

SCHOLARSHIP AND POWER: “RESEARCH OF THE UKRAINIAN ETHNIC GROUP” – AN ACADEMIC PROJECT IN SLOVAKIA UNDER THE COMMUNIST REGIME

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This paper considers the relations between political power and scholarly activity during the period of the communist regime in Slovakia, then part of Czechoslovakia. Taking the example of a research project on the Ukrainian minority, undertaken by the Slovak Academy of Sciences during the years 1954–70, the paper traces the relationships between scholars and politicians and among academic institutions in the Czech lands and Slovakia, and the interventions by political power in academic work. The author focuses on the following questions: how did the project originate, and what were its aims and results? In what political, economic and social context did scholars undertake the project? How did the power relations between scholars and politicians develop and change in the course of the project? Why did political power intervene in research of the Ukrainian ethnic group? The paper draws upon M. Foucault's views on the exercise of power, develops questions of the legitimacy of power (R. Barker), conceives scholarly work as an activity of a certain kind (P. Rabinow), and concentrates on the actors in power relationships, their strategies and motivations. Empirical data for the answer to research questions were acquired from archival documents about the project and from interviews with scholars who had participated in its work. The findings from analyses show what the specific possibilities and limits were for scholars functioning in the respective network of power relationships. They furthermore reveal a gamut of successful or unsuccessful strategies which scholars employed to bring about changes in the processes of the exercise of power.

Keywords: scholars; politicians; power relations; communist regime; Slovakia

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INTRODUCTION: CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN A COMMUNIST REGIME

This paper addresses the question of scholarly activity and power relationships in Slovakia, then part of Czechoslovakia, where a political regime of single party rule by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (hereafter KSČ) was imposed after 1948. In the period 1948–1989, Czechoslovakia was part of the socialist bloc in Eastern Europe, under the direct political, economic and ideological influence of the Soviet Union, declaring the principles of universal brotherhood and the aim of building communism – a society vision for a future based on common ownership with the absence of social class, money, and the state (Taborsky, 1961; Pipes, 2001: 108–111; Tismaneanu, 2012: 123–233).

I will consider one scholarly project, “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”, which was undertaken by the Ethnographic Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences (hereafter SAV) during the 1950s and ’60s. Ethnography in the formerly socialist countries of Eastern Europe was mostly defined as a science studying “the people” and their “popular culture”. In this understanding “there has never been an absolute dichotomy between home investigations and research on distant territories” (Sárkány, 2002: 562). However, the “home” people – that is the majority or minority ethnic groups in the “home” country – were often the privileged research objects and investigations outside the home country were practiced less frequently (Hann, 1994; Hann, Sárkány, Skalník, 2005; Mihailescu, Iliev, Naumović, 2008; Brunnbauer, Kraft, Schulze Wessel, 2011; Kockel, Nic Craith, Frykman, 2012). Slovak ethnographers in the communist period concentrated predominately on populations in Slovakia (Slovaks and ethnic minorities such as Hungarians, Roma, Rusyns, Ukrainians, etc.) and on Slovak minorities in other socialist countries such as Hungary, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria.

Using the example of a research project on the Ukrainian minority, I will trace how the actors in this undertaking entered into various power relationships. These did not merely involve the assertion of the dominance of politicians over scholars: there were also power relationships and arguments over competence between academic institutions and amidst academic communities. At the same time, this study is a contribution to the history of social sciences and humanities in Slovakia and their development in the context of an authoritarian political regime.

Scholars in the past (like those of the present) did not live in a vacuum. Their scholarly research, besides responding to the current state of enquiry in a given academic community, responded also to certain social and political processes in the societies in which they lived. I agree with Ludwig Fleck (1980) that scholarly knowledge is, to a large extent, a social phenomenon. It relies, on the one hand, upon the individual findings of scholars who examine definite objects. On the other hand, knowledge comes into being through the exchange of ideas in a concrete scholarly community, and hence it is in essence socially determined. Influence is exerted upon knowledge not only by the scholarly community but also by lay circles and by the entire community in which the scholars live (Fleck, 1980: 32–60). The history of scholarly knowledge thus becomes an interesting field of research for enquirers, who, besides studying the history of ideas, focus on scholarly work itself as a certain kind of practice (Rabinow, 1996), as well as on its actors and their strategies and motivations. Taking Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory (2005) as a point of departure, I concentrate my attention principally on the actors in the case under review, namely the realisation of the scholarly project

“Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”. I will elucidate the process of the project’s realisation in the light of interventions by political institutions in the scholars’ research work, or, in other words, in the light of interference with academic freedom. This process will be traced from the perspective of the actors, who were staff members of the SAV Ethnographic Institute and other researchers involved in the project, members of the SAV Presidium as representatives of the central academic institution in Slovakia, and politicians/members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia (hereafter KSS).¹ I will describe specific actions and reactions by politicians and scholars, as well as their opinions and justifications of their actions, insofar as the data I have acquired make this possible.

At the same time, the chosen example of “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” provides an opportunity to describe relations between scholarly institutions in Czechoslovakia. These involve the attempted domination of one institution over another, conflicts over prerogatives, and changes in power relations. In concrete terms, this concerns relationships between Charles University, the University of Russian Language and Literature, and the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (all based in Prague) on the Czech side, and the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Comenius University (both in Bratislava) and the Pavel Jozef Šafárik University (in Košice and Prešov) on the Slovak side.

Last but not least, the case under examination will illuminate everyday practices in scholarly work within that specific society and during that specific time.

I shall understand the exercise of power as a process occurring on various levels of society and integrated in everyday life. I accept Foucault’s view that the exercise of power “functions [...] as a network of relationships which proceeds not only from the top down, but to a certain extent also from the bottom up and sideways” (Foucault, 2004: 179). Power, thus conceived, is not merely a form of repression which proceeds in one direction only. It is a network, and it functions precisely because the exercise of power and its effects on subjects support one another. I further define power as the direction and demarcation of the field of possible operation. In other words, the actors who enter into power relationships establish the field and its limits within which the directed subjects can move.

