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## State institutes and the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, 1948–1953\*

### Abstract

State institutes started emerging shortly after the establishment of the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918) in the form of institutions affiliated to the Ministry of Schools and National Education. They were independent scientific institutions receiving regular state subsidies and their scientific focus and budgets were approved by the state.

The State Institute of Archaeology and the National Institute for Folk Songs were founded in 1919.

We may already follow the activities of the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Institute of Slavic Studies in the early 1920s. – even though they reached full efficiency only in 1928.

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The paper shows the organizational and personal transformation of these institutions, in particular from 1948 until 1952 or 1953, when they “voluntarily” became part of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. The incorporation of state institutes into the Academy of Sciences thus gives a clearer picture of the centralization of sciences in the 1950s, arranged according to the Soviet model.

**Keywords:** *Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, state institutes, centralization of sciences, communism*

## Instytuty państwowe i Czechosłowacka Akademia Nauk, 1948–1953

### Streszczenie

Instytuty państwowe zaczęły powstawać wkrótce po utworzeniu pierwszej Republiki Czechosłowackiej (1918) w formie instytucji powiązanych z Ministerstwem Szkół i Edukacji Narodowej. Były niezależnymi instytucjami naukowymi otrzymującymi regularne subwencje państwowe, a ich naukowa działalność i budżety były zatwierdzane przez państwo.

Państwowy Instytut Archeologii i Narodowy Instytut Pieśni Ludowych powstały w 1919 r.

Możemy śledzić działania Instytutu Studiów Wschodnich i Instytutu Studiów Słowistycznych już od wczesnych lat dwudziestych, choć osiągnęły one pełną sprawność dopiero w 1928 r.

W artykule przedstawiono transformację organizacyjną i kadrową tych instytucji, zwłaszcza od 1948 do 1952 lub 1953 r., kiedy to „dobrowolnie” stały się częściami Czechosłowackiej Akademii Nauk. Na przykładzie włączenia instytutów państwowych do Akademii Nauk ukazano na czym polegała centralizacja nauk w latach pięćdziesiątych, organizowana według modelu radzieckiego.

**Słowa kluczowe:** *Czechosłowacka Akademia Nauk, instytuty państwowe, centralizacja nauki, komunizm*

## 1. Reorganising research in the 1940s/1950s – an introduction

The Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was founded on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1952. Its foundation was preceded by seven years of deliberations and negotiations how to best organise research institutions in Czechoslovakia in the post-war era. In the end, the Academy incorporated a number of pre-existing institutions.

Concerning the pre-existing non-university Czechoslovak research institutions (operating mainly as learned societies), which flourished in the interwar period and the activities of which were often adversely affected by the Second World War, a number of these nominally independent institutes resumed work in 1945. These included the Czech Academy of Arts and Sciences (ČAVU), the Royal Bohemian Society for Sciences (KČSN), Czechoslovak National Research Council (ČSN-RB), Masaryk Labour Academy (MAP), and a group of independent institutes administered by the Ministry of Education, namely: the State Institute of Archaeology (established in 1919), the State Institute of Folk Music (became a state institute in 1919), the Institute of History and Editing (established in 1921), the Institute of Slavonic Studies and the Oriental Institute (both established in 1922).

Immediate post-war years brought new challenges for all non-university research institutes that were nominally independent. The departments of the Czech Academy of Arts and Sciences gradually developed into fully-formed research institutes – the Institute of the Czech Language in 1946, the Institute of Nuclear Physics in 1946 to 1950, the Mathematics Research Institute in 1947, and the Czech Literary Institute in 1947 to 1948.<sup>2</sup>

A governmental programme published in July 1946 set a goal of establishing an Academy of Sciences in Czechoslovakia as a central state-controlled (and financed) research institution that would encompass desirable and hence supported areas of research. The Ministry of Education presented an analytical paper in November 1946: “An analysis of theoretical models applicable to a Czechoslovak Academy of

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Bačkovský 1973.

Sciences”.<sup>3</sup> Propositions included in the analysis aimed at a reorganisation of existing institutions, their adaptation in the post-war conditions, and eventually also an establishment of a new “umbrella” institution that would serve as a matrix for existing research institutes and societies or at least for a selected group of them. The ministerial analysis was not popular at first, especially not among scholarly societies and independent research institutes, as these entities feared a loss of independence in research choices as well as in budgeting – although technically they depended on state subsidies anyway, as individual independent donors and larger mecenate were unlikely in post-war conditions.<sup>4</sup>

The State Planning Office compiled then another proposal that envisaged a “Centre for scientific research”, which was to include research as well as experimental and regulatory institutions. The centre was indeed established in 1949. During 1950s, seven centralised research institutes were founded, intended as its parts: the institutes of biology, chemistry, physics, geology, mathematics, astronomy and polarography.<sup>5</sup>

From 1946 till 1951 we follow the formation of new research institutes and reorganisation of the former representative institutions into state-financed institutes with paid researchers. All these institutions, and respectively some of their departments and members, were meant to become part of the new centralised Academy of Sciences.

The complex changes in the academy were closely connected to a gradual political change in Czechoslovakia. The post-war state did not become restored as a fully democratic government and its gradual loss of plurality of political parties participating in power was a prelude to the communist coup in 1948. Czechoslovakia mutated into a totalitarian regime controlled by one party, i.e. the communist party, and was subsumed as a satellite state into the Soviet bloc.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Archives of the Academy of Sciences (hereafter A AV ČR), collection Governmental Board for Establishment of the Academy (hereafter VK ČSAV), box No. 2, part 5/1. *An analysis of theoretical models applicable to the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.*

<sup>4</sup> Míšková 2003; Pokorná 1992; 1999.

<sup>5</sup> List of centralised research institutes: Ústřední ústav biologický, Ústřední ústav fyzikální, Ústřední ústav chemický, Ústřední ústav matematický, Ústřední ústav astronomický, Ústřední ústav geologický, Ústřední ústav polarografický.

