

Chapter II

Americans and Soviets in the defeated Germany: the division of the country, Occupation administrations, and their transformation strategies for German universities

Introduction

The primary aim of this chapter is to explain and discuss the policy of the United States and the Soviet Union towards Germany which formed the basis for their activities in German universities during the entire period of the Cold War. The political division of Germany implemented by the victorious powers, and the subsequent impossibility of reunifying Germany due to the political shortcomings of American-Soviet bilateral relations and their policies in Europe after the end of the Second World War, defined the development of universities in Germany. The second aim of this chapter is to give a description of the Occupation military administrations that transformed German universities. Finally, in order to understand American and Soviet reforms in the universities of Germany, the chapter will discuss how the superpowers perceived the German university system and what strategies they proposed in order to modify it.

I. From friendly to hostile division

What happened in German universities during the Cold War period, 1945-1990, was determined by that major event in recent world history known as the division of Germany. The partition of the defeated Germany after the end of the Second World War, planned and executed by the victorious powers in World War II – the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France – is a much debated question in the literature. One or another interpretation of the events anchored in this division can influence the point of view of a scholar who seeks to study the educational policy of the United States and the Soviet Union in Germany. Understanding the positions of these main Cold War rivals in regard to the division and fate of the defeated Germany is crucial for an accurate comprehension of their policy within Germany and in German universities.

Before the opening of the archives in Russia and the former East Germany in the 1990s, the most wide-spread and traditional view of the division of Germany stated that the partition of the country was an unavoidable consequence of American resistance to Soviet expansionist intentions in Europe.¹⁵¹ This point of view dominated in American and Western European literature. Soviet scholars exclusively blamed the government of the United States for the division of the country.¹⁵² Recent historians, however, both in Russia and in the United States have found no strong, documented evidence that the Soviet Union intended to dominate Western Europe;¹⁵³ on the contrary, new documents claim that the Soviet Union followed a consistent policy of preserving German unity and its neutral position vis-à-vis any military alliances in Europe during the period of 1949 through the mid-1950s. By applying the newly available documents, contemporary scholars now argue that the short-term policy decisions made by both the United States and the Soviet Union, in addition to their mutual suspicion, and the clash of interests in other regions, was what led to the division of Germany and to the long-term impossibility of reunifying the country.

During the final stages of the Second World War, the European countries, the United States, and the Soviet Union strongly believed that German economic and military potential would be a permanent threat to peace in the future. If this potential was not curtailed, Germany would raise once again as the most powerful state in Europe and start a new war. France, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, which had all suffered enormously during the past two world wars, shared this common perception. In the period 1943-1945, they sincerely believed that

¹⁵¹ W. McNeill, *America, Britain and Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941-1946* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953); H. Feis, *Churchill-Roosevelt-Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1957); A. Schlesinger Jr., "Origins of the Cold War," *Foreign Affairs* 46 (1967): 22-52; J. Combs, *American Diplomatic History: Two Centuries of Changing Interpretations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

¹⁵² N.N. Inozemtsev, *Vneshnyaya Politika SSHA v Epohu Imperializma (The Foreign Policy of the US. in the Era of Imperialism)* (M.: Gospolitizdat, 1960); N.V. Zagladin, *Antisovetizm v Globalnoy Strategii Imperializma SSHA (Anti-Sovietism in the Global Strategy of the US)* (M.: Mysl, 1981).

¹⁵³ R. Levering, V. Pechtnov, et al., *Debating the Origins of the Cold War: American and Russian Perspectives* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). See, new documents and research in regard to the positions and the policy of the superpowers during the period of the Cold War in the *Cold War International History Bulletins*, nos. 1-16, published on the web page of the Woodrow Wilson International Institute for Scholars, Washington, DC <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index/>

