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Christopher P. Loss

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CHRISTOPHER P. LOSS

Party School: Education, Political Ideology, and the Cold War

John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

György Péteri, *Academia and State Socialism: Essays on the Political History of Academic Life in Post-1945 Hungary and Eastern Europe* (Columbia University Press, 1998).

Arthur L. Smith Jr., *The War for the German Mind: Reeducating Hitler's Soldiers* (Berghahn Books, 1996).

Timothy R. Vogt, *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany: Brandenburg, 1945–1948* (Harvard University Press, 2000).

Books also discussed: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union: 1921–1934* (Cambridge University Press, 1979).

In 1949, Harvard history professor and liberal activist Arthur Schlesinger Jr. declared that the high-stakes global dimensions of the cold war precluded it from being resolved by conventional military means. The combined destructive capacity of the Soviet and American militaries ensured that the standoff between “free” and “totalitarian” societies would be won nonmilitarily, by the combatant most adept at winning the battle for the “minds and hearts of men.”¹ As the principal state institution responsible for shaping citizens’ hearts and minds, the cold war university surfaced as a vital

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weapon in the worldwide war between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Of the two regimes, the Soviet Union was the first to purposely and inextricably connect university research and training with the total development of the modern state. Believing, as Vladimir Lenin did, that education was an indispensable tool for the lasting “communist metamorphosis of . . . [bourgeois] . . . society,” the Soviet government embarked upon a furious two-pronged higher-education policy designed to spur rapid industrial modernization and the ideological indoctrination of a new cadre of proletarian elites.² The reorganization of the Soviet education system followed closely on the heels of the Communist Party’s 1917 political ascendance, and gained unstoppable momentum a decade later with the launch of Josef Stalin’s First Five-Year Plan. Seemingly overnight, peasant and working-class students emerged as the university’s key demographic and the study and glorification of Marxist-Leninist ideology the badge of an educated citizen. To an extent unappreciated by contemporary scholars, the Soviet government’s unprecedented remaking of the university into a state-coordinated “party school” devoted to political training as well as industrial research and development marked a radically new use for education in modern society.

The United States also turned to its constellation of higher-education institutions to help bring order to its industrial and political universe in the twentieth century. Prior to World War II, however, it was a contested union compromised by America’s federalist political tradition and plural arrangement of public and private higher-education institutions. But the pursuit of ideological and militaristic mastery during World War II and the cold war narrowed the gap between the state and higher education, and in the process moved the university from the periphery to the core of American life. Yet scholars interpreted the relocation of the university vis-à-vis society in the Soviet Union and the United States differently. While they unhesitatingly portrayed Soviet higher education as a product and purveyor of Marxist ideology, American scholars and “educrats” balked at examining the liberal democratic ideological impulses that lurked behind America’s cold war education agenda.³ Indeed, aside from a rich literature tracing the rise and fall of McCarthyism’s assault on academic freedom in the 1950s, the ideological treatment of cold war-era American higher education remains largely undeveloped despite copious evidence to the contrary.⁴ Through federally supported education policies, commissions, and

programs—the GI Bill of Rights (1944), the Fulbright Act (1946), UNESCO (1946), the Truman Report (1947), the National Defense Education Act (1958), the Peace Corps (1961), the community college movement, and university-based international and area studies centers—Congress sought to strengthen citizen's political faith and to help the United States fight and win hot and cold wars alike.⁵

Insisting that the growth of applied research was the institution's primary point of intersection within the nexus of political, social, and academic commitments that comprised the United States' larger cold war project, scholars have overlooked the extent to which liberal democratic ideological imperatives influenced federal higher education policymaking, institutional practices, and disciplinary developments during the middle decades of the twentieth century.⁶ Perhaps swayed by Daniel Bell's postwar plea for an "end of ideology," historians neglected to study the ideological nature of America's decentralized federal-state higher education policymaking model because liberal democratic ideology, unlike communist ideology, appeared to sustain, rather than to subvert, the free scientific empirical tradition thought to be the very seedbed of the modern research university enterprise.⁷ By taking Hannah Arendt's equation of "ideology and terror" at face value, historians have failed to consider why and how political ideologies perpetuate themselves in the absence of state terror.⁸ As a result, the liberal democratic fantasy of the disinterested pursuit of academic knowledge production and consumption for its own sake still maintains a strong hold upon the work of today's scholars.⁹

