International Conference

New Perspectives in the Transnational History of Communism in East-Central Europe

October 16-17, 2014, Poznań
Program and Abstracts
Komitet Naukowy/Scientific Committee:

Péter Apor
(Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

Uwe Backes
(Hannah-Arendt-Institut für Totalitarismusforschung an der TU Dresden)

Stefano Bottoni
(Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

Krzysztof Brzechczyn
(Adam Mickiewicz University/Institute of National Remembrance)

Sándor Horváth
(Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

Chris Lorenz
(Free University of Amsterdam)

Tomasz Pawelec
(University of Silesia)

Michal Pullmann
(Charles University in Prague)
Program

The First Day, Thursday, October 16, 2014
Conference Venue: DS „Jowita”, Zwierzyniecka Street 7, hall AB

9:00-9:20: Opening

Session I: Ideological Dimensions of Communism
Chair: Krzysztof Brzechczyn
Institute of National Remembrance, Poznań

9:20-9:40:
Balázs Apor (Trinity College Dublin),
The Anatomy of Stalinist Leader Cults in the Soviet Bloc

9.40-10:00:
Uwe Backes (Hannah Arendt Institut fur Totalitarismus Forschung, Dresden),
Decadent Ideocracies? Changes of Regime Legitimation in Real Socialist Countries

10:00-10:20:
Vilius Ivanauskas (Lithuanian Institute of History),
„Engineers of Human Spirit“ in Soviet Lithuania: Making Sense of Global Sixties or Embracing the Localism

10:20-10:40:
Éva Petrás (Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security, Budapest),
Prevailing Romantic Elements of Hungarian Nationalism at the End of the Cold War - their Origin and Influence on Nationalism

10:40-11:10: Discussion
11:10-11:30: Coffee Break

Session II: East-Central Communism in Transnational/Global Context
Chair: Péter Apor (Hungarian Academy of Science, Budapest)
Agnieszka Łuczak (Institute of National Remembrance, Poznań)

11:30-11:50:
Sarolta Klenjánszky,
Transnational Relations or Paradiplomacy? Theoretical Reflections on the Example of the HSWP’s Relationships to the FCP after the Invasion of Czechoslovakia
11:50-12:10:
Robert Brier (German Historical Institute, Warsaw)
**Human Rights, East-Central European Dissent, and the Western Left in the 1970s and 1980s**

12:10-12:30:
Ned Richardson-Little (University of Exeter)
**Globalizing the History of Human Rights in the Soviet Bloc**

12:30-13:00: Discussion
13:00-14:20: Break

14:20-14:40:
Christie Miedema (Amsterdam Institute for German Studies),
**A Transnational Movement Breaking Down the Blocs? The ‘Alliance’ between the Western Peace Movement and the Polish Opposition in the 1980s**

14:40-15:00:
Jure Ramšak (University of Primorska),
**“Ultra-Left Demagogy”: New Left and Student Criticism in Slovenia 1971-1974**

15:00-15:20:
Dirk Dalberg (University of Pardubice),
**The New Left in Czechoslovakia: Petr Uhl’s Framework of a New Political System**

15:20-15:40: Discussion
15:40-16:00: Coffee Break

16:00-16:20:
Tom Junes (Imre Kertész Kolleg, Jena),
**Explaining Change from a Generational and Transnational Perspective: the Oppositional Student Movement in Communist Poland**

16:20-16:40:
Natalia Jarska (Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw),
**Women’s and Gender History in Postwar Central European Societies. The State of the Art and perspectives**

16:40-17:00:
Zsófia Lóránd (Central European University),
**New Feminist Ideas: Challenging the State or Ameliorating Yugoslav Socialism?**

17:00-17:20: Discussion
Session III: Military/Security Relations in History of Communism  
Chair: Uwe Backes  
(Hannah-Arendt-Institut für Totalitarismusforschung, Dresden)

17:20-17:40:  
Jens Boysen (German Historical Institute, Warsaw),  
*Integration through Militarism in the Warsaw Pact: The East German and Polish Military Establishment between National Specificity and Transnational Cohesion*

17:40-18:00:  
Paul Maddrell (Loughborough University),  
*Compartmentalized Minds: the Communist Security Services’ Understanding of the Western Espionage Threat to the Soviet Bloc in Comparative Perspective*

18:00-18:20: Discussion

The Second Day, Friday, October 17, 2014  
Conference Venue: DS „Jowita”, Zwierzyniecka Street 7, hall AB

Session IV: Economics of Communism  
Chair: Tomasz Pawelec (University of Silesia)  
Sándor Horváth (Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

9:00-9:20:  
Krzysztof Brzechczyn (Institute of National Remembrance/Adam Mickiewicz University)  
*Between Modernization and Totalitarianism. Class Analysis in Explanation of Communism in East-Central Europe*

9:20-9:40:  
Viktor Pál (University of Tampere, Finland/Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration),  
*The Post-war “Golden Age” and Sustainability in East-Central-, and Western Europe*

9:40-10:00:  
Olaf Mertelsmann (University of Tartu),  
*An Economy of Shortages Aspiring Mass Consumption: The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Baltic Republics in the 1950s and 1960s on the Example of Estonia*
10:00-10:20: Elizta Stanoeva (Kulturwissenschaftliches Kolleg, Konstanz),
*Inventing the Socialist Consumer: Worker, Citizen or Customer? Politics of Mass Consumption in Bulgaria, 1956-1968*

10:20-11:00: Discussion
11:00-11:20: Coffee Break

11:20-11:40: Mara Marginean (Romanian Academy. George Baritiu Institute of History),
*Mis/Managing Industrial Labour Productivity by the Late 1950s: Work, Collective Consumption and Technologies of Nation Building in Romania.*

11:40-12:00: Eva Schäffler (University of Salzburg),
*Pronatalism in the GDR and in the ČSSR*

12:20-12:40: Constantantin Parvulescu (West University of Timisoara, Romania),
*Mass Gymnastics, Biopolitics and Romania’s Late Socialist International Presentation*

12:40-13:20: Discussion
13:20-15:00: Break

**Session V: Memory and Narratives of East-Central Communism**

*Pavel Kolář (European University Institute)*

15:00-15:20: Dorota Malczewska-Pawelec, Tomasz Pawelec (University of Silesia, Katowice),
*A Study of Memory Politics as a Research Program for Transnational History of Communism in East-Central Europe*

15:20-15:40: Jakub Muchowski (Jagiellonian University),
*Intimacies under Real Socialism. Poles Emotional Self-Realization in 1960’s*

15:40-16:00: Branislav Radeljić (University of East London),
*European Community-Yugoslav Relations: Documents that Mattered (1980–1992)*