Germany should be economically weakened through a partition into smaller states so as to be unable to move its military forces throughout Europe. The American government joined in this solution. At the 1943 Tehran Conference, the Allies (Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin) agreed to divide Germany into several parts, turning Germany into an agrarian country without industry or an army, and thereby diminishing any German potential for war. At the 1945 Yalta Conference, they confirmed this decision by introducing the provision for the establishment of four Occupation Zones. Finally, at the 1945 Potsdam Conference, the Allies agreed to denazify and demilitarize Germany and to demand huge reparations from the defeated nation. In discussing the fate of Germany and making these decisions, the Allies constructed a very important political discourse that determined the perspective of their disputes on the German question: they contemplated the fate of Germany in terms of its division and of the establishment of Zones without taking into consideration the question of any reunification of the country. Not one of them seriously raised the question of the establishment of a central government in Germany after the end of the Occupation period. Literally speaking, together they elaborated the mechanism of the division and management of the Zones during these conferences, but they did not create any mechanism for the unification of these Zones and the city of Berlin after the end of the Occupation period.

After arriving in Berlin, divided also into four sectors but governed jointly, the Allies established their Occupation authorities, they diminished the local economic potential through reparations, and they purged Nazis. However, their alliance, built on the basis of the common enemy – Nazi Germany – soon came apart as a consequence of a clash of American and Soviet political goals and strategies, and as a consequence of a gradual growth of misperceptions, mutual suspicions, and personal aversion between the two governments. The new American president, Harry Truman, as compared with the previous president, Franklin Roosevelt, would not tolerate the policy of Sovietization of Eastern Europe, and this conflicted with Stalin's main foreign policy aim of building a new buffer zone in Europe, and thereby securing the Soviet Union from any possible new attack. The secret building of an atom bomb in the United States frightened and convinced the Soviet government that America would exploit it to conduct coercive diplomacy. Moreover, the perspectives of communist victories in such countries as Italy, Greece, and Turkey, and the actual victory of the communists China in 1949 convinced the American government of the real existence

of communist expansionism. Finally, mutual diplomatic attacks on each other regarding the Iranian and Korean problems impeded the bilateral partnership established during the War. All told, this new situation compelled the former Allies to elaborate new grand strategies for their European policy. They repudiated their previous agreements to jointly build a new, weak, and agrarian Germany, and reevaluated the place of Germany and its Occupation Zones in their new grand strategies.

The United States was the first to propose the unilateral decision to rebuild a piece of Germany as a powerful democratic country with a strong military force. This decision became a constituent part of a new policy towards Europe aimed at developing a common defense system in Western Europe against any possible military offensive by the Soviet Union. The western part of Germany was considered to be an integral element of this system that consisted of the democratic countries. In addition, the bitter memory of the policy conducted by the United States in the interwar period, when the isolationist approach had prevailed over an active position in European politics, encouraged the American establishment to undertake decisive steps on the European continent. Since 1947, the part of Germany controlled by the US, Great Britain, and France was democratized, and developed economically and militarily in order to be integrated in the economic and military block of Western European countries. This decision clashed with the Soviet policy aimed at establishing a unified, neutral, and weak Germany. According to new documents and research,¹⁵⁴ Stalin personally believed that a unified and neutral Germany would be the best way to diminish all possible threats from the West. A Germany, neutral in terms of any military alliances and without an army, coupled with the occupation of the Eastern European countries, was considered the manner to create the strong buffer zone needed between West and East.

According to the new American strategy, the Soviet Union was cut off from access to the western Occupied Zones for the purpose of collecting reparations. The Soviet appetite for huge reparations came into conflict with the American desire to rebuild German industry. After merging the three western zones into the Trizone in 1948 and after introducing a new currency reform there that stimulated the flooding of the Eastern Zone with old Reich marks, the Soviets initiated a coercive

¹⁵⁴ *Cold War International History Bulletins*, 1-16, ed. Ch. Ostermann (Washington, DC.: Woodrow Wilson International Institute for Scholars, 1995-2009) <<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index>>

policy to compel their former Allies to stop integrating the western parts of Germany into the European economic and defense community, viewed by Stalin as the most dangerous situation possible for the Soviet Union. The Soviets reacted firmly: they blockaded the land routes between Berlin and the western parts of Germany in 1948. This step in Soviet foreign policy severely undermined any hopes for improvement in relations between the two superpowers. Moreover, this political attack worsened the Soviet image in Europe: many European citizens and social democratic parties as well turned away from the Soviet Union and its ideology, perceiving the blockade as the intention of the Soviet Union to expand its power further into Western Europe. After the blockade, the United States quickly elaborated the Bonn constitution for a new German state, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), created soon after the lifting of the Berlin blockade in May 1949. In response to the founding of the FRG, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was proclaimed in the Soviet Zone in October of 1949.

