critical historiography, represented by authors such as Vienna-educated Ilarion Ruvarac and Kyiv-educated Panta Srećković respectively, had a notable impact onto the coming generations of Byzantologists—the stream of Serbian proper (*srbijanski*) thinkers engaged in Sokol, regardless of their generation, largely retained the mythology-driven neo-romanticist package.

Their visions of national authenticity, Serbian historical right and state right, but also of Serbs being a core-nation of the empire—that came to be rather relevant in different iterations in the interwar period—largely derived from the late 19th century historiography that posited Serbian state(s) as inheritors of Byzantine culture and thus of modernity alternative to the Western model.²⁴ In such visions, Serbs not only suffered under the Ottomans for the West to be able to peacefully develop, but also retained elements of the Roman Empire’s civilization and glory, throughout centuries. While the original Hegelian perspective negates such vision of Byzantium, it is important to accentuate that these ideas of *translatio imperii* or *renovatio imperii*, mostly rested on notions of alternative modernity, rooted in the Russian Byzantology’s notion of the “Serbo-Byzantine empire”, also known as “Slavo-Byzantine empire”—which they rendered into a synthesis of ancient civilization and Serbian national character.²⁵

Importantly, as opposed to their (post-)Habsburg and liberal postivist counterparts, neo-romanticist Sokol thinkers did not want to completely do away with the concept of empire, even if a large portion of their discourse consisted in attempting to equate South Slavs’ Ottoman and Habsburg experiences of imperial subjugation. They, instead, posited Byzantium as a civilized-cum-modern empire that could, indeed, emulate some of the (pan- or neo-)Slavic agenda and

²³ Aleksandar Ignjatović. “Byzantium’s Apt Inheritors: Serbian Historiography, Nation-Building and Imperial Imagination, 1882–1941.” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 94, no. 1 (2016): 57–92; Diana Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums: Empire and Identity in Southeastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

²⁴ Ignjatović, “Byzantium’s Apt Inheritors”, *passim*.

²⁵ Ignjatović, “Byzantium’s Apt Inheritors”, p. 75.

imbue it with the tradition of statecraft. The contradiction was much less visible also due to the fact that the “Serbo-Byzantine Empire” got nationalized relatively early on, so as to project the historical state continuity, erasing the complexity of these polities’ relationship and dynamic change on the meanings of the identities alleged thereat. Moreover, given that the Kingdom of Serbia, and especially the modest-origin Karađorđević dynasty affiliated to the local Sokol, were both unmarked by stark class divisions unlike the nationalities in the Habsburg context—the tension between monarchy and the nation was not as pronounced in abstract terms, thus influencing the differences in their conceptual setup around the turn of century. The modern political culture of the Kingdom, characterized by authoritarianism, monarchism, pronounced role of the Serbian Orthodox Church, as well as state centralism, became legitimized by the historiography that purported the Byzantine legacy within the Serbian political corpus. Finally, in the context of the early 20th century, such historiographical claims essentially synthesized the idea of Byzantine civilization and Serbian autochthonous, modest peasant, but also democratic, national culture evidenced in “self-government, popular democracy, communal assemblies and peasant communes”, positing Serbs as “masters of statecraft”, historical state-builders and an “imperial core-nation” not only for historical reasons, but also, eventually because of their psychology.²⁶ Sokol thinkers who stemmed from this milieu also retained many of these assumptions and used such points as a framework for their, namely Serbian, contribution to the Yugoslavist modernity Sokol was supposed to achieve. As Aleksandar Ignjatović excellently pointed out, the Byzantine imperial legacy was repackaged as an answer to the interwar question of civilizational and cultural standard, and modernity.²⁷ While such heritage also sometimes served as a blueprint for peaceful coexistence of different groups, promoted not least by the interwar field of Balkanology that hoped to use it as an integrative

²⁶ Ignjatović, “Byzantium’s Apt Inheritors”, p. 82-83, p. 79, p. 59; Vladimir Dvorniković, *Karakterologija Jugoslovena* [Characterology of Yugoslavs] Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1939.

²⁷ Ignjatović, “Byzantium’s Apt Inheritors”, p. 87.

device—it nevertheless bore much of its claims on historic statehood and imperial pedigree, that were both ultimately incompatible with the (post-)Habsburg liberal-positivist package and its contribution to the devising of a distinctly Yugoslavist modernity.

Beyond this regionally-specific insight into the stakes around neo-romanticism, the dissertation also takes into account other theoretical writings that highlight other aspects relevant for better contextualization of the said group. For the period of the mid- to late 1930s, namely after the effects of the Great Depression impacted semi-peripheral Yugoslavia, Georg Lukács's concept of romantic anti-capitalism also proves rather relevant for framing their intellectual response.²⁸ It does so by pointing to the way in which interwar liberalism's deeply reformist and deconstructivist drive, as well as promotion of alternative social formations, opened way for demagogical and eclectic "order-making" projects that posed as authentic, autochthonous and anti-capitalist, but in fact concealed much darker and more dangerous agendas.²⁹ The traditional peasant communes (*zadruga*), as well as other historical examples of Balkan peoples' attempts at creating economic and social resilience in face of scarcity and uncertainty in the imperial borderlands and frontiers, became prominent elements of the neo-romanticist autochtonist imaginary. More often than not, they also incorporated explicitly anti-modernist and anti-positivist elements, seeking to romanticize and irrationalize the existing social tensions. Even if they still nominally used democratic language to narrate their own project, this type of democracy was also largely void of liberalism, which, in turn, represents a crux of their conflict with the thinkers who belonged in the liberal-positivist tradition. This was so because the latter,

²⁸ Georg Lukács "Lebensphilosophie und die Erneuerung der Romantik" In: *Wie ist die faschistische Philosophie in Deutschland entstanden?* Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982, pp. 82-113.

²⁹ Lukács: "Today's philistines gone wild are the same, however, who a few years ago listened to the resigned wisdom of Lebensphilosophie, whose fathers or grandfathers sat at the universities at the feet of Simmel or Husserl, in the Wandervogel movement expressing their romantic protest against the mechanization of life, or making a pilgrimage to Darmstadt to the school of wisdom of Count Keyserling. The 'new' that the fascist philosophers bring to vitalism is nothing more than the demagogic-political exploitation of this situation, the exploitation and ruthless further development of that ideological fog that vitalism has brought about precisely by sublimating the problems of romantic anti-capitalism.", p. 108.

particularly because of the epistemic authority they were continuously asserting, were more comfortable with compromising on democraticity of social change, than on its liberal and positivistically-rooted character.³⁰ Neo-romanticist commitments also underpinned the distinct Balkanist symbolic geographical framework promoted within Sokol from the mid-1930s onwards. It injected Balkanism with mythologized irrationalist autochtonist agenda, justifying their rejection of Slavdom as a main political-geographical sphere of reference otherwise characteristic for Sokol since its inception. In other words, the choice between Slavism and Balkanism, disenchantment or re-enchantment, had much larger intellectual and ideological implications, that primarily had to do with the negotiation of the ultimate vision of the Yugoslav, as alternative or belated normative, modernity.

It is, however, important to add that this brand of neo-romanticism, even if in tension with “bourgeois rationalism”, largely did not comply neither with Schmittian political romanticism, neither his vision of the conservative revolution.³¹ Given that the South Slavic national movements, and especially Yugoslavism, never predominantly relied on detached, individualist aristocracy, within which Schmitt locates the flaccid political romanticism—his rendering of the concept remains irrelevant for the present study and critique neo-romanticist thinkers within Sokol had, at the expense of liberal-positivists. This is all the more the case because they did not consider the state to be a neutral, abstract entity, but instead saw its historically contingent creation and development as historically logical outcome of their anti-imperialist efforts and of their national character. Having presented these two streams of thinkers, namely the liberal-positivist and neo-romanticist one, it is important to accentuate that their theoretical descriptions provided here represent ideal-types. The findings that the dissertation presents

³⁰ For more on the historically contingent marriage between liberalism and democracy, as well as liberal democracy's key interwar challengers, populism and neo-liberalism, see: Balázs Trencsényi, *Intellectuals and the Crisis of Politics in the Interwar Period and Beyond: A Transnational History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025.

³¹ Jeffrey Herf, “Ch. 5. Technology and Three Mandarin Thinkers” *Reactionary modernism: technology, culture, and politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 109-130.

point to the dynamic process of their mutual cross-fertilization, that intensified from 1929 onwards, but was latently present before as well.

Lastly, the analytical part of the dissertation that stretches across three research chapters is supplemented by appendices, placed at the very end, that contain a selection of Sokol statistics relevant to its intellectual output and outreach, such as those on Sokol libraries, reading rooms, lectures, cultural events, periodical distribution, speeches given in front of gymnasts etc. It also comprises of the selection of “Sokol jokes” rubric, caricatures of select Sokol thinkers and a list of the tasks performed as part of the Sokol Peter's Five-year Plan. The goal of this selection is to provide a sense of daily life of the association, approximate impact of its intellectual output, as well as its self-ironizing tendency and attitudes towards limited success of their numerous modernist initiatives.

1.2. Theoretical and conceptual framework³²

One of the key ambitions of the dissertation is to provide a contribution towards theoretical and methodological reconciliation between intellectual and social history,³³ using the example of the history of the body. In other words, it aims both to root intellectual trends in social realities of the bodies central to its theme, but also to examine how those same social realities changed as a result of the given intellectual production on the theme of the body and politics.³⁴

³² This section includes minor portions of a text submitted for publication in the *International Journal for the History of Sports*, which is under review at the time of the submission of the dissertation.

³³ Following assertions from: David Armitage “Unsocial Sociability” *The Routledge Handbook of the History and Sociology of Ideas*, eds. Stefanos Geroulanos, Gisèle Sapiro. London: Routledge, 2024, pp. 358-356.

³⁴ Darnton, Robert. “In Search of the Enlightenment: Recent Attempts to Create a Social History of Ideas.” *The Journal of Modern History* 43, no. 1 (1971), pp. 113–32.

Following the arguments espoused within the framework of the so-called 'Darnton debate', pertaining to the viability of the field of the social history of ideas, the dissertation also seeks to „follow thought throughout the fabric of society“ and investigate the „ideas from below“. Given Sokol's propensity for debates in associational periodicals and in associational life alike, as well as the fact that many Sokol thinkers included in the analysis could hardly be considered to be the great *Philosophes* of their age, the initial assumption was that their conversations and evolution will allow for trace the diffusion, circulation and reception of different ideas in the wider layers of society, beyond the academe and debates in elite intellectual journals.

The place of 'social' here, in this research design, is thus in a strictly mutually informing position with the 'intellectual', as the dissertation seeks to avoid presenting the so-called 'free-floating intellectuals' or 'big ideas' without situating them in social context relevant to their initial conception, articulation, diffusion and circulation, but also their wider reception and reaction to them, or their translation into pragmatic initiatives. Importantly, the social context is used as an explanatory device for the intellectual dynamics under investigation, throughout the dissertation.

It is, however, important to overtly address the social elements that fall outside of the scope of the dissertation, such as the everyday life of the association, more extensive information on the social background of the membership, as well as a deeper insight into the reception of the Sokol's intellectual program among the membership – even if there is an attempt to mend the latter by including the selection of Sokol jokes which reveal the limited success of their 'ideological education', in the appendices.

Alongside the stated goals, the dissertation seeks to add a third component and, conjointly with the first two processes, also theoretically explore the evolution of the concept of a political community in the writings of Sokol thinkers who drew both on their social experience and intellectual debates within the association. With this, it aims to contribute to the

interdisciplinary debates on liberal citizenship and democratic theory, not least in the fields that deal with the contemporary renditions of the concept in the context of participatory or deliberative democracy.³⁵ Specifically, however, it points to tradition of political thinking that very much resembled that of Karl Loewenstein's militant (defensive) democracy, in the sense that it sought to oppose the abuse of democratic institutions, through built-in safeguarding mechanisms.³⁶ Instead of focusing on the constitutional provisions and top-down measures, Sokol thinkers inspired by Masarykian realist tradition, focused on conducting civic education through physical education, in their aim to promote liberal citizenship. In that way, they sought to widen the array of actors responsible for the democratic processes and conditions, improve citizenry and their understanding of democratic politics, so as to go around what they saw as abusable tenets of liberal democracy.³⁷

Given that the body was at the very center of these debates and political thought of the relevant actors, the dissertation is situated at the intersection of intellectual and social history of the body, with an ambition to expand the traditionally understood intellectual history with some key aspects of social history, namely that of practices, history of voluntary associations, but also by providing an analysis of the sociopolitical background of thinkers involved in Sokol. In addition, the intellectual production encompassed in the body of sources analyzed does not comprise only of strictly political texts, but also of knowledge production, communication and science—yet again in conjunction with social practices, such as scholarly activism. To sum up,

³⁵ In historical and theoretically-oriented perspective, this relates to the works such as: Derek Heater, *A Brief History of Citizenship*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004; Rogers Brubaker, *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. London: Harvard University Press, 1992. For relevant and comparable examination of the models and understandings of citizenship and subjecthood, such as those of John Rawls see: Iseult Honohan “Liberal and Republican Conceptions of Citizenship” in Ayelet Shachar, Rainer Bauböck, Irene Bloemraad, Maarten Vink eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 83–106.

³⁶ *Militant Democracy and Its Critics: Populism, Parties, Extremism*, eds. Anthoula Malkopoulou, Alexander S. Kirshner. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 2019.

³⁷ For more on similar contemporary approaches that stress civic education, wider shared responsibility and importance of political will, see: Jan Werner-Müller “Militant Democracy” *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Constitutional Law*, eds. Michel Rosenfeld, András Sajó. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 1253–1269.

the main theoretical framework of the dissertation rests on a mutually informing and body-centred triad of: intellectual production—associational history—concept of political community.

When discussing the intellectual production, the corresponding sections of the dissertation traces the change in intellectual and social make-up of the Sokol thinkers; when analyzing associational history it examines Sokol's relationship to the state, other social groups and organizations, but also intellectualizes its practices of modelling a political community; and finally, when it conceptually analyzes the ways in which political community was framed, it situates this change into the context of changing intellectual trends and social realities around the thinkers who attempted to articulate or alter its meaning. Since the body is relevant to all three tenets of the triad, its intellectual and social history are prioritized and presented, with an aim to expose its centrality and importance to regional political thinking and related knowledge production. Within the context of the said knowledge production, the dissertation pays special attention to the process of professionalization of studying physical education from a biomedical and psychological perspective, outlining different strategies of its institutionalization and codification.³⁸

Since the dissertation's scope sits at the very intersection of different (sub)fields, the following literature review which also provides justifications for the dissertation's conceptual framework, includes several clusters of scholarship, so as to be able to map out the existing literature on all the issues that are tackled and addressed within the dissertation, as well as subsequently demonstrate the dissertation's contribution to their respective debates. These clusters of scholarship, designed particularly for the purpose of situating the thematically specific discussions that have taken place among Sokol thinkers in the examined period (pairing the

³⁸ For more on the multifaceted historiography on professionalization, see: Gergely Magos, "Mérlegen a hivatások (A professionalizációs paradigma historiográfiája)". [Professions assessed: The historiography of the paradigm of professionalization] *AETAS - Történettudományi folyóirat* vol. 32, no 2 (2017), pp. 138-157.

themes they jointly addressed), are the following: 1) **spatial and cultural cluster**: history of the late Austria-Hungary, interwar Yugoslavia, East Central Europe and, in select cases, the Third Reich; 2) **intellectual history cluster**: including conceptual history, with special attention paid to discourses on modernity and civilizational hierarchies; 3) **physical education cluster**: history of the body, the body-mind problem, physical education, sports and pedagogy; 4) **history of science and knowledge production cluster**: in particular psychology, biology, evolutionary thought and scholarly activism; 5) **welfare cluster**: history of non-state welfare provision and 6) **historical institutionalism cluster**: different modalities of institutional and organizational continuity and change.

While there are significant thematic overlaps among these clusters as well, both in scholarship and in the primary sources, this literature review nevertheless aims to outline the most relevant studies produced on these distinct phenomena, portray the ongoing debates and their evolution, but also demonstrate their multifold gaps and potential inconsistencies. In the same vein, it enumerates and explains the key theoretical concepts that allow for the innovative hermeneutic reading of the debates within Sokol, as well as for explaining these debates' relationship to their respective sociopolitical contexts.

1.2.1. Spatial and cultural cluster

To start with, the spatial and, to a lesser extent, cultural cluster of the existing literature informing the dissertation namely includes that on (symbolic) nationality politics in late Austria-Hungary (roughly from 1900 to 1914), with special attention paid to the divergent state-civil society relations in the two respective realms of the Monarchy, as well as the shared outlier

Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁹ Moreover, one of the key pillars of the entire dissertation can be found in the achievements of the “new imperial history”, which stresses the importance of imperial context for the development of modern national movements and strives to identify important sociopolitical continuities in that regards.

Here, the more recent works of Laurence Cole, Dominique Kirchner Reill,⁴⁰ Daniel Unowsky,⁴¹ Bálint Varga,⁴² Alexander Maxwell,⁴³ Pieter Judson,⁴⁴ Gábor Egry,⁴⁵ but also those on the nascent cultural associations such as the highly relevant *Maticas*⁴⁶ represent the foundation, specifically in the cases where the prewar period is discussed. In most such literature, which insightfully examines the complex relationship between the rise of mass politics, various national projects and the gradually nationalizing state apparatuses, the voluntary associations are not centrally addressed as one of the crucial vehicles, in conjunction with state administration, of nation-building and massivization of politics. Moreover, because of this blindspot, the different stakes voluntary associations had in these three imperial realms, with

³⁹ For the socio-economic specificity of public sphere and civil society in Muslim-inhabited areas such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, see: Emily Greble, *Sarajevo 1941-1945: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Hitler's Europe*. London: Cornell University Press, 2011, p. 17.

⁴⁰ Dominique Kirchner Reill, *The Fiume crisis: life in the wake of the Habsburg Empire*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2020.

⁴¹ *The limits of loyalty: imperial symbolism, popular allegiances, and state patriotism in the late Habsburg monarchy*, eds. Daniel Unowsky, Laurence Cole. New York: Berghahn Books, 2007.

⁴² Bálint Varga, *The Monumental Nation: Magyar Nationalism and Symbolic Politics in Fin-de-siècle Hungary*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016.

⁴³ Alexander Maxwell, *Everyday Nationalism in Hungary 1789-1867*. 2019. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019; Alexander Maxwell, *The Comparative Approach to National Movements: Miroslav Hroch and Nationalism Studies*. London: Routledge, 2014.

⁴⁴ Pieter Judson. *Habsburg Monarchy: A New History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, , 2016.

⁴⁵ *Postwar continuity and new challenges in Central Europe, 1918-1923: the war that never ended*, eds. Tomasz Pudłocki, Kamil Ruszała. New York: Routledge, 2022.

⁴⁶ *The Matica and Beyond: Cultural Associations and Nationalism in Europe*, eds. Krisztina Lajosi and Andreas Stynen. Leiden: Brill, 2020; alongside them, attention is paid to the universities in imperial capitals, where most of the Sokol thinkers were first socialized into positivism co-opted by the national projects, see: *Universities in Imperial Austria, 1848-1918 : a social history of a multilingual space*, ed. Jan Surman. Purdue University Press, 2018; *The Worlds of Positivism: A Global Intellectual History, 1770–1930*, eds. Jan Surman, Franz Fillafer, Johannes Feichtinger. Springer, 2018.

an exception of the studies produced by Pieter Judson,⁴⁷ Fabio Giomi and Stefano Petrungaro,⁴⁸ are rarely situated in the analytical focus in this strain of historiography. Even when reflected upon, their intellectual and epistemological production that developed alongside the national claims they were making, is rarely taken into account and tied into the broader sociopolitical transformations of the said polities.

For this very reason, focusing on Sokol both as a platform for political consolidation of the Slavic cultural and political rapprochement,⁴⁹ as well as a site of ideological and knowledge production, represents a unique approach that enriches the existing explanatory models that reckons with the turn of century nationality politics in Austria-Hungary. Elements such as Neo-Slavism, which represent relevant intellectual origins of the interwar trends and debates, are included as a response to the recent proliferation of research on the complex post-imperial transitions, breaks and continuities.⁵⁰ The recent study by Natasha Wheatley on post-Habsburg continuities in legal thought and approach to resolving issues of democracy and diversity, informs the manner in which the debates between the two key intellectual streams within Sokol are conceived, and the issues inherited from the Habsburg legal framework addressed by those thinkers who theorized on such issues.⁵¹ What is, moreover, taken from Wheatley's approach is the focus on the discursive and theoretical construction of a legal subjecthood and its

⁴⁷ Pieter Judson, *Constructing Nationalities in East Central Europe*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2005; Pieter Judson, *Exclusive revolutionaries : liberal politics, social experience, and national identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.

⁴⁸ Fabio Giomi, Stefano Petrungaro (eds), *Voluntary Associations in Yugoslavia (1918-1941) / Le fait associatif en Yougoslavie (1918-1941)*, *European Review of History / Revue européenne d'histoire*, vol. 26, no 1, 2019; Stefano Petrungaro "Inter-war Yugoslavia Seen Through Corporatist Glasses" In: *Corporatism and Fascism. The Corporatist Wave in Europe*, London, Routledge, 2017, pp. 236-256.

⁴⁹ Alongside parallel transnational initiatives such as various interwar Slavic associations, or: Mirosław Piwowarczyk "The Educational Work of Slavic Women Union in Interwar Poland and Czechoslovakia: Ideas, Postulates, and Selected Examples" *Czech-Polish Historical and Pedagogical Journal*, Vol.8, No.1 (2016), pp. 22-35.

⁵⁰ Paul Vyšný, *Neo-Slavism and the Czechs, 1898-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, eds. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon. New York: Berghahn Books, 2018; Gábor Egry et al. *Momentous Times and Ordinary People: Life on the Ruins of Austria-Hungary*. Budapest: Napvilág, 2023.

⁵¹ Natasha Wheatley. *The Life and Death of States: Central Europe and the Transformation of Modern Sovereignty*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023.

continuity—that was a rare, yet relevant strategy among some of the Yugoslavist Sokol thinkers who insisted on historical right.

This cluster, furthermore, consists of studies done on interwar Yugoslavia and Yugoslavism(s) (and historically analogous concepts espoused in East Central Europe) more broadly. For instance, Carole Rogel’s study on Slovenes’ Yugoslavism before the First World War⁵² usefully demonstrates the modalities of the national integration envisioned by most Slovene intellectuals around the turn of century, but also Branka Prpa’s analogous study on Serbian intellectual’s conceptions of Yugoslav integration laid an important groundwork for my own research, particularly in relation to the adjacent knowledge production.⁵³ In the same vein, Andrew Wachtel’s seminal work on the integral Yugoslavist cultural canon,⁵⁴ in conjunction with Ljubodrag Dimić’s research on the cultural politics of interwar Yugoslavia,⁵⁵ as well as that of Dejan Đokić on the volatile party politics,⁵⁶ represent a factual and interpretative foundation of my own approach to studying Sokol’s stance towards the same phenomena.

Most of these studies focus on the integral Yugoslavist literary canon-building, as well as early historiography, but they mostly take into account either state-based initiatives or intellectuals who were state-backed at any one point. Moreover, their representation of integral Yugoslavism is tightly related to the state-sanctioned one, particularly in relation to the Royal Dictatorship (1929-1934). For this very reason, my own contribution on Sokol aims to decentralize the

⁵² Rogel, Carole. *The Slovenes and Yugoslavism, 1890-1914*. Boulder, CO: East European Monographs; New York: Distributed by Columbia University Press, Columbia, 1977.

⁵³ Branka Prpa, *Srpski intelektualci i Jugoslavija 1918-1929*. [Serbian intellectuals and Yugoslavia] Belgrade: Clio, 2018.

⁵⁴ Andrew Wachtel, *Making a nation, breaking a nation: literature and cultural politics in Yugoslavia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

⁵⁵ Ljubodrag Dimić, *Kulturna politika u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji, 1918-1941*. [Cultural politics in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1918-1941] Belgrade: Stupovi kulture, 1996.

⁵⁶ Dejan Djokic, *Elusive compromise: A History of Interwar Yugoslavia*. London: Hurst, 2007; Dejan Djokic, *Nikola Pašić and Ante Trumbić: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*. London: Haus Publishing, 2010; Dejan Djokic, *Yugoslavism: Histories of a Failed Idea, 1918-1992*. London: Hurst, 2003.

narrative on integral Yugoslavist (historical and cultural) canon-building and demonstrate a sociopolitically wider array of actors and alternatives.

Conceptually, however, the most useful study in this first cluster is the recently published volume on Czechoslovakism,⁵⁷ many of whose theoretical assumptions proved essential for the way I treat integral Yugoslavism in all its iterations throughout the dissertation. This is particularly the case because they relied heavily on the apparatus of conceptual history, employed a strong comparative outlook, but also because subsequent (post-WW2) historiographies on Yugoslavism and Czechoslovakism experienced similar trends in the past decades.

Specifically, Kopeček's recognition of Czechoslovakism as a *zukunftsträchtig* concept excellently assists me in labelling Yugoslavism in the same vein. In addition, the editors' insistence on examining conceptual pairs or concepts parallel to Czechoslovakism, sheds light also on the manner in which Yugoslav Sokol thinkers tackled both the so-called 'tribal nationalisms', but also other alternatives to Yugoslavism, such as *Slavija* before and Balkanism, after the First World War. Most importantly, their thorough work on outlining different types of Czechoslovakism (integral/amalgamating and modernizing one which aimed to subsume the Slovak one and universalize the Czech one), represents an outstanding starting point for the development of the concept I promote throughout the dissertation, namely that of 'synthetic nationalism', which would be able to encompass all varieties of such nationalisms whose project relies on combining already existing ones. Despite the editors of the volume claiming that Czechoslovakism's "specific temporality and historic layering and its idiosyncratic polyvalence distinguishes it from other analogous historical phenomena, such as

⁵⁷ *Czechoslovakism*, eds. Adam Hudek, Jan Mervart, Michal Kopeček. New York: Routledge, 2022.

Yugoslavism...”, I argue that the same characteristics can, in fact, be observed when considering thinkers such as ones engaged in the Yugoslav Sokol and particularly their debates.

When it comes to the historiography on Sokol itself, together with a seminal book of Claire Nolte⁵⁸ and an excellently-researched recent book of Peter Roubal on Spartakiads,⁵⁹ there are some Yugoslavia-specific studies and non-academic publications which provided a solid factual basis for the social and organizational context I was investigating, namely the *Ko je Soko taj je Jugosloven* exhibition catalogue,⁶⁰ but also the articles and books of Dejan Zec⁶¹ and Pieter Troch⁶² who provided valuable contributions on the same topics, but oftentimes disregarded the particular intellectual and epistemological stakes within the association itself—which my dissertation sheds a light on, providing a more complex picture of the associational history more broadly.⁶³

Studies done on Sokol, particularly in the regional languages, namely Slovenian, Serbo-Croatian, but also Czech, Slovak, Polish and Bulgarian, oftentimes reflect historians' broader arguments and views about the Second World War, and the role that actors (such as Sokol or Yunak associations) had in the resistance or collaboration with the occupying forces. Also, they are used to evaluate the success of interwar liberal and/or democratic experiments more generally, given Sokol's position as a relevant actor of civil society.

⁵⁸ Claire E. Nolte, *The Sokol in the Czech lands to 1914: training for the nation*. New York: Palgrave, 2002; Nolte Claire E. ““Every Czech a Sokol!”: Feminism and Nationalism in the Czech Sokol Movement.” *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 24 (1993), pp. 79–100.

⁵⁹ Petr Roubal, *Spartakiads: The Politics of Physical Culture in Communist Czechoslovakia*. Prague: Karolinum, 2020.

⁶⁰ *Ko je soko taj je Jugosloven = To be a falcon is to be a Yugoslav*, edited by Veselinka Kastratović Ristić. Belgrade: Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, 2016.

⁶¹ Dejan Zec, “The Sokol Movement from Yugoslav Origins to King Aleksandar’s 1930 All-Sokol Rally in Belgrade.” *East Central Europe* vol. 42, no. 1 (2015), 48–69.

⁶² Pieter Troch, “Interwar Yugoslav state-building and the changing social position of the Sokol gymnastics movement” *European Review of History-Revue Europeene d’histoire*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2019), pp. 60–83; Pieter Troch, *Nationalism and Yugoslavia: Education, Yugoslavism and the Balkans before World War II*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2015.

⁶³ In contexts where secondary literature on particular associational practices is missing, I rely on literature that covers comparatively relevant cases, for instance, on labor camps: Kiran Klaus Patel, *Soldiers of Labor: Labor Service in Nazi Germany and New Deal America, 1933–1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

In the Czechoslovak context, for instance, this is visible in the works of Marek Waic, whose books on Sokol promote an interpretation in which Sokol not only comprised a nucleus of the resistance in Prague and other urban centers of Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, but also represented a unique liberal tradition of civic education and activism, to which post-socialist Czech and Slovak republics purportedly 'returned' in 1989.⁶⁴ Such triumphalist historiography also often glances over the 'reception' of Czech Sokol among the Slovak population throughout the interwar years. In the Polish case, which has an astonishingly few studies done about, Sokol is represented as a pinnacle of prewar Galician civil society and liberal Polish nation-building, whereby the fact that the interwar Polish Sokol was ravaged by the tension between Roman Dmowski and Józef Piłsudski remains largely unproblematized, along with the less than cooperative relationship between Polish and Ukrainian Sokol societies in Habsburg Galicia.

As in these cases, the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav historiographies on Sokol reflect the said issues. In Serbian nationalist historiography, Sokol is portrayed as too liberal (pervaded with masonry) and weak Yugoslavist platform, that quickly lost ground due to successful political manouvering of the separatist, autonomist or independentist forces in the country.

The most notorious case is Nikola Žutić's seminal book on *ideology in physical culture of Kingdom of Yugoslavia* (first published in Belgrade in 1991),⁶⁵ which is not only very descriptive, but also promotes an interpretation which vastly overaccentuates the role of and the alliance between the Roman Catholic Church, former Austro-Hungarian military officers, the Croatian Peasant Party, remnants of Josip Frank's Party of Right (so-called *Frankovci*) and even

⁶⁴ J. B. Uhlíř, M. Waic. *Sokol proti totalitě 1938-1952*. [Sokol against totalitarianism 1938-1952] Prague: Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta tělesné výchovy a sportu, 2001; Marek Waic et al. *Sokol v české společnosti 1862-1938*. 1st ed. [Sokol in Czech society 1862-1938] Prague: Univerzita Karlova, Fakulta tělesné výchovy a sportu, 1997.

⁶⁵ Nikola Žutić. *Sokoli – ideologija u fizičkoj kulturi Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929-1941*. [Sokols – ideology in the physical culture of Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1929-1941] Belgrade: Angrotrade, 1991.

the Hungarian and German minorities – posing them collectively as agents of a separatist agenda that was to eventually destroy Yugoslavia.

In other words, in 1991, historiography of Žutić, but also other notable historians such as Vasilije Krestić who re-published Viktor Novak's *Magnum Crimen* (originally published in 1948) to make a point about Catholic Church's anti-Sokol and, by extension, essentially anti-Yugoslav activity, promoted a following argument. In their view, Milan Stojadinović made concessions, to the regional leaders (e.g. Slovenian representative Anton Korošec and representative of Muslims Mehmed Spaho), that resulted in overall political de-centralization and eventual rise in separatism that wished to renew the plans for the creation of, what he termed and reified, Danube Catholic Confederation. Sokol's liberal approach was, in this perspective, too weak to resist these forces and prevent the political fragmentation of the country into nationality-based compartments. The parallels between Žutić's evaluation of Stojadinović's political stumbling and the events surrounding Slobodan Milošević's rule, at the time of the publishing of his book, are plentiful and potentially indicative of the political subtext of the book.

In contrast to this view, in Croatian nationalist historiography, most notably in the research of Aleksandar Jakir, but also other historians who dealt with Croatian Sokol in particular (e.g. Adolf Paar),⁶⁶ Yugoslav Sokol is usually posed as an exponent of either of the Greater Serbian nationalist project that completely negates Croatian historical-legal subjectivity or a type of integral Yugoslavism that was to subsume and thus deprive Croatian identity of its particularity, or Serbify it under the guise of cultural rapprochement.

⁶⁶ Aleksandar Jakir “‘Everybody wants Yugoslavism, there is no difference!’ - The Sokol Movement as a Promotor of Yugoslav Nationalism during the Interwar Years in Dalmatia” *Südost-Forschungen*, vol. 81 (2022), pp. 224-242; Adolf Paar. *Hrvatski Sokol*. [Croatian Sokol] Samobor: Društvo za športsku rekreaciju ‘Šport za sve’, 2011.

In the Slovenian case, there is historiographical consensus about the importance of Sokol for the pre- and interwar *Kulturkampf* between liberal progressives and political Catholicism, but there is a strife over the extent to which the CPY permeated Sokol structures before the invasion by the Axis powers in April 1941. The protagonists of this scholarly debate, namely Tomaž Pavlin and Ivan Čuk, agree,⁶⁷ however, that Sokol structures also comprised the core of the Anti-imperialist front that soon became the Liberation front, the most notable antifascist resistance organization in the territory of contemporary Slovenia. What remains unresolved, however, is the extent of Sokol's willing and conscious collaboration with CPY before the invasion.

Bosnian historiography that deals with Sokol comprehensively is the one that was produced during socialist Yugoslavia, with an aim to investigate the relationship between the so-called 'national question' and the workers' movement. Here, the works of Enver Redžić bring the most sophisticated reading of the split between the modernist Yugoslavist Muslim youth typically engaged in Sokol and the older generation of Muslim political-religious elites stemming from Habsburg Bosnia, who had significant material stakes (namely: feudal estates) in rejecting Yugoslavist centralism, that went far beyond the ideological and generational fault lines.⁶⁸

In order, however, not to adopt an exclusively internalist perspective whereby the association is the main driver of historical change in this context, it is necessary to more extensively reflect on the complex relationship between the extra-associational sociopolitical and international context and the Sokol, as well as the ideological and epistemological content its thinkers are producing. In that regard, the associational history, especially the organizational set-up, can be seen as indicative of wider, external phenomena. Specifically, the dissertation examines how

⁶⁷ Ivan Čuk, Aleks Leo Vest. *Prevarani Sokoli* [Sokols deceived]. Ljubljana: Študijski centar za narodno spravo, 2018; Tomaž Pavlin "Sokolstvo in prevare" [Sokol and deceit] *Dnevnik.si* (February 21, 2020), URL=<https://www.dnevnik.si/mnenja/sokolstvo-in-prevare-3-2231426/> (Last access: May 20, 2025).

⁶⁸ Enver Redžić. *Sto godina muslimanske politike u tezama i kontroverzama istorijske nauke*. [One hundred years of Muslim politics in theses and controversies of historical sciences] Sarajevo: ANUBiH, 2000.

the heritage of liberal voluntary and highly localized character of the Sokol in Habsburg contexts, corresponded to the heritage of the state-bound, highly centralized and ultimately less secular—once the two contexts, and with them two sorts of political socialization within Sokol—merged into one, after the First World War, and had to synchronize their agendas and associational cultures. To sum up, I argue, at different points in the dissertation, that these (con)tensions are both caused by, but also indicative of, clash of political cultures in interwar Yugoslavia on a much broader level.

1.2.2. Intellectual history cluster

The second historiographical cluster relevant for informing my study is the one on intellectual history,⁶⁹ whereby the foundational comparative and transnational volumes, *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*,⁷⁰ allowed for situating my findings in a rich intellectual and temporal landscape that was very thoroughly researched thereat. Beyond such syntheses, it was the Koselleckian conceptual history framework, the Cambridge school of intellectual history's linguistic contextualism, as well as Michael Freeden's understanding of the relationship between ideologies and concepts that most fruitfully underpinns my own understanding of these essential elements that I examined.⁷¹ Importantly, however, they are not used in the same capacity throughout the dissertation, but are employed depending on the quality of the source discussed at a given point. It is also worth noting that the “ideologies proper” are appropriated into Sokol on various occasions in a rather selective manner,

⁶⁹ Understood in an eclectic way that accounts for the diversity of approaches in the contemporary field, see: Matej Ivančík, “Rethinking Intellectual History in East-Central Europe: Capitalizing on Eclecticism (An Introduction)” *Forum Historiae*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2023), pp. 1–9.

⁷⁰ *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, vol. I-II, eds. Balázs Trencsényi et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 2018.

⁷¹ Michael Freeden, “Ideology and political theory,” *Journal of Political Ideologies*, vol. 11, no. 1 (2006), pp. 3–22; Michael Freeden, *Ideology Studies: New Advances and Interpretations*. London: Routledge, 2022.

depending on a variety of contextual conditions and that the main, superordinate frameworks are, in fact, liberal positivism of the 1920s and early 1930s (rooted in modernist, secularist/ecumenist nationalism, Neo-Slavism and internationalism) and the neo-romanticist Balkanism of the mid- to late 1930s (rooted in autochtonist and increasingly anti-modernist claims, that transform the liberal into integral nationalism). What is more, both of these traditions (and their interplay) have elaborate and complex implications for other discourses present in the associational periodicals (e.g. biomedical and physical education ones), as well as for broader epistemologies within the association, thus representing the key overarching symbolic and ideological components around which the dissertation's argument is organized.

Especially relevant for my case-study were arguments such as those of Richard Drake (*The Changing Landscape of Intellectual History*),⁷² on the proximity between social history of ideas and historical sociology of knowledge, due to my to holistically understood intellectual history which I posit in close and mutually-informing position with broadly understood social history. Similarly inspired by Karl Mannheim, Peter Gordon's recent examination of trends within intellectual history also draws attention to the importance of incorporating institutions, social context, collective biographies and social background to the circulation of political ideas, beyond focusing exclusively on their conceptual context.⁷³ In the same vein, I use Kapil Raj's approach to the circulation of scientific ideas among the imperial capitals and peripheries, particularly in regard to late Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in regard to Sokol thinkers' socialization and maturing in the Habsburg imperial capitals.⁷⁴

⁷² Drake, Richard. "The Changing Landscape of Intellectual History." *South Central Review*, vol. 39 no. 1 (2022) pp. 39-51.

⁷³ Gordon, Peter E. "What Is Intellectual History? A Frankly Partisan Introduction to a Frequently Misunderstood Field." Unpublished article, 2013. URL: <https://ces.fas.harvard.edu/uploads/files/Reports-Articles/What-is-Intellectual-History-Essay-by-Peter-Gordon.pdf> (Last access: March 7, 2024).

⁷⁴ Kapil Raj, "Introduction: Circulation and Locality in Early Modern Science." *The British Journal for the History of Science* vol. 43, no. 4 (2010), pp. 513-17; Kapil Raj "Beyond Postcolonialism ... and Postpositivism: Circulation and the Global History of Science" *Isis* vol. 104, no. 2 (2013), pp. 337-347.

Moreover, together with taking inspiration from George L. Mosse's insightful approach to the role of social context in the spread of political ideas,⁷⁵ I heavily draw on the concept of political socialization, articulated both by Mannheim and numerous other thinkers after him—thus attempting to reconcile these traditions and presenting Sokol precisely as a site of political socialization, circulation of political and scientific ideas, as well as their articulation.⁷⁶ This is complemented by Pierre Bourdieu's notion of social capital, through which I intend to sketch the way Sokol functioned as an intellectual network, as well as how the (post-)Habsburg Sokol thinkers capitalized on these connections in various contexts, in contrast to those from the kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro. In other words, Bourdieu's theoretical framework assists the dissertation in shedding light on the complex relationship between, primarily, Czech Sokol and its South Slavic counterparts, but also to accentuate the importance of these networks for common political socialization, thus drawing a distinction between the Serbs socialized in the Habsburg context and those outside of it. Moreover, it is to say that Bourdieu's sociology of intellectual life, and specifically practices, is not only what theoretically binds these thinkers together, but also a phenomenon by the intellectualizing of which, it is possible to further uncover Sokol thinkers' thought on the issues they were addressing through the associational activities.

It is hereby also important to stress the pragmatic quality of Sokol thinkers' intellectual output. As opposed to the writings that derive from authors who mostly theorize on the national characteristics, specificities and the nation's (meta)physical qualities, Sokol thinkers were

⁷⁵ George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich*. New York: Howard Fertig, 1975.

⁷⁶ For a particularly socially sensitive approach see: Johan Östling, David Larsson Heidenblad. *The History of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023; on theories of knowledge circulation: Hoppel, Lisa, Florence Klauda, und Nora Lehner. "Applying 'Knowledge Circulation' in Historical Research". *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften* vol. 34, no. 3 (2023), pp. 7-20; and on political socialization: Herbert Hyman. *Political Socialization: A Study in the Psychology of Political Behavior*. New York: Free Press, 1959; Karl Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction: Studies in Modern Social Structure*. London: Routledge, 1966.

intent not only on disseminating these ideas, but primarily on translating them into practice. Through Sokol's robust infrastructure and with support of the allied voluntary associations and, on occasion, the state, Sokol thinkers saw themselves as clearly distinct from earlier generations of nation-builders, by the fact that they were foremost practice-oriented and used this practice to theorize on tensions and dynamics of nation-building, but also on the national body more broadly. This practical, or, applicatory quality of their intellectualizing and nation-building strategies corresponds to phase C of Miroslav Hroch's theory on nation-forming.⁷⁷

Nevertheless, within such markedly holistic understanding of intellectual history, the vast literature on discourses of modernity and those of civilizational hierarchies, proved most useful for providing depth to my interpretation of Sokol's stance on these two crucial concepts of the studied period. The foundational theoretical studies that frame my reading of such discourses and are concerned with temporality in such contexts, are *Regimes of Historicity*,⁷⁸ but also *European Regions and Boundaries*,⁷⁹ which very effectively demonstrate the strong links between temporality and civilizational hierarchies, albeit on the example of symbolic geographies, which in the case of Sokol continuously oscillate between the New European, Neo-Slavist and Balkanist frameworks, in the examined period.

Specifically, however, Ibrahim Kaya's paramount study on the Turkish social theory and discourses of belated modernity,⁸⁰ which makes for a comparable context due to the Balkanist symbolic geographical framework which also implied belated modernization, as is convincingly demonstrated by Diana Mishkova in her latest volume on Balkanism⁸¹ in the local

⁷⁷ For more on terminology of these distinct phases in a wider theoretical context, see: Alexander Maxwell "Typologies and phases in nationalism studies: Hroch's A-B-C schema as a basis for comparative terminology" *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, vol. 38, no. 6 (2010), pp. 865-880.

⁷⁸ Francois Hartog and Saskia Brown. *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*. Columbia University Press, 2015.

⁷⁹ *European Regions and Boundaries: A Conceptual History*, eds. Balázs Trencsényi and Diana Mishkova. New York: Berghahn Books, 2017.

⁸⁰ Ibrahim Kaya, *Social Theory and Later Modernities: The Turkish Experience*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004.

⁸¹ Diana Mishkova, *Beyond Balkanism: Scholarly Politics of Region-Making*. London: Routledge, 2019.

and international knowledge production. The most useful point Kaya makes, based on the assertions of authors such as Eisenstadt, is that the thinkers from these regions which already carried a label of belatedness, were among the first to theorize not only on multiple political modernities, but were also articulating an autochthonous way towards modernization very early on, which sometimes diverged into outright antimodernism, but for the most part retained its positive attitude towards appropriating the elements of Western modernity in conjunction with respecting the local developmental conditions. Such assertions were followed by the formulation of the idea of plurality of civilizations and paths towards civilizing and raising the cultural levels of different populations. When applied to Sokol, as Kaya applies it to Kemalism more broadly describing it as a *sui generis* modernization project, this lens manages to effectively capture their analogous stance towards both modernity and civilizational hierarchies which they almost never saw as fixed, but rather malleable through concerted effort of voluntary associations such as Sokol.

In turn, one of the most central approaches to raising civilizational-cum-cultural level of the Yugoslav population at large that Sokol theorized on and attempted to employ, was through behavioral change, with specific focus on the notions of self-restraint and social restraint. Most notable contemporaneously produced theoretical works that speak to this are Norbert Elias' study on *The Civilizing Process*,⁸² as well as Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*.⁸³ While both of these books offer arguments on the positive correlation between behavior and the civilizational level, they differ in their view of bodily plasticity and the ability to alter inheritable behavioral instincts. For the present study of Sokol's debates on these issues, they are useful in so far as they are one of the rare examples of directly connecting bodily experiences

⁸² Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: the History of Manners*, 1939.

⁸³ Sigmund Freud, *Das Unbehagen in Der Kultur*. Vienna: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1930.

and, with or without the inheritable alteration of behavioral instincts, the overall political culture and social life of a community.

To sum up, by examining Sokol thinkers' stances on both modernity (which were largely analogous to Kaya's conclusion) and civilizational hierarchies (which they deemed alterable through concerted behavioral change), the dissertation manages to diversify, historicize and localize the given concepts, thus demonstrating that there was a strong tradition of such reflexive negotiating of these otherwise hegemonic ideas. By way of complementing this agenda, the inter- and, more precisely, trans-imperial lens adopted and oftentimes directly problematized in complex ways by the Sokol thinkers, is taken from Anca Parvulescu's and Manuela Boatacǎ's arguments from their recent book: *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania across Empires*.⁸⁴ While their subjects and questions differ from the dissertation's, as they worked with literary sources and primarily explored the region's integration into world systems and multi-imperial contexts, the manner in which they engage with modernity, but also political projects operating in the complex imperial borderlands, well informs the present analysis of those Sokol thinkers who reflected on the same issues, stemming from a similar position. The inter-imperiality is thus both a perspective I employ to contextualize the given actors and their intellectual production, as well as the object of my inquiry, in the instances when the Sokol thinkers engaged with the issue of "imperial difference", *avant la lettre*, particularly when discussing the predicament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in conjunction with the Serbian national project.

Beyond these two central notions the debates on which are implied in most texts analyzed throughout the different chapters, it is important to theoretically frame the way in which fiction writings included in the corpus of the sources is addressed. Namely, since Sokol promoted

⁸⁴ Anca Parvulescu, Manuela Boatacǎ, *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania across Empires*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022.

numerous contemporaneous fiction works which most often thematized (recent) history, Vladimir Macura's concept of semiosphere⁸⁵ is used to capture the dynamics of meaning change behind the tropes that (re)appear in the literary sources examined thereat, particularly those whose main goal was to construct a novel narrative of the post-imperial break and transition.

1.2.3. Physical education cluster

The third literature cluster, namely that on the physical education, encompasses research done on the history of the body, the body-mind problem, physical education, sports and pedagogy. This cluster is also the one, in regards to which the dissertation perhaps makes the most extensive contributions.

The reason why the literature on education and pedagogy is placed in this cluster, rather than the fourth one which pertains to scholarly activism, science communication and knowledge production, is because education is, in the case of Sokol thinkers, inseparable from their theorizing on physical education. In other words, it was the physical education (education and psychocognitive development through bodily movement) that was their primary focus, as well as the method they argued in favor of. This also means that all other novel and foreign pedagogical and educational trends they aimed to incorporate into both their theorizing and associational practice, were, in fact, adapted almost exclusively to physical education, or education through physical exercise.

⁸⁵ Particularly as is used in: Vladimir Macura, *Český sen* [The Czech dream], Prague: NLN - Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 1998; see also: Thomas G. Winner, "Czech and Tartu-Moscow semiotics: the cultural semiotics of Vladimir Macura (1945-1999)" *Sign Systems Studies*, vol. 28 (2000), pp. 158-180.

Having said that, it is first important to define the role of the body itself in the theoretical build-up of the dissertation. In that regard, there are two crucial points that need to be addressed. The first is that, the vast majority of Sokol thinkers understood the body and mind (individual's psychology) to be inextricably connected and malleable one through another. For this particular reason, the historiography on the body-mind problem is relevant to the present research, as are the perspectives from a wide array of fields, on this peculiar relationship, which I hereby briefly examine.

The other crucial point is that for Sokol thinkers, as for numerous other interwar thinkers, these associational activities aimed at cultural amalgamation, raising the civilizational level and labor capacity of their population, was seen as a collective effort. This means that, in order to situate their explanatory models of how the human body relates to the broader sociopolitical systems, it is necessary to explore and employ the theories and concepts stemming from the contemporary sociology of the body, physical education and sports.⁸⁶

While Foucault's studies, alongside his notable understanding of biopolitics, are oftentimes considered to be some of the most relevant reference points in the history of the body, this dissertation does not adopt their perspective as the dominant explanatory frameworks for the body-related discussions and practices within Sokol. In cases where it is particularly warranted, the concept of biopolitics is used to denote the conceptual reducing of the human collective to their bodily capacities and traits by the governing structures, but in other cases, a more complex theoretical framework is used. This is mainly due to the fact that Foucault's contributions and

⁸⁶ For instance, volumes such as the: Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory*. Los Angeles: Sage Publishing, 2012; *Learning Bodies: The Body in Youth and Childhood Studies*, eds. Julia Coffey, Shelley Budgeon, Helen Cahill. Singapore: Springer, 2016; but also more abstract notions on embodied learning in social context, such as those from the recent volume: *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Sociology, Oxford Handbooks*, eds. Brekhus, Wayne H., and Gabe Ignatow. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019; or Ian Burkitt, *Bodies of Thought: Embodiment, Identity and Modernity*. London: SAGE, 1999; Stefanos Geroulanos and Todd Meyers, *The Human Body in the Age of Catastrophe: Brittleness, Integration, Science, and the Great War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018; Chris Shilling, *The Body: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

genealogies of the body, largely regard it as “an object of techniques and deployments of power”.⁸⁷ In other words, the picture Foucault paints on the history of the body is mostly a one where it is devoid of agency, and is instead subject of manipulation—which is relevant in describing the way particular Sokol thinkers treated the bodies to be molded from the mid-1930s onwards, but is largely not applicable to the vast majority of them who, up until that point, awarded substantial agency to and sought to horizontally engage their subjects.

Foucault’s other point, which deserves a mention and is useful for theoretically framing certain portions of the dissertation is the one on the production of (bodily and psychological) normativity, by those state institutions which engaged in sanctioning behavior, in terms of criminality or insanity. The knowledge production that was shaping and supporting the development and implementation of such normativities is something that can be observed within Sokol (with the most poignant case in point being the debates around gender normativity that was discussed within the association),⁸⁸ but in contrast to Foucault formative cases—in a markedly different non-state and political context.

In very much the same vein, while Bourdieu’s insights, on the way body relates to and generates social inequalities through contributing to one’s symbolic value, remain relevant for the contemporary sociology of the body and beyond, they are useful for the study of Sokol only in so far as the thinkers therein directly referred to the social legitimacy of particular bodies or sought to “normalise them”.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Gutting, Gary and Johanna Oksala, “Michel Foucault”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL= <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/foucault/>>. (Last Access: March 11, 2024).

⁸⁸ In this context, it is necessary to highlight that it was mostly women’s bodies, and not that of men, that were tackled in such debates. For more theoretical insight on the issue in conjunction to political socialization, see: Charlotte Witt, “Gender and Social Normativity”, *The Metaphysics of Gender, Studies in Feminist Philosophy* (2011; online edn, Oxford Academic, 19 Jan. 2012), Last Access: March 12, 2024.

⁸⁹ *The Oxford Handbook of Pierre Bourdieu*, eds. Thomas Medvetz, Jeffrey J. Sallazo. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Instead, it is Georges Vigarello, whose distinctly post-structuralist, holistic and socially-sensitive approach to the history of sports and particularly of the body, underscore the approach that was taken throughout the dissertation.⁹⁰ Vigarello insists that the body is both socially and discursively constructed, thus making a very clear connection with the realm of intellectual history. Most of his studies, inspired in part by Elias and partially by Foucault, are characterized by the *longue durée* perspective on the body normativity, representations and practices, with special attention paid to the issues of bodily sensitivity, the relationship between the body and technology (in terms of capacity), body and the environment, as well as economy of embodiment in historical perspective. Taking inspiration from his insistence on the social, historical and discursive construction of the body, I apply the same lens when examining Sokol thinker's numerous writings on the body, its relevance to the human psyche and culture, its capacity, relationship to its environment, rapidly changing technologies, but also labor-capital relations and international politics more broadly.

In parallel with Vigarello's research on these issues, done in the tradition of French social history, it was Henning Eichberg who wrote most extensively on similar phenomena, contributing mainly to the German and Danish post-structuralist school of body culture studies, despite having started his scholarly career in the mid-1970s in the rather Eliasian tradition of the *historische Verhaltensforschung*.⁹¹ Nevertheless, unlike Vigarello, Eichberg uses these themes to address Mossean topics such as sports/gymnastics performances as political

⁹⁰ Georges Vigarello, *Histoire de la beauté, le corps et l'art d'embellir de la renaissance à nos jours*. Paris: Seuil, 2004; Georges Vigarello, *Histoire du corps*, vols. I-III. Paris: Seuil, 2006; Georges Vigarello, *The metamorphoses of fat: a history of obesity*. New York: Columbia University press, 2013; Georges Vigarello, *A history of fatigue: from the Middle Ages to the present*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2022.

⁹¹ Henning Eichberg, *Der Weg des Sports in die industrielle Zivilisation*. Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1973; Henning Eichberg, *Body Cultures: Essays on Sport, Space, and Identity*. London: Routledge, 1998; Henning Eichberg, *Bodily Democracy. Towards a Philosophy of Sport for All*. London: Routledge, 2010; Henning Eichberg, "Do we need an existential philosophy of the railway? Why then a philosophy of sport?" *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 8, no. 1 (2014), pp. 77-84.

spectacles, political athleticism at large, as well as history of (pre)modern European games in an anti-modernist key.

One of his main arguments states that the premodern European games became corrupted through the influence of the modern Western competitive sports which contributed to the “industrialization of space and time”. He mainly traces the latter process throughout the late 18th and 19th century development of “noble exercises and enclosure in halls,” which he overtly criticizes as unnatural and unproductive, not least from a pedagogical point of view. While not directly useful for the theoretical framework of the present dissertation, Eichberg’s writings can perhaps point to the longevity of some of the autochtonist and essentialist ideas on body culture, akin to those of certain Sokol thinkers.

Importantly, the majority of Sokol thinkers also vehemently opposed sports, albeit oftentimes on different grounds. Namely, they argued that sport was harmful and an unproductive endeavor, as it is overly individualist, focused on competition and achieving records, drives people towards specialization of their skills, thus neglecting other aspects of their (bodily and psychological) development, ultimately resulting in the atomized society with the majority of its population physically and mentally underdeveloped. It is necessary to note, however, that such criticism of sports—and arguments in favor of gymnastics, collective calisthenics and folk games—served as an avenue for a much more elaborate criticism of Western modernity, including capitalism and social atomization. In other words, their insistence on the holistic understanding of physical education on the one, and its collective (ideally all-encompassing) character they strived to achieve, allowed them to position themselves as the crucial, albeit paternalistic, designers of the overall political culture, national canon and societal order — all of which, they believed, could be molded through the physical education of the entire “national body”.

It is necessary to underscore, however, the stark contrast between the Sokol's vision of a "new man" and alternative contemporaneous "new men" (e.g. fascist, national socialist, Soviet) has roots in Sokol's liberal tradition of a voluntary association that provides agency to its subjects which it, despite gradually failing to do so, aimed to treat and "mold" horizontally, rather than impose a vision "from above". In fact, Sokol thinkers' continuous theorizing on the issue of will, largely from a psychological and behaviorist pedagogical perspective, also played into adopting of such "molding" strategies. While the issue of the "new woman" could be addressed here, it is omitted because it was a much more contentious issue within the association, throughout the studied period and it is hardly possible to claim that there was a general consensus on the manner in which the "new woman" should be "molded" through associational practices.

The history and philosophy of sports have, however, experienced different phases and turns in the past decades⁹² and represent a strain of scholarship this dissertation speaks to most directly, namely, by demonstrating the essential difference that historical actors such as Sokol thinkers ascribed to the sociopolitical role of the Sokol(-like calisthenic systems) and sports. Seeing both as conducive to diverging sociopolitical development, as well as having different effects on the given individual's body and psyche, they saw these different types of physical education as tools that lead to radically opposing sociopolitical realities. This connection, between physical education and sociopolitical order(s), is something that is almost completely unaddressed in the different strains of modern scholarship on the history and philosophy of sports—not least because the field developed in distinctly Anglophone or Western European contexts which do not share neither the historical tradition of such systems (instead relying mostly on sports), neither the tradition of anti-imperialist nation-building projects which relied on physical

⁹² Devine, John William and Francisco Javier Lopez Frias, "Philosophy of Sport", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2023 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.), URL=<<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2023/entries/sport/>>. (Last access March 7, 2024)

education as a vehicle of massivization and dissemination of national ideas. One of the rare, yet notable exceptions, is the Irish GAA, Gaelic Athletic Association.⁹³

Beyond the once dominant conflation of the philosophy of sports and philosophy of play (as was promoted in the notable *Homo Ludens* by Johan Huizinga), Robert Scott Kretchmar⁹⁴ summarized the recent history of the philosophy of sports in the following way. Namely, he argued that it went through three stages since the 1870s until the present day: the eclectic phase (whereby it was subsumed into and contaminated by the philosophy of education more broadly; including the “new physical education” of the 1910s which integrated it into other educational systems in the West), the system-based phase (whereby a lot of philosophy of sports was produced by comparing different systems such as the Swedish and German ones) and the disciplinary phase (roughly from the mid-1970 onwards, when the field became gradually institutionalized and consolidated).

In addition to being spatially and linguistically rather limited, this overview is also immensely sports-centered, and by extension, games- and rules-centered. Moreover, the authors who Kretchmar outlined as the crucial proponents of the systems-based phase, reflected on the connection between physical education and upholding of sociopolitical systems only in so far it related to sports, which they saw as inherently more democratic than other contemporaneous systems, they deemed authoritative and conducive to uniformization. To sum up, the dissertation aims to use the Yugoslav Sokol as an example of the rather different approach, whereby the sports were precisely the sort of physical education that gymnastics was posed against, for particularly political and ideological reasons. Moreover, the dissertation demonstrates that the Sokol writings on the body-mind problem, political role of the body and

⁹³ Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland*. London: Pan Books, 2007, pp. 227–231.

⁹⁴ Robert Scott Kretchmar, “Philosophy of Sport,” in J.D. Massengale and R.A. Swanson (eds.), *The History of Exercise and Sport Science*, Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1997, pp. 181–201.

those with a biopolitical lens—can and should be considered as part and parcel of the European philosophy of physical education (as opposed to sport), which should itself be conceptually widened so as to accommodate many other traditions that existed and which prompted thinkers to reflect on similar issues.

Due to this prevalent sport-centrism, that is partially an extension of Western-centrism,⁹⁵ many adjacent fields (such as art history, anthropology,⁹⁶ performance studies⁹⁷ etc.) tend to overlook the crucial ideological and historical differences among physical education forms that existed across Europe. For instance, this could be said for the otherwise excellent recently published volume on *Sport and the European Avant-Garde*, by Andreas Kramer and Przemysław Strożek.⁹⁸ While this volume is outstandingly informed on the intellectual contexts that inform the various avant-garde tendencies across Europe, their focus on sport immensely obscures the other existing physical education traditions that also served as a platform for both intellectual and artistic production. Their examination of premodern physical education is also limited exclusively to precursors of modern sports, but they nevertheless do not fail to note the intimate connection between a particular physical education strategy and the desired sociopolitical order.

A much more sensitive study that also reflects on the conjunction of performance studies, physical education and socially sensitive intellectual history is Anson Rabinbach's *Staging the Third Reich*,⁹⁹ which although not concerned with East Central European contexts, offers insightful findings on a sort of physical education analogous to that of Sokol. While discussing organizations such as *Kraft durch Freude* and *Schönheit der Arbeit*, it succeeds in providing an

⁹⁵ Visible also in the larger overviews of modernist thought and projects around the body, see Jean Harvey, Robert Sparks "The Politics of the Body in the Context of Modernity" *Quest*, vol. 43, no. 2 (1991), pp. 164-189.

⁹⁶ Niko Besnier, Susan Brownell "Sport, Modernity, and the Body" *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 41 (2012), pp. 443-459.

⁹⁷ The most useful volume for situating the way Sokol used gymnastics and other public performances is: *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space*, eds. Michael R. Glass, Reuben Rose-Redwood. London: Routledge, 2014.

⁹⁸ *Sport and the European Avant-Garde*, eds. Andreas Kramer and Przemysław Strożek. Leiden: Brill, 2021.

⁹⁹ *Staging the Third Reich: Essays in Cultural and Intellectual History*, eds. Anson Rabinbach, Stefanos Geroulanos, Dagmar Herzog. London: Routledge, 2020.

innovative perspective on the history of physical education by pointing to the centrality of labor and humanly labor capacity within such initiatives.

This is relevant to the case of Sokol because it is also most often labeled in historiography as primarily focused on “training for the nation”, whereas the crucial concern of Sokol thinkers, that was the improvement of national economy through producing a larger labor capacity and efficiency in the overall population, most often remains unaddressed. The main structural difference between the Third Reich and interwar Yugoslavia, in this context, is the fact that the latter never experienced the institutionalization of such initiatives on the state level.

Rabinbach demonstrates how, beyond improving factory workers’ labor capacities, such organizations stressed the development of discipline, comradeship, muscle regeneration and *esprit de corps*, through collective calisthenics. Their most notable initiative was the 1938 Sportappell, whose declared goal was to create a non-alienated and non-proleterianized working class. Most such approaches that they aimed to put into practice and massivize, however, had their origins in the philosophy of physical education, developed much earlier mainly by thinkers such as François Delsare (who principally wrote on aesthetic gymnastics, posture, factory air quality etc.), as well as by Hugo Münsterberg who founded psychotechnics (the scientific measurement of the effects of fatigue, temperature, dampness, body positions, including seating and the position of work materials, the influence of overeating on emotional life etc), which later led to the development of industrial psychology as a field.

Lastly, Rabinbach addresses a very pertinent interwar theme of the relationship between the human body and the machine, elaborating on the fascist fascination of the mechanized body, the efficiency of the modern industrial complex and the adjacent theoretization on the boundaries of the human body in that context. Conceptually, however, the particular national socialist concepts he addressed, that can be seen as most comparable and pairable to those that were developed and employed by the Yugoslav Sokol thinkers when discussing organic

nationhood and autochthonizing political modernity, are *Rassenstaat*, *Volksgemeinschaft*, *Volkskörper*—all of which, alongside some others, are paired and discussed in the different sections of the dissertation dedicated to the thinkers who elaborated on them within the associational periodicals.

Furthermore, the existing literature on the body-mind problem, one of the key elements of this cluster, is most often limited to discussing the ancient, medieval or early modern thinkers on the one, and ideas exclusively, on the other hand. Even when discussing modern thinkers who contributed to this discussion, the focus on the relationship between the way they discussed it and their broader sociopolitical agendas is lacking.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, there are outliers, such as the volume edited by Henrik Lagerlund,¹⁰¹ in which Timo Kaitaro brings together the largely neglected early modern medical thinkers (the so-called Montpellierian vitalists) and modern neuropsychology, in showing that is not only the mind that “thinks”, but also the body, namely the autonomic nerve system. Importantly, in this tradition the reason and emotions were not juxtaposed against one another, as the author underscored that they thought that “appropriateness of sentiments is part and parcel of our concept of rationality in the broad sense”. This idea could be seen as a predecessor of claims made by numerous Sokol thinkers who investigated the same topics, reaching markedly similar conclusions.

Moreover, in the recent years, there has been an attempt, within the scholarship on the body politics and history of the body, to reconcile the materialist and discursive approaches to treating the body as a subject of historical inquiry. Such are the Stacy Alaimo’s book,¹⁰² but

¹⁰⁰ This can be observed in philosophical syntheses such as: Tim Crane, *History of the Mind-Body Problem*. London: Routledge, 2000; but also: Frank Chouraqui, *The Body and Embodiment: A Philosophical Guide*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021.

¹⁰¹ *Forming the mind: Essays on the Internal Sense and the Mind/Body Problem from Avicenna to the Medical Enlightenment*, ed. by Henrik Lagerlund. Dordrecht: Springer, 2007.

¹⁰² Stacy Alaimo. *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

also the volume on *The Body and the Arts*,¹⁰³ that is precisely based on the idea, first articulated by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception*, that body does not just constitute a given subject's perspective, but rather that it constitutes subjectivity as such. Relatedly, the volume chapters explore the history of the idea of a relationship between the body and character in Western political thought, through the lens of this relationship's scientification and consequent (Weberian) disenchantment through modern medicine.¹⁰⁴ The volume essentially showcases how the idea of bodily beauty (centered around symmetry and geometry) encompassed the traits of efficiency and self-discipline since antiquity, as well as that the premodern (e.g. Galenic) or proto-scientific ideas on the body-mind relations (conceived as body-soul or location of soul in the body) greatly influenced the development of modern psychology and physiology.

Another relevant convergence between studying the bodies as vehicles of social experience and political thinking about them—can be seen in the literature that tackles the questions of selfhood, personhood, bodily ownership and related issue of social responsibility. These are some of the most pertinent issues that Sokol thinkers attempted to address and, on many occasions, radically redefine, through their writings. Given Sokol's voluntary nature, as an association, the argument most of its thinkers subscribed to, whence debating these issues, is that individuals have agency, but also an obligation, to suspend the “separateness of persons”¹⁰⁵ that would have ensured their fully-fledged, sovereign, bodily ownership. In that way, they would assume liberally conceived collective responsibility for the state and evolution of their political community. Unlike the traditional theories of collective responsibility that focus on harm, Masarykian realist tradition that most Sokol thinkers subscribed to, thus operated with

¹⁰³ *The Body and the Arts*, eds. Corinne Saunders, Ulrika Maude, Jane Macnaughton. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Egil Asprem, *The Problem of Disenchantment: Scientific Naturalism and Esoteric Discourse, 1900-1939*: Leiden: Brill, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ As is understood in: John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

this, markedly liberal notion of collective responsibility, that was not only optional, but also future- and progress-oriented. In other words, it is a sum of personal responsibilities, that renders the role of the state as a modernizing and order-making agent, much less relevant.¹⁰⁶ In this context, the monistically understood body can be seen as a joint resource, that can be socially and economically invested into, as long as there is an informed societal consensus that supports its handling as, to a certain extent, a public property.¹⁰⁷ Both its strength, health, fitness, skills, on the one, but also its inherited urges, instincts and characteristic traits, on the other hand—hereby become a resource for achieving the progress of the political community, to the extent to which the individual themselves conforms to it. Because these issues remain relevant in legal, but also cognitive and philosophical debates of the present day, this study on Sokol serves as a useful attempt at their sensitive historicization.¹⁰⁸

In other words, the body's social and intellectual histories are approaching a synthesis, alongside the process of merging the body and mind as subjects of inquiry. For this very reason, it is crucial to note that the dissertation, in its sections on physical education and pedagogy, very much aims to maintain this perspective and contribute to this trend of regarding the body as a vehicle for shaping the human psychology and cognition, but also to reconcile the social and intellectual stakes of its history. The ambiguities around the aforementioned process of scientification and disenchantment, very often addressed by Sokol thinkers, however, represent

¹⁰⁶ “Collective responsibility” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, URL=<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/collective-responsibility/> (Last access: January 8, 2025); John Kekes, “Collective Responsibility as a Problem for Liberalism” *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, vol. 20 (1995), pp. 416-430.

¹⁰⁷ Alexandra George “Property in the Human Body and Its Parts: Reflection on Self-determination in Liberal Society” *EUI working paper*, Law, no. 2001/8. Florence: European University Institute, 2001.

¹⁰⁸ For some of the contemporary debates at the intersections of said fields, see: Joe Higgins, “Biosocial selfhood: overcoming the ‘body-social problem’ within the individuation of the human self” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, vol. 17, pp. 433-454; Olaf Blanke, Thomas Metzinger “Full-body illusions and minimal phenomenal selfhood” *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, vol. 13, no. 1. (2009), pp. 7-13.

a productive tension well into the first half of twentieth century, as was noted in the volume on *Religion and Science in the Making of Modernist Bodies*.¹⁰⁹

This cluster also includes the issues stemming from the history of pedagogy.¹¹⁰ Overall, in that context, the historiography that can be deemed most relevant for the dissertation is the one on the so-called “new education” (in different linguistic contexts also known as: progressive education, *éducation nouvelle*, Reformpädagogik, new education, educación nueva, escola nova, *éducation fonctionnelle*, *méthodes actives* etc.) that had developed around the turn of century in the US and Germany, and gained momentum in the interwar period across Europe, surviving until the present day. A notable scholar of this movement, Beatrice Haenggeli-Jenni, argued that it should generally not be regarded as a homogeneous movement, as well as accentuated the dominant role of French activists, alongside other Western European pedagogues (e.g. John Dewey, Maria Montessori etc.) and feminists.¹¹¹ Importantly, in her synthetic article on this transnational phenomenon, she accentuated the pacifist drive behind their pedagogical interventions such as experiential learning and introduction of students’ self-government. In the same vein, the key Sokol thinkers—inspired by the very same Western European thinkers—produced numerous writings on the need for a profound reform of pedagogy, overtly related such pedagogical reforms to the overall societal progress, but nevertheless often added an autochtonist layer to their suggestions. They did this, for instance,

¹⁰⁹ Lara Vetter, *Religion and Science in the Making of Modernist Bodies: Modernist Writings and Religio-scientific Discourse: H.D., Loy, and Toomer*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010; conversely, a process of drawing on biological imaginary to explore the modernist bodies in literary production was dealt with in: Carl Gelderloos, *Biological Modernism: The New Human in Weimar Culture*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2020.

¹¹⁰ The same approach, namely linking histories of the body and education, was taken in the following recent volume: *The Body, Embodiment, and Education: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, ed. Steven A. Stolz. London: Routledge, 2024.

¹¹¹ Béatrice Haenggeli-Jenni, “New Education”, *Encyclopédie d’histoire numérique de l’Europe* [online edition] URL=<https://ehne.fr/en/node/12270> (Last access March 7, 2024); Kevin J. Brehony, “A New Education for a New Era: The Contribution of the Conferences of the New Education Fellowship to the Disciplinary Field of Education 1921-1938”, *Paedagogica historica*, vol. 40, no. 5-6, (2004), pp. 733-755.

by recommending the introduction of the authentic South Slavic folk games or vernacular teaching/dissemination/knowledge communication methods into the state education system.

One of the key elements of this movements' efforts was the nascent dynamic psychology which insisted on putting the focus on the individual learner's holistic development, rather than on the exact knowledge that needs to be (frontally) transferred. A tension between using this approach to communicate knowledge more effectively and thus reach the desired sociopolitical order on the one, and psychopathologisation of children on the other hand—is interestingly touched upon by Nelleke Bakker in her article on the British child guidance movement, prompted by the philanthropic initiatives from the US.¹¹² Essentially she, alongside Nikolas Rose and John Stewart,¹¹³ demonstrates that such alternative pedagogies proved to be a fertile ground for the development of normative frameworks in psychiatry and pedagogy alike, whereby the boundaries of normal and pathological were continuously negotiated by the experts involved thereat. This sort of negotiation process that Bakker described, as well as the epistemic struggle between the already established behaviorism and nascent developmental psychology, that underlied many of the discussions Sokol thinkers had on the different modes of physical education—represents a theoretical crux of the dissertation's sections dedicated to discourses on (physical) education.

It is necessary to note that the field of history of pedagogy is relatively well developed in a comparable regional context, namely that of Czechoslovakia, with extensive and sophisticated studies done by authors such as Tomáš Kasper and Dana Kasperova. For instance, Tomáš

¹¹² Nelleke Bakker, "Child guidance, dynamic psychology and the psychopathologisation of child-rearing culture (c. 1920-1940): a transnational perspective," *History of Education*, vol. 49, no. 5 (2020), pp. 617-635.

¹¹³ John Stewart "The Scientific Claims of British Child Guidance, 1918-45" *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2009), pp. 407-432; Nikolas Rose, *The Psychological Complex: Psychology, Politics and Society in England 1869-1939*. London: Routledge, 1985.

Kasper demonstrated in several of his articles on the issue,¹¹⁴ that the underlying ideological, epistemic and political goals of the education reform, albeit based on mostly positivist approaches inspired by the American notion of scientific management, also included humanism, Masarykism, pacifism and internationalism that they thought would result in overall social emancipation. In studying the reception of the “new education” trends in Czechoslovakia, Tomáš Kasper thus demonstrated that it was not only the modernist Czechoslovak pedagogues, but also representatives of Sudeten Germans, e.g. Karl Metzner who founded the *Deutscher Arbeitskreis für Neugestaltung der Erziehung*, who mediated and appropriated such principles to the local conditions and political constellations. In fact, Blanka Kudlačová¹¹⁵ underscores that it was precisely the non-state actors who proved to be most innovative and radical in their rethinking of the pedagogies and building up of the institutional frameworks for their implementation.

Building on these findings from very comparable contexts, throughout the dissertation, I raised a question on the difference between how in the Western European contexts (e.g. with the aforementioned British child guidance movement)¹¹⁶ such initiatives relatively rapidly became incorporated into the welfare state, and how in the East Central Europe they primarily remained in the realm of voluntary (professional) associations throughout this period—thus resulting in non-existing or very slow modernizing of the state educational practices. This is more the case for Yugoslavia, than for Czechoslovakia, which underwent the so-called “Příhodovská” reform in the 1930s, based on Václav Příhoda’s *Rationalisation of Education* (1930) that ultimately aimed to go beyond the scientisation of pedagogy and was centered around the concepts of

¹¹⁴ Tomáš Kasper, “The field of history of education—from development to stagnation, crisis and perhaps a ‘new’ beginning: the Czech example”, *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 58, no. 6 (2022), pp. 920-943; Tomáš Kasper, “Open Air School—A new space for educational school reform and life reform in the Interwar Czechoslovakia (Sudeten German and Czech examples)” *Historia y Memoria de la Educación* vol. 13 (2021), pp. 179-215.

¹¹⁵ Blanka Kudlačová, “Reform Pedagogy in Slovakia in the interwar period” *Historia Scholastica*, vol. 1 (2020), pp. 94-108.

¹¹⁶ John Stewart, “The Scientific Claims of British Child Guidance, 1918-45” *The British Journal for the History of Science*, vol. 42, no. 3. (2009), pp. 407–432.

pragmatism and behaviourism, that also became hegemonic within the Yugoslav Sokol circles around the time, as is demonstrated in the dissertation.¹¹⁷

All this is to say that Sokol should be understood as a platform for debating, mediating, appropriating and experimenting with pedagogical approaches and trends. Even though many of these novel trends never got appropriated into the state system and largely remained present exclusively in the alternative education projects, it can be said that Sokol (due to its size and tradition) served as a laboratory for their implementation throughout the studied period. This is not irrelevant also due to the fact that many of the individuals who were socialized within Sokol, later went on to become notable designers of (physical) education in the postwar period, yet in a markedly different context.

1.2.4. History of science and knowledge production cluster

The fourth literature cluster, focused on the history of science and knowledge in a more narrow sense, also includes themes such as evolutionary thought, but also scholarly activism—both immensely relevant for understanding Sokol and its intellectual production.

Specifically, this cluster is focused on two main groups of literature, one that regards scientific knowledge production as a (culturally and politically embedded) social practice and the other that aims to contextualize the concrete topics (in fields such as biology, psychology and anthropology) that they continuously discussed within the associational periodicals and occasionally translated into associational practices (e.g. anthropometry, eugenic initiatives).

¹¹⁷ Dana Kasperova, “Child, Pupil, School and the Reform of Society in interwar Czechoslovakia” *Pedagogika*, 2015, vol. 65, no. 5, pp. 487-501.

The first said group of literature informs the dissertation's approach to science (production) at large, namely, posing it as inherently politically, culturally and socially situated and constructed claims of universal knowledge. This is underpinned by theoretical approaches such as the concept of boundary-work or demarcation,¹¹⁸ which is applied throughout the dissertation in the sections dedicated to the Sokol thinkers' scientific output and practices. Such literature examines the way epistemic authority is built and asserted, as well as how boundaries are set between authoritative scientific knowledge production and alternative ways of knowing. Moreover, this sort of literature pays special attention to the sort of (political) economy of scientific authority, that scholars participate in vis-à-vis the state. This nexus of issues represents yet another lens through which knowledge produced within Sokol could be regarded, particularly when it comes to the integral Yugoslavist claims they aimed to give weight to through their positivist interventions.

The creative tension between Sokol thinkers' positivist claims, on the one hand, and their tendency to deconstruct others' such claims (e.g. those of their "tribal" counterparts or the so-called Nazi racial science in the 1930s) makes for a productive theoretical conversation and insights into the boundary work they were performing. Moreover, in line with relatively recently recognized localist approach to knowledge production,¹¹⁹ Sokol thinkers also oftentimes stressed the indigenous ways of knowing and communicating knowledge. For this very reason the literature that reflects on the importance of localism in the history of science¹²⁰ serves both as a theoretical signpost for some of the arguments espoused in the dissertation, but

¹¹⁸ Thomas F. Gieryn, *Boundaries of Science; Cultural Boundaries of Science: Credibility on the Line*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

¹¹⁹ Adi Ophir and Steven Shapin, "The Place of Knowledge: A Methodological Survey," *Science in Context* vol. 4, no. 1 (1991), pp. 3-21, here p. 5.

¹²⁰ The creative tension between simultaneous institutionalization and indigenization of knowledge was tackled both in: Christophe Charle, Jürgen Schriewer, and Peter Wagner, eds., *Transnational Intellectual Networks: Forms of Academic Knowledge and the Search for Cultural Identities*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2004. and Vedran Duančić, *Creating national space(s): anthropogeography and nation-building in interwar Yugoslavia, 1918-1941*, PhD diss. Florence: EUI, 2016.

also an epistemic context that many of them were developing through their examination of the ways vast illiterate peasant populations engaged with modern medical or social knowledge.

One of the rare studies that speaks to the latter, albeit from a different disciplinary and spatial context, is Steven Feierman's *Peasant Intellectuals*,¹²¹ which provides a “thick description” of a particular peasant epistemology, the sort of which Sokol thinkers sought to emulate and imitate, in order to win over the peasant masses through avoiding frontal, hierarchical science communication that would presumably alienate them—instead imbuing the peasant epistemologies with their own findings and knowledge.

The theoretical concept which best captures this long-standing Sokol intellectual practice, observable throughout the studied period, whereby they mainly ethnographically studied the way knowledge is communicated and then emulated those practices, imbuing them with their own intellectual agenda—is the one of ethnopedagogy. Due to the fact, however, that there were several variations on the said theme, the concept will be expanded, used in plural, thus also reflecting its status in the current literature and usage, primarily in anthropological and ethnological contexts.¹²²

Since many of the discussions within the Sokol associational periodicals attempted to theorize on the potential biological and sociopolitical effects of the Sokol's main task, namely the collective physical education of the nation—evolutionary thought deserves special attention as it ties these issues together. Due to this, it is important to mention that the theory of evolution also served as a central theme within the 19th century biology more broadly, and contributed to

¹²¹ Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals, Anthropology and History in Tanzania*: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990.

¹²² The term was used by Henry G. Burger as he was developing a manual for cross-cultural teaching for the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare in 1968, but more recent attempts at tracing its origins and uses can be found in: Ildikó Sándor “Ethnopedagogy: the term and the content” *Acta Educationis Generalis*, vol. 9, no. 3 (2019), pp. 105-117; Adnan Tufekčić. “Etnopedagogija kao znanstvena disciplina.” [Ethnopedagogy as a scientific discipline] *Školski vjesnik* vol. 58, no. 3. (2009), pp. 265-279.

its disciplinary consolidation and systematization.¹²³ In other words, it helped both scientists and political thinkers to conceptualize different theories on bodily, but also social development through history. One important result of such approaches was the emergence of sociobiology, a field later renamed into evolutionary psychology.¹²⁴ Importantly, the field developed in the Western European contexts only in the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of the initiative of the Austrian ethologist Konrad Lorenz. In light of that, Sokol's ventures into this field can be considered relatively early and regionally exceptional, not least because Lorenz and his followers largely limited their investigations to animals, even if they had brief excursions into human-based research as well. In contrast, Sokol thinkers who wrote extensively on sociobiological issues primarily focused on the inheritability of human instincts and their relation to the social and political life of a given country.

Moreover, it is necessary to point to the fact that most examined thinkers were neo-Lamarckians throughout most of the interwar period, with the dominance of those who believed in hard heredity, only emerging in the second half of the 1930s. This also necessitates delving into those texts where they reflected on the way the "improvements made by better education and social conditioning might eventually become part of the race's biological inheritance",¹²⁵ or, in other words, the way Sokol might "mold" the national body for generations to come.

Due to the fact, however, that they understood physical education to impact both the body and the mind (specifically, one's psychological state and traits), their initiatives aimed at molding the national body (and psyche), should also be regarded as methods that used the authority of science to, in fact, conduct social regulation and normalization. This is very well articulated in Erica Burman's sophisticated study on the history of developmental psychology, whereby she

¹²³ Vassiliki Betty Smocovitis, *Unifying Biology: The evolutionary synthesis and evolutionary biology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

¹²⁴ *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Darwin and Evolutionary Thought*, edited by Michael Ruse. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

¹²⁵ Peter J. Bowler, *Evolution: The History of an Idea*. University of California Press, 1984.

showcased how the legitimacy of scientific claims was used to regulate, and in particular case, divide bodies and minds across various contexts.¹²⁶

This issue becomes particularly pertinent when it comes to the aforementioned goal of Sokol to enlarge the collective labor capacity of the overall population. In that context, one of the most useful comprehensive study of the development and varieties of such productivist discourses was done by Anson Rabinbach in his book on the *Human Motor*.¹²⁷ Rabinbach thereby presented how the development of thermodynamics as an independent field of study actually contributed to the understanding of the human body as a motor, and consequently of physical labor as energy expenditure, in the rawest sense.

Conceptually, however, he juxtaposed the body-machine and body-organism against one another, insightfully arguing that in most such contexts the mind was conceptually reduced to the body. His concept of “social Helmholtzianism” is thus particularly useful for interpreting most of the texts Sokol thinkers produced within or outside of the association. This is especially true for those thematizing the role of rest in the increasing of labor and bodily productivity in general, whereby the second law of thermodynamics became a venue for criticising both modernity and capitalism. To sum up, Rabinbach’s “energist paradigm” also presents one of the key theoretical reference points of the dissertation, not least when it comes to the Sokol texts dealing with the question of posture.¹²⁸

Importantly, as Rabinbach also showed in his sequel to the said book, namely in *The Eclipse of the Utopias of Labor*, numerous fields and middle-class initiatives such as industrial psychology were developed in an attempt mend the continuous demands on the labor force that came to be conflated with modernity. This is also where Sokol’s elaborate debates around its own

¹²⁶ Erica Burman, *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*. London: Routledge, 1994.

¹²⁷ Anson Rabinbach, *Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue and the Origins of Modernity*. University of California Press, 1992.

¹²⁸ Sander L. Gilman, *Stand Up Straight! A History of Posture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2018.

gymnastic system's, and the related environment's, ability to convalesce the diverse worker's bodies, but also assist them in achieving the body-mind harmony, come in.

Nevertheless, despite this long-standing Lamarckian tradition in Sokol, the period of late 1930s is marked by the proliferation of discourses on hard heredity and increasing, primarily conceptual, reflection on the way racial science was being used in Nazi Germany. In order to contextualize and better inform these Sokol discussions, Christopher Hutton's studies¹²⁹ on the concepts of race and nation are used, as is the book *Beyond the Racial State*,¹³⁰ which suggests that there was no monolithic "scientific" theory of "race" in Nazi Germany, but rather a number of competing approaches. Moreover, it showcases that most of these theories did not equate the Volk/nation with race—something that Sokol writers on the issue continuously accentuated, but to whose racial categorization some Nazi arguments, such as those of Hans F. K. Günther, bear striking similarities.

In terms of the second type of literature that makes up this cluster, namely that on scholarly activism, it is necessary to note that it is oftentimes relatively ahistorical, or significantly linguistically and spatially selective and limited. In other words, the concept is primarily confined to the analyses stemming from the contemporary sociology of knowledge, rather than projected back into history, with rare exceptions.¹³¹ Instead, historiography is rather saturated with the studies using the concept of public intellectuals¹³² (or mandarines, in the interwar context),¹³³ but these rarely include those scientists who used the epistemic authority derived from quantitative and/or natural sciences to promote their political or construct ideological

¹²⁹ Christopher Hutton, *Race and the Third Reich: Linguistics, Racial Anthropology and Genetics in the Dialectic of Volk*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005; "Race science and scientific racism", in: *Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnic Studies*, ed. Ellis Cashmore. London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 385-9.

¹³⁰ *Beyond the Racial State: Rethinking Nazi Germany*, eds. Devin O. Pendas, Mark Roseman, Richard F. Wetzell. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

¹³¹ Daniel Gordon, *What is Academic Freedom? A Century of Debate, 1915–Present*. London: Routledge, 2023.

¹³² Richard A. Posner, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003.

¹³³ Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890-1933*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1969; Julien Benda, *La trahison des clercs*. Paris, 1927.

claims. For this reason, I find the notion of scholarly activists, albeit largely unihistoricized in the existing scholarship so far, more precise and hermeneutically appropriate for capturing the processes within Sokol.

1.2.5. Welfare cluster

The following literature cluster is also the most limited one, namely dealing with non-state welfare, something Sokol gradually exceeded in, although in most cases based on populations' political and ideological orientation, rather than on the idea of providing universal, indiscriminate welfare. Theoretically, the viewpoint which underscores the issues highlighted in the dissertation when discussing Sokol's numerous welfare initiatives, is the one espoused in the recent volume on the *Politics of Non-State Welfare*, which argues that such practices most often result in novel inequalities of access to welfare, overly complex mechanisms of accountability (very pronounced in the case of Sokol), as well as the perpetuation of the limited state capacity to provide the given services to its citizens.¹³⁴ These claims were complemented by the recent volume on the complex relationship between such initiatives by Fabio Giomi, Célia Keren and Morgane Labbé,¹³⁵ but also Laura Lee Downs' notable assertion on the genderedness of such welfare projects,¹³⁶ which can also be well observed within Sokol. Given the association's changing, and oftentimes complementary relationship to the state, a recent volume on the mixed economy of welfare,¹³⁷ that demonstrates the relevance of these interwar

¹³⁴ *Politics of Non-State Social Welfare*, eds. Melani Cammett and Lauren M. MacLean. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014.

¹³⁵ *Public and Private Welfare in Modern Europe: Productive Entanglements*, eds. Fabio Giomi, Célia Keren, Morgane Labbé. London: Routledge, 2022.

¹³⁶ Laura Lee Downs. "'And So We Transform A People': Women's Social Action and the Reconfiguration of Politics on the Right in France 1934–1947." *Past & Present*, no. 225 (2014), pp. 187–225.

¹³⁷ *Caring for the Socially Marginalized in Interwar Europe, 1919–1939*, eds. Stefano Petrunaro, Michele Mioni. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024.

models for the later, more robust, projects of welfare provision, also serves as a relevant backdrop to the Sokol's initiatives of the late 1930s. Focusing specifically on the relationship of the state towards national minorities, in the context of welfare, Hanna Lindberg, Karolina Lendák-Kabók and John Paul Newman demonstrated that the interwar Yugoslav approach often deepened inequalities and contributed to deepening the rift between majority and minority populations.¹³⁸ The same could be assumed in the case of Sokol that provided welfare only to its membership, that was nominally limited to those of Slavic background.

Moreover, the findings that originate from exploring the complex dynamics of the interaction between the reactive volatile state and Sokol, in terms of ethnically framing welfare provision, may speak to broader contemporary debates¹³⁹ which examine the crucial continuities of such practices and their long-term consequences, such as those that pertain to the equity of access to social welfare, and diverging experiences of citizenship in general. Since most Sokol authors, however, have not conceptualized welfare in the contemporary manner, despite the fact their practices could be categorized as such, the relevant literature centered around the concept of “social justice”, which they used most often, is taken into account.¹⁴⁰

1.2.6. Historical institutionalism cluster

The very last literature cluster deals with different theories around institutional continuity and change, and is used in different chapters to frame and organize the changes within the

¹³⁸ Hanna Lindberg, Karolina Lendák-Kabók, John Paul Newman “Introduction: minorities and the making of European welfare” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire*, vol. 31, no 2 (2024), pp. 183–201; John Paul Newman, Karolina Lendák-Kabók, “War veterans, minorities and crisis points in Yugoslav welfare” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire*, vol. 31, no. 2 (2024), pp. 310–329.

¹³⁹ Melanie Claire Cammett “Introduction: The Political Consequences of Non-state Social Welfare in the Global South” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, vol. 46, (2011) pp. 1–21.

¹⁴⁰ *Social Justice in Twentieth-Century Europe*, eds. Martin Conway, Camilo Erlichman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024.

associational make-up and leadership, throughout the distinct and turbulent periods of Sokol's relationship with the state. Specifically, it is used to assess Sokol's proximity to or overlap with the given state's apparatus, that is, both in the late Austro-Hungarian and interwar Yugoslav context. Alongside *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism*,¹⁴¹ the most relevant pieces of literature derive from the works (co-)authored by Kathleen Thelen,¹⁴² as well as by R. Daniel Kelemen.¹⁴³ Thelen and Kelemen discuss different theoretical and conceptual issues around institutional change and its modes of relating to other institutional or political structures. Since this literature was traditionally devised to address the evolution of distinctly formal institutions, when applying it to Sokol's dynamic and eventually more official status, a proxy concept of the "adaptive informal institution"¹⁴⁴ is used in most periods, although the theories and models of institutional change remain theoretically tied to the formal institutions. Importantly, the "adaptive informal institution", as theorized on by Kellee S. Tsai, can be accommodating (meaning it does not undermine) to, complementary (meaning it enhances) or substitutive to the state's institutional framework. Moreover, the models of institutional change in formal institutions include: displacement, layering, drift, conversion and exhaustion.¹⁴⁵ Displacement pertains to the "effective replacement of previous institutions", whereby informal institutions can facilitate the transition. Layering, moreover, refers to the appearance of "incremental amendments to existing rules or enactment of new rules without voiding others, so as to not challenge an institution directly". Furthermore, drift subsumes a change in broader,

¹⁴¹ *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism*, eds. Orfeo Fioretos, Tulia G. Falleti, Adam D. Sheingate. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

¹⁴² Kathleen Thelen, "How Institutions Evolve," in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, eds. James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 208-240; Kathleen Thelen and Sven Steinmo, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics," in *Structuring Politics: Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Analysis*, eds. Sven Steinmo et al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 1-33; *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies*, eds. Wolfgang Streeck and Kathleen Thelen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005; *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*, eds. James Mahoney, Kathleen Thelen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

¹⁴³ Giovanni Capoccia, R. Daniel Kelemen "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism" *World Politics*, vol. 59, no. 3 (2007), pp. 341-369.

¹⁴⁴ Tsai, Kellee S., "Adaptive Informal Institutions", in *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism*, eds. Orfeo Fioretos, Tulia G. Falleti, and Adam Sheingate. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 270-288.

¹⁴⁵ *Beyond Continuity*; Tsai, Kellee S., "Adaptive Informal Institutions", p. 270.

environmental conditions, when the “change occurs in the absence of adjustments to ensure continuing vitality of the institution”. In contrast, conversion denotes a redeployment of institutions for purposes that depart from their founding intentions. Finally, exhaustion refers to the “gradual institutional depletion” and ceasing to function, which can also be caused by institution’s self-destruction. These models are applied and used to explain different phases of Sokol’s institutional evolution in each of the chapters, with special attention paid to its complex relationship with the state. The tension between structure and agency implied in the studies on historical institutionalism is, in this case, resolved by drawing on R. Daniel Kelemen’s assertions on the role of individual agency in the moments of “heightened contingency” and at “critical junctures”, thus breaking away with the notion of institutions’ inevitable path dependency.

1.3. Methodology

This study's methodology rests on combining different strategies for excavating the aforementioned tenets of the theoretical framework, from the rather sizeable body of sources. For the purpose of examining the dynamic and socially-informed relationship between the state and the association, the dissertation relies on the said historical institutionalism theories, paying special attention to their formal and legal relationship, across different periods.¹⁴⁶ In other cases, it uses prosopography for tracing and uncovering the social background of the key officials and thinkers through distinct periods of associational history. The goal of employing this strategy is to explore the social make-up’s impact on the adoption or rejection of intellectual or epistemic trends and paradigms. Moreover, the dissertation relies on conceptual history in the

¹⁴⁶ James Mahoney, Kathleen Thelen. *Explaining Institutional Change: Ambiguity, Agency, and Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

context of ideological morphology, as articulated by Michael Freeden,¹⁴⁷ but also discourse analysis and Cambridge school linguistic contextualism¹⁴⁸ to reconstruct the mutual informing of ideological and epistemological changes, particularly vis-à-vis the relationship between the body and the notions on political community—throughout the different periods of associational history. In terms of temporality and spatiality, it stresses the importance of tracing both post-imperial transitions and employing of the trans-imperial perspective (post-Habsburg, post-Ottoman and post-kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro),¹⁴⁹ through utilizing the comparative method with other relevant East Central European contexts and thus highlighting transnational connections, circulation of ideas or concepts, comparisons and exchanges whenever relevant.¹⁵⁰

1.3.1. Sources and limitations

This section further discusses the use of various primary sources, such as the numerous associational periodicals and adjacent publications, whereby their usage is critically evaluated. Namely, the dissertation relies primarily on the periodicals published either centrally by the associational leadership (e.g. *Jugoslavenski Sokol*, *Sokolski glasnik*) or by its respective committees (e.g. *SOKO*, *Prednjak*, *Sokolsko selo*). There are also those periodicals that pertain to particular regions, such as *Sokol na Jadranu*, or those numerous regional and local ones that

¹⁴⁷ Michael Freeden, “The Morphological Analysis of Ideology” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies*, eds. Michael Freeden, and Marc Stears. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, pp. 115-137.

¹⁴⁸ Gary Browning “Quentin Skinner, the Cambridge School, and Contextualism”, *A History of Modern Political Thought: The Question of Interpretation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 67-88.

¹⁴⁹ Gábor Egry. “Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: Local Societies and Nationalizing States in East Central Europe”. *Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918*, eds. Paul Miller and Claire Morelon, New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2018, pp. 15-42.; Parvulescu and Boatcă, *Creolizing the Modern*.

¹⁵⁰ As is done in: *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*; and Kapil Raj “Thinking Without the Scientific Revolution: Global Interactions and the Construction of Knowledge” *Journal of Early Modern History* vol. 21, no. 5 (2017), pp. 445-458.

were in circulation before the unification of South Slavic Sokol societies into a single organization, meaning before the First World War (e.g....) These associational periodicals not only provide information on the events and practices of the association, but also help in identifying key actors and in distinguishing those (such as the Sokol's long-term official Engelbert Gangl) who were more involved with associational politics and less with producing political thought, from those who produced a vast array of texts on many issues discussed thereat. Most of the said periodicals are also useful insofar that they contain literary sections, within which numerous contemporaneous publications are reviewed by the members of Sokol. These publications comprise, with rare exceptions, expert literature from the fields of nascent sports medicine, medicine in general, history, philosophy, ethnography, anthropology, economy, geography etc. It was only in exceptional cases that they reviewed or recommended fiction, in which case such works are understood as forming the integral Yugoslavist literary canon or supporting the newly espoused historical narratives that aimed at state legitimation. These books that were recommended in the literary sections of said periodicals represent a large pool of literature that the dissertation is based on, not least because they were oftentimes not only recommended to the membership, but acquired for the Sokol libraries established and regularly updated in all Sokol clubs across the country. Moreover, in many cases, the associational courses and popular lectures were usually based on this literature. While it is hardly possible to assess the actual reception or effect such literature had on the associational membership and beyond, it is plausible to assume that their choice and their promotion in this context signify their importance to those thinkers who were engaged in Sokol, as well as assist in reconstructing the intellectual trends they subscribed to over time. Taking into account Sokol's own statistics on the number of subscriptions to different associational periodicals in 1930, across the country,¹⁵¹ it is possible to assert that the expert periodicals, such as *SOKO*,

¹⁵¹ Vladimir Belajčić "Sokolska štampa" [Sokol press] *Sokolska prosveta* 3-4 (1931), pp. 61-67, here p. 64-65. See appendices for the reproduction of the statistical table.

had approximately half as much subscribers, as the central associational organ, *Sokolski glasnik*. Relative to their population at the time, the largest portions of subscribers to all periodicals resided in: Osijek, Novi Sad, Veliki Bečkerek (today's Zrenjanin), Sušak, Maribor, Mostar, Zagreb, Belgrade, Ljubljana and Banja Luka.

Also, when discussing different challengers of Sokol's thought and agenda, sources include other publications and periodicals, that stem from different sides of the political spectrum, e.g. nationalist, Catholic, leftist, Muslim etc. The audiovisual sources, namely those obtained from the Croatian Film Archive, Serbian National Library and Radio Belgrade, were used only in so far as they contained recorded lectures or recordings of important symbolic rituals done either on Sokol slets or on other occasions.

Lastly, the limitations of the research design and the dissertation's scope are examined in the last part of this section. These limitations mainly include the choice to focus primarily on those thinkers who published in the association-wide periodicals and publications, thus bypassing those who were more active on the local level (especially having in mind how localized Sokol was as an association). Moreover, while the dissertation traces numerous transnational trends Sokol was a part of or mediating, it is still not entirely comparative in its outlook, but rather represents a sort of entangled history, by including tangentially relevant French, German, Hungarian, Polish, Italian, Czech, Russian/Soviet and other thinkers and strains of thought. Another limitation is the lack of information provided on the organizational and institutional history of Sokol, which stems from the dissertation's and doctoral programs' scope, as well as the grave inaccessibility of the Archives of Yugoslavia during and after the pandemic. Similarly, not all periodicals relevant to the dissertation were available in the libraries and online databases in which the research was conducted, meaning that in some cases entire years were not publicly accessible or held by a given institution. Lastly, while seemingly rather relevant (especially when it comes to the cultural canon, but also personal continuities), the

transition between the interwar and postwar periods is not extensively addressed or tackled, but could prove to be a fruitful avenue for further research.

1.4. Terminology and nomenclature

Given the topic's and Yugoslavia's specific setup, it is necessary to clarify the way in which particular terms are used throughout the dissertation and why particular terminological choices were made. To start with, the concept of "Sokol thinker" denotes a political thinker engaged in the Sokol association and publishing their writings mostly within the associational framework, rather than outside. The same is the case for the term "Sokol activist", indicating one's active role within the association, and relatedly, wider political context. Moreover, there are two different ways the noun *Serbs* is used, one corresponding to Serbo-Croatian term *Srbi* and the other to *Srbijanci*.¹⁵² The former denotes Serbs in general (anywhere in the world) and the latter specifically denotes Serbs from Serbia (principality or kingdom). Where the latter is being employed, the Serbo-Croatian word is indicated in the parentheses so as to avoid a lengthy expression "Serbs from Serbia". Also, while the regional designator *Vojvodina* did not exist in the period concerned in the dissertation, the qualifier *Vojvodinian* is used as a shorthand for describing particular thinkers' origins or place of work, especially if they moved between different towns and to avoid misunderstandings in case of referring to *Dunavska banovina*, which also included Belgrade, for instance. This is done to accentuate their (post-)Habsburg origins and avoid them being wrongly attributed to Belgrade. The dissertation also relies, across different chapters, on hardly translatable and highly culturally contextual terms which are to be explained here and then not repeatedly explained in the text itself, as they appear on multiple

¹⁵² Egon Fekete, "Semantičke razlike i upotrebne vrednosti prideva srpski i srbijanski", [Semantic differences and practical values of the adjectives *srpski* and *srbijanski*] *Naš jezik* vol. 13, no. 5 (1978), pp. 199–209.

occasions. For instance, *idejne škole* (literally: schools of ideas), that were essentially ideological courses where participants were to be taught and socialized into given political ideas, are translated as “ideological schools”. Moreover, a rather relevant term of *uzgoj*, that conceptually sits between “raising” (contemporary: *odgoj*) and “breeding” (contemporary: *uzgoj*) is translated as “raising” throughout, albeit its exact semantic boundaries and morphology remain unclear. Furthermore, the concept of *pobratimstvo*—that could equally mean fraternity, alliance, brotherhood of blood—that was used in different context with different meaning, is translated as “brotherhood of blood” as this is what it originally stemmed from, despite being largely used as a form of temperance-driven sociability, particularly in Habsburg Bosnia. Also, the frequently used concept of *zavet/zavjet*, that could equally indicate an oath, vow, pledge, promise or a testament—is translated as both an oath and a pledge, given its political usage within and outside of the association (e.g. *Kosovski zavjet*, *Vidovdanski zavjet*, *Svatoplukov zavjet* etc.). In the same vein, the term *Sokolski dom* (literally: Sokol house) has a much larger and holistic meaning than the term itself suggests, going beyond merely “gym” or “house”, and instead incorporating the comprehensive (*Aus*)*bildung* to be conducted there as well. Another relevant part of Sokol-specific vocabulary is a *slet/zlet* (indicating downward flight, i.e. of a falcon), that stood for large-scale events whereby Sokol members gathered and performed gymnastics, alongside different cultural performances. It is kept in the original form throughout the text due to a lack of English equivalent. A relatively frequently used concept of cooperative (*zadruga*), or cooperative movement (*zadrugarstvo*) refer to the somewhat mythologized and idealized communal, often family-based, social and economic multi-generational autarkic living formations that existed in the countryside of the space concerned. Furthermore, “integral Yugoslavism” does not necessarily indicate the theoretical concept of integral nationalism (as opposed to liberal one), that Yugoslavism could be seen an example of, but rather a unitary (integrative) quality of Yugoslavism, that presupposed the

amalgamation of the initial titular nationalities and beyond. The reason behind this semantic choice is the fact that the analogous concept in Serbo-Croatian and Slovenian language historiography (*integralno jugoslovenstvo/integralno jugoslavenstvo/integralno jugoslovanstvo*) denotes the latter, rather than the former.

Regarding analytical language, most terms used in the dissertation are explained in the theoretical section or supported by existing theoretical literature. In the case of the term “progressive” and its derivatives—they are used to denote political thought that belongs to the loosely modernist, social reformist, evolutionary and future-oriented category that ascribes a better quality to the coming etape, without my superimposing of any normative or anachronistic vision of progressivism or progress. This is done so as to distinguish such thinkers from anti-modernist or those who subscribed to revolutionary thought. When the term stems from the historical actors' own self-identification or affiliation with a particular political party or movement, it is used in quotation marks.

Moreover, even if the historiographical concept of titular nationality encapsulates the position of Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian identities' in the given context, on numerous occasions throughout the text, the concept of “tribal” identity is used instead. This is because of the fact that the relevant historical actors used the latter designation so as to express the difference in developmental degree between purportedly primitive (“tribal”) identities, such as the Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian ones, and the more modern and developed Yugoslav one, that they subsumed under the category of a nation. In order to remain sensitive to the actors' semantic content read into these titular identities, the adjective “tribal” is used in quotation marks throughout the dissertation.

Many of the morphologically complex or rare concepts, as well as original names of institutions, political parties, associations, associational bodies, laws and different legislative documents, translated to English, also appear in Slovenian and Serbo-Croatian languages in the text. The

designator “Serbo-Croatian” is used throughout the dissertation, in line with the arguments of the linguist Snježana Kordić on its linguistic and historical merits, as opposed to other alternatives.¹⁵³ Lastly, the names of the settlements are largely stated in their contemporary form, without stating their historical or parallel names that exist in other languages (e.g. Karlovac instead of Karlstadt, Senta instead of Zenta etc.)—for the sake of brevity. The names of administrative units that existed in interwar Yugoslavia (e.g. *banovina*, *oblast*, *kotar* etc.) are kept in their original form, as some of them do not have equivalents in English. Moreover, the outdated names of regions that appear in the sources (e.g. South Serbia instead of Macedonia) are referred to in the text, where analytically relevant.

1.5. South Slavic Sokols before the Sarajevo Gunshots

1.5.1. National Liberals’ Pragmatic Turn: Turn of Century Sokol Associational Culture

The period between the turn of century and the outbreak of the First World War was marked both by the rise of mass (nationality) politics and the increased relevance of the human body in the political and public sphere, as well as in political thinking. In the context of South Slavic-populated areas, namely Austria-Hungary and kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, it was within Sokol that these two processes converged, as well as resulted in fruitful intellectual and cultural production largely based on middle-class male sociability. Even if Sokol was a relevant actor in the late imperial “nationality politics”, as is already recognized in historiography, this section will also examine its two other functions. Namely, its role in the transition from largely symbolic to “pragmatic” politics, on the one, and its promotion of the body as a relevant

¹⁵³ Snježana Kordić “Naziv jezika” [Name of the language] in *Jezik i nacionalizam* [Language and nationalism]. Zagreb: Durieux, 2010, pp. 125-136.

political subject, on the other hand.¹⁵⁴ For that reason, both its associational culture and its intellectual and cultural production centered around the human body are brought to the fore, across different imperial and royal realms where the Slovenian (“South”), Serbian, Croatian and Muslim and Sokol clubs existed. This is done to be able to provide a context both of the complex framing of the “nationality question” that unraveled in the interwar Yugoslavia, but also to depict an evolution of their intellectual traditions and associational culture as such.

As the novel polities of Serbia and Montenegro experienced relatively turbulent period due to the Balkan Wars and dynastic tensions, in this period, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy also struggled with numerous external and internal challenges, not least the ever greater demands for democratization. Its dualist nature, as well as the relatively divergent political cultures and agendas within its two respective realms, posed a different set of challenges to the Sokol thinkers and organizers, who articulated their increasingly body-centered political claims in this period. Multiple crises have shaken the Dual Monarchy, in relation to the Southern Slav question, in the period between 1908 and 1912, namely the Bosnian annexation crisis, High treason show-trials in Agram/Zagreb and the Balkan Wars. Mandatory revision of the Compromise also became a neuralgic point, due to the significant political divergences, especially after the 1906 elections when the ‘48-ers Independence party of Ferenc Kossuth came to power in Budapest. In this climate, instead of engaging with the official party-politics, which they perceived as inefficient, corrupt and unnecessarily slow, Sokol activists sought to carve out their own public sphere and participate in associations where they could set the rules and nationalize, as well as modernize the masses on their own terms.

¹⁵⁴ On the initial symbolic politics and socialization within the “South” Sokol, see: Rok Stergar, “Jan Zdeněk Veselý’s Year in Ljubljana: A Story of Cooperation of Czech and Slovene Sokols” *Per saecula ad tempora nostra: Sborník prací k šedesátým narozeninám prof. Jaroslava Pánka*, eds. Jiří Mikulec in Miloslav Polívka. Prague: Institute of History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, 2007, pp. 720-724.

This was not without obstacles and significant ideological divergences throughout this period, but they arguably succeeded in creating a (supra-)nationally framed networks both inside and outside of the Dual Monarchy. Together with exploring indicative differences between associational culture and political claims on the peripheries of Cisleithania and Transleithania,¹⁵⁵ as well as the kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, this section provides an insight into the conceptualization of Slavic commonality and politicization of the body done by Sokol members before the First World War. Through examining the complex intersection of the intellectual, performative, symbolic and political aspects of Sokol's prewar activities, it demonstrates that its strategy of subverting the liberal framework of a voluntary association for the ultimate goal of gathering South Slavs in a massive national-political modernizing 'institution', proved moderately successful and influential, not least because of the wider coalition of actors they engaged with. The most relevant instance of the latter can be found in the aforementioned Neo-Slavist movement whose social and intellectual heritage significantly shaped the liberal-positivists' stances and production from 1910s until the early 1930s, not least due to their social and generational markers.

In contrast to the earlier pro-Russian tradition of Pan-Slavism, and exclusively Austrian Slavs-oriented Austro-Slavism, the short-lived Neo-Slavist movement was nominally centred around the cultural rapprochement of Slavic nationalities both within and outside of Austria-Hungary, promoting the improvement of relations among them and abandoning the notion of Russian leadership. Its prominence and momentum were achieved due to a combination of largely contingent developments, such as Czech Russophile politician Karel Kramář's weakened position in domestic politics, the concessions Russian liberal constitutionalists hoped to obtain

¹⁵⁵ Gary Cohen, "Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914" *Central European History*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (2007), pp. 241-278.; Gary Cohen "Neither Absolutism nor Anarchy: New Narratives on Society and Government in Late Imperial Austria" *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 29, no. 1 (1998), pp. 37-61.

due to the 1905 Revolution and also the rising economic interests of Czech businessmen towards the markets of the Russian Empire.¹⁵⁶ Their nominally apolitical program included founding of the Slavic bank, Slavic news service, organizing a Slavic economic and trade exhibition in Moscow, improvement of the position of Poles within the Russian Empire and coordinating political actions of Slavic nationalities in Austria-Hungary.¹⁵⁷ The, by then, incapacitated liberal Young Czech Party of Karel Kramář hoped to regain its influence and rebuild its base, through galvanizing Slavic political elites and masses against what they dubbed as Pan-German threat and *Drang nach Osten*, yet the initiative soon deflated, mainly due to competing Slavic projects' collisions (e.g. Polish-Russian, Serbian-Bulgarian), exclusion of certain groups (e.g. Slovaks, Ukrainians) and the opposing reactions of Czech and Slovene representatives to the 1908 annexation crisis.¹⁵⁸

It is then of no surprise that the first, and virtually the sole, achievement of Neo-Slavists was the 1908 creation of the Federation of Slavic Sokols. Such initial Neo-Slavist agenda fit excellently with Sokol's existing tradition that foregrounded the approach of the so-called pragmatic (or Čapek's) generation (*pragmatická generace*), an action-oriented interwar political culture that was intellectually indebted to Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's realist doctrine, and in part, to the philosopher Miroslav Tyrš, the founder of Sokol.¹⁵⁹ Even though Kramář's

¹⁵⁶ Paul Vyšný, *Neo-slavism and the Czechs 1898–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977; J. F. N. Bradley 'Czech Pan-Slavism Before the First World War' *The Slavonic and East European Review* vol. 40, no. 94 (1961), 184–205; Karel Kramář, "In Defense of Slavic Politics" in *Anti-modernism: Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, eds. Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda and Balázs Trencsényi. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014, pp. 282–291; Hugo Hantsch, "Pan-Slavism, Austro-Slavism, Neo-Slavism: The All-Slav Congresses and the Nationality Problems of Austria-Hungary" *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 1 (1965), pp. 23–37; Louis Levine. "Pan-Slavism and European Politics" *Political Science Quarterly* vol. 29, no. 4 (1914), pp. 664–86.

¹⁵⁷ Sokol slets were also conducive to the devising of the Neo-Slavist agenda, see Claire E. Nolte, "All for One! One for All!"

¹⁵⁸ Irena Gantar Godina, "Neoslovanska ideja in Slovenci" [The Neo-Slavic Idea and the Slovenes] *Zgodovinski časopis*, 43, 4 (1989), pp. 513–546, here p. 515.

¹⁵⁹ For a critical examination of interwar Czechoslovak democratic experiment, see: Michal Kopeček 'Czechoslovak interwar democracy and its critical introspections' *Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift für moderne europäische Geschichte / Revue d'histoire européenne contemporaine*, vol. 17, no. 1 (2019), pp. 7–15; Thomas Ort, *Art and Life in Modernist Prague. Karel Čapek and his Generation, 1911–1938*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013; Andrea Orzoff, *Battle for the Castle: The Myth of Czechoslovakia in*

old line of liberal thought that retained romanticist connotations, his political ambitions and Russophilia collided with Masaryk's realism—Sokol emulated Neo-Slavism's drive toward Slavic cultural rapprochement, it's nominally modernist, egalitarian, anti-imperialist, liberal character, and certainly its anti-German orientation.¹⁶⁰ In the context of its voluntary position¹⁶¹ and liberal, yet practice-focused traditions, it complemented this with Masarykian realism's central notion of “small-scale work” (*drobná práce*), thus underscoring its evolutionary approach to social change, as opposed to the rising forces of revolutionary character. Importantly, alongside these ideological commitments, Yugoslavist Sokol thinkers and activists particularly embraced the positivist¹⁶² and anti-clerical of these streams of thought, not least because of Yugoslav project's inherent embrace of religious tolerance,¹⁶³ but also because of their own modernist orientation and socio-professional background rooted in knowledge production and communication.

Crucially, because Masaryk's realism was focused on the improvement of individuals' moral, consciousness and character, with an aim of producing dutiful (as opposed to rights-based) citizens as key agents who permanently perform political work—Sokol easily embraced such a communitarian vision of inter-dependent citizens, voiding its concept of citizenship of reliance on the state institutions. Instead, Sokol sought to produce such citizenry, through its own physical educational work and extrapolate it onto the “all-Slavic” and level of the entire humanity, in what they saw as a process of its emancipation from different, intersectional, forms

Europe, 1914–1948. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009; For more on Čapek's specific and critical understanding of pragmatism, primarily rooted in its moral dimension and connection to everyday life, see: Petr Jemelka “Bioethical motifs in the literary work of Karel Čapek” *Ethics & Bioethics (in Central Europe)* vol. 9, no. 3-4 (2019), pp. 168–180, here pp. 169-70.

¹⁶⁰ For details of Neo-Slavists' ideological morphology and developmental trajectory, see Balázs Trencsényi et al. eds., *History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe, Volume I: Negotiating Modernity in the 'Long Nineteenth Century'*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 359.

¹⁶¹ Pieter Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience, and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848–1914*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, p. 265.

¹⁶² For a more philosophical discussion intent on comparing Masaryk's and Auguste Comte's rather diverging stances on French revolution and individual rights, see Jan Svoboda, *Masaryk's realism a filosofie pozitivismu* [Masaryk's realism and the philosophy of positivism] Prague: Filosofia, 2017.

¹⁶³ Maria Falina, *Religion and Politics*.

of oppression. In other words, due to its unique positioning, Sokol synthesized elements of Neo-Slavism and Masaryk's realism, in its attempt to contribute to what Michal Kopeček described as the "democratization of democracy".¹⁶⁴ While the adherents of Neo-Slavism and heirs of liberal parties gradually drifted towards integral nationalism in the interwar years,¹⁶⁵ Yugoslav Sokol largely retained its progressive, universalist and overall liberal attitudes until the 1930s, despite different challengers' and opposing projects' attempts to change it from outside and within.

This liberal conceptualization of citizenship that stemmed from the said synthesis, was not difficult to imagine, for those Sokol thinkers who resided within the Dual Monarchy on whose institutions they could not unconditionally count. Yet, even if Sokol promoted identities, symbolic geographies, but also ideological values and intellectual traditions that sometimes significantly diverged from the ones promoted by the Habsburg imperial state—its membership still retained certain overlap with the public administration, as well as elected officials, particularly in the peripheral contexts.¹⁶⁶ This indicates that Sokol was not only accommodated by the state, but that it received political support in particular cases. Based on the prosopography of both high officials and regular contributors to the associational periodical and activities from various Southern Slavic Sokol clubs,¹⁶⁷ it is possible to claim that there was a considerable number of civil servants involved in Sokol, most often mayors or workers of the municipal government, teachers and lawyers. They used Sokol to promote their alternative vision of political modernity, mobilize youth for their cause and sometimes shift their loyalties away

¹⁶⁴ Kopeček, "Czechoslovak", p. 15.

