FORUM HISTORIAE Journal and Portal for History and Related Disciplines
ISSN 1337-6861

Forum Historiae, 2022, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 88–104

www.forumhistoriae.sk

Between Historiographies of Finitude and Appropriation of the Annales School: The "National Question" in Post-1945 Croatian Intellectual History

Lucija Balikić

Keywords
Croatian historiography, intellectual history, contemporary history, Annales School

DOI
10.31577/forhist.2022.16.1.6

Author
Lucija Balikić
Central European University
Quellenstraße 51
1100 Wien
Austria
Email: balikic_lucija@phd.ceu.edu
ORCID: 0000-0002-7613-0747

Cite
BALIKIĆ, Lucija. Between Historiographies of Finitude and Appropriation of the Annales School: The "National Question" in Post-1945 Croatian Intellectual History. In *Forum Historiae*, 2022, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 88–104, doi: 10.31577/forhist.2022.16.1.6

Abstract

BALIKIĆ, Lucija. Between Historiographies of Finitude and Appropriation of the Annales School: The "National Question" in Post-1945 Croatian Intellectual History.

The present article outlines the main trends in post-1945 Croatian intellectual history writing, with special attention paid to the unique dynamics of the reception and influence of the Annales school, plus other external historiographical trends dominant in "Western" historiographies of the time. Moreover, the intellectual history was oftentimes written from a teleological perspective, culminating in either the people's liberation struggle (*narodnooslobodilačka borba*) and socialist revolution, or in the making of an independent Croatian nation-state, whereby numerous ideologies were fashioned to fit these two goals. In contrast, a more self-reflexive and open-ended intellectual history inspired by the Annales School opposed these type of schemes. Nevertheless, both historiographical traditions of the period primarily grappled with the so-called national question and the historical interplay between the Yugoslav and Croatian national movements and ideologies, debating the intellectual and social origins of the former from a zero-sum perspective, while attempting to alienate the latter from the projects of Yugoslavism and socialism in the period after the wars of the 1990s. Using primarily the example of Mirjana Gross and her treatment of the ideology of rightism (*pravaštvo*) together with the polemics she developed with other historians about its morphology and relevance for the development and content of Croatian nationalism, the article demonstrates the aforementioned argument about historiographical trends and debates, as well as their notable transformations in the given period.

The writing of intellectual history in Croatia in the period after 1945 materialized amidst a wider context of noticeable tension between the current historiographical approaches, mainly Marxian (non-dogmatic),[1] self-centred, positivistic history and a more self-reflective, theoretically sensitive and widely understood social history (comparative perspective), primarily adopted from outside socialist Yugoslavia.

However, the main debate surrounding the position intellectual history should take, as well as alternatives to such a narrowly

1 The term Marxian (instead of Marxist) is used in order to demonstrate that this genre had only certain elements of positivist Marxist historiography (e.g. teleological stucture with dialectical class struggle as the dominant explanatory model for historical development), but it was also oftentimes underpinned by the "frozen" national conflict (esp. Serbian–Croatian). It served as analaytical framework for a debate on the nature of common history and measuring national achievements against each other.

conceived political history, was occurring within broader historiographical debates about theoretical and methodological innovation, its origin, necessity, applicability and relevance. Intellectual history was often simultaneously researched in the adjacent fields of political philosophy and political science, outside of the framework of history departments, yet with a strikingly similar approach. Moreover, after the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia and the proclamation of an independent Croatia, a new and stronger wave of positivistic, teleological nation-building historiography expanding on the achievements of nationalizing historiography during the socialist period[2] gained momentum and became the new focal "opponent" of social historians, who were becoming increasingly more receptive to wider historiographical trends such as the linguistic turn, constructivist theories of nationalism and comparative history. Due to unique geopolitical, historical and intellectual circumstances, the post-1945 development of Croatian historiography offers fertile ground for a more abstract inquiry into the dialectical dynamics of theoretical and methodological innovation between Western and East-Central European historians, as well as related questions regarding the translation of new vocabularies, personal and institutional cooperation around the Cold War and the morphology of the nationalization[3] of this particular historiographical tradition.[4]

Furthermore, the widespread perception of theoretical and methodological innovation as inherently of external origin often resulted in a false dichotomy between contemporary historiography[5]—oftentimes conceptualized as inauthentic, supranationally-focused and hardly applicable to local history—and the allegedly timeless national historiography—thought of as neutral and positivistic with positive connotations.

Such conceptualizations were strongly reflected within institutional policies as well, whereby "contemporary historiography" became almost entirely separated from the rest of historiographical culture and production, soon realizing its own university department chair and peer-review positions in journals. Throughout the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, members of both camps reacted differently to the challenges and opportunities emerging from outside of the country or the broader region, often di-

2 The "national question" that subsumes discussions on Croatian history is defined here as the historical, and in some contexts legal, legitimacy of independent Croatian statehood.

3 Nationalization will, in this instance, be defined not only in terms of a resurfacing of older debates and arguments that primarily served a sort of nation-building agenda, as would more be the case in the states of the Eastern-bloc proper, but more importantly, as a process which functioned both within the socialist and Yugoslavist framework without questioning or undermining any of them, and thus performing the function of both appropriating national narratives into those frameworks as well as redefining such meanings in themselves. In other words, the main actors in focus here will not be those who overtly claimed that there was a process of denationalization during the socialist period, but rather those who were protagonists of the debates and appropriations of national narratives into the aforementioned frameworks, and who managed to remain in those positions later, during the period of democratic transition and the realization of independent Croatian statehood.

4 For wider regional context, see SORIN, Antohi – TRENCSÉNYI, Balázs – APOR, Péter. *Narratives Unbound: Historical Studies in Post-Communist Eastern Europe*. Budapest : Central European University Press, 2007.

5 Not *Zeitgeschichte*, but rather understood as a field that subsumes contemporary theoretical and methodological approaches in historical sciences.

vided through self-attributed labels of professional or non-professional historians—intellectualized as apolitical or political—or those who were explicitly doing the work of nation-building and those who aimed at toning down the national level of inquiry[6] in favour of regional and comparative perspectives,[7] especially after the fall of Yugoslavia.