During the period 1949-1951, the clash between the United States and the Soviet Union as centered on Germany became obvious. The concept of containment, integrated into the American foreign policy, and the Marshall plan, aimed at reconstructing the Western European economy, along with the building of a European defense system, were of course measures directed against the Soviet threat, but that threat was exaggerated to some extent by the American political establishment as is today admitted in the literature.¹⁵⁵ However, misguided conceptions, perceptions, and unjustified measures contributed to the final and long-term division of Germany. The United States, by making a political choice between a reunification of Germany that could lead to a possible Sovietization of the country and the protection of that part of the country under their influence, decided in favor of the latter. Washington believed that if Germany should come under the influence of the Soviet Union, the strength of the West would be seriously undermined, since a fully integrated Communist block including all of Germany would constitute a dangerous threat to the balance of world power.¹⁵⁶ The creation in 1949 of the Western security system known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization became a more essential priority for American policy in Europe than proposals concerning the reunification of Germany.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ NARA. Record Group 59. Records of the Department of State. Office of Educational, Cultural Affairs. Lot 98D 252. Box 169-172, 205-206.

The eastern part of Germany was therefore viewed by Moscow as a small but loyal military point and as the buffer zone between West and East. The logic of the Soviet approach was likely the following: if there was no chance to create a unified and neutral Germany, then the establishment of a loyal part of Germany would be also constitute a good outcome for this affairs. The creation of NATO and the steady rearmament of West Germany contributed to the Sovietization of East Germany and to the establishment of military blocks in Europe. The truth of this Soviet approach is proven by the new documents: before the early 1950s, Stalin was reported to reject any ideas of building a socialist Germany. It was likely that he did not to believe that the German nation, the German economy, and German traditions and culture could be remodeled after the Soviet pattern. However, developments such as the American intention to create a new Europe, along with the reluctance of the Allies to discuss the reunification of Germany, together with pressure from German communists, changed his approach profoundly.¹⁵⁷

In March 1952, Stalin personally sent his own diplomatic letter to the governments of the former Allies. In this diplomatic note he suggested withdrawing the armies of the Allies from Germany, unifying Germany, and making the country free from any military alliance. This proposal was viewed by the Allies as a bluff and as a propagandistic step by the Soviet Union. They believed that such a reunification of Germany would lead to its Sovietization. The diplomatic note therefore remained without positive answer: the United States and the Western European allies did not want a new “red” country as had already happened in Eastern Europe and Asia. In addition, the concept of containment of Soviet communism and of Soviet expansionism in any part of the world restrained any experiments with the creation of a neutral and unified Germany in the heart of Europe. Having received no agreement with his proposal from the West, Stalin invited the leaders of the German communist party to Moscow in April of 1952. He spoke to them as follows: “In reality there is an independent state being formed in West Germany. And *you must organize your own state*. The line of demarcation between East and West Germany must be seen as a frontier. One must strengthen the protection of this frontier.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ *Cold War International History Bulletins*, 1-16.

¹⁵⁸ “Conversation between Joseph V. Stalin and the SED leadership. April 7, 1952,” in *Cold War International History Bulletin*, 4, ed. Ch. Ostermann (Washington, DC.: Woodrow Wilson International Institute for Scholars, 1995): 48.

In 1954, the Soviet Union signed a treaty with the German Democratic Republic and recognized it formally as a sovereign state. The occupation of the Soviet Zone was officially lifted. However, the treaty contained a provision for the permanent location of the Soviet army and for the establishment of a special control commission to communicate with the former Allies. The United States, Great Britain, and France officially lifted their own Occupation regime in 1952, while stipulating in the treaty their right to implement their military commitment to West Berlin and West Germany. The United States integrated the German Federal Republic into the European community and into NATO, declaring in 1955 that West Berlin would be under the NATO nuclear umbrella. In reaction, the Soviet Union incorporated the military power of the GDR into the Warsaw Pact, created in 1955.