16:00-16:20: Coffee Break

16:20-15:40: Oleksii Polegkyi, (Antwerp University/Wroclaw University),
Russian and Ukrainian Struggle of “Historical Narratives”: Post-Imperial vs. Post-Colonial Perspectives

16:40-17:00:
Anna Zadora, (Strasbourg University),
The Second World War in Belarus: a Fundamental Event for National Building

17:00-17:40: Discussion
Abstracts
The Anatomy of Stalinist Leader Cults in the Soviet Bloc

The paper will provide a comparative assessment of Stalinist leader cults in the countries of the Eastern bloc (excluding the Soviet Union) after the Second World War (1945-1956). The leader cult is often treated as a singular phenomenon by historians: it is usually studied in relation to a single leader, dictator, monarch, emperor, etc. and is usually interpreted as an absurd by-product of excessive, personalized executive power. This focus on the single leader was reflected in the way the phenomenon was conceptualized in the communist context: the “cult of personality”. The main problem with the notion of the ‘cult of personality’ is that the concept has for a long time obscured important aspects of the leader cult phenomenon, namely that cults—in Stalinist Eastern Europe at least—formed a hierarchical system. The Sovietization of Eastern Europe triggered the extension of this system to the countries where communist regimes were established. The fixation with representations in studies of the cult also resulted in a tendency to regard communist leader cults in the Soviet bloc as clones (at best) of the Stalin-cult. Despite the dominance of the Stalin-model, however, the cults of Eastern European party leaders were different to some extent. I would thus argue that it is more fruitful to understand the cults of communist leaders in the framework of a dynamic system of cults rather than to study and interpret them separately and in isolation. The communist leader cult, in other words, has a transnational aspect, and the histories of individual cults are entangled.

My paper will focus on the creation of satellite leader cults as part of the post-war Sovietization project in Eastern Europe. Apart from the copying of Soviet institutions and policies, the adaptation of the leader cult to the national environment was an integral part of this process. Despite the fact that the cults of satellite leaders mostly recycled the essential building blocks of Stalin’s imagery, they also displayed a substantial amount of specificity. The problem of adoption vs. innovation, or more precisely: the extent to which such cults were based on the mechanical copying of the Soviet model vs. the degree to which they were rooted in local national traditions enriching them with national characteristics, will be one of the key themes in the paper.
Decadent Ideocracies? Changes of Regime Legitimation in ‘Real Socialist’ Countries

An expression frequently encountered in the debates on “totalitarianism” and “political religion” is the term “ideocracy”. However, as anyone searching for a deeper or more profound understanding of the term will quickly notice, in most cases its usage is devoid of any knowledge of its etymological origins and its historical conceptualization. This contribution will therefore reconstruct in its first section the analytical potential of the ideocracy concept. In the second section the author will determine in a comparative analysis in which extent the basic elements of “ideocracy” shaped the power structure of “real socialist” countries in the last phase of their existence.
Integration through Militarism in the Warsaw Pact: The East German and Polish Military Establishments between National Specificity and Transnational Cohesion

The military sphere was not only an obvious focus point of the socialist countries’ self-defense and – maybe even more – of their self-representation towards the West and the world in general; just as much, it was a field of activity where the (suppressed) tensions between the forced members of the Soviet bloc found a specific manifestation. Precisely the question of common strategic interest vis-à-vis the “class enemy” rendered necessary – behind the scenes – a repeated balancing of national interests even if these were not usually called this way. One factor that played into this process was the pre-war – and thus pre-Communist – past and related national traditions. Here, the differences and enmities that had characterized, and helped destroy, the inter-war order in Central and Eastern Europe, could only be surmounted by, certainly, Soviet pressure but likewise (after 1956) by a smart approach of allowing national(ist) residual patterns to be absorbed by a flexible “internationalist” narrative.

Once one dismantles the rather hollow rhetoric of “proletarian internationalism”, but also understands that since the 1960s Soviet coercion alone could not explain anymore the cohesion and functioning of the Soviet “external empire” in Eastern Europe, one needs to find another explanation for the fact that over 40-45 years national elites in the non-Soviet member states worked actively (if with limited success) towards the creation of a sort of transnational political structure. To be sure, the general populations, too, adapted, the latest after 1956, to the existing regimes, and the notion of “resistance” could be applied – at least until 1975 – only to small groups of principled anti-Communists. But the role of the systemic elites was crucial for the fact that the Warsaw Pact could pursue, to a point, active and ambitious global policies and for some time even believe to pose a credible alternative to the West.

In this context, the armies as classical both tools and symbols of national sovereignty, and their mutual relations, were important yardsticks of the cohesion and purpose of the Socialist alliance. The military establishments were technical profes-
sionals but also managers of the aforementioned delicate balance between the national and the (socialist) transnational rationale. In this, they had to neutralize at the alliance level historical enmities that were often very deep, not least between Germans, Poles and Russians; at the same time, they used at the domestic level historical elements of identity building that contained the source of those very enmities.

During most of the era of “real socialism”, Poland and the GDR, in particular, competed for the second place after the Soviet hegemon, and thus for the position of unofficial leader of the non-Soviet member states. Once more, the military was one major field of competition here. Even though the GDR displayed a defeatist attitude with a view to the “burdened German past” and adhered to “internationalism”, while Poland was unabashedly nationalist, both saw the Warsaw Pact as a useful framework for pursuing their national ambitions. In a way, one can say that a common socialist militarism was developed to reconcile the contradictory national militarisms. Especially, common studies of the military upper echelons in the Soviet Union helped to cement the supranational cohesion of this specific elite type.
In my paper, I focus on dissent in the former “Soviet-bloc.” In the past, the history of dissent was largely written as a history of parallel national developments; little attention was paid to interaction between different movements of dissent. More recently, scholars have come recognize the degree to which protest movements in the Soviet bloc were entangled in processes of cross-border and even East-West interaction. In my paper, I want to analyses a specific form of cross-bloc entanglements revolving around human rights. Human rights politics is overwhelmingly associated with the Helsinki Final Act. This focus is well deserved but it overshadows how East-Central European dissidents interacted with diverse social groups in the West. What is thus being missed is that the appeals of dissidents resonated with western audiences because they tied in with western debates about collective self-determination, radical democracy, and socialism. I focus on three examples: The first is Italian Euro-communism. Nowadays, Euro-communism is easily dismissed as a mere side-show of the 1970s. At the time, however, it drew much attention of non-conformist forces in Eastern Europe; some Czech dissidents and older members of the Polish opposition were initially much more concerned with Euro-communism than the famous Helsinki Final Act. Western attempts to reconcile socialism with human rights also provided an important transnational “soundboard” for the dissidents’ appeals to an international community. Second, I discuss how non-orthodox socialists from West Germany supported dissent because they believed it signaled an evolution of the communist countries towards a more human socialism. Third, I analyses the French New Left’s enthusiasm for Soviet and East European dissidents. The emergence of a French “Second Left” out of the “anti-totalitarian moment” of the 1970s is often seen as a major event for the western left’s shift from revolutionary thinking to individual rights. This is true but, again, their encounter with the dissidents highlights the extent to which support for human rights in Eastern Europe revolved around hopes for an, however ill-defined, alternative to western modernity.
Between Modernization and Totalitarianism.
Class Perspective in the History of Communism
in East-Central Europe