<sup>6</sup> Kocian, Devátá (eds.) 2010.

A centralisation of power in the hands of one party was accompanied by the centralisation of economic and cultural programme planning. Economically, the hallmarks of the period were the nationalisation of businesses and the confiscation of privately owned land, and on the cultural front – the free press was muzzled and the research institutions had to be brought under a centralised state control as well.

Immediately after the coup, in February and March 1948, there were numerous revolutionary action committees established at a range of institutions with the ostensible aim to “cleanse” the institutions from “reactionaries” (from state offices to research institutes). There was a considerable impact of the purges instigated by these committees at universities, as both teachers and students that were not certified as politically acceptable (or at least tolerable), had to leave. The purges were less comprehensive than similar processes in Poland or East Germany, and from the Communist party’s perspective the universities, for instance, were always considered as unreliable institutions. The Academy of Sciences was, at least in theory, to be tasked with the centralisation of science, and with balancing the influence of universities.<sup>7</sup>

The newly founded Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences was intended from the beginning as a highly selective institution under direct governmental control. It was tasked with the centralisation of research as well as, in theory, with its ideological control. Its role was eventually more complex, but the political context and a need for negotiation strategies with the overt and covert demands of the regime made an impact on activities of the academic bodies. The idea of the political planners was that all research would be subject to and based on the Marxist-Leninist doctrine. A Soviet-style indoctrination tool was represented by the Czechoslovak-Soviet Institute, established in 1950 and included in the Academy in the 1953; its role was ideological and mediatory in terms of providing a link to Soviet institutions and research interests.<sup>8</sup>

This paper follows the aspects of the re-organisation, and in particular of the integration of the existing state research institutes into the

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on this problem see Connelly 2000, pp. 249–281; Petrůň 2015; Devátá, Olšáková 2010.

<sup>8</sup> The Institute published magazines *Sovětská věda* (Soviet Science) and organised lectures of Soviet scholars. See Petrůň 2015, pp. 168n; Devátá, Olšáková 2011, pp. 333n.

new scheme. It is concerned with the immediate post-war development, as well as with the Communist takeover in 1948 and the ensuing changes, including the strategies of individual institutions versus the new Academy of Sciences, and the institutional expectations versus the requirements of the Academy. Did the Academy offer advantages or disadvantages compared to the previous status? The present study focuses mainly on three institutes: the Oriental Institute, the Institute of Slavonic Studies and the State Institute of Folk Music and their institutional and personal transformation under the emerging organisational scheme. These institutes had a special position. They did not belong to the previously leading scientific organisations such as the Czech Academy of Arts and Sciences, and maintained a high degree of independence throughout their existence in spite of the Ministry of Education's degree of control over their subsidies and research programme.

Their integration into the new scheme illustrates rather well the transformation of the independent research and cultural bodies into research institutes with a defined plan. After 1948, not only their independence, but also their original integration of the economic department's aspects, were radically undermined. This can be well observed in the case of both the Oriental Institute and the Institute of Slavonic Studies. Another aspect of the political influence is shown by establishing research bodies driven ostensibly by the application of new methods. e.g. the Institute for Ethnography that was only later, as a part of an overall centralisation, incorporated into the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences.

## **2. Outline of institutional histories**

### **2.1. The Oriental Institute**

The Oriental Institute was established in 1922 as a state institute dependent on the Ministry of Education and was provided with an endowment of 4 million Czech crowns and a regular annual subsidy from the Ministry of Education reaching several hundred thousand Czech crowns.<sup>9</sup> The interwar Oriental Institute operated rather as a scholarly

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<sup>9</sup> The financing of the Oriental Institute is a very important but rather difficult topic. For more information see Jůnová Macková 2015a.

society, enabling research networking and meetings of Orientalist scholars, Arabic researchers and Egyptology specialists as well as other specialists interested in the Near, Middle and Far East. It had no full-time research positions (scholars connected with the institute were working at universities, as well as at secondary schools or as journalists,<sup>10</sup> etc.), only administrative positions and fellows, but it published an internationally respected periodical, *Archiv Orientální*. The periodical also had a series of supplements and functioned as a publishing platform for Czechoslovak Oriental scholars. The institute's fellowships were offered financing for conferences and research travel expenses. In this form the institute acted as a platform supporting scholars with or without a university position.

The Oriental Institute as well as the Institute of Slavonic Studies had a very specific feature, i.e. a dedicated business section, which was actively engaged in business, marketing and intercultural communication research (the latter not yet under this label) in the respective areas of interest and promoted a set-up of a network of well-informed sales representatives that would ultimately foster export and trade relations in the assigned geopolitical regions. The Institutes were in close connection with the ministries and export companies and passed the most important information onto export-oriented entrepreneurial circles. In a way, these institutes, rather than aiming at a narrowly defined specialist research, promoted an idea close to area studies as exemplified in more recent scholarships.

It does not surprise that during the war the Oriental Institute's activities were limited and suppressed. The business department was closed and the institute's activities were reduced to language classes. Immediately after the war, the debates in the Oriental Institute<sup>11</sup> focused on the future of the reorganised institute. A special committee consisting of researchers, language teachers and students of Oriental languages (i.e. all members and associates, not only its full members) gathered as soon as on 28<sup>th</sup> of May 1945.

The committee aimed at rebuilding the Oriental Institute into a full research and teaching institute, the members of which would all

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<sup>10</sup> For details on the history of the Oriental Institute in the interwar period see Žďárský 2014; Jůnová Macková 2014; Lemmen 2014.