Only one problem remained unresolved: the joint control of a Berlin divided into four sectors. Located on the territory of the GDR, Berlin was perceived by the Soviet government as a sort of state within the state. In 1948, the Quadripartite Allied Control Commission for Berlin broke down, and every Occupation authority established its own city administration. The unregulated situation in terms of the four-power responsibilities for Berlin had produced a permanent and dangerous crisis situation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The intention of the Soviet Union to seize control of all parts of Berlin clashed with the American commitment to preserve West Berlin from Soviet hands. This situation resulted in one of the severest crises of the Cold War period, known as the Berlin crisis of 1958-61, when the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev demanded that the status of West Berlin as the city controlled by the Western Block be transformed into a demilitarized "free city." He wanted the former Allies to withdraw their military forces. Moreover, Khrushchev threatened the American president, John F. Kennedy, with the signing of a separate treaty with East Germany which would give the GDR control over the Western access routes to West Berlin. Following this logic, the two parts of the city could then be merged into a Berlin controlled by the Soviets. In addition, the political regime in East Germany pressured the Soviet Union to close off free access for East Germans to West Berlin because of the high level of emigration from East Berlin and East Germany to the FRG. When the United States repudiated the ultimatum about the "free city," the Soviet Union agreed to let the German communists close all the routes around East Berlin, erect the Berlin Wall in August 1961, and thereby draw a bold line under the first chapter in the division of Germany.

A new and cardinal shift in the policies of the former Allies towards Germany began in the late 1960s, and extended through the 1970s. The political relaxation between the superpowers and the Ostpolitik conducted by the West German Chancellor Willy Brandt contributed to the reunification of Germany in 1990. The political events of that period are reviewed in Chapter VI. Before this period, however, the Germanies and German universities endured radical transformations implemented by both the United States and the Soviet Union in the period of 1945 through the early 1960s. These reforms are reviewed in Chapters III, IV, and V.

II. The American military administrations and their transformation strategies for German universities

1. The American military administrations in Germany

After arriving in defeated Germany, the United States established the *Office of the Military Government, United States*, abbreviated officially as the OMGUS. The main authority over Occupation policy belonged to the Chief of the OMGUS, appointed by the War Department after consultation with the Department of State and after approval by the President.¹⁵⁹ The first head of the American occupational authority was General Lucius Clay who governed the American Zone of Occupation until 1949.¹⁶⁰

The OMGUS had its *Education and Religious Affairs Office* located in West Berlin, which formulated and implemented American policy in the German universities. Each of the following German Länder (called *states* by the American government) of the US Zone of Occupation – Bavaria, Hessen, Baden-Württemberg, and Bremen city – had an educational office which reported directly to the Education and Religious

¹⁵⁹ “Principles Regarding Policy-making and Administration in Occupied Areas. Memorandum for the President by Assistant Secretary D. Acheson, May 11, 1946,” in *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 276.

¹⁶⁰ In 1949, General Clay submitted his resignation. It was not the first time. His previous requests had been rejected by the government because of political crises such as the Soviet blockade of Berlin, and the process of forming the German government. When the political situation became more stable, he sent a letter to President Truman requesting permission to retire. The president allowed him to leave Germany. The general left, but in 1953 he asked the US Government to send him back to run various cultural programs between West Berlin and United States such as the Berlin Viability Program. Due to his efforts, the American government permanently supported the Free University, Technical University, and other educational establishments in West Berlin.

Affairs Office in West Berlin. The Offices of the Military Government were located in the capital of each state: in Munich, Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, and Bremen.¹⁶¹ The branches in these states supervised the German universities located in Munich, Erlangen, Würzburg Frankfurt, Heidelberg, Marburg, and, from 1948 onward, also in Berlin. Every university accommodated an American military officer who supervised university life.