The exercise of power is founded on legitimacy, by which I understand the entitlement of one subject to have dominance over another subject, with both subjects accepting this entitlement. The legitimacy of power may proceed from an inscribed juridical order, from written laws, statutes and decrees; equally, it may proceed from unwritten rules and customs (Barker, 2001: 19–25). In both these aspects – written rules, and those which are unwritten but familiar to the people – the legitimacy of power will be a key phenomenon, which I will trace in the activity of scholars under the conditions of communist power.

In my paper I proceed from the assumption that all of the actors whom I will describe and follow were entangled in networks of power relationships. In other words, scholars

1 Within the framework of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) in the period 1948–1989 there existed a Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS), whose prerogatives were subordinated to the Central Committee of the KSČ. Relations between the KSČ and KSS, and the spheres of political competence of both these bodies underwent a number of changes during the period of Communist power in Czechoslovakia, especially in connection with Slovak efforts to establish greater national and political independence (Lipták, 2000: 278 ff.)

as well as politicians were actors in the process being studied, and the relations between them evolved and changed over time. Likewise, I assume that in the instance studied, “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”, the process of the exercise of power proceeded in various directions in the network, not only hierarchically from the top down. On the basis of the aforesaid assumptions, I will pose questions which I have assigned to three groups:

1. The project:

How did the project “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” come into being?

What were the planned goals and expected findings of the project? In what social, political, and economic context was the project generated and undertaken? What were the final results of the project?

2. Political power and scholars:

How did political power interfere in scholarly work, in academic freedom? Why did interventions occur in the scholarly work of the project “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”? How did power relationships develop between the actors in this process? What influence did political interventions have on the realisation of the project, and results?

3. Power relationships among academic communities and between academic institutions:

What kind of power relationships existed between research institutions in the Czech lands and Slovakia? How did institutions assert their rights and areas of competence, and what influence did this have on the project “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”?

My study is based on data which I acquired by archival research in the years 2014–2016 in the SAV Central Archive and the Archive of the SAV Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology, which is the continuator of the SAV Ethnographic Institute. I also draw on the findings of two previous research projects focused on the history of ethnography in Slovakia, realised in 2008–2010 and 2011–2013 under my supervision. The project team gathered seven wide-ranging structured interviews with former staff members of the SAV Ethnographic Institute who had worked at the Institute during the period of the communist regime, along with other research data relevant to the history of ethnography in Slovakia (Kiliánová, 2008; Zajonc, 2010).

In the first section of the paper I will describe the conditions in which academic research in Czechoslovakia began to function after the assumption of power by the communists and the change of political regime in 1948. I will address in greater detail the institutional frameworks for scholarly research, the areas of competence of institutions, and the power relationships in academic communities. After that, I will offer readers a concise overview of the social, political and economic contexts in which the project “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” in Slovakia began and ended. The core of my paper will be a description of the given case and an analysis of empirical data, based on the aforementioned assumptions and research questions. My aim will be to elucidate how power relationships proceeded between scholars and political power and also within the sphere of scholarship, between scholars from various institutions. I want to show the influence and effect which the exercise of power had on scholarly activity and its findings in a specific society, in a specific empirical reality.

PLANNING OF SCHOLARSHIP: THE ORGANISATION OF ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AFTER 1948

The communist regime in Czechoslovakia, as in other East European countries at that time, presented itself as a social system which was based on scientific knowledge. Right from the inception of the planned economy in the early 1950s, the findings of scholarly research projects, especially in the technical and natural sciences, were expected to help in advancing economic growth and the living standards of the population. Apart from that, the new regime aimed at centrally directing academic research within the state (Hudek, 2014: 89–92). Hence, a law was passed in October 1952 establishing the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (ČSAV) as the supreme scholarly authority with its headquarters in Prague, which was expected to develop and steer research in all scholarly disciplines. Various scholarly institutes which had been established previously were incorporated into the new institution. Nine months later, in June 1953, the creation of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, linked to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, was approved by law (Hudek, 2014: 89–92; Klačka, 2014: 92–99). The Slovak Academy of Sciences took over the workplaces of the former Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts, created in 1942, during World War II and during the existence of the Slovak state at the time (1939–1945). The Ethnographic Institute was established in 1946, still under the auspices of the Slovak Academy of Arts and Sciences, and after various difficulties² became subsumed into the newly-opened Slovak Academy of Sciences in 1953.

The Slovak Academy of Sciences, with its headquarters in Bratislava, became the highest-ranking academic institution in Slovakia. Thematically and methodologically it gave direction to academic research, attending also to the ideological aspect of scholarship, and promoted the advanced education of its personnel. According to the law of 1953, the SAV had *de iure* a relatively autonomous structure. The Academy's highest organ was the General Assembly of its members, which determined the orientation of research and the internal structure of the institution, approved reports on activities, and chose the president and members of the SAV Presidium. The choice of president and members of the Presidium had to be approved subsequently by the Commissariat, to which the Academy was subject.³ *De facto*, however, the ruling communist regime continuously supervised scholarly activity via its party organs; kept track of the scholarly plans of the SAV and ČSAV, the progress of the work, and its findings; and conducted repeated political investigations of the staff members (Hudek, 2014: 92), as I will describe in more detail later on.

The status of the SAV in contrast to the ČSAV was not defined with precision in the 1952

2 In 1951, the Ethnographic Institute was abolished as an independent centre because, according to a report by the Slovak Academy of Sciences and Arts, it had serious ideological deficiencies. Almost half of the staff members were dismissed, and the remaining section was assigned to the Historical Institute as its ethnographic section. From 1952, the staff members of the ethnographic section attempted to regain their independent centre, which in fact became possible with the emergence of a new structure in the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In 1953 the centre was made autonomous and titled the Ethnographic Cabinet; from 1955, it recovered its old name of the Ethnographic Institute (Zajonc, 2016: 29–31; Kiliánová, 2016: 55–60).

3 The Commissariat of the Slovak National Council came into being during the Slovak National Uprising of 1944. After World War II, it was the organ of legal and executive power on the territory of Slovakia, subordinate to the Czechoslovak government in Prague. This was an asymmetric model for the exercise of government power, because no such organ existed in the Czech lands. The Commissariat was dissolved in 1960 after the adoption of the new Czechoslovak constitution.

and 1953 laws, but the analysis of various official documents has shown that in the beginning the relationship between these institutions was actually one of equals. However, this equivalent standing was gradually changed by the updating of the laws in 1957 and 1958, and from 1963 the SAV was fully subordinated to the ČSAV. This meant that the SAV's budget, academic research plans, staff, editorial policy, and international collaborations were subject to approval by the ČSAV Presidium (Hudek, Klačka, 2014a: 119–124). As the political liberalisation of the country proceeded in the course of the 1960s, the SAV attempted to recover, as far as possible, its prerogatives and independence “from Prague”, and in 1967 it achieved this to a certain extent (Hudek, Klačka, 2014b: 140–142).