<sup>11</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 14. Meeting of the Oriental institute on 22.5.1945.

participate actively in both research and educational activities concerned with the study and dissemination of knowledge of the Eastern Mediterranean, Western Asia and Middle East. The language classes and the lecture series – intended for the general public – were to remain an essential part of the institute's remit.<sup>12</sup> Early meetings were to be concerned with the “reorganisation of our Institute into a full scholarly institution, on par with similar organisations that are now being planned”<sup>13</sup>

The acting director, Vincenc Lesný, was an Indologist, professor at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University; Bedřich Hrozný, a Hittitologist, professor at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University, who was a leading personality in the interwar period, remained as chairman. The larger, preparatory committee elected an executive committee<sup>14</sup> with the task of supervising the institute's activities. In 1945, a new periodical was started and quickly gained popularity, i.e. *Nový Orient* – the *New Orient* that was also soon published in an English version. A Club of Oriental Languages was set up by the participants of language classes. Furthermore, a Society for cultural and economic relations with the Orient was set up.<sup>15</sup> Eventually, a School of Oriental Languages was established in 1946.

A wider problem of the inclusion of the Oriental Institute into a broader research platform was first presented at a committee meeting

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<sup>12</sup> Jaroslav Průšek commented the situation in 1952 in retrospective: “The first post-revolution meeting of the entire body of Oriental studies scholars decided to end the institute's duality and abolish the business section. The institute consequently had new tasks: 1) editing a new popularising periodical; 2) organising specialist lecture series later to be published in *Archiv Orientální* and 3) organising popularising lecture series.” A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 8, part 11b. Preparations, takeovers and set up of the research departments of ČSAV. Oriental Institute 1952. Report on the Oriental Institute, incorporation into the Academy of Sciences.

<sup>13</sup> See A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 6, inv. No. 15. Meeting of scholars, employees and students of the Oriental Institute 28.5.1945. See also A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 10, inv. No. 31. Institutional development analysis. The Ministry of Education Initiative for Collection of Data on Significant Research Institutes, 13.4.1951, n. 92.295/51-IV/5.

<sup>14</sup> Executive committee had six elected members – scholars: Jan Rypka and Otakar Pertold; teachers: Jaroslav Průšek; employees: Václav Čihař and students: Alois Pultr and L. Hynar).

<sup>15</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 2, inv. No. 8. Reorganisation of the Oriental Institute and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences 1951–1952. Report by Jaroslav Průšek 3.3.1952.

in 1947 as a reaction to a ministerial proposal that was recently circulated.

Dr. Fafl reported on the new organisation of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts, which is supposed to integrate the Oriental Institute. Out of four proposals made by the Ministry, the third option seems the most reasonable. However, Czech-Slovak relations remain unclear... Moreover, the project – as currently presented by the ministry – is a rather problematic one and would lead to a giant, clumsy structure that could not function well due to a lack of personnel. It would be a loss of investment and time. Almost all relevant institutions and universities presented negative opinions to the ministry of education. The Oriental Institute is an institution with a specific character and is unlikely to be practically included in the proposed research infrastructure. These factors have led the committee to a negative opinion. A detailed communication will be issued at a later date.<sup>16</sup>

The Communist coup in February 1948 acutely altered the executive structure of the Oriental institute. The existing executive committee and the officers lost authority and a revolutionary action committee was set up.<sup>17</sup> The executive powers, however, were held by younger members

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<sup>16</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 15. Committee meeting 3.3.1947. Reaction to the letter of the Ministry of education 29.11.1946, and attached document *An analysis of theoretical models applicable to Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences*. A reply by the committee of the Oriental Institute 1.4.1947.

<sup>17</sup> Revolutionary committees were established immediately after the coup in February 1948 at ministries, in factories, local communities, and indeed also research institutes. Their main tasks consisted of “cleansing” or “purging” any organisation by evicting those opposed to the Communist regime. At research institutions some were transformed into more or less capable executive committees that co-opted other members. The rhetoric was entirely subject to Communist doctrines. *In February 1948, the revolutionary committee of the Oriental Institute purged the reactionary forces, and set up a, executive gathering whose executive powers are based on the Central Committees Act*. Viz A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 2, inv. No. 8. Reorganisation of the Oriental Institute and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences 1951–1952. Report Jaroslav Průšek 3.3.1952. Members of the revolutionary committee were: Jaroslav Průšek, Jan Rypka, Vincenc Lesný, J. Čermák, Vlasta Hilská, Alois Pultr, Augustin Palát.

and teachers of the language school, who had support from the elected older and founding members. The business department, already closed during the war, was finally abolished and never renewed.<sup>18</sup> Typical aggressive and manipulative rhetoric was used to explain the provisional committee's steps – “it finally purged the institutional executive from reactionaries and last capitalist elements”.<sup>19</sup> Its activity was concluded at a meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1948, and it was replaced by a new executive committee, which grew further with the inclusion of new co-opted members (mostly from the younger generation of scholars teaching or studying at the School of Oriental Languages).<sup>20</sup> Its chairman was Bedřich Hrozný, vice-chairman – Jaroslav Průšek (the most important person of the younger generation, a sinologist and japanologist, who later became director of the Oriental institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences), and Vincenc Lesný stayed on as a director of the Oriental Institute.

Consequently, the institute was transformed significantly from 1948 onwards, following a 1945 plan to change it into a „working research institute“,<sup>21</sup> with resulting changes in membership and a reorientation

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 2, inv. No. 8. Reorganisation of the Oriental Institute and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences 1951–1952. Report Jaroslav Průšek 3.3.1952. See also A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 8, part 11b Preparations, takeovers and set up of the research departments of Academy of Sciences Oriental institute 1952. Oriental institute report and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences.

<sup>19</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 10, inv. No. 31. Report on the Oriental institute 18.8.1953.