¹⁶⁵ Oskar Mulej, *Liberalism After the Habsburg Monarchy*, passim.

¹⁶⁶ See, for instance a travelogue by a notable Slovenian physician promoted within Sokol periodicals: Ivan Oražen, *Među ranjenom sprskom braćom* [Among the wounded Serbian brothers]. Rijeka, 1913.

¹⁶⁷ The analysis was made for the purpose of this dissertation, based on prosopography of contributors to the Sokol journals and Sokol officials in clubs across different regions, with special attention paid to the indicative differences between Cisleithanian, Transleithanian and Bosnia-Herzegovinian membership profiles. It is limited, in so far the lists of members were not obtained from the relevant archival institutions, but the membership was reconstructed based on the periodicals and, in several cases, founding documents or rules of the association, totaling in sum more than 80 biographies. The relevant categories recorded for each member were: vocation, place of study, political activity (holding office) and participation in other associations or societies.

from the Habsburg state. The main differences between Cisleithania and Transleithania seem to confirm the claims stated in secondary literature, especially those of Gary Cohen, about difference in their political cultures, that can be well exemplified by the workings of Sokol in their respective civil spheres.

For instance, in Cisleithania (that includes clubs located in Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Austrian Littoral and Dalmatia), a significant number of high Sokol officials were engaged in the work of local municipality (city, county), crownland diets, Reichsrat or political parties, majority of them consisting of city mayors. The founders and high officials of Sokol in Slavic-populated urban centers often comprised of prominent members of imperial administration whose political parties, usually fractions of the Dalmatian Party of Rights, were in power, especially on the littoral and in smaller urban centers.¹⁶⁸ In Dubrovnik, nevertheless, the political and ideological allegiances aligned more harmonically, with Sokol secretary being the notable pharmacist Ante Katalinić and the Sokol elder (as well as a city mayor) Melko Čingrija, public attorney and national activist who belonged to the People's Party and participated in the Fiume Resolution of 1905, during whose signing he was an elected representative to the Dalmatian Diet and later also a member of the Reichsrat. Furthermore, the situation was quite similar on the Austrian Littoral proper as well, for instance, the elder and founder of the Opatija-Lovran Sokol club was a Yugoslavist publicist Ivan Pošćić, editor of the *Narodni list*, a political weekly published in the local Istrian čakavian dialect for the broader public, in which he passionately denounced the

¹⁶⁸ For instance, the elder (*starješina*) of the Croatian Sokol club in Split, Vinko Katalinić, was a member of People's Party (*Narodna stranka*) and served as the mayor of Split 1911-1914 despite being persecuted during the Balkan Wars), see: Marijan Čipčić "Splitski gradonačelnik Vinko Katalinić (1857. – 1917.)" [Split mayor Vinko Katalinić, 1857-1917] *Kulturna baština: časopis za pitanja prošlosti splitskoga područja* vol. 44 (2018), pp. 201-222. Katalinić was succeeded by a notable Yugoslavist politician Josip Smolaka, a Party of Rights (*Stranka prava*) leader, elected representative at the Dalmatian Diet and subsequently in Reichsrat. However, they had an opposition in the Josip Frank's fraction of Party of Rights, closely aligned with the Catholic Church, who strongly opposed cooperation with local Dalmatian Serbs or the Kingdom of Serbia, denounced Yugoslavist claims and conducted anti-socialist propaganda as well. For example, Frano Ženko Donadini, who would later become a notable folklorist, ethnomusicologist and scholar of family cooperatives, was a frequent contributor to the periodical of the rival club of the Croatian Sokol in Split, *Glasilo pravih hrvatskih sokolaša* (Herald of True Croatian Sokolists), which was halted after only several months of publication.

claims of the Italian party, especially those on Istrian “national” identity. The historiographical accounts on the paper suggest that the notable Yugoslavist writer Viktor Car Emin, stood behind the weekly and tailored its political and ideological output.¹⁶⁹ These insights showcase the relatively elite and politicized, and certainly liberal Yugoslavist, orientation of the relevant Sokol clubs in the Cisleithanian periphery.

The prosopography shows that by vocation most Sokol members, in this context, were sports or gymnastics trainers, lawyers, teachers, translators, pedagogues, Catholic priests, poets, writers, painters, historians and merchants. Moreover, they were educated in Ljubljana, Prague, Vienna, Graz, Fiume, Trieste and Rome, and most of their biographies portray educational institutions as the main places for recruitment into Sokol. Through a cross-sectional analysis of their membership in other associations, a considerable overlap can be traced between Sokol and Istrian Cyril and Methodius Society, Southern Slavic university student societies in imperial metropolises (especially in Vienna), as well as the Chamber of Commerce in Ljubljana. It could be inferred, from this overview, that the intellectual elite and leadership of Cisleithanian Sokol participated in a sort of a (supra)nationally-framed coalition comprising of middle-class, highly educated men, seeking to reform the empire and promote the body as a relevant political actor and topic.

Regarding Transleithania (namely clubs in Croatia-Slavonia), an inclination toward Croatian-Serbian Coalition is observable within the members’ biographies, yet the overall membership seldom included members of city councils, municipal government, Croatian Diet, Hungarian Parliament or any political parties, with very few exceptions. Those were the lawyer and Croatian parliament (*Sabor*) representative Srđan Budisavljević (who was also involved in the Agram High Treason Trial), architect and county council member Milan Pilar and the city

¹⁶⁹ *Viktor Car Emin: život i djelo*, [Viktor Car Emin: Life and Work] ed. Goran Moravček. Kastav: Inicijativa za zaštitu baštine, 2015.

council member Juraj Vrbanić. Since the Croatian-Serbian Coalition won the majority in the 1906 parliamentary elections, it assisted various activities and infrastructure of local Sokol clubs during its short rule, most notably the 1906 Zagreb *slet*. Professional groups engaged thereat included mainly sport or gymnastic experts and trainers, scientists, notable science popularizers, historians, physicians, biologists, anthropologists, chemists, lawyers, teachers, theater actors, zoologists, museum curators, a police officer, an architect, translators, theater intendant, bankers, writers and an opera singer. While peasantry was indeed the target group which Sokol nominally sought to recruit within its ranks, the associational statistics, of Transleithanian Serbian Sokol for instance, demonstrates that, in reality, they represented the majority of membership in very few cases.¹⁷⁰ Majority of members were educated in Vienna, Zagreb, Graz, Jena and Prague. Lastly, in terms of other associations they belonged to, the *Kolo* (Circle) singing choir, various expert and professional associations, Slavia bank and temperance societies primarily stand out. In associational periodicals, they often referenced political restraint from Budapest, but also received strong accusations from the imperial metropolises, which often framed them as part of a larger Slavic conspiracy or a project for the creation of a covert Slavic army.

Due to the relatively more restrained political freedoms Sokol clubs in Transleithania had less print publications, urban events and less overt anti-state, anti-German or anti-Hungarian discourse, but in turn, had significantly more participation on international events such as Sokol *slets* within and outside Austria-Hungary, as well as other international gymnastic competitions. This might indicate their more body- and gymnastics-focused associational culture, in comparison to their Cisleithanian counterparts. Nevertheless, since they were raising suspicion of Budapest elites, their arrests and questioning by police gradually became much

¹⁷⁰ “Statistika srpskog sokolstva” [The statistics of Serbian Sokol] *Srpski soko: list za sokolske stvari*, (July 1907), no page indicated.

more frequent, and the local government-appointed governors often target them for political persecution.¹⁷¹ In the first months of the war, Sokol membership became one of the most relevant markers of suspicion stated in police reports.¹⁷² This explains, to some extent, the more considerable involvement of the gymnastic and sport experts in the Sokol leadership, since they might have been significantly less suspicious to the regime and could justify Sokol's existence based on expert grounds. Nevertheless, in their publishing, there was a much larger number of those who were more interested in using the perfectly aligned Slavic bodies as a metaphor for portraying possible political communities.

Lastly, in recently annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina Serbian Sokol was the most dominant in terms of size and it maintained a direct link to Sokol from the Kingdom of Serbia. Its membership consisted mostly of teachers, merchants and especially physicians from Tuzla, Mostar, Priboj and Foča, who studied in Vienna and Graz (where most of them were recruited) and also belonged to the associations such as Red Cross, Serbian temperance society Fraternity (*Pobratimstvo*), notorious paramilitary organization National Defense (*Narodna odbrana*), Serbian cultural association Education (*Prosveta*) and the Chamber of Commerce for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The only explicitly politically engaged member was Atanasije Šola, who was a Member of Parliament in 1912-13. In addition, there was also a separate network of Muslim Sokol societies in Trebinje, Tuzla, Bijeljina, Čapljina, Ljubuško and Počitelj, supported by the

¹⁷¹ Josip Onyszkiewicz, a notable member of Dubrovnik Sokol club and a translator of key Czech Sokol texts, published a Hašekesque satirical remark in the Yugoslavist-rightist (*pravaški*) newspaper Red Croatia (*Crvena Hrvatska*) for instance, portraying the politically motivated targeting of individuals and authoritarian tendencies by the state in an 1909 article entitled "Tale the Fool (excerpt from the everyday life in Pandurenland)": "...tell me once again everything you saw and heard. - It was about midnight. I was in the city on business. When I passed near the house of Risto Poštenjaković [Risto Honestman], I heard some whispers. I stopped and listened some more... It was exactly his voice...But dear God, what did I hear! My whole body froze! Risto was praying to God in cyrillic! (...) Latter that day the newspapers stated the following news: 'High traitor again. This morning a warranted search was suddenly conducted in the house of the respected citizen and notable trader Risto Poštenjaković. Nothing suspicious was found, but he was nevertheless brought to the court at once.'" Josip Onyszkiewicz "Budalina Tale (iz svakidašnjeg života u Pandurelandu) [Tale the Fool (excerpt from the everyday life in Pandurenland)] *Crvena Hrvatska*, no. 26 (1909), p. 3.

¹⁷² Mark Cornwall, *Sarajevo 1914: Sparking the First World War*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020, p. 78.

Muslim cultural-educational association *Gajret* (Diligence) and its leaders,¹⁷³ Mostar-based modernist and Yugoslavist literary figure Osman Đikić and Avdo Sumbul, the latter of whom was a prominent Young Bosnia member as well. Simultaneously Đikić was secretly involved with the anti-Habsburg Muslim national organization (*Muslimanska narodna organizacija*). He understood the Muslim Sokols to be of Serbian nationality and initiated the creation of the Union of Muslim Sokol Societies “Đerđelez” in Sarajevo in 1913,¹⁷⁴ many of whom participated in the international Sokol gatherings, for instance at the 1912 *slet* in Prague, under the leadership of Serbian army Lieutenant Voja Živanović, together with the delegation of Serbian Sokols. The dominance of the Serbian Sokol is not surprising, given the attitude of the new Habsburg administration towards the local nationalities and their institutions, which favored the Muslim populace, likely motivating the Serbian national activists to employ associations such as Sokol to further their agenda.

Given the number and position of members from the ranks of intelligentsia, but also those who held public office or served as civil servants, it is possible to claim that Sokol’s associational morphology and relationship with the state remained complex and region-dependent in this period, in the Habsburg context. In the case of Cisleithania it had either complemented the state (in the areas where Yugoslavist politicians gained momentum on a municipal level) or competed with the state, in the imperial metropolises and areas where they lacked political support and were considered as challengers to imperial or other loyalties. In Croatia-Slavonia, particularly under the rule of the of Croatian-Serbian coalition, it can be assessed as a

¹⁷³ For more on the history of *Gajret*, see: Fabio Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European: Voluntary Associations, Gender, and Islam in Post-Ottoman Bosnia and Yugoslavia (1878–1941)*. Budapest: CEU Press, 2021. Apart from *Gajret*, some notable figures gathered around the *Bosanska vila* (Bosnian fairy) journal were also promoters of Sokol, such as Stevo Kaluđerčić.

¹⁷⁴ The name most probably refers to Alija Đerzelez (Gerzelez, Erzelez), a legendary hero of oral epic poetry and songs carried through generations of Bosniaks in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Sandžak, who has been identified by historians to be a local sipahi Gürza Ilyas, and who died in the 1491 battle under the Sokol fortress. His symbolic importance for the Bosniak national identity and literary tradition persists until the present day. Ivo Andrić also popularized and canonized him as a figure in 1920 when he published a short story “Put Alije Đerzeleza” [The path of Alija Đerzelez] in *Srpski književni glasnik*.

complementary informal institution, at least in the urban centers. In the context of post-annexation Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sokol was at best accommodated by the state, given its Serbian portion's ever more revolutionary political agenda.

This difference in associational culture, between Cisleithania and Transleithania, was noted by contemporaries such as Karlovac-based lawyer and a Party of Rights member Božo Vinković in his article “A few words on the Dalmatian Sokol”¹⁷⁵: “...I have to note that majority of us in Croatia-Slavonia were of the opinion that the Sokol clubs in Dalmatia are not arranged according to the same system as the one which we, in Croatia-Slavonia, received from our Czech brothers, especially not regarding physical exercise. This was often interpreted or excused with the fact that our Dalmatian brothers, in regard to the national struggle in many localities, gather into Sokol as a national-political organization, for political purposes. That would be understandable in the light of circumstances in Dalmatia, but would also demonstrate a weak understanding of the task and point of Sokol organization, because thus not just an effect is excluded which should be the result of the way Sokol is understood in Dalmatia, but also what is an ultimate goal of this too valuable Slavic organization, to which a systemic Sokol physical exercise serves only as a means. As we can see today, our brothers from Dalmatia came to understand the Sokol idea very well, in fact even better than it is understood in Croatia-Slavonia, and only the lack of trainers can be blamed for the fact that the Sokol clubs in Dalmatia carried a label of exclusively national-political organization at first. (...) With their manner, they achieved something much larger and more valuable, which is that they attracted peasantry to the Sokol as a national-political organization, and in it, except the physical exercise, they started spreading other moral and economic Sokol principles such as character, manliness, moderation and frugality.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Božo Vinković “Par riječi o dalmatinskom sokolstvu” [A few words on Dalmatian Sokol] *Sokol: časopis za promicanje tjelovježbe* (15th of August 1905), p. 1-2.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

Unlike Dalmatia that chronically suffered from the lack of Czech expert leadership, Zagreb and Croatia-Slavonia were well integrated into the Czech model of Sokol exercise and, conjointly, the Neo-Slavist agenda. For instance, one of the most notable Sokol gymnastics teachers from Bohemia, who resided in Zagreb and Ljubljana from the mid-1880s onwards, was Josip Hanuš.¹⁷⁷ He served as the director of the local club of Slavia Bank, one of the most concrete materializations of the Neo-Slavist movement, apart from the Federation of Slavic Sokols.¹⁷⁸ His translations of fundamental Sokol texts (namely those of Miroslav Tyrš and Jindřich Fügner) and handbooks, personal connections and interventions into associational terminology and gymnastic practice were crucial for shaping the associational culture, as well as the similarities it had to the Czech Sokol tradition. In Cisleithanian context, on the other hand, Sokol clubs organized more explicitly political events such as *slets* and balls. In other words, the presence of Sokols in municipal government of the Cisleithanian periphery and vice-versa, most probably enabled them a greater autonomy in expression of alternative political communities in the public sphere, whereas the tighter political control in the Transleithanian case made the Sokol activists more careful, shifting both form and content of their activities to those which could be considered apolitical to some extent, which was simultaneously supported by the arguments in their periodicals which frequently stressed precisely the “apolitical and purely national”¹⁷⁹ character of their activities. In other words, in Cisleithania gymnastics was on the margins of associational life that was largely centered around political agitation, while in Transleithania, it was the politics that was reserved only for particular circumstances, giving way to professionalization of gymnastics.

¹⁷⁷ “Hanuš, Josip” *Hrvatski biografski leksikon (1983–2024)* [online edition]. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2025. URL= <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/hanus-josip> (Last access: January 20, 2025).

¹⁷⁸ Paul Vyšný, *Neo-Slavism and the Czechs 1898-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

¹⁷⁹ Lazar Car “Srpski Sokoli prema ostalom slavenskom Sokolstvu” [Serbian Sokols towards the rest of the Slavic Sokol] *Sokol: list za promicanje tjelovježbe*, p. 1-2.

The horizontal participation and social inclusivity without discrimination based on profession and class, which can be best traced in the founding documents, associational rules¹⁸⁰ and in the members' self-narration inside periodicals, is one of the most important elements which distinguished Sokol from other voluntary associations or political groups, namely political parties. In their perspective, other associations were mostly exclusionary and based on gathering individuals belonging to a particular social class, gender, professional, political or religious group, while Sokol was in contrast, fashioned as an "all-national" institution where all members of the nation could without difference. This presumption was the ideological crux of the connection between participation in Sokol and the symbolic representation of the national body and the desired social order in its activities. In order to symbolically strengthen this order and associate it with the (alternative) political modernity which Slavdom was presumably about to realize, a novel vocabulary was developed to name the various types of members and associational practices. For instance, the rules obliged all members to address each other with 'brother' and "sister", as well as to greet each other with a rather informal and neutral salute "Zdravo! ", in order to remove the unnatural hierarchies which, in their view, otherwise discursively divided the national body. This was coupled with a mandatory uniform prescribed by associational rules, which was supposed to be worn on different occasions such as gymnastic practice and competition, as well as public marches and ceremonies.

The most known symbolic element of this uniform became the red shirt, oftentimes thematized as a representation of Sokol and Slavdom, both by the Sokol members and their opponents in the public space. Moreover, the names of the Sokol officials did not correspond to the usual administrative lingo of the period (e.g. "president", "secretary", "member"), but rather consisted

¹⁸⁰ *Pravila Hrvatskog Sokola u Dubrovniku* [Rules of the Croatian Sokol in Dubrovnik] (Dubrovnik, 1905); *Pravila Hrvatskog Sokola u Splitu* [Rules of the Croatian Sokol in Split] (Split, 1899); *Kućni red Hrvatskog Sokola u Splitu* [Standing orders of the Croatian Sokol in Split] (Split, 1901); *Pravila društva Tržački Sokol* [Rules of the Trieste Sokol society] Trieste State Archives (Archivio di Stato di Trieste), Luogotenenza Società, envelope 12.

of historical and, to some extent, primordial and mythical ones such as *starješina* or *starosta* (the elder), while the local clubs were named *župa* (literally: parish and/or county) partly indicating a community of believers. The majority of these terms were simply transplanted from the Czech Sokol vocabulary, but there were also instances of relying on religious terms such as “apostles” or “profession of faith”, to describe the associational membership and traditions. The names of clubs across the space inhabited by Southern Slavic population were sometimes geographical (as is the case of those located in Carniola, Carinthia, Styria and southern Hungary), but in other cases, they were named based on the important historical or associational personalities originating from a given geographical area, notably on the territory of Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The choice of name thus indicated a sort of variegated, supraethnic canon of historical figures, including names such as Fon (Zagreb), Gundulić (Dubrovnik), Ibršimović (Požega), Jelačić (Mitrovica), Krešimir (Šibenik), Ljudevit Posavski (Sisak), Ban Paližna (Zadar), Preradović (Bjelovar), Antun Starčević (Gospić), Tomislav (Chicago), Tvrtko (Sarajevo), Strossmayer (Osijek), Vitezić (Volosko-Opatija), duke Hrvoje (Split), Zrinski (Karlovac) and Zrinski-Frankopan (Sušak-Bakar).¹⁸¹ These figures, when combined, represent the sum of the Southern Slavic ‘great men’ who resisted and fought against both Ottoman Empire and for improving the position of South Slavs within the Habsburg Monarchy, across the ages.

This novel associational culture, rather characteristic for the Čapek’s “pragmatic generation” and Neo-Slavist agenda many of these activists belonged to, was in part a response of the new generation, frustrated with the relatively modest achievements of their more strictly liberal and often romanticist predecessors, such as those of the so-called “young parties”, e.g. Young Czechs and the circle around Karel Kramář in the Bohemian context.¹⁸² This can, in the

¹⁸¹ Adolf Paar, *Hrvatski sokol* [Croatian Sokol] (Samobor: Društvo za športsku rekreaciju “Šport za sve”, 2011).

¹⁸² Despite him later playing a principal role in the Neo-Slavist movement.

Habsburg portion of the Southern Slavic case, be exemplified by the “politics of the new course” or *Napredna omladina* group (Progressive youth) in the Croatian context,¹⁸³ as well as with the circle around “National radical youth” (*Narodno-radikalna mladina*) among the Slovenes,¹⁸⁴ circle around Jaša Tomić in Novi Sad, as well as National defense (*Narodna odbrana*) among the Serbian national activists and Young Bosnia (*Mlada Bosna*) group in Bosnia and Herzegovina respectively. This generational change had also greatly influenced the associational culture of Sokol from the turn of century onwards, during which time it lost the national liberal focus on symbolic representation, individual (men’s) betterment through physical culture which sometimes allowed for national ambiguities, but rather went beyond and articulated nationhood in organicist, oftentimes biological terms, with a focus on collective physical betterment and political claims, which also coincided with admission of women into Sokol. Another developing aspects of associational culture, in this period, were the cooperation across the imperial boundaries, both internal and external, as well as the massivization of the membership. In the context of the nascent Yugoslavist movement, this particularly meant engaging with the Sokol clubs from Serbia and Montenegro and establishing connections between them and the South Slavic clubs in Austria-Hungary—even if their stance towards the Czech model sometimes differed.

In the kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro the associational culture was somewhat different as the Sokol was founded considerably later and was more tied to the military culture and personal networks revolving around the competing dynasties of Obrenović and Karađorević,¹⁸⁵ the latter

¹⁸³ On the genesis of and intellectual tendencies within the group, with special attention paid to the appropriation and mediation of the key elements of the Czech model by this generation, see: Nikola Tomašegović, *Moderno ili narodno? Modernistički pokret u Hrvatskoj na prijelomu 19. i 20. stoljeća*. [Modern or national? Modernist movement in Croatia at the turn of 19th and 20th century] Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2024.

¹⁸⁴ Jurij Perovšek “Organizacijsko-politična slika liberalnega tabora v letih 1891–1941” *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 57, no. 1 (2017), pp. 49-83.

¹⁸⁵ Vladan Vukašinić, Dragan Strelić, Saša Vajić, Violeta Šiljak, “The Gymnastics Program in the Training of Military Structures of Serbia since 1850” *Physical Education and Sport Through the Centuries*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2016), pp. 7-22.

assuming power after the May Coup of 1903. Regarding traditions of physical exercise, early Serbian professional sports and gymnastics were dominated by military-affiliated fencing societies. The Sokol initially established in Serbia during the 1890s by a notable physician, politician and historian Vladimir Đorđević, who studied surgery in Vienna and got acquainted with Jahn's gymnastics system during his university years.¹⁸⁶ A strong supporter of the Obrenović dynasty, and a personal physician of Prince Mihailo, Đorđević founded Sokol in Belgrade, among other notable associations, with an outlook of cooperation with other Slavic nationalities across Europe. While also, to some extent, mediated by the professional gymnasts from Bohemia,¹⁸⁷ such as František Hoffman (who taught gymnastics at the Serbian Military Academy and changed/Serbianized his name to Miroslav Vojinović), due to the high officials oftentimes being involved with the army, it did not inherit the tradition of the liberal voluntary association akin to the one in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but can rather be seen as a certain kind of extension of the networks participating in the state structures. The most relevant example of this can be seen in the relationship between the elder of Serbian Sokol, Lieutenant Milutin Gr. Mišković and King Peter I. Karađorđević.¹⁸⁸ The latter group was also highly embedded in the discourse of democratization and removing of the 'artificial class division' within the nation inside of the organization, blaming their predecessors of creating unnatural hierarchies in the associational life.

This social and professional quality of Sokol membership in Serbian context was also reflected in the discourses operating in the associational periodicals and adjacent literature, which constantly reference the enemies of national unity (alternating between Serbian and Yugoslav

¹⁸⁶ Vladan Vukašinović "Vladan Đorđević, the life and work of a gymnast, scientist, politician, writer and the progenitor of gymnastics and the Sokol Movement in Serbia" *Fizička Kultura*, vol. 72, no. 1 (2018), pp. 5-19

¹⁸⁷ Rok Stergar, "Jan Zdeněk Veselý's Year in Ljubljana: A Story of Cooperation of Czech and Slovene Sokols".

¹⁸⁸ Dejan Gavrilović "Uticaj srpske vojske na razvoj fizičke kulture u Srbiji u XIX i početkom XX veka" [Influence of the Serbian army on the development of physical culture in Serbia in 19th and early 20th century] *Tokovi istorije: časopis Instituta za noviju istoriju Srbije*, vol. 2 (2011), pp. 7-22; Zvezdan Savić, Nikola Stojanović, Dejan Gavrilović, Đorđe Savić "Contribution of officers cadre to the Sokol movement and the Serbian Olympic Club from 1904 to 1941" *Physical education and sport through the centuries* vol. 9, no. 2 (2022), pp. 69-78.

conceptions) for the struggle against whom the Serbian Sokols are to be trained in the association. In other words, the Serbian Sokol (from Kingdom of Serbia) model resembled more the one of Jahn, which accentuated covert military training, than the liberal and body development-driven one that was characteristic for the Habsburg context. Moreover, due to the fact that the deep political instability and systemic divisions began slightly earlier than in the case of Austria-Hungary, namely during the involvement in the Great Eastern Crisis in the 1870s and subsequently the Balkan Wars, the Sokol in Serbia already reflected the militarization and political rift at the turn of century.

Together with their relation to the military, the second most prominent professional group among founders and leaders in Serbia and Montenegro were gymnasium teachers, such as Atanasije Popović or scholars affiliated with the Serbian Academy of Sciences, as well as the notable member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and a (pseudo-)historian of the older generation, Miloš Milojević. While they were not active participating members themselves, many influential ‘national’ poets, writers and thinkers from both Serbia and Herzegovina such as Jovan Skerlić,¹⁸⁹ Dimitrije Mitrinović, Jovan Dučić and Aleksa Šantić, praised Sokol’s national education of youth based on physical culture.

In the Serbian context around the 1910s, two competing Sokol clubs existed, which represented the contemporaneous political divisions as well. The first one was Belgrade-based Dušan Silni, which was the main gymnastic association after Đorđević’s Sokol was discontinued and he fell out of favour of high political circles. The second was the Serbian Sokol (*Srpski Soko*), established in 1907 in Srijemski Karlovci, whose Fruškogorska was under the leadership of the notable physician and publicist Laza Popović. There was a long-standing debate between their leaderships about adopting the Sokol framework and the need for cooperation with other clubs,

¹⁸⁹ Jovan Skerlić, “Novi omladinski listovi i naš novi naraštaj” [The new youth magazines and our new generation] *Srpski književni glasnik*, vol. 30, no.3 (1913), pp. 212–224

particularly those from Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. On the one hand, Laza Popović strongly advocated for representation of Serbian Sokol at the international Sokol gatherings and in transnational organization established between all Sokol clubs globally, but the Dušan Silni leadership was reluctant to adopt Slavdom as a category of identification, particularly because they felt politically opposed to the Slavs of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria, who they saw as relatively conforming to Monarchy's policies aimed against the Serbian national activists.¹⁹⁰ However, these two separate associations united into a single one (under the name "Serbian Sokol") in 1910 under the patronage of Serbian king Petar Karađorđević¹⁹¹ and from 1912 onwards published a joint, Belgrade-based, periodical, whose editor and main contributor was again Laza Popović, thus showcasing transimperial cooperation in the time of the Balkan Wars and the increasingly strained relationship between the two countries.¹⁹²

One of the notable differences between the Dušan Silni and Serbian Sokol from Austria-Hungary, in terms of practices, was the character of the events and gatherings they organized, namely in that the Dušan Silni, similarly to the Littoral Serbian Sokol parish (*Srpski Soko na primorju*, encompassing Herceg Novi, Budva, Dubrovnik among others),¹⁹³ primarily organized *slets* in the Serbian Orthodox monasteries, on dates of national importance. These were, for instance, those of Kosovo battle (June 28th, also known as *Vidovdan* or Saint Vitus Day) or Saint Sava day (*Savindan*, January 27th).¹⁹⁴ It is important to note that in the case of the Littoral parish, such events were also attended by numerous representatives from Dalmatian clubs of Croatian Sokol. This was done in stark contrast to the essentially progressivist and even

¹⁹⁰ "'Dušan Silni' ili 'Srpski soko'?" [Dušan the Mighty or Serbian Sokol] *Srpski soko: List za sokolske stvari* (January 1907), pp. 40-41; "Soko i Sokoli Kraljevine Srbije" [Sokol and the Sokols of the Kingdom of Serbia] *Srpski soko: List za sokolske stvari* (April 1907), pp. 122-124.

¹⁹¹ Vladan Vukašinović et al. "Contribution of Doctor Laza Popović to the development of Serbian and Yugoslav Sokol movement" *Vojnosanitetski pregled. Military-medical and pharmaceutical review*, vol. 73 (2016), pp. 976-979.

¹⁹² *Srpski sokolski glasnik* (Serbian Sokol herald, published only throughout 1912 and 1913).

¹⁹³ Milan Gulić "Dalmatinska javnost i Sarajevski atentat" [Dalmatian Public and the Sarajevo Assassination] *Istorija 20. veka*, vol. 1 (2016), pp. 31-54.

¹⁹⁴ Two best examples for this are *slets* in 1907 at Ravanica Monastery on Fruška gora mountain in Southern Hungary and Lazarica Monastery in the Dalmatian hinterland in 1914, shortly before the Sarajevo assassination.

to some extent ecumenical,¹⁹⁵ but also mostly secular character of Serbian Sokol in southern Hungary and Croatia-Slavonia. The Littoral Serbian Sokol was also the most dominant one on the territory of today's Montenegro, binding the clubs both from the territory of the Kingdom of Montenegro and those from the Kotor bay, that belonged to Austria-Hungary. One of the most influential personalities in that context was the founder of Sokol in Herceg Novi, Mirko Komnenović, who was in close collaboration with and served as a diplomat of the government of Serbia before and during the war. He also belonged to a number of Serbian cultural and economic associations in the broader littoral region and Herzegovina at the time, and would become an important political actor in the interwar period. His wife, Olga Komnenović also participated in nationally-framed societies, namely she served as the president of the influential women's patriotic organization Circle of Serbian Sisters (*Kolo srpskih sestara*) until the Second World War. It can thus be said that the cases of kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, due to its proximity to their dynasties, but also traditionally the Serbian military, Sokol acted as a complementary informal institution that enhanced the work of the state. This essential difference from the complex, but certainly not as state-affiliated and centralized associational morphology of the Sokol in the Habsburg context, will prove relevant in the interwar years when the associations will be made to merge into a single one, revealing the stark contrast between their inherited associational cultures and traditions. Overall, because of the continued cooperation between all of the said clubs, it can be said that South Slavic Sokol cooperation functioned across imperial borders and realms, conforming to the larger Sokol idea on Slavic unity. This Neo-Slavist agenda that Sokol sought to realize was, however, essentially contested not only due to the constrained relationships between Polish and Russian, as well as Serbian and Bulgarian delegations. Towards 1914, there was also a strong friction within Croatian Sokol around the question of whether to join the Yugoslav Sokol Union, propagated by the the

¹⁹⁵ One of the most widespread Sokol slogans concerning religion was, in this period: 'A brother is loveable, regardless of his faith' ('Brat je mio, koje vjere bio').

Croatian Advanced Youth (*Hrvatska Napredna Omladina*) leader and Sokol activist Lav Mazzura, or to retain the Croatian designator. This debate translated into a fully-fledged crisis of the entire Sokol project in the early 1920s.

The Neo-Slavist agenda of Slavic cultural, and eventually economic and political, rapprochement was facilitated at the Sokol *slets*. Even if still largely symbolic, these events served for rallying up the support for the Neo-Slavist project and establishing cooperation between relevant actors. This Slavic symbolism included referencing and ritualising motifs from Slavic mythology, such as the queen bee (*matica*)¹⁹⁶ and “Slavic” linden tree,¹⁹⁷ as well as ethnogenetic stories (*Čeh, Leh i Meh*) and paradigmatic failures (especially referring to Kosovo battle of 1389 and battle of Gvozd of 1097).¹⁹⁸ Beyond the symbolic rituals, however, many Sokol members who were simultaneously more or less high-positioned civil servants in the imperial state administration also used their position to further Sokol’s agenda. For instance, many of them donated, or rather channeled, money from numerous local municipalities’ budget to the Sokol for the purpose of organizing *slets* and there were numerous instances where they used their influence to provide Sokol with spaces (offices and buildings) for meetings, exercise and gatherings, for instance in local gymnasias or theaters.¹⁹⁹ In a similar vein, *slets* oftentimes

¹⁹⁶ *Matica* (literally: queen bee) has been also a widespread symbol of Slavic nationalities in the early 19th century, when it was used in the names of the most Slavic cultural-educational societies, namely the key intellectual centers of nation-building throughout the Habsburg Monarchy and beyond, see: *Matica and Beyond: Cultural Associations and Nationalism in Europe*, eds. Krisztina Lajosi, Andreas Stynen. Leiden: Brill, 2021; Rok Stergar “Illyrian Autochthonism and the Beginnings of South Slav Nationalisms in the West Balkans” in *In Search of Pre-Classical Antiquity: Rediscovering Ancient Peoples in Mediterranean Europe (19th and 20th c.)*. Leiden: Brill, 2017, pp. 96-118.

¹⁹⁷ Linden tree was also used as a symbol in Alphonse Mucha’s notable 1926 painting “The Oath of Omladina under the Slavic Linden Tree”, which was a part of his world famous Slavic Epic series.

¹⁹⁸ For instance, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Croatian Sokol in 1905, delegates from various Slavic nations drove nails into the linden tree in the Zagreb city center, while pledging allegiance to Slavia (in this context a feminine anthropomorphized supranational entity), all of which were then connected with a special ribbon, woven by prominent noblewoman Miroslava (Rika) Hrzić, arranged by Božena Miletić (Stjepan Miletić’s wife) and consecrated by prebendary Rubenić. On other occasions, they visited graves of ‘national poets’, namely those from the national romanticist tradition.

¹⁹⁹ On the list of donations for the 1906 *slet* in Zagreb, for instance, we can see following municipalities: county of Delnice, city of Ivanić-grad and city of Karlovac, while the best example of the latter can be seen in the gymnasium spaces in Srijemski Karlovci being put at the local Sokol club’s disposal for different kinds of events, offices, gymnastic exercises and social gatherings free of charge, but there are also many other examples across

served as a platform for cultural diplomacy, whereby prominent political figures would accompany Sokol national delegations and meet. This best be exemplified by the case of a number of meetings among the city mayors on the Zagreb 1906 *slet*, such as Karel Groš (of Prague), Spasoje Piletić (of Podgorica), Milan Amruš (of Zagreb) and the Slovak politician Milan Hodža.²⁰⁰ Their meetings took place at the exhibitions, theater plays and concerts with distinct Neo-Slavist political character and explicit claims for Slavic economic and political cooperation within and beyond the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

The slets usually included a plethora of cultural activities and practices, mainly related to physical culture (mass calisthenics), theater performances, symbolic rituals, parades and marches through the city, speeches in front of the formation of gymnasts (*vrsta*). Another very common practice was organizing Sokol balls, which often served as crowdfunding events for the associational budget or certain humanitarian purposes, reminiscent of 19th century voluntary associations.²⁰¹ These would often include prominent political actors, especially in Cisleithania, and nationally-themed musical and theater performances with themes related to Slavdom or particular national history, thus serving as a place for producing and disseminating the new cultural-historical canon.²⁰²

both Cisleithania and Transleithania, see statistics published on April 15, 1906 in *Hrvatski Sokol, časopis saveza hrvatskih sokolskih društava* and “Dve sokolske zabave” [Two Sokol gatherings] *Srpski soko: list za sokolske stvari* (February 1907), pp. 68-70.

²⁰⁰ *Spomen spis I. hrvatskog svesokolskog sleta u Zagrebu, 2.-3. rujna 1906* [Memorial booklet of the I. Croatian All-Sokol slet in Zagreb, September 2-3 1906], ed. Franjo Bučar. Zagreb, 1906 .

²⁰¹ Daša Ličen, *Kulturna društva v Trstu kot prizorišča identifikacijskih procesov tržaškega prebivalstva (1848-1914)* [Cultural societies in Trieste as venues of identification processes of the Trieste population, 1848-1918], PhD diss. Ljubljana: Institute for Slovenian Ethnography of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2021.

²⁰² The (new) cultural canon established at such events also points to the ideological underpinnings and the conceptual transformation that was prompted in this context, for instance the 1906 *slet* in Zagreb featured the joint massive calisthenics exercise named “With lion’s strenght”, accompanied by a stark anti-German discourse referencing the ‘Drang nach Osten’, as well as the folkloric performance of a notable Dalmatian sword-dance “Moreška” and the series of ‘Jugoslav national songs’ entitled ‘From Triglav mountain to the Balkans’, composed by Ivan Muhvić. Moreover, all the representative songs of national delegations were performed and accompanied by speeches highlighting their particular national characterology, the Serbian one being ‘There, there behind the hills’ (*Onamo, onamo za brda*), also known as the ‘Serb Marseillaise’, which was officially a song of Montenegrin king Nikola I. Simultaneously socially and politically charged theater plays were performed about the peasant uprising of Matija Gubec and anti-Ottomanist struggle, most important one being the piece of Branislav Nušić

A relevant piece of Sokol's prewar associational culture was also the inclusion of women, which started around 1900 in the Czech context and spread to the South Slavic clubs around the same time as well. Given Sokol's focus on bodily exercise and holistic improvement, this period saw debates on the legitimacy of women's participation in Sokol, from a gymnastic and medical point of view, as well as on the ability or feasibility of women to become Sokol trainers who would go on to train other groups of women. In fact, it was rather the case that, besides the translations of certain Czech texts on the issue, the role of women was not problematized in the organization as such, in the Southern Slavic clubs. Women were allowed and encouraged to participate both in the physical exercises, as well as in the other activities, especially social gatherings and symbolic rituals. Nevertheless, when these issues were brought up in associational periodicals, the expert discourses stemming from medicine and the nascent sport medicine dominated the discussion.

For instance, one of the frequently translated Czech authors on these issues, particularly in the Slovenian language space, was Antonín Šebánek²⁰³ who, on the one hand, supported Sokol as a platform for women's bodily and intellectual emancipation, but on the other hand also relied on heavily medicalized and positivist biological arguments regarding the "natural" hierarchies between the genders. Predictably, he also argued for primacy of motherhood and its implications for the "national body", namely the concerns around demographic strength vis-à-vis the other (competing) groups, primarily Germans. Such arguments also went hand in hand with scientist concerns around women's physical strength and limiting of exercises that would produce bodies that are not feminine enough or which could fail to produce the desired national

'Prince Ivo of Semberije' (*Knez Ivo od Semberije*), promoting the narrative of Serbian suffering under the Ottoman empire and Christian Orthodoxy as a *locus* of national culture. The hygienic, economic and associational exhibitions organized as parts of the same *slet*, focused on technological innovation, sponsored by the current governor (*ban*) of Croatia Teodor Pejačević (Pejačevich Tivadar) and Minister of culture Milan Rojc, featured an extremely aggressive type of social-Darwinist discourse on Slavs' mutual help against the German economic and demographic dominance, in a zero-sum game scheme, see: *Spomen spis*.

²⁰³ Martin Klement "Na cestě k sokolskému rytmickému tělocviku" [On the way to the Sokol rhythmic bodybuilder] *Vzdělávatelské listy. Ženy Sokolky*, vol. 2 (2019), p. 7.

offspring due to the changes in the body, as a consequence of an overly intense physical exercise. Instead, he and similar authors concerned about the demise of the gender binary, such as Josef Čermák,²⁰⁴ promoted alternative set of physical exercises that they prescribed to women, which were supposed to mold a different kind of body, namely, feminine, elegant, motherly and nationally representative, for which reason they accentuated and developed a system of rhythmic gymnastics, as well as introduced popular (folk) dances that women would perform in national folk costumes at the *slets*. In other words, their concerns and anxieties about gender (in)stability, women's bodily emancipation beyond serving the national reproduction needs and the demographic state of their nation in the social Darwinist view of international relations—all influenced the practical and symbolic repertoire they designed for the purposes of integrating women in the Sokol gymnastics.

Similar views were promoted in the Southern Slavic context, for instance by a notable Slovenian historian and politician Pavel Pestotnik, incidentally also a professor at the girls' Realgymnasium in Ljubljana, who published on the history of women's exercise in the associational periodical.²⁰⁵ While he did argue for introducing women trainers to Sokol due to the "lack of trust" between the men trainers and women trainees, he also substantiated this claim with arguments on the role of motherhood in heredity and hence in the "national life and development", alleging that "woman is the first person on the biological defense line of the nation" and that every healthy individual represents "national capital". This was, in particular, his reasoning behind promoting and advancing women's position within the associational hierarchy. He concluded that this change would enable women to be "nationally and morally

²⁰⁴ Claire Nolte, "Every Czech a Sokol!": Feminism and Nationalism in the Czech Sokol Movement" *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 24 (1993), pp. 79-100.; Martin Klement, Jan Pezda "Přemysl's soldiers and Libuše's companions: On gender and the limits of female emancipation in the Sokol gymnastic movement" in *Critical Reflections on Physical Culture at the Edges of Empire*, ed. Francois Johannes Cleophas. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 2021, pp. 57-84.

²⁰⁵ Pavel Pestotnik "Telesna vzgoja žen, društvena organizacija za ženstvo" [Physical education of women, social organization for women] *Sokolski Vestnik, Glasilo Župe Ljubljana I., Idrijske i Novomeške* (October 1912), pp. 81-89.

mindful and healthy” and after setting this agenda, he outlined a number of logistical and organizational suggestions that would help facilitate the creation of such women. Perhaps the best example of the convergence between many of the aforementioned concerns can be seen in the text “Women’s exercise”, submitted by a notable Slovenian diplomat of the Yugoslav period, Stanko Erhartič,²⁰⁶ in which he gave an extensive overview regarding the historical development of the understanding the relationship between the mind and body, relying on a range of philosophical works on the issue in order to support his argument that exercise, is, in fact appropriate for women, exemplifying it with the case of Spartan women (“healthy mothers, healthy nation”) and contemporary German medical, particularly physiological, research on women’s physical exercise. Nevertheless, he also temporalized the idea, saying that “today we live in the age of women’s emancipation”, soon after reiterating that it is “understandable” that women cannot perform the same exercises as men, for which reason Miroslav Tyrš invented a special set of exercises “for their fragile constitution”, finally concluding with the quote of the notable contemporary ‘national’ poet Anton Aškerc: “Every Slovene is Sokol, and every Slovene woman is a Sokol woman [LB: Sokolica]”, thus prioritizing the national over women’s emancipation.

Such arguments and especially those focusing on heredity, were often underpinned by the notions of progress and decline of the nation, as can be seen from the 1907 article “A word or two to our patriotic women”, published by a Croatian dramatist Viktor Rudolf,²⁰⁷ who elaborated on some basic heredity principles in the spirit of Lamarckian eugenics, without explicitly using the concept, arguing that peasant women produce stronger offspring due to their more frequent physical exercise, unlike the urban women who often neglect their bodily

²⁰⁶ Stanko Erhartič “Ženska telovadba” [Women’s exercise] *Vestnik Celjske Sokolske župe* (June 1912), pp. 13-15, here p. 13-14.

²⁰⁷ Viktor Rudolf “Riječ dvije našim domorotkama” [Two words to our patriotic women] *Hrvatski Sokol* (May 1907), pp. 71-2.

strength which results in stunted bodies. Appealing to bourgeois women to actively work on their bodies, and not just on being patriotic-minded, within Sokol for the purpose of national progress, he espoused a view of the plasticity of national body, which remained a dominant one within Sokol until the mid-1930s. In this, he also posited the body as a relevant site of patriotic expression.

These kinds of approaches were, however, contested by some of the women in Sokol, namely in the Czech context, but also in the Southern Slavic clubs, which can be seen from the commentary which accompanied the said translations in associational periodicals, as can be seen from the article “Physical Education of a Woman”, based on loose translation of Šebánek’s text, whereby an anonymous²⁰⁸ woman translator critically engaged with his claims. She responded that his arguments are based on “medieval views on women’s exercise” and the parents’ fear that by joining Sokol, their daughters might get exposed to lower social classes, potentially ruining their moral standing. Instead, she countered this arguing that Sokol is for that very reason “democratic” and that “whatever is healthy for men is also healthy for women”, supporting the latter with raising the issue of the lack of or biased research done on the female body in general.

Nevertheless, there were also women professional gymnasts who combined the two views, focusing on the primary national mission of strong women’s bodies in this context, which can best be seen in the case of the most notable Croatian woman gymnastics teacher, also of Jewish origin, at the turn of century: Ivana Hirschmann, who published numerous books on gymnastics and sports pedagogy, especially focusing on girls’ and women’s bodies. In 1908, in the herald of the Croatian Sokol she wrote: “In the present day, which is about the equality of a woman, and when she is asked to do more than ever before, and when it is being claimed that her

²⁰⁸ The article is only signed as a ‘sister G’, see “Telesna vzgoja žen” [Physical education of women] *Sokolski Vestnik, Glasilo Župe Ljubljana I., Idrijske i Novomeške* (May 1912), pp. 7-11, here p. 8.

constitution is much weaker than men's - it is exactly her physical strength that needs to be strengthened, and there is no better way to do it, than with the well-organized girls' exercises."²⁰⁹ Despite Ivana Hirschmann's numerous feminist pedagogical innovations in her practices, unconventional private life and promotion of equal inclusion of women in the physical culture, it is not possible to trace a conceptualization of feminism in her works that would go beyond the questions of bodily integrity and physical improvement on the individual basis. On the whole, the broader conceptualization and articulation of feminism, as well as its reflection within Sokol as a framework for representing a desired social order, will become slightly more developed only in the interwar period, with the greater inclusion of women in the officials' positions at the higher organizational levels, as well as with the dissolution of the practices of their compartmentalization in the women's committees (*gospojinski odbor*). Such committees usually worked on different issues, such as event organizing, arranging the symbolic rituals and determining the routes of the urban marches during international *slets*. Almost without exception, such committees consisted of wives of prominent Sokol men.²¹⁰

1.5.2. Articulating South Slavic Commonality Across Imperial Boundaries: Political, Cultural and Medical Discourses

Having described the key tenants of Sokol's prewar associational culture, it is important to examine the political and expert discourses that marked the final prewar years. Most of these discourses reflected the extra-associational life, not least the alternative visions of political modernity, espoused by Sokol's competitors in the public sphere. One of the notable other

²⁰⁹ Ivana Hirschmann, "Djevojačka gimnastika" [Girls' exercise] *Hrvatski Sokol, časopis saveza hrvatskih sokolskih društava* (November 15, 1906), p. 157.

²¹⁰ *Spomen spis I. hrvatskog svesokolskog sleta u Zagrebu, 2.-3. rujna 1906* [Memorial booklet of the I. Croatian All-Sokol slet in Zagreb, September 2-3 1906], ed. Franjo Bučar. Zagreb, 1906.

associations Sokol had to pose itself against were the social-democratic or workers' gymnastic societies,²¹¹ and in order to justify and legitimate their position, they articulated their stance in ideological terms, simultaneously conceptually clarifying the meaning they attach to the key concepts of political modernity. This can be seen in the 1912 text from the Ljubljana Sokol club,²¹² whose authors reacted to the founding of social-democratic gymnastic societies in Bohemia and to the similar attempts in Ljubljana. In their view, such societies are redundant and harmful for the “national unity” because Sokol allows for anyone to join, regardless of their worldview and political attitudes. Going beyond that, they argued that one of the main reasons for founding of these societies is exactly to split up Sokol members along the ideological lines and exclude some of them, through politicization of gymnastics, especially stating the “hidden” goal of ideological education of young workers by social democratic parties. In other words, they framed themselves as being under the attack of social democrats, because these societies went against the main Sokol principles and artificially divided the Slavic “national body” in regard to social class or political views.

In particular, the conceptual clarification stated that: “Nationality and nation stands as a wider social form above the concept of political party, social class and estate (*stalež*). Claims of the political parties, social classes or estates (*staleži*) must never stand opposed to the generally recognized ethical principles of humanity and to the healthy, self-perserving principles of real nationality. Let us never forget that we are in a defensive mode. We Slovenes do not attack, and our holy and natural duty is to defend our land, language and property, to fight for the conditions in which we are able to economically and culturally progress. Only a powerful and independent nation possesses economically independent feudal and social classes. Because Slovenian

²¹¹ *Radnički sportski pokret Jugoslavije do 1945* [Workers' sports movement in Yugoslavia until 1945], ed. Stjepan Cerjan. Zagreb: Alfa, 1972; Duga Mavrinac “Civil Associations and Urban Modernity in the Late Austro-Hungarian Periphery” *Collegium antropologicum* Vol. 42, No. 1 (2018), pp. 65-72.

²¹² “Sokolstvo in delavska telovadna društva” [Sokol and workers' gymnastic societies] *Sokolski Vestnik, Glasilo Župe Ljubljana I., Idrijske i Novomeške* (May 1912), pp. 4-7.

workers, with bad education and contingent German influence eagerly neglect the principle of national feeling...” after which the anonymous two authors went on to name a number of (mostly Marxist) thinkers, investigating their stances on the relationship between nationhood and social democracy, arguing against socialism and internationalism on the basis of social Darwinist and organicist perspectives, thereby quoting the likes of Max Adler, Sodrug Daszynski, Engelbert Pernerstorfer, Jean Jaurés, Emil Vandervelde, Enrico Ferri, Eduard Vaillant, Georgi Plekhanov, August Bebel and Ludiwg Gumpłowicz.

Following the quotes, the authors appealed to scientific rationality as a basis for taking “nationhood” as an umbrella term: “from what was stated we see that today first socialists and greatest world experts, such as Masaryk and Gumpłowicz, recognize nationality as a cultural and social creative force and that the solving of the national question is of equal importance for solving the social problems. Since Sokol is an institution which doesn’t recognize the difference in name and class, it has the power and strength to gather all the members of our nation to whom liberty, progress and independence are not just empty phrases, but who use them to build their own existence with. (...) Labor, free-minded in its thinking and which yearns for independence is exactly for that reason a member of Sokol, as any other class whose members don’t renounce brotherhood and equality. Those who deny that, they do harm to the workers and do not understand the core of the Sokol idea.”

This staunchly positivist discourse around the concept of nationhood, was promoted, particularly in the Slovenian context, by Vladimir Ravnihar, a notable “progressive” lawyer, politician and publicist. In a tone rather typical of prewar liberal Sokol thinkers from the Habsburg context, he stated that: “It is therefore understandable that Germanization and Italianization, which existed in a certain system and were under the patronage of the higher circles over the last 50 years, decimated our kind, while the Czechs are today already in the offensive. (...) We need to take these circumstances into account if we want to compare the

development of the national institutions, among them the Sokol thought - between the Slovenes and the Czechs (...) We have every right to existence (...) and it has been predicted, on the basis of the given parameters by a deep thinker, university professor Gumpłowicz, that we will be excluded from the lineage of generations and included into a lineage of nations in due time!”²¹³ As a regular contributor to the political section of the Ljubljana Sokol periodical, Ravnihar also commented on the “work of the parliament” (quotation marks in the original text). He thereby criticized its inability to solve the issue of the state budget, foreign (trade) policy towards the Balkans (arguing it is conceived to serve German business interests), the increase of taxes and tax oversight over smaller businesses, as well as for the lack of transparency in parliamentary work regarding multiple issues on its agenda, concluding that: “We truly need to fight for every single breadcrumb of democracy” and “If it would be possible to obtain a smart and farsighted statesman in our Monarchy, the following would have to be his slogan: *future of Austria is in Slavdom and with Slavdom*”. For thinkers such as Ravnihar, the question of nationhood was already resolved by experts, and it was upon the state to accommodate it. Moreover, it can be read from his discourse that Ravnihar saw Sokol as a necessary political tool for improving the position of Slavs within the current political constellation. Sokol was, in his eyes, merely channeling the objective needs of positively determinable nationalities.

In contrast to thinkers akin to Ravnihar, who were responsible for the majority of Sokol’s turn of century intellectual production, thinkers stemming from Serbian Sokol (from Kingdom of Serbia) and Dušan Silni, were more reluctant to accept both the Czech model and the political modernity it was promoting. Even if Czech, Slovene and Croatian national movement occasionally operated with the imagined antiquity and deep-rootedness of Slavic (physical) culture in their writings, the Serbian proper (*srbijanski*) intellectual production was much more

²¹³ Vladimir Ravnihar, *Sokolska ideja in Slovenci: ob 40-letnici Sokola v Ljubljani*. Ljubljana, 1903.

explicitly primordial and autochtonist in its nature. For that very reason, they departed from the traditional liberal and modernist commitments of Habsburg Sokol activists and sought to devise a more autochtonous program, relying on, for instance, folk dances and games.

Moreover, these games were also understood as loci of the national character: “In our games there is something stronger than apathic generality, something more fantastic than the urge, in them are our peculiarities, our virtues, power, imagination - in one word - poetry. Through the peasant Sokols we give the Sokol into the people, into that lively, cultural workshop of our future (...) by taking our national games into our Sokol work, we don’t alienate ourselves from the people at all, but at the same time we stand very close to the program of the most modern ideals of the physical exercise. (...) Open the works of Vuk [Karadžić] and search for the death of vojvoda Kajica. Next to the unmeasurable and strong beauties of the entire poem, which sounds like a mountain waterfall, mentioned five of our games are also mentioned (...) In our lands there are no manly and heroic games anymore! They escaped before the ‘culture’ among the sheep keepers and poor people - that is where they are kept. Lika, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Old Serbia and other dense and pure nuclei of our national life, preserved these games. (...) I know that we need to acquire everything that is good in the Czech prototype, I know the whole story about discipline and organization, I know about the solidarity of all the Slavic Sokols in the world, but I also know that the Serbian hospitality doesn’t go as far to swallow and digest every good foreign thing. (...) And our urban gentlemen like to watch the good pole vaulter, they enjoy and their nerves are pleasantly aroused when they watch a competition (...) but in these competitions there is very little of our own, they have the least originality (...) We have games which others don’t have, those which they cannot neither translate nor learn - that unknown and completely our own number of games needs to be saved and strengthened!”

In a similar vein and in another text, Popović did not shy away from denouncing liberalism and modernism as such, when discussing the sort of education Sokol should be conducting:

“...education is not here in the foggy, wide, ‘freethinking’ direction, but in the national one. National education is, of course, narrow and conservative, but it is real! The emotional sphere of that education is filled, on the one hand with ‘hatred towards every foreigner’, and ‘blood for the kin’ on the other!”²¹⁴ The tension between these traditions will continue well into the interwar period, with liberalism’s individualism and universalism remaining challenged by neo-romanticist forces throughout.

Finally, in terms of biomedical and nascent expert discourses related to physical education, prewar South Slavic Sokol thinkers largely wrote about temperance, as well as capitalism-induced bodily degeneration of the members of their national collective. Many of them also operated with a distinctly social Darwinist repertoire. Janko Jazbec, Yugoslavist Istrian Sokol organizer and later the founder of Yugoslav-Czechoslovak League (1925), published a series of articles in Liburnian Sokol herald under the title “Life and exercise”,²¹⁵ tackling the issues of evolution of human urges, nature and societies in a social Darwinist perspective, arguing that there is an “unstoppable competition of nations” in which all other values of individuality and sociability are lost. He went on to articulate the “miserable state of human health” focusing on the Yugoslav peasantry and its chronic suffering from hunger, alcoholism and lack of hygiene, as well as the urban populace whom he criticized for the abuse of alcohol, coffee and tobacco, naming these practices “the slamming of the national body” which results in “lagging behind of the nation”. This, as he argued is additionally worsened by the emigration and denationalization (*odnarođenje*) of youth abroad. He portrayed Sokol as a valuable antidote to this crisis, given its ability to develop patriotic spirit among the strong bodies, unlike the ones of the state bureaucrats and civil servants, the bodies of whose he described as skinny, prone to

²¹⁴ Laza Popović, “O seljačkim sokolima” [On peasant Sokols] *Srpski soko: list za sokolske stvari* (December 1, 1906), pp. 6-11, here p. 8.

²¹⁵ Janko Jazbec “Život i tjelovježba” [Life and Exercise] *Sokolski Vijestnik Hrvatskog Sokola župe Vitezić Lovran* (January 1914), pp. 3-8.

various diseases, without muscle strength, skeleton-like and unable to properly participate in the army or fulfill most physical tasks they should be able to. After this juxtaposition of Sokol and state bureaucrats' bodies, he concludes that Sokol education primarily develops spiritual virtues, one's will, prolongs life and counters the widespread mental illness of onanism, especially through wrestling.

Oftentimes, the experts engaged thereat used the association for appealing to the state, in the name of the nation, in hope of bringing about general rejuvenation of the nation. Here it is worthwhile to consider a Czech Sokol thinker Karel Vaníček who was active and translated in the Southern Slavic space in this period, and who directly addressed the unhealthy habits of the nation that Sokol can help exterminate through its associational rules and practices. Such habits were, nevertheless, often conceptualized as the *malaise* of the modern age or the so-called diseases of affluence. In the 1909 Slovenian translation of his book "The Sokol Gospel",²¹⁶ it is stated that "there is no doubt that this is the age of significant historical events", pointing to the acceleration of experience of historical time, "hence the Sokol thought need to raise the Slavic people on the higher moral level", namely to protect them from the three great dangers: alcohol, tobacco and 'Venus', increasing the values of moderation and frugality. Regarding smoking tobacco which destroys the national body "united by the revivalists", he states: "That smoking is the new age habit, is not even denied by the most passionate believer of the Nicotiana Goddess. Our ancestors didn't raise the tobacco clouds, as the modern Leviathans do, but its origin is still in the brutality of our external enemies and despite us being socially and nationally enslaved by the German Counts (...) our ancestors kept our nation as fresh and capable of life as they could throughout the 19th (...) including making the way for rebirth, that

²¹⁶ Karel Vaníček, *Sokolski evangelij*. [The Sokol Gospel] Ljubljana, 1909.

is, the unification of scattered limbs and giving us awareness that we make up a language community...”.

He supported these claims with elaboration on the psychology of addiction and data on the economy of the tobacco industry in Austria-Hungary, highlighting statistics on how much is spent on tobacco per capita in Carniola, Carinthia and the Austrian Litoral, arguing that this money could instead be channeled for building a gym: Brothers, only a little sociological mathematics is needed, to see that we need less energy for the defensive, than for the offensive, and that with less work and effort we can protect our economic, language and political interests”. He suggested that for that very reason “two days of Sokol abstinence” should be introduced annually, on the birthdays of its founders, Tyrš and Fügner. Lastly, he related the issue to women’s emancipation saying that: “All of this, naturally, absolutely concerns our pseudo-modern smoking women, which emancipate themselves and interpret the equality of women in a way that they should be equal to men in lighting cigarettes, squandering of personal property and consequently, lessening of the national wellbeing.”

Another typical biomedical expert and thinkers who appealed to the state through Sokol was the notable physician and eugenicist Fran Srećko Gundrum Oriovčanin,²¹⁷ who published a large body of work before the First World War on the numerous topics. They ranged from issues such as tobacco and alcohol abuse, workers’ health issues, cycling, mineral water, Croatian poisonous spider species, sexual health and venereal diseases, dentistry, longevity, physical education of children, hair care, women’s exercise, first aid, botany, tuberculosis, public baths, prostitution, local history and culture etc. Together with publishing on this immense range of topics, Gundrum also participated in Sokol activities, namely in leading associational courses on abstinence, medical or hygiene-related topics, but also served as a

²¹⁷ “Fran Srećko Gundrum Oriovčanin” *Hrvatski biografski leksikon (1983–2024)*, [online edition] Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2025. URL=<<https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/gundrum-oriovcenin-fran-srecko>>. (Last access: January 20, 2025).

translator of notable literary works from Bulgarian to Croatian and was one of the most vocal proponents of including the Bulgarian national corpus into the Yugoslav framework. One of his most widespread alarmist booklets, which was also recommended within Sokol periodicals, “Alcohol - poison!”,²¹⁸ for instance, contains arguments on the heredity of criminality through alcohol abuse. Through combining detailed statistical data from Croatian psychiatric wards with hearsay anecdotes about a several generation long case of inherited psychiatric disease²¹⁹ and inherent criminality due to the ancestors’ alcohol abuse, Gundrum expressed concern for their influence onto the state economy, outlining the social welfare and criminal institutions that had to get involved in the case of the family whose single ancestor was an alcoholic in the mid-18th century. His suggestions for countering alcoholism were focused on founding moderation societies, as opposed to the temperance-focused ones, installing a sense of labor duty among the peasantry, as well as propagating the legal models from antiquity such as Lycurgus’s laws. In many of these examples, Sokol thinkers’ and particularly experts’ pleas reveal expectations from the state, even if many of them reverted to relying on Sokol to spread their “gospel”. Moreover, as is visible from the select thinkers and their writings, the prewar Sokol agenda was rather eclectic, sitting between romanticist tradition of symbolic politics and the ambitions of the “pragmatic generation” that possessed markedly more modernist and positivist commitments. These underlying trends and their mutual relations will comprise the bulk of the Sokol’s interwar morphology and intellectual output, but also the latent tension between the inherited associational cultures and ultimate agendas, particularly in regard to political modernity and visions of political community Sokol was supposed to model and help realize.

²¹⁸ Fran Gundrum Oriovčanin, *Alkohol-otrov!* [Alcohol - poison!] Bjelovar, 1904.

²¹⁹ Ibid, p. 23.

2. Enter Disillusionment: Grappling With Yugoslavist Modernity in The 1920s²²⁰

2.1. The Trials of Structural Unification

The wartime years proved exceptionally difficult for most Sokol members from the Habsburg context, as their Sokol membership often drew negative attention from the authorities and ultimately resulted in several notable cases of treason trials.²²¹ Besides similar infamous prewar trials, such as the 1907 Friedjung trial and the 1909 Great Treason Trial, the two most prominent wartime cases of such trials can be seen in the so-called Zagreb and Banja Luka trials of 1915-16, whereby dozens of Sokol members were sentenced to death.²²² Unlike in the Czechoslovak case, where Sokol members under Masaryk's patronage also symbolically comprised the nucleus of the ultimately victorious Czech legionnaires, not least in the eyes of Western observers—in the Yugoslav case, the former Sokol comrades had to face one another on the battlefield. In exceptional cases, such as that of the Slovenian historian and military officer Ljudevit Pivko, this situation led to their disobedience in the military in the name of the struggle for the South Slavic unification.

²²⁰ This article contains portions of my previously written publications, namely Lucija Balikić “Narratives of Rupture in the post-Habsburg Space: The Case of the Interwar Yugoslav Sokol” In: *Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions in East Central Europe, 1914-1930*, vol. 4., eds. Elisabeth Haid-Lener, Cody J. Inglis. [forthcoming]; Lucija Balikić “Viktor Murnik, Culture and Physical Exercise, 1929” and “Josip Vilfan, The Congress of European Nationalities and the Peace Problem, 1932” In: *Political Transformations in the Interwar Period: The Case of Slovenian Political Thought from Yugoslav and Transnational Perspectives*, eds. Isidora Grubački, Marko Zajc. Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino, 2025. [forthcoming]; Lucija Balikić “Depoliticizing the Modern Nation: Discourses of Organic Nationhood and Political Socialization in the Interwar Yugoslav Sokol”. *Historical Studies on Central Europe*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2023), pp. 90-105.

²²¹ Mark Cornwall “Loyalty and treason in late Habsburg Croatia: a violent discourse before the First World War” In: *Exploring Loyalty*, eds. Jana Osterkamp and Martin Schulze Wessel. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017, pp. 97-121; Mark Cornwall, “Traitors and the Meaning of Treason in Austria-Hungary's Great War” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* vol. 25 (2015), pp. 113-34; Mark Cornwall, “Treason in an Era of Regime Change: The Case of the Habsburg Monarchy” *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 50 (2019), pp. 124-149.

²²² *Sokolski veleizdajnički proces u Zagrebu: iz 1915-1916 god.* [Sokol high treason trial in Zagreb: from the years 1915-1916] Zagreb: Štamparija glavnog saveza srpskih zemljoradničkih zadruga, 1927. (without author).

Importantly, while the war formally ended in November 1918, the Yugoslav borders were drawn, negotiated and changable until at least 1922,²²³ which heavily influenced Sokol's local clubs renewal and activity in this initial period. Due to the secret Treaty of London (1915),²²⁴ despite Serbian army's expanding military presence on the Adriatic, Italy continued to lay claims on the coastal territories. These claims were emboldened by Gabriele D'Annunzio's successful overtake of Fiume and inspiration, as well as symbolic importance, it provided to the rising regime of Mussolini. This left otherwise numerous and active Sokol clubs in Istria and Kvarner regions, on the other side of the border, where they were soon suppressed by the fascists, both formally and informally. This situation gave birth to the so-called "Istrian question" and related literature and cultural products that were both circulated within Sokol. They usually thematized the lost territories and miserable conditions in which the local Slavic population lived, through fact and fiction, but also included sophisticated legal-political writings on the broader issue of the nascent "minority politics" by Sokol thinkers such as the Trieste-born Josip Vilfan (Wilfan).

Another border that was relatively malleable and problematic until late 1921 was the Hungarian one, namely due to the establishment of the Hungarian Soviet Republic and its complex downfall that was neither smooth, nor straightforward in the counties bordering the newly founded Yugoslav state.²²⁵ Since none of the prewar South Slavic Sokol associations had active clubs in those parts of Hungary proper that comprised the post-1918 *de facto* Hungary, the

²²³ Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End, 1917-1923*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

²²⁴ Signed between Italy and the Serbian Pašić government, but mainly brokered by Sir Edward Grey's diplomacy.

²²⁵ This was the case due to the prolonged occupation of the Serbian army of the Pécs area and the subsequent establishment of the shortlived Serbian-Hungarian Soviet Republic of Baranja-Baja that was to serve as a starting point for emancipation of Hungary from the Horthy's forces, by Count Károlyi and the Hungarian civic radicals, see: Árpád Hornyák "A Baranyai Szerb-Magyar Köztársaság" [The Baranya Serbian-Hungarian Republic] in: *Kérészállamok: Átmeneti államalakulatok a történelmi Magyarország területén (1918-1921)*, eds. Szeghy-Gayer, Veronika; Zahorán, Csaba. Budapest: Ludovika Egyetemi Kiadó, 2022, pp. 353-368.

issue—even if rarely thematized—was framed as one of the struggle against the spread of Bolshevism, thus reflecting the official stance of the Yugoslav state.

In terms of Sokol's organizational history, the period from 1918 to 1929,²²⁶ when the Royal Dictatorship was established, represents the one of setting it up institutionally and internationally in the newly created political constellation, based on the existing integrative agenda interrupted by the outbreak of the war.²²⁷ The ultimate objective of the various Sokol clubs and officials, after the war has finished, was to unite all those who have found themselves within the borders of the new state into a single umbrella voluntary association. This entity was to encompass all the previously existing clubs that operated both on Habsburg and territories of the Serbia and Montenegro.

This process started, indicatively, in Zagreb in January 1919, when the pre-existing associations merged into the *Sokolski savez Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (Sokol Union of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes). On Saint Vitus day of the same year, they held a first joint meeting in Novi Sad, where they elected the main officials, namely the Slovenian physician Ivan Oražen, the aforementioned Laza Popović, as well as the physician, temperance activist and Boy Scout leader Miloš Popović. Thereat, they decided on the new administrative division of the pre-existing clubs into clubs and societies (*župa, društvo*), thus strategically terminating the existence of the nationally-framed prewar associations (e.g. Serbian, Slovenian, Croatian).

²²⁶ This chapter, however, also includes publications published throughout the year 1929, due to the fact that the law that liquidated different co-existing Sokol associations and forcefully united their membership into a single association (renamed into 'Savez Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije') only came to being in 1930. For this reason, those publications still fit the pre-dictatorship intellectual climate, despite having been published in early or mid-1929. The break with the previous period is also witnessed by the establishment of the new periodicals only from January 1930 onwards. See: *Zakon o osnivanju Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije sa Uredbom o likvidaciji Jugoslovenskog sokola, Hrvatskog sokola, Orla i Srpskog sokola i Statut o organizaciji i poslovanju Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*. [The law on the founding of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia with the Decree on the liquidation of the Yugoslav Sokol, Croatian Sokol, Orla and Serbian Sokol and the Statute on the organization and work of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia] Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1930.

²²⁷ The first joint performance of the Yugoslav Sokol Union that had combined the Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian Sokol was, in fact, scheduled for June 28, 1914, in Ljubljana, see: Ante Brozović, *Sokolski zbornik*. [Sokol volume] Belgrade: SSKJ, 1934, pp. 221-4.

Moreover, at this meeting, they adopted the basic statutory documents and set out the associational, practical-pedagogical and intellectual agenda for the decade to come. While this initial setup nominally reflected the tripartite, or the so-called “tribal”, understanding of Yugoslavia’s titular nationalities, it was already at their following meeting in Maribor in 1920 that they renamed the umbrella association into the Yugoslav Sokol Union (*Jugoslavenški sokolski savez/Jugoslovanska sokolska zveza*) to better reflect their Yugoslavist agenda. Nevertheless, it is important to note that most of their contemporaneous intellectual projects still sought to combine the already existing historical narratives and cultural canons, into three parallel ones, with an added layer of narrating the common traumatic, but also triumphalist experience of the First World War.

One of the first programmatic texts, whereby this generation outlined their vision for Sokol’s role in the new sociopolitical context and its stances towards other contemporaneous phenomena was a 1919 booklet on *Sokol principles* [Sokolska načela],²²⁸ put forward by the elite of the Slovenian Sokol intellectual-associational scene. Here they expressed their decision to merge the prewar Slovenian (formally: South/*Južni*) Sokol into the JSS/JSZ which they described as an apolitical, all-national association with a strong, progressive social program, with special attention paid to improving the national health, but also providing welfare to the Sokol war veterans. This text provides insight into their markedly post-Habsburg, Neo-Slavic, voluntary, liberal, evolutionary, modernist, positivist and holistic understanding of both physical exercise and Sokol.

In a similar vein, some months later, Laza Popović elaborated on the expectations that Sokol, and presumably the entire post-Habsburg “old guard” that he was a noteworthy representative of, had from the new state apparatus. In *Nova Evropa* (*New Europe*), an eminent progressive

²²⁸ *Sokolska načela* [Sokol Principles], eds. Engelbert Gangl, Riko Fux, Oton Fettich, Verij Švajgar, Ivan Lah, Miroslav Ambrožič. Ljubljana, 1919.

and left-leaning journal of the Yugoslavist intelligentsia, he laid out a proposal for the new position of Sokol vis-à-vis the state, but also its members and the population at large.²²⁹

While retaining strictly biopolitical and collectivist lense, the proposal reads markedly progressive in the sense that it encompasses the entire population of the state, in contrast to the otherwise usual insistence of Sokol on targeting exclusively Slavic populace: “The official state, the carrier of the initiative for the realization of everything that is needed for the maintenance and the development of the entire society, after having achieved the so-called minimum, will leave it to the private initiative to perfect different parts and realize the higher aspirations. (...) From this perspective, new horizons are being opened to Sokol: the physical education of all citizens, all and without any difference, is to become mandatory and regular, the same as other education. The state is to take upon itself the foundational work by creating the state law that mandates the physical education and by building the institutions for implementing it.”²³⁰

Indicatively, he justified this reasoning with strictly positivist arguments, characteristic of this post-Habsburg Sokol milieu that hoped to have their pleas heard and initiatives swiftly picked up by the new state: “The common [LB: *zajendičko*] health is a sum of everyone’s individual health, an average healthy strenght made up of all individuals together. On it rests the entire cultural and economic strenght of the state and the society (...) an individual does not have the right to neglect [LB: *raspolaže*] their own health, or to not improve it. (...) Physical education is thus part of the jurisdiction of the whole, of the community, and should be mandatory for all its members, without exceptions. Mandatory physical education of the state’s citizens is the fundamental and vital law of the state”.²³¹ This Yugoslavist post-Habsburg stream of thinkers

²²⁹ Laza Popović, “Novi pogledi na Sokolstvo” [New perspectives on Sokol] *Nova Evropa* (16. 9. 1920), pp. 11-14.

²³⁰ Ibid, p. 13.

²³¹ Ibid.

that had insisted on such arguments remained in power in the association, with varying influence and success, until at least 1929.

It was soon, however, that the Croatian Sokol, otherwise the most numerous among the three, re-established itself in January 1922,²³² breaking away from the Ljubljana-based centralized umbrella association, which will remain the case until the beginning of the Royal Dictatorship.²³³ This tension between the Croatian Sokol and the Yugoslav Sokol Union was widely debated, particularly with an aim to produce a historical narrative on the (post-)Habsburg experience of South Slavs.²³⁴

The arguments that Croatian Sokol, previously known as *Župa Fonova* and later as *Župa Kralja Petra Svačića*,²³⁵ used from around 1919 onwards pointed to their strong preference for maintaining the tripartite (SCS) Sokol structure, with an umbrella association serving mainly to coordinate the three nationally-framed ones. In the same vein, they hoped to distribute the duties and tasks in a way that each of those three constituent associations takes responsibility for one key aspect of the Sokol's overall activity (e.g. publishing, courses, gymnastic training). This was designed to avoid administrative centralization in any one urban or national context, but to instead stimulate horizontal cooperation between them.

One other structural issue, that Pieter Troch insightfully pointed to as well, was the fact that in numerous cities of former Croatia-Slavonia, as a rule, there existed parallel prewar Croatian and Serbian Sokol clubs which were now to unite into single clubs, according to the JSS/JSZ's

²³² "Sokol na Wilsonovom trgu Jugoslovenskom Sokolskom Savezu" [Sokol on Wilson square to the Yugoslav Sokol Union] *Sokolski vjesnik*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1922), pp. 1-4; "Sokolski sporovi u Zagrebu" [Sokol conflicts in Zagreb] *Sokolski vjesnik* vol. 4, no. 1 (1922), pp. 4-8.

²³³ Pieter Troch, *Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Education and Yugoslav Nationhood in Interwar Yugoslavia: Possibilities, limitations and interactions with other national ideas*, PhD dissertation. University of Gent, 2012., p. 583-4.

²³⁴ For some issues that were raised in this context, see: "Sokolska vanredna skupština u Zagrebu 17. oktobra t. g." [Ad-hoc Sokol assembly in Zagreb, on October 17 of this year] *Nova Evropa*, br. 4 (21. 10. 1920), pp. 159-160 (without author).

²³⁵ Svačić was, in the second half of 19th century, historiographically fashioned as an anti-Hungarian tragical martyr, by the notable liberal Yugoslavist historian of the older generation, Franjo Rački—but was also a King, which might have had its own implications in this markedly anti-Karađorđević context.

suggestions. It was this process that Croatian Sokol hoped to avoid by insisting on retaining the overall tripartite associational structure. The same could be said of the Serbian Dušan Silni Society that hoped to retain its national name and was reluctant to blend into the Yugoslavist framework.²³⁶

The individual protagonists of this organizational conflict were the Zagreb-based lawyer and Yugoslavist liberal politician Lav Mazzura and Laza Popović who mainly debated the extent of Sokol's politicization in this context. Mazzura, together with a notable prewar Sokol activist, literary historian and gymnast Franjo Bučar, criticized JSS/JSZ' growing affiliation and alignment with Svetozar Pribićević's Democratic party (*Demokratska stranka*), of liberal Yugoslavist orientation, throughout the early 1920s.²³⁷

Indicatively, the membership of the independent Croatian Sokol, headed by the agrarian politician Vladko Maček and a notable Zagreb-based historian Rudolf Horvat, consistently grew throughout this period and, in contrast, those Sokol clubs in the former Croatia-Slavonia that remained affiliated with the otherwise centralized JSS/JSZ remained relatively low-size in terms of their membership.²³⁸ While they accused the JSS/JSZ of politicization and partisanship, the leaders of Croatian Sokol also relied on political parties and actors, namely the Croatian Peasant Party (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka*), but also the faction members of Josip Frank's Party of Rights (*Frankovci*) for support. Stjepan Radić's *Slobodni dom* (Free home) newspaper, for instance, ferociously reacted to the JSS/JSZ' 1924 *slet* in Zagreb, dubbing JSS/JSZ members "Pribićević's beaters [LB: batinaši] (...) that miserable Belgrade-born footman society, to which Zagreb represents merely some sort of Yugoslav Prnjavor,"²³⁹ and

²³⁶ Tomaž Pavlin "Ustanavljanje Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije" [The founding of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia] *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 42, no. 1. (2002), pp. 55-72.

²³⁷ Tomaž Pavlin, *Razvoj sokolstva v Sloveniji med leti 1929-1941* [The development of Sokol in Slovenia between 1929 and 1941], PhD dissertation. University of Ljubljana, 2000, pp. 224-5.

²³⁸ Pieter Troch, *Education and Yugoslav Nationhood*, table 8, p. 628.

²³⁹ Prnjavor is a city in Bosnia and Herzegovina, used here in a derogatory manner, due to its onomatopoeic and associative character.

Croatia only some sort of Yugoslav Cinderella—that bloated, evil gentry society...”.²⁴⁰ In other words, the conflict between JSS/JSZ and the Croatian Sokol partly reflected the larger political conflict between the key political parties, both with strong bases in the post-Habsburg territories. Importantly, this conflict excluded the otherwise powerful and Karađorđević-dynasty affiliated National Radical Party (*Narodna radikalna stranka*), but also, at least discursively, a tension between urban and rural populations. Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that JSS/JSZ suffered from the debates on politicization internally as well, as can be witnessed from the overt conflict between several prominent JSS/JSZ leaders on the issue of JSS/JSZ’ relationship with ORJUNA (Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists), in the early 1920s, particularly due to the latter’s radical, violent and revolutionary agenda that stood in stark contrast to the Sokol’s pronouncedly liberal, evolutionist tradition.²⁴¹

It was after the 1925 elections, once the coalition of centralist National Radical Party and Svetozar Pribićević’s Independent Democratic Party (*Samostalna demokratska stranka*) won, that JSS/JSZ leaders felt that most of the ambiguity on state organization was removed from the public life of the new state. They felt it evident that the unitary Yugoslavist, centralist, conception has ultimately succeeded in trampling federalist and essentially anti-modernist forces.²⁴² This is foremost visible in a triumphalist article, published following the announcement of election results, by Dušan Bogunović, a Zagreb-based Yugoslavist pedagogue, publicist, prominent Sokol activist and one of the organizers of the Sarajevo assassination, who eventually ended his career in the Serbian Orthodox Church’s Commission for Refugees in German-occupied Serbia. In it, he outlined a proposition for founding a club of

²⁴⁰ Stjepan Radić, “Dosadašnji upravni rad parlamentarne Davidovićeve vlade” [The governing work of Davidović’s parliamentary government so far] *Slobodni dom* (August 20, 1924), pp. 1-2, here p. 2.

²⁴¹ Oto Gavrančić, “Sokolstvo i nacionalistički pokreti” [Sokols and the nationalist movements] *Sokolski vjesnik župe Zagrebačke*, vol. 1 (1923), pp. 6-7; Oton Iveković “Župski glasnik” [Club’s herald] *Sokolski vjesnik župe Zagrebačke*, vol. 3 (1923), p. 46.

²⁴² Which is not to say that all political actors who subscribed to it, at this moment, did so for ideological reasons, but oftentimes for tactical ones.

Sokol MPs in the National Assembly. Their main task would be to pass a law on physical education and ensure that a state-sponsored Higher School for Physical Education is founded, so as to scale-up Sokol's voluntary traditions and practices.²⁴³ Since this was not realized in due time, he repeated the call after the following elections, urging Sokol-affiliated MPs to use their position and channel the state resources into these initiatives.²⁴⁴ In a telling contrast, it was already in late 1922 that the Regional Administration for Croatia and Slavonia (*Pokrajinska uprava za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*)²⁴⁵ adopted Dragutin Šulce's textbook on Sokol physical education as a mandatory school textbook for all the schools on the territory, perhaps precisely due to the Regional Administration's continuity with the prewar, Sokol-affiliated, municipal structures.²⁴⁶

This radically changing relationship between Sokol and the state was also explicitly addressed by Pavel Pestotnik in 1925, whereby he compared Sokol's position between the periods when it enjoyed and those when it did not enjoy the support of the governing structures. Here he portrayed its fluctuating impact as a question of choice between societal progress and backwardness, but more importantly, between protecting state's interests and allowing various political forces to go against them.²⁴⁷ In this way, he also partially denounced JSS/JSZ' programmatic stance on Sokol's essentially apolitical, rather positivist, character. Beyond appealing to their own members that assumed the role of MPs, many Sokol thinkers appealed to the state more generally throughout this period, attempting to use their epistemic authority to provide it with policy recommendations.

²⁴³ Dušan Bogunović, "Sokolstvo i narodni poslanici" [Sokol and Members of the Parliament] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 3 (1925), pp. 1-2.

²⁴⁴ Dušan Bogunović, "Sokolstvo i narodni poslanici: povodom osnutka kluba Sokola-narodnih poslanika" [Sokol and members of the parliament: on the founding of the Club of Sokol MPs] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 10-11 (1927), p. 142.

²⁴⁵ For more on this level of administration, see the archival fond: HR-HDA-137 Pokrajinska uprava za Hrvatsku i Slavoniju [Regional administration for Croatia and Slavonia].

²⁴⁶ "Sokolska knjiga obligatan školski udžbenik" [Sokol book as a mandatory school textbook] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 10-11-12 (1922), p. 283. (without author)

²⁴⁷ Pavel Pestotnik "Sokolstvo i javni život" *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 3 (1925), pp. 62-63.

Such appeals were for instance those of Janko Jazbec, who very early on called for complete abandonment of the “tribal” ethnonyms and adopting the Yugoslav designator across all the state institutions. Simultaneously, he pointed to the issue of the reductionist official conception of “three tribes”, that he saw as neglectful of other Slavic nationalities in the country.²⁴⁸ In a similar vein, it was Franjo Malin, a Novi Sad-based publicist, journalist and Sokol activist,²⁴⁹ who called for the introduction of the ethnonym “Yugoslav” for the country’s population, arguing that there would be no progress in achieving social cohesion and political consolidation, should the previous ethnonyms remain in use, both administratively and in the fields of culture and knowledge-production.²⁵⁰

Moreover, contemporaneous suggestions by Sokol thinkers also encompassed foreign-political issues. One such example can be found in famous linguistic scholar’s, Petar Skok’s, article on the state’s neglect of the South Slavic population in Greece, whereby he overtly invited the Sokol members from the “South Serbian” borderlands to organize locally, but also to exercise pressure towards the state that should protect the said population from the Greek assimilatory pressure.²⁵¹ It can, thus, be said that JSS/JSZ attempted to posit itself as a relevant forum for policy recommendations to the state administration, remaining rather unsuccessful until 1929 and using much of its political and organizational capacities to tackle its numerous challengers from various sides of the political spectrum.

In this period, however, further structural tensions between JSS/JSZ and the independent Croatian Sokol became particularly visible in the context of the millennial celebrations of the

²⁴⁸ Janko Jazbec “Provedimo praktično Jugoslovenstvo” [Let us realize the practical Yugoslavism] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 6 (1922), pp. 117-118.

²⁴⁹ Malin is known primarily as a first director of the Museum of the Matica Srpska in Novi Sad, for more on his biography see: Dominik Deman “Znameniti Petrovaradinac Franjo Malin” [Notable Petrovaradin inhabitant, Franjo Malin] *Godišnjak za znanstvena istraživanja*, vol. 14 (2024), pp. 115-152.

²⁵⁰ Franjo Malin “Jugoslovenstvo” [Yugoslavism] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 3 (1925), pp. 34-39.

²⁵¹ Petar Skok “Sloveni u Grčkoj. Prilog Sokolskog rada u Grčkoj. Na pažnju Sokolstvu Južne Srbije” [Slavs in Greece. Contribution to the Sokol work in Greece. To the attention of the South Serbian Sokols] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 8 (1927), pp. 101-103.

creation of the Croatian Kingdom (925-1925). This was particularly so, because this was an event which Croatian Sokol took utilized for further promoting their national historical narrative, with focus on historicizing the Croatian legal subjectivity and performing symbolic rituals in urban spaces. What is more, this structural ambiguity was reflected among Sokol thinkers and Yugoslav Sokol's overall stance towards its notable competitors, such as the Catholic gymnastic association Orel/Orao (Eagle) and the already developed worker's or socialist sports clubs—both of which attacked JSS/JSZ for its liberalism, Yugoslavism and evolutionism.²⁵² In contrast, it can be stated that the (former) Slovenian Sokol clubs were not only best organized and most active, but also produced the largest number of Sokol officials in this period.²⁵³

The origins of such discrepancies between Sokols from the post-Habsburg and other contexts were interestingly thematized by Bogunović. In his reflective 1924 booklet²⁵⁴ he framed the conflict between the “tribal” and “unified” Sokol factions, as a continuation, with other means, of the long-term rivalry between the South Slavs from the Habsburg context and those from the post-Ottoman emancipated Balkan kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro. Bogunović hereby traced the historical genesis of this conflict, as well as that of the disruptive actors who stimulated it. The examples of the latter can be seen in the Catholic Orao/Orel movement or the prewar Dalmatian “True Croatian Sokolists” (*Pravi hrvatski sokolaši*), whom he posited as exponents of the Habsburg imperial *divide et impera* politics towards the South Slavs. Such arguments could be read as depicting the independent Croatian Sokol and those few Serbian

²⁵² Aleš Šafarič “Sokolstvo in rekatolizacija” [Sokol and re-Catholicisation] *Naša pot: 150 let ustanovitve Južnega Sokola in sokoskega gibanja*, ed. Tomaž Pavlin. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za šport, 2014, pp. 65-83.

²⁵³ Tomaž Pavlin, *Razvoj sokolstva v Sloveniji med leti 1929-1941* [The development of Sokol in Slovenia between 1929 and 1941] PhD dissertation, University of Ljubljana, 2000, pp. 56-8, cited in Pieter Troch, *Education and Yugoslav Nationhood*, p. 583.

²⁵⁴ Dušan M. Bogunović, *Od ujedinjenja do II sokolskog sabora*. [From the Unification to the 2nd Sokol Assembly] Zagreb: Štamparija Glavnog saveza srpskih zemljoradničkih zadruga, 1924.

Sokol clubs reluctant to unite with their Croatian counterparts,²⁵⁵ not only as essentially inauthentic, but as direct heirs of the despotic imperial politics. For that reason, they were portrayed as treasonous or anti-state projects. In order to underscore his argument, Bogunović posited the idea of Sokol unification above both state and party politics, highlighting their common tasks, that were articulated by Laza Popović already at the First Sokol Assembly (*Prvi sokolski sabor*). These were namely: establishing children's sections, promoting the brotherhood of blood (*pobratimstvo*) tradition among the rural Sokols, establishing of the education programs in the countryside and introducing measures for the struggle against Bolshevism.

Crucially, Bogunović dedicated a chapter to intellectual differences between the two groups, the Yugoslavists and the tripartite “tribalists”, which he saw in the way they understand physical education ontologically. Hereby he accused some “tribalists” of having a very simple, reductionist view of the physical education conducted in Sokol, pertaining solely to its gymnastic aspects. In turn, he argued that those of Yugoslavist orientation have a much more comprehensive agenda that focuses on guiding the harmonious development of all Sokol members—intellectual, psychological and physical. In the context of the independent Croatian Sokol, this might have tackled the overly technical and expertise-based approach to physical exercise, while in the case of non-cooperative Serbian clubs, the continuation of the radical (perhaps revolutionary) militant view of Sokol's duties. This stark difference, he claimed, had enormous implications on the way individuals saw their own work in Sokol and Sokol's ultimate role in society, that should be resolved on the upcoming Second Sokol Assembly (*Drugi sokolski sabor*).

²⁵⁵ In this context he refers to a notable article of Laza Popović in the *Riječ* (Word) paper (January 11, 1919) in which he urged the Serbian Sokols to embrace this cooperation.

The broader structural unification of Sokol clubs within the country into JSS/JSZ, however, was later complemented by the interational integration of Sokol associations through the creation of the All-Slavic Sokol Association in 1925 where the Yugoslav representatives played a crucial founding role, together with Czechoslovak, Polish and Russian émigré ones.²⁵⁶ This transnational Sokol network served as a basis for an eclectic, namely symbolic, cultural diplomatic, and research cooperation among individual Sokol thinkers and other Sokol associations, that increased in this period. In the JSS/JSZ' case, this can be well exemplified with the case of Ante Tadić's trip through Czechoslovakia sponsored by the Czechoslovak government or Božo Škerlj's later scientific cooperation with the Polish Institute for Physical Education.²⁵⁷

Throughout this period, as can be seen from numerous statistical overviews produced by individual clubs on multiple occasions (most notably in 1923 and 1928), the ever-expansive membership mainly consisted of urban, middle-class men, many of whom were of liberal professions; but also of a significant portion of urban youth and children. Importantly, the socially-oriented Yugoslavist physicians, educated mostly in Vienna, comprised a majority not only in the governing bodies of the association, but also among the thinkers who contributed to the associational periodicals. Such setup cotnributed to the rise in the prominence of biomedical discourses thereat, but also to the establishment of the Medical section (*Lekarsko odeljenje/Zdravniški odelek*) both within the umbrella association and on the clubs' level. Moreover, the Czech example that dominated the prewar period also remained strongly imprinted throughout the 1920s not only through close associational cooperation of JSS/JSZ and ČOS (*Česká obec sokolská*), but also through notable Czech gymnastics trainers and

²⁵⁶ "Manifest sveukupnom Slavenskom Sokolstvu. U Varšavi 14. augusta o.g. svečano je proglašen osnutak Sveslavenskog Sokolskog Saveza" [Manifest to the entire Slavic Sokol. On August 14 this year in Warsaw, the founding of the All-Slavic Sokol Union was announced] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 8-9 (1925), p. 1.

²⁵⁷ To be discussed in the third chapter of the dissertation.

physicians who remained in Zagreb, Belgrade, Ljubljana and Sarajevo after the war, most notable cases being František Tichý,²⁵⁸ Fran Lhotsky²⁵⁹ and Miroslav Vojinović (previously known as František Hoffman).²⁶⁰ In addition to this prewar group of Czech gymnastic and medical experts that Yugoslavist ones drew on in their intellectual production, a new external impetus was given to them by the sizeable influx of White émigrés to the Kingdom's urban centers. At this time, many representatives of the latter received university posts and successfully integrated themselves in the local knowledge production hubs.²⁶¹ Among other urban localities, Novi Sad proved to be one of the most relevant milieus where the Sokol-based intellectual activity was conceived and developed, within distinctly liberal and modernist intelligentsia.

While in some regions the prewar and postwar membership remained on approximately the same level, it was particularly in former province of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as territories of the former Serbia and Montenegro where the membership spike was most visible in the 1920s.²⁶² This could be indicative of the lack of the Sokol associational tradition in those areas, as well as the structural and developmental differences between the post-Habsburg realms and those that derived from the said regions. These areas' rurality (and lack of the need for ameliorating the ills of industrial modernity), combined with the romanticist and revolutionary traditions of their anti-Ottoman nation-building projects—might have also been

²⁵⁸ His most notable book in the local Yugoslav context, written in a clear Lamarckian tradition, being: Franjo Tichý, *Higijena tjeleovježbe*, transl. Josip Hanuš. [Hygiene of exercise] Zagreb, 1919.

²⁵⁹ Lhotsky, otherwise the elder of the Osijek Sokol club, was also prone to medicalizing the discourse on physical education, see: Fran Lhotsky, "Uticaj telovežbe na telesno i duševno zdravlje", *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 8-9 (1928), pp. 123-124.

²⁶⁰ However, some Sokol thinkers argued that JSS/JSZ was perpetually lagging, compared to ČOS, as can be seen in the prewar booklet: Vladimir Ravnihar, *Sokolska ideja in Slovenci! : ob 40 letnici "Sokola" v Ljubljani*. [The Sokol idea and Slovenes. On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Sokol in Ljubljana] Ljubljana, 1903.

²⁶¹ For more information on their community led by the elder Vladimir Nikolajevič Poljanskoj, see: "Русский Сокол" в Земуне (Югославия), 1922-1932 [Russian Sokol in Zemun, Yugoslavia 1922-1932]. Zemun, 1932.

²⁶² Pieter Troch, *Education and Yugoslav Nationhood*, p. 583.

behind their tardy and, at times, reluctant acceptance of the distinctly Czech modernist project that Sokol represented.

In line with the fact that most Sokol members derived from the post-Habsburg contexts and were of liberal professions, most of them simultaneously participated in other voluntary associations or parties such as the Adriatic Guard, Democratic Party, the nascent feminist movement,²⁶³ Yugoslav-Czechoslovak League, Serbian Peasant Party of Dragoljub Jovanović, ORJUNA etc. With respect to the close relationship between the said organizations and the overlap in their membership, it could be argued that the prewar tradition of building nationally-framed civil society coalitions persisted in this postwar context as well, however, this time with a markedly Yugoslavist character, even if it meant, at times, opposing the state's tripartite "tribal" model that dominated the 1920s.

Sokol clubs mostly retained previously existing committees, with an expanded field of work that, for instance, began to encompass the production of radio lectures and mandatory founding of Sokol libraries in all clubs. New traditions established within the organization were introduced, particularly the celebrations and commemorations that did not correspond to the state or religious ones (e.g. Rapallo day, dedicated to the 1922 Rappallo Treaty), while some of the previously Sokol-established ones were taken up by the state (e.g. Saint Vitus Day).

²⁶³ While the prominent Zagreb-based feminist activist Adela Milčinović indeed published several articles within the Sokol associational periodicals in this period, it is important to clarify that the affiliation between JSS/JSZ and different feminist organizations, ran either through personal contacts from the prewar period, or through the Democratic Party that both organizations were on the similar side of the political spectrum with. Nevertheless, both in Milčinović's overtly feminist articles and in other women-related texts within Sokol written by both women and men, there is pronounced connection between women's social emancipation and secularism, as well as Yugoslavism, and in most other cases maternalist discourse as well. See: "Referat sestre Adele Milčinović na jugoslavenskom ženskom kongresu u Beogradu o. g. meseca oktobra" [Report of the sister Adela Milčinović on the Yugoslav Women's Congress in Belgrade in October this year] *Sokolski glasnik*, vol. 11-12 (1919), pp. 516-518; Adela Milčinović "Žena i Sokolstvo" [Woman and Sokol] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 5 (1922), pp. 87-88; F. Kalafatić "Važnost žene u Sokolstvu" [The importance of women in Sokol] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 5 (1924), pp. 123; Zorka Janković "Sokolstvo i žena" [Sokol and a woman] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 12 (1924), pp. 319-321.

Another new activity which rapidly developed in this period were the Sokol-wide educational courses, featuring a wide array of topics, ranging from national history and literature (thus disseminating new historical narrative and Yugoslavist cultural canon) to eugenics or the ones centered around rural hygiene. Nevertheless, these were not yet systematically organized as was the case in the 1930s, but rather occurred on an *ad hoc* basis.

However, in order to see how Sokol thinkers responded to the, rather disillusioning, dynamics of cooperation with the new state, as well as to the aforementioned internal associational and intellectual struggles, it is necessary to analyze the novel associational organization they established in this period, as well as their own statements about the association's ultimate goals. In August 1924, at the Second Sokol Assembly (*Drugi sokolski sabor*),²⁶⁴ the representatives of all JSS/JSZ-affiliated Sokol clubs voted on numerous resolutions and declarations, through which they established not only a more developed associational structure and decision-making processes. Here, they also strove to unify their stance towards a number of sociopolitical issues of the day, prescribing strict and elaborate rules of associational life down to the salutes and types of dress. Immediately after the Assembly, a *slet* was held to rally up the support of the local membership.²⁶⁵

In the document which served as the key product of this assembly, namely the *Conclusions of the Second Sokol Assembly*,²⁶⁶ they described and strictly delineated the duties and responsibilities of various associational bodies and actors. The *Conclusions*, for instance, begin with a concise definition of Sokol's position and role in the given sociopolitical context, by

²⁶⁴ *Organizacija Jugoslovenskoga Sokolskoga Saveza; po zaključcima drugog sokolskog sabora u Zagrebu* [Organization of the Yugoslav Sokol Union, based on the conclusions of the second Sokol assembly in Zagreb] Ljubljana, 1925. (without author); Ante Brozović, *Spomenica sleta u Zagrebu 1924*. [The Memory Book of the 1924 Zagreb slet]. Zagreb, 1925.

²⁶⁵ Ante Brozović, *Spomenica sleta u Zagrebu 1924*. [The Memory Book of the 1924 Zagreb slet]. Zagreb, 1925.

²⁶⁶ "Rezolucije, načelni i drugi zaključci" [Resolutions, general and other conclusions] In: *Organizacija Jugoslovenskoga Sokolskoga Saveza; po zaključcima drugog sokolskog sabora u Zagrebu*. [Organization of the Yugoslav Sokol Union, based on the conclusions of the second Sokol assembly in Zagreb] Ljubljana, 1925. (without author)

saying that: “The Yugoslav Sokol has a task to, in the sense of Tyrš’s Sokol idea, raise [LB: uzgaja] in a physical, moral and social manner the Yugoslav constituents [LB: jugoslovenske pripadnike] and members of other Slavic nationalities in Yugoslavia, in order to reach maximal perfection. This process needs to be done in the national, democratic and progressive spirit, with an aim to provide benefits to the entire nation.”²⁶⁷

In fact, the *Conclusions* accentuate that any one Slavic citizen can join the Sokol, regardless of their gender, religion, class, professional background and so on. The ultimate goal, rooted in universalist civilizational hierarchies, was articulated as follows: “To our understanding (...) regardless of one’s tribe, religion and class, and in the spirit of progress, democracy [LB: demokratizma] and social justice [LB: socijalne pravičnosti], it is our goal to create a higher cultural type of a Yugoslav man as a means for development and unification of Slavdom on the path to the unification of the humanity”.²⁶⁸ Hereby they underscored, on multiple occasions, that such approach originates in the Sokol’s historical tradition and thought, as opposed to any other potential external political influence or input—past or present. By relying on liberal and Enlightenment-based ideas, but also the concept of self-determination, they represented themselves as the ones who seek to “through peaceful means and through culture, unite territorially our entire nation, with no regard for the artificially constructed borders”.²⁶⁹

In this way, they discursively posited the association, and designed its governing and functional bodies and their practices, as the key actor in molding or raising the entire “national body”, not necessarily in conjunction with the state. In other words, they argued that time has come for them to translate liberal and progressive Yugoslavist ideas of (some) elites (meaning also evolutionist, partially feminist, religiously tolerant,²⁷⁰ voluntarist and socially progressive) into

²⁶⁷ *Organizacija*, 1925, p. 2.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 6.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 7.

²⁷⁰ One of the numerous slogans of JSS/JSZ being “Brat je mio, koje vjere bio!” [Brother is dear, no matter his faith].

associational practice that they hoped to consequently disseminate across the social spectrum. Importantly, this was seen as an initiative that went in parallel with the state institutions whose work they, at least discursively, aimed to complement and support, although they also seemed to imply that the state institutions are by definition vulnerable to politicization and corruption, unlike Sokol's efforts rooted in positive knowledge. "In the spirit of those principles, every member needs to be raised from a dissatisfied, dependent and unaware into a free and politically aware citizen",²⁷¹ they stated, adding that this is not inherently a political goal of Sokol, nor do they plan on getting involved with the ongoing party politics. Instead, they framed it in positivist terms, as an objective and desirable outcome of Sokol's traditions and associational practices—all of which are designed to entice the feeling of mutual responsibility and eventually social solidarity among the new state's citizens who otherwise share an ethnic background. They saw their main task to be the creation of citizens who are advanced enough to match the political modernity formally embodied in the nation-state as such, as well as to create a political culture that would ensure that sociopolitical life of the young state is conducive to further social and cultural progress.

The *Conclusions* go on to programmatically describe Sokol's position on a number of issues and stance towards other institutions and phenomena, such as the military, other voluntary associations, religion, the oppressed social groups [LB: potlačeni] and the women's question. Most of these positions were nominally progressive, but also positivist, placing Sokol's work above the daily political life and into the realm of expertise that the association was, according to them, merely channelling into the Slavic masses, for the sake of their betterment.

In other words, in this period, the post-Habsburg positivist strain, dominated by the Vienna-educated members of liberal professions, has taken the lead and saw it as its mission to spread this understanding of Sokol into other areas of the country. This ambition was rooted in their

²⁷¹ Ibid.

perspective, in which the rest of the country's population shared the cultural and biological predispositions that would allow them to adopt Sokol's agenda and to work with them together on elevating the national health and culturedness.

It is already visible in this relatively early programatic document that the leadership sought to convince the state to scale-up their work. For instance, this is evident in the case of Sokol gymnastics, which they argued promotes “versatile movement” (*svestrani pokret*),²⁷² invites gymnasts’ interest, increases discipline and uses sophisticated equipment. They offered it to the state military and hoped it would be integrated into their standard training, resulting in “elimination of spiritual tiredness, introduction of hygiene and education in the national spirit”.²⁷³ In this, as well as in the case of their resolutions on Sokol’s relationship to the state school system, the ones on villages and women (in which they explicitly used the concept of equality; *jednakopravnost*), they used positivist arguments, showcasing their own knowledge production and its dissemination as a matter of national interest.

The *Conclusions* are also relevant, as they are the document that established the membership category of “trainers” (*prednjak*, derived from the Czech Sokol concept of *cvičitel*) for the first time, thus producing a sort of Sokol ruling elite, or at least, hierarchies among those who are more dedicated to the association and those who are not. The trainers were supposed to pass rigorous exams in the fields such as the correct interpretation of the Sokol thought, Sokol gymnastics, Yugoslav history and literature, Sokol organizational structure and regulations, gymnastic and gym equipment; as well as medical subjects such as: anatomy, physiology and hygiene of exercise and first aid. It was only after successfully passing such exams that they could obtain the title of a trainer and with it, accept numerous administrative and organizational duties, but also receive different benefits within the association. Some of the latter included the

²⁷² To be elaborated on in the following sections of this chapter.

²⁷³ Ibid, p. 10.

ability to attend advanced courses, summer schools, excursions, be part of Sokol-sponsored delegations to foreign trips and competitions.

Due to the fact that JSS/JSZ, as well as its leadership and most prominent members, comprised primarily of physicians, the Medical section was awarded a large jurisdiction and array of tasks and responsibilities at this assembly. This included developing of sports medicine as a field, organizing regular lectures and courses, acquiring of recent scholarly and educational literature, keeping anthropometric statistics for all the Sokol gymnasts, regular compiling of statistical data, as well as regular updating of the medical curriculum within Sokol.²⁷⁴ Moreover, they were to monitor the epidemiological situation at larger events and gatherings, particularly the hygiene of gyms and ceremonial halls. Importantly, the anthropometric data they collected included not only the typical values (e.g. weight, chest circumference, length of extremities etc.), but also regular analysis of urine samples and measuring of the Pignet index of the individual trainers' body build. The latter, first developed by a French military physician Maurice Charles Joseph Pignet before the outbreak of the First World War (and considered obsolete in the present day), was primarily designed for military purposes, that some Sokol physicians wanted to contribute to with their work.

Other committees also received an expanded jurisdiction and a more elaborate administrative apparatus, thus in sum contributing to Sokol's overall administrative-institutional growth and enlargement of its intellectual and practical activities, in contrast to its relatively simple administrative make-up of the prewar period. For instance, the Educational committee (*Prosvetni odbor*) was to regularly organize Sokol ideological schools (*Idejne sokolske škole*) whose goal was to provide its attendees with the correct interpretation of the state organization, national history and the performance of citizens' and national duties, but also to host debate

²⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 96.

evenings etc. The statistical committee would then be tasked with producing overviews and compile data on the success of such events, across different clubs.

Another, rather tellingly designed new committee, was the so-called Minority committee (*Manjinsko odelenje*) that was supposed to: “take care of our clubs in the nationally mixed areas, specifically in the borderlands”.²⁷⁵ This committee was expected to organize the colonization, immigration of Sokol-affiliated state officials, appointees, craftsmen, shopkeepers, workers and others, as well as to connect them with “other nationally-defensive [LB: *narodnoodbrambenim*] organizations” thereat. Their protégées (*manjinski pouzdanici*) were responsible for continuously reporting to the committee on the Sokol-related dealings and developments in these regions. The fact that this committee was established and that its work designed in the given manner, indicate that Sokol’s ambitions unquestionably went beyond the state’s capacity to integrate the borderland regions. It demonstrates that Sokol itself wanted to conduct the process of national homogenization on these territories. What is more, this case showcases that Sokol understood itself, in its own right, as a vehicle of installing new, nationally-based, administrative and economic structures in such areas—in cooperation with other members of their civil-society coalition, such as the ultranationalist ORJUNA, *Jadranska straža* (Adriatic guard) associations etc. This was all the more pertinent as the regions in question contained large agricultural estates with pronounced quality of soil (e.g. Slavonia and Vojvodina), tying into one of the most pressing issues of the period, namely the question of agrarian reform.

By that time, the state-initiated colonization programs were already underway, since 1919 (until roughly 1923), notably installing the war veterans from the Salonica front and optants from Hungary and Romania into newly expanded villages of Vojvodina such as Vojvoda Stepa, Banatsko Karadorđevo, Aleksandrovo, Banatski Dušanovac Banatsko Višnjicevo, Stajicevo,

²⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 113.

Hajdučica, Rusko selo, Rastina, Aleksa Šantić etc. Sokol's initiative was, however, exceptional, until at least 1935 and the establishment of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS)-affiliated *Gospodarska sloga*'s colonization program.²⁷⁶ It thus represented a rare or a single example of a voluntary association conducting the colonizing process in conjunction with the state's nationalizing agenda, whose goal was to "neutralize" the economic, cultural and political impact of the sizeable non-Slavic population in the borderlands. The combination of Sokol's *de facto* elevated social standing and Vojvodina's exceptionally fine agricultural estates, according to Sokol thinkers, had a potential to provide the overall colonization process with an added value. Namely, it opened a possibility of installing educated and well-off "national elements" into a promising region that was bound to support the entire state's economy, once put in the state-friendly hands by actors such as Sokol members.

In fact, oftentimes the newly founded or previously discontinued Sokol clubs built their associational infrastructure in the "places" of prewar German gymnastic clubs,²⁷⁷ ranging from moving into their gym halls to attempts at the symbolic renaming of streets (for example, Jahngasse to Sokolska ulica in Celje).²⁷⁸ In the immediate aftermath of the war, in the multiethnic borderlands, Sokol officials publically forbade their membership to attend any kind of social gathering or cultural performance to which Germans had been invited.²⁷⁹ The antagonism between the Slavic and non-Slavic population in such borderland areas was not always as straightforward as it might seem at the first glance, however. While the official statutes and rules of the JSS/JSZ explicitly forbade the joining of non-Slavic citizens as

²⁷⁶ Ivica Šute, *Slogom slobodi!: Gospodarska sloga 1935-1941*. [Through Accord to Freedom! Gospodarska sloga organization, 1935-1941] Zagreb: Srednja Europa, 2010.

²⁷⁷ Konrad Rom: "Zur Gottscheer Vereinsgeschichte" in *650 Jahre Gottschee. Festbuch 1980*, ed. Ludwig Kren. Klagenfurt, 1980, pp. 129–142.

²⁷⁸ Ivanka Zajc Cizelj: "Telovadno društvo Celjski Sokol 1890–1940" [The Celje Sokol Gymnastics Association 1890–1940]. In: *Arhivi. Glasilo arhivskega društva in arhivov Slovenije* [Archives. Newsletter of the Society of Archives and the Archives of Slovenia] vol. 31, no. 2 (2008), pp. 349–362, here: p. 357.

²⁷⁹ "Sokolsko društvo v Celju" [Sokol Society in Celje] *Novo doba*, (16.5.1922), p. 3.

members, it is known from previous research²⁸⁰ that this was not respected until at least 1933. Zoran Janjetović states that, for example, while the local Turnverein was forcefully shut down after the war ended, 80 percent of Sokol members in the town of Vrbas consisted of local German-speaking population.²⁸¹ It was only in the 1930s that they started exiting Sokol clubs in significant numbers and founding separate gymnastics associations, usually divided between the Kulturbund's Volksdeutsche Sportstelle and those under the influence of the pro-national socialist Erneuerungsbewegung. Moreover, the locations chosen for the early Sokol *slets* are indicative as another practice pointing towards national performativity in the multiethnic borderlands. The locations of these initial ones were as follows: Novi Sad (1919) Maribor (1920), Sombor (1920), Bečkerek (1920), Osijek (1921), Subotica (1922), namely all borderland cities with numerous non-Slavic populace.

Towards the end of this period of Sokol's organizational history there was a growing dissatisfaction among Sokol leaders with the state's capacity to scale-up their work. This was particularly visible once the state rejected their memorandum on founding of a school for physical education that they hoped would adequately complement or even overtake Sokol's efforts at "molding the national body", especially in pedagogical and medical terms.²⁸² This expectation goes to show that Sokol's work was merely accommodated by the state and that it still operated as an "adaptive informal institution", respecting the rules of the young state's political life, not undermining them, but also not necessarily enhancing the agenda of the state either. While the younger generation of Sokol officials and thinkers welcomed the introduction

²⁸⁰ Caroline Mezger, *Forging Germans: Youth, Nation and National Socialist Mobilization of Ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia, 1918-1944*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

²⁸¹ Zoran Janjetović: *Deca careva, pastorčad kraljeva: nacionalne manjine u Jugoslaviji 1918-1941*. [Children of emperors, stepchildren of kings: national minorities in Yugoslavia 1918-1941] Belgrade: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2005, pp. 314–315; Stipica Grgić "The kingdom of diversity and paternalism: The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes/Yugoslavia, 1918-1941" *Interwar East Central Europe, 1918-1941: The Failure of Democracy-building, the Fate of Minorities*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet. London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 213-249.

²⁸² Dušan Bogunović *Od ujedinjena Sokolstva do II. Sokolskog sabora*. [From the unification of Sokol till the 2nd Sokol Assembly] Zagreb: Štamparija Glavnog Saveza Srpskih zemljoradničkih zadruga, 1924, p. 89.

of the Royal Dictatorship in January 1929, hoping it would bring about political consolidation and state support for their integral Yugoslavist program, the largely negative reaction of the older generation also indicates that their horizon of expectation laid elsewhere, namely in the democratic experiment they had hoped to continue.

2.2. Producing a Scientific Nation: Debates on the Rootedness of Yugoslavism and Building of the New Canon

The associational conflict between unitary Yugoslavist and the tripartite conceptions, might have been about multiple stakes simultaneously, such as associational resources, distribution of decision-making power and retaining or terminating prewar associational traditions and structures. Yet, the intellectual level of this conflict contained, in itself, much deeper philosophical and epistemological stakes, that this section reconstructs. Specifically, the key tension was between those who aimed to root the national identity (in this case: Yugoslav) in positivist, scientific terms and project that onto the cultural canon and historical narratives in the making, and those who challenged that attempt from multiple sides of the ideological-epistemological spectrum. Among the latter, that was ideologically rather diverse, there were the proponents of the tripartite (SCS) national conception who sought to root their national claims in religious traditions or romanticist narratives.²⁸³ In turn, Marxist and more broadly, materialist critique of liberal Yugoslavism was, for instance, more present in biomedical and physical education-related writings of Sokol thinkers and will thus be analyzed in the subsequent sections. Moreover, there was also somewhat of a unique tension between Yugoslavist Sokol thinkers and the Muslim community, particularly that on the territory of

²⁸³ This group also contains a spectrum of thinkers on the left who will not be addressed at length because of their relative invisibility in the intellectual space of interwar Yugoslavia from 1921 onwards.

former Habsburg Bosnia. Importantly, this period saw a gradually intensifying cross-fertilization of some of these discourses, whereby some of the said “challengers” also adopted positivist language and arguments, at least until the establishment of the Royal Dictatorship. In the same vein, the positivists’ discourse also became permeable so as to include a number of romanticists’ and particularists’ tropes and claims.

The aforementioned change, which also became official once the seat of the association was moved from Zagreb and Ljubljana to Belgrade in 1929,²⁸⁴ however, was rooted in the deep-seated friction between the two streams of thinkers. The first were the post-Habsburg heirs of liberal, positivist, largely modernist Neo-Slavist framework, and the second the Balkanist, often anti-modernist, national-revolutionary and neo-romanticist ones who sought to autochtonize and radicalize Sokol’s claims, but also to imbue them with romanticist, organicist and oftentimes anti-positivist content. Due to Sokol’s initial, at least nominal, rejection of overt politicization, as well as to the post-Habsburg liberal thinkers’ dominant position within the association—the positivist, expertise-driven language took the lead in framing the Yugoslavist cultural and political conceptual content in this formative period of associational history, ideological production, but also canon-making.

Thus, the 1920s can be seen as the period when the two intellectual traditions, the liberal-positivist and the neo-romanticist one, were in its pronouncedly cross-fertilizing phase, with the former remaining dominant throughout most of this period. In addition, these discourses also acted as avenues for mobilizing and rallying the Sokol membership and adjacent constituencies behind the Yugoslavist agenda. Over the course of this period, Yugoslavism subsumed an immensely eclectic mixture of intellectual and ideological heritage, gradually adopting more Balkan neo-romanticist, organicist content and agenda, as opposed to its initial

²⁸⁴ Tomaž Pavlin “Ustanavljanje Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije” [The founding of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia] *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 42, no. 1. (2002), pp. 55-72.

liberal expertise-based “science of citizenship”-like drive. The romanticist-organicist one would only become dominant from the mid-1930s onwards and, in this period, served largely to culturally inform the positivist claims made by the key thinkers and the associational leadership. It was, however, the first period in Yugoslav Sokol’s associational history in which the mutual cross-fertilization of these otherwise distinct discourses (culturally autochthonistic and positivist universalist ones) is observable on a larger scale.

