

SOVIETIZATION OF HISTORIOGRAPHY DURING CULTURAL STALINISM. NEW PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract: *This study will address Stalinism as the 'revolution imposed' on the countries of East and Central Europe and in doing so it will analyze the cultural aspects of the process, questioning its regional policies and practices, with specific attention to historical writing. It will examine the dialectics between intention and implementation arguing the priority of internal (local) actors of the process, offering specific reference to the Romanian case and to aspects of its deployment in a specific history production centre, namely the Cluj History Institute.*

Keywords: Stalinism, Sovietization, Cultural revolution, Historiography, Model.

1. Introduction

Suggestively described by Andrew C. Janos as “Imperial Bolshevism”¹, Stalinization abroad² proceeded through a series of consecutive stages after which the agencies of the Soviet power were able to compress in East Central Europe, in a very short span of years, the re-enactment of the *Revolution*³. In its cultural aspect

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¹Using this term Janos argues that during *stalinism* the further progress of the international communist revolution and the territorial expansion of Soviet Russia became one and the same thing, see: Andrew C. Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World, the Politics of the Borderlands from Pre- to Postcommunism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 219.

²I am using here the term ‘abroad’ paraphrasing Jan T. Gross’s who associated it with the ‘revolution’ in the context of the Soviet occupation of the lands consisting of eastern Poland between the two world wars, Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, see: Jan. T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad, The Soviet Conquest of Poland’s Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2002.

³I follow here Stephen Kotkin’s point of view according to which the Stalin “revolution” of the 1930 and not the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was the one that created radically new and durable political, economical, social and cultural structures that were to last for half a century. For the american author, Stalinism was *the revolution* as it signified the advent of a specifically socialist civilization based on the rejection of capitalism and, challenging the classic view put up front by Trotsky and revised by Moshe Lewin, that Stalinism represented a reversal of the revolution, Kotkin asserts that for the vast majority of those who experienced it and even to its enemies, far from being a partial retreat, let alone a throwback to the Russian past, Stalinism remained forward-looking and progressive throughout. Coining the term *stalinist civilization*, he directed his attention towards to what might be described as the developmental character of the dictatorship that shaped the Soviet regime after Lenin (I also consider *stalinism* as only partially captured if neglecting its interests in the externalization of the *revolution*, or Stalinism). See, Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1995, Robert C. Tucker, *The Politics of Soviet Destalinization* in *World Politics*, vol.9, No.4 (Jul. 1957) p. 563, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2009424> accessed: 27/06/2011.

the process had enormous ambitions: to reshape the organization and direction of science and education, to promote political and economic objectives, to plan the creation, to integrate the academies into the broader communist system of cadre promotion and to create a new scientific intelligentsia, while using or replacing the old elite. The goals to be achieved and the methods to be applied by the state's cultural and science-political apparatus were defined all over the region with explicit reference to the Soviet experience and its socialist culture. As such, most of the historiographical interpretations refer to the importance of the 'model' as part of a, more or less coordinated set of Soviet policies ('master-plan'), for the re-enactment of its 'cultural revolution'⁴. However, how a different cultural Soviet-originated 'system' was actually imposed and functioned in East and Central Europe was, and still is under great debate, historians being far from reaching a consensus. Nonetheless, despite the ongoing debate over the techniques and application, the "revolutionary-imperial paradigm"⁵ of Soviet politics in the 'outer empire' is generally described by the Sovietization metaphor⁶. Taking into consideration such historical trends⁷ this study will address *Stalinism* as the *revolution imposed* on the countries of East and Central Europe and in doing so it will analyze the cultural aspects of the process, questioning its regional policies and practices, with specific attention to historical writing. It will examine the dialectics between *intention* and *implementation* arguing the priority of internal (local) actors of the process, offering specific reference to the Romanian case and to aspects of its deployment in a specific history production centre, namely the Cluj History Institute.

2. Understanding Cultural Stalinism.

If looking at Soviet Russia's 'cultural front', from 1917 until the post-war period, one sees that clear statements of principle regarding a 'cultural revolution' were stated but the policies and the application of the program(s) proved the above to be nothing else than clichés and ambiguous statements, rather than clear cut coordinates. The main argument resides in the multiple senses and interpretation given to the term itself. For

⁴ See John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech and Polish Higher education 1945-1956*, North Carolina, Univ of North Carolina Press, 2000; Michael David-Fox, Gyorgy Peteri, Edit. *Academia in Upheaval, Origins, Transfers and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe*, London, Bergin&Garvey, 2000; Michael David-Fox, *Revolution of the Mind: higher learning among the Bolsheviks, 1918-1929*, Ithaca NY, Cornell Univ. Press, 1997; Gyorgy Peteri (edit.), *Academia under State Socialism: Essays on the Political History of Academic Life in Post-1945 Hungary and East Central Europe*, Highland Lakes, New Jersey, East European Monographs, 1998.

⁵ Andrew C. Janos, *op. cit.*

⁶ For one of the best theoretical approach to the term see: E.A. Rees, *Theories of Sovietization* in Balázs Apor, Péter Apor și E.A. Rees (eds), *The sovietization of Eastern Europe: new perspectives on the post-war period*, Washington, DC, New Academia Publishing, 2008.