<sup>20</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 2, inv. No. 8. Reorganisation and incorporation of the Oriental institute into the Academy of Sciences 1951–1952. Report Jaroslav Průšek 3.3.1952 and box No. 10, inv. No. 31. Members: Bedřich Hrozný, Jaroslav Průšek, Jan Rypka, Vincenc Lesný, Otakar Pertold, Felix Tauer, František Lexa, František Peroutka, J. Čermák, František Bous, Vlasta Hilská, Alois Pultr, Augustín Palát, Václav Čihař, Lubor Matouš, Oldřich Friš, Adolf Janáček, Pavel Poucha, M. C. Vejborný, J. Poch, Erich Herold, Josef Bartůšek. Institutional development analysis. The Ministry of Education Initiative for Collection of Data on Significant Research Institutes, n. 92.295/51-IV/5.

<sup>21</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 2, inv. No. 8. Reorganisation of the Oriental Institute and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences 1951–1952. Report Jaroslav Průšek 3.3.1952 and box No. 10, inv. No. 31. Institutional development analysis. The Ministry of Education Initiative for Collection of Data on Significant Research Institutes, n. 92.295/51-IV/5.

from the area studies, including trade, to language studies, philology, teaching and popularising. These changes opened the door both to a systematic and state-subsidised research and to a use of Oriental studies in state propaganda projects. The two sides – complex and quality research versus manipulative statements – co-existed in a number of research institutions operating under authoritarian regimes and in a tight grip of Soviet control.

In December 1950, a first group of new researchers was hired by the Oriental Institute (these scholars became the younger generation, most of them were teaching at the School of Oriental languages during and after the war and studied oriental languages at Charles University). The first group consisted of five researchers, three more came in 1951 and before September 1952 the Oriental Institute had twelve researchers and thirteen assistant employees, the latter mostly in the library, which grew considerably, being enriched by donations and also with books from confiscated private libraries.<sup>22</sup>

To sum up, before the end of 1952, the Oriental Institute was affected by fundamental changes. The business section was lost and its members dismissed.<sup>23</sup> The institute, however, focused on research with full-time job positions for specialists in Oriental studies.

## 2.2 Institute of Slavonic Studies

Similar to the Oriental Institute, the Institute of Slavonic Studies was established in 1922 as a state institute dependent on the Ministry of Education. Its tasks consisted of systematic studies of Slavonic geopolitical areas (mainly Balkan Peninsula) together with research into Slovakia

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<sup>22</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 7, inv. No. 19. List of employees 1943 and 1948–1952. Oriental institute had 28 employees at the beginning of 1952 (8 scholars, assistant researchers and 7 administrative employees), in September 1952 already 34 employees (12 scholars) worked there.

<sup>23</sup> The business section was never properly renewed when the Oriental institute reformed after the war. It was destroyed rather easily as previously it was the interwar bankers and entrepreneurs that had been its mainstay and by 1948 they lost their influence on the social and economic life in Czechoslovakia. The founding generation of ministry officials, such as Zdeněk Fafl, was already retired, and hence had no significant leverage, or, such as Rudolf Hotowetz, had passed away before their work was dismantled.

and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, including culture, languages and trade, and cultivation of ties to these areas. Not unlike the Oriental Institute, the Institute of Slavonic Studies was provided with an endowment of 4 million crowns and a regular annual subsidy from the Ministry of Education, reaching several hundred thousand crowns. The institute offered fellowships for scientific travel expenses and for business contacts and published extensively – periodicals *Byzantinoslavica* and *Germanoslavica* and more than forty scientific monographs. There were no full-time paid research positions.

The war afflicted the institute considerably. It was under German control from 1940 and for a time it was affiliated with the Reinhard Heydrich Foundation and its activities were stopped entirely in 1943. However, as there was no doubt that these changes were enforced, it could resume its operation in 1945 without further delay.

Soon it became clear that the restructuring of the institute was desirable. An executive committee meeting in June 1945 set up a subcommittee<sup>24</sup> consisting of members of both main departments of the institute. The subcommittee had one sole task, i.e. the new organisation of the institute. Practically all the 1945 meetings shared this focus. The subcommittee concluded that a large-scale change of the constitution or the legal status of the institute were not necessary.

The reorganisation as planned should mainly concern the work plan and work programme that should correspond to current requirements. Furthermore, the research focus of the institute should be maintained. It is a matter for further consideration if the institutional activities are to include applied research, i.e. educational and popularising elements.<sup>25</sup>

The subcommittee also emphasized that the character of the institute at present was that of a scholarly society or charity rather than a purely research-oriented institution.

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<sup>24</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting of the Institute of Slavonic Studies 1.6.1945. Subcommittee members: Antonín Boháč, Karel Domin, Zdeněk Fafl, Jiří Horák, Karel Chotek, Josef Macek, Antonín Pimper, Theodor Saturník, Jan Slavík.

<sup>25</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 29.8.1945.

The inclusion of the Institute of Slavonic studies in the Academy of Sciences was proposed very soon, but the subcommittee had a negative attitude to this.

According to the current ideas, the institute is to be related more closely to the Academy of Arts and Sciences. The subcommittee would like to table a comment that such a plan would require a change in the legal status of the institute that was intended as an independent entity, the independence of which would be lost, and which the subcommittee will defend.<sup>26</sup>

Already in 1945, new administration of the institute was named, led by a literary historian, professor at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Albert Pražák.<sup>27</sup> The departmental division remained in place. Gradually, several subcommittees were nominated to address specific research areas (archaeology, economic history, Balkan studies and literary studies). The priorities consisted of research and international networking. A special subcommittee<sup>28</sup> planned research-related tasks, i.e. editorial projects such as periodicals, monograph series, public lecture series, exhibitions and so on. Following the Oriental Institute model, the School of Slavonic languages was established.