It is for this reason, therefore, that the books under review here are so important. Collectively they challenge the tenacious Humboldtian myth of the objective, apolitical modern research university by exposing communists' multiple illiberal uses for education and higher-education institutions in cold war Eastern Europe. Using a comparative approach to contrast the ideological uses of education within Eastern Europe and, if to a lesser degree, between the East and West, these books examine the relative successes and failures of the Soviet Union's use of education and reeducation as a means of state building, and of universities, professors, and students in the administrative and mental reconstruction of Eastern Europe during and after World War II. Although the results of the Soviet Union's efforts to remold Eastern Europeans through education were at best uneven, and in many instances wholly unsuccessful, these books reveal that during the cold war education played a more im-

portant and far-reaching role in the functioning of the modern state than previous studies tracking the birth of state-sponsored university research and development have allowed.¹⁰ In this essay, I argue that the Soviet Union's effort to use education to shape Eastern Europe and its inhabitants in its own ideological image raises important questions about the state's dissemination of, and the public's receptiveness to, ideology in both the Soviet Union and the United States during the cold war.

First published nearly twenty-five years ago, Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* remains the starting point for any discussion of Soviet education policymaking. As Fitzpatrick explains, between the unveiling of Lenin's New Economic Policy (1921) and upheaval of Stalin's First Five-Year Plan (1928–32), the Communist Party created a remarkably durable blueprint for the reorganization of Russian education that it would later attempt to export to occupied countries in Eastern Europe after World War II.

Expanding upon research she conducted for her dissertation and subsequent book, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts Under Lunacharsky*, Fitzpatrick's *Education and Social Mobility* explores the ostensibly nonviolent means by which the Bolsheviks secured proletarian support through higher education following the October Revolution.¹¹ Specifically, Fitzpatrick challenges scholars who contend that the Bolsheviks betrayed the Marxist pledge of working-class rule. Using higher-education accessibility and upward mobility as her major points of reference, Fitzpatrick convincingly argues that while the Bolsheviks never completely handed the reigns of power over to the proletariat, "They did fulfill a simpler and more comprehensible promise of the revolution—that workers and peasants would have the opportunity to rise into the new ruling elite of the Soviet state" (17).

Fitzpatrick relates the story of the Bolshevik reorganization of Russia's education system in two parts. Part one tracks the myriad and often conflicting policies issued by the Commissariat of Enlightenment (Narkompros) between 1918 and its demise in 1929; part two examines Stalin's oversight of the establishment of a more or less uniform national education policy during his regime's First Five-Year Plan. The difficulty Narkompros had in implementing a cogent education policy in large measure resulted from lukewarm Party guidance, no doubt compounded by Civil War and economic disorder, as

well as from fierce institutional opposition mounted by two competing interest groups, the Supreme Council for the National Economy (Vesenkha) and the radical student-run Komsomol Central Committee. These proletarian interest groups portrayed Narkompros as a holdover of the bourgeois establishment and therefore incapable of purging the higher-education system of its ideologically outmoded curricula, professors, and students.

Ideological differences between Narkompros and its proletarian rivals led to conflicting education agendas and protracted policy stalemate. Although Narkompros and its proletarian opponents supported the continuation of state-supported education, they envisioned Soviet “higher schools” (VUZy) service to the state in decidedly different capacities. On the one hand, Narkompros supported equal educational opportunities for all youth, universal secondary education, and access to higher education for the best and brightest Soviet students, a majority of whom were middle class. For Vesenkha and Komsomol members, however, Narkompros’s obvious middle-class bias—further evidenced by the organization’s commitment to the “general education” of the “cultured man”—was a direct breach of the Marxist creed (251). In a direct challenge to Narkompros’s authority, Vesenkha and Komsomol advanced an alternative education model favoring vocational training at worker institutes (rabfaks), industry-university cooperative education programs, and the active recruitment by universities of peasant and working-class students. But changes in the Soviet Union’s education system occurred slowly, as vague Communist Party directives coupled with interest-group battles prevented either side from assuming definitive control of the Soviet Union’s multifaceted education system. Consequently, after a decade of bureaucratic turf wars, the Soviet government’s effort to build a new “Soviet Man” through education had yet to be realized (40).

The “great turning point” (*velikii perelom*) in the history of Soviet education policy coincided with the unveiling of Josef Stalin’s First Five-Year Plan. The push toward rapid industrial modernization signaled by Stalin’s Five-Year Plan exposed weaknesses in the Soviet education system and convinced Party officials, including Stalin himself, of the importance in connecting educational training and academic research to state economic growth and development. Using the political mileage afforded him by the Shakhty Trials (1928–29), which allegedly revealed the presence of capitalist agents among the nation’s industrial engineers, Stalin initiated the total

reorganization of the Soviet Union's education system. Relying upon the recommendations of the Komsomol and Vesenkha, Stalin and the Central Committee restructured the Soviet education system along vocational lines. In doing so, the Party created a prototype for the reorganization of occupied-countries' education systems after World War II.