⁷ See note 3 and 4.

example, in its Leninist sense 'cultural revolution' was generally associated with a nonmilitant development of mass education that industrialization would require whereas, during the first 'five year plan', the emphasis was switched to stress the class war and thus implied a rather violent conflict with the old intelligentsia, combined with massive recruitment of workers and Communists to higher education. But, as Sheila Fitzpatrick, one of the most competent analyst of Soviet social and cultural history observed, after 1931 a 'restoration of order' occurred, which involved a comeback to the cultural values of the NEP period, policies to remain essentially unchanged for the remaining twenty years of *stalinism*⁸.

Patently, same indeterminate characteristics are traceable within the trajectory of Soviet historiography along the decades until the end of Second World War. As stated, during the NEP years (1921-1928) cultural policy was marked by the use of 'noncommunist' hands in the building of communism, thus in the formative years of Soviet historiography historians spoke in a variety of voices. This segment of the 'front' was not uniform nor monolithic, as generally portrayed, but rather varied between pluralism and polarization, with blurred lines between camps. The so called 'historical front', name to be latter fully-adopted in Romania, was the chief embodiment of what was to be known as the 'school of Pokrovskii', a group of young Soviet historians immune to the bourgeois influence of the elderly, as intended by its leader, and therefore capable to fully assume 'Marxist methodology'. M. N. Pokrovskii supervised them directly through a vast institutional network which he either controlled, or had great influence upon: deputy chairman of the People's Commissariat of education (in control there with the state council of scholars -GUS a body that decided major issues in higher education), chairman of the presidium of the Academia, rector of the Institute of Red Professors and member of the Institute of History which evolved later into history institutes of the Academy of Sciences (a branch of the Russian Association of Social Sciences Research which was a network of institutes where non Marxists worked and taught under the supervision of Marxists)⁹.

Despite consistency in some aspects, Pokrovskii himself proved to be changeable in matters on his own view on historiography. Beginning with the second half on 1928, in the context of the new cultural policies, he changed his view with respect to the organization of scholarship, playing a major role in the liquidation of Răul's Institute of History. Then, to justify this he modified his

⁸ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front. Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*, Ithaca and London, Cornell Univ. Press, 1992.

⁹ Enten M. George, *The Soviet Scholar Bureaucrat. M.N Pokrovskii and the Society of Marxist Historians* University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press; Enten M. George, Tatiana Gom and Cheryl Kern (eds.), *Soviet historians and the study of Russian imperialism* University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979; Nancy Wittier Heer, *Politics and history in the Soviet Union*, Cambridge MIT Press, 1971; Andi Mihalache, *Istorie și practice discursive în România "Democrat Populară"*, București, Edit. Albatros, 2003, p. 24-46; Florin Constantiniu, *De la Rău și la Mușat și Ardeleanu*, București, Edit. Enciclopedică, p. 17-23.

own theory of 'cultural revolution' abandoning, according to the general trend, the view that noncommunist hands were required for the building of communism¹⁰. Thus, ceasing to defend pluralism, he championed the quest for uniformity. Afterwards, in the context of Stalin's triumph over Buharin he recast even more his previous conceptions in such a manner as to exalt the emerging notion of *partiinnost* (party mindedness). To summarise, Pokrovskii's trajectory¹¹ on the Soviet cultural scene underlines several aspects. First it stresses that history became one of the major political challenges in the *creation* of the *civilization*¹², based on the assumption that it was not science¹³ and that it was believed that a close bond should exist between politics and scholarship¹⁴. At the same time it also showed that the great problem of Soviet historian, was not necessarily of conformation, but the extent in which one had to follow the perpetually changing official line. Even in the case of Pokrovskii and his school, both ended to be described as 'anti-Marxist', 'anti-Leninist, essentially liquidationist and anti-scientific' in contrast with the *new line* illustrated from 1938 onwards by the Stalin's short course¹⁵.

The 1938 'Short Course' was therefore another (important) turning point in matters of how history should be written. Stalin was initially mentioned for his 'precious' instructions, to be by 1946 assigned with the paternity of the entire work and, until the 20th Congress, this book became the most important guide for approaching and re-creating the past in all the countries of the so-called socialist camp. Its importance is evident if looking only at what happened in Romania, where after 23 august 1944 the first edition was published in over 735,000 copies, an unprecedented local printing record¹⁶.

¹⁰ Enteen M. George, *op. cit.*, 4. for a review of Pokrovskii's main work "History of Russia from the Earliest Times to the Rise of Capitalism", see Samuel H. Cross's review in „The Journal of Modern History”, vol. IV, No.2, Jun. 1932, p. 282-285.

¹¹ See also D. Fedotoff White *Protiv Istoriceskoi Konceptii* (Against M.N. Pokrovski's concept of History) in „Slavonic and East European Review. American Series”, vol. 2, No.1, March 1943, p. 257-158.

¹² See Stephen Kotkin, *op. cit.*

¹³ Thus stopped its sistematic teaching in secondary school, see. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁴ "The task of politics and science cannot be put in opposition to one another. Historical truth is not at variance with the political interest of the proletariat (and its vanguard) but supports and logically justifies them", *Voropsii Istorii*, no 2, 1949, p. 4.