To start with the Yugoslavists, it is important to underscore that their main agenda in this period was an outcome of the combination of a strong liberal-positivist tradition from the Habsburg context, but also their personal trajectories. Namely, a vast majority of them had a background in medicine, biology, psychology, pedagogy, history or anthropology and thus sought to draw on their episemic authority to legitimize their political claims. These comprised of using Sokol as a vehicle of raising modern citizens²⁸⁵ within the Yugoslavist framework. This meant that the language they used to reflect on the post-imperial transition was oftentimes reliant either on positivist claims or at least drew significant inspiration from the natural sciences for its understanding of political community and commonality. This was all the more true for convinced integral Yugoslavists who aimed to root the Yugoslav identity in biological and psychological arguments, rather than historicist or legal ones, which they sometimes deemed characteristic for the “tribal” identities, although they also used such claims themselves on different occasions. The most pervasive arguments they relied on, however, were linguistic and geographic (determinist) ones.

Due to such disciplinary and social composition of the Yugoslavist camp in this period, the main Sokol thinkers who belonged to it did not primarily rely on writing political texts or texts concerned exclusively with narrowly conceived politics, but instead they opted for writing

²⁸⁵ *Raising Citizens in the ‘Century of the Child’: The United States and German Central Europe in Comparative Perspective*, ed. Dirk Schumann. New York: Berghahn Books, 2014.

about Sokol-style gymnastics, medicine and pedagogy, only to draw political conclusions from these otherwise more epistemically imbued articles in associational periodicals or books published by the association. As a result, many of the early 1920s Sokol journals formally resemble and read like academic journals dedicated to said topics, rather than, for instance, the press that would refer to the political issues of the day. In general, most of the state-wide Sokol periodicals of the 1920s (e.g. *Sokolski glasnik*, *Jugoslavenski Sokol*, *Prednjak*, *Sokolski vjesnik*, *Sokol na Jadranu*) relied primarily on associational matters and medical or gymnastic knowledge production and communication, in contrast to the 1930s when many of them acquired increasingly more overt ideological and political content. Importantly, the sheer amount of published material in the 1930s far exceeds that of the 1920s, particularly in terms of periodicals, brochures and booklets.

On the other hand, the challengers of the liberal-positivist Yugoslavist framework, such as the (“tribalist” or, more rarely, integral Yugoslavist) romanticist, revolutionary or religious-mysticist thinkers, employed markedly different genres to express their arguments. Instead of academically-informed articles containing references and/or illustrations, they largely adopted (epic) poetry, memoir prose and *stricto sensu* (daily-)political texts. Due to this difference in genres, the bulk of the more typically positivist integral Yugoslavist arguments are addressed and analyzed in the subsequent sections of this chapter. Hereby, however, it can be noted that the relatively thin layer of their overt and explicit reflection on the traditionally understood political issues, was in the majority of cases characterized by the language of progress, modernity and raising [LB: *uzgajanje/odgajanje*] of the citizens.

The latter agenda on raising citizens was, however, not immediately obvious to all Sokol thinkers and, in fact represents a radical break from the prewar associational agenda. This was clearly elaborated in 1920 by Laza Popović, who was one of the first to even publicly articulate it and raise the question of the way Sokol was to adapt to the new political circumstances.

Through the allegory of “Sokol of slavery” and “Sokol of freedom”, he clarified that: “What I call freedom here is the emancipation from nationalism, that, alongside all its nice and dear illusions, carried the reactionary tribalism, classism and confessionism. Prewar nationalism was a winged yearning. Having flown to its goal, its wings have lost their power. Now it needs to be given a new meaning. Freedom and nationalist Sokol cannot go forward together. Freedom requires Sokol to become all-national [LB: opštenarodno] (...) Social and humanist thought came to replace nationalism (...) With the establishment of our liberated state, as an institution that belongs to the whole society, the functions of all our institutions of private initiative should also be changed”.²⁸⁶

Popović then proceeded to sum up the new social, associational and intellectual role of Sokol in the new state into a vision that came to be shared by most of the post-Habsburg Yugoslavist Sokol thinkers in this period: “Playing with the prewar Slavism is over, forever. For over half a century, Sokols were cultural Pan-Slavists. Now they are at a junction point. New, modern and large Slavdom is knocking at their door. (...) New Sokol is to be realized in three directions: in the direction of complete freedom, transforming from a national into a social and general institution; in the direction of creating a new relationship with its new and free state (the state is to take over some part of Sokol’s work); and in the direction of new Slavdom, as the main ideal, from the realization of which the main and most useful changes for the life of our society are to be awaited”.²⁸⁷ In other words, he wanted to broaden the agenda of Sokol, so as to go beyond the traditional nationality politics, inherited from the late Austro-Hungarian context and into the direction of social engineering and improving the overall political culture that he and his Neo-Slavist intellectual circle deemed representative of political modernity.

²⁸⁶ Laza Popović, “Novi pogledi na Sokolstvo” [New perspectives on Sokol], *Nova Evropa* (September 16, 1920), pp 11-13, here p. 12.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 14.

This novel agenda was picked up by other post-Habsburg positivists in Sokol, such as the Zagreb-based natural scientist and science popularizer, Lazar Car²⁸⁸ who further elaborated on this nominally apolitical task of the association in his 1922 and 1926 articles respectively. In the former explicitly argued that: “We Sokols aren’t politicians: we do not create programs and do not influence daily political issues, but instead we create that, which is the foundation of everything, namely the physically and spiritually well raised [LB: zdravo odgojen] nation”.²⁸⁹ In the latter, Car aimed to clarify a conceptual distinction between civilization and culture.²⁹⁰ He argued that while cultural progress was largely achieved, namely in humanity’s successful rule over the natural world, the adequate development of civilization as such, which he understands as ordering and improving of social relations, is still to be reached within many societies.

In contrast to Popović who saw the population (and Sokol membership) as an equal and participatory partner in achieving societal progress, that deserves agency in its own right; Car espoused a different approach that he thought Sokol should adopt, albeit remaining evolutionist in his relation to the nature of change. While reflecting on the rise of mass politics and democracy in recent history, he articulated a much more authority-based vision of the work of the societies such as Sokol: “In fact, submission was, after all, necessary for the primitive man. He felt that something existed above him and got to know what authority means. That reminds me of (...) the circumstances in Turkmenistan before the Russian occupation. We are appalled at the Russian serfs, but there was no other way to raise the cultural level of such nations, than through the epoch that was the Russian regime. You couldn’t superimpose the high Nordic culture onto such peoples (...) Realizing just how backward one is and respecting authority,

²⁸⁸ “Car, Lazar” *Hrvatska enciklopedija*. URL=<https://enciklopedija.hr/clanak/car-lazar> (Last access: July 18, 2024)

²⁸⁹ Lazar Car “Teorija i praksa” [Theory and practice] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 6 (1922), pp. 111-112.

²⁹⁰ Lazar Car, Zagreb: “Još jedna zadaća Sokolstva” [One more task of Sokol] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 5-6 (1926), pp. 48-9.

that is the first condition of every sort of progress. And that is exactly what remains terribly scarce in the present day (...) We are not against democracy. It has been realized and it would not be possible to resist it anymore (...) but we want to perfect it and correct its harmful side-effects (...) That is the task that has fell upon the free, particularly cultural (better said ‘civilizational’) societies, instead of on the formerly privileged classes”.²⁹¹ This goes to show just how explicitly Sokol dubbed itself as progressive and responsible for raising the civilizational level of the new state’s population.

The question of the connection between the Yugoslavs’ cultural-cum-civilizational level and the national economy, was also evident and relevant for many post-Habsburg Sokol thinkers. One of the most active such theoreticians in this period was the notable Ljubljana-based Sokol gymnast and a prolific political thinker mostly concerned with writing on the relationship between gymnastics and the national economy—Viktor Murnik (1874-1964). Already in 1921, he initiated a gymnastics-themed supplement to the *Sokolski glasnik* [LB: Sokol herald], the official journal of the JSS/JSZ, entitled *Vestnik tehničkog odbora JSS/JSZ* [Herald of the JSS/JSZ technical committee].²⁹² In its first issue, Murnik published a programmatic text of the committee, saying their main task was to produce: “the common work of the Sokol brothers and sisters of all three tribes for the physical, moral and mental strengthening and uplifting of the whole nation. The strengthening of the physical, moral and mental strength of the nation is the main and only permanent task of Sokol. By fulfilling our permanent task, and in the course of its fulfillment, by daily Sokol training and practice, and by joint events and rallies, to which the temporary task increases in importance, we shall then most successfully promote the complete unification of a united nation, most successfully work for the disappearance of tribal

²⁹¹ Ibid, p. 49.

²⁹² Technical committee is the term they used to denote the one that was concerned with gymnastics.

consciousness and its complete giving way to a solid national consciousness.”²⁹³ To Murnik, organizing common gymnastic practices and performances, represented a guarantee of the common socialization of the diverse population into the Yugoslavist framework, as well as of the improvement of the physical and mental state of the nation. In this early phase, however, he did not mention the biological or psychological preconditions for this process, but relied instead on the typical Sokol evolutionist tradition of “small work” and pronouncedly monistic beliefs about gymnastics.

A more biologized and psychologized framing of national identity and, importantly, character, can be seen in the booklet by Franjo Malin who also served as the first curator of the Matica Srpska Museum. Within Sokol, he published on the concept of “national unity” in 1927, evidently under the spell of grave disappointment in party politics and under the influence of epistemically authoritative arguments of a notable geographer Jovan Cvijić. Directly addressing those who went against the integral Yugoslavist framework, and relying on positivist means, Malin hereby claimed: “Cvijić, whilst optimistically regarding the new generation, the one that will arrive along with its strong individuals, who will lead our nation, that is also numerically rather strong: ten milion of talented people ‘with one set of basic psychological traits, one language, people known for their values and beauty, fully formed and perfected’, he regards our nation as a single Yugoslav national community, a single large national whole.”²⁹⁴

Malin continued to argue that, while “national unity” is rooted in the stated linguistic and psychological preconditions, it is politically not yet fully achieved,. Similarly to other Sokol thinkers, he called for more work to be done on the political and cultural rapprochement of the different regions and populations, so as to build on the otherwise strong inherent, intrinsic

²⁹³ Viktor Murnik “Prednjaštvu, pa tudi vsem drugim bratom in sestram!” [To the trainers, as well as to all other brothers and sisters!] *Vestnik tehničkog odbora Jugoslovenskog Sokolskog Saveza*, vol. 1, no. 1. (1921), p. 2.

²⁹⁴ Franjo Malin, *Jovan Cvijić i naše narodno jedinstvo*. [Jovan Cvijić and our national unity]. Novi Sad, 1927, p. 12.

psychological foundation that exist as a result of historical experience of South Slavs: “South Slavs had already in their ancient homeland [LB: predomovini] comprised one single ethnographic community, epitomized in one single Slavic name and language, common religion and customs, common family, tribal and social organization, common lifestyle and thinking patterns, and ultimately one race and blood.”²⁹⁵ In this and other writings of his,²⁹⁶ Malin was articulating a crisis discourse and, in a reactive mode, expressing grave disappointment with the persistent challenges to the implementation of what he and other Sokol thinkers saw as the modernizing Yugoslavist project, many of which culminated in the context of 1927 parliamentary elections. In fact, it was not at all unusual to find some of the most creatives, but also radical, integral Yugoslavist statements, precisely in the context of different thinkers’ reflection on the failure of its integrative agenda and overall massivization.

Somewhat earlier, in his 1925 book on the history of Yugoslavism,²⁹⁷ Malin identified the main reasons for the new state not being conducive to building true national unity: “It is my belief—and surely not only mine—that Yugoslavism would, after six years of common life, already have become realized and a fact, if one part of our intelligentsia, namely the active politicians and journalists, would not have used all their power to compromise and defeat it.” Further reflecting on the disappointing follow-up to the possibilities of 1918, Malin identified a critical moment in the present day: “The course of events can go in two directions: either in the direction of dissolution or in the direction of complete merging (...) On that day [LB: December 1, 1918], Yugoslavism was manifested strongly because a large part of Yugoslavs found themselves liberated and united on a territory, on which the awareness of the commonality never grew numb, and if at that point it would have been decided, our state and national life would have taken the direction of complete amalgamation, which would be conducted by the authority of

²⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 14

²⁹⁶ Franjo Malin, *Jugoslavenstvo kroz istoriju*. [Yugoslavism through history] Split: ORJUNA, 1925.

²⁹⁷ Franjo Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo kroz istoriju* [Yugoslavism through history] Split: ORJUNA, 1925.

the state and expertise, gradually, but permanently, as was stated in regard to our cultural unity, by Jovan Cvijić.”²⁹⁸

Cvijić’s aforementioned concept of amalgamation gained momentum in the scholarship of the 1930s, removing the focus from historical and political caesurae such as 1918, and rather focusing on the *longue durée* processes within the Yugoslav cultural history, history of migrations, ethnography, anthropology, and so-called “racial science”. Sokol thinkers thus used these discourses to present themselves as the protagonists and subjects of this amalgamation through their work in Sokol. Similarly essentialist discourse of national characterology in the making can be fruitfully analysed in the speech by Dragutin Prohaska, a notable Vienna-educated and Prague-based Croatian literary historian and critic. He gave it in the Prague Sokol club on the occasion of a Czechoslovak national holiday already in December 1920. The speech, which was an introduction to the lecture on the “Yugoslav Type” given by the physician Jiří Král, was also accompanied by a silent film on the “Sarajevo martyrs”, namely those who were imprisoned and executed following the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Prohaska here displayed Cvijić-inspired environmental determinist claims in conjunction with concepts of political modernity. This description was then elaborated on by listing the “foreign” cultural input injected into the Dinaric race over the centuries of alien imperial rule by the Austrians, Hungarians, Ottomans and Venetians. Such essentialist understanding of Yugoslavs and Slavdom more broadly, was at odds, throughout this period, with those of the aforementioned Laza Popović’s²⁹⁹ who posed Slavdom as an emancipatory, universalist and humanist concept. He did so in an attempt to stabilize the new symbolic geographies, but also to strengthen the boundaries of the new national community by highlighting the commonality of the Slavic peoples in historical and philosophical terms, binding them to the particular vision of political

²⁹⁸ Malin, *Jugoslovenstvo kroz istoriju*, 5.

²⁹⁹ Laza Popović “O Slavenstvu” [On Slavdom] *Sokolski Glasnik*, vol. 12 (1921), p. 409.

modernity and international order. Despite this crucial difference pertaining to the (non-)essentialist view of Slavdom, actors such as these ones can be said to have been immensely successful in their promotion of biological and psychological arguments regarding Yugoslavism, both within and outside Sokol, precisely due to their positivist attitude.

Regarding the attempts to root Yugoslavism in legal-historical arguments, it was Viktor Novak, a Yugoslavist Zagreb- and Belgrade-based historian, who used his historiographical production and expertise to provide Yugoslavism with historical roots. He covered a period stretching back to the early medieval period—countering the otherwise strong stream of Croatian medievalists who aimed to historicize Croatian legal subjectivity and thus strengthen Croatian parties' negotiating position vis-à-vis the ever-centralizing Belgrade. It could be argued that Viktor Novak's work, alongside for instance the state-sponsored project of Stanoje Stanojević's *National Encyclopedia of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes*,³⁰⁰ is one of the rare and rather atypical examples of legal-historical arguments used by the Yugoslavist Sokol thinkers in general. Importantly, most of his, otherwise immense and primary source-centered, publications were published by the Sokol publishing house.³⁰¹

Already from the mid-1920s, since he relocated from Zagreb to Belgrade and re-oriented his academic and other intellectual production from medieval to recent history, Viktor Novak tasked himself with producing a new reading of many relevant 19th century figures, but also

³⁰⁰ Stanoje Stanojević, *Narodna enciklopedija SHS*. [National encyclopedia of SCS] Zagreb: Bibliografski zavod, 1925-1929; this is not to say that it was the first such historiographical undertaking, since it was already in 1919 that the Slovenian geographer and historian Anton Melik published his *Zgodovina Srbov, Hrvatov in Slovencev* [History of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes]. Ljubljana: Tiskovna zadruga, 1919.

³⁰¹ Viktor Novak, *O tisućgodišnjici hrvatskog kraljevstva*. [On the millenium of the Croatian Kingdom] Zagreb, 1925; Viktor Novak, *Franjo Rački u govorima i raspravama*. [Franjo Rački in speeches and debates] Zagreb, 1925. Viktor Novak, *Lužički Srbi u prošlosti i sadašnjosti*. [Lusatian Sorbs in past and present] Belgrade, 1927. It is, nevertheless, necessary to point out that one of his works published only after the Second World War was re-actualized during the process of the dissolution of socialist Yugoslavia, when the Serbian historian Vasilije Krestić edited and had published an edition that contains two previously unpublished chapters that tackle the controversial issue of the relationship of Catholic clergy with the Yugoslav Sokol and liberalism more broadly, that was framed in a rather reductive way. See: *Magnum Crimen. Ecclesia militans ratuje s Tyrševom ideologijom i libellus accusationis. Dva izostavljena poglavlja iz knjige Magnum crimen Viktora Novaka* [Magnum crimen. Ecclesia militans at war with Tyrš's ideology and libellus accusationis. Two unpublished chapters from the Magnum crimen book of Viktor Novak] ed. Vasilije Krestić. Jagodina: Gambit, 2005.

tracing what he saw as initiatives for South Slavic political rapprochement and cooperation, throughout different historical periods. Some of his first interventions in that regard are the reflections on the aforementioned Millenium of the Croatian Kingdom (925-1925),³⁰² on which he published a book within the Sokol series edited by Dušan M. Bogunović.

The book is based on the speech he gave on the JSS/JSZ ceremony dedicated to the said anniversary, in September 1925. Relying on his expert medievalist and classical philological knowledge, as well as on his posture of a historian with an access to the historical truth, Novak depicted the early medieval Croatian Kingdom and other polities as predecessors of the contemporary polity: “The Byzantine, Venetian and French chronicles of the 6th, 7th and 8th century called the one and the same territory at times Croatian and at times Serbian, referring to one and the same nation as Slavs, but one and the same tribe as Croatian or Serbian. What an amount of evidence and spirit for our national unity! But to these civilized and Christianized tribes, who are well hereditarily burdened with general Slavic individualism and libertarian understanding of life, not bowing to each other, not least to stronger and more prominent forces — this meant gradual succumbing to external pressures from the East and the West, and forming of the countries and state units, that will start living its own independent life.”³⁰³

Discussing the historical-political developments in an essentialist and deeply Volkspshologie-inspired manner, Novak portrayed all the historical conflicts between South Slavs (of whom he primarily decided to extrapolate Serbs and Croats) as a foreign doing, that went against the biological and psychological unity of the nation: “In the conflict of Greek-Byzantine and Roman-Germanic understandings of life and religion, our nation had to pay with the highest sacrifice, with the termination of the unification of the congenital [LB: istorodnih] tribal [LB: rodovnih i plemenskih] elements.”³⁰⁴ This statement also presents the tension

³⁰² Viktor Novak, *O tisućgodišnjici hrvatskog kraljevstva* [On the Millenium of the Croatian Kingdom] 1925.

³⁰³ Ibid, pp. 8-9.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 15.

between the biological and psychological arguments on the one, and legal-historical ones on the other side, whereby the essentially foreign forces are said to have interrupted the otherwise natural flow of historical development, one that has only recently been resumed. King Tomislav's Croatia, and Bishop Gregory of Nin in particular, are in this rendering of history represented as a South Slavic bulwark against Bulgarian Empire's expansion—a reading that supported both a premise on Yugoslav unity, but also on Bulgaria's ultimate incompatibility with the integral Yugoslavist project.

Most of Novak's historical arguments stemmed not from his own research, however, but from that of the mid-19th century Croatian Yugoslavist Catholic priest and historian Franjo Rački. Novak dedicated a biographical study and a sourcebook to Rački, also in 1925,³⁰⁵ portraying him as a scholar who bravely risked his own status for the cause of historicizing “national unity”. In a chapter entitled “The largest Yugoslav of the 19 century”³⁰⁶ he draws a direct line of intellectual and political development from the early 19th century Illyrian movement, to the Franjo Rački and the Josip Juraj Strossmayer's National Party's (*Narodna stranka*) agenda in the 1860s, after the renewal of constitutionality. Important in the context of the Yugoslav political climate of 1925 is Novak's insistence on documenting Rački's efforts to mend what he calls “Serbo-Croatian fratricidal hatred”,³⁰⁷ in an attempt to contextualize the contemporary events. With this, he sought to mobilize the Yugoslavist circles against a backdrop of “the disorder of hearts and minds” (...) “from which any honest Serb or Croat can draw inspiration for the belief in a better future”.³⁰⁸ In addition, Novak used the example of Rački's political biography to underscore the need for politics to be informed by ethical considerations as well, something he saw as gravely missing from contemporary political life of the new state.

³⁰⁵ Viktor Novak, *Franjo Rački u govorima i raspravama*. [Franjo Rački in speeches and polemics] Zagreb, 1925.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, pp. 9-25.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 10.

³⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 11.

While authors such as Novak, Melik and others worked on the new, markedly integral Yugoslavist, *longue durée* historical matrix, other Sokol thinkers oftentimes relied on their own memories and accounts of the recent history, to build the novel historical narratives, shape the collective memory and consequently, the Yugoslav identity itself. One such narrative, on the rejection of this transimperial division of Yugoslavs, and consequently of imperial politics at large, can be insightfully traced in the work of Stevan Žakula. He was a Sarajevo-based teacher, publicist, nationalist, Sokol activist and organizer, who was one of the defendants in the High Treason Trial of Banja Luka in 1915-16. In his numerous writings published in the Sokol context,³⁰⁹ Žakula thematized revolutionary political nature of the Sarajevo assassination with a mixture of concepts deriving from both Ottoman and Habsburg imperial contexts. Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was thus presented as anachronistic, backward in terms of development and overrun by history. Moreover, it became a sort of epitome of the artificial political community, or rather, logic of political organization of peoples. Posed against this image was the natural, scientifically provable, national, apolitical and ahistorical community of Yugoslavs, that went beyond the contingent state-formations of the past and party politics of the present day. In one article published in the associational periodical, for instance, Žakula reflected on the revolutionary role of Sokol, alongside the Serbian Orthodox Church, in organizing South Slavs against the Dual Monarchy:

“These two important movements followed one another seamlessly and have shaken up all the easily inflammable nerves [LB: of the local population]. The former [LB: Serbian Orthodox Church] did it with the elderly population, which was religiously uptight, the latter [LB: Sokol] with the youth, which was strengthened by burnout, martyrdom and combativeness of its elders,

³⁰⁹ For instance, published somewhat later, but relevant as an example: Stevan Žakula, *Sokolska buna na bečke dahije* [Sokol rebellion against the Viennese Dahijas] Belgrade: Planeta, 1936; Dahijas were the renegade Janissary officers who took power in the Sanjak of Smederevo (also known as the Belgrade Pashaluk), after murdering the Vizier Hadži Mustafa Pasha of Belgrade on 15 December 1801. The title of the book refers to the notable national poem of Filiš Višnjić, *Buna na dahije*, which describes the so-called ‘First Serbian Uprising’.

ready for decisive feats and recklessness in manifesting their irreconcilability [LB: with the current political situation] and in finding a way to give it the clearest and most unconvoluted expression possible.”³¹⁰ In most such narratives, these young revolutionaries were portrayed as an expression of the democratic and freedom-loving Yugoslav character and political culture that was already realized in the “non-occupied” and progressive kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro, as can be seen from the Bogunović’s writing:

“In Austria-Hungary feudal aristocracy is in power. In Serbia, King speaks with the peasant, and in Austria-Hungary the King can only be approached by feudal aristocracy. While Serbia is ruled by modern parliamentarism and full democracy, in the Habsburg Monarchy parliamentarism is just a form without any content.”³¹¹ More importantly, this view of progressive and politically modern Yugoslavism was conceptualized in a transimperial manner: “The unification of our entire nation, whether it was the subject of Turkey or Austria-Hungary [LB: Austro-Madžarske],³¹² as well as the awareness of belonging to one whole: awareness, that our former rulers don’t wish us well, was the motive of all the national movements of our people’s thought”.³¹³ Succintly, Bogunović’s account of late Austria-Hungary reads like an attempt to prove Germany’s fault for the outbreak of the war, as well as the genesis of the Sokol-initiated revolutionary nationalist movement which realized the historical unification of Yugoslavs, whereby the rebellious youth played a crucial role: “...young generation founded associations (libraries, choirs, schools etc.) in order to awaken people and maintain their awareness, while others founded movements which revolutionized that same awareness, and asked for action and rebellion. Sokols and Young Bosnia belonged to the latter. (...) Was it then

³¹⁰ Stevan Žakula “Duhovna veza srpskog sokolstva i sarajevski atentat” [Spiritual connection between the Serbian Sokol and the Sarajevo assassination] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 5-7 (1928), pp. 71-72.

³¹¹ Dušan M. Bogunović, *Srpsko Sokolstvo i Sarajevski atentat*. Zagreb, 1925.

³¹² It is important to note the stylistic difference between the official name for Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (*Austro-Ugarska Monarhija*) and the derogatory, Magyar-centered unofficial name used by the author (*Austro-Madžarska* or *Austro-Madžarija* at other places).

³¹³ Bogunović, *Srpsko sokolstvo*, 10.

curious, that in the moment when the Sarajevo assassination was being prepared, they participated in it just as much as it took for them to perform their national duty, which any, even the least national man of Bosnia, should perform? They performed their duty in a way ordered by their national and Sokol awareness, which conducts the regeneration of the national soul. The young generation in Bosnia sees in Sokol the army which will lead the liberation and unification, and it creates its own national and Sokolist cathesis: 1) Save the young Serbian generation, 2) Support the revengful thought of national freedom, 3) Serve the homeland - not yourself, 4) Those who die, shall live, 5) Those who want to live, shall die (...) and every member was nationally aware that they have to, if necessary, fulfill the national duty even at the price of death”.³¹⁴

In addition to the revolutionary fervor, Bogunović operated with highly essentialist understanding of Slavdom and Germandom in his texts: “This movement for freedom did not originate from outside, but rather from our own awareness, that we are a nation which has a right to freedom and independent life. It became apparent that Bosnia and Herzegovina will become a reason for the clash of Slavic and German ideas. Blocs for and against Serbia were formed, which were, in reality, blocs for liberation of Slavdom from Germandom and for slavery of Slavdom under the Germanic peoples”.³¹⁵ Such narratives of caesurae were rather typical in the interwar years, as they legitimized the new regime and provided the state with a useful reading of its most recent prehistory, while obscuring or disregarding crucial post-imperial continuities.

Similarly, in line with the Yugoslavist assertion that the so-called “tribal” national identities (Slovenian, Croatian and Serbian) were artificially created and superimposed on the South Slavic populations by the ruling imperial structures, a Split-based poet and politician of the

³¹⁴ Bogunović, *Srpsko sokolstvo*, 14.

³¹⁵ Ibid, p. 10.

older generation Dujam Mikačić published a series of articles, reflecting on the prewar situation in Dalmatia. In them, he depicted the party politics as particularly corrupt and backward, and thus a backdrop to the narrative of Sokol activists as democratic and progressive societal forces.³¹⁶

The rupture in the most literal sense, however, was thematized in the narratives of the war experience itself, most often tackled in the abundant memoir prose, but also in the source collections published either by Sokol or other Yugoslavist voluntary associations. Their ultimate goals were to demonstrate that the Dual Monarchy abandoned its South Slavic citizens throughout this period and saw particularly Serbs engaged in Sokol, but also others who had Yugoslavist inclinations, as traitors or at least a serious threat. On the other hand, in somewhat of a reaction to such developments, they aimed to promote the tropes of martyrdom undertaken both by Sokol activists and other historical actors, whose sacrifices made the South Slavic unification possible.

In regard to the persecution of the South Slavic or Yugoslavist national activists during the war itself, together with the literature on Sokol martyrdom and imprisonment, a case of Ljudevit and his spouse Ludmila Pivko demonstrates some of the most fruitful narratives of rupture that were promoted in the Sokol periodicals. While both *Proti Avstriji* (Against Austria)³¹⁷ and *Kriminal* (Crime)³¹⁸ were written in a form of memoir prose, they certainly read like fiction and thematize the persecution of those staunchly Yugoslavist and anti-Habsburg intellectuals and political actors, who won Yugoslavia its statehood. Ljudevit Pivko, a Maribor-based secondary

³¹⁶ Dujam Mikačić “Postanak splitskog Sokola, s osvrtom na njegov razvitak prema našoj partijskoj nesređenosti” [The founding of the Split Sokol, with regard to its development alongside our party disorder] *Sokol na Jadranu* 5-6 (1926), pp. 53-55; Dujam Mikačić “Sokolski duh u Zadru. Sećanje na poletarski život iz splitskog gnezda.” [Sokol spirit in Zadar. Memory of the youth life from the Split nest] *Sokol na Jadranu* 9 (1927), p. 1.

³¹⁷ Ljudevit Pivko. *Proti Avstriji: slike iz borbe jugoslovanov na italijanski fronti proti Avstriji*. [Against Austria: images from the struggle of Yugoslavs against Austria on the Italian front] Maribor: Klub dobrovoljcev, 1923.

³¹⁸ Ludmila Pivko. “Kriminal” [Crime] *Edinost* 48 (1923), pp. 237–252, 255–281, 283–295; Ludmila Pivko, *Kriminal*. [Crime] Maribor: Klub dobrovoljcev, 1925. For its positive review in the Sokol press, see: “Književnost” [Literature] *Jugoslovenski Sokol*, vol. 4 (1925), pp. 64.

school professor who authored a significant *Kratka zgodovina slovenskega naroda* (Brief history of the Slovenian nation) before the war and betrayed the Dual Monarchy on the battleground—was also one of the founders of Maribor Sokol society. His Czech spouse Ludmila, a notable feminist publicist and activist, spent the war partially in women’s prison, suffering continuous interrogation and police brutality, all of which she documented in the aforementioned series of articles that was later published as a book. These experiences and particularly their narratives around them made for a useful reading of these publications as war veteran narratives, whereby their underlying motifs and sacrifices were documented in great detail. Fittingly, both books were published by the Maribor military volunteers’ society (*Klub dobrovoljcev*), thus adding the symbolic weight to the claims articulated in the books.

Together with memoirs of prominent political actors, it was the wartime documents that were used to support these narratives, alongside commemorative associational practices for the fallen military volunteers. Publishing of a sort of sourcebook, containing transcripts of original documents from the Zagreb Sokol treason trials of 1915 and 1916³¹⁹ can also be seen as creating the image of Sokol activists’ martyrdom for the national cause. This almost 400 page-long collection of juridical documents begins with an indicative statement: “Let the future generation be the judge”,³²⁰ before providing evidence for the narrative on persecution of those public figures and intellectuals who supported South Slavic cultural and political unity. Namely, it was Laza Popović, Milan Metikoš (lawyer), Milan Teodorović (lawyer), Srđan Budisavljević (lawyer and MP) and Đuro Gavrilović (professor) who were accused by the Zagreb state attorney for spreading Greater-Serbian propaganda through Serbian Sokol-societies which were

³¹⁹ *Sokolski veleizdajnički proces u Zagrebu: iz 1915-1916 god.* [Sokol treason trial in Zagreb: from the years 1915-1916] Zagreb: Štamparija glavnog saveza srpskih zemljoradničkih zadruga, 1927. Note that it was published by the Central League of Serbian Agricultural Cooperatives [Glavni savez srpskih zemljoradničkih zadruga] whose Zagreb-branch was one of the sites of Serbian wealth concentration in the Dual Monarchy.

³²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 1.

allegedly affiliated with the National Defense (*Narodna odbrana*) organization in Serbia.³²¹

While they were initially sentenced to several months-long prison sentences, these were shortened after their appeals, as the court couldn't decisively prove their affiliation with the National Defense. Nevertheless, the collection, duly promoted within Sokol, was intended to serve as tangible proof of Monarchy's plot against the South Slavic unity.

A somewhat untypical narrative of rupture, in contrast to those outlined so far, can be seen in the works of Viktor Car Emin, a notable liberal feminist writer from Liburnia/Kvarner Bay, whose works largely thematized the war, the shortlived D'Annunzio's Free State of Fiume³²² and the subsequent Italian rule over these South Slavic-populated former Habsburg territories. The wartime is, in this case, prolonged, so as to include the D'Annunzio episode and provide the Sokol membership with a narrative on an alternative war outcome, namely the case of South Slavs who hoped to join Yugoslavia, but eventually became citizens of Mussolini's Italy. With a strong Yugoslavist and Istrian regionalist inclinations, he included Sokol as a factual context for some of his fiction works, but was also one of the contributors to the local Sokol periodicals both before and after the war, thematizing the "Istrian question" through prose fiction and drama.³²³

To sum up the previous assertions, the narratives of historical-temporal rupture relied primarily on the tropes of oppressive, despotic and retrograde Austria-Hungary; war experience of Sokol

³²¹ Mislav Gabelica "Političke prilike u Banskoj Hrvatskoj na početku Prvoga svjetskog rata" [Political circumstances in Croatia-Slavonia at the Beginning of the First World War] *Društvena istraživanja* vol. 23, no. 1 (2014), pp. 189-90.

³²² In this period he published: *Iz podjarmljenih krajeva* [From the subjected lands], 1921; *Nove borbe* [New struggles], 1926; *Nevidljivi Jurić* [Invisible Jurić], 1922. Particularly successful in this context is his later novel *Danuncijada: romansirana kronisterija riječke tragikomedije 1919-1921*. [Dannunziada: romantified chronoistery of the Rijeka tragedycomedy 1919-1921] Zagreb: Nakladni Zavod Hrvatske, 1946. In it, he not only essentially deconstructs the myth of D'Annunzio, but also heavily psychologizes him as a character, rendering the period of his rule as one of societal psychological and moral degeneration.

³²³ Most notably through the 1923 drama *Na straži* [On Guard] and novels *Naša Mare* [Our Mary] (published in the journal *Ženski list*, 1931–33) and *Među dva ognjišta* [Between two hearths] (published in *Novosti*, 1934).; In addition, there were instances in Sokol periodicals where organicist and mystical integral Yugoslavist arguments (e.g. *Svatoplukov zavet/zavjet*, Eng. Svatopluk's oath) were used to frame that portion of the Southern Slavic population that had remained on what has become Italian territory, see: Oton Gavrančić "Sokolovi na Jadranu" [Sokols on the Adriatic] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 5-6 (1926), p. 50.

activists and those who promoted South Slavic political unification; and images of Sokol as a progressive, democratic force that united the otherwise divided South Slavic population. In order to support the argument on the Yugoslavs being one cultural corpus divided by historical contingency, however, many Sokol thinkers had to overwrite the cultural canon and the existing historical narratives in a Yugoslavist key so as to fashion the various historical figures as predecessors or visionaries of the South Slavic political unity. This was the case for instance with the Nikola Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan, who became anti-imperialist fighters for the South Slavic unity, part of the same historical development as the “Sarajevo martyrs”.³²⁴ Not always was this done successfully, however, as can be seen by the criticism of the Sokol calendars that were to be distributed across the country. These calendars failed to include those historical figures or events that could be posited as common ones, nor were they completely secular. They also caused confusion by including different names for the months within a year (e.g. *januar/siječanj*), as well as mixing cyrillic and latin script for different ideological texts distributed thereat.³²⁵

Lastly, yet not less importantly, this period also saw proliferation of liberal internationalist thought that had a marked impact on the broader European level, one of such cases being the aforementioned Josip Vilfan (Wilfan). A lawyer by training, he is considered one of the most important European liberal legal and political theoreticians of the minority question in the interwar period. This was still a context in which the modern concept of national minority was still being stabilized and articulated by various actors. Besides being a president of Trieste Sokol and notable Slovenian association *Edinost* (Unity), Vilfan also acted as an MP in the Italian parliament after the First World War. Most notably, he was a founder and chairman of

³²⁴ “Zrinsko-frankopanska uspomena u Zagrebu” *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 4-5 (1927), pp. 36-37.

³²⁵ Dušan Bogunović, “Sokolski kalendar 1923.” [Sokol calendar for 1923] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 10-11-12 (1922), pp. 241-2; Bogunović “Sokolski kalendar 1924.” [Sokol calendar for 1924] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 1 (1924), pp. 14-16

the Vienna-based Congress of European Nationalities (CEN)³²⁶—an international organization dedicated to solving the question of the political representation of national minorities and ensuring a deeper European political integration based on liberal internationalist principles.

Vilfan's publishing activity primarily stemmed from his work in CEN, whereby he developed progressive practices, for instance, involving representatives of those groups that did not have a corresponding nation-state apparatus to support their political efforts or provide them with a platform to argue their cases. For instance, the Congress hosted Jewish, Rusin, Frisian and Catalan envoyés. Nevertheless, it is necessary to underscore that the concept of "national minority" was still very much caught between the antipodes of "nationality" and "minority", almost throughout the entire interwar period. The former was characteristic for the prewar Habsburg context, in the sense of *Volksgruppe* as actors and *Rechte der Nationalitäten* as an antecedent concept. The latter was a nascent, modern concept initially developed and enforced by the Great Powers at Versailles, and was primarily focused on numerical weakness.³²⁷ Vilfan's most relevant contributions in terms of political thought can, thus, be seen in the articulation and appropriation of the concept of the national minority, but also in theory of liberal international institution building. Importantly, his work also contributed to the development of the language of universal human rights more broadly.

³²⁶ Egon Pelikan. "Josip Vilfan and Engelbert Besednjak in the Congress of European Nationalities between 1925 and 1938" *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 40, no. 1 (2000), pp. 93-112; Ferenc Eiler "The Congress of European Nationalities and the International Protection of Minority Rights, 1925–1938" *Populism, Memory and Minority Rights: Central and Eastern European Issues in Global Perspective*, ed. Anna-Mária Bíró. Leiden: Brill, 2019, pp. 235-282; Oskar Mulej "Ch. 7. A Glimpse Beyond Party Politics" *Liberalism after the Habsburg Monarchy, 1918-1935: National Liberal Heirs in the Czech Lands, Austria and Slovenia*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024 pp. 333-358.

³²⁷ Tara Zahra. "The 'Minority Problem' and National Classification in the French and Czechoslovak Borderlands." *Contemporary European History* vol. 17, no. 2 (2008), pp. 137–65.

Vilfan's booklets and speeches,³²⁸ particularly on the position of Slovenian populace in Austria and German minority in Yugoslavia,³²⁹ were popularized through the Sokol periodicals and recommended for the Sokol libraries, thus acquainting the membership with the nascent modern understanding of the minority rights that his liberal internationalist thought was promoting. Crucially, he remained a rather moderate, non-essentialist, proponent of the South Slavic "national unity" throughout the interwar period. Relatedly, his understanding of the liberal international order rested on a vision of the post-Habsburg Slavdom that was to imbue the new European political community with a democratic and rejuvenated spirit, stemming from its immediate historical experience.

2.2.1. Challengers of the Integral Yugoslavist Paradigm(s) Abound

It is, however, characteristic of most Yugoslavist Sokol thinkers' texts, that they primarily developed as a reaction to the multifaceted intellectual and political challenges to their claims, rather than being set out, pre-emptively or in their own right. For this reason, most of them are, in fact, apparent crisis discourses. Among the challengers of the Yugoslavist framework which became representative of liberal-positivist commitments at large, the most pronounced ones were the proponents of tripartite national identities, specifically the Croatian one. It found itself aligned with the Catholic clergy and saw the JSS/JSZ' centralizing tendency as a threat to its associational and intellectual traditions. Their challenge to Yugoslavism was intertwined with the religion-based fault lines and thus subject of what some Sokol thinkers called a "culture

³²⁸ "Vilfan, Josip. The Speech in the Italian Parliament" in *Modernism: The Creation of Nation-States: Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe 1770–1945: Texts and Commentaries*, volume III/1, eds. Ahmet Ersoy; Maciej Górný and Vangelis Kechriotis. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010; Josip Vilfan. *Les minorités ethniques et la paix en Europe*. Vienna, 1929.

³²⁹ Carinthiacus (pseud.), *Position of Slovenes in Austria and the Position of Germans in the Kingdom of SCS*, Ljubljana: Inštitut za manjšinska vprašanja, 1925.

war”, from the very beginning of the interwar period. While Sokol nominally adopted an ecumenic attitude, it was already from 1920 and the Maribor *slet*, that its relationship to the Catholic Church and clergy, as well as their gymnastics organization Orel/Orao, was formally suspended as a result of the JSS/JSZ resolution that *de facto* aimed to exclude devout Catholics from the association.

While these tensions were both inherited from the prewar period and, to an extent, imported from the distinct Czech context—they proved especially pertinent and difficult in the case of Croatia where liberal clergy traditionally used to side with Sokol’s agenda in the prewar political constellation. A document of Catholic circles’ reaction to the said resolution and overall Sokol attitudes towards the Catholic Church can be found in an anonymously published booklet entitled *Cultural Principles of Sokol in Czechia and Yugoslavia (Kulturna načela Sokolstva u Češkoj i Jugoslaviji)*.³³⁰ The publication staunchly attacked JSS/JSZ, but also its (social) liberalism, atheism (also dubbed as paganism), progressivism, scientism and evolutionary vision. In addition to relying on the trope of “culture wars” in the “liberal press”, the anonymous author(s) particularly tackle Sokol’s “body cult”, shaming associational practices involving half-naked gymnasts bodies, but also Sokol “ideology” and “ideologues” who posited themselves as the new, “materialist”, religion.

Crucially, the notion of Sokol as an all-national, apolitical association was deconstructed throughout the booklet both by pointing to the existence of other gymnastic organizations with a similar agenda, but also by socially contextualizing the Sokol “bourgeoisie” : “If we take into account that Czech social-democrats already possess rather strong gymnastic organizations, then it becomes obvious that the Czechoslovak Sokol is not at all an all-national organization and that it is not representative of the Czechoslovak nation. Czech Sokol is nothing but a front

³³⁰ *Kulturna načela Sokolstva u Češkoj i Jugoslaviji*. [Cultural principles of Sokol in Czechia and Yugoslavia] Zagreb, 1920. (without author)

for the organized Free Thought and Freemasonry”. The booklet also made it clear that this is exclusively a post-Habsburg issue, by accentuating that the entire phenomenon of such “culture wars” is unknown and alien to Serbs from Serbia proper (*Srbijanci*).

Soon after, in March 1921, shortly before the Croatian Sokol’s re-establishment, Josip Pasarić, otherwise a well-established Zagreb-based literary critic, publicist and politician, published his lecture entitled *Glory to Strossmayer! (Slava Strossmayeru!)* that he had given in the Zagreb Sokol and that further deepened some of these arguments. In it, he posed Strossmayer, but also the unlikely characters such as the governor (*ban*) Josip Jelačić and the rightist (*pravaški*) politician Ante Starčević, as carriers of the Yugoslavist idea, in its Illyrian iteration. He particularly underscored Strossmayer’s federal program, first for the reorganization of the Habsburg Monarchy and then, theoretically, for the potential independent Yugoslav state.³³¹ Within this context he cited Strossmayer’s passionate speeches against centralism and the Croatian-Hungarian compromise, arguing that federalization, equality among nations (*ravnopravnost*) and the distribution of power are the only guarantee of any diverse state’s survival—hereby directly addressing the “contemporary centralists”.³³² Such lectures show that the alternative Sokol projects also served as venues for radical re-contextualization of recent historical and political debates and making of the, in this case, distinct “Croatian” reading of the late Austro-Hungarian developments.

Such array of reactions also indicate that the tradition that dominated JSS/JSZ in this period, and that aimed to frame Yugoslavism in liberal and positivist terms, was facing a multifaceted challenge, both from the remnants of Habsburg (sometimes liberal) Catholicism, but also from the ever growing stream of neo-romanticist thinkers who not only did not want to challenge other religious institutions, but in many cases (e.g. Serbian Orthodox, Muslim), inherited a

³³¹ Josip Pasarić, *Slava Strossmayeru*. [Glory to Strossmayer] Zagreb, 1921, p. 4.

³³² *Ibid*, p. 5.

political affiliation with them from the prewar period. A telling reflection on the rift created within the (mainly Bosnian) Muslim community in the early 1920s can be, for instance, seen in an article³³³ by a Yugoslavist Sokol member, Munib Osmanagić. He belonged to the Bosnian modernist literary circle, published in the noteworthy Bosnian Muslim journal *Gajret* and was also a member of the short-lived Organization of the progressive Muslim nationalists (*Organizacija naprednih nacionalista muslimana*) in 1919/1920. Later, Osmanagić went on to become an MP and a director of the Merhamet bank.³³⁴ Addressing the results of the 1920 Constitutional Assembly elections, he heavily criticized the victory of Banja Luka mufti Ibrahim Maglajlić's Yugoslav Muslim Organization party (*Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija*, JMO), due to his conservatism, religiosity, general apathy towards both the old and the new regime, and most of all, towards the necessity for Muslims to be "nationalized".

From a nominally progressive point of view, Osmanagić lashed out at Maglajlić's class- and nation-blindness, as well as at what he saw as a representation of the Habsburg imperial legacy, namely the Muslim community's political opportunism and former close ties to the Habsburg rulers, at the expense of South Slavic solidarity. In his eyes, all of these represented a barrier to modernization. What is more, Osmanagić compared this perceived disloyalty to the national community, to that of the communists, that he saw as having achieved satisfactory electoral results precisely due to the apathetic, nationally indifferent, Muslim voters. Fashioning his own urban modernist milieu as rationally moderate progressives, he portrayed the alleged Muslim-communist alliance as one of dangerous irrational extremists, stating that: "All of this is so characteristic for the psychosis of the masses, that it reminds us of that old saying on 'extremes that attract each other' (...). Without having experienced national education, in a long spiritual

³³³ Munib Osmanagić, "Politički pregled: Muslimani na izborima" [Political review: Muslims on the elections] *Nova Evropa* (14. 12. 1920.), pp. 468-472.

³³⁴ Munib Osmanagić "Dve svečanosti" [Two ceremonies] *Budućnost: organ naprednih nacionalista*, vol. 1, no. 2 (1919), p. 28; Staniša Tutnjević, *Andrićeva slika Bosne na razmeđu poetike i ideologije*. [Andrić's Image of Bosnia Between Poetics and Ideology] Sarajevo: Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva 2019, p. 129.

ennui, the conditions for the extremes of communism are already created in this mass, much more cruel than the one executed by Trotsky and the Russian Jewry (...) In Muslims, communism would gain something completely different: *enthusiasts for a blind, colorless ideology, who are completely religiously obsessed and nationally indifferent*'.³³⁵

This example demonstrates well that the Yugoslavist (nationalist) language was imbued with a myriad of other, context-specific meanings and layers, but also that it related to the real or perceived imperial legacies in complex and divergent ways.³³⁶ Furthermore, it clearly shows that it was not only Serbian and Croatian nationalisms that attempted to superimpose political modernity onto a nationally indifferent Bosnian Muslim community, but that this was done from a normative, prescriptive Yugoslavist point of view as well. Having penetrated the young modernist intelligentsia of Muslim background, it divided the community precisely on the issue of statist centralism (perceived by Sokols as a vehicle of political modernity) and JMO's attempt at tactical retaining of former (feudal estates and) autonomy.³³⁷

One similar issue that divided and ultimately challenged the (post-Habsburg) Sokol thinkers' framework, was the question of monarchy itself, addressed, among others by the elder of the Ljubljana Sokol club, Vladimir Ravnihar, in his speech given on the occasion of the commemoration of King Petar Karađorđević's passing in 1921, entitled "From the plough to the crown".³³⁸ In it, he compares the rule of Habsburg to that of Karađorđević dynasty, by

³³⁵ Ibid, p. 472, emphasis in the original.

³³⁶ For a more nuanced and conceptually sensitive discussion on the notion of 'imperial legacies', particularly among Austro-Hungarian and maritime colonial context, see Vojtěch Pojar's dissertation chapter on "Contested imperial legacies" in: *Experts in Post-imperial Transitions: Entanglements and Diverging Trajectories of Eugenists between the Habsburg Empire and the 'Miniature Empires', c. 1900-1939*, PhD dissertation. Central European University Budapest/Vienna, 2024.

³³⁷ For a very sophisticated discussion of this question, see the works of Enver Redžić, particularly: *Sto godina muslimanske politike u tezama i kontroverzama istorijske nauke*. [One hundred years of Muslim politics in theses and controversies of historical sciences] Sarajevo: ANUBiH, 2000, pp. 70-73; as well as Xavier Bougarel. "Farewell to the Ottoman Legacy? Islamic Reformism and Revivalism in Inter-War Bosnia-Herzegovina". *Islam in Inter-War Europe*, eds. Nathalie Clayer, Eric Germain. London: Hurst, 2008, pp. 313-343; Sabina Ferhadbegović "Fes oder Hut? Der Islam in Bosnien zwischen den Weltkriegen" *Wiener Zeitschrift zur Geschichte der Neuzeit*, vol. 2, no. 5, pp. 69-85.

³³⁸ Vladimir Ravnihar, "Od pluga do krone" [From the plough to the crown] *Vestnik tehničkog odbora Jugoslovenskog Sokolskog Saveza*, vol. 1., no. 1. (1921), pp. 98-103.

saying: “Until our liberation, Slovenians in particular were not used to seeing such men on the royal or imperial thrones. They were potentates and absolutists, owing their dignity only to some ‘*Dei Gratia*’ and ‘anointing’, strangers to the soul of the people, superficially educated, without conscience and without morals. (...) That is why we were not monarchists and were instead republicans. King Peter Karađorđević was a highly educated man. The hard school of life gave him the most education. (...) Enlightened France gave him his first teachings. (...) In those years - 1867 - he translated John Stuart Mill’s philosophical treatise on ‘Liberty’. (...) In Geneva he spent a lot of time in socialist circles and in the company of Russian revolutionaries, and he wanted to get to know all sides of our social life. Modest to the extreme, he hated luxury, which seemed to him the lot of the lower souls. (...) He calmly shouldered the cross of his nation as he made his way to Golgotha, through wild Albania. (...) It is only natural that he could not have been other than democratic in spirit. He called himself the crowned President of the Yugoslav Republic. That is why his personality was so deeply engraved in the popular soul, why a grateful nation loves and adores its Uncle Pete [LB: Čika Pera]”.³³⁹ This romanticist, pro-revolutionary and, above all, populist discourse, while broadly liberal Yugoslavist in its assumption, still gravely challenged the dominant stream of Sokol thinkers who didn’t openly criticize monarchy as a concept, but strongly promoted evolutionism, participative democracy and republicanist values of political modernity in their writings.

Those who promoted the vision of a ruler who has a mystical and, crucially, direct relation to the national masses whose national character he is a prime specimen of, usually expressed it using radically different genres. One of the more prominent and fruitful examples of such intellectual production can be seen in the contributions of Josip Boko to various publications, although primarily *Sokol na Jadranu* (Sokol on the Adriatic), a unique periodical that contained writings from both the integral Yugoslavist (JSS/JSZ) and Croatian “independentist” Sokol

³³⁹ Ibid, passim.

activists. Boko was a Sinj-based writer, teacher and alkar³⁴⁰ mostly interested in theory of pedagogy and the women's question in the characterological key, who later became a notable partisan fighter and was killed during the Second World War.³⁴¹ His texts, oftentimes literary in character, comprise mostly of essentialist, autochtonist and starkly romanticist tropes (e.g. martyrdom, Yugoslav or Slavic soul etc.), focused on the experience of the First World War. He also promoted historical imagery from the nascent integral Yugoslavist canon revolving around *longue durée* anti-imperialist struggle rooted in the Yugoslavs' national character.³⁴²

In particular cases, this aesthetic preference of his, came out in his rather sophisticated and oftentimes prescriptive pedagogically-themed texts, which serve as one of the clear-cut examples of the cross-fertilization of the liberal-positivist discourses with the neo-romanticist, particularist and autochtonist Balkanist ones. For instance, in his 1928 article on the "Heroic education [LB: odgoj] of our youth",³⁴³ Boko simultaneously operated with a strictly essentialist understanding of the Yugoslav national character and soul (both understood as a sort of persistent biological palimpsest that folk legends are an evidence of), as well as with the modernist understanding of progressive (national) education. The latter, he thought, should be conducted through morally unspoiled Sokol (as opposed to the corrupt state education system), but also build on and perfect the said cultural-psychological traits. This is particularly striking since he was himself a teacher throughout his career.

³⁴⁰ Participant of the *Sinjska alka* traditional equestrian competition.

³⁴¹ "Boko, Josip" *Hrvatski biografski leksikon* URL= <https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/boko-josip> (Last access: July 18, 2024).

³⁴² Josip Boko "Sokolov let" [Falcon's fly] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 5-6 (1926), p. 50; Josip Boko "Mrijeti ti ćeš, kad počneš sam u ideale svoje sumnjati" [You shall die once you start doubting your own ideals] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 11-12, 1927, pp. 147-8; Josip Boko "Jadran – vali -južnoj zelenoj sestri svojoj. Zemlji stare slave – slijepijeh guslara – divnih zadužbina – i oslobodilačkih belih orlova" [Adriatic – to the bay – its south green sister. To the land of old glory – blind pirates – beautiful foundations – and liberating white eagles] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 5-7, 1928, pp. 86-88.

³⁴³ Josip Boko "Herojski odgoj naše mladeži" [Heroic education of our youth] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 11-12 (1928), pp. 165-167.

In a rather culturally pessimist tone, Boko asserted: “Science says that the development of an individual is a model of the humanity’s physical and psychological development. Humanity, nations and peoples have passed through the developmental phases (...) till the present day principles of innate education [LB: unutrašnjeg odgoja], Christian mercy and self-abnegation, altruism, humanitarianism etc. It would be wrong to think that these ideas—albeit replaced with one another—completely vanished from the human soul. No, they were merely suppressed to the subconsciousness, but their impact on the physical and intellectual life of humanity continued. (...) what is much stronger in us, is the primal, primitive and atavistic, that worked in us through perhaps millions of years, then what worked in us through merely a few centuries, the highest thoughts of Confucius, Budha, Christ, Tolstoy, Tagore and others. We are still servile slaves to the capricious impulses and inherited animalistic urges, than spontaneous followers of all possible philosophies, religions and ethics...”³⁴⁴

Boko hereby painted a grim picture where these, rather primitive, inherent biological and psychological settings clash with the corrupt postwar political culture, that the state cannot resolve and is, instead, the main creator of. Showcasing it as a vicious circle that can only be ameliorated by non-state educational initiatives that stem from a moral cause and that aim to amplify the positive traits that are deposited in the national psyche, Boko concluded: “If we study our heroic poems and envision the pictures of our heroes and giants, that Meštrović the genius carved in stone; if we look at the numerous windows of the soul through which nobleness, sacrifice, discipline, mercy, altruism and humanitarianism of both our male and female types, that represent our entire characteristic racial psyche bursted throughout centuries — then we can, without a doubt, say that these traits (that are unfortunately being lost today), should be poured into the hearts of our youth, as the best guarantee for their virility [LB:

³⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 165.

muževnost] and character [LB: karakternost], as well as for the future of the Nation.”³⁴⁵ It was mostly likely in Sokol (periodicals) that he was exposed to the Yugoslavist racial and national character-related discourses, yet it is clear that his vision of the education reform built both on them and on the more romanticist and organicist integral Yugoslavist cultural canon. While texts and arguments resembling that of Boko represented a less dominant stream in the 1920s, they still serve to show that the process of cross-fertilization of these two streams was already under way in this period, particularly among those Sokol thinkers who were neither in the associational leadership, nor established scholars or experts, but were rather precisely those who worked more closely and directly with the Sokol’s rising membership.

To conclude, when regarded in this light, the struggle of the dominant liberal-positivist thinkers to use authoritative language to root the Yugoslav national identity had multiple implications, not least political modernity as such. Crucially, these Sokol thinkers’ concerns evidently went far beyond choosing between smaller or larger integrative nationalisms. Instead, they were trying to defend and massivize particular liberal, modernist, universalist and progressive ideas—however, oftentimes in response to the constant and versatile intellectual and political challenges they faced from the groups that they would eventually be forced to integrate into their milieu after the establishment of the Royal Dictatorship.

These complex “inborn” cracks and tensions in their ideological, aesthetic and epistemological affiliations—that could not be overtly addressed after the King’s January 6th decree and the subsequent new law on Sokol—were tackled about a month before its introduction by Laza Popović in his polemical article entitled “I’m once again asking to be heard”.³⁴⁶ In it, he outlined the cruxes of the irreconcilable approaches that the two (main) streams would not give up on. Namely, these were their differing stances towards religion as such, whereby he marked

³⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 166.

³⁴⁶ Laza Popović “Molim ponovo za reč” [I’m once again asking to be heard] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 11-12 (1928), pp. 162-165.

particular tension between the Serbian Orthodox Church and “free-thinking” Sokol leadership. Furthermore, he raised an issue of Yugoslav Sokol’s overall servile relationship with the diverse ruling elites over the past decade, in the name of Yugoslavism and all it represents. Popović hereby reflected on the resulting conceptual confusion within the organization by saying: “Nowhere, absolutely nowhere in the world can one find as convoluted and entangled concepts of nation, state and government, on the one hand, and this whole mixture toppled with some undefined Yugoslav and Slavic condiment, on the other hand”.³⁴⁷

Both of these paramount issues became pertinent in the coming period when Sokol’s novel position as a quasi-state institution not only forcefully integrated these streams and produced a more intense cross-fertilization of discourses, but also shifted the power balance between them, in favor of the neo-romanticist Balkanist one that had benefited from the centralization of both state and Sokol organization.

2.3. Expertise and the New (Yugoslav) Man: Biomedical, Physical Culture and Pedagogical Discourses

In contrast to the nascent racial discourses, more characteristic of the political and literary texts,³⁴⁸ there was a number of other articles, produced mainly by physicians and scholars from the fields of natural sciences, as well as experienced Sokol gymnastic trainers—that were

³⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 163.

³⁴⁸ Used, in this period, most often by Franjo Malin in a non-medical sense, but rather as a literary trope, see: Franjo Malin “Jugoslovenstvo” [Yugoslavism] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 3 (1925), pp. 34-39; Franjo Malin, *Jovan Cvijić i problem narodno jedinstva*. [Jovan Cvijić and the problem of national unity] Novi Sad, 1927; Franjo Malin, *Jugoslavenstvo kroz povijest*. [Yugoslavism through history] Split: ORJUNA, 1925; but also by rare representatives of the Balkanist neo-romanticist stream of thinkers who wrote on the anti-imperialist national character determined by the mountainous environment, such as: Milan Janković “Sokolski rad u vojsci” [Sokol work in the army] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 5 (1922), pp. 88-89; The rare example of race being used as a strictly biomedical category in this period can be found in the translation of Czech eugenicists’ Karel Weigner’s book, see: Karel Weigner, *Telesno obrazovanje*, trans. Josip Hanuš. [Physical education] Zagreb, 1919.

thematically much more concerned with the biological, medical and pedagogical questions. They would draw (bio)political conclusions out of these themes, sometimes merely as an afterthought,³⁴⁹ albeit in most cases in direct connection to the desired physical strength and economic power of the nation. The latter, namely the economic power of the nation, was seemingly inspired by the rather influential prewar assertions of Rudolf Goldscheid on the “human economy”,³⁵⁰ but characteristically for Sokol’s intellectual climate, tied into a rather disciplinarily complex and intertwined knowledge production. Importantly, this notion of the “human economy” remained a framework looming behind many scholarly texts on the pedagogy, physiology and psychology of exercise, oftentimes overtly acknowledged only in the texts’ conclusion when discussing the proposed approaches’ wider relevance and benefits. Besides this particular concern, such Sokol writings also widely debated the complex relationship between (physical) education and the national character—remaining in flux between retaining the prewar, Czech tradition-based, behaviorist paradigm and overcoming it by appropriating new pedagogical tendencies from the German, French and Italian contexts. The latter encompassed the achievements of the pacifist and reformist “new education movement” rooted in cognitive psychology, but also the gravely essentialist, racial or spiritual rejuvenation-driven ones.³⁵¹ This subchapter examines Viktor Murnik, Miroslav Ambrožič and their milieu as representatives of the former (2.3.1.); and Stjepan Vrdoljak and Dušan Bogunović as thinkers who gradually pushed the discourse towards the latter (2.3.2.).

³⁴⁹ This was the case, for instance, with the notable Slovenian physician Alija Košir who published an extensive series of articles on the anatomy and physiology of the human body, in relation to exercise, in the journal *Jugoslavenski Sokol*, as well as participated in some of the Sokol courses.

³⁵⁰ I thank Vojtěch Pojar for kindly bringing this publication to my attention. Veronika Hofer “Rudolf Goldscheid, Paul Kammerer und die Biologen des Prater-Vivariums in der liberalen Volksbildung der Wiener Moderne” in *Wissenschaft, Politik und Öffentlichkeit. Von der Wiener Moderne bis zur Gegenwart*, eds. Mitchell G. Ash and Christian Stifter, Vienna: WUV, 2002, pp. 149-184.

³⁵¹ Béatrice Haenggeli-Jenni “New Education”; Christine Mayer “Education reform visions and new forms of gymnastics and dance as elements of a new body culture and ‘body education’ (1890–1930)” *History of Education*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 523–543; Bernd Gröben. “Natur als Problemkategorie in der Bewegungserziehung—dargestellt an der Rhythmischen Gymnastik des Rudolf Bode (1881–1970) und mit Bezug auf den aktuellen Diskurs zum ‘freien Willen’” *Jahrbuch 2009 der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Sportwissenschaft e.V.*, vol. 11, eds. Jürgen Court, Müller, Arno, Wacker, Christian. Köln, 2010, pp. 115-129.

Since Sokol's primary organizational activity was based on gymnastics and physical education more broadly, these texts often served as an avenue for their development and professionalization, generating fields known today as sports medicine, physiology of sports, developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, as well as pedagogy of sports.³⁵² It is necessary to underscore that the vast majority of Sokol thinkers who wrote on these topics, originated from the post-Habsburg contexts, belonged to the liberal-positivist intellectual stream, with a pronounced hope that their agenda will either be successfully uploaded into the state framework or, at least, be successfully implemented through Sokol's work with its numerous membership. In this period, however, they were rather inclined to call for the latter, since they experienced the disappointment with both the state capacity and party politics, relatively early on. In other words, they attempted to use their expertise and Sokol to bring about political modernity, by bypassing the state, in their effort to change the basis of political life, namely the population itself. This is not to say that, however, these discourses hadn't begin to experience cross-fertilization with the neo-romanticist ones, analogous to the more strictly political ones. It was, in particular the pedagogy-related ones that have, but due to the significantly lesser involvement of physicians and natural scientists belonging to the neo-romanticist stream, such instances remained relatively modest in their impact. It is, nevertheless, important to point out that the discourses most susceptible to essentializing tendencies were those that had moved the furthest away from the traditional behaviorist paradigm and adopted Lebensreform-like arguments on the "natural" in the body, bodily movement and the relationship between the body and its environment.³⁵³

³⁵² Crucially, however, these fields developed under a host of different names in this period and it was particularly in East Central European contexts that the concept of 'sports' was not at all central to their focus or subject matter. Instead, they mostly focused on the holistically understood physical education and physical culture.

³⁵³ In this context the environment around the body that most Lebensreform and Sokol thinkers theorized on, was the urban and industrial one, which they saw as causing harmful effects due to the repetitiveness and artificiality of the movement it required the bodies to perform. See: Bernd Wedemeyer-Kolwe. *Aufbruch: Die Lebensreform in Deutschland*. Darmstadt: Philipp von Zabern Verlag, 2017, p. 92.

Due to this disproportionately smaller ratio of the neo-romanticist stream thinkers involvement, the imported and appropriated wider European tendencies that pertained to the understanding of, for instance, bodily movements, postures, exercises, games, but also dances or fatigue—arrived mostly from those linguistic contexts (e.g. German, French, English) that represented the main frame of reference for the dominant liberal-positivist stream within the association. Nevertheless, this pool of thought also included the white émigré thinkers, who put forward their own, markedly essentializing, epistemic stakes.

Over the 1920s, Sokol thinkers attempted to emulate and appropriate numerous reform pedagogical and Lebensreform initiatives into their specific (integral) Yugoslavist context, negotiating their core content in some cases, yet remaining largely modernist and progressivist in their overall intent.³⁵⁴ These, often Western European, alternative initiatives that had proliferated in this period, were, however, rather heterogeneous and often coincided with projects aimed at socializing medicine.

Crucially, the period of 1920s represents a moment when pedagogy was, more broadly, on a cusp between the 19th century behaviorist (instructionist) paradigm and the mid-20th century

³⁵⁴ For larger context around the key Western and regional thinkers, activists and intellectual trends they drew from, see: Erica Burman, *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*, second edition. London: Routledge, 2008; Thomas C. Leonard, *Illiberal Reformers: Race, Eugenics, and American Economics in the Progressive Era*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016; Milena Strachová, Zdeňek Vostrý “Temperance Movements in Sports: Response to Teetotal Movements in Bohemian Lands” *Historický časopis*, vol. 71, no. 5 (2023), pp. 827–847; Julia L. Foulkes, *Modern Bodies: Dance and American Modernism from Martha Graham to Alvin Ailey*. London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002; *Sport and the European Avant-Garde, 1900–1945*, eds. Andreas Kramer, Przemysław Strożek. Leiden: Brill, 2022; Nelleke Bakker, “Child guidance, dynamic psychology and the psychopathologisation of child-rearing culture (c. 1920–1940): a transnational perspective,” *History of Education*, vol. 49, no. 5 (2020), pp. 617–635; John Stewart “The Scientific Claims of British Child Guidance, 1918–45” *The British Journal for the History of Science*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (2009), pp. 407–432; Blanka Kudláčková “Reform Pedagogy in Slovakia in the Interwar Period (Specifics and Selected Examples from Practice)” *Historia scolastica*, vol. 1 (2020), pp. 94–108; Tomáš Kasper “The field of history of education—from development to stagnation, crisis and perhaps a ‘new’ beginning: the Czech example” *Paedagogica Historica*, vol. 58, no. 6 (2022), pp. 920–943; *Fifty Modern Thinkers on Education: From Piaget to Present*, ed. Joy A. Palmer. London: Routledge, 2001; Tomáš Kasper ““Open Air School—A ‘New’ Space for Educational School Reform and Life Reform in the Interwar Period in Czechoslovakia (Sudeten German and Czech Examples)” *Historia y Memoria de la Educación* vol. 13 (2021), pp. 179–215; Mária Potočárová “School and Educational Objectives of the Interwar Period in the First Czechoslovak Republic” *Polska Myśl Pedagogiczna*, vol. 7 (2021), pp. 349–364; Dana Kasperová “Child, Pupil, School and the Reform of Society—A Few Notes Regarding the Czechoslovakian Interwar Pedagogical Reform Debate” *Pedagogika*, vol. 65, no. 5 (2015), pp. 487–501.

cognitivist (progressivist) one. The former, rooted in B. F. Skinner's strictly knowledge-oriented approach, insisted on hierarchical conditioning (via positive and negative reinforcement) and allowed solely for the external stimuli and external motivation in its understanding of teaching and learning processes. The latter, however, promoted most notably from the turn of century by John Dewey and somewhat later by Jean Piaget and Eduard Spranger,³⁵⁵ regarded the learner as internally motivated. It understood school as a place of social reform and building of democratic values, as well as insisted on holistic education (as opposed to vocational), that built on the pre-existing cognitive structures within the student. Markedly more student-oriented and practice-based, the cognitivist approach also aimed to deconstruct the teacher-learner hierarchies, provide an open environment for learning and employed various types of “building blocks” via concept mapping, classification, standardization, simplification—that the students could make use of in their later development. The experimentation with and implementation of the cognitivist paradigm, nevertheless, depended on the various local settings into which it was to be appropriated in this period.

For a certain portion of Sokol thinkers, due to their linguistic and regional background, it was the Lebensreform that proved among the most relevant, since, despite its rather heterogeneous character³⁵⁶ as a movement, it aimed to adopt many of the achievements of experimental pedagogies, particularly cognitivism in conjunction with physical education (Leibesübungen), with a goal of creating “new” man and women.³⁵⁷ In addition, in the German context, it was Carl Diem, who, among others, contributed most to the subsequent institutionalization of

³⁵⁵ Hans Thomae and Francis P. Hardesty “Development and value orientation: The contribution of Eduard Spranger to a differential developmental psychology” *The developing individual in a changing world, Teil 1: Historical and Cultural Issues*, eds. by Klaus F. Riegel and John A. Meacham, Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 1976, pp. 27-38.

³⁵⁶ The most contentious point for the Sokol context was the *Lebensreform*'s anti-urban drive they could not identify with, due to the fact that Yugoslavia was largely rural and most Sokol clubs operated in rather small settlements, rendering the need to escape the urban environment obsolete.

³⁵⁷ Kari Kicker Frisinghelli “Das neue Körpergefühl in der Lebensreform” *Survival of Utopias—Weiterlebende Utopien. Life Reform and Progressive Education in Austria and Hungary—Lebensreform und Reformpädagogik in Österreich und Ungarn* eds. András Németh et al. Vienna: Peter Lang, 2017, pp. 73-85.

physical education as a scholarly discipline. Sokol thinkers regularly reflected on his work at the Deutsche Hochschule für Leibesübungen, that demonstrated an example of state scaling up the work on studying and conducting the necessary physical education *en masse*, that was never fully realized in the Yugoslav context and the stalling of which they blamed many political crises on.

It was, nevertheless, crucial for Sokol, that German-, Italian- and French-speaking thinkers at the time theorized on the intimate connection between physical exercise and character (consisting of inborn traits, instincts and urges), in a way that rendered the latter malleable. Read from the Sokol perspective, such research paved a path towards a positivist approach to collective “moral” and physical rejuvenation by enabling the increase in the number of people with better (channeled) traits among their respective populations. In such a scheme and with a lack of a state initiative to make use of their expertise, Sokol saw its own added value in its vast network, numerous membership, existing physical education tradition, as well as nation-building-oriented mission. In contrast to the reformist French, Italian and German thinkers they were referencing and debating, this tradition of Sokol also allowed for the essentialization of the character in question.³⁵⁸ Regardless, what all these thinkers had in common at this point in time, was their insistence on the importance of embodied cognition, namely enactivism, and the attempt to connect the physiology of exercise with the question of will (volition) and character development.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁸ This is not to say that the spectrum of trends they were concerned with did not contain examples of essentializing approach, see for instance: Agnes Trattner, “Jugendbewegung und Körperkultur”, *Survival of Utopias–Weiterlebende Utopien: Life Reform and Progressive Education in Austria and Hungary – Lebensreform und Reformpädagogik in Österreich und Ungarn*, eds. András Németh et al., Vienna: Peter Lang, 2017, pp. 85-101.

³⁵⁹ Kevin Krein and Jesús Ilundáin-Agurruza “High-level Enactive and Embodied Cognition in Expert Sport Performance” *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*, vol. 11, no 3. (2017), pp. 370-384.

2.3.1. Energy, Fatigue and the National Economy: Viktor Murnik's Thought on Bodily Movement and Physical Education

It was Viktor Murnik who made the most significant impact on the establishment and practical implementation of the so-called Sokol pedagogy, in this early phase of its development and application to the much more numerous and diverse membership, than the one Sokol had before the war. Building on the pedagogically-themed evolutionist writings of Miroslav Tyrš from the 1860s and 1870s,³⁶⁰ Murnik sought to adapt these principles to the postwar conditions in the Yugoslav Sokol context. As a leading member of the Sokol Technical Committee (*Savezni tehnički odbor*, STO), alongside notable thinkers almost exclusively from the post-Habsburg urban contexts,³⁶¹ Murnik was well positioned to solidify his vision of the educational and pedagogical work Sokol should be conducting. He also used this position to channel it into the associational rules and regulations, as well as state-wide practices. In an article published in early 1923,³⁶² Murnik set the ambitious goals and course for the years to come, citing some of the foundational settings of the Sokol pedagogy that were to be implemented by the committee on the large scale.

Succinctly, the vision of Sokol pedagogy he presented here was the one based foremost on monism (“physical, moral and spiritual education”³⁶³) and understanding that learning and development happen primarily through bodily movement and exercise, but also that the goal of

³⁶⁰ For a synthesis on Tyrš's political thought see: Petr Roubal, “A genealogy of Spartakiads” in *Spartakiads: The Politics of Physical Culture in Communist Czechoslovakia*. Prague: Karolinum Press, 2020, pp. 25-126; and: Roland Singer, *Sozialdarwinismus und Materialismus im Werk des Miroslav Tyrš. Die philosophisch-weltanschauliche Grundlage der nationalistischen tschechoslowakischen wie gemeinslawischen Sokolbewegung*, Berching: Goldenes Böhmen, 2022.

³⁶¹ Such as: Miroslav Ambrožić, Vladimir Kuščer, Matija Amrbožić, Ivan Bajželj, Engelbert Gangl, Pavle Grošelj, Jovan Hadži, Nikola Radojčić, Stane Rape.

³⁶² The article was, in fact, a summary of the committee's report to the coming Sokol Assembly, see: Viktor Murnik “Prosvetno delo v Sokolstvu” [Pedagogical work in Sokol] *Sokolski glasnik* 3-4 (1923) pp. 89-95.

³⁶³ *Vestnik tehničkog odbora Jugoslovenskog sokolskog saveza*, (1922) vol. 1, p. 1.

Sokol's physical education is to encompass as many gymnasts (portion of the state's population) as possible,³⁶⁴ rather than to insist on the said gymnasts' specialization or professionalization. This is also reflected in Murnik's suggestion to bring the work of the Technical and Education committees into a closer relationship, as well as in his insistence on the inclusion of women and creation of the separate women's committees.³⁶⁵ Furthermore, Murnik hereby provided the Sokol members with full agency and called for educating them on the role of physical education in psychological and intellectual development, as well as nation-building,³⁶⁶ and strengthening national economy. In other words, he aimed to remove the hierarchies that existed in traditional educational systems, but to instead treat the associational membership as equal partners in achieving a common goal through holistically understood gymnastics.

Indicatively, his pedagogical methods diverged from the otherwise still very dominant behaviorist paradigm and rather focused on seminar-style discussions of the readings or lectures, but also peripatetic approach to learning, with special preference for discussing the given topics during hiking, mountaineering and walks in the nature more broadly. The first larger course, for instance, that took place in 1923 in every Yugoslav Sokol club and lasted for

³⁶⁴ Also a topic of: Miroslav Ambrožič "Pomladni čas in naša vzgoja" [Spring time and our pedagogy] *Vestnik tehničnog odbora Jugoslovenskog sokolskog saveza*, vol. 4-5 (1921), pp. 62-64.

³⁶⁵ The first such committee was established in 1919 in Novi Sad, at the First Sokol Assembly and its members were Z. Kovačević, J. Čubrilović, M. Baranova, J. Reberskova, K. Bajlova, N. Jovanović, Lj. Medić, H. Šnajderova, D. Pešić, F. Iličina, M. Dušica i Franka Lev; thereby they produced a report [LB: elaborat] based on which JSS/JSZ arranged the position of women within the association. See: Bogunović, *Od ujedinjenja*, pp. 41-42; The second such committee was established at the JSS/JSZ' 1922 Assembly in Zagreb and its members were: Minka Babnikova, Anuška Cigojeva, Milena Govekarjeva, Ela Horvatova, Majda Jerškova, Angela Preskerjeva, Elza Skalarjeva, Joža Trdinova and Nina Trdinova, see "Načelnikovo poročilo na glavni skupščini J. S. S. v Zagrebu" [Chief's report to the General Assembly of JSS/JSZ in Zagreb] *Vestnik tehničnog odbora*, vol. 1-3 (1923), p. 1; Around this time Murnik also translated a feminist article from a ČOS periodical, that tackles the issue from a pedagogical point of view: Míla Koutníková "Uzgoj ženskog prednjačkog zbora" [Raising the women's trainers' committee] *Vestnik tehničnog odbora Jugoslovenskog sokolskog saveza*, vol. 1-4 (1924), p. 18-20.

³⁶⁶ It was in this article that he suggested the following methods for conducting this process: establishing a common historical calendar that would mark the dates of birth and death of important historical figures from all three tribes, founding of expert and general Sokol libraries, as well as those specifically designed for youth (with mandatory readings of national literary canon). He already wanted to use the coming trainers' courses (župski prednjački tečaj) in 1923 to train the trainers for the various methods of nation-building.

8 days, included discussions on subjects such as: “Sokol thought”, “Anatomy”, “Physiology”, “Methodology”, “First aid”, “Libraries”, “Rethorical skills”, “Games”, “Organization”, “History of the Yugoslav people”, “Theories of exercise”, “Dance”, “Fencing”, “Literacy” etc.³⁶⁷ In this programmatic article on Sokol pedagogy,³⁶⁸ Murnik argued for an individualized, gender-based, approach to teaching and learning, as well as promoting self-study within the associational membership. In it, he underscored that the ultimate goal of Sokol pedagogy is not only to transmit knowledge on particular subjects or to achieve “healthy and fresh spirit” in members via versatile gymnastics. It was also to ensure that the members are displaying the newly acquired characteristics and applying the acquired knowledge in real life, outside of the association, in order to serve the homeland and the national community. Specifically, these characteristics included self-discipline or self-taming (*samopregor*), strong will, energy, persistence and the ability to achieve ideological fervor (*sposobnost idealnoga zanosa*). It is the trainers’ task, Murnik underscored, to perfect these characteristics in the associational membership. In a later article he specifically “corrected” the ancient Greek gymnastics-related slogan *kai agatos* (beautiful and good) to “physically and spiritually complete man”—insinuating that it was Sokol’s task to mold, but also to complete and perfect the national body. Due to this rather ambitious agenda anchored in monistic and holistic understanding of physical education, it was very early on that JSS/JSZ’s Technical committee adopted a negative attitude towards both competitive sports and the Boy Scouts movement.³⁶⁹ They saw such initiatives and traditions as eventually curtailing the members’, and consequently national, development

³⁶⁷ “Urnik” [Schedule] *Vestnik tehničkog odbora Jugoslovenskog sokolskog saveza*, vol. 1-3. (1923), pp. 16-17.

³⁶⁸ Viktor Murnik “Prednjaštvu, pa tudi vsem drugim bratom in sestram!” [To the trainers, as well as to all other brothers and sisters!] *Vestnik tehničkog odbora Jugoslovenskog sokolskog saveza* vol. 1 (1921), p. 1-5.

³⁶⁹ Fran Švarcvald “Nogomet i Sokolstvo” [Football and Sokol] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 7 (1922), pp. 152-153.

due to their repetitive and limited set of physical movements, as well as lack of explicit “moral” education that Sokol, in contrast, aimed to integrate into its educational program.³⁷⁰

Furthermore, it was not only pedagogical, but also biomedical discourses that helped provide epistemic authority to the liberal-positivist streams’ claims and associational agenda. Beyond versatile movement, monistic approach and holistic physical education, thinkers such as Murnik drew from the emergent physiology of gymnastics to tackle a rather important issue of perfecting and economizing the gymnasts’ bodily movement. They did so with special focus on energy and fatigue, yet not always with the same end goal in mind. They would then use these arguments to further position Sokol as not only a notable (physical) pedagogical hub for improving the national health and strenght, but also as an impactful tool for “fine-tuning” the gymnasts’ bodies towards the optimal energy expenditure. Their goal here was to stimulate the gymnasts’ application of these principles outside of the Sokol gym, thereby contributing to the improvement of the national economy by not wasting and better managing their bodily energy in the context of physical and mental labor, the former often having to do with posture. Indicatively, however, the issue of posture was mostly thematized in the context of women’s bodies—as most Sokol thinkers saw their static and ergonomically incorrect posture as a threat to women’s health, psychological state and ultimately, the strenght of the coming generations.³⁷¹ Among the reference points within the field of the physiology of gymnastics, Sokol thinkers such as Miroslav Ambrožič, a notable Slovenian publicist and *Edinost*-affiliated press-owner, promoted the work of the French physician of the older generation, Fernand Lagrange.

³⁷⁰ “Naznanila tehničnega odbora J.S.S.” [Announcements of the technical committee of the JSS] *Vestnik tehničnog odbora Jugoslovenskog sokolskog saveza*, vol. 4-5 (1923), pp. 46-48, here p. 47.

³⁷¹ “Žene i tjelovježba” [Women and exercise] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe Zagrebačke*, vol. 1-2 (1925), p. 2 (without author); S. V. “Savremene težnje na polju telesnog uzgoja” [Contemporary tendencies in the field of physical education], *Sokol na Jadranu* vol. 1 (1929), p. 4-6, here 5; Smiljana Mikačić “Fizički odgoj žene” [Physical education of a woman] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 11-12 (1928), pp. 177-179.

In one of his articles translated into Sokol periodicals,³⁷² Lagrange argues that there is no essential difference between the physical work performed by a farmer or a miner out of necessity and the physical exercises pursued by a sportsman. Both involve muscular work, but the distinction lies in the way they are carried out. The aristocrat, or sportsman, can choose when and how much time to devote to their exercises, following rules of hygiene and being in control of their nutrition and rest. In contrast, the “poor plebeian” works excessively, eats inadequately, and sleeps too little, which results in exhaustion. However, connection between the nerves and muscles, known as neuromuscular junction, presents a crucial difference between the two examples. A skilled individual can achieve impressive success through the training of this connection, as demonstrated by jugglers and equilibrists, argued Lagrange. The opposing muscles, he stated, also play a significant role in physical exercises, and their precise and measured action can facilitate movement. However, he highlighted here that excessive and inept action of opposing muscles can interfere with each other and make the work more difficult to perform. Lagrange’s work on the physiology of exercise was thus hereby used by Ambrožič to support Sokol’s overall claims on it having the adequate expertise on physiology of harmonious bodily development, energy expenditure and pedagogy that has the ability to communicate and disseminate it across the country, to its versatile membership. By framing the question of improving the national economy, in such articles, as one of muscle energy expenditure, the relationship between will, nerves and muscle work (that Lagrange also theorized on extensively in his work) Ambožič sought to position the evolutionist pedagogical work of Sokol at the center of the political life, yet in a markedly positivist and scientist manner, with a pronounced hope to have it included into the state’s modernizing agenda.

³⁷² Fernand Lagrange “Fizijologija telesnih vaj” [Physiology of physical exercise], translated by Miroslav Ambrožič. *Vestnik tehničkog odbora Jugoslovenskog sokolskog saveza*, vol. 1-5 (1922), p. 42.

Furthermore, beyond theorizing and publishing on types and multifold impact of bodily and virtual (imagined) movement and posture on the energy efficiency (and consequently labor capacity), the aforementioned Viktor Murnik also greatly influenced the associational practices and on the state level.³⁷³ Through that, he also contributed to the codification and institutionalization of physical education as such. Firstly, he tasked himself relatively early on, with developing a systematized professional gymnastics- and movement-related terminology in Slovene and Serbo-Croatian languages, which hadn't existed before, thus forcing most trainers to rely either on German or on nascent Czech terminology developed by the Czech Sokol Union (*Česká obec sokolská*). This terminology that primarily tackled the most basic movements and positions/postures was in Murnik's focus not only because it was central to the associational life and practices, but also because of his ongoing theorization on the intimate link between bodily movement and a given nation's culture and economy. In the same vein, he set out to systematize the basic gymnastic exercises, taking into account a wide array of physiological, biological, psychological, but also culture- and economy-related concerns. In addition to the terminology itself, whereby he attempted to keep the Czech word roots whenever possible, Murnik also invented a counting system that captures the duration of each movement in case of complex calisthenic exercises or in the context of another form he invented—the so-called gymnastic dances (*telovadni plesi*). The latter namely comprised of calisthenics accompanied by music, akin to the otherwise popular symbolic nation-building tools, the

³⁷³ Ivan Čuk “Dr. Viktor Murnik - ata, oče slovenske telesne kulture” [Dr Viktor Murnik – ata, father of the Slovenian Physical Culture] in: *Naša pot: 150 let ustanovitve Južnega Sokola in sokolskega gibanja = Our way: 150 years since the Southern Sokol and the Sokol movement were established*, pp. 177-194. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za šport, 2014; *Dr. Viktor Murnik: zbornik s posveta*, 24. 3. 2006 [Dr Viktor Murnik: conference proceedings], eds. Tomaž Pavlin, Ivan Čuk. Ljubljana: Muzej športa, 2009; “Murnik, Viktor (1874–1964)”. *Slovenska biografija*. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU, 2013. URL=<http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi382158/#slovenski-biografski-leksikon> (Last access: March 14, 2024). Original entry: *Slovenski biografski leksikon: 6. zv. Mrkun – Peterlin*, [Slovenian biographical lexicon] eds. Franc Ksaver Lukman Ljubljana: Zadrúžna gospodarska banka, 1935; Tomaž Pavlin “‘Naša naloga, smer in cilj’ Idejne osnove sokolske misli in vzgoje” [‘Our Task, Direction and Goal’ Ideological Foundations of the Sokol Thought and Education] *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 49, no. 1 (2009): 81-92; Jelica Vazzaz. *Dr. Viktor Murnik–Ata*. Ljubljana: Olimpijski komite Slovenije, Združenje športnih zvez: Slovenska olimpijska akademija, 1997.

tableaux vivants, and analogous to Dalcroze eurhythmics that was also initially developed for the purpose of character-building.³⁷⁴

Secondly, he greatly contributed to changing the associational practices and culture from the one oriented towards (essentially elitist and certainly urban, middle class) symbolic politics, to the one oriented towards highly professional and holistically understood gymnastics. He thus helped transform an associational culture formerly centered around artistic performances, symbolic rituals in urban spaces, socializing in a Neo-Slavist tradition—into a project that expanded the associational membership, but positioned Sokol as an organization that practically “molds” the “national body”.

Importantly, Murnik’s perhaps most notable strategy of expanding the associational membership was including women and women’s gymnastics trainers, by creating women’s departments and committees within Sokol. These new structures enabled women gymnasts to exercise independently and develop their own physical education practices. In other words, his work was essential for initiating a novel phase of nation-building whereby it was translated from a primarily cultural and intellectual endeavor, into the primarily practical one, with an aim to actually produce Yugoslavs with greater bodily capacity, body-mind harmony and “national awareness” through Sokol’s associational activities. It was very early on that Murnik positioned himself as a mediator between Western European positivist and boundary-work performing of gymnastics theoreticians such as Georges Demény and the local knowledge producing milieus that hadn’t yet experienced the codification or institutionalization. The thinkers who greatly influenced him in this period, usually stemmed from that strain of contemporaneous behaviorist

³⁷⁴ Some of the better known Murnik’s gymnastic dances include: *Valček* [Little waltz] (1913), *Naprej* [Forward] (1919), *Marseljeza* [Marseillaise] (1920), *Turški marš* [Turkish march] (1924), *Poloneza* [Polonaise] (1929), *Pad tirana* [Fall of the tyrants] (year unknown), but perhaps the most notable and most frequently performed one, that overtly reflected on the creation of the state, was *Oslobođenje i ujedinjenje* [Liberation and Unification] (year unknown), for a detailed description, see: Viktor Murnik “Upute za javnu vežbu na pokrajinskom sletu u Osijeku 1921” [Instructions for the public exercise on a regional slet in Osijek in 1921] *Vestnik tehničkog odbora Jugoslovenskog sokolskog saveza*, vol. 6-7 (1921), p. 2.

pedagogy, which sought to reject modern psychology, but also acquired monistic views on the body-mind problem, seeking to connect gymnastics, education and wider sociopolitical systems.

His monistic arguments stemmed not only from the widespread assumptions of other contemporaneous thinkers who dealt with the psychological and political effects of physical education, but also from larger philosophical works. These were, for instance, Emile Zola's examination of the relationship between the *belles-lettres* and physical exercise, but also Ludwig Klages' conceptual distinction between the (e.g. Hegelian) spirit and the soul—both arguments he discusses at length in his own writings, particularly in the 1930s.³⁷⁵

Due to the fact, however, that Yugoslavia experienced volatile party politics over the 1920s, which resulted in a disappointment among those post-Habsburg Yugoslavist thinkers, such as Murnik, who expected the state to take the lead in achieving said goals, he gradually adopted cultural pessimist views. This was very much reflected in his subsequent stances towards physical education as well. In several of his texts, Murnik relied on works of both Spengler and Nietzsche to espouse arguments on modern life's harmful impact on human bodily capacities and used this to overturn the civilizational hierarchies. In this context, he claimed that primitive cultures were bound to develop (unlike modern societies which are bound to stagnate), due to their bodily movements being more natural and unbound. His main inspiration for this, beyond Spengler's take on Slavic nations as the youthful rising ones, was the work of the Leipzig-based ethnologist Karl Weule, who studied different groups' relations to physical exercise and their supposedly consequent cultural development.³⁷⁶ It was in this moment that he sided with the views on the need for spiritual rejuvenation (based on the Klages' concept of the life-affirming

³⁷⁵ Emile Zola "La littérature et la gymnastique" in *Mes haines: causeries littéraires et artistiques*. Paris: A Faure, 1866, pp. 57-67; Translated in "O literaturi in telovadbi" [On literature and physical exercise] *Slovenski Sokol* vol. 2, no. 1 (January 25, 1905), pp. 3-4; Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*. Leipzig, 1929–32.

³⁷⁶ Karl Weule, *Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse meiner ethnographischen Forschungsreise in den Südosten Deutsch-Ostafrikas*. Berlin, 1908; Karl Weule, *Die Kultur der Kulturlosen*. Stuttgart, 1910.

soul), that he claimed could only be achieved through a thorough rejuvenation of the (collective) body.

Murnik, as most other interwar Yugoslav thinkers, maintained that bodies are malleable and belonged to the Lamarckian tradition in assuming that the traits acquired through exercise are inheritable. His practical work in Sokol can thus be seen as an attempt at “molding” the coming generations of Yugoslavs. This agenda was also supported by, otherwise widespread, medicalization of previously espoused civilizational hierarchies. By biologizing and psychologizing the relationship between “primitive” and “advanced” cultures and individuals, through (historically) addressing the questions of intelligence, urges and instincts—Murnik was able to position his work on physical education as essential for ensuring the state’s and political community’s viability, cultural coherence and economic progress.³⁷⁷

When regarded from this perspective, his writings on the theory of movement and his notable work on systematizing basic calisthenic movements, as well as their expert terminology in Slovene and Serbo-Croatian languages, represent crucial vehicle and backdrop for his further theorizing on versatile movement. Murnik saw the latter as conducive to producing citizens with enlarged labor capacity, energy, efficiency, but also to developing psychological traits that would ensure a more stable and progressive political culture, such as the feeling of social solidarity, social justice, democratic spirit (*demokratičnost*), cooperativeness, intelligence etc. When examining the texts that he produced, it is visible that the pool of sources and debates he mainly drew on, consisted of progressive, reformist Germanophone physical education theorists, such as the immensely influential Karl Gaulhofer and Margarete Streicher who later

³⁷⁷ He has done this most extensively in: Viktor Murnik, *Kultura in telovadba*. [Culture and physical exercise] Ljubljana: self-published, 1929. The text of this book first appeared as a series of articles in the main Sokol periodical, *Sokolski glasnik*, earlier that same year.

jointly coined the theory on “natural movement”,³⁷⁸ as well as Ferdinand August Schmidt, the notable promoter of open-air gymnastics and the FKK movement.³⁷⁹ The fact that he included them relatively late in his writings,³⁸⁰ also indicates that the change of paradigm from the behaviorist to reformed pedagogies occurred largely around the time of the Great Depression. It also signals that it might have happened as a result of the cross-fertilization of discourses among the behaviorist stream and those who aimed to challenge or to complement their intellectual agenda from different directions.

Furthermore, he also relied significantly on the work of the Hungarian-Jewish philosopher and physicist of the older generation, Menyhért Palágyi. In his research, Palágyi dealt with the philosophy of perception and imagination, and it was his theory on “virtual movement” that Murnik used to further theorize and experiment on the connection between the physiology of exercise and imaginative psychological processes. Hereby, he claimed that they have the same psychological and mental effect as the actual, physical, movements.³⁸¹ Among the cultural pessimists he engaged with, Oswald Spengler (whose *Der Mensch und die Technik* proved especially inspiring for Murnik’s arguments on technology’s role in lessening of the human bodily capacities) and Nietzsche took the primacy, especially from the late 1920s, once he fully decided to subvert the traditionally construed civilizational hierarchies.

³⁷⁸ Most notable publications of theirs, in this period, being: Karl Gaulhofer, Streicher, Margarete. *Grundzüge des österreichischen Volksschulturnens*. Vienna: Dt. Verl. für Jugend u. Volk, 1922; Karl Gaulhofer. *Die neue Turnlehrerausbildung in Österreich*. Berlin: Weidmann, 1927; Karl Gaulhofer, *Turn- und Spielfest der Mittelschulen von Wien und Niederösterreich*. Vienna: Dt. Verl. für Jugend u. Volk, 1923. Most of their pre-1930 articles can be found in the volume: *Natürliches Turnen: gesammelte Aufsätze*, eds. Karl Gaulhofer, Margarete Streicher. Vienna, Leipzig: Dt. Verl. für Jugend u. Volk, 1930.

³⁷⁹ F. A. Schmidt, *Unser Körper. Handbuch der Anatomie, Physiologie und Hygiene der Leibesübungen*. Leipzig: R. Voigtländer, 1899; Ferdinand August Schmidt, *Das Schulkind nach seiner körperlichen Eigenart und Entwicklung*. Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1914, Ferdinand August Schmidt, *Physiologie der Leibesübungen*. Leipzig: R. Voigtländer, 1922.

³⁸⁰ They appear only from 1929 onwards in his references.

³⁸¹ Menyhért Palágyi, *Naturphilosophische Vorlesungen über die Grundprobleme des Bewusstseins und des Lebens*. Leipzig, 1924; Menyhért Palágyi, *Die Logik auf dem Scheidewege*. Berlin, 1903; Menyhért Palágyi, *Wahrnehmungslehre*. Leipzig, 1925; On one occasion he went even deeper, using Palágyi’s work to debate the relationship between the physical and metaphysical more generally, relying on his book: *Zur Weltmechanik Beiträge zur Methaphysik der Physik*; Barth. Leipzig, 1925.

Combining the American-style theory of scientific management, derived directly from Henry Ford, and the holistic behaviorist pedagogy such as that of Eduard Spranger,³⁸² Murnik strongly believed in the ability of physical education to teach or train individuals to use their physical energies in an economically efficient manner. Specifically, he thought it possible to apply those same principles when performing labor and in the process of citizens' cultural development, ultimately achieving state sovereignty through economic emancipation. In the context of the relatively small, unstable and certainly economically weak Yugoslavia, this question was of paramount importance, especially when framed in positivist terms. Importantly, when taking into account this pool of references, it is visible that his understanding of the energy and fatigue within the “national body” was both channeled towards raising the labor efficacy and productivity,³⁸³ as well as retaining and improving the cultural-cum-civilizational level of the nation. The effects of physical education on national and global economy were most theorized in his subsequent works *Sokolstvo in življenje* (Sokol and life)³⁸⁴ and *Sokolstvo in narodno gospodarstvo* (Sokol and the national economy),³⁸⁵ whereby he adopted Charles Gide’s view of national economy.³⁸⁶ Prompted by the outbreak of the Great Depression, Murnik hereby

³⁸² Eduard Spranger “Lehrer und Lehrerpersönlichkeit” *Monatsschrift für Turnen, Spiel und Sport*, vol. 11 (1924), p. 462; Eduard Spranger, *Kultur und Erziehung. Gesammelte pädagogische Aufsätze*. Leipzig, 1919; Eduard Spranger, *Psychologie des Jugendalters*. Leipzig, 1924; Eduard Spranger, “Lebensformen. Ein Entwurf” in *Festschrift fuer Alois Riehl. Von Freunden und Schülern zu seinem 70. Geburtstage dargebracht*. Niemeyer, Halle (Saale) 1914; Eduard Spranger, *Volk, Staat, Erziehung. Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze*. Leipzig, 1932; Werner Sacher, *Eduard Spranger 1902–1933. Ein Erziehungsphilosoph zwischen Dilthey und den Neukantianern* (= Europäische Hochschulschriften. Reihe 11: Pädagogik. Bd. 347). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1988.

³⁸³ Radu Harald Dinu, “Recent Historiographical Trends in Scholarship on Disability and Socialism in Eastern Europe” *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research* vol. 24, no. 1 (2022), pp. 42–53; Kathryn E. Amdur, “Paternalism, Productivism, Collaborationism: Employers and Society in Interwar and Vichy France.” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, vol. 53 (1998), pp. 137-163; *The Disability Reader: Social Science Perspectives*, edited by Tom Shakespeare. London: Continuum, 1998.

³⁸⁴ Viktor Murnik, *Sokolstvo in življenje* [Sokol and life]. Ljubljana, 1932.

³⁸⁵ Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (8.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (10.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (12.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (15.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (22.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (24.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (26.3.1932), p. 4;

³⁸⁶ Charles Gide, *Cours d’Économie politique*, vol. 1. Paris, 1919.

reflected on the phenomenon of unemployment in conjunction with bodily capacities and cultural (technological) development on the global level, also relying on Norman Angell, for instance. Here, he paid special attention to the developmental difference between the “whites” and the “colored peoples”, as a consequence of their habitual bodily movements and physical culture, yet again subverting the hegemonic civilizational hierarchies. In dialogue with a local thinker, namely the White émigré, of positivist agrarian orientation, Aleksander Bilimovič (a professor of national economy at the University of Ljubljana), Murnik also addressed the issue of global economic dependencies that underlie global economic crises. Yet, he did so by employing a biopolitical lens, closer to his own interests and expertise.³⁸⁷

In the aforementioned booklet, *Kultura in telovadba* (Culture and Physical Exercise, 1929), he argued that all culture is merely an exponent of the nature of the human body and is thus solely building upon those foundations. This argument can be read as an essentially antimodernist, but at the same time evolutionist, take on civilizational hierarchies. The transformation of Murnik’s thought in this period can be seen in the gradual shift from a liberal, optimistic, culturally Yugoslavist evolutionist thinker who was socialized in the modernist neo-Slavist traditions, towards a culturally pessimistic one that heavily biologizes and essentializes cultural phenomena. It likely stemmed from his and most other intellectuals’ grave disappointment brought about by the turbulent politics of the first decade of the interwar Yugoslav state and later the Great Depression. For that very reason, this 1929 booklet is one of his first publications that reflects his change of attitude, that would mark his later writings from the 1930s and in which the said disappointment in the state produced calls for the wider jurisdiction of Sokol in politics and society alike.

Seen from the Slovenian perspective, the most industrialized and literate language group in the interwar Yugoslav state, Murnik’s theorization on physical and psychological malleability on

³⁸⁷ Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” *Trgovski list* (26.3.1932), p. 4.

the one hand and placing of these debates into civilizational framework on the other hand, can be seen as an attempt to argue for equalizing the state's immensely diverse populations, at least in terms of bodily capacity and psychological disposition. Importantly, having in mind his strictly anti-clerical, urban liberal milieu in Ljubljana, aligned with the royal court's unitary Yugoslavism, often for economic reasons, his amalgamation-focused theoretical arguments could be seen not only as modernization attempts, but also as supportive of centralist conception of the novel state.³⁸⁸

To sum up, the scientist and expertise-based approach characteristic for Murnik, Ambrožič and their colleagues from the Technical Committee, remained fairly typical for the otherwise dominant liberal-positivist streams' intellectual and theoretical approach to the question of physical education throughout this period, albeit it also had its challengers throughout the 1920s, who did not seek to revert back to the behaviorist paradigm that reigned in the state school system, but rather to expand the Sokol pedagogy into a more experimental, cognitivist and "natural" direction, whereby the latter oftentimes carried distinctly essentialist, Yugoslavist, connotations. Crucially, those who sought to challenge the more positivist paradigm, were chiefly concerned with the practical reform of Sokol pedagogy, encompassing its intellectual, psychological and physical impact respectively.

2.3.2. Play, Instinct and Development: Reforming the Sokol Pedagogy Between Universalist and Essentialist Approaches

³⁸⁸ For a more detailed and sophisticated examination of the Slovenian urban liberals' preference for state centralism in this context, see: Oskar Mulej, "Jugoslavizem slovenskih 'naprednjakov' v luči sočasnih združevalnih nacionalnih ideologij: Primerjava s čehoslovakizmom" [Yugoslavism of Slovenian 'progressives' in light of contemporary unifying national ideologies: A comparison with Czechoslovakism] *Kolektivne identitete skozi prizmo zgodovine dolgega trajanja. Slovenski pogledi*, ed. Vanja Kočevar. Ljubljana: ZRC SAZU, 2022, pp. 605-622.

Within the liberal-positivist camp that was much more prone to engaging with pedagogical and biomedical discourses, there were multiple entry-points for those who aimed to supplement or challenge the normative Sokol pedagogy prescribed by the Technical committee. One of the paramount topics of that sort, in this period—in the discussion of and theoretization on which the Sokol thinkers developed some of the most sophisticated transdisciplinary arguments on body-mind relation—is the one of (the philosophy of) play. This was also supported by Sokol's own associational transformation which meant the much wider inclusion of children and youth since its expansion in the early 1920s, prompting many thinkers to theorize on pedagogy and developmental psychology, in conjunction with physical movement and exercise characteristic for Sokol's traditions. Importantly, many of these debates within Sokol periodicals sought to radically reform the strictly behaviorist Sokol pedagogy inherited from the prewar period. Many of them aimed to do this by prioritizing natural bodily movements, finding methods to increase the energy and bodily capacity of the gymnast, as well as ensuring their harmonious mental and bodily development through non-traditional pedagogies, but also by thoroughly changing the environment used for the exercises.

In fact, it was already in 1923 that the Czech Sokol's novel understanding of the role of (physical exercise-based) play in improving youth developmental psychology caught the attention of the League of Nation's Intellectual Cooperation and International Bureaux Section.³⁸⁹ In his memorandum on "Play and Nationality", Colonel Ronald Bruce Campbell, the director of physical and recreational training in the British Army and head of their successful fencing team, recounts what he concluded after having studied the Prague Sokol for several months, directly relating it to the political agenda of the League. Espousing a strictly

³⁸⁹ File R1013/13/27340/27340 - Physical Training (Sokol Institution Prague) - Communicated by Mr. Colban - Memorandum, entitled "Play and Nationality" showing the Influence of Games on Character, handed by Col. Campbell to Mr Colban. *United Nations Library and Archived Geneva*, League of Nations Secretariat, Intellectual Cooperation and International Bureaux Section, Registry Files (1919-1927).

Lamarckian view on the inheritance of acquired characteristics, Colonel Campbell discussed the (suppression of) instincts for play in both animals and humans, eventually arguing that a child deprived of opportunity to play will eagerly be “devouring bolshevist doctrines”.³⁹⁰ He further asserts that play is a natural means of education that contains a constructive tendency,³⁹¹ maternal and paternal instincts, that are, in turn, the “foundation of community and citizenship”,³⁹² highlighting that organizations such as Sokol and Boy Scouts—which productively build on these universal developmental stages of youth, thus represent a pacifist endeavor. Hereby he particularly underscored that physical exercise is crucial for building those character traits that eventually contribute to the wealth of the nation, as well as international comradeship. Despite these connections between physical exercise, character and ultimately political culture and a given country’s economy, that he presented, very much resembling Sokol discourse—Colonel Campbell’s argument differed in one very important way. Namely, he substituted, and on occasions equated, sports and gymnastics—in stark contrast to Sokol’s traditions that aimed to alienate competitive sports from its membership as much as possible, in favor of promoting collective calisthenics and gymnastics. Furthermore, he presupposed the general equality of developmental stages and instincts in youth, regardless of their background, which was something most Yugoslav Sokol pedagogical theorists would not concede to, in this period.

In the Yugoslav Sokol context, it was Stjepan Vrdoljak, a Split-based prolific integral Yugoslavist thinker, physician and publicist, who wrote most about play and reform pedagogy, in different periodicals, from the mid-1920s onwards. Based on his close involvement with the

³⁹⁰ Ibid, sheet 2 of the memorandum.

³⁹¹ This, while not explicitly referenced, is the *verbatim* definition of play provided by the philosopher Karl Groos and the argument of his most notable book on *The Play of Animals*, published in 1898. This same postulate, namely that games (as results of inborn instincts) are the natural means to education and preparation for life, was best promoted by Stjepan Vrdoljak, within the association.

³⁹² File R1013/13/27340/27340 - Physical Training (Sokol Institution Prague) - Communicated by Mr. Colban - Memorandum, entitled “Play and Nationality” showing the Influence of Games on Character, sheet 2 of the memorandum.

associational membership in Split, Vrdoljak assessed the negative impact of urban, industrial life on the young bodies in development, that he thought Sokol should be a corrective to, through its work. Focusing on the issues of learning, posture and physical environment with special regard to air quality and light, he pushed back against the enclosure of young gymnasts in the Sokol gyms. Instead, he called for not only increasing the number of their outdoor activities, but also abandoning the traditional exercises in favor of individualized guided play that would help promote harmonic growth of both body and mind. Crucially, Vrdoljak addressed the issue of gymnasts' environment in conjunction with their alleged biological and psychological predispositions, as well as the realization of the desired sociopolitical order.

In one of such texts, Vrdoljak states: "Nature is the best teacher. (...) children have always played and will always play. The concerns of the adults that play leads to lack of concentration and is harmful to schoolwork, are in vain. The child's brain, and consequently its body, is fatigued both by school and by life; the child is driven by an instinct to rest itself during playtime, to disburden the tiresome regions, giving stimulation to the rested ones. The tired ones rest during play and the whole organism is being strengthened through bodily movement. (...) Our task will be to routinize play and to ensure it is respectful, moderate and timely. We will exploit it to perfect various psychological characteristics that are naturally being developed in that age, so as to channel them and ameliorate the weaker instincts".³⁹³ Such arguments mark the much wider change of the pedagogical paradigm from the behaviorist knowledge-oriented to cognitivist individual-oriented, with special attention paid to adapting the program to the students' (percieved or evidence-based) natural development. This change was rather visible within Sokol, in contrast to the state educational system that hasn't experienced a reform in that direction.³⁹⁴ While Jean Piaget is not explicitly cited in Vrdoljak or other such thinkers' text, it

³⁹³ Stjepan Vrdoljak "Srž telesnog vaspitanja dece" [The crux of physical education of children] *Jugoslavenski Sokol*, vol. 5, (1924), pp. 69-72.

³⁹⁴ Pieter Troch, *Education and Yugoslav Nationhood*.

is plausible to assume that his initial work on cognitive psychology and reform education was widely known and consulted by them at this time. The same could be asserted in the case of the aforementioned Karl Groos and his work on cognitive development and instinct management (amplification or minification) through games (“Einübungstheorie, Selbstausbildungstheorie und théorie de l’exercice préparatoire”).³⁹⁵

Importantly, however, for Vrdoljak and Sokol trainers and thinkers more broadly, it was primarily the physical exercise, as well as play, that preceded any sort of psychological development and intellectual learning alike, not least because of the greater malleability of children’s bodies and minds, as opposed to that of adults. In one of his articles, to support this thesis in conjunction with discussing the interest of particular nations in physical education and play, Vrdoljak even referred to Ernst Haeckel’s Biogenetic Law (1866), that states that each embryo’s developmental stage represents an adult form of an evolutionary ancestor—yet another Lamarckian reference.³⁹⁶ Following such assertions, Vrdoljak also cautioned against competitive games,³⁹⁷ namely sports of different kinds, as well as competitive gymnastics among children and youth, citing their harmful impact on their psychological development and describing their role in causing antisocial behavior. Interestingly, however, he pointed to various strains of pedagogical research that theorized on the primacy of physical movement on the one, and mood and personality development, on the other hand. He hereby referenced the influential Italian researcher Giovanni Antonio Colozza who studied the psychology of children’s games, concluding that competitive games should not serve as an educational method within Sokol.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁵ Stjepan Vrdoljak “Teorija Karl Groosa o igri” [The game theory of Karl Groos] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 2-3 (1924), pp. 1-4.

³⁹⁶ Stjepan Vrdoljak “O jačanju interesa do telesne vježbe” [On increasing the interest for physical education] *Jugoslavenski sokol*, vol. 1, (1926), pp. 6-9.

³⁹⁷ Stjepan Vrdoljak “Jedna slaba strana borbenih vježbi” [One harmful component of competitive exercises] *Jugoslavenski Sokol*, vol. 4. (1926), pp. 57-59.

³⁹⁸ Giovanni Antonio Colozza, *Psychologie Und Pädagogik des Kinderspiels*. Altenburg, 1900.

Within such arguments, the most relevant indicator of the underlying biological and psychological dispositions for thinkers such as Vrdoljak was the instinct, that they saw as a direct product of environmental determinism, which for most Yugoslav thinkers tied into Jovan Cvijić's notion of a distinct Dinaric race, at that time already deeply embedded in cultural and historical narratives of the neo-romanticist, and increasingly Balkanist, camp.³⁹⁹

Seen from this perspective, many expert Sokol thinkers argued that it was the task of the association to channel those inborn, inherited and rather unique set of instincts into the betterment and perfection of the future generations of Yugoslavs. In the Lamarckian logic that vast majority of them subscribed to, these instincts were not stable and universal within the “national body”, but rather acquirable, intensifiable, as well as losable or minimizable. Reflecting on the role of the instinct in Sokol pedagogy, Vrdoljak stated that: “Instinct, whether it is strictly inborn or a phenomenon mixed with atavistic inheritance, is in any case an internal human phenomenon, that appears in a specific moment, under particular conditions. The external stimuli can cause only the quicker development of already germinated instincts or the palliation and slowdown of the speed of their development, but they can in no case be the cause of their nascency. In the case of eunuch, despite the immensely attractive external stimulus, his sexual instinct is benumbed, due to the unnatural physiological process. The case of the game is similar. Instinct, as much as it was the cause of the game's origins, as well as the consequent development of various psychological characteristics, is not enough on its own, for various psychological phenomena to be adequately developed.”⁴⁰⁰ Instead, he suggested that Sokol trainers seeking to improve and essentially reform the associational pedagogy turn to the works of notable Swiss child psychologist and neurologist Édouard Claparède. Claparède was one of

³⁹⁹ Vedran Duančić, *Geography and Nationalist Visions of Interwar Yugoslavia*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

⁴⁰⁰ Stjepan Vrdoljak “Smernice telesnom odgoju dece” [The guidelines for the physical education of children] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 7 (1926), pp. 85-6.

the main representatives of the international reformist movement for “new education”, centered around a markedly pacifist and liberal internationalist agenda. He might have served as an inspiration for Vrdoljak due to his study of the pervasiveness of underlying instincts in psychological development, but while appropriating Claparède’s universalist findings to the Sokol agenda, Vrdoljak and most other Sokol thinkers who aimed to challenge the behaviorist tradition essentialized and rooted the origins of these supposed instincts in the local geographic environment and romanticist notions of national history.

This approach is also visible from a review of the notable books published within this field, as is the case with a laudable review of the book *Hry a Písň Děti Slovanských* (*Slavic Children’s Games and Songs*), published by the White émigré musicologist Semyon Petrovich Orlov in Prague,⁴⁰¹ with a special introduction by the influential Czech ethnographer and archaeologist Lubor Niederle and illustrations provided by the neo-romanticist painter Mikoláš Aleš.⁴⁰² The review appeared anonymously in 1929 in the periodical intended for the advanced Sokol trainers⁴⁰³ and espoused a distinctly essentialist reading of the Slavic children’s games, recounting Orlov’s argument without further critical reflection.

For instance, it claimed that, in contrast to Western European children who play with rather specified toys, the Slavic child intentionally chooses a more primitive toy, so as to develop their imagination and invent various games around it. Moreover, it argues that Slavic children’s ancient games are a repository of historical sources for the broader history of Slavs, since they remained unchanged, unlike those of German or English children whose games are forever lost

⁴⁰¹ Professor of singing in the Russian Realgymnasium in Prague (1890, Moscow – 1973, Prague) and collector of folk songs, see: Nadezhda Pavlovna Mamaeva, *Musical Education of Children in Schools and Extra-curricular Institutions of the Russians Abroad (1920s-1930s)*, PhD dissertation. Perm State Humanitarian-Pedagogical University, 2018, pp. 64-66

⁴⁰² S. P. Orlov, *Hry a Písň Děti Slovanských: Rozbor Po Stránce Námetové, Literární a Hudební Klasifikace a Praktická Sbírka 500 Dětských Písni a Her Všechn Národů Slovanských*. [Slavic Children’s Games and Songs: A Page-by-Page Analysis of Themes, Literary and Musical Classification, and a Practical Collection of 500 Children’s Songs and Plays of All Slavic Nations] Prague: Československá obec sokolská, 1928.

⁴⁰³ “Književnost” [Literature] *Prednjak*, vol 7-8 (1929), p. 101. (without author)

to industrialization and urbanization. Orlov, similarly to Yugoslav Sokol's stance, hereby considered the element of competition to be almost completely alien to Slavic children's games and more characteristic for the Western, English-speaking world. In this context, he also insisted that Slavic children not only play by performing bodily movements, but, in fact, dramatize them and create elaborate stories and characters while playing out a game. For all these reasons, Orlov urged his readers (as did the anonymous reviewer) to collect and describe such games, but also to integrate them into the state curricula across Slavic countries, so as to emancipate from the harmful influence of German approach to children's games: "Kindred Slavic songs and games are most pleasant to the spirit and temperament of the Slavic child, they can invigorate the Slavic fundamentals of child's psychology and support the development of its Slavic personality [LB: individualnosti]".⁴⁰⁴ This example showcases how the essentialist drive was not only a product of the local intellectual environment and traditions, but also of the Sokol's long-term interconnection with the White émigré community at home and abroad, that had its own intellectual stakes, not least the discourse of Slavic character and commonality, in an anti-modernist, anti-progressivist key. It, moreover, illustrates the tension between the presupposition of a particular, allegedly inherited, character and Sokol's agenda to further mold the future generations, so as to achieve an authentic political modernity.

Somewhat later in 1929, however, Vrdoljak proposed a reform of Sokol pedagogy that was to ameliorate the harmful effects of traditional state education, in a much more intellectually complex way. Drawing on the French physical culturist Fernand Lagrange's distinction between the "natural" and "artificial" (bodily) movements,⁴⁰⁵ Ferdinand August Schmidt's developmental gymnastics⁴⁰⁶ and expressionist dance theorist Rudolf Bode's insistence on the

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Fernand Lagrange, *L'Hygiène de l'exercice chez les enfants et les jeunes gens*. Paris: F. Alcan, 1894.

⁴⁰⁶ Ferdinand August Schmidt, *Unser Körper: Handbuch der Anatomie, Physiologie und Hygiene der Leibesübungen*. Leipzig: Voigtländer, 1899.

importance of physical education for the upholding and survival of a nation-state,⁴⁰⁷ he suggested a synthetic approach that would harmonically develop both the body and the mind of Yugoslavia's citizens. It would do so in a way that both tames and productively channels their inborn instincts for the benefit of the national community. Succintly, he concluded with the three main tasks of gymnastics in his present day: "...to emancipate the human body (...) to tame the human body (...) to raise the human body".⁴⁰⁸ He elaborated, saying that: "It is simply about awakening again that plastic [LB: plastički] feeling, inherent in every man. This primordial plastic physical feeling is completely different than affectation [LB: afektiranje] and exaggerating in one's expression...".⁴⁰⁹ This proposition illustrates the multi-layered "molding" of the "national body" that Sokol thinkers imagined themselves conducting within the association and beyond. It operates on biological, cultural and political levels respectively, with a pronounced positivist assumption on the one, and dynamically essentializing tendency on the other hand.