Marxism fulfilled function of ideology of communism – a social system established in the Soviet Union and imposed after 1945 in the countries of East-Central Europe. Therefore, communist system was perceived as a direct embodiment of Marxist Utopia and realization of classless society. The elimination of private property was understood as abolishment of all social inequalities. However, it was appeared very soon that liquidation of social inequalities characteristic for capitalist society caused the rise of the new social divisions. What more, they become more oppressive and unjust than inequalities in capitalist societies. It causes the problem of the choice of theoretical tools adequate for conceptualization of communist system. In my paper I would like to consider usefulness of the class perspective in description and explanation of history of the east-central European communism.

It is possible to distinguish three basic standpoints in historical and social sciences. Namely, class perspective may be: (1) useless for analysis of communist societies (2), useful for analysis of these societies (3) the condition of its potential applicability is its radical modification based on inclusion of the concept of class division to the spheres of politics and culture. An example of the first standpoint may be David Ost who argued against applicability of class perspective in analysis of communism system. The classical example of the second standpoint is developed by Milovan Djilas. According to him, the communist party fulfills the role of the new class in society. The base of its social and political rule is collective property and their members are collective owners of means of production. In Djilas’ vision of history necessity of modernization facilitated the rise of communist party to power and transformation into new class of owners. The third standpoint is developed by Leszek Nowak. According to him, class divisions spontaneously arise not only in economics but also in politics and culture. The base of class divisions in these domains of social life is relation to the means of coercion and the means of indoctrination. In politics and in culture there is possible to distinguish the social minorities that decide about use of these means. Class divisions may accumulate and hence, it is possible to distinguish supra-class societies in which a single social class may control politics, economy
and culture. Communism, in fact, turned out to be the system with the communist party’s apparatus controlling the political, economic and cultural spheres of life. From this perspective, this appears to be the most oppressive social system in human history. The basic line of social division divides society into the people’s class and the triple-lords class. The main interest of the latter lies in maximizing the power regulation. Control of the economy and culture only served as a means of asserting political dominance over the rest of the society. Therefore, it is possible to paraphrase in this conceptual framework the concept of totalitarian rule. However, the classic concepts of totalitarianism authored by Brzeziński/Friedrich assumed the stability of the totalitarian domination. In Nowak’s approach stability of totalitarian rule depends on social relations between the peoples’ class and triple-lord class what allows for conceptualization of the processes of totalitarianization and de-totalitarianization.
The New Left in Czechoslovakia: Petr Uhl’s Framework of a New Political System

The New Left that emerged in the 1950s in Western Europe and the USA is to be distinguished from reform-orientated social-democracy and also communism. In the Western world the New left criticized both, the democratic-capitalistic world and also the socialist-communistic World in Eastern Europe. At the end of the 1960s during the Prague spring, ideas of the New Left can also be found in the socialistic Czechoslovakia, even though based on other social and political terms and conditions as in the West. These characteristics are (1) individual moral revolt and a desire for nonconformity in all aspects of existence; (2) civil rights, peace, and poverty; (3) direct action as essential means of struggle and as the democratic mode of political expression; and (4) a new political-organizational practice which is based on a) decentralization and multiplicity of structures b) direct method of self-government at all levels c) abolition of institutionalized political bureaucracies d) non-exclusionism.

In Czechoslovakia largely influenced by ideas of the New Left were the Movement of Revolutionary Youth (HRM) and the Trotskyist oriented mechanical engineer Petr Uhl. This radical democratic theoretician declared as his major goal an anti-bureaucratic revolution. For him this revolution was above all a political revolution that would enable to build a democratic socialism, which would repair first of all these of the socialist political systems in the eastern part of Europe, and the faults of the democratic system in Western Europe.

His major ideas concerning the new social order are to be found in “Alternative Society as Revolutionary Avant-garde“, but mainly in his “Program of Society’s Self Organization” written together with Jaroslav Suk in the second half of the 1970s and published in 1982 in Western Germany. This program contains two main parts. Firstly, an analysis of the existing system. Secondly, a conceptual framework of a new political system (describing democracy, parliamentarianism, political parties, political pluralism, state), a new economic system (economical democracy) and a new culture (i.e. new moral, education, fine arts).

The thesis deals with the theoretical outline of the new political system and is aimed at analysis of Uhl’s understanding of state, democracy-, political parties- and parliamentarianism. It will tackle both, the description of his ideas as well as critical reconsideration of his ideas. Which kinds of democracy he distinguished? Which functions have the parliament and the political parties? What is the state and what are its functions? Furthermore the thesis deals with the question, in which political and philosophical tradition can be integrated his understanding of these institutions.
A Soviet writer was one of the most publicly recognizable intellectuals. They actively participated in indoctrination practices that reflected strict mechanisms of control and censorship and provided prestige and authority in society. Official Lithuanian writers’ active participation not only in legitimizing the Soviet regime in 1940, but also in destroying the regime in 1988, calls for an evaluation of the dynamics of Lithuanian literature and the activities of official writers, with particular attention to those turning-points when the milieu of local writers turned from indoctrination practices to the mobilization of national identity.

This paper analyses how local writers in Lithuania who were part of the establishment during late socialism developed a multi-faceted relationship with the system. The perspective of different generations reveals the rise of ethnic (local) interests and the disconnection of everyday-life from official goals. It also shows that writers who worked in official channels reduced their participation in indoctrination processes and significantly influenced the mobilization of national identity.