One notable consequence of both camps repeatedly acknowledging the external agency of theoretical and methodological innovation, and often using external—primarily Western in both a broader and looser sense—points of reference in studying local or national historical development, resulted in a distorted image of local history dominated by the actions of political actors, often with a teleological tone, and the regional, European and world history by the social, intellectual and other motors of development. Moreover, the somewhat patronizing, self-proclaimed mediators between Western "contemporary" historiographical trends and local historiography helped to deepen existing hierarchies and animosities between the camps, at times excluding the possibility of original local thought on those issues. However, it is the social history in fact, in the broadest possible sense, often incorporating intellectual history in particular, that came out of the 20th century as a winner in terms of theoretical and methodological innovation, as various generations of historians, spanning from the early 1950s until the present day, made efforts to provide alternative constructions of the national history, not only by offering legitimization for the communist project through the means of Marxian historiography, but also very much contributing to the genre of historical sociology.[8] The aim of this article is, therefore, to first theoretically assess the general trends and tendencies among relations between Western and East-Central European historians and historiographies, not only in terms of content, but mainly regarding theoretical considerations.

In this light, a specific Croatian case will be examined through the prism of generations that vacillated between approaches and maintained different understandings of the aforementioned relationships with Western historiographies as well as their theoretical stakes as generators or/and recipients of innovations. Besides introducing the protagonists and their intellectual biographies, the intention here is also to partially reflect on the main debates they

6 A lively discussion about the various traditions that different generations of Croatian intellectual historians belonged to, and comparison with other Central European historiographies, can be followed in the transcribed roundtable organized by the Department of History of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb in 2003: Okrugli stol Opus profesorice Mirjane Gross u srednjoeuropskoj historiografiji: iskustva i poruke: Ivo Goldstein, Mirjana Gross, Horst Haselsteiner, Geneviève Humbert-Knitel, Alojz Ivanišević, Zdenka Janeković-Römer, Drago Roksandić, Nikša Stančić, Arnold Suppan. In *Radovi: Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, 2012, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 17–57.

7 Some of the most successful works which went in the direction of localizing a multitude of imperial heritages (Habsburg, Ottoman, Venetian) in Croatian national identity, as well as developing theoretical models based on those cases, were products of an international research project *Triplex Confinium*, led by Drago Roksandić. See: *Triplex Confinium ili O granicama i regijama hrvatske povijesti: 1500–1800*. Zagreb : Barbat, 2003; or BLAŽEVIĆ, Zrinka. At the Crossroads. Methodologies for Liminal Spaces. In PRIJATELJ PAVIČIĆ, Ivana et al. *Liminal Spaces of Art between Europe and Middle East*. Cambridge : Cambridge Scholar Publishing, 2018, pp. 1–11.

8 JANKOVIĆ, Branimir. *Mijenjanje sebe same: preobrazbe hrvatske historiografije kasnog socijalizma*. Zagreb : Srednja Europa, 2016.

were part of, namely the historicizing of Croatian nationhood and statehood, through carefully mapping the ideological underpinnings of the intellectual history they were writing. Finally, in conclusion, a contribution will be made to possible future avenues of research as well as the opportunities Croatian historical and geographical settings offer to the latest historical studies in the wider region and beyond.

A *Sui generis* Historiographical Environment within and beyond the Cold War

To begin, it is important to note several historical factors that contributed to Croatian historiography's unique situation during the Cold War and later. Firstly, after the Tito-Stalin split and the exclusion of socialist Yugoslavia from the Communist Information Bureau, the diplomatic position of the country enabled historians to maintain strong professional and personal relationships with historians from both sides of the Iron Curtain, an advantage in comparison to colleagues from each of those blocks. In other words, their research was not strictly limited to the archives and libraries of any given country or region and as such, was much more prone to placing Yugoslav historical accounts among broader spatial and temporal contexts. Moreover, this enabled many personal or institutional connections from the interwar period to continue in a certain way and maintain the dominant reference points of the past, especially with regard to Germany and Austria, but also those of Western Europe in the narrower sense.

Lastly, the civil war that turned into an intensively mythologized[9] war for independence (1991–1995),[10] provided historians with opportunities as well as a responsibility to re-focus on the national history, and in fact reinforced the divisions detailed above into supporters of those more sensitive to and respective of theoretical innovations and the positivistic nation-builders and memory entrepreneurs.[11] However, despite the beneficial diplomatic position of Yugoslavia and resulting ability to maintain connections with traditional historiographical hubs and centres of interest such as German-speaking historiographies, in the generations of historians that marked the second half of the 20th century in Croatia, the pioneers of intellectual history and its contemporary developments were not as numerous and often did not strictly

9 CVIJANOVIĆ, Hrvoje. On Memory Politics and Memory Wars: A Critical Analysis of the Croatian Dialogue Document. In *Politička misao: časopis za politologiju*, 2018, vol. 55, no. 4, pp. 109–146.

10 The interpretation concerning the character and length of the war is still a very controversial and troublesome task as there is no consensus among historians or the general public; neither on the moment when it transformed from a civil war into a war of independence, not least due to war crimes and ethnic cleansing committed in the context of the latter. See for instance: PRLIĆ, Jadranko et al. (IT-04-74). United Nations, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. https://www.icty.org/en/case/prlic (last viewed on 11 April 2022).

11 The process of democratic transition in Croatia, particularly in the context of the war and the post-war developments following the break-up of Yugoslavia as well as the ramifications on historiography, has been analytically noted and tentatively evaluated recently by Drago Roksandić in a collection of essays: ROKSANDIĆ, Drago. *Historiografija u tranziciji*. Zagreb : Srpsko kulturno društvo "Prosvjeta", 2018.

distinguish between social history, primarily in the context of the Annales school in Croatia,[12] and intellectual history as a distinctive unit of analysis.