Following the purge and deportation of all politically unsuitable faculty members and students, which was the *sine qua non* of all subsequent Stalinist system building efforts, the core elements of Stalin's reformation of Soviet higher education included the following features: top-down centralized control; close coordination with Soviet industrial needs; the creation and dissemination of nationwide fixed curricula; the elimination of social science courses and replacement with courses in Marxist-Leninist ideology; and, finally, the vigorous recruitment and placement of proletariat students through Soviet-style "affirmative action" programs. By 1933, according to Fitzpatrick, nearly half of the Soviet Union's 500,000 students attending VUZy derived from worker or peasant backgrounds (188). While the percentage of "promoted ones" (*vydvizhenie*) from peasant and working-class families plateaued following Stalin's mid-1930s restoration of order in higher education, when some bourgeois faculty and students were readmitted and older subject-based courses in the social sciences were once again added to the curriculum, the Communist Party's belief in the power of education and reeducation to transform the social and political allegiance of the Soviet people was at that point well established.

Although Arthur L. Smith Jr. does not explicitly state as much in *The War for the German Mind: Reeducating Hitler's Soldiers*, it was precisely because of the Soviet Union's experimentation in using education as an ideological tool for the nonviolent transformation of its own citizens that it attempted to reeducate enemy German populations before any of its World War II allies considered doing so. Smith's book compares Soviet reeducation and denazification policies, particularly those operated through Soviet Antifascist (Antifa) Schools in Moscow and the East German Soviet Occupation Zone, with the reeducation and denazification policies established by the U.S. Army Special Projects Division and the British military's Wilton Park program in the United States and England, respectively. Because of the Soviet Union's long-standing belief in the power of reeducation techniques, they established their denazification program in May 1942, well before the outcome of the war could be known.

With the organizational assistance of German communist exiles living in Moscow and united under the banner of the Free Germany Committee (NKFD), the Soviet Union recruited its reeducation instructors from among its own wartime population. German émigré Walter Ulbricht, the founder of the German Communist Party and the future deputy premier of the German Democratic Republic, worked tirelessly to convert captured German officers into Antifa school instructors. Ulbricht's job was made easier following the organization of the anti-Hitler German Officers League (BDO) by captured German soldiers at the Battle of Stalingrad. Personal survival undoubtedly motivated most former Nazis to denounce Hitler and to swear allegiance to the Soviet state. At the same time, however, in uncovering the administrative and organizational links between the NKFD and the BDO, Smith demonstrates the extent to which the Soviets and their German communist counterparts truly believed in the malleability of individual political consciousness via educational training. So while it is impossible to know how many of the 85,000 German prisoners who attended the Antifa Schools actually became devout communists, it is possible that, as Smith asserts, the "Russians embarked upon re-education as simply another weapon in the war to expand communist domination" throughout Eastern Europe after the war (37).

Whether the Soviet Union implemented its reeducation programs for offensive or defensive reasons is open to debate. What is certain, however, is that the United States and Great Britain established their own reeducation programs in response to reports detailing the Soviet's alleged successful ideological conversion of Nazi prisoners of war. The United States began its prisoner-of-war reeducation efforts in September 1944 after developing a curriculum and gathering instructors "to teach citizenship to the foreign born" (80). According to Smith, language barriers combined with a lack of organizational oversight diminished the overall effectiveness of the Special Projects reeducation program: a scant 39,000 German prisoners of war attended the Special Projects Division (1944–46) reeducation program; and still fewer German prisoners graduated from the British Wilton School (1946–48). This was partly for programmatic reasons, however. As the only reeducation program that required enrollment in actual university subjects, it is not surprising that only 4,500 German prisoners of war attended Wilton School. Considering the feebleness of the United States' and Great Britain's reeducation programs, Smith ends his study in agreement with the

conventional view of Allied reeducation efforts: “The Soviet re-education program [was] quite impressive when compared with the programs of the Special Projects and Wilton Park” (193).