Importantly, Vrdoljak also theorized on the topic of energy and fatigue in a series of articles published from 1922 to 1925, challenging Murnik's and other Sokol trainers' approach to gymnastics that they began codifying, disseminating and institutionalizing around this time, through the STO. Relying primarily on the works of the Italian physiologist Angelo Mosso who theorized on the relationship between body, mind and energy around the turn of century, as well as invented important medical measuring instruments, such as the ergogram, used for measuring

⁴⁰⁷ Rudolf Bode, *Gymnastik und Jugenderziehung*. Munich, 1922.

⁴⁰⁸ Stjepan Vrdoljak "Nekoja mišljenja o tjelesnom odgoju djeteta" [Some thoughts on the physical education of a child] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 10-11 (1929), pp. 170-174.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

the muscular fatigue.⁴¹⁰ Vrdoljak's take on energy was, thus, markedly monistic,⁴¹¹ in contrast to those who recognized solely the physical fatigue as an issue to be amended within the framework of the aforementioned "human economy", such as Murnik. For Vrdoljak, there was no separation between physical and mental, or intellectual, fatigue, as he was primarily concerned with physiological and neurological level of energy expenditure, as well as impact of energy levels on learning processes and development.⁴¹² In other words, he saw physical exercise, such as the one performed in Sokol, as incapable of raising the energy level in gymnasts. The only exception were those types of exercises that were performed with joy (e.g. games), which he regarded as having potential for raising one's energy levels, an idea borrowed from Lagrange. Such joyful exercises, he further claimed, can only be derived from natural bodily movements, as opposed to the artificial ones, that required more energy from the gymnast to perform, as they have to invest energy to train his nervous system and muscles to perform them, at least initially, until the artificial movement becomes routinized.⁴¹³

In conjunction with this, Vrdoljak discussed the issue of attention in gymnasts, framing it also as a matter of energy, fatigue and exercise (routinization to shorten the reaction time), as well as development of the will as such, necessary to maintain attention while performing the given movement.⁴¹⁴ He hereby drew on Ernest Meumann's theoretical framework⁴¹⁵ and Philippe

⁴¹⁰ Serge Nicolas, Dalibor Vobořil "Ergographs and dynamographs: New devices at the turn of the century for the measurement of muscular fatigue and endurance" *L'Année psychologique*, vol. 117, no. 3 (2017), pp. 311-349; Angelo Mosso, *La Fatigue Intellectuelle et Physique*. Paris, 1903.; Angelo Mosso, *Les Exercices Physiques et le Développement Intellectuel*. Paris, 1904; Angelo Mosso, *La democrazia nella religione e nella scienza; studi sull'America*. Milan, 1908.

⁴¹¹ Stjepan Vrdoljak, "Umornost i tjeļovjeŹba Źkolske djece" [Fatigue and physical exercise of school children] *Sokolski vjesnik Źupe zagrebaĹke*, vol. 10-11-12 (1922), pp. 236-239; importantly, Vrdoljak hereby sought to quantify intellectual and physical fatigue by using the fatigue index developed by the Swiss neurologist and developmental psychologist Édouard Claparède.

⁴¹² S. V. "VaŹnost relaksije kod ritmiĹke gimnastike i u Źivotu" [The importance of relaxation in rhythmical gymnastics and in life] *Sokol na Jadranu*, vol. 11-12 (1927), p. 161.

⁴¹³ Stjepan Vrdoljak "ZaŹto se tjeļovjeŹba kreĹe u uskim granicama" [Why does our exercise have a limited repertoire] *Sokolski vjesnik Źupe zagrebaĹke*, vol. 2 (1923), pp. 2-4.

⁴¹⁴ Stjepan Vrdoljak "PaŹnja i tjeļovjeŹba" [Attention and physical exercise] *Sokolski vjesnik Źupe zagrebaĹke*, vol. 8 (1924), pp. 208-9.

⁴¹⁵ Robert Jahrling "Experimental Pedagogy, the Science of Education" *The Pedagogical Seminary*, vol. 30, no. 1 (1923), pp. 40-44.

Tissie's psychodynamic method of will development, positing them as a solution to "widespread ills of contemporary age, excessive sensitivity and weak will" and "high percentage of passive, affective characters" within the population. Building on this premise, Vrdoljak argued for introducing more competitive games, natural movements and relying on intrinsic motivation of gymnasts, within and beyond Sokol.⁴¹⁶

While Vrdoljak mostly channeled the novel French, Italian and German pedagogical and gymnastics-related trends into the associational discourse, it was Dušan Bogunović who was more intent on translating these premises into Sokol associational practice in an exact and measurable manner, as well as through the careful design of the environment in which physical education was to take place. Here, he put particular focus on the achievements of the developmental and cognitive psychology that was to eliminate harmful phenomena in the nation's sociopolitical life.⁴¹⁷ By 1927, Bogunović was visibly frustrated and diagnosed a social and moral crisis that he felt only Sokol was equipped to respond to, by raising an uncorrupted generation with healthier and stronger psychological character traits.⁴¹⁸

Overall, it can be argued that actors such as Vrdoljak and Bogunović wanted to reform Sokol pedagogy and infuse it with the novel approaches that stemmed from experimental and/or cognitivist pedagogy, with special focus on physical education as a means to ameliorating what they saw as an all-encompassing sociopolitical crisis. Taking a new role of Sokol, that went beyond ensuring the health and strength of the "national body", and entered the realm of biologizing and psychologizing the said body—they saw Sokol as an avenue for large-scale manipulation of the populations' inborn instincts and fine-tuning of their energy expenditure,

⁴¹⁶ Stjepan Vrdoljak "Upliv telesne vežbe na razvoj volje" [The influence of physical exercise to the development of the will]] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 6 (1925), pp. 109-111.

⁴¹⁷ Dušan Bogunović, "Osnovi znanja kod odgoja deteta" [The fundamental knowledge when raising the child] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 2 (1923), pp. 12-14; Dušan Bogunović "Nacrt Sokolskoga Doma u selu i varoši: projektovao brat arhitekt Josip Mašek" [Sketch of a Sokol gym in the village and city: designed by the brother architect Josip Mašek] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 9 (1927), pp. 116-118.

⁴¹⁸ Dušan Bogunović "Harmonija odgoja u Sokolstvu" [Harmony of education in Sokol] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 4-5 (1927), pp. 33-35.

for the purpose of character-building and, ultimately, spiritual rejuvenation. Their agenda thus also represented a challenge to Murnik's labor- and economy-driven theorization on energy and fatigue.

To sum up, this change of focus from training bodies as part of holistic physical education, also implied a change of Sokol's role in sociopolitical life of the new state, fashioning it as an educational association with a pronounced regenerative mission. In Vrdoljak's own words: "The spirit should be cured as well, given it was damaged by the war equally as the body, if not more, since those who were spiritually the strongest, left their bones across sorry Balkan gorges or casemates, while those who stayed alive want to blow up the foundations that were built upon the bones of the best among us. Beyond the state initiative, we want to mention two important factors that, from our perspective, have the potential to assist in the regeneration of the soul and the body. School, reformed in terms of physical education (...) that applies the achievements of experimental pedagogy and psychology. Sokol..."⁴¹⁹ that would be a partner in achieving the desired sociopolitical order and moral rejuvenation, by producing strong individual characters through its radically reformed pedagogy.

It is difficult to assess the real impact that all of the examined suggestions and initiatives had on the associational life and membership, yet an indicative critical opinion piece published by the Zagreb-based Slavist Josip Hamm in 1925⁴²⁰ can provide a sense of the obstacles faced by Sokol thinkers and officials in their attempts to realize their ambitious program. Hamm overtly addressed the issues such as the large fluctuation in membership number, polarization of the ideological and gymnastic work, as well as work of Sokol in the age of sociopolitical extremes ("symbolism—epic romanticism ; pacifism—militarism ; centralism—separatism"), saying

⁴¹⁹ Stjepan Vrdoljak "Uz harmonički odgoj duha i tela do obnove današnjeg čoveka" [Using the harmonious raising of spirit and the body to achieve the regeneration of today's man] *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 1-2 (1925), pp. 6-7.

⁴²⁰ Josip Hamm "Appendix" *Sokolski vjesnik Župe zagrebačke*, vol. 11-12 (1925), pp. 219-221.

that there are clubs that only focus on gymnastics, as well as those that “went into the other extreme, namely in excessive ideologizing”, concluding that: “...and indeed—that merely verbally transmitted and solely theoretically received Sokol idea is developing recently in a sickening specter, in the heads of the attendees, into a hypocrisy, from which everyone wants to free themselves sooner or later”.⁴²¹

2.4. Conclusion

The chapter examined the structural, intellectual and epistemic trends in the Yugoslav Sokol Union in the period from 1918 to 1929, arguing that the main axis of the associational tension was between those liberal-positivist thinkers who promoted the Yugoslavist framework and those who challenged it from different sides of the ideological-epistemic spectrum. This tension was also reflected in the structural dynamics within and around the association. Firstly, it resulted in the breaking away of the Croatian Sokol in January 1922 and later in the ratification of the new legislation on the Yugoslav Sokol that resulted from the establishment of the Royal Dictatorship of King Aleksandar Karađorđević in 1929. The latter essentially mandated the centralization and unification of all existing Sokol associations into a single one, conceived in the unitarist Yugoslav manner.

In the part of the chapter that deals with the political discourses (2.2. and 2.2.1. respectively), different Sokol-affiliated publications were examined, which sought to provide the new Yugoslav identity with different meanings and roots, ranging from arguing for its historical-legal subjectivity to those, that sought to root it in expertise-based arguments, largely stemming from geographic and linguistic arguments, but also from biological and cultural ones. These

⁴²¹ Hamm, “Appendix”, p. 220.

two subchapters also demonstrated the disciplinary and ideological fault lines between the still rather liberal Yugoslavist paradigm and its challengers that either subscribed to the “tribal” nationalist-romanticist frameworks, oftentimes due to Yugoslavist religious tolerance and their religious affiliation, or those on the further left.

The second part of the chapter dealt with the way the expertise-based discourses (e.g. from pedagogical, gymnastics and biomedical contexts) framed the Sokol pedagogy within the sphere of physical education, but also attempted to position the association as a crucial political actor for ensuring the new state’s viability, physical strenght and economic prosperity. It also showcased different ways in which this normative stance was supplemented or brought into question by those Sokol thinkers who mediated reformist trends from the Western pedagogical contexts, ultimately bringing the associational discussions towards the essentialist side of the spectrum. This was likely caused by the initially positivist thinkers’ grave disappointment in state’s governing capacities, party politics at large, as well as the outbreak of the Great Depression—which highlighted the unfavorable place of Yugoslavia in the intricate international web of economic dependencies. The chapter also discussed the difficulties associational leaders faced in translating the complex theoretical debates and postulates into the association-wide practice, as well as obstacles they faced in their attempts to scale up their work onto the state-level.

To sum up, while this initial (parliamentary) period was marked by complex tensions that impacted Sokol intellectual production, communication and dissemination, it can be argued that it was the one of the dominance of the liberal-positivist stream within the association. In that way, it marked relative continuity with the prewar evolutionist and largely liberal traditions, despite the new political circumstances and the attempt to change the agenda from the nationally-framed one to the one that would position Sokol as the “gardener of the nation”. In turn, most discourses that pertained to the political community, employed organicist perspective

onto what they conceptualized as the “national body”. Such conceptualization of a political community presupposed a notion sovereignty that was shared among the members of the “national body”, rather than the state. This was also the period in which Sokol thinkers continuously accentuated their liberal universalist, internationalist and pacifist agenda.⁴²²

Crucially, however, due to the continuing lack of consensus between the different heirs of the Sokol traditions in the state and their parallel existence (within JSS/JSZ and beyond), this period also saw the beginning of the cross-fertilization of discourses, particularly modernist positivist ones and anti-positivist, romanticist ones that would come to dominate the intellectual landscape of the Sokol throughout the 1930s, once the association lost its typical liberal-positivist character and structural components, becoming instead an epitome of state centralisation and an ever-essentializing integral Yugoslavist agenda.

⁴²² One of the central slogans of the Yugoslav Sokol being ‘Jugoslavenstvu Slavenstvu, Slavenstvu čovječanstvu’ [With Yugoslavism towards Slavism, with Slavism towards Humanity].

3. Becoming Official: Yugoslav Sokol's Rise to Prominence during the Royal Dictatorship and Beyond

3.1. Structural Reconfiguration and the Co-opting of Sokol by the Centralizing State

The period between the establishment of the Royal Dictatorship in 1929 and the assassination of the King Aleksandar Karađorđević in 1934, represents the one of Sokol's rapid growth in size, organizational centralization and co-optation by the centralizing state.⁴²³ Before this period, Sokol was neither unified into a single organization, nor the only integral Yugoslavist organization that had pleaded for its program to be adopted by the state. After 1934, and specifically after the coming to power of the prime minister Milan Stojadinović in 1935, Sokol gradually fell out of the state's favor and lost the support it had previously enjoyed in the administration and society alike. This process, however, had radically diverging dynamics in different parts of the country and, needless to say, an immense impact on the dynamics of the intellectual and epistemic stakes and debates within the Sokol circles. This subchapter examines the process and modes of structural reconfiguration of Yugoslav Sokol (namely the organizational transition from JSS/JSZ to SSKJ⁴²⁴ in 1930), as well as its significantly tighter relation to the centralizing state until the end of 1934. In this new context, Sokol came not only to complement and enhance the state's, and particularly King Aleksandar's, political agenda, but also to, to a certain extent, substitute it.

⁴²³ Tomaž Pavlin "Jugoslovanski Sokol" [The Yugoslav Sokol] *Naša pot: 150 let ustanovitve Južnega Sokola in sokolskega gibanja*. ed. Tomaž Pavlin. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za šport, 2014, pp. 100-134, here p. 121-123.

⁴²⁴ *Savez Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije* [Union of Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia].

Using Sokol's associational transformation as a basis, the chapter builds on the premise, contrary to much of the local synthetic historiography,⁴²⁵ that it was not necessarily Serbian centralism that was realized in the period preceding or following 1929, but rather that centralism as such had a diverse body of supporters who actually found it politically and economically beneficial, such as the Slovenian liberals and the Muslim religious elites. Their opposition, namely the post-Habsburg Serbian and Croatian elites, rooted in Svetozar Pribićević's and Stjepan Radić's political parties, attempted or negotiate the centralist state conception either by adopting a federalist approach (as in the case of Radić supporters) and negotiating the state's organization on integral Yugoslavist premises (as in the case of Pribićević supporters), throughout the 1920s.⁴²⁶ This demonstrates a sort of post-imperial continuity, in a way that the smaller post-Habsburg groups saw it necessary to settle their status directly in a compromise with centralist Belgrade and the dynasty in the 1920s, during the hegemony of the Serbian nationalist Radical Party in the parliament and the dominance of the tripartite state conception. The liberal and left-leaning Serbian and Croatian heirs of the liberal Habsburg and Neo-Slavic tradition, who also saw themselves as heirs to some sort of negotiated political subjectivity, simultaneously insisted on the integral Yugoslavist or federalist solutions until 1929.

From this perspective, the introduction of the Royal Dictatorship makes for a radical break with the post-imperial continuities that dominated the 1920s, in a way that both the Radical Party's Serbian centralism⁴²⁷ and its republicanist-cum-federalist challengers were curbed, in favor of

⁴²⁵ Ferdo Čulinović. *Jugoslavija između dva rata, 1–2*. Zagreb 1961; Branko Pertanović, *Istorija Jugoslavije 1918–1988*, vols. I–III. Belgrade: Nolit, 1988.

⁴²⁶ Importantly, Radić did not bring into question the cultural unity of South Slavs or complementarity of their political claims, often arguing for disjoining national and religious affiliations, instead he was wary of compromising on the Croatian historical state right and overwriting of historical-territorial units with a new radical state organization that some of the relevant actors were proposing. For more on his stance, see: Mark Biondich "Stjepan Radić, Yugoslavism and the Habsburg Monarchy" *Austrian History Yearbook*, vol. 27 (1996), pp. 109–131, here p. 120–121.

⁴²⁷ Inherited not only due to Kingdom of Serbia's prewar statehood and diplomatic importance for brokering the break-up of Austria-Hungary and Radical Party's long-term affiliation with the Karađorđević dynasty, but also due to this generation of Serbian politicians being educated in highly centralized France, precisely in law, political science and adjacent disciplines. See: Branka Prpa, *Srpski intelektualci i Jugoslavija 1918–1929*. [Serbian

superimposing the integral Yugoslavist conception that has, in fact, been argued for by mainly by the liberal post-Habsburg thinkers, akin to (or overlapping with) those active within Sokol. The new name and administrative division of the country also reflected integral Yugoslavist commitments and while the nature of the dictatorship, indeed, served as a vehicle for strengthening centralism and illiberal political life, it was by no means merely “Serbian”, nor can that be used to qualify the regime before 1929. The relations within Sokol leadership and the changes in the associational structure and life, described in this section, reflect this process in profound and telling ways.

Nevertheless, despite the different attempts to simulate an organic and mystical connection between the ruler and his subjects, by bypassing liberal parliamentary politics and instrumentalizing the organizations such as Sokol, the regime of the Dictatorship mostly relied on top-down approaches. This also meant that it operated with a relatively narrow intellectual and ideological canon, rendering the integral Yugoslavism programmatic in its nature.⁴²⁸ For an organization such as Sokol, whose intellectual life was revolving around debating, producing and communicating the integral Yugoslavist paradigm to the wider population—the regime’s co-optation of it, marked a great shift both in the role of Sokol in wider sociopolitical context and within its intellectual dynamics.

This programmatization of integral Yugoslavism was all the more accepted as Yugoslavism’s “enemy” national projects, e.g. German, Italian and Hungarian, descended into their authoritarian and essentialist iterations in this period. This awarded Yugoslavism and Sokol

intellectuals and Yugoslavia, 1918-1929] Belgrade: Clio, 2018. For a contemporaneous usage of that argument, see: Stanoje Stanojević, *Borba Srba za srpsko-hrvatsko ujedinjenje*. Belgrade, 1930.

⁴²⁸ The 1931 Constitution is conventionally not considered a breaking point in political life of the state, nor will it be extensively problematized in this chapter, since it has largely not changed the nature of the dictatorship. This is witnessed, among numerous other political constraints, by the anti-centralist and pro-parliamentary programmatic documents brought about by the diverse opposition to the Dictatorship, yet led by the SDK, *Seljačko-demokratska koalicija* [Peasantist-democratic coalition], see: *Zagrebačke punktacije* [Zagreb points], *Ljubljanske punktacije* [Ljubljana points], *Sarajevske punktacije* [Sarajevo points] and *Novosadska rezolucija* [Novi Sad resolution].

with the opportunity to narrate and symbolically promote their nominally progressive and democratic heritage from the previous decades,⁴²⁹ despite operating with gradually essentializing categories as well. Tellingly, this language was not employed against the Bulgarian national project, which was instead fashioned as a complementary one in the Balkanist framework, that experienced its proliferation and successful dissemination to the wider intellectual circles in this period in particular.⁴³⁰ Memoires of significant political actors, such as that of Svetozar Pribičević,⁴³¹ contain references to Sokol's much graver instrumentalization by the state, insinuating that its members were exploited for gathering intelligence and exerting influence on the Czechoslovak government, which remains impossible to verify or disprove. It is, however, possible to trace the discursive changes within Sokol periodicals, the limitations of its ever more self-contained discourses and the changing dynamics of its internal debates.

Sokol's organizational settings were, in this period, largely defined by the Law on the Founding of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia, from December 1929.⁴³² While other similar associations were disbanded (e.g. Orel/Orao,⁴³³ Hrvatski Sokol, ORJUNA, SRNAO, HANAO), Sokol was uplifted into a quasi state institution, given that its leadership was, from then on,

⁴²⁹ "Treći rajh i slovenske narodne manjine" [The Third Reich and the Slavic national minorities] *Sokolski glasnik* (May 12, 1933), p. 1; "Rascep u lužičkom sokolstvu" [The split in the Lusitian Sorb Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), p. 181; Tone Peruško "Naši pod Italijom" [Our people subjugated by Italy] *Sokolski slet. 1874-Zagreb-1934*, vol. 6, p. 57-59; Tone Peruško "Crni calendar na sokolskom slavlju" *Sokolski slet. 1874-Zagreb-1934*, vol. 8 (1934), pp. 95-6.

⁴³⁰ Diana Mishkova, *Beyond Balkanism: Scholarly Politics of Region-Making*. London: Routledge, 2018.

⁴³¹ Svetozar Pribičević, *Diktatura Kralja Aleksandra* [The dictatorship of King Aleksandar]. Belgrade: Prosveta, 1953, p. 194-195.

⁴³² "Zakon o osnivanju sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije," *Službene novine*, vol. 11, no. 287 (1929): 2151-2; "Statut o organizaciji i poslovanju Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije," *Službene novine*, vol. 12, no. 36 (1930): 315-20; "Zakon o likvidaciji jugoslovenskog sokola, hrvatskog sokola, orla i srpskog sokola," *Službene novine* 12, no. 5 (1930): 3; *Zakon o osnivanju Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije sa Uredbom o likvidaciji Jugoslovenskog sokola, Hrvatskog sokola, Orla i Srpskog sokola i Statut o organizaciji i poslovanju Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*. [The law on the founding of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia with the Decree on the liquidation of the Yugoslav Sokol, Croatian Sokol, Orla and Serbian Sokol and the Statute on the organization and work of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia] Belgrade: Ministarstvo prosvete Kraljevine Jugoslavije, 1930.

⁴³³ They were refashioned, and continued to exist under the patronship of the Jesuits, as Crusaders (*Križari*), see Fabio Giomi. "Making Gymnastics Catholic: The Life, Death, and Resurrection of the Croatian Orao in Interwar Yugoslavia" *East Central Europe*, (2023), vol. 51, pp. 253-275.

appointed directly by the Minister of Education, Minister of Army and Navy with the approval of the president of the Ministerial council (*Ministarski savet*) that was subjected to the King (§6).⁴³⁴ The Law also envisioned discounts on all state-operated modes of public transport (specifically trains and ships), as well as reduced duration of mandatory military service for all SSKJ members. In this new scheme, the state was responsible for providing some of the funding to the SSKJ, and the *banovinas* to the individual clubs, which was also materialized in the form of loans from the Ministry of Physical Education.⁴³⁵

In contrast to the previous rules and regulations that were in place in the 1920s, the 1930 organizational statute designates mandatory places for women in the governing structures (§17 of the statute), requiring an equal number of women heads (*načelnica*) and deputy heads (*zamenica/zamjenica načelnice*), analogous to those positions held by men.⁴³⁶ Shortly before the law was introduced, however, a delegation of JSS/JSZ led by Engelbert Gangl appeared before the King with a memorandum on the division of work on physical education, among the state and Sokol. The memorandum suggested Sokol gymnastics be introduced to the state school system,⁴³⁷ as well as into the army, while Sokol would continue working on the physical education of adults independently.⁴³⁸ It is difficult to assess JSS'/JSZ's strategy behind submitting such a memorandum to the ruler, but it might have served as a pre-emptive attempt at retaining their position and avoiding liquidation, at the cost of political co-optation.

Crucially, the new law demanded that all existing Sokol associations (e.g. Hrvatski Sokol, Srpski Sokol, JSS/JSZ) unite into a single organization: the SSKJ, but it was also open to other

⁴³⁴ *Organizacija Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije: autentičan tekst*. [Organization of the Union of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia: authentic text] Ljubljana: Naklada Jugoslovenske sokolske matice, 1930, p. 8.

⁴³⁵ *Organizacija*, p. 73-74; Materijali stručnog znanja Sokolske organizacije, Sokolske organizacije. [Materials of expert knowledge of the Sokol organization, Sokol organization] AJ-71-15-45.

⁴³⁶ *Organizacija*, p. 21.

⁴³⁷ Which was eventually envisioned soon after, by the Law on Primary Schools, see: *Jutro* (September 7, 1929), *Jutro* (September 8, 1929).

⁴³⁸ Tomaž Pavlin "Ustanavljanje Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije" [The founding of the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia] *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 42, no. 1. (2002), pp. 55-72.

existing associations dealing with physical education. Practically, this meant that the other existing Sokol associations were forced to accept the integral Yugoslavist paradigm and let go of their “tribal” nomenclature and overall orientation. This resulted in rising of the enlargement of the overall membership, but also with many of the former officials of the “tribal” Sokol associations stepping down from the association altogether. It could be argued that entering such a close relationship with the centralizing state was a calculated choice on the part of the JSS/JSZ leadership. It enabled them to reach the wide societal strata they would hardly have been able to reach as a mere voluntary association, yet at a cost of losing some part of its autonomy. Perhaps more importantly, this new form also curtailed their ability to refashion their own traditions according to their own, still rather positivist, understanding of societal problems and progress. Symbolically as well, Sokol became closely tied to the Karađorđević dynasty, since the heir apparent, Prince Petar II Karađorđević, at that time slightly more than 6 years old, became the official elder (*starosta*) of the SSKJ. Nevertheless, the composition of the key leadership positions reflected a sort of compromise between the liberal-positivist and neo-romanticist streams. It was Viktor Murnik who became the head (*načelnik*) of SSKJ, the gymnast Elza Skalarjeva the women head (*načelnica*), and Đura Paunković, a Russian-educated businessman from the financial sector and the former leader of the Dušan Silni Serbian Sokol, became Murnik’s deputy.⁴³⁹

The SSKJ formally had one seat in Belgrade, yet in contrast to the previous period, it divided its three key functions across three cities that served as seats for their respective committees. Specifically, its governing-administrative seat was in Belgrade (in contrast to Ljubljana that was the seat of JSS/JSZ), the technical committee had its seat in Ljubljana (until 1934) and the educational one in Novi Sad. The first was initially led by Ante Brozović and the latter by

⁴³⁹ Ante Brozović, *Soko Kraljevine Jugoslavije* [Sokol of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia] Belgrade: Venac, 1930, p. 52.

Vladimir Belajčić respectively, while the technical one changed several heads in this period, not least due to their intellectual allegiances and tensions with the new orientation of the transformed Sokol. In terms of committees in general, SSKJ consisted of the educational committee, health committee, statistical committee, economic committee, technical committee, national-defense committee⁴⁴⁰ and the injury fund (*ozledni fond*).⁴⁴¹

Building on this structure, each club (*župa*) or society (*društvo*) had two inspectors, appointed by the union-level organs, monitoring their work and reporting back to the union-level officials.⁴⁴² The nominal tasks of the educational committee, based on the regulations within the new statute, included: organizing and popularizing lectures, writing articles of “Sokol-educational and national content”,⁴⁴³ publishing Sokol books, organizing courses for the membership and individual clubs’ educators (*prosvetari*), organizing educational conferences and gatherings, maintaining an expert library, systematically following press on Sokol and keeping a record of press clippings, maintaining public relations of SSKJ and responding to any potential accusations against it, collecting and publishing the larger Sokol bibliography that should include publications in all Slavic languages that have to do with “physical education and national education”,⁴⁴⁴ as well as coordinating their work with the temperance and other initiatives of the health committee. These statutory documents also brought about a new category of a Sokol official, namely the librarian, whose jurisdiction was rather large, encompassing acquiring, circulating, record-keeping and censoring various publications. Preparations were also envisioned for the creation of the Sokol Museum, that was eventually

⁴⁴⁰ Presumably the heir of what was called the “Minority committee” in the 1920s; since its main mission was described as “...to influence the national, social, economic and cultural strengthening of our nation, so as to preserve and improve the national individuality vis-à-vis the other nations, at home and abroad.” *Organizacija*, p. 70.

⁴⁴¹ Which was used for distributing money among members who got injured or died while performing Sokol exercises, during their unemployment and sickness that had occurred as a result of the exercises; and to which it was mandatory to contribute, for all members of the SSKJ.

⁴⁴² *Organizacija*, p. 25.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 38.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 39.

never realized due to the outbreak of the Second World War. The rather sizeable and influential Russian Sokol was not co-opted into SSKJ, thus continuing its previous independent Zemun-based organization that also operated throughout the 1920s, albeit the two organization had exchanged delegates in 1930 and coordinated their activities, to an extent.⁴⁴⁵

Based on the first regular general assembly of SSKJ in March 1931, a programmatic booklet, under the title *Paths and Goals of SSKJ* (Slovenian: *Pota in cilji SSKJ*, Serbo-Croatian: *Putevi i ciljevi SSKJ*) was published,⁴⁴⁶ containing a resolution with 25 points that aimed to elucidate SSKJ's, perhaps slightly changed, position on the key questions of Sokol tradition and its new position in the political life of the state. With special attention paid to values of social justice, religious tolerance, progressiveness and equality (*ravnopravnost*) of women and men within the association, it stated that the mission of the association was: "to raise all the physical and moral forces within an individual, and through him, the entire Yugoslav nation and other Slavic nations, until the upper limit of perfection."⁴⁴⁷

The booklet thereby outlined its understanding of nationalism, as namely "selfless, real and lasting work for the national whole".⁴⁴⁸ Unlike such programmatic documents of the 1920s, where the state itself was rarely theorized on, it clarified that: "Sokol considers our free and independent state to be the strongest expression of our national individuality, in the community of other nations. That is why it considers its task to be the improvement of the state and the state community (...) Sokol raises its membership into fully-aware citizens [LB: državljane], in its belief that the strenght of the state rests on the awareness of individual citizens' rights and obligations, as well as on the sense of collective responsibility of all the citizens for the future

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 215.

⁴⁴⁶ *Putevi i ciljevi Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije. Odobrila I. redovna glavna skupština 29. marta 1931. godine u Beogradu.* [The paths and the goals of the Union of Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Approved by the 1st regular general assembly on March 29, 1931] Ljubljana: Naklada Jugoslovenske sokolske matice, 1931.

⁴⁴⁷ *Putevi i ciljevi*, p. 5.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 6.

of the state.”⁴⁴⁹ However, in a radically different approach, than that of the 1920s, the genre of the oath (*zavet/zavjet*) appears within the resolution.⁴⁵⁰ This genre will come to dominate the 1930s and contribute to the continuous essentialization, neo-romanticisation and radicalization of political discourses thereat, considerably changing the overall associational culture. This oath demanded, from the membership, to pledge to apply Sokol values in their life outside of the association, as well as to remain faithful to the Yugoslav “national unity”. While the oath contained typical demands that were imposed in different ways onto the associational membership already in the previous period, the form and the act of the oath as such demonstrate a significant change in approaching both political socialization within Sokol (vis-à-vis the relationship between private and associational life) and image of political participation they aimed to project more generally—and a distinctly illiberal one.

This period of consolidation, however, was not entirely welcomed by the Sokol leadership and officials. In fact, they soon demanded the law on SSKJ to be ammended, so as to enable them to elect and re-elect the leadership themselves, which came to be realized only after King Aleksandar’s death.⁴⁵¹ Due to its expanding membership, which as a rule involved more children than in the previous period, Sokol’s traditional challengers such as the Catholic Church, raised a concern with the parents, on the potential negative influence the children would become targets of should they join the organization. This culminated in the 1932 pastoral letter issued by the Yugoslav Catholic Bishops, in which they outlined the particular Sokol values they saw as harmful to the wider society and children alike.⁴⁵² The educational committee formally responded to the attack reiterating SSKJ’s stance⁴⁵³ and Sokol press highlighted

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 7.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 10.

⁴⁵¹ Pavlin “Jugoslovanski Sokol”, p. 121.

⁴⁵² Bogdan Kolar “Sokol Kraljevine Jugoslavije in ustvarjanje napetosti: primer župnije Koprivnik v Bohinju” [The Sokol of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Making of Tensions: the Case of Parish Koprivnik in Bohinj] *Bogoslovni vestnik*, vol. 78, no. 3 (2018), pp. 729-744.

⁴⁵³ “Raspis br. 3. Povodom klerikalnoga napada na Sokolstvo” [Writ no 3. On the occasion of the clerical attack on Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1933), p. 34 (without author).

association's tradition of religious tolerance and liberalism not just in conjunction to Catholicism, but also other religions, such as Islam.⁴⁵⁴ Among other typical Sokol values Bishops attacked, such as liberalism and secularism, they also highlighted militarism, a characteristic ascribed to SSKJ also by the Italian delegation at the League of Nations disarmament conference in 1933, who demanded SSKJ be considered as part of the nominal Yugoslav military capacity.⁴⁵⁵

Nevertheless, as Tomaž Pavlin insightfully pointed out when interpreting an article by one of the Sokol officials, Miroslav Ambrožič, published on the eve of the founding of SSKJ: it is visible that the leadership itself aimed to dispell the anxiety among the membership on the imminent militarization of the organization, that they feared would be the inevitable result of the tighter relationship with the state.⁴⁵⁶ This fear was not entirely unfounded, since it was general Petar Živković who was, alongside the King himself and two Radical Party-affiliated Ministers (Božidar Maksimović and Stevan Hadžić), the most impactful political figure behind creating the new law and who remained rather distrustful of the JSS/JSZ at large, during the transformation process.⁴⁵⁷ Even Czech Sokol had a careful reaction to the new law, asking the Yugoslav ambassador in Prague to provide more information on SSKJ, so as to convince them that it does not have a fascist (sic!) character or that it does not go against broader Sokol traditions and values.⁴⁵⁸ It is, nevertheless, possible to interpret some of their writings and novel positions on the military, as an attempt to “Sokolize” the army, rather than to militarize the Sokol, since they reiterated on multiple occasions that their ultimate goal would be to perfect

⁴⁵⁴ J. Ulman “Tirševi verski nazori” [Tyrš's stances on religion] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1933), pp. 205-6.

⁴⁵⁵ Nikola Žutić, *Sokoli–ideologija u fizičkoj kulturi Kraljevine Jugoslavije 1929-1941*. [Sokol – ideology in the physical culture of Kingdom of Yugoslavia 1929-1941] Belgrade: Angrotrade, 1991, cited in: Tomaž Pavlin “Jugoslovanski Sokol”, p. 121.

⁴⁵⁶ Miroslav Ambrožič “Sokolova dolžnost” [Sokol's duty] *Jutro* (December 1, 1929), cited in: Tomaž Pavlin “Ustanavljanje”, p. 62.

⁴⁵⁷ Tomaž Pavlin “Ustanavljanje”, p. 63.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 66.

and widely disseminate Sokol gymnastic exercises, rather than to prepare their own membership for warfare.⁴⁵⁹

National defense, as was defined in Ante Brozović's 1930 programmatic, textbook-like illustrated book on Sokol, its history and traditions, became a much more metaphysical category. He portrayed it, as not depending solely on the physical strength of the army, but also on the overall social cohesion, a result of the wide-scale change in the national character.⁴⁶⁰ His references to Sokol's approach to physical education and national well-being, discussed in the context of labor capacity, display largely similar tropes to those of the 1920s, despite being stated in rather simplistic terms. One of the issues that Brozović also covers in his brief essays, outlining official stances of Sokol towards various phenomena, is the all-national, democratic and protective (towards both nation and the state) character of Sokol. However, as opposed to the continuous insistence of the 1920s Sokol officials on its apolitical character, Brozović relativizes the relationship between daily politics and Sokol's work, saying that: "It does not tie its organization to no political party or religious organization. Sokol is aware of its mission to erect golden birdges from party to party, from religion to religion, from tribe to tribe, and to preach love, brotherhood and equality".⁴⁶¹ In conceptual terms, both this book and the new statutory documents, visibly contained more references to the state, the king (specifically the Karađorđević dynasty) and homeland, than those of the preceeding JSS/JSZ entity, marking a change in discourse towards a more essentialized and etatist one. When discussing youth, specifically the postwar generation, Brozović posed its participation in Sokol as a rejuvenation strategy for ameliorating the present crisis of body, soul (sic!)⁴⁶² and culture. In this way, he

⁴⁵⁹ Ante Brozović, *Soko*, p. 71, 88.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 72.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, p. 74.

⁴⁶² Indicatively, the concept of the soul becomes a main reference point in this period, as opposed to that of the spirit, that dominated the 1920s.

announced a much more systematic approach to the raising of the new generation within Sokol, than was the case in the previous period.

The rapid growth of membership that SSKJ experienced also meant a lowering of the quality of the work performed, since there were not enough certified trainers (*prednjaks*) who would be able to encompass its vast membership scattered around the country. Ante Tadić complained, in 1933, that even those trainers who are successful in gymnastics training, most often lack the proper pedagogical training and, more importantly, ideological outlook they should transmit, for which reason they were well advised to attend trainers' schools organized by the union-level educational committee.⁴⁶³ In order to centralize the publishing activity and systematize Sokol-related knowledge, a new series was established by the newly founded Sokol publishing initiative, *Jugoslovenska sokolska matica* (Yugoslav Sokol matica)⁴⁶⁴ based in Ljubljana—*Sokolska knjižnica* (Sokol library). It started immediately, already during the year 1930, publishing key works to be distributed across all the Sokol clubs' libraries. These were, namely, foundational texts by Tyrš and Fügner, but also some more condensed and instructional booklets on Sokol traditions, practices and thought, authored by the current officials of the SSKJ.⁴⁶⁵ Their main aim was to communicate the basics of "Sokol ideology" and traditions to a much wider, and markedly less educated, associational membership. To ensure that officials involved in disseminating these basic Sokol postulates to the widening membership were in

⁴⁶³ Ante Tadić, *Kakav treba da je vaspitan sokolski prednjak*. [How should a Sokol trainer be educated] Subotica: Sokolsko društvo Subotica, 1933, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁶⁴ *Matica* (literally: queen bee), denotes a specific type of cultural association, characteristic for 19th century nation-building efforts of Slavic nationalities within Austria-Hungary.

⁴⁶⁵ Engelbert Gangl. *O sokolski ideji* [On the Sokol idea] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1930; Lado Bevc. *Sokolsko prosvetno delo* [Sokol's educational work] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1930; Miroslav Tyrš. *Naš zadatak, smer i cilj* [Our task, direction and goal] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1930; Miroslav Tyrš. *Sokolska gesla* [Sokol slogans] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1931; Jan Pelikan. Dr. Miroslav Tyrš [Dr. Miroslav Tyrš] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1931; Jan Křen. *Cilj sokolskih težanj* [The goal of Sokol aspirations] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1931; Engelbert Gangl. *Tyrševo Sokolstvo* [Tyrš's Sokol] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1931; Vekoslav Bučar. *Dr. Ivan Oražen* [Dr. Ivan Oražen] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1931; Niko Mrvoš. *Pogledi i misli Dr. Miroslava Tyrša* [Perspectives and thoughts of Dr. Miroslav Tyrš] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1932; Engelbert Gangl. *Tyrševo poslanstvo* [Tyrš's mission] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1934.

agreement on Sokol's official stance towards various socio-political phenomena, the educational committee published a resolution on the questions of "Sokol, nation, state and politics" and "Sokol and other national organizations".⁴⁶⁶ The gymnastics-related terminology was also first unified, adjusted to the Czech one and systematized on the associational level only in this period.⁴⁶⁷ This new influx of membership also meant a significant increase in the amount of peasant population enrolled in Sokol and them becoming the largest social group as opposed to the previously dominant urban dwellers of liberal professions, alongside members of the public administration. It is plausible to presume that the influx of the latter was due to their increased need to express political loyalty to the state, and its rendering of Yugoslavism, in exchange for protectionism, which is evidenced by contemporaneous associational concerns, but also in existing historiography on this period of associational history.⁴⁶⁸

These programmatic booklets, however, still largely retained the paternalistic, positivist Sokol agenda of the previous period, highlighting that Sokol stands for religious tolerance, gender equality, "democratism" (class-blindness), social justice and Yugoslavist patriotism.⁴⁶⁹ Tellingly, most publishing activity, aside from the periodicals that continued featuring relatively sophisticated debates on physical education, biology, medicine and political issues alike—the booklets published did not include gymnastics-related content and prominent thinkers, such as the the head of SSKJ, Viktor Murnik, had to publish such books at their own

⁴⁶⁶ "Iz sednice saveznog prosvetnog odbora" [From the meeting of the educational committee] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1931), pp. 3-4 (without author).

⁴⁶⁷ This was done by the Publishing committee of the associational leadership (*Književni odbor načelnništva*), consisting of Ivan Bajželj, Miroslav Vojinović (formerly known as František Hoffman), Dragutin Šulce, Viktor Murnik, Danica (Dana) Ilić, Stanko Trček and Joža Trdinova on February 27-28 1932, see: "Promene u nazivoslovju" [Changes in terminology] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 5 (1932), p. 88.

⁴⁶⁸ Dejan Zec "The Sokol Movement from Yugoslav Origins to King Aleksandar's 1930 All-Sokol Rally in Belgrade" *East Central Europe*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2015), pp. 48-69; see also: Zorka Vojnović-Trkulja, "Sestrama nastavnicama" [To our sisters, the teachers] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1932), pp. 406-8.

⁴⁶⁹ Engelbert Gangl. *O sokolski ideji* [On the Sokol idea] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1930.

expense.⁴⁷⁰ For the illiterate members or those presumed to not engage with thorough reading, especially the youth, a new format of communicating the Sokol ideology was invented in this period, namely the “speeches before members in line formation” (*govori pred vrstom*).⁴⁷¹ The periodicals from the previous period were largely discontinued and the new ones were founded in their place, namely *SOKO: List prednjaštva Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije* (SOKO: Paper of the trainers of Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia), *Sokolska prosveta* (Sokol education) and *Sokolsko selo* (Sokol village) accompanied the continuing *Sokolski glasnik* (Sokol herald) from 1933 onwards. Their editorial boards largely remained the same as in the previous period, albeit with steady rise of a professionalized Sokol cadre, meaning a set of thinkers who did not use other venues, apart from Sokol, to publish their texts and communicate their ideas.⁴⁷² The steep rise in Sokol membership was, nevertheless, criticized by many officials and trainers from the very beginning and throughout this period,⁴⁷³ as the novel educational and associational infrastructure could hardly follow the demands presented by Sokols enlargement and, perhaps more importantly, sizeable tasks of channelling its model into the state administrative apparatus. One attempt to ameliorate these new challenges was scaling up of the associational courses,⁴⁷⁴ organized by the Educational committee (*Savezni prosvetni odbor*, SPO), but also bureaucratizing the associational life at large, so as to allow the union-level leadership to have a tight grasp on the various practical and intellectual tendencies in different clubs across the country. One of the reasons behind was also unifying the approach and the content delivered by the numerous Sokol officials in different local contexts. The said courses, directly inspired

⁴⁷⁰ This is the case with two of the Murnik’s notable booklets: Viktor Murnik. *Kutlura in telovadba*. [Culture and physical exercise] Ljubljana: self-published, 1929; and: Viktor Murnik. *Sokolstvo i življenje*. [Sokol and life] Ljubljana: self-published, 1932.

⁴⁷¹ Jovana Papović. “Unreachable youth: physical education, national mobilization and intergenerational conflict in interwar Yugoslavia. The case of the Yugoslav Sokol.” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire*, vol. 31, no. 3 (2024), pp. 370–399.

⁴⁷² Such as: Ivan Bajželj, Vladimir Belajčić, Ante Brozović, Bogoljub Krejčik, Stanko Trček, Ante Tadić.

⁴⁷³ Pieter Troch “Interwar Yugoslav state-building and the changing social position of the Sokol gymnastics movement” *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d’histoire*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2019), pp. 56-83.

⁴⁷⁴ Which was also criticized, see: Dušan Bogunović, “Današnji problem sokolske prosvete” [Contemporary problem of Sokol education] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1931), pp. 34-37.

by the Czech Sokol ones, targeted not only the membership, but also the trainers who were supposed to be the authorities on both physical and ideological education.⁴⁷⁵ The latter, the committee concluded, should be strictly centralized so that it can regularly distribute the pre-prepared speeches to the educators (*prosvetari*) in each club, that they would then deliver to the gymnasts during their breaks, later examining them on that same content, so as to assess the success of their performance.⁴⁷⁶ These courses were also piloted, among other reasons, to be presented to the Ministry of Physical Education in a hope to be funded and co-opted by the state, thus solving the issue of their funding,⁴⁷⁷ but this was never successfully realized. In general, however, the courses had a rather comprehensive program, including detailed lectures, seminars and practices in different fields that went far beyond physical education and adopted a character of elaborate ideological education as well.⁴⁷⁸ The latter also included the intensification of education on other Slavic nations, their culture, languages and histories, for which purpose the educational committees of all Slavic Sokol organizations decided to regularly exchange materials, data and ensure that their membership is kept up to date on each other's associational life.⁴⁷⁹

Due to their persistent lack of funding, some clubs, such as that of Sarajevo, opted for cooperating with other institutions whose capacities and networks they could use for their own

⁴⁷⁵ Vladimir Belajčić “Savezna prosvetna škola” [Union-level educational school] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1931), pp. 7-9; “Raspis br. 11. Tiršev tečaj u Saveznoj prosvetnoj školi u Novom Sadu” [Writ no. 11. Tyrš's course in the Union-level educational school in Novi Sad] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1931), p. 145-6.

⁴⁷⁶ Svetislav Marić “Sokolske prosvetne konferencije” [Sokol educational conferences] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1931), pp. 13-15.

⁴⁷⁷ Dušan M. Bogunović “Savezna prosvetna škola” [Union-level educational school] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1931), pp. 94-95.

⁴⁷⁸ “Raspored osmodnevnog tečaja u SPO” [The schedule of the 8 day-long course in the Educational Committee] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), p. 86-7 (without author); “Raspored desetodnevnog tečaja u SPŠ” [The schedule of the 10 day-long course in the Union-level educational school] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1934), pp. 20-25 (without author).

⁴⁷⁹ “Raspis br. 25. O slovenskim večerima” [Writ on Slavic evenings] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1931), p. 257. (without author)

goals.⁴⁸⁰ Such inter-organizational cooperation and coalitions became particularly important in the light of Sokol's ambitious plan to penetrate the rural areas, as was noted by the French-educated and Skopje-based linguist Milivoj Pavlović, who suggested that all similar associations unite in their effort to channel their modernizing initiatives towards the rural populations.⁴⁸¹ In his exposé, he specifically named the Serbian cultural association *Prosveta* (Education), Croatian cultural association *Napredak* (Progress), liberal Muslim association *Gajret* (Diligence), feminist association *Ženski pokret* (Women's movement), but also the *Društvo za srpskohrvatski jezik* (Society for Serbo-Croatian language) and *Pedagoško društvo* (Pedagogical society). While this suggestion was, presumably, never realized in practice, it still serves to show how Sokol activists understood their own positionality and agenda for approaching the largest segment of the Yugoslav population, namely, through liberal, associational and educational work with various community-embedded stakeholders. It was not only the clubs that lacked funding, but it was also evident that the membership was hit by the economic crisis, for which purpose a Sokol charity (Sokol heart—*Sokolsko srce*) was established in 1934, that collected contributions (in money and nature) for Sokol children who were deemed poor, but also for the unemployed members as well.⁴⁸²

The success of Sokol's educational and ideological work, in this period, was not measured solely with the spontaneous examination of the members, but also by a vast body of statistics that was to be produced by clubs and officials alike.⁴⁸³ The templates and forms they were to

⁴⁸⁰ "Organizacija prosvetnog rada" [Organization of the educational work] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1931), p. 55 (without author): "It is only the Sarajevo club that displayed organized and thoughtful common work with the National University, that produced positive results, particularly from the Sokol point of view."

⁴⁸¹ Milivoj Pavlović "Sokolsko društvo kao središte kulturnog i prosvetnog rada na selu" [Sokol society as a center of the cultural and educational work in the countryside] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1932), pp. 141-146.

⁴⁸² *Prvi decembar 1934: Čuvajmo Jugoslaviju!* [First of December 1934: Let's protect Yugoslavia!] Belgrade: SSKJ, 1934, pp. 34-38.

⁴⁸³ For instance: Ivan Ivančić "Prosvetni rad Sokolske župe Sušak-Rijeka u 1930. god" [Educational work of the Sušak-Rijeka club in the year 1930] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1931), pp. 102-105; Petar M. Mrklić "Prosvetni rad Sokolske župe Split u 1930. god" [Educational work of the Split Sokol club in the year 1930] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1931), pp. 105-107; "Prosvetno delo v Sokolski župi Ljubljana 1930" [Educational work in the Ljubljana Sokol club in the 1930] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1931), pp. 107-110. (without author)

use to keep track of numerous aspects of their works' success were also centrally designed and distributed, using associational periodicals. In addition, the celebrations and commemorations of important (historical) dates became a matter of prescription and formality, whereby the SPO issued detailed instructions and/or speeches to be delivered on their occasion.⁴⁸⁴ The novel radio technology was also frequently employed, in this period, to emit radio lectures on various Sokol-related topics⁴⁸⁵ by markedly famous intellectual figures, such as: the prolific Croatian economist and sociologist Rudolf Bićanić, geographer and mayor of Sarajevo Husein Brkić, Slovenian writer and translator Ivan Lah, notable Subotica-based cyberneticist Stjepan Han, literary critic and historian Boško Novaković and Bosnian-born Polish diplomat and publicist Tadeusz Lubaczewski. There were voices, however, that pointed to the inability of the Yugoslav radio infrastructure to support Sokol's mission and reach not only the diaspora in the surrounding countries, but also the local population, despite such broadcasts being of national importance.⁴⁸⁶ In addition to the radio, SPO also worked intensively on distributing films, in cooperation with the Yugoslav Educational Film (*Jugoslovenski prosvetni film*), a Central press bureau- and Ministry of social politics-affiliated film production company.⁴⁸⁷ Such technological and cultural developments also attracted new members into SSKJ, as did the proliferation of amateur puppetry, with puppetry committees mushrooming around the country throughout the 1930s, not least due to the influence of the Czech model.⁴⁸⁸ While it is difficult

⁴⁸⁴ For instance, see: M. Kovačić “Dva nacrti za govore prilikom državnih praznika 1 decembra i Vidovdana” [Two templates for speeches for the occasion of the state holidays, December 1st and Saint Vitus Day] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), p. 136; Lado Bevs, *Sokolsko prosvetno delo* [Sokol's educational work] 1930.

⁴⁸⁵ “Raspis 10. Radio u službi sokolske prosvete” [Writ no.10. Radio in the service of Sokol education] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1931), p. 115.

⁴⁸⁶ Bogoljub Krejčik “Sokolstvo i pitanje naše radiofonije” [Sokol and the question of our radiophony] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1-2 (1936), pp. 14-17.

⁴⁸⁷ “Jugoslovenski prosvetni film” [Yugoslav educational film] *Filmska enciklopedija (1986-90)*, online edition. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2024. URL=<<https://filmska.lzmk.hr/clanak/jugoslovenski-prosvetni-film>>. (Last access: January 21, 2025); For the list of distributed films see: “Film za propaganda sokolske ideje među školskom decom i odraslima u sreću kulskom” [Films for propagating the Sokol idea among the school children and adults in the Kulski srez] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1932), p. 217.

⁴⁸⁸ Igor Tretinjak “The role and significance of Sokol puppet theatres in Croatia” *Niti, časopis za lutarsku umetnost*, vol. 16 (2022), pp. 33-35; “History of Czech Puppetry” *UNIMA: International Puppeteers Union* URL=<https://unima.idu.cz/en/history-of-czech-puppetry/>. (Last access: August 15, 2024).

to assess how political Sokol puppetry was in reality, due to the lack of research conducted on that topic, some personal continuities between Sokol and the Partisan movement, such as that of the Slovenian sculptor and puppet-maker Lojze Lavrič, provide hints as to the potential usage of puppetry into political purposes.⁴⁸⁹

One of the most important events of this period, organized in order to showcase the new SSKJ not only to the local audience, but also to present it to the international community, was the 1930 All-Sokol *Slet* that took place in Belgrade, held in June so as to coincide with the Saint Vitus Day (*Vidovdan*). The *slet*, that centrally featured the youth, the dynasty and presented SSKJ's loyalist and integral Yugoslavist orientation, was attended by Sokol delegations from different Slavic countries and by a number of international observers from various gymnastics organizations. The present international delegations also consisted of soldiers from the ranks of the Romanian, Czechoslovak and Polish armies.⁴⁹⁰ Together with gymnastics and other performances by Sokol members from Yugoslavia and other countries, the *slet*'s program included a performance of the different branches of the Yugoslav Royal Army—making the event politically and diplomatically profitable for the state elite. The introduction of elements of military training into Sokol, however, did not take place until late 1938.⁴⁹¹

Another important event during this period was the 1934 Zagreb Sokol *slet*, which was marked by the significant political rapprochement between Yugoslav Sokol and Bulgarian Yunak association, in stark contrast to the creation of the evidently anti-Bulgarian Balkan pact between Yugoslavia, Romania, Greece and Turkey, in the same year.⁴⁹² The Zagreb *slet* coincided with

⁴⁸⁹ "Slovenske lutke od Klemenčiča do LGL danes" [Slovenian puppets from Klemenčič until LGL today] *Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana* URL=<https://www.lgl.si/si/o-gledaliscu/zgodovina>. (Last access: August 15, 2024).

⁴⁹⁰ "Na slet su stigle savezničke vojske" [Allied armies arrived to the rally] *Politika* (June 27, 1930), p. 1.

⁴⁹¹ Tomaž Pavlin, Zrinko Čustonja, "Sokol: Between Making Nation and State" *Kinesiology* vol. 50, no. 2 (2018), pp. 260-26

⁴⁹² The Bulgarian Yunak association was represented by Dimitrije Lazov and Kiril Georgijev at the 1934 Zagreb *slet*, see "Bugarski Junaci i Slovensko Sokolstvo" [Bulgarian Yunaks and the Slavic Sokol] *Sokolski slet 1874–Zagreb–1934*, vol. 1 (1934), p. 7; Hrvoje Macanović, "Značenje sokolskog sleta u Zagrebu 1934" [The importance of the Zagreb Sokol *slet* of 1934] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1934), pp. 249-251.

the Balkan games, a derivative of the Olympic games, that was also held in Zagreb, hosting representatives of the Balkan pact countries as well. This was also the year when the Bulgarian Yunak officially entered the international Association of Slavic Sokol (*Savez Slovenskog Sokolstva*)⁴⁹³. Intellectually, the rapprochement with the Bulgarian Yunak prompted a number of Sokol thinkers to reflect on Yugoslav-Bulgarian relations in the past, whereby many of them adopted the novel Balkanist paradigm and cited works produced by the Institut des Études balkaniques, founded in 1934 in Belgrade. Together with the development of the said Balkanist paradigm, this rapprochement resulted in establishing scientific cooperation between the two groups, specifically in terms of the Zagreb physicians and the influential Bulgarian anatomist Mikhail Minev who greatly contributed to the institutionalization of anatomical research in Yugoslavia.

The overall rapid and, to an extent, mutually beneficial rapprochement with the governing circles and particularly the Karađorđević dynasty, resulted in the progress in the overall professionalization and institutionalization of physical education as a field of knowledge production, but also as a practice. It was already 1932 that the Ministry of Physical Education was founded and was, throughout its existence, headed by Sokol-friendly politicians or Sokol members, as was the School for Physical Education (*Škola za telesno vaspitanje*), founded in Belgrade in 1937.⁴⁹⁴ One of the Ministry's first missions was to introduce the law on mandatory physical education, whereby Sokol and its gymnastics system played a great role, albeit not without challengers who aimed to introduce a more sports-oriented approach.⁴⁹⁵ These developments presented yet another avenue that allowed both Sokol members and practices to penetrate the state apparatus and become official and yet, the intellectual and ideological

⁴⁹³ "Bugarški Junaci", *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁴ Pieter Troch "Interwar Yugoslav state-building and the changing social position of the Sokol gymnastics movement" *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire*, vol. 26, no. 1 (2019), pp. 56-83.

⁴⁹⁵ Hrvoje Macanović "Sokolstvo i sport" [Sokol and sports] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1933), pp. 404-6.

content produced over the 1930s will, in certain cases such as ethnography and physiology of exercise, resurface as official in the *fizkultura* and national communist contexts, during the early years of socialist Yugoslavia.⁴⁹⁶ Lastly, despite the etatization, immense growth, strict centralization and bureaucratization of SSKJ, from January 1930 onwards, the associational periodicals started publishing a self-ironizing rubric, “Sokol joke” (*Sokolska šala*).⁴⁹⁷ This section routinely ridiculed Sokol’s associational life, but also various elements of national history, Yugoslavist ideology, the question of the country’s language and overall culture—thus tellingly pointing to the productive failure of centralization, etatization and dissemination of said ideas and narratives.

3.2. Making Integral Yugoslavism Programmatic: Discourses of (High) Political Modernity Between Cross-fertilization and Conceptual Stabilization

In contrast to the 1920s, when Sokol discourses were largely characterized by the rejection of party politics and were centered around improving the “national body” as a foundation of all politics—Sokol discourses in the period between 1929 and 1934 displayed a significantly more etatist character, which also implied gradual conceptual rapprochement between the concepts of “nation” and “state”. This might have been a result of the fact that the post-Habsburg liberal-positivist stream of thinkers that dominated the 1920s, represented precisely those nation-building traditions that were oriented against, or in compromise with, but certainly not overlapping with a state they could claim was their own. For that reason, and their professional background, the “national body” remained their main reference point. On the other hand, the

⁴⁹⁶ While this would require additional research, some of the notable examples of the afterlife of SSKJ’s intellectual production include the work of Janković sisters, Stjepan Vrdoljak’s importance in the Split *fizkultura* movement, and other examples.

⁴⁹⁷ From January 1934 (vol. 1) of *Sokolska prosveta*, onwards.

neo-romanticist, that is Balkanist, stream of thinkers, stemmed from those nation-building traditions that had precisely been embedded in the nationalized (even if post-imperial) states or, affiliated with liberal clergy, in certain cases. These diverging traditions could explain, to an extent, the conceptual conflation of “nation” and “state”, aside from integral Yugoslavism’s existing tendency to project its agenda as one of the creation of a homogenous nation-state. In this novel setup, where integral Yugoslavism was uplifted into a state-promoted ideology, Sokol was uniquely positioned, and certainly politically invited, to rely on this conceptual conflation and adopt an etatist discourse. This also implied that those who aimed to negotiate integral Yugoslavist settings could essentially be deemed as anti-state actors. Sokol’s special state-affiliated position thus somewhat required its thinkers, or at least, officials, to solidify their understanding of Yugoslavism, address the issue of such actors and respond to their criticisms, changing the discourse in the process by removing the focus from improving the “national body” to protecting the state against revisionist powers and internal challengers. The state, thus, conceptually came to subsume the national community.

Engelbert Gangl’s 1933 speech from the third regular general assembly of SSKJ⁴⁹⁸ represents one such instance, whereby he stated before numerous politicians and representatives of the Royal Army, that: “Czechoslovaks, Poles, Russians and Yugoslavs began in their single-mindedness a struggle for our liberation and rapprochement between all Slavs (...) It is clear that because of this perspective on this idea common to all of us (...) we are separated from any type of ultramontanism and internationalism (...) and it’s also clear that such secret, stunted and cold forces oppose the fundamentals of Tyrš’s idea of Slavic Sokol brotherhood (...) so that the slogan of state sovereignty would fade away from our shields and so that all those who are

⁴⁹⁸ *Govor brata E. Gangla na trećoj redovnoj glavnoj skupštini Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije u Beogradu 23. aprila 1933.* [Speech of brother E. Gangl on the third regular general assembly of SSKJ in Belgrade on April 23, 1933] Belgrade: SSKJ, 1933.

against us, as well as those elements who hate us, all those from inside and out, could throw a dice at our homeland”.⁴⁹⁹

The fact that the officials’ discourse has adopted such etatist and radicalized character, did not, however, mean that the intellectual debates within the associational periodicals have not attempted to examine those same questions in a more sophisticated and pluralistic manner, albeit oftentimes displaying the said conceptual conflation on their part as well. Crucially, however, it was mostly the liberal-positivist stream of thinkers who discussed the issues of raising citizens, (crisis of) democracy, Tyrš’s liberal legacy and aimed to supplement these with their novel interest in social justice. In parallel, the Balkanist one tended towards essentialist, neo-romanticist and religionizing frameworks while promoting their reading of integral Yugoslavism. Both these groups, however, often reflected on the Sokol’s new, state-affiliated, character. It was, for instance, Joža Wilfan who investigated the novel position of Sokol vis-à-vis the state already in 1930.⁵⁰⁰ He was a Trieste-born lawyer and son of Josip Vilfan (Wilfan). Joža Wilfan later went on to become a member of the Liberation front (OF) and a high-ranking Yugoslav diplomat in the socialist period.⁵⁰¹ In his speech, on the 12th anniversary of the Kingdom’s founding, Wilfan posited the Yugoslav state as an abstract expression of the psychological content, to which, *per definitionem*, the Western nation-state model is not applicable and which Sokol has a duty to support and shape using its liberal and communitarian traditions. What is more, he presented the progression from a national movement to a statehood-based one, as a natural evolutionary path that both Sokol and Yugoslavism have historically

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid, pp. 6-7; This speech was held partly in a reaction to the incident that occurred some months earlier in Trogir (Dalmatia), whereby SSKJ members destroyed historic monuments from the period of Venetian Republic, in protest to Italian irredentist and nationalist claims, see: Mario Jareb “Trogirski incident od 1. prosinca 1932. i mletački lav svetog Marka kao simbol ‘talijanstva’ istočne obale Jadrana” [Trogir incident, from December 1, 1932, and the Venetian lion of Saint Mark as a simbol of Italianness of the East Adriatic] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, vol. 39, no. 2 (2007), pp. 419-443.

⁵⁰⁰ Joža Wilfan “Država in Sokol. Predavanje održano 1. decembra 1930” [State and the Sokol. Lecture held on December 1, 1930] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1931), pp. 126-8.

⁵⁰¹ “Vilfan, Joža (1908–1987)”. *Slovenska biografija*. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU, 2013. URL=<http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi788321/#primorski-slovenski-biografski-leksikon> (Last access: August 15, 2024).

followed, albeit by overcoming numerous challenges posed by the unfavorable execution of the unification and other historical contingencies.

Specifically, Wilfan argued that: “The State is a complex phenomenon. Without wishing to diminish its importance, it is above all the external expression of a content. And without thereby denying its vital complexity, it is above all something technical. To speak of the relationship to the state on this occasion (...) is therefore to speak of the relationship to its content, above all to its psychological substrate: that is to say, to speak of the relationship to state consciousness. (...) However, he who judges Sokol in general must not forget that it too, like all our public life, has had to overcome the crisis of transition from a one-dimensional, self-national [LB: samonarodnega] life to a two-dimensional, life of statehood. (...) But we must not forget that from all this, (...) there has grown another (...) It was the consciousness of a higher community, a community which cannot be translated into the terminology of any Western nations, a consciousness which embraced the Southern Slavs and grew to Slavdom (...) we cannot exchange such a consciousness for a shallow loyalism, for a passive recognition of the state. For us, this consciousness is a unique but active reality which also reaches into the inner life of a nation, into its cultural consciousness. This is the relationship of Sokol to the state, or more precisely to its psychological substratum. (...) And here it should be stressed that only the State itself gives Sokol the opportunity to live its thought to its last depths; the importance of its individual functions is greatly modified in this respect.”⁵⁰²

For Wilfan, apparently, the new, tighter embrace of the Sokol by the state, represented a culmination of Sokol’s evolutionary and emancipatory agenda. He saw Sokol’s physical education here, as a key vehicle for changing and molding the national character that is bound to result in an elevated political culture as well. This was particularly so, according to Wilfan,

⁵⁰² Ibid, p. 127.

because of Sokol's essential role in developing collective discipline and social solidarity, as well as contribution towards achieving an overall higher culture and thus ultimately, a stronger state, by improving individuals: "High culture is the guarantee of social order. And here again the importance of Sokol is shown. Sokol bases its leverage on the individual. It wants to make of everyone who comes into its fold a man capable and worthy of life. With the worthy heir, the Sokol creates the first condition of culture and thus of social progress."⁵⁰³ His optimistic reading of the new situation depicts the hopes that numerous other Sokol thinkers initially held in regard to the state, during the Royal Dictatorship. In that context, they presumed that, by imbuing the state structures with their own traditions and methods, that supposedly stemmed from the national culture, they would provide a necessary corrective to the otherwise technical, abstract scaffolding that the modern nation-state represented.

Similar understanding of the state was shared and discussed in relation to Sokol's large-scale educational work by the Novi Sad-based philosopher, mathematician and physicist Svetislav Marić, who aimed to disseminate this idea to the ever-growing membership. When presenting his vision of the courses to be conducted in the near future, Marić suggested that expert knowledge should be communicated exclusively in a way that directly tackles the lived experience of the Sokol membership. Hereby, he outlined the role of different subjects and concepts in shaping their worldview, among them that of the state, by saying: "The state, in these lectures, should be presented as the highest national organization, that enables and supports all the positive creative national forces [LB: stvaralačke snage narodne], so that they can come to their fullest expression".⁵⁰⁴ In such visions, the state is merely a supportive infrastructure for the life, development and expression of the national organism, meaning that

⁵⁰³ Ibid, p. 128.

⁵⁰⁴ Svetislav Marić "Sokolska predavanja uz diapozitive. Referat na sednici SPO" [Sokol lectures with slides. Report at the SPO meeting] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1931), pp. 318-20, here p. 319.

in this initial period the reading of the Sokol's relation to the centralizing state was still markedly liberal and progressivist, although remaining largely communitarian.⁵⁰⁵

It was not long until these optimistic perspectives were brought into question by the outbreak of the economic crisis and the continuing political crises in Yugoslavia and abroad. The fault was not necessarily seen within the state, but rather within Sokol's own deterioration due to its enlargement, but also in global political, economic and other trends that they felt invited to respond to with their work. Miroslav Ambrožič raised an alarm, in 1933, and pleaded for the membership to think of the state and the community they pledged to protect: "So it happens many times that the basic foundation of our existence, that is the state, slips from our memory (...) For Sokol our homeland, state and nation are, in today's circumstances, equal concepts. The interest of the state comes first, and is our highest and, in fact, our only duty. Today's Sokol needs to adapt to the domestic needs of the country. Sokol was built on the old traditions, and came into existence under different circumstances, but it has to live according to its idea and calling in a contemporary way, with new and real life, that awards it a right to live and the duty to participate in the organic alliance with the life of the state (..) Sokol (...) must never see only its own benefit"⁵⁰⁶ Highlighting Sokol's organic connection not only with the state, but also with the nation, in times of crises, Ambrožič suggested: "In this sense, let us be aware that we are not gymnastics teachers or trainers, but educators/raisers [LB: uzgojitelji], who must live and feel with their protégés [LB: pitomcima]."⁵⁰⁷ The fact that Ambrožič felt the need to publish such a plea and reflect on the select ills of associational life, might indicate that the membership

⁵⁰⁵ For an example of didactic communitarian fictional anecdotes in the periodicals, see: "Zar ja jedan da spasavam narod?" [Should it be me, an individual, who should save the nation?] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1933), pp. 42-3: "That is why the nation, rightfully, demands of each of its members to cooperate in the social matters. Those who do not respond to that demand are social and national enemies."; as well as: Miloš Stanojević "Sokolstvo i narodna prosveta" [Sokol and the national education] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1932), pp. 285-287.

⁵⁰⁶ Miroslav Ambrožič "K novome poletu!" [Towards the new momentum!] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1933), p. 1-3.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 3.

did not unequivocally accept the state's embrace and the new demands imposed on Sokol, in this period.

One of the consequences of etatization of discourse and the conflation between the “nation” and the “state” for Sokol thinkers was the raised concern for the economic state and progress of the country. While the 1920s saw some theoretization on the relationship between bodily capacities and labor efficiency, it was only in the early 1930s that some Sokol thinkers further elaborated on this connection, with a more pronounced concern for the prosperity of the state. It was done in the most sophisticated way by Viktor Murnik who first gave a speech on this in the Ljubljana-based Merkur trade association, published a series of articles on the relationship between Sokol and the national economy in the Slovenian *Trgovski list* (Trader newspaper), but also broadcast it as a Sokol lecture on the radio.⁵⁰⁸ One of the crucial desired outcomes of Sokol physical education that Murnik posited here, was precisely state sovereignty, that he thought could only be achieved through economic sovereignty. Clearly inspired by the outbreak of the economic crisis and the way it shed light on global economic dependencies, Murnik easily adopted the etatist lens. After outlining the positive effects of physical education on individuals' character and the resulting accumulation of wealth, he further argued that: “The nation, furthermore, needs wealth for raising its cultural level and improving in other ways, not just in terms of economy. (...) But the nation needs wealth for something else as well: for its freedom! I do not mean only the guns and the canons, that are very expensive; I do not mean only the political independence and political integrity, but foremost I'm thinking about the economic

⁵⁰⁸ Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (8.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (10.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (12.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (15.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (22.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (24.3.1932), p. 4; Viktor Murnik “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo” [National economy and Sokol] *Trgovski list* (26.3.1932), p. 4; “Narodno gospodarstvo in Sokolstvo. Govor na radiju” [National economy and Sokol. A radio speech] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1932), pp. 203-210; It was also published in a separate booklet: Viktor Murnik, *Sokolstvo in življenje* [Sokol and life]. Ljubljana, 1932.

independence, meaning to not be economically subjugated, that should not be conflated with the economic dependencies, that is mutual in contemporary times, among countries. Today, more than ever, the freedom of a nation consists not only in political independence, but in not being economically subjugated. For the latter, it is foremost wealth that is necessary. Because material dependence of a state can ultimately cause a political dependence as well. That is why the gym raises not only good soldiers, but in peace times, work performed within it is the work dedicated to the defense of the homeland!”⁵⁰⁹ The focus on economy is not surprising given Murnik’s engagement with the trade associations and fair throughout his life, yet, what this text represents is his turn from the focus of regarding physical education as a means to furthering the nation’s cultural development to the more strictly economic and, ultimately, sovereignty-related concerns. Hereby, the ultimate goal of physical exercise was oriented towards ensuring state’s security, political and economic independence and not towards individual’s psychological development and cultural elevation, as was the case in the previous period. In this text, he also paid special attention to the economic relationship between machinery and labor, not least in the context of the unemployment crisis, that he saw as mostly transitory and suggested could be amended by increasing the labor productivity and capacity of the population. Relying on several works of Spengler,⁵¹⁰ he also tackled the issue of outsourcing of industrial labor among the “colored peoples” (sic!) and the competition between European and labor from the Global South, but also the potential dangers of relying on continuous technological inventions for the economy more broadly. Taken together, Murnik’s renewed concern for the “human economy” points to the etatization of discourses and also a change in regarding the role of human body in society at large, whereby it became, at least for Murnik and his milieu, one

⁵⁰⁹ Murnik, *Sokolstvo in življenje*, p. 109.

⁵¹⁰ Oswald Spengler, *Mensch und die Technik*. Munich, 1931; Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*. Vienna, 1918.

of the first lines of defense against economic crises and endangerment of state sovereignty alike—rather than a vehicle for general human progress and holistic development.

Finally, the concept of state sovereignty was thematized in the context of Sokol's novel relationship with the Catholic Church, given that it was recently partially subsumed into the state administration. Beyond the traditional tension between Sokol's drive towards religious tolerance and secularism on the one, and Catholic Church's complex relationship to the political sphere, on the other hand—it was the 1929 Lateran Treaty that raised this issue among anonymous Sokol thinkers who regarded the issue from a novel, etatized, perspective, yet, in a nuanced and historical manner. Careful not to alienate progressive and nationally-oriented clergy, but remaining critical of ultramonatism as a “heretical doctrine”, an anonymous author concluded that Catholicism: “does not consist of complete negation of those natural differences that God imposed on the people, in terms of character, tendencies and culture; Catholicism, that is, generality [LB: *opštost*] can only comprise of higher synthesis of parts according to which they do not destroy each other, but the “opposites are reconciled”.”⁵¹¹ The historically nationalist clergy was thus not attacked, but it was evident that Sokol's loyalty to them went only in so far, as it did not encroach the state's sovereignty that they felt invited to protect and identify with.

3.2.1. New readings of Tyrš: Raising Citizenry, Crisis of Democracy and Social Justice

In parallel, and perhaps to an extent, in conflict with such rapidly etatizing discourse that many Sokol thinkers espoused—there was a novel stream of political thinking in Sokol that aimed to develop a theoretical framework on citizenship and raising (semantically equivalent to making

⁵¹¹ “Šta je ultramontanizam” [What is ultramonatism] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1933), pp. 1-3. (without author)

or shaping) of citizens more generally, including raising their social awareness. While these concepts certainly counted as some of the discussion topics, within Sokol, in the previous period as well, it is only in the early 1930s that the debates on them flourished in the associational periodicals. This was done, among other ways, by reinforcing and recontextualizing Tyrš's liberal, progressive and evolutionist philosophical heritage. In part prompted by the overall rise of authoritarian, irredentist, but also anti-modernist paradigms and regimes—this new framework allowed for Sokol's more nuanced ideological positioning vis-à-vis the radicalizing political movements and ideas, but also for subtle critique of its own recent associational transformation. Alarmed about authoritarian tendencies at home and abroad, the thinkers who provided these new readings of Tyrš in the early 1930s, repackaged his, and Masaryk's, thought, in the tradition of Loewenstein's militant (defensive) democracy, *ante litteram*.

The very concept of citizenship itself (*državljanstvo*)⁵¹² proliferated only in this period in Sokol and precisely in a conjunction to the aforementioned conceptual conflation of the “nation” and “state”. In the eyes of Sokol thinkers, the guarantee of a strong political community was a citizen that possesses particular psychological traits and is socialized in a particular manner, resulting in possession of a given set of values. They saw Sokol as a platform that is uniquely suited to facilitate this process. The raising of citizens (*državljanski uzgoj/odgoj*) thus became one of the most prominent subjects of the debate, whereby the underlying premise was that the democratic and value-based resilience of citizens is the sole purpose of Sokol work, but also the only chance for state's survival and prosperity. In this view of politics, the political responsibility is shared among all citizens and all associations and organizations within the country—yet, still in a liberal sense of active and critical citizenship.

⁵¹² In contrast to present day *građanstvo* (citizen being *građanin/građanka*).

One of the most sophisticated reflections on this rather new vision of the Sokol's mission and politics at large was published by the Slovenian lawyer, journalist and politician, Otmar Pirkmajer. He later went on to become the first rector of the UNRRA University "Free Europe", founded in Munich in 1946, after surviving internment in the Dachau concentration camp.⁵¹³ In 1934,⁵¹⁴ Pirkmajer cried out: "It is us who are the state! This should be repeated countless times and the state's self-creation [LB: samotvornost] should be highlighted so that the state thought [LB: državna misao] fills up everyone's soul and so that each individual stands up for state's interests equally automatically as he is taught to stand up for his own. (...) That state is not something imaginary, is not an abstract creation, but an expression of a concrete will of the people. (...) That is why we need awaken the sense for the state (...) and train people to be true, valuable citizens, meaning citizen who will (...) know how to arrange their actions even in their private lives in a way that everything they do serves the general progress and, finally, general prosperity (...) Every Sokol needs to be a creative [LB: tvoran] member of the state community, an exemplary citizen, an excited preacher of the state thought and an apostle of the state ethos."⁵¹⁵ It is visible from this text that even though Pirkmajer unquestionably accepted the hegemony of the state over Sokol, and Sokol's wilful subjugation to it, he nevertheless insisted on the raising of citizens who should act as co-creators of and key actors within the state—positing them as a conceptual core of the concept of modern state as such. By dispelling the abstract character of the state, he brought it conceptually closer to the nation, national culture and character, but importantly to the notion of citizens' collective responsibility as a sum of their individual responsibility. Crucially, this approach presupposed that politics itself is conducted "from below", rather than "from above".

⁵¹³ Irena Žmuc. *Dr. Otmar Pirkmajer: The Forgotten Elites*. Ljubljana: Mestni muzej Ljubljana, 2022.

⁵¹⁴ Otmar Pirkmajer, "Sokolstvo in državljanska vzgoja" [Sokol and the raising of citizens] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 3 (1934), pp. 68-73.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 73.

Despite Sokol's limited success in realizing such visions of politics and democracy, the strenght of this paradigm within the large layer of thinkers involved, demonstrates that the tradition of liberal democratic and citizenship-focused thinking was pervasive and developed in parallel to the state's centralizing and authoritarian tendencies. It is, in fact, evident that even in these circumstances, Sokol was open to critical and multi-vocal debate on its key postulates, but also to criticizing the nationalist dogmas, even when it came to integral Yugoslavism. They argued, early on in this period, that it is critical citizenship that is a much stronger guarantee of national prosperity, than the one that thrives on the consensus over the matters of national culture and interest.⁵¹⁶ Praising Masaryk for continuing the work of Tyrš, for instance, Yugoslav Sokol thinkers highlighted that his largest contribution to this mission was that "he most effectively helped Sokol to protect itself from the mere external 'nationeering' [LB: narodnjakovanja]",⁵¹⁷ thus implying that a critical citizen is a desired result of their pedagogical and overall associational efforts.

The cult of Tyrš and his ideas, widespread across all Sokol associations, was used in the local context to underscore the association's distinctly liberal democratic and evolutionist commitments that rest on "small-scale work" and educational outreach—as key vehicles for improving the citizenry and political culture at large, rather than focusing on the electoral process, which they deemed evidently corrupt.⁵¹⁸ The quesiton of Tyrš's philosophical and ideological production was examined also in its relation to positivism,⁵¹⁹ whereby it was argued

⁵¹⁶ "Epilog k Masarykovim proslavama" [Epilogue to the Masaryk' celebrations] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1-6. (1930), pp. 4-7. (without author)

⁵¹⁷ Ibid, p. 4

⁵¹⁸ Venceslav Havliček "Kako je Tirš cenio narodno prosvjećivanje" [How Tyrš appreciated the national education] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1931), pp. 272-4; Božena Stiblova "Tirševa oporuka mladoj generaciji" [Tyrš's will for the young generation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1932), pp. 15-17.

⁵¹⁹ Branko Janković "Da li je Tirševa filozofija pozitivizam" [Is Tyrš's philosophy positivism] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1934), pp. 315-318.

that Tyrš supplemented the basic positivist package in a way that rendered him progressivist evolutionist who understood the nation as the fundamental social unit.

A Belgrade-based thinker Branko Janković elaborated on this by saying that: “He accepted his [LB: Ludwig Feuerbach’s] understanding of the national question, that should not be solved with a revolution, as well as a highlighted a slogan on progress. Tyrš’s history of philosophy has a character of a national synthesis, romanticist ideas connected to the idea of progress. The center of his thought is a nation as a fundamental social unit. To him, history of the world is the history of nations. This is how he differs from the positivist views of history, with which there was a tendency to regard a universal community and the laws of its development. As a supporter of the new renaissance, he regards the new task of his nation, from an aesthetic perspective, in terms of creating an absolute human harmony (...) Once Tyrš accepted Darwin’s theory, he did not stop being a Schopenhauerian, but only gave his philosophy a different conclusion, and that is the practical tendency [LB: težnja za delatnošću] (...) The ethical ideal of love, as Schopenhauer understood it in the Buddhist form, Tyrš complemented with the utilitarian ethics, that was necessary due to realizing those ideals in practice in the interest of the whole. That ideal of love was not realized in practice in the aristocratic-imperialist direction, as was later the case with the Darwin’s supporters of social character, but it was realized in the direction of democracy and brotherhood, namely in the direction of a humanist ideal.”⁵²⁰ An anonymous Slovenian author who discussed the same philosophical underpinnings of Tyrš’s writings in this period also underscored its synthetic, eclectic, and foremost practical character, as well as its long-term objective of creating citizens of noble, virtuous character, whose development is maximized—as a foundation for all further politics: “Sokol is a practical philosophy, i.e. a philosophy which does not consider the various sub-phenomena of either psychic or physical

⁵²⁰ Ibid, p. 316-17.

nature as such, but judges them only in terms of their relation to the life of the individual as well as the whole”.⁵²¹

This argumentation demonstrates that Tyrš’s intellectual heritage was thus put forward, re-interpreted, but also used to implicitly debate the positivist and evolutionist commitments of the association at large. This line of thought also, ironically, reinforced the still rather anti-political attitude of this strain of Sokol thinkers, as was well articulated by the Zrenjanin (then-Petrovgrad)-based gymnasium teacher and a notable Sokol activist Miloš Stanojević. Drawing on Tyrš and John Stuart Mill’s claims on the relationship between politics and an individual, he exclaimed that: “Nothing is more obvious, than the fact that the fate of one nation doesn’t depend on its organization, but only of the quality of the members of that society, that is, nation or the state. (...) If there is corruption, at some point, in a given country, it will never be cured by laws, but morally strong individuals of the given country. (...) It is, thus, not the laws that create large and reasonable people, but first there have to be strong and genius people to create the laws and all other regulations for the improvement of the human race. (...) we [LB: Sokol] are aware that we are not weak (...) that is a consciousness of a man that is healthy and useful for the social community. That is an awareness of a man who carries the existence of his nation within himself, for eternity.”⁵²² This was further underscored by Hanibal Kaponi, a Sušak-based pharmacist, journalist and Sokol activist whose conceptual delineation of nationalism included the work of the entire population for the overall cultural and social progress, but also towards the emancipation of the humanity at large—headed by Sokol as a sort of enlightened avant-garde.⁵²³

⁵²¹ M. K-ić “Sokolstvo kot svetovni nazor” [Sokol as a worldview] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1931), pp. 177-8, here p. 177.

⁵²² Miloš Stanojević “Sokolska nauka” [Sokol science] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1934), pp. 402-6, here p. 402.

⁵²³ Hanibal Kaponi “Uloga sokolstva u našem nacionalnom i državnom životu u sadašnjosti i budućnosti” [The role of Sokol in our national and state life in contemporary times and in the future] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1933), pp. 335-6.

Importantly, even in this new context, some Sokol thinkers made sure to accentuate Tyrš's distinctly liberal and universalist understanding of nationalism—so as to imbue the new concept of citizenship with the same attitude. Nikola (Niko) Mrvoš, a Novi Sad- and Zagreb-based physician,⁵²⁴ for instance, recounted Tyrš's genius in postulating the Sokol-style nationalism that was “neither parochial, neither chauvinist”, but rather philosophically synthetic in a way that it paired body-mind monism with modern political ethics, seeking to universalise the communitarian spirit.⁵²⁵ Such interpretations of Tyrš's heritage were, needless to say, in conflict with the new narrowing etatizing agenda of the Sokol leadership, yet it is visible that numerous thinkers remained on this position until the end of this period of associational history. At the same time, they refused to instrumentalize nationalism for the contingent daily politics of the state, but still retained an idealist view, albeit rooted in the materialist body-driven view of politics, which saw it as an initial developmental step in the general emancipation of the humanity.

In another text, Mrvoš elaborated on the significant obstacles posed to this sort of agenda, embodied in the present all-encompassing crisis, that he diagnosed as a decisive transitional period between radically opposing futures. Positing the Sokol as one of the rare platforms whose ethos promotes world peace by remaining inclusive and socially peacable, he portrayed a grim picture of the present situation: “Those who came out of the war as victors, they want to secure their acquisitions created in blood; and those who lost the war, hope to soon return what they have lost. Certain classes in a given society and nation also prepare to maintain the gained or to return the lost. In short—the good will that creates yearning for peace has disappeared among the people. (...) Our Sokols (...) gather in their circle all social classes, religions and

⁵²⁴ Later to be incarcerated and murdered by Ustaša soon after the establishment of the so-called Independent State of Croatia, see: “Nikola Mrvos” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. URL= <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/id-card/nikola-mrvos> (Last access: August 22, 2024).

⁵²⁵ Niko Mrvoš “Tirš-filozof” [Tyrš, the philosopher] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1932), pp. 5-8, here p. 7.

tribes, thus becoming a guarantee of general peace and good will among the people. Sokol has the best chances to create an attitude for world peace among its members, because Sokol itself was created out of humanist [LB: opštečovečanskih] yearnings for freedom, ethics and morals.”⁵²⁶ The rapidly changing international order and the rise of authoritarian tendencies at home and abroad, prompted many Sokol thinkers such as Mrvoš to adopt crisis as a discursive category. More often than not, such thinkers used this discursive framework to further theorize on the connection between Sokol’s traditions and role of particular sort of citizenship in maintaining democracy and peace.

It did not escape Mrvoš, however, that producing such citizenship, continuously aware and practicing its political role, also means establishing citizens-run social institutions that would make both the individual and the collective more resilient against global and local challenges. His claims on this issue might also imply a broader Sokol stance on the inability of the state, in its current form and ability, to, in fact, mend the social conditions across the country, thus making Sokol work all the more relevant. In his report to the educational committee on the issue of social welfare (*socijalno staranje*) in Sokol,⁵²⁷ Mrvoš suggested to the highest associational leadership to found a separate committee for social welfare and, in this way, scale up the work currently sporadically done by initiatives such as *Sokolsko srce* or certain clubs, e.g. that of Mostar in Herzegovina. Most importantly, he proposed founding a Sokol labor bureau (employment service), so as to assist its membership in finding labor opportunities across its network and beyond. Hereby, he underscored that developing such social institutions, and taking part in their work, is an essential element of modern citizenship that Sokol should be conducive to the development of, as a renowned carrier of social progress. It was Ilija Mamuzić,

⁵²⁶ Niko Mrvoš “Sokolstvo i težnja za svetskim mirom. Povodom sećanja na 11. novembra 1918.” [Sokol and the tendency for world peace. On the occasion of the remembrance of November 11, 1918] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1932), pp. 404-6.

⁵²⁷ Niko Mrvoš “O socijalnom staranju u Sokolstvu. Referat za SPO” [On social welfare in Sokol. Report for the SPO] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), pp. 137-8.

a notable Sokol thinker from Osijek, who accentuated, however, that the said social drive is not inherent in individuals, but rather needs to be cultivated through appropriate socialization.⁵²⁸

Building on this premise, Mamuzić most brutally attacked the Yugoslav intelligentsia and the intellectuals, dubbing them “social parasites” for not partaking in the creation of such social institutions. In the same vein, he scolded Sokol for not realizing its program among the rural populace that had remained sceptical of all external forces hoping to bring modernization therat. Mamuzić, nevertheless, suggested that complementing the existing “national education” with a strong social program, would result in a much more successful penetration of Sokol into the countryside.

The concept that subsumed most such commitments and ideas was the one of social justice (*društvena pravda*), which only entered the Sokol vocabulary in this period, even though not much has been realized in terms of the associational policies and overall program, in that regard. It conceptually belonged to the same conceptual cluster as personal freedom, but also moral as such. This can perhaps best be seen in the 1933 article published by the historian Đura Mrvaljević⁵²⁹ who stated that: “Only when the poorest member of our society will feel protected from the fear of the future, only when he will feel that even such a modest, valuable and honorable man can freely move and develop, without being crippled by the thought that his family will soon be left without means ; only then will our society, our nation, flourish without drawbacks and dear (...) The society is always able to do something for its members and to find a way for securing them, without hurting the principles of personal freedom and dignity. Those are, for example, different insurances, co-operatives, organizations for mutual help etc., where the insecure will always find a refuge. (...) That is why it can rightfully be said that Sokol is not

⁵²⁸ Ilija Mamuzić “Jugoslovensko Sokolstvo pred sutrašnjicom” [Yugoslav Sokol before the future] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1934), pp. 65-69.

⁵²⁹ Djura Mrvaljević “Lična sloboda i društvena pravda sokolski su ideali” [Personal freedom and social justice are Sokol ideals] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1933), pp. 38-40.

only a national organization, but also a social one, that tasked itself with rejuvenating our society, our nation and to which it shall instill the highest possible degree of morals.”⁵³⁰ This period marks the first instance of Sokol thinkers attempting to base their agenda on a widening socio-economic program, as well as linking the social question with the national and cultural ones, that had previously been regarded largely in isolation.

This new tendency, however, can also plausibly be seen as a sort of response to the politics of the Popular Front. Srećko Džamonja, a Bosnian-born, Paris-educated literary translator, publicist and pedagogue, for instance, overtly addressed the Popular Front’s ideological appeal to the youth that Sokol was attempting to co-opt.⁵³¹ In his article on nationalism and its role in raising of youth, he relied on the same argument as Mrvaljević, but nevertheless found Marxist and broadly leftist ideologies reductivist, due to their assumptions on individual’s rational and class-driven behavior, even if he admitted that they contain elements of truth. Pointing to greed and selfishness as roots of potential destruction of state and society, Džamonja explicitly posited liberalism and its perfectionizing drive towards evolutionary social change as the sole option that has the capability to retain the existing cultural and civilizational achievements of a given political community. He saw it as most effective given that it presupposed gradually building on these achievements and mending different societal imperfections. From this perspective, liberal nationalism, with its reliance on the protective, ever-improving state and active political community, already had the capacity to address the economic inequalities and the drivers of their deepening. He reiterated: “National state has for its natural task to found its power and ability to improve the national community, on the well-being and enlightenment of all the classes of citizens and every individual alike. The material goods and education, that are the conditions of economic prosperity of the individual and the nation, have to be distributed in a

⁵³⁰ Ibid, p. 40.

⁵³¹ Srećko Džamonja “Nacionalizam i nacionalni uzgoj omladine” [Nationalism and national upbringing of youth] *Sokolski slet. 1874-Zagreb-1934*, vol. 1, no. 6 , p. 54-55.

way, that their effects can be enjoyed by every individual, proportionally to the effort they are contributing to the common good. It is the state, primarily, that struggles to rise the economic power and, through school, to enlighten all its citizens. It is thus the duty of a nationalist to support the state in its mission, as much as they can.”⁵³²

Responding to a leftist thesis on nationalisms and national states’ inevitable transformation towards promoting imperialism and causing war by larger states, Džamonja acknowledged the existence of contemporaneous imperialist states whose agendas threatened world peace, but accentuated that: “There are also wonderfully organized small national states, that are not threatened by any sort of war danger, because they are designed according to the true national principles. In the consciousness of their citizens lies great moral strength, that defends them against all onslaughts of their stronger neighbors.”⁵³³ He finally concluded that due to the strength of the democratic and national ideals that the current international order is based on, the larger states do not even dare to overtly admit their imperialist or subjugation-driven agendas. Here, he suggested that soon enough the competition in armament will be replaced by a more noble competition, namely one in the acquisition of moral, cultural and spiritual goods.⁵³⁴ According to Džamonja, the liberal, nationally-based community thus not only had the power to gradually and permanently resolve the social tensions, but also irretrievably provided an antidote to global imperialist projects of the past.

Together with the reinforcing of Tyrš’s evolutionary and practical commitments, as well as integration of the social question into the broader field of Sokol’s interest and action—there was a significant portion of the debates that were concerned with the rise of radical authoritarian forces on the international stage. In that context, they theorized on Yugoslav Sokol’s unique position in that context, given its liberal democratic heritage. These debates were fueled by the

⁵³² Ibid, p. 54.

⁵³³ Ibid, p. 55.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

ever more present crisis discourses. Tellingly, some of them also reflected on the novel meaning of the term and advised against its usage for diagnosing, for instance, the situation in the villages.⁵³⁵ Nevertheless, most texts did not shy away from the concept of crisis and, what is more, accentuated its all-encompassing character. It was, for instance, Jan Uher, a notable Czech pedagogue and university professor, who systematically examined what he saw as the prevailing crisis in different sectors and areas of contemporary life.⁵³⁶ In his rendering, however, the crisis retained its transitional character and meaning, marking yet another transitional phase in the chain of events from the French revolution onwards. For Uher, this transitional crisis could be felt in economy, philosophy, science, art and politics alike.

Philosophy, he claimed, experienced a proliferation of relativist, pragmatist and materialist tendencies and stances among all social classes, as well as a struggle of radically opposing idealist and reactionary visions. The tension between sciences and humanities, voiding the overall knowledge production of principled thinking, was also a symptom of this greater transition. The same, he claimed, could be said of pedagogy whereby its fundamental postulates were continuously being revised and brought into question. Uher, furthermore, diagnosed a crisis of private life, witnessed by the increasing number of suicides, divorces and abortions, as well as politics at large. The latter he subsumed under the “crisis of democracy”, which he blamed on the rise of: “extreme Russian collectivism, extreme personal individualism (America) and national egoism (fascism and Hitlerism)”.⁵³⁷

In an increasingly psychologizing tone, Uher summed it up, by saying that: “Within the state there is a crisis of democracy, on the one side with party egoism and personal egoism, and on

⁵³⁵ “Before, we only knew of crisis when someone was sick, and found themselves between life and death (...) Let us beware of it as if it was fire and let us not transmit this mood to our children, because they will become weaklings, snowflakes and incapable of life.” Jovan Udicki “Sokolstvo, selo i kriza” [Sokol, village and the crisis] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), pp. 147-149.

⁵³⁶ Jan Uher “Današnji život i Sokolstvo” [Contemporary life and Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1932), pp. 431-433.

⁵³⁷ Ibid, p. 431.

the other side with political nihilism. The dictatorial tendency appears not only among parties, but also within parties, with the dictatorial appetite of strong individuals. There is no democratic mutual understanding, the matters are not being managed according to the interests of the majority, but by using the path of least resistance. There is no reasonable cooperation. The strong line is missing both in bourgeois and socialist parties. It is the time of political experiments. Individuals' politics—without individuals.”⁵³⁸ He further supplemented this vision by depicting a chaotic, disorganised and volatile economic order based on harmful global dependencies, but also arguing that art and literature have lost its idealist purpose by relying on eclectic, wavering characters and thinkers without higher principles. Having painted this rather alarming picture of the present age, Uher turned to the place of Sokol's intellectual task of the day, saying that: “It must *a priori* reject various forms of relativism and nihilism, whose consequences lead to the collapse of society and weakening of the individual and social life. It has to reject materialism and overly utilitarianistically understood pragmatism, but also different forms of idealism, that is essentially reactionary, as well as pessimism. Sokol is most compatible with Masaryk's realism. (...) It is Sokol's duty to resolutely defend democracy, particularly today, in the time of doubting the value of the democratic principle, in the age of true crisis of democracy.”⁵³⁹ Such defense of democracy meant, for Uher, categorically rejecting all variants of authoritarian, despotic, nepotistic rule, as well as all forms of extremism, chauvinistic nationalism and militarism. Hereby, he also saw it as Sokol's duty to contribute to the international cooperation and peace-building.

The latter was simultaneously tackled by Josip Vilfan's novel publications, published in the early 1930s in the context of his aforementioned Vienna-based Congress of European Nationalities,⁵⁴⁰ that was experiencing a rather volatile period due to the continuing and

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Ibid, p. 432.

⁵⁴⁰ One of the most programmatic ones being: *Die organisierung der Volksgemeinschaft*. Vienna, 1932.

increasing instrumentalization of the minority question by the Third Reich and other revisionist states. This is well witnessed by his alarmist 1934 booklet,⁵⁴¹ that posited the issue of minority rights as the one of European peace. Narrating a deep crisis of European continent by evoking the imagery of the Ottoman Empire as a “sick man of Europe”, Vilfan espoused a liberal internationalist attitude towards the minority question. In the same vein, he argued for establishing a normative framework for their cultural autonomy and development, but also refashioning their role as one of supporting and ensuring better relations and cooperation between the various European countries.⁵⁴² While these booklets were mentioned on occasion in Sokol periodicals, they were not directly included in the various curricula, nor its the libraries.

Furthermore, one of the most comprehensive and fertile Sokol thinkers who deeply reflected on the nature of and relationship between democracy and authoritarianism was the Novi Sad-based lawyer Aleksandar Tabaković. He published a series of articles in the Sokol periodicals, in the mid-1930s, whereby he sought to conceptually delineate different understandings of authoritarian governance and rule, as well as democracy as their conceptual opposite.⁵⁴³ He did so precisely on the cusp between Sokol being at the zenith of its power and its subsequent rapid decline after the 1934 assassination of the King Aleksandar Karađorđević. In Tabaković’s rendering of the present situation, Sokol stood for liberal and democratic commitments in general. However, he also felt it necessary to outline Sokol’s attitude towards the evolving international political and intellectual developments, that, he argued, stemmed out of a deep moral crisis of the postwar period. Blending Italian fascism and German national socialism

⁵⁴¹ Josip Vilfan. *Die programmatische Arbeit der Nationalitätenkongresse*. Vienna, 1934.

⁵⁴² Ibid, p. 17.

⁵⁴³ Aleksandar Tabaković, “Sokolstvo i duhovna strujanja sadašnjice. Novi pokreti i naša kulturna orijentacija” [Sokol and the contemporary intellectual tendencies. New movements and our cultural orientation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1934), pp. 196-205; Aleksandar Tabaković “Sokolstvo i duhovna strujanja sadašnjice. Nemački nacionalizam” [Sokol and the contemporary intellectual tendencies. German nationalism] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1934), pp. 243-239; Aleksandar Tabaković “Sokolstvo i duhovno strujanje sadašnjice. Nacionalsocijalistički rasizam” [Sokol and the contemporary intellectual tendencies. NS rasism] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7 (1934), pp. 273-281.

into the same category, Tabaković set out to provide the readers with their “intellectual physiognomy”. He hereby accentuated fascisms’ action-driven, etatist and doctrineless character, but also showcased it as a regime in crisis, precisely due to it being void of any grander idea or vision that would justify its violence. Tracing Mussolini’s thought to the empty vitalist and moralless attitude of both Sorel and Nietzsche, he dubbed this trajectory of thought as one that supports action without an eschatology of sorts. Tabaković further criticized (the use of) Gentile’s *faux* Hegelianist abstract construction, by saying that: “...the goal was achieved, fascism was awarded its seemingly highly-educated ‘philosophy’, fascist creed got its fascist scholasticism, and then Mr. Gentile could calmly publish the new fascist gospel, that said that ‘freedom stopped being a right and became a duty’, leaving his co-nationals devoid of any freedom, to search for the hidden meaning of those profound words.”⁵⁴⁴

Having painted the grotesque picture of the abominable relationship between the ideology and the political culture of fascist Italy, Tabaković also pointed to its philosophical and conceptual inconcistencies, as well as its markedly instrumentalized character. Reflecting on the socialization of youth and future elites in the Balila, an organization somewhat comparable to Sokol, he highlighted that it is not conducive to raising of strong-willed and children possessing desirable character traits, but rather “dutiful praetorians, reckless ‘nerds’, political mandarins or blinded fanatics”.⁵⁴⁵ Stripping the characteristics of this regime down to its essentially violent authoritarian core, Tabaković concluded by dubbing it “Caesarism”, in one of its historical iterations, and stating that: “the hope for the new social ‘systems’ of salvation [LB: nove spasonosne društvene ‘sisteme’] always proved futile, because it is only with lasting work, avoiding adventures and perfecting the existing cultural values, it is possible to reach lasting success and progress of humanity (...) history shows us that the phenomenon of Caesarism is

⁵⁴⁴ Aleksandar Tabaković, “Sokolstvo i duhovna strujanja sadašnjice. Novi pokreti i naša kulturna orijentacija”, p. 201-202.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 203.

always tied with only one individual, and it represents only one transitional state, that can never become eternal.”⁵⁴⁶ Tabaković’s analysis demonstrates that it was already in this phase that Sokol milieus developed critical stances towards master narratives and ideologies in a more abstract sense, particularly those that claimed their doctrines and systems could be scaled up in a way that would facilitate a rapid large-scale societal change. Indicatively, Tabaković also presupposed that Sokol’s traditions and ideas represented a valuable counter-example, despite simultaneously being co-opted by the state, demanding the subjection of its members to the professed collective interests and the ongoing etatization of the discourse in its circles.

When comparing fascism and national socialism, Tabaković found that their notable similarities lay in their revolutionary, anti-liberal, anti-parliamentarian character, but also ruthless collectivism, “national imperialism”, “national egoism”, anti-internationalism and promotion of new lifestyles rooted in the cult of youth, militancy and *élan vital*. He considered both worldviews to be atavistic, with a tendency to transform the: “‘theoretical man’, who observes and thinks, into a ‘political man’, who creates and acts”.⁵⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Tabaković set out to outline particular unique traits of national socialism, in historical perspective. Starting with a *Sonderweg*-like narrative of the essentially illiberal development of German nationalism and political culture, he went on to portray the Weimar system as a political superimposition onto the radically different political heritage that had demanded a counter-revolutionary romanticist force since it had no liberal tradition to rely on. After outlining a number of Christian-socialist and other conservative thinkers, he underscored the historical rootedness of national socialism, in contrast to fascism, but also accentuated its racial, autochtonist, primordial and purifying language that came to rule over the entire political and legal landscape, bringing into question numerous modern institutions and legislation. Having dispelled the alleged scientific basis of

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 204-5.

⁵⁴⁷ Aleksandar Tabaković “Sokolstvo i duhovna strujanja sadašnjice. Nemački nacionalizam”, p. 243.

racism, as was understood in the particular German context, Tabaković went on to articulate the “Sokol stance” towards the menace of these new phenomena. He hereby argued that Slavic nationalisms and Sokol traditions originated in the struggle for the liberation of the previously subjugated nationalities and peoples, rendering them essentially noble and non-chauvinist. This also meant that these movements were pacifist, humanist and internationalist at their core, but also emancipatory in an outwardly way, meaning they carry a mission to contribute to the emancipation of other forms of suffering and subjugation in the wider human community.⁵⁴⁸ Due to these traditions and orientations, he categorically rejected the racist standpoint, but also race as a category more broadly, citing Lamarck and other thinkers who theorized on the human malleability vis-à-vis the given environment. In the same vein, he deconstructed the notion of national character and other tropes from the mysticist and organicist repertoire, that he felt stood in opposition to Sokol’s evidenced liberal commitments.

Indicatively, Tabaković’s articles mark the only explicit mention of vitalism in the entirety of Yugoslav Sokol’s intellectual production. It could be assumed that, similarly to Lukács who saw it as a root of “ideological fog” that opened the back door to fascist and national socialist brute systems, these thinkers also considered it irrelevant for their cause. The reasons behind this lack of engagement with this otherwise influential intellectual trend, could lay in its metaphysical nature, that would be difficult to practically “manipulate” even for the starkest of proponents of reform pedagogies who concerned themselves with questions of evolution, energy expenditure and will.⁵⁴⁹ This is also visible from Viktor Murnik’s critique of the concept of the “life force” (*življenska moč*), which he deemed as insufficiently measurable, as opposed to its external manifestation, namely the bodily movement.⁵⁵⁰ In fact, what might have been a

⁵⁴⁸ Aleksandar Tabaković “Sokolstvo i duhovno strujanje sadašnjice. Nationalsocijalistički rasizam”.

⁵⁴⁹ For more on the reception of vitalism in such contexts, see: *Vitalism and Its Legacy in Twentieth Century Life Sciences and Philosophy*, eds. Christopher Donohue, Charles T. Wolfe. Cham: Springer, 2023, passim; Mathilde Tahar “Bergson’s vitalisms” *Parrhesia* vol. 36 (2022), pp. 4-24.

⁵⁵⁰ His critique very much drew on the works of the Hungarian philosopher and mathematician Menyhért Palágyi and German embryologist and zoologist Oscar Hertwig, see: Viktor Murnik, *Sokolstvo in življenje*, pp. 58-61.

decisive factor in their choice not to employ a vitalist lense when discussing the conjunction of evolution and (physical) education, was vitalisms rejection of human agency in “molding” its evolutionary trajectory, on the one, and its disregard for the body as a space where that agency can be exercised, on the other hand. What could have perhaps been a common ground between the two traditions was Henri Bergson’s concept of vital intuitions that corresponded to Sokol thinkers’ idea on dormant instincts and urges that need to be activated through physical education and channeled for the improvement of the individuals, and consequently, the political community at large. Still, the fact that Sokol thinkers didn’t pick up on these ideas, goes to show just how important positivist, materialist and pragmaticist commitments were to them throughout the interwar period.

Furthermore, despite the overall present diagnosis of crisis of democracy and the wishful re-actualization of Tyrš’s drive toward raising citizenry through liberal means, once the issue of working with the rural population was raised, numerous Sokol thinkers admitted to the multifaceted difficulties and resistance they faced thereat.⁵⁵¹ This situation led some of them to devise novel methods of knowledge and ideas communication that will be discussed in the following sections, as most of the Sokol work done in the rural areas tackled economic, welfare-, health- and hygiene-related issues, rather than those of cultural development or even national consciousness. It is also worth noting that most of the aforementioned thinkers did not conjointly raise the rural question and the one of raising citizens. The newly founded journal, *Sokolsko selo* (Sokol village), was thus not intended for the otherwise largely illiterate rural population, but rather for the Sokol thinkers and officials to debate the countryside-related issues within the association. For that very reason, the articles published thereat can solely be used for investigating the thinkers’ understanding of the tension between rural and urban life,

⁵⁵¹ Mihovil Keretić “Prosvetni rad na selu” [Educational work in the villages] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), pp. 151-2; A. Jamnik, “Ogled po našem in svetovnem kmetijstvu” [An overview of our and world peasantry] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 5 (1933), pp. 57-8.

but also their views of the rural masses and visions for Yugoslavia's overall developmental trajectory, given that a substantial portion of its population consisted of peasantry. What some of them highlighted on different occasions as the most pertinent long-term mission of Sokol in this context, however, was the raising of religious tolerance, and in some cases, enabling ethnic co-habitation.⁵⁵² Moreover, some of the most notable women in the association, such as the Slovenian official Elza Skalar/Skalarjeva, wrote about Sokol's role in promoting the equality between women and men, modelling their equal status and bodily autonomy, particularly in the countryside and thus creating a new, emancipated type of Yugoslav women.⁵⁵³ Nevertheless, this journal mostly contained rather essentializing and discourses building on the notion of peasantry as a pure source of national character, that eventually marginalized any theoretization on more abstract issues related to modernizing, raising, or at least integrating the rural populace into the overall "national body", as a result of Sokol efforts.

Finally, similarly to the other Sokol thinkers who built on the concept of crisis, and particularly that of democracy, Laza Popović also voiced his opinion on the matter in this period. Diagnosing it primarily as a moral crisis, that he saw as a basis for all its other external manifestations, he foregrounded the significant essentialization and romantization of the discourse, to be realized in the mid- and late-1930s, as a result of the gradual conceptual cross-fertilization of liberal-positivist and neo-romanticist streams of thought. Pointing to his vision of the Yugoslav history, he urged the membership to overcome the present moral crisis by relying on such historical examples as inspiration for "small work", but also the exemplary image of the King, whom he dubbed "the genius of the nation", so as to ensure the survival of both the nation and the nation state, despite the dire conditions it found itself in.⁵⁵⁴ Popović,

⁵⁵² Stevan Žakula "Sokolsko staranje za selo" [Sokol's care for the countryside] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1 (1933), pp. 3-5.

⁵⁵³ Elza Skalarjeva "Jugoslavenska žena u sokolskoj organizaciji" [Yugoslav woman in the Sokol organization] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1934), pp. 125-129.

⁵⁵⁴ Laza Popović "Napred! Napred sa ponosom i sa čašću!" [Forward! Forward with pride and with honor!] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1934), pp. 8-13.

thus, yet again drifted away from the critical examination of local and international conditions, and slowly turned inward for inspiration on the modes of protecting the essentially understood nation.

To sum up, while the discourses on Tyrš's liberal heritage, modern citizenship, social justice and crisis of democracy, generally served as a vehicle for the development of critical and markedly liberal thought on citizenship in face of different domestic and international political challenges, the process of discursive change and overall change in the understanding of Sokol's mission were already underway. This was largely due to the co-optation of Sokol by the state and the associational, as well as intellectual rapprochement of the liberal-positivist and neo-romanticist streams, around this time. In these changing circumstances, the crisis of democracy and raising of citizenry, gradually gave way to markedly more essentialist and ultra-nationalist concerns that had proliferated from the mid-1930s onwards.

3.2.2. Proliferation of the Balkanist Paradigm: Essentialism, Neo-Romanticism and Religionization

The proliferation of the Balkanist paradigm was most visible in the rise of the discourse of the national character, in gradual abandonment of the Sokol's traditional secular and ecumenical stance in favor of cooperation with the Serbian Orthodox Church in particular, as well as in the promotion of a distinctly Balkanist and neo-romanticist cultural canon and historical narrative. Indicatively, the latter was done in opposition to the state's participation in the making of the Balkan Pact (1934), given Sokol's rapprochement with the Bulgarian Yunak association. Moreover, in this period, due to the limited public and political sphere under the Royal Dictatorship, all religious institutions, Serbian Orthodox Church included, came under pressure

to or willingly tasked themselves with promotion of the still relevant “tribal” identities.⁵⁵⁵ The tacit affiliation with the Serbian Orthodox Church thus also meant, for Sokol, gradual embracing of its vision of Serbian nationhood, at the expense of the Yugoslavist project. It is, nevertheless, important to note that the full overtake of such discourses and tropes only happened after 1935, while this period still largely displayed the development of parallel streams of liberal-positivist and neo-romanticist thinkers and their conceptual and ideological cross-fertilization. Crucially, the Balkanist intellectual package, subsuming neo-romanticisation, religionization and essentialization that manifested itself through the rise of the language of national character—all predated the arrival of the Balkan-centered cultural content that was used to frame this stream mostly from the mid-1930s onwards.

While Balkanism had a variety of different iterations in this period, not least ones of liberal and leftist orientations, the Balkanist genre in Sokol press remained markedly nationalist and essentialist, with very few, although notable exceptions.⁵⁵⁶ Due to the renewed interest in the Bulgarian Yunak and Bulgarian national culture more broadly, the Balkanist vision presented in Sokol often encompassed solely Yugoslav and Bulgarian topics, with rare excursions into Greek and Romanian ones, and almost complete neglect of the Albanian topics.⁵⁵⁷ One of the implications of the rise of such thinkers, who used Balkanism to negotiate the dominance of the liberal-positivist,⁵⁵⁸ element within the intellectual landscape of the association, were also numerous attempts at negotiating the normative political modernity as such. This meant, in particular, bringing into question Sokol’s materialist (body-centred), individualist and, foremost, rationalist commitments, both in discourse and in terms of associational practice. The

⁵⁵⁵ Maria Falina, *Religion and politics in interwar Yugoslavia: Serbian nationalism and East Orthodox Christianity*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, p. 4.

⁵⁵⁶ Diana Mishkova “The Balkans as autospace” *Beyond Balkanism: The Scholarly Politics of Region Making*. London: Routledge, 2018. pp. 70-103.

⁵⁵⁷ For an example of promoting the Yugoslav-Bulgarian rapprochement via literary texts, see the text of the Serbian Orthodox priest: Vaso Š. Vujović: “Vera i moral Jugoslovenskog Sokola” [Faith and moral of the Yugoslav Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1934), pp. 313-314.

⁵⁵⁸ Originally Neo-Slavist, and at this time still seen as heirs of that orientation by the Balkanists.

primary entry points for the articulation of this critique were the topics related to (national) historical narrative, Yugoslavist cultural canon, but also those that thematized contemporary cultural orientation in the context of the programmatization of integral Yugoslavism. The latter also meant that the particular preferences of the state leadership, specifically the dynasty that acted as the patron of the association, were to be implemented into the Sokol-promoted Yugoslavism, despite its existing intellectual traditions or orientations.

To start with, the most impactful new elements that gradually arose and eventually became destructive for the entire association in the second half of the decade, were religionization/sacralization and essentialization. It was not only thinkers from the territories of former Serbia and Montenegro who proposed such a turn, albeit they still represented a majority in this period, compared to their post-Habsburg counterparts. One of the latter, however, was the aforementioned physician Nikola Mrvoš, who made a concrete proposition for changing the associational culture, so as to be more representative of what he saw as innate “national spirit” the population possessed. Mrvoš went even further and sought to symbolically bind the membership to the associational goals via introducing the Sokol pledge, for which he devised and published a template in one of the associational periodicals.⁵⁵⁹

In a rather essentialist manner, Mrvoš argued that the autochthonous national traits are waning, as a consequence of the spread of modern life forms, and that the association should fulfill a mission of their retention and wider communication: “We only need to collect that treasure of lasting artistic value that our people produced in their songs, customs, games, colors, hand-made objects. We only need to see everything that was woven, engraved, drawn, we need to hear what was sung, so as to see the efforts and achievements of something that has innate beauty and with which we can proudly appear in front of the cultured world. That treasure

⁵⁵⁹ See the exact text of the oath: Vladimir Belajčić “Sa zbora župskih prosvetara” [From the assembly of the clubs’ educators] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1934), pp. 185-194, here p. 190-191.

demands skilled, knowledgeable and expert hands to mold it, and thus molded, transfer it into Sokol, that will give it the particular national colors.”⁵⁶⁰

Here, beyond heritagization, he specifically suggested “nationalizing”, or rather “folklorizing” gymnastics, so as to replace the current, overly technical and bland movements and exercises. By appropriating such elements into the Sokol gymnastics system Mrvoš hoped not only to retain the Yugoslav cultural heritage, but also what he saw as national memory, contained within different cultural forms: “Our national songs and music are the expression of our national suffering and of our victories.”⁵⁶¹ In Mrvoš’s vision, gymnastics should have primarily served the dissemination of the new, amalgamated and folklorized, canon across the country, combining cultural elements from different regions that were still unacquainted to one another. This idea, namely of nation-building via communicating folklorized heritage of a sum of distinct regions, will remain relevant in different iterations of (post-)Yugoslavist nation-building until the present day. Beyond this, his suggestion also included establishing tighter cooperation and coalition with a wide range of associations that he, indicatively, saw as “national” and progressive, namely the Red Cross, *Jadranska straža* (Adriatic Guard), *Narodna odbrana* (National Defence), Aero-klub, as well as *Društvo za čuvanje narodnog zdravlja* (Society for the protection of public health).

Similarly *völkisch* and essentialist views on national characterology and the need for its protection and broader dissemination through Sokol were presented by the the aforementioned Miloš Stanojević. In the newly established *Sokolsko selo* (Sokol village) periodical, he discussed the way the countryside is to be penetrated by the Sokol—a persistent issue that the association grappled with throughout the past decades. Stanojević also operated with the idea that the nation innately possesses and historically displays certain traits, e.g. modes of

⁵⁶⁰ Nikola Mrvoš, “Kako da se unese više nacionalnog duha u naše sokolstvo” [How to insert more national spirit into Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1932), pp. 130-133, here p. 130.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid, p. 132.

sociability, that Sokol should merely build on and exploit for its modernizing agenda.⁵⁶² In other words, Sokol's mandate to encompass the rural populace should be easy to fulfill, given the existing and naturally occurring communal life that the nation is known to be leading thereat: "Our nation always possessed an affection for brotherhood and sociability [LB: *pobratimstvo*]. We should only remember the *hajduks* and *uskoks*, remember their sacrifice for one another (...) It is exactly through such communities that our nation survived at all. It likes the community. (...) our rural youth is already part of a community. (...) Our nation was always Sokol-like, and it is now behaving so as well. It only needs to be shown that this is how it is, so that it can become conscious of its Sokol-like traits (...) This idea needs to be accepted voluntarily without a slightest feeling that it was imposed."⁵⁶³ Reflective of the association's long-standing failure to permeate the rural areas, his reasoning also seemingly included disseminating the discourse on national character among the rural population, with an aim to equate and conflate Sokol and their own sociability, through essentialist arguments.