From their inception, each of the Academies in Prague and Bratislava, both in their entirety and for their individual institutes, created yearly and multi-year – sometimes even 20-year – plans of academic activity. A unified plan for academic research was introduced from 1960 (Hudek, Klačka, 2014a, 120), which was linked with the third five-year plan for the development of the national economy in Czechoslovakia (1961–1965). In subsequent years there was a state plan for fundamental research directed from a single centre, which was realised at five-year intervals up to the fall of the communist regime in 1989.

THE PROJECT “RESEARCH OF THE UKRAINIAN ETHNIC GROUP” IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS

Realisation of the project “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” from 1954 to 1970 was played out in a changing political climate in Czechoslovakia. The turn of the 1950s ushered in a period characterized by the systematic imposition of the power of the Communist Party at all levels of society and in all social fields, its influence exerted on the working and private lives of all inhabitants of the country.⁴ Czechoslovak politicians, assisted by Soviet advisors, created an authoritarian regime, a communist dictatorship in which political, economic, and ideological power was concentrated in the hands of a small group of people – representatives of the state bureaucracy and above all, of the party bureaucracy (Buben, Pullman, Spurný, Růžicka, 2014). The state was administered directly from a single centre. Although formally a division of powers existed, the exercise of power was to a great extent in the hands of the supreme representatives of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.⁵ After the deaths of Joseph V. Stalin, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (5. 3. 1953), and of Klement

4 After 1948, the nationalisation of private productive enterprises (e.g. factories) was in progress, with confiscation of large agricultural and other properties (e.g. houses). From the early 1950s, the ruling power compelled small and medium sized farmers to work cooperatively in collective farms modelled on the Soviet kolkhoz. The collectivisation of agriculture proceeded slowly over decades, promoted by brutal methods applied to farmers. Simultaneously, the planned economy began, with the state asserting an economic monopoly. State and party institutions interfused and grew symbiotically. The KSČ and the state also sought hegemony in the fields of education, ideology, culture, and spiritual life (with massive suppression of the influence of the churches on the population, persecution of priests and religious orders) and systematically destroyed civic society in the country. From the second half of the 1950s, the state's five-year plans directed, besides the economy, scholarly research, schooling, culture, and all other productive and non-productive spheres of society (Lipták, 2000: 278–291).

5 The question of state organs as apparent power and party organs as real power was addressed in detail by Hannah Arendt (1951), taking the example of the totalitarian state. See, in particular, her analysis of the case of Russia under the rule of J. V. Stalin.

Gottwald, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (14. 3. 1953), some measure of relaxation occurred in Czechoslovakia. However, the popular uprising in Hungary against the Communist Party in 1956 made the ruling power in Czechoslovakia nervous and fearful. Hence, after the suppression of the Hungarian rebellion, a new wave of political repression of the population began in Czechoslovakia, with political purges and renewed efforts by the communists to achieve the maximum centralisation of power. Only from the early 1960s was there a gradual relaxation of political control in society. These liberalising processes in Czechoslovakia culminated in the so-called Prague Spring and its violent suppression in August 1968 through the intervention of the armies of the Warsaw Pact. Subsequently a so-called “normalisation” prevailed, meaning once again the reinforcement of the authoritarian communist regime (Lipták, 2000: 286–291).

The SAV Ethnographic Institute’s project entitled “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”, conducted from 1954 to 1970, focused on inhabitants of north-eastern Slovakia who in different historical periods had called themselves variously Rusyns, Rusnaks, Ukrainians, Russians, Uhro-russians, or Carpatho-russians. In the next section of the text I will describe this ethnic group designated, for simplicity’s sake, as Rusyns. North-eastern Slovakia had been settled by this ethnic group from the 11th–12th century (Magocsi, 1993; Mušinka, Mušinka, 2011). Rusyns lived for centuries on the territory called Carpathian Rus’ (also Carpatho-Ruthenia, Carpatho-Russia, Carpatho-Ukraine), a land lying within the current borders of south-eastern Poland, north-eastern Slovakia, western Ukraine, and north-central Romania. The whole group mostly used the traditional ethnonym “Rusnak” as well as the regional names “Lemko”, “Boiko” and “Hutsul”. For many centuries the settlements in Carpathian Rus’ were ethnically heterogeneous; Rusyns lived together with Ukrainians, Germans, Magyars, Poles, Slovaks, Jews, Roma, and other groups. The land was subjected to Hungarian and Polish kingdoms and was for centuries one of the least developed regions in these kingdoms economically and socially (Magocsi, 2015: 1–15, 33–72; Magocsi, Pop, 2005). When the Ottomans defeated the Hungarian army at the Battle of Mohacs (1526) the Ottoman Empire annexed most of the Hungarian Kingdom. The north-western part of Hungary was included into the Habsburg monarchy. After the Ottomans were forced out from the Hungarian Kingdom in 1699 and after the first Partition of Poland by Prussia, Russia and Austria (1772), the whole of Carpathian Rus’ became a part of the Habsburg monarchy until 1918 (Kann, David, 1984). After the dissolution of Austria-Hungary in 1918, the Carpathian Rus’ was again divided among Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Romania. The first Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1939) included a large part of this land under the name Subcarpathian Rus, currently a part of the Ukrainian Republic, designated as the Carpathian Region or Transcarpathian Ukraine.

Processes of the regional population’s ethnic identification began from the 19th century under the Habsburg monarchy (Magocsi, 1978; Rusinko, 2003). During the first half of the 20th century, three orientations were formed among Rusyns in Czechoslovakia: predominately Rusyn or Russian; and to a much lesser degree Ukrainian (Gajdoš, Konečný, 2019: 23). Rusyns were originally members of the Orthodox Church, but from the 17th century many of them converted to the Greek-Catholic Church (Pekar, 1992; Magocsi, 2008). The Greek-Catholic Church played an important role in the Rusyn ethnic identification process.