Timothy R. Vogt’s *Denazification in Soviet-Occupied Germany: Brandenburg, 1945–1948* offers a decidedly different assessment of the Soviet Union’s denazification efforts, of which reeducation was a defining part. Writing against East German historians, who “claimed the denazification in the Soviet zone laid the groundwork for the creation of an ‘antifascist-democratic’ state,” and their West German counterparts, who “saw denazification in the east as part of a methodical imposition of a one-party dictatorship,” Vogt argues that the Soviet Union’s denazification programs were no more successful than similar programs administered by United States and British officials (232). In an effort to erase imposed boundaries between American and Soviet denazification initiatives as well as between the study of East and West Germany, Vogt claims that both denazification efforts failed for the same sets of reasons: “an inability to turn ideological assumptions into a workable program, an increasing reliance on German-staffed denazification commissions whose decisions could not be controlled by the policy makers, a ballooning bureaucratic operation that quickly reached unmanageable proportions, and the intractable contradiction between the purge and reconstruction” (9). The Soviet state-building model was compromised from the start by interference from local communist networks and by the paradoxical demand to cleanse East Germany of its Nazi past while simultaneously creating a functioning governing apparatus. Because so much of German life had been dominated by Nazi ideology and ideologues prior to the Soviet occupation, the complete denazification of East Germany, Vogt contends, was impossible to achieve.

Vogt’s monograph uncovers the origins of the commission’s futility. In an analysis of four of Brandenburg’s thirty-one locally administered denazification commissions, Vogt has discovered important, even surprising, details about the denazification commission’s purging and punishing operations. His analysis of how a Nazi Party member’s age and sex—but not class affiliation—often played a decisive role in the outcome of Soviet denazification hearings is especially interesting (chap. 6, “The Demographics of Denazification”). By considering other causal factors besides class, Vogt reveals how limiting historical analyses of communist states can be when examined solely through a Marxist lense. A host of other factors, including local social patterns and personal relation-

ships between and among communist and noncommunist Germans, determined the outcome of a majority of denazification hearings exclusive of Soviet Military Administration (SVA) influence. As Vogt's nuanced analysis of the demographics of denazification perceptively demonstrates, "Soviet policy does not reveal a master plan for the imposition of one-party rule, but rather shows a pattern of indecision born of unclear policy goals, faulty lines of communication, and a lack of centralized control" (234).

John Connelly's superb *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956* improves upon and advances Vogt's argument. Like Vogt, Connelly's primary goal is to understand the nature and limits of Soviet totalitarian rule in Eastern Europe. But unlike Vogt's dichotomous East-versus-West study of the effectiveness of one policy (denazification) in one region (East Germany) of the Soviet sphere, Connelly's intra-Eastern bloc study of three countries shows how national "political cultures" modified and often undermined the reception of Soviet higher-education initiatives. Even as Connelly concurs with Vogt's assertion that the implementation of a top-down Soviet administrative model was achieved locally, Connelly's study of the "inefficiencies and contradictions in the mechanisms of imperial rule" in three Eastern European countries' higher-education systems is the more convincing and impressive work (21).

The greatest strength of Connelly's study is the ease with which he tacks between state and local policy actors and institutions and draws knowledgeable inferences about both. Employing a methodological approach most accurately described as a state-centered social history model, Connelly believes that the university is the institution best positioned to reveal the complexity and ambiguity of the Soviet-satellite partnership from "above" (the state) as well as "below" (society). Students, professors, and state functionaries all "had clear interests and competing agendas" that centered upon and intersected with the university, making it the "opportune place not only to explore the diversity of a region thought to be uniform but also to consider unexplored continuities and discontinuities in the dynamic of state-society relations" (8). Located at the social and political crossroads of the Soviet state, Connelly argues that the Party viewed higher education as essentially a vehicle for the production of politically loyal proletarian elites.

Given the initial uncertainty that surrounded the Bolshevik reorganization of Russian higher education, however, communist functionaries across Eastern Europe predictably experienced similar

difficulties implementing centralized Soviet-style education systems in their own countries. While top-down Communist Party control, political purges, and the institution of fixed Marxist-Leninist curricula uphold the conventional portrayal of a monolithic Soviet state, Connelly's real interest is in understanding how Soviet education policies were filtered through and changed by national "political cultures" and "identities." He approaches Soviet rule as nonabsolute and uncovers the administrative weaknesses that permitted local East German, Polish, and Czech Communist Party officials, professors, and students to negotiate and build their own socialist universities. By placing the university at the center of his study, Connelly convincingly argues that higher-education institutions deserve the same scrutiny and depth of analysis that historians routinely direct at other foundational state institutions, such as large-scale political and military organizations. The close inspection of university life from a comparative perspective reveals that higher-education policies and organizations are altogether inseparable from the political and social cultures they inhabit.