Furthermore, the overarching topic of study in intellectual history was nationalism, often in a teleological way, with a sort of nation-state as the ultimate goal, including questions related to statehood and inter-ethnic relations in the Yugoslav space or in its immediate surroundings. More specifically, the key debates revolved around the character and the nature of the early 19th century Illyrian movement,[13] the ideology of Croatian Rightism[14] and the extent to which it inspired the Ustaša movement, the history and the development of the Croatian left accentuating the social-democrats, as well as Serbo-Croatian relations, (integral) Yugoslavism[15] and the history of the Serbs in "Croatian lands,"[16] in the Military Frontier in particular.[17] It is, however, important to note that both the camp of Marxian positivist historians, who prioritized the League of Communists' discursive approach to history in the state-socialist period, and the group engaged in nation-building through historiography during the 1990s structured their narrative in a similar, teleological way, oftentimes insisting on the finitude of history. In the case of the first, the goal was the realization of a classless society in socialist Yugoslavia and the triumph of the Partisans' revolution in the—paradigmatic victory—of the Second World War, while in the case of the latter, it was the realization of independent Croatian statehood through—also a paradigmatic victory in the War of Independence—the idea of which, embodied in the concept of a "Croatian state-creating idea,"[18] allegedly persisted throughout history.[19]

12 The lasting potency and influence of the Annales school for the orientation of Croatian historiography can be exemplified by the most recent contribution by the younger generation of Croatian scholars of the Habsburg Monarchy and their new publication: ROKSANDIĆ, Drago – ŠIMETIN-ŠEGVIĆ, Filip – ŠIMETIN-ŠEGVIĆ, Nikolina. *Annales in Perspecitve: Designs and Accomplishments.* Zagreb : Centar za komparativnohistorijske i interkulturne studije, 2019.

13 While this was the topic of many heated debates because of its underlying implications on the tension between the Croatian, Serbian, and Yugoslav solutions for national integration of the South Slavic peoples, it escalated most notably in the case of Roksandić's PhD defense, where he was accussed of "national disloyalty," with the case receiving the international attention of prominent émigré scholars from East Central Europe, see: BANAC, Ivo et al. Fired in Belgrade. In *The New York Review of Books*, 29 March 1990. https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1990/03/29/fired-in-belgrade (last viewed on 25 March 2022).

14 GROSS, Mirjana. *Povijest pravaške ideologije*. Zagreb : Institut za hrvatsku povijest Sveučilišta, 1973.

15 GROSS, Mirjana. *Vijek i djelovanje Franje Račkoga*. Zagreb : Novi Liber, 2004.

16 "Croatian lands" (*hrvatske zemlje*) is one of the key, pervasive concepts used to extend the contemporary territory of the Croatian nation-state into the historical past, often used to decontextualize—especially when discussing imperial state structures—the story and ascribe indepdendent statehood with historical legitimacy.

17 The debate on this issue was most prominent between Croatian and Serbian historiography, and the question of the cultural authenticity of Serbs from Croatia-Slavonia where Serbian historiography often went off into various victimization narratives, generalizing the national and historical facets, their identity, and Croatian historiography, mainly in the socialist period, chose a much more nuanced perspective which called for incorporating them into Croatian history as one of its indispensible elements.

18 Often also conceptualized as a Croatian state-creating (*državotvorna*) political thought, idea or movement, its meaning is closest to the German concept of *Staatsbildende Idee*; a focus on quality and not the process. It was a prominent trope in nationalist political discourse and Croatian historiography of the 1990s, aiming at providing the nation-state with historical continuity and legitimacy.

19 GOLDSTEIN, Ivo. Od partijnosti u doba socijalizma do revizionizma 90ih: ima li građanska historiografija šansu? In LIPOVČAN, Srećko – DOBROVŠAK, Ljiljana (eds.) *Hrvatska historiografi-*

Thus, both groups were much less concerned with external theoretical and methodological input, unlike the social historians, whose narratives were often more open-ended, analytic in nature, based on problematizing certain issues and, in the most recent period, post-structuralist in character. On the contrary, finite historiographies depend on the portrayal of a series of subsequent political thinkers whose ideas are teleologically about to be realized in the given political order and asserted by contemporary political actors, whether it is the independent ethnonationalist state or the realization of a communist classless society.

The Case of Mirjana Gross and the Ideology of Rightism

Taking the example of one of the most notable Croatian intellectual historians of the period, Mirjana Gross (1922–2012), it is in fact possible to claim that the study of intellectual history was highly influenced and mediated by the appropriation of the Annales school of Croatian historiography.[20] While Gross was the first Croatian historian to explicitly and systematically touch upon the nature of the relationship and penetration of external historiographical trends into Croatian historiography,[21] and thus to inspire her contemporaries and students to critically reflect on the same questions and strive towards developing their own theories and methodologies, it was her work on intellectual history that deserves the most attention here.

Intellectually, she grew from the traditions of her predecessors, Jaroslav Šidak and Vaso Bogdanov, both of whom were members of the Department of History at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities of the University of Zagreb. Bogdanov, a notable member of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, protagonist of the interwar "conflict on the literary left"[22] and a staunch defender of arguably one of the most known left-wing intellectuals and Croatian literary figures of the 20th century, Miroslav Krleža, represented

ja XX. stoljeća: između znanstvenih paradigmi i ideoloških zahtjeva. Zagreb : Institut društvenih znanosti Ivo Pilar, 2005, pp. 57–71.

20 In particular, historiographical trends inspired by the Annales school included going beyond positivist and idealist approaches, with an emphasis towards tracing the changes and transformations within broader social structures, as well as generalizations and abstractions of the data analyzed thereat. This was reflected in studies of nationalism and analyzing the way ideas spread from the elite to the masses, for instance, in the seminal study by Miroslav Hroch and in the development of fields such as memory studies or microhistory, which contribute to the knowledge of one individuals' or communities understanding and actions within broader transformations of nationalist ideas. In the Croatian context and that of Mirjana Gross' works, however, it was comprised of the understanding of societal modernization as one of the main contexts for the emergence of nationalism, imparting a combination of Annales-inspired social and intellectual history without determinist claims.

21 GROSS, Mirjana. *Suvremena historiografija: korijeni, postignuća, traganja*. Zagreb : Novi Liber, 1996; JANKOVIĆ, Branimir. Rijetka predanost metodologiji historije. Mirjana Gross (1922–2012). In *Historijski zbornik*, 2012, vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 479–500; JANEKOVIĆ-RÖMER, Zdenka. Mirjana Gross: traganje za novim putevima povijesnog mišljenja. In *Radovi: Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest Filozofskoga fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu*, 2000, vol. 32–33, no. 1, pp. 481–484.

22 BROZOVIĆ, Domagoj. Sukob na književnoj ljevici u novohistorističkom ključu. In *Umjetnost riječi: Časopis za znanost o književnosti*, 2015, vol. 59, no. 1–2, pp. 133–154; PERUŠKO, Ivana. The short life of socialist realism in Croatian literature, 1945–1955. In DOBRENKO, Evgeny – JONSSON-SKRADOL, Natalia (eds.) *Socialist Realism in Central and Eastern European Literatures under Stalin: Institutions, Dynamics, Discourses*. New York : Anthem Press, 2018, pp. 165–182.