In the first census of the population of Czechoslovakia in 1921, 102,313 residents in total identified themselves as Rusyns, Russians, or Ukrainians, comprising 0.8 % of the

population; of these, 88,970 were resident in today's Slovakia, amounting to 3 % of the population there (Gajdoš, Konečný, 1991: 4).

During the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1939) there was a network of primary schools on the territory of north-eastern Slovakia where instruction was carried out either in the Russian language, or alternatively in the so-called “jazyčie”, which was a language composed of Russian, Church Slavonic, and local dialects. After World War II ended in 1945 the teaching in these schools was done principally in Russian (Gajdoš, Konečný, 2019: 22–25).

In March 1945, hence before the World War ended, the Ukrainian National Council “Prjaševčina” was formed in Slovakia to promote the national and also economic, social, and cultural interests of Rusyns, Ukrainians, and Russians. The council primarily had a Russian and Ukrainian orientation and in the first months of its existence in 1945 it inclined towards the idea of attaching north-eastern Slovakia to the Soviet Union, as was done in Subcarpathian Rus.⁶ However, as early as April 1945, the Ukrainian National Council “Prjaševčina” abandoned this position and declared its loyalty to the renewed Czechoslovak Republic (Gajdoš, Konečný, 1991: 19–32). In 1952, the activity of the council as a self-determining organ of a national minority was brought to an end. From 1951, within the Communist Party framework, the Cultural Union of Ukrainian Working People in Czechoslovakia was formed; in 1954 it held its founding conference and became the representative of Ukrainians/Russians in Czechoslovakia (Danko, Szedláková, 1989). Simultaneously, based on a decision taken by the KSS on 28. 6. 1952,⁷ as from the school year 1953–54 only standard Ukrainian was proposed as the language of instruction in schools of the first and second levels.⁸ Residents could profess only Ukrainian or Russian nationality not the Rusyn one. The Greek-Catholic Church, one of the important actors in the identification process of Rusyns, was abolished in Czechoslovakia and the believers were forced to join the Orthodox Church.

As a result of changes in the Czechoslovak policy towards minorities and other circumstances, especially migration within Czechoslovakia (often from eastern Slovakia to the Czech lands) and assimilation into the majority population, the number of residents who declared Ukrainian nationality fell continuously during the second half of the 20th century (Srb, 1988: 70–76; Mušinka, Mušinka, 2011: 34–35).⁹

6 In November 1944 the *1st Convention of the National Committees of Transcarpathian Ukraine* published a manifesto in which the population expressed a wish to be attached to Soviet Ukraine and to the Soviet Union. On the basis of the treaty between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union on July 29, 1945, Subcarpathian Rus was detached from Czechoslovakia and under the name of Transcarpathian Ukraine was incorporated into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (Gajdoš, Konečný, 1991: 10–13).

7 I would point out that in this, as in other instances which I will subsequently present; the decision was first issued by the party organ of the KSS or KSČ and elaborated by the relevant state organ as a law or legal decree. This practice indicates the hierarchy in the exercise of power during the period of the communist regime.

8 However, this decision provoked tensions among Rusyn inhabitants. In 17 villages of Prešov district the parents refused to send the children in the Ukrainian schools. They demanded Slovak schools. The protests were very serious and occupied the attention of the KSČ and state institutions for nearly two years (Gajdoš, Konečný, 2019: 36–40).

9 After the Velvet Revolution of 1989, the inhabitants divided into those favouring Rusyn, Ukrainian or Carpathorussian orientation, thus reconnecting with the orientations of the first half of the 20th century. Since 1991, residents have been able to declare Rusyn as well as Ukrainian nationality in the Census. After 1990, those of Rusyn orientation were represented by the Rusyn Revival Society, those of Ukrainian orientation by the Union of Rusyn-Ukrainians in the Slovak Republic, while the pro-Russian

Despite the declared new aims of ethnographic research in Czechoslovakia after 1948 (Grill, 2015), and the programme published at the beginning of the 1950s (Resolution, 1952), according to which enquirers were to concentrate on specific features of the mode of life and culture of all ethnic communities in the republic, research into ethnic minorities developed only gradually. Researchers at the SAV Ethnographic Institute concentrated their efforts on research of the Slovak population, since it had become a primary aim to create a synthesis on the traditional folk culture of the Slovaks. The first attempts to research ethnic minorities focused on the Roma (Gypsies) from 1951 (Horváthová, 1964); subsequently Ján Mjartan, the director of the SAV Ethnographic Institute, organised the first collective research of the Hungarian ethnic group in a number of villages in southern Slovakia in 1954 (Podolák, 1955: 439). Also in 1954, “ethnographic research of the Ukrainian ethnic group” was assigned to the plans for the first time. Here and in the remainder of the text I will use the period terms Ukrainian ethnic group, Ukrainian folk culture, Ukrainians in Slovakia, or the term used in a cited source. It is not my aim to resolve the question of the ethnic identification of Rusyns, Ukrainians or Russians in Slovakia. My goal is to examine the project “Researching the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” in terms of the history of a scholarly discipline.

There were a number of reasons for incorporating this new task into the plans of the central ethnographic research institution. In 1953, just a year previously, researchers from the University of the Russian Language and Literature in Prague had conducted research of the Ukrainian ethnic group in the Prešov region under the auspices of the Cultural Union of Ukrainian Working People (Podolák, 1955: 440). The findings from the “Ukrainian ethnographic expedition” were presented by Czech researchers at the 3rd state wide ethnographic conference in Liblice in 1953. However, at that conference, ethnographers from the Czech lands and Slovakia agreed that, from 1954, the SAV Ethnographic Institute in Bratislava would be responsible for the project (Podolák, 1988: 89). At the close of 1953, the Institute added the project to the plan for 1954. Otakar Nahodil, a staff member of the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University, became project leader of the ethnographic section, and Eva Vrabcová, from the University of the Russian Language and Literature, became leader of the folkloristics section. Both were working in Prague.