Connelly's comparative multinational study offers a major reassessment of high Stalinist-era Soviet-satellite relations that until now was only available in separate monographic studies. Drawing from research collected in four languages from archives and universities across Central and Eastern Europe, Connelly explains how rates of university "Sovietization" (i.e., the duplication of the Soviet's hierarchical administrative model) varied depending on the institutional milieu and cultural context of the occupied university and nation. In East Germany, for example, Connelly asserts that Sovietization was quite systematic. Two features of East Germany's political culture accounted for its thorough Sovietization. First, the presence of SVA occupying forces strengthened the loyalty of local Communist Party members; second, professorial and student collaboration with National Socialism left both sectors without the "moral capital" needed to combat effectively the Communist Party's postwar invasion. As a result, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), with the crucial support of occupying SVA forces, closely followed the Soviet Union's higher-education strategy. To a degree uncommon elsewhere in Soviet-occupied Eastern Europe, East German communists copied the Soviet Union's higher-education organizational plan: the SED removed politically incompatible faculty and students, especially in the social sciences, replaced social science courses with mandatory instruction in Marxist-Leninist philosophy, and actively

recruited students from among the ranks of the working and peasant classes. Assisted by Soviet officials, the SED felt confident that it had made significant progress toward replicating the Soviet system when it successfully organized worker studies programs as early as the fall of 1946 (20). In support of his claim on behalf of methodical Sovietization, Connelly points out that during the social upheavals in 1953 and 1989 East German students were “conspicuous by their absence from the turmoil” (282).

The “Czech lands” (the ethnic Czech region of Czechoslovakia), on the other hand, experienced a different, less comprehensive, pattern of university Sovietization that generated as much opposition as it did support. Benign Nazi backing in the form of professorial passivity during World War II coupled with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia’s (KSC) relative lack of interest in the affairs of higher education after the war, forced communist student “action committees” to design and administer university policies for themselves. While the action committees followed a plan of attack not unlike the one undertaken by their fellow communists in East Germany, ambiguous Party orders left Czech action committees adrift and “plagued by fears of having failed to capture the spirit of the Bolshevik experience” (20). Party indifference, however, was far from the only obstacle facing Czech action committees. Widespread rural intransigence toward student recruitment drives, shaped by centuries-old class conflict, also hindered the efforts of the action committee. As Connelly explains, working-class resistance to higher-education attendance and matriculation circumscribed action committee efforts to attract working-class students that, in turn, contributed to popular disenchantment with the Party.

Poland’s higher education system proved the most impervious to communist interference. A tradition of vigorous university resistance to outside meddling begun during the Nazi occupation of Poland combined with the strength of the Roman Catholic Church and a tight professional scholarly community limited the Sovietization of Polish higher education. Deep “familial ties,” a strong “common professional ethos,” “interests in reproducing social and economic power,” and the “shared experience of resistance” provided Polish scholars with a clear idea of whom and what the university was to serve (284). This is not to say that Polish higher education was unaffected by Soviet occupation—far from it. Professors stood by as specific groups of students—namely, Jews, whom professors never considered part of Poland’s “national community”—were ex-

cluded from university life. In addition, journals and research presented a predominantly Marxist point of view. But because of the persistence of strong religious-based social cohesion, pockets of dissent appeared that permitted some scholars and students to pursue non-Marxist ideas and research projects—particularly during the so-called “thaw” following Stalin’s death in 1953—without fear of Party retribution.

Yet the question that remains unanswered after finishing Connelly’s sweeping comparative history is why professors in all three countries, but especially in East Germany and the Czech lands, buckled so quickly and completely when faced with Communist Party demands? Or, to frame the question another way, why did not more professors behave as many Polish professors did and aggressively resist the temptations of the Communist Party? Connelly’s use of “political culture” is at least partly to blame. The concept provides Connelly with the latitude he needs to make broad generalizations about professorial behavior in the face of Communist Party insurgency, but it fails to deliver in the few places where he attempts to account for individual professorial capitulation. Connelly admires the Polish professors, viewing them as moral exemplars. But he stubbornly resists leveling his own opinion of widespread professorial surrender, coyly concluding instead that professors “became Communists . . . because they chose to become Communists, with all the consequences that followed” (291).

Connelly’s explanation, though hardly inaccurate, is ultimately unsatisfying. Why did professors succumb to Party pressures? What motivated professors to subvert their professional academic codes, to denounce their colleagues, to sabotage their belief in the disinterested, objective pursuit of knowledge? These are perhaps the most important questions one can ask about the cold war-era academic enterprise, and they are questions that a capacious analytic category such as “political culture” can probably never adequately explain. In order to understand individual professorial motivation, one must uncover professors’ private beliefs and retrace where, when, and under what circumstances professional and personal motivations were subsumed by, or overlapped with, political ideology. It is in the realm of personal desire and motivation that a decision to commit oneself to a particular political ideology, whether communist or liberal democratic, actually lies.