In the late 1946, the Institute of Slavonic Studies received a set of propositions concerning the future centralisation of research organisations. During 1947, the committee meetings at the institute addressed the matter repeatedly, and an assessment was produced as early as in March 1947, but unfortunately it did not survive in the archive records. However, several committee minutes did and one of the early ones in this period summed up a proposed loose relationship to the Academy of Sciences.

The ministerial proposal of a solution for the Academy of Sciences that is to be assessed by the Institute of Slavonic Studies before the end of February 1947, will be discussed

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<sup>26</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 3.10.1945.

<sup>27</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 3, inv. No. 21. Committee meeting 19.12.1945.

<sup>28</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 21.6.1946.

at the early February meeting. Comments by professor Engliš and experts from the presidium of the Academy are awaited. A future relationship of the Institute of Slavonic Studies to the Academy may be regulated similarly to the Institute of Economy that is part of the Academy. A copy of its constitution will be requested.<sup>29</sup>

Important decisions on the reorganisation were thus postponed until the future role of the Institute of Slavonic studies was decided upon in the framework of centralised research infrastructures.

A provisional, revolutionary action committee was formed in 1948 too, led by Frank Wollman (literary scholar, historian, professor at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University), but this committee respected the existing executive and the institutional administration continued working as before – the chairman Albert Pražák was re-elected in 1948 for another three years.<sup>30</sup>

The revolutionary committee eventually transformed into an organising committee that aimed at a reformation of the institute into a purely research oriented institution.

The Chairman of the Institute of Slavonic Studies, Prof. Pražák and the chairman of the revolutionary committee prof. Wollman reported on a meeting with the minister Nejedlý that reached an approval for the plan of reorganising the Institute as proposed by the committee, i.e. into a research institution. The issue of affiliation to the Academy of Sciences remains open.<sup>31</sup>

In 1949, full-time paid researchers started to work for the Institute for the first time.<sup>32</sup> The organising committee grew into a Reorganisation

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<sup>29</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 14.1.1947.

<sup>30</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 3, inv. No. 21. General assembly meeting 9.12.1948.

<sup>31</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 10.6.1948.

<sup>32</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 11.10.1949. From September 1948 till January 1949 became members Slavomír Wollman, Pavel Tučný, Jan Jíša, O. Maleček, M. Kirschnerová-Kašparová, Svobodová-Štědrá.

Board of the Institute of Slavonic Studies<sup>33</sup>, and again new plans were made in a greater detail and more attention was paid to the set-up of research positions. The board presented its new plan in November 1949.

With respect to the previous negotiations of the revolutionary and other committees, it follows that the Institute must be reorganised into a purely scholarly organisation, its two departments abolished and replaced by research divisions.<sup>34</sup>

The plans for restructuring the institute as an independent entity, i.e. a state institute, however, were stopped in 1950, on the eve of the overall changes in the system of research institutions in Czechoslovakia.

The Ministry official Professor Vaněček<sup>35</sup> announced a new project of a general reorganisation of research in Czechoslovakia. The general plan, however, will not be ready until late 1950, hence the present recommendation is that the institute continues in its current form but with new tasks, new emphasis, and new forces.<sup>36</sup>

If we look beyond the rather ponderous rhetoric of constant “re-organisations, restructuring” etc., we see a gradual transformation of the Institute of Slavonic Studies into a departmentalised research institution, much larger than its interwar precursor, which specialised in the history, literature and language as well as the archaeology of Slavic

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<sup>33</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 11.10.1949. Members of the Reorganisation Board of the Institute of Slavonic Studies: Václav Čejchan, Julius Dolanský, Ladislav Dvořák, Zdeněk Fafl, Jan Filip, Antonín Grund, Bohuslav Havránek, Karel Horálek, Vilém Hromádka, Zikmund Konečný, Karel Krejčí, Josef Macek, Josef Macůrek, Bohumil Mathesius, Prokop Maxa, Albert Pražák, Vladimír Procházka, Oldřich Říha, Ludvík Svoboda, František Trávníček, Václav Vaněček, Frank Wollman.

<sup>34</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 6, inv. No. 30. Reorganisation Board meeting 11.10.1949.

<sup>35</sup> In January 1950, the Reorganisation elected its chairpersons: chairman Frank Wollman, vice-chairman Václav Vaněček, and executive officer Václav Čejchan.

<sup>36</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 6, inv. No. 31. Reorganisation Board meeting 27.1.1950.

countries. Its programme of activities included publication of periodicals such as *Slavia* and *Byzantinoslavica*, monographs, and again public lecture series, the latter often with topical modern (and propaganda) themes. The number of full-time researchers grew steadily. In November 1951, there were 28 employees including librarians. A school of Slavonic languages and a Brno office of the Institute were opened. The future of the institute lay in its affiliation to the Academy of Sciences, but already without any sociology and business aspirations.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.3. State Institute of Folk Music

In the interwar period, the State Institute of Folk Music (SÚLP) acted as a representative scholarly society that would offer its affiliation rather than a prestigious label. Under its aegis, four boards (Czech, Moravian-Silesian, Slovak and German – the latter being abolished during the war) supported the search for and collection of traditional music and texts of folk songs across Czechoslovakia. Most of the activities were done on a voluntary basis and an annual subsidy from the Ministry of Education was rather a nominal one (a few thousand crowns a year), but enabled the Institute to buy private collections, copy texts and publish edited collections. Jiří Horák (a slavist and folklorist, professor at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University) acted as its chairman during the war, eventually, however, the Institute became part of the Reinhardt Heydrich Stiftung.

After the Second World War, SÚLP shared the intention to become a fully subsidised research institute with only two departments. The Czech board was chaired by Zdeněk Nejedlý (historian, musicologist professor at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, became involved in politics – head of ministry of education etc. and in 1952 was elected as a chairman of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences), and from 1948 by Jiří Horák, Moravian-Silesian by Alois Gregor, then, after 1948, by Jan Racek.

