The Transformation of European Universities: Disciplines and Professions in England, Germany and Russia since 1870

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Dietrich Beyrau, ed., *Im Dschungel der Macht. Intellektuelle Professionen unter Stalin und Hitler* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 399 pp., €52.00 (hb.), ISBN 3-525-36244-7.

Corine Defrance, *Les alliés occidentaux et les universités allemandes, 1945–1949* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2000), 406 pp., €27.50, ISBN 2-271-05768-X.

Ralph Jessen, *Akademische Elite und kommunistische Diktatur. Die ostdeutsche Hochschullehrerschaft in der Ulbricht-Ära* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 552 pp., €52.00, ISBN 3-525-35797-4.

Brian Pullan with Michele Abendstern, *A History of the University of Manchester, 1951–73* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 281 pp., €32.95, ISBN 0-7190-5670-5.

Reba N. Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University and the Making of an English Elite, 1870–1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 308 pp., €55.00, ISBN 0-8047-2383-4.

The university is a time-honoured institution, and university anniversaries and centennials regularly provide occasions for the celebration of academic achievement. In the past two decades there has also been a marked increase in scholarly interest in university history, sometimes of a comparative nature but often with a focus on the history of individual institutions. While longevity may be a characteristic of some European universities, they have certainly also undergone profound transformations. In the early nineteenth century the very survival of the university as an institution was an open question in France and the German states, and indeed, across the European continent. A large number of universities were disbanded, some of them, like Cologne, to be resurrected after a century or, as in the cases of Erfurt and Frankfurt an der Oder (Viadrina), after an even longer time; others vanished forever. This period of crisis was, however, also a period of rethinking and of creative initiatives, most famously that associated with Wilhelm von Humboldt which ushered in the establishment of the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin in 1809/10.

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The transformation of the English universities

The university survived the crisis at the begining of the nineteenth century, and the stage was thereby set for a widespread transformation of universities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into key institutions for research. The institutionalisation and professionalisation of academic disciplines also made for a more rigorous training of scholarly and social elites. In this process close links were forged between academic disciplines, and the training they provided, and the processes of state- and, sometimes, empire-building. These links were perhaps closer and more consequential in the leading imperial nation of the times, Britain, than anywhere else. They have also been at the centre of contributions to the history and sociology of higher education not only by British scholars but also by scholars from what might be termed 'the Berkeley school'. Pathbreaking contributions to the understanding of the changes in British academic life in the late nineteenth century and the twentieth century have been made by historians such as Sheldon Rothblatt and by sociologists such as Martin Trow, Neil Smelser and Burton Clark, all of whom have for most, or, as in the case of Clark, for an important period, of their careers been at Berkeley's research centre for higher education. Rothblatt's *The Revolution of the Don: Cambridge and Society in Victorian England* (first published in 1968, with a second edition 1981) has long been a classic, tracing the profound transformation of Victorian universities in the new context of British commercial and imperial power into institutions uniquely qualified to mould the elites of a new society while retaining features of an older aristocratic tradition. In this process the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge were transformed from quasi-monastic entities into more influential educational institutions than anything the world has seen before and, possibly, since.

These themes are taken up in Reba N. Soffer's *Discipline and Power: The University and the Making of an English Elite, 1870–1930*. To a large extent it draws on and elaborates themes developed by scholars in what I have termed 'the Berkeley school'. Indeed, Soffer, although having spent most of her academic career at California State University at Northridge, and having originally been a student of H. Stuart Hughes at Harvard, may perhaps be seen as part of this school.

Soffer here sheds new light on the history of higher education and the formation of elites in England.[1] The first chapter of the book is a brilliant summary of the nature of the reforms at Oxford and Cambridge in the second half of the nineteenth century. In particular she argues that the establishment of disciplines, the successful defence of institutional independence and the introduction of new honours degrees and more rigorous forms of teaching meant that Oxford and Cambridge became 'substitute households dominated by adults who moulded their members to a degree never attained by earlier universities, by the home, or by conventional religion. The universities were able to create a homogeneous governing class because they organized

[1] A quarter of a century ago she wrote an important and too little discussed book on the establishing of the social sciences in Victorian England: *Ethics and Society in England: The Revolution in the Social Sciences, 1870–1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978).