The relationship between professorial decision making and university control in postwar Hungary is the thematic strand connect-

ing the essays in György Péteri's illuminating work, *Academia and State Socialism: Essays on the Political History of Academic Life in Post-1945 Hungary and Eastern Europe*. Péteri divides his eight essays among three sections: "Academic Elite and Academic Regime," "Social Science Research under State Socialism," and "The Systematic Overstretch." The first section retraces the collapse of the Hungarian professoriate and the subsequent communist conquest of Hungarian higher education; the second section is a case study that considers how the communist takeover irrevocably altered the trajectory of one academic field, economics; and the final section is an extended meditation on the institutional challenges facing Eastern European higher education in the aftermath of the democratic revolutions of 1989. Overall, Péteri views the communist experiment with centrally planned higher education as a regrettable period in the history of Eastern Europe that resulted in the betrayal of the university's core values of independent learning and academic freedom. He makes his commitment to the restoration of research universities across Eastern Europe quite clear: The legacy of communist control left Eastern Europe's higher-education system in ruins, and its recovery will only occur with minimal state intervention, that is, in a liberal democratic polity "where the autonomy of societal institutions is respected and protected" and the state's only responsibility to higher education is the provision of adequate research funding (254).

Considering Péteri's reverence for the objective, apolitical modern research university, his discussion of the disintegration of professorial comity in his book's first section is most important. According to Péteri, political and personal infighting among university professors and administrators paved the way for the postwar communist seizure of Eastern European higher education. Péteri's account of professorial complicity in the communist capture of Eastern European higher education focuses on Hungary, especially the personal and professional activities of University of Szeged's Nobel Prize-winning biochemist and political activist Albert Szent-Györgyi. Using university documents, private papers, public speeches, and scholarly publications, Péteri provides an in-depth account of what he characterizes as Szent-Györgyi's misguided attempt to increase research funding in the natural sciences by soliciting United States and Soviet research sponsors during the early cold war. Despite Szent-Györgyi's considerable political acumen, his effort to tap the Natural Science Division of the Rockefeller Fund while en-

trenched within the Soviet bloc was disastrous. Szent-Györgyi publicly praised the “generous manner” of Soviet research funding; privately, however, he admitted to Rockefeller officials that without additional outside support, “really first-rate biology cannot be done [in the Soviet bloc]” (24, 26). Szent-Györgyi’s private concerns with the Soviet research model were prophetic. In addition to forcing university researchers to sever all ties with Western funding agencies, in 1947 the communist-controlled Hungarian National Assembly gutted the total annual higher-education budget, reducing it by more than half its prewar allocation (26).

Szent-Györgyi’s ill-fated attempt to siphon research funding from both sides of the “Iron Curtain” is examined in great detail. But an abbreviated account includes the following key events. In order to curry favor within the Communist Party, Szent-Györgyi and his fellow political “radicals” from the natural sciences split with their “conservative” counterparts in the social sciences by supporting a strong governmental presence in the affairs of postwar Hungarian higher education. The radicals’ decision to support the development of a Soviet-style centralized university model was triggered by self-interest and political naiveté, and by what Péteri describes as the radicals’ “illusion” of a true communist people’s democracy (11). But by 1947, the professional and political differences between social and natural scientists instigated by Szent-Györgyi backfired, forcing him to seek academic exile in the United States. Following his abrupt departure, the Communist Party deepened professorial paranoia by dissolving the venerable Hungarian Academy of Sciences and replacing it with the Hungarian Council of Science, the one and only professional science organization authorized by the Party. According to Péteri, Szent-Györgyi and his natural scientist allies’ decision to mix politics and scientific research was the key contributing factor leading to the division of the academy and to the downfall of Hungary’s higher-education system and research economy. Although Péteri never explains what alternative paths he thinks the Hungarian professoriate could have taken to halt the communists’ hijacking of the university, he plausibly argues that once professors divided themselves along opposing disciplinary and political lines, the Communist Party’s takeover of Hungary’s higher-education system was all but complete.

The final, thoughtful essay in Péteri’s book, “On the Legacy of State Socialism in Academia,” concludes that the only way for Hungarian higher education to recover from its communist past is for

professors, university officials, and national political actors to agree that the university functions most effectively when permitted to operate free of state intrusion. Having both experienced and studied the detrimental effects of communist-run higher education, Péteri applauds the demise of the Soviet-style higher-education model. Like other political liberals, Péteri views the spread of legally protected academic freedom, peer-reviewed journals, independent scholarly communities, and pluralistic democracies in the last decade as the correct path for the revitalization of university life in the former Soviet bloc.