The younger generation was the outcome of the process of de-Stalinization and Khrushchev’s Thaw. Its rise coincided with the appearance of a new official line on poetry at the central level and the growth in more liberal members of the intelligentsia (šestdesiatniki), who acted as agents of change and simultaneously ‘developed a distinctive, unofficial life of their own’. This new generation of Lithuanian writers had its own characteristics. As “postwar children, who came from the countryside to the capital Vilnius to receive higher education” (Poetas J. Marcinkevičius: Mūsų kur- sas buvo ypatingas – daug poetų, daug savižudžių [Poet J. Marcinkevicius: Our Course Was Special: Many Poets and Self-Murderers. An Interview Made by V. Davoliute], “Kulturos braai” 2009, no. 2), they could be distinguished by their ambiguous position. They tried to avoid the simplified schemes interpreting Soviet life, but at the same actively they attempted to integrate into Soviet establishment structures and to ensure their own status.
Women’s and Gender History in Postwar Central European Societies: the State of the Art and Perspectives

My paper is going to focus on recent trends and research concerning gender history in Central Europe’s countries. There are few attempts of comparative studies on gender in these countries. Indeed, in some of the post-communist countries the historical literature on gender and women’s history is rather modest. Nevertheless, recent studies show that gender can be a useful category in more general analysis of social and political processes in the Soviet Bloc. It seems that gender politics and the dynamics of gender ideologies were similar in many aspects. However, more research is required in order to achieve better understanding of cultural differences between the countries in question. The paper will give a general view of the existing literature and possible directions of further studies.
Explaining Change from a Generational and Transnational Perspective: The Oppositional Student Movement in Communist Poland

This paper will discuss some examples of how transnational trends influenced the political consciousness of several generations of oppositional student activists in Poland. The impact of New Left ideas, social Catholicism, and the counter-cultural appeal of punk rock will be discussed with relation to the ideas and actions of student activists from destalinization in the mid-1950s to the demise of the communist regime in 1989. The paper will demonstrate that these trends had a period of dominant influence among student activists and served to contribute in steering the oppositional student movement from an originally predominant leftist and ‘revisionist’ position to a more radical anti-communist stance in the span of a few decades. In doing so, this paper will also underline the importance of changing generations of students and their specific experiences coming of age under communist rule in Poland. Finally, the paper will point to some instances when Polish students’ ideas and actions influenced their peers in other countries of the Soviet bloc.
Transnational Relations or Paradiplomacy? Theoretical Reflections on the Example of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party Relationships to the French Communist Party after the Invasion of Czechoslovakia

Between the Eastern European Communist parties on power and the Communist Parties of Western Europe, behind the principle of “proletarian internationalist solidarity” featured in the Leninist canon, in reality, there were not only harmonious relations. The conflicts of interest attributable to the national embeddedness of the parties interwove their cooperation at all levels. This paper examines the question how Hungarian Communists dealt with this problem through the evolution of their relations to the French Communist Party after the 1968 crisis in Czechoslovakia, on the basis of Hungarian and French archival sources. This period is in the Hungarian foreign policy still a poorly understood period, on the other hand, the French Party first denied its loyalty. This led to increasingly tension between the two party leaders; it can be attributed to the Hungarians pragmatism, who were decided not to allow the collaboration to go wrong under the effect of ideological disagreement, that a healthy dialog was still maintained with the HSWP (Hungarian Socialist Workers Party) in contrast to other Eastern European parties. The main concern for the Hungarian leadership at that time was to compensate the narrowness of the foreign policy maneuver; it followed the subordination of the party’s foreign relations at various levels, including municipalities as well as social organizations or “twin-town” relations for example, to the immediate diplomatic goals of the country; this led paradoxically in the cultural collaboration with the French and the Italian Communist Parties to the strengthening of the reform line. Therefore, party links can be defined more within the framework of “para-diplomacy” paradigm instead of “transnational relation” concept which seems not relevant for analysis of relations between western and eastern fraternal parties in the Cold War.
New Feminist Ideas: Challenging the State or Ameliorating Yugoslav Socialism?

New Yugoslav feminism, emerging in the 1970s, parallel and in dialogue with the Western second wave of feminisms, was a critical discourse. A critical discourse, which, in the meantime, built its criticism on the promises of socialism. My presentation at the conference, based on my dissertation about the new Yugoslav feminist phenomenon from an intellectual historical perspective, would reflect on its relevance from the perspective suggested in the CfP, i.e. the generational relevance of the group, as well as their relationship to global (feminist and peace) movements, New Left theories, as well as life-style movements and anti-technological or ecological ideologies. The corpus of texts produced by the group members, from the field of philosophy, social sciences, arts, as well as popular texts supporting a new women’s movement, connects the new Yugoslav feminists to the aforementioned phenomena in often times unexpected ways. Moreover, I would like to show that new Yugoslav feminism was a distinguishable approach to feminism in comparison both to the Western second waves and to the post-colonial and Third World women's movements. Due to its peculiarity and its inspiration taken from several other ideational sources, its relationship to the state was equally ambiguous, still, offering the example of the probably only critical feminist stance vis-à-vis the state in East Central Europe after WWII and before 1989.
Dorota Malczewska-Pawelec, Tomasz Pawelec
Department of History, University of Silesia in Katowice

A Study of Memory Politics as a Research Program for Transnational History of Communism in East-Central Europe

The authors’ aim is to discuss and evaluate research possibilities offered by the study of memory politics (a part the memory studies) in order to provide a model for comparative and/or transnational study of post-1945 East-Central European History. In every country of the region that fell under the communist yoke, the new rulers attempted to remodel the sphere of social imaginary. Images and ideas of the past were the first among those to be rebuild. So, the sphere of memory politics seems to be an area where the basic community of historical fates and experiences of societies is most clearly visible. This encourages to make comparisons, opens the possibility of posing similar research question and testing the same theoretical model on empirical materials referring to various countries. The authors develop such a model (based on idea of memory politics understood as a kind of social practice), identify major areas of research and specify source materials suitable for them. In the course of their argument they explain why it could become a basis of an approach suitable for the study of East-Central European regional history on transnational level. In this context the authors discuss the great synthesizing potential for writing modern history inherent in the study of practices related to the creation, modification and preservation of historical memory.
Compartmentalized Minds: the Communist Security Services’ Understanding of the Western Espionage Threat to the Soviet Bloc in Comparative Perspective

This proposed paper demonstrates that Marxism-Leninism required of Communist security officials that they compartmentalize their understandings of the subversive threat posed by the Western intelligence services. They displayed a greater tendency to compartmentalize these understandings than characterized the thinking about Communist espionage of Western security officials. This tendency to compartmentalize existed across the Soviet Bloc. This argument rests on two comparative case studies: the East German Stasi (Ministerium für Staatssicherheit: Ministry of State Security) and the Soviet KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopastnosti: Committee of State Security).

The dominant view among historians of the Communist regimes of the Soviet Bloc and their security services is that they believed in a paranoid Marxist-Leninist conspiracy theory according to which the Western states (“imperialism”) were engaged in constant subversive attacks on the Communist Bloc (“Socialism”). Western spy networks in the Bloc were regarded as large and very aggressive and threatening. This view greatly exaggerated the extent and dangerousness of Western espionage, which the security services largely succeeded in defeating. It was used to justify extensive surveillance and control of the peoples of the Bloc.