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liberal education, in all its social, intellectual and moral aspects within the intimacy of college life and loyalties' (p. 24). In the rest of the book she demonstrates the central role of history as a university discipline in this process, a subject that 'came to be identified almost entirely with the study of England's political and constitutional development' (p. 33). These universities in general, and the discipline of history in particular, 'were more closely tied to the production of the governing class than anywhere else' (p. 46).

Oxford and Cambridge were elite institutions, and the number of university students per age cohort in early twentieth-century England was significantly lower than in not only the United States, which by 1930 had roughly nine times as many students per capita, but also Germany, which at that time had about one and two thirds times as many students in relative terms. Against this background the sheer size of the history student population at Oxford and Cambridge is worth noticing. Thus just for 'the years 1878 to 1885, there were 642 honours degrees in history at Oxford and 111 in Cambridge'. In Oxford for the period 'between 1873 and 1930 there were 6,575 Modern History in every class of degree'. These graduates of the new honours degree courses 'had extraordinary opportunities to enter new careers in the Indian and other colonial services, the civil service, the diplomatic service, the schools and universities, and a large variety of multiplying positions at the national and local level. These opportunities were seized with alacrity' (p. 179). Just one small example of the success of these history students is offered by the astonishing fact that the British delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 included eleven delegates who had read history at Balliol College, Oxford.

Soffer provides an extensive analysis of the role of key professors, not least those holding the Regius professorships at the two universities, in particular that of William Stubbs at Oxford and John Robert Seeley at Cambridge. She also discusses elegantly and at length the role of student societies. The study ends with a detailed analysis of the career patterns of the honours students of the two most important history colleges, namely Balliol at Oxford and King's at Cambridge. This analysis substantiates the influence of the colleges but also the fact that the Oxford graduates tended to have a more varied career pattern than the Cambridge ones. It is also able to lay to rest some common prejudices about these graduates. Thus, although the greatest number of the graduates went into public service in government or education, a relatively large proportion also went into business and industry. Finally, Soffer reveals that extremely few of the Balliol and King's graduates availed themselves of opportunities to study abroad in Europe.

Both in its social organisation and in its intellectual orientation history remained clearly focused on the British national experience. There was thus an emphasis on the evolution of, ultimately, praiseworthy 'common political institutions and on the character of these responsible individuals able to govern such institutions with effect' (p. 209). This also entailed less emphasis on comparative analysis and critical thinking, and an unwillingness to incorporate the new social sciences into the academic environment. Unlike their American colleagues, British academics saw little reason to assume that these new fields of study had anything much to contribute

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to the promotion of the public good, or to substitute the scientific pretensions of an inherently divisive social science for the powerful and both intellectually and normatively coherent interpretive schemes of historical teaching.

Brian Pullan's *A History of the University of Manchester, 1951–73*, sheds light on a different part of British university history. Its focus is on what is perhaps the most famous and successful of the so-called civic, or 'red-brick' universities outside London that came to supplement Oxford and Cambridge. Furthermore the temporal focus is on the years of the dramatic expansion of higher education in the period after the Second World War.

This is a rich and multi-faceted account of two decades of university history. It covers institutional, and to some extent intellectual, developments, but also gives a vivid picture of the shifting architectural phases of the university during these years of expansion. It is based both on archival and textual analysis and on interviews with key participants from different ranks of the university, leadership and academics as well as staff and students. It firmly locates the university within the context of a great and changing commercial and industrial city. In 1953 a third Manchester scientist (Patrick Blackett) received the Nobel Prize and the institution was eminent not only in the sciences and in medicine but also in social sciences, including political science and to a large degree anthropology. With scholars such as W. J. M. Mackenzie and Michael Polanyi as academic staff it was second to none in the field of the social and human sciences.