But Péteri is too keen an observer of the university and of Eastern European politics to truly believe that the region is on the verge of an academic golden age. Not only has the transition toward liberal democratic politics and social institutions been more difficult than anticipated, but the communist past still casts a dark shadow across present-day Eastern European higher education. Low public faith in, and respect for, the postcommunist university combined with significant, albeit unexpected, critical funding scarcities once again threaten to destabilize the institution. Ironically, the rise of market economics and liberal democratic politics—what political liberals like to believe are the necessary preconditions for the fulfillment of pure academic research and learning—has unleashed its own torrent of financial and political contingencies. The shift from Sovietization to Democratization, cautions Péteri, has provoked a “scramble for limited resources [which] might divide the academic community sufficiently to undermine any chance of attaining consensus . . . [thereby necessitating] outside political intervention” (255). Though Péteri desires a university free of state interference, in the last decade he and his fellow political liberals have discovered that the mythical Humboldtian research university is indeed fantastical. No such institution exists.

Conclusion

This essay has examined the Soviet Union’s efforts to use education, reeducation, and higher-education institutions as an instrument of statecraft during the cold war. As I have argued, the Soviet Union and its Eastern European communist functionaries viewed education as a vehicle for altering human consciousness and for securing political loyalty. While none of these books adequately accounts for

the decisive part that state terror played in the spread and institutionalization of the Soviet Union's education agenda, they do reveal the communists' belief in education as a tool for the ideological readjustment of professors, students, and entire nations. Even as many of the Soviet Union's education experiments did not work, and many more were transformed by local academic cultures, its reliance on education as a means of mass mobilization marked the logical culmination of its doomed attempt to recast Eastern Europe in its own ideological mold.

Though the use of brute force separated the two regimes, the United States also used education and higher education institutions to build and maintain its cold war empire. But historians have resisted the study of the liberal democratic ideological uses of American education during the cold war, opting instead to study the rise of the federal-academic research partnership. To be sure, the boom in federally funded applied research marked a major shift in the nature of postwar academic culture. But the ideological uses of education and of the American university changed too. By taking seriously Arthur Schlesinger Jr.'s depiction of the cold war as an endless struggle for the "minds and hearts of men [and women]," new and different questions concerning the uses of education in the United States immediately emerge: In what ways did the United States use education to cultivate its global influence? To what extent was American education policy shaped by—or the shaper of—Soviet education policies and programs? How did expanded access and state subsidies reward certain citizens? What effect did the cold war have on the professional and personal lives of professors and students? Was the United States more successful than the Soviet Union in using education to reinforce the political beliefs of American citizens? In short, what role did education and universities play in America's cold war victory? These are several of the questions that the study of the Soviet Union's propagation of, and the public's receptiveness to, ideology through education in cold war Eastern Europe raise in an American context, and that the next history of the American cold war university must attempt to answer.

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Notes

1. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (New York, 1988; 1949), 1–10. On the eve of the end of the cold war, Schlesinger's opinion had changed little. In an updated introduction for a 1988 reprint of *The Vital Center*, Schlesinger mused: "I did not think then and do not think now that the Cold War is essentially a military conflict amenable to military solutions" (xiii).

2. Joseph I. Zajda, *Education in the USSR* (New York, 1980), 10–11.

3. American commentators portrayed Soviet education as ideologically driven prior to the launch of Sputnik I. But real concern with the use of education as a means of communist indoctrination followed the Soviet Union's first foray into space. For a sampling of the pervasive fear engendered by Sputnik and Soviet education, see, for example, Fred Hechinger, *The Big Red Schoolhouse* (New York, 1959); George S. Counts, *The Challenge of Soviet Education* (New York, 1957); George Z. Bereday, *The Politics of Soviet Education* (New York, 1960); Arthur S. Trace, *What Ivan Knows and Johnny Doesn't* (New York, 1961). The ideologically charged interpretation of Soviet education described here persisted well beyond the hottest years of the cold war; see Frank M. Sorrentino and Frances R. Curcio, *Soviet Politics and Education* (New York, 1986).

4. The literature on the 1950s Red Scare and the demise of academic freedom is enormous. For several of the best accounts, see Ellen W. Schrecker, *No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the University* (New York, 1988); Lionel S. Lewis, *Cold War on Campus: A Study of the Politics of Organizational Control* (New Brunswick, 1988); Jessica Wang, *American Science in an Age of Anxiety: Scientists, Anticommunism, and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, 1999).