In this way, the Yugoslavist paradigm, as was understood in the pragmatist Sokol, was imbued with essentialist understandings of nationhood, which meant that the practical work done within the association was also to be reformed along those lines, even if the ultimate goals of the said work remained nominally progressive. Reporting on the success of the Sokol activities in Hadžići (Drinska banovina, present day Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 1933, a local teacher and Sokol activist Velimir J. Žerajić justified the positive results by highlighting what he saw as compatibility between the Yugoslav national character and Sokol's modernist agenda: "With the inherited traits of their famous ancestors, who died on the gallows with smiles on their faces so that their homeland can live, our peasants, although unfortunately largely illiterate, yet deeply nationally aware, enthusiastically embraced the Sokol work (...) In a short span of time, Sokol

⁵⁶² Miloš Stanojević "Sokolski narod-narodno sokolstvo" [Sokol nation–National Sokol] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1 (1933), pp. 2-3.

⁵⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 2.

changed the look of our villages, created a spirit of brotherly religious tolerance, brought faith into mutual brotherly trust and common work (...) and to everyone's surprise, the sisters of Orthodox and Muslim faith found themselves at the same housekeeping course."⁵⁶⁴ It was not by chance that Žerajić used the examples of religious tolerance and women's education as key evidence of successful modernization of the countryside.

In fact, these were the two most relevant issues seen as obstacles to exporting Sokol's vision of Yugoslavist modernity to the largely rural population of the country, not least because many Sokol thinkers saw particularly the rural mothers as crucial entry points for the dissemination of their ideas, as well as potential nationalizing and modernizing agents. For this very reason, work with the rural women, especially through such Sokol-led domestic courses and cultural events, during which they hoped to support transconfessional sociability, was one of their key strategies for the introduction of modernist and Yugoslavist ideas into the countryside. This approach was spelled out by one of the most notable neo-romanticist SSKJ officials, Kragujevac- and Belgrade-based judicial secretary (Đorđe) Đura Brzaković. In his 1934 article on the education of rural women, he made it abundantly clear that Sokol's focus on rural mothers is not to be understood as feminist, but instead in a strictly maternalist sense, whereby the maternal role is to assume a nationalizing function, as well as that of a repository of national culture.

Brzaković thus urged his fellow Sokol members, in a poetic and essentialist primordialist manner, to: "...help this *vestalka* of ours, who always made sure that the fire on our national ignle does not go out".⁵⁶⁵ The importance of women doing the "nationalizing" work was reiterated several months later by a notable Kragujevac- and Belgrade-based woman painter

⁵⁶⁴ Velimir J. Žerajić "Sokolsko selo se budi" [The Sokol village is awaking] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 4 (1933), pp. 33-4.

⁵⁶⁵ Đura Brzaković "Prosvjećivanje žene u selu" [The education of rural women] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1934), pp. 122-125, here p. 125.

Ljubica Filipović who nevertheless stressed the equality between the sexes in Sokol and her stance that women are naturally and historically better equipped for intellectual work, rendering them more suitable agents for the twin tasks of nationalization and modernization.⁵⁶⁶ She hereby also argued for a sort of feminization of the national culture being communicated: “...their duty would be to develop a feeling of love toward the nation (...) and especially to highlight the value of those works of national culture that are a product of female intelligence and female art. Those are, foremost, the national embroidery, national color patterns...”.⁵⁶⁷ Such arguments demonstrate that it was precisely rural women who were seen as keepers of the repositories, but also key transmitters of the national culture, in the eyes of Sokol activists. In their hope to get rural women to promote a more progressive and amalgamated vision of Yugoslavism, they hoped to be able to disseminate it across a more sizeable layer of the coming generations.

The aforementioned question of religious tolerance was, together with that of using rural women as agents of nationalization and modernization of the rural population, the one that arose in connection to Sokol’s permeation of the rural world and in achieving “national unity” more broadly. This discussion did not remain only in the sphere of strategizing on the most effective approach to the religious diversity of the peasantry, but also relied on the discourse of national character to support its cause. In this perspective, Yugoslavism subsumed religious tolerance as such. This was based on the historically contingent development of South Slavic nationalisms, among them Yugoslavism, on the territory that came to be dominated by Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Islam. Underscoring the long-term effects of such religious tolerance that he saw as an outcome of said historical development, an anonymous author postulated it as one of the ingrained characteristics of the Yugoslav psyche that Sokol

⁵⁶⁶ Ljubica Filipović “Žena i Sokolstvo” [Woman and Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1934), pp. 320-323.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 322-3.

should build on, in its work: “Faith and hierarchical organization (...) always influenced the forming of the national psyche, influencing also the destinies of states and nations (...) History does not speak in hypotheticals, but a question still remains: what would happen if the Christian church hadn’t been divided in the exact moment when our national states began their formation, and our nation came under the influence of two different forces: Rome and Constantinople.”⁵⁶⁸

The author proceeds to portray the church schism as one of the main obstacles of “national unity” that: “not only caused the forming of two religious hierarchies, but also cuts deep in the entire life of our nation, that is subject to dualism in literature and in art, in state organization and finally in the shaping of the national psyche”.⁵⁶⁹ Depicting the Catholic clergy loyal to Rome, together with the “Greek church and Bulgarian exarchate” and Ottoman-superimposed Islam as equal traitors to the Yugoslav national—and implicitly modernist—cause through centuries, he concluded that religion cannot anymore be regarded as a national designator, nor the “condition for the state’s survival”.⁵⁷⁰ Evidencing religious tolerance as an essential part of the Yugoslav national psyche through different widespread folk sayings,⁵⁷¹ he argued that nation and state demand loyalty of all its constituents regardless of their religious background.

Similarly to the previous examples, it was the essentialist language of the national character that came to the fore and, at least on a conceptual level, enabled Sokol thinkers to present their liberal, modernizing Yugoslavist agenda as a historically and naturally most fitting political vision for the local conditions. Such overt essentialization of the subjects Sokol saw as its mission to culturally elevate and modernize also transformed the vision of their mutual connection, namely from one between the universalist progressivist avant-garde and their plastic protégés, to the more organicist, innate and mythical one, rooted in hard heredity. The

⁵⁶⁸ F. “Jugoslovenska misao i verska tolerancija” [Yugoslav thought and religious tolerance] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2, (1933), pp. 33-34.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 33.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 34.

⁵⁷¹ Such as ‘Brat je mio koje v(j)ere bio’ [Brother is lovable, despite his faith] or ‘Ne pita se ‘ko se kako krsti’ [It should not be asked, how one crosses themselves].

anonymous author's rather critical remarks towards the impact of the three major religions on Yugoslavism did not represent a universally accepted stance within the association, however. When several other thinkers reflected on religion as a phenomenon, they sided with a different interpretation of the process of secularization and its effects on Yugoslavism.

Another anonymous author ("N. M."),⁵⁷² for instance, took on religion, inspired by the rather popular pessimist philosophical booklet *Misli* (Thoughts) by the Serbian Hegelian idealist and progressivist philosopher Božidar Knežević, most famous for translating and promoting Thomas Carlyle's works.⁵⁷³ The anonymous was reluctant to deconstruct religion historically or culturally, but instead cast religion as the sole, irreplaceable, idealist force that can truly morally mobilize the masses. Sketching the historic separation of religion, philosophy and science, he argued that: "...they became merely a property of individual races, nations, classes and persons in given spaces and times. Consequently, philosophy and science are religions of individuals, but a religion is a philosophy of the entire humanity."⁵⁷⁴ Such, essentially conservative, arguments stood in direct opposition to Sokol's traditional secularist and ecumenist, but also progressivist orientation, not least because the author aimed to particularize scientific inquiry and philosophy, and conversely, to universalize religion in an essentialist fashion.

Such rapprochement and cross-fertilization of previously opposing discourses can also be seen in a contemporaneous statement by the Belgrade-based Sokol activist Jelica Jović Vasiljević who refashioned the concept of self-discipline, traditionally used in expert circles of Sokol physical education to discuss the biological facilitation of cultural elevation, into one that acquired religious and spiritual dimensions: "Self-discipline [LB: samopregorevanje] is a broad

⁵⁷² N. M. "O bogu i veri" [On God and faith] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1932), p. 255.

⁵⁷³ Jovan Skerlić "Božidar Knežević" *Istorija nove srpske književnosti* [History of the new Serbian literature] Belgrade, 1912, pp. 253-255; Božidar Knežević, *Misli* [Thoughts] Belgrade, 1902.

⁵⁷⁴ N. M. "O bogu i veri", p. 255.

foundation on which Sokol and Christian religion arise, like two lighthouses in a night (...) In order to perfect our interior [LB: unutrašnjost], both Sokol and religion demand the service of the body to our soul.”⁵⁷⁵ Indicatively, the concept of soul appears in her discourse, instead of spirit that was traditionally coupled with that of the body throughout the 1920s, signalling a change and cross-fertilization of the two aforementioned streams of thought beyond the recontextualization of self-discipline. This newly negotiated approach to religion was not only a matter of intellectual debates within the periodicals, but also became visible in the increase in religiously framed literary and poetic texts,⁵⁷⁶ that mushroomed together with the genre of the oaths, both of which supported the development of what will become the integral Yugoslavist aesthetic output in the late 1930s.

Ultimately, the surge in religionizing arguments, discourse of national character and neo-romanticist and ultranationalist aesthetics were all propped up by the said essentialization of Yugoslav identity, as well as that of the concept of Slavdom that almost exclusively carried universalist and transitionalist pretensions in the previous decade. This turn can be well exemplified by the text submitted by the Vienna-educated Dalmatian physician and temperance activist, eugenicist and prolific Sokol thinker Grga Bogić.⁵⁷⁷

In his exposé on the “Sokol ideology”, Bogić asserted that: “Sokol ideology is a specific Slavic creation that could never develop on a non-Slavic soil”,⁵⁷⁸ accentuating the primacy of freedom-fighting, in the most holistic fashion, among Slavic Sokols and Slavs more generally. In this, however, he insisted that Slavs are innately driven to universalize liberty and conduct struggle for the emancipation of the entire humanity: “Sokol’s understanding of freedom of man and

⁵⁷⁵ Jelica Jović Vasiljević “Sokolstvo i hrišćanska religija. Govor pred vrstom” [Sokol and Christian religion. Speech before members in line formation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1933), pp. 336-7.

⁵⁷⁶ Such as Ilija Mamuzić “Molitva Vidovdanu” [Prayer to Saint Vitus Day] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1934), pp. 241-2. ; “Putokaz Jovana Cvijića” [Signpost of Jovan Cvijić] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1934), p. 400.

⁵⁷⁷ “Bogić, Grga.” *Hrvatski biografski leksikon* (1983–2024), online edition. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2024. URL=<https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/2250>. (Last access: September 17, 2024).

⁵⁷⁸ Grga Bogić “O sokolskoj ideologiji” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1933), pp. 406-8.

nation, is diametrically opposite to that of the self-proclaimed ‘übermenschen’ and self-proclaimed ‘superior’ races, meaning of conquering aggressors, imperialists and fascists of all colors. While nations who consider themselves invited to ‘lead’ other nations (that is, to subject and exploit them; to rejuvenate themselves with their juices, to enrich themselves with their material and spiritual wealth), consider themselves free only once they are surrounded [LB: opkoljeni] with slaves, meanwhile Sokol, that is a Slav, demands, for his nation and for all other nations, equal duties and equal rights. These two completely opposite views represent a conflict between, currently vampirized [LB: povampirene] black past and bright, Slavic-Sokol, future. Freedom is manifested, in both Slavs and Sokols, as a profound, ineradicable awareness of equality and fraternity among individuals, among nations, while fascist-led nations apply methods of violent power-grabbing, fueling of chauvinism and hatred against everything foreign (...) to them, war is presented in the mythical light of apotheosis.”⁵⁷⁹

Bogić justified this claim by pointing to Slavic national character that, supplemented with the “Sokol ideology”: “must support the birth and development of the feeling of social solidarity among individuals and among nations (...) Freedom is either universal, or it doesn’t exist.”⁵⁸⁰ In his reasoning, Bogić displayed, similarly to other thinkers presented in this section, an essentialization of Sokol’s progressivist agenda, tying it to the Slavic national character that he saw as acquired and shaped through centuries of imperial subjecthood. However, in this perspective, the associational ideological orientations become merely manifestations of Slavic or Yugoslav collective psychology, and in some cases, biology, raising an issue of individual agency in the wider socio-political sphere, but also that of the ever-narrowing space for negotiating of Yugoslavism’s key postulates. The previously implied hierarchy between the association as the “gardener of the nation” and the “national body” that was to be “gardened”,

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 406.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 407.

was in this new setup beginning to dissolve, and with it, Sokol's modernist, practical and progressivist commitments. While there were still numerous thinkers who considered it to be the modernizing and developmental avant-garde, such as the Montenegrin poet and travel writer Batrić Marjanović, who accentuated that its task was to “make conscious [LB: osvesti] and rejuvenate the race (...) to cultivate virtues (...) among the masses. Primarily, those of truth, justice, kindness, humaneness, grace, sense of beauty, and, in one word, humanity [LB: čojstvo]”⁵⁸¹, such claims that called for rejuvenation via instilling—rather than uncovering or simply retaining—virtuous traits, became increasingly less present towards the mid-1930s.

Having examined the gradual essentialization and religionization of the political discourses within the association, it is necessary to explore the resulting neo-romanticization of both the Yugoslavist historical narratives and cultural canon, communicated in the periodicals, on radio and in the framework of different associational courses. It is hereby important to note, however, that both the visions of the national past and culture, largely retained the *De Viris Illustribus* form, consisting mainly of brief biographies of representatives of the three nation-building projects Yugoslavism saw itself as the amalgamated heir of. These historical figures were portrayed both as the forerunners of Yugoslavist political modernity, throughout different historical periods unfavorable for their mission, but also as specimens of the Yugoslav national character and genius, in its purest form.

This combination of modernist, yet essentialist claims, persisted throughout this period, giving way to the ultranationalist ones in the late 1930s. It also signaled the cross-fertilization of the two streams. In conjunction with biographies of such Yugoslav *genii*, the promoters of this more programmatic canon and historical narratives, selected “key turning points” in Yugoslavs' history that they then attempted to memorialize and communicate to the wider associational

⁵⁸¹ Batrić Marjanović “Rad Sokola na kulturnom podizanju naroda” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1933), p. 41-2.

membership. Through this, they further primordialized their conception of national community, that was previously rooted in more Lamarckian environmental determinist and, consequently, constructivist and plasticist arguments. Thereat, they also included the most recent history, that of the First World War, and used it to solidify the collective memory of the “liberation and unification”, as a culmination of the national history, the narrative on which they sought to stabilize, not least due to their novel, state-affiliated, role.

One of the most fruitful agents of such programmatization and stabilization of the historical narratives, who tasked himself with systematically refashioning the figures that previously primarily counted as actors of the tripartite (SCS) national history, was the aforementioned historian Viktor Novak. His two most important publications from this period,⁵⁸² both otherwise tightly affiliated with or published by SSKJ, represent a collection of primary sources and biographies, with an ambition to provide an intellectual history of the Yugoslav and All-Slavic ideas throughout different epoch from the 14th century until his day. In his book entitled *Anthology of the Yugoslav Thought and National Unity, 1390-1930*, Novak provided a chronologically ordered selection of various historical documents that he deemed representative of the development of the Yugoslav thought through centuries. In his prologue to the book, he asserted that: “The Yugoslav thought created Yugoslavia. It will create Yugoslavs too, with one single national sentiment and belief in large and powerful future of the nation.”⁵⁸³ Using such a Hegelian approach to the construction of the Yugoslav thought, Novak portrayed it as a “chain of greatest successes in historical development of the nation” throughout the multi-imperial history of South Slavs, that will “provide strength for overcoming the inherited innate evil, that wants to threaten the Unity and Unification”.⁵⁸⁴ Novak saw the said unity in the national soul,

⁵⁸² Viktor Novak, *Antologija jugoslovenske misli i narodnog jedinstva 1390-1930* [Anthology of the Yugoslav thought and national unity, 1390-1930]. Belgrade, 1930; Viktor Novak, *Sveslovenska misao* [All-Slavic thought]. Belgrade: SSKJ, 1931.

⁵⁸³ Novak, *Antologija jugoslovenske misli*, p. 65.

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid.

together with the inherent rebelliousness and freedom-loving character that manifested itself through many “hearts and minds of cultural and political representatives of the nation”, whom he repeatedly dubbed as “forerunners, heralds, apostles and advocates” of Yugoslavia.⁵⁸⁵

These ranged from the medieval Bosnian King Stefan Tvrtko to Slovenian and Croatian protestant thinkers and the entire Illyrian movement. Together with the programmatic texts of around 400 such thinkers, Novak also included descriptions of artefacts, such as coats of arms, that he portrayed as evidence of historical struggle for “national unity”. Beyond primordializing Yugoslavism using historical arguments and also arguing for the Yugoslavs’ innateness of the tenets of political modernity, he explicitly reflected on the introduction of the 1929 Royal dictatorship, casting it as the culmination of the progressive efforts on the merging of the three “tribal” national cultures. In his very definition of the Yugoslav thought, however, Novak far surpassed the historical framing, claiming that the polycentric national agitation for the creation of the Yugoslav political community was: “supported with biological layers of cognation, carried from generation to generation through blood and language, that unique soul of each nation, deriving even from the pre-Balkan periods. If we want to reach the roots of the secrets of the development of forces that, alongside all permanent obstacles, led to the merging of the kindred [LB: istorodna] tribes and their biological components, to understand the power and freshness of the vitality of those cognations and all their elements in their most diverse expressions, that protected the invisible, but lively soul of the Yugoslav thought until its awakening, the antecedent of Unification, then the Yugoslav thought presents itself through history as a sum of all conscious and unconscious yearnings, individual and collective forces, nations separated by cultural and political history, through centuries.”⁵⁸⁶ Through such evidently Hegelian and historical-philosophical narration, Novak sought to root Yugoslavism

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 64.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 9.

in biology and psychology as well, rendering historical development as their progressive manifestation, thus supplementing his previously exclusively historical-legal arguments with much more clearly essentialist ones.

Already in 1931, the Sokol educational committee sought to promote such interpretations among its membership and use Novak's epistemic authority to validate them, which they attempted by publishing his *Sveslovenska misao* (All-Slavic thought) as part of the committee's initial book series. The series' editor and highest-level Sokol official, Engelbert Gangl, presented Novak as an "excellent expert" who "knows the present topic from all perspectives and who presents it to us in the exact manner, in which the history itself has sculpted it", in the booklet's prologue, revealing his positivist and hierarchically didactic agenda.⁵⁸⁷ The brief booklet reads like a textbook aiming at intellectual history of different iterations of Slavism in the Habsburg context and beyond, from the early 19th century onwards, containing a recommended further reading on the topic. This bibliography consists of several articles on Sokol and Slavism by Laza Popović, largely published in *Nova Evropa*, but also notable works by the Zagreb-based Yugoslavist historian Milan Prelog, e.g. on Slavic national movements and Pan-Slavism,⁵⁸⁸ as well as Ferdo Šišić's most notable piece on Croatian early medieval "national" rulers⁵⁸⁹ and Branko Vodnik's authoritative textbook on history of Croatian and Serbian literature.⁵⁹⁰ Nevertheless, in addition to these rather synthetic pieces on national history and culture, written from a more standard synthetic Yugoslavist perspective, a few entries appeared that stood out with their essentially Balkanist and/or extremely essentializing and anti-modernist character. This was the case with the article on "Slavic spirit" as the base of

⁵⁸⁷ Novak, *Sveslovenska misao*, p. 4.

⁵⁸⁸ Milan Prelog, *Slavenska renesansa, 1780-1848*. [Slavic renaissance, 1780-1848] Zagreb, 1924; Milan Prelog "O sveslovenskom kongresu u Moskvi godine 1867." [On the All-Slavic congress in Moscow in 1867] *Godišnjak Skop. Filozofskog fakulteta*, vol. 1 (1930), pp. 117-126.

⁵⁸⁹ Ferdinand Šišić, *Povijest Hrvata u vrijeme narodnih vladara*. [History of Croats in the age of national rulers] Zagreb, 1925.

⁵⁹⁰ Branko Vodnik, *Pregled hrvatsko-srpske književnosti u ogledima*, I. [Overview of Croatian-Serbian literature in perspective] Zagreb, 1923.

future political orientation of Slavic countries by the lesser known Belgrade-based expressionist writer Siniša Kordić,⁵⁹¹ the booklet on Slavic national character and rapprochement by a Skopje- and later Sofia-based Macedonian nationalist writer Todor Krajničanac/Todor G. Krainichanets,⁵⁹² but also with an article on the need for restoring Russian leadership among Slavic nations by Aleksandr Lvovich Pogodin, a famous Belgrade-based White émigré historian, linguist and a university professor.⁵⁹³ Importantly, Krajničanac's other works were not only recommended here, but also in other contemporaneous Sokol periodicals, pointing to their relevance in the framing of Slavism that was being established by the educational committee through Sokol courses and libraries.⁵⁹⁴

The choice to include such works in what can be seen as the main associational curriculum brokered by thinkers akin to Novak, however, signalled a change in understanding of Slavdom that Sokol should stand for. It transformed from the previous vision which posited Slavdom solely as a transitional, loosely culturally-bound, stage on a path towards the emancipation of the entire humanity, toward the hierarchical, essentialist and effectively, antimodernist mission-driven one. Novak's programmatic booklet, that in a certain way sought to synthesise these two positions, did not stop shy of proposing a political unification of Slavic states, with an aim of rejuvenating European politics at large, providing a direct reference to Krajničanac's vision. Interestingly, while Novak cited Popović's opinion whereby the latter argued that this was not

⁵⁹¹ Siniša Kordić "O slovenima i slovenskom duhu kao budućoj orijentaciji u slovenskim zemljama i u svetu" [On Slavs and Slavic spirit as the future orientation in Slavic countries and in the world] *Narodna odbrana* (1930-1931); On his biography and literary contributions, see: Radovan Vučković. "Siniša Kordić u dodiru i u sukobu s avangardom" [Siniša Kordić in contact and conflict with the avant-garde] *Zbornik Matice srpske za književnost i jezik*, vol. 1-2 (2003), pp. 109-119.

⁵⁹² Todor Krajničanac, *Sloveni u današnje doba i bliži karakter njihova ujedinjenja*. [Slavs in the present age and the closer character of their unification] Skopje, 1929; see more on the relation between Krajničanac's idea of Slavdom and Bulgarian folklore: Vladimir Penchev "The Slavic Idea and the Origin of Bulgarian Folklore Studies" *Traditiones*, vol. 40, no. 2 (2011), pp. 97-110, here p. 101.

⁵⁹³ A. Pogodin "Rusija i Slovenstvo" [Russia and Slavism] *Nova Evropa*, vol. 8, no. 10 (October 1, 1923), pp. 282-291.

⁵⁹⁴ Todor Krajničanac, *Budimo Sloveni* [Let us be Slavs] Skopje, 1933—this book was promoted in *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1934); Todor Krajničanac, *Kirilo i Metodije i Slovenstvo* [Cyril and Methodius and Slavdom] Skopje, 1930.

to be done using inter-state diplomatic means of small Slavic “states and statelets”, but primarily through: “society, using private organizations, and with a help of social classes”—he added that it should be a concerted effort of state, voluntary associations and experts. In this way, he reflected Sokol’s novel, state-affiliated position under the dictatorship.⁵⁹⁵ Novak used this booklet also as an opportunity to disseminate a canon of Slavist thinkers from different Slavic contexts, among the sizeable Sokol membership that was required to consult his booklet and the recommended literature not only when participating in associational courses, but also when undergoing mandatory examinations for obtaining the status of a trainer (*prednjak*).

Another key person who contributed to the proliferation of the Balkanist, essentialist and neo-romanticist narratives and perspectives within Sokol, not least due to his rather influential position within both the educational committee and association at large, was the aforementioned Franjo Malin. His main works on the most pertinent questions of integral Yugoslavist cultural politics were published immediately after the founding of SSKJ and the establishment of the new setup. Malin’s thoughts and perspectives on these issues were not irrelevant, given that he was a notable journalist and that it was already in 1933 that he became the manager of the Novi Sad-based *Matica Srpska* museum that had been first opened to the public precisely under his mandate. Several key booklets of his from this period, also rather brief and programmatic in nature, tackled the issues of language, the state’s and nation’s name, as well as the development of “Yugoslav thought” through centuries, in a similarly Hegelian key. Malin’s suggestions thereby, were rather concrete and explicitly stated. For instance, he promoted the unification of Christian churches, since they “stand in the way of unification”, due to “those differences that are a result of stupid and harmful conflicts of Byzantium and Rome from a thousand years ago”.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁵ Novak, *Sveslavenska misao*, p. 42-3.

⁵⁹⁶ Franjo Malin, *Jugoslovensko ime, jugoslovensko pismo, jugoslovenski jezik*. [Yugoslav name, Yugoslav script, Yugoslav language] Novi Sad, 1931, p. 3.

Insisting on amalgamating the three existing national cultures in an uncompromising way that would remove all the cultural differences among what he saw as essentially equal Yugoslav race (sic!), he outlined the distinct historical-conceptual phases of the realization of the multifaceted unity of the Yugoslav people, namely: “Serbo-Croatian, Serbocroatian, South-Slavic [LB: južno-slovenski], South Slavic [LB: južnoslovenski] and Yugoslav.”⁵⁹⁷ Using psychologizing language, Malin further claimed that prejudice represents the main obstacle towards complete unification, since it was the prejudice that convinced the people that “script is some sort of sanctity: cyrillic a Serbian, Latin a Croatian one (...) Biliou party passions did not want to admit the truth, that Cyrillic is originally a Greek, Bulgarian and Russian (sometimes even Romanian) script, whereas Latin script is used in practice by numerous nations. They did not even want to believe that Croats used to write in Cyrillic, while Serbs wrote in Latin script.”⁵⁹⁸

Following this historical argument, relying on numerous 19th century examples of arguments on introducing a single script for the Serbo-Croatian literary language and his attempt at de-ethnicizing the two scripts, Malin called for a swift, top-down, state decision on the question of the script, arguing that “the nation is mature enough to understand the need for achieving complete unity”.⁵⁹⁹ In particular, his proposition for reforming the Serbo-Croatian literary language consisted of two elements: 1) opting for the Ekavian Štokavian dialect, and 2) Latin script, as the standard, that should be superimposed by the state authority through education, scientific institutions and through other means. While he reiterated on multiple occasions that dialects and scripts are not to be ethnicized and are historically rather intertwined in a way that renders them not exclusively ascribable to either of the modern national identities or cultures—this proposition makes for a perfect compromise between the two titular nationalities, Serbs and

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 5.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 7.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 8.

Croats. Based on this suggestion, each would be asked to sacrifice one crucial component of their literary standard, for the sake of achieving the linguistic unification. The booklet also outlined the usage of different scripts in the event of the implementation of such policy, whereby the state would limit the usage of Cyrillic script solely within the Serbian Orthodox Church, order the Catholic Church to rely on Glagolitic script (to be transcribed in Cyrillic when necessary) and retain the teaching of Cyrillic in schools so as to not lose it as a part of cultural heritage of the nation. Since this suggestion tackles only the issues pertinent within the Serbo-Croatian cultural sphere, he argued that the Slovene-speakers will have to be completely integrated into the Yugoslav center “if they do not want to remain isolated”, which he also hoped would eventually happen with the Bulgarian corpus as well.⁶⁰⁰

Malin’s suggestions for the new language policy were echoed some years later in the articles of Miraš Kićović, Montenegro-born and Vršac-based literary historian,⁶⁰¹ who nevertheless challenged Malin’s etatist, top-down approach with preference for a swift radical change, promoting instead gradual transition between the literary standards.⁶⁰² In a response to Kićović’s constructive criticism, Malin reiterated his stance and went further to argue against the policy of retaining “small literatures” that has served the nation-building projects in the 19th century, but has now, in his view, become redundant: “The only understandable argument in times of national endangerment, was, to give the nation (the people) a book, in their hands, that they could understand. That argument threw Czech language out of Slovakia. Today, it is supported in case of Slovaks and Ukrainians, and even in our case, by the inherited Slavic character trait, that has already prevented many constructive initiatives; by local patriotism, false national sanctities and prejudices, in which Cvijić saw great danger for the development

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 21.

⁶⁰¹ “Kićović, Miraš” *Enciklopedija Srpskog narodnog pozorišta*
URL=<https://www.snp.org.rs/enciklopedija/?p=6025>. (Last access: September 23, 2024).

⁶⁰² Miraš Kićović, “Stvaranje jezičnoga jedinstva našega naroda” [Creating the linguistic unity of our nation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), pp. 143-147.

of the Yugoslav nation (...) Provincial tongues, like in the case of other nations, become provincial literatures. They remain charming, characteristic speech of individual regions, with a lot of beauty, similarly to beautiful songs and folk costumes of certain regions, that are pretty, yet expensive and impractical, and thus suppressed and condemned to death.”⁶⁰³

In his original booklet, moreover, Malin supplemented this suggestion on language with numerous others that also gave away his preference for strong state interventionism. These included alignment of the two calendars, resolving the administrative issues around civil marriage, as well as redesigning the national flag and coat of arms, accentuating that this state-led amalgamation should primarily “remove the three obstacles of the spiritual unity of the Yugoslav nation: name, language and script.”⁶⁰⁴ Praising the dictatorship’s efficiency in changing the country’s name, Malin called for immediate adoption of a single name for the citizens in all official communication (i.e. Yugoslavs), as well as for the language (i.e. Yugoslav) “instead of ‘naš’ [LB: our] or Serbo-Croatian” so that there would be “Yugoslavs, of Yugoslav nationality, citizens of Kingdom of Yugoslavia, who speak the Yugoslav language.”⁶⁰⁵ Finally, Malin concluded the booklet with a territorialized view of the united and uniform state, implying the eventual inclusion of Bulgaria into it, by exclaiming: “from the Black Sea to the Isonzo river”, that he hoped would enable its entrance “into the grand cultural nations, as an equal member”.⁶⁰⁶ The latter statement also well exemplifies the normative drive between programmatizing Yugoslavism and devising it into a uniformizing framework, rooted in implied cultural-cum-civilizational hierarchies, with sizeable homogenous nation-state as the desired outcome and optimal organizational form of the given political community. The same argument on the importance of the country’s name was underscored around the same time by

⁶⁰³ Franjo Malin, “Stvaranje jezičnoga jedinstva našega naroda” [Creating the linguistic unity of our nation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1933), pp. 238-240.

⁶⁰⁴ Malin, *Jugoslovensko ime*, p. 16.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 18.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 21.

Milorad Dragić, a notable Belgrade-based polymath physician and ethnographer, who also acted as Jovan Cvijić's personal doctor. On the sixth anniversary of Cvijić's passing, Dragić cited Cvijić's 1921 speech, where he framed Yugoslavism in the most positivist, matter-of-fact terms, by saying: "That question is, after all, resolved for scientists, artists, for our entire young intelligentsia. While it hasn't matured in the heads of our older politicians yet, and particularly in those parties, which demagogically debate it in front of the uninformed masses, that name will eventually persist."⁶⁰⁷ The support for superimposing uniform Yugoslavism was thus, within this neo-romanticist and Balkanist stream of Sokol thinkers, overt and pronounced.

In his other texts from this period, Malin particularly evoked the authority of ethnography, using its findings to frame Yugoslavs' commonality and juxtaposing it against contingent historical development that he claimed divided Yugoslavs and instilled in them prejudice against one another.⁶⁰⁸ Reyling on the trope of historical borderlands and gust of history, thus tying the issue of South Slavic diversity into much larger civilizational and cultural differences between the symbolic East and West, Malin yet again adopted the trans-imperial perspective to account for the contemporary struggles around reconciling community and commonality. In this view, all the South Slavic nation-building figures are cast as fighters against the multi-imperial subjecthood, in the name of political modernity and unification of ethnographically unique Yugoslav community. Similarly to Novak, Malin also put the role of the bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer and Canon Franjo Rački at the forefront of the process of reviving the unification struggle. Here, he also highlighted that of the pro-Habsburg Cisleithanian politicians who demanded the creation of the South Slavic territorial unit within the Monarchy in 1917, thus

⁶⁰⁷ Milorad Dragić "Jugoslovenska ideja kod Dra Jovana Cvijića" [The Yugoslav idea of Dr. Jovan Cvijić] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1932), pp. 7-11.

⁶⁰⁸ Franjo Malin, "Jugoslovenska misao. Govor pred vrstom" [Yugoslav thought. Speech before members in line formation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1931), p. 139-140.

showcasing the contributions of the Habsburg-subjected national activists to the eventual unification.⁶⁰⁹

Further narrating the politically harmful and unsuccessful 1920s, however, Malin portrayed a picture in which it was only the dictatorship that had been able, in contrast to party politics and parliamentarism more broadly, to instill order into political life and create the conditions for the realization of political modernity, by the actors such as the enlightened Sokol activists: “The tribal thought started again to come in conflict with the national thought (...) Again, what started to stand out were the local traditions, historical prejudices, and particularly false tribal sanctities, and it seemed as if the unitary Yugoslav thought will be again forever suppressed. But then, perhaps in the final moment, decisive and strong will appeared, which stopped the disintegration process in one swing, inviting all the Yugoslav national forces to gather and create solid, eternal foundations to the Yugoslav thought of complete political and spiritual unity.”⁶¹⁰

In other words, the notion of democratic governance was, at least in the discourse of thinkers prominent in this period, being disjointed from that of party politics and framed as one that can be resolved only after significant work was completed on removing the cultural differences within, as well as raising the overall cultural level of, the population. The “national body” was to be studied, but primarily to be “molded” into a culturally uniform and more elevated one, with help of an interventionist state, so as to match the political modernity embodied in the model of the nation-state, that the young Kingdom was hoping to emulate. It was yet again Kićović who added nuance to what he saw as naïve assumptions on the ability of the alliance between the state and intellectual avant-garde to disseminate progressive ideas among the

⁶⁰⁹ Franjo Malin “Franjo Rački” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1933), pp. 13-14; “Misli J. J. Štrosmajera” [Thoughts of J. J. Strossmayer] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1933), pp. 51-53; Franjo Malin “Jugoslovenska misao u Majskoj deklaraciji. Govor pred vrstom.” [Yugoslav thought in the May Declaration. Speech before members in line formation], *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1932), pp. 212-213.

⁶¹⁰ Franjo Malin “Jugoslovenska misao. Govor pred vrstom“, p. 140.

masses, saying that the: “Integral unity of our three tribes came (...) as a realization of the dream of only those most cultured and most farsighted sons of ours, foremost the writers, which means that that reality stood far away from the wide social masses.”⁶¹¹

Nevertheless, such narratives relying on the trope of the “Yugoslav thought” thus sought to stabilize the Yugoslavist historical narrative, use it to historicize the state itself in a teleological manner, but also legitimize the present dictatorship using above-mentioned essentialist arguments. Sokol-sponsored historiographical production, in this context, consequently tasked itself with refashioning of historical figures and events, in a manner that would serve said political purposes, not least with an aim to rally broader support for the dictatorship and the ensuing *faux* democratic landscape, dominated by the state-sponsored nominally integral Yugoslavist parties such as the Yugoslav national party⁶¹² and later, after 1935, the Yugoslav radical community (*Jugoslovenska radikalna zajednica*).

Historical figures who were refashioned to represent the realization of the “Yugoslav thought” through centuries were carefully picked so as to represent all three titular nationalities’ projects, together with a broadly understood, Enlightenment-driven, liberal commitment. This meant, in some cases, pairing or grouping of actors who represented different orientations in their own age, yet once combined, stood for liberal Yugoslavist cause in a way that rendered the individual national projects as its key constitutional parts. This was the case with the liberal Croatian bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer and state law-inspired Jacobinist politician Ante Starčević, for instance. They were jointly promoted not only in Viktor Novak’s publications, but also in the Sokol-promoted (text)book, by the popular (regime) historian Jovan M. Popović,⁶¹³ Builders of

⁶¹¹ Miraš Kićović “Jugoslovenstvo u našoj književnosti” [Yugoslavism in our literature] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1934), pp. 69-74, here p. 74.

⁶¹² Initially known as: Yugoslav Radical Peasants’ Democracy (Serbo-Croatian: *Jugoslavenska radikalna seljačka demokratija*; Slovene: *Jugoslovanska radikalno-kmečka demokracija*).

⁶¹³ Not to be confused with Kikinda-born writer and poet Jovan Popović (1905-1952).

Yugoslavia (*Neimari Jugoslavije*).⁶¹⁴ The latter book, evidently intended to reach the widest audiences, albeit written exclusively in Cyrillic script, represents a markedly eclectic patchwork of figures, from pronouncedly liberal thinkers and compromise-driven politicians from the late Habsburg context to nationally framed conservative Chetnik-affiliated revolutionaries. After numerous entries on their biographies and contributions towards realizing the Yugoslav unification, Popović also added two indicative chapters on the development of the Yugoslavist project in the two nationally ambiguous regions that fell out of the normative tripartite scope, namely “Herceg-Bosna” and “South Serbia and Macedonia”,⁶¹⁵ both of which he presented as relevant due to the widespread tradition of anti-imperial (*hajduk/četnik*) uprisings.⁶¹⁶

Crucially, in his and other books centered around historicizing the “Yugoslav thought” and legitimizing the state more broadly, there were three important political and historiographical goals, that the choice of the promoted figures and events clearly reveals: 1) the reconciliation of the 19th century struggle between the Obrenović and Karađorđević dynasties and related symbolic geographical orientation of the Serbian national project (towards the West or autochthonously framed Russia); 2) the reconciliation of the exclusively Croatian and Yugoslavist projects by the nominally Croatian political actors (as in the case of the inclusion of Starčević and Strossmayer); 3) the equilibration of the Serbian proper (*Srbijanci*) and non-Serbian actors’ contribution to the founding of the state itself, whereas the majority of thinkers included in these narratives derived from the Habsburg context, yet most of the military officers and leaders originated from the Principality or Kingdom of Serbia.⁶¹⁷ In essence, it aimed to transgress the post-imperial political-symbolical boundaries and cracks.

⁶¹⁴ Jovan M. Popović, *Neimari Jugoslavije* [Builders of Yugoslavia]. Belgrade, 1934; “Knjige i časopisi” [Books and journals] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1934), p. 437.

⁶¹⁵ Popović, *Neimari Jugoslavije*, pp. 378-408.

⁶¹⁶ He uses the terms interchangeably.

⁶¹⁷ The persistent relevance of the arguments on the Serbian wartime sacrifice and Serbian state’s centrality in the context of ‘national unification’ can be also seen in the Sokol-promoted reprint of Stanoje Stanojević’s 1916

The violent and radical revolutionary movements such as those mentioned in Popović's book, that were previously not considered to be characteristic of Yugoslav Sokol's political action in the tradition of "small work", became more and more prominent in the historical narratives written around this time. In that way, they were inserted and promoted as crucial turning points of national history that manifested the national character at crucial historical junctions. This was the case with the 1389 battle of Kosovo and 1912 battle of Kumanovo, among other examples. While these were previously understood as exclusively Serbian national milestones, Sokol activists such as the aforementioned Miroš Kićović, sought to recast them as steppingstones towards the Yugoslav unification through employing the trans-imperial perspective: "The fifteenth of June with Kosovo and eleventh of October with Kumanovo, are the most decisive dates in the life of the Serbian portion of the Yugoslav nation, because the first represents the breakdown, while the second the resurrection of its glory and greatness. In the immense struggle of East and West, wild Hagarism [LB: agarjanstvo] with European civilization and of Islam with Christianity, Serbs were destined to find themselves on this crossroads and endure the first enemy attacks (...) the disjointed limbs of the national organism had, in Kumanovo, merged into one body, healthy and strong, to renew its old power and step into the society of contemporary enlightened nations. But Kumanovo does not have only a narrow Serbian character, but much broader, Yugoslav one. Once Serbs defeated their most dangerous and long-lasting enemy there, then came the others' turn: Austrians and Hungarians."⁶¹⁸

For Kićović, even the governor (*ban*) Josip Jelačić, who contributed to the defeat of the 1848 Hungarian Revolution, became a "personification of the Yugoslav thought" whose "war against

lecture, originally given on the occasion of his appointment as a professor at the University of Sankt Petersburg, in which the Serbian military struggle during the war is represented as the crucial achievement in the realization of the 'national unity', see: Stanoje Stanojević, *Borba Srba za srpsko-hrvatsko ujedinjenje* [Struggle of Serbs for the Serbian-Croatian unification] Belgrade, 1930.

⁶¹⁸ Miroš Kićović "Kumanovska bitka" [The battle of Kumanovo] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1932), pp. 362-3.

the Magyars was understood as a liberation campaign in all Yugoslav regions”.⁶¹⁹ Beyond integrating anti-Ottoman and anti-Hungarian (even if omitting or recontextualizing the pro-Habsburg) South Slavic struggle into the same matrix, Kićović saw the progressive proverbial “red thread” of Yugoslavism also in the figure of Saint Sava. He framed his life and work in terms of the progressive Yugoslav national character, dubbing his contemporary cult as one of the “pet-saint” (“sveca-ljubimca”) of Yugoslavs, despite his legacy being co-opted by the Serbian Orthodox Church in a ultranationalist key in this period as well.⁶²⁰ Other contemporaneous authors also refashioned figures such as notable Slovenian and Croatian early modern protestant thinkers, but also the tragically executed anti-Habsburg conspirators Petar Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan, into antecedents of modern, distinctly liberal and anti-imperial, Yugoslavism.⁶²¹

Together with much more instrumentalized and nationally framed historical narratives, Sokol periodicals also started publishing texts of particular memory brokers who aimed to historicize and instrumentalize the most recent history. These thinkers focused on the memory of the First World War, in a way that would synthesize the struggles of different actors for the creation of the state, but also assign them motivation that was rooted in their purported national character. Among such memory brokers, it was the aforementioned Nikola (Niko) Mrvoš and Stevan (Stevo) Žakula who published the most on the issues of veterans, military volunteers and famous military officers whose Yugoslavist agenda they aimed to root in historical and psychological terms. Mrvoš, for instance, highlighted the importance of the culture of military volunteering that he argued existed in the Serbian corpus of the Yugoslav nation, exemplifying

⁶¹⁹ Miraš Kićović “Kroz vatru je prošla jugoslovenska misao (uspomena bana Jelačića)” [Yugoslav thought passed through fire (a memory of ban Jelačić)] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1933), pp. 47-8.

⁶²⁰ Miraš Kićović, “Sv. Sava” [Saint Sava] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1933), pp. 11-12; Maria Falina, “Svetosavlje: A Case Study in the Nationalization of Religion” *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Religions- und Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 101 (2007), pp. 505-527.

⁶²¹ Maks Kovačić, “Naši protestantski prosvetitelji” [Our protestant enlighteners] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), pp. 156-7; A. Štefan, “Zrinsko-frankopanska tragedija” [The tragedy of Zrinski and Frankopan] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), pp. 157-8.

it with different anecdotes from the second half of the 19th century and up to the end of the First World War. He used markedly literary language, arguing that without the existence of such culture, progress in terms of unification would hardly be achieved solely via diplomatic means.⁶²² Specifically, he went on to essentialize the ideas he thought the war was fought over, dubbing it as a conflict of “Social religion of Freedom with anti-social ideas of pangermanism”⁶²³

Such views, in which the Yugoslav character and the values that the war was purportedly fought over, were in direct relation, came to be complemented by the writings of Žakula, in which he most often narrated the Yugoslavs’ mentality-driven resistance to the late dualist oppressive nationality politics, that Sokol was the prime example of. In one such article, he portrayed this interplay between the South Slavic mentality and political conditions that shaped it, but were also shaped by it: “Sokol as a youth organization undoubtedly best fit the circumstances and the mentality of those Slavic peoples, who politically lived under the Austro-Hungarian rule (...) Deprived of almost any authority over political and state life of their own lands (...) underestimated and scorned by their violent masters (...) Slavic peoples living under Austro-Hungarian rule had to, due to such circumstances, create, on their own and out of their own initiative, protection and barrier against oppression, disparagement and denationalization [LB: *odnarođivanje*], to protect their national consciousness (...) Even if the Austro-Hungarian rulers took good care of economic prosperity of their subjects, they still sought to culturally completely Germanize them, and had barely tolerated their educational achievements, while in

⁶²² Niko Mrvoš, “Dobrovoljački pokret u ratovima za Oslobođenje i Ujedinjenje” [Volunteering movement in the wars for the Liberation and Unification] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1934), pp. 350-351; Niko Mrvoš “Neka je slava i čast našim dobrovoljcima!” [Glory and honor to our volunteers!] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1931), pp. 235-237; Niko Mrvoš “Vojvoda Radomir Putnik. Govor pred vrstom za članstvo i naraštaj.” [Field Marshal Radomir Putnik. Speech in front of the line formation for members and youth] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1932), pp. 363-4.

⁶²³ Niko Mrvoš, “Pre petnaest godina” [Fifteen years ago] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1931), pp. 39-41, here p. 39.

terms of political freedoms it remained stiff and unyielding, protecting its power and privilege [LB: gospodstvo] most possessively.”⁶²⁴

From such neo-romanticist perspectives, Yugoslavism, in the illiberal sense of belonging, itself subsumed political values, simply by the fact of its particular character. The deeds of the historical actors who thus contributed to the creation of Yugoslavia were also naturalized and used to legitimize and reconcile otherwise rather diverse and not completely overlapping national and political projects that were uploaded into the final state setup. This was done through the essentialization of the discourse and recasting of many historical figures and events in a trans-imperial and nominally liberal matrix. In other words, a diverse set of historical actors such as the Serbian war volunteers, émigré diplomats, but also vastly different anti-Ottoman, anti-Habsburg, anti-Hungarian and anti-Catholic figures—became vessels for the realization of the “Yugoslav thought”. The latter purportedly stemmed from their allegedly common national character and wish for political unification into a state-bound political community. Given Sokol’s novel state-affiliated position, such historiographical, memory-related and cultural claims became more relevant due to its enlarged dissemination capacity. In fact, they were part and parcel of the mandate Sokol has been given by the royal court and modern state alike, to lead the way in programmatizing, stabilizing and unifying the tenets of integral Yugoslavism, with an aim to eventually scale it up onto the state level.

In fact, Yugoslavs’ national mission, rooted in their historical experience of trans-imperiality, went much further, for a Zagreb-based philosopher and publicist Zdenko Vernić. Operating with a notion of historical contingency that he saw as the key explanation for South Slavs’ characteristic diversity, Vernić thought it self-understandable that their mission was to transpose their values rooted in said historical experience onto the global level, with a goal of

⁶²⁴ Stevo Žakula “Slobodarski duh Sokolstva” [Freedom-loving spirit of Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1931), pp. 268-271, here p. 268-9.

uniting humanity on progressive terms.⁶²⁵ In his words, nationalism was merely a “school of collectivism” that was bound to emancipate its believers from harmful individualistic tendencies “that have hyperthrophied like a cancer in Europe”.⁶²⁶ For Vernić, Yugoslavs were well advanced in this exercise, given that they already had to accommodate immense diversity in their new political community, and it was thus their duty to help and achieve a “global community of peoples” under the “flag of collective humanity” that is rooted in principle of social justice.⁶²⁷ Using the history of Zagreb, Vernić demonstrated how Yugoslavist modernity, realized thereat, succeeded in leveling numerous social and political differences that existed as a result of its trans-imperial position and historical experience. Vernić’s argument serves to showcase the ever-more intensified cross-fertilization between the universalist positivist commitments and neo-romanticists’ essentializing discourses.

The final element that marked the Balkanist paradigm and that will experience an even greater rise in the post-1935 period, was the neo-romanticization of discourse and gradual abandonment of Sokol’s positivist orientation. Before the King’s assassination, however, while Sokol was still very much experiencing its “golden age”, this was relatively less prominent and mostly manifested via the folklorization and heritagization of what was seen as the Yugoslav national culture. Given the rise of cultural functions of Sokol, namely rise in choirs, bands, puppetry, theatre groups, film and radio production and musealization of the association itself—it is not surprising that the novel cultural production came to be filled with the attempts at producing integral Yugoslavist political aesthetics, akin to the described intellectual changes that were ongoing within the association.

⁶²⁵ Zdenko Vernić “Jugoslavenski Zagreb” [Yugoslav Zagreb] *Sokolski slet. 1874-Zagreb-1934*, vol. 6, pp. 59-61.

⁶²⁶ Ibid, p. 60.

⁶²⁷ Ibid, p. 61.

Specifically, it was the Belgrade-based sisters Ljubica and Danica Janković,⁶²⁸ nieces of the notable ethnographer Tihomir Đorđević,⁶²⁹ who attempted to promote the achievements of modern ethnography in Sokol, and introduce elements of the folklore education into its mandatory curricula. While they became more successful, locally and internationally in official ethnographic institutional knowledge-production frameworks after 1935, in this period they oftentimes relied on Sokol to argue their cases and situate folklore dances and games, particularly the *kolo* circle dance, as a matter of national cultural heritage that is about to be lost to modernity if not recorded by and transmitted to the wide Sokol membership. Even if their understanding of culture disclosed their primordialist and essentialist perspectives, Sokol's new drive towards cultural synthetization, uniformization and catalogization of regional specificities, represented a complementary project within which they could espouse their thinly veiled anti-modernist sentiments.

It was already in 1933 that Ljubica S. Janković, otherwise trained in comparative literature and Greek philology, called for founding a special committee within SSKJ, whose task would be to collect, but also stylize and ensure the organized teaching of different 'national dances' [LB: narodne igre]: "It is high time to begin with this, since our national dances, under pressure from the postwar Black [LB: crnačkih] and other foreign dances, are being lost, particularly in the cities, and barely live only in the remote corners of our country, in villages and smaller towns (...) This year a private initiative for collecting them began (...) As a first result of this initiative, we can satisfactorily record the successful gathering [LB: poselo] of the female members of the Sokol club Matica in Belgrade (...) for which the sister Agata Žic prepared several old *kolo* dances (...) Given that Sokol is an organization whose goals is also developing all national

⁶²⁸ Selena Rakočević and Mladena Prelić "Sestre Janković: pionirski rad na polju etnokoreologije" [The Janković Sisters: Pioneering Work in the Field of Ethnochoreology] *Naučnice u društvu / Women scholars and scientists in society*. Belgrade: Institute of Ethnography of Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2020, pp. 421-430.

⁶²⁹ Known especially for his interest in minority cultures in Serbia, e.g. that of Roma and Aromanians, who also published on national dances, see: Tihomir Đorđević, *Srpske narodne igre*. [Serbian national dances] Belgrade, 1907.

forces; and that it is an organization of the private initiative and national consciousness, it should, provided these are its tasks, be the most invited to organize a systematic collecting of the national dances and the most powerful propagator of their tendance and preservation from oblivion. (...) After that [LB: founding of the relevant committee], we could come up with combinations, or rather combination [LB: spletovi] of national dances from the same region, and mixes of the national dances from different parts of Yugoslavia. (...) Finally we can also introduce various covers, adaptations and stylizations of national dances, but in that case they should not be called national dances, but for instance: rhythmical adaptation or cover of a national dance, stylization of national dance based on rhythmics, ballet etc.; gymnastic stylization of national dances etc.”⁶³⁰

For her, however, this was not only a question of folklore and heritage, but mainly of “nationalizing” youth as such. Given the context, this nationalization also meant a number of other implied ideological and intellectual influences that were to be mediated through such attempts to folklorize youth culture. In another text,⁶³¹ published some months later, she bashed foreign-imported jazz culture that, according to her, threatened to change the entire culture of sociability among the younger generations. As a counter-measure, she proposed promoting *kolo* dances within Sokol, with an additional goal, namely that of facilitating sociability more akin to the Yugoslavs’ national character: “...from such dancers, with inborn feeling for national dances, inherited from their ancestors, we should learn how they are danced (...) what is ‘contemporary’ [LB: sudobno] is also temporary, and it is our goal to revive and forever preserve from oblivion the dances of our ancestors (...) They are an expression of the national soul in the same way as are the national songs, stories and other national creations [LB:

⁶³⁰ Ljubica S. Janković, “Sokolstvo i narodne igre” [Sokol and national dances] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1933), pp. 402-4.; On the dynamics of the internationalization of the field around the time the sisters began internationalizing their work, see: Bjarne Rogan, “Folk Art and Politics in Inter-War Europe: An Early Debate on Applied Ethnology.” *Folk Life*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2006), pp. 7–23.

⁶³¹ Ljubica S. Janković “Narodni i društveni značaj narodnih igara” [National and social importance of the national dances] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 5 (1934), p. 144-146.

umotvorine] (...) Because as much as our nation expressed national suffering and unextinguished wish for freedom, it also gave as much vent to joy of life and life force in its national dances. Its most ceremonial and jovial life moments were marked and expressed in its dances. In this way, even modern dances received our racial and national characteristics. (...) There is nothing more social than, for example, national dances. (...) Kolo, accessible to everyone, does not make a difference among the classes, nor sexes or ages. In kolo, everyone is equal and has equal rights, old and young, men and women, rich and poor ones, business owner and worker, city dweller and peasant. That is a dance that can combine the most diverse elements, it is a communal dance, that makes people equal to one another and harmonizes them. It is a dance whose particular advantage lies exactly in that leveling, merging of individuals into a whole and direction of that whole according to the kolo leader [LB: kolovođa]”⁶³² She went on to conclude that because of the egalitarian sociability fostered by *kolo* dances, they should be considered a political tool for creating a “more national and sociable future of our nation”.⁶³³

These two interventions of Janković largely coincided with the publishing of her initial ethnomusicological collection,⁶³⁴ that she had co-authored with her sister, yet appeared two and three years after the first introduction of *kolo* dances into the repertoire of the Union-level educational school (*Savezna prosvetna škola*), respectively.⁶³⁵ Given that ethnomusicology was not yet properly institutionalized in Yugoslavia, her reliance on state-affiliated Yugoslavist Sokol and, in parallel, on similar associations, i. e. the Serbian *Privrednik* (Businessman) association,⁶³⁶ Yugoslav Association of Professors (*Jugoslovensko profesorsko društvo*)⁶³⁷ and

⁶³² Ibid, p. 144.

⁶³³ Ibid, p. 146.

⁶³⁴ *Narodne igre: skupile i opisale Ljubica S. Janković i Danica S. Janković*, 5 vols. [National dances: collected and described by Ljubica S. Janković and Danica S. Janković] Belgrade: Prosveta, 1934.

⁶³⁵ “Savezna prednjačka škola” [Union-level trainers’ school] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 7 (1931), p. 122-126.

⁶³⁶ That published her first book on the topic, see: Ljubica S. Janković, *Narodne igre*. [National dances] Belgrade: Privrednik, 1933.

⁶³⁷ She published one of her first works as part of its herald, see: Ljubica S. Janković, *O značaju narodnih igara: sa proslave Sv. Save u II. ženskoj gimnaziji u Beogradu 1933. god.* [On the importance of national dances: from the celebration of Saint Sava in the II female gymnasium in Belgrade, in 1933] Belgrade: Planeta, 1933.

networks of largely progressive politicians and cultural figures, such as Jaša Prodanović and Milan Predić,⁶³⁸ might indicate that she sought to build a larger coalition for the establishment and institutionalization of Yugoslav-framed ethnomusicology as a separate field of study. It was only in 1937 that she succeeded in founding an Archive of national dances within the framework of the Ethnographic museum in Belgrade. In fact, in 1939 that she became the head of the Department of musical folklore, thereat.

From this position, and eventually with the help of the Serbian Academy of Sciences, she went on to become a notable and internationally recognized expert on Yugoslav ethnomusicology in socialist Yugoslavia, positing herself as one of the key custodians of the immensely diverse heritage used for socialist framing of the national cultures. Crucially, her and her sister's understanding of the role of folklore and national dances in integral Yugoslavist nation-building, namely the one that rested on: 1) identifying several distinct cultural regions, 2) producing and disseminating the stylized versions of these regions' folklore, and 3) representing Yugoslavia as a sum of all the distinct regions; proved to be a basis of a much longer lasting (post-)Yugoslav cultural policy that enabled its diversity to be tamed and widely communicated to local and foreign audiences, without bringing into question the (territorial) integrity of the state, or even politicizing cultural difference as such. Nevertheless, her approach to these cultural elements, contributed to the folklorization and heritagization of culture within Sokol, unavoidably divorcing the associational agenda from strictly understood modernization. Although it is not clear whether Janković employed such language due to opportunistic or sincere intellectual motivation, its effects on associational understanding of culture likely remained the same.

⁶³⁸ She dedicated her first book to Predić and her first collection to Prodanović.

The enchanted, or vicious, circle between essentially understood culture, national character and contemporary political life, was also displayed in a number of folklore-themed articles that mushroomed around this and the subsequent period. They thematized the falcon in the folk songs of different regions or subsections of the Yugoslav population, usually with an aim to demonstrate the innateness of the falcon-inspired values the association embodies, within the national culture. In some cases, like the one of Abduselam Abdulahović, a *Gajret*-affiliated Višegrad-based school director, who traced the trope of falcon in the “Muslim national songs”,⁶³⁹ it was also an attempt to promote the individuality of Muslim populace in the broader Yugoslav matrix, as well as to de-mystify their alleged “Turkish”, or simply, foreign affiliation. Abdulahović prefaced his article based on the recent ethnomusicological collections, in rather explicit terms: “It is wrong to use the name ‘Turk’ [LB: Turčin]⁶⁴⁰ when thinking of Bosnian Muslims, since the latter represent the purest Slavic element. Muslims of Bosnia have nothing in common with Turks, except their faith, that can in no way influence their national feeling and Yugoslav orientation. It is important to know that Muslims of Bosnia live, feel, have the same yearnings and ideals, as their kindred [LB: istokrvna] brothers of Orthodox and Catholic faith (...) They are proud of their giant heroes [LB: div-junaci] (...) who were not afraid even of the emperor in Istanbul.”⁶⁴¹ Pointing to the joint national character, uncontaminated by the historically contingent development and superimposition of the Muslim faith onto the Bosnian portion of the South Slavic populace by the Ottomans, Abdulahović aimed to make them also symbolically constituent of the Yugoslav and, importantly, modernist project.

Others who used the same entry point of identifying the cultural trope of the falcon to pledge loyalty to the same cause, were, for instance the Kragujevac-based Sokol activist Mašan

⁶³⁹ Abduselam Abdulahović “Soko u muslimanskoj narodnoj pesmi” [Falcon in the Muslim national song] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1934), pp. 205-8.

⁶⁴⁰ Pejorative designator for a person of Turkish origin.

⁶⁴¹ Abdulahović, “Soko”, p. 205.

Bulatović, whose radio lecture on this topic enumerated not only falcon-centered cultural traditions, but also discussed the potential territorial implications of toponyms bearing related names.⁶⁴² Specifically, the falcon represented the heroic and rebellious trait such thinkers were striving to read into the Yugoslav national character that produced Sokol as an all-national association. In a similar vein, the aforementioned Miloš Stanojević also weighed in on the topic with a markedly literary, pathos-driven text, in which he highlighted numerous bloody anti-Ottoman uprisings throughout the past centuries, that he felt evidenced the persistent Yugoslav trait, which will soon lead to “the day when we will proudly claim: our whole homeland is falcon-like [LB: sokolska], because its every citizen is a member of Sokol!”⁶⁴³ In cases such as these, both the pathetic literary form, and its neo-romanticist folkloric content, contributed to the considerable change of the stakes within the associational discourse.

Finally, an important element that gave rise to the neo-romanticist stream was the cult of the royal family and King Aleksandar in particular. Given his assassination, that took place on October 9, 1934 in Marseille, it was in the period of his mourning and before the gradual institutional collapse that ensued in the following period, that most texts pertaining to this cult, also rooted in essentialist and characterological claims on the organic connection between the ruler and his subjects, were published. It was, for instance, Vladimir Belajčić, the highest SSKJ official, Osijek-born and Novi Sad-based judge and member of the Rotary club—who published a literary commemorative text on the occasion of the King’s passing.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴² Mašan Bulatović, “Soko u našoj narodnoj pesmi” [Falcon in our national songs] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1934), pp. 111-117; “Prosvetna propaganda” [Educational propaganda] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1934), pp. 220-221.

⁶⁴³ Miloš Stanojević “Narodna pesma i sokolstvo” [National song and Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1934), pp. 108-111.

⁶⁴⁴ He later went on to cooperate with the chetniks of Draža Mihailović, bringing the remaining Sokol membership in the occupied Serbia into coalition with them. Belajčić was also later one of the authors of the “Memorandum on Crimes of Genocide Committed against the Serbian People by the Government of the ‘Independent State of Croatia’ during World War II, Addressed to the fifth General Assembly of the United Nations, 1950,” alongside Adam Pribičević and Branko Milijuš, see: Edmond Paris, *Genocide in Satellite Croatia, 1941–1945*, p. 291; *The Crime of Genocide—A Plea for Ratification of the Genocide Pact*. Chicago: Serbian National Defense Council of America, 1951.

Evoking different South Slavic historical figures rendered as transhistorical and trans-imperial anti-imperialist fighters for the Yugoslav cause, Belajčić exclaimed that: “Alongside Lazar of Serbia [LB: Knez-Lazar] and Petar Svačić, He is the only one who, with his blood, redeemed the salvation of His people (...) In the age when, in the horrifying and bloody struggle among nations their destiny was being resolved and when the military qualities of the nation were worth more than anything else, it was only due to luck that such a Leader [LB: Vođ] found himself at the helm of our nation, in whom the superb military character was expressed not only in the caring education he received among the imperial pages (...) but also due to the racially inherited mix between Šumadija and Vasojević blood (...) his concept of a nation was wide, Yugoslav in the fullest sense”.⁶⁴⁵ Together with evidently employing racialized language touching upon the Montenegrin and Albanian tribe tradition, Belajčić also accentuated the role of providence that had determined the King’s life path and political role among the South Slavs.

Due to the dramatic passing of the King, but also the ongoing intellectual and social reconfiguration of the streams within Sokol, such tropes and discourses became increasingly frequent, at the expense of the positivist or and those that relied on the concept of citizenship to frame the political community. In other words, by late 1934, the latent tenets of the neo-romanticist thinkers’ stream became more frequent contributors to the associational periodicals, leaders of the associational courses and lecturers on the radio—influencing the change in both increasingly literary form and essentialist, primordialist content of the association’s self-image, but also vision of its mission, tasks and the membership that they still saw as a model for the wider political community.

⁶⁴⁵ Vladimir Belajčić „Vođ Naroda, Heroj i Mučenik“ [Leader of the Nation, Hero and Martyr] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1934), pp. 363-367, here p. 364.

3.3. Ambitions Unleashed: Expansion of Biomedical and Physical Education

Discourses and Initiatives

The social and intellectual processes thematized in the previous sections, such as etatization and essentialization, also made an impact onto the knowledge production and communication, in this period. Due to the Sokol's new affiliation with the state, reliance on its resources and institutional framework, new concerns arose among the biomedical and pedagogical thinkers within. This new position, however, also attracted other scientists and researchers more focused on ensuring the state's viability, using their expertise as a means towards achieving that, rather than on molding the "national body" as such, that was done with little regard to the state politics in the previous decade. This also prompted the proliferation of practical, or practice-geared knowledge production, that used the access to the rising membership as an opportunity to conduct inductive or deductive research on a larger sample,⁶⁴⁶ with largely clear etatist and Yugoslavist agenda. It did so, so as to be able to assess the applicability of different models for ethnic and social engineering, responding to what they saw as various demographic and gender-related challenges, as well as with an objective of increasing the state's human capital.

The rise of such concerns can be explained with the radical etatization of Sokol, and its subjections to the need of the political goals of the state. In more biomedical and philosophical terms, however, the process of essentialization was reflected in the gradual change of the stance of the majority of thinkers, on the question of bodily plasticity. It transformed from the strictly

⁶⁴⁶ This can also be witnessed in the rise in the medicalization of slets and in number of physicians and examinations conducted thereat, see: Venčeslav Arko "Slet u Ljubljani u zdravstvenom pogledu" [The Ljubljana slet in the medical perspective] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1934), p. 7-9; see also systematic writings that focused exclusively on the physiognomy of exercise in the context of civilizational level of the national community, such as: Milutin Mudrinić "Zadatak i korist telesnog vežbanja" [The mission and the utility of the physical exercise] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1934), pp. 407-410.

Lamarckian views that had dominated the previous decades, to an incremental rapprochement with the views on “hard heredity”. Beyond theoretical discussions on the relationship between the increasingly more essentialized body, its environment and its *Einübung*—this change of intellectual climate was mirrored also in the way agency of the membership and overall population was, implicitly and explicitly, being conceived by the thinkers who aimed to redesign and, eventually, scale-up their association-based initiatives. While, in the 1920s, they had hoped to work together with the associational membership to “mold” their bodies towards enhanced capacities, achieving body-mind harmony, perfection and overall reform of the sociopolitical order; in the 1930s, they started positing themselves as the technocratic engineers of the population, with agency of the latter declining, among their increasingly state-centered priorities. Together with awarding agency to the members, what also dwindled in this period was the premise on the impact of the environment and on the individual organism, previously commonly understood as evident and highly relevant for Sokol’s agenda.⁶⁴⁷ The boundaries of the body thus gradually became ever firmer, even if some elements of environmental determinism remained, at least discursively, present in the literary texts of the neo-romanticist stream.

Regarding educational initiatives and pedagogical thought, this period was marked by standardization and enlargement of such initiatives, both in number of schools and courses, but also in terms of the number of members who attended them. The curricula, expert literature and literature available in the libraries were centrally decided upon by the Educational committee, together with the teaching guides for trainers, and speeches or lectures they were supposed to deliver to the members. While such centralized and standardized methodology was largely

⁶⁴⁷ In contrast to the trends among the more influential interwar Western scientists’ approach to bodily integrity and individuality, see more about their debates in: Stefanos Geroulanos, Todd Meyers “The Organism and Its Environment: Integration, Interiority, and Individuality around 1930” in *The Human Body in the Age of Catastrophe: Brittleness, Integration, Science and the Great War*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018, pp. 161-207.

conceived for the urban and more educated portion of the overall membership, the early and mid-1930s brought novel experimental pedagogies for the rural sphere that Sokol was mandated to penetrate. Specifically, it was the ethnopedagogical approaches that flourished in this context, whereby multiple new teaching approaches were devised, largely drawing from the existing pedagogical repertoire established by the Zagreb-based and Carnegie- and Rockefeller-funded School of Public Health around the same time.

This subchapter first examines the etatist- and essentialist-driven biomedical and social engineering initiatives, practices and studies done within or in cooperation with Sokol; dedicating its second part to the analysis of the debates around and practices of said novel, yet largely progressivist pedagogies, in the context of association's significant enlargement, geographically specific expansion, but also the standardization and centralization of its educational initiatives. Importantly, due to the personal and institutional continuities with the previous periods, however, the early 1930s were not yet completely dominated by the state-centered and essentialist discourses. It could be said that the intellectual and ideological weight between this and the other, namely modernist progressivist and largely liberal, pole, was in a dynamic flux until at least 1935. Moreover, the knowledge production and scientific research were mainly done by the representatives of the post-Habsburg liberal-positivist stream of thinkers, with very few contributions from the neo-romanticist one. This also meant that some of their initial modernist and progressivist commitments remained relevant in their approach to physical education and pedagogical innovation more broadly. On the whole, however, the etatist concerns, evident in the rise of anthropometric practices, debates around human economy of the state, propositions around demographic engineering, but also temperance discourses, curbing epidemics' and promotion of eugenics—came to represent the vast majority of the discourses and debates among experts in Sokol, with the gradual, yet definitive, decline of the progressivist and liberal approaches to physical education.

3.3.1. *Menschenökonomie* and Adopting of the Technocratic Lens

To start with the biomedical discourses, that had reflected the increasingly more technocratic approach to the body, it was the Slovenian anthropologist Božo Škerlj who most notably took advantage of Sokol's rise in membership, to pursue his own research agenda, even if his own ideological and intellectual commitments did not necessarily match those of the programmatized, yet nominally liberal and progressive, Yugoslavism of Sokol. He attempted to back his strictly maternalist, Slovenian nationalist and racialized, but principally technocratic perspectives, with extensive research done within Sokol and Sokol-affiliated circles and networks. As was already noted in historiography on eugenics in the post-Habsburg space,⁶⁴⁸ Škerlj primarily conducted anthropometric research on different occasions throughout the 1930s, namely at the Sokol *slets*, but also associational courses,⁶⁴⁹ with a goal of investigating the relationship between physical exercise, physiognomic changes and gender—in women. While he did not understand these changes to be heritable, Škerlj still went on to test the different hypotheses around the impact of physical exercise on women's fertility and acquisition

⁶⁴⁸ Ana Cergol "Evgenika na Slovenskem v perspektivi spola" [Eugenics in Slovenia from a gender perspective] *Zgodovinski časopis*, vol. 63, no. 3-4 (2009), pp. 408-425; *Racial Science in Hitler's New Europe, 1938-1945*, eds. Anton Weiss-Wendt and Rory Yeomans. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013; Vojtěch Pojar, *Experts in Post-imperial Transitions: Entanglements and Diverging Trajectories of Eugenicists between the Habsburg Empire and the 'Miniature Empires', c. 1900-1939*, PhD diss. Budapest, Vienna: CEU, 2023, pp. 468-473.

⁶⁴⁹ For instance, he began already conducting systematic anthropometric research at the 1931 Ljubljana Union-level *prednjak* school for women members (*Savezna prednjačka škola za članice*), see: "Savezna prednjačka škola" [Union-level prednjak school] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 7 (1931), pp. 122-126; he also used a large-scale regional slets and trainings of competitive gymnasts in 1933 and 1934 in Ljubljana, see: Božo Škerlj "Antropometrična opazovanja na I. pokrajinskem zletu SKJ v Ljubljani" [Anthropometric observations on the I. regional slet of SKJ in Ljubljana] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 10 (1933), p. 251-252; Božo Škerlj "Antropološka preiskava tekmovalcev" [Anthropological examination of the competitors] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 7-8 (1934), pp. 211-217; Božo Škerlj "Antropološka preiskava tekmovalcev" [Anthropological examination of the competitors] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 9 (1934), p. 269-2175; Božo Škerlj "Pronalasci antropoloških opažanja dveh najboljih takmičarskih vrst određenih za međunarodno takmičenje 1934" [Findings of the anthropological observations of the two best competitive groups selected to attend the international competition in 1934] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 11-12 (1934), pp. 373-381, here p. 373-381.

of masculine traits in this initial period, while he also addressed the questions of “race” and constitutional types in mid- to late 1930s.⁶⁵⁰

The three cited studies, from 1933 and 1934 respectively, were conducted in this period with the help of the notable Slovenian eugenicist physician Alija Košir,⁶⁵¹ Ljubljana-based Institute of Hygiene and the Department of anthropology at the State school clinic. Škerlj and Košir managed to acquire samples of around 800 gymnasts at each of the Sokol events, devising a detailed and rigorous anthropometric examination and data collection methodology, with an aim to investigate different questions, most of which derived from the contemporaneous Germanophone anthropological and medical research they referred to in their studies.⁶⁵² The data on gymnasts’ physical characteristics acquired through such examinations (e.g. height, weight, eye and hair colors according to Fischer and Martin scales respectively, cranial index, Rohrer index,⁶⁵³ but also data on menarche, births given and sport achievements) was meticulously recorded in each gymnasts’ *opazovalni list* (observation sheet).

Based on these, Škerlj and Košir sought to provide a response to three particular questions: 1) “what our man is like (typologically, racially etc.)”⁶⁵⁴; 2) to investigate if there is a positive correlation between bodily proportions and sports achievements, so as to identify a sort of ‘sports type’⁶⁵⁵; 3) to prove the positive correlation between competitive, or what they dubbed

⁶⁵⁰ While there are no such studies done on the Yugoslav case, for the analysis of literary reflections on gender division, and imposition of normative masculinity in particular, in the Czech Sokol, see: Alfred Thomas, *The Bohemian Body: Gender and Sexuality in Modern Czech Culture*. London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007, pp. 55-57.

⁶⁵¹ Bernard Špacapan, “Košir, Alija (1891–1973).” *Slovenska biografija*. Ljubljana: Slovenska akademija znanosti in umetnosti, Znanstvenoraziskovalni center SAZU, 2013. URL=<http://www.slovenska-biografija.si/oseba/sbi1015500/#primorski-slovenski-biografski-leksikon> (Last access: September 28, 2024).

⁶⁵² Particularly works of the famous gynaecologist Hugo Selheim, but also research done on the anthropometrics of German gymnasts, such as: Fritz Bach, *Leitfaden zu anthropometrischen Sporttypenuntersuchungen und deren statistische Auswertung*. Munich, 1930.

⁶⁵³ Similar to contemporary BMI, see: Gerhard Nahler “Rohrer index” *Dictionary of Pharmaceutical Medicine*, Vienna: Springer, 2009, p. 163.

⁶⁵⁴ Božo Škerlj “Antropometrična opazovanja na I. pokrajinskem zletu SKJ v Ljubljani” [Anthropometrical observations at the 1st regional slet of SKJ in Ljubljana] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 10 (1933), p. 251.

⁶⁵⁵ Božo Škerlj “Antropološka preiskava tekmovalcev” [Anthropological examination of gymnasts] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 7-8 (1934), p. 211.

‘excessive’ or ‘masculine’, gymnastics and the narrowing down of the pelvis in young women.⁶⁵⁶ Although the examined gymnasts came mostly from Dravska, Savska and Dunavska banovinas, with several Czechs and Russians included in the sample as well, Škerlj decided to only extrapolate the values pertaining to the ‘Slovenian’ portion of the gymnasts and compare it with that of the German gymnasts (male and female) from Bach’s study. He hereby reaffirmed what he presented as a matter of scientific consensus, namely that the gymnasts’ height was the sole predictor of their success in competitive sports, positing Slovenians as better equipped than Germans studied by Bach and explaining this difference by the “racial difference” among Yugoslavs, who had more representatives of the Mediterranean race and the Germans, among whom there were more members of the Alpine race.⁶⁵⁷ Škerlj announced that he will publish his key findings in a Stuttgart-based expert journal on morphology and anthropology soon after, dubbing his study an “anthropology of exercise” (*telovadna antropologija*),⁶⁵⁸ yet his article never appeared on the journal’s pages. Škerlj’s conclusion to this study marks one of the first explicit usage of ‘race’ as a category in scientific research within Yugoslav Sokol, in contrast to the categories previous usage in predominantly literary and politically-minded texts.

The same can be said of constitutional types that were not relied upon by the vast majority of Sokol thinkers, despite their educational and professional background. Based on these findings, Škerlj suggested the introduction of regular anthropometrical examinations for all Sokol members and mandating them for those who wanted to join local or international competitions. He was explicit, however, about the fact that this was not only to be done for the purpose of tracing the bodily capacities of Sokol gymnasts, but primarily to control and select those who are better physically equipped to attend competitions, so as to bar others—specifically

⁶⁵⁶ Božo Škerlj “Antropološka preiskava tekmovalcev” [Anthropological examination of gymnasts] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 9 (1934), p. 269.

⁶⁵⁷ Škerlj, “Antropološka preiskava tekmovalcev” *SOKO* 7-8, 1934.

⁶⁵⁸ He cited it in the following way: Božo Škerlj, “Beiträge zur Anthropologie der Slowenen. Körpermerkmale von 153 Turnerinnen und 189 Turnen.” *Zschr. f. Morph. f. Anthropol.* Stuttgart, 1935.

women—from what he saw as harmful and excessive competitive gymnastics, that is “certainly not the main purpose of the Sokol work”.⁶⁵⁹ Basing his argument on the extensive research done by Hugo Selheim, but also his own extensive anthropometric studies on the width of the pelvises of female Sokol gymnasts, Škerlj raised alarm over the effects of intense exercise onto the development of relatively plastic female physiognomy, their birth prospects and consequently, the demographic standing of the entire Yugoslav nation.

Tellingly, he was equally disturbed by their potential infertility or malformed offspring, as he was with what he saw as a threat to the traditional gender division. By adopting ‘male’ exercise regimen, that he saw particularly relevant in the case of German female gymnasts, women were risking losing their female characteristics, acquiring male ones and becoming an inter-sex monstrosity (*strašilo*) that he dubbed “ženomuž” (compound of the words “woman” and “man”).⁶⁶⁰ Importantly, what can be observed in his interventions, is a much more technocratic approach, rooted in scientism, desire for controlling the associational activities based on such findings, but also the drive to reify both “race” and constitutional types as categories relevant for the physical education and overall associational activities conducted in Sokol.

The question of the difference between the women’s and men’s exercises was, nevertheless, not new within Sokol. Some years before Škerlj’s initial findings and suggestions, an anonymous author discussed the question of gendering bodily movements in their respective exercise regimens, by asking “Should the female members perform only ‘soft’ and male only ‘harsh’ movements?”⁶⁶¹ This article sought to deconstruct the gender-framed characteristics of different, more or less, quick and harsh calisthenic movements, by enumerating real life examples of women’s physically taxing work and, conversely, men’s precise, sensible

⁶⁵⁹ Škerlj “Antropološka preiskava tekmovalcev” *SOKO* 9 (1934), p. 274.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 275.

⁶⁶¹ “Zar da članice izvode same ‘mekane’, a članovi same ‘odsečene’ pokrete?” [Should the female members perform only ‘soft’ and male only ‘harsh’ movements?] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1930), p. 57.

movements in the context of playing piano. The anonymous accentuated the importance of professional performance, over the unnecessary gendering of given movements and positions—thus pointing to the existence and relevance of this debate before Škerlj, but also to the different stances to the question of gendered calisthenics. It became, nevertheless, obvious that by the hay day of Škerlj's interventions, even the most prominent woman official of SSKJ, Elza Skalar/Skalarjeva, stood closer to his standpoint, as can be seen from her 1934 text in which she addresses women gymnasts by attempting to reconcile his input and the existing tradition of women's gymnastics.⁶⁶² Thereby, she displayed both maternalist and gender-normative positions, akin to those of Škerlj: "It would be wrong for women to completely reject exercising with equipment, because once correctly chosen they do not only benefit the body, but also facilitate the development of excellent traits, such as boldness and strengthening of the spirit, both of which should be cultivated among men and women alike (...) Despite the fact that we often see how a women tortures not only herself, but also her spectator, in her wish to perform an overly difficult exercise using equipment, that could only fit a male gymnast (...) This is without a doubt in conflict with principles of beauty and physical education (...) Every woman should be aware of the responsibility that she has towards her own health and towards the health of her children, as well as that of the future generations. This awareness should force a woman to take care of her body and character using appropriate exercise and moral natural life."⁶⁶³ Because both Skalar and other notable women officials and trainers publicly adopted and promoted such attitudes, the question of women's exercise, and more intensely, competitive gymnastics to be performed at events such as the Olympic games or other international competitions, became increasingly medicalized and framed in technocratic terms. Yet, such stances received very little resistance from the other lower-level women trainers and members.

⁶⁶² Elza Skalar "Glavna načela ženske telovežbe" [The main principles of women's exercise] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1934), pp. 2-3.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 3.

Another notable eugenicist whose writings reflect Sokol's essentialism in regard to Yugoslavism and Slavdom alike, was the Ljubljana-based surgeon, poet and philosopher Franc Derganc.⁶⁶⁴ Although most of his publications appear on the pages of associational periodicals only in the subsequent period, Derganc's most relevant book that relates to Sokol's mission and in which he, in fact, coined a concept of Sokol eugenics, came out and was well received in 1932.⁶⁶⁵ Taking the issue of diversity to the fore, Derganc subverted the approach to miscegenation and posited it as one of the strengths, rather than weaknesses, of Slavic and Yugoslav situation. Conversely, he used numerous examples from biology, botany and chemistry to point to the degenerative tendency of "racial" and biological purity. Relying on these premises, he attacked what he called "Western eugenics", by saying that: "Gobineau himself cites two cultured, noble races, the Aryans and the Mongols, with the latter even acknowledged by some as superior with regards to statehood, organization and morality. The addition of Mongol blood, therefore, equips the Aryan Slavs for higher tasks. We Slavs can only be proud of our amalgam of Aryan and Mongol blood as a guarantee of a better future (...) The type of Western eugenics represented by Gobineau, Darwin and Nietzsche is an attempt to build an ethical-eugenic movement, but on completely misguided, incorrect ethical and eugenic foundations. Deriving throughout from exploitative, imperialist, and therefore unethical and non-eugenic instincts, Western eugenics is a true monstrum *per excessum*, and therefore, a pathological formation. Indeed, the whole future of humanity depends on an ethical-eugenic movement that would cultivate and better the soul and body of man, and suppress and eliminate degenerate, antisocial and pathological types."⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ *History of East Central European Eugenics 1900-1945*, ed. Marius Turda. London: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 377-378.

⁶⁶⁵ Franc Derganc, *Borba zapada in vzhoda: ob stoletnici Tyrševega rojstva* [The conflict of East and West: on the occasion of the centenary of Tryš's birth] Ljubljana: Učiteljska tiskarna, 1932.

⁶⁶⁶ *History of East Central European Eugenics 1900-1945*, ed. Marius Turda. London: Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 379-80.

Derganc continued to present Sokol as the most effective, and also the most traditional and natural, agent of achieving the said goal, calling it “our defensive ethical-eugenic movement” that works through education. The timing of Derganc’s publication, but also the conflation of Sokol’s traditionally evolutionist drive, ethics and what is essentially education and selection of particular “types” as eugenic means—indicate that the essentialization of the discourse, as well as vision of Sokol’s mission that included some sort of social engineering, was already well present in expert circles. Importantly, diversity which is one of the most frequent *leitmotifs* of Yugoslavism, was being biologized and medicalized, precisely by actors such as Derganc, but also later Škerlj, who dedicated several publications to responding to and criticizing Nazi claims on “racial purity”.

Further attesting the rise of the etatist and essentialist lens over the early 1930s, it was Viktor Murnik’s writings on the national economy that combined the nominally liberal Rudolf Goldscheid-style *Menschenökonomie*⁶⁶⁷ with the novel and crisis-driven concerns for Yugoslav state’s economic viability to discuss Sokol physical education, in the most productive way. Murnik hereby re-published and re-framed his originally *Trgovinski list*-published article series on “National economy and Sokol” as a booklet entitled *Sokol and Life* in 1932, connecting the issues of physical exercise, national economy and cultural life more broadly.⁶⁶⁸ In it, he explicitly framed Sokol’s work with the population as one of increasing its physical and mental labor capacity, and consequently overall labor productivity and competitiveness, stating that: “Sokol clubs build and strengthen the most precious capital, with which it is possible to obtain and multiply other capitals”.⁶⁶⁹

⁶⁶⁷ Cheryl A. Logan, *Hormones, Heredity, and Race: Spectacular Failure in Interwar Vienna*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013, pp. 113–15.

⁶⁶⁸ Viktor Murnik, *Sokolstvo in življenje*. [Sokol and life] Ljubljana, 1932.

⁶⁶⁹ Murnik, *Sokolstvo in življenje*, p. 10.

Citing the work of an older German philosopher and promoter of establishing physical education as a unique discipline Ferdinand August Schmidt, but also that of Vienna-based proponents of ‘natural movement’ and later Nazi collaborators Karl Gaulhofer and Margaretha Streicher, Murnik pointed to the plasticity of humans and role of physical education in improving their intellectual and mental abilities, within the limits of their “inborn strength”, but also in the creation of the will.⁶⁷⁰ “In this way, they raise the labor strength of the nation, that consists of individuals and is not something outside of them”, Murnik accentuated.⁶⁷¹ He further enumerated the virtues, some of them inspired by the writings of Henry Ford, that he thought physical education instills into workers and members of the nation, which they are then bound to reflect in other areas of their life, to the benefit of the national economy and the overall national community. These were the values, or rather traits of “healthy competition”, discipline, solid work, intelligence, optimal distribution of energy and strength, saving strength, moderate lifestyle etc.

Such virtues would, according to Murnik, be translated into the increased speed, efficiency and quality of labor, in both industrial and agricultural contexts, directly benefitting numerous aspects of the national economy from prices to resilience to global crises. Scaling up his vision onto the level of the entire nation, Murnik concluded that: “When the exercise would become widespread in the entire nation, the possibilities of increased savings would rise as well. Savings could be achieved in another way too, because there is no doubt that, when there would be less disease, less would be spent on curing them.”⁶⁷² The agent he proposed for ensuring the scaling-up, apart from Sokol, was the school, whose reform he suggested be designed according to the “demands of the body.”⁶⁷³ While the previous sections reflected on Murnik’s stances on state

⁶⁷⁰ Viktor Murnik, “Narodno gospodarstvo i sokolstvo: govor na radiju” [National economy and Sokol: speech on the radio] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1932), pp. 203-210.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid, p. 205.

⁶⁷² Ibid p. 209.

⁶⁷³ Murnik, *Sokolstvo in življenje*, p. 64.

and economic sovereignty, it is hereby important to note his promotion of the tight connection between bodily capacity, skillfulness and broader political and economic agendas, subsumed primarily under the state interests. One's will, physical and mental ability, and optimalization of their labor thus became matters of economic survival and prosperity of the state, in the eyes of Murnik and his supporters within Sokol. He was explicit, in the part of the book where he discusses Spengler's *Decline of the West*, that his argument on the connection between physical education and labor is a response to Spengler's superfluous ideas on culture, but also those economic thinkers who were devising economic theories "from above", without paying attention to the generative human capital that is the base of all economic life.

Finally, given that this booklet, but also several other articles that it is based on, were published in Slovenian and appeared within the Slovenian associational contexts (e.g. he gave a notable speech in the Ljubljana-based traders' association *Merkur*), it could be asserted that his primary audience were Slovenian-speakers, the most educated, but also economically most prosperous citizens of Yugoslavia, with significant stakes in the makeup of the state economy. Due to this contingent and relevant circumstance, it could be argued that he projected his own positivist and expertise-driven policy suggestions to what he saw as the key stakeholders and decision-makers, namely the state and the drivers of the economic life, namely businessowners and tradesmen—in contrast to the 1920s when his primary audience were the Sokol thinkers. Murnik, however, did not have a monopoly on the discourse on the issue of human capital and capacity, in Sokol. It was, for instance the notable leftist, Zagreb-based, economist and sociologist Rudolf (Rude) Bičanić, who tied the issue of expansion of conscious and unconscious bodily and mental energies with the one of modernity as such. Positing the energetic, youthful, but also tamed, or rather disciplined, body as the modern ideal, Bičanić

showed how it was a distinctly humanism- and disenchantment-driven phenomenon, that has become an indispensable requirement and marker of any modern society.⁶⁷⁴

One of the crucial concerns in regard to labor productivity, as well as average amount of citizens' savings that were tackled by expert discourses—was alcoholism or, more precisely, temperance. While many such discourses were framed in biomedical and/or social science expert languages, it was evident that national economy was their main concern. Sokol was, almost since its inception, active in various temperance initiatives, but in early 1930s Yugoslavia this signaled the etatization of discourse—since it was not the quality and health of the “national body” that was in the focus anymore, but rather state's economy and the integration of peasantry into Sokol's modernizing project. There were, however, multiple entry points for the concerned thinkers to intervene, from discussing Sokol's role and stance on the issue, to debating the ethnopedagogies and approaches to divorce rural sociabilities from the widespread alcohol consumption, even in Muslim-populated areas.

One of the more engaged thinkers on this issue was the Novi Sad-based Velimir Popović, who already in 1931 suggested a founding of the Sobriety committee (*Trezvenjački otsek*) within SSKJ. Its main tasks would comprise of creating a library collection on the topic together with a reading room in each of the clubs, regularly organizing courses and excursions dedicated to the issue, but also establishing stores with non-alcoholic drinks and fruit juices, alongside supporting companies that produces fruit juices, syrups and marmalades, tying their work with Sokol's through organizing fruit weeks and fruit fairs, across the country.⁶⁷⁵ A few months later, Popović was invited to present a report to further elaborate on his suggestions, to the

⁶⁷⁴ Rude Bičanić “Značenje telesnog vežbanja u životu modernog čoveka” [The meaning of exercise in the life of a modern man] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1932), pp. 248-250.

⁶⁷⁵ Velimir Popović “Borba trezvenosti u sokolstvu” [The struggle for temperance in Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1931), pp. 296-301.

Educational Committee (SPO),⁶⁷⁶ so that the feasibility of the project could be assessed by the higher-level officials. The initiative was, however, never fully implemented, although some of its elements, such as the promotion of fruit and fruit derivatives' consumption, gained momentum throughout the 1930s.

It was evident that, by that time, there was a significant overlap between other temperance initiatives and Sokol's agenda, not only in intellectual terms, but also institutionally. This was also the case with the Yugoslav temperance congresses, the participants of which also published within the Sokol associational periodicals. Framing the temperance movement as primarily an ethical one that reconciles "material and moral culture", a Zagreb-based Jewish food policy expert and publicist Edo Marković who participated in both, saw capitalism, among other factors, as the proponent of alcoholism and—consequently—destruction of the social fabric that guarantees cultural and civilizational (sic!) development.⁶⁷⁷ Marković, however, saw the temperance movement as the key constitutive part of the broader eugenics movement whose mission was precisely to guide the said development.

Discussing different measures proposed for the improvement of societies they discussed at one of the temperance congresses, he argued: "We are considering disabling of reproduction for the depraved and defect people, in some, for the future generations impractical sense, whether physical, intellectual or moral. And there is no doubt that the time of rational selection in the human society is arriving and that it will bring unforeseen results of multifaceted development of human traits. That eugenic aspect is one of the leading ethical ideas of the temperance movement. The improvement of the future generations through elimination of alcohol is our

⁶⁷⁶ Velimir Popović "Trezvenjaštvo u Sokolstvu. Referat za SPO" [Temperance in Sokol: report for the Educational Committee] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1932), pp. 133-136.

⁶⁷⁷ "Marković, Edo" *Židovski biografski leksikon*, URL=<https://zbl.lzmk.hr/?p=1230> (Last access: October 2, 2024); Edo Marković "Etički osnovi trezvenjačkog pokreta. Predavanje održano na svečanoj sednici IV jugoslovenskog kongresa trezvenosti" [Ethical foundations of the temperance movement. Lecture given at the ceremonial assembly of the 4th Yugoslav temperance congress] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1931), p. 258-262, here p. 259.

path.”⁶⁷⁸ Similarly to Murnik’s newly developed regard for the ‘human capital’ whose quality directly impacts the national economy, Marković claimed that: “The capital invested in the production of alcohol and the mending of its consequences could, once channeled into the cultural needs of the humanity, achieve immense changes in the relations between men and create a path to the harmonizing of their, cultural levels (...) The developed economic life and its functioning mediated by the subtle decrees and the entire complicated mixture of economic relations, demands mature and adaptable people who are always able to rule themselves.”⁶⁷⁹

Evidently, Marković’s and his associates’ response to capitalist-driven spread of socially harmful alcoholism, lied in technocratic governance that they saw as containing the hope of fine-tuning the population’s consumption and thus mending the ills caused by irrational consumption. In contrast to the 1920s attempts to lecture and explain the goals of the temperance movement to the voluntarily present Sokol members, thinkers such as Murnik and Marković increasingly saw solely the state as the agent that can mandate their expertise-based solutions and impose them onto the population so as to better manage the distribution of its resources. In other words, mending the ills of capitalism was a matter of marrying expertise and state intervention.

The increase in discourses linking eugenic concerns with the harmful impact of capitalism on the human body was also evidenced in the contributions by Branko Polič, a Slovenian physical culturist, trainer and teacher, who addressed the issue of posture among the modern labor force: “Today’s vocations demand ever more specialized work, that one-sidedly develops the body and spirit, often causing the crippling of the latter (...) The greatest danger, about which we don’t think enough these days, is how this will be reflected on their offsprings. It is thus our greatest duty to make the widest masses aware, that by neglecting oneself, they are also harming

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 260.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

their children. With physical education we want, on the one hand, to make people respect their own bodies and health precisely because of their descendants, but on the other hand we want to help a man in better development of his strengths and liberation from the destructive influences (...) Physical exercise wants to return an ancient freedom of movement. It aims to make him simple [LB: priprostim], so that he can always feel full and regain his original thoughtfulness and appropriate usage of movements (...) Natural movement does not know redundant movements and that is why it relies on the least among of force.”⁶⁸⁰

The language of the natural movement, already present in the 1920s’ anxiety about the labor forces’ bodily deformations, thus continued to inform their suggestions and self-image, whereby they saw Sokol-style physical education as regenerative and necessary for ensuring the proper societal development.⁶⁸¹ In the context of the early 1930s, however, it could have also been a response to the contradictions of capitalism highlighted by the outbreak of the Great Depression.

Alongside such propositions that showcased the extent of the etatization and technocratization of discourse among the liberal-positivist group, those who set out to devise a new methodology to address peasantry, often resorted to a novel sort of ethnopedagogy that mostly combined promoting memorable, rhymed sentences of simpler register with images and attempts at tweaking or changing the existing rural sociabilities. The new *Sokolsko selo* (Sokol village) periodical was the one in which this campaign received the most attention, although probably with questionable success, given the illiteracy of the actors it was supposed to address. The aforementioned Velimir (Velja) Popović, for instance, attempted to make his points by employing the format of short story (“What awaits the child of a drunken man”), but also

⁶⁸⁰ Branko Polić, “O smotrenoj telovežbi” [On thoughtful exercise] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1934), p. 365.

⁶⁸¹ The same was the case with the arguments on the role of play in human and societal development, albeit it was much less represented in this period, compared to the 1920s, see for instance: Vasa Krstić “Sokolstvo je čuvar narodnog zdravlja” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1931), p. 168-172.

publishing a collection of folk sayings and songs that tackle the negative effects of alcoholism, pairing them with the visually elaborate statistical overview of the potency of different alcoholic drinks.⁶⁸²

The usage of folk sayings and sentences designed to resemble folk sayings, but in fact devised to serve as science communication devices, was not only a strategy to spread coded messages among the uneducated and illiterate rural populace, but they were also intended to be placed within the village Sokol clubs, as slogans, or referred to in conversation between trainers and members,⁶⁸³ indicating that this ethnopedagogy also relied on elements of informality, i.e. private and individual conversations with the membership. This new approach signaled the lasting influence of reform pedagogies within Sokol and the continuous challenge Sokol thinkers posited towards the knowledge-centered, behaviorist paradigm that prevailed in the state schooling system.

This was the case also among the activists from the regions where Sokol was most involved and successful in penetrating and conducting activities in the rural areas, namely Hercegovina, Imotski region (Imotska krajina) and the Dubrovnik hinterlands. Čedomir (Čedo) Milić, a local teacher, whose sizeable report details his and his fellow Sokol activists' activities in these regions across the years, serves as one of the best examples of these approaches.⁶⁸⁴ Despite its exceptionally religionized tone, Byzantium- and Nemanjić dynasty-related references and overt evocation of God's help in achieving the sanitization of the villages and education of its inhabitants, the report reflects distinctly modernist agenda and practices employed for these

⁶⁸² Velja Popović "Sokolsko selo – trezveno selo" [Sokol village – sober village] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 3 (1933), pp. 22-23; Velja Popović "Narodne izreke o piću" [Folk sayings about drinking] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 4 (1933), p. 38.

⁶⁸³ N. M. "Higijenske rečenice za sokolski rad na selu" [Hygienic sentences for the Sokol work in the villages] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1933), pp. 150-151.

⁶⁸⁴ *Sokolsko selo: cilj, sretstva i metodi*. [Sokol village: goal, means and methods] Mostar, 1934. The report is also based on data from Miroslav Stojadinović's book *Naše selo*. [Our village] Belgrade, 1929. Among his multi-confessional group of largely liberal activists, there were also some well known public figures, such as the *Gajret* association leader Hasan Đikić.

purposes. It, moreover, contains templates for different speeches and memoes to be sent and read aloud in the villages, on topics considered relevant to Sokol's program of modernizing the given areas. The way God's expectations and other religious references are worded and presented in such speeches, however, hints at Milić's conscious usage of religious references as a mediatory device for communicating modernizing reforms to the peasantry, rather than an honest religious commitment from his side.

This is, for instance, visible in the repeated warnings against petty corruption, informal economy, alcoholism or economic inefficiency, whereby they are presented not only as harmful to the state and national community, but also as a violation of one's duty towards God. Milić, furthermore, designed a particular brand of ethnopedagogy, that he successfully conducted in the Sokol School for Rural Workers (*Sokolska škola za seoske radnike*). The School did not rely on written materials, thus accommodating the largely illiterate local population; strictly avoided abstract and theoretical terms, relying exclusively on 'real life' examples; introduced a completely horizontal relation between the instructor and the students, provided accommodation and food for all the participants relieving them of sustenance costs and also operated with visibly simpler definitions of key terms students were to be acquainted with. To build on the rural sociabilities, Milić also introduced the competition in playing the *gusle* instrument (*guslarske utakmice*), alongside numerous joint agricultural works and those centered on sanitizing the villages or providing basic infrastructure, most important of which were wells with drinking water. Around these, and on most of their occasions, he also organized the charities that were supposed to support the most socially deprived families in each village. Finally, the report outlines not only all the statistics demonstrating activities organized and infrastructure built as part of this initiative, but also data on the frequency and manner of establishing contact with different villages.

Regarding the temperance-themed libraries set up in different clubs at this time, it is possible to reconstruct their collections to an extent, given that extensive bibliographies from which numerous books were recommended to be obtained within them, were published in associational periodicals.⁶⁸⁵ These bibliographies contained a wide array of works by authors such as the influential physician and founder of the Belgrade-based turn of century League for Sober Youth, but also a pioneering member of the Scouting movement, Miloš Đ. Popović. In another telling example, the writings of the Sarajevo-based welfare and humanitarian activist Jovanka (Joka) Šiljak, president of the *Srpkinja* (Serbian woman) women's association were also included, further pointing to the overlap between the social, temperance and Sokol's modernizing and nationalizing projects. Alongside temperance campaigns and initiatives, due to the worsening epidemiological situation, particularly in Yugoslavia's southern regions,⁶⁸⁶ Sokol began, around this time, communicating knowledge on malaria, tuberculosis and other contagious diseases to its membership, using both scientific articles and booklets within such libraries or the aforementioned ethnopedagogy. In these iterations, however, the epidemiology's politics of containment turned to be a question of patriotism, as can be seen from Jova Popović's, Novi Sad-based physician's reasoning. He argued that: "Malaria, strictly speaking, is not a disease of individuals. It could rightfully be considered a social and communal disease since it doesn't just endanger the health and wellbeing of an individual, but due to its wide distribution it also endangers the health and wellbeing of the entire nation. The protection against malaria (...) thus means working for the good of one's nation and one's homeland."⁶⁸⁷ Due to Sokol's traditional ambition to penetrate all layers of society and corners of the state, the new task on spreading epidemiological knowledge, as well as building hygienic

⁶⁸⁵ "Knjige trezvenosti koje se mogu dobiti u Prosvetnom odboru Saveza Sokola KJ" [Temperance books that can be obtained at the Educational committee of the SSKJ] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1932), page missing (without author).

⁶⁸⁶ Dunja Dobaja "Kraljevina Jugoslavija v boju proti malariji" [Kingdom of Yugoslavia in the struggle against malaria] *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 61, no. 3 (2021), pp. 117-140.

⁶⁸⁷ Jova Popović, "Čuvajmo se malarije" [Let's beware of malaria] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1932), pp. 289-290.

infrastructure necessary for containing said diseases, proved to be rather complementary with Sokol thinker's vision of political modernity.

Epidemiology hereby became yet another device for strengthening the “homeland”, alongside the improvement of the “human capital” and eugenic negative selection of alcoholics or, relatively implicitly, women competitive gymnasts. The ultimate goals of such largely negative selection measures that were theorized on and suggested in this period, were well articulated by the aforementioned Skopje-based linguist Milivoj Pavlović, who came to combine Sokol's evolutionist drive towards improving the national body, individual by individual, and much larger concerns, in a markedly more expertise-driven and technocratic manner. Pavlović thereby adopted the eugenic lens and situated Sokol's evolutive social and intellectual work within the eugenic movement's agenda on guided evolution, pairing this concept with the one of cultural development, that was a remnant of the 1920s discussions.

Tying biology and culture together, he claimed that: “A species of organic life is a sum and evolutive phenomenon of all individuals: the perfection of the species simultaneously means the ensuring of ever better and ever more perfect individuals, as, conversely, conscious selection and creation of better and more life-equipped individuals, resulting in the perfection and adequate further development of the race, of the entire humanity. In this way, 70 years ago, before science created and formulated the grand principle of eugenics, racial selection and perfection, Tyrš's Sokol movement began translating that truth into practice.”⁶⁸⁸ The scientist argument thus rendered Sokol's liberal and pragmatic, but foremost Masarykian realist, associational culture and intellectual tradition—as means to biological and strictly racial, improvement and essentially to guided evolution. After enumerating key elements of the

⁶⁸⁸ Milivoj Pavlović “Sokolstvo kao živa sila u narodu” [Sokol as a live force in the nation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1933), pp. 367-9, here p. 367.

associational tradition, Pavlović reflected on its overall purpose, saying these tasks are done “to raise the value of the race in the national community”.⁶⁸⁹

Explicitly rejecting both extreme individualism and collectivism, Pavlović claimed that “Sokol preaches complete cooperation of the individual and the collective, and the preparation of the individuals to use all their abilities for the progress of the collective”,⁶⁹⁰ basing this on the two principles he saw Sokol synthesizing in its work, namely those of individual and national liberty. Referring to the King Petar Karađorđević’s preface to John Stuart Mill’s book *On Liberty*, Pavlović cited the King’s take on it, namely a section where he states that: “Liberty opens a nation’s eyes so that it can get to know its negative characteristics and to mend them. The liberty gives it a chance to get to know its virtues, to develop them and to (...) thus approach the entire humanity in a manner awarded to it by God (...) Sokol is, similarly, foremost invited to lead our people and our age out of spiritual turmoil, through the struggles that were the unavoidable consequence of war and postwar psychosis; it needs to create personalities, and not only to strengthen the bodies (...) a person rejuvenated in this way could completely stand up for a state that must guarantee him full development, for its strength and its development.”⁶⁹¹ Given that Pavlović concluded with this reference, it is possible to argue that Pavlović aimed to reconcile Sokol’s evolutionary and radical modernist commitments, evidenced in his overt reference to eugenics, with the viability of the state that he saw as primarily supported and shaped by citizens and modernizing agents such as Sokol.

Finally, their increasing preference for state interventionism, that could also be read as an indicator of the processes of etatization and essentialization of the previously distinctly liberal and “national body”-oriented expert discourses, was visible rise in reporting and reflecting on the change of approach to physical education in the Third Reich, in contrast to Weimar Republic

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid.

during whose model of (reform) physical education Sokol thinkers often praised throughout the 1920s. This was an ambiguous position, given Yugoslavism's and Sokol's self-proclaimed democratic struggle against the rise of authoritarianism. Yet, in Sokol's rendering of state interventionism, the case of, in their eyes democratic, Yugoslavia was fundamentally different than the fear- and terror-induced interventionism of the Third Reich. Such ambiguity was palpable in the way associational journals, for instance, tacitly praised the alarmist projections of the demographic rise of the Slavic nations and the parallel decline of the German nation, taken from the Germanophone articles in physical education-related journals Sokol thinkers routinely followed and reacted to, such as the Nazi-affiliated *Leibesübungen und körperliche Erziehung*.⁶⁹² Incidentally, they were not always in disagreement with such journals' and Third Reich's approach to physical education that promoted "...weakening of the individualism (...) that is nothing but a product of the unhealthy libertarianism [LB: slobodnjaštvo] (liberalism) of the 19th century."⁶⁹³ On the contrary, beyond using Nazi anxieties about the Slavic demographic rise to substantiate Sokol's work, there were also instances where they overtly laudated such state interventionism that they felt was lacking in the case of Yugoslavia, as opposed to the Third Reich.⁶⁹⁴

Nevertheless, in terms of the physical education conducted in the Deutsches Turnverein itself, Sokol trainers remained rather critical and upheld their positivist and expertise-based perspectives arguing it was politicized and not professional enough. This can be well seen in the reaction, of the anonymous author ("T. S."), to the 1933 Deutsches Turnfest, that took place in Stuttgart.⁶⁹⁵ After enumerating many technical deficiencies of the gymnastic performance and organizational settings of the event, the anonymous reminisced about the time German

⁶⁹² "Sitne vijesti: Nemci se boje stalnog porasta Slovena" [Brief news: Germans are afraid of the constant rise in the number of Slavs] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3-4 (1934), p. 174.

⁶⁹³ "Tuđina" [Foreign news] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1933), p. 34.

⁶⁹⁴ "Tuđina" [Foreign news] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 9 (1933), p. 247.

⁶⁹⁵ T. S. "Slet nemačkih vežbača u Stuttgartu" [Slet of the German gymnasts in Stuttgart] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije* vol. 9 (1933), pp. 220-227.

press diminished a Sokol *slet* in Prague, saying it's merely an Effekthascherei without much gymnastic substance, saying that: "At least in our 'theatre' thousands of people cry from being moved and shout with delight: not from the sick one aroused by the sports gladiators, but because of the truly exciting delight that can only be understood by the Slavic soul open towards brotherhood. And in terms of German 'reality'? I will not be lying if I said that almost all of the excitement was—in the newspapers."⁶⁹⁶ The atmosphere and images that T. S. recounted were chilling: SA members on 'parental duty', but also unable to maintain order after a rowdy reaction to the Hitler's speech; silent crowds reacting to the performances using the Sieg Heil salute, together with revisionist symbolic performances thematizing the "kidnapped Saar territories" and many more. Returning to the comparison between the Deutsches Turnerschaft and Sokol, he claimed that: "we Slavs have, in Sokol, something more precious, more lifeful, more essence of the true soul, than other nations. We are overjoyed with this realization, that provides us with fresh faith. No, we are not lagging, like they are blaming us to be, for a thousand years already!"⁶⁹⁷

This statement reveals not only an immensely essentialist understanding of purportedly democratic Slavdom and authoritarian Germandom, but also speaks to the tension between the orchestrated political spectacle, that the author aimed to exemplify with the description of the *Turnfest* and, what he saw as a more organic and sincere connection between Sokol and the spectators of its performances, rooted in Slavs' innate character.

All these examples point to the fact that this period was still the one of turmoil between Sokol's liberal and voluntary traditions and the following phase of its attempts at creating a given political community, whereby more and more voices adopted a technocratic etatist lens. This can be seen in Murnik's theories on the manipulation of "human capital", Škerlj's attempts to

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 221.

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 227.

operationalize the findings of his tendentious anthropometric research, but also with different temperance-inspired eugenic thinkers' concerns for the state's viability and national economy. What is more, it can be found in the ambiguous stances towards the new political culture espoused by the establishment of the Third Reich, that was tightening its authoritarian grip on the local population. In other words, by the assassination of the King Aleksandar in October 1934, the process of conceptual and intellectual cross-fertilization was at its culmination point, both in ideological and epistemological contexts.

3.3.2. Souls Tamed, Bodies Fit for Labor: New Phase in Theorizing on Physical Education

After having examined the key changes and stakes in the broadly conceived biomedical discourses, in the period of the early 1930s, it is necessary to also examine the trends within pedagogical and physical education-related ones. Beyond the development of the said ethnopedagogies that were mostly employed outside of the scope of physical education and for the purposes of promoting temperance and communicating epidemiological and other medical knowledge—this period was marked by the further continuation of the debates between the proponents of the traditional behaviorist pedagogies and those who were inspired by reform and experimental ones, trying to implement them in Sokol's model of physical education. Among the latter, it was still cognitive psychology, mediated by the Czech context, that had remained dominant, but there were also other tendencies, particularly in relation to changing the gymnasts' physical environment.⁶⁹⁸ It was, nevertheless, clear that unlike in the 1920s, the

⁶⁹⁸ Ivan Lavrenčić, “Deca u proleću” [Children in springtime] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 4 (1933), p. 106-108; Aleksander Kostnapfl, “Uzgoj naraštaja” [The raising of youth] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 2 (1934), pp. 33-35.

new sociopolitical position of the organization brought new demands to both pedagogic thinkers and practitioners. They thereby moved away from the formerly central notion channeling and suppressing the existing urges and instincts, towards two distinct directions, namely “raising citizens” through physical education, on the one, and instilling the romanticist spirit and reinforcing their Yugoslav traits, on the other hand. The apparent contrast between the two remained characteristic for the pedagogical debates throughout the period, gradually giving way to the latter after 1935. The question of integrating competitive sports into associational program, that had resurfaced among the thinkers and gymnasts of this period, further brought into question Sokol’s pedagogical and socialization-based agenda.

One of the most relevant and telling examples of how the intellectual cross-fertilization penetrated the pedagogical practices and debates as well, can be seen in a series of speeches in front of the line formation of young gymnasts (*naraštaj*), inspired by the works of the Scottish Enlightenment philosopher Thomas Carlyle. The said speeches were both published in associational periodicals and delivered at before the Sokol youth across the country in early 1930s, tackling different issues and demonstrating the gradual change in communication of Sokol’s intellectual heritage, given that the members did not have agency in the process and were regarded as passive recipients of what was seen as Carlyle’s progressive thought. In ceremonial, literary and powerfully evocative language, the trainers were supposed to deliver these speeches, tackling mainly the role of labor and work in human development. Given that labor and work were considered to be self-understood and thus largely unthematized in the 1920s, it is indicative that they appeared as relevant concepts for gymnasts’ understanding of development in the times of both Great Depression and immense expansion of the associational membership.

This could imply the Sokol thinkers’ growing concern for ensuring the reproduction of the ‘human capital’ they saw themselves as investing in, with their associational activities. These

speeches, written by an anonymous author, presented labor as both an inborn human response to having to survive in a hostile physical environment, as well as the crucial vehicle of civilizational and individual development. Conversely, they warned against idleness and labor avoidance, positing them as roots of numerous socially harmful behaviors. Labor thus represented an instrument for taming nature and oneself's natural tendencies: "There, in the most fertile and warmest regions of the world, where bananas grow and where a man can, without particular effort, eat and clothe himself, the wildest, most primitive tribes live, who find the greatest pleasure in devouring one another. Civilizations arose in those lands where a man had to fight nature, to find his way around it, to contain it in every possible moment. In this struggle he became resistant and strong, while his spirit sharpened in an unusual way. Railways, steamboats, airplanes, huge factories and rich cities are just some of the rich results of that centuries long struggle."⁶⁹⁹

The question of labor reproduction and translation of Sokol's associational investment into the growth of national economy was not only being instilled into membership via such civilizational arguments, but also much more direct references to the usefulness of those citizens who perform effective labor, and worthlessness of those who do not.⁷⁰⁰ The streamlining of Sokol's state-mandated work with the membership was thus becoming increasingly more explicit and the designers of the Sokol courses' curricula apparently felt that the time has come for communicating this ever more overtly to the membership as well, abandoning the initial concern for the development of the "national body" for its own sake. Another Carlyle-inspired speech intended to be delivered to the youth, relied on the arguments from his work around the concept of natural supernaturalism, using which he attempted to reconcile the rational positivist

⁶⁹⁹ "Po T. Karlajlu, Blagoslovljen je onaj koji je našao svoj posao. Govor pred vrstom" [According to T. Carlyle. Blessed is the one who found his work. Speech in front of the line formation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1931), pp. 281-2, here p. 282.

⁷⁰⁰ "Uradi, stvori najpre nešto, da poznaš sebe. Govor pred vrstom po T. Karlajlu" [Work, first make something, so you can know yourself. Speech in front of the line formation, according to T. Carlyle] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1931), p. 323.

drive to disenchant the world and the “supernatural” by integrating the latter in his perspective on the nature and scientific inquiry as such.⁷⁰¹ The speech draws on this arguing that people and phenomena, simply by being worldly, already become contaminated with transient and false or imperfect truths. It is, however, essential to recognize and bring out the eternal and transcendental in each individual, shedding the contingent and fleeting aspects of terrestrial and worldly existence in the process.⁷⁰² While this thought might fit well with Sokol’s previous arguments on the necessity for channeling and/or suppressing various inborn urges and instincts of members through appropriate physical education—in the novel context and that of the previous Carlyle-inspired speeches, it could also be read as an argument for achieving perfection and bodily enhancement.

Nevertheless, the issue of the relationship between labor and Sokol-style physical education was also raised among the higher-level associational officials, as can be seen from the report that the aforementioned Svetislav Marić produced for the Educational committee,⁷⁰³ in response to the widening membership and consequent inclusion of different social classes who related to labor in different ways. This new diversity and expansion of membership, as well as their approach to labor and physical movement or posture, was not irrelevant for the rethinking of the physical education and other educational programs and initiatives. As Marić noted: “Given that Sokol youth belongs to almost all social classes, and in the vast majority to three major ones, the social work of Sokol will be the most efficient if in the raising of its youth this

⁷⁰¹ Alexander Jordan “The Contribution of Thomas Carlyle to British Idealism, c. 1880–1930” *The Scottish Historical Review*, vol. 98, no. 248 (2019), pp. 439–468.

⁷⁰² “Ne pita se koliko imaš pleve, nego ima li pšenice u tebi. Govor pred vrstom po T. Karlajlu” [It is not asked of you if you have weeds, but if you have wheat in yourself. Speech in front of the line formation, according to T. Carlyle] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1932), p. 215.