Marxian historiography and was primarily working, both during the interwar and the post-war periods, on the topics of Southern Slav participation in the revolution of 1848–1849 in the Kingdom of Hungary and the conspiratorial Jacobine group of Ignjat Martinović.

What connects him to Gross are his studies on rightism, social history—primarily labour history—and matters of the Illyrian movement, the ideology behind it as well as questioning its scope and a sort of proto-Yugoslav, Serbo-Croatian orientation.[23] Šidak was, on the other hand, a formative figure for Gross in a more personal and professional sense, since it was him who was her supervisor and included her in some of the most notable collaborative projects at an early stage of her career, such as a comprehensive synthesis of Croatian history between the renewal of constitutionalism and the beginning of the First World War. It was published in 1967,[24] shortly after and arguably in a similar tone as the famous "Declaration about the name and the status of the Croatian literary language,"[25] which was one of the main cornerstones in the build-up to the highly decentralized massive political-cultural conflict around the Croatian language and political claims, also known as the "Croatian Spring," that would follow in 1971.[26]

In the aforementioned roundtable discussion from 2003, one of Gross's closest colleagues, Nikša Stančić, overtly brings that book as well as her best recognized intellectual history piece, *The History of Rightist Ideology* (1973), into connection with the Croatian Spring and a rethinking of the history of Croatian political thought and Serbo-Croatian relations from the early 19th century onwards.[27] Šidak, himself coming from a background of the most notable, complex and eventually controversial collaborative project in the history of historiography in socialist Yugoslavia, an unfinished Marxian state-sponsored multi-volume synthesis *The History of Yugoslav Peoples*,[28] introduced Gross to the network of his collaborators, both inside and outside of Yugoslavia. Šidak was an important intellectual mentor to Gross as well, since he was very much focused on 19th century Croatian intellectual history as well as the Illyrian movement and the Croatian role in the 1848–1849 revolution, similar to Bogdanov. While he was often accused of Marxian positivism and had some open conflicts on methodological grounds with Gross in later periods, he can still be considered one of the decisive figures of Croatian intellectual history writing of that period.

23 ŠVAB, Mladen. Vaso Bogdanov. In *Hrvatski biografski leksikon*. Zagreb : Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, 1989, http://hbl.lzmk.hr/clanak.aspx?id=2219 (last viewed on 25 March 2022).

24 ŠIDAK, Jaroslav et al. *Povijest hrvatskog naroda 1860-1914*. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 1968.

25 Declaration on the name and status of Croatian Literary Language, 1967, http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n247666 (last viewed on 25 March 2022).

26 Additional proof of the controversy this book created can be found in the reactions received in Belgrade as well as Gross' response: GROSS, Mirjana. Maliciozne marginalije o 'delikatnim' pitanjima. In *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1971, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 211–222.

27 Okrugli stol Opus 2012, p. 22.

28 GRAFENAUER, Bogo – PEROVIĆ, Dušan – ŠIDAK, Jaroslav. *Historija naroda Jugoslavije. Vol. 1–2*. Zagreb : Školska knjiga, 1953, 1959.

Regarding any concrete consequences of Gross' inspiration from the Annales school, which she first got introduced to at the 10th International Congress of the Historical Sciences in Rome in 1955,[29] it is necessary to explore her research interests for gender history, the development of civil society[30] and the history of everyday life,[31] as well as her rapprochement with structuralist approaches.

One of the main contributions of Mirjana Gross, besides mediating the Annales school perspectives into a Croatian context, was providing new methodological vocabulary in translating many terms from French, German and English. The primary theoretical concepts and *longue durée* processes she identified and worked on were those of modernization and national integration.[32] These were two key concepts which also provided a background and structure to her work on the national themes, bringing them together with the Marxian philosophy of history embodied in societal modernization—in the structuralist and relational manner, taking into account broader European intellectual history.[33] In this context, her most notable works on the "original" Croatian rightism of Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik show allegiance to the aforementioned Annales-inspired concepts and approaches,[34] outlining its ideological tenants against a backdrop of societal "modernization" and portraying it as one of the engines of national integration, and more broadly, history. Her understanding of nationhood is in this context not essentialist, but rather explicitly constructivist as she is constantly situating and comparing the concept of nation within Ante Starčević's rightism to multiple alternatives within and outside of the Party of Rights, ranging from political Catholicism to different versions of Yugoslavism. Crucially, this positioned her against the dogmatic Marxist and emerging nationalist historiographies of finitude as she maintained an open-endedness of history and developed a considerable amount of conceptual sensitivity to the various incarnations of nationhood espoused in the material she studied.

29 GROSS, Mirjana. Plaidoyer za profesionalnu historiografiju. In *Radovi: Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest*, 1996, vol. 29, pp. 7–10.

30 More in the sense of 19th century *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* than the projection of contemporary transitologist conceptualization of civil society.

31 Perhaps her most notable social history work in the strict sense, which incorporates all of the aforementioned elements is GROSS, Mirjana. *Počeci moderne Hrvatske: neoapsolutizam u civilnoj Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji 1850–1860*. Zagreb : Globus, 1985.

32 While adopting classical social-science normative modernization theory and also most often successfully integrating a sort of "class struggle" in her 19th century narratives of Croatian history, the notion of national integration is often an ambigous one in her works. It actually comprises all the intellectual and ideological positions of the available options for the realization of independent statehood, most often either Croatian, to which the book on rightist ideology mainly refers to, or Yugoslav, to which her book and articles on Franjo Rački and the People's party (Narodna stranka) refer to.

33 For a discussion of Gross' attempts at arguing for the applicability of structuralism in historical science in a comparative perspective, see: KRIZMANICS, Réka. *Fruitful Inconsistencies: Historical Knowledge Production in Late Socialist Hungary and Croatia*. Doctoral dissertation. Budapest; Vienna : Central European University, 2020, pp. 81–82.

34 On Mirjana Gross' reception of the Annales school and employing of Braudelian structuralist framework in the Croatian context, see: RADONIĆ, Ljiljana. Post-socialist politics of history in Croatia. In LUTHAR, Oto (ed.) *Red Dragons and Evil Spirits: Postcommunist Historiography Between Democratization and New Politics of History*. New York : Central European University Press, 2017.