This paper qualifies this view. It makes use of records on the Cold War counter-intelligence operations of the Stasi and the KGB. The counter-intelligence divisions of the two services believed in their regimes’ severely distorted view of Western espionage. However, they were able to investigate cases of Western espionage rationally and skilfully. On the basis of these investigations, they were able to reach more moderate conclusions about Western espionage. They knew that its extent was far smaller than it was officially portrayed as being.

The Communist security officials’ ability to hold two conflicting views of Western espionage is a manifestation of the common psychological tendency among all human beings to “compartmentalize” conflicting aspects of their thinking and so prevent the conflict between different ideas from becoming manifest and causing the distressing mental state of cognitive dissonance. “Compartmentalization” was
not a psychological tendency which was confined to Communists in the Soviet Bloc; it is a universal human tendency and manifested itself in the democratic world as well. However, the distortion of political and social reality produced by Marxism-Leninism meant that “compartmentalization” became more extreme among those who, like Communist security officials, had to believe in their regimes’ official ideology and yet also had to deal with day-to-day problems which were very different in character from the way they were officially presented.

The first case study is that of the Stasi’s counter-intelligence service and, chiefly, one important part of it, Line IX. Line IX was the Stasi's trials division. It was a key department of the Stasi. Its job of preparing political trials was a crucial one; the Line was a central part of the Communist regime’s repressive apparatus. Its officers received extensive training in Marxism-Leninism.

The Line had the job of interrogating those suspected of political crimes, including arrested spies, and preparing their trials. Between 1955 and 1989 it reported regularly on the cases of arrested spies to the German Democratic Republic (GDR)’s Minister of State Security and the KGB. These reports demonstrate the rationality and skill of the Stasi’s counter-intelligence service. The Line's officers for decades reached conclusions in their investigative work which were inconsistent with the official Marxist-Leninist view of Western espionage. Their investigations into cases of Western espionage were careful and displayed much forensic skill. The Line made great efforts to obtain satisfactory evidence of espionage. The conclusions the officers reached in their investigations reflected a much more moderate and realistic view of Western espionage than was officially proclaimed, though they never made the contradiction explicit. Over thirty-four years they actually found a relatively small number of people to be spies of Western secret services. The Line's reports teach historians that it is essential to distinguish between the enemies the Stasi believed to exist and those it knew to exist. Although ideological bias distorted the Line's view of its enemy, it did not do so enough to impair its ability to do the job of counter-intelligence well. The Stasi’s principal counter-intelligence division, Line II, demonstrated the same rationality. The Stasi’s counter-intelligence service did its job well enough to defeat the Western espionage threat to the GDR.

The second case study is that of the KGB and its forerunners, the NKGB and MGB, from the 1940s to the 1980s. They were under heavy pressure from the Soviet Communist Party and, while he lived, from the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin himself, to present Western espionage as a severe subversive threat to the USSR and Western spy networks on Soviet territory as large and active. Yet both the foreign and counter-intelligence services consistently reached conclusions which were more moderate and reasonable than these. This did not undermine their faith in Marxism-Leninism. Like the Stasi in the GDR, they were able to do their job well enough to defeat the Western espionage threat to the Soviet Union. Compartmentalization turned out to be not only a psychological tendency but also an essential professional skill.
By the mid-1950s the political leaders of the Eastern Bloc became increasingly concerned with improving the production efficiency of heavy industrial work. In Romanian steel sector, for instance, the production price of various components was double than their market value. Labor inefficiency was a consequence of employees’ previous experiences, subjective reading of the state-led politics, informal networking and personal interests and expectations. Authorities re-evaluated the production norms and diminished substantially workers’ incomes. To compensate such financial loss, the state initiated a sophisticated rhetorical strategy consisting of educational programs, technological propaganda and building housing facilities, which aimed to ease the workers’ integration into the new socialist labor system.

This paper will investigate how the new system of labor management impacted upon the workers’ daily lives by looking at how the authorities tied the industrial productivity with workers’ proficiency in technical propaganda; the state aimed to replace a number of traditional related practices like religion believes and popular manifestations with laic practices. Scientific atheist propaganda and technological education conducted within the steel production lines built on the East-West dichotomy rhetoric; it claimed that the Western approach to technical progress determined the instauration of anarchy, while the socialist technologization would lead towards the modernization – that is rationalization, of the population’s daily lives. However, this paper will argue that this strategy effected into consistent Western-related developments like articulating sociological methods of social research or increasing the consumption appetite of the urban industrial workers. Furthermore, the state-led mechanism of industrial labor management implemented by the mid-1950s generated a shift in the hierarchy of needs of the social actors, which would prove beneficial for the political power during the 1960s when the Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej regime built upon the capital of legitimacy granted by industrial workers to carryover its autonomist policy in relation to the other countries of the socialist bloc.

In the 1950s and 1960s a significant economic transformation occurred in the Soviet bloc. While the foundations of the command economy remained untouched, the standard of living increased substantially. Poor societies with sometimes live-threatening low levels of subsistence as during the Soviet famine in 1946–1947 could establish modest social guarantees and a kind of security while attempting to create a consumer society. This was the socialist mirror of the post-war economic miracles in the Western world during the so-called Golden Age of Capitalism. This post-war economic growth and increase in well-being was a transnational phenomenon all around the Soviet bloc. The question remains how its outlook was on a micro-level.

The Estonian SSR offers the great opportunity to analyze these developments in detail since it is the only Soviet republic with a sound estimate of GDP based on quantitative output data having been compiled by Martin Klesment and the details of household budget surveys from this period are also available. All three Baltic republics followed essentially a similar path. In this case the “Golden Age of Socialism” turned out to be limited. Only by the late-1950s did the GDP-level reach the pre-war level of a then deeply agrarian society, while the standard of living recovered only approximately five years later. Estonia and the entire Soviet Union followed global trends, but on a much lower level of quantity and quality. Real mass consumption became available even in the richest former union republics only after the downfall of socialism. Nevertheless, for contemporaries the development of the 1950s and 1960s was still very impressive compared with the extreme austerity of the 1940s.
A Transnational Movement Breaking Down the Blocs?
The Alliance between the Western Peace Movement and the Polish Opposition in the 1980s

“The turbulent development of the peace movement was not incidentally accompanied by a wave of democratization in Poland and a broad movement in the churches in the GDR against the militarization of the own society. Forces had risen, in East and West, which would put the ossified thinking in bloc systems to the test” - Mient Jan Faber, secretary of the Dutch Interchurch Peace Council in 1981 (Mient Jan Faber, Brief van het IKV-secretariaat aan alle IKV-kernen over Polen kort na 13 december 1981 [in:] Mient Jan Faber, ed., Zes jaar IKV campagne, Amersfoort, De Horstink, 1983, pp.133-134).