After consultations at the Ministry of Education, Jiří Horák reported new priorities – a defined institutional administrative structure, a re-

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<sup>37</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 6, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 12.5.1952. The business section was no longer included in propositions for an inclusion in the Academy.

search plan and goals, including both scholarly editions that would confirm the professional status of the SÚLP, and dissemination of popularising information.<sup>38</sup> As a result, SÚLP obtained two full-time research workers and one assistant in November 1950.<sup>39</sup>

As the institute had to provide a report for the state general assessment (1952), it provided the following.

The institute's main task consists of research and collection of traditional music including dances, folk songs and related musical phenomena that either have a folk origin or were reinterpreted in traditional environment. Collected material is to be analysed critically and – in case it remains unpublished – edited for public access. Eventually, the institute focuses on structuring the existing musical collections and new additions to these, maintaining a systematic collection of musical material organised on sound scholarly principles.<sup>40</sup>

The institute therefore had tasks that may be classified as folkloristics, or more generally, ethnography. The history of Czechoslovak university ethnography and that of the SÚLP intersected soon thereafter.

#### 2.4. Institute of Ethnography

In the 1950s, ranks of ethnographers received a new generation of researchers that started the studies in a complex post-war atmosphere. Students of ethnography at the faculty of arts of Charles University formed a Marxist circle – a new platform for communist party members (led by Otakar Nahodil, a Marxist ethnographer) already in 1949 and was in active opposition to their teachers. The main aim of the

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<sup>38</sup> Viz A AV ČR, collections State Institute of Folk Music (hereafter SÚLP), box No. 2, inv. No. 44. Report by Jiří Horák for Moravian-Silesian board concerning meeting at the Ministry of education.

<sup>39</sup> A AV ČR, collection State Institute of Folk Music (hereafter SÚLP), box No. 2, inv. No. 65. Employees 1946–1952. Stanislav Petíra as a scholar, Dagmar Rychnová as a scholar (for one year), Moravian-Silesian board had one scholar Zdenka Jelínková (who replaced Jiří Vysloužil). Cf. Vysloužil 2006; Melzer 2006.

<sup>40</sup> A AV ČR, collection SÚLP, box No. 2, inv. No. 42. List of scientific institutes [1952].

circle was to promote new soviet methods in the seminar of ethnography.<sup>41</sup> The ministry of information (basically, propaganda) called for a first Czechoslovak ethnography conference at the Faculty of Arts in January 1949. Among the propagandist several students of ethnography were actually employed at the ministry: Hannah Rejchrtová-Laudová, Rostislava Křížková and Věra Hasalová. It was the beginning of an ideological transformation of the Czechoslovak ethnography.

A younger generation of researchers took the initiative and set up a new project that rejected previous institutions and authorities to a large extent, and demanded a new institute of ethnography.<sup>42</sup> Eventually, in April 1952, the final plan was made for a specialised Department of Ethnography as a subject institution within the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. SÚLP was to be included in the Academy as well, alongside this new institution.<sup>43</sup> The department started its activities officially on 1st of October 1952, under the direction of a member of the Marxist circle, one Jaroslav Kramařík.<sup>44</sup> Kramařík, who graduated after 1945, selected his colleagues from the faculty of arts. Soon the department had four new researchers and assistants.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Skalníková 2005; Petráňová 2000, p. 307 n. Members of the Marxist circle led by Otakar Nahodil were: Božena Barabášová-Filová, Ludvík Baran, Hana Dymarová-Podešvová, Věra Hasalová, Hana Hynková, Jaroslav Kramařík, Rostislava Křížková, Zdeněk Mišurec, Dagmar Palátová-Cveková, Hannah Rejchrtová-Laudová, Strejčková, Olga Skalníková, Pavel Tučný. See also Petráň 2015, pp. 168–197.

<sup>42</sup> Skalníková 2003; Rejchrtová-Laudová 1949–1950. An attempt to found the Department of Ethnography 1951 viz A AV ČR, collection Section VI, box No. 13, inv. No. 29. The Institute of Ethnography and Folkloristics 1952–1957. The Department of Ethnography 1952. Report by Hana Hynková, Rostislava Křížková and Hannah Laudová 16.9.1952.

<sup>43</sup> A AV ČR, collection Section VI, box no. 20, inv. No. 82. Conference 1952. Resolution of the second national ethnographic conference held in Prague in 1952.

<sup>44</sup> A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 7, part 11/2. Governmental Board report – incorporation of the Department of Ethnography into the Academy of Sciences.

<sup>45</sup> A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 1, part 3. Governmental board committee meeting 22.9.1952, 29.9.1952 and 6.10.1952. New employees: Olga Skalníková (from 1.10.1952, assistant), Eva Vrabcová (from 1.10.1952, assistant researcher, her studies at the university of Leningrad contributed to a new political profile of the institute), Vladimír Scheufler and from October Emanuel Baláš.

### 3. Institutes entering the new Academy of Sciences

The negotiations led by individual institutes with the Governmental Board for the Establishment of the Academy were documented, but the documents did not survive in the archive records. The committees of the respective institutes, however, kept minutes of their meetings. The minutes show the acceptance of the centralisation and other proposals of the Governmental Board. Most of the aforementioned state institutes were willing, if not particularly enthusiastic.

A positive attitude and acceptance were undoubtedly a consequence of the new possibilities that the Academy affiliation offered, such as subsidised research and full-time research jobs. The younger generation of researchers thus grasped the opportunity that their older colleagues, established at the university, did not need to seek. Also, they mostly saw the affiliation and the new subsidies as a chance to develop the institutes' legacies. An exception to this was the Department of Ethnography, which was formed as a new entity and with a research plan and personnel structure adapted to the expectations of the Academy.