The work of the Education and Religious Affairs Office was supervised by Colonel John Taylor, PhD. He had a doctorate in education from Columbia Teachers College at Columbia University. Taylor had been selected by the Army for implementation of various educational reforms in occupied Italy. Being a specialist in German higher education, he was transferred to Germany. His deputy was Dr. Richard Alexander, an expert in German education, and a former mentor of John Taylor. Late in 1947, their educational adviser became the President of Indiana University, Dr. Herman Wells.¹⁶² These three men elaborated the strategies and plans for American reforms. They were assisted by a corps of American visiting professors invited by Washington to work and observe the situation in German universities. These numerous professors, whose names remain unknown to historians to a larger extent, actually provided Taylor, Alexander, and Wells with ideas on how to reform the German university system according to the American model.

Upon the establishment of the West German Federal Republic in 1949, the functions of the OMGUS were absorbed into the *Office of the U.S. Higher Commissioner for Germany* (HICOG) led by General John McCloy. University policy was relegated to the Office of Public Affairs and to its primary division of *Education and Culture and Exchanges*. Their branches in the German states served as the channel of communications and liaison with the German Land Ministries of Education reestablished in 1949-1950.

After the official lifting of the Occupation in 1952, the functions of control over the German universities located in West Germany were transferred to American diplomats accredited in Bonn, to the American mission located in West Berlin, and to all the American consulates established in every state of West Germany.

¹⁶¹ "Governmental Structure in the US Zone," in *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 372.

¹⁶² Clay, *Decision*, 298-305.

2. Initial strategies for transforming the German university system

The American strategies for the transformation of German universities proposed by American experts such as John Taylor and his numerous assistants mainly proceeded from the general perception of the German university system as being different from the American university system. Americans and Germans approached university education from two deeply divergent perspectives. The German university system was well known for producing students of high scientific potential and educating an elite by selecting students from aristocratic families. German universities were viewed mostly as a system for imparting knowledge and as a system where studies were combined with pure research, with the universities being far from public and political life. The American tradition strove to impart common values to a heterogeneous population, and Americans viewed education as proceeding not simply from school and university but from the family, the community, the church, and social groups as well.¹⁶³ Moreover, Americans placed their main emphasis upon educating students but not upon doing pure research. Another incompatible feature between the German and American university systems, articulated by American experts soon after the arrival in Berlin in 1945, was the elitism of German universities and their distance from public life. This characteristic was criticized by those American officers and professors who came to Germany in order to modify its universities. These initial perceptions of German universities spread widely in American academic circles and the political establishment contributed to developing the idea that the United States should modify them according to the American model.

Initially, the US based its educational policy in the Zone on the famous directive issued by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the summer of 1945. The directive set forth severe policies relating to all educational institutions. They should first be closed, and a system of control over German education and a program of reeducation were to be established in order to eliminate Nazi doctrines.¹⁶⁴ This first directive, elaborated by the Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr., contained the Roosevelt approach to the future of occupied Germany as a small and agrarian country free from any participation in European military and economic alliances. However, the deterioration in relations with the Soviet Union

¹⁶³ Tent, *Mission*, 3.

¹⁶⁴ *Documents on Germany under occupation*, 13-21; *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, 3-8.

and the introduction of the new American goal of bringing the Western part of Germany into a united European economic and defense system enormously changed the general approach of the government to reforms in Germany.

The Directive was superseded by the new one known by its number, 1779, of 11 July 1947.¹⁶⁵ It stated that persuasion, demonstration, and example should be the only means of influence in making West Germany a European state. According to the directive, American educational policy was aimed at establishing a society based on the democratic ideal. It stated that the true orientation of the German people would depend on what was taught, how it was taught, and by whom it was taught in universities and schools. The training of a corps of democratically minded teaching staff, and the development of university education as education for responsible citizenship – which implied a knowledge of how to act intelligently and independently in solving contemporary problems and how to protect freedom – therefore became a primary necessity, therefore.¹⁶⁶