Why, then, was the project allotted at all to the SAV Ethnographic Institute, when neither the authors nor the leaders of the project were its staff members? This was a matter of the division of the spheres of competence in the planning and direction of scholarship within Czechoslovakia, which was divided according to the territorial principle. According to the 1953 law, the Slovak Academy of Sciences was supposed to steer and coordinate fundamental research in all disciplines and in all of Slovakia. It followed from this that ethnographic research which was conducted in eastern Slovakia should have been organised and led by the Institute in Bratislava. Ján Mjartan, director of the SAV Ethnographic Institute, subsequently pointed this out in a letter to E. Vrabcová

orientation was represented by the Society of Rusyn Carpathorussians. In 1995, the Rusyn language was codified in the Slovak Republic. According to Census returns in 2011, 33,367 inhabitants (0.6 %) declared Rusyn nationality, 7,430 inhabitants (0.1 %) for Ukrainian. For the Census results, see <http://portal.statistics.sk/files/tab-10.pdf>. Further to the problem of the collective identification of Rusyns, Ukrainians or Carpathorussians in Slovakia, see Gajdoš, Homišinová, Konečný, Baumgartner, Frankovský, Šutaj (2001); Mušinka, Mušinka (2011). For Rusyns in the Ukraine and in the other states, see Magocsi (2015: 1 ff).

“...when you in Prague, without as much as informing anyone of anything, went to eastern Slovakia, and then afterwards admitted that it wasn’t fair, that it was acting like a raiding party.” (SAV Central Archive [henceforward ŰA SAV], fund of the SAV Ethnographic Institute [henceforward f. NŰ SAV], box 14 [henceforward b.] Letter by J. Mjartan, 14. 6. 1956, p. 2.)

Immediately after the Bratislava Institute became responsible for “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”, a council was held on February 2–3, 1954, where Nahodil and Vrabcov presented research themes planned for that year. Nahodil and his co-workers wished to concentrate on researching family, kinship and community relations, employment, clothing, accommodation and folk healing in the district of Snina. Concurrently, they were to collect objects for a future museum of Ukrainian culture, which was to be created in the eastern Slovakian town of Medzilaborce.¹⁰ Nahodil was to collaborate with staff members of the Pavol Jozef Šafrik University (hereafter UPJŠ) in Prešov and with other experts from Bratislava and Košice. Vrabcov, together with her students from Prague, was to continue researching folk songs and narrative. Nahodil and Vrabcov also prepared a complex plan for the project up to 1960. According to the plan, they were to examine not only all manifestations of folk culture and the mode of life in the 20th century, but also the history of Ukrainians in Slovakia and their (biological-) anthropological features. Hence, a historian and a physical anthropologist were also to be included in the project team. The research was to be financed by the Slovak Academy of Sciences via the Ethnographic Institute, which was responsible for the project, its realisation and its findings. The Slovak Institute was not, however, expected to finance the students from the University of the Russian Language and Literature who participated in field work. Research data was to be published every year, and all data were to be stored together in the Ethnographic Institute’s archive (ŰA SAV, f. NŰ SAV, b. 13. Record of the council, pp. 1–2). The aim of the research was “to provide a picture of the folk culture of Slovak Ukrainians and to ascertain the ethnographic boundary between the Ukrainian and Slovak ethnic groups” (Ibid., p. 2. Emphasis G. K.). Vladimr Latta, one of the project members, spoke at the council; he was a staff member of the Pedagogical Faculty of UPJŠ in Prešov and a representative of the Cultural Union of Ukrainian Working People, and he drew attention to the political importance of the project “arising from the decrees of the government and party on giving assistance to the Prešov region” (Ibid., p. 5).¹¹

The research soon came to the attention of the main political institution. A decree by the Politburo of the Central Committee of the KSS dated 4. 12. 1955, and sent to the SAV president, states “that the [...] SAV Ethnographic Institute shall, beginning in 1956, engage in systematic research of the folk artistic creativity of our Ukrainian population, and that SAV staff members shall engage in scientific elucidation of the issues of Ukrainian-Slovak relationships and cultural cooperation in the past” (ŰA SAV, f. NŰ SAV, b. 14. Letter from J. Mjartan to the Secretariat of the Social Sciences Section, 22.2. 1956, appendix Printout of the Decree by the Central Committee of KSS, dated 4. 12. 1955). The SAV Presidium

10 The museum was established in 1956. On a number of occasions, it moved and eventually settled definitively in the town of Svidnk, where it operates to this day (Podolk, 1982).

11 Eastern Slovakia, especially the districts of Svidnk, Medzilaborce, Stropkov, Sobrance and Snina were among the most seriously damaged areas in Czechoslovakia following the end of World War II. Hence, in the first five-year plan for the economy (1949–1953) considerable emphasis was placed on the renewal and the economic and social development of precisely those areas where Rusyns/Ukrainians lived (Gajdoš, Koneny, 1991: 82–142; Mušinka, Mušinka, 2011).

turned to the Ethnographic Institute, whose director, J. Mjartan, replied that research of the Ukrainian ethnic group had been conducted since 1954, but with impediments, which were connected especially with inadequate experience in fieldwork on the part of a number of external co-workers. Subsequently, a meeting of representatives of the SAV Ethnographic Institute was held at the Central Committee of the KSS. The Institute was entrusted with devising "a proposal for the organisation of research on the Ukrainian ethnic group in eastern Slovakia", which it would have to present both to the Central Committee of the KSS and the SAV Presidium (Ibid.) for approval in 1956. The proposal envisaged complex research, in which further scholarly centres in the SAV such as the Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute, the Institute of Linguistics, the Institute of Literary Scholarship, the Historical Institute, and the Institute of Musicology, and other institutions in Prešov such as the KSS Regional Committee, the National Committee of the Regions, the Society of Ukrainian Working People in Prešov, the Regional Museum in Prešov, and the Pedagogical University UPJŠ in Prešov were to be involved.

However, the plans began to run into difficulties, because external staff members did not deliver research materials by the stipulated dates. Hence, in June 1956, J. Mjartan refused to finance further research from the budget of the SAV Ethnographic Institute (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b. 14. Letter from J. Mjartan to E. Vrabcová, 14. 6. 1956). The undertaking was discontinued in the plan for 1957 with the comment: "The Institute regards this task as extremely important, but cannot perform it to the required extent due to a lack of cadres" (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b. 14).