#### 3.1. Individual institutional attitudes

Mostly, being affiliated to the Academy of Sciences was a logical step following an independent, but financially limited existence. The committees and the executive officers mostly accepted the centralisation as a matter of fact, no longer to be discussed, but only to be implemented, to their advantage if possible.

In February 1952, the Committee of the Oriental Institute announced its affiliation to the Academy of Sciences. The move was accepted without further debates, indeed, the minutes betray no reaction at all.

Professor Lesný reported on the founding of the new Academy of Sciences and the Oriental Institute's affiliation to it. Preparatory steps are in process. The Academy act is expected on 9 May. Research tasks for the academicians will be set by the state and the government.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 5, inv. No. 14. Committee meeting 28.3.1952.

The Institute of Slavonic studies committee also accepted their upcoming affiliation as a fact. No opposition or further discussion was minuted.

[At one occasion] at the end of the meeting, Professor Dolanský presented a detailed report on the prepared re-organisation of the research and scientific activities and the affiliation of the Institute of Slavonic studies in the future Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. The institute in its new form will have three sections – history, philology and literary studies – and an office in Brno.<sup>47</sup>

In May 1952, the members of the reorganised institute met for the last time and a Marxist-oriented literary historian, prof. Julius Dolanský, noted that

The Institute of Slavonic Studies will be affiliated to the future Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and has a very promising perspective for its development and activities.<sup>48</sup>

SÚLP, however, unlike the above two institutes, debated its new position in detail and was not content with an affiliation and an ensuing loss of independence, especially if it were to be merged with the Department of Ethnography. In November 1952, the position of this institute was still open and its head, Jiří Horák, attempted to convince the Governmental Board that SÚLP should have been maintained as an independent entity, even if affiliated to the Academy. He approached Jaroslav Böhm (archaeologist, director of the State Institute of Archaeology, vice-chairman of the Governmental Board for the Establishment of the Academy of Sciences) in the Scientific Board of the Department of Ethnography and tried to convince him that SÚLP should stay independent.

I aim at a clear definition of the status of the Institute of Folk Music, especially with regard to the Department of Ethnography. Initially, I was told by the secretary Černý

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<sup>47</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 6, inv. No. 25. Committee meeting 12.5.1952.

<sup>48</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 3, inv. No. 21. Committee meeting 16.2.1952.

that we will be an independent department. I consider this to be the only possible and acceptable solution and appeal to you to support it.<sup>49</sup>

### 3.2. Governmental Board

The Governmental Board concerned with the establishment of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (ČSAV) convened in January 1952.<sup>50</sup> This Board was comprised of significant scholars and scientists of the older as well as the of younger generation from various fields. Its chief task was the founding act and the preparation of the structure of the new academy, including the selection of institutes and members. The Board was also concerned with budgetary plans for 1952 and 1953 and with setting up a research plan.

The Board had four sections, the humanities were included in the fourth section. The fourth section worked on the characterisation of individual subjects, and their research and conference plans from February 1952. They also assessed the existing research entities; the situation in the Oriental studies was considered *satisfactory*, and in the Ethnography – *unsatisfactory*.<sup>51</sup>

The future institutes thus had an unequal position from the outset. In April, Jaroslav Průšek proposed an affiliation of the Oriental Institute and it was accepted after the 1952 budget approval.<sup>52</sup> In the proposal, the institute's goal was a complex research of the developing countries, assuming seven sections, geographically oriented, for different geopolitical areas of Africa, Asia etc., including non-Slavic nations of the Soviet Union. Průšek proposed 25 research employees (as opposed to the existing 8). Including support staff, there were 65 employees

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<sup>49</sup> A AV ČR, collection SÚLP, box No. 2, inv. No. 45. Letter by Jiří Horák for Governmental board (directly for Jaroslav Böhm), 13.11.1952, n. 835/52.

<sup>50</sup> See Míšková 1993; Schwippel 1981; Beran 2004. Documents are preserved in A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV.

<sup>51</sup> A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 6, part 10. Humanities and Social Sciences section meetings, 10.2.1952.

<sup>52</sup> A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 6, part 10. Humanities and Social Sciences section meetings 17.4. and 24.4.1952. A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 2, inv. No. 8. Reorganisation of the Oriental Institute and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences 1951–1952. Report Jaroslav Průšek 3.3.1952.

in the proposal. The annual budget was altogether 13 million crowns, with a half assigned for salaries and a half for other expenses.<sup>53</sup>

In March 1952, the Board assessed the Institute of Slavonic Studies and its verdict was that *the Institute needs to be principally restructured*.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, i.e. in spring 1952, a Marxist-oriented historian Václav Husa presented a detailed assessment of the current status of the Institute of Slavonic Studies. Its main tasks consisted of language, literature and lexical studies, studies in transliteration of non-Latin scripts and studies in Slavic cultures. The reorganisation as described in Husa's model, intended to systemise three sections – language, history and literary studies – following a model set by the Slavonic Studies Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Husa proposed academic staff of 50 and support staff of 10.<sup>55</sup> A budget proposal did not survive, but since the staffing was close to the Oriental Institute proposal, it must have been in a similar range, i.e. around 13 million crowns.

In the meantime, ethnographers from the main Czechoslovak institutions (universities and museums) organised a second state conference in April 1952, and as a result, the above-mentioned Department of Ethnography was founded.<sup>56</sup> Its establishment was proposed to the Governmental Board by Jaroslav Böhm, who based its proposal on the conference conclusions; the idea was of an Ethnographic Institute that would be part of the Academy and would have offices in Prague and in Brno. The conference also set research aims.

Ethnography will analyse our national culture in the past and the present, in all its manifestations and phenomena,

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<sup>53</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 2, inv. No. 8. Reorganisation of the Oriental Institute and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences 1951–1952. Report Jaroslav Průšek 3.3.1952. For a similar version of the report see A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 8, part 11b. Oriental institute report and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences.