⁷⁰³ Svetislav Marić, “Vaspitanje sokolskog naraštaja. Referat za SPO” [The raising of the Sokol youth. Report for the Educational committee] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1932), pp. 154–155.

will be had in mind, and our work with the youth is adjusted according to having to deal with rural, agricultural, tradesmen-craftsmen or schooled youth.”⁷⁰⁴

Enumerating these distinct groups’ different experience with and approach to labor, Marić underscored their consequent intellectual and ideological allegiances, particularly on the idealism-materialism axis. He hereby provided concrete recommendations on what each of the groups should be working on and made aware of, so that they achieve the highest possible level of social and national usefulness. Revealing his slightly corporatist perspective, Marić argued that: “The rural youth should become aware that farmers are that part of the nation that is the closest to nature, least developed and out of which all other classes that are necessary for societal development, are created. They are the main reservoir of national strength and based on their collective quality, the quality of the whole nation depends.”⁷⁰⁵

Stressing their socio-economic independence, but also dynamically changing demands of modern agriculture, he portrayed peasantry as a key layer of the society. Marić further claimed that: “It should be instilled in the tradesmen-craftsmen youth that, except the economic, they also possess a social and cultural mission in the society. Due to the nature of their vocation, they come into contact with many people, so they have many chances, especially in smaller settlements, to see, to hear and to learn. They are better suited to create organizations that peasants and for propagating everything that is right.”⁷⁰⁶ In Marić’s vision, it is precisely the multi-generational trades- or crafts-business that creates the very urban fabric of each city and which can best contribute to its economic development. In terms of school youth, he asserted that it: “...should be convinced that given their labor ability and realistic labor achievements, they are far behind the farmers, tradesmen and craftsmen (...) The notion of the lord who lives a comfortable life and does nothing, created by peasants, should particularly be destroyed. It

⁷⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 154.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 155.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

should be made clear that intellectual without an intellectual life and interests outside of his everyday field of work demanded by his vocation, is not an intellectual.”⁷⁰⁷ The sociability facilitated by the common physical education in Sokol, Marić apparently thought, should also serve to make young people more aware of the mission and stakes of their class, in a distinctly corporatist manner that sought to fine-tune the economic work and interests of the respective social classes. The centrality of the notion of labor, hereby, testifies to Educational committee’s utilitarian vision of their own work as well, namely that they aimed to make youth aware of its role, but also instill in them their own vision of political modernity ever more rooted in streamlining the ‘human capital’ towards the improvement of the state’s economy.

There were, nevertheless, those voices that remained embedded in the previous discussions on the modes of training of the monistically understood body with a goal of achieving the development of inborn traits and capacities. Branko Polič, for instance, delved into the issue of the normative relationship between the trainer and the trainee, as well as the notion of holistic, multifaceted, exercise—as opposed to using limited or one-sided movements.⁷⁰⁸ Pertaining to the first issue and relying on 19th century German philosopher Johann Friedrich Herbart’s classical pedagogical theories, he suggested that the trainer has to take care of the gymnasts bodily and spiritual development, as well as his social and intellectual growth, through the holistic “raising” of body and mind. In another piece where he discusses the desired characteristics of a Sokol trainer, Polič stated that he should have the personality of the Eduard Spranger’s aesthetic man, meaning one whose highest value lies in form and harmony and whose main goal is self-actualization.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁸ Branko Polič “Misli o uzgoju” [Thoughts about raising] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugosavije*, vol. 11 (1933), p. 274-276; Branko Polič “Misli o uzgoju” [Thoughts about raising] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugosavije*, vol. 12 (1933), pp. 297-302.

⁷⁰⁹ Branko Polič, “Prednjakova osebnost” [The trainer’s personality] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugosavije*, vol. 7-8 (1933), pp. 181-3; Eduard Spranger, *Types of Men*. New York: G. E. Stechert Company, 2014.

Furthermore, showcasing industrialization and “civilization” as causes of different bodily impairments due to their demand of artificial movements in human bodies, Polič suggested that physical exercise based on natural movements is the sole remedy that can return a man on his path to development, or at least prevent further degeneration. Citing his contemporary August Bier, a German surgeon and pioneer of sports medicine, Polič doubled-down on this claim saying that exercise should neither be “medicalized”, nor “pedagogized”, as both choices risk neglecting the needs of the human soul. The physical exercise was, in this perspective, equal to spiritual exercise and, relatedly, spiritual education, which he also tried to support by pointing to the works of the 19th century German social democratic philosopher Friedrich Albert Lange.⁷¹⁰ Indicatively for the processes of intellectual cross-fertilization, Polič’s example of such natural movements conducive to education of the soul were the “primitive and light ones, that are close to national dances”⁷¹¹ that he saw as useful both for achieving people’s self-knowledge, but also for the process of taming themselves (*samosavlađivanje*). The national dances hereby permeated the expert gymnastic discourses as examples of ‘natural movement’ that has a potential to mend the ills of modernity. Most relevant here, however, is his insistence on the centrality of the soul, as well as soul’s eventual essentialization. Both the concern with labor performance and that with the soul’s development and “molding”, demonstrate that physical education thinkers also drew on key intellectual and discursive changes ongoing in the association, such as etatization and essentialization.

Such arguments, nevertheless, had to withstand substantial criticism from those inclined to defend the more traditional official stance of Sokol. An author hiding behind initials (“T. S.”) attacked what he perceived as new and untested theories on “natural movement” espoused by

⁷¹⁰ Specifically his contributions on pedagogy to the *Encyklopädie des gesamten Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesens*.

⁷¹¹ Polič “Misli”, p. 299.

Polič.⁷¹² Arguing against importing foreign trends that merely seem innovative, yet represent nothing of the sorts, the anonymous pointed to “what we possess already for 80 years: content and method”,⁷¹³ in his attempt to retain the pedagogical *status quo* that was in fact still rooted in the behaviorist paradigm.

The challenge to that tradition however, was already well underway, as can be seen from the translation of Czech eugenicist physician Karel Weigner’s extensive article in favor of cognitive psychology, that was published somewhat earlier.⁷¹⁴ This also might explain the author’s choice to remain anonymous, as he perhaps felt that his side was gradually losing ground. Criticizing the instructionist approach of different actors that aim to “conquer our youth in all sorts of ways, with big words and gestures, to convince it that only this church offers salvation, or only that political party, or this expert association, that attempts to win them over, at the same time instilling in them hatred towards the other organization”.⁷¹⁵ Weigner saw cognitive psychology as having potential to completely emancipate the learners, rather than gear them in a particular direction.

Interestingly, he also saw his pedagogical preference as more compatible with positivist commitments, linking it to the penetration of the scientific method into the social affairs. He exemplified this by the way social Darwinism had awoken the ‘solidarity of all animals’, as argued by the Bohemian philosopher and physician Baron Carl von Rokitansky, culminating in the modern language of class struggle. Full emancipation through learner- and society-centered reform pedagogies and class struggle more broadly thus, for Weigner, both stemmed out of the application of the positivist and rationalist package to social relations. Another testament to the

⁷¹² T. S. “Misli o mislima” [Thoughts on thoughts] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 4 (1934), p. 109-112, here p. 109.

⁷¹³ Ibid, p. 112.

⁷¹⁴ Karel Weigner, “Odnos Sokolstva prema vaspitanju dece” [The relationship of Sokol and education of children] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1931), pp. 28-31.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid, p. 30-31.

continuous turmoil between these conceptions and struggles around pedagogical methods, can be seen in a personal conflict between two representatives of the ‘old guard’, Ivan Bajželj and Dušan Bogunović, after the former criticized the latter’s book saying it was rather superficial, harmful and not based on expert knowledge.

The mutual attacks ensued in the associational periodicals, thus highlighting the self-perceived expert position of Bajželj—who felt it necessary to accentuate that experts from outside of Dravska banovina also agreed with his evaluation—and that of the grievance-driven Bogunović who discussed his unfair status within the association relying on *ad hominem* arguments.⁷¹⁶ In other words, while expertise still carried weight in this period, the fact that the field of physical education was on the cusp between the behaviorist and post-behaviorist paradigms, made it difficult for any one thinker to establish complete authority over the key questions.

The final indicator that the tides were changing in the circles of thinkers concerned with physical education was the dynamically evolving debate on Sokol’s stance towards (competitive) sports. The Gorizia-based teacher and Sokol activist Maks Kovačič and a legal thinker Zoran Polič, who was also a covert member of the illegal Communist Party of Yugoslavia, reacted to the text on this topic, published by Jan Pelikán, one of the most notable ČOS officials.⁷¹⁷ Their texts links different societies’ adoption of sports or collective gymnastics to the structure of their economy and social classes. They argue that in the industrialized societies, particularly among industrial workers, there is greater degree of pressure for mutual help (sic!) and expression of one’s individualism that they are not able to achieve through work or other means, due to their class.

⁷¹⁶ Ivan Bajželj “Izjava” [Statement] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 5 (1932), pp. 103-4.

⁷¹⁷ Maks Kovačič, Zoran Polič “Sokolstvo i sport. Prema raspravi Jana Pelikána u zbirci ‘Sbirka sokolských přednášek br 37’ [Sokol and sports. According to the discussion by Jan Pelikán in the collection ‘Sbirka sokolských přednášek no. 37] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 9 (1933), pp. 217-219.

Conversely, Polić and Kovačić saw the human need for sports, with its characteristics such as individualism, record-achieving, specialization etc.—among those societies or groups that had not experienced class pressure. Finally, and perhaps counterintuitively, while they conclude that sports could, at best, be allowed for adult Sokol members, given that it has negative impact on the children's development—they suggest Sokol do exactly that, namely introduce optional sports activities for its adult members. This also might indicate the rising popularity of sports and the need for Sokol to make such concessions in order to retain its membership. To conclude, while many of the stakes of the previous decades' debate still remained relevant, particularly in the field of pedagogy—there were many indications that the etatist perspective, as well as the essentialist drive had penetrated and impacted the way physical education was understood in this period. Physical education was not merely an instrument for achieving greater body-mind harmony, but was reframed as a matter of national economy. Instead of the spirit that carried progressive connotations, the concept of soul has returned in its essentialized iteration. Finally, as was shown, while sports were still criticized for the same reasons as before, propositions were made to include them into the associational program so as to animate the ever-growing membership.

3.4. Conclusion

To conclude, the chapter has examined the period between the introduction of the Royal Dictatorship of King Aleksandar in 1929 and the King's assassination in late 1934. Given that Sokol's legal status and associational setup became tightly affiliated with the state apparatus shortly after the Royal Dictatorship was introduced, the chapter provided an analysis of the key internal institutional changes, as well as changes in the socio-political make-up of the

associational leadership and membership. The processes of centralization and bureaucratization of Sokol's structure and work were presented and exemplified, together with the effects of the surge in membership that the association experienced around this time. When put in context of the evolution of Sokol-state relationship in other periods covered in the dissertation, it becomes evident that this period was the one in which Sokol functioned as a para-state institution, with a clear mandate from the relevant ministries and bodies, to physically improve and ideologically educate the masses into integral Yugoslavism.

Crucially, this could only be done, as is apparent from the other chapters, mostly due to the personal protection and favoritism exercised by the King himself. The said mandate had a visible impact on the Sokol's intellectual production and debates within the association. It demanded that Yugoslavism become programmatized and, as such, its cultural and historical tenets communicable on a large scale, to the masses. Albeit parliamentarism and civil society were both suspended in this period after the political crisis culminated in 1928, both Sokol's and King's understanding of work performed by Sokol was framed in the language of democracy and democratic participation, particularly drawing on the postulates of Masarykian realism. Nevertheless, what was a clear and crucial difference in comparison to the previous periods, was the etatization of the discourses—political, biomedical and physical educational alike. Political community, previously understood and framed as the “national body”, indeed became the community of “active citizens”, responsible for one another. This re-actualization of key elements of Neo-Slavism and Masarykian realism in the early 1930s conserved within the associational setup, thought and practice since the turn of century, provided a platform for articulating a response against rising conceptions of illiberal citizenship. It also removed the focus from the concerns for, organically understood, national sovereignty, towards the concern towards citizens' shared responsibility for the viability of the state—in that way forshadowing

a much more state-heavy notion of sovereignty that was to dominate from the mid-1930s onwards.

On the one hand, the rising cult of King Aleksandar Karađorđević and co-optation of Yugoslavism by the state diminished Sokol's role in ideological and intellectual production on nominal South Slavic national culture(s), rendering its membership and overall population into his royal subjects, and Sokol into a facilitator of their socialization into loyal subjecthood—with rather varying success. On the other hand, the proliferation of authoritarianisms on the international stage, with a notable “return” of the imperial paradigm in Yugoslavia's wider neighbourhood, prompted many thinkers who saw themselves as rightful heirs and synthesizers of Neo-Slavist and Masarykian realist traditions to try and defend, further develop and communicate their concept of liberal citizenship to the overall population, in their attempt to prevent or, at least diminish, the coming catastrophe.

In parallel, due to the enlargement of the association, as well as the rise in prominence of the neo-romanticist stream of thinkers, the challenge to the Sokol's original progressivist and positivist package became ever more serious. This was evident in the proliferation of the Balkanist neo-romanticist tropes, religionization of the discourse, but also in the novel literary and political genres that appeared on the pages of associational periodicals. Their impact could be primarily felt in the growing essentialization within concepts of Yugoslavism and Slavdom. The process of intellectual cross-fertilization was and subsequent conceptual stabilization was thus at its highpoint precisely in this period.

The changing ideological landscape and orientation within the association was reflected in the epistemological settings of the knowledge production that had also expanded in this period, not least due to the greater number of subjects that could be accessed and studied via Sokol, given its associational enlargement. Most physicians and other scientists and thinkers who engaged in knowledge production, however, gradually adopted the technocratic lens, centering state's

interests instead of the improvement of the “national body” that was previously their dominant concern. Most initiatives were thus geared towards channeling and streamlining the process of investing into and instrumentalizing—the human capital. Such novel framing of the membership had consequences in both biomedical and physical educational discourses, particularly in terms of the implementation of the new ethnopedagogy devised to integrate the rural populace into this project as well.

In other words, the previous intellectual package focused on the improvement of the bodily and mental capacities of the *nation*, came to be repackaged and channeled into improving of the *state economy*, not least due to the widespread consequences of the Great Depression. Given that the state compartmentalized such efforts into Sokol and rarely scaled up any of their models or initiatives using its own apparatus and prerogatives, it could be asserted that, unlike in various other and more researched authoritarian context of the same period—Sokol was an example of an attempt to bring about high modernism “from below” in this particular period.⁷¹⁸ Even if ultimately unsuccessful, the mere size of their physical educational courses set an institutional precedent that contributed to the further professionalization of the field itself, due to the rise in number of trainers, professional gymnasts, unification of terminology, curricula, spaces and equipment, as well as other activities. Once King was assassinated, and his political protection thus removed, Sokol’s initiatives and projects were significantly less likely to be adopted by the state and even the ones that were already in place, were brought into question, gradually diminishing from different regions and over time.

The gradual, yet definite, overtake of essentializing discourses and corresponding intellectual commitments in Sokol was sharply noted in 1934 by a notable Serbian modernist writer Milan

⁷¹⁸ In contrast to the argument of James C. Scott in his: *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Bogdanović, in his seminal critical essay “The collapse of the postwar modernism”.⁷¹⁹ Reflecting on the two central tendencies in the postwar Yugoslav literature, “one being a mystical separation from life”, and the other “a deeply real coming to terms with life,” Bogdanović depicted their mutual tension in the following way: “From one, lyrical caprices are born, and in that nervous ‘lyrical emphasis’ [LB: lirskoj emfazi], through which even the attempts of epic realization are restrained, comes touristic enthusiasm with the shores of the ‘blue Adriatic’, fashionable enchantment with the life of the ‘upper ten thousand’, and nationalist Sokol enthusiasm! From the other, a reliable and constant line develops that goes from *Plamen* [LB: Flame], across the *Književna Republika* [LB: Literary Republic], towards the present day.”⁷²⁰ In other words, Bogdanović placed the “nationalist Sokol enthusiasm” alongside fleeting expressionist forms, superficial and empty aestheticization of the country that has no practical and real grounding—thus testifying to the loss of Sokol’s original intellectual orientation and rise in the dominance of the neo-romanticist stream by the time his essay was published.

4. Falling From of Grace: Crisis and Associational Disintegration in the late 1930s⁷²¹

⁷¹⁹ Milan Bogdanović “Slom posleratnog modernizma” [The collapse of the postwar modernism] *Danas: književni časopis*, vol. 3 (1934), p. 310.

⁷²⁰ Ibid.

⁷²¹ Minor portions of this chapter are based on a text submitted for publication, namely: Lucija Balikić “Narratives of Rupture in the post-Habsburg Space: The Case of the Interwar Yugoslav Sokol” In: *Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions in East Central Europe, 1914-1930*, vol. 4., eds. Elisabeth Haid-Lener, Cody J. Inglis. [forthcoming] ; and an already published chapter in a book: Lucija Balikić “The Slavic ‘Other’: Social-Darwinist Portrayal of Germanness within the Interwar Yugoslav Sokol” *Danubiana Carpathica. Jahrbuch für die Geschichte und Kultur in den deutschen Siedlungsgebieten Südosteuropas*, vol. 60 (2023), pp. 245-272.

4.1. From Professionalization to Implosion

The period of the mid- to late 1930s was, in terms of associational life and culture, characterized by rapid decline and disintegration. While the previously established associational structures largely functioned until 1937, or in some cases early 1938, the years that followed marked a ceasure in SSKJ's intellectual production and associational activities alike. The only exception to this can be found in a small number of publications, *ad hoc* periodicals or booklets, published irregularly in 1940 and early 1941, by individuals who were previously not active in the association. Importantly, some of these publications stem from the successful infiltration of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia forces, into SSKJ, towards the end of its existence. A separate section (4.2.4.) is dedicated to the analysis of their writings and usages of the association for achieving their original goals.

Given that King Aleksandar Karađorđević was assassinated in October 1934, the gradual change of SSKJ's relationship with the state can be traced from the establishment of Milan Stojadinović's government (in June 1935) onwards. His premiership, marked by political and economic rapprochement with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, as well as political and ideological affiliation with corporatist authoritarianism based on the rule of the 'state party' (JRZ—Yugoslav Radical Community)—largely characterized the behavior of the state towards SSKJ in this period.⁷²² Stojadinović's image as a financial expert and technocrat, who previously served in a Sokol-friendly Bogoljub Jevtić's government, initially won him popularity, as there was an expectation that he would be able to mend the consequences of the Great Depression, as well as to achieve compromise with the federalist Croatian political forces.

⁷²² Dragan Bakić. "Milan Stojadinović, the Croat Question and the International Position of Yugoslavia, 1935-1939" *Acta Histriae* vol. 26, no. 1 (2018), pp. 207-228; Bojan Simić "Milan Stojadinović and Count Ciano—A History of a Friendship" *Tokovi istorije*, vol. 3 (2019), pp. 11-36.

The latter he attempted to appease by signing a concordat with the Holy See in 1935, which he eventually never had ratified, given the substantial resistance on the part of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its constituency. Importantly, he distanced Yugoslavia from France (not least due to the remilitarization of the Rheinland) and Little Entente under its patronage, fostering new cooperation with Bulgaria's King Boris III,⁷²³ rooted in their joint territorial pretensions on the Greek ports of Thessaloniki and Alexandroupoli. The state apparatus, under his and his party's rule, resumed and strengthened its network of centralized patronage, largely attempting to resolve the effects of the economic crisis through interventionism.

In early 1939, Stojadinović was replaced by Dragiša Cvetković, a royalist loyalist cadre, once Prince Paul Karađorđević estimated that he was becoming too dangerous in the increasingly tense international situation. Stojadinović was meanwhile forcefully exiled, with the help of the British King George VI, into Mauritius. Cvetković had a mandate to achieve a sort of compromise with the Croatian federalist leader Vladko Maček, based on which the state's territorial division was redesigned, so as to include the *Banovina Hrvatska* (banovina Croatia), that emulated what Maček and his circle considered historically Croatian lands. In early 1941, once the war was well underway, Cvetković succumbed and signed a Tripartite pact with the Axis powers, in exchange for them to respect Yugoslavia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, prompting a military coup that overthrew his government. The Axis powers took the opportunity of power vacuum to invade and partition the country just several days later.

Most probably due to political inertia or the existing patronage of the ruling dynasty of Karađorđević and Jevtić's party's still relevant patronage over SSKJ, Sokol initially retained its dominant position and one of its key state-supported projects was realized under Stojadinović's government. This was the long-awaited establishment of the School for Physical

⁷²³ Živko Avramovski, "The Yugoslav-Bulgarian Perpetual Friendship Pact of 24 January 1937", *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1969), pp. 304-338.

Education (*Škola za fizičko vaspitanje*), tasked with training and certifying school trainers of gymnastics in a Sokol tradition, alleviating the SSKJ of the responsibility to conduct their training and qualifying exams across the country. To that end, in 1938, the Minister of Physical Education established a year-long course for the preparation of the school teachers of physical educations, that took place in the Sokol Matica club in Belgrade.⁷²⁴ A year later, the course expanded into the said School, based on the Minister's Decree on the School for Physical Education (*Uredba o Školi za telesno vaspitanje*). Its first director was Milivoje Vuk Aračić, a Paris-educated professional politician of the older generation, affiliated with the Serbian Peasant Party (*Zemljoradnička stranka*), later to serve as an official in the Milan Nedić's collaborationist government. The school's mandate was not only to train the teachers, but also to conduct comprehensive research on topics in the field of physical education, marking an important step in the professionalization and institutionalization of the field. The initial list of School's instructors and researchers reveals that Sokol cadre played an important role in all of the different subfields its curriculum was concerned with, such as 'practical exercise', 'health science', 'education science' and 'management science'.⁷²⁵

While SSKJ demanded funds for the building of the new Sokol stadiums in Belgrade and Zagerb from the said Ministry, and the notable Subotica architect Kosta Petrović already devised their initial designs, these projects were ultimately never realized and only those that were already in progress, such as the Subotica one, were finished in this period.⁷²⁶ In fact, instead of directly financing SSKJ's projects, the Ministry opted for providing them with loans

⁷²⁴ "1938-1946: Jednogodišnji tečaj za spremanje nastavnika telesnog vaspitanja po školama" *Fakultet sporta i fizičkog vaspitanja, Univerzitet u Beogradu*. URL=<http://www.fsfv.bg.ac.rs/%D1%81%D1%80/o-fakultetu/242-razvojni-put/5387> (Last access: January 21, 2025).

⁷²⁵ Ibid.

⁷²⁶ Vladana Putnik Prica; Kosta Petrović, "Sokolski stadion u Beogradu, u Jugoslovenskom narodnom parku Kralja Aleksandra I" [Sokol stadium in Belgrade in the Yugoslav national park of King Aleksandar I] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1935), pp. 16-18.

instead.⁷²⁷ At the same time, Sokol officials, such as Milorad Dragić, directly addressed the question of association's relationship towards the new government, accentuating that while Sokol is naturally interested in public life, it refuses to "tie its existence as an organization" to each of the changing "regimes", or their ideologies or political needs.⁷²⁸

The longest-serving leader of SSKJ in this period was Alfred Ratislav Pichler, an Osijek-raised Zagreb-based Sokol activist, botanist and scientist, who worked at the University of Zagreb and also published several works on Josef Čermák's rhythmic gymnastics, athletics and F. A. Schmidt's and W. Kohlrausch's physiognomy of exercise.⁷²⁹ Despite the fact that Pichler evidently represented the liberal positivist stream of thinkers, as did his predecessor Vladimir Belajčić who stepped down from his post in 1935 only to resume it in 1939,⁷³⁰ the association was gradually changing its culture and intellectual output, not least due to its continuous enlargement, inclusion of different social strata and thinkers with different backgrounds. Soon after the elections in 1935, the SSKJ also changed its organizational seat from Ljubljana to Belgrade.⁷³¹

Importantly, given the asymmetric power balance and levels of patronage across the state's diverse territories, SSKJ's clubs received differential treatment in different *banovinas* and *kotars*, characteristic of interwar Yugoslavia's patchwork character. That meant that, by early 1939, for instance, a special fund was established for supporting those members, mostly from Savska, Dravska and Primorska *banovina*, and later Hrvatska, whose property has been

⁷²⁷ "Sokolske organizacije" [Sokol organizations] Ministarstvo fizičkog vaspitanja Kraljevine Jugoslavije AJ-71-15-45.

⁷²⁸ Milorad Dragić "Naše gledište" [Our view] *Sokolska Prosveta*, vol. 7 (1935), pp. 327-329, here p. 328.

⁷²⁹ Dragutin Šulce "Novi načelnik SSKJ" [New head of SSKJ] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 6 (1935), pp. 170-171.

⁷³⁰ "Belajčić, Vladimir" *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji* [Who is who in Yugoslavia] Zagreb, Belgrade, 1928, p. 14.

⁷³¹ "Premještanje načelnništva Saveza SKJ u Belgrade" [Moving of the seat of the presidency of SSKJ] *Sokolski glasnik* (May 24, 1935), p. 1.

destroyed, they were personally physically attacked or who lost their jobs due to their activities in Sokol.⁷³²

At the same time, due to the renewed public sphere after the end of the Royal Dictatorship, Sokol's former competitors gathered in a new association, named Junak (Hero), largely representing the remnants of Croatian Sokol and the Catholic Orel/Orao, that sought to challenge SSKJ's dominant societal position.⁷³³ An already aged Laza Popović reacted to this new unfavorable socio-political position of Sokol, in 1938, by demanding from the Ministry of Physical Education an establishment of a separate body that would regularly control the situation on the ground, in different areas of the country, so as to avoid the marginalization of state-sponsored Sokol by the voluntary associations such as the Catholic Orao/Orel, that were overtly hostile towards it.⁷³⁴

On the other hand, the admittedly rather eclectic civil society coalition alongside and around Sokol consisted of the Red Cross, Yugoslav Association of Teachers (*Jugoslovensko učiteljsko udruženje*), National Defense (*Narodna odbrana*), Yugoslav Grand Lodge of Temperance (*Jugoslovenska velika loža trezvenosti*) and the Russian Sokol in Yugoslavia.⁷³⁵ In the final years of this period, namely the wartime 1940 and 1941, the Union of patriotic, warrior and viril organizations (*Savez patriotskih, ratničkih i viteških organizacija*) also appears to have made a rapprochement with what was left of SSKJ.⁷³⁶ While all of these association nominally

⁷³² “Za pomoć progonjenoj braći” [For the help of the persecuted brothers] *Sokolski glasnik* (January 27, 1939), p. 1. ; “Napadaji na naše članove” [Attacks on our members] *Sokolski glasnik* (September 29, 1939), p. 2. ; “Položaj Sokola nameštenika” [Position of Sokol functionaries] *Sokolski glasnik* (September 29, 1939), p. 4; “Napadaji na Sokolstvo” [Attacks on Sokols] *Sokolski glasnik* (November 3, 1939), p. 4; On the destruction of Sokol clubs' buildings, see: “Sokolski domovi su naši i takvi će ostati” [Sokol houses are ours and will stay ours] *Sokolski glasnik* (September 29, 1939), p. 2.

⁷³³ “Novi ‘junaci’” [New ‘heroes’] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1937), p. 121-22.

⁷³⁴ Laza Popović “Za prvi decembar 1938” [For December 1st 1938] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 307-309.

⁷³⁵ *IX glavna skupština SSKJ, govor brata Gangla* [9th General assembly of the SSKJ, speech of brother Gangl] 1939. Belgrade, 1939.

⁷³⁶ *Spomenica proslave 25-godišnjice bitke na Mojkovcu* [Memory book of the 25th anniversary of the Mojkovac battle] Belgrade, 1941.

promoted Yugoslavist modernity, their ultimate goals rather diverged and revealed vastly different understandings of it.

This period also saw the gradual decrease in SSKJ's membership. Even if the membership numbers were at their peak around the mid-1930s, not least due to Sokol's societal prestige and affiliation with the state and state resources, many contemporary commentators critically assessed massivization's effects, from within the association. In 1936, Miroslav Vojinović, for instance, overtly tackled a number of harmful practices he witnessed, such as founding fictitious village Sokol clubs, keeping Sokol gyms in disrepair or members falsely claiming a trainer (*prednjak*) status, without having passed the rigorous exams necessary to obtain it.⁷³⁷ In his view, most such occurrences stemmed from the leadership's ambition to portray unrealistic and fictitious growth of the association, so as to be able to report it to the state in hope of obtaining further support.

This approach, according to him, diminished the quality of the social and educational work being done, as well as that of the gymnastic and artistic performances.⁷³⁸ The same question was raised by a notable gymnast Olga Skovran, who illustratively criticized the new gymnasts' discipline demonstrated at one of the *slets*, saying that: "All it took was an ice cream man to pass and half of the choreography was destroyed".⁷³⁹ Đura Paunković, one of the leading SSKJ officials, further decried the dishonesty of the new members, who "massively began joining, but not only out of idealist and national motivations",⁷⁴⁰ alluding to their opportunistic and

⁷³⁷ Miroslav Vojinović "Nedostatak i nedostaci sokolskih prednjaka" [Shortcomings of Sokol trainers] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 11 (1936), pp. 371-374.

⁷³⁸ Miroslav Vojinović "Javni nastupi" [Public performances] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 10 (1937), pp. 321-4.

⁷³⁹ Olga Skovran "Pred slet" [Before the slet] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 6 (1936), pp. 204-5.

⁷⁴⁰ Đura Paunković "Naše današnje dužnosti sokolske" [Our contemporary Sokol duties] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1935), pp. 451-452.

materially-driven ambitions centered around promotions in civil or public service.⁷⁴¹ A notable Slovenian publicist and activist pedagogue Drago Pahor, for instance, complained that, in 1939, both the number and the quality of the ideological schools was visibly decreasing, given the membership size and SSKJ's leadership insistence on the centrally-distributed "constructed ideology" to be consumed, instead of debated and understood, by the attendees.⁷⁴²

The most brutal bashing of such practices, however, can be found in Laza Popović's extremely aggressive text, in which he points to the need for organic, controlled and gradual growth of the association.⁷⁴³ Thereby, he also reflected on Sokol's evolution in the past and, indicatively, posited its liberal associational form and 'national' content in a sort of tension. Popović accentuated that Sokol's ultimate goals already existed, and were in fact inborn, in the nation, long before the 'foreign' associational form came to channel their realization. Sokol was taken merely as an instrument, given that it was "the most comfortable and most practical", yet most activists, in his view, concerned themselves with the grand program and only wanted to partake in the higher echelons of the association, neglecting the everyday, small-scale work, that had to be done on the level of local clubs. Hereby he specifically attacked the associational (over-)regulation and bureaucratization, but also the uncontrolled adoption of numerous new tendencies without much deliberation or consideration for their appropriateness.⁷⁴⁴ Popović, moreover, criticized the lack of generational knowledge transfer and the cliquy culture of the new administrative officials, without regard for the intransient nature of both the association and its comprehensive agenda.

⁷⁴¹ This was also tackled in Engelbert Gangl's 1935 programmatic booklet, a reprint of the 1930 with slightly changed content and language, where he discusses the taking advantage of membership in Sokol and privileges that some individuals expect to receive based on it: *O sokolskoj ideji* [On the Sokol idea] Ljubljana, 1935, pp. 19-21.

⁷⁴² Drago Pahor "Naše idejne šole" [Our ideological schools] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1941), pp. 62-3.

⁷⁴³ "Razgovor s jednim starim sokolom" [A conversation with an old Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1937), pp. 123-127.

⁷⁴⁴ Also thematized in a growing number of literary texts addressing the youth, such as: Jovan Udicki "Reč sokolskoj omladini" [A word to the Sokol youth] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1937), pp. 10-13.

The question of relations between the different generations within Sokol was also addressed by several thinkers who alarmingly pointed to the worsening situation, in terms of portion of the youth in the overall membership. For instance, Franjo (Franc) Lubej, a Slovenian pedagogue, Sokol activist and later communist party member and partisan, published a statistical overview in 1935, demonstrating the dramatic decrease in the number of youth and of young gymnasts across different clubs. Lubej argued that this could be a result of the irresponsible behavior of Sokol functionaries who founded numerous fictitious clubs, but also generally neglected the work with the youth.⁷⁴⁵ Some other thinkers, such as the physician Stevan Simonović from Split, attributed this to the what they saw as psychologically and physically harmful “postwar sport”,⁷⁴⁶ that had a potential to spoil the future generations of the nation.

In a markedly doom-mongering tone, Simonović denounced sports’ modernity while examining the way Greek physical culture is represented in contemporary discourses: “To this cultured and large people of the ancient period (...) we contemporary, modern savages, who shamelessly dared to exploit science and modern technology for the purpose of waging war with bacteria (and we are writing books on hygiene!) instead of ensuring for ourselves better conditions for a more comfortable life, to such people we look upon from some artificially inflated height, and we call them—barbarians, while our ‘cultured’ public takes pleasure in the bewildered matches of our non-barbarian youth, that transformed the nobleness of physical exercise into a professional vocation relying on rough outbursts, in which this ‘cultured’ man participated with the same curiosity with which Spanish public of the former monarchy, did at the bull fights”.⁷⁴⁷

Beyond bashing modern sports for their primitiveness, unculturedness and, most importantly, harmful impact on the youth, there were those, such as Miloš Stanojević, who portrayed

⁷⁴⁵ Franjo Lubej “Uzgoj omladine” [Raising of youth] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 4 (1935), pp. 101-103.

⁷⁴⁶ Stevan Simonović “Omladina i naše Sokolstvo” [Youth and our Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1935), pp. 221-226, here p. 222.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 225.

contemporary youth as having no firm ideological orientation and, in their typical youthful ambition for achieving large-scale change, they swerve from one extreme to the other.⁷⁴⁸ In this, he stressed youth's need for guidance and positive and productive channeling of their inborn, revolutionary, urges. Indicatively, he blamed the decades of disenchantment of the world, for youth's ideological disorientation, evoking the romanticism and idealism of the turn of century Sokol youth, that set them up for political success. Stanojević hereby pessimistically declared: "Life killed the thought, or the thought suffocated and numbed out life. The modern man simulates life, emotions, beliefs, even love. He buys all and sells all. There is much that he desires, but he feels himself a poor man. HE TRANSFORMED THE SUN INTO A SPOTTY BOWL OF GAS, and moon into a petrified volcanic lump of soil. What used to be an ideal, is now being dragged into the dust. In this tumult of things and events, wanders our contemporary youth".⁷⁴⁹

After reminiscing about the idealist youth of the past generations, that acted as a force of societal and political improvement, he paints a grim picture of contemporary state of youth: "And today, that youth that wants something, has before itself a strange age, in which the world is broken apart into two halves: one peaceful, constructive and another, combative, destructive side (...) So is there such a compas? We claim there is. It exists in Sokol."⁷⁵⁰ Evidently, Stanojević blamed the radical materialist, positivism-driven ideologies, for youth's estrangement from the Sokol's distinctly liberal project. It was both the disenchantment and the revolutionary, radical, even if modernist, projects, that he saw as confusing and co-opting the youth away from Yugoslavist modernity propagated within Sokol. While SSKJ responded to these tendencies by founding a Sokol National University (*Sokolski narodni univerzitet*) and Sokol Student Center

⁷⁴⁸ Miloš Stanojević "Kompas omladine" [Compas of the youth] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1937), pp. 3-5.

⁷⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 4.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 4-5.

(*Sokolsko studentsko središte*), both at the University of Belgrade in 1940, they did not manage to mobilize and integrate more young people or university students into their ranks.⁷⁵¹

Together with youth's waning participation that they attributed to popularity of sports and of their ideological competitors,⁷⁵² women also sought to re-negotiate their position within the association in this period. While there were many calls, largely by notable women gymnasts, for them to become more active and join the ranks of the associational officials,⁷⁵³ certain movements indicate that the tensions between them and the central administration were rising. These tensions started in the mid-1930s and were rooted in the diverging visions of femininity and women's role in Sokol, as can be seen in the initial conflict between Božo Škerlj and women gymnasts, whom he sought to barr from competitive gymnastics for alleged health reasons. The taming of women's initiatives and promotion of increasingly maternalist discursive framing of their role in achieving Sokol's program, was in this period done by individuals such as the Prague-educated Tuzla-based gymnasium teacher and literary publicist Radovan Jovanović.⁷⁵⁴ While, indeed, nominally progressive and concerned with women's inadequate representation in the leadership of the association, Jovanović's numerous writings on the issue nevertheless operated with a strictly maternalist vision of women's political work. Therein, mothers were casted as the carriers and transmitters of the essential national culture, but also advised to look

⁷⁵¹ "Uspjela osnivačka skupština Sokolskog studentskog središta u Beogradu" [Successful founding assembly of the Sokol student center in Belgrade] *Sokolski glasnik* (April 19, 1940), p. 3; Interestingly, lecturers at the Sokol National university promoted human rights discourses during the war, as can be seen from the titles of their lectures, see: Milić Majstorović "Sokolski narodni univerzitet" *Sokolski glasnik* (April 26, 1940.), p. 6.

⁷⁵² Importantly, early and mid-1930s were, particularly in Belgrade, marked by the rise of the revolutionary student movement, initially as a response to the introduction of the Royal Dictatorship, but later in opposition to Stojadinović's government and in support of the republican forces in the Spanish civil war. For these reasons, the student body was radicalized and permanently alienated from Sokol and analogous associations, particularly ORJUNA, instrumentalized by the government, for the purpose of taming the continuous protests, before resorting to sheer violence and establishment of the concentration camp for the arrested students, in Višegrad. See: *Hronologija radničkog pokreta i SKJ 1919-1979*, vol. I, eds. Stojan Kesić, Vuk Vinaver. Belgrade: Narodna knjiga, 1980.

⁷⁵³ Elza Skalarjeva "Na pragu nove godine" [At the beginning of the new year] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1936), p.1; Milena Gruborova "Sestro načelnice!" [Sister president!] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 5 (1936), p. 167-8; Milena Gruborova "O ubedenju" [On belief] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 10 (1936), p. 324-5.

⁷⁵⁴ "Jovanović, Radovan" *Ko je ko u Jugoslaviji* [Who is who in Yugoslavia] Zagreb, Belgrade, 1928, p. 61.

up to the models of ‘national’ mothers in the Yugoslav folk songs and epics, that they were supposedly embodying.⁷⁵⁵

Ultimately, the tension between men’s increasingly conservative agenda, and women gymnasts’ desire for continued professionalization, culminated in Milena Gruborova’s proposition for the founding of a separate union-level women’s technical committee, that she voiced at the 1936 assembly of the Sokol club presidents.⁷⁵⁶ In her exposé, Gruborova pointed to the prevalent and long-lasting inequality between men and women in Sokol. Specifically, she tackled the issue of the omnipresent tokenism, by saying: “Sokol does not need ‘representations’, kitties and dolls. It needs Sokol women workers. With all our words and acts employed in the hope of achieving independent work of women in Sokol, we want to convince all women members: that a woman worker is not the one who constantly expects the help of others, who merely receives from Sokol, instead of giving back”.⁷⁵⁷ Despite partly blaming women members for their complicitness in creating the gender-based inequalities, Gruborova insisted that a creation of a separate committee, that would organize the gymnastic training for all women gymnasts, and solely by women, across the country—would help emancipate women members from men’s well-meaning, but ultimately counter-productive, patronage.

Despite the increasing issues with youth’s and women’s participation, the SSKJ leadership decided to better channel the work of the newly enlarged membership, as well as to have

⁷⁵⁵ Radovan Jovanović “Žena u sokolstvu” [Woman in Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1936), pp. 65-68; Rada Jovanović “Devojka – njena smirenost i vrednoća. Uzori za sokolicu nađeni u našim narodnim pesmama” [A girl—her calmness and diligence. Models for a Sokol woman, found in our folk songs] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1936), pp. 111-116; Radovan Jovanović “Žena kao supruga. Primeri žrtve i vernosti u narodnom epu” [Woman as a spouse. Examples of sacrifice and loyalty in the folk epics] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1936), pp. 169-174; Also worth noting is a theatre play by a notable Serbian actor and director, Dušan Cvetković, entitled “Sokolska majka” [Sokol mother], see: “Izašlo je iz štampe pozorišno delo Dušan Cvetković, Sokolska majka, Knin 1936” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1936), on the cover.

⁷⁵⁶ Milena Gruborova “Savezni ženski tehnički odbor” [Union-level women’s technical committee] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1937), pp. 100-101.

⁷⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 100.

measurable results of their work, by introducing a five-year plan (1936-1941).⁷⁵⁸ Its introduction might have indicated an increased necessity to justify the associational expenses vis-à-vis the state and Stojadinović's government in particular. This plan's end year coincided with King Peter II Karađorđević's coming of age, and presumed assuming of regency, in 1941. Given that the plan—entitled Sokol Peter's Five-year plan (*Sokolska Petrova Petoljetka/Sokolska Petrova Petoletka*)⁷⁵⁹—encompassed the entire membership and detailed their individual tasks and goals, it is plausible to assert that it greatly contributed to the changing of the previously more voluntary and liberal character of the association. Importantly, the bulk of SPP's program concentrated on different welfare and infrastructure initiatives, in urban and rural areas alike. The funding for some of the more expensive investments done as part of SPP, also came from members themselves, who were invited to donate for specific purposes, such as digging up wells in villages affected by the lack of drinking water.⁷⁶⁰ The success of the plan was, among other ways, traced by anthropometric data acquired on the young King's body, given that he also took part in the plan.⁷⁶¹

In order to distribute tasks and keep track of individual members' or clubs' contributions to the plan's realization, the SSKJ leadership began to issue the so-called proofs of vows (*zavetnice/zavjetnice*), detailing responsibilities entrusted to the members, as well as the timeline and manner of their execution. Radmilo Grđić, a Hercegovina- and Sarajevo-based journalist, later ZBOR-affiliate and one of the Chetnik wartime leaders, devised the system of their implementation in 1937.⁷⁶² Relying on the language of individual rejuvenation (*preporodaj*) as the ultimate goal of SPP, Grđić stated that tasks performed within its framework

⁷⁵⁸ "Sokolska Petrova petoletka, 1936-1941" [Sokol Peter's five-year plan] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 7-8 (1936), pp. 65-66.

⁷⁵⁹ In further text to be referred to as "SPP".

⁷⁶⁰ "Priložite Sokolskoj župi Mostar u fond Sokolske Petrove Petoljetke da bi uzmogla urediti 90 voda u bezvodnim selima" *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1936), p. 256.

⁷⁶¹ Miodrag Dragić "Kralj Petar kao Soko" [King Peter as a Sokol] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 7-8 (1936), pp. 71-74.

⁷⁶² Radmilo Grđić "Delo i žrtva" [Act and sacrifice] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7 (1937), pp. 270-73.

will encompass a person's duty towards their family, close ones, national community and towards the past. It was the responsibility of each member to choose their own tasks in each of these fields, and have them registered in the local club's book of votives (*knjiga zavjetnika/knjiga zavetnika*), so that they can be centrally monitored and assessed after the SPP ends in 1941. In exchange, the member receives the proof of vows, as well as a badge, depicting King Peter II's face in a burning heart. The tasks, however, were not completely up to the decision of the given members, but could instead be chosen from an exhaustive list prepared by the associational leadership (the list is available in the appendix).⁷⁶³ The list of tasks reveals a redistributive agenda that sought to improve the material conditions in the rural areas, which was also reflected by the radically changed discourse of the actors who aimed to frame the SPP as a rejuvenation strategy and response against urban modernity and peripherality as such.

Čedo Milić, for instance, frontally attacked modernity in the broadest sense, when describing SPP's goals in a religious tone, explicitly embarking from Sokols' previous rationalist commitments: "The votive thought [LB: *zavjetna misao*], according to the tradition and teachings of the Slavic forefathers, is the grandest strength, secret and goal of human existence. That secret can be known solely by the spiritual, never by the mind's intelligence. Until Sokols learn that, they will never become national Sokols, nor will they be able to rejuvenate their thoughts and their spirit (...) because of that, the vow can be obtained and felt only by those, who suspended their thoughts like a string on the *gusle*, and who learned about the strength of the bloody national history and spiritual langour of the 'cultured' present".⁷⁶⁴ The change in associational culture, into a more contractual and labor-driven, was thus also framed in increasingly more mythical and mysticist terms by such thinkers. Milić went on to denounce

⁷⁶³ "Zadaci koje su jedinice i njihovi pripadnici-ce preduzeli da izvrše u Petrovoj petoletnici, a koji kao posebni zadaci spadaju u petoletnicu" [Tasks that units and their members aim to fulfil in the Peter's five-year plan, and that belong to the five-year plan as special tasks] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 7-8-9 (1937), p. 57.

⁷⁶⁴ Čedo Milić "Riječ o Sokolskoj Petrovoj petoletnici" [A word on the Sokol Peter's five-year plan] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1-2-3 (1937), pp. 3-6, here p. 4.

the inborn ills of modernity, namely “knowledge, wealth and power”, that he argued artificially divided the nation, particularly between urban and rural communities. The sole antidote to the alienation brought on by the elites and urban modernity, according to him, was the vow-driven rejuvenation that promises to protect the roots of the national soul.

While vows, such as Kosovo-, Vidovdan-, Svatopluk- and others, already existed as literary devices employed in the associational periodicals in the previous periods, in this new iteration and, in fact, instrumentalization of the vows, they served as pledges of loyalty and contractual devices, with an aim to bind together the members of the political community and demand their palpable contributions to the achieving of Yugoslavist modernity.⁷⁶⁵ In this manner, they marked the transition between the early 1930s Masarykian discourse of community of active citizens, toward the one that will come to dominate the late 1930s, namely that of loyal royal subjects, bound organically through their national culture in their resistance to the ills of normative, Western, modernity, and its stress on individualism in particular.⁷⁶⁶ The vision of the Yugoslavist modernity was, thus, becoming increasingly unstable and articulated by thinkers with diverging ideological commitments—gradually in favor of the neo-romanticist camp whose claims were attaining an ever more radical and overtly anti-modernist shape. There are indications, however, that the oaths were not well received among the membership, which prompted some thinkers to reach for the allegedly analogous historical examples, in order to convince the membership to join the novel scheme.⁷⁶⁷

SPP’s and overall SSKJ’s focus on the incorporation of the rural populace into the association signifies a more prominent concern towards socio-economic issues, a departure from the previously dominant agenda of nationalizing-cum-modernizing the countryside. This change is

⁷⁶⁵ Đura Paunković “Naš Vidovdan. Uoči sleta u Subotici 1936 god” [Our Saint Vitus Day. On the coming slet in Subotica in 1936] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1936), pp. 153-4.

⁷⁶⁶ Đura Brzaković, “Vaspitni činioci” [Educational factors] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1938), pp. 83-87.

⁷⁶⁷ J. Radulović “Smisao zavjeta: prema podacima iz istorije narodnog predanja” [The purpose of the vow: according to the data from the history of folk traditions] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1-2-3 (1937), p. 2-3.

visible in the 1936 Karlovac-published booklet on the ways rural settlements should be penetrated and local associational life organized.⁷⁶⁸ The booklet makes it clear that the ultimate goal of improving the socio-economic conditions in the villages is the increase in the peasants' labor productivity, as well as decrease in their multifaceted cost towards the national community. Highlighting the need for "lasting work and small needs",⁷⁶⁹ the booklet outlines different measures that should be taken to establish continuously functioning Sokol village clubs (*čete*) that maximize the villages' economic output toward the national economy. Indicatively, it stresses, on multiple occasions, that politization of all sorts should be avoided in associational activities, together with charity work (that was to be replaced with social welfare, *socijalno staranje*) and excess discussions on the question of nationality. Equally relevant is the accent put on building the "Sokol character", which among the typical desired psychological traits they wanted to achieve in their members, also tackles one's relationship to the state. It underscores that a "Sokol character" knows his rights (sic!) very well and never demands more from the state, than what he is entitled to.

Moreover, the struggle against analphabetism should be done discretely, advises the booklet, in a way that the *četa* members teach the members of their household at home, instead of everyone attending literacy courses in the Sokol club.⁷⁷⁰ The most relevant work, however, was to be done in the areas of rural hygiene, agricultural productivity and modernization, and changing the peasantry's diet so as to increase the input of vegetables, fruits, fruit juices instead of alcohol. Indeed, the booklet goes as far as to describe, in detail, the desired settings of a typical village house interior, leaving no aspect of life outside of the scope of the program it proposes. While still nominally modernizing in nature, the booklet's concern for the peasantry's

⁷⁶⁸ *Sokolski rad na selu*. [Sokol work in the village] Karlovac, 1936. (without author)

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid*, p. 1.

⁷⁷⁰ For more on the logistics of Sokol's literacy courses, see: Milan First "Prosvetna propaganda: Osnivanje sokolskih analfabetskih tečajeva (upute)" [Educational propaganda: Founding of the Sokol literacy courses (instructions)] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1935), pp. 317-18.

contribution to the national economy, as well as its labor-centeredness, reveal a change in the priorities when discussion Sokol's and Yugoslavist modernity's embrace of the 'village question'. Alongside the raise in social welfare work conducted in the impoverished countryside, there were small-scale, yet not irrelevant, attempts at providing welfare for the urban Sokol membership as well. The most relevant such example was the personal initiative of a Belgrade-based notable woman member Danica (Dana) Ilić, namely the aforementioned Sokol heart (*Sokolsko srce*).⁷⁷¹

Given that these new circumstances and ambitions of the leadership often caused contradictions or resistance on part of the membership, this period also saw the birth of the new genre published in the associational periodicals, namely the "Sokol jokes" (*Sokolske šale*), that usually thematized precisely the clash between leadership's expectations and realities of associational life.⁷⁷² Even if visibly well-meaning and light in nature, they serve to demonstrate the lasting gap between the thinkers, gymnasts, youth and other groups within the association, as well as to the mixed reception of the Sokol's intellectual and ideological repertoire.

Many associational periodicals, except the Sokol herald (*Sokolski glasnik*), were published regularly until the end of 1938, and were completely discontinued or merged over the course of 1939 and 1940, only to return in the first three months of 1941, with discourses largely disjointed from its previous production, and reflecting the ultranationalist and corporatist commitments. In the latter context, the president of the Educational committee was Miloš Stanojević and the editor of the Sokol herald, Niko Bartulović, the most notable head of radical and ultranationalist ORJUNA organization.⁷⁷³ The longest-lasting editor, in this period, of the *SOKO* journal was Stanko Trček, a professional Slovenian Sokol cadre, under whose mandate

⁷⁷¹ Mihajlo Nikolić "Dana Ilić (nekrolog)" [Dana Ilić (necrologue)] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1935), pp. 392-395.

⁷⁷² A selection of Sokol jokes is provided in the appendices.

⁷⁷³ Nikola Žutić "Liberalna, antiklerikalna i antifašistička ideologija srpskih i jugoslavenskih sokola u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji 1918-1945" *Naša pot*, p. 135

the journal, as did the *Sokolska prosveta* one, began concentrating much more on reviewing sophisticated contemporary literature and participating in extra-associational public intellectual polemics. While they received a significant amount of books for review by particular publishing houses or associations, such as the Yugoslav association of professors, many of them were picked by their in-house reviewer, Radomir Gačić. The instability of operations within one of the main intellectual periodicals of SSKJ in this period, namely *Sokolska prosveta*, is visible by the fact that it had to change the place of its editorial office from Ljubljana to Novi Sad, then Belgrade, where it had significant trouble finding a printing house that would even print it, testifying to SSKJ's diminishing political influence and position.⁷⁷⁴

Alongside changes in the make-up of the membership and increased centralization of activities based on SPP, Sokol experienced increased militarization in this period, particularly the years after 1937, when the Shooting committee (*Streljači otsek*) was founded. In reaction to ever more unstable international relations that had an effect on Yugoslav internal politics as well, SSKJ felt it was responsible to take on an additional role and task itself with conducting a sort of military training to a portion of its membership. Given its nominally progressive Yugoslavist orientation, the militarization was largely introduced under the guise of antifascism and resistance to authoritarianist forces from abroad. Some of the key concepts that floated around this agenda were those of “armed peace” (*naoružani mir*) and internal consolidation, seen as guarantors of maintaining peace in a volatile international environment.⁷⁷⁵ The alarmist discourse legitimizing militarization began promoting an image of Sokol's-cum-Yugoslavia's enemies on the international stage, warranting the introduction of different elements of military training into the existing associational activities, largely from 1936 onwards.⁷⁷⁶ Importantly, a

⁷⁷⁴ “Na početku godine” [At the beginning of the year] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1937), pp. 1-2.

⁷⁷⁵ Jože Smertnik “O 20godišnjici narodne slobode” [On the 20th anniversary of national freedom] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), p. 336-7.

⁷⁷⁶ “Domaće vijesti: Zbor župskih načelnika i načelnica od 5. juna 1936” [Domestic news: Assembly of the Clubs' presidents, on June 5, 1936] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 6 (1936), p. 220.

guide to military-style commands, to be taught across the country to all Sokol members, was published and distributed to the clubs in early 1938. Specifically, military training in Sokol included exercises with wooden replicas and actual arms, as well as inclusion of women into different aspects of the military training and preparedness.⁷⁷⁷

The call for adopting such approach came from ČOS's long-serving president Marie Provazníková, whose texts on women's role in national defense were translated to Serbo-Croatian by Marija Vojinović, likely the wife of Czech-born František Hoffmann/Miroslav Vojinović. In her articles,⁷⁷⁸ Provazníková posed women's wartime tasks as primarily caritative, focused on providing for children, the wounded, as well as procuring sustenance for the broader community. Most importantly, she pointed to their duty to motivate their husbands and sons to join the combat. Thereat, she developed a holistic vision of national defense, subsumed under the concept of *branbenost* (defensiveness). It represented a concerted channeling of the Sokol's differential and reformist pedagogy for national-defensive purposes. She suggested splitting the work of children, young women and mature or older women, into different tasks, appropriate for their physical and cognitive abilities. Provazníková specifically advised practicing endurance, raising energy levels, retaining freshness long into old age, by introducing specific physical exercises. Moreover, she envisioned strengthening the nervous system by practicing "decisiveness, balance, competition, nightly watches", but also practicing empathy, developing the feeling of duty towards society and "social care", namely the value of

⁷⁷⁷ "Domaće: Uzorci drvenih pušaka za naraštaj i decu" [Domestic news: Samples of wooden rifles for youth and children] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 2 (1938), page not indicated.

⁷⁷⁸ Marija Provazníková "Značaj žene u odbrani naroda" [The importance of women in national defense] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 11 (1937), p. 358-9; Marija Provazníková "Uzgoj žena za odbranu naroda—sokolskim vežbanjem" [Raising women for national defense—through Sokol exercise] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 4 (1938), p. 151-3.

sharing with those who have less.⁷⁷⁹ Women were also included in the training based on military commands.⁷⁸⁰

Finally, in 1940, two artillery colonels, Dimitrije S. Pavlović and Dragutin A. Valter, published an almost 300-page manual on military training within Sokol,⁷⁸¹ marking a change in Sokol's long-standing ambition to modernize and 'Sokolize' the army, whereby they sought to subject the membership to a more traditional military curriculum. The practical manual describes the process of the training, with an ambition to recruit the best performing Sokol members into the army.⁷⁸² The training envisaged by the two colonels very much resembled the standard complete military training, both in its theoretical and practical aspects, even if it was to largely be conducted by Sokol trainers. It, for instance, covered fighting with a knife, hand grenades, training Sokol members for military communication via signalization and telephone, defending positions, planting land mines, but also techniques of guerrilla warfare (*četničko ratovanje*) and many more topics.

This newly acquired militarized character of Sokol, was accompanied by an ever more radicalizing self-description and portrayal of its competitors, as well as calls for raising military preparedness of the citizens. When reflecting on the international developments, many articles focused on Third Reich and fascist Italy, not least because of the worsening situation of Slavic minorities in these two contexts, as well as their dictatorial nature they posited themselves against.⁷⁸³ Given the increasingly more unstable domestic politics in Yugoslavia, the

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 152.

⁷⁸⁰ Olga Skovran "Priprava žena u strojevnim vežbama" [The preparedness of women in military command exercises] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 4 (1938), p. 158-9.

⁷⁸¹ *Borbena obuka u Sokolstvu*. [Military training in Sokol] Belgrade: SSKJ, 1940.

⁷⁸² Ibid, p. 10.

⁷⁸³ "Kuda ideš Evropo?" [Quo vadis Europe?] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1936), p. 138; "Intelektualci protiv talijanskog fašizma" [Intellectuals against Italian fascism] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1936), p. 139; "Paradoksi su odlika Hitlerovih nacional-socijalista" [Paradoxes are a trait of Hitler's national socialists] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1936), p. 183.; "Zakleti neprijatelji istine" [Sworn enemies of truth] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1936), p. 282; "Kako u Nemačkoj postupaju s nosiocem Nobelove nagrade?" [How they are treating a Nobel prize winner in Germany?] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1937), p. 31; , "Hitler, Staljin, Musolini" [Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini] *Sokolska*

association also sought to mobilize their own membership, which became visible in the radicalization of the discourse towards what they dubbed their internal enemies, particularly from 1937 onwards.⁷⁸⁴ While they seemingly never overtly named these internal enemies, from new slogans such as “One nation, one state, one Sokol”,⁷⁸⁵ it is visible that they saw the unity of the state as the main stake at hand, pointing to ultranationalist forces as the culprits. SSKJ adopted this as its programmatic stance in the later documents, such as the 1939 Declaration of the General Assembly of SSKJ,⁷⁸⁶ read aloud by Hugo Werk thereat, restating the association’s commitment for the territorial and political integrity of the country and its defense, calling upon all the political factors in Yugoslavia to do whatever is in their power, “for the realization of the internal consolidation of the country and a just national agreement, that would enable the natural and healthy further development of the nation and state.”⁷⁸⁷ They hereby specifically put themselves at the disposal of the army and other defense-related bodies, so as to create a “powerful, moral and battle phalanx of the nation”.⁷⁸⁸ Yet, the domestic political situation proved much more intricate for Sokol.

Following the 1936 assassination attempt on the PM Milan Stojadinović, committed by the MP Damjan Arnaudović, a school teacher from the party of Bogoljub Jevtić, Milorad Dragić reflected on this complex position they found themselves in. Portraying Sokol as a force that hopes to maintain a more cultured approach to public life, Dragić expressed disappointment at the brutal assassination attempt that took place in the National Assembly (*Narodna skupština*), not least because Jevtić’s party was, implicitly, the strongest political ally of Sokol against the

prosveta, vol. 1 (1937), p. 32; “Građanski rat u Španiji” [Civil war in Spain] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1937), p. 33; “Blagostanje u Nemačkoj” [Prosperity in Germany] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1937), p. 112; “Borba protiv umetnosti” [Struggle against art] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1937), p. 113; “Zlato-Države-Režimi u zemljama” [Gold-states-regimes in countries] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1937), p. 113-14.

⁷⁸⁴ “Mnogi protivnici priželjkjuju da nas nestane! Nastupili su dani iskušenja! Braćo i sestre” [Many enemies wish that we would disappear! The days of tribulation have begun! Brothers and sisters] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1937), p. 1.

⁷⁸⁵ “Naša zadaća – naš život” [Our task – our life] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1937), p. 349.

⁷⁸⁶ *IX glavna skupština SSKJ, govor brata Gangla, 1939*, pp. 18-20.

⁷⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 18.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid*, p. 19.

Stojadinović government: “...with this act of violence, the high principle of ideological struggle [LB: idejne borbe] in political life, was abandoned. The understanding of the idea of our national and state unity has to, in every way, represent a leading thought in political orientation of each Sokol, as a citizen of this country (...) based on all this, the issue of active participation of Sokol in the public political life is somewhat complicated and it has—at least to some extent—a more significant psychological background (...) When realistically regarding the events and circumstances in which Sokol finds itself today, and when regarding—so to say—the influence of the invisible emanation of political life on our Sokol, we arrive to the difficult constatation that we, as Sokol, find ourselves in a very delicate position, for a while now. In such circumstances, every, even slightly wrong move, can cause unpredictable consequences for the material and moral side of our Sokol existence.” Dragić finally concluded that “we cannot shake off the impression that there is negative selection going on in our political and party life, which cannot be without influence on our national and state life.”⁷⁸⁹ It was thus clear that Sokol’s former allies such as JNS, that used to represent its interests in the higher political circles, were not in the grace of the current government that had also used this incident to get rid of internal opposition, namely the figure of regent-general Petar Živković, and discard Jevtić’s political project at large.⁷⁹⁰

It was further, Miloš Stanojević, for example, who casted Sokol’s tradition of evolutionary and small-scale work as, in this context, revolutionary, by reflecting on the concept of preparedness: “The spirit is being killed, the faith is being destroyed, the self-confidence, the resistance, as in individuals, so in entire nations (...) Simply and briefly put: only that person can be prepared, who is educated. National masses need to be revolutionized in the wish to achieve something

⁷⁸⁹ Milorad Dragić “Metodi borbe, posle atentata u Parlamentu” [Methods of struggle after the assassination in the parliament] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1936), pp. 57-61, here p. 58.

⁷⁹⁰ Bojan Simić “Atentat u Narodnoj skupštini marta 1936. godine—pozadina, sudski proces, posledice” [Assassination attempt in the National Assembly in March 1936—background, court process, consequences] *Tokovi istorije*, vol. 1 (2024), pp. 63-89.

better, both in terms of body and mind.”⁷⁹¹ Retaining idealism and evolutionary approach, in Stanojević’s perspective, became a revolutionary act in the given circumstances.

The largest and most relevant event that took place in these final years of SSKJ’s existence was the 1936 Subotica regional *slet*, that almost coincided with the Berlin Olympic games.⁷⁹² It had two main pronounced goals, first was to promote the image of Subotica as a “norther fortress” of the nation, against Hungarian revisionist claims; and the second to underscore the Yugoslav character of this important economic center, that was culturally rather mixed, with about 25-30% of its populace belonging to non-Slavic nationalities (primarily Hungarians and Germans).⁷⁹³ Given that Subotica was the third largest city in the country, following Belgrade and Zagreb, this demonstration or superimposition of loyalty to the state, was even more important, as was articulated by the Novi Sad-based lawyer and notable Freemason Ignjat Pavlas, in his literary text on the topic: “We will demonstrate even in the North of our homeland that our nation wants to be, and remain forever, one, inseparable national body with a single rhythm of national life and one national soul, and that this national will lives in the Sokol idea”.⁷⁹⁴ Indeed, the Subotica *slet* presented an opportunity for the political elite of Yugoslavia to perform cultural diplomacy, given that among its international invitées, there were numerous experts, economic partners and political allies of the country, for which reason many delegates of the Stojadinović government and army were present thereat. Coincidentally, the city was also ruled by Stojadinović’s JRZ at the time, which might indicate another reason why it was chosen for this important event. The guide to the *slet* and reports on it in the associational press,

⁷⁹¹ Miloš Stanojević “Sokolska prosveta i sokolska pripravnost” [Sokol education and Sokol preparedness] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1941), p. 36-8, here p. 37.

⁷⁹² The most important upcoming event SSKJ was organizing was the All-Sokol *slet*, that was to take place in Belgrade in 1941, but was cancelled due to the country’s disintegration.

⁷⁹³ Siniša Samardžić, Dušan Kravljača “Politika i sport: IV pokrajinski sokolski slet Saveza sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije u Subotici 1936. godine” [Politics and sports: Fourth regional Sokol *slet* of the Union of Sokols of Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Subotica in 1936] *Petničke sveske*, vol. 3 (2012), pp. 441-447.

⁷⁹⁴ Ignjat Pavlas “Pokrajinski slet severnih župa u Subotici, 28 i 29 juna 1936” [Regional *slet* of the northern clubs in Subotica on June 28-29 1936] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1935), pp. 64-66, here p. 65.; Stevo V. Nikiforović, *Vodič kroz Suboticu, 12.-16. i 26.-30. Juna 1936*. [Guide through Subotica, 12-16 and 26-30 June, 1936] Subotica, 1936.

outline numerous Yugoslavist artistic performances that were done on the occasion, but also frame the city's history and culture in a distinctly Yugoslavist manner.⁷⁹⁵ As will be shown in the following section, one question that came to dominate the intellectual output around this *slet*, was the one of culturally ambiguous Bunjevci group, around whose identity and loyalty to the Yugoslavist cause there were substantial conflicts, given that Subotica represented their historical-cultural center.

The Berlin Olympic games that took place just about a month after the Subotica *slet* also stirred a debate within Sokol circles, given that they were extremely politically charged and took place not long after many of the cultural rights of Lusitian Sorbs' were revoked. These debates revolved not only around the blatant politicization of the games by the Hitler regime, but also around Sokol's traditionally negative stance towards competitive sports more broadly. In a fairly emotional text by an anonymous contributor to one of the Sokol periodicals, the question of justifiability of Sokol's participation in these Olympic games is posed. The anonymous asked the readership: "Aren't we Sokols the supporters of democracy, in every possible way? Don't you feel that the democratic Sokol will, while participating in the Olympics, bear the torch of Hitler's fascism, to some extent? Don't we feel that our brotherly Lusitian Sorb Sokol (that, despite 'voluntarily dissolving' and being merely 'Slavic-speaking Germans', still feel like Sokols in their hearts) will have to endure an immense weight of self-constraint, not to call us 'traitors' once they will see us standing right besides the SS and SA?"⁷⁹⁶ The author finally concedes, arguing that even if Yugoslav or any other Sokol members will attend the controversial Olympics, they will have Hitler's Germany know that its wrongful treatment of Lusitian Sorb community is unacceptable. Nevertheless, despite several such writings

⁷⁹⁵ Bognar "Pokrajinski slet u Subotici" *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 7 (1936), pp. 230-234.

⁷⁹⁶ "Da li da idemo u Berlin na Olimpijadu?" [Should we go to the Berlin Olympics?] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1936), p. 104.

circulating in the Sokol press, the Yugoslav Sokol ultimately participated in the Olympics, after having founded an “Olympic foundation” to financially support its gymnasts who were attending it, shortly before.⁷⁹⁷

Simultaneously, however, it was Hrvoje Macanović, a Zagreb-based gymnast, pioneer of radiophony and publicist of the older generation, who began a campaign for the rapprochement of Sokol and competitive sports, in contrast to the previous tradition. This campaign also attempted to exonerate Sokol members’ participation at the Berlin Olympics. As part of his initiative, Macanović published several articles and a book on the issue and held a course on the relationship between sports and Sokol, despite being in serious personal and intellectual conflict with Viktor Murnik who rejected his theses.⁷⁹⁸ In the new, crisis-ridden climate, the question of sports was not only related to one’s physical and moral education or cultural improvement. It was instead increasingly more tied to the question of war preparedness.

Crucially, as opposed to the 1920s and early 1930s, where the main wedge between the Sokol officials was between those who wanted to put an accent solely on the physical education and those who wanted to enlarge the intellectual and educational components of the associational life—it was the very goal of the physical education that became a source of conflict in this period, instead. Those who were the associational elite in the 1920s and had insisted on reforming the Sokol pedagogy and introducing novel tendencies into it, represented a source of tension for those who aimed to use Sokol physical education for defensive purposes, in their goal to respond the demands of the 1930s. In a markedly laudated article by the Czech thinker František Bláha, translated to Serbo-Croatian in the trainers’ journal *SOKO*, the issue of

⁷⁹⁷ “Domaće vijesti, Zbor župskih načelnika i načelnica od 5. juna 1936” [Domestic news: Assembly of the clubs’ presidents on June 5, 1936] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 6 (1936), p. 220

⁷⁹⁸ Hrvoje Macanović, *Sport-Sokolstvo* [Sport-Sokol] Zagreb: self-published, 1933; Hrvoje Macanović, *Olympia 1936: savremene olimpijske igre* [Olympics 1936: contemporary Olympic games] Zagreb: self-published, 1936; Stanko Trček “Za istinu” [For the truth] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 6 (1935), pp. 177-182.

‘defensive’ education (*odbrambeni uzgoj*) is raised and weighed against physical education for other purposes, particularly those that concentrate on fulfilling one’s bodily capacity, harmonious and holistic development, managing and channeling of instincts and urges etc.

Bláha hereby demonstratively argued that: “...No one damaged the defensive and military preparations as the one who introduced sportist individualism, records, excursions, and particularly all the contemporary tendencied into physical education, with all its loosening and un-exercising [LB: olabavljanjem i razvebažbavanjem]. Such an officer is neither a Sokol, nor a ‘gymnast’. Instead of sharp moves, resilient and long-lasting strenght of built-up defenders, it is the delicate primadonas of the clubs, poisoned young men with sad songs of mountain refuges and cissies — physically and spiritually — the gymnasts of the associations for physical education. Now the alarm is sounding all around! The calamity is in front of our doors!”⁷⁹⁹

Another, not as well-know, but certainly relevant event of this period, was the 1939 “March to Kosovo” (*Pohod na Kosovo*), a symbolic neo-romanticist performance that marked an anniversary of the battle and managed to gather a significant portion of the SSKJ’s officials and representatives of other organizations and institutions, in stark contrast to *slets* centered around gymnastics and other professional performances.⁸⁰⁰

The new circumstances also demanded new international alliances and establishment of cooperation. In contrast to the previous periods when Yugoslav Sokol’s strongest partners could be found in Czechoslovak and Polish, as well as Russian white émigré Sokol associations, these years brought two new partners to SSKJ. These were the Bulgarian Yunak association, previously not considered the closest partners given the tensions between the Serbian and

⁷⁹⁹ František Bláha “Za stoosamdeset stepeni” [For 180 degrees] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 4 (1935), pp. 133-4.

⁸⁰⁰ “Pohod na Kosovo” [March on Kosovo] *Sokolski glasnik* (June 23, 1939), p.1. (without author)

Bulgarian national projects during the Balkan and First World war, particularly in the question of “South Serbia” (today’s Macedonia); and the Romanian Șoimii Carpaților (Carpathian falcons) association, Sokol-inspired and physicians-driven gymnastic initiative mainly dedicated to eugenics. The latter, founded originally in 1930 after several physicians attended the Belgrade *slet*, mostly remained tied to Yugoslav-Romanian physicians’ cooperation on eugenic issues, even if the associations attempted to imitate Sokol’s associational culture on a smaller scale.⁸⁰¹ Nevertheless, Șoimii Carpaților, otherwise affiliated with a notable cultural organization ASTRA (Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People; Romanian: *Asociația Transilvană pentru Literatură Română și Cultura Poporului Român*), regularly sent their representatives to the relevant events of Yugoslav and Czechoslovak Sokol associations.

The rapprochement with the Bulgarian Yunak, on the other hand, coincided with the rise and adoption of the Balkanist paradigm within Sokol, even if the two projects were in tension, to some extent. It is also indicative of Sokol’s behavior, that they hadn’t sent any of their representatives to the newly established Balkan games, an autochtonist offshoot of the Olympic games. Instead, SSKJ representatives began attending the Yunak rallies in much larger numbers than before, as can be seen from the report by the younger Slovenian Sokol activist Ludvik (Ludwig) Trček, who was later to go through the Dachau concentration camp and survive. In his account of the 1935 All-Yunak rally in Sofia,⁸⁰² Trček stated that about 5000 Yugoslav Sokols attended, alongside the Czechoslovak ones, whereby they were greeted by the Emperor Boris III before whom they had several artistic performances,⁸⁰³ representing different portions of the Yugoslav nation (e.g. sailors, miners etc.) and expressed their alliance with Bulgaria. “As

⁸⁰¹ Atanasie Popa “Șoimii Carpaților” [Carpathian Falcons] *Boabe de grâu: revistă lunară ilustrată de cultură*, vol. 6, pp. 340-346 ; Raul-Marian Todor “Șoimii Carpaților” *Transilvania*, vol. 7 (2018), pp. 93-96.

⁸⁰² Ludvik Trček “VIII svejunački slet u Sofiji” [VIII All-Yunak slet in Sofia] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 7-9 (1935), p. 218-225.

⁸⁰³ Including the ‘Hej trubaču!’ [Hey trumpeter!] song and a *tableau vivant* of the Cyrillic letter ‘B’, as in Boris.

we were returning in the dark, over the Slavonian fields and when the bloody sun was on the rise, I heard the distant whispers telling me ‘we will still be happy: we are Balkan peoples and that is what we wish to remain...’“, Trček proudly reminisced.⁸⁰⁴ Conversely, numerous representatives of Yunak, largely of its administration, some of whom were also notable officials in the Bulgarian army,⁸⁰⁵ regularly visited Yugoslav Sokol *slets* and began mutual intellectual cooperation, in this period.

To conclude, while the original human and associational infrastructure of Sokol persisted into the late 1930s, there was an evident rise of the neo-romanticist elements, not least because of the extra-associational circumstances. The Stojadinović regime never succeeded in fully transplanting its own agenda into Sokol, yet Sokol also struggled with remaining relevant and afloat, particularly among younger generations and women. The tension between his governments’ political goals and Sokol’s inherited political allegiances and associational values were deepening, as time went on. Once Stojadinović was out of political life, SSKJ came at the mercy of the new, largely repackaged ‘tribalist’ political elites.

The institutionalization of physical education studies and introduction of the mandatory physical education, in this period, were largely related with the subjugation of some of the SSKJ’s infrastructure for the purpose of fulfilling Stojadinović’s governments’ needs, such as in the case of 1936 Subotica *slet* and rapprochement with the Bulgarian Yunak. Its expansion into the countryside and welfare provision initiatives were, however, most successful into this period, even if mainly conducted precisely by those who sought to challenge the association’s traditional liberal-positivist agenda. For these two reasons, it could be asserted that, in institutional terms, Sokol both accommodated and complemented the state, at this time, even if there is evidence that it attempted to become less reliant on state’s funding and, relatedly, less

⁸⁰⁴ Trček, “VIII svejunački slet”, p. 218.

⁸⁰⁵ See more on the Yunak president Raško Atanasov (*Рашко Атанасов*) and Sokol in: “Junačke i Sokolske manifestacije u Sofiji” [Yunak and Sokol manifestations in Sofia] *Sokolski glasnik* (March 24, 1939), p. 2.

susceptible to state's demands.⁸⁰⁶ Most of the Sokol thinkers from the previous period remained active around mid- to late-1930s, despite experiencing operational difficulties overtly acknowledged by the associational leadership,⁸⁰⁷ yet experienced dramatic fallout in 1938 and the subsequent years. It can be assumed, based on the character of the intellectual publications published in 1940 and 1941, that most representatives of the liberal positivist stream had left the association that was gradually overtaken by the Communist Party or its fellow travelers, in the case of Slovenian-speaking areas, and the ultranationalist forces, often part of the distinctly Serbian national project, in the Serbo-Croatian speaking areas. Last years of the main organizational periodical, Sokol herald were marked by ever more overt politicization, commentary on the international situation, as well as different fundraising campaigns for Sokol members affected.⁸⁰⁸ During the Second World War, a significant number of them were murdered in the concentration camps or, in notable cases, participated either in the resistance against the occupying forces or in the collaborationist government in Serbia—testifying to the immense political diversity of thinkers and activists involved. Needless to say, owing to this wartime split, their collective legacy remains contested until the present day.

4.2. Citizens to Subjects: Sacralization and Mythologization of the Yugoslavist Discourse

4.2.1. The Last Masarykian Moment

⁸⁰⁶ See a point on the financial independence of SSKJ in “Sednica izvršnog odbora Saveza SKJ” *Sokolski glasnik* (March 3, 1939), p. 2.

⁸⁰⁷ “Izjava Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije jugoslovenskom Sokolstvu” [Statement of the Union of Sokols of Kingdom of Yugoslavia to the Yugoslav Sokol] *Sokolski glasnik* (March 6, 1936), p. 1.

⁸⁰⁸ See for instance fundraising for refugee Czechoslovak Sokol members: “Sednica izvršnog odbora Saveza SKJ” [Meeting of the executive board of SSKJ] *Sokolski glasnik* (February 3, 1939), p. 2.

While Sokol's intellectual output experienced a significant change, given the rise of neo-romanticist discourses and associational practices in this period, due to the worsening international climate and later particularly the consequences of the 1938 Munich Agreement—the key elements of Masarykian realism remained relevant and, to an extent, framed the discussion about the concepts of nation and state. This 'Masarykian moment' was brief, yet indicative of SPO's lasting commitments to Sokol's traditional ideological orientation. This, specifically, meant that the ever more pronounced divisions between the 'democratic' and 'authoritarian' states, as well as between 'active citizens' and 'subjects' made up the main stakes of the debate in the mid-1930s.

As in the previous years, it was Aleksandar Tabaković who developed this language to its furthest extent, by dissecting the role of Sokol in society and politics. In an authentically Masarykian manner, Tabaković pointed to the need for Sokol and the state to find a better way of cohabitating and cooperating, given their radically different natures and normative tasks. Presuming that Sokol is an authentic expression of the national will and channel for articulating its needs, Tabaković argued that: "The secret of blossoming, shining and strength of a given country does not lie in its internal, legal organization, in the wisdom and fatherly patronage of the state's rule, but instead in the entrepreneurial energy and morality of the citizens themselves (...) the role of the state governance is rather regulatory, than a driving force, it covers the external moving and behavior of people, rather than their inner sphere of consciousness and feelings (...) a state, no matter how powerful and universal, will never be able to encompass all the manifestations of the social life, and that is why different social groups and creations of private initiative will always be created under its auspices. Through such spontaneous forces, the creative spirit and life élan of a nation is manifested. The state governance can be more or less libertarian [LB: slobodarska] (...) but it can never replace those immense social energies

that are constantly being reproduced from below.”⁸⁰⁹ Focusing on the citizens themselves as the main guarantors of social and political development and stability, Tabaković casted the state as a mere infrastructural mechanism for maintaining social life, concluding that: “In that eternal harmony of Sokol’s and state’s goals, one should seek the meaning and guarantee of Sokol freedom, and not only in the state laws that are always an offspring of its age and that can be overrun by that same age, at any point.”⁸¹⁰ In the context of the association’s still very close relationship with the state, at the time of the article’s publication, this argument could be read as a warning against merging of state and national interests.

Tabaković also analyzed different groups’ response to the twin economic and political crises, observing his contemporaries’ loss of faith in human progress, but also human reason, both of which he evidently saw as a given. In his view, the loss of belief in human reason resulted in the rise of various “mystical and harshly materialist systems” that rely on the worst human instincts. That is, they “do not attempt to solve the most difficult problems using the mind, but with a fist and terrorist action”.⁸¹¹ In his plea for moderation and discussion, Tabaković complained that: “For those who think they possess the single salvatory truth [LB: *jedinospasavajuće istine*], who have a ‘ready plan’ for the ideal organization of the human society, every thought is merely a waste of time, and any discussion is pure blabbering.”⁸¹²

In the same breath, he attacked the cultural pessimists who go on and spread about the gloom and doom, rejecting both such stances, claiming instead that the present crisis discourses are solely a language that aims to capture a naturally occurring transitory period. For Tabaković, who relied on a Hegelian dialectical view of political life, any opposition to Sokol was natural

⁸⁰⁹ Aleksandar Tabaković “Sokolstvo i država” [Sokol and state] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1935), pp. 1-6, here p. 5-6.

⁸¹⁰ Ibid, p. 6.

⁸¹¹ Aleksandar Tabaković, “Razmišljanja o novoj godini” [Thoughts about the new year] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1-2 (1936), pp. 1-4, here p. 1.

⁸¹² Ibid.

and to be expected. “Such turn of events can only be feared by those who can only imagine their ‘state-making’ [LB: državotvorni] and ‘national work in the shadow of gendarme bayonets and the source of their strength in the state treasury (...) even Saint George has to fight the dragon, so that he could become Saint George”, explained Tabaković.⁸¹³ Given the intransigent nature of the Yugoslav and Sokol idea, he argued, whatever the challenges and the reaction, it will always eventually persevere, even in face of pressures from within the association, whereby he alluded to ever larger opportunistic portion of the membership. Such reasoning insightfully shows how, despite his deeply liberal and optimistic evolutionary commitments, both rooted in Masarykian pragmatic ‘small scale work’, Tabaković in fact operated with a Hegelian idealist framework and typically modernist normative assumptions on the self-propelling spirit of progress.

In order to mend the present crisis, he suggested approaching the youth with ideology better suited for their characteristic cognitive and emotional developmental stage, namely playing into their demands for achieving societal justice and suffering at the hands of the system. Criticizing the current associational leadership in their unimaginative, schematic and shallowly idealist approach to youth agitation, he exclaimed: “ A torrent of stereotypical ‘patriotic’ and ‘nationalist’ phrases splashes our miserable country ‘from Triglav to Vardar’, for a very long time, and that so-called national ‘kitsch’, rejected by all the civilized nations, still blossoms in our case. In this way, all that which should be holy is being profaned.”⁸¹⁴ He went even further so as to tackle Sokol’s uninvolved in the student protests at the University of Belgrade and tolerance of state’s brutal violence towards the student movement, that resulted in several tragic deaths of students.

⁸¹³ Ibid, p. 3.

⁸¹⁴ Aleksandar Tabaković “Duhovne težnje mladosti. Problemi omladine u Sokolstvu” [Spiritual tendencies of the youth. Problems of youth in Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1936), pp. 105-8, here p. 108.

Tabaković also saw the danger looming from the competing ideologies of fascism and communism, that had the allure that could sway the youth away from Sokol's moderate modernizing project. In his article on the topic, he also observed that, at different points in time and by different actors, Sokol was also accused both of promoting fascist associational culture and of adopting communist ideology.⁸¹⁵ Indeed, he even found it necessary to elaborate on the difference between the three phenomena. Regarding fascism, he stated that it cannot be compared to Sokol, given that it stemmed from a completely different national culture, to whose character it is adapted or is an outcome of, but also because it was superimposed onto the people—unlike Sokol, whose brand of widely-supported liberal nationalism is a reflection of the autochthonous culture, indigenous conditions. In Yugoslav case, he said, “It is not the order that creates people, but the people who are creating the order.”⁸¹⁶ In fact, he went on to argue that Yugoslav transhistorical and transimperial struggle was merely an instrument for achieving liberation, whereas Italian project, in contrast, inherently seeks to oppress and dominate the others.

In the case of communism, Tabaković agreed that it bears slight resemblance to Sokol's agenda, given that the latter does encompass ‘social justice’, yet the key differences were to be found in eschatology, which the Sokol does not possess, but also in their diverging manner of achieving social change. “As opposed to such destructive tendencies of communism, Sokol as an educational movement seeks to preserve, and if possible perfect all the existing cultural achievements of the humanity. Sokol does not have any particular plan about some completely new and never-seen-before social organization”, he clarified.⁸¹⁷ Unlike communism, Sokol invested in individual people who are the basis of all further political and social life, reiterated

⁸¹⁵ Aleksandar Tabaković “Sokolstvo, fašizam i komunizam. Dva fronta.” [Sokol, fascism and communism. Two fronts] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7-8 (1936), pp. 194-197.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid, p. 195.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid, p. 195-6.

Tabaković. He thereby concluded that education of the widest possible masses, and the consequent moral and spiritual rejuvenation, will always prevail over artificially and reductively conceived communist society that rests on wrongful presuppositions: “We offer neither land, nor others’ property, not even debt forgiveness. We approach the solution to all social questions from a completely different side, when we educate a man, and such a man who will, according to his moral understanding and with his traits, be actually able to solve them.”⁸¹⁸ In face of etatization and massivization, both of which stretched the associational infrastructure in its ability to mold and adapt to the work with individuals, he still defended the traditional Sokol pedagogy and attitude towards social change.

The phenomena characteristic for the contemporaneous authoritarian regimes, such as the cult of the leader and charismatic leadership as such, were also tackled by Radomir Gačić, who dedicated a text to examining this particular set of issues. While he did not condemn strong leadership as such, he sought to diversify the overall picture, arguing that a leader is merely one of the elements of any (political) organizations “conscious orientation”, alongside the masses, “general cultural state of a man” and an epoch in which the given transformation is ongoing.⁸¹⁹ The collective seeking of a leader and leadership more broadly, he further claimed, was a symptom of disorientation and fear of the victory of the material over the spiritual and ideational. According to Gačić, the role of the leader is to: “awaken the love towards organizing, creating meaning and yearning in its [LB: organization’s] members, so that they become enthusiastic and sacrifice themselves for it and its ideals”.⁸²⁰ In this sense, he saw the positive correlation between the ethics of the leader and a given community’s development. The moral and ethical predisposition, however, proved most relevant for differentiating between a good leader and a dictator, but also between cultured and uncultured communities, Grčić asserted,

⁸¹⁸ Ibid, p. 197.

⁸¹⁹ Radomir Gačić, “O vođi” [On the leader] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), pp. 227-231, here p. 227.

⁸²⁰ Ibid.

also pointing to Mazzini's understanding of democracy. Culturedness of the average person, hereby had a direct correlation with the quality of the leader the given community will produce, and *vice versa*, namely the "demagogue dictators (...) cannot create large cultural epoches, because they have no moral characteristics".⁸²¹

This strictly Masarykian view he displayed also evidently operated with cultural-cum-political hierarchies, assigning dictatorial regimes merely to a self-contained community of individuals, whom he nevertheless holds collectively responsible. To those disturbed by the lack of political leadership in the present crisis, he conveyed a message, namely: "Similarly to that philosopher who searched for a man using a lantern, light up your own lantern and search for your leader. Search for him inside of yourself and around yourself. It is only there you can find him. If you don't find him, create him. If you don't find him and don't create him, don't complain, because it is your fault for all the bad things happening around you."⁸²² The liberal notion of collective responsibility is thus implied by the notion of active citizenship, and leadership casted as a perfected and transformative exponent of an already improved community of emancipated idealists.

The leadership of the Educational committee also recognized, in this period, the need to insist on Masarykian realism and its understanding of national community and of Sokol's role in society, in face of complex challenges at home and abroad that threatened to tear apart or radically redefine the liberal national community they saw themselves forging. Because of this, the Ljubljana-based Sokol publishing house, *Sokolska knjižnica*, decided to publish a series of booklets on the Masaryk's political thought, Sokol and 'raising of citizens', as part of a series of mandatory literature for Sokol membership and particularly the trainers. Almost without exception, these were the translations of relevant Czech authors who developed the literature

⁸²¹ Ibid, p. 230.

⁸²² Ibid, p. 231.

on ‘raising citizens’, such as the aforementioned Jan Uher, Antonín Krejčí and Ladislav Jandásek.⁸²³

While Krejčí’s one was markedly less substantial, simply indexing various quotes of Masaryk on Sokol with an aim to portray the intellectual overlap between the two,⁸²⁴ the others were more serious in their tackling of his political thinking and its applicability to the Yugoslav case. The series’ editors, however, made a disclaimer in one of the books, saying that the only difference between the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav cases was in the fact that Yugoslavia was a monarchy, “luckily for us”,⁸²⁵ and Czechoslovakia a republic. Jandásek, a Brno-based a gymnasium teacher, publicist and Sokol activist, provided a detailed analysis of Masaryk’s thought in his booklet, with special attention paid to the issues of modernity, that is, modern citizenship and building of the “new man”, both rooted in technocratic positivism, progressivism and Masarykian ideal of social justice. Jandásek dedicated a significant portion of the text to explaining the difference between Masaryk’s principles and revolutionary thought on the one, and conservative thought, on the other hand. In this perspective, Masaryk was merely channeling the objective laws of history and society, synthesizing them with his insistence on the moral dimension of politics, to be realized in the socializing of different rights, as well as in the workings of the rule of law. The “new man” and the “new, brighter, generation”,⁸²⁶ would thus be emancipated within the national state whose entire organization and legal framework would stem from the national culture, but would also provide him with justice and rights necessary for enabling him to achieve his complete development and perfection into a higher cultural type. These emancipated and elevated individuals would then

⁸²³ They were all translated to Serbo-Croatian by the inspector of the Yugoslav Ministry of Education, Adolf Štefán.

⁸²⁴ Antonín Krejčí, *Masarik i Sokolstvo*, [Masaryk and Sokol] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1935.

⁸²⁵ Ladislav Jandásek, *Masarikova politická načela i građansko vaspitanje u Sokolstvu* [Masaryk’s political principles and raising of citizens in Sokol] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1938, p. 3.

⁸²⁶ Ibid, p. 5

create the foundation of different levels of societal and political life of the state, guaranteeing its peaceful and steady development.

The choice to publish this in 1938, when the modernist, egalitarian and crucially, *Rechtsstaat*, framework was evidently eroding and being seriously brought into question, might indicate that the Educational committee decided to insist on these principles and fashion Sokol as an insulated liberal, progressive community. It could also point to the substantial lack of further theorization on the reasons behind the success of alternative ideological explanatory models and political forces or towards Educational committee's strategic consolidation and attempt at strengthening Sokol's ideological basis, so as to be able to better compete with other seemingly coherent systems of thought that were on the rise, given that Masaryk was, alongside Tyrš, the most prestigious and relevant thinker whose thought largely overlapped with its project. Producing an image of having a compact, coherent, reason- and moderation-based ideology, but also inclusive and rules-based associational culture that,⁸²⁷ might have been their scheme for attracting youth torn between radically different projects struggling for their allegiance.

The same could be said for the publishing of Jan Uher's booklet on the concept of patriotism, that urged for positive, optimistic, reason-driven and, above all, moderate approach to the question of nationality.⁸²⁸ For Uher, the question of nationality was already resolved by experts and Versailles peacemakers, who carefully weighed facts and arguments against one another, and achieved one of the best possible solutions for permanent peace. The problem lied elsewhere. Namely, it was in the fact that this rational and expertise-based idea of nationality never reached the widest masses, who still operated with romantic and irrationalist conceptions of nationhood. This, in his view, made them susceptible to various abuses of the concept. The

⁸²⁷ Promoting adherence to rules, especially those of the state community (sic!) through Sokol was well tackled in: Marko Sablić "Sokolstvo i politika" [Sokol and politics] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7-8 (1936), pp. 211-213.

⁸²⁸ Jan Uher, *Narod i patriotizam kod Masaryka i u sokolskim načelima* [Nation and patriotism by Masaryk and in Sokol principles] Ljubljana: Jugoslovenska sokolska matica, 1938.

remedy, Uher further argued, could be found in Masaryk's objective and scientific study of nationhood. This study was, nevertheless, not disinterested, given that it did not exclude love for particular nations, each of which, Masaryk said, should be regarded in comparative perspective and not as a self-enclosed unit. He nevertheless insisted that national culture (sometimes subsumed under the concept of national spirit) represents a basis for all other intellectual work, whether in fields of science, culture, humanities, law or any other, giving it primacy over language that is its mere mechanistic expression, yet overly accentuated in the debates on what constitutes nationality. What perhaps better fitted Sokol's political circumstances in 1938, however, is Uher's insistence on patriotism's orientation towards concrete work for the benefit of the nation, as opposed to mere chauvinist, ceremonial and superficial expressions of nationalism. The booklet specifically focuses on the importance of respecting minority rights, "economic democracy" (*gospodarska demokracija*), truthfulness about the nation's past and traits, as well as public critique of the nation—all of which constitute the concept of patriotism, in contrast to "flashy nationalism" that habitually overstates the nation's virtues and thrives on symbolic and romanticist political culture.⁸²⁹ This was all the more true, argued Uher when evoking Tyrš, for small states, whose nations need to be overall more capable, active and aware, so as to compensate for their state's size and be able to ensure its peaceful development. Importantly, small states' mission in the international arena, was not to adapt themselves to some bland cosmopolitanism, but rather to work on establishing "democratic internationalism".⁸³⁰ Even if the direness of the political situation in 1938 Yugoslavia was pronounced, the 'pragmatic turn' this literature seemed to suggest by placing Masarykian realism at the center of Sokol's intellectual heritage, was a meaningful response to the Sokol's increasingly marginal and superficial work in the public life of the country.

⁸²⁹ Ibid, p. 20.

⁸³⁰ Ibid, p. 26.

Thematization on small stateness (Kleinstaaterei), in other contemporaneous Sokol texts, sought to justify the imposition of nationalism, that is nominally scientifically-determinable liberal, pragmatic and rooted in individual responsibility, and increasingly in labor, to the national collective, as a means of self-defense and survival.⁸³¹ The positivistically framed human cooperation and cultural unification into ever larger units, thus still remained a pronounced goal of a portion of the thinkers involved, who saw small nations naturally more directed towards realizing it.

With the signing of the Munich Agreement, the belief in the meaningfulness of international law and Masarykian “democratic internationalism”, started to wane. It became evident that idealists such as those gathered in Sokol, might represent a naive minority. Munib Osmanagić proved particularly disenchanted, as can be seen from his response to the agreement: “In the unbearable game of interests of those who are large and strong, and under the gloomy slogan of peace, one small and brave nation was stepped over, beyond any measure, and without any mercy. On its account, all interests were settled, all forms preserved, all prestiges upkept. Yet no one even asked it, if it had any interests, if its self-confidence is being harmed, if its spiritual foundations of further life and survival were destroyed. (...) That nation believed in a new humanity, in the best possible sense. It believed that it is being born out of the ocean of blood spilled in the world war. And that its motivations were honest, tendencies more noble, that its foundations in international relations were humanity and moral, the way of arbitration and settlement for the termination of all disputes, while resorting to force was ultimately obstructed, as a ‘dishonorable thing’ according to the pacts...”⁸³²

⁸³¹ Ljubiša Stojanović “Za pretcima među potomcima” [For ancestors among descendants] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7 (1937), pp. 274-280.

⁸³² Munib Osmanagić “Čehoslovačka, zemlja ostavljena” [Czechoslovakia: a land abandoned] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1938), pp. 262-64, here p. 262.

In a gravely disappointed tone, Osmanagić advised the entire Slavic contingent in Europe, excluding those in the Soviet Union, not to rely on the support of larger and more powerful forces, “that only throw them from one vassalhood to the other”,⁸³³ suggesting instead relying on their own, inborn strength and Slavic mutuality that is founded on law, rather than on force, but should not reject the use of force once the international law has been made meaningless, by other actors. The righteousness of small nations, to be sacrificed for the sake of keeping peace in Europe by the treacherous and *faux* Western democracies, was also thematized in a pathetically-worded text by a Gračac-based physician Josip Vodehnal, demonstrating the broader relevance of this perspective.⁸³⁴

Together with political, the discourses on social crises Sokol membership was exposed to, were also mushrooming, underscoring Masarykian pragmatism and placing social work, and provision of social welfare in particular, at the very top of activists’ priorities. Branko Polić, for instance, urged his fellow Sokol gymnasts to raise the members’ social awareness and participate in founding Sokol employment service, Sokol inns (*svratišta*), Sokol cooperatives etc., that he claimed acted as a precondition for the work of ‘raising citizens’.⁸³⁵ This rapprochement between social and liberal, primarily education-driven, mission of Sokol, was theorized on by an anonymous author, in the context of the greater need for the socialist-liberal alliance on the European level, that would serve as a counter-leverage against fascist and national-socialist forces.

In his review of the 1936 *Nova Evropa* article that compared the ideological output of Benedetto Croce and Romain Rolland,⁸³⁶ the anonymous (most probably Radomir Gačić), regrets that:

⁸³³ Ibid, p. 263.

⁸³⁴ Josip Vodehnal “Proslava dana ujedinjenja” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 323-324.

⁸³⁵ Branko Polić “Naše obaveze” [Our duties] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 2 (1938), p. 54-55.

⁸³⁶ Bogdan Radica “Dva svedoka današnje Evrope” [Two witnesses of contemporary Europe] *Nova Evropa* vol. 3, (1936), p. 91-96.

“The intellectual elite of Europe finds itself torn between these two conceptions (...) it seems that if, by some chance, the light of those stars, merged into one, the intellectual unity of Europe would come, and with it the betterment of the life and normalization of the development and progress of the nations in Europe and on other continents, and then the regular development and perfection of the spirit and spiritual life of the entire humanity”.⁸³⁷ Adopting more social work, but also elements of the socialist intellectual package, seemed to become imperative for the continuation of Sokol’s work, given the circumstances that had changed and demanded this turn.

The notion of democracy, so central to Sokol’s self-description, was in some instances also racialized, testifying to the success of the cross-fertilization process between the two groups. While it was already symptomatic of the previous periods for Sokol thinkers to essentialize Slavdom and attribute democratic tendencies to its collective supranational character, it became increasingly clear that skin color mattered as well and that Slavs’ whiteness was at stake. In Grga Bogić’s 1938 text on Sokol democracy, for instance, a particularly relevant synthesis of Masarykian realism and Great Replacement Theory-like arguments, can be found.⁸³⁸ In it, Bogić attacks not only the “anti-democratic” tendencies in contemporary Europe, but specifically those who dared to forge alliances with non-white authoritarian regimes, alluding to Japan. Comparing the Western democracies with Third Reich, he asserted: “On the one side, a tendency to, in the general interest, protect the territorial and economic achievements of the white race, and together with that the seriously endangered Euro-American culture (...) and on the other side, complete abdication of all that, *in the interest of yellow ones*, and the greatest possible welcoming of their barbarian invasion and expansion, naturally at the expense of

⁸³⁷ “Beleške: Nova Evropa, br. 3 1936 g.” [Notes: Nova Evropa, no. 3, 1936] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1936), p. 183.

⁸³⁸ Grga Bogić “Slovenstvo i sokolska demokratija” [Slavdom and Sokol democracy] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1938), pp. 12-15.

particular white nations, Slavs (...) We stand, astonished, we simply don't believe our eyes, at the actual betrayal of the white race—from the side of whites! (...) We stand now, thanks to the treachery of European imperialists, before the possibility of the realization of the most daring conquering dream in the history of humanity (...) before the realization of the Japanese Pan-Asian Empire that will (...) expel all of Europe from Asia, until Ural (...) and finally dictate, in Europe, to the whites, the life conditions, at the expense of their European 'allies'".⁸³⁹ Sokol's democratic orientation was thus not only about curbing fascism, communism and national socialism, but also about preserving white civilization from the non-White authoritarian imperialist projects. In other words, democracy, as it was understood and hereby explicitly articulated, presupposed whiteness, as did political modernity. The process of cross-fertilization with the complex and ever more pronounced neo-romanticist stream, was well underway, leaving Masarykian thought in an overall rather marginalized position, compared to its previous hegemony, even if the leadership insisted on it until roughly 1938. The dominant vision of political community thus moved gradually in the favor of that advanced by the neo-romanticists, at the expense of the Masarykian ideal and liberal-positivist commitments more generally.

4.2.2. Neo-romanticist Renaissance

The neo-romanticist renaissance came largely from below, rather than from the ranks of the associational leadership. In other words, it was the trainers, local thinkers and provincial club leaders, who began producing intellectual content more characteristic of the neo-romanticist current of thought. The main tenets of this neo-romanticist current were: 1) rehabilitation of religion; mostly based on the promotion of the Serbian Orthodox cult of Saint Sava

⁸³⁹ Ibid, p. 14.

(*Svetosavlje*) and new image of 19th century ‘national’ bishops such as Josip Juraj Strossmayer; 2) autochthonization of political modernity; namely through posing the *völkisch* national culture and national character respectively, as sources for the design of political community and state institutions, thus rejecting the normative Western political blueprint; 3) romantic anti-capitalism,⁸⁴⁰ through using the image of *zadruga* cooperatives as an inspiration for a modern welfare provision model; 4) Balkanism as an autochthonous counter-concept to (liberal and nominally universalist) Slavdom. These tenets stood in opposition to Sokol’s previously established ideological and intellectual traditions, comprising of religious tolerance and overall aversion to religionizing the associational culture; universalization-cum-Westernization of political modernity; positivist anti-capitalism, rooted in biological and psychological arguments and finally, insistence on Slavdom and universal humanity as cultural-political frames of reference.

The rising role of religious discourses, but also of religionizing of the associational culture through the aforementioned oaths and other such formulas, marked a significant departure from the previous periods when religion was *de facto*, one of the most relevant Others of the Sokol ideology. This change was, however, hardly surprising, given that the integral Yugoslavist canon they operated with presumed the “national” character of different saints and clerics. Importantly, these historical figures stemmed exclusively from Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. What was also read into their “national” designator, was their intellectual and political work for the given nation, most often Croats, Serbs or Yugoslavs, projected back into historical time. The particular accent on their intellectual production, put in their numerous biographies published in the associational periodicals and taught about at various courses, vaguely implied their liberal and worldly commitments. Yet, it was exactly this ambiguity of their position, a mandate they received both from God and the nation, that

⁸⁴⁰ In the sense in which Georg Lukács used it in “*Lebensphilosophie und die Erneuerung der Romantik*”.

gave way to the change in their perception between the previous periods and the mid- to late 1930s. While their largely liberal nation-building activism was in the focus before, what came into the forefront in the mid-1930s was their representativeness of the metaphysical.⁸⁴¹

In this context, the most relevant new element of the neo-romanticist framework, was the promotion of the cult of Saint Sava, done both by Sokol and the Serbian Orthodox Church, from the mid-1930s onwards. As Maria Falina insightfully argued, this was, on the part of the Serbian Orthodox Church, a reaction to the ultimate breakdown of the state's adoption of integral Yugoslavism. Once King Aleksandar's patronage for that project was out of the picture, they had to resort to courting the Serbian national contingent, assuming once again the role of the national church. Saint Sava, whose heritage is not only tied to the national culture, but crucially also to achieving post-Byzantine Serbian statehood and legal subjecthood, thus stood for different claims, to different actors who sought to renegotiate the Yugoslavist framework in the new circumstances.⁸⁴²

Stanoje Stanojević, a notable historian and Byzantologist in the tradition of Russian Byzantology,⁸⁴³ for instance, fashioned him as a precursor to the Serbian national and state projects, yet in a manner compatible with integral Yugoslavist statehood and cultural claims. In other words, Saint Sava's legacy legitimized a process of South Slavic claims to statehood throughout history, in a sort of *translatio imperii* manner, incidentally beginning from a Serbian

⁸⁴¹ The promotion of the work of Jela Spiridonović Savić, notable Serbian poetess esteemed for her philosophical examination and revival of the metaphysical, not least from the perspective of (Orthodox) Christianity, is also indicative in this context. See her critical essay on Nietzsche, recommended in associational periodicals: "Knjige i časopisi: J. Spiridonović-Savić, Tragika Ničea" [Books and journals: J. Spiridonović-Savić, The Tragedy of Nietzsche] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1-2 (1936), p. 44.

⁸⁴² Stanoje Stanojević, Sv. Sava (recenzija knjige u SP); Srpski književni glasnik (brojevi posvećeni Sv Savi); A book that claims this, focusing on projecting Serbian statehood into the past in relation to Byzantine civilization, was also promoted within associational periodicals, see: "Knjige i časopisi: Ilija M. Živančević, Novom pokoljenju (Belgrade, 1934)" *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1935), p. 49.

⁸⁴³ Stanoje Stanojević "Sveti Sava" [Saint Sava] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1935), p. 7-12; For more on the uses of and relevant trends within Russian Byzantology, see: Diana Mishkova, *Rival Byzantiums: Empire and Identity in Southeastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

context and ending in the realization of the Yugoslav state that also in itself emulated the remnants of the Byzantine legal and cultural setup.

The same could be said for Milorad Dragić, who evoked the likes of Konstantin Jireček and relied on distinctively positivist language on historical sciences to argue that the spirit of Saint Sava could, in parallel, be seen “when the Senj Uskoks⁸⁴⁴ attacked the Klis fortress (...) Dalmatian priests were persecuted and tortured by the Venetian authorities, they reached out to and helped the Uskoks, and demonstratively organized *ad hoc* liturgies, praying for the victory of the Uskok rebels (...) These and such actions of the national clergy were inspired with the symbol of the Saint Sava spirit. Because the Saint Sava spirit means a yearning for national culture, national freedom and national state (...) We see this tendency in the national spiritual intellectual creations, made during the period of enslavement, in which the ethics of the national state and national conception is at its most crystalized form”.⁸⁴⁵

Dragić hereby underscored that what Saint Sava stands for, namely the merging of church’s, state’s and national interests, belongs to all Yugoslavs, regardless of their religion. Such articles, that simultaneously employ positivist and neo-romanticist claims, represent a peak of the cross-fertilization process between the two streams and their respective intellectual cultures. Indicatively and in tension with the Serbian Orthodox Church’s insistence on the Serbian, rather than Yugoslav, heritage of Saint Sava, Dragić here pointed to its relevance and analogous effects to those of other early modern clergymen that counted as national, as well as anti-imperial, activists.⁸⁴⁶ Indeed, there were also those, such as Miloš Stanojević, who framed Saint

⁸⁴⁴ *Uskoks* (paramilitary fighters and bandits in Habsburg Croatia), see: Catherine Wendy Bracewell. *The Uskoks of Senj: Piracy, Banditry, and Holy War in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992.

⁸⁴⁵ Milorad Dragić “Sveti Sava i naša državna ideja” [Saint Sava and our state idea] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1935), pp. 114-117, here p. 116.

⁸⁴⁶ Many more examples are also enumerated in: Stjepan Roca “Biskup, Sokol i Jugosloven. Prilikom 89-godišnjice biskupa Frana Učelini-Tice” [Bishop, Sokol and a Yugoslav. On the occasion of the 89th anniversary of the bishop Frano Učelini-Tice] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7-8 (1936), pp. 198-201.

Sava's actions in the national character, seeking to render him relatable both to the contemporaneous peasantry and their culture, but also to the Sokol's associational program. In order to demonstrate this congruity, he published a series of anecdotes on Saint Sava and his permanent imprint onto the peasant mind and cultural production.⁸⁴⁷

The second relevant nationalized religious figure was the Catholic bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer, who was also a central persona of the canon of the previous periods. In this new iteration, however, he regularly became paired with Saint Sava, in narratives that aimed to showcase the realization of the Yugoslavist idea throughout history. The otherwise markedly liberal and progressive legacy of Strossmayer was thus gradually replaced with his more essentially "national" role. Strossmayer's biography was also exploited for the sake of presenting a counter-balance to the image of Saint Sava, in hope that joining of the two figures would satisfy representatives of different national cultures, evidently and dominantly Serbian and Croatian one, in the process of creating a common religionized canon. This process could well be seen in the text submitted by a Split-based Sokol activist and progressive nationalist publicist Stjepan Roca. In an emotional plea against particularisms and religious discrimination, Roca exclaimed: "We do not ask who was born in which part of our country, but how much his labor contributed to the strengthening, development, liberation and unification of our nation (...)" Strossmayer wanted to preserve and keep the old custom of some Dalmatian churches, whereby Catholics and Orthodox believers held a joint liturgy in the same church, at least once per year (...) in such churches Strossmayer saw not only national unity, but also a religious one".⁸⁴⁸ In fact, Roca made a comparison between Strossmayer's moderate unionism and Serbian medieval rulers' respect for their non-Orthodox subjects. This 'spirit', the concept also being indicative

⁸⁴⁷ Miloš Stanojević "Sveti Sava. Po narodnoj priči i verovanju" [Saint Sava. According to the folk tales and beliefs] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1 (1935), pp. 1-2.

⁸⁴⁸ Stjepan Roca "Svetosavski i Štrosmajerov duh" [Saint Sava and Strossmayer spirit] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1-2 (1936), pp. 5-8, here p. 5, p. 7.

of an ever loaded Hegelian presupposition on historical development, merely manifested itself in policies of such historical personas, according to such perspectives. A Montenegrin Sokol activist and teacher, Miraš Kićović, further discussed Strossmayer's unionism,⁸⁴⁹ disproving Serbian Orthodox Church's long-standing aversion towards merging with the Catholic Church, instead casting it as a politically calculated move towards achieving national unity, assuming the two churches also represented the two respective South Slavic national cultures.

Ultimately, this was also a period when the work of the white émigré clergymen, such as Grigory Spiridonovich Petrov, became relevant in the associational periodicals. It was also Roca who promoted his biography and work, suggesting to the Ministry of Education for them to be incorporated among the mandatory school readings across the country, given their pedagogically progressive and democratic character.⁸⁵⁰ A notable socialist and critic of the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as Member of Duma belonging to a Constitutional Democratic Party, Petrov emigrated to Yugoslavia following the Bolshevik revolution, although most of his works were published while he still resided in the Russian Empire. Even if he passed away relatively early, already in 1925, his moderately liberal and moral-centered publications and famous speeches, must have convinced Roca and his milieu that Orthodoxy is a viable ally for Sokol and its educational mission. In sum, while the rapprochement with religious thought occurred in this period, it was most likely a result of the cross-fertilization between the two streams, on the one hand, and also a reaction to the Orthodox and Catholic church's renewed 'tribalization' at the expense of the Yugoslavist paradigm, on the other. Despite their attempt to 'Yugoslavize' these figures and different elements of the individual national projects' canons or historical narratives, what they managed to do instead was to elevate the position of religious,

⁸⁴⁹ Miraš Kićović "Delo Josipa Jurja Štrosmajera" [The work of Josip Juraj Strossmayer] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1937), pp. 43-46.

⁸⁵⁰ Stjepan Roca "Grigorije Petrov: narodni prosvetitelj" [Grigorije Petrov: the national educator] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 9-10 (1936), pp. 100-103.

particularly Christian, thought and thinking as such, within the purportedly liberal and modernist associational project.

The second most important tenet of neo-romanticization of the discourses thereat, were those that sought to autochtonize political modernity as such, in contrast to those from the previous periods that instead aimed at merely appropriating the Western-cum-Czech model. In this context, autochtonization meant searching for the authentic cultural blueprints that could be extrapolated and elevated onto the state level, in terms of state organization and overall arrangement of the public life of the given political community. Even if the Czech Sokol model and its intellectual cognates also described their intentions in a similar way since the 1860s onwards, they were still ‘foreign’ and ‘Western’ enough for the neo-romanticist portion of the Yugoslav group, enabling them to reject their model in a move that could be described as ‘nesting autochtonism’.⁸⁵¹

Unlike the preceeding decade when the essentialization within the discourses merely signalled a drive to appropriate the conceptual framework of political modernity, in this new phase, autochtonization went almost as far as completely rejecting the normative political modernity as such. The role of folk songs, dances, customs, as well as uncovering of the national character and soul from which they allegedly stemmed, thus became not only about perserving the national culture, but also about seeking for best possible models of the organization of political community at large. In many a case, this was legitimized by the discourse of the crisis of the soul (sic!), that such thinkers saw as caused by the ills of modern age, threatening to wipe out the last remnants of national authenticity and, conjointly, of potential models for a more authentic political organization. Moreover, autochtonization was not universally accepted by thinkers stemming from different prewar or originally ‘tribal’-turned-Yugoslavist national-

⁸⁵¹ Analogously to “nesting Orientalism”, as defined in: Milica Bakić-Hayden. “Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia.” *Slavic Review* vol. 54, no. 4 (1995), pp. 917–31.

cultural traditions, but was in fact spearheaded by those who belonged to the Serbian one. This disparity was overtly addressed by Laza Popović in late 1938, who depicted a *longue durée* of this dynamic within the association: “That portion of the Sokol history [LB: dominated by Slovenes and Croats] is characterized by lack of independence and by imitation, transplanting from the side of Czechs (...) Serbs to not merely transplant or immitate, but they try to independetly create and build up, and put their Sokol into the service of the national thought. That left a mark on the Sokol of Slovenes and Croats and since then, that side’s movement also displays innovations.”⁸⁵²

Many such authors argued from a position of assuming, and indeed revealing, the existence of such blueprints of political organization, among the peasantry and in the authentic national culture more broadly. This was the case with the otherwise progressive physican Hranislav M. Joksimović, for instance, who wrote about the mentality of religious tolerance he observed in Southern Serbia (today’s Macedonia).⁸⁵³ Basing his argument on environmental and historical determinism that he saw as the causes of South Serbia’s exceptional cultural and biological diversity, Joksimović argued that: “At the battleground of various cultures throughout centuries, a man of Souther Serbia he received, absorbed, adapted and shaped, consciously and unconsciously, his soul in a way that, once carefully studied and uncovered, traces of moods and thought can be revealed, whose origin lies in the ancient work of a mixture of different races, social and stately developments (...) In Skopje and entire Southern Serbia, Saint George Day (*Đurđevdan*) is a holiday of both Serbs and Muslims, equally of real Turks and Albanians [LB: Arnauta] and of islamicized Serbs. And they fall on the same calendar day. And something even more beautiful. Numerous customs, rituals and activities, that are done on the Saint George

⁸⁵² Laza Popović “Za prvi decembar 1938” [For the December 1st, 1938] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), p. 307.

⁸⁵³ Hran. M. Joksimović “Plemenitošću ka čvršćoj društvenoj zajednici” [With nobleness towards a stronger social community] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), p. 206-210.

Day, are the same (...) Saint George Day could, appropriately and wisely exploited for a large number of common manifestations, contribute to the common understanding and enthusiasm for our state community and would have a state-making effect”.⁸⁵⁴

Other authors suggested similar measures, namely the upscaling of particular shared cultural phenomena, that they saw as progressive and authentic, onto the national level. In a rather philosophical text on the topic of Yugoslav ethics, Tima Dimitrijević, for example, called for a systematic and pedantic study of the “tradition and needs of our nation”, but also the “psyche in all the regions of our homeland”.⁸⁵⁵ He advised his fellow Sokol activists, saying they should “draw from the field of national moral and national culture, those necessary elements for the ethical and intellectual education”,⁸⁵⁶ so as to produce a new generation that would better understand Yugoslavia’s place on the cultural and intellectual map of Europe. This new “national pedagogy”, spearheaded by Sokol, must make a valuable contribution in the realization of the new age and bear the spirit of progress, Dimitrijević convincingly explained.

Drawing and extrapolating from the national culture was not only to be done based on observing, recording, describing and ultimately upscaling different customs or folk celebrations, but was also to emulate principles expressed by the folk sayings. In the perspective of neo-romanticist Sokol thinkers, different folk sayings and proverbs represented a repository of knowledge. A notable Belgrade-based Sokol activist, official and publicist, Đura Brzaković, for instance, explicitly posited the folk sayings, which he entitled “popular wisdom”, as a repository of Yugoslavs’ historical experience, that could be drawn on.⁸⁵⁷ As opposed to the 1920s, when such sayings were seen by the liberal-positivist thinkers merely as a tool for

⁸⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 208.

⁸⁵⁵ Tima Dimitrijević “Jugoslovenska etika i Sokolstvo” [Yugoslav ethics and Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1935), pp. 389-391, here p. 389.

⁸⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 390.

⁸⁵⁷ Đura Brzaković, Belgrade “Bratu Sokolu u selu. V. pismo” [To the Sokol brother in the village. 5th letter] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 3 (1935), pp. 37-8.

science communication in the most precarious communities, this period refashioned them as sources of knowledge and truth, to be extrapolated and communicated to the urban and already modernized Sokol membership.

What is more, some authors, such as then Tuzla-based Mehmed (Meša) Selimović, later to become a world-famous novelist in the postwar period, regarded folk sayings and storytelling traditions as a source of the most authentic national aesthetics, that should assume a dominant place in the overall cultural production of the state. In one article on the issue of folk traditions Selimović celebrated the national culture as a reflection of national character, philosophy and unique historical experience: “Our national poetry is an excellent aesthetic and ethical unit, particularly ethical. That was the podium of the nation that suffered and was forged in agony, humiliated but dignified in humiliation, who had time to sculpt his role models and also his opinions about the world. Our folk songs are a great book of wisdom, honesty, self-reproach, morality. (...) Old Vujadin is the incarnation of the hardness of our race and the perseverance of our people. (...) Hajduks are protectors of the poor; they renounced the comforts of ordinary life and ran away to the mountains, just to fight the oppression (...) Under the influence of tradition, a nation is formed as such, its physiognomy is built by this age-old view of things and life around it.”⁸⁵⁸

It was not by chance that the cultural production and aesthetic criteria ranked high in such thinkers’ reasoning. It was particularly the folk songs, and motifs displayed therein, that they flagged as clear evidence of the historical experience that molded the national character and body. The environment and events described thereat thus began to be read as verified historical sources and, except a minority of thinkers who still insisted on source critique and the traditional historical method, such as Viktor Novak, such neo-romanticist approach approached a

⁸⁵⁸ Mehmed Selimović “Narodna tradicija” [National tradition] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1937), p. 182-83, here p. 182.

hegemonic position within the associational discourses.⁸⁵⁹ What were previously objects of contemporary study, became subjects of history in a way that flattened many differences, even if diversity represented one of the key Yugoslavist tropes. The “popular wisdom”, “popular poetry” and “popular song” counted as signposts for contemporary politics and ruthlessly demanded curving the line of progress in the direction of autochthonous values and patterns of political organization.