Problems concerning academic theory also arose. At a conference of Soviet and Czechoslovak scholars in November 1956, at which the preparations of the Russian-language work "Narody mira" (Peoples of the World) were discussed, the Soviet researcher Leonid Pavlovitch Potapov expressed doubt that it was Ukrainians who were being researched. He recommended that those particular inhabitants of eastern Slovakia be called Rusyns and conceived as a distinctive (ethnic) group. Ján Mjartan immediately selected the relevant passage from the record of the conference and sent it to the SAV Presidium. In an accompanying letter he wrote: "This is an important and fundamental question. As Prof. L. P. Potapov pointed out, it is about scientific truth, which must be given utterance without regard for the viewpoint which was previously valid and the usage hitherto observed". In conclusion, he appealed to the SAV Presidium: "But the institutes [...] could not adopt this standpoint without official agreement or a decision of the SAV leadership. For this reason I am presenting the matter for an authoritative decision" (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b. 14. Letter from J. Mjartan to the SAV Presidium, 15. 1. 1957). Whether the SAV Presidium concerned itself with Mjartan's letter is not known: no reply regarding the matter is extant. However, the term Rusyns does not appear in further writings, and conversely, the inhabitants in eastern Slovakia continue to be referred to as "Ukrainians".

The director of the SAV Ethnographic Institute halted the project in June 1956, did not include it in the Institute's research plan for the coming year, and was aware of all difficulties associated with the project (the research collective, the theoretical problems). He nevertheless abruptly changed direction, submitting, in December 1956, a modified Institutional research plan for 1957 to the SAV Presidium which indicated that the "Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group" project would continue. In a subsequent letter, Mjartan explained that staff members of the Institute would conduct complex ethnographic research in the Bardejov region in the summer of 1957. Reference was made to a direct intervention by the Central Committee of the KSS: "[...] having regard

to the cultural and cultural-political requirements, as interpreted and clarified for us by the KSS Central Committee deputy Cde. Klokoč [at the end of 1956 – GK], the collective of the institute decided to conduct larger-scale research of this ethnic group in the Bardejov district in July 1957..." (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b. 13. Letter from J. Mjartan to the SAV Presidium, 25. 4. 1957).

The Institute, however, was well aware of the political character of the research project. At the same time, in the spring of 1957, the director of the SAV Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute, Jozef Hrozienčik, submitted plans to the SAV Ethnographic Institute to conduct "Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group" in the areas of language, history and literature, and in an accompanying letter called for comments from ethnographic colleagues. In Point I, Focus and Goals of Research, the plan declared:

"The SAV Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute does not conceive this research as a one-off action, since it is believed that such an approach holds no prospects of worthwhile scientific findings. In Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group, the work cannot be guided exclusively by practical considerations (e.g. **ascertaining the ethnographic boundary**, etc.), but as has become evident recently, it is also necessary to work out some theoretical questions (e.g. **Rusyns – Ukrainians**). This, however, requires that the entire research be extended in scope. [...] The responsibility is all the greater in that some of the knowledge acquired in research may also have an influence on **specific political practice in eastern Slovakia** in certain respects." (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b. 14. Letter from J. Hrozienčiek to the SAV Ethnographic Institute, 19. 4. 1957, appendix Plan for Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group in eastern Slovakia, p. 1. Emphases G. K.)

Hrozienčik was probably responding here to the doubts expressed by Soviet researchers on whether the inhabitants of eastern Slovakia were in fact Ukrainians. However, Communist Party policy after 1948 was to present the inhabitants with an unambiguous Ukrainian orientation and to recognise Ukrainian nationality only. The requirement that influence be exerted on the process of the population's ethno-identification was mentioned by Božena Filová, who became the director of the Institute after Ján Mjartan in 1958 and held the position till 1989. In an interview which she gave in 2006 she said: "There was a demand by one member of the Central Committee [of the Communist Party of Slovakia – G. K.] that our institute should make or create Ukrainians as a nationality in eastern Slovakia" (Bobáková, Tužinská, 2006: 210).

In January 1957, even before it received the plan for Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group from the SAV Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute, the SAV Ethnographic Institute had proposed that the organisation and leadership of the project should be transferred to the SAV Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute. However, the SAV Presidium did not accept this proposal (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b. 14. Letter from J. Mjartan to the SAV Presidium, 17. 1. 1957).

Responsibility for the project remained with the SAV Ethnographic Institute, with its realisation supervised as before by the KSS Central Committee. Nevertheless, scholars in the Institute did not abandon their attempts to "get rid of" the complicated project. In mid-April 1957, the director sent a letter to the Presidium of the SAV Social Sciences Section, informing them that the Academic Council of the SAV Ethnographic Institute had suggested that the Presidium should organise research of the Ukrainian ethnic group with the participation of a number of scholarly disciplines, because:

“Ethnographic research, alone and in isolation, may produce valuable material about the popular culture of this ethnic group, but it will not be able to resolve the question of the **Slovak-Ukrainian ethnographic frontier**. [...] But it is the **Slovak-Ukrainian national boundary** that is the first concern for the KSS Central Committee, and it will be possible to resolve this only when other avenues of research, such as the Academic Council suggests, are combined with the ethnographic work.” (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV. b. 14. Letter from J. Mjartan to the SAV Presidium, 18. 4. 1957. Emphases G. K.)