Gross' Intellectual Legacy: Between Fertilization and Nationalist Exploitation

Among her students and intellectual successors, such as the aforementioned Nikša Stančić, or Iskra Iveljić, Mario Strecha, Drago Roksandić and Branimir Janković, it was Zrinka Blažević who wrote a significant number of essays exploring and translating the new concepts and terms that were in circulation among European and American historiographies around the turn of the millennium.[35] It was another of Gross' students, Mario Strecha, who focused much more on confronted national ideologies (*pravaštvo* and *narodnjaštvo*; rightism and populism),[36] particularly on the Croatian tradition of political Catholicism as well as its interplay with liberalism.[37] An additional strong influence Gross exerted upon Croatian historiography was the adoption of a comparative perspective and the employment of comparative methodologies in general, which eventually resulted in a notable volume of translations of key theoretical texts in that field, edited by Drago Roksandić.[38]

Her books on rightist and populist ideologies maintain a strong comparative perspective and bring wider Western and East-Central European comparative cases and existing entanglements to light as a relevant context. Further, Gross was not afraid to portray the inherent contradictions and extreme positions held by historical actors, especially Ante Starčević and Eugen Kvaternik, who have typically been idealized and utilized for nation-building purposes in Croatian nationalist historiography, which oftentimes selectively reads and decontextualizes their calls for independent Croatian statehood based on a "historical right."

Nevertheless, almost the entirety of her students and successors continued to base their perspectives of Croatian historical development on modernization theory inherently, with a few nuances. This valorisation and thematization of the multiplicity of imperial and hence, cultural borderlands in Croatia and the Balkans more broadly has also been analysed in the Braudelian key and portrayed as a historical "added value" in terms of the originality of political concepts and ideologies devised therein.

War In and Around Historiography: New Readings of Rightism and the Birth of Independent Croatia

It is important to put Gross's writings and research choices into the context of the late socialist Yugoslav crises, spanning from the massive political and cultural movement and conflict that raised the issue of Croatia's position within

35 BLAŽEVIĆ, Zrinka. *Prevođenje povijesti: teorijski obrati i suvremena historijska znanost*. Zagreb : Srednja Europa, 2014.

36 The former being a radically democratic Croatian exclusivist independentist tradition and the latter belonging to a typical mid-19th century liberal national tradition with a strong orientation towards South Slavic cultural and political cooperation.

37 STRECHA, Mario. *Katoličko pravaštvo: politički katolicizam u Banskoj Hrvatskoj u predvečerje Prvoga svjetskog rata (1904–1910)*. Zagreb : Srednja Europa, 2011.

38 ROKSANDIĆ, Drago. *Uvod u komparativnu historiju*. Zagreb : Golden marketing, 2004.

the Yugoslav federation in 1971, namely the Croatian Spring,[39] to the beginning of the civil war in Croatia in 1991 and beyond. In this particular setting, it can be asserted that the role of researching the ideologies behind various "solutions" for the "national integration" of primarily Croatian peoples had multifold implications. First of all, the intellectual history around the rightist movement directly tackled, heavily contextualized and partially affirmed the legitimacy of the question of independent Croatian statehood. The parallel between the Yugoslav federation and the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire, as well as legally strained relations with other nations and an economically and politically exploited Croatia, might have resonated with the moderately nationalist voices around the Croatian Spring and the civil war, especially during the War for Independence.[40]

In fact, while Gross was approaching the topic seriously and using her intellectual resources to show the ideology of rightism as relationally and dialogically as possible, the political thinkers and historians around her managed to selectively extract arguments and motives from her narrative, fashioning the figure of a mid-19th century radical democratic—almost Jacobine—ethnonationalist Ante Starčević as "Father of the Homeland" by accentuating his anti-Serbian stances as well as those that overtly evoked the integration of Bosnians and the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Croatian state.[41] Moreover, in this new reading of her work and the ideology of rightism, nationhood became increasingly essentialized, dehistoricized and naturalized, while independent Croatian statehood was shown to be legally and historically legitimate.

Most importantly perhaps, these tendentious interpretations cantered around the concept of Croatianness and Croatian statehood, breaking away from the Yugoslav and socialist frameworks more broadly. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of the Ustaša movement and symbols during the war itself went hand in hand with the politicization of the history of rightist movement by the political and part of the intellectual elite, which used it to inflate the claim on the historical continuity of Croatians striving for independent statehood. Another partially intellectual[42] historian was in fact responsible for drawing the direct, uninterrupted line of development of Croatian political thought

39 For a more detailed inquiry into the popularization of history as well as the use of history for political purposes in and around the Croatian Spring see: BRANĐOLICA, Tomislav – ŠIMETIN-ŠEGVIĆ, Filip. Historiografija i popularna historija u vrijeme Hrvatskog proljeća. In *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 2019, vol. 51, no. 3, pp. 699–739.

40 However, it is worth mentioning that this parallel was previously raised in interwar Croatian historiography by the notable Croatian intellectual historian and journalist Josip Horvat in his works: HORVAT, Josip. *Ante Starčević: kulturno-povijesna slika.* Zagreb : Antun Velzek, 1940; HORVAT, Josip. *Stranke kod Hrvata i njihove ideologije.* Beograd : Politika, 1939.

41 For instance, one of her opponents in this context was a historian of political Catholicism, see KRIŠTO, Jure. *Prešućena povijest. Katolička crkva u hrvatskoj politici 1850–1918.* Zagreb : Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994.

42 While many contemporary professional historians disapprove of Tuđman's academic status and historiographical contributions, it is important to note that he was essentially tackling very similar research questions and topics as other historians who gradually transitioned from studying the social and/or intellectual history of 19th century Croatian lands to questions of the legitimacy of independent statehood and the national *others* (e.g., Serbian, Yugoslav) against which the contemporary Croatian identity could be defined.

between the two (namely the rightist movement and Ustaša regime as historical forces that worked towards Croatian independence); the first president of independent Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, who relatively tacitly permitted the use of these arguments for the purposes of ideological mobilization.[43] Gross worked hard to counter these tendencies and references in the Croatian public discourse around the war, due not only to her Jewish identity and surviving the horrors of Holocaust as a child, but also her professionalism as a historian. Playing an important role before and after the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia, the ideology of Yugoslavism is another complementary research choice of hers. Not only did it subsume the work of major political thinkers of the 19th century who were engaged in a dialogue with those on the side of Croatian rightism, and thus showing how they managed to reinforce each other, but the work also provided her an opportunity to portray the complexity of the issue of South Slavic political and cultural integration in and around the Habsburg Monarchy. She also recognized, as did many other historians, that one of the key elements and intellectual origins of integral Yugoslavism at the turn of century was Dalmatian rightism.[44]

Furthermore, this allowed her to reflect on the assumptions and implications the unification had for the Croatian people in particular, which was rarely discussed separately in Marxist political historiography. It was especially after the war that the entirety of Yugoslav-related topics were extremely problematic to deal with and were often discriminated against in favour of projecting Croatian nationhood and statehood into the historical past. This is when her work on these topics managed to ease tension and normalize the discussion about intellectual tendencies and political thought in relation to integral Yugoslavism.