Ethnomusicological analysis, for instance, thus became a tool of legitimation of Sokol itself, but also for drawing the physical frontiers of the national culture, under a positivist guise. The organic closeness of the Sokol ideals to the transhistorical national culture was best and most emotionally described by Miloš Stanojević who equalized the modern positivist experts and authors of folk songs who reflected on the complex, namely transimperial, historical experience of the South Slavs.⁸⁶⁰ He dissected each of the Sokol principles and provided examples from the national culture that converged with them, concluding that: “While scientists, together with Darwin, twisted all of this into some scientific forms and created scientific systems, our nation even unconsciously translated those systems into practice (...) Our gray-haired *gusle* player did not even know that Darwin and his theory exist, yet he only recognized its validity if, on the side of force, there was also justice (...) Unfortunately modern age came and in all its perversion, it bended both of them (...) a man must return to himself and measure himself solely by his strenght and soul. And for that measurement to be greater, the capitals of strenght and soul need to be increased. And nations need to return to themselves, following that same law: only that is national, which belongs to the nation by both force and justice.”⁸⁶¹

⁸⁵⁹ His epistemic authority was further reinforced by the highest associational officials, see: M. Stanojević “Istorijski razvoj jugoslovenske misli” [Historical development of the Yugoslav thought] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 293-296.

⁸⁶⁰ Miloš Stanojević “Snaga i lepota u narodnoj misli” [Strength and beauty in the national thought] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1937), pp. 96-99.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid, p. 98-99.

No achievement of modernity was safe from the ever more hegemonic autochthonous culture, at this point in time. The lasting relevance of the ethnographic and geographically determinist arguments, for such claims, is also evidenced by the publishing of Jovan Cvijić's most radical quotes stemming from the convergence of these fields, as a booklet in 1938, by the SSKJ's publishing house.⁸⁶²

On the other hand, the physical mapping of national culture through ethnomusicology can be well exemplified by the case of Mašan A. Bulatović, who argued that Yugoslav culture can easily be territorialized and charted, based on the appearance of the falcon (*Sokol*) as a folk song motif, across different regions.⁸⁶³ Other authors used the discipline and study of folk culture to try and naturalize and de-ethnicize the unity of the littoral and mountainous environment, into a single political unit, arguing that this unity was clearly expressed in cultural products of the past.⁸⁶⁴ In the same vein, Branko Polić began collecting, recording and describing the “national games” across the country, many of which were incidentally centered around mocking Jewish and Roma people.⁸⁶⁵

Others, such as Bogoljub Krejčik, described the “viril games” (*viteške igre/megdani*) of the people, in which he ‘discovered’ that not only did they not lag behind the Western ones in terms of usefulness and entertainment, but that they also promoted an image of a strong and capable woman, which solidified in the anti-Ottoman folk songs.⁸⁶⁶ This virility, as was evident to many Sokol thinkers, was part and parcel of the national character forged in the anti-imperialist and transimperial struggle of Southern Slavs for their independence and peaceful development, as

⁸⁶² *Reči Jovana Cvijića* [Words of Jovan Cvijić] Belgrade: SSKJ, 1938.

⁸⁶³ Mašan A. Bulatović “Soko u narodnoj pesmi i jugoslovenskoj kulturi kao celini” [Falcon in folk songs and Yugoslav culture as a whole] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1935), pp. 269-275.

⁸⁶⁴ “Naš plavi Jadran” [Our blue Adriatic] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1937), pp. 161-63; Niko Bartulović “Narodna pesma i More” [Folk song and the sea] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1937), pp. 164-65.

⁸⁶⁵ Branko Polić “Narodne igre” [Folk games] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 4 (1935), p. 148.

⁸⁶⁶ Bogoljub Krejčik “Viteške igre u našem narodu” [Viril games in our nation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1937), pp. 91-95.

was cried out in a pathetic tone by Đura Brzaković: "...heroism is one of the fundamental traits of our nation. It is being born with these traits, because it inherited them from its fathers and distant ancestors (...) We inherited an immense moral wealth that we need to preserve, because there is no nation in the world that made such a sacrifice for freedom, as our did".⁸⁶⁷ Even if national character was present as a concept from the early 1920s, virility and heroism only appeared as related tropes in the second half of the 1930s, most likely prompted by the political crisis and the increased militarization of the association. In other words, the discourses of political crisis radicalized conjointly with those of the crisis of national soul and character, pointing to joint solution of preserving the national culture in face of ills of modernity and external endangerment, and at the same time radically transforming the political organization of the state, so as to increase authoritarian, protectionist autochtonism.⁸⁶⁸

National culture was thus casted as a refuge from a morally degenerate modernity and uncertainty brought by global capitalism, by the likes of Marko Sablić who wrote that "...today's generation (...) sick from modernism and snobism of present day, can hardly understand the true value of our folk songs (...) Is it even possible, for a contemporary 'modern' man, to transfer himself into a spirit of the time when the words such as ethics, aesthetics, moral and philosophy, were not present in their contemporary form, but in much simpler terms (...) it should be said that in no other folk songs of other peoples, is there so much ethics and sense of justice and truth, as in our folk songs (...) just how huge is the difference between popular wisdom [LB: narodnog umovanja], understanding of honesty, values of truth and justice, the age in which our man spoke only through a folk song, and today's 'enlightened and cultured' age, where injustice and lies evidently rule."⁸⁶⁹ These attacks on the normative political

⁸⁶⁷ Đura P. Brzaković "Viteški duh u sokolstvu" [Viril spirit in Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1941), pp. 28-30, here p. 28-29.

⁸⁶⁸ Well articulated in: Josip Kocmut "Današnje potrebe" [Contemporary needs] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1936), p. 7-9.

⁸⁶⁹ Marko Sablić "Istina i pravda po narodnoj poeziji" [Truth and justice according to folk poetry] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1937), pp. 101-4, here p. 101-2.

modernity became ever more pronounced, in favor of autochtonist solutions. Some of the more daring thinkers even went as far as problematizing Western modernity in particular, clearly inspired by Spenglerian arguments, comparing the present moment with the fall of the Roman Empire. This was the case with the Karlovac-based theater actor and director Leon (Leo) Tomašić,⁸⁷⁰ whose article portrayed a tired out, deflated Western cultural sphere, void of useful political imagination, supporting his arguments by a variety of economic and biological experts' works that pointed to the strengthening of other centers of political and economic power.⁸⁷¹ Spengler, in this iteration, became an advocate of Slavic, essentially understood, culture, as well as of autochtonization of political modernity more broadly, based on the projection of Slavs' economic and biological advancement. A primarily moral decline of the West, argued Tomašić, signalled an opportunity for the Slavic East, to inherit its leading political role on the international stage.

Romanticism as such, furthermore, was never openly addressed or promoted by this stream of thought, except on a sole occasion of Russian Sokol's intervention into the SSKJ press, in which they sought to justify their Russian nationalist and white émigré revisionist perspective. To that end, they explicitly wanted to exonerate idealism, and relatedly romanticism, against a backdrop of reductionist Marxism-Leninism, with a hope of returning to "the correct historical path" that would mend the relationship between Russians and other Slavs, but also bring the USSR down, enabling them to "fulfill their mission in the East".⁸⁷² Overall, the discourses that contributed to the autochtonization of political modernity in this period largely relied on centring the national character and culture as the sources for the models of modern political organization, and over the course of doing that, highlighted the traits of virility and heroism.

⁸⁷⁰ "Leo Tomašić" *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, URL=<https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/tomasic-leo> (Last access: November 27, 2024)

⁸⁷¹ Leon Tomašić "Sumrak Zapada. Prilog sokolsko-slavenskoj orijentaciji" [Twilight of the West. Contribution to the Sokol-Slavic orientation] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7 (1935), pp. 352-355.

⁸⁷² Vladimir Poljanski "Slovenstvo i Rusija" [Slavdom and Russia] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1936), pp. 257-260, here p. 260.

Importantly, as a result of the cross-fertilization of the discourses between the formerly relevant liberal-positivist and currently dominant neo-romanticist group, the fields such as ethnomusicology and ethnography borrowed their epistemic authority to those Sokol thinkers who wanted to make, and in fact radicalize, such claims. They hereby promoted the trope of ‘crisis of soul’, which conceptually made a move from the more concrete and tangible subjects of discussion—such as body and mind—towards the considerably more metaphysical, and thus, mysticized ones.

The third most important tenet of the neo-romanticization of the discourses within Sokol was what Georg Lukács named “romantic anti-capitalism” in one of his essays.⁸⁷³ Specifically, in Sokol, it manifested as thematization of peasant social issues in a markedly romanticist manner, with particular focus on the *zadruga*-style cooperatives⁸⁷⁴ and different types of welfare provision. On a much smaller scale, it was also demonstrated by the appearance of protectionist and discourses against petty corruption, in conjunction with those that promoted a cult of patriotic labor.⁸⁷⁵ Nevertheless, given that the joint question of land reform and internal colonization represented one of the most pertinent political issues in interwar Yugoslavia more broadly,⁸⁷⁶ not least due to large chunks of fertile land still belonged to the non-Slavic populace, Sokol’s turn towards addressing the social position of peasantry had both economic protectionist and national-cum-ethnic framing and consequences. It is important, however, to

⁸⁷³ Lukács “Lebensphilosophie und die Erneuerung der Romantik”.

⁸⁷⁴ Dubravka Stojanović. “Imagining the Zadruga. Zadruga as a Political Inspiration to the Left and to the Right in Serbia, 1870-1945.” *Revue des études slaves* vol. 91, no. 3 (2020), pp. 333–353.

⁸⁷⁵ Jovan Udicki, “Posle dvadeset godina” [After twenty years] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 319-323; Stevan Žakula “Pisma tečajcima” [Letters to the students] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 3-4 (1936), pp. 30-32.

⁸⁷⁶ Dietmar Müller, *Colonization Projects and Agrarian Reforms in East-Central and Southeastern Europe, 1913–1950*. London: Routledge, 2017; Sarahelen Thompson, “Agrarian Reform in Eastern Europe Following World War I: Motives and Outcomes.” *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 75, no. 3 (1993): 840–44; John R. Lampe and Marvin Jackson, *Balkan Economic History, 1550–1950, from Imperial Borderlands to Developing Nations*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982; Milivoje Erić, *Agrarna reforma u Jugoslaviji 1918–1941* [Agrarian reform in Yugoslavia, 1918–1941]. Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1958; Zdenka Šimončić-Bobetko, “Kolonizacija u Hrvatskoj 1919.—1941. godine” [Colonization in Croatia Between 1919 and 1941]. *Povijesni prilozi* vol. 9, no. 9 (1990), pp. 85–164; Srđan Milošević (2013). “Nacionalni aspekt debate o agrarnoj reformi i kolonizaciji u Kraljevini SHS (1919-1920)” [National aspect of the debate on the agrarian reform and colonization in the Kingdom of SCS] *Tokovi istorije*, vol. 2 (2013), pp. 53–74.

note, that Sokol was merely one of the associations concerned with organizing internal colonization and participating in the ‘nationalization’ of areas whose land could improve the socio-economic standing of a great number of deprived South Slavs, at the expense of the non-Slavic landowners. The state also organized land expropriations, particularly in regions of today’s Vojvodina and Slavonia, at the time, while particular branches of ‘tribal’ political parties coordinated the process of their internal colonization.⁸⁷⁷

Whereas Sokol’s penetration of the countryside was still rather limited in the 1920s and early 1930s, the second half of the 1930s brought a significant expansion of their work and presence thereat, that went far beyond the initial educational program. Still, the educational agenda remained relevant and it was visible that thinkers such as Đura Paunković, had concerns about coming across as paternalist or too hierarchical towards the peasants involved in any given learning situation within Sokol. In his article on the problems of conducting educational programs in the countryside, Paunković admits that they have so far been unsuccessful whence concentrating solely on “democratic ideas”, without factoring in the pressing social issues peasantry might be facing.⁸⁷⁸ He thereby suggested adapting the Sokol programs to the class and background of their attendees, but also including them as co-creators of the curriculum focusing on the exchange between the urban and rural participants: “As the refreshing juices of racially-ethnic and ethnic values stream from below, so should the educational and cultural values stream from above.”⁸⁷⁹

Paunković, furthermore, saw this exchange as not always reciprocal, given that he saw the influence of the urban onto the rural culture as rather harmful. Even if he admitted that the countryside “demands both leaders and instructors”, he was not sure that urbanity, marked by

⁸⁷⁷ Šute, *Slogom Slobodi!*

⁸⁷⁸ Đura Paunković “Prosvetni i opšti sokolski rad na selu” [Educational and general Sokol work in the villages] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1935), pp. 275-286, here p. 276.

⁸⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 281.

numerous anti-social and degenerative phenomena, could properly step up to assume that role. On the other hand, the villages also succumbed to numerous troubles brought about by modernity and particularly party politics, Paunković further argued, deepening the gap between the two worlds. The sole solution, according to him, was “that instinct that was expressed in the intellectual works [LB: umotvorine] as a creative force; that is, the racial resilience and toughness (...) that racial instinct, ‘stronger than logic’ that keeps them on the level of its national duties (...) village should not be approached from the side and given lessons, but it should be culturally organized, instructed on rational economy, improvement of the life conditions...”⁸⁸⁰ It was thus evident to Paunković, as well as to the Educational committee, that more was to be offered to the countryside, than mere lessons on democracy and nationhood. Sokol was to assume a much more active role in the villages and, to an extent, substitute the state in regard to infrastructure and welfare provision, thereby translating its nominally progressive mission from urban, largely middle-class context, to the much more impoverished and traditional one.⁸⁸¹ Economically and educationally empowering the rural Slavic populace, sometimes at the expense of the non-Slavic one, thus became a pronounced goal of those, largely neo-romanticist, Sokol activists, who dedicated their efforts to the countryside. The courting of the state, presumably for the purpose of obtaining funding and political support, based on the results they achieved in this context, can be seen by numerous agricultural exhibitions they organized, and which were attended by the relevant ministers and other government representatives.⁸⁸² Similarly to other investments into human capital, from the previous periods, this one also had to do with their grander vision of the consolidation and

⁸⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 282.

⁸⁸¹ See for example: Veljko Kuprešanin i Rikard Marušić, *Onima koji dolaze: bilješke, zapisi, sjećanja i pričanja o Prvoj studentskoj radnoj četi i njenom djelovanju 1936. godine u Hercegovini*. [To those who are coming: notes, memories and stories about the First student labor contingent and its activities in Herzegovina in 1936] Zagreb, 1936.

⁸⁸² See for instance: “III sokolska poljoprivredna izložba u Konjicu” [Third Sokol agricultural exhibition in Konjic] *Sokolsko selo* (September-October), 1935, p. 112.

strengthening of the national economy through individually accumulated wealth concentration and improving labor efficiency.

For this reason, the topics of labor, crops productivity, seed quality, peasants' savings and temperance, were among the most frequently addressed within the periodicals of the period, particularly the Sokol village (*Sokolsko selo*) one. It is, however, interesting to observe that beside the numerous neo-romanticist and national economy-driven expert claims within that periodical,⁸⁸³ there were also contributors, such as the indicatively anonymous "G.K-c." (most likely a notable Lepoglava-based leftist agricultural expert Georgije Kodinec),⁸⁸⁴ who promoted explicitly Marxian understandings of peasantry and its class interests. The protectionist strengthening of the national economy through investing in peasantry's resilience and productivity can thus be seen as a shared goal of both the neo-romanticist group and leftist thinkers who also came to appreciate Sokol's efforts in that direction.

For example, in his evidently didactic article on the character and interests of different social classes, he cited both Lamarck and Marx, portraying all ideology and political behavior as exclusively class- or "function"-based, divided between the privileged and disenfranchised classes. Conceptually, he did not rely solely on "class" (*klasa*), but also on one's "profession" (*profesija*) and "legal status" (*pravni položaj*) that together: "make up the so-called class consciousness, the foundation of the permanence of the class thought and its structural significance, organic character..."⁸⁸⁵ In his series of more theoretical articles on the role of peasantry in a country, he placed the ongoing efforts at "economic rejuvenation" of the rural

⁸⁸³ The relevance of expert approaches to the peasant question can also be seen in the fact that Adam Pribičević's notable 1936 book *Seljak* [Peasant], rooted in discourses of peasant character and geographic determinism, was reviewed at length and recommended to the membership, for its explanatory value regarding contemporary economic problems of the rural world. See: "Adam Pribičević, *Seljak*" *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1937), pp. 75-77.

⁸⁸⁴ "Kodinec, Georgij" *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*, URL=<https://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak/kodinec-georgij> (Last access: November 29, 2024).

⁸⁸⁵ "Socijalno okupljanje grupa i klasa u državi" [Social gathering of the groups and classes in the state] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 5 (1935), pp. 68-70, here p. 69.

areas, as a response to the effects of the Great Economic Crisis, that he conceptually defined as a stagnation (*zastoj*) of the global economy, suffered primarily by peripheral countries and lower classes, such as peasantry. In this moment, he suggested, the time has come to rethink the relationship between a peasant and the land they are working on, in the interest of the national economy and “nation-people” (*nacija-narod*) more broadly, testifying to leftist thinkers’ complicity in the project of land reform and also internal colonization that followed it.

It was most likely the protectionist-cum-autarkic aspect that bound the two together in this context, particularly given the historical cult of the South Slavs’ *zadruga* cooperative that proved inspiring both as a model of both autochthonous political and resilient, egalitarian economic organization. Overtly framing it as a sort of “third way” between socialism and capitalism, Kodinec reflected on *zadrugas* in a global context, showcasing it as a *sui generis* “independent economic movement”.⁸⁸⁶ Thereat, he sketches the key differences between socialism, cooperativism and capitalism respectively, highlighting *zadruga*’s voluntary, non-state, non-violent character based on human reciprocity, serving the economy (rather than rulling it) and reconciliation of the needs of the individual and the collective. Indicatively, for Kodinec, these values represent a heritage of Christian teachings on the individuals’ duties towards the humanity at large.

To address the influence of capitalist economy on peasantry, he annexed another article dealing with English historical experience of industrial revolution. In it, he argued that while the capitalist classes virtually destroyed traditional peasantry over its course, they recently came to realize the innate economic and political resilience that it possesses. Faced with the effects of the economic crises and general instability of market economics, England will draw a lesson, hoped Kodinec, that: “agricultural states, that is the states where peasantry comprises the

⁸⁸⁶ Ing. G. K-c. “Suština zadrugarstva” [The essence of cooperativism] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1 (1935), pp. 12-14, here p. 12.

majority of the population, and where our Yugoslavia also belongs, are in much better position than industrial ones, such as England.”⁸⁸⁷ In other words, Yugoslavia’s semi-peripherality could be mended by the strengthening and emancipating of the peasantry through better implementation of the agrarian reform and the *zadruga* cooperative system.

The maximization of the gains to be obtained by the state policies introduced as part of the comprehensive reform, were announced in one of the news published in 1935, on the new plans for colonization of the areas around Ohrid and Struga (today’s Macedonia, generally an area with a fertile land, but also populated by the Albanian and Turkish population at the time) by “colonists, volunteers, citizens living in poverty and primarily the optants”.⁸⁸⁸ Given that the state’s attempts at this largely failed due to the hostility of the local populace and frequent raids of the colonies’ by the Komitadji, the fact that Sokol press published this article, might also be read as an invitation for local Sokol membership to support the state’s effort.⁸⁸⁹ This announcement went together with the one envisioning a serious and strict revision of the estates awarded in the 1920s to the war veterans, namely Serbian volunteers, so that they could be allocated to other families, in case it is determined that the current ones are not exploiting the land adequately or efficiently enough. Overall, the neo-romanticists’ concern for peasantry’s economic standing vis-à-vis the urban centers and capitalism, in conjunction with the concern for the national culture, played an important part in the transformation of the Sokol’s general program and associational culture, in this period.

Some thinkers, who were admittedly less concerned with peasantry as a social class, and more with the colonisation and ethnic homogenization itself, combined such concerns with etatist and technocratic proposals. Arguably the best example of such thinking is the seminal work of

⁸⁸⁷ G. K. “Seljaštvo u Engleskoj” [Peasantry in England] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1 (1935), p. 14.

⁸⁸⁸ “Pitanje agrarne reforme” [The question of the agrarian reform] *Sokolsko selo*, (November) 1935, p. 144.

⁸⁸⁹ On the failure of the previous attempts, see: Vladan Jovanović “Land Reform and SerbianC: Belgrade’s Problems in Interwar Kosovo and Macedonia” *East Central Europe*, vol. 42 (2015), pp. 87-103.

Vladan Jojkić, on the *Nationalization of Bačka and Banat regions*.⁸⁹⁰ Jojkić was a physician whose studies were intensively promoted in Sokol periodicals and in the Sokol courses on the given topics, in this period.⁸⁹¹ An author of several works on agrarian reform and colonisation as a means of ethnopolitics, Jojkić served as senior advisor in the Department of Social Policy and Public Health of the Danube Banovina in Novi Sad. The said book, an “ethnopolitical study”, which he self-published both in Serbo-Croatian in 1931 and in 1938 in German in Vienna,⁸⁹² provided a host of statistical data, regional maps and calculations with a developed theory on the way non-Slavic minorities could be targeted and made to voluntarily start identifying as Yugoslavs, with a special focus on the economic and security-related benefits of the proposed policy, but also on achieving the natural increase of the South Slavic population in the ethnically mixed areas. In particular, Jojkić operated with a conceptual binary of denationalization/nationalization (*odnarođenje/nacionalizacija*), which can be compared and to some extent equated with Albert Brackmann’s ideas of *Umvolkung/Entfremdung*, employed within *Ostforschung* later taken up by the Nazis as part of the *Generalplan Ost*.⁸⁹³ Despite subscribing to a Lamarckian understanding of heredity,⁸⁹⁴ in this book he mostly referred to cultural ‘nationalization’, circumventing the proposals for a biological merging of the populace in the mixed regions.

Jojkić’s tendency to promote new terminology for this type of study can also be seen in the usage of the concept of “živalj”, which denotes the biological (corporeal) totality of a certain ethnic population, which is assumed to be managed either by the state or a host of experts, essentially indicating social engineering and population management. In this context it

⁸⁹⁰ Vladan Jojkić, *Nacionalizacija Bačke i Banata: etnopolitička studija*. [Nationalization of Bačka and Banat: an ethnopolitical study] Novi Sad, 1931.

⁸⁹¹ Radivoj Vrhovac “Matica Srpska i nacionalni rad u Vojvodini” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1935), pp. 381-386.

⁸⁹² Vladan Jojkić, *Nationalisierung der Batschka und des Banates, eine ethnisch-politische Studie*. Vienna, 1938.

⁸⁹³ Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards. A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

⁸⁹⁴ Which is rather visible from his text: Vladan Jojkić “Problem genija i Gete” [The Problem of Genuis and Goethe]. *Nova Evropa*, vol. 25, no. 3-4 (1932), pp. 226–236.

particularly means managing the ethnic composition of these suspect regions (namely Bačka and Banat, which he also refers to as “politically and socially sensitive provinces”)⁸⁹⁵, inhabited by a considerable number of non-Slavic minorities on the most fertile land and close to the borders of revisionist Hungary. The history of denationalization he provides in the book includes references of geographical, environmental, transport-related and culturological influences on the given ethnic composition, with a special focus on what he saw as the past two centuries of cultural assimilation and majoritarianization by Hungarians that was achieved by intentional colonisation of their population and the consequent emigration of Southern Slavic peoples. He critiques pre-1918 nationalization policies as not systematic enough, based on which he argues for devising a detailed plan of South Slavic colonisation, namely tackling the “economically and socially independent elements” who should be incentivized by awarding them considerable agricultural and industrial productive capacity, as well as by ensuring the profitability of the said capacities in the name of economic efficiency.⁸⁹⁶

Jojkić elaborated on his version of Ethnomorphose,⁸⁹⁷ which he described as “melting from one nation to another” through state-supported measures. Naming it ‘nationalization’ (*nacionalizacija*)⁸⁹⁸ and ‘ethnic mutation’ (*etnička mutacija*) he argued that it’s based on a scientific principle, whereby the numerical strenght of the ruling nation and its national prestige manage to assimilate the minority, namely by targeting minority youth through joint social and cultural programs and against which the minority’s national consciousness presents a resistance. Putting the notions of prestige and reputation of the assimilatory nation at the forefront, he

⁸⁹⁵ Vladan Jojkić, *Hygienische Verhältnisse und Gesundheits-Budget der Donau-Banschaft*. Vienna, 1939.

⁸⁹⁶ For a broader analysis of the intellectual context of such claims, see Rudolf Kučera, *Rationed Life. Science, Everyday Life, and Working-Class Politics in the Bohemian Lands, 1914–1918*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2016.

⁸⁹⁷ Vladan Jojkić “Nacionalizacija Vojvodine kao ekonomski problem” [The Nationalization of Vojvodina as an Economic Problem]. *Nova Evropa*, vol. 25 (1932), pp. 314-20.

⁸⁹⁸ These terms later became frequently used and discussed within the association itself, see “Za dobre i čiste račune” [For Good and Clean Balances]. *Sokolski glasnik* 10 (1939) 9, p. 1; “Ni jedan Jugosloven u Jugoslaviji ne sme da se odnarođi” [Not a Single Yugoslav in Yugoslavia is Allowed to Denationalize]. *Sokolski glasnik* 10 (1939) 10, p. 1.

argued that the youth of both nations should belong to the same social milieu in which this kind of nationalization could allegedly be facilitated by the minority, voluntarily, despite the dissatisfaction by their parents' generation and especially the conservative women and mothers, whom he deemed to be "the most reliable carrier and keeper of inheritable national values".

He supported his argument by the examples of "Americanization" and the local Jewry from the 19th century, concluding that after increasing the number of South Slavic inhabitants in Bačka, Banat and Baranja, a cultural mixing of their youth with the minority youth should be organized, simulatenously to efforts at performing/showcasing the prestige of the idea of (South Slavic) national unity. This unviolent, voluntary assimilation, Jojkić asserted, would prove more effective than the violent, oppressive methods of the Hungarian state in the second half of the 19th century. Even if his suggestion was evidently rooted in positivist claims and technocratic ethos, the ultimate goal of such campaign largely overlapped with the suggestions of protectionist neo-romanticists concerned with peasantry's social position. The promotion of his work within Sokol, at this time, thus demonstrates the compatibility between the two intellectual positions. Moreover, the ever more visible overlap between the state's ethnic and economic agenda in these Northern regions, and the one of Sokol as an association, is evidenced by the books such as Jojkić's and the one by a notable Novi Sad-based archivist and librarian Dimitrije Kirilović, published by the Dunavska banovina, on de-magyarizing said regions.⁸⁹⁹

Finally, the last tenant of the propellant rise of neo-romanticist discourses in Sokol that could be discerned in the periodicals and other publications of the time, was Balkanism, that previously figured very scarcely and was almost absent from discussions on broader, transnational, cultural kinship and coalitions to be forged. While it permeated not just political

⁸⁹⁹ "Knjige i časopisi: Dr. Dim. Kirilović, Asimilacioni uspesi Mađara u Bačkoj, Banatu i Baranji - Prilog pitanju demađarizacije Vojvodine. Novi Sad, 1936" [Books and journals: Dr. Dim. Kirilović: Assimilatory successes of Hungarians in Bačka, Banat and Baranja—contribution to the question of de-magyarizing of Vojvodina] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1937), p. 39.

thinking, but also the cultural canon, historical narratives and ongoing memory politics—there were also visible changes in the way the new symbolic geography and culturo-spatial frame of reference played into the conceptualization of the political community and related concepts of ever more autochtonized political modernity.

The permeation of the otherwise relevant and ideologically diverse Balkanist framework, into Sokol, was primarily tied to associational rapprochement with the Bulgarian Yunak association, whose associational journals and other publications were being recommended and reported on in Yugoslav Sokol press.⁹⁰⁰ In other words, not much was said about other Balkan states or contemporaneous alliances, and there was a palpable bias towards the Slavic contingent, represented by the Bulgarians. In fact, on some occasions, their Slavic character had to be defended, by some Sokol authors, against rumors on their Turkish ethnic kinship. Even though Sokols' Balkanism was thus rather Slavic-based and largely autochtonist in its nature, it is important to note that it also somewhat overlapped, both intellectually and in terms of the thinkers involved, with the more progressive brand of Yugoslav Balkanism, gathered around the newly founded Institute of Balkanology.⁹⁰¹ The books and a journal published by that milieu, that considered the Balkans to be representative of alternative and autochtonous political modernity, but also of peaceful coexistence in spite of ethnic and religious diversity, were not only reviewed at length in the associational periodicals, but also recommended to the Sokol libraries and courses.⁹⁰²

⁹⁰⁰ Such as the journals *Zdrave i sila* [Health and strength] and *Junaško selo* [Yunak village]; or books such as those by Kosta Todorov, *Politička istorija savremene Bugarske* [Political history of contemporary Bulgaria] Belgrade, 1938; or Vladislav Savić, *Bugarska* [Bulgaria] Belgrade, 1935.

⁹⁰¹ Mishkova, "The new science of Balkanology" in *Beyond Balkanism*, pp. 74-86.

⁹⁰² "Biblioteka 'Balkan i Balkanci', knjiga 1: Balkan i Balkanci, Knjiga 2: Borba za nezavisnost Balkana, dr. Vladimira Čorovića (Beograd 1937), published by Balkanskog instituta u Beogradu" [Edition: Balkan and Balkan people, book 1: Balkan and Balkan people, book 2: Struggle for the independence of the Balkans, by dr. Vladimir Čorović (Belgrade, 1937)] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1937), p. 389.

The embrace of this framework was not completely unwarranted, given Sokol's lasting preoccupation with the transimperial experience and inter-imperial division of South Slavs throughout history. The Balkan project tackled the same themes, including the tropes of historical borderlands where interests of Great Powers continuously clash, on a larger scale. This can well be exemplified by the statement of one reviewer of one of the Balkanology's most significant scholarly achievements, namely of the sizeable *Book on the Balkans (Knjiga o Balkanu)*: "Balkans were and still are a source of the enrichment of the Great Powers, that have nothing in common with the Balkan peoples, neither racially, neither nationally. Balkans were the unbreakable wall of the European defense from various invasions of wild and marauding hordes, primitive and half-cultured nations. From the book we can see that, for the past and present economic slavery of the Balkans, Balkan nations themselves are at fault. The discord of the Balkan nations makes them the slaves of the stronger and larger ones."⁹⁰³

Importantly, the reviewer highlighted the idea that Balkans makes up a natural geographic unit, yet remains extremely politically fragmented, despite its statelets' economic and cultural systems perfectly complementing each other and suffering at the hands of the same exploiters. These facts, he purported, were supported by world-renowned experts in multiple relevant fields, which was not completely wrong, given the Balkanology's steep rise in exogenous scholarly circles. Sokol thus became a vehicle for promoting Balkan political unification, using both Balkanology's and its own epistemic authority and image of a liberal-positivist hub. Taking into account when these discourses appeared and the way in which they coincided with the associational rapprochement between Sokol and Yunak, it is not implausible to suggest that Sokol was acting in Stojadinović's favor, even if some of their and Balkanologists' claims significantly diverged from the Prime Minister's ideological commitments. The convergence

⁹⁰³ "Knjige i časopisi: Knjiga o Balkanu" [Books and journals: Book on the Balkans] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1936), p. 186-7.

between the neo-romanticist package and novel regard for the Balkan questions can also be seen in the promotion of the books and works of Dimitar Lazov, one of Yunak's officials, that abounded with the tropes on Balkan Slavs' character forged in historical struggle for liberation from various imperial yokes.⁹⁰⁴

Finally, by the beginning of the Second World War, the Balkanist paradigm not only persisted, but was transformed and used for the justification of anti-Bulgarian political orientation. In their support letter for the Balkan conference and agreement, that took place in February 1940 in Belgrade,⁹⁰⁵ Yugoslav Sokol leadership accentuated the Balkans' neutrality and Yugoslavia's unique position, given its agreement on eternal friendship with Bulgaria and "settled relations" with Hungary. Due to this setup, they purported that Yugoslavia was uniquely suited to lead and mediate between the signatories of the agreement, namely Turkey, Greece and Romania, in their struggle to maintain neutrality and preserve their independence, for which reason they are rising their level of military readiness. The tropes and arguments taken from mid-1930s Balkanology, principally the resistance to succumbing to Great Powers' interests and conflicts, thus survived and got repackaged for the new geopolitical realities in the region.

4.2.3. Canon(s) in Crisis: Between Succumbing to "Tribalization" and a Defunct

Insistence on Yugoslavism

All of the aforementioned changes in the socio-political context around the association, as well as within associational culture and discourses, were directly reflected in the debates on national identity, historical narratives and in the contemporaneous memory wars. Since the brand of

⁹⁰⁴ Dimitar Lazov, *Junaštvo u istoriji balkanskih Slovena* [Heroism in the history of Balkan Slavs] Ljubljana, 1938, recommended in "Knjige i časopisi" [Books and journals] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1938), pp. 172-73.

⁹⁰⁵ "Balkanski sporazum u Beogradu" [Balkan agreement in Belgrade] *Sokolski glasnik* (February 2nd, 1940), p.1.

integral Yugoslavism that Sokol nominally stood for in the previous year, largely withered away with King's passing and especially with the renewed relevance of nationality politics among titular nationalities and beyond—particular thinkers' insistence on promoting it left an anachronistic impression. In order to respond to these new circumstances, as well as to novel subjectivities that began appearing, particularly the Montenegrin, Muslim⁹⁰⁶ and Bunjevci ones, an effort was put into incorporating their historical and cultural contributions to the broader South Slavic sphere, into the mainstream conceptualization of Yugoslavism. There were, nevertheless, those who *a priori* rejected Yugoslavism, or intentionally conflated it with their titular nationalities' identity, so as to be able to promote its individual virtues.

Both the cultural canon and historical narratives on which it was based, displayed the effects of autochtonization, with the Czech Sokol model gradually being abandoned in favor of local variants of 19th century liberal nationalism. In other words, the thinkers active in this period, sought to autochtonize the liberal script more broadly, in their indigenization of the Czech, namely Tyrš's, intellectual package. While this was also reflected in Sokol's memory politics, particularly building on the experience of the war into which they read the language of national character and contemporaneous political strifes, this genre also served to demonstrate just how removed they were from the political and intellectual demands of the newer generations. Since the generational change largely did not take place in Sokol, leaving the older generation in associational leadership almost until the very end of its existence, the publications on the memory of the war or late Austria-Hungary read more like an outdated perspective and attempts at fighting the old battles, than a relevant contribution to the ongoing memory-driven political debates.

⁹⁰⁶ Even if some of them also considered themselves to be Serbs, or at least an integral part of the Serbian national project, see: Hajrudin Ćurić, *Istorija "Srpskog sokola" u Sarajevu*. [History of the "Serbian Sokol" in Sarajevo] Sarajevo, 1940.

To start with what could be called “tribalization”, this period saw a return of the discussion on national-cultural individuality and the manner they should respectively be merged into the integral Yugoslavist framework. While it is fair to say that most of the impulses towards resurrecting these questions came from outside of the association,⁹⁰⁷ it is also possible to detect a latent conflict between those Sokol thinkers who sought to preserve the association’s commitment to Yugoslavism and those who, in different ways, obstructed this agenda or worked towards building up alternative projects, rooted in said individuality. Nevertheless, the majority of thinkers insisted on the Yugoslavist framework against the rise of the “nationalist-chauvinist reaction”, on a largely Serbo-Croatian axis, even if they admitted it found itself in a crisis.⁹⁰⁸

This growing tension, that partly stemmed from the new political circumstances and pointed to the fragility of the Yugoslavist project more broadly, was addressed by several contemporaneous Sokol thinkers. Among the most alarmist ones was the notable Styria-born, Zagreb-based literary historian Fran Ilešić, who warned against the “dangers of 1935”, in his speech, following the King’s assassination.⁹⁰⁹ The speech, given in the Zagreb Sokol club, was worded in a religionized manner by addressing “pilgrims” and “priests” of Yugoslavism, thus indicating the sense of mission and, ideally, conversion of others. In a doom-mongering tone, Ilešić admitted that the “psychological unification”, unlike the state one, was not finished yet and is being obstructed by what he saw as anti-social and egoistical separatists. One by one, he deconstructed their largely cultural arguments, showcasing the culturally individualist position as a backward one, as opposed to Enlightened and progressive Yugoslavism. In fact, he did not

⁹⁰⁷ As was noted in: Kornel Radulović “Sve je to nekad bolje bilo” [It was all better before] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1937), pp. 55-58; “Pošteno i istinito” [Honestly and truthfully] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1937), pp. 41-42.

⁹⁰⁸ See a very frank reflection on this issue: Miša Matić “Vizija Svetozara Miletića” [The vision of Svetozar Miletić] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1937), pp. 49-51.

⁹⁰⁹ Fran Ilešić, *Naše Ujedinjenje. Opasnosti godine 1935* [Our unification. Dangers of the year 1935]. Zagreb, 1936. Interestingly, the booklet, repositied in the National Library of Serbia contains a handwritten dedication to the Prime Minister Milan Stojadinović, and a date April 2, 1936, indicating that Ilešić thought Stojadinović would find his warning relevant.

stop short of accusing those who were “culturally grouping” themselves, of plotting for a state disintegration in the near future. The “Yugoslav question”, that Sokol members already “resolved” among themselves, was thus of existential importance, and required urgent and wider agitation.

Even if Ilešić implicitly admitted that this goal requires concrete activists’ conscious work, thinkers such as Grga Bogić still operated with an expectation that Yugoslavism will realize itself naturally and spontaneously. In his metaphor of a transition between a pupa and a butterfly, analogous to the one between a “tribe” and a “nation”, Bogić insisted that the realization of the Yugoslav nation is but a question of time.⁹¹⁰ He saw this process as being subjected to the laws of biology and sociology, rather than being a result of human agency. Bogić thereby made a plea, in his text, to leave behind any loyalty—cultural, personal or political—to the old “tribal” identities, that are soon to be swept away by the natural development of a political community in such circumstances. Thinkers such as Bogić, however, who might have owed his positivism and optimism to his medical profession, were ever fewer. Most thinkers involved in Sokol, precisely because of its practical side, knew very well that ideological socialization takes a significant amount of effort. Since the hard won results of their decades-long work began to wane in this period, there were more negative reactions to extra-associational “tribalist” phenomena. Such were, for example, reactions to the individualist claims of contemporaneous Croatian literature that “encloses itself with a Chinese wall from the literature and writers who were born outside of Croatian settlements”.⁹¹¹ Similar reactions were displayed by the Slavonian historian Antun Milinković, who was disappointed that: “In this day and age, it became necessary to point to the Yugoslavism of the past, to realize how Yugoslavia was not realized due to an accident or wartime luck, but that it was a conception of

⁹¹⁰ Grga Bogić “Izađimo iz čaure” [Let us get out of the pupa] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1937), pp. 46-49.

⁹¹¹ “Kroz naše časopise” [Through our journals] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1937), p. 157-8.

the best and brightest sons of our people”.⁹¹² Even the review of the Stevan J. Jakovljević’s famous anti-war Bildungsroman on the experience of Serbian military in the First World War, *Serbian trilogy* (*Srpska trilogija*), was reviewed in a way that overwrites its claim to Serbia’s immense sacrifice for the creation of the new state, focusing instead on the “fight till extermination, in which the sides are only differentiated by the fact that ones yell out ‘ure’ when storming, while the others ‘ura’”.⁹¹³

One other attempt to fight the upsurge of nationalist individualism, was to accentuate the geographic and economic arguments for the existence of the common state. For this very reason, several articles were dedicated to the Adriatic sea, as an issue that well exemplified this necessity. The goal was both to portray the Adriatic sea and its coast as a common good, shared equally by all Yugoslavs, but also to point to its defensive, economic, trade, traffic and tourism-related usefulness for the whole nation.⁹¹⁴ It was, moreover, to showcase the Adriatic coast and its towns, as historically important centers of Yugoslav cultural development and rapprochement.

The rise of national individualism did not only concern the SCS titular nationalities, but brought new ones into the focus, in this period. These were the Montenegrin, Muslim and Bunjevci ones, most prominently. While there was not much written about some, it is important to notice that some of their ethnonyms appeared for the first time on the pages of associational

⁹¹² Antun Milinković “Jugoslovenska misao u našoj novijoj književnosti” [Yugoslav thought in our newer literature] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1937), pp. 174-78, here p. 174.

⁹¹³ “Knjige i časopisi: Stevan Jakovljević, *Srpska trilogija*” [Books and journals: Stevan Jakovljević, *Serbian trilogy*] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1937), pp. 155-158.

⁹¹⁴ Ljubo Perković “Naše more” [Our sea] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1938), pp. 139-142; Stjepan Roca “Sokolstvo na Jadranu” [Sokol on the Adriatic] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1938), pp. 143-148; Tihomir Protić, “Jadransko more” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1938), p. 137-38; Stjepan Roca “Bratstvo i Jugoslovenstvo na Jadranu” [Brotherhood and Yugoslavism on the Adriatic] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 5-6 (1936), pp. 51-2.

periodicals, as was the case with Montenegrins.⁹¹⁵ Partially due to the 1936 Subotica *slet*,⁹¹⁶ but also because of the state's intention to "nationalize" Bačka, Banat and areas similarly characterized by fertile land, the question of Bunjevci group that resided there became rather prominent within Sokol around that time.

Given Bunjevci's historically ambiguous identity, torn between Croatian, Hungarian, Serbian and independent one, it was important for thinkers involved in Sokol to frame them as part and parcel of the larger Yugoslav one, embodying the same historical experience. In these articles' series they debated Bunjevci's ethnogenesis, linguistic characteristics, but also reflected on their nation-building struggles vis-à-vis the Hungarians and Serbs under the Habsburg rule. These themes provided them with a chance to construe narratives around oppressive Monarchy's inevitable dissolution in face of Yugoslav unity and preserverance against the corrupt authoritarian regime which didn't possess the capacity to self-reform and democratize. Their writings reveal a particularly grim view of the late Habsburg nationality politics, both in regard to class-conditionality and gaining of legal subjecthood based on cultural distinctiveness and national activism. Moreover, the Bunjevac vantage-point allowed them to argue that, despite Hungary's liberal and constitutional set-up: "National minorities in Hungary represented the first target for the government and it is natural that they awaited Austrian liberalism expressed particularly towards Serbs and Bunjevci in Vojvodina, which was then replaced by the Hungarian chauvinism. Subotica was at that time already the northern ethnographic frontier of South Slavdom and in that position, it was the first to receive strong

⁹¹⁵ Gavro Milošević "16 novembar, Sokolski praznik župe Cetinje, dan ujedinjenja Srbije i Crne Gore" [November 16, Sokol holiday of the Cetinje club, day of the unification of Serbia and Montenegro] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1936), pp. 254-256; See also a book recommended to the membership: Nikola Đonović, *Rad i karakter Crnogoraca* [Work and the character of Montenegrins] Belgrade, 1935, In: *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1935), p. 322.

⁹¹⁶ Aleksa Ivić "Značaj Subotice za južne Slovene. Povodom Vidovdanskog sleta" [The importance of Subotica for South Slavs. On the occasion of the Saint Vitus Day-slet] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1936), pp. 108-110.

magyarization waves that arrived from Budapest”.⁹¹⁷ In constructing such arguments, they thus projected both the nation-state logic and the modern concept of national minority onto the imperial past.

Moreover, Ivo Milić, originally an islander from Brač who settled in Subotica and became a professor at the local University of Law, as well as a founder of the rather unsuccessful *Subotička Matica* cultural association (1920)—reflected on this cluster of issues in the following manner: “The language and the customs were most staunchly upheld by the Bunjevac (grand)mothers, particularly in the Salaš-style dwellings, where it was more difficult to implement the mandatory attendance of the denationalizing [LB: denacionalizatorske] schools (...) If our liberation would have been belated by fifty years, it would have been unfathomable for us to rescind the northern Bačka by evoking the principle of nationality. Subotica-based Bunjevci and Serbs were awaiting the national destiny of their tribesmen in Szeged, where they used to be in majority, but nowadays they are not being taken care of.”⁹¹⁸ In fact, in such narratives, Bunjevci’s national activism and perseverance are not only shown as responsible for expanding and appropriating a particular territory, but also as an essential part of the integral Yugoslavist struggle for unification and statehood in the *longue durée*. This argument owes much to the long-standing idea they are culturally and historically positioned between Croatian and Serbian “ethnic spaces”.

This was well articulated by a notable Novi Sad-based philosopher and writer Vasa Stajić who provided a historical narrative of Bunjevac-Serbian cooperation against the oppressive Hungarian government, posing Bosnian Franciscans and the Serbian Orthodox Church as the main actors in laying the groundwork for the “national unity”. He also portrayed the Serbian

⁹¹⁷ Jozo Šokčić “Kolor Milodanović, prvi bunjevački novinar” [Kolor Milodanović, the first Bunjevci journalist] *Sokolska prosveta* 6 (1936), pp. 155-159, here p. 155.

⁹¹⁸ Ivo Milić “O bačkim Bunjevcima” [On the Bačka Bunjevci] *Sokolska prosveta* 4 (1935), pp. 187-192, here p. 188.

national movement as a blueprint for the Bunjevci, by saying: “Bunjevci needed the Serbs. First they needed them as an illustrative example: one doesn’t need to be a Hungarian, if they became *nobilis regni Hungariae*; doesn’t have to be a Hungarian even if they graduate from the Subotica gymnasium, or even the Pest one, or if they receive a position in the Subotica magistrate. The Subotica Serbs demonstrated this without success to the Bunjevci by a whole lot of their noblement and intelligentsia. (...) It has been, however, shown that it is not enough to provide an example to Bunjevci, but they also need to be helped directly, in order to stop the magyarizing of the Bunjevci intelligentsia and to provide the masses with national books, Serbian and Croatian, alongside the Bunjevci prayerbook. (...) Once awoken, Bunjevci did nothing without the Serbs. When they economically organized themselves into the People’s Smallholders’ Bank, or the Agricultural Savings Bank, they did it all in concert...”⁹¹⁹

Finally, in these types of narratives the late Habsburg nationality politics seems to become a ground of either being nationalized or denationalized, retaining legal subjecthood or becoming assimilated into the oppressive and non-democratic Hungarian nation, often with the added benefit of achieving social mobility, at the expense of losing one’s language and, consequently, national culture. On the other hand, deciding to support a given nationalities’ cause also came with explicit economic commitments to concentrating wealth in the given community’s financial institution.

A similar, “either-or” narrative on assimilation and class was espoused by Milivoje V. Knežević, a noteworthy director of the Senta gymnasium who focused on the issues of social class, mobility and prestige in conjunction to assimilation: “Quiet and gradual magyarization, resulting from the closer contact with non-homolinguistic and non-ethnically similar, but co-religious and more educated nationality, conditioned in particular with the common church-,

⁹¹⁹ Vasa Stajić “Bunjevačko-srpski odnosi u prošlosti” [Bunjevci-Serbian relations in history] *Sokolska prosveta* 5 (1935), pp. 227-231, here p. 228.

state- and social pressure, misunderstood patriotism, example of the alienated nobility and mostly by the education of Bunjevci youth in Hungarian language and Hungarian spirit—produced a division of Bunjevci into two separate groups: on the one hand there were the gents [LB: *gospoda*]—a cadre of alienated and educated Bunjevci sons, who (...), for the purpose of obtaining positions in the state and social hierarchies, competed in rejecting their simple, peasant ‘Rac’ language⁹²⁰ in favor of ‘gentlemanly’ Hungarian language (...) on the other side, there was an uneducated ‘peasant’ [LB: *zemljodilac*]⁹²¹ neglected by his educated sons, relying only on himself—without his books, newspapers and journals, but who protects his ethnic individuality and mother tongue in the shelter of his family, where the patriarchal Bunjevci (grand)mother truly stood as a priestess of the ancestral hearth.”

Further reflecting on the role of intellectuals in Bunjevci nation-building through promoting their language and steering it towards the Yugoslav community more broadly, Knežević concluded that their end goal was: “that the Bunjevci people once and for all stop classifying themselves among those anonymous and insignificant *egyebek*-nationalities [LB: ‘other’-nationalities, in Hungarian] of the Austro-Hungarian Empire”⁹²² which was very belatedly realized when the local administration finally allowed the use of Bunjevci language in schools two days before the Serbian army entered Subotica in 1918. In summary, this series of articles served to frame the 1936 Sokol *slet* in Subotica in a way that informed the Sokol membership arriving from different post-imperial contexts on the prehistory of the current ethnic composition of this region, which comprised of a significant portion of non-Slavic populace. It also attempted to pose Bunjevci as one of the essentially Yugoslav “tribes” and depict its historic role as an integrative one. In the same breath, these articles blamed the assimilatory and

⁹²⁰ This expression could denote any South Slavic language in this context.

⁹²¹ Written in the Bunjevci, *ikavian*, dialect.

⁹²² Milivoje V. Knežević “Borba Subotičkih Bunjevaca za materinsku reč” [The struggle of Subotica Bunjevci for their mother tongue] *Sokolska prosveta* 7 (1935), pp. 340-347, here p. 342.

economic pressures, to which many Bunjevci succumbed, onto the corrupt imperial politics led by the non-Slavic, meaning, regressive forces which were not able to accommodate different nationalities' cultural and political demands, ultimately causing Monarchy's dissolution.

Some authors even found it necessary to highlight South Slavs' earlier presence in these regions, compared to Hungarians and Germans: "...largely poor people, who came to Vojvodina once the fight with the Turks was over and peaceful times came. These settlers were brought later to Vojvodina by the Austrian and Hungarian authorities, so that they can share the fertile Vojvodinian flatlands with the Serbs, watered for centuries by Serbian blood."⁹²³ It was thus not only the populace, but also the land, that was historically attributable to South Slavs, according to these ever more radicalizing claims. When reflecting on a more recent history, some authors posited Vojvodina as an important site of overall Yugoslav art and *haute* cultural production, with its cities comprising of a strong and foreign-educated, as well as markedly cultured, middle class.⁹²⁴ The "northern regions" were thus thoroughly Yugoslavicized in the Sokol press of the period, with much of their cultural and ethnic ambiguity addressed from different angles.

Some thinkers, such as the Tuzla-based historian, madrasa teacher and *Gajret* member, Mehmed Salihspahić, also tasked themselves with promoting Yugoslav-cum-modern Muslimhood so as to provide the Muslim community with subjectivity within the larger Yugoslavist project.⁹²⁵ In his article on the question, he points to the fact that his community evades the habitual South Slavic equating of religion with nationality, for which reason it has

⁹²³ Aleksa Ivić "Slovenska naselja u Vojvodini" [Slavic settlements in Vojvodina] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1935), pp. 236-239, here p. 239.

⁹²⁴ Veljko Petrović, Belgrade "Vojvođansko slikarstvo" [Vojvodinian painting] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1935), pp. 419-423.

⁹²⁵ For more on this conflation in the Muslim context, see: Fabio Giomi, *Making Muslim Women European Voluntary Associations, Gender, and Islam in Post-Ottoman Bosnia and Yugoslavia (1878–1941)*. Budapest: CEU Press, 2021.

not yet been fully recognized as part and parcel of the Yugoslav one.⁹²⁶ In order to demonstrate this, Salihspahić outlined what he saw as numerous commonalities between Islam and Sokol—namely, collectivism, concern for hygiene, temperance, religious and class tolerance, “free thinking” (*slobodoumnost*) and liberty of individual development, as well as a sort of *Ijma* (consensus)-driven intellectual and communal exchange (“*Idžma um-met*”), that he compared to Sokol’s reform educational initiatives. Alongside these tradition- and value-based arguments, he felt it necessary to accentuate that the commonality of the two agendas was rooted in “our belief that we are ethnically pure Yugoslavs, which was also proven by ethnologists, who said that we possess no trace of foreign elements and that we perserved, through our instinctual national urge, our racial blood, national language and customs, tht are characteristic only for the pure Yugoslav tribes.”⁹²⁷ In other words, Muslims in Sokol were as Yugoslav as the other members of the association. Their faith, the conflict between which and the one rest of the population belongs to is a thing of the past, shared core values with the modern and liberal Sokol project.

A similar process occured in the case of the so-called South Serbia (today’s Macedonia), that was now thematized more than ever before. This was likely due to it being considered one of the “sensitive” regions, given its ethnic and religious composition, as well as Bulgarian claims on its territory.⁹²⁸ A later Chetnik-affiliated historian, Dragoslav Stranjaković, for instance, wrote about the 1848/49 propaganda campaign devised by a notable Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilija Garašanin, in South Slav-populated areas of Ottoman Empire—

⁹²⁶ Mehmed Salihspahić “Muslimani u Sokolu Kraljevine Jugoslavije” [Muslims in the Sokol of Kingdom of Yugoslavia] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1938), p. 20-21.

⁹²⁷ Ibid, p. 21.

⁹²⁸ The tension between the latter and Serbia’s and later Yugoslavia’s modernizing attempts were tackled in the review of notable Serbian historian and ethnographer’s Jovan Hadži-Vasiljević’s book, *Prosvetne i političke prilike u južnim sprskim oblastima u 19. veku* [Educational and political circumstances in the Southern Serbian provinces in the 19th century] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), p. 258.

accentuating Serbian state's contribution in "nationalizing" this territory.⁹²⁹ Furthermore, another well known Chetnik-affiliate, Ilija Trifunović (Birčanin), a veteran of the Balkan wars and previous campaigns for obtaining this region, reflected on the way the local living conditions improved since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Yugoslav state's patronage over the local population.

The modernization he illustratively described only happened due to Yugoslavia's authentic model of political modernity, before the realization of which, in Southern Serbia, "justice was served by the pashas and soubashis (...) with a wholehearted and efficient cooperation of the reform officers of the Great European Powers. For the fact that South Serbians finally managed to save them selves from that Bosphorian-European 'justice', that transformed our glorious cradle into the most neglected province of the Ottoman Empire, that now so successfully marches in the path of progress and prosperity, is the biggest achievement of those compatriots, who managed to path the way for the liberating Serbian army, despite being enslaved for decades while Serbying [LB: srbujući] under the bloody Turkish yataghan."⁹³⁰ In both of these accounts, modern Serbia's anti-Ottoman struggle and modernization of the region in question, are done also in resistance to the order that suited the Great Powers. The same, increasingly common, overlap between the autochthonizing and anti-Western, anti-imperialist discourses can be seen in Miloš Stanojević's account of the 1389 Kosovo battle, he published before the Skopje 1937 *slet*.⁹³¹ He thereby explained a complex inter-imperial interplay that led to the subjection and partition of the Balkan peoples among the foreign imperial powers, recorded and repositied in the folk songs for generations to come. As can be seen from the above-described examples

⁹²⁹ Drag. Stranjaković "Odnosi između Srbije i Južne Srbije u prvoj polovini XIX. veka" [Relations between Serbia and South Serbia in the first half of the 19th century] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), pp. 224-26.

⁹³⁰ Ilija Ž. Trifunović "Južna Srbija u oslobodilačkoj borbi" [South Serbia in the liberation struggle] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), pp. 231-35, here p. 232.

⁹³¹ Miloš Stanojević "U predvečerje Kosovske bitke. Povodom V pokrajinskog sleta u Skopju" [At the dawn of the Kosovo battle. On the occasion of the 5th regional slet in Skopje] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), pp. 236-240.

of arguments, the Balkanist, neo-romanticist and autochtonist discourses served both to Yugoslavize the ethnically mixed borderland regions and communicate their relevance to the associational membership, in a very pressing political moment. The rise of such arguments, however, at the same time opened the door for particularly neo-romanticist anti-Ottoman, and by extension, anti-Western and anti-modern perspectives, despite nominally accepting the Yugoslavist framing.

Finally, while these different attempts at responding to “tribalization” made sense within the microcosm of Sokol intellectual circles, it was evident by the beginning of the Second World War, as well as the signing of Cvetković-Maček agreement that brought to life the banovina Croatia (*Banovina Hrvatska*), that their stance was far from the political mainstream. Nevertheless, the associational leadership insisted on promoting the Yugoslavist framework until at least 1939, when they announced the creation of the *National textbook* (*Nacionalna čitanka*), that was to combine the totality of historical narratives, cultural canons, “general theory of the Yugoslav culture” and other important elements of the curriculum they sought to communicate to the wider population, in spite of the comprehensive crisis and, in particular, expanding conflict with the representatives of the exclusively Croatian intellectual and political circles.⁹³²

The cultural canon and historical narratives promoted within Sokol in this period, displayed increased autochtonization of the concepts of political modernity, that was nevertheless still often used for promoting the Yugoslav framework. The previously dominant Czech progressive component—that stood for a particularly Slavic, liberal national and pragmatic thought—was now replaced by a more autochtonist view that questioned the notion of progress itself. The mushrooming of texts on Illyrism, as well as pairing its history with that of Serbian language

⁹³² “Nacionalna čitanka” [National textbook] *Sokolski glasnik* (December 22, 1939), p.1; “‘Obzor’ o sokolskoj rezoluciji i napadajima na sokolstvo” [Obzor journal about Sokol resolution and attacks on Sokol] *Sokolski glasnik* (October 6, 1939), p. 6.

standardizer and reformer Vuk Kardžić and mythologized blind anti-Ottoman poet Filip Višnjić—signalled a turn towards searching for, and in the process, creating, more authentic local blueprints for framing the cultural and historical unity of South Slavs, as well as contemporary political organization. This was, in part, also because the positivist and universalist language, was by that time overtaken by those scholarly activists who sought to strengthen the claims of the individual national identities (SCS) as well. In other words, the division between “positivist” Yugoslavism and “neo-romanticist” tribalisms, became largely redundant, as both streams permeated both groups, by this time.

Given that by this time, the Hegelian perspective on the “Yugoslav idea” that supposedly manifested and gradually realized itself through historical past, gained firm ground in Sokol and affiliated neo-romanticist intellectual circles, many of the historical figures and movements discussed thereat were presumed to be exponents of that idea. This can be excellently exemplified by the argument espoused in Miloš Stanojević’s text on “The idea of unity through centuries”.⁹³³ Reacting to those scholars who were in the business of deconstructing Yugoslavism, in various disciplines, he pointed to the existence of the Duke of Lower Pannonia, Ljudevit Posavski’s polity, but also to the Emperor Samuilo’s “Macedonian-Slavic Empire”, as legal-historical predecessors of contemporary Yugoslavia, even dubbing them both “united Yugoslavia”, portraying the latter as a powerful challenger and nemesis of the Byzantine Empire.⁹³⁴ Crucially, he explicitly de-ethnicized such medieval states, arguing that their mutual conflicts should never be seen as conflicts between the two nations, but rather between two polities that sought to absorb one another at different points in time. In fact, these conflicts were rather in the background, while the intellectual and spiritual unity of South Slavs was already achieved by the spread of Cyril and Methodius’, that is, distinctly Slavic Christianity, in these

⁹³³ Miloš Stanojević “Misao jedinstva kroz vekove” [The idea of unity through centuries] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1937), pp. 52-55.

⁹³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 52.

areas, from the early medieval period onwards. Stanojević's need to cast this history as one of different attempts and partial successes at political and cultural unity, likely indicates these polities were a matter of projecting legal subjectivity into the past, on part of both "tribal" and Yugoslavist actors such as himself.

It is, however, necessary to point out that highlighting the Slavic character of the Christianity was part and parcel of its autochthonization. Within Balkanist circles, this argument was also used to "other" the Byzantine Christianity, on part of those thinkers who considered it to be Greek, as well as corrupt. A notable Serbian diplomat and publicist, Jovan M. Jovanović (Pižon), for example, framed the struggle for the autocephaly of the Serbian Orthodox Church as an expression of the Slavs' "durable, resilient and persistent" character. Despite them being "better Christians than Greeks themselves", Jovanović alleged, they were at the mercy of the corrupt and greedy "despot effendi" of the Byzantine Empire before they decided to secede and live according to their own values.⁹³⁵

A similar situation can be observed with the pairing of the Ilyrian intellectual heritage and Vuk Karadžić's and Filip Višnjić's cult. On the occasion of the centenary of the Ilyrian movement, Ilija Mamuzić, for example, claimed that while it primarily employed the Croatian framing, it was still a movement with a Yugoslavist agenda, that succeeded in establishing a literary unity of Serbs and Croats.⁹³⁶ For this reason, argued Mamuzić, it represents an important initial phase of the national unification that is still to be completed. Conversely, Illyrism's failure, in certain respects, provides a valuable lesson on Yugoslavs' "national evolution" and "creation of a single national psyche" that can only be done in a joint effort. Mamuzić's text was visibly a warning to his fellow Sokol intelligentsia, to avoid the mistakes of the Ilyrian activists whom

⁹³⁵ Jovan M. Jovanović "Pravoslavna crkva pod Turcima" [The Orthodox church under Turks] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), p. 221-24, here p. 222-23.

⁹³⁶ Ilija Mamuzić "Povodom 100-te godišnjice Ilirizma" [On the occasion of the centenary of Illyrism] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1935), pp. 410-412.

he evidently saw as wrongly insisting on the Croatian framework and not taking into account the importance of abandoning it in favor of the Yugoslavist one.

In a more pronouncedly autochtonist manner, Milorad Dragić, for instance, submitted a very emotionally charged eschatological text on Višnjić, centered around “national unity”, asking his readers: “Are we relying enough on this true source of our national understanding and our ethnic will?”.⁹³⁷ Casting Višnjić's epic poetry as a source of national political will and aesthetics, Dragić purported that “Based on these sources, we can find the corrective to our contemporary public and political life.”⁹³⁸ In other texts, Višnjić's oral epic poetry was posited as a historical source *in lieu* of classical and literacy-based work of figures such as the ancient Greek Homer.⁹³⁹ The models of political organization were thus not to be found in the philosophical and political writings of rather positivistically fashioned thinkers such as Tryš or Masaryk, but rather the thought and aesthetics of early 19th century revolutionary epic poet, whose performances tied into the Serbian uprising against the Ottoman Empire.

Importantly, while the previous images of Tyrš, Masaryk, and even Ilyrians, did not bring into question Western modernity, but only asserted the need for its adequate appropriation into the local circumstances—the late-1930s historical narratives broke with that assumption and approached a position of completely rejection Western modernity. This was very visible in the way Vuk Karadžić was refashioned to be not only an important language standardizer and reformer, thus also a contributor to the realization of the “national unity”, but also as a model thinker who dared to conceive alternative, authentic and autochthonous, national modernity.

⁹³⁷ Milorad Dragić “Filip Višnjić i naše narodno pesništvo” [Filip Višnjić and our national poetry] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1935), pp. 416-418, here p. 418.

⁹³⁸ Ibid.

⁹³⁹ S. Č. “Filip Višnjić – jugoslovenski Homer. Sećanje na 100godišnjicu njegove smrti” [Filip Višnjić – Yugoslav Homer. Remembering the centenary of his passing] *Sokolsko selo* (December), 1935, pp. 145-7.

An anonymous author who reflected on “Vuk’s age”, and drew parallels with the present, described the following circumstances: “...while for instance Napoleon Bonaparte put an imperial crown on his head, and wrapped himself in imperial purple, Karađorđe carried a crown of thorns on his head, wrapped in the cloth of a Šumadija peasant woman. While Napoleon had before him academies of sciences and immortal academicians, Karađorđe had before him a people of shepherds, peasants, illiterate and eager for knowledge and freedom. France ruled the world, and Serbia was just waking up from the ashes, shackled by all the troubles of the previous barbaric tyranny. (...) Ripened, rotten Europe was an unspeakable land for small souls, for worms in the dust, for flattery, for meanness, humility and lies. But it was also the promised land for a Napoleon, Washington, Kutuzov, Mickiewicz, Goethe, Cavour, Bismarck, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Jungmann, Palacký, Kollár, Pushkin, Tolstoy, Tyrš and—how far would it take us to list everything. Our Yugoslav column of brilliant people would not be small either.”⁹⁴⁰ In contrast to this “rotten Europe” and its regional followers, he placed Vuk as a defender of autochthonous and pure, unspoiled, culture.

This new motif, namely the purity of culture, however, might have had an ambiguous meaning. It might have meant pure Serbian, given that this is the principal frame Vuk Karadžić used himself at the time, or it might have indicated a pure Yugoslav culture. The relevance of this ambiguity is witnessed by Grga Bogić’s intervention, who, in no uncertain terms, rejected any potentially hidden implication of Vuk’s Serbianness: “Vuk, a Serb? At the time, yes. Now, not anymore. Can Grgur Ninski, who added a national dimension into the liturgy in one portion of our nation (while thinking of its entirety) be considered, now, a Croat? Can Vuk, who added a national dimension into our literary language, not be considered, today, a Yugoslav? Long live VUK, THE YUGOSLAV!”⁹⁴¹

⁹⁴⁰ “Vukovo doba” [Vuk’s age] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1937), pp. 361-62.

⁹⁴¹ Grga Bogić “Nešto o proslavljanju Vuka” [Something on celebrating Vuk] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1937), pp. 366-68, here p. 368.

Reading the Yugoslavist agenda into Vuk Karadžić's early 19th century work was not meant to address only the scholars' renewed "tribalism", but also the political actors in a more narrow sense. Assuming a position of interpretative authority and, from it, asserting Vuk's conscious Yugoslavist orientation, Sokol authors explicitly related this issue with contemporary politicians' short-sited search for, creation of and reliance on "tribal" constituencies: "According to this image, presented to us by Vuk, it is visible that it would be a grave mistake of our national question, and even of our present political and stately life, to use the regional territories [LB: pokrajinski teritoriji] as state-legal and political measuring sticks (...) a former peasant boy, Vuk Karadžić, represents a personality who, with a force of a strong national sovereign, teaches us what our national unity is comprised of. And how the systems of national and state politics should be adjusted to our national unity and national spirit."⁹⁴² Karadžić's romanticist heritage, in a Yugoslavist setup, thus became a model for resolving the present crisis, stirred up by the rise of "tribalist" politics.

Perhaps the most explicit, about the reurrection of romanticist thought and aesthetics in this context, was Blagata Koljenšić, who praised Vuk's work: "because it demands a live connection between national culture and its natural foundation, instead of the mechanically artificial montage of civilization superimposed onto the instinctual being of the national soul... Vuk's thought is indeed a national thought because (...) it is a conscious formulation of the spontaneous, innate, intimate national yearnings and orientations."⁹⁴³ Many such statements thus aimed at deeply redefining Sokol's relationship to normative Western modernity and demanded a turn towards reifying the *völkisch* national culture that, in majority of cases, centered exclusively around Serbian and Croatian canons. One of the rare critics of romanticism

⁹⁴² Milorad Dragić "Vuk Karadžić i naše narodno jedinstvo" [Vuk Karadžić and our national unity] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1937), pp. 364-366, here p. 366.

⁹⁴³ Blagata Koljenšić "Vuk-odblesak narodnog genija" [Vuk—a reflection of the national genius] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1937), pp. 368-372, here p. 370.

past and present was the poet and hypnosis expert Ismet A. Tabaković, who portrayed it as an outdated petty bourgeois pastime of middle-class that does not dare to face harsh social realities of their time.⁹⁴⁴

In a synthesis of the dominant neo-romanticist paradigm, its insistence on historical, metaphysical and more narrowly cultural arguments, and a more positivist brand of historiography—it was Viktor Novak who continued shaping historical narratives and production promoted by Sokol. Some of his relevant contributions, in that regard, comprise of tying together the paradigmatic Kosovo battle, that Serbian national project traditionally regarded as a national tragedy and historically detrimental loss of sovereignty, on the one, and the noblemen Petar Zrinski's and Fran Krsto Frankopan's execution ordered by the Habsburgs, that the Croatian national project regarded in a similar manner, on the other hand. These two “national tragedies” at hands of Ottoman and Habsburg empires, Novak purported, marked similar historical setback for both portions of the larger Yugoslav nation.⁹⁴⁵ This example demonstrates well how the making of the new canon and historical narrative, even by professionally trained and respected historians, often meant combining the existing matrixes of the existing, “tribal”, ones, subjecting them to a contemporaneous understanding of Yugoslavism. In Novak's case, however, this also meant glossing over the reason for Zrinski's and Frankopan's execution—namely their readiness to cooperate with that same Ottoman Empire that had subjected the Serbian populace to its yoke, not long before. What mattered more to Novak, was demonstrating all of the relevant, namely Serbian and Croatian, actors' anti-imperialist historical record.

⁹⁴⁴ Ismet. A. Tabaković “Realnost u poeziji S. Kranjčevića. Uz 75godišnjicu pjesnikova rođenja.” [Realism in the poetry of S. Kranjčević. On the 75th anniversary of the poet's birth] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1941), pp. 34-6.

⁹⁴⁵ Viktor Novak “Pogibija Petra Zrinjskog i Frana Krste Frankopana” [The death of Petar Zrinski and Fran Krsto Frankopan] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1935), pp. 169-175.

In the early 1940s, Novak also published two books, dealing with the figure of the Yugoslavist bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer and his nemesis magyar cardinal, archbishop Josip Mihalović, who was controversially installed as an archbishop by the machinations of the Zagreb and Pest governments.⁹⁴⁶ He thereby insisted on Strossmayer as a representative of liberal national clergy that had fought for the Yugoslav cause, that in itself embodies values such as rule of law, egalitarianism, transparency, but also positivism and search for truth, with no contradiction implied.⁹⁴⁷ Mihalović was, conversely, portrayed as a loyalist of the regime in Pest, and traitor of his nation's interests. His second book from this period was rather intended as a teaching material for SSKJ's courses, than for a deeper scholarly examination of Strossmayer's legacy. It largely thematized his attempts at achieving the union of the churches, inviting the new generations to contribute to finalization of the project Strossmayer and his generation considerably contributed to. The publishing of these two books by Novak, particularly in this period, might be read as a historians' reaction to the (re)- "tribalization" of the Serbian Orthodox Church and public life in general. By pointing to the legacy of Hungarians' sewing of discord among the South Slavs, Novak might have warned—in particular the younger Sokol members—against contemporary Hungarian revisionisms' anti-Yugoslav agenda.

In a similar vein, Dušan Bogunović wrote about the radical jacobinist Croatian politician of the second half of the 19th century, Ante Starčević, who developed and promoted the thesis on Croatian historical state right. Bogunović casted him as a fighter for the unification of South Slavs, despite Starčević's life-long insistence on the Croatian framing, as well as notable attempts at diminishing Serbian political subjectivity. To justify his otherwise rather historiographically unusual claim, Bogunović underscored that: "he principally wanted us to be

⁹⁴⁶ Viktor Novak, *Dva antipoda: biskup Strossmayer i nadbiskup Mihalović u očima savremenika, 1870*. [Two enemies: bishop Strossmayer and archbishop Mihalović in the eyes of contemporaries, 1870] Belgrade, 1940; Viktor Novak, *Strossmayer apostol jugoslovenske misli* [Strossmayer, the apostle of the Yugoslav thought] Belgrade, 1941.

⁹⁴⁷ Novak, *Dva antipoda*, pp. 133-134.

one whole and as such, to be outwardly resilient and strong (...) He cared neither about the name, nor about the internal organization, as long as liberty, equality and egalitarianism were achieved.”⁹⁴⁸ In the same text, Bogunović historicized the recently assassinated Croatian liberal-leftist peasantist politician Stjepan Radić, also framing his prewar activities as part of historical Yugoslavist struggle, despite Radić being one of the key proponents of Croatian individuality and federalism. “He rose up against Croats who wanted to burn the Serbian flags, and instructed them to burn the Hungarian flags instead”, explained Bogunović.⁹⁴⁹

To sum up, Novak’s, Bogunović’s and other such authors demonstrated an effort at challenging the rising particularisms and at Yugoslavizing the canon and historical figures, around this time. While not a majority, there were still those Sokol thinkers who believed in positivist laws of historical and social development, that they hoped would eventually turn the tide in Yugoslavists’ favor. In a review of notable philosopher’s Vladimir Dvorniković’s book, one reviewer noted that Yugoslavia suffered from paradoxically strong particularist tendencies, “yet every man of ours knows that ‘culture leans towards larger integration and general humanization’ (...) general march of history and different phenomena of sociology and biology, demonstrate that life turns into dust all the weak, nonresilient, sick individuals, communities, nations. In a very humorous way, the writer reconciles nationalism and socialism, permeating them with higher level ethical principles or reducing them to ethnic principles.”⁹⁵⁰ As can be seen from this statement, but also other contemporaneous trends analyzed above, the process of intellectual cross-fertilization and even merging, was at its peak in this period, stimulating ever greater scepticism towards grand narratives and assertions on truth.

⁹⁴⁸ Dušan M. Bogunović “Momenti iz kulturne borbe za narodno jedinstvo” [Moments from the cultural struggle for the national unity] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1937), p. 346-48, here p. 348.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 348.

⁹⁵⁰ Radomir Gačić “Knjige i časopisi: Vladimir Dvorniković, Borba ideja” [Books and journals: Vladimir Dvorniković, Struggle of ideas] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1937), pp. 35-38.

As in previous periods, however, the publishing activity within Sokol did not only concern cultural canons and historiography, but also played a relevant role in the contemporaneous memory politics. Arguably, this period was one of the most fertile in that regard, compared to the previous ones. This could have been the case for two reasons, the first being that during the Royal Dictatorship memory was largely programmatized and sanctioned given SSKJ's position vis-à-vis the state. The second, furthermore, has to do with the aging of the foundational generation of Yugoslav Sokol as such, meaning they felt it necessary to publish their wartime memories or those of the late Habsburg period, once they were out of the gym halls. Some of them even opted for writing or promoting fiction or poetry, centered around these topics. It is also important to mention that SSKJ was an important mnemonic actor for memorializing King Aleksandar and his recent assassination, the martyrdom-driven narrative which they participated in devising. Moreover, 1938 marked the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Kingdom, allowing many thinkers involved in Sokol to reflect on their experiences and memories of the unification itself.

Because of the growing relevance of the anti-imperialist, and to an extent, anti-Western sentiments, but also of revolutionary thought in place of evolutionary one—the memories and fiction works on the recent history of Habsburg Bosnia, proliferated in this period. For instance, a reflection on the rejection of this transimperial division of Yugoslavs can be seen in Stevan Žakula's 1936 book *Sokol Rebellion Against Viennese Dahijas* (*Sokolska buna na bečke dahije*). Its text was originally performed in the National Theater in Belgrade for the anniversary of one of the high officials' of Yugoslav Sokol presidentship.⁹⁵¹ The booklet contains a curious poem, written in the Serbian national style of epic poetry, intended to be performed with the *gusle* instrument, describing the revolutionary political nature of the Sarajevo assassination with a mixture of concepts deriving from both Ottoman and Habsburg imperial contexts. In this poem,

⁹⁵¹ Stevan Žakula, *Sokolska buna na bečke dahije* [Sokol rebellion against Viennese dahijas] Belgrade, 1936.

he portrayed Sokol activists who participated in the planning of the Sarajevo assassination as part of the same historical development (in a Hegelian sense) of liberation and unification, as the protagonists of the so-called First Serbian Uprising against the Ottoman Empire in 1804. With the ever more frequent publishing of such memories, the image of the Sokol tradition gradually changed from that centered around “small-scale work” to an increasingly more revolutionary and political violence-related one.

It was not only memoir prose and politically charged articles in their periodicals that thinkers used as methods of solidifying memory of the recent past among Sokol’s massive membership. Fiction that thematized imperial experiences, usually of both Ottoman Empire and Austria-Hungary, as well as post-imperial transition(s), was regularly recommended both for the periodicals’ readership, but also for the Sokol libraries. One such fiction piece, which very much played into the argument which equated the Ottoman and Habsburg administrations’ relationship towards the Yugoslavs, was the 1935 *Dani na Miljacki* (*Days on the Miljacka river*) by Borivoje Jevtić—promoted in a Sokol periodical.⁹⁵²

Jevtić was a Sarajevo-based writer and theater director of Serbian origin,⁹⁵³ who was previously a member of *Mlada Bosna* (Young Bosnia) organization, for which he spent three years in prison during the war. The book in question represents a collection of short stories, about half of which have to do with the hypocritical establishment and the corrupt political life of Habsburg Bosnia, where the main conflict usually takes place between the cold “foreign” bureaucracy and the authentic, organic, yet oppressed South Slavic population inhabiting this region. The very first story, *Filipović u Sarajevu* (Filipović in Sarajevo), deals with the figure of Austrian general Josip Filipović who had overtaken Bosnia and Herzegovina following the

⁹⁵² “Knjige i časopisi” [Books and journals] *Sokolska prosveta* 6 (1936), pp. 184-185.

⁹⁵³ “Jevtić, Borivoje” *Hrvatska enciklopedija* URL=<https://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=29104> (Last access: December 8, 2023); For more on Jevtić’s brand of Yugoslavism, see: Emily Greble, *Sarajevo 1941-1945: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Hitler’s Europe*. London: Cornell University Press, 2011, pp. 44-47.

1878 Berlin congress, thus betrayed the Yugoslavs' national interests and "...forgot his kin, his father, his mother and his village, as soon as he put the collar around his highlander neck".⁹⁵⁴ When the deputies of different communities which represent the strict social and religious hierarchies of the local society arrive to meet him, upon his initial conquest, he treats them negligently and has a violent outburst upon receiving them. Over the course of the same evening he befriends a former pasha who was part of the Ottoman imperial administration until very recently and hosts him as a guest, accepting his earnest advice on how to rule Bosnia by keeping these communities strictly divided.

The description of the deputies thereat hints at another integral Yugoslavist historical argument, which is namely, that such strict social hierarchies are a byproduct of imperial rule and not an essential characteristic of, otherwise biologically and psychologically, democratic, cooperative, humanist and socially horizontal South Slavic populations: "The deputies met in front of the inn's entrance around 10 (...) entering consecutively, carefully so that they avoid mixing with each other (...) Even though they share the sorrow, discouragement and tiredness, it should still be clear who is a housekeeper and landholder, and who is poor and who a guild-member. [LB: ko je odžaković i gazdić, a ko sirotinja i esnaf] And who belongs to whom: Chirst, or Muhammed or Moses."⁹⁵⁵ In other words, it is implied that the imperial governors, regardless which empire they are representing, are prone to building on the existing social divisions and exchanging ruling methods among one another—to the detriment of their subjects.⁹⁵⁶

Another telling example of building upon such tropes is Jevtić's short story whose main protagonist, *Tio Mamuleto* (Uncle Mamuleto), goes to court fighting against the local municipalities' plan to tear his house down in an effort to build a modern market hall in the

⁹⁵⁴ Borivoje Jevtić, *Dani na Miljacki*. [Days on the Miljacka river] Belgrade: Geca Kon, 1935, p. 8.

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid, 9.

⁹⁵⁶ This could also be captured by the recently promoted theoretical concept of the "imperial cloud", see: Kamissek, Christoph, and Jonas Kreienbaum. "An Imperial Cloud? Conceptualising Interimperial Connections and Transimperial Knowledge." *Journal of Modern European History* 14, no. 2 (2016): 164–82.

Ferhadija borough of Sarajevo, thus threatening to divide the centuries-old Serbian-Jewish community forged in the darkest of times. The municipality counselors keep persuading him to sell his house (“the world has become corrupted, it lost the sentiment for its forefathers’ bedrock”),⁹⁵⁷ but Mamuleto vehemently refuses to sell his house (“stubborn and persistend as the race he originated from”).⁹⁵⁸ Finally, the executors carry out the eviction on Shabbat, while he was at the Synagogue, displacing his family and their centuries-old memorabilia. Once he returns home, seeing the police and firefighters destroying his house, he cries out in desperation: “The German [LB: Švabo] took my grandfathers’ house and wants to turn it into a market!”⁹⁵⁹ and decides to leave for good to Jerusalem with his family. In this case, the author draws the attention to the Habsburg administration’s essentially illegal and heritage-disregarding modernization and progress which comes at the expense of destroying historical boroughs, historical communities’ relations and ultimately the emigration of the vulnerable communities.

Oftentimes, the trope of such corrupt or illegal methods employed by the Habsburg administration under the guise of progress is also exemplified in a trope surrounding foreign capital in what are perceived as South Slavic ethnic lands. Both of these can be seen in another short story from this collection, *Izbori u selu* (Elections in a village), told from a perspective of a civil servant who goes to a remote village (“on the conjunction of large forest complexes which were mercilessly cut down by a foreign company”)⁹⁶⁰ to participate in an electoral committee. Once he cannot find one Muslim villager on the voters’ list and consequently bans him from voting, the voter attacks him, saying “Does it say there [LB: on the voters’ list] that I, Smail, who bloodily fought in Dobruja, don’t have rights in my own country, not even as much as a village fool who stole sorb tree fruits in other people’s fields, while I carried a

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid, 26.

⁹⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁹ The sentence is both in Ladino and Serbo-Croatian in the original text.

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid, 84.

shotgun!”⁹⁶¹ Despite the civil servant’s detailed, yet bureaucratic explanations, the villager persists (“I know the order: rights for all. Either I’ll vote, or not leave this place alive”)⁹⁶² and gets restrained by the guards. Later that evening the civil servant is shot at in the tavern where Smail works as a bartender.

To sum up, all of the tropes present in this book such as the insincere implementation of the democratic processes, resource exploitation and the co-optation of the imperial apparatus for the German and Hungarian business-cum-national interests, were also relatively common in the broader Yugoslavist literary canon, as well as in Sokol’s perspective on the last decades of Austria-Hungary. The difference was that they began more overtly legitimizing the actions of “revolutionary youth”, likely aiming at inspiring the present young generations to resist the revived imperialisms in Yugoslavia’s neighbourhood. Čedo Milić also weighed in with his view on late Habsburg period, addressing the political gap between the younger and older intelligentsia, in regard to cultural work with the peasantry.⁹⁶³

In the text, he accused the turn of century nationalist writers for blindly adoring the Western cultural and political model, without taking into account national or social concerns of the majority peasant population. All things considered, it can be asserted that these memory activists thematized the late Habsburg Bosnian experience to make two larger points. The first was about Great Powers’ universal imperialism, that they saw the South Slavic national character as bound to resist against. The second was an attempt to negotiate Sokol’s evolutionary tradition and point to the historical examples of its revolutionary agency as well. The most explicit reflection on the latter, and the work of autochthonizing the Czech liberal script

⁹⁶¹ Ibid, 87.

⁹⁶² Ibid, 88.

⁹⁶³ Čedo Milić “Naše misli pred ulazak u selo” [Our thoughts before entering the countryside] *Sokolsko selo* (September-October 1935), pp. 103-105.

in that sense, was provided by Nikola Mrvoš, in his lecture on “national liberation”.⁹⁶⁴ In it, he promoted the concepts of “national liberation war” to describe the events from 1912-1918, and of “revolutionary nationalism”, to describe the intellectual spirit of the times, respectively. Mrvoš hereby specifically repackaged Tyrš’s notion of individuals’ innate resilience to suggest the citizenry to begin preparing for the wartime military resilience against a potential invasion.

Other texts that could be categorized as participating in ongoing memory politics had to do with remembrance of the Balkan wars and the First World War, conjointly with that of the creation of the state, as well as the assassination of King Aleksandar Karađorđević. To start with those reflecting on the process of unification of previous polities and also of the past 20 years’ experience of living together in a common one—it is safe to argue that most of them focused on trying to uncover the reason for the failure of realizing the Yugoslavist modernity. Most of them demonstrated significant disappointment with the rise of “tribal” identities and related intellectual, political and social phenomena. Some searched for the origin of such developments in the general lack of education and unculturedness of the population, as well as in inclusion of such actors in a democratic setting.⁹⁶⁵

Some used self-deprecating arguments alleging that Sokol activists did not provide the public with “credible enough” evidence, demonstrating the South Slavic commonality and geopolitical necessity of a common state.⁹⁶⁶ In order to mend this, they envisioned a large-scale campaign that would ensure the meeting of citizens from different regions and their mutual cultural exchange.⁹⁶⁷ Others sought the roots of the present situation in the fact that the state was not set up, legally and administratively, for success from the very beginning—due to the hegemony of

⁹⁶⁴ Nikola Mrvoš “Sokolstvo, narodno oslobođenje i ujedinjenje. Predavanje održano na Saveznom sokolskom prosvetnom tečaju 1936g” [Sokol national liberation and unification. Lecture given at the Union-level Sokol educational course in 1936] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7-8 (1936), pp. 203-211.

⁹⁶⁵ Vladimir Deduš “Jugoslovenska misao 1918-1938” [Yugoslav thought 1918-1938] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 309-311.

⁹⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 310.

⁹⁶⁷ Ibid, p. 310-11.

the old elites and their interests.⁹⁶⁸ They admitted that the initial disappointment was shared both on part of the “tribalist” politicians and those intellectuals who conceived and propagated the Yugoslavist modernity well before. The persistent struggle of opportunistic political entrepreneurs to find new and widen their constituencies, was addressed as a very material driver of “tribalism”, and in particular in relation to the still nationally “amorphous” Muslim population.⁹⁶⁹ Still, even with all the said critical remarks, they mostly agreed on the limited, but certainly significant progress that was made in lifting up the general population, by both state and Sokol over the past two decades, attributing this success to the conditions enabled by the fact that what was created in 1918 was a national state.⁹⁷⁰ Through these debates and investigations into the ever more elusive Yugoslav modernity, the memory of the past two decades that was promoted within Sokol, acquired the motif of permanent crisis and negotiation, whereas the importance of both Yugoslavist and “tribalist” activists was accentuated and relevant.

When it comes to the creation and promotion of the cult of the recently assassinated King Aleksandar Karađorđević, Sokol was, alongside other such voluntary associations that self-described as patriotic, among the most important mnemonic actors—particularly following the King’s passing. Through numerous articles on King’s life, death, character and contributions to Yugoslav and world history, Sokol thinkers created an image of the martyr, “national” King. Most of them already framed him as a (trans)historical figure, an exponent of the Hegelian Yugoslav thought, whose contributions to general peace and human rights, as well as to the anti-imperialist struggle, will be remembered and appreciated for generations to come.⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶⁸ Oton Gavrančić “Prvi decembar osamnaeste” [First December of Eighteen] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9 (1937), pp. 335-37.

⁹⁶⁹ Grga Bogić “Sokolsko ‘vjeruju’” [Sokol profession of faith] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 345-47.

⁹⁷⁰ Svetislav Marić “Prvi decembar” [December 1st] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1936), pp. 245-247.

⁹⁷¹ Miloš Stanojević “Narodni Kralj” [National King] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7-8 (1936), pp. 189-193; Miraž Kićović “Aleksandar I – Heroj i Ujedinitelj” [Aleksandar I—hero and uniter] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1937), p.

Moreover, the King's mystical and direct connection to the wants and needs of the national soul and will, was pronounced as a trope, in texts dedicated to his passing.⁹⁷² To justify his ability to channel the national demands into political sphere, oftentimes his and his family's modest origins, akin to those of romantically construed peasantry, were accentuated.⁹⁷³ Indeed, he was presented as a figure who knew, unlike numerous positivist scientists and materialist or rationalist intellectuals, that only laws of historical development and community-forging therein, matter when analyzing the nature of the Yugoslav commonality.⁹⁷⁴ In fact, some of them even went as far as not only sacralizing his person and didacticizing his assassination, but also as asserting that he himself returned "the Balkans to the Balkan people" and, had he lived, he would have assumed the leading political position in Central Europe as well.⁹⁷⁵

To conclude, the discourses that pertained to historical narratives, cultural canon(s), as well as memory politics, analyzed throughout this section, demonstrate the unfolding of two processes. First is the contention of Yugoslavist Sokol thinkers with the return of the "tribal" paradigms. It is visible that their insistence on Yugoslavism largely persisted almost until the very end of the period, but that the "tribal" (that is, SCS) historical "contributions" to the Yugoslavist cause also began counting more explicitly, in turn reifying the "tribal" nomenclature and historical subjectivity within the Yugoslavist circles. The second process was the cross-fertilization between the two groups, that was at its height in the mid-1930s and whose consequences were apparent in the rest of the period in question. Unlike previous years when the liberal-positivist group was in majority and the neo-romanticists largely marginalized, the late 1930s and

300-306; Josip Boko "Na dan 9 oktobra 1938" [On the day October 9, 1938] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1938), pp. 255-57.

⁹⁷² T. Dimitrijević "Kralj Ujedinitelj i vaspitač" [King Uniter and educator] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1937), p. 306-308.

⁹⁷³ Mileva Stanojević "Kralj-otac i domaćin" [King-father and housefather] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1937), p. 309-312.

⁹⁷⁴ T. Dimitrijević "Kralj Ujedinitelj".

⁹⁷⁵ Svetislav Marić "Deveti oktobar" [October ninth] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1935), p. 378-381; Branislav M. Stepanović "Nacionalni testamenat Kralja Aleksandra I." [National testament of King Aleksandar I] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1937), pp. 325-26.

especially early 1940s, displayed an intellectual change of weight in the Sokol intellectual production, in favor of the latter.

The most relevant effects of this process were the rise of anti-Western, and some cases, anti-modernist autochtonism, in complete contrast to the association's earlier orientation. Finally, as will be shown in the following section, in addition to the change in power between these two groups indigenous to the association, there were also external actors or traditions—namely communist ones—that sought to penetrate the association so as to expand their constituencies and promote their intellectual heritage to what they considered to be a susceptible audience, not least due to rather uncontrolled expansion of the association in this period.

4.2.4. Politics of Popular Front and Sokol's Ambivalent Relationship to the Left

While Sokol and the, otherwise outlawed, Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY), never cooperated or shared a political and ideological agenda, the latter's introduction of the politics of Popular Front from 1935 onwards, by the grace of the Comintern, stimulated their eventually limited rapprochement. It was in December 1938 that the *Resolution on the work among the Yugoslav youth* explicitly posited Sokol as one of the key potential partner organizations for the communist youth to penetrate.⁹⁷⁶ Since this extra-associational circumstance coincided with the expansion of the Sokol's social program and overall more pronounced anti-fascist character, it is relevant to examine those instances where the members of the CPY managed to conduct their agitation among the Sokol membership, most often youth, but also to investigate the extent of their overall success.

⁹⁷⁶ "Rezolucija o radu među omladinom Jugoslavije" in: *Josip Broz Tito: sabrana djela* [Josip Broz Tito: collected works], vol. 4, ed. Pero Damjanović. Belgrade: Komunist, 1983, pp. 134-138, here p. 135-6.

It is important to note, that the Popular Front in Yugoslavia gathered within its ranks those democratic, peasant- and workers' political parties, that already had a close relationship with Sokol in the previous periods, most notably Zemljoradnička stranka (*Peasant Party*) and Demokratska stranka (*Democratic Party*). Even if CPY never truly succeeded in assuming the leadership role within the Popular Front, the cooperation between a diverse set of actors in the opposition to Stojadinović's government, largely overlapped with the parties that CPY sought to influence through the Popular Front. The same was the case with the feminist organizations whereby it was the younger activists that merged CPY's agenda with that of their own; or the aforementioned anti-dictatorship "revolutionary student movement" that operated at the University of Belgrade from the early 1930s onwards.⁹⁷⁷ Sokol was also an integral extension part of this wider, Popular front-affiliated, structure and for that reason it also adopted the policy of creating wider political alliances, even if they found themselves in a delicate situation given that they still very much relied on state funding.⁹⁷⁸

Nevertheless, the disparity between the clubs located in different regions of the country, in regard to cooperating with CPY-affiliates, was blatantly obvious. In fact, it is plausible to suggest that it was almost only visible exclusively in the majority Slovene-speaking contexts. The reasons for this could be multiple. One could be the relative higher degree of economic development of the Slovene-speaking areas, in comparison to the other ones. More urban industrial workforce and educated middle class, might have meant a better chance for CPY's penetration into these classes' representation in Sokol. Another reason could be found in the fact that the Slovene-speaking urban areas already possessed a stronger base of liberal-positivist

⁹⁷⁷ The movement also overlapped with the feminist-cum-communist organizations that largely gathered young women into their ranks, see: Isidora Grubački "Communism, Left Feminism and Generations in the 1930s: The Case of Yugoslavia." in *Gender, Generations and Communism in Central and South-Eastern Europe*, eds. Anna Artwińska and Agnieszka Mrozik. London: Routledge, 2020, pp. 45-65.

⁹⁷⁸ Branko Petranović, "Osnivački kongres Narodnog fronta Jugoslavije" [The founding congress of the Popular front of Yugoslavia] *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1980), pp. 5-15, here p. 16.

thought in the previous periods.⁹⁷⁹ The radicalization and transformation of such thinkers' attitudes, due to the Great Depression and continuous political crises, not least the first-hand experience of facism by a notable portion of Slovenian intellectuals born in what subsequently became Italy—all might have contributed to the indigenous-born leftist thought, a fertile ground for CPY's expansion.⁹⁸⁰

One rather telling incident, historiographically known as the “Tabor trial” (*Taborski proces*) that testifies to Sokol's participation in the Popular Front coalition, occurred in 1939, in the central Ljubljana Sokol club (called *Tabor I*).⁹⁸¹ Namely, one of the liberal representatives of the older liberal generation, Pavel Pestotnik, accused Franjo (Franc) Lubej and six other younger members of the club's leadership, for spreading negative influence and “unhealthy ideas” among the club's youth through their recently founded “scientific circle”.⁹⁸² The conflict escalated into a formal disciplinary procedure against them, whereby they were defended by one of the most notable gymnasts and trainers of the club, belonging to the older generation—Stane Vidmar. In his defense of the group, Vidmar accentuated the voluntary basis of the circle, as well as the importance of Sokol's mission to develop critical thinking in its younger membership, and entrusting them to differentiate between toxic and healthy ideas.

He, moreover, pointed to the complementarity between the ideas propagated by this circle and those that represent the foundation of the Sokol ideology. In turn, Vidmar attacked Pestotnik for misconstruing the case, brining up very vague accusations without evidence and subjecting

⁹⁷⁹ Božo Repe “Intelektualci, političke stranke i grupacije u Sloveniji u predvečerje Drugog svjetskog rata” [Intellectuals, political parties and groups in Slovenia, shortly before the beginning of the Second World War] *Intelektualci i rat: 1939.-1937. Zbornik radova s Desničinih susreta 2012*, dio I. ur. Drago Roksanđić, Ivana Cvijić Javorina. Zagreb: FF Press, 2013, pp. 67-83, here p. 68, 74.

⁹⁸⁰ For more on the transformation of the previously national liberal camp towards the eve of the Second World War, in the Slovenian context, see: Oskar Mulej, “Stanje in notranja razmerja v slovenskem naprednem (liberalnem) taboru na pragu 2. svetovne vojne” [The situation and internal relations in the Slovenian progressive (liberal) camp on the eve of World War II] *Dileme: Razprave o vprašanjih sodobne slovenske zgodovine*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2023), pp. 33-72.

⁹⁸¹ *Sokolskemu članstvu, vaditeljski zbor Tabora I., govor na 1. dec. 1939*. [To the Sokol membership, by the gymnastics committee of Tabor I., speech given on December 1, 1939] Ljubljana, 1940.

⁹⁸² Ibid, p. 7.

the Ljubljana club to the needs of different political actors and regimes, in the previous decades. Even if the euphemism “scientific circle” (*znanstveni kružok*) does not unequivocally point to Lubej’s and others’ leftist, or more specifically communist, agitation, it is not implausible to suggest that the circle was an exponent of the Popular front.⁹⁸³ In fact, left Sokol not long after the process and joined the OF (Liberation front/*Osvobodilna fronta*) and CPY once Yugoslavia was invaded,⁹⁸⁴ as did many of his collaborators who were later historiographically dubbed “the left wing of Sokol” in the Slovenian context. France Lubej’s own reflection on this incident and its broader meaning was framed in terms of “democratization” of Sokol, presumably indicating both a generational and ideological conflict between the two groups.⁹⁸⁵

On certain occasions, Lubej framed it also a political conflict, given the “old guards” regime-friendly, JNS affiliation. The exact relationship between CPY and this circle is, however, historiographically rather disputed, and the existing evidence points to this process protagonists’ later explicit involvement with the CPY, rather than during or before the incident occurred.⁹⁸⁶ Lubej himself stated, in his book, that he and other leaders of the youth’s progressivist stream were first approached by Maks Nahlik, a CPY member authorized to recruit them, on December 18, 1940—and that the first official meeting between the representatives of both groups took place on January 13, 1941.⁹⁸⁷ What is, however, important to highlight is that this circle, in fact, comprised the core of the Anti-imperialist front (*Protiimperialistična fronta*), that soon transformed into the notable Liberation front. The most

⁹⁸³ Jurij Perovšek “Slovenci, Jugoslavija in začetek vojne” [Slovenes, Yugoslavia and the onset of the war] *Prispevki za novejšo zgodovino*, vol. 59, no. 3 (2019), pp. 74-97, here p. 86.

⁹⁸⁴ “Bili so med nami: Franc Lubej-Drejče” [They were among us: Franc Lubej-Drejče] *Naša komuna* (March 26, 1985), p. 2.

⁹⁸⁵ France Lubej-Drejče, *Odločitve: boj za demokratizacijo Sokolstva na Slovenskem* [Decisions: struggle for the democratization of Sokol in Slovenia] Ljubljana, 1980.

⁹⁸⁶ For the two sides of the debate, see: Tomaž Pavlin, “Sokolstvo in prevare” [Sokols and deceits] *Objektiv, sobotna priloga časnika Dnevnik*, (20.1. 2020), p. 22; Ivan Čuk, Aleks Leo Vest, *Prevarani Sokoli* [Sokols betrayed]. Ljubljana: Študijski center za narodno spravo, 2019.

⁹⁸⁷ France Lubej “Odločitve”, p. 162-4.

relevant actors, besides Lubej, who forged this initially informal connection between Sokol and CPY over this period were Zoran Polič⁹⁸⁸ and most notably Josip Rus.

The Ljubljana Sokol press, even that which was explicitly dedicated to and partially run by the youth, did not reflect the leftist commitments as much as it could be expected, based on the said accusations. For instance, the visibly informal and type-written *Sokol youth* (*Sokolska mladina*) journal, published by the youth section of Ljubljana Sokol between 1939 and March 1941, comprised mostly of articles on typical Sokol topics—physical education, history of the organization and some patriotic literary production.⁹⁸⁹ The very first article that elaborated on the mission of the journal was written by, at that time already aged, Viktor Murnik, a sympathizer of the purported “left wing of Sokol”.⁹⁹⁰ One of the most frequent contributors to this journal was Ivo Pelicon, later to become a LF and CPY member, as well as a notable political actor in the early socialist Yugoslavia. Still, most of the articles were written by the members of the older generations, and tackled associational and state history, or the classic Sokol intellectual repertoire, namely Tyrš and Masaryk.

Another relevant, yet highly underresearched, entry point for the CPY and its “fellow travelers”, into Sokol at the time of Popular front, was political puppetry. Originally a distinctly Czech cultural phenomenon,⁹⁹¹ political puppetry spread into Yugoslavia, precisely through Sokol’s mediation. By mid-1930s, almost every larger Sokol club had a puppetry committee, albeit not every puppet troupe produced political content. Many of them initially relied solely on the classics of puppet theater and theater in general, nevertheless still significantly contributing to the professionalization of puppetry as such. Due to the dissertation’s scope and design, it is not

⁹⁸⁸ See his memoir book that also tackles these questions: Zoran Polič. *Uloga sokolske organizacije u povijesti slovenskog naroda* [The role of Sokol organization in the history of Slovenian people] Ljubljana: Ljeto, 1952.

⁹⁸⁹ *Sokolska mladina*, 1939-1941.

⁹⁹⁰ Tomaž Pavlin “Sokolstvo in prevare”; Viktor Murnik “Sokolski mladini!” [To the Sokol youth!] *Sokolska mladina*, vol. 1, pp. 1-5.

⁹⁹¹ Cheryl Stephenson, *The Mobilized Jester: Czech Puppet Theater in Theory and Practice, 1912-1948*, PhD diss. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2018.

possible to inquire into the extent of the politicization and radicalization of the overall Sokol puppetry on the eve of the Second World War. A glance over their repertoire, however, allows for an insight into the distinctly Yugoslavist, and by extension, anti-fascist content of the chosen plays. It, furthermore, suffices to say that the key promotor and founder of political puppetry in the Tito's Partisan movement, sculptor Lojze Lavrič,⁹⁹² began and developed his career precisely in Sokol. In parallel, in German-occupied Serbia, it was Božidar Valtrović, otherwise a famous Novi Sad-based pioneer of puppetry and Sokol member,⁹⁹³ who most contributed to the development of puppetry in the Partisan context and well beyond.⁹⁹⁴

Still, despite these overlaps with CPY and agenda of the Popular front more broadly, most of which were realized only later, during wartime, the question of associational rapprochement with the communist ideology was actualized in this period, and debated by multiple actors in an ambiguous manner. This was, relatively early on, addressed by a philosopher, physician and eugenicist Franc Derganc.⁹⁹⁵ In contrast to Marx's, implicitly German, "historical materialism", Derganc poses Tyrš's, implicitly Slavic, "historical idealism", rooted in "brotherhood and progressivist freedom".⁹⁹⁶

Responding to those leftist critics of Sokol who dubbed these ideals as empty demagogery, he exclaimed that: "Brotherhood and freedom are phrases only if the political demagogues howl them into empty, suggestively sonorous and loud words. Whence, on the other hand, the silent and true science reveals them with the light of empirical and scientific [LB: prirodoslovne] method, there they became the fundamental truth of history and life."⁹⁹⁷ In other words, unlike

⁹⁹² "Lavrič, Lojze" *Biografski leksikon občine Slovenska Bistrica*. Slovenska Bistrica, 2021, pp. 133–134.

⁹⁹³ Božidar Valtrović "Pozorište s lutkama" [Puppet theatre] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1935), pp. 36-37.

⁹⁹⁴ Radoslav Lazić "Glasnici istorije srpskog lutkarstva: Božidar M. Valtrović, Marija Kulundžić i Srboljub Lule Stanković" [The pioneers of the history of Serbian puppetry: Božidar M. Valtrović, Marija Kulundžić and Srboljub Lule Stanković] *Scena*, vol. 4 (2014), pp. 91-94.

⁹⁹⁵ Franc Derganc "Soko u borbi protiv istoriskog materijalizma" [Sokol in the struggle against historical materialism] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1935), pp. 165-168.

⁹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 167.

⁹⁹⁷ *Ibid*.

Marxian class tyranny unfounded by science, liberal ideals were scientifically provable and thus universally applicable and inevitably realizeable. Sokol's task was, continued Derganc, merely to make these facts known to the widest public through a large-scale educational project, thus pointing them to the right developmental path.

In a similar vein, Milorad Dragić lashed out at “cult of the matiral and rough force”, ever more popular among the Sokol youth, that should be suppressed by Sokol and civic duty, rooted in nationalism that respects human dignity and individuality.⁹⁹⁸ Beyond such liberal alarmist tone, on the completely other side of the spectrum, there were those members of Sokol who founded and participated in the leadership of a White émigré-affiliated, extremely anti-communist Zagreb-based organization, entitled Society of friends of national Russia (*Društvo prijatelja nacionalne Rusije*), from 1937 onwards. In their journal entitled *For national Russia* (*Za nacionalnu Rusiju*),⁹⁹⁹ whose main editor was no other than a liberal feminist writer Milica Bogdanović, notable Sokol members, such as the historian and gymnast Franjo Bučar, wrote in the explicitly anti-communist Yugoslavist tone.

The society also mediated between the Zagreb Ethnographic museum and the local White émigré community, whereby they founded and expanded the collection of Russian folk artefacts, gathered from the families with whom they were in touch. Sokol's discourse of Slavic mutuality was hereby posed as a counter-concept to Bolshevism, with an indicative insistence on the Ukraine as the Piedmont of the future “national Russia”, but without awarding it any sort of legal or other subjectivity. Instead, the discourse on what they dubbed the “Ukrainian question” was that of the Russian, implicitly imperial, borderland.¹⁰⁰⁰ Moreover, they explicitly

⁹⁹⁸ Milorad Dragić “Dve ideologije—u 20 godišnjici” [Two ideologies – on the occasion of the 20th anniversary] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 10 (1938), pp. 311-12.

⁹⁹⁹ *Za nacionalnu Rusiju: glasnik društva prijatelja nacionalne Rusije u Zagrebu*.

¹⁰⁰⁰ See for instance: “Ukrajina o ukrajinskom pitanju” [A Ukrainian on the Ukrainian question] *Za nacionalnu Rusiju: glasnik društva prijatelja nacionalne Rusije u Zagrebu*, vol. 9, p. 5.

promoted anti-capitalist technocracy,¹⁰⁰¹ based on the writings of Wayne W. Parrish, a US journalist and aviation expert,¹⁰⁰² as a desirable order for the post-Bolshevik, “national Russia”. Parrish’s book, whose translation appeared in 1936 in Yugoslavia,¹⁰⁰³ sought to provide a sort of “third way” program for taming the technological progress, and related contradictions of capitalism that happen at the expense of humanity, and channel it for a better sustenance of national communities, in a corporatist manner. The expertise-driven technocracy is simply to apply the laws of science onto society, while reducing chances for instability and occurrence of crises. They would intend to manage this through measuring and adequately allocating energy expenditure in all spheres of socio-economic life, taking a particular unit of energy (“erg”) as their main base for quantification, but also as a measurement of a given state’s wealth.

Aiming to fight capitalism by closing the productivity gap between industrialized production and human labor, the US-based technocrats Parrish was a member of, thus regarded the potential future post-communist Russia as a great pool of human labor that could be equilibrated with the industrial production, based on fine-tuning the economic relations in accordance with the scientific laws of socio-economic development. It is thus apparent that while, in the case of Slovenian clubs, leftist and most probably communist thought was being promoted among the Sokol youth, Zagreb-based Sokol members participated in an extremely different project, thereby testifying to a rather localized approach to the rising allure of communism among the youth in the late 1930s, with immense disparities between the different parts of the country.

The situation in Belgrade, simultaneously, was marked by the expansion of the university students’ movement, namely through the United university youth (*Ujedinjena studentska*

¹⁰⁰¹ “Tehnokratija” [Technocracy] *Za nacionalnu Rusiju: glasnik društva prijatelja nacionalne Rusije u Zagrebu*, vol. 9, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰² Wayne W. Parrish. *An outline of technocracy*. New York, 1933.

¹⁰⁰³ *Tehnokratija: spas čovečanstva*. [Technocracy: salvation of humanity] Belgrade, 1936.

omladina) that organized continuous protests of anti-fascist and widely patriotic character. Due to Sokol's presence and wholehearted support for these demonstrations, a number of ultranationalist organizations led by the overtly pro-fascist Yugoslavist ZBOR accused SSKJ for collaborating with the communist youth, based on the presumption that communists comprise the majority of the students protesting.¹⁰⁰⁴ At the same time, the Croatian ultranationalist *Hrvatski list* (*Croatian newspaper*) accused Sokol for participating in the same event, yet charged it with intentionally conflating Serbian and Yugoslav cultural and political agendas. In its official response, an anonymous Sokol author equated the two accusations, concluding that what bothered both was not a potential small number of communists present, or a Serbian portion of the Yugoslavist cultural and political agenda, but that the demonstrations were of pronounced democratic and anti-fascist character. In other words, their anti-communism was not the same as Sokol's traditional and proved one, but a new brand, imported from the external regimes they sought to imitate, claimed the author. As the conflict between the ultranationalist ZBOR and Sokol escalated, based on the question of cooperation between Sokol and the protesting youth, the author concluded that such pro-fascist organizations would label anyone who is not a supporter of national socialism or fascism, as a communist or their collaborator. He accused them of having no regard for the dire necessity of creating a broader anti-fascist coalition in an attempt to defend the country from an imminent invasion, in cooperation with the state administration.¹⁰⁰⁵ This is not to say that there wasn't any overlap between ZBOR and the Sokol membership. In fact, due to the Slovenian national liberal heirs' gradual demise, it was not only leftist, but also more exclusively Slovenian nationalist and even

¹⁰⁰⁴ "Sokolstvo i omladina" [Sokol and youth] *Sokolski glasnik* (June 9, 1939), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰⁵ "Sokolstvo i omladina" [Sokol and youth] *Sokolski glasnik* (July 21, 1939), p. 4.

ZBOR-affiliated thinkers, who permeated the association, not least because of their overall anti-clerical agenda.¹⁰⁰⁶

Finally, some months after the conclusion of the Ribentropp-Molotov Pact, and USSR's early 1940 annexation of Karelia, Salla, Estonia, Lithuania, Litva, as well as Bukovina, northern Bessarabia and Hertza region—Sokol's main herald reacted to the change of heart they noticed among local and other European communists alike. Given CPY's ever stronger influence among the Yugoslav youth, they felt invited to respond to the new attitudes they saw appearing thereat, on the questions of Czechoslovakia, Poland and potentially the future Yugoslav situation.¹⁰⁰⁷ In contrast to what comprised the previous communist and generally leftist agitation, namely the need for building up a wider national-defensive coalition that would represent a core of resistance in case of Yugoslavia's subjugation or dismemberment—their new collective stance represented just the opposite, they reverted to calling for the experiment of world revolution and empty anti-war slogans.

In describing this attitude, Sokol authors did not stop short of calling the USSR a chauvinist imperialist force that undermines its Slavic counterparts occupied, or soon to be so, by the Third Reich. Overall, it can be concluded that there was perhaps some loose overlap between the Sokol and the United University Youth movement, many of whom were indeed affiliated with CPY, yet the nominal stance of the association, as was demonstrated, remained programmatically anti-communist and retained a distinctly liberal understanding of social questions until the very end of its existence.¹⁰⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰⁶ One of the better known cases of the latter was Ljanko Urbančič (Miljenko Urbančič) who later emigrated to Australia and became a politician, see his memoir prose in which he reflects on Sokol: Ljanko Urbančič "Sokolska stotnija" [Sokol company] *Svobodni razgovori*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1994), pp. 2-11.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Protiv unošenja zabune i rušenja" [Against the causing of confusion and destruction] *Sokolski glasnik* (April 5, 1940), p. 1.

¹⁰⁰⁸ This can also be seen from the promotion of explicitly anti-communist literature, such as that published by the *Svetlost* (Light) publishing house in Belgrade, see: *Komunizam i porodica* [Communism and family]; *Selo u boljševičkoj Rusiji* [Village in Bolshevik Russia]; *Šta je boljševizam?* [What is Bolshevism?], recommended in: *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1936), back cover.

4.3. Doing Away with Lamarck: Upsurge of Discourses of “Hard Heredity” and Technocratic Interventionism

4.3.1. Professionalization of Physical Education and the Technocratic Turn

The biomedical and pedagogical knowledge production, communication and related practices of this period resembled those of the previous one in many ways, particularly in terms of scale. Yet, the character of the knowledge in question, which brought Sokol’s long-term Lamarckian commitment into question, as well as the turn towards demanding state’s intervention into many aspects of “managing the national body”—indicated a change among Sokol experts’ priorities and understanding of the tasks at hand. This meant that eugenic discourses and practices, many of which began operating with the notion of “hard heredity”, were on the rise, especially in the Slovenian context. This change was also supported by the increased collaboration with state and other, in some cases, foreign institutions dedicated to social and racial hygiene, or physical education or anthropology.

In parallel, the positivism of claims of authors who wrote on physical education regarding the field they positioned themselves in, also radicalized, partially as a result of import of foreign discourses on the “science of physical education”, marking the final stage of its professionalization. Importantly, these markedly more authoritarian and technocratic discourses, many of which sought to diminish the very agency of the population in question, existed in parallel and, it could be argued, as a result of the heterogeneous reform pedagogical initiatives that Sokol acted as a vehicle for in the previous periods. In order to map out these processes and discursive changes, this section will first map out the socio-institutional

circumstances of the development of the relevant fields—that is, conjointly examine the mutual relationship between the changing tendencies of the knowledge produced and communicated within the association and associational alliances, networks, exchanges and cooperations—with focus on the latter. Following that, the next section will portray a transformation of the wide array of reform pedagogical initiatives Sokol emulated in different ways, into the more technocratic and authoritarian variant of conceiving the association’s mission, particularly in biomedical terms, whereby “negative” eugenics managed to gain ground in this period. Finally, in the third and ultimate section of this chapter, the continued debates around the political economy of the body will be analyzed, with special attention paid to the practical, and indeed interventionist, suggestions many of the authors proposed within and beyond the associational context.

Even if Sokol activists contributed to the professionalization of physical education studies in a significant amount, over the course of previous decades, these last years of the interwar period were the ones where their attempts at the fields’ institutionalization finally culminated. In fact, much beyond Sokol and the Yugoslav context, and for different purposes, physical education came to attain the status of an institutionalized and codified field of knowledge.¹⁰⁰⁹ For this to take place, Sokol and other thinkers who pertained to the fields’ fortification and formal establishment, had to resolve some of their internal debates—particularly in relation to the “new tendencies”, largely imported from abroad—that some of them felt endangered the proven, positivist, core of the entire endeavor.

It was, yet again, Viktor Murnik, who continued with his series of articles entitled “On the problems of systematizing physical exercises”, aiming to classify and divide different

¹⁰⁰⁹ Kretchmar, “Philosophy of Sport”.

movements and exercises, based on various criteria and purposes.¹⁰¹⁰ In that regard, and as could be seen in the previous chapters, Murnik did not shy away from employing some of the novel, postwar movements and framings of physical movement, when he saw them as aligned with the mission he saw Sokol as fulfilling. In contrast, and much more explicitly, the director of the Sarajevo's First Gymnasium and a Sokol trainer Salem Jajatović, blamed the “new directions”, “founded almost exclusively on strictly physiological bases,” for promoting crude individualism, at the expense of achieving a “sense of community” and relatedly, of civic duty.¹⁰¹¹ In the Yugoslav context, Jajatović highlighted, the latter is all the more important, given the immense diversity of the populace. Moreover, placing virility in particular as one of the key psychological characteristics of the nation, Jajatović ridiculed the imported tendencies that aims to produce “cissies”, through “conscious loosening of one’s muscles” or maintaining “free and loose posture, that was recently promoted among us, under the guise of (...) not straining the muscles in vain, and not expending energy without any purpose”.¹⁰¹² These overly relaxed movements, thus, in his eyes, threatened to jeopardize the grand task of Sokol, namely “the creating of a new Yugoslav citizen”, who needs to display a very particular set of bodily and psychological characteristics, such as “punctuality, attention to perfect purity of each movement, every posture, each and every little rule”.¹⁰¹³ In other words, what was at stake, was the ultimate goal of physical education as such—individual or collective development, as well as the means through which it is to be achieved.