In the 1980s both East and Western Europe experienced extreme levels of mass mobilization. In Poland in 1980-1981 the first Eastern European independent trade union Solidarność collected 10 million supporters. At the same time the peace movement in Western Europe gained momentum through the NATO-Double track decision. Hundreds of thousands protested the deployment of new nuclear weapons on the streets in Amsterdam, Bonn and other European cities. These masses developed separately from each other, but of course perceived each other. In Poland attention was initially most focused on reaching national objectives. The peace issue around which Western organizations rallied was discredited by the propaganda of the regime and therefore mistrusted. On the Western side peace activists looked with a mixture of fascination and anxiety towards what was happening in Poland. On the one hand Solidarność carried the promise that something could change in Eastern Europe as well, which might favorably influence the East-West conflict. On the other hand the catholic and nationalistic currents in parts of Solidarność caused misunderstanding, just as the fact that socialism was not the preferred system anymore for many of these activists. Above all Solidarność could destabilize Europe and maybe thereby risk the world war that the peace activists so much tried to prevent.

A part of the Western peace movement tried to overcome these feeling of anxiety, because they were convinced that preventing the deployment in Western Europe was not enough: they strived for a nuclear-free Europe from ‘Poland to Portugal’. These ideals were voiced in an appeal issued by the prominent British peace activist E.P. Thompson and others in 1980. It called for loyalty not to East or West but to
each other. These ideas appealed to the prominent Dutch peace organization IKV (Interchurch Peace Council) which became one of the leading peace organizations in Western Europe. It were convinced that the arms race between East and West could only be broken with pressure from below and looked hopefully at Solidarność as a possible ally in that struggle. Needless to say, it had a long way to go to convince Eastern European activists of that cause.

In my paper I would like to focus on the transnational exchange of ideas on activism and the East West conflict across the Iron Curtain. How did the idea of a natural partnership between movements from below in East and West develop in several organizations such as the IKV and the West German Greens? I will show how in the years 1980-1985 the attempts from both the Eastern and Western side to start a transnational dialogue was ridden by misunderstandings on both sides and failed to become a real transnational cooperation. Exchanges of idea took place but mainly centered on what both sides did not agree on. The main cause for misunderstanding was a strongly divergent perception of the East West Conflict, as shown in the different prioritization of peace and human rights on both sides of the iron curtain and the different assessment of the systems in East and West.

The character of the East-West dialogue from below changed after 1985 with the emergence of Wolność i Pokój movement in Poland and the end of the anti-deployment struggle in the Netherlands. This young oppositional organization showed more openness towards the Western peace movement and thereby managed to start a real exchange of views which not only resulted in the realization that different opinions existed but in understanding of the causes and actual convincing between the activists. At the same time the Dutch peace movement could start to direct its full attention towards what it called ‘détente from below’.

In my paper I would like to show how transnational exchange on a low level brought the realities of the East West conflict closer to the people in both blocs and created not only contact but in the end also better understanding for the way in which either of the systems influenced the ideas of the people living in it. Above all it created a transnational network of activists which with the help of emigrants in the West could mutually influence the way the other side perceived the East West conflict and maybe even the own system.

The transnational exchange between the Eastern European opposition and the Western European peace movement represents an important part of my dissertation ‘Peace or Freedom?’ (which I will finish this year) on the perception of the Polish events of the 1980s in left-wing movements in the Federal Republic and the Netherlands and the transnational dialogue that came into being between East and West.
Many scholars (e.g. Marx, Riesman, Sennett, Illouz) discussed the ways emotional lives of modern men and women are entangled with capitalism. They examined emotional discourse produced by market, including models of subjects and trajectories of socialization it offered. They provided explanations of how capitalism binds the strategies of rationalization of sentiments with their commodification, how it mixes the economical and emotional practices, and blurs the traditional distinction between emotionless public sphere and emotional private sphere. The analogous topic: “The entanglements between economic system of Eastern Block and emotional lives of its citizens”, did not receive much attention. This presentation focuses on how citizens of Polish Republic of People in 1960’s understood the entanglements between their emotional self-realization and economic, political or social context. I analyze the collection of works sent for the diary competition Mój chłopiec, moja dziewczyna (“My Boyfriend, My Girlfriend”) organized by weekly “Dookoła Świata” in 1966. These texts are treated as autopresentations in the form of biographical narratives on self-realization in which young Poles tell stories about their emotional experiences as parts of the process of becoming “people they want to be”, mature, self-contained, “normal”, and recognized by society. As a result the gathered texts disclose both the understanding of social norms concerning emotions in PRL and the practices of adapting them by its citizens to their own lives.
We know very little of the environmental history of East-Central Europe during the decades of state socialism. Much of the extensive literature that exists on that subject is often anecdotal, one-sided, and repeats the stereotypical mantra of “grey landscapes”.

In the 2000s works by Zsuzsa Gille and Petr Pavlínek reconsidered human-nature relationship in East-Central Europe during state-socialism. These accounts contested the prevailing Cold-War influenced image.

However, there has not been a comprehensive study carried out that viewed both the environmental accounts of East-Central-, and Western Europe critically, and would have pointed out that from the perspective of sustainability, both the state-socialist-, and the capitalist systems failed eventually. The difference between these two political systems during the 1950s-1980s was only the degree of their environmental failure.
Mass Gymnastics, Biopolitics and Romania’s Late Socialist International Presentation

My paper studies written and visual media representations of the body in late socialism in order to articulate insights into a biopolitical transnational history of East Central Europe. I focus on the Romanian Daciada mass exercise events, and trace how various aspects of the body are rendered apparent or disappear in the media representations of these rallies. My analysis throws light on the particularities of Romanian late socialist biopolitics and links its internal immunization strategies to the way in which the regime marketed the country on the international scene in the post Helsinki conference context. I am particularly interested in the turn from a pro-Western, more white collar and pro consumption socialism (of the 1970s), to one of austerity, cult of physical labor, nationalism and international autarchy.
Prevailing Romantic Elements of Hungarian Nationalism at the End of the Cold War – their Origin and Influence on Nationalism

Nationalism as a coherent and contingent idea emerged at the beginning of the 19th century under the inspiration of the romantic world view in Hungary. It is, however, supposed that numerous concepts and elements, which romantic nationalism developed, survived the founding period of the “reform era” and occurred later at crucial moments of national history. In my contribution I examine one of these formative periods, the period of system changing, in order to find out how the romantic tenets of Hungarian nationalism emerged again and in what ways they have been responsible for the prevailing concept of the nation, the national policy, and the question of national minorities and of national historiography since 1989/90.