In other words, while she used her works on Yugoslavism to openly criticize some arguably more "official," ideologically-motivated and unprofessional approaches to the history of Yugoslavism in socialist Yugoslavia,[45] she used

43 Nevertheless, Tuđman's role as a historian is also relevant, not only because of his intellectual history works on Croatian nationhood and statehood, such as: TUĐMAN, Franjo. *Velike ideje i mali narodi*. Zagreb : Matica Hrvatska, 1969; but also his personal situation as a sort of "national dissident," which additionally publicized and realized the question of the position of Croatian intellectual history within the broader Yugoslav historiography at the time. For a deeper analysis of the ideological underpinnings of his view of history, see ĐURAŠKOVIĆ, Stevo. Nation-building in Franjo Tuđman's Political Writings. In *Politička misao: časopis za politologiju*, 2014, vol. 51, no. 5, pp. 58–79, whereby Đurašković argues that it was based on "the narrative on the nature of humankind as teleological struggle to achieve independent national states; the narrative of supranational ideologies—such as liberalism and communism—acting as a pure geopolitical means used by the great nations to subjugate small ones. And finally the narrative of the Croatian thousand-year long struggle to achieve an independent national state."

44 Dalmatian rightism, while immensely heterogeneous in terms of party politics and ideological associations throughout the second half of 19th century, had a liberal strain which went beyond political Catholicism and Dalmatian autonomist pro-Italian traditions, both of which were dominant forces up to the turn of century. This liberal and progressive rightist thread, personified in the figures of Frano Supilo and Ante Trumbić, argued for unification of Dalmatia with Croatia-Slavonia in cooperation with Serbian political actors as part of their broader Yugoslavist framework, with the support of Ferenc Kossuth's Independentist Party of '48ers, all against the German *Drang nach Osten*. It thus differed from the narrowly Croatian, Catholic and socially conservative rightist traditions that were dominant in Croatia-Slavonia and Istria at the time.

45 GROSS, Mirjana. *Vladavina Hrvatsko-srpske koalicije 1906–1907*. Beograd : Institut društvenih

the result of that same research to bring it back into the picture at a time when it was being severely and pro-actively distorted and abused in the 1990s and early 2000s. In the first case, during state-socialism, she managed to decentralize and conceptually excavate the intellectual origins of Yugoslavism through her work on the ideology of one of the key thinkers of the 19th century who espoused it, Franjo Rački, even if it went against the political assertions of the day. Her polemic with Serbian historians Vladimir Dedijer, Milorad Ekmečić and others, on the occasion of publication of the notable volume *History of Yugoslavia* (1973),[46] which was an attempt to substitute the aforementioned never-finalized comprehensive state-sponsored project *History of the Yugoslav Peoples*, is especially worth mentioning here.[47]

In a staunch criticism of the book, she exposed and countered numerous fallacies, baseless claims and tendentious nationalist arguments around 19th century conceptions of South Slavic integration, particularly those which attempted to portray the Serbian state and intellectual actors as the crucial "inventors" of the content and carriers of Yugoslavism as an ideology, but also as the main contributors of Yugoslavism's political realization, allegedly due to Serbian peasantry-based and Croatian aristocracy-based political cultures. In order to add some complexity, she disconnected the class base from the articulation of national ideologies and demonstrated the ideological interaction and also cross-fertilization between Croatian, Serbian and Yugoslav nationalisms in the Habsburg Monarchy of the time, showcasing them as vehicles of societal and state modernization.[48]

After the war, she countered the exclusionary, nation-building historiography which promoted a narrow understanding of the origins and development of Croatian national ideology by abusing and de-contextualizing the results of previous studies on rightism and 19th century intellectuals, portraying such political ideas as "state-creating" (*državotvorne*) in character, and thus over-stating the continuity and potency of the movement towards independent Croatian statehood.[49] In particular, she invested into countering the then-dominant decoupling of Croatian and Yugoslav ideological frameworks within Croatian historiography. Namely, in the second edition of her book on "original rightism" published in 2000, about three quarters of the content being the results of a completely new study, she relied on the Annales-inspired *longue durée* perspective, employing the methodology of the *histoire des mentalités* and portraying it in relation to multiple other intellectual streams in

nauka, 1960; GROSS, Mirjana. Ideja jugoslavenstva u XIX st. u "Istoriji Jugoslavije". In *Časopis za suvremenu povijest*, 1973, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 8–21; GROSS, Mirjana. Ideja jugoslavenstva u XIX stoljeću i "dogmatski nacionalizam". In *Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis*, 1975, vol. 3–4, pp. 121–160.

46 BOŽIĆ, Ivan et al. *Istorija Jugoslavije.* Belgrade : Prosveta, 1973; translated to English: BOŽIĆ, Ivan et al. *History of Yugoslavia*. New York : McGraw-Hill, 1974.

47 SINDBAEK, Tea. *Usable History. Representations of Yugoslavia's Difficult Past From 1945 to 2002*. Aarhus : Aarhus University Press, 2013, p. 96.

48 GROSS 1973.

49 MATKOVIĆ Stjepan. *Čista stranka prava 1895–1903*. Zagreb : Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2001; TURKALJ, Jasna – MATIJEVIĆ, Zlatko – MATKOVIĆ, Stjepan. *Pravaška misao: zbornik radova*. Zagreb : Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2007; MATKOVIĆ, Stjepan. *Izabrani portreti pravaša: prilozi hrvatskoj političkoj povijesti*. Zagreb : Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2012.

a synchronic and diachronic perspective. In this way, she denaturalized and showcased rightism as solely one of many rather politically marginal "solutions" for the national integration of Croatian and other South Slavic peoples in the mid- to late-19th century when it transformed from a youth sect centred around charismatic leaders such as A. Starčević and E. Kvaternik to a massive political movement at the turn of century.