These ideas were developed in more detail by the Education Office. The intention of the head of the Education Office, John Taylor, was to make German universities less aristocratic, to change the structure of the universities by instituting new sub-divisions such as departments, to insert a special representative board made up of persons from outside the universities, to expand the power and duties of the rectors, to introduce more professional knowledge into the universities by appointing more specialists from the outside, to establish a general assembly of teaching staff and thus to reduce the power of the senior professoriate, to expand freedom of teaching, to introduce student body representation into university administrative bodies, to expand the social basis of the student body by introducing entrance examinations, to make admission irrespective of political party affiliations and social roots, to make academic programs and university curricula more suitable for real life and more social sciences-oriented, to introduce general education and political science in every university, to introduce “classes” and seminars instead of lectures, to encourage the individual work of students through the introduction of term papers and examinations, along with tutorship,

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ NARA. Record Group 59. International Information Administration Programs 1949-1952. Box 7, 12, 25.

and, finally, to establish a system of extra-curricula activities for students.¹⁶⁷

American experts believed that these intentions could not only permit the US government to model German universities on the American pattern but also contribute to achieving American political goals, most notably, the promotion of German solidarity with the West, the strengthening of political and social democracy in Germany, the enforcement of a military alliance with West Germany, the promotion of mutual understanding between the two nations, and an increase in knowledge about the United States and awareness of its common institutions, traditions, and interests, thus also increasing respect for Americans, their life, and moral values, and for American cultural traditions as such.¹⁶⁸

Hence, the scope of these proposed reforms was huge. However, the actual state of affairs in German universities affected these plans of the American government.

III. The Soviet military administrations and their transformation strategies for German universities

1. The Soviet military administrations in Germany

The Occupation authorities in the Soviet Zone were established in June 1945. They were called the Soviet Military Administration in Germany abbreviated officially in the German version of its title as the SMAD (*Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland*). The SMAD functioned officially until October 1949, when it was replaced by a new structure called the *Soviet Control Commission* (SCC). In 1953, the SCC was itself replaced with the apparatus of *Higher Commissioner in Germany* located in the building of the Soviet Embassy at Unter den Linden in Berlin. In 1955, the functions of supervision of life in the universities were transferred to the Soviet ambassador in Berlin and to the Soviet consulates and the Soviet Houses of Culture located throughout East Germany.

¹⁶⁷ NARA. Record Group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

¹⁶⁸ NARA. Record Group 59. Bureau of Public Affairs. International Exchange Service 1950-58. Box 1, 3.

The Soviet Zone of Occupation was divided into five *Länder* called the “Lands” by the Soviets: Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony, Thuringia, and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Every Land had its own regional office of the SMAD. Their function was to transmit orders from the SMAD to the Lands’ governments and to supervise their execution.

The *Educational Division* of the SMAD was located in Berlin-Karhost. The first head was Professor Pjotr Zolotukhin, a former rector of Leningrad University and a future rector of the Moscow Pedagogical Institute. His staff consisted of fifty-five Soviet officers. The *Sector of Higher Education* was led by *Pjotr Nikitin*, an associate professor at the Leningrad Mechanical Institute. The Sector of Higher Education consisted of eight military officers who implemented a range of Soviet transformations in six German universities located in Berlin, Halle, Leipzig, Greifswald, Jena, and Rostock.

According to Soviet documents, all the Soviet military officers of the Educational Division had university diplomas and several of them had a doctoral degree and had previously been associate professors at Soviet universities.¹⁶⁹ However, not all of them spoke German, and thus they were subjected to permanent language studies in special courses arranged by the Soviet Government in Berlin.¹⁷⁰ In contrast, the American military officers neglected language training, because they were surrounded by numerous former German émigrés who had fled Germany and who had then been invited by Washington to assist the Occupation Administration.

The functions of the Educational Division at the SMAD were very purposefully defined. The Division had control over the policy and activity of the German Administration for People’s Education established by the Soviets in 1945; it confirmed and admitted the governing staff and teaching staff of the universities, and examined and approved university curricula, programs, and textbooks.¹⁷¹ Faced with rising opposition to Soviet reforms, and after Berlin University was splitting up in 1948, the Educational Division was assigned such additional functions as regulating student admissions, introducing Marxism-Leninism studies, and elaborating new standard syllabi.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 11:13-33, 37-38.

