

Attila Pók

EASTERN EUROPEAN HISTORIOGRAPHY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Does historical scholarship reflect regionalism? Is it at all reasonable to speak about West-European, American, Asian, African or East European historical writings or this is not a proper approach? The organizational principles of most comprehensive historiographical surveys are in most cases different. Ideological, political, philosophical concepts, methodological principles, outstanding historian-personalities serve as structural pillars of these works. National historiographies deserve subchapters or chapters if they represent ideological, theoretical or methodological alternatives (as German historicism or French social history or the American New History). Histories of historical writing have thus their focus on Germany, France, Britain and the United States --- the Soviet Union and the countries of the former Soviet bloc enter the stage generally

only in connection with the presentation of Marxist historiography. If this is the case, we can not avoid asking the very basic introductory question: once our panel will have to try to give on overall assessment of 20th century historiography, what is the task of the "East European" expert on the panel? I thought of two issues that might have to be clarified from my perspective:

a) Is there anything like the "East European contribution" to the overall development of 20th century historiography? Once the answer is positive: is this contribution the posing of certain questions that are less or not at all relevant in other regions, some theoretical or methodological considerations or perhaps this specific contribution can be found in the field of the institutions of historical research work? The other side of this very same coin might be the "responsibility" of Eastern Europe for distortions, deficiencies in 20th century historiography, for abuses of historical scholarship.

b) what is the peculiar, specific social, political, cultural role, function of historical scholarship in Eastern Europe in the 20th century?

This, however, is only the first set of preliminary remarks. These questions can namely hardly be answered if we are not aware of the fact that in this part of the world (much more than elsewhere) the educational and social-political representative functions of history are as important or frequently more important than the scholarly, cognitive function. In other words: the craft of the Eastern European historian often embraces not only the academic, scholarly world but just as much, or occasionally even more, the public realm. (1) Prof. Torstendahl's questions also clearly show into this direction when he encourages us to discuss the relationship between academic and non-academic historians.

In this short survey draft my sole aim is to present a few characteristic features of East European historiography during the 20th century. My horizon is, however, quite limited: I do not include Russia and the Soviet Union (only as a major external factor) and the Baltic countries, on the other hand I rely on material also from the former German Democratic Republic. I also have to add that most - though not all - my sources are secondary (2), as it would be very difficult to find anyone with so much language proficiency and research time that would be satisfactory to digest the 20th century output of Eastern European historians. I have also heavily relied on my numerous personal contacts with the historians of the countries I am going to discuss: Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia (i.e. the Czech and the Slovak Republics), Hungary, Poland, Romania and the territory of former Yugoslavia.

1./ The role of historiography in East European nation making. States and nations

It is a commonplace of East European social, political and intellectual history that the emergence of modern historical scholarship from the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries is an important element of "national awakening" in the region. Historical writing was charged with strengthening national identities and historians were occasionally directly involved in political developments. (3) The ideas of the Enlightenment initiated an effort to try to broaden the scope of historical investigations to involve not only elites but also the entirety of the nation. In the multiethnic Russian and Habsburg Empires, on the Balkans where the Ottoman Empire was gradually losing ground, the first modern historians were tracing the origins of peoples, of nations and not the histories of dynasties. In other words: for them the natural framework of history was the national and not the dynastic community. Monumental works as Frantisek Palacky's History of the Czech Nation in the Czech and the Moravian Lands, the synthetic works by Mihály

Horváth and László Szalay in Hungary, Joachim Lelewel's twenty-volume Polish history, P. Slavkov Sreckovic's less, Ilion Ruvarac's more critical appraisals of the history of the Serbs, N. Balcescu's and M. Kogalniceanu's books in Romania have greatly contributed to the formation of the national movements of the respective nations. The relationship between state territories and national homelands remained a key-issue for historians of the region in the 20th century as well. It is namely obviously impossible to draw state-borders in this part of the world without creating complaining national minorities. Why is it practically impossible to grant self-determination for the peoples of the region and what are the "second-best" solutions? -- were the great issues for politicians and social scientists especially in the aftermath of World War One. Historians had a lion's share in coming up with possible answers concerning both former and contemporary national problems, tragedies. Who is to be blamed for the partitionings was a bone of contention in Poland between representatives of the conservative, self-critical Krakow school (as J. Szujski or M. Bobrzynsky) and the liberal Warsaw school historians (as T. Korzon or W. Smolenski) who blamed the partitioning powers (Russia, the Habsburg Empire and Russia) for the Polish national tragedy. When the partitioning powers got into conflict with each other in 1914, the majority of Polish historians were getting closer to the optimism of the Warsaw school as far as the potentials of the Polish nation for recreating their own state was concerned.