Importantly, she also went against the predominant reading of Yugoslavia in the paradigmatic vision of the "Homeland War" of the 1990s/2000s—akin to understanding the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy of the triumphalist historiography of the 1920s—as a "prison of peoples" in which Croatia could not realize its otherwise historically and legally justified claims to independence and, hence, free cultural and economic development. Simultaneously with Gross' and others' efforts inside local historiography, there were intellectual historians who attempted to answer similar questions from an émigré perspective, and it is in that context, important to mention the role and the work of historian, writer and politician Ivo Banac, who was awarded a PhD from the University of Stanford and subsequently taught at Yale University, Central European University and the University of Zagreb. While principally researching a narrowly conceived political history, Banac's contribution towards Croatian intellectual history can in part be recognised as one of raising the "nationality question in Yugoslavia" in his most notable book,[50] as well as the closely related "Croatian language question."[51]

The postmodern perspectives and linguistic turnaround in the 1990s enjoyed a somewhat mixed reception within Croatian historiography, which can be exemplified not only by Mirjana Gross's essay in which she explicitly expresses scepticism towards the new trends arriving from social sciences and partially from other humanities,[52] but also by the notable discussion it prompted between her and one of her students and intellectual successors, Zrinka Blažević, who became a practitioner and participant in some of the schools which grew out of these traditions relatively quickly, relying mainly on post-structuralist approaches and literary theory. Lastly, a number of historians and political scientists who dealt with conservative and radical right thought as well as the relationship between culture and the Ustaša movement, all of which were pertinent questions after the 1990s war when Ustaša symbolism and ideologuemes were rehabilitated by state institutions, used historical methodologies and constructivist traditions promoted by Gross to contextualize, diversify and interpret the ideas of the thinkers they were studying. Stevo Đurašković's studies on the "mediterranism" of Bogdan Radica[53]

50 BANAC, Ivo. *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics.* Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 1984.

51 BANAC, Ivo. *Hrvatsko jezično pitanje.* Zagreb : Društvo hrvatskih književnika, 1991.

52 GROSS, Mirjana. Dekonstrukcija historije ili svijet bez prošlosti. In *Historijski zbornik*, 2009, vol. 62, no. 1, pp. 165–194.

53 ĐURAŠKOVIĆ, Stevo. Mediteranizam Bogdana Radice kao ideja slobode nasuprot totalitarizmima. In ROKSANDIĆ, Drago – CVIJOVIĆ-JAVORINA, Ivana (eds.) *Split i Vladan Desnica 1918–1945. Umjetničko stvaralaštvo između kulture i politike: Zbornik radova sa znanstvenog skupa Desničini susreti 2015*. Zagreb : FF Press, 2016, pp. 233–244.

and the conceptual intricacies of Franjo Tuđman's ideology, or Tihomir Cipek's work on the numerous ideological incarnations of Croatian national identity, as well as Višeslav Aralica's reading of Croatian nationalism in the agrarian populist, fascist and totalitarian contexts all strongly contributed to nuancing the otherwise plastic, teleological perspectives on the ideological morphology of Croatian nationalism in the modern era, even beyond its perceptions as "useful" for the 1990s political moment and historicization of a homogenous nation-state.

Enduring Legacies and the Prevalence of Historiographies of Finitude

Intellectual history writing in Croatia from 1945 onwards displayed a persistent tendency to reflect upon questions of Croatian nationhood and statehood from a more or less social perspective. Furthermore, literature was rarely conceptualized as a separate unit of analysis and was either imagined as a part of social history, or as cultural history defined strictly against what was considered political history. The main concepts that came to be juxtaposed to Croatian nationhood and statehood towards the 1990s were the projects of Yugoslavism and state-socialism, with special attention paid to the role of the Serbian minority in Croatia and its conduciveness to the development of the modern Croatian national identity and the (nation-)state. Yugoslavism was increasingly portrayed as alien to Croatian intellectual history and the process of national integration, as well as a vehicle for the realization of Serbian national interests at the expense of Croatian intentions. After the 1990s war, however, the Serbian national minority in Croatia became the constitutive "other" of Croatian national identity, which was consequently strongly reflected in nationalist historiography and contemporary political discourse.[54] Croatian historiography attempted to follow certain trends and turns that were occurring in other national or regional historiographies around Europe throughout this period, but they were often heavily negotiated with Marxist political ideals and gradually nationalizing positivist historiographies. There were several notable exceptions which genuinely invested effort into comparative contextualizing and accounting for the latest developments on the international historiographical stage, especially with regard to social history.

Along with attempts to make use of Croatian and wider Yugoslav heritage by multiple imperial histories overlapping for the purpose of developing innovative perspectives, theories and methodologies, went the process of re-focusing on other levels of research (e.g., regional or micro-history), leaving aside the national account, or putting it into a comparative perspective. Though, due to the experience of the war and the realization of national independence, there was immense political pressure to rethink existing historiographical approaches and patterns and to provide a new, much more Croatian history for the state in the making, something that managed to seriously distort efforts

54 JOVIĆ, Dejan. *Rat i mit. Politika identiteta u suvremenoj Hrvatskoj*. Zagreb : Fraktura, 2017.

that were underway in the late socialist period and beyond. In a nutshell, writing the "national" history and thus the "national" intellectual history of those intellectual figures who claimed to be Croatian, became an imperative and any questioning of the new canon, even if it was completely progressive and aligned with the contemporary European and global historiographical trends, became problematic and was rejected in favour of positivistic, nation-building master narratives.

The most contemporary trends often build on such work, mainly by omitting the heritage of Marxist, socialist and communist thinking from Croatian intellectual history and hence, the national identity, simultaneously rehabilitating radical right wing or fascist thinkers fashioning them primarily as "victims of communist terror" or as intentionally "forgotten" by the Marxist positivist historiography.[55]

Moreover, the most recent example of decontextualization and new understandings of thinkers from multiple traditions of rightism can be found in a recently published book[56] by Stipe Kljaić from the Croatian Institute of History, which combines a series of biographies of, he argues, conservative political thinkers, spanning from Mihovil Pavlinović to Bogdan Radica. The author claims that the reading of the "true", namely conservative or counterrevolutionary, intellectual character of their writings can only be done in the present day, after the "silence" induced by alleged liberal-communist hegemony in historiography was lifted.