<sup>54</sup> A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 6, part 10/1. First summary report by the Humanities and Social Sciences section for the establishment of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences 8.3.1952.

<sup>55</sup> A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 8, part 11b. The Institute of Slavonic studies report and its incorporation into the Academy of Sciences. Václav Husa, sine data, 1952.

<sup>56</sup> A AV ČR, collection Section VI, box No. 20, inv. No. 82. Conference 1952. Resolution of the second national ethnographic conference held in Prague in 1952.

indeed especially where the current transformation of our society and order is manifested – the research is to be concerned with industrialised urban as well as with rural areas.<sup>57</sup>

The Department was to have five sections including specialised Czech and Slovak ethnography research as well as studies in traditional culture. The staff was to have at least 10 full employees, three in the Brno office.<sup>58</sup>

Studies in traditional culture, including music, caused apprehension in the SÚLP, especially its chairman Horák, who, as already hinted at above, was concerned that his institute would be dissolved within the Academy. Finally, in autumn of 1952, SÚLP was kept as an independent institute (i.e. not dissolved within the Department of Ethnography), but affiliated to the Academy. It had to modify its area of interest, however, to include also traditional oral literature.<sup>59</sup>

Generally speaking, all three above institutes were accepted for the affiliation to the Academy, although with a condition of *reorganisation* to a varied extent. The Governmental Board made its own proposals for future academic institutes in terms of research and support staff, research aims, and indeed also location, as during the immediate post-war period, many research entities were being constantly moved between usually quite unexpected addresses.

## 4. Conclusions

In the autumn of 1952, the nascent Academy absorbed its new elements gradually. Its former section IV was divided into three new sections, VI, VII, and VIII. The former state institutes were mainly in section VI (philosophy and history), and included the Department of Ethnography and the former SÚLP – Department of Folkloristics and section VIII (philology and literature), the Oriental Institute and the Institute of Slavonic Studies.

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<sup>57</sup> A AV ČR, collection Section VI, box No. 20, No. 82. Conference 1952. Resolution of the second national ethnographic conference held in Prague in 1952.

<sup>58</sup> A AV ČR, collection VK ČSAV, box No. 7, part 11/2. Proposal to found a commission of ethnography together with the Department of Ethnography.

<sup>59</sup> A AV ČR, collection SÚLP, box No. 2, inv. No. 45. Letter by Jiří Horák to the Governmental board (directly to Jaroslav Böhme), 13.11.1952, n. 835/52.

New sections and their subdivisions became engaged in research planning, nominations of scientific boards and directors, editorial boards and recruitment of new research and support staff. Budgets for 1953 were also tabled.

Assets of former independent state institutes were absorbed into the Academy assets. This was mainly done by a dedicated Liquidation Board. There were losses as the assets were absorbed and redistributed, but the financial assets were already devastated by a financial reform implemented in 1953, so the loss was more due to that reform than to the redistribution of assets within the Academy.<sup>60</sup> The Academy took possession mainly of libraries and collections.

What did ultimately happen to the institutions we followed in this contribution? The Oriental Institute was functioning as a department of the Academy from January 1953, with 40 staff members (18 research employees, 5 librarians, 5 assistant researchers, 1 assistant, 4 support staff) paid from the Institute's budget. It was led by a director, a specialist in Chinese studies and a corresponding member of the Academy, Jaroslav Průšek.<sup>61</sup>

The Institute of Slavonic Studies was also affiliated to the Academy by January 1953, had 26 employees (23 research employees and 3 members of support staff). It was led by a literary historian, a corresponding member of the Academy, Julius Dolanský.

The Department of Ethnography was set up as a new institution affiliated to the Academy on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1952, led by an ethnographer, Jaroslav Kramařík. By 1953, there were seven research and one support staff; its Brno office led by Karel Fojtík had 2 employees.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> A AV ČR, collection Slavonic Institute, box No. 3, inv. No. 21. General assembly meeting 16.5.1952. Enclosures, Accounts on 31 December 1952 and collection Oriental Institute, box No. 8, inv. No. 22. Transfer of assets for the Academy, 1952–1953, Liquidation Board report on 16 October 1953. The Academy would have obtained 12 million crowns were it not for the reform, mainly in liquid assets of the Oriental and Slavonic Institutes.

<sup>61</sup> A AV ČR, collection Oriental Institute, box No. 10, inv. No. 31. The history of the institute and report 18. 8. 1953 and collection Oriental institute ČSAV, box No. 6, inv. No. 15. Brief history of the Oriental institute from 1922, 18.8.1953.

<sup>62</sup> In the report for the Section VI the Department of Folkloristics states seven members (1.1.1953). Viz A AV ČR, collection Section VI, box No. 13, inv. No. 29.

The former SÚLP – the Department of Folkloristics, was affiliated to the Academy on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1953, led by a folklorist, Jiří Horák (member of the Academy only from 1956) and with six employees in Prague. Its office in Brno was led by Jan Racek and had three employees.

Altogether, the years 1946 to 1951 brought a formation of new institutional characteristics and networks. The research institutes transitioned from a position of independent scholarly societies, operated partly as charities, to a position of state-subsidised institutions offering regular paid research posts. The former independent, if state-subsidised, humanities institutions were affiliated to a centralised Academy during 1952 to 1953. The affiliation was not a voluntary and welcome process, but it was not opposed actively.

The independence in budgeting and in setting research goals was lost to the central control, but on the other hand charity-like institutions obtained paid scientific boards and employees, financed with the Academy budget, and therefore a certain stability. This was soon demonstrated with a growing size of their teams.

Assessing this development in terms of an uneasy balance between research independence, so important in the humanities, and state-controlled – hence also ideologized – planned research goals, is a subject for another paper. The manner in which the Academy “bought” the individual institutions with an offer of financial stability may be interpreted both in positive and negative terms, and must await a very careful evaluation.

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