¹⁷⁰ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 55. File. 1: 2-14.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 9: 10-18.

In contrast to the American authorities, the Soviet Educational Division transformed the universities by using the German governing structures in the area of education. *The German Administration for People's Education* established in July 1945 and the *Land Ministries of Education*, reestablished in 1946, implemented various reforms in the universities.

The German Administration for People's Education, officially called *Deutsche Verwaltung für Volksbildung*, was the primary link between Soviet military officers, on the one hand, and the Land Ministries of Education and German universities, on the other. This agency was new for the German educational system, and it later became the Central Ministry of Education in the German Democratic Republic. The German Administration for People's Education consisted of 204 Germans, with 118 of them communists, and the rest unaffiliated with any party. As to the social roots of the first staff, 100 employees out of 204 were members of the intelligentsia.¹⁷³ The leader of the German Administration for People's Education, Paul Wandel, became the first Minister of Education in the GDR.¹⁷⁴ He was a communist and former editor of the German communist newspaper in Berlin. Coming from a working-class family, he had only been able to obtain an eight-year school diploma (*Volksschule*); however, he received a thorough political education in the Soviet Union, to where he had emigrated in 1931. Soviet documents describe him "as a politically educated man without any ideas about education."¹⁷⁵

The German Administration for People's Education was viewed by the Soviet Occupation authorities as the primary mechanism for the transformation of German universities. The functions of Wandel's Administration were to purge former Nazis from the universities, to select the teaching staff and confirm these lists with Soviet officers, to form new university curricula, and to inspect how the university

¹⁷³ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 8: 233-234.

¹⁷⁴ Paul Wandel (1905-1995) became a member of the Communist Party of Germany in 1926. In 1931, he emigrated to the Soviet Union and remained there till the end of the war. On his return, he became the editor of the *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, the main newspaper issued by the Communist Party of Germany. From 1945 until 1949, he was the president of the German Administration for People's Education. From 1949 till 1952, he was the Minister of the Education in the GDR. Later, he became a member of the Central Committee of the SED.

¹⁷⁵ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 1: 2-14.

administrations had implemented Soviet orders.¹⁷⁶ The Educational Division of the SMAD oversaw Wandel's activity and that of his staff. Broadly speaking, the SMAD elaborated the reforms, and Wandel's Administration carried them out.¹⁷⁷ Initially, Soviet officers trusted Wandel completely; however, his soft policy in the face of opposition in the universities in 1948 and his support of those German historians who repudiated the idea of introducing Marxism-Leninism in historical studies was of concern to the SMAD.¹⁷⁸ The Soviets purged Wandel's staff and warned him about possible negative consequences due to his loyalty to the "Old German Professoriate."¹⁷⁹ As a consequence, Wandel changed his approach, promising to carry out Soviet reforms. In 1949, the German Administration for People's Education was given more freedom to govern German universities. Wandel selected and approved the new Rectors for the universities, the deans of faculties, the directors of institutes, and the heads of chairs, as well as all professors, ordinary and extraordinary. Moreover, the Soviets later allowed the Administration to approve the junior teaching staff and the lists of students admitted to the universities. However, the Educational Division of the SMAD expanded its controlling functions over the Administration and internal life in universities.¹⁸⁰ The SMAD inspected how Wandel was implementing the prescribed transformations by means of party organizations and the special Soviet curators located in every university.

In addition to Wandel's administration, the Soviet Occupation authorities reestablished the Ministries of Education in the German states. The Soviets, in contrast to the Americans, had fewer problems with the local German Ministries of Education, because German communists returning from their Soviet exile were placed in positions as heads.¹⁸¹ Most of the employees were communists with a pedagogical education: 58% of the Ministries' staffs were German educationalists and members of the German Communist Party. The remaining positions were

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 7, 41.

¹⁷⁷ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 8: 229-230.

¹⁷⁸ Russian State Archive of Social-Political History. Record Group 17. Inventory 137. File 891: 170.

¹⁷⁹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 9: 10-18.