¹⁵ As interpreted in the 1954 „Voropsii Istorii” article *On Studying modern and recent history of capitalist countries*: "It was not possible to make progress in historical research without first overcoming views which would have liquidated history as a science. The anti-Marxist essence of the historical concepts of M.N. Pokrovskii and his "school" was exposed in comments made by Stalin, Zhdanov and Kirov in reference to drafts of history textbooks (1934) and the history textbooks decree of the U.S.S.R.(1936). These comments and the decree played a decisive role in liberating our historians from the influence of these faulty concepts. The publication in 1938 History of the communist Party of the Soviet Union (Short course) had a tremendous effect upon the development of a genuine Marxist historical science. This remarkable work of Comrade Stalin provided our historians with a classic formulation of the methodology of history –the theory of historical materialism- and an affirmation of history as a precise science capable of making use of the laws of the development of society for practical purposes..." *Voropsii Istorii*. No.7, July 1954, p. 12.

¹⁶ Lavinia Beta, *Psihologie Politica. Indivind Lider, Multime in regimul communist*, Iasi, Polirom, 2001, p. 144; Florin Constantiniu, *op. cit.*, p. 226-227.

The inevitable question is whether the countries of the Soviet block were to skip the first part of the Soviet experience (as seen in the NEP cultural policies and the first stage of the Pokrovskii school) or assume only the conclusions of the schematic and dogmatized formula illustrated by the publication of Stalin's 'History of the Communist Party' (Short course) who, "smashed the anti-historical school" of the former. A somewhat acceptable answer to this would be that despite variations, the socialist culture and Soviet approach to historiography managed to present itself in unitary format based on several coordinates that involved both the first stage (Pokrovskii) and the Stalinist dogmatic formula, completed with Andrei Zhdanov (Stalin's top deputy), theories on culture¹⁷. According to these coordinates, the historians of the 'outer empire' were supposed to assist the local party authorities, following the example of the center, in effecting a 'cultural revolution' by implementing a fundamental change in the people. They were supposed to help "secularize, modernize and rationalize"¹⁸, that is they should make scientific the "traditional mentality".

In Romania, by 1948 such priorities were clearly stated and forwarded to the public by the one who would become the country's coordinator of the 'historical front', Mihail Roller. In his 1948 article, "*On the way towards our cultural revolution*" Roller stressed the need for a Romanian cultural revolution with the immediate purpose of edifying the new socialist culture¹⁹. An alteration of this sort was considered a prerequisite all over the region²⁰. The implementation of such policies, despite variations made that by 1953, what seemed as the 'model', to apparently be imposed²¹. But if the intentions seemed somewhat clear, the actors and their application, partially.

¹⁷ Werner G. Hahn, Postwar Soviet Politics, *The fall of Zhdanov and the defeat of Moderation, 1946-1953*, Cornell University Press, New York, 1982, p. 9.

¹⁸ Enteen M George, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹⁹ Mihail Roller, *Pe drumul revolutiei noastre culturale*, „Lupta de clasa”, seria a V-a nr.2, octombrie-decembrie 1948, p. 97-110.

²⁰ The Soviet Press of the time emphasized frequently this. A conclusive example was set (even by its title) in the article Basic talks about the historians of Soviet Society: "History in our socialist country represents one of the most important sectors of the general ideological front. It plays a great part in the formation of the scientific Weltanschauung of the Soviet people, in their education as conscientious and active builders of communism and as ardent patriots of their fatherland. Soviet history has an important obligation not only to provide a scientific explanation of «the events of the past» but also, by generalizing from historical experience, to aid in the correct understanding of contemporary political events and the perspectives of the further development of human society... The example and experience of the soviet Union makes it easier for the working people of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Mongolia, China and Korea to do the difficult but wonderful and noble work of socialist reorganization of their fatherlands" in *Voropsii istorii*, No.8, October 1949.

²¹ For the evolution of historiography in the other states of East and Central Europe see "Historiography of the countries of Eastern Europe" in „American Historical Review 97”, 1992, 4, p. 1011-1117.

3. Cultural Stalinism and Historiography: Avenues for the transformation

Arpad von Klimó, an excellent observer of the sovietization of Hungarian historiography argued that according to their educational background and/or Party association, five different groups were involved/contributed to historical production during Stalinism: 1) party theorists, 2) party theorists who held academic positions at the same time, 3) young communist historians, who were not high ranking functionaries, 4) non-communist historians who were 'tolerated' and 5) non communist historians who were defamed and eliminated due their 'falsification' of history²². Such taxonomies might help differentiate between politicians and professionals, as well as between propaganda and scholarship, but they also show that in cultural affairs, due to the low number of loyal functionaries in charge of cultural policies, there was a real need of individuals to help duplicate the Soviet pattern. Communist functionaries in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland or Romania desperately wanted to implement politically accepted cultural policies and they were those that asked Moscow for teachers, advisers or lesson plans. Beginning with 1945, dozens of such specialists visited these countries with the aim of giving practical assistance. They had a twofold mission: to help create or restructure central cultural institutions and to help train specialists in fields that seemed poorly developed²³.

This need for explicit Soviet involvement is explained by John Connely as a consequence of a shortage of 'reliable' intellectuals and as well as to fear of purges, mingled of course with opportunism and enthusiasm, as communist organizations were purged of anyone whose loyalty toward the Soviet Union seemed suspect²⁴. Connely continues his analysis of this phenomenon, proposing the interesting hypothesis according to which the Soviet leadership showed a relative *passivity* in East and Central European cultural and educational affairs, in contrast with their behavior in politics or economy. For the American author, the difference was mainly caused because local communists, within their own established hierarchies, were trusted to oversee themselves the import of Soviet ideals as well as due the fact that Soviet institutions, like the ministry of higher education, had more than enough to do in attempting to "micromanage education within the Soviet Union, without becoming involved in the details of East European education"²⁵. What Connely suggests is that all over the region local communists in charge with cultural affairs had both to interpret and implement Soviet models mainly based on their own understanding of

²² Arpad von Klimó, *The Sovietization of Hungarian Historiography. Failures and Modifications in the early 1950s* in Balázs Apór, Péter Apór and E.A. Rees (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 237.

²³ Soviet visitors felt that the greatest need was in social science, with explicit reference to history, see. "The verbatim report of the meeting with the soviet delegation who visited some Romanian institutions" in Dan Catanus (ed.), *Intellectualii în Arhivele comunismului*, București, Edit. Nemira, 2006, p. 107.

²⁴ John Connely, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

the ‘official myths’. Following his interpretation, and focusing on the Romanian context, the extent and importance of Soviet involvement might be reinterpreted concomitant with a new perspective on the role of those who held important positions in government hierarchy and Academia, the so called, in communist jargon, members engaged in the ‘ideological front’. Were indeed Leonte Rautu, Mihail Roller, Sorin Toma, Stefan Voicu, Nestor Ignat, P. C. Iasi and other organizers of scholarship the main actors of the initial stages of the ‘revolution’, detrimental to Moscow involvement? If so, then information about the Soviet type historiography was transferred above all through native communists who knew the system intimately for lengthy stays in the Soviet Union and who had proved their devotion in the Soviet territory. If looking at Roller’s path, he indeed seems such an “academic bureaucrat”, to follow here Enteen M. George’s term in describing Pokrovskii²⁶.

Being rather unknown before the Communist Regime was instituted in Romania, after his return from Moscow, Roller was ‘the little dictator of the History’, as deemed by Lucian Boia, a scholar administrator who possessed both academic and entrepreneurial skills, holding positions in government as well as in the academia and having thus the possibility of shaping the science and the educational policy at all levels²⁷. Functionaries such as Roller, as well as less visible ones (such as the directors of the newly created history institutes), were thoroughly dedicated to the idea that Romanian historical writing should become as Soviet as possible, but their knowledge of the ‘model’ was after all insufficiently detailed as to serve guide for duplication. Hence, numerous individuals and institutions began approaching Soviet agencies for information, study programs, textbooks, examination schedules, etc. Requests were usually forwarded via VOKS²⁸ representatives in Soviet embassies and then received back by higher learning institutes through Soviet type institutes: the House of Soviet Culture in Berlin, East Germany, the Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute, Polish Soviet Institute, Soviet Romanian Studies Institute or other similar cultural organization, commonly known as *friendship societies*²⁹.

²⁶ Enteen M George, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

²⁷ It is known, however, that he published some modest articles during the interwar period and that he was a member of the Romanian Communist Party who studied in Moscow and made a name for himself when the Party was outlawed. Before the war ended, Roller was in Moscow with his family as part of a new communist structure created after the dissolution of the Comintern, the Research Institute number 205. Due to its major influence on the Romanian historical writing, many authors referred to this period as the “Rollerization” of Romanian Historical writing. See Florin Constantiniu *op. cit.*; Al Zub, *Orizont Inchis, istoriografia romana sub dictatura* Iasi, Institutul European, 2000; Andi Mihalache, *op. cit.*; *Pe urmele lui Marx. Studii despre comunism si consecintele sale*, Iasi, 2005; Keith Hitchins, *Mit și realitate in istoriografia romana*, București, Edit. Enciclopedică, 1997; Lucian Boia, *Istorie si mit in constiinta romaneasca*, București, Edit. Humanitas, 1997.

²⁸ The All Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, known by the initials of its Russian name, VOKS, was created by a decree of the USSR council of People’s commissars on August 8, 1925, as a ‘public’ society. See Louis Nemzer “The Soviet Friendship Societies” in „The Public Opinion Quarterly”, vol 13. No.2 (summer 1949), p. 271.

²⁹ *Ibidem*; see also, Jan. C., *Agitation, Organization, and Mobilization. The League for Polish-Soviet Friendship* in Balázs Apor, Péter Apor and E.A. Rees (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 181-201.

In Romania the best known such society was *ARLUS*, The Romanian Association for strengthening ties with Soviet Union (Asociația Română pentru strângerea Legăturilor cu Uniunea Sovietică), which had around 1,500,000 active supporters. It had a Romanian Cultural and Scientific Institute, it trained teachers of various types for the Romanian schools and had an active scholarship program for study in the Soviet Union sending frequently delegation to visit Russia. Within the country, *ARLUS* worked through its numerous branches which brought the Soviet message to virtually every adult in the country. It did so by using most of the communication media, including its own publishing house, one of the largest in the country, and through numerous meetings. Its House of Soviet-Romanian Friendship in Bucharest was estimated to have had more than five hundred full-time employees, visited during 1946 by more than one million people³⁰.

But for the purpose of this study, and due to its focus on the Cluj History Institute it is also important to mention the activity of a rather unknown institute, the *Soviet-Romanian Studies Institute* (Institutul de Studii Româno Sovietic), and its branch in Cluj³¹, part of a greater network of cultural organizations, fully interconnected, which included the above mentioned *ARLUS*, the Russian-Romanian Museum, the Russian language Institute "Maxim Gorki", the Russian Book publishing house and libraries. From its first year the institute edited three journals, the *Soviet Romanian Annales* (bimonthly) *External Problems* (monthly) and *Problems of Art and Literature* (quarterly). Its declared purpose was to support the higher educational institutes in "understanding the fact that Soviet science and its conquests are the only ones which can give a just ideological orientation and scientific content to study"³². The tasks of the institution were the following: making 'scientific' and qualified translations in different fields and disciplines, completion of the study of other institutes manifested through a series of conferences on Soviet science, the task being expressed in vague terms: „on a thematic which usually goes beyond the concerns of a regular institute". In this respect attention was given to: a) Themes related to the fight of Soviet science against 'decadent' bourgeois science and against cosmopolitanism manifested in science; b) Themes related to the advanced character of Soviet science and its role for the progress of mankind; c) Dissemination of the Soviet material translated at the institute. In 1963, its last year of existence, the Institute edited 41 magazines, 7 technical science publications, 8 natural science, 5 medical science, 9 social sciences(!), 4 publications of art and literature and 4 Russian language publications, and three other un-periodicals³³.

³⁰ Louis Nemzer, *op. cit.*; Adrian Cioroianu, *Lumina vine de la Rasarit. Noua imagine a Uniunii Sovietice in Romania postbelica, 1944-1947*, in Lucian Boia (Edit.), *Miturile Comunismului Românesc*, București, Edit. Humanitas, 1997; Adrian Cioroianu, *Dilemele mimetismului istoriografic. Cazul "Analelor Româno-Ruse" (1946-1963)*, in *Fațetele Istoriei*, Universitatea București, 2000, p. 593.

³¹ Created in 1949 in Bucharest, the Institute had two branches one in Cluj and the other in Iași.

³² See Romanian National Archives Cluj County, (ANSJC), P.M.R Cluj, RWP Regional Committee, fond 2, dossier 138/1947, p. 1.

³³ *Ibidem*.

Such a macro-level/panoramic approach reveals that Sovietization, or the attempt to introduce the Soviet model, was not a product of a single homogenous group but a process that required adaptations to local circumstances, with several factors to facilitate it. Help and guidance was needed and requested from the Soviet Union, but in the end the axiomatic role for the transformation was that of local actors and their interpretation of the 'model', from within the 'sovietized countries'.

4. The Sovietization of Romanian Historiography during Cultural Stalinism: Cluj History Institute

It is generally accepted now that the 1948-1953 period was the most prodigious in terms of measures taken in Romania in order to assure the 'revolution of historical writing'. Then, history along other social disciplines was one of the main victims at the forefront of the Stalinist type cultural revolution. It was, as David Prodan, a prolific historian of Cluj history institute said, "a difficult period of upheaval, of agitation, of humiliations inherent to great transformations"³⁴. The historians who survived the purges could no longer work independently under the new etatized cultural infrastructure. The Academic system³⁵ and the history production centres³⁶ underwent massive and far-reaching restructuring with the entire educational system being reframed³⁷. The Sovietization of historiography was thus a process of institutional changes and ruptures, but at the same time one of attempting to transfer Soviet models of ideological content and Soviet models of

³⁴ David Prodan, *Memorii*, București, Edit. Enciclopedică 1993, p. 51.

³⁵ The "relentlessly upheaval" (Dan Berindei) began with putting all cultural institutions under the control of a single body which was the Propaganda Department of the Party's Central Committee and was continued through a far reaching restructuring process of all major cultural institutions. The first to suffer such transformation was of course, the Romanian Academy, country's highest cultural and scientific forum. For the organizational regulations of the Academy see PRR „Analele Academiei Republicii Populare Române 1948-1949, București, Edit. Acad. R.P.R, 1948-1949, p. 37.

³⁶ From the point of view of the history institutions, same radical changes occurred as in the case of the Academy. Thus, on 15 July 1948, by a decree of the Great National Assembly (the legislature of the Romanian People's Republic) a new history institute was created, *The History Institute of the Peoples Republic of Romania*, concomitant with the abolishment of the former *Institute of National History*, the *Institute for the Study of Universal History*, the *Institute for Byzantine Studies*, all from Bucharest, as well as the *National Institute of History* from Cluj and Iasi. In continuation of this measure, all former historical institutions merged under the History Institute of Bucharest. From then on the History Institute of the Academy had 4 sections and two branches in Cluj and Iasi: National History, Universal History, Slavic and Balcanic History, Byzantium History. See. Vlad Georgescu, *Politică și Istorie. Căzul comuniștilor români*. București, Edit. Humanitas 1991; Gabriel Catalan, *Institutul de Istorie și Filozofie al Academiei R.P.R (1947-1951)*, „Xenopoliana”, VI. 1998, p. 141; Florin Muller, *Politică și istoriografie în România, 1948-1964*, Cluj-Napoca, Edit. Nereamia Napocae, 2003.

³⁷ See the 1948 Educational act and the organization of Higher Education.

narratives structures³⁸. How this program was implemented and its (multiple) manifestation are subjects that still support further research.

Regarding the situation of the Cluj institute, the former institute (*Institutul de Istorie Națională*), following the general trend, was replaced by a totally transformed one, The History and Archeology Institute of the Academy (*Institutul de Istorie si Arheologie din Cluj al Academiei Române*). Thereby, history production in Cluj was linked to specific centres and to the central scientific research which were at all time under the control of the State and implicitly to that of the Party. This structuring determined the internal politicization and cancelation of academic neutrality or, to put it differently, a process of institutionalization of the historians activity. Officially, the institution in charge with the internalization of the new values was the Academy through its local branch. In the new institutional structuring an exchange of information took place between the Institutes and the local branch of the Academy, as well as between the latter and the General Secretariat of the Academy in Bucharest. Apart from these arrangements, the 'dialogue' generally involved meetings between locals and the Secretariate of the Academy, not always recorded in written format. In turn, the 'centre' sent its instruction to the local branch once a year, in the format of general working plans. This information exchange was not at all perfect, causing problems and conflict, as it can be depicted from several archival documents³⁹, but the control remained complex and involved the general working plans, rapports, meetings and the supervision of the courses of the historians who were at the same time university professors⁴⁰. The preconditions for this was the transformation of the professoriate body which meant that the state initiated a selective action of *eliminating* the intellectuals of the *ancien regime* while simultaneously manifesting major interest in *creating* its own intellectuality/intelligentsia⁴¹. The other body meant to oversee the transformation was the Party, in charge with the 'just line', task

³⁸ I follow here Arpad von Klimó's definition. He describes the sovietization of historiography as a process of attempting to transfer: 1) Soviet Models of ideological contents, 2) Soviet models of narrative structures, and 3) Soviet institutional models into a different academic context see, Arpad von Klimó, *op cit.* p. 237.

³⁹ "The filial hasn't gotten a clear perspective in the way the session should be prepared as well as what are the internal objectives... there are then difficulties which arise from lack of clear organizing principle". See ANSJC, PMR Cluj, RWW P Regional Comitee. fond 2, dossier 138/1947, Informative Note, 87.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*.

⁴¹ The treatment of the two former directors of the History Institute of Cluj, Ioan Lupas and Alexandru Lapedatu reflects best this tendency. For all that the Party desperately needed its own intelligentsia that corresponded to its cultural, economic or political needs its range of selection never included what they called 'the bourgeois reactionary'. The strategy towards them in the early years of the communist regime was clear and involved isolation and elimination due to their refuse to ideological (re)education. Lupas and Lapedatu are examples of the maximum hardness line adopted by the regime in its first years as a preliminary for assuring the best conditions for the implementation of the new 'model' in historiography. The elimination of such important intellectual figures of the interwar period was also a signal for those who escaped the purges and were still wondering about their attitude toward the regime. The frequency with which party members spoke of Lupas and Lapedatu in their accusations brought to the former institute proves this last aspect.

assumed officially as the “comaredly and constant watch”. What was the line and what meant the constant watch has always been (intentionally) vague, inherently source for misinterpretation and pretexts for accusations and purges.

As stated, sovietization was also about form, methodology and new (historiographical) norms, manicheanly opposed to previous ones. In Cluj, the so called retrograde principles of the past were most oftently associated with *objectivism*, *cosmopolitanism* and *nationalism*, and used for attacking the activity of the former directors (Lapedatu and Lupaş) as well as for criticizing historians with ‘unsatisfactory’ results after the transformation: Professors such as Puscariu, Lupas, Lapedatu, Ghibu, Dragomir and others propagated from the desk through conferences, brochures and their books, not only hatred against all that was Hungarian, German or Jewish, but also a mystic and retrograde conception in scientific matters all drowned in a swamp of objectivism and cosmopolitanism. In this University have grown and received the education the members of the institute... founded with the money of the most hated exploiters headed by the agent of foreign imperialism Ferdinand and with heads as the former two directors... There is no surprise that the University and the Institute became in time real nests of the legionary movement⁴².

Assuming Marxism Leninism and Soviet historical science was in the last few years the main task of history. Several elements of ‘old’ background have been deeply and sincerely transformed due to this fact...Despite all these there are in Cluj a great amount of historians, so called specialists who couldn’t make this step and who do not have any perspective in doing this. Among them objectivism and cosmopolitism is manifested⁴³.

The ‘cosmopolitanism’⁴⁴ and ‘objectivism’, different Party and Academia documents referred to, were also used as pressure instruments in determening the historian to write on topics considered to be of an urgent need. Most of these were related to contemporary events -a ‘proper’ and complete history of the Transylvanian working class, as well as that of ‘fully reflecting’ the aplication of ‘nationalist-Stalinist policy after 23 August 1944’ – but they were frequently avoided as they could easily be wrong portrayed, due to the ideological instability regarding the recent past. Eluding such tasks was described in terms of “running from interpreting the history of the fatherland”⁴⁵. How the historian jeopardized their position by writting on such thematic, is again best described by David Prodan, according to which at modern history (in which he was specialist), every word was supervised and the historian subject to unfair allocation and missinterpretation⁴⁶. Closely linked to this, the historians were urged in writing more critical, i.e. more combative, against their former

⁴² “The Report of the P.R.R. Academy, Cluj brach, regarding the scientific work, 1951” ANSJC Romanian Workers Party, fond 13, dossier nr 203/1951, p. 65.

⁴³ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁴ See also the article written by the director of the newly founded History Institute in Bucharest, P.C. Iasi, who was also the president of the Historical Section of the Academy, *Cosmopolitismul în științele istorice „Contemporanul”*, nr. 160, 2 October, 1949.

⁴⁵ ANSJC, Romanian Workers Party, part 13, dossier nr. 203/1951, p. 109.

⁴⁶ David Prodan, *op. cit.* p. 5.

professors. The solution found by the institute's management for this shortages was that of setting working collectives which had a pre-established topic, as well as by putting the 'hesitative' historian to work with a more combative co-author.

In what concerns 'nationalism', this was a rather sensitive aspect for Cluj and its institution⁴⁷. The interwar institute, founded at the same time with the University (1920), had the precise purpose of studying the history of the Romanians in Transylvania and set to explore, from a perspective neglected by previously established narratives, some of the fundamental themes of the interwar historiography: the political history of Transilvanian voievodship (as a specific Romanian political form), the Transilvanian principality and its evolution during Ottoman suzerainty and its integration within the Habsburg Empire, the history of the medieval peasant upheavals, etc. Politically influenced by the nation-building process, these themes were completed with the interest in subjects concerning the Romanian political and national movements of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, with specific attention to the 1918 Union Act and its impact on the development of the intra-carpathian community. Naturally, after 1948 such an approach to the region's past could no longer be accepted and the 'new' history was set to solve any historiographical grievances by addressing previous topics from a unitary, 'marxist', point of view. This aspect of the 'historical transformation' is best described by Constantin Daicoviciu, the director of the Institute, who in 1950 gave in the periodical *Studii și cercetări științifice* an account ("dare de seamă") on undertaken research and his management. Following the official pattern and arguing the 'enourmous difference between the so called social and historical science of the past and that of "today's time of political and scientific freedom – "indebted to our great friend, the country of triumphant communism, and to the marxist-leninist-stalinist conception of history", Daicoviciu evaluated the different departments of the institute (archeology, medieval, modern and contemporary), with increased attention on the ways in which the historical tensions between the Hungarians and Romanians were solved: "Seen in the light of the new science, which is the history of the working class of all times, Transylvania no longer appeared as a

⁴⁷ In his study dedicated to the interwar Cluj University, Lucian Nastasa argued that Cluj had always been different in the Romanian university life referring to the fact that while the two other provincial institution (Iasi and Cernauti) played an antechamber role for the capital, *Universitatea Daciei Superioare*, (later named *Universitatea Regele Ferdinand I - King Ferdinand I University*) was a veritable attraction point for the researchers who were there in direct competition with the 'centre'. The tumultuous past of the Transylvanian city, its multicultural aspect as well as its problematic postwar situation made that this difference to persist. After the University and its institutes returned from the exile in Southern Transylvania (1940-1944) caused by the Hungarian occupation, the problem of creating a Hungarian University, as proposed by the government, determined intense nationalistic disputes between the professors and the students of the Ferdinand University on one side, and the Sanatescu and Groza governments on the other, which soon turned into antigovernment and anticommunist manifestations. The climax of these manifestations was 1946 the same year when the autonomy of the university was cancelled (24 August 1946) and thus the first steps towards the transformation were made. See Lucian Nastasa, *Intelectualii și promovarea socială în România sec XIX-XX*, Cluj-Napoca, Limes, 2004, p. 135; Dobos Dănuț, *Ingerințe politice în viața universitară clujeană (1945-1948)* in „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie A.D. Xenopol din Iași”, XXXIII, 1996, Iași, Edit. Academiei Romane, p. 225-239.

multinational conflict region but as the land of concord of the three nations and a fighting arena of oppressed masses, both Romanian and Hungarian, against a common enemy, the 'oppressors of all nations and all religion'⁴⁸.

Despite Daicoviciu's generally optimistic portrayal, as what was published by the institute between 1950-1957 proves, the transformation seemed rather arduous. In 1950 only three historical studies were published, all of them with questionable academic value, to be completed by several reviews to some obscure books; between 1951-1952 not a single article was published, as between 1953-1955 the majority of the studies referred to dacians. As the historians started to publish independently from the Academy, from 1956 onwards the articles began being more diversified⁴⁹:

1950	Ardeleanu G. S. , <i>Russian-Romanian Historical Notes</i> ; Ardeleanu, G., S. F. Grecul , <i>Moldavia's cities in the second half of the 15th century</i> (review); Ardeleanu, G., S., B.D. Grekov, A.I. Iakubovski , <i>The Golden Horde and its decline</i> (review); Daicoviciu, C. <i>The Dacians from Orastie Mountains and the begining of the slave-ownership state.</i> ; Izsak, Samuil , <i>The real image of Ioan Molnar-Piuariu.</i> ; Prodan D. , <i>A George Sincai manuscript against superstitions.</i>
1951	
1952	
1953	Jako, Sigismund , <i>The history of potash manufactures form Valea Ungurului and Calin. (Contributions from the forest exploatation domain and the history of the begining of capitalism in Transilvania).</i>
1954	Kovacs, Iosif , <i>Peasant Agitations in Apuseni mountains after Horea's upheaval, as reflected in Turda county archive.</i> ; Macrea, M, Protase, D. <i>The Roman Imperial conins from Geomal and the Carpien invasion of Dacia in 242</i>
1955	Cîmpianu, C. , <i>From the past of Tauti village during the feudal decay</i> ; Crișan, I. H. <i>The Dacian Cup. Contributions to the Dacian History and culture</i> ; Lupu, Nicolae. <i>The history of Casolt-Sibiu necropolis research</i> ; Rusu, Mircea. <i>The Dacian pots at the Guserita-Sibiu repository.</i>
1956	Belu Sabin, Roșcău Dumitru , <i>Contradictions within the privileged lands of Transylvania during the first half of the 14th</i> ; Bozac Ileana , <i>The school policies of Viena courtship in Zlatna fiscal estate during the second half of 18th century.</i> Cicală I. Egyed A. <i>The Romanian 1907 peasant upheaval echo in Transylvania.</i> Jako, Sigismund , <i>Early writing in the laic stratum of Medieval Transylvania.</i> ; Pall Fracnisc , <i>The social structure in France after Beaumanoir feudal act of law</i> ; Pataki Iosif, Imre Istvan , (trad) <i>The alodial household in szeklers couty during feudal decay.</i> (review); Protase, D. <i>1953's Alba Iulia Archaeological Research.</i> ; Rusu, I. I. <i>Atticus the slave. Contributions to the economic history of Dacia.</i> Surdu, Bujor. <i>The problem of the inception and the characteristics of the state owned manufactures in 18th century Transylvania.</i>

⁴⁸ „Cronica. Din activitatea Institutelor și colectivelor de cercetări ale Filialei Cluj a Academiei RPR. Institutul de Istorie și Filozofie din Cluj al Academiei RPR. Report sumar pe anul 1949-1950” in „Studii și cercetări științifice”, I, 2, 1950, p. 172.

⁴⁹ At the same time with the new institutional reorganization the most important historical journals had perished: „Revista Istorică”, „Revue Historique de Sud-Est Europeen”, „Revista Istorică Romana and Balcanica”, to be all replaced by a single one entitled *Studii* (Studies). In Cluj, this journal was published between 1950 and 1955 to be latter replaced by „Studii si cercetari de istorie” while from 1958 untill 1970 the name was again changed into „Anuarul Institutului de Istorie din Cluj” (The Yearbook of the History Institute of Cluj).

1957	<p>Benko S, <i>Cluj cultural societies in the first half of 19th century and their role in the formation of the burgeois intellectuality</i>; Cicală I, <i>The links between Romanian and Hungarian workers movements between 1900-1914</i>. Pascu Ștefan, <i>The role of Transylvanian princes in lăncu of Hunedoara anti-ottoman fight</i>; Cîmpianu, C., <i>A unknown work of Samuil Micu: "Hronologica împăraților turcești"</i>; Cîmpianu, C., <i>Studies and materials concerning medieval history. (review)</i>; Crăciun, I., <i>Hungarian historical bibliography 1825-1867. I,II, (review).</i>; Dan, Mihail, <i>The Army and the militar art of lăncu of Hunedoara (on the basis of contemporary chronicles)</i>; Kovacs, Iosif, <i>Information regarding the decay of Transylvanian peasantry after the 1848 liquidation of serfdom</i>. Mureșan Hilda, <i>Aspects of some of the strikes in Banat at the end of the 19th century and the begining of 20th century</i>. Neamțu Al., <i>Turmoils within the Transylvanian miners at the begining of 19th century. The 1804 Baita miners strike</i>. Prodan D., <i>500 years since the death of lăncu of Hunedoara</i>; Sabău, Ioan, <i>Aspects of the financial habsburg policies in Transilvania at the end of 18th century</i>. Surdu, Bujor, Ștefan Pascu, <i>The Transylvanian crafts until the 16th century. (review)</i></p>
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To sum up, after 1948 history production was set in Cluj in a new cultural infrastructure, according to the Party/State propaganda purpose, yet at a slow pace. From the institute's own perspective, decoded as such from the directors, historians and the Academy's statements, the transformation started with shortages but eventually suitable preconditions were assured for visible results in attaining the stated goals of the State's cultural program of *development, construction and progress* toward cultural revolution. For historiography this meant the introduction of strictly authoritarian centralizing practices and ideas, as well as certain aesthetic forms, completed with a methodological turn (based on illustrating the conflict of social classes as the propellant of historical events), and a thematic turn that focused on the benefactor role of the Soviet Union in the development of the Romanian people, condemnation of bourgeoisie and nobility, both Romanian and Hungarian and deference to post 1948 political achievements. The model was found in Soviet literature as well as in Roller's 1947 textbook. In its less obvious manifestation, sovietization involved a 'political dressage'⁵⁰ of the historian, indoctrination and propaganda, ensured and controled by the local branch of the Academy, propaganda institutions (such as the Romanian-Soviet Studies Institute) and the Party.

Conclusions

As the perception of the past had always a determinative role and impact towards the understanding of the present and the future, history became one of the major temptations of the post-war communist regimes of the so called Soviet Bloc. Therefore, in their attempt to follow Soviet Union and its pattern in implementing the communist utopia, the newly created 'democracies' initiated a process with the aim of transforming their history into an important ideological weapon, an *instrumentum*

⁵⁰ D. Prodan, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

regni, meant not only to contribute to the so called ‘cultural revolution’, but also to provide constitutive legitimacy and identity. Nonetheless the transformative process (Sovietization of historiography), proved to be the resultant of local actors, detrimental to Moscow involvement, of pressure, and up to a point of compromise, between inhomogeneously agencies.