Yet even this strategy on the part of the Ethnographic Institute was not successful, and the project remained in the Institute’s plans for 1958 as a self-contained academic task. A change occurred only after another year had passed. The Plan for Scholarly Research Tasks for 1959, written in the autumn of 1958 by the new director, Božena Filová, did not contain research on the Ukrainian ethnic group as a separate scholarly task. Though the research did not disappear from the plan, it was incorporated into a “subsidiary” task, and, in further plans by the Institute from 1961 onwards, it figured within the framework of Folk Culture in the Carpathian Region, which was the principal task. Although staff members continued to perform field work in eastern Slovakia, the planned synthetic works on the folk culture of Ukrainians, or indeed on ethno-identification processes, were not published.¹²

Early in 1968, research on the Ukrainian ethnic group once again became the centre of attention of scholarly institutions. Tibor Halečka, Dean of the Philosophical Faculty of UPJŠ in Prešov, sent a letter to the SAV Presidium, where he wrote: “Stemming from the decree of 21. III. 1967 by the Presidium of the KSČ Central Committee on the development and guided convergence of nationalities and national groupings, at our faculty we have supported research in the area of Ukrainian Studies and the Ukrainian ethnic group in Czechoslovakia. Development of this work makes it possible to combine the research of problems (encompassed by the ‘Carpathian’ concept) which interest Slovak, Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian and Hungarian scholars, on historical, ethnographic, dialectological, sociological, and other levels”. He further explained that the Department of Ukrainian Language and Literature and the Research Cabinet of Ukrainistics (functioning at the Department) were engaged in research of the Ukrainian ethnic group. The Dean wrote that, having regard to the availability of scholarly staff and co-workers from other departments, there was a possibility of the Department and Research Cabinet performing complex research into the Ukrainian ethnic group in the following disciplines: general and political history, the history of culture, the history of journalism, ethnography, the history of literature and writing, the history of visual art, the history of musical art, the history of language, dialectology, the history of education, and Czechoslovak-Ukrainian relations. The letter ends with the declaration

12 In the SAV Institute of Ethnology and Social Anthropology’s Archive of Texts there are currently 18 research materials which may be classed as belonging to the project. See Archival Sources: Ábelová, 1957; Gašparíková, 1967b, 1969; Hanušin, 1960; Kahounová, 1969; Kovačevićová, 1957; Markuš and Kantár, 1957; Mjartan, 1963, 1968, 1969; Nosáľová, 1959, 1964, 1965; Urbancová, 1957, 1964a, 1964b; Vrabcová 1955, 1957. A number of partial studies by staff members of the former SAV Ethnographic Institute emerged from this research, e.g. Gašparíková, 1967a, Markuš, 1972. The songs and narratives collected by students of the University of the Russian Language and Literature in Prague were published more than fifty years later in the Slavic Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (Šišková, Mušinka, Hrušovský, 2009).

that the UPJŠ Philosophical Faculty was calling for the theme of “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group in Czechoslovakia” to be included in the state plan for fundamental research, and further called for the Research Cabinet to be the coordinating centre for this task in the state plan. Halečka expected the SAV Presidium to support this request and pass it on with a recommendation for approval to the ČSAV Presidium, which coordinated the state plan for fundamental research in Czechoslovakia (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b. 15. Letter from T. Halečka to the SAV Presidium, 23. 2. 1968).

The SAV Presidium forwarded the letter from Prešov to the Ethnographic Institute and the deputy director, Svetozár Švehlák, replied to its contents. The Institute welcomed the growth of interest in Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group among its colleagues in Prešov. On the proposal that the theme of “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” be included in the state plan and that the Research Cabinet in Prešov should be the task coordinator, Švehlák observed that since 1955 the SAV Ethnographic Institute had been the coordinator of “systematic research on the question of the Ukrainian ethnic group in eastern Slovakia”, based on a decree of 23. 12. 1955 by the Politburo of the KSS Central Committee. Švehlák further wrote that from 1955 to 1965 this had been one of the principal tasks of the SAV Ethnographic Institute¹³ and staff members of the Institute had collaborated with many colleagues from P. J. Šafárik University, the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University in Prague, and district and regional museums. As regards including the theme in the scholarly research plans of the SAV Ethnographic Institute, in recent years research of the Ukrainian ethnic group had been concentrated in the task “Popular Culture of the Carpathian Region”, which encompassed research on all ethnic groups on the territory of Slovakia. For these reasons, the SAV Ethnographic Institute did not regard it as necessary for “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group in Czechoslovakia” to be distinguished as a new task in the state plan, or for coordination of the task to be entrusted to the Research Cabinet at the Department of Ukrainian Language and Literature in the UPJŠ Philosophical Faculty in Prešov (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b.15. Letter from S. Švehlák to the SAV Presidium, 26. 3. 1968).

Notwithstanding this declaration, in subsequent years the SAV Ethnographic Institute abandoned the task of Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group. The reason for this was the creation of a new centre, the Cabinet of Ethnology, at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava. The Cabinet was established on 1. 10. 1968, and both centres coordinated their activities and plans. Research of the culture of Slavic peoples and nationalities in Slovakia became the Cabinet’s principal scholarly programme (Podolák, 1969: 149). The new division of work was officially declared in the next state plan for fundamental research for the years 1971–1975, where responsibility for Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group passed to the Cabinet of Ethnology.

DISCUSSION

The project “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”, which the SAV Ethnographic Institute undertook in the years 1954–70, illuminated the manner in which the political power of an authoritarian regime intervened in scholarly work. Under the law, the

¹³ As mentioned above, the relevant decree of the Politburo of the KSS Central Committee was issued on 4. 12. 1955. From 1961, the project was incorporated into other tasks, no longer remaining a principal task in its own right.

Slovak Academy of Sciences was guided and steered by state organs;¹⁴ *de facto*, however, many decrees and decisions were issued by the KSS Central Committee in Bratislava. This was also true in the case of the scholarly project examined here. Based on a decree by the KSS Central Committee in December 1955, the SAV Ethnographic Institute was entrusted with realisation of the project “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group”. However, organisational and academic difficulties ensued. As shown by progress reports on the project in 1954 and 1955, some team members did not have sufficient professional expertise, skills or linguistic competence in order to be able to conduct field work. Also, several researchers were late in handing over research data. Given that in all cases external co-workers were involved, the Institute’s abilities to cope with unfulfilled tasks were essentially limited. Hence, the director, Ján Mjartan, resorted to an extreme solution: in the summer of 1956 he refused to finance further “holiday trips in eastern Slovakia” (ÚA SAV, f. NÚ SAV, b. 14. Letter from J. Mjartan to E. Vrabcová, 14. 6. 1956) and he halted the project in the plan for 1957.