Nevertheless, as intellectual history gains momentum as an independent field of study internationally, Croatian state institutions are investing in relatively large-scale domestic and international research projects in the field.[57] Included are some less positive examples of such collaborative projects in which the wider East-Central European paradigms, such as cultural opposition and dissidentism,[58] are intentionally mistaken and applied to the Yugoslav case

55 KLJAIĆ 2022; TOMAS, Domagoj. *Ideologija, krivnja i odmazda. Vlaho Lovrić i (dis)kontinuiteti prve polovice 20. stoljeća*. Zagreb : Alfa, 2021.

56 KLJAIĆ, Stipe. *Povijest kontarevolucije. Hrvatska konzervativna misao od 1789. do 1989*. Zagreb : Naklada Pavičić, 2022; KLJAIĆ, Stipe. *Nikada više Jugoslavija. Intelektualci i hrvatsko nacionalno pitanje (1929–1945)*. Zagreb : Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2017.

57 Hrvatska znanstvena i filozofska baština: transferi i aproprijacije znanja od srednjeg vijeka do dvadesetog stoljeća u europskom kontekstu (IP-2016-06-6762), (Croatian scientific and philosophical heritage: transfers and appropriations of knowledge from the Middle Ages to the 20th century in the European context) led by Željko Dugac from the Department for history and philosophy of science at the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences (2017–2021); Moderne misleće žene: intelektualni razvoj žena u Hrvatskoj 20. stoljeća (IP-2018-01-3732) (Modern thinking women: intellectual development of women in 20th century Croatia) led by Andrea Feldman from the Faculty of Teacher Education, University of Zagreb.

58 This particularly refers to the way in which the Hrvatski institut za povijest (The Croatian Institute for History) participated in the international project COURAGE, Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries, funded by Horizon 2020, the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2016–2019), which was notably problematized by Dubravka Ugrešić in her article, *An Archaeology of Resistance*, in *New York Review of Books,* 16 November, 2020, whereby she argued that one of the intellectual intentions behind the Croatian part of the project was to refashion certain problematic thinkers as dissidents and labeled it part of a campaign of historical revisionism and a lumping together of liberal and democratic, as well as Nazi-supporting enemies of the socialist Yugoslav regime; see: https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2020/11/16/an-archaeology-of-resistance/ (last viewed on 11 April 2022).

in such a way as to rehabilitate the ultranationalist intellectual figures and portray them as merely culturally dissident, without problematizing their ideological legacies. This tendency is especially evident in a recently opened question in Croatian intellectual historiography and memory politics from the present day, which is the totalitarian paradigm and its applicability to the Yugoslav case. The institutions of the European Union and Western European historiographies often insist on equating the totalitarian experiences of Nazism and Communism in their memory cultures, and post-Yugoslav historiography tends to count Yugoslav history as one of those.

As long as this continues, there will be legitimacy for the occurrences such as the state-led "Council for Dealing with Consequences of the Rule of Non-Democratic Regimes,"[59] which was established by the Croatian parliament in 2017 in an attempt to "finally come to terms with the past"—following the German example of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*—and close some interpretations and discussions once and for all. It could be argued that this attempt in itself displays totalitarian tendencies by establishing a "historical truth," firmly remaining in the Croatian tradition of the historiographies of finitude. The case of Mirjana Gross demonstrates how an attempt to provide a comprehensive intellectual account of a local intellectual stream of thought without serving the contemporary political agenda evoked equally unprofessional reactions, both in the state-socialist and nationalist historiographical environments, which then served as a basis for dehistoricized, decontextualized, selective and politically tendentious reading of local thinkers in the period of establishing of a new political order from the 1990s onwards.

Conclusion

Croatian intellectual history writing in the post-1945 period was markedly characterized by a duality between the historiographies of finitude and a self-reflexive, open-ended ones. The former relied on a teleological view of history, culminating either in Tito's partisans' revolution and the creation of a socialist, federal Yugoslav state, or in the independent Croatian statehood, depending on the period. On the other hand, the latter stream countered these tendencies by introducing constructivist, relational and comparative methodologies with a focus on similar themes and historical periods that often had to do with historicizing Croatian nationhood and statehood. Moreover, the historiographies of finitude were generally less receptive to external or internal theoretical and methodological developments and advances, remaining mostly on the positivist line throughout the period.

On the other hand, the historiography that was more self-reflexive predominantly engaged in appropriating trends originating from the Annales school to local context, and used concepts from political or literary theories to analyse crucial political ideas and ideologies that shaped Croatian nationalism and

59 Recommendations adopted by the council for dealing with the consequences of undemocratic regimes, https://vlada.gov.hr/recommendations-adopted-by-the-council-for-dealing-with-the-consequences-of-undemocratic-regimes/23539 (last viewed on 10 March 2022).

claims for statehood throughout the ages. Both in the state-socialist period and in the subsequent period, the historiographies of finitude can be said to have been less inclined to cooperate or engage in the polemics with their counterparts within the Yugoslav state or in the post-Yugoslav space, instead closing themselves into self-referential circles, which oftentimes resulted in a decontextualized and one-sided perspective on key topics.

The case of Mirjana Gross, who was arguably one of the most significant intellectual historians in Croatia and belonged to the self-reflexive historiographical tradition, demonstrates the sophisticated strategies of transgressing challenges posed by the historiographies of finitude through engaging in direct scholarly polemics with unfounded positivist arguments by showcasing the constructed, relational, mundane, comparative, *longue durée* and contingent aspects of one nationalism's development. Finally, during the state-socialist period, Mirjana Gross' work on the ideologies of rightism and Yugoslavism countered state-promoted interpretations simplified for the political legitimation of the state, as well as the Serbian nationalist current that was aiming at a gradual rewriting and replacing of the 19th century input of Croatian intellectuals to a Yugoslav political integration with the Serbian one. Furthermore, after the 1990s wars and the establishment of an independent Croatian state, her expertise was applied to the intellectual history of Europe and the Habsburg Monarchy in re-contextualizing the history of original rightism and its subsequent incarnation in the original ideological and intellectual context, arguing for understanding it as a marginal radical movement until the turn of century, which was in dialogue with the much more influential program of South Slavic cultural and political integration that the 1990s historiography was increasingly attempting to remove from the intellectual history of the period.

Acknowledgements

I would like to sincerely thank Barbora Buzássyová, Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences, for her suggestions and comments during the initial phase of the paper, my supervisor, Balázs Trencsényi, who prompted me to publish this article and the two anonymous reviewers whose comments greatly helped enrich this article's focus and argument.