¹⁸⁰ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 1. P. 106; Inventory 55. File 11: 32.

¹⁸¹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 8: 229-230.

distributed among the non-partisans (38%) and members of the liberal parties (9%).¹⁸²

2. Initial strategies for transforming the German university system

In contrast to the American Occupation authorities who had elaborated plans beforehand, Soviet officers did not themselves obtain or elaborate any preliminary agenda for German universities before 1945. They deliberated and conducted reforms in Germany on site and on the run, guided by personal and ideological considerations, and the local situation. Observations about the German university system made by Soviet officers were turned into initial guidance and used as a starting point for Soviet reforms.

In contrast to the American reforms, the Soviet reforms, proposed and implemented in German universities, proceeded from a general perception of the German university system as similar to the Soviet university system.

The Russian and German university educational systems shared some similarities, particularly in the period before the radical reforms in Russia after 1917 and in Germany after 1933. First, a combination of research and teaching existed in the universities of both countries. This combination was not fundamentally broken up after the coups d'état in 1917 and 1933. The universities of both Germany and Russia did not consider themselves as institutions of higher learning but rather as places where scholarship should mix with student studies. However, in German universities scholarship could be pursued more for its own sake than was allowed in Russia, and after 1917 in the Soviet Union. Second, academic freedom was the main feature of German and Russian university life. Professors of both countries enjoyed lifetime tenure, and they determined what and how to teach. Third, the academic curriculum was defined by the professoriate without any strict state control. These similarities were determined by the fact that the Russian university system was entirely patterned on the German one, and these Humboldtian ideas had come in Russia and had become profoundly rooted in Russian universities in the nineteenth century.

The Soviets in Russia and the Nazis in Germany implemented radical changes in the universities, imposing their doctrines on the university curriculum, making the professoriate join their parties, and

¹⁸² State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record Group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 11: 13-33, 37-38.

eliminating academic freedom. However, in contrast to the American university system, Germany and the Soviet Union strongly maintained a combination of education and scholarship, with both the student body and the teaching staff being deeply involved in research activities. This approach as well as the pliability of universities faced with ideological pressure created more affinity between German and Soviet universities than between German and American universities. Therefore the Soviet Occupation authorities viewed these features of the German university system as the premise for its successful transformation.

Hence, the Soviets came to German universities without any grand strategies for their transformation. This Soviet approach differed from the American approach.

Conclusion

Since the question about the unification of Germany was not resolved by the Allies, the Military Occupation Administrations, which received their own Zone of Occupation in Germany according to mutual agreements, endeavored to create their *own* German states based either on the American or on the Soviet systems of social and political development. German universities were considered a primary tool in the creation of a new and loyal Germany.

Both United States and the Soviet Union established and constantly perfected a special division (generally called an Educational Division) within their Occupation establishments in order to supervise German universities and carry out transformations in those German universities located in their Zones of Occupation. The Soviets additionally established such German educational agencies as Wandel's Administration and the Land Ministries of Education in 1945. These establishments became the mechanism for implementing Soviet reforms. The Americans reestablished the State Ministries of Education only in 1949. American officers relied upon themselves to bring about reforms in the universities.

The American Occupation authorities had elaborated a general line of transformation for German universities before the end of the Second World War. Contrary to this, the Soviets only planned their transformations after arriving in Berlin. Moreover, the strategies of the superpowers were maintained by the different perceptions of the German university system. The American government considered German universities as too elitist, as too closed, and as too scholarly oriented. The Soviets initially suggested no strong critical perceptions of German

universities, identifying themselves more with the shared values between the Russian-Soviet and German higher education systems.

The American and Soviet transformations of German universities were determined by the political interests of both governments within the Cold War context and by the divergent ideological and cultural values of both societies. However, their educational policies in Germany had more similarities than different trends. Both powers reopened the universities, purged the professoriate and student body, revised academic programs and curricula, purged library holdings, etc. However, their rival ideologies (liberal democracy and Marxism), implanted into courses, into textbooks, into student organizations, as well as their reaction to opposition attitudes as articulated by German academic people, were evidently their points of difference.