In December 1956, Mjartan, following political instructions, returned the project to the plan for the following year. Since external team members could not be relied on, staff members of the Institute began to undertake the research tasks. As shown by the analysis of extant archival documents, once the project had come to the close attention of politicians from the Communist Party, the director and Academic Council of the SAV Ethnographic Institute developed various strategies to rid themselves of responsibility for its organisation and coordination. Their fears and circumspection stemmed from (among other things) the negative experiences which staff members had recently undergone. These related to the political investigations of scholars carried out in 1950 by a commission from the Commissariat of Education, Science and Art, following which almost half of the staff were dismissed. This was followed by the abolition of the Institute in 1951. Hence, at the beginning of 1957, the SAV Ethnographic Institute proposed that the SAV Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute should take over coordination of the project, and in the spring it attempted to hand the task over to the Presidium of the SAV Social Sciences section. These attempts, however, did not lead to the desired goal. After 1958, the Institute accordingly removed “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” from its place among the principal plans and changed its thematic focus, and developed a certain kind of passive resistance. The project began to be presented within the framework of the principal task “Popular Culture of the Carpathian Region”, which thematically and methodologically steered the research in a different direction.

“Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” equally revealed the power relationships between scholarly institutions in Czechoslovakia, in particular between Czech and Slovak bodies. After the staff of the SAV Ethnographic Institute learned at the state wide ethnographic conference in 1953 that Czech researchers were conducting research in eastern Slovakia without informing their Slovak colleagues, they demanded the recognition of their rights and spheres of competence. According to the law of that period, all research activities on the territory of Slovakia, in all scholarly disciplines, were to be directed by the Slovak Academy of Sciences. On this account, Czech and

14 The Commissariat of the Slovak National Council until 1960. After 1960, the SAV, as part of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, was directly subordinate to the Czechoslovak government, until the new federative arrangement of the state dating from 1969. In 1969, Czechoslovakia became a federation of the Czech Socialist Republic and Slovak Socialist Republic (Lipták, 2000: 286–291).

Slovak ethnographers concluded an agreement that from 1954 onwards research activities in eastern Slovakia would be organised and coordinated by the SAV Ethnographic Institute. As further developments indicate, during the second half of the 1950s, the project became more an impediment than a benefit to the Institute, in that the KSS Central Committee was watching it closely and the research theme was linked to a red-hot political issue. However, in 1968, when the UPJŠ Philosophical Faculty in Prešov sought to take over coordination of the project, the SAV Ethnographic Institute did not wish to cede it. Without hesitation, the Institute cited the KSS Central Committee decision of 1955 in support of its arguments, the very decree which had caused fear and concern to its staff. It is also symptomatic of the contemporary strategies of the actors in power relationships that it was precisely the decision of the Communist Party which the Institute produced as its strongest argument, and not the laws or guidelines of the state organs.

Naturally, one must also take into account the fact that by then the “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” project had happily been given a lower priority in the SAV Ethnographic Institute’s plan and did not provoke any great anxiety. Hence, there was no reason for the Institute to surrender the coordination of this project. Only with the foundation of the Cabinet of Ethnology at the Philosophical Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava did the situation change: the new Cabinet became the coordinator, but the project remained within the Institute’s own academic sphere.

In 1973, Emília Horváthová, deputy to the director, Božena Filová, published an extensive study evaluating the twenty-year activity of the Ethnographic Institute within the framework of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. According to the author, during that period the Institute undertook the following tasks: 1. the development of folk culture in Slovakia; 2. the influence of industrialisation on traditional culture; 3. the folk culture of the Carpathian region; 4. the culture of Slovak enclaves abroad; and 5. the history and methodology of scholarship (Horváthová, 1973: 172). In a section dealing with “other ethnic groups in Slovakia” her most extensive observations were about research on “Gypsies” and the findings achieved in this area. Information concerning research on the culture of the Hungarian population in Slovakia was given a few sentences. As regards the research of staff members in the milieu of the “Ukrainian minority” over the preceding two decades, Horváthová devoted just one brief sentence to this theme in the entirety of her paper. Such brevity regarding “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” in a survey article reflected the attitude of the Institute to this 16-year-long research project. On account of political intervention and interference in scholarly undertakings, and consequent defensive actions on the part of scholars, the project did not fulfil its original goals, did not produce the planned synthetic publications, and gradually faded from the Institute’s plans.

CONCLUSION

The example of the realisation of the “Research of the Ukrainian Ethnic Group” project reveals the functioning of power relationships on various levels in an authoritarian regime and their changes over time. On the basis of empirical data it was possible to trace how the relationship between political power (= KSS Central Committee) and scholars (= staff of the SAV Ethnographic Institute, the project workers) proceeded hierarchically at all times, from the top down. The KSS Central Committee issued

a decree in 1955, which the Slovak Academy of Sciences and the SAV Ethnographic Institute accepted. They participated in a meeting at the KSS Central Committee at the beginning of 1956, prepared the required proposals for the project, and sent reports to that organ about its ongoing realisation. When problems began to appear in the work, the director made an attempt to halt the project, for which he gave cogent reasons in the plan for 1957. However, following an interview with a member of the KSS Central Committee, Ondrej Klokoč, in December 1956, the director restored the project to the plan for 1957. He bowed to political pressure, although the Institute wished to give priority to other projects.

The director and staff of the SAV Ethnographic Institute addressed their further efforts concerning the project, or their attempts to have another Institute assume responsibility for it, to the organ to which they were directly subordinate, i.e. the SAV Presidium. There, they were dealing with colleagues and scholars. They attempted to achieve change using academic and logical arguments. When the SAV Ethnographic Institute proved unable to assert its interests even on this level of power relationships, it chose the path of passive resistance. The Institute began cautiously to apply this strategy from the end of the 1950s and more openly from the early 1960s, when a certain liberalisation of political relations occurred.

In its relations with other equivalent scholarly institutions the SAV Ethnographic Institute behaved proactively and self-confidently. The Institute attempted to maintain correct relationships with Czech and Slovak scholarly institutions, while nonetheless constantly guarding and defending its rights. On the level of such power relationships the Institute was not prepared to surrender its project to another centre. It did so only when this was to its own advantage: when it had a sufficiency of other important projects, and when the direction of the project in question remained with an institution belonging to the same discipline.

The findings from analyses of empirical data show what the specific possibilities and limits were for scholars functioning in the respective network of power relationships, and in what area they were able to move. They furthermore reveal a gamut of successful or unsuccessful strategies which scholars employed to bring about changes in the processes of the exercise of power. Taking one example, this paper casts light on the everyday activity of scholars in the context of the communist political regime, and on the relations between scholarship and power.

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