Pullan, with the assistance of Michele Abendstern, is able to give a vivid, almost tangible, sense of the nature of Manchester at the beginning of the period of analysis: 'a strongly hierarchical institution . . . governed by people of manifest ability . . . Austere, utilitarian and overcrowded as it was, its dense population jammed into a cramped and inconvenient site, it retained . . . a sense of unity which was later to be lost' (p. 23). To a greater degree than most university histories, this study has successfully included what might almost be termed ethnographic studies of university culture at different points in time. It pays little attention to broader comparative issues, but *A History of the University of Manchester, 1951–73* is a rich and sensitive study of the history of an individual institution in a crucial period of transition.

Universities and university ideals: Anglo-German imaginations

Both Soffer's and Pullen's studies share a focus on the experiences of individual institutions. However, there are also, particularly in Soffer's volume, interesting comparative observations, not least concerning similarities and dissimilarities between British and US higher education institutions.[2] In Soffer's book continental European experiences of universities and of history as a discipline appear as an inevitable, but marginal, part of the account. She notes for instance that despite the fact that German universities were more closely tied to the state, German historians, in contrast to their

[2] Sheldon Rothblatt's *The Modern University and Its Discontents: The Fate of Newman's Legacies in Britain and America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) is a noticeable example of such comparative reflection.

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English colleagues, at least rhetorically, disavowed any attempt to make historical conclusions immediately applicable to the present or the future. A comparative analysis of the actual teaching of history in English and German universities would constitute an interesting field of study in the way that Soffer has explored so well in the English context. Such a study would also bear out the complex relationship in German historiography between university ideologies, historical teaching practice and varieties of historicism as research programmes.

More generally, however, Soffer also argues that continental professors on the whole 'distanced themselves from their students by enforcing both their authority and their political preferences. As a result, universities there were often ideological and intellectual battlegrounds . . . But in England dons and students were united by a common acceptance of appropriate purpose and conduct' (p. 256). Again, this would be a theme worthy of comparative historical analysis. Yet another comparative theme implicit in Soffer's analysis is that of the importance of history relative to social science in different national contexts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Francis Farrugia, in a study of the reconstruction of French sociology after the Second World War, also reminds us that, despite the fragile and partial institutionalisation of sociology in French universities around the beginning of the twentieth century, there were, indeed, close ties both institutionally and thematically between Durkeimian sociology and the Third Republic.[3] One expression of this was, of course, the importance of sociology and of Durkheim himself for the instruction of teachers in primary and secondary schools and their crucial role at a time when the separation of church and state and the persistent ideological attacks of anti-republican forces meant that the republic itself was consistently embattled. Similarly there is now an extensive comparative scholarship on the role of the emerging social sciences in different national contexts. It is to be hoped that Soffer's, and perhaps also Pullan's, contributions may enrich this scholarship in the future.

Some of the key university figures of the Victorian era were themselves intensely preoccupied with continental European developments. Soffer highlights the extent to which Seeley's educational and research programme was formed by his idea that nineteenth-century German history also provided for Britain an exemplary lesson in state development and state assertion. One might add, as does Corine Defrance in passing, that an analogous theme was also taken up by one of the towering intellectual figures of the mid-Victorian era, Matthew Arnold, poet, critic and Oxford professor (1857–1867), and the son of another Oxford professor and educationist, Thomas Arnold, the celebrated headmaster of Rugby School. Defrance quotes Matthew Arnold's well-known saying: 'The French university has no liberty, and the English have no science; the German universities have both.'

These words appear in the longest book ever published by Arnold, namely *Schools and Universities on the Continent*,[4] originally written as a report to the Schools Inquiry

[3] Francis Farrugia, *La reconstruction de la sociologie française (1945–1965)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000).

[4] In *The Complete Works of Matthew Arnold*, IV, *Schools and Universities on the Continent*, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964).

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Commission of 1865–1866, as a factual account of secondary and higher education in France, Italy, the German states, in particular Prussia, and Switzerland. It reflects to a considerable extent the cultural pessimism that Sheldon Rothblatt so elegantly highlighted in one chapter of *The Revolution of the Dons*, where he juxtaposed the writings and positions of the two contemporaries John Stuart Mill – with Mill's appreciation and acceptance of diversity – and Matthew Arnold – with Arnold's critique of what he perceived to be signs of cultural decay in England. This general attitude of Arnold may also help explain why he, the epitome of Victorian high culture, makes a statement that would have been inconceivable coming from an Englishman