The often-used metaphor of “fridge-effect” of communism regarding nationalism reveals only a half-truth in the Hungarian case: nationalism could not follow where it left forty years before, because there was also a latent existence of nationalism during these decades. It evolved an anti-globalist character, reacting to nowadays global challenges by using romantic, but because of their latent character, sometimes distorted tenets of nationalism in an increasing manner. Some scientists claim that even the demise of state socialist experiment was a part of globalization, which, as a driving force, played an immeasurable role in causing the “second world’s” historical deadlock. Accordingly, the political and economic transformation since 1989, the transition to democracy, is but an episode in the worldwide process of globalization. International power relations, economic constraints induced the rapidity of the democratic change, which in many cases left only a couple of years of re-captured national independence between Soviet satellite status and European integration. East Central European nations were certainly not unprepared for the collapse of Soviet world, in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary the national causes were unforgettably present in the memories of 1956 and 1968, but the rapidity of the changes and the time-consuming transition period provoked the re-birth of such a nationalism, which gained a new strength from the feeling of national defenselessness against international tendencies. Moreover, the ambiguous legacy of state socialist era did not let a clear-cut picture to be drawn: past was not sufficiently revised either in academic historiography, or in the social consciousness.
Russian and Ukrainian Struggle of “Historical Narratives”: Post-Imperial versus Post-Colonial Perspectives

The idea of applying a postcolonial perspective to the countries of Eastern Europe may seem controversial. Of course, we are not dealing with classical colonies in this case. But analysis of post-imperial and post-colonial elements in public discourses from the postcolonial perspective can provide us useful analytical framework to discuss the Soviet imperial legacy and historical narratives in such post-Soviet states as Ukraine.

In the post-Communist world, politics of history becomes a crucial battle field for competing narratives of the past and for political competition. The countries of former Soviet Union still have contradiction relations to the past and their approaches to it are constantly changing. As a result, history is becoming an instrument for achieving political goals and strongly influences foreign policy.

Important part of Russian foreign policy and public diplomacy towards Ukraine is concerned with affecting very specific discursive elements, for instance by trying to manipulate the narratives and interpretation of IIWW in one ideologically “proper” way. Russia also uses its compatriots’ policy and historical narratives as a way of exerting influence on neighboring countries. The Soviet Union’s victory in WWII became a central tenet of Russian national identity building process especially under rules of Putin. The “defense” of the national past is seen as the foundation of national cohesion.
The archives of the European Union provide an impressive amount of documents about the then European Community-Yugoslav relations in the period 1968–1992. Starting with 1980, when many debates hosted by the European Parliament tended to be dominated by an ever-increasing pessimism about Yugoslavia after Tito, to 1992, when the European Union actually recognized the collapse of the Yugoslav federation, this paper focuses on primary sources discussing primarily political aspects of the official relations between the two parties. In the end, the European Union’s decision to recognize Slovenia and Croatia as independent states in January 1992 was a political decision.

Aware of the complexity surrounding the concept of memory and how primary sources can affect our memory, the paper starts by outlining various guiding principles one needs to keep in mind when approaching and selecting documents. As already suggested in the literature, “[t]he archival record doesn’t just happen; it is created by individuals and organizations, and used, in turn, to support their values and missions, all of which comprises a process that is certainly not politically and culturally neutral … Archival work is critical in shaping history” (E. Kaplan, We Are What We Collect, We Collect What We Are: Archives and the Construction of Identity, “The American Archivist”, vol. 63, no. 1, 2000, p. 147). The documents are even more powerful if we think of the generally accepted idea that history should help us to understand the present and hopefully prepare us for future scenarios. For example, government archives (including the archives of the European Union), by gathering records that can be used as evidence, “can force leaders and institutions to be accountable for their actions” (P. B. Hirtle, Archival Authenticity in a Digital Age [in:] Council on Library and Information Resources (ed), Authenticity in a Digital Environment, Washington, DC 2000, available at http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/pub92/contents.html/hirtle.html, p 1). Alongside this understanding, archives are expected to be impartial contributors and this is another reason why this volume is likely to be an important source for future analyses and contributions to the field.

Accordingly, the paper shows that the official debates and documents about the European Community-Yugoslav relations in the period 1980–1992 pointed out that the relationship between them was rather unstable, often characterized by harsh European Community criticism and skepticism with regard to the survival of the Yugoslav state.

In most cases conflicts in Yugoslav society and politics are explained through national antagonisms in federal level or clash between party conservatives and liberals in the level of republics. According to Dennison Rusinov, the student movement at the end of 1960s and at the beginning of 1970s was perhaps the first important political manifestation in the fifty years of Yugoslavia’s existence in which ethnicity played no role at all. This characterization is probably particularly accurate for student movement in Slovenia, which could also be scarcely fitted into the context of struggle between party liberals and hardliners in that period. Because its goal was not to introduce Western liberal democracy or anti-Yugoslavism, which prevailed among Croatian students, it drew very little attention in post-1991 Slovenian historiography, while foreign researchers (Boris Kanzleiter, Nick Miller, Radmila Radić) are mainly focused on the situation in Yugoslav capital Belgrade. One-sided characterizations of student’s criticism as grist to dogmatists’ mill on one hand or idealistic narratives by former protagonists on the other hand proved to be too narrow to analyze phenomena of “Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing” in the context of Yugoslav self-management socialism.

Having grown up in the Yugoslav version of socialism, the first generation of young intellectuals were faced with ascent of new bureaucratic and technocratic elites, the emergence of the middle class, unemployment, outflow of work force into Western countries and other forms of social stratification, which they perceived unacceptable to the socialist order. The seeming restoration of class principles in Yugoslav politics after Tito’s removal of liberals from the helm of republic’s governments in Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia in 1971/1972 did not convinced highly politicized student activists that party’s empty statements have bridged the gap between the political establishment and the working class rather reintroduced authoritative methods, which were soon employed also against student activists and their professors.

I will discuss in my paper how New Left theoretical concepts developed to analyze capitalist Western societies were applied by Slovene students to their criticism of Yugoslav self-management socialism. In this sense I will shed light on the question what was the influence of widely renowned journal “Praxis” and famous summer school at the Croatian island of Korčula, which attracted speakers such as H. Mar-
cuse, E. Fromm, L. Kołakowski, E. Mandel, E. Bloch, H. Lefebvre, L. Goldmann and others. I will discuss also the question in which way Maoist rhetoric and Trotskyist strategies of organization, which reached Slovenia via France were employed as organizational tactics in order to bypass the rigid state socialist structure. Special emphasis will be given to the polemics about democratization of public sphere, which was not understood from the point of view of liberal democracy, but in terms of pre-war Marxists (R. Luxemburg, G. Lukács, A. Gramsci).

By denouncing alienation, lack of democracy and party monopoly by using the language of the New Left, students were taking similar steps as official Yugoslav policy did after the split with Cominform in 1948, only that criticism in this case was not against Soviet Stalinism, but Yugoslav Titoism. Facing the challenge for party hegemony political decision-makers and their authorized representatives initiated campaign against “ultra-left demagogy”. Although physical violence was excluded, response of party establishment revealed the limits of public criticism and President Tito's anti-intellectualism, causing disillusion about Yugoslav experiment, which rose hopes among many Western left-oriented intellectuals in the 1960s. Although prospects to reform state socialism were not buried in such a dramatic way as happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and neo-Marxism persisted among leftist intellectuals well into the 1980s, questions concerning civil society gradually prevailed since then in Slovenian alternative discourse.
Globalizing the History of Human Rights in the Soviet Bloc

The history of human rights in the Soviet Bloc is usually told as the West imposing a set of ideas and values on the recalcitrant East. While in the West, human rights were seen as the antithesis of state-socialist rule, in the Soviet Bloc, political and intellectual elites saw human rights as an idea that actually highlighted the failings of capitalism and formed an essential aspect of communist rule. Over the course of the Cold War, the Soviet Bloc was an active player in global human rights politics and not just the subject of Western pressure. From the 1940-70s, the idea of human rights was incorporated into ideology, rhetoric and propaganda across the Eastern Bloc. Although state socialist human rights emerged initially in response to criticism from the West, it also drew on the discourses of anti-colonial activists and post-colonial states that emphasized anti-imperialism, anti-racism and freedom from Western interventionism. As dissident human rights activists began to campaign for reforms, their political rhetoric was drawn not just from the West, but also from official state discourses of rights as well as the experiences of campaigning against human rights abuses in the third world, from the Chilean Junta to Apartheid South Africa. From the other side, exiles from the Third World who resided in the Soviet Bloc became more open to liberal democratic human rights claims in reaction to their disappointments from experiencing real existing socialism. In 1989, when the Eastern Bloc began to collapse, the human rights ideas advocated by dissidents and reform communists were interconnected with a globally evolving human rights politics.
Pronatalism in the GDR and in the ČSSR

The paper compares pronatal policies in the GDR and in the ČSSR (with a focus on the 1970s and 1980s). It examines similarities and differences of why and how these policies were developed and shaped. Furthermore, it analyzes to what extent the individual policies (marriage loans, maternity leave, child care, reforms of abortion regulations) were able to meet the objective to stabilize or even increase birth rates. It turns out that there were some differences, why and how pronatal policies were established and which emphases they had (e.g. GDR: child care, ČSSR: maternity leave). However, the “success” of pronatalism was similarly low in both countries: The increase of birth rates was forcefully pursued but did not become reality (at least on a medium and long term level). This failure of pronatal policies can be ascribed to a dilemma which was relevant in both countries. Both countries were at the same time modern industrialized societies, which were facing decreasing birth rates, and socialist industrialized societies, which followed an extensive economic strategy, which was dependent on (at least) stable birth rates. However, by their pronatal policies the socialist regimes did not manage to stabilize or increase birth rates because of two reasons: 1) The pronatal policies were not suitable to stop the ongoing modernization of values and behaviors concerning family formation and number of children. 2) The pronatal policies rather helped to consolidate traditional gender arrangements and altogether were not able to reduce the multiple burden Czechoslovak and East German women had to carry being mother, housewife and employee at the same time (and because of this multiple burden most of them did not want to have more than one or two children).

This paper discusses socialist consumerism that emerged in Bulgaria in the late 1950s from the perspective of the contradictory institutional agendas that stimulated its development as an effect of de-Stalinization. On the level of party and state decrees, the advancement of mass consumption attempted to prove the regime’s responsiveness to workers’ needs and the moral as well as economical supremacy of socialism. On this plane, the socialist consumer was envisaged in proletarian terms since recipients of the improved trade and promised prosperity were invariably the “people of labor.” On the level of popular propaganda – in an agitprop genre of instructive advertisement – the party imagery was supplemented by a notion of the consumer as an exemplary socialist citizen. Steering consumer choices through soft techniques of social discipline, popular magazines and other agitprop publications emphasized the educational impact of shopping in cultivating the cultural values constitutive of the “New Man” of socialism. Whereas the above two images of the consumer were mutually reinforcing, in the operational logic of high-ranking commercial enterprises – the flagships of socialist trade – they were eclipsed by the figure of the customer stripped of any ideological qualifications. Concerned with their economic performance, these state-run enterprises employed marketing strategies with a discernible client-oriented approach. The outcome of meshing political propaganda, social engineering and economic objectives gave birth to a hybrid notion of socialist consumers: enticed to increase their consumption, yet paternalistically navigated in their consumer choices; agitated with promises of social equality and mass prosperity, yet lured to lifestyle individualization.

The research to be presented is based on three sets of primary sources: party programs and governmental decrees; publications on trade improvements and cultured shopping practices in popular magazines; archival documents of the Central Department Store (stenographic records of board meetings; reports of store managers; correspondence between the Board of Directors and the Ministry of Domestic Commerce).
The Second World War in Belarus: a Fundamental Event for National Building

In the former USSR interpretation of the past was manipulated to construct a narrative of national identity which legitimized the Soviet social political system. During the Soviet period, the history of Belarus, for example, did not exist as a separate academic discipline and was replaced by the history of the USSR, in which the Second World War was articulated as the defining moment. A fundamental and sacred character was attributed to this event, resulting in a discourse of history and national identity based entirely on the destructive and violent reference of war. The violence of the war was related to its heroic character.

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union the majority of post-Soviet countries have tended to articulate historical consciousness in opposition to Soviet and Russian interpretations of the past, seeking for European roots in their histories. The role of WWII for Belarus was re-written, the criminal and tragically aspects were underlined. In nationalist political and historical discourse, the WWII is not a fundamental event. During the Perestroika, the discourse was a discourse of victims and not of heroes.

Of all the former republics of the USSR, Belarus, often called the ‘Soviet museum’, is a particular case in terms of its relationship to Soviet tradition and Soviet historical narrative. From the mid-1990s, Belarus returned to the Soviet legacy and turned away from a nationalistic interpretation of history. History was one again re-written. The present official conception of Belarusian national history is based on a Soviet (pro-Russian) interpretation. Soviet historical dogma, and in particular the cornerstone of the Soviet legacy - the glorification of the Second World War - has marginalized other historical interpretations. Thus ideas of Belarusian national identity are once again based exclusively on the negative, violent and destructive reference of war. The teaching of history where it relates to national identity should have an open, peaceful, pluralistic and discursive basis and should transcend controversial issues like wars and conflicts. Current definitions of Belarusian identity cannot be sustainable and will always be weak and susceptible to political manipulation because they are based on destructive historical references.
Organizers:

Adam Mickiewicz University, Department of Philosophy,
Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of History
Institute of National Remembrance, Poznań Branch
Polish Philosophical Society, Poznań Branch