5. Despite frequent citations and widespread praise, the GI Bill has commanded relatively little scholarly attention. For the only two academic treatments of the GI Bill, see David R. B. Ross, *Preparing for Ulysses: Veterans and Politics During World War II* (New York, 1969); Keith W. Olson, *The GI Bill, the Veterans, and the Colleges* (Lexington, Ky., 1973). The community college movement has generated even less interest. For the best historical overview of the community college movement, see Steven Brint and Jerome Karabel, *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900–1985* (New York, 1995). A creative discussion of the place of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the post–World War II education landscape is available in Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore, 1997). For the growth of area and international studies programs, see Robert A. McCaughey, *International Studies and Academic Enterprise: A Chapter in the Enclosure of American Learning* (New York, 1984), especially 141–96; Bruce Cumings, "Boundary Displacement: Area Studies and International Studies During and After the Cold War," in Christopher Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War* (New York, 1998), 159–88. Recent studies dealing with the Peace Corps have emphasized its connection to America's cold war containment strategy. For just such an insightful account, see Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, *All You Need Is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000).

6. The exception to this scholarly oversight is the investigation of the use and abuse of social science research during the cold war; see, for instance, Christopher Simpson, ed., *Universities and Empire: Money and Politics in the Social Sciences During the Cold War* (New York, 1998); Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1995); Ron Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy: Culture and Politics in the Military-Intellectual Complex* (Princeton, 2001). The early history of the "exceptionalist," liberal-democratic lineage of American social science, to which all the above scholars are at least partially indebted, has been chronicled most exhaustively by Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (New York, 1991).

7. Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology in the West: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (New York, 1961). A fine account of the origins and outcomes of the United States' decentralized federal-state education policymaking cycle is provided in Hugh Davis Graham and Nancy Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Postwar Era* (Baltimore, 1997), 1–25. The classic elucidation of the mutually reinforcing relationship between liberalism and freedom of inquiry is provided by Michael Polanyi, "The Republic of Science: Its Political and Economic Theory," *Minerva* 1 (1962): 54–73.

8. Hannah Arendt, "Ideology and Terror," *The Review of Politics* 15 (1953): 303–27. According to Mark Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (New York, 1998), the equation of ideology and terror has proved remarkably resilient. In an important reconfiguration of the typical characterization of Nazism and Communism as the twentieth-century's two quintessentially ideological regimes, Mazower argues that liberal democratic regimes have been, and continue to be, ideologically motivated. In a departure from other scholars, who, like Arendt, have tended to think of ideology as exclusively a tool of totalitarian states, Mazower persuasively argues that the history of United States' twentieth-century military and diplomatic interventionism is best understood when couched in an ideological frame. I agree. For a similar reading of ideology in the United States during the cold war, see Nigel Gould-Davies, "Rethinking the Role of Ideology in International Politics During the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 1 (Winter 1999): 90–109.

9. Before World War II, universities relied on foundation support to fund research. Following the entrance of the United States into the war, however, the federal government emerged as the foremost patron of universities, and permanently redirected academic investigation toward applied rather than basic research. For the finest history of the rise of sponsored research during World War II and the cold war, see Roger Geiger, *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities Since World War II* (New York, 1993). But Geiger, like Talcott Parsons before him, tends to treat research as normative and to view the growth of research universities in highly functional, that is to say, nonideological, terms. For Parson's sociological structure-functionalist interpretation, see *The American University* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973).

The Parsonian functionalist narrative has found less favor among historians recently, however, as newer scholarship has emphasized the important role that individual researchers and policy-actors perform in the production of academic knowledge; see Stuart W. Leslie, *The Cold War and American Science: The Military-Industrial-Academic Complex at MIT and Stanford* (New York, 1993); Rebecca S. Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University: The Transformation of Stanford* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1997).

10. The scholarly focus on "research" is all the more vexing considering that it did not become a normative activity at American universities until the 1960s. To wit, in 1957–58 a mere fourteen universities controlled 49 percent of all federal research funds while thirty-six universities controlled 73 percent; see Alice M. Rivlin, *The Role of the Federal Government in Financing Higher Education* (Washington, D.C., 1961), 47. Comparable data are provided in Graham and Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities*, 36–37 and 256 n. 27. Given these figures, the question remains: What other functions beyond research did universities serve in the twentieth century?

11. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organization of Education and the Arts Under Lunacharsky, October 1917–1921* (London, 1970).