Whereas Polish historians faced the problem of the disintegration of their state in late 18th century, for their Hungarian colleagues this was the problem of the day after 1918-19. Who is to be blamed for the dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy, for losing nearly 70 percent of the Hungarian state territory and about 40 percent of the Hungarian population? How could the country lose some of the most important locations of its national history, Transylvania being integrated into Romania, the former capital, Pozsony (Bratislava, Pressburg) into Czechoslovakia? The Hungarian argumentation against the decisions of the Paris peace-conference was dominantly historical (though extensively drawing on economic or ethnic arguments as well). It pointed out that Hungarians had always been the most advanced political forces in the Carpathian Basin and — especially after 1867 — the Hungarian political institutions gave the best possible framework for the cohabitation of the numerous national groups here. The other side of the coin was the search for the nation's own responsibility for its fate. A bit comparable to the discussions of the responsibility for the partitionings of Poland was the debate on the in 1920 published book by Gyula Szekfu under the title "Three Generations"(4) which blamed Hungarian liberalism as represented by the Hungarian gentry for the country's catastrophe. Three successive generations were misled by the mirage of western liberalism that could not take root in Hungary. As a consequence, the

Hungarian nobility lost positions in the emerging liberal market economy and the gaps in the system were filled by the "alien" Jewish middle and upper classes and the elite of the non-Hungarian nationalities.

For Romanians the First World War turned out to be a most decisive step towards the building of a state uniting all Romanian-inhabited territories. A major problem of romantic historiography was thus solved. Still, the attempts to prove the continuity between Dacians and Italian, Roman settlers of the first centuries A. D. in the Roman province of Dacia, and this way the historical legitimacy of the boundaries of post-World War One Romania were in the focus of the interest of Romanian historiography and archeology (first of all Nicolae Iorga and Vasile Parvan).

Not going now into more examples, let me just raise the in my view crucial question: did this constant preoccupation with national problems enrich or decrease the value of the professional performance of East European historiographies? One possible line of argumentation is that at a time when social, cultural and economic history were coming into the foreground in West European historical scholarship, a more traditional type of political history showed a relative underdevelopment of historical scholarship. On the other hand, however, a great number of important source-publications and large-scale-monographs were motivated by this "national drive: we probably would know much less about the history of Transylvania without the Hungarian - Romanian debates concerning the time of the arrival of Romanians there, about Macedonia without Greek-Serbian-Bulgarian debates about which national state this region should belong to, about Bessarabia without Russian - Romanian discussions about its "historically legitimate" national affiliation and about numerous other territories of the region if they had not been subjects of national-nationalist rivalries. Sometimes, however, the historical argumentation enriched historiography at large as well: the methodology of modern settlement and ethnohistory originating in the German "Volkstumkunde" reached for example an extremely high level with Elemér Mályusz and his disciples at the Péter Pázmány University of Budapest.(5) This point, however, already takes us to the second major field of interest of 20th century Eastern European historiography.

2./The origins of East European backwardness, regions, the symbolic geography of Europe

Where do the internal borders of Europe run and what types of social, economic, political, cultural developmental patterns do they delineate? This is a key-issue for all the social scientists of Eastern Europe and is closely connected to the search for "scapegoats": who are responsible for all the political and economic defeats, failures, losses of these nations? The search for these causes organized historians into "traditionalists" and "Europeanists" in Romania, "populists" and "urbanists" in Hungary, "centralists" and "decentralists" in Yugoslavia, "optimists" and "pessimists" in Poland, romantic nationalists and the followers of Jaroslaw Goll's sober realism in Czechoslovakia. This is, of course, an oversimplification but the real crux of the

matter was quite simple: is there only one standard type of social, economic and political transformation of European societies, i.e. the one shaped by the French political and British economic-industrial revolutions and the lack or belated emergence of these processes signals underdevelopment? Or this is not at all the case: there are several alternative modes of development and imposing the "Western model" onto "Eastern" societies leads to really great catastrophes?

Interest in tracing the origins of divergences, differences in European social-economic development has never been limited to the research-agenda of modern Eastern European historians. Leopold von Ranke was already very much interested in regional differences(6) and later German, British, French scholars shed much light on the consequences of the great geographic discoveries, colonization, on the regional peculiarities of the confrontation of central royal power and the estates, on the impact of religious factors (Eastern Orthodoxy vs. Roman Catholicism, the spread of Reformation and Counter-Reformation), cultural-artistic trends (Roman, Gothic Art, Renaissance) etc. in respect of the "staying behind" of Eastern Europe. For the 20th century Eastern European historians dealing with these issues was far from being an academic "exercise", they were (are) searching for the numerous factors shaping their life and career possibilities as well. When -- to a great extent in line with "Western" historical scholarship-- 20th century Hungarian, Polish, Romanian etc. historians looked into 16th–17th century European agrarian history, the historical question they were addressing was a most current, topical one. Have, namely, the international political developments (Ottoman-Turkish expansion, the growing influence of the Habsburgs in the region) and the phenomena of social-economic development (the expansion of the landlord's manorial land at the cost of the free peasants plots, the strengthening of feudal bonds, the gaining ground of the "second serfdom") of the 16–17th century been "fatal" for the region, putting it on an "eternal" "forced path" of underdevelopment OR the significance of the "deviation", "Abbiegung" of the territories East of the river Elb was exaggerated to a great extent as a politically motivated legitimization of 20th century divisions of Europe? If we now ask the question whether preoccupation with these problems turned out to be a gain or a loss for historical scholarship in Eastern Europe, my answer is quite resolutely showing towards the gain. What is even more, I would go a step further: it greatly enriched the overall development of historical scholarship. Why and how? First of all because it greatly motivated serious comparative economic and — to a lesser but most significant extent — social and cultural historical investigations. My first example is Hungarian but quite honestly not because I come from there, not because I know the historiography of that region best and I am favorably biased. This example is the life-work of the in the west unfairly little known István Hajnal (1892–1956). Hajnal's major research interest was comparative paleography and in more general terms the impact of the rise of literary and technical progress upon historical evolution. He pointed out mediaeval Hungary's "Western Christian" character by proving that chancelleries in Hungary issued written privileges first at exactly the same time as

their counterparts in the "West" and at this time all over Europe the clergy's most important social function was to be "custodian" of what Hajnal in his, quite complicated terminology defined as the "objective social organization". This is in sharp contrast with the Balkans and Russia -- he argued -- but is far from being identical with the "Western" situation as well. An evidence for that is that in Hungary and Poland Latin is used as the language of official documents for a much longer time (up to the 19th century) than in the "West" where the vernaculars appear in legally binding documents as early as the 12th century. This, however, does not at all mean that in this field Hungary would share the characteristics of the "Orthodox cultural circle". There the "dead church vernaculars" (as "ancient Slavic") had nothing to do with the spoken national languages whereas in Hungary and Poland Latin lived in a permanent, deepgoing, mutually enriching contact with the "living national language".

I think, that this is a good case-study well reflecting the great, fundamental question that 19-20th century Czech, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, Southern Slav historians, politicians have had to face: how is it that their region has essentially always been "part of the West" and still these nations have not been treated by the great powers as equals, they were economically, socially less developed and frequently fell victims of "western" great power aspirations. For Hajnal's generation the post-World War One peace-settlement, for later generations of historians the post-World War Two peace-settlement resulting in the division of Europe into the western and Soviet bloc were decisive experiences along this line.

One possible answer to this question was (and not seldom is) "victimization" i.e. the argumentation that the nations of the region have basically been always right, they have always taken their share in "western" efforts (e.g. in the fight against the Mongolians, Ottomans and other barbarians) but evil, bad-intentioned western politicians were far too egoistic and sacrificed them. The other type of answer (for which Hajnal was my first example) was trying to go deeper, looking at structural characteristics of the societies "East of the river Elbe". Historians working in this field – with a few exceptions like Hajnal – dwelt upon these problems more on a theoretical level than working out comprehensive surveys of European history based on their unique perspectives. Three names are worth mentioning here. The first is Oscar Halecki (born in Poland, maturing into a great historian in the US) whose *Borderlands of Western Civilization and The Limits and Divisions of European History* postulated a fourfold division of Europe: Western, West Central, East Central and Eastern greatly challenging the cold war determined East vs. West division in the early 1950s. Jenő Szűcs published his "The Three Historical Regions of Europe" following the footsteps of Halecki on the one hand, and a Hungarian social scientist, *István Bibó*, on the other, in 1979. Bibó examined the possibilities ("Spielraum") of the small nations living between Germany and Russia in a series of brilliant essays during the aftermath of World War Two arguing that ever since Charles the Great's time (9th century A. D.) Europe was divided into "East" and "West". The borderlines between these two regions were in a flux – up to approximately the middle of the sixteenth century this borderline ran somewhere at the Eastern

border of Poland, Bohemia and Hungary. The tragedy of the Ottoman Turkish wars pushed Hungary into the East and the Habsburg rule of the 18-19th centuries didn't allow for a reintegration into the West either. It was only in 1945 that a most unique opportunity emerged for the "arrested socio-economic development" to return to the "Western" pattern. The two decisive peculiarities of this model, Hajnal argued, were the economic modernization disseminated through the Industrial Revolution and the representative democratic political system rooted in the French Revolution. According to this interpretation the socialist revolution ("disseminated" by the USSR) was in fact a great historical venture to try to get out of the deadlock of Eastern development. The deep-rooted historical traditions of the region should have enabled Hungarians (but Czechs and Poles as well) to carry out this "experiment" by employing the "western techniques of practicing liberty". These views reflect the optimistic political climate of 1945–47 when a couple of really free elections were taking place in Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia and it was widely believed that pluralistic "Western-type" democracies can emerge in the western neighborhood of the Soviet Union. These hopes had, of course, quickly vanished and the question that an increasing number of intellectuals in the region (and specialists of the region) started posing was more and more the one that – in my view – is topical up to the present day. Namely: was it only Soviet expansionism (motivated by Russian great power imperialism and communist ideology) and the logic of the cold war that doomed these "western" or "westernizing" aspirations to failure or deeper lying structural peculiarities were of decisive significance in this respect? This is the key-problem of Jenő Szűcs' brilliant essay who came up with a great number of arguments concerning the existence of a third region in Europe, approximately among the Elbe region in the West, the Carpathians in the East, the Adriatic in the South, and the Baltic in the North. The region was defined both by referring to institutions that existed there but could not be found further East (autonomous towns, corporate liberties as e.g. those of the guilds, the presence of Roman and Gothic art and architecture, the influence of Reformation etc.) and by the lack of institutions that are typical of the social-economic development further West: the so called "second serfdom" instead of free peasantry, influential nobility instead of a strong burgher, later bourgeois layer. The argumentation went into numerous details of social, economic, political and cultural development and in most fields arrived at the conclusion that most of the "Western" institutions were available in this central region but in a "belated" and "distorted" form. At approximately the same time (late 1970s, early 1980s) did some Czechoslovak, Polish and Hungarian intellectuals start "propagating" the concept of Central Europe with more or less the same message. Their region (which in some statements included Croatia, Slovenia, sometimes even Austria and Northern Italy as well) might have been in many respects different from the West but it was much more different from the East i.e. from Russia and the Orthodox world in general. The Iron Curtain logic of the Cold war was refuted here. Bibó and Szűcs addressed a great number of concrete issues and based their arguments on an extremely broad knowledge of respective research results, still, the genre of their

works was a historical essay. The question regarding the roots of the division of Europe during the decades of the Cold War, however, also resulted in large-scale monographs and synthetic works in East European historical writing.

In this short survey I can only refer to the in its choice of research subject similarly motivated economic and social history school in Poland with close connections to the Annales school (especially the works of Witold Kula), to the internationally most influential works on comparative East European economic and social history(Pál Zsigmond Pach,Iván T.Berend,György Ránki) , the comprehensive works on East European national awakening in Hungary (Endre Arató, Emil Niederhauser) and Czechoslovakia (Miroslav Hroch), to the great achievement of Romanian intellectual historians (Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Lucian Blaga, Henri H. Stahl).

3./ The impact of the Soviet political system on historiography in Eastern Europe

No doubt, the most obvious argument in favor of defining Eastern Europe as an independent entity in structuring our assessment of 20th century historiography, is the fact that for four decades the region was integrated into the Soviet-dominated part of the divided world. The sane political institutions were imposed on originally quite different countries, states, societies. Did this lead to some kind of a fast pace homogenization of the historiographies as well ?

Before making an attempt at answering this question, I would like to emphasize the obvious point that the Marxist doctrine had a far broader impact on historiography then the "official Marxism-Leninism "of the countries of the Soviet bloc and will obviously be an item on our assessment-agenda but here my observations are limited to the historiographies of the countries of the Soviet bloc.

The peculiarities could perhaps be best summarized if we first focused on the *institutional framework of research*. Science, humanities, all fields of scholarship were under the tight central control of the respective departments of the Central Committees of the Communist Parties. It was believed that research could be much more efficient if it was separated from teaching, therefore (partly built on earlier beginnings) a wide network of research institutes was set up where the members were expected (at least in principle) to do nothing else but research.. These research institutes functioned within the framework of the Academies of Sciences which were stripped of their wealth and autonomy and operated as ministries of scientific research. Like all

other conscientious builders of socialism, the members of the historical research institutes also prepared and sometimes even accomplished five-year plans. Emphasis was not so much on finding new primary sources, initiating new projects but on the fight against the "Front of Bourgeois Historians", i.e. on reevaluating in a Marxist-Leninist spirit the historical sources made accessible by the "bourgeois" predecessors. Funding was no problem if research and publications remained in this spirit. The from the point of view of these regions most sensitive historical issues, those relating to the past of the communist parties, were dealt with by special party-historical institutes within the Central Committees of the parties. The awarding of degrees, the "system of scientific qualification" was highly centralized and politically controlled. No one could become a "candidate" or a "doctor of science" in any field without being examined in the basics of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Archives were under the strict control of the Ministries of Interior and special limitations kept researchers from the so called taboo-questions i.e. anything that could have presented an even slightly negative picture of the activities of the Soviet Union and the of the communist movements. If we now shift our attention from the institutions to official doctrines that served as guidelines for historians in the countries of the Soviet bloc, this was dialectical and historical materialism, a mandatory subject of study for all university graduates. This doctrine was an easy key to understanding historical processes with class struggle being the driving force of historical progress displacing less advanced social formations by more advanced ones, from the slave-holding to the feudal, from the feudal to the capitalist and finally from the capitalist to the socialist-communist formation.

The picture I drew here is, of course, extremely simplifying because in spite of the fact that the communist parties ruling the countries of the Soviet bloc exerted a very high level of control over historical research and historical publications, there were substantial differences both chronologically and regionally. *Chronologically* 1956, the year of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Hungarian revolution, 1968, the year of world - wide student revolts and of the crushed "Prague Spring and 1985, the year of Gorbachev's coming to power might serve as decisive milestones. Regionally there was a huge difference between the countries led by orthodox, "hard-liner" communists in Bulgaria, and Romania or in Czechoslovakia after 1968, the more liberal Poland and Hungary and the more refined dogmatism of the German Democratic Republic. Yugoslavia with its foreign policy and centralized but still -- at least until the death of Tito in 1980 -- indeed federal communist power structure was a very special case.

The best way to provoke a discussion is if we are trying to set up a balance sheet about the historiographies of the countries of the Soviet bloc. Let me first try — based on a document proposed by the director of the Institute of History of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in 1991 — to give a list of the major areas where the Soviet type totalitarian system is said to have influenced historiography most unfavorably. I will immediately add certain considerations to each point.

- 1) Strictly limited access to archives of modern and contemporary history and consequently the presentation of a biased, inadequate, distorted picture of numerous post World War One developments. Even if specialists of the earlier periods had an easier life as far as archival research was concerned, here the sources of distortion were different, more of an ideological nature..
- 2) The schematic application of Marxist social doctrine, of historical materialism, especially the concepts of class and class-struggle. The artificially exaggerated role of the working-class movement and especially of the Communist Party in national histories not only falsified history but also cut it off, separated it from the main trends of national development. Still, it must not be forgotten that in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and even during the 1980s it seemed to be very much likely that the communist-ruled monolithic state-party systems would prevail in Eastern Europe for a long time. From this perspective the history of the internal life of the communist parties that had a major, decisive impact on current national and international developments was far from being unimportant.
- 3) The "social commissions" attached to historical scholarship which led to the categorization of historical facts into "progressive-revolutionary" and "conservative-reactionary" trends. This could lead to most conscious distortions, a most conspicuous example being when disgraced personalities were removed even from the photographs of events in which they participated. Still, quite frequently, a substantial difference existed between vulgarmarxist presentations for agitation-propaganda purposes and the way these issues were treated in the workshops of historical scholarship. Let me refer here to just one example, to the so called Erik Molnár debate in Hungary in the 1960s. Erik Molnár was a prominent figure of the Hungarian communists movement, originally a lawyer but well-trained in other social sciences as well. Besides filling numerous senior political functions he was director of the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences from 1949 to his death in 1966.

The actual starting point of the discussion(around 1960) was the evaluation of the anti-Habsburg movements in the 17th and early 18th centuries . Erik Molnár kept arguing that they were much more class - conflicts (between the Hungarian nobility, the Hungarian estates and the centralizing Habsburg-aspirations) than struggles for "national independence" mobilizing all layers of Hungarian society. Contrary to the -- according to his view -- historically unfounded argumentation, the nobility's nationalism and a kind of "popular patriotism" in the 17th and early 18th centuries were not direct antecedents of modern 19th century Hungarian nationalism. These problems were in the foreground of the political-ideological discussions of the day: in the aftermath of the 1956 national revolution, A bit more than a year after the execution of Imre Nagy , the reform-communist leader of the revolution, the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party issued a statement on "bourgeois nationalism" and socialist patriotism" and in March 1960 a conference at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy discussed the historical

roots of nationalism. Molnár and a number of his followers argued that most Hungarian Marxist historians had that far divorced the concept of the Hungarian nation from social class and historical age. Nation and patria had not reflected the objective interests of all classes, only those of the exploiting ruling class. These were, of course, most orthodox Marxist views and could (could have been) easily interpreted as a historians' contribution to the struggle against "reactionary nationalism" which had an important role among the causes of the 1956 "counter-revolution". Still, the historical-political function of these views was quite different — they initiated a number of most productive research-projects on how concepts like "people", "nation", "patria", "independence" were interpreted in 16–17th century Hungary. At the same time they also initiated debates on other key issues of Hungarian history in which the representatives what is sometimes labelled as the "sociological- realistic-denationalizing and the "romantic- revolutionary progress- dogmatic nationalist" interpretations of modern Hungary confronted each other.

The "sociological" interpretation was trying -- on the basis of plenty of new basic research-- to examine the objective economic-social foundations of political and ideological developments — whereas the "romantic camp"--moving the center of the debate from early modern to more recent periods, was much more preoccupied with the "subjective" factors, the "correct" or "faulty" policies of leading personalities at major turning-pointsy of Hungarian history. They were interested in "progressive political struggles", whereas the "sociological" school believed as — one of its representatives, Péter Hanák put it in a later point, in 1969, in the sources of failures.

4) The introduction of "zones of silence" which among others comprised any negative aspect of the activity of the Soviet Union, any negative aspect of the Great October Revolution, former conflicts among the countries, nations, peoples of the Soviet-led "brotherhood" of Eastern European peoples, any serious treatment of the Jewish question and the Holocaust, very often the non-communist political left, a balanced, unbiased evaluation of the interwar-leading personalities (Masaryk, Horthy, Pilsudski, Antonescu, Boris III) etc. Scholarship, of course, cannot exist with taboo topics but strangely enough it was exactly the insuppressible public will to get to know the truth about various facts of national histories and international relations that led to some of the first cracklings, fissures in the edifice of the monolithic Soviet system. Be it the secret clauses of the 1939 German - Soviet Treaty about the territorial claims of the Soviet Union, the 1940 massacre of Polish army officers in Katyn by the Soviet army, the evaluation of the Paris peace settlements after World War One, the relationship between communists and social democrats, the 1953 uprising in East Berlin or the 1956 Hungarian revolution, the balanced, scholarly evaluations here paved the way towards the transition in 1989–90. (It is perhaps not without any interest to mention here that a number of Eastern European historians were directly involved in the political transformation of the region. Between 1990 and 1994, for example, in Hungary the prime minister, the foreign minister, the minister of defense, three deputy ministers, the president of the parliament and

numerous members of parliament were historians, and historians played an important role during the period of transition in Poland as well.)

4./ Academic and non-academic historians in 20th century Eastern Europe

I assume that in Eastern Europe more than in other parts of the world the borderline between "academic" and "non-academic" historians is quite blurred. The most outstanding figures of the profession have nearly always had a manifold activity also outside their university chairs, especially journalism was extremely important for them. The best-known and most productive Romanian historian, Iorga, besides publishing more than a thousand (!) books, regularly contributed to daily papers. The essays of the most prestigious 20th century Hungarian historian, Gyula Szekfu had a very important role in orienting Hungarian intellectuals during World War Two. This tradition was followed after World War Two --- both Communists and anti-Communists among the most influential historians attached a great significance to using non-academic fora for the popularization of their views. This might be attributed to a peculiarity of political life in Eastern Europe: it is extremely "history-loaded," i.e. when politicians are identifying their political platforms, are presenting their programs, they -- much more than elsewhere -- rely on historical analogies. Closely related to this peculiarity of the region is that originally scholarly exchanges about the evaluation of certain events and personalities could and can lead to passionate political debates. This is either connected to the politically most sensitive nature of the issues at stake or - - especially but not exclusively during communist times - -to the coded messages historical references carry. Let me refer to some random examples: who is to be blamed for the 1526 Turkish victory over Hungarian troops with the ensuing dismemberment of the country, the relationship among the Hussite movement, Reformation and Czech national awakening, numerous episodes of the Habsburg-Czech, Habsburg-Hungarian relationship, the relationship between Czechs and Germans in Bohemia, the debates about the theory of Daco-Romanian continuity in Transylvania, the immense political consequences of the ban on the showing of A.Mickiewicz's classic "anti-Russian" play, (the Ancestors) in Warsaw in March 1968. There is no space here to go into the details of the role of films and fiction in the realm of "non-academic" ways of addressing historical subjects. Forman, Jancso, Wajda, Zanussi and a great many other film-directors have become world-famous through the presentation of major dilemmas, conflicts of their national histories. Some of the writers of the format of Sienkiewicz or Gyula Illyés did more for shaping the historical thought of their nations than generations of historians.

A peculiar significance is attached in this respect to what most recently Katherine Verdery described as the "political lives of dead bodies", i.e. public funerals (in most cases reburials) of outstanding historical personalities. The 1895 Budapest funeral of the leader of the 1848-49 Hungarian revolution, Lajos Kossuth after his four and a half decade exile, the reburial of the leader of the early 18th century Hungarian anti-Habsburg movement, Ferenc Rakoczi in 1906, the commemoration of the 1389 death of Prince Lazar of Serbia in 1989, the return of the

heart of Bulgaria's former Tsar Boris from his place of exile in Spain to post-communist Bulgaria, the reburial of Polish World War II generals Bor-Komorowsky and Sikorski in post-communist Poland, the return for the 1997 reburial of the corpse of Bishop Inochentie who died in Rome in 1768 etc. were all cathartic experiences of collective remembering (11).

This piece being no more than a short survey offering quite arbitrarily selected examples with the sole aim of provoking discussion is hoping to pave the way towards a balanced, concise contribution to the assessment of 20th century historiography. Coming now back to the introductory questions, let me restate my major points:

a/ Eastern European historiography did enrich the output of 20th century historical writing not only by covering the history of the region but methodologically as well;

b/ the role of historiography and of historians in Eastern European political-cultural-social life has been more decisive than in other parts of the world.

NOTES

1. *William E. Leuchtenburg* "The Historian and the Public Realm" *The American Historical Review*, Volume 97, Number 1 (February 1992) 1–18.
2. Two secondary sources were the most indispensable in my work: the recent synthesis by *Emil Niederhauser*: *A történetírás története Kelet-Európában*. Budapest, 1995. and the essays by *Ivo Banac*, *István Deák*, *Keith Hitchins*, *Jiri Koralka*, *Maria Todorova* and *Piotr S. Wandycz* in the October 1992 (Volume 97, Number 4) issue of the *American Historical Review*.
3. *Miloslav Hroch*: *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Eastern Europe*. Cambridge, 1985. *Emil Niederhauser*: *A történetírás szerepe a kelet-európai nemzeti mozgalomban a felvilágosodás korában*. Vázlat. In: *—A tudomány szolgálatában — Emlékkönyv Benda Kálmán 80. születésnapjára*. Budapest, 1993. 287–292. A small, "classical" piece about this topic: *R. W. Seton-Watson*: *The Historian as a Political Force in Central Europe*. An Inaugural Lecture Delivered on 2 November, 1922 as Professor of Central European History in the University of London. London, 1922.
4. *Gyula Szekfű*. *Három nemzedék*. Budapest, 1920.
5. Cf. *Steven Béla Várdy*: *Modern Hungarian Historiography* *East European Quarterly*, Boulder, 1976. 104–120.
6. *Leopold von Ranke*. *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker von 1494 bis 1535*. Berlin, 1824, Leipzig, 1885³ V–VI. I. XV–XIX.
7. Cf. *Istvan Hajnal*: *Technika, muvelodes*. (Edited by Ferenc Glatz) Budapest, 1993.
8. *Oscar Halecki*: *Borderlands of Western Civilization*. New York, 1952. and *The Limits and Divisions of European History*. New York, 1950.

9. An English version was published in *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 29(1983)/2-4/131-184.
10. Quoted by *Maria Todorova* in *American Historical Review*, Volume 97, Number 4 (October 1992) 1109.
11. *Katherine Verdery*: *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies. Reburial and Postsocialist Change*. Columbia University Press, 1999.

twentieth centuries. The third factor, disruptions in the tradition of schools of thought and paradigm shifts, had a considerable impact on the approaches and methods of Russian research of the Habsburg monarchy. The Russian historical science suffered two major disruptions in the intellectual tradition, and each time a change of political system brought about a new historiography that began with an emphatic rejection of the previous tradition. The prevailing opinion was that the union of two empires allowed to advocate common interests in the "Eastern question," despite their differences in the vision of the role of the Ottoman Empire in European policy. National history writing in Europe is older than the nineteenth century. In fact, we find authors writing about nation and nations in the middle ages and in early modern Europe. Take, for example Nineteenth Century Eighteenth Century National Identity National History East Central. These keywords were added by machine and not by the authors. This process is experimental and the keywords may be updated as the learning algorithm improves. Meyer, Frank and Jan Eivind Myhre (eds), *Nordic Historiography in the Twentieth Century* (Oslo, 2000). Google Scholar. Middell, Matthias, *Weltgeschichtsschreibung im Zeitalter der Verfachlichung und Professionalisierung*. In 12th-century Europe secular history writing emerged, shown in the work of Geoffroi de Villehardouin, and the chronicles of Jean, sire de Joinville, Jean Froissart, and Philippe de Comines in successive centuries. The humanism of the Renaissance revolutionized historiography, for it placed emphasis on textual criticism and on a critical attitude toward documents and sources. Men such as Petrarch, Lorenzo Valla, Marsilius of Padua, and Juan Luis Vives did much to produce a more critical attitude toward the past.