A relevant signpost as to how exactly Sokol thinkers conceived of the authority of physical education as a field of knowledge, can also be seen in their reactions to some of the similar

¹⁰¹⁰ Viktor Murnik “O problemih sistematike telesnih vaj” [On the problems of systematizing physical exercises] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vols. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7-9, 11, 12 (1935), vols. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8-9, 10, 11, 12 (1936), vol. 2 (1937).

¹⁰¹¹ Salem Jajatović “Uklonimo površnost!” [Let us remove the superficiality!] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 9 (1937), pp. 284-6.

¹⁰¹² Ibid, p. 285.

¹⁰¹³ Ibid, p. 286.

claims espoused on the occasion of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, that they largely saw as politicized. The Third Reich's tendentious claims on the demise of the ancient Greek traditions were thus something they felt invited to disprove with a host of facts, expert literature and argumentation on the issue. Indeed, the rising popularity of sports as such, in that context, spelled doom for thinkers such as Stanko Trček, who saw the malign spirit of competition, and relatedly, selfishness and preference for accumulation of material wealth, as the root of the demise of the ancient Greek Olympic games, but also of contemporary ones.¹⁰¹⁴ In the process, Sokol posited itself as a rightful heir of that tradition, as well as a relevant pool of knowledge and expertise that must defend the truth about this history, in face of dictators like Hitler who abused it for their own agendas. Even if there were those, such as the Berlin-educated sports pedagogue Janko (Ivan) Kavčič, who sought to salvage competition as such, whether in sports or gymnastics, for its merits in terms of developing combating spirit and igniting motivation in its participants—they still represented a minority in comparison to those who prevented the rise of competition as such, within Sokol.¹⁰¹⁵

In addition to numerous similar arguments and debates, aiming to demarcate the field and elevate it onto an authoritative position, it was the institutional cooperation that some notable Sokol members established with the state or other notable institutions at home and abroad, that demonstrated the fields wider relevance to society and public life in general. The state's ultimately limited, yet expanded cooperation with Sokol in this regard, compared to the previous decades, also provided them with an opportunity to showcase the importance of their work for defending the state's interests, in a particularly difficult moment. Besides the aforementioned establishment of the School for Physical Education, such cooperations and initiatives include,

¹⁰¹⁴ Stanko Trček "Olimpije" [The Olympics] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 2 (1938), pp. 47-49.

¹⁰¹⁵ Janko Kavčič "Značenje takmičenja za razvitak tela" [The importance of competition for the bodily development] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 7-8 (1938), pp. 263-267.

for instance, the “Sokol-hygienic course”, realized in cooperation with the Central Hygienic Institute in Belgrade,¹⁰¹⁶ promotion of the Institute’s publications within Sokol,¹⁰¹⁷ as well as those by the members of the Belgrade Municipal Office for the Protection of Mothers and Children.¹⁰¹⁸ Moreover, the increase in scientific publications promoted in the associational press, together with more pronounced connections with academic journals,¹⁰¹⁹ demonstrated to the membership and other parties that Sokol’s knowledge expanded and was certified well beyond the associational circles.

The same goes for transnational cooperation, the most relevant case of which can be seen in Božo Škerlj’s research stay at the Warsaw’s Central Institute for Physical Education (*Centralny Instytut Wychowania Fizycznego*, or CIWF),¹⁰²⁰ whereby he sought to compare the results of research obtained within SSKJ and the one done on the CIWF’s own subjects. Finally, shortly before the beginning of the Second World War, once he was elected to the Yugoslav Senate, Laza Popović moved from Zagreb, his long-time residence, to Belgrade, and used his Sokol networks to establish a large-scale project of X-ray examination for all the children who resided in the city.¹⁰²¹

Crucially, while the claims on and boundary-work around physical education’s status as a field, developed rather prominently in this period, this process went hand in hand with the rise of

¹⁰¹⁶ “Sokolsko-higijenski tečaj” [Sokol-hygienic course] *Sokolski glasnik* (April 26, 1940), p. 2.

¹⁰¹⁷ Vladimir Morgan, *Problem nastave sa gledišta biologije i fiziologije*. [The problem of teaching from the point of view of biology and physiology] Belgrade: Biblioteka centralnog higijenskog zavoda, 1936.

¹⁰¹⁸ Živojin Đorđević, Marija Vajs-Gajić, *Roditelji i lekari* [Parents and physicians]. Notably, Marija Vajs-Gajić, a physician herself, was also one of the most prominent activists in the Yugoslav Union of for Children Protection (*Jugoslovenska unija za zaštitu dece*), which was in itself a rather eugenicist project. See: *Prvi kongres Jugoslovenske unije za zaštitu dece i druga glavna redovna skupština Unije, 30. Novembra i 1. Decembra 1935. u Belgradeu* [First congress of the Yugoslav Union for Children Protection and the Second Regular General Assembly of the Union, on November 30 and December 1 1935 in Belgrade] Belgrade, 1935.

¹⁰¹⁹ Such as *Proteus*, or other journals where notable members have published the results of their research.

¹⁰²⁰ “Centralny Instytut Wychowania Fizycznego” [Central Institute for Physical Education] *Słownik polskiej modernizacji*, URL=
https://sownikpolskiejmodernizacji.pl/index.php/Centralny_Instytut_Wychowania_Fizycznego (Last access: December 10, 2024).

¹⁰²¹ Mislav Čavka, Stjepan Matković “Response to ‘Contribution of Dr. Laza Popović to the development of Serbian and Yugoslav Sokol movement’” *Vojnosanitetski Pregled*, vol. 80, no. 12 (2023), p. 977.

markedly more authoritarian and technocratic discourses. Thereby, the authority of the physical education was asserted, so as to convince both the state and other actors to, in fact, implement the suggestions based on this expertise. Unlike similar pleas that were continuously made in the previous decades by the liberal-positivist stream within Sokol, those who came to dominate this period reduced the agency of the population to participate in the necessary socio-political change, to a minimum. The liberal aspect of the endeavor, in other words, was largely abandoned. While the previous generation regarded the citizenry as partners in achieving the common goal, the new Sokol generation of thinkers, particularly those most interested in biomedical and eugenics-driven proposals, preferred technocratic solutions that would presume the mere management of the population. In combination with the parallel rise of neo-romanticist, loyalty-based and increasingly mythicized, autochthonized, associational culture, as well as overall political crisis permeating the Sokol from outside, such thinkers fashioned their authoritarian technocracy as a locally-appropriate restorative remedy to the ever more disoriented and spendthrift public life.

4.3.2. From Reform Pedagogies to Authoritarian Eugenicist Concerns

The numerous and heterogeneous alternative approaches to pedagogy of physical education presented in the previous chapters, still remained relatively influential in the trainers' and political thinkers' Sokol circles in the mid-1930s. Even if they were challenged by the "old guard" of liberal-positivists or, indeed, gradually replaced by much darker racially inspired ones, they succeeded in pluralizing of the matter and ultimately contributed to the dissolving of the normative liberal-positivist framework that had underpinned the Sokol-style physical education since its inception. This was mainly due to their pronounced insistence on

essentialism,¹⁰²² but also to importing elements of technocratic and authoritarian conceptions of physical education, the combination of which resulted in a creation of a fertile ground for the proliferation of the latter. The indigenous-born liberal concerns for the national economy, social cohesion and raising of citizens, thus got overridden by both local and imported combination of concerns for uncovering and preserving of the national soul, channeling the national character into national defense and most importantly—expertise-based population management. Nevertheless, this ultimate death of the liberal-positivist consensus around physical education within the association, did not take place at once, but rather gradually, as many of the tenets of classical Sokol-style physical education were brought into question over a period of time.

Building on the previous debates on and experiments with reforming the classical Sokol pedagogy, thinkers relevant in the mid- to late 1930s, concerned themselves with topics such as the physical environment for conducting physical education and gymnastics- and sports-related issues within the developing field of cognitive psychology. In regards to the environment, many of them began promoting exercises in the open air, outdoors, as well as in the nature, including abandoning systematic practices in favor of fostering excursions and daytrips for youth, whereby they would be subjected to natural movement. This is not to say that their writings on this constitute completely separate units, but simply that the weight and accents in their respective argumentations were not put onto the same phenomena.

Based on the writings of one of the most prolific reformist pedagogues of interwar Yugoslavia, a Leipzig-educated philosopher Vićentije Rakić,¹⁰²³ for example, Radomir Gačić argued for

¹⁰²² Franjo Lubej “Telesni i duševni razvitak omladine” [Physical and intellectual development of youth] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 5 (1936), pp. 166-7; Franjo Lubej “Telesni i duševni razvitak omladine” [Physical and intellectual development of youth] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 6 (1936), pp. 197-210.

¹⁰²³ Jelena Petrović “Uticaj Duijeve koncepcije vaspitanja na određenje vaspitača kod srpskih pedagoga” [The influence of Dewey’s conception of education onto the determination of educators, in case of Serbian pedagogues] *Godišnjak Pedagoškog fakulteta u Vranju* (2016), ed. Sunčica Denić. Vranje, 2016, pp. 153-169.

abandoning of the Sokol gyms and conducting the physical education mainly in nature.¹⁰²⁴ For this, he provided a strictly evolutionary biological and physiological arguments. According to his and Rakić's reasoning, the pedagogical methodology should adapt completely to the human evolutionary biological setup, namely the nervous system that was designed to function in a habitat much more natural than what industrial urban modernity can offer. For the conserved bodily energies to be well channeled, harmonized and even expended at all, it is necessary to turn to the natural environment and remedy, as much as possible, ailments caused by excessive development and the uneven distribution of energies.

While physical exercise, in itself, already greatly helps to alleviate the symptoms caused by modern lifestyles, changing its environment for the more natural one is imperative in modernized, urbanized and industrialized contexts—argued Gačić. Both of these devices for “fine-tuning” the modern experience, namely physical exercise and access to natural environment, however, were casted as basic, “primordial” human needs, in this context. The task of the Sokol, and implicitly the state schooling system, was thus to respond to these needs, so as to prevent creating “artificial” and, indicatively, “less productive” people.¹⁰²⁵ Even if such thinkers still operated with the modernist *credo*, not least due to their unshakeable belief in scientific truths, it was evident that it was not humanity that was to adapt to the design of the new age, but that they suggested reconceptualizing the new order, based on intricate design of humans.

Other needs mentioned by thinkers who aimed at a radical reform of associational pedagogy, were those for conspiracy and “romanticism”, that adolescents often display, as was pointed out by a Pančevo Gymnasium mathematics teacher and Sokol activist Mirko Skovran.¹⁰²⁶

¹⁰²⁴ Radomir D. Gačić “Osećanje prirode” [The feeling of nature] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1937), pp. 133-137.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid, p. 137.

¹⁰²⁶ Mirko Skovran “Izleti naraštaja i dece” [The excursions of youth and children] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1937), pp. 140-142.

“Night-time conversations around the campfire are very dear to the youth. Using such conversations and debates with the youth, we could conduct an entire ideological course” suggested Skovran.¹⁰²⁷ In fact, notable examples of practical attempts at implementing the achievements of these environment-centered reform pedagogical principles, were also promoted within the association at this time.

This was the case with the model established by a notable Zürich-educated pedagogue Franjo Mandić (Higy)¹⁰²⁸ in his Zagreb-based “Tuškanac forest school” that operated from 1929–41.¹⁰²⁹ His book on the topic of open-air education,¹⁰³⁰ largely based on the Third Congress for Open-Air Education he attended in Germany in 1936, was ambiguously promoted within Sokol press. Its reviewer carefully acknowledged the book’s quality and relevance, but did not shy away from criticizing the national socialist co-optation of the movement: “The spirit of pacifism is dead in German schools. Despite all this, the author still spoke in superlatives about German schools (...) Let us also mention that we, and our people, are more interested in education in general, that is, in democratic countries, because we believe that only true freedom of the spirit can create grand cultures.”¹⁰³¹ The anonymous reviewer was thus well aware and felt it relevant to mention to the readership, that “fine-tuning” modernity through adapting the education to amend some of its contradictions, and completely rejecting it in the name of reverting to a radical primordialist utopia—are not one and the same agenda.

The rest of the literature reviewed and articles submitted on the problems of reformist pedagogies, largely dealt with issues stemming from cognitive psychology and implementation

¹⁰²⁷ Ibid, p. 141.

¹⁰²⁸ “Franjo Mandić” *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, online edition. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013.–2024. URL=<<https://enciklopedija.hr/clanak/mandic-franjo>>. (Last access: December 11, 2024).

¹⁰²⁹ “Radna škola” *Hrvatska enciklopedija*, online edition. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013.–2024. URL=<https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/radna-skola>, (Last access: December 11, 2024); Mia Roth-Čerina, “The Influence of the Open-air Education Movement on the Development of the Pavilion School Selected European and Croatian Examples from the 1930s” *Prostor*, vol. 19, no. 1 (41), (2011), pp. 60–73.

¹⁰³⁰ Franjo Higy Mandić, *Škole na slobodnom zraku*. [Open-air schools] Belgrade, 1937.

¹⁰³¹ “Knjige i časopisi” [Books and journals] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1937), pp. 193–94, here p. 194.

of its achievements into (physical) educational practice in Sokol and beyond, with a purpose of both centering students' needs and achieving a desired socio-political order. To this end, they reviewed and promoted John Dewey's seminal *The School and Society*,¹⁰³² but also Wilhelm Stekel's 1927 radical psychoanalytical manual for mothers, *Briefe an eine Mutter*,¹⁰³³ and an excerpt on self-containment from Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster's 1909 *Lebensführung*.¹⁰³⁴ In a stellar review of Stekel's voluminous and pragmatically-gearred work, the Sokol reviewer underscored that "the price of culture are neuroses, neurasthenias and psychoses, due to the various human urges being suppressed, and their manifestation and satisfaction are not being allowed."¹⁰³⁵ Yet, in a reflection on Foerster's reasoning on self-containment, the suppression and select channelling of urges was posited precisely as the only way to attain higher levels of culture, something Sokol thinkers of the older generations insisted upon for a long time.¹⁰³⁶ Even if these two approaches do not entirely contradict each other, the fact that both of them featured in the associational periodicals around the same time, testifies to the diversity of opinions among those who agitated for the introduction of the elements of reform pedagogies into Sokol's educational programs. The attempt at "marrying" the biological and the (progressive) social, was thus at its climax. Alongside self-containment, the role of self-education, self-supervision, self-observation, self-control and self-management, was thematized in the discussion of Slobodan Popović's book on a different model of youth education, albeit the question of these methods' automatic translation into real-life "socio-ethical action" remained unanswered.¹⁰³⁷

¹⁰³² "Knjige i časopisi: Džon Džui, *Škola i Društvo*. Belgrade, 1936" [Books and journals: John Dewey, *School and society*, Belgrade 1936] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1-2 (1936), p. 41-2.

¹⁰³³ "Knjige i časopisi: Vilhelm Štekl, *Pisma jednoj majci*, prev. Radunka Anđelković-Čubrilović. Belgrade, 1937" [Books and journals: Wilhelm Stekl, *Letters to a mother*, transl. Radunka Anđelković-Čubrilović. Belgrade, 1937] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1937), pp. 195-97.

¹⁰³⁴ "Knjige i časopisi: Vilhelm Ferster, *Samosavlađivanje*, prevela Paulina Albala" [Books and journals: Wilhelm Foerster, *Self-containment*, translated by Paulina Albala] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1937), pp. 198-99.

¹⁰³⁵ "Knjige i časopisi: Vilhelm Štekl", p. 195.

¹⁰³⁶ "Knjige i časopisi: Vilhelm Ferster", p. 198.

¹⁰³⁷ "Knjige i časopisi: Slobodan popović, *Vaspitanje omladine*. Belgrade, 1936" [Books and journals: Slobodan Popović, *Education of youth*. Belgrade, 1936] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), p. 260-62.

All of these works' likely reviewer, the aforementioned Radomir Gačić, also weighed in on the debate, by highlighting the connection between physical movement and brain development, and by making grand claims about the centrality of physical education for a holistic human development and improvement of life as such.¹⁰³⁸ For him, physical education was a “historical and biological necessity”, that served an additional purpose of “awakening the most ancient and the deepest dispositions, that cannot be awoken by any other means”, especially when combined with music to which the nerves supposedly respond in a way that enables the excavation of historically ingrained bodily movements.¹⁰³⁹ Physical education was thus a question of uncovering and further developing trans-generational capabilities and neural scripts of the “human machine”.¹⁰⁴⁰ In more practical terms and in another text, Gačić discussed the best practices around “molding” the impressionable and rebellious youth.¹⁰⁴¹ Yet, the question largely remained around if it is humans' task to manipulate their own instincts and channel them in the direction of achieving societal progress and realizing a given political modernity, or, if they should instead re-organize the socio-political setup based on what they saw as scientifically provable biological and psychological developmental settings of humanity.

It was a Petrovgrad (today's Zrenjanin)-based teacher Blagota Koljenšić, who further sought to respond to this question. In his theory of the harmonious education that reconciles the bodily and psychological developmental demands with those of organized society, he suggested a radical reform of all education based on: “...subjecting, yet only by way of close understanding of nature and strict adherence to its own laws (...) using its plan and methods of work, that can lead the humanity into the kingdom of happiness: liberty, health and wealth”.¹⁰⁴² In other words,

¹⁰³⁸ Radomir Gačić “Telesno vaspitanje i razvijanje duševnih snaga i sposobnosti” [Physical education and the development of mental strengths and capabilities] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1935), pp. 395-401.

¹⁰³⁹ Ibid, p. 397.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 398.

¹⁰⁴¹ Radomir D. Gačić “Mladost” [Youth] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1 (1937), pp. 6-10.

¹⁰⁴² Blagota Koljenšić “Harmonija u vaspitanju” [Harmony in education] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 354-56, here p. 355.

Koljenšić argued for organizing both education and the societal order that is to be its outcome, primarily on the body's and mind's own, natural, developmental trajectory. While this also largely corresponds to the cognitive psychology's and other post-behaviorist pedagogical paradigms' agenda, due to Sokol activists' habitual essentialist framing of nationhood and simultaneous rise of the neo-romanticist stream, it might be read as an implicitly much more radical claim.

For a Dalmatian-born publicist and experimental pedagogue Miljenko Vidović,¹⁰⁴³ this was not a dilemma, but rather a spectrum that humanity not only has a conscious agency over, but also a duty to exert its influence onto its own societal evolution, in the idealist direction.¹⁰⁴⁴ “Whenever a human society, according to its settings and development, begins to stumble and wander, falling under the influence of blind force and urges, not orienting itself towards conscious goals anymore, then it is certain that the mind-driven [LB: umna] side of the social organism has weakened (...) It is visible from an entire host of phenomena and facts that, in the contemporary age, the mind-driven strength of humanity has indeed weakened” argued Vidović, brining numerous examples from various fields of human activity.¹⁰⁴⁵

Basing his statements on expert psychological claims, and the idea that the loss of ideals, in favor of the material (that is, physiological), is the best indicator of humanity's descend into the decadence. Vidović saw the origins of this disorientation in the lack of intellectual “connecting and combining”, or rather a lack of compass among the European intelligentsia, that should

¹⁰⁴³ “Vidović, Miljenko.” *Hrvatska enciklopedija, mrežno izdanje*. Zagreb: Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2013.–2024. URL=<<https://www.enciklopedija.hr/clanak/vidovic-miljenko>>. (Last access: December 11, 2024).

¹⁰⁴⁴ Milenko Vidović “Škola bez sistema daje inteligenciju bez kompasa” [A school without system produces intelligence without a compass] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4. (1938), p. 112-116.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 113.

have been instilled in them by the educational system. The European intellectual elite, whose “job it was to listen, not to give orders; to follow the already ignited torches, rather than ignite new ones; to provide own effort and strength, but not the direction”, following the ideals and agendas of the 19th centuries’ revolutions, was obsolete. Criticizing the schools that created such passive generations due to their mere reproductive function, Vidović sketched the present situation as a decisive moment in history, in which the schools and all educational programs should transform their socio-political impact to much beyond reproduction. This disoriented 20th century intelligentsia that found itself in a new, completely transformed and extremely demanding set of circumstances, cannot adequately respond to the new questions posed.

A remedy Vidović hereby suggested is “a synthesis of individual scientific disciplines that provides a single outlook onto the world and life (...) it is a final hour for starting to conceive a planned education. Only that, which begins with education and through education, meaning through the consciousness, has its organic foundation. Here and only here, can the foundations of the lasting social armature for the constructing of economic, social, political, national, cultural and moral life be made. (...) The school must be a nursery garden of ethical virtues (...) for general common goals and ambitions. Otherwise, a school without a system produces an intelligentsia without a compass, meaning an intelligentsia that is unfit to act as the avant-garde of the society.”¹⁰⁴⁶

The synthesis of idealism and positivism, channelled through an ethically informed progressivist pedagogy, were to act as guarantees for regaining, or rather reasserting, the agency humanity should exert over its own socio-political evolution and transformation, according to him. As is evident from his reasoning, the radical reform he suggested was on the opposite side of the debate, when compared to the thinkers presented above. Succumbing to the physiological

¹⁰⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 116.

at the expense of the intellectual was what spelled catastrophe for Vidović, who was not interested in reimagining the system based on accommodating human developmental urges and instincts—even if he was a staunch believer in the power of scientific inquiry.

This debate aside, the demise of the liberal-positivist framework that used to underpin the well-established Sokol program of physical education—with its preference for versatile basic movements, calisthenics, gymnastics with equipment and gymnastic dances—allowed for a new sort of model, markedly more rooted in technocratic assumptions, authoritarian preferences and racial-eugenic concerns. As was stated at the beginning of this section, these trends stemmed both from the evolution of Sokol’s own alternative and reform thought on physical education, but also from the act of importing foreign, particularly national socialist, trends in physical education. Two figures of the younger generation, namely the aforementioned Božo Škerlj and the Slovenian trainer, pedagogue and publicist Branko Polić,¹⁰⁴⁷ stood out in relation to the latter.

To start with the former, Božo Škerlj relied on the Sokol-harvested anthropometric data, together with his research and experience gained at ICWF in Warsaw,¹⁰⁴⁸ to further espouse his claims on harmful impact of competitive gymnastics on women’s physiognomy, and consequently, reproductive function. On other occasions, he also stressed the dangers of bodily and physiognomic “equalization of the sexes”, namely rapprochement of women’s bodies towards the normatively understood male body type, as a result of overly intense exercise.¹⁰⁴⁹ In Warsaw, Škerlj had an opportunity to collaborate with a notable Polish eugenicist, Jan

¹⁰⁴⁷ Not to be confused with the Belgrade-based Sokol thinker who also published on issues of physical education: Branko Polić. See his most relevant, markedly anti-modernist, publication of the period that concerns bodily movement and energy expenditure: Branko Polić, *Proste vežbe kao vežbe oblikovanja* [Basic exercises as exercises of molding]. Belgrade: SSKJ, 1938.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Božo Škerlj “Moj studijski boravak u C.I.W.F.” [My research stay at the CIWF] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 11 (1935), pp. 327-29.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Božo Škerlj “Čemu telesni uzgoj” [What is physical education for] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 3 (1935), p. 69-70.

Mydlarski, at the time the director of the said institute.¹⁰⁵⁰ The results of Škerlj's research appeared not only within Sokol-based and the Yugoslav academic or popular scientific publications,¹⁰⁵¹ but were also geared towards academic audiences of Nazi Germany.¹⁰⁵²

In cases of both his research in Warsaw and that in the context of Yugoslav Sokol, however, women researchers reacted in an attempt to disprove his research results,¹⁰⁵³ based on which he called for the exclusion of women from competitive gymnastics, using maternalist and eugenicist arguments. In the case of SSKJ, it was Milica Bogdanović who conducted her own research among women who were active gymnasts and trainers, asking them to respond to a survey and supply her with data, so as to be able to cross-check Škerlj's results.¹⁰⁵⁴ The results of her survey and data collection were never published in the associational periodicals, but it is important to note that Škerlj's suggestions, namely to replace women's competitive gymnastics with rhythmic gymnastics, were also never implemented by the associational leadership. The tendency among notable women SSKJ officials and more influential women trainers to promote moderate exercise among those women who were preparing for competitions existed before Škerlj's alarmist discourses,¹⁰⁵⁵ but were never based on medical, biological or even patriotic claims.

Besides Škerlj's agenda of banning women from competitions, his most relevant contribution to the transformation of discourses on physical education in this period, were his race- and

¹⁰⁵⁰ Vojtěch Pojar, *Experts in Post-imperial Transitions*, p. 468-9.

¹⁰⁵¹ See, for instance, a review of his booklet, based on the results of his research conducted at CIWF: "Knjige i listovi: Božo Škerlj 'Menschlicher Körper und Leibesübungen, 1936'" [Books and journals: Božo Škerlj 'Menschlicher Körper und Leibesübungen, 1936] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 8-9 (1936), p. 302.

¹⁰⁵² Božo Škerlj "Menstruationszyklen und Leibesübungen" *Archiv für Gynäkologie*, vol. 162 (1936), pp. 516-37.

¹⁰⁵³ For the ICWF case, see: Halina Milicerowa, "W Sprawie w. f. kobiet (Ocena wyników pracy w C. I. W. F. a typy konstytucjonalne)" [On physical education of women: evaluation of work at CIWF and constitutional types] *Wychowanie Fizyczne*, vol. 20, no. 9 (1939), p. 311; cited in: Pojar, *Experts in Post-imperial Transitions*, p. 471.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Milica Bogdanović "Zdravstveno istraživanje" [Medical research] " *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 11 (1935), p. 326.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Elza Skalar "Sestrarna takmičarkama" [To sisters who are competitive gymnasts] *SOKO: List Prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 2 (1935), p. 47.

bodily constitution-related writings. They represent some of the first and almost only attempts to promote race as a biological and medical category, rather than a literary trope, which was largely the case in previous decades. As Vojtěch Pojar insightfully pointed out, Škerlj's agenda in his racially and constitutionally-framed research, was not only to blur the boundaries between the two categories, but also to provide complementary female types to those of Ernst Kretschmer's constitutional typology.¹⁰⁵⁶ Through this, but also through his continuous accentuation of Slovene racial-typological distinctiveness, vis-à-vis rest of the Yugoslav corpus, as well as of the alleged prevalence of Nordic type among Slovenian-speakers, Škerlj reified the said categories as relevant for Sokol's physical education programs and promoted hierarchies in terms of whiteness and other "racial markers" within the Yugoslav national body itself.¹⁰⁵⁷

Another, explicitly pronounced goal of his research, was to uncover if there is a racial-constitutional type that could be considered a "sport type", based on its characteristics. If this could be proven, and in parallel the existence of those types less gifted for sports and gymnastic competitions, a broader hierarchy of biologically more superior and able types could be devised, which would not be irrelevant in the case of war. To this end, Škerlj compared different Yugoslav gymnasts, their anthropometric data and gymnastic performance, with the corresponding data on German ones.¹⁰⁵⁸ His lasting political and statehood-related motivation for studying these questions can also be seen from his writing on the question of Yugoslav territory and its frontiers, from the perspective of anthropology.¹⁰⁵⁹ Given Yugoslavs' extremely diverse and heterogeneous post-imperial biological and racial makeup, Škerlj argued,

¹⁰⁵⁶ Vojtěch Pojar, *Experts in Post-imperial Transitions*, p. 470.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Vojtěch Pojar, *Experts in Post-imperial Transitions*, p. 472.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Božo Škerlj "Takmičenje, životna dob i rasa" [Competition, age and race] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 12 (1936), p. 417-425.; He already began this comparison earlier in his 1934 series of articles on the "Anthropological examination of gymnasts" in *SOKO*, see chapter 3.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Božo Škerlj "Značenje zajedničkih državnih granica sa antropološkog gledišta" [The importance of common state frontiers from an anthropological point of view] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 326-28.

the novel state borders will ensure increased reproduction between Slavic elements, led by the Dinaric race, resulting in even more racial and biological mixtures, that can only be stimulative for further cultural development. From this and other contemporaneous statements of Škerlj,¹⁰⁶⁰ it is visible that he strongly advocated “racial miscegenation” and responded, from a positivist perspective, to what he saw as the brutal abuse and politicization of racial anthropology and related fields, in Nazi Germany that underscored the necessity for racial purity.

Yet, he participated in the process of knowledge production in the very same field, subscribing to many of the very same notions and related set of policies, but from a “Yugoslav” point of view that stressed the positive impacts of racial-biological diversity, even if admitting hierarchies among the given types.¹⁰⁶¹ While it is difficult to assess the true impact of Škerlj’s reification of “race” through research and different suggestions among the associational membership and beyond, it is possible to register occasions on which these categories received substantial criticism. One such occasion was the review of Vladimir Margan’s 1936 book, published by the Central Hygienic Institute in Belgrade. Margan, a Banat-born politician who otherwise published on urbanism, demography and Romanian culture, suggested reforming the state educational system based on biological and racial makeup of the population. The review which severely criticized his reliance on Kretschmer’s constitutional typology as a basis for the said suggestion, demonstrates the rejection of such “racial” categories within SPO’s circles that concerned themselves with reform pedagogies.¹⁰⁶² It is, nevertheless, indicative of this period of associational decline, that Škerlj could, in fact, publish, conduct research and theorize based on Sokol’s membership and associational activities—revealing an ever more loosening grip the liberal-positivist stream had on the knowledge produced and communicated within Sokol.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Božo Škerlj “Nemške rase ni” [There is no German race] *Proteus*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 65–66.

¹⁰⁶¹ Božo Škerlj “Zur Rassekunde der Jugoslawen” *Zeitschrift für Rassekunde*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1938), p. 145-181.

¹⁰⁶² Vladimir Margan, “Knjige i časopisi: ‘Problem nastave sa gledišta biologije i fiziologije’” *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1937), p. 78-9.

A much more explicit embrace of the national socialist regard for physical culture and related technocratic discourses, was espoused by the aforementioned Branko Polič, who published both on the issues of cognitive psychology in the context of physical education, but also performed the work of importing the current trends from Nazi Germany's field of physical education. It is important to mention, however, that it was not only Polič who paid attention to these trends and changes thereat. It was also the SPO that edited the major Sokol periodicals, who made sure that the membership was aware of the international trends in the field by publishing on developments in numerous European countries, including various excerpts from Deutsche Turnerschaft's organ *Leibesübungen*—even if they were oftentimes criticized.¹⁰⁶³

Initially, Polič participated in the debates on reform pedagogies, taking the stance characteristic for their proponents, and arguing specifically against sports.¹⁰⁶⁴ Stressing his support for implementing Jean Piaget's "moral education" into physical education, as well as Karl Gaulhofer's monistic regard for the body as merely an instrument for holistic education—Polič denigrated sports as socially irresponsible, developmentally severely limited, anti-intellectual and likely medically harmful. The only aspect of sports he somewhat exonerated was that which has to do with "overcoming obstacles", and in his perspective thus, "corresponds to biological laws".¹⁰⁶⁵

In another text Polič authored, he explicitly employed eugenicist arguments by positing physical education as a remedy against spoiling the bodies of future generations due to bad posture and underdeveloped bodies—and relatedly, personalities—as an unavoidable consequence of industrial modernity. He thus framed mandating versatile physical education

¹⁰⁶³ In some cases agreeing or polemizing with the statements published thereat, see for instance: "Inteligenca i brzina kretanja" [Intelligence and the speed of moving] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 11 (1935), p. 330.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Branko Polič, "Škola i sport" [School and sports] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1935), p. 5-8; Branko Polič, "Škola i sport" [School and sports] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 2 (1935), p. 37-40.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Branko Polič, "Škola i sport", p. 38.

for all youth and adults, as one of “freedom and survival of the homeland”.¹⁰⁶⁶ In fact, in his division between “authoritarian” and “democratic” states’ approaches to physical education, Polič noted that the former ones invested much more into the infrastructure for conducting it, including physical and human resources, as well as mandated it in many ways—while the latter ones did it more sporadically and less systematically, given they primarily considered it to be a “all-humanist and cultural movement”.¹⁰⁶⁷ While he suggested Yugoslavia conform to the model of the authoritarian ones, the editor of the periodical intervened and underscored the difference between liberal and violence-driven impositions of physical education on the populace, dubbing the authoritarian physical education projects as ones that misunderstand its impact, functioning and ultimately resort to “fetishizing force”.¹⁰⁶⁸ Polič’s contribution to the debate on reform pedagogies was thus to reify eugenic concerns in a state interventionist and technocratic manner, despite relying onto the same cognitive psychological toolbox that was usually employed by his liberal counterparts.

His preference for these sorts of “solutions”, however, can best be seen in the texts he had translated and published in the Sokol periodicals in the late 1930s—some of which represented completely opposite projects to those espoused by the Sokol’s liberal-positivist stream some years ago. All of them stemmed from the Congress of Physical Education, that took place as part of the International Sports Students Camp, at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, that Polič likely attended or at least consulted the off print of the lectures from.¹⁰⁶⁹

¹⁰⁶⁶ Branko Polič “Telesno vaspitanje i škola” [Physical education and school] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 7-9 (1935), p. 214-217, here p. 215.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Branko Polič: “Zadaci telesnog uzgoja” [The tasks of physical education] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 3 (1938), p. 95-98.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid, p. 97.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Beckett Park Library Collection, [Box 18] Carnegie College of Physical Training. Material relevant to the Berlin Trip 1936, “XI Olympic Games in Berlin 1936. Congress of Physical Education. Programme of events. 25 May 1936” Leeds Beckett University.

The first of such texts which partly built on the “novel tendencies”, but put the conceptual-intellectual weight onto the authoritarian and primordialist side of the equation, was the lecture of Carl Krümmel, national socialist sports official and scholar of anthropology and physical education, initially heading the Hochschulinstitut für Leibesübungen and later the Deutsche Reichsakademie für Leibesübungen.¹⁰⁷⁰ In his opening lecture to the congress, Krümmel provided an overview of the evolution of physical education through centuries of human cultural development, in a way that reified the primordial “folk games” or mythological cults, as biologically- and culturally-driven vehicles of physical movement and exercises through centuries. The modern, scientific, positivist and mostly teleological physical education, that targeted specific body parts of movements in its attempt to achieve a certain modernist ideal through exercising the body—was, for him, divorced from the natural, holistic bodily movement. “In the scientific phase of the physical education, a man chooses a particular physical exercise for a particular goal, so one person accentuates military gymnastics, another medical gymnastics or perhaps aesthetic one.”¹⁰⁷¹

He asserted that the future and final phase of the development of physical education is the “political one” which will rest on the awareness “that a man is only worth something once he is a useful member of the community”.¹⁰⁷² The agenda Krümmel hereby suggested was thus to provide holistic physical education that develops a human in various directions, but who also decides to channel his wide array of abilities for the communal interests, the latter being the “political” part. While this seemingly does not diverge considerably from Sokol’s nominally liberal program, Krümmel’s concluding words, that posit the implementation of this “within the framework of particular nations”, might have begged the question of which and why those

¹⁰⁷⁰ Branko Polić “Razvojni stepeni telesnog uzgoja, po predavanju prof. dra Krümmela” [Developmental degrees of physical education, based on the lecture of prof. dr. Krümmel] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 8-9 (1936), p. 287-288.

¹⁰⁷¹ Ibid, p. 288.

¹⁰⁷² Ibid, p. 288.

and not others. Similar, deeply collectivist and patriotist arguments, were promoted in a Polič-promoted text, by Carl Diem, one of the key organizers and designers of the 1936 Olympic Games.¹⁰⁷³

Another lecture from the congress that Polič translated and published within Sokol, was the one of the Chicago-based physiologist, Arthur H. Steinhaus, a notable professor at the George Williams College.¹⁰⁷⁴ In his exposé, Steinhaus addressed the complex disciplinary character of physical education “science” and posited it as a biological science, located between anatomy and physiology. Its ultimate goal, according to him, was to transform the human body, and also psychology, through training the body in terms of its movements, but also through nutrition and eugenicist means. What Steinhaus stressed, at this point, however, was the very slow nature of eugenic measures, positive and negative. In other words, his vision of heredity was much “harder” than the usual Sokol (neo-)Lamarckian one, that expected relatively quick results, visible already in one or two generations. Through promoting these theses within Sokol expert periodicals, Polič promoted the concept of “hard heredity” and, implicitly, legitimized the illiberal “population management” approach that stood in contrast to Sokol’s liberal educational tradition towards its membership and Yugoslav population at large.

Furthermore, beyond “hard heredity” that left little space for Sokol activists to “mold the national body”, Polič brought up the question of workers’ leisure time, through the lecture given at the congress by Ernest Major, a professor at the Physical Training College Leeds and later a warden of Carnegie College of Physical Training.¹⁰⁷⁵ Major thereby highlighted the importance

¹⁰⁷³ Branko Polič “Temeljna načela telesnog uzgoja. Po predavanju Dragutina Diema” [Fundamental principles of physical education. Based on the lecture of Carl Diem] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 11 (1936), p. 374.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Branko Polič “Telesni uzgoj kao znanost. Po predavanju H. Steinhausa.” [Physical education as a science. According to the lecture of H. Steinhaus] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 1 (1936), p. 326-331.

¹⁰⁷⁵ “Major, Ernest” *Archive and special collections, Leeds Beckett University*. URL= <https://archives.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/index.php/major-ernest> (Last access: December 14, 2024); Branko Polič “Osnovi telesnog i duhovnog uzgoja. E. Major, prof. na Physical Training College Leeds, Velika Britanija” [The

of the science-based approach to physical education, especially in differentiating methods for training peoples of different “races”, cultures and geographical areas. The ultimate objective of this endeavor, for him, was taming the youth not enrolled in a schooling system, productively organizing industrial workers’ leisure time, as well as preparing the general populace for the “larger life goals”.¹⁰⁷⁶ In other words, it was to make use of these otherwise disenfranchised groups, as well as to tame what he might have seen as their dangerous disruptive potential.

To sum up, Polič’s numerous interventions into associational press, based on the lectures from the said congress, promoted ideas and discourses that were so far not traditionally present in the circles of Sokol thinkers. From eugenics and “hard heredity” to authoritarian state interventionism and illiberal approach to “managing”, rather than “raising” the population—these notions from the Third Reich-sponsored congress might have additionally deepened the loss of consensus brought about by the rise of reform pedagogies within the association. In conjunction with Škerlj’s research and suggestions, many of which betrayed similar attitudes, the two thinkers’ elevated relevance within Sokol spelled an overall change in the way expertise was fashioned by the association, highlighting its authoritarian and hegemonic potential for resolving societal and political issues at hand.

Despite the rather ambiguous stance Sokol thinkers retained towards heredity, the rise of discourses on eugenics is noticeable precisely in this period, meaning that the medicalization, biologization—and relatedly, positivization—of reproduction and physical education as well, developed in close association with rise of technocratic discourses and overall proliferation of illiberal, neo-romanticist-driven associational culture. Even if some of these intellectual tendencies nominally stood in stark contrast to one another, they co-existed and still displayed elements of cross-fertilization, in many ways owing to their common illiberal and essentialist

fundamentals of physical and spiritual education. E. Major, prof. at the Physical Training College Leeds, Great Britain] *SOKO: List prednjaštva Saveza Sokola Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, vol. 2 (1937), p. 37-39.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 38.

underpinnings. The explicit strictly positivist fashioning of eugenics can be seen in the manner in which its definition is presented to the membership, namely as an English-born “science of inheritance” that seeks to improve and refine the future generations of races.¹⁰⁷⁷ The latter was defined as a biological category, superior to that of the nation, denoting a group of a “similar origins and similar descendants, that reacts to the external stimuli in a similar way (...) who work together towards preserving a specific way of life that they constitute”.¹⁰⁷⁸

The potential contradictions or conflictual relations between different “races” purportedly inhabiting the Yugoslav space, were not addressed at any point. In fact, joint reproduction was promoted, with serious regard for eugenic, medical and economic examination prior to conception, by the Sokol press that framed the awareness on the necessity of these preparations as part and parcel of the Sokol’s modernizing agenda.¹⁰⁷⁹ According to such prescriptive suggestions, the desirable “Sokol family” was the one that is aware of their duty towards their racial and national community, to ensure the refined descendants through employing Sokol and state infrastructure, to that end.

In sum, the rise of authoritarian, technocratic, racially- and eugenically-framed concerns and suggestions—replaced many of the previously dominant liberal and “soft heredity”-based approaches and attitudes to Sokol experts’ mission in the wider society and political community. The reification of “race” and “hard heredity”, in conjunction with already existing cultural tropes on national character and neo-romanticization of the associational culture, seriously theoretically undermined Sokol’s pragmatic commitment to “small-scale work” and education. It, moreover, raised questions around bodily autonomy, individuals’ bodily sovereignty and ownership, and ultimately, selfhood as such. While the liberal-positivists of the previous periods also conceived of collective responsibility in a Masarykian manner, thus

¹⁰⁷⁷ “Trezenost i štednja: Eugenika” [Sobriety and savings: Eugenics] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1936), p. 89-91.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 90.

¹⁰⁷⁹ M. Kovačić “Sokolska porodica” [Sokol family] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 2 (1935), pp. 66-72.

laying claims onto the populations' bodies, these new approaches that sought to void it of agency over own bodily and mind development, marked a radical transformation of Sokol's character and agenda, vis-à-vis the given political community.

4.3.3. Political Economy of the Body in an Interventionist Key

Due to many Sokol thinkers' belief in technocratic management and solutions, the appeals on the state and other relevant organizations to intervene and scale up their ever more autocratic program, proliferated. The political economy of the body was thus to become instructive for state policy, even if Stojadinović's government and particularly the one that followed it—had little intention of responding to most of their calls, no matter how economically beneficial or efficient they seemed. The main themes addressed within these attempts to translate the novel framework into practice were nutrition, alcohol consumption, as well as different psychological and physical interventions geared towards increasing the populations' resilience against the coming catastrophe. To better communicate many of these propositions, they resorted to publishing numerous statistics, typologies and ideal-type models to be replicated and scaled up by the state. In parallel, the *Sokol village* (*Sokolsko selo*) periodical increased their ethnopedagogical content, namely the medically-inspired songs for the *gusle* instrument and brief anecdotes on temperance and savings, so as to further communicate Sokol modernizing agenda to the peasant masses.¹⁰⁸⁰

¹⁰⁸⁰ St. R. "Mrtvo selo: ubila ga krčma i mehana" [The dead village: killed by taverns and inns] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1-2-3 (1937), p. 17; V. D. "Sokolski razgovori" [Sokol conversations] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 4-5-6 (1937), p. 35-41; "Duvan 'eškija' i zdravlje" [Smuggled tobacco and health] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 4-5-6 (1937), p. 45-6; "Čehoslovački radnik i seljak" [Czechoslovak worker and peasant] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 7-8-9 (1937), p. 64-5; "Priča o braći" [A story about brothers] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 7-8-9 (1937), p. 62-3; "Knjige i časopisi: Stevan M. Simunović, Govori o zdravlju za decu i odrasle" [Books and journals: Stevan M. Simunović, Speeches on health for children and adults] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1935), p. 322.

To begin with, the question of food and drink consumption surfaced as one of the relevant issues to be addressed, in conjunction with physical education and epidemiology. For instance, a physician and Scouting pioneer Miloš Đ. Popović, published a suggestive statistics on fruit consumption in Yugoslavia, arguing for replacement of alcohol consumption with that of fruit juices.¹⁰⁸¹ In the same context, namely within the rubric on sobriety and savings, the Sokol editor promoted the books such as those that heavily psychologize alcohol consumption and demonstrate its ravaging effects on the national economy.¹⁰⁸² Tima Dimitrijević hereby sought to merge the biologizing language with that of national soul and duty, arguing against alcohol's impact on the brain "on whose quality, the quality of the soul depends",¹⁰⁸³ as does the performance of communal duties.

This more or less explicit quantifying approach towards the body, increasingly conceptualized as a collective social and national investment, was also displayed in an excerpt of an anti-sports speech given to the ČOS' Medical committee by Karel Weigner, translated and transplanted in the Yugoslav Sokol press. Noting that the health represents a main capital of each individual, Weigner called for increased medical control of all physical exercise and education conducted within Sokol and beyond. He justified this by the need for experts' supervision over such valuable national resource, as is the gymnasts' health.¹⁰⁸⁴ Additional evidence of the rise of "population management" approaches within Sokol can be seen in the appearance of demographic statistics, that registered not only the demographic changes in certain areas, but also the epidemiological situation that needed to be curbed for the social and national

¹⁰⁸¹ "Trezvenost i štednja: Potrošnja voća u našoj zemlji" [Sobriety and savings: Fruit consumption in our country] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 4 (1936), p. 136.

¹⁰⁸² "Trezvenost i štednja: Dr Ivan Robida, *Psihične motnje na alkoholski podlagi*; Dr Fedor Mikić, *Naše alkoholno gospodarstvo*" [Sobriety and savings: Dr. Ivan Robida, Psychological disturbances based on alcoholism; Dr. Fedor Mikić, Our alcoholic economy] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1936), p. 181-2.

¹⁰⁸³ "Trezvenost i štednja: Tima Dimitrijević, Dr. Forel o alkoholu" [Sobriety and savings: Dr. Forel on alcohol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 7-8 (1936), p. 234-5.

¹⁰⁸⁴ "Beleške: Zadaci lekara telesnog vaspitanja u Sokolstvu" [Notes: Tasks of the physician of the physical education in Sokol] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1936), p. 285.

investment into bodies to take place. The latter was the most visible in the Vardarska banovina, today's Macedonia, which suffered from the epidemic of malaria at the time, as was mentioned in the previous chapter. A notable ZBOR-member and later a commissar in the German-occupied Serbia, physician Stevan Z. Ivanić, for example, provided one such statistical overview that demonstrated the improving of health conditions in "South Serbia" in the past decades, praising the state for its work with the people.¹⁰⁸⁵ Epidemiology was in itself an implicated field, as it demands the collaboration of the entire population, for its goals to succeed, and was in that way "total". This was accentuated also in relation to struggle against venereal diseases,¹⁰⁸⁶ but mostly tuberculosis that required active contributions from the state institutions, political parties and all elements of civil society and culture—wrote an anonymous thinker who warned of economically harmful consequences of contagious bodies' socialization.¹⁰⁸⁷ The bodies were thus to be properly fed, sober, healthy and productive, under the supervision of experts and all the relevant socio-political factors to whom they are entrusted. The state's necessary patronage over physical education, and its long-term economic profitability, was thematized in the translation of Louis Marin's¹⁰⁸⁸ speech of the role of physical education in democracies: "In our country, as in the case of our neighbours, the conducting of physical education must be a key part of race protection, protection of its health and strenght (...) All that the state spends on protecting the health of the youth, represents a certain saving. Ministry of Public Health exclaims, without hesitation, that it prefers the training field, to its contenders, sanatoria and hospitals."¹⁰⁸⁹ Interventionist Sokol thinkers who

¹⁰⁸⁵ Stevan Z. Ivanić "Unapređenje narodnog zdravlja u Južnoj Srbiji" [Improving of the national health in South Serbia] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1937), p. 240-244.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Other relevant books recommended and reviewed in this context were: "Knjige i časopisi: Dr. K. Jovanović, O šarlahu" *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 1-2 (1936), p. 44; "Knjige i časopisi: A. S. Fridman, Iza zatvorenih vrata: Zapisi lekara venerologa (prevela dr. Mirjana Pavlović)" *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1935), p. 322.

¹⁰⁸⁷ "Narodno zdravlje: Borba protiv tuberkuloze" [National health: Struggle against tuberculosis] *Sokolsko selo*, vol. 1-2-3 (1937), p. 12-13.

¹⁰⁸⁸ French Minister of Public Health.

¹⁰⁸⁹ "Ka boljim vremenima" [Towards better times] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1935), p.p 126-128, here p. 127.

theorized on political economy of the body might have only wished to hear similar statements from the Yugoslav state officials.

Yet, it was not solely the bodies whose “capital” was quantified in relation to national economy, in an interventionist and technocratic manner, but also that of the human psyche.¹⁰⁹⁰ In Sokol’s reception of the work of an early pioneer of child neuropsychology, Grigory Ivanovich Rossolimo, from the Russian Empire and later Soviet Union—they immediately noted its pragmatic utility. Rossolimo’s “psychological profiles” based on the quantification of psychological and mental abilities, as well as related developmental degrees he devised, were adapted to the local context by the notable Professor Borislav Stevanović from the University of Belgrade.¹⁰⁹¹

Drawing on this toolbox, Sokol reviewer of the book that presents Rossolimo’s theoretical achievements, called for implementing its elements in practical work of states, in a process of allocating positions to members of its population. “If people’s specific abilities and traits were more known in the world, and if every man would receive a calling and labor they are capable of, then the world would be better, culture larger and civilization more perfect”, argued the reviewer, evidently convinced in the pragmatic potency of the Rossolimo’s psychological profiles.¹⁰⁹² In fact, this strictly positivist and data-driven examination of national economy did not shy away from promoting young Bogdan Prica’s statistical economic study of the “Croatian

¹⁰⁹⁰ Even Pavlov’s seminal book on conditional reflexes was promoted, albeit without engagement with its contents, see: “Knjige i časopisi: I. P. Pavlov, Uslovni refleks (preveo Dušan Cvetić)” [Books and journals: I. P. Pavlov, Conditional reflex, transl. Dušan Cvetić] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 6 (1936), p. 185.

¹⁰⁹¹ Who was also a translator of Grigoriy S. Petrov’s book, see *Deca i odrasli* [Children and adults] Belgrade, 1938.

¹⁰⁹² Ivan Kanjuh, “Rosolimova metoda psihološkog profila i njen pedagoški značaj” [Rossolimov’s method of psychological profile and its pedagogical relevance] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 5 (1937), pp. 197-98, here p. 198.

question”¹⁰⁹³ conjointly with ORJUNA leader and soon to become Chetnik Niko Bartulović’s newly founded journal *Javnost* (Public) that published a positive review of the said book.¹⁰⁹⁴

On some occasions, however, these new approaches were framed as a matter of the state security and Sokol’s ensuring of the population’s resilience against the potential invasion or armed conflict that they saw as very likely in the near future. In that sense, the Slovenian physician and publicist Alojz Zalokar, wrote about mental health as one of the key tenets of Yugoslav resilience against such developments.¹⁰⁹⁵ Physical education was thus also about raising morale and social-political cohesion of the national collective. Tightly pairing mental health and political cohesion of the nation, conceptually subsumed under “brotherhood”, Zalokar exclaimed that: “Brotherly work and labor should be implemented everywhere: when deciding on taxation, so that the one paying the tax stops questioning the intentions of the state and government; in case of economic enterprises, so that the employee stops considering himself an exploited slave; in case of all political decisions, so that each citizen can feel equal in his country; in public administration, so that no one feels subjected, oppressed or as a second-class citizen!”¹⁰⁹⁶ By referring to issues under state jurisdiction, such as taxation, economy and administration, as primarily rooted in “brotherhood” and mental health—Zalokar effectively psychologized the political culture and yet again reverted the discussion towards investing in individuals’ mental and physical health, for the sake of state’s resilience.

A very similar thought, equally explicitly, was echoed by the Belgrade-based Branko Polić, who stated: “Today, it is in the interest of the state that each of its members lives as long as possible, is as capable for labor as possible, and this also happen to be wishes of each individual.

¹⁰⁹³ Bogdan Prica, *Hrvatsko pitanje i brojke: jesu li Hrvati stvarno zapostavljeni od strane države?* [Croatian question and the numbers: are Croats really neglected by the state?] Belgrade, 1937.

¹⁰⁹⁴ “Knjige i časopisi: Časopis Javnost (ur. Niko Bartulović)” [Books and journals: Journal Public (ed. Niko Bartulović)] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1936), p. 290-91.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Alojz Zalokar “Moralno zdravlje—glavni oslon jugoslovenske skupnosti” [Moral health—the main tenet of the Yugoslav collective] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 9-10 (1938), pp. 340-42.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 342.

That is why the state is this concerned for the health and education of its population today. That is why today, the health of an individual, his labor ability, and his cultural maturity, are not anymore individual matters, but equally so, the matters of state.”¹⁰⁹⁷ With a raising consensus on this matter, and a host of thinkers eager to advise the state in regard to best expertise-based interventions into its political community, Sokol reached a point where its long-standing liberal-positivist commitments evolved into illiberal, yet still positivistically-framed ones.

The new, deeply collectivist, authoritarian, technocratic and interventionist character of the association, thus bore trace both of rapprochement with the state, a remnant of the old-guard’s “golden age”, but also of young generations’ radicalization and unshaken belief in technocratic solutions and population management. While there were still those who used Masarykian language to insist on liberal values in face of the coming catastrophe, their voices were ever more drowned out by the calls for either technocratic management or populist, neo-romanticist, “return” to the strictly communitarian, parochial and primordialist-inspired models of political organization.

4.4. Conclusion

Axis powers’ invasion of Yugoslavia found SSKJ intellectually and generationally divided, weakened by internal feuds and numerous external challenges, as well as torn between different attitudes towards the coming occupying forces. Still, the associational leadership, and presumably a significant portion of the membership, supported the resistance and rejected any sort of cooperation and pact with the Axis powers, well before the invasion. Even if Yugoslavia

¹⁰⁹⁷ Branko Polić “Organizovana telovežba jednog naroda je plod visoke kulture njegove” [Organized exercise of a nation is a result of its high culture] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 3 (1938), pp. 105-108, here p. 105.

was formally neutral in the first year and a half of the Second World War, Sokol felt the need to publically promote *de facto* neutrality, given that the government signaled that it might enter a pact with the Axis powers, in due time. In a fatalist warning, published roughly a year before the invasion, they stated that: “Neutrality is in the fact that we do not interfere into the armed conflict, but let us also not allow that those who are in war, to interfere with our peace”.¹⁰⁹⁸ The country was parsed by the different occupying forces and the genocidal puppet state, so-called Independent State of Croatia, was created, where Sokol was banned in the same decree with which introduced anti-Jewish and anti-communist legislature.¹⁰⁹⁹ Some Sokol leaders and thinkers opted for collaboration with the occupying forces, most notably in the case of German-occupied Serbia, while some joined the resistance forces that eventually comprised a portion of the Tito’s partisans, as was notably the case in Slovenian portion of the former and future Yugoslavia. It is difficult to assess the overall position of Sokol members in the so-called Independent State of Croatia, but it will suffice to say that many of those who found themselves on its territory also appear in the database of the Jasenovac concentration camp victims.¹¹⁰⁰

After the establishment of the socialist Yugoslavia, those who survived, and particularly those who were considered esteemed experts in matters of physical education, joined the ranks of the newly founded institutions, designed based on the Soviet *fizkultura* model, as well as the state-sponsored *Partizan* sports clubs. What is more, former notable Sokol members assumed important positions in the state folklore ensembles and puppet theaters, thus playing an important role in the socialist rendering of Yugoslavism and Yugoslav culture—for which

¹⁰⁹⁸ “Sloboda je preča od neutralnosti!” [Freedom is more important than neutrality!] *Sokolski glasnik* (April 26, 1940), p. 1.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Hrvoje Klasić “How Sokols became Partisans” *Sport in Socialist Yugoslavia*, eds. Dario Brentin, Dejan Zec. London: Routledge, 2018, pp. 17-33.

¹¹⁰⁰ „List of individual victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp“ *Holocaust Survivors and Victims Database* URL= https://www.ushmm.org/online/hsv/source_view.php?SourceId=45409. (Last access January 21, 2025).

reason these continuities deserve to be studied by further research that would investigate the personal, intellectual and other continuities between the two periods.

This chapter has examined the parallel processes of associational decline, rise of the neo-romanticist stream of thinkers in the discourses on Yugoslavism, its cultural canon, historical narratives and within Sokol's memory politics, but also the effects of the generational change within the expert discourses on physical education and biomedical topics. It thereby demonstrated that the association comprised of the dwindling liberal "old guard" and novel generations that were susceptible to communist and ultranationalist infiltration. The associational culture also radically changed in this period, not least due to the SSKJ's ever more vulnerable social and political position, particularly in what became the banovina Croatia.¹¹⁰¹ The steep rise of the neo-romanticist thinkers and leaders within the association also contributed to the mythologization of nationhood and notion of the political community as such, with a notable rise in religious discourses and oaths of allegiances. In turn, this meant that sovereignty was not seen anymore as shared between active and self-developing citizens, but rather that it rested with high politics—which, at the same time, became representative of a primordial community and culture. In other words, the relevance of individual agency was diminishing, in favor of more pronouncedly collectivist visions of a political community. The flagship project of the period, namely the Sokol Peter's Five Year Plan (*Sokolska Petrova Petoljetka*), established an ambitious, as well as carefully managed project of resource production, welfare provision and labor distribution across the country's clubs. Given that Yugoslavia was invaded before the project was officially finished, it is difficult to assess its final results and effectiveness. Finally, the chapter also showcased the proliferation of the discourses on hard

¹¹⁰¹ See more on clashes between the forces of Vladko Maček's Croatian Peasant Protection (*Hrvatska seljačka zaštita*) and members of SSKJ in: Željko Karaula, *Mačekova vojska: Hrvatska seljačka zaštita u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji*. [Maček's army: Croatian peasant protection in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia] Zagreb: Despot infinitus, 2015.

heredity and eugenics, prompted by two thinkers of the younger generation, the anthropologist Božo Škerlj and physical education expert Branko Polič. In combination with ever more romanticized and mythologized nationhood, the reification of biological and, more broadly scientist, racism, spelled the end of the Sokol's traditional liberal positivist consensus on matters of body, mind and politics.

5. Conclusion

“All that we find to be cultured today, transformed from the uncultured through work, creation, care, upbringing and education”.¹¹⁰²

In September 1967, almost three decades after the beginning of the Second World War and the termination of Sokol's existence, a renowned writer Miroslav Krleža reminisced in his diary about the atmosphere around the dramatic days of April 1941, when the fate of Yugoslavia was being decided. In an entry entitled “Wars begin and end with tears”,¹¹⁰³ he depicted a bizarre scene that played out at the Zagreb train station, soon after which the Croatian Peasant Party leader Vladko Maček left for Belgrade to sign the pact with which Yugoslavia was to join the Axis powers. “The crowd of mobilization. One YugoSokol from Kranj, dead-drunk, performs free gymnastics, full with patriotic war enthusiasm. The man creates the war mood with his free Sokol exercise: deep squat, one-two. Strange athletics! Surrounded by a crowd of the mobilized, everyone is merely passively regarding him. No one believes that this athletic parade means anything more than a drunken clown show. He's a man without an audience.”¹¹⁰⁴ Krleža went

¹¹⁰² Nenad Rajić “Sokolstvo i porodica” [Sokol and the family] *Sokolska prosveta*, vol. 8 (1933), pp. 318-322, here p. 318.

¹¹⁰³ Miroslav Krleža “Ratovi počinju i svršavaju sa suzama, 5. IX. 1967.” [Wars begin and end with tears, September 5, 1967] *Hiljadudevetstošezdesete: Fragmenti dnevnika*. Zagreb: Fraktura, 2022, p. 32-33.

¹¹⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 32-33.

further to compare this scene with the one from one of the London train stations in 1939, highlighting the absurdity of the Yugoslav situation, in contrast with the English civilized, touching and loving farewells bidden to the departing soldiers. “All on the theme of: *entitas nationis*”,¹¹⁰⁵ concluded Krleža, pointing to the modernist Yugoslavism’s profound and grotesque demise at the time of signing of the pact.

This demise was, however, a result of a complex set of circumstances in internal and external Yugoslav politics alike. Instead of projecting it into the past, however, this study has drawn attention to and shown the undeniably robust effort that was put into realizing a sort of unique Yugoslavist modernity, by a considerable number of relevant political thinkers and intellectuals more broadly. On a more abstract level, it did this to demonstrate the historiographical necessity for reading interwar Yugoslavia through the hopes and expectations of 1918, rather than through the consequences of its invasion in 1941. What is more, it sought to reconcile social history, by integrating the history of the association and membership, with intellectual one, examining the mutual dependency of the two throughout markedly different periods of Sokol’s existence. In that way, it sought to problematize interpretative frameworks that rely on the “national question”, focusing, in turn, on the post-imperial continuities in political cultures and intellectual traditions, as well as their modes of cross-fertilization. The principal objective of this choice was to investigate much more profound stakes than the state’s continuous political turmoil encompassed, as well as to reveal alternative, non-nationally framed, fault lines. Some of these stakes pertained to much larger questions and traditions, namely modernity, secularism, progressivism, positivism and liberalism more broadly. The dissertation outlined the key intellectual trends within Sokol and situated them in a complex web of local and transnational political and ideological commitments that different Sokol thinkers operated within—paying special attention to the space between political and scientific thinking, as well as the way they

¹¹⁰⁵ Ibid, p. 33.

often informed each other. All of this is to say that it attempted to make a more theoretical point on the boundaries of intellectual history, and the relevance of including the socially-informed history of ideas and knowledge production within its ranks. Given the subject of the dissertation, that ties together pragmatism with liberalism and positivism, in a context of different varieties of nationalism and small statehood—Sokol proved to be a fertile case to demonstrate the added value of this integrative theoretical approach.

The first research chapter, that dealt with the 1920s, showed the transition of Sokol's agenda from the one primarily centered around promoting South Slavic national claims in the prewar context, to the more expansive progressivist educational one. Throughout this new phase, the most prominent Sokol thinkers debated and sought to implement novel transnational pedagogical trends they synthesized and appropriated to the local context. This also meant that Sokol's field of work was continuously expanding and that the body was increasingly more understood as a vehicle for achieving social cohesion and a strong national economy. It being the heyday of positivism and role of expertise in Sokol's associational life, the conceptions of Yugoslavism, its cultural and historical renderings, were also primarily framed as a matter of hard facts. Nevertheless, due to the association's relatively loose voluntary status and position, numerous thinkers were free to take up these assumptions and propose alternative ones. This was the case with those who began theorizing on developmental psychology in an essentialist manner, rejecting the liberal-positivists' universalist drive. In that sense, they opened the way for the language of national character to transcend the boundaries of literary expression and enter the realm of Sokol's expert discourses. Given the ever greater relevance of the principles of "new education" and reformist pedagogies within Sokol, as well as emulation of new approaches to the training of the body (most notably in relation to "natural movements" and "natural exercises"), the old and codified system of Sokol's physical education was increasingly up for the taking.

This transitional process was interrupted by the abrupt introduction of the Royal Dictatorship, in 1929, which resulted in the radical change of Sokol's associational status and societal position in 1930. Having been uplifted into a sort of para-state institution and subjected more strictly to state's and notably King Aleksandar's political patronage—Sokol's associational morphology changed in so far as it became more centralized, its intellectual output more programmatic and its membership extremely expanded, reaching wider layers of society and going beyond liberal physical education enthusiasts. This period, concluding with the 1934 assassination of King Aleksandar, is dealt with in the second research chapter.

Besides obtaining a semi-official status, due to its more pronounced subjugation to the state interests and direct connection to the state institutions, what changed Sokol in this period was the consequent tighter cooperation between the previously opposing or, at least, competing intellectual streams within the association. Having to produce, as well as rapidly disseminate, a coherent programmatic stance on Yugoslavism and related issues thus contributed to their mutual cross-fertilization. The liberal-positivists and neo-romanticist packages, with their affiliated preferences for different associational cultures, thus began encroaching on each others' territory. Still, given that this period, namely of the early to mid-1930s, coincided with the outbreak of the Great Depression and the rise of authoritarianism internationally, and specifically in the Germanophone contexts that represented the most important intellectual reference point for Sokol thinkers, this period also saw an attempt at prioritizing Masarykian realist theory of democracy, in conjunction with Sokol's pragmatist, body-centered program. In other words, while the Yugoslavist historical narrative and cultural canon underwent the process of essentialization and rapprochement with the neo-romanticist framework, there was a distinct layer of thinkers who promoted Sokol's own intellectual origins and agenda. This was epitomized in the person and work of Miroslav Tyrš, akin to Masarykian realist arguments on civic resilience and popular sovereignty, both of which they saw as a necessary response to the

rise of national socialism, fascism and Soviet communism alike. In epistemic terms, however, this period saw the expansion of the body-centered concerns for the national economy, in a technocratic key, not least because of the impact of the Great Depression on the semi-peripheral and immensely diverse Yugoslav economic setup. Other debates, such as those on the pedagogy of physical education, hereby became subjected to that priority, signalling a gradual turn towards more statist perspectives on the “national body”, its strenght, energy, efficiency and overall health.

Finally, following the assassination of King Aleksandar and the election of the new government of Milan Stojadinović in 1935, who sought greater economic rapprochement with both fascist Italy and the Third Reich, Sokol lost its favour in the official state circles and gradually became persecuted both in society and politics. Differing accross the country’s regions, however, the falling out of state's favor also enabled the rise of “tribal” nationalisms, at the expense of the Yugoslavist framework that Sokol represented. With it also went the more pronounced relevance of church(es), particularly in the case of Serbian Orthodox Church, but also more overt anti-modernist and autochtonist discourses, both outside and within the association. Even if the association retained a robust infrastructure and minutely devised system of physical education, due to the degradation of the membership, leadership and its overall program, “raising citizens” was not anymore a priority on their agenda. Instead, the rise and prevalence of the neo-romanticist stream of thinkers, in fact, resulted in the alternative vision of political community promoted by the association, namely that which regarded the population as “royal subjects” that are to voluntarily subject themselves for the protection of state interests, in a pronouncedly collectivist manner. Even if thinkers of earlier periods also operated with the language of monarchism, their “national” framing of the dynasty and individual rulers, put the conceptual weight onto the presupposed liberal underpinnings of the national project. In other words, because the King was “national”, being his subject was initially not in conflict with

Sokol's modernizing and emancipatory agenda, whereas in the 1930s, when the dynasty and the monarchical state became reflective of an imagined primordial parochial community—royal subjecthood became markedly more illiberal.¹¹⁰⁶

In terms of knowledge production, this meant that those thinkers who promoted eugenics, as well as other similar measures that rest on technocracy and taking agency away from the population that is to be managed, dominated this period of associational history. In this context, it was not the citizens who were to share the responsibility for societal progress, but instead the state, through whose intervention the “national body” was to be fine-tuned and managed. Given the ever greater deterioration of Yugoslav politics in the late 1930s and early 1940s, especially after the outbreak of the Second World War, Sokol ceased many of its operations in particular regions of the country, limiting itself solely to some areas, where its membership opted for radically opposing strategies of either collaboration or resistance, once the war began. The intellectual consequences of this, however, were already detectable shortly before the country was invaded, as the Belgrade and Ljubljana Sokol thinkers, for instance, experienced rapprochement with the groups that will comprise some of the more important actors of the Second World War politics in the same geographic area.

Having outlined, in detail, the key intellectual debates and arguments espoused within Sokol in the above-mentioned changing circumstances, the dissertation arrived to the following results and responses to the initial set of research questions—all of which point to potential further research avenues in the fields and subfields that the dissertation sits on the boundaries of. Specifically, this study revealed three distinct conceptualizations of a political community, articulated and promoted by Sokol thinkers at different points in time, namely 1) the “national body”; 2) “active citizens”; 3) “royal subjects”. Even if these do not regularly appear *verbatim*,

¹¹⁰⁶ For more on languages of monarchism in interwar Yugoslavia, see: Cody James Inglis “The languages of monarchism in interwar Yugoslavia, 1918–1941: variations on a theme” *History of European Ideas* (2023), pp. 1–17.

the arguments and adjacent concepts pertaining to them follow a distinguishable pattern, based on which it is possible to argue that the notion of the “national body” dominated the period of the 1920s, the one of “active citizens”, in the Masarykian realist sense, the early to mid-1930s, and that of “royal subjects” the late 1930s and early 1940s. The prominence of these perspectives depended directly upon the socio-political position of the association and, specifically, the prevalence of the given stream of thinkers at different points in time. While the “national body” represented the 1920s’ concerns for the national health, strenght and development in a loosely liberal framework that prioretized voluntary contributions towards societal progress; the notion of “raising citizens” and active, responsible citizenry that gained prominence in the early 1930s, reflected the pragmatist repackaging of Masarykian realism for the purposes of ensuring a viable and resilient national economy and smooth functioning of the, otherwise volatile, Yugoslav state. Finally, the visions on “royal subjects” that came to the fore in the late 1930s and early 1940s, signalled the rise in the “tribalist” identities, collectivism, autochtonism, but also in technocratic approaches, among those who came to shape the associational intellectual output in the final years of Sokol’s activity.

These different understandings of political community, however, all demonstrate the lasting impact of ideological and epistemic trends and debates, for what Sokol was not only modelling, but also attempting to realize through its work. Beyond the rather contingent evolution of its conceptualization of political community, the dissertation tackled different modes of creating a supranational framework of Yugoslavism. Reconstructing its historical narrative, cultural canon and more abstract approaches to the linguistic and geographic questions—it traced the making of a unique synthesis of existing national frameworks that also incorporated some of the values that stemmed from the process of synthetizing itself, such as religious tolerance, deconstruction of “tribal” national narratives, celebration of cultural and reigonal diversity and more. Taking all of these elements into account, it showed that the main fault lines between

proponents and challengers of the, otherwise not always coherent, notion of Yugoslavist modernity, were largely rooted in the post-imperial condition and the differences in the inherited political and intellectual cultures and traditions, rather than other markers.

The second, and more abstract, main result that the dissertation offers is the one on the relevance of the body for intellectual history and vice versa. Importantly, this is construed as a response to the vast predominance of social history of the body in contemporary historiography, that has rarely taken into account body as an inspiration for and object of political thought. In fact, larger systems devised by long-standing traditions of political thought have rarely been examined from the body-centered point of view and this dissertation's attempt at bridging the two subjects and regarding them as a joint historical phenomenon, represents a plea towards the two distinct subfields, to take each others' subjects more seriously. The same could be said for gender history and gender studies more broadly. Not only do most body-centered studies deal with women's bodies, disproportionately thematizing women's embodiment, but they also largely do not engage with different understandings of the body, taking it as a given. Understanding that body was a relevant factor for political and scientific thought in ways that continuously reconceptualized its ontology and relationality to society, politics and culture, could benefit all of the fields and de-normativize it as a subject of study.

The third and more specific point that the dissertation's results touch upon is the relevance of the body for distinctly liberal projects, such as was, at least initially, the one of Yugoslav modernity. The historiography, and especially that of sports and physical education, has largely overwritten the liberal understanding of collective body improvement, conflating it with markedly illiberal and authoritarian body-centered projects of, for instance fascist Italy, Soviet Union or the Third Reich. The body as a site into which liberal hopes were uploaded in a way that underscored individuality, universalism and evolutionism—is rarely addressed in

historiography that would center on the common points between political thinking and physical education.

In that way, the dissertation claims that physical education was understood not only as essentially politicized, but also had a specific liberal iteration whose ultimate objectives significantly differed from the more pronouncedly collectivist body-driven projects of authoritarian regimes. Given Sokol's voluntary nature as an association, the usual issues that are brought up in relation to authoritarian body projects, such as negation or limiting of selfhood and bodily sovereignty—are cast in a liberal light, relying on liberal and civic notion of collective responsibility that one can opt out of or only partially participate in, according to their ability or willingness. In contrast to some of the relevant theoretical contributions on modernist projects' propensity for totalitarian frameworks, such as those of Zygmunt Bauman, the case of Sokol that was not an irrelevant socio-political factor in Yugoslavia's and many other European countries' history, represents a corrective, showcasing an example of a largely modernist and pragmaticist project that prioritized the evolutionary and voluntary aspects of social change, at the expense of state or even epistemic authority.

On a more profound level, the dissertation also shows the successful marriage between pragmatism and liberalism, conjointly with that of idealism and materialism—using Sokol's notion of “small-scale work” and ideological input into the otherwise materially understood body. Regarding temporality, it is possible to claim that, across the board, in case of both liberal-positivists and those belonging to a neo-romanticist stream, almost none of them considered themselves exempt from history, even if their understandings of history sometimes diverged quite significantly. This shared underlying assumption affirms their belonging to a category of modernist thinkers, given that a vast majority of them operated with specific expectations and qualitative visions of the historical future.

Finally, all of these research results combined point to the Yugoslav Sokol thinkers' insistence on the connection between small-scale work on individual bodily improvement, in a liberal key, and the creation of a viable political community. It is not by accident, however, that it was precisely the thinkers who found themselves in a semi-peripheral, relatively weak and small state, surrounded by revisionist forces, who thought about strategies that would compensate for its lackings by promoting liberal citizenship, one of the pronounced goals of Sokol's civic-cum-physical education. This insight allows for a meaningful return to the examination of the dynamics between East Central European small statehood and the Great Powers, on the eve of the Second World War and in transhistorical terms, as thematized by Rebecca West in her memoirs, presented at the beginning of the dissertation.

Focusing on the value individual, yet highly developed, citizens possess, even in the most peripheral and dire conditions, West introduced the characters of Militsa and Mehmed, a married couple from Novi Sad and Mostar, respectively.¹¹⁰⁷ Mentioning, as part of her travelogue, the general disregard of Skopje as a town worth visiting due to its provinciality and underdevelopment, she countered that sentiment by showcasing the brilliance of the most ordinary Skopje residents: "Militsa and Mehmed have a special value to me not only because of what they are, but because of where they are (...) And all the time there was the flat on the Vardar embankment, lovely with old furniture brought from Novi Sad that told of the best in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that spoke of the Vienna of Mozart and Schubert, and there were Militsa and Mehmed, always in motion, yet always steady".¹¹⁰⁸

Depicting their domestic idyll, comprised of their sophisticated intellectual engagements, consumption of *haute* culture and productive daily life, West posited them as organic intellectuals, in touch with life and their most immediate local communities, thus contributing

¹¹⁰⁷ Inspired by real historical figures, Anica Savić-Rebac (a literary scholar and Helenist) and her husband Hasan Rebac (philosopher and politician).

¹¹⁰⁸ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and the Grey Falcon*, p. 809.

to the political resilience of their compatriots. “...these two are steady as pillars. They are pillars supporting that invisible house which we must have to shelter us if we are not to be blown away by the winds of nature. Now, when I go through a town of which I know nothing, a town which appears to be a waste land of uniform streets wholly without quality, I look on it in wonder and hope, since it may hold a Mehmed, a Militsa”, she reminisced.¹¹⁰⁹ Soon after, faced with the invasion of the Third Reich onto the United Kingdom, West reached out for even more profound implication of Yugoslavia’s model of liberal citizenship, comparing it to her own native context in a way that centered the question of British historical guilt and responsibility towards small nations and states: “Often, when I have thought of invasion, or when a bomb has dropped near by, I have prayed, ‘Let me behave like a Serb,’ but I have known afterwards that I had no right to utter such a prayer, for the Slavs are brothers, and there is no absolution for the sins we have committed against the Slavs through our ineptitude. Thus we were without even the support of innocence when we went to our windows and saw London burn...”¹¹¹⁰

Building further on this trope, she pointed to the result of resilience that she saw existed among the Yugoslavs as a result of their transimperial historical experience: “In this war, as in the one before it, they have made out of their defeats great victories, which have preserved the powerful empires that were their allies from the shame of becoming weak like themselves. Now, in this hour when their King is in exile and their hearths are defiled by swine, their state seems as a rock in a shifting world; and all over Europe the sorrowful find comfort in thinking on their history, though it passes from woe to woe. For the news that Hitler had been defied by Yugoslavia travelled like sunshine over the countries which he had devoured and humiliated, promising spring”.¹¹¹¹

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 1126.

¹¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 1149.

In her eyes, Yugoslav present resistance to the invader was a direct consequence of centuries worth of building civic and economic resilience, in order to compensate for the historical experience of small and peripheral (lack of) statehood. Boiling this argument down to the level of resilient citizens and organic intellectuals such as Militsa and arguably most of the thinkers involved in Sokol, West buoyed up and asserted that: “Really, we are all much safer than we suppose. If there are twenty people like this woman scattered between here and China, civilization will not perish.”¹¹¹²

Ultimately, however, despite vast majority of interwar Yugoslav Sokol thinkers adopting nominally liberal, humanist and modernist views that West would see as guarantees of a future convalescence of Yugoslavs and liberal democracy as such – the fact still stands that this approach allowed both for the cross-fertilization with those who held different views on key issues, but more importantly, legitimization of symbolic and physical violence, as well. With time, in other words, many of them made peace with abandoning liberal commitments for the sake of retaining the national communitarian vision of political order, rooted in autochtonist and essentialist understanding of nationhood. Having shed the liberal layers of their nationalism and reduced their vision of democracy to national majoritarianism, they also lost the future-orientedness of their initial outlook, turning ever more inward. Even in case of nominally liberal, progressive and anti-imperialist voluntary associations such as Sokol, the double face of progress and belief in the Blumenburgian *makeability of the world* translated into the contradictions of what could be termed as 'growing pains of modernity'.

¹¹¹² Ibid, p. 807.

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Статистички преглед српског сокољства 1907. год.

Редни број	Име друштва	Дан и година оснивања	Бр. члан.				Број чланова, по старости	Колико нах вежбају	Колико се пута вежба на нед.	Има ли друштво клубова и са колико чланова	Имовина друштва				Из којег су staleжа чланови друштва
			оснивача	потомства	варшких	мушких	женских				у готову	у сирова	у некретности	сва	
1	Београдско гимнастичко друштво Соко	3./I. 1882.	49	22	90	—	—	200	3	Футбал са 30 срп. маж са 40 чланова	5000—	3000—	—	8000—	из разних staleжа
2	Српски Соко у Београдима	20./XI. 1905.	1	38	28	18	—	30	3	—	276—	518-60	—	794-60	"
3	Вршачко српско гимнастичко друштво	1900.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	Српски Соко у Вуковару	8./V. 1904.	6	35	—	—	—	25	3	—	754-10	730—	—	1484-10	из разних staleжа
5	Српски Соко у Глини	10./IX. 1906.	25	34	29	—	—	29	3	—	—	750—	—	750—	"
6	Српски Соко у Голубинцима	20./X. 1906.	—	30	15	—	—	15	3	тамбурашки са 9 чланова	120—	100—	—	220—	"
7	Српски Соко у Госпићу	30./IX. 1906.	8	51	18	66	—	84	3	—	1000-50	300—	—	1300-50	"
8	Српски Соко у Грачацу	13./VII. 1906.	20	6	17	16	—	33	2	—	500—	120—	—	620—	"
9	Српски Соко у Двору	1./V. 1905.	3	8	15	—	—	15	1	тамбурашки и пев. са 8 чл.	483-09	316-30	—	799-39	из ратарског
10	Српски Соко у Доњој Тузли	19./XI. 1906.	10	24	46	—	—	46	2	—	1000—	400—	—	1400—	из трговачког и обртничког
11	Српски Соко у Загребу	14./V. 1905.	16	29	82	—	—	82	3	—	617-27	936—	—	1553-27	из разних staleжа
12	Српски Соко у Земуну	11./IV. 1906.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	"
13	Српски Соко у Инђији	16./IX. 1906.	—	20	12	—	—	12	2	певачки	100—	—	—	100—	"
14	Српски Соко у Пригу	20./VII. 1905.	6	40	17	—	—	14	3	—	319-23	40—	—	359-23	из чиновничког и занатлијског

15	Српски Соко у Јаску	1906.	—	—	16	—	—	16	4	—	—	60—	—	60—	из разних staleжа
16	Српски Соко у Карловцима	11./I. 1904.	13	53	41	61	—	95	6	читаонички са 22 члана	1474-48	1080—	20.000—	22.554-48	"
17	Српски Соко у Кореници	11./VIII. 1905.	10	20	26	—	—	26	2	—	500—	231-41	—	731-41	"
18	Српски Соко у Матровици	1904.	4	50	49	15	—	49	6	—	—	—	—	—	"
19	Срп. гимнаст. друштво Обилић у Мостару	1903.	35	57	55	45	—	50	3	—	885-21	700—	—	1585-21	из занатлијског
20	Српски Соко у Нештину	21./IX. 1906.	—	17	19	—	—	19	2	тамбурашки са 9 чланова	30—	308—	—	338—	из ратарског
21	Соко у Новом Саду	7./II. 1906.	—	15	65	—	—	25	3	—	325-85	—	—	325-85	из трговачког и занатлијског
22	Девојачки Соко у Новом Саду	22./XI. 1906.	—	—	30	—	—	30	2	—	400—	—	—	400—	—
23	Српски Соко у Новој Градишци	26./VII. 1906.	7	16	16	—	—	16	3	—	14-38	1065—	—	1079-38	из чиновничког
24	Српски Соко у Осеку	22./V. 1906.	3	55	33	48	24	34	4	певачки са 30 чланова	529-79	523-80	—	1053-59	из разних staleжа
25	Српски Соко у Пакрацу	1906.	11	27	19	—	—	50	4	—	452-55	—	—	452-55	"
26	Српски Соко у Руми	15./V. 1905.	1	37	25	—	—	20	3	—	527-58	53—	—	580-58	"
27	Душан Силни у Сарајеву	3./II. 1906.	22	29	52	—	—	52	2	мачеваљачки са 10 чланова	174-80	1185-79	—	1360-59	"
28	Српски Соко у Ст. Пазови	15./VIII. 1906.	—	23	32	—	—	28	3	—	89-30	32—	—	121-30	"
29	Српски Соко у Червину	1906.	4	20	36	—	—	35	3	тамбурашки и певачки	100—	355—	—	455—	из ратарског
30	Српски Соко у Чортановцима	24./VII. 1905.	—	17	18	—	—	12	2	—	105—	40—	—	145—	"
31*	Српски Соко у Шиду	14./VIII. 1905.	5	15	26	32	12	—	3	женски са 11 чланова	469-22	100—	—	569-22	из трговачког и занатлијског
СВЕГА:			262	788	927	301	36	1142	—	—	16.248-35	12.944-90	20.000—	49.193-25	

*Нису послали података: 32. Крагујевачко друштво за гимнастику; 33. Шабачки и 34. Нишки „Соко“; „Душан Силни“ 35. у Београду; 36. у Пироту; 37. у Лесковцу; 38. у Врању; 39. у Нишу; 40. у Алексинцу; 41. у Пожаревцу; 42. у Крагујевцу; 43. у Ваљеву; 44. у Крушевцу и 45. у Зајечару.

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Redni broj	Sokolska župa	Brojno stanje*				P r e t p l a t .					
		članova	narasla	dece	Ukupno	„Sokol. Glasnik“			„Naša Radost“		
						društvo	pojedinci	Duguju	društvo	pojedinci	Duguju
						Din	p		Din	p	
1.	Banja Luka	1867	296	621	2784	53	119	4712	60	74	640
2.	Beograd	2578	1361	2944	6883	20	226	5653	190	8	1900
3.	Bjelovar	1943	258	775	2976	140	135	6561	58		540
4.	Celje	2430	510	1442	4382	42	155	3147	209	35	1650
5.	Cetinje	1150	280	426	1856	80	65	4795	54	1	385
6.	Karlovac	brojno stanje nepoznato				49	36	1375	52		520
7.	Kragujevac	1017	497	808	2322	47	78	4170	56	1	320
8.	Kranj	2361	266	848	3475	30	88	2225	81	17	700
9.	Ljubljana	6138	1078	1978	9194	99	255	5495	179	88	1750
10.	Maribor	5399	1547	3403	10349	77	308	5338	205	78	1540
11.	Mostar	5479	894	1101	7474	140	272	12929	50	97	3
12.	Niš	1458	510	990	2958	28	47	2080	38	2	340
13.	Novi Sad	5322	1196	3098	9616	153	313	12341	149	4	1290
14.	Novo mesto	1408	271	454	2133	15	25	900	41	4	292
15.	Osijek	3978	894	1457	6329	105	334	11925	232	18	1600
16.	Sarajevo	2337	539	621	3497	74	156	4350	52	9	448
17.	Skoplje	3172	1202	1952	6326	77	81	5020	43	6	370
18.	Split	3308	786	1285	5379	102	75	5145	58	24	640
19.	Sušak - Rijeka	3179	809	1225	5213	124	192	9995	123	18	1100
20.	Šibenik - Zadar	1773	443	800	3016	69	87	3820	64	31	700
21.	Tuzla	2716	452	713	3881	190	82	8875	56	1	410
22.	Užice	853	292	653	1798	41	7	2000	30		300
23.	Vel. Bečkerek	2373	730	1709	4812	102	74	3680	109	12	1261
24.	Zagreb	4472	1052	1909	7433	146	468	13799	121	7	1200
Svega . .		66711	16163	31212	114086	2003	3672	140330	50	2357	431
											21036

* Prema podacima Jugoslovenskog sokolskog kalendara za god. 1931.

Stanje koje nam ovaj tabelarni pregled pokazuje ne može nas zadovoljiti.

3: Sokolska prosveta, vol. 3-4 (1931), p. 64. Holding of the National Library of Serbia.

n i k a n a :						Da li je u broju pretplatnika postignut propisani %				Pri- metba	
„Sokolić“			„Soko“			10 %	5 %	10 %	5 %		
društvo	pojedinci	Duguju		društvo	pojedinci	Duguju		„Glasnik“	„Naša Radost“		„Sokolić“
		Din	p			Din	p				
49	18	1160		27	34	1610		nije	jeste	jeste	nije
145	4	2720		164	17	4950		„	„	„	jeste
83	3	1621		72	2	1170		jeste	„	„	nije
77	36	1660		80	23	2120		nije	„	„	„
46	1	690		26		780		jeste	„	„	„
50		1000		16		480		—	—	—	—
43		842		60	60	1740		jeste	jeste	nije	jeste
65	14	1280		60	6	1680		nije	„	jeste	nije
162	4	2140		129	66	3250		„	„	„	„
133	69	1791		135	18	3420		„	„	„	„
75	19	1590		66	8	2000		„	„	„	„
32	3	620		19		570		„	nije	nije	„
166	2	3160		150	7	4460		„	„	jeste	„
32	6	580		28	2	780		„	jeste	„	„
145		2780		100	28	3600		jeste	„	„	„
62	6	1590		68	12	2090		nije	„	„	„
43	11	970		14	10	690		„	nije	nije	„
54	21	1190		86	3	2340		„	jeste	„	„
106	22	1612	50	17	12	2240		„	„	jeste	„
43	9	960		57	2	1620		„	„	„	„
62	3	1240		71		2100		jeste	„	„	„
31	2	620		17		510		nije	nije	„	„
70	3	1300		43	6	1260		„	jeste	„	„
72	24	1420		77	23	2940		jeste	„	nije	„
1846	280	34536	50	1582	339	48400					

4: Sokolska prosveta, vol. 3-4 (1931), p. 65. Holding of the National Library of Serbia.

Tabela broj 1

Predavanja

Broj održanih predavanja u godini 1931		Sokolska župa															Svega										
		Banja Luka	Beograd	Bjelovar	Celje	Cetinje	Karlovac	Kragujevac	Kranj	Ljubljana	Maribor	Mostar	Niš	Novi Sad	Novo mesto	Osljeik		Sarajevo	Skoplje	Split	Sušak-Rijeka	Sibenik-Zadar	Tuzla	Užice	Varaždin	Vel. Beckerek	Zagreb
Sokolskih	idejnih	93	84	37	14	13	26	64	32	32	14	5	57	3	26	231	26	Nema podataka									
	istorijskih o telesnom vežbanju	25	25	4	1	2	11	18	11	17	3	1	14	—	8	128	8	Nema podataka									
Dругih	zdravstvenih organizatorno-adm. nistrativnih drugih	—	22	7	5	2	33	24	9	107	30	9	74	1	4	68	4	Nema podataka									
	istorijskih zemljopisnih socijalnih narodno-gospodarskih o štednji	5	19	2	1	11	8	26	10	8	10	3	23	—	4	23	—	Nema podataka									
Uz upotrebu	zdravstvenih o književnosti i umetnosti drugih	4	27	6	23	17	15	42	9	2	5	3	9	—	2	21	—	Nema podataka									
	filmova diapozitiva	11	6	2	—	3	10	16	13	—	—	2	15	—	—	15	—	Nema podataka									
Broj slušalaca	članstva naraštaja dece drugih	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	181	249	—	—	3	9	15	1	—	7	3	2	—	1	2	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	313	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
Ukupan broj predavanja	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka									
	Ukupan broj predavanja	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—													

Tabela broj 2

Broj održanih govora pred vrstom u god. 1931		Sokolska župa																			Svega						
		Banjaluka	Beograd	Bjelovar	Celje	Cetinje	Karlovac	Kragujevac	Kranj	Ljubljana	Maribor	Mostar	Niš	Novi Sad	Novo mesto	Osljeck	Sarajevo	Skoplje	Split	Sušak-Rijeka		Sibenik-Zadar	Tuzla	Užice	Varaždin	Vel. Bečkerek	Zagreb
Sokolskih	idejnih																										
	istorijskih o telesnom vežbanju	240	29	30	247	515	37	156	193	46	70	71	281	128	356	103	304	8	17	355	283	683	3846	1997			
Drugi	zdravstvenih																										
	organizatomo-administrativnih drugih	52			123	29	9	82	107	319	348	47	129	75	200	75	75	9	21	111	190	1990	1060				
Broj slušalaca	zdravstvenih o književnosti i umetnosti drugih																										
	članstva narastaja dece drugih																										
Ukupan broj govora pred vrstom																											
		401			1403																						
Ukupan broj slušalaca																											

Tabela broj 3

Propagandna nedelja sokolske štampe

Izveštaj		Sokolska župa																											
		Banjaluka	Beograd	Bjelovar	Celje	Cetinje	Karlovac	Kragujevac	Kranj	Ljubljana	Maribor	Mostar	Niš	Novi Sad	Novo mesto	Osijek	Sarajevo	Skopje	Split	Sušak-Rijeka	Šibenik-Zadar	Tuzla	Užice	Varaždin	Vel. Bečkerek	Zagreb	Ukupno		
U župi ima jedinica		47	47	68	58	80	34	30	34	69	89	115	118	66	18	146	43	114	43	49	39	57	26	65	77	128	1650		
Izveštaj poslalo jedinica		4		7	14	19	18	12	18	27	44	25	12	31	11	71	4	15		23	6		8	46	62	45	510		
Propagandna nedelja održana je u jedinici		3		23	14	19	10	7	14	19	32	12	12	29	7	57	3	8		12	2		8	43	62	?	396		
Predavanja održano je		2		25	9	19	10	7	13	13	22	12	12	17	7	47	3	8		12	2		6	39	62	22	269		
Broj slušalaca		136		1372	?	?	336	276	441	590	763	756	?	817	144	3173	414	575		838	50		372	159	12342	?	23954		
Govora pred vrstom održano je		2		41	5	24	24	25	35	20	82	30	26	66	17	160	12	21		34	4		12	59	218	82	999		
Izložbe sokolske štampe		—		2	—	1	—	1	6	1	7	1	3	8	—	10	1	—		1	—		—	5	2	2	51		
Broj predavanja u školama		2		28	—	6	8	1	2	—	11	10	10	12	2	24	4	2		5	2		—	18	36	18	201		
Prikupljeno novih pretplatnika na	U koliko jedinica	3	Nema podataka	12	?	19	2	6	4	14	15	12	12	9	4	24	3	3		6	1		6	19	62	?	236		
	Sokolski glasnik	7		11	?	8	4	24	18	12	28	27	12	42	14	175	7	5		11	1		35	36	83	22	582		
	Sokolić	40		26	?	17	21	17	8	3	23	39	14	88	3	223	4	5		24	2		35	38	140	61	801		
	Naša radost	1		2	?	45	—	14	9	2	26	30	18	117	5	159	2	31		38	—		5	54	—	30	588		
	Soko	—		1	?	2	—	4	1	—	8	5	3	19	2	29	1	5		—	—		2	10	32	—	124		
Svega		48		40	?	72	25	59	36	17	85	91	47	275	24	586	14	46		73	3		67	138	255	113	2095		
Broj prodatih sokolskih knjiga		10		45	?	—	—	4	8	—	31	—	24	46	15	?	—	—		—	—		26	37	—	35	281		
Broj prikupljenih oglasa		—		—	?	—	—	—	9	—	1	—	—	—	—	4	2	—		—	—		—	2	—	1	19		
Na Sokolski glasnik pretplaćeno javnih	čitaonica	1		—	?	1	1	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	?	—	—		—	—		—	9	—	14	37		
	drugih	—		—	?	—	—	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	?	—	—		—	—		—	—	?	?	6		

7: Sokolska prosveta, vol. 3 (1932), p. 101. Holding of the National Library of Serbia.

Sokolske knjižnice

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Tabela broj 6

Sokolske čitaonice

Sokolske čitaonice			Sokolska župa																			Ukupno																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																														
Za članstvo	broj	novina časopisa posetilaca	Nema podataka			Banjaluka	Beograd	Bjelovar	Celje	Cetinje	Karlovac	Kragujevac	Kranj	Ljubljana	Maribor	Mostar	Niš	Novi Sad	Novo mesto	Osijek	Sarajevo		Skopje	Nema podataka					Split	Sušak-Rijeka	Sibenik-Zadar	Tuzla	Užice	Varaždin	Vel. Bečkerek	Zagreb																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																
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Tabela broj 8

Drustvene priredbe

broj 6

Redni broj

Sokolska župa

Broj društva
četa

Večeri
društvene
debatne

Pretstave
pozorišne
lutkama
kino

Koncerti
Zabave
Sela

Igranke
Svečane proslave
Akademije
Izložbe

Izleti
Ino

Za naraštaj i decu
izleti
sela
akademije
pozorište
lutaka
razno

Ukupno svih priredaba

Primerba

Banjaluka
Bjelovar
Beograd
Celje
Cetinje
Karlovac
Kragujevac
Kranj
Ljubljana
Maribor
Mostar
Niš
Novi Sad
Novo mesto
Osiijek
Sarajevo
Skoplje
Sušak-Rijeka
Split
S benik-Zadar
Tuzla
Užice
Varaždin
Veliki Beckerek
Zagreb

1	20	27	—	14	—	6	8	3	1	156	11	7	—	48	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	240	Nema podataka	
2	45	23	—	23	—	—	19	9	32	—	42	28	2	48	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	286	Nema podataka	
3	37	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	603	Nema podataka	
4	52	6	25	107	27	107	5	12	7	75	—	31	75	34	—	74	3	45	51	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	189	Nema podataka	
5	26	54	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	79	Nema podataka	
6	27	7	30	9	9	14	5	9	2	15	6	9	14	15	1	25	3	4	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	854	Nema podataka	
7	17	13	1	19	—	19	—	3	4	2	13	15	3	5	—	8	—	1	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	79	Nema podataka	
8	28	6	199	66	122	66	122	—	89	13	51	5	33	51	27	1	57	27	37	29	2	6	—	—	—	—	840	Nema podataka	
9	51	18	83	145	96	145	22	147	10	81	—	6	73	40	1	93	19	43	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1750	Nema podataka	
10	54	35	136	248	96	248	42	75	65	103	112	24	267	161	—	143	—	82	76	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	862	Nema podataka	
11	28	87	81	53	26	—	—	—	1	94	35	24	236	50	49	4	61	7	23	23	—	—	—	—	—	—	113	Nema podataka	
12	34	84	15	9	5	—	—	—	—	5	14	16	8	11	7	—	15	—	3	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	706	Nema podataka	
13	60	6	33	20	47	2	40	15	46	114	164	55	56	6	8	32	5	12	14	18	11	—	—	—	—	235	Nema podataka		
14	14	4	49	43	28	4	12	4	4	1	9	17	6	—	—	12	1	6	14	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1225	Nema podataka	
15	65	81	55	52	127	8	—	—	49	10	105	47	67	181	105	4	185	34	71	79	27	27	—	—	—	1	164	Nema podataka	
16	24	19	49	5	—	—	—	—	1	5	4	25	31	13	10	—	6	—	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	606	Nema podataka	
17	38	76	56	27	43	10	13	8	74	24	88	74	70	1	39	7	22	20	7	6	9	10	1	—	—	—	103	Nema podataka	
18	38	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	165	Nema podataka	
19	37	6	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	5	—	36	8	5	—	7	1	3	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	349	Nema podataka	
20	21	18	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	771	Nema podataka	
21	23	34	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	12	7	6	52	—	19	—	3	53	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka
22	11	15	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	18	23	7	5	54	39	—	15	15	37	39	1	1	10	8	—	—	—	Nema podataka	
23	25	40	4	18	12	—	—	—	—	19	33	61	105	67	45	1	26	6	18	18	5	3	6	13	—	—	—	Nema podataka	
24	73	4	32	212	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka	
25	55	73	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	Nema podataka	
Svega		903	757	918	517	1200	90	495	327	717	521	1075	1066	728	23	897	181	438	427	77	55	102	141	57	57	30	26	10140	

Tabela broj 9

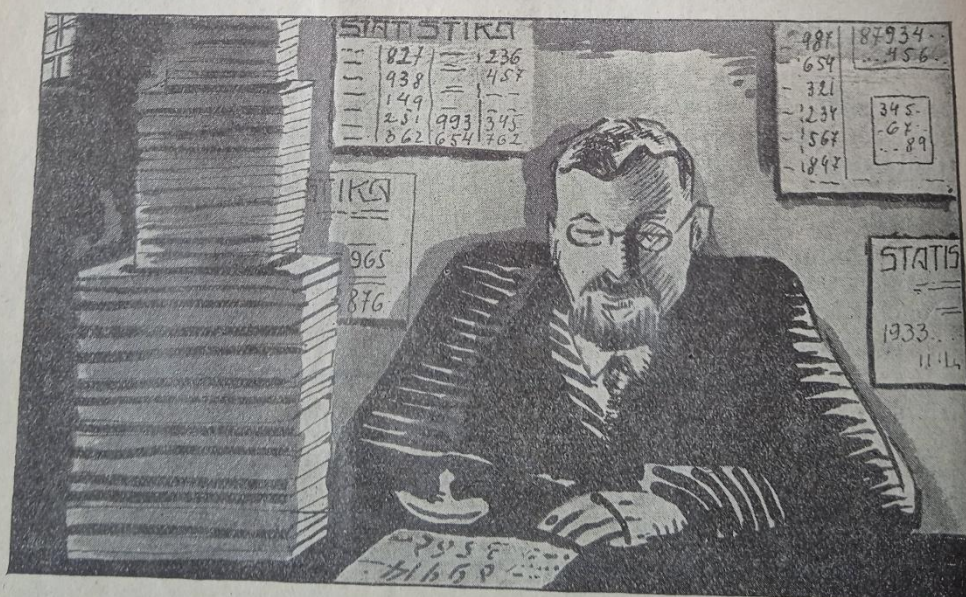
Naziv otseka		Otseci		Sokolska župa																							
				Banja Luka	Beograd	Bjelovar	Celje	Cetinje	Karlovac	Kragujevac	Kranj	Ljubljana	Maribor	Mostar	Niš	Novi Sad	Novo mesto	Osijek	Sarajevo	Skoplje	Split	Sušak-Rijeka	Tuzla	Užice	Varaždin	Vel. Bečkerek	Zagreb
Pozorišni	otseka članova	5	72						1	9	1	5	7	39	4	6	89	6	15	2		2	2		1	18	114
Muzički	otseka članova	8	53						1	15	1	4	4	?	8	7	128	7	3	—	—	2	2	2	2	3	45
Omladinski	otseka članova	—	—						—	—	—	1	1	?	—	?	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
Pevački	otseka članova	2	69						—	—	—	6	3	?	1	7	203	7	6	—	—	2	3	1	14	44	
Tamburaški	otseka članova	—	—						—	—	—	3	39	?	5	—	—	—	2	22	3	3	1	2	28	46	
Lutkovni	otseka članova	—	—						1	7	—	?	1	6	—	1	?	?	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	10	
Kino	otseka članova	—	—						—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	?	
Zabavni	otseka članova	—	—						—	—	—	1	6	?	—	—	—	—	1	9	1	7	—	—	—	3	

**UPRAVITELJ I NASTAVNICI
SAVEZNE PROSVETNE
ŠKOLE 1933
U KARIKATURI**



**UPRAVITELJ ŠKOLE
BRAT DR. VL. BELAJČIĆ**

BROJKE U SOKOLSKOJ PROSVETI

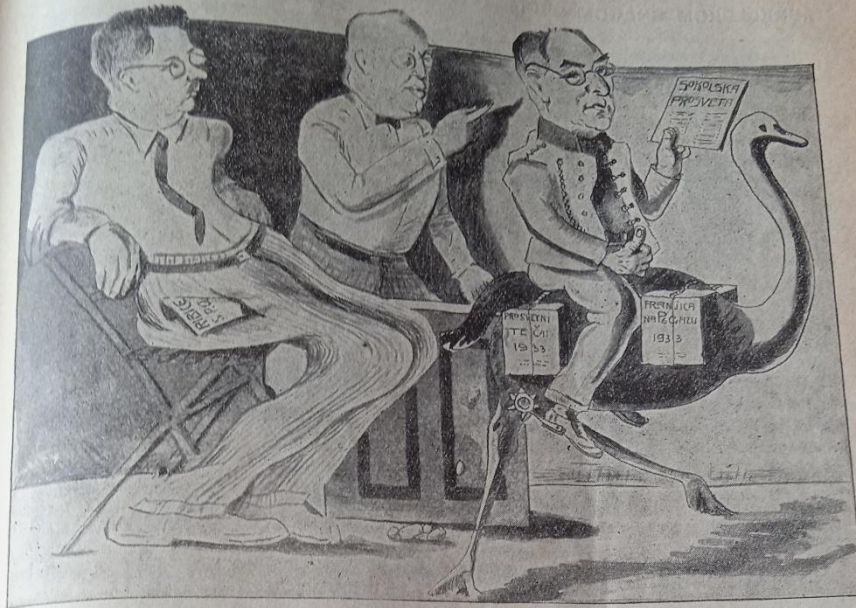


292

BRAT CVEJIĆ

12: "Upravitelj i nastavnici Savezne prosvetne škole 1933: u karikaturi" [Director and the instructors of the Union-level educational school of 1933: in caricatures] Sokolska prosveta, vol. 7 (1933), p. 292. Holding of the National Library of Serbia.

REDAKCIJA, DEKLAMACIJA I SATIRA



BRAĆA MALIN, ŽAKULA I DR. MRVOŠ

LUTKAR KAO LUTKA



BRAT LAVRENČIĆ

293

13: "Upravitelj i nastavnici Savezne prosvetne škole 1933: u karikaturi" [Director and the instructors of the Union-level educational school of 1933: in caricatures] Sokolska prosveta, vol. 7 (1933), p. 293. Holding of the National Library of Serbia.

kolskim dužnostima posvete punu pažnju i da u toku sokolske Petrove petoletnice stvore od dužnosti pojam časti i svetinje, te da, prekaljeni u sve-
sti o dužnosti i očeličeni u savla-
đivanju teškoća, gledajući na sva dela

stvorenau sokolskoj Petrovoj petoletnici
složnom snagom, neizmernom ljubav-
lju i požrtvovanjem, budemo spremni
i osposobljeni za nove podvige, nova
dela za dobro, sreću i lepu budućnost
Kralja, Jugoslavije i Sokolstva!

Zadaci koje su jedinice i njihovi pripadnici-ce preduzeli da izvrše u Petrovoj petoletnici, a koji kao posebni zadaci spadaju u petoletnicu

Nabavka pljuvaonice,
nabavka-izrada otirača,
uređenje izvora mineralne vode,
uređenje pojila za stoku,
podizanje spomenika,
uređenje krečana-jedinica,
uređenje potoka i kanala,
podizanje mostova,
zasipanje močvara i bara,
podizanje higijenskih nužnika,
podizanje pčelarnika i košnica,
uređenje modernih dubrišta,
izgradnja kupatila,
podizanje silosa,
uređenje trgova,
podizanje spomenika Viteškom Kralju
Ujedinitelju,
uređenje seoskih groblja,
obnavljanje crkvi,
podizanje svetiljki na ulici,
podizanje letovališta na moru ili planini,
nabavka modernih preslica,
uređenje cesta-putova,
izgradnja vodovoda,
podizanje novih česama,
opravka postojećih bunara,
podizanje novih bunara,
podizanje odbranbenih nasipa,
podizanje spomen-ploča,
podizanje zadužbine Kralju Aleksandru,
sađenje drvoreda,
sađenje šumskih sadnica — pošumljavan-
je goleti,
sađenje i negovanje voćnih sadnica,
podizanje rasadnika šumskih sadnica,
podizanje rasadnika plemenitih voćaka,
podizanje i uređenje parkova,
podizanje Petrova Gaja-šume,
podizanje četnih koševa,
nabaviti i razviti zastavu,
osnivanje fonda za podizanje doma,
sanacija domova,
dogradivanje domova,
podizanje i uređivanje novih vežba-
onica,
podizanje novih domova,
priredivanje higijenskih izložbi,
osnivanje zdravstvenih zadruga,

higijenski tečajevi,
poljoprivredni tečajevi,
uređenje plivališta,
uređenje uzornog gospodarstva,
domaćićki tečajevi,
nabavka poljoprivrednih sprava,
nabavka bolje stoke,
priredivanje poljoprivrednih izložbi,
stvaranje socijalnih ustanova,
nabavka kreveta,
podizanje stanova za tkaonice,
odevanje siromašne dece,
rad na prosvetivanju seoskih žena,
opšti privredni rad,
župski tečaj za SPP,
pohodi na Oplenac,
osnovati fond „Petrov dinar”,
tečajevi slovenskih jezika,
nabavka čamaca,
osnivanje poljoprivrednih zadruga,
osnivanje radnih četa,
analfabetski tečajevi,
kalemarski tečajevi i kalemljenje,
voćarski tečajevi,
priredivanje sokolskih izložbi,
nabavka zemljišta za podizanje doma,
prikupljanje sredstava za podizanje
doma,
obeležiti turističke puteve u šumi,
izraditi istorijat društva,
osnovati fond „Bratska pomoć” za neza-
poslene,
pomaganje đaka sokolskim školskim po-
trebštinama,
darivanje knjiga za poklon učenicima,
fond za pomaganje siromašnih za sle-
tove,
nedelja socijalne pomoći za siromašne
prikupljanje priloga,
obeležanje istorijskih mesta podizanjem
znakova,
podizanje spomen-ploča izginulima,
odevanje siromašne dece na Kraljev ro-
đendan,
nabavka odeli i vežbačkog odeli za si-
romašnu sokolsku decu,
izgradnja klupa za odmorišta,
izgradnja oporavišta.

osnivanje sokolskih zadruga,
stvaranje pokretnih biblioteka za sokol-
ske čete,

obnavljanje ranijih četa,
nabavka nameštaja za dom,
osnivanje oteka za smučarstvo,
prednjački tečajevi,
osnovati pevački otek,
izvesti predavanja u selu,
uštedeti za slet 1941 godine,
osnivanje oteka starije braće,
osnovati konjički otek,
osnovati otek za laku atletiku,
osnovati otek za narodne igre,
osnovati otek za štednju,
osnovati pozorišni otek,
osnovati nove čete,
nabaviti knjige za knjižnicu,
pribaviti pretplatnike na sokolske li-
stove,
nabavka sokolskih odora,
tehnička dopuna,
štednja,
rad na narodnoj odbrani,
uređenje domova,
nabavka sprava za vežbe,
sokolski prosvetni rad,
organizacioni rad,
rad među decom i omladinom,
podizanje tehničkog rada,
predavanja o jugoslovenskoj narodnoj
misli,
društveni tečajevi,
priredivanje idejnih tečajeva,
priredivanje tečajeva za sokolske čete,
priredivanje dečjih akademija,
priredivanje prosvetnih tečajeva,
osnivanje veslačkih oteka,
osnivanje plivačkih oteka,
osnivanje čitaonica,
osnivanje trezvenjačke sekcije,
osnivanje streljačkog oteka,
osnivanje — stvaranje — glazbi,
osnivanje lutkarskog pozorišta,
izvoditi razne sokolske manifestacije,
osnovati knjižnice,
nabaviti ručne apoteke,
prikupiti sredstva za taborovanje,
izvršiti mobilizaciju sokolskog članstva,
izvesti logorovanje i taborovanje,
štedeti za slet u Beogradu,
povećati broj članstva,
osnivanje novih oteka i kategorija.

Primedba:

Pada u oči, da je kod svih jedinica
predviđeno da se svega nabavi oko 500
odora u toku SPP, a izvršenje svojih
materijalnih obaveza bratske jedinice
uopšte ne spominju. U ovom popisu
su bezmalo izloženi svi predviđeni ra-
dovi bratskih jedinica.

Zadaci koje su jedinice i njihovi pripadnici-ce preduzeli da izvrše u toku petoletnice, a koji spadaju u redovan sokolski rad i pojačanje redovnog rada

Odricanje od alkoholnih pića,
suzbijanje psovki i ružnih reči,
izlet u poučne svrhe,
nabaviti glasovir,

opravka patosa u sokolani,
nabavka radio-aparata,
osnivanje tamburaškog oteka,
osnivanje sok. zadruga,

Sokolska šala

Nije šala, nego zbilja*)

1.

Izveštaj

zamenika načelnika Sokolskog društva u N. na redovnoj godišnjoj skupštini. održane 22 januara 19.. godine.

Želja mi je i insistiraću na tome, da ukratko iznesem kardinalne i kauzalne motive rada porajviše tehničkih organa našega sokolskog društva pre-gledno, sav njihov moralni i materijalni uspeh kako bi dobili što jasniji i pre-gledniji tabelni rezultat za 19...

Posle odlaska našeg višegodišnjeg načelnika brata nastaje faza sukcesivno, skoro permanentnih kriza, klonulosti i moralnih depresija, koje su mogle biti od katastrofalnih posledica za vitalne interese i ekzistenciju našega sokolskog društva. Kauzalne motive i pojedinosti ovde neću specificirati, pošto su nam poznate.

Nesumnjivo, ne možemo biti suviše skrupulozni, ali i pored moga umerenog pesimizma, potpuno ću objektivno biti i konstatovati da i pored mnogih pre-limiranih nezgoda, naše društvo donelo je jedan lep i hvale vredan rezultat rada. Ako se i nije desio neki vidan proces regeneracije, ipak je vidno, da je društveni organizam dobro konsolidovan zahvaljujući samo organima tehničkog odbora i njihovom intezivnom radu i energiji.

*) Iako rubrika nosi naslov "Sokolska šala", ipak donosimo dva ozbiljna dopisa u kojima nismo nijednu reč izmenili. Sve je štampano onako kako u originalu stoji.

Sokolska šala

Sličice sa Zagrebačkog sleta. Kroz kafane i gostionice prolaze prodavači i prodavačice i nude neke figurice koje su slične Sokolima. Jedan Soko upitaće neku ženu koja prodaje te figurice:

— Šta ćete raditi s tim sokolima kad prodje slet, a ne prodate ih.

Žena sasvim hladnokrvno odgovori:

— Bum ih nekak zrihtala za Sv. Nikolu i znjih napravila krampuse (đavol-čiče). Na glavu im denem male roge a v zube veliki jezik, a člreni je tak i tak, pa iz sokola napravim krampusa.

*

Prolaze Praškom ulicom grupe stranih Sokola i čitaju osvetljeni veliki naslov: „Doručkovaona“. Jedan će od njih kazati:

— A što su ovoj gostionici nadenuli ime „Doručkovaona“ kad se tu i ruča i večera.

*

Na zagrebačkoj stanici naiđe jedan član Sletskog odbora na grupu seljaka-Sokola pa će ih upitati:

— Šta čekate braćo?

— Raspitujemo brate slatki će bi spavali, kaže jedan od njih.

— U nastambi, kaže član Sletskog odbora.

— A kakva je to kuća i će je ta kuća, upitaće drugi seljak.

*

Noću preko Jelačićevog trga prolazi neka čudna rashodovana fanfara sa instrumentima pod miškom, čije fizionomije potsećaju nas na poznate profesionalce s našega Juga. Jedan ih prolaznik upita:

— Kuda ste krenuli braćo?

— Tražimo veselo društvo da im sviramo, reče jedan iz fanfare.

— A šta znate svirati? upita drugi prolaznik.

— Sviramo klasične i moderne igre, a za sevdalije sviramo gospodine sevdalijske šlagere samo da čuješ. Potom grunuše posle ponoći „Crven fesić“ a ceo trg ječi od njihove svirke.

Vesti: Prilikom jedne konferencije o sokolskoj štampi predlaže jedan nepopravivi optimista da se u svakoj našoj sokolskoj jedinici priredi po jedna akademija u korist sokolske štampe, pa bi čist prihod od svake akademije po 2.000 din. išao u fond za štampu. Sa svotom od 4 miliona dinara moglo bi se nešto početi. Ovaj optimistički predlog ustupljen je Saveznom optimističkom oteku na proučavanje.

Oglasi: Specijalista za sokolsko oduševljanje nudi se mladim društvima na ispomoć. Isti je svršio lutkarsku školu i podesan je za pravljenje grmljavine u pozorištu s lutkama.

*

Tražim jedno počasno mesto u Prosvetnom odboru župe ili društva gde bih mogao davati savete i pomalo nadziravati. Napominjem da imam 4 godine prosvetno-nadzorničke prakse.

Nove knjige, muzikalije i filmovi:

N. M., O ljuljanju kao prosvetnoj gimnastici.

A. H., O strunjači kao prosvetarskoj spravi.

S. P., „Zvrc-zvrc katanac.“ Moderna kompozicija sa svim muzičkim zavrzlama uz pratnju gajda i prangija.

G. M., O penziji kao novom životnom principu.

K. L., O prelaženju članstva u naraštaj ili najnovija metoda podmlađivanja.

S. H., Režijski trikovi sa suncem i mesecom u diletanskim pozorištima.

Ž. P., Oj raspisu, moja knjigo bijela. Aktuelna narodna pesma.

N. M., Prosvetni nadzornici kao moderni prepodobni mučenici.

Ž. K., Jedan dan jugoslovenskog prosvetara. Vrlo poučan 2.000 met. dug film sa dramatskim zapletom i raspletom.

S. R., Budžetska fuga u g molu na tekucem računu.

Vlasnik u ime Saveza Sokola K. J.
D-r Vladimir Belajčić
Vojvođanska ulica 9

Urednik
Franjo Malin
Kralja Aleksandra ulica 7

Štamparija Jovanović i Bogdanov, Novi Sad.



Sa Zbora župskih prosvetara u Novom Sadu 14 i 15 aprila 1934

17: "Sa zbora župskih prosvetara u Novom Sadu 14. i 15. aprila 1934" [From the assembly of clubs' educators, April 14-15 1934] Sokolska prosveta, vol. 5 (1934), p. 187. Holding of the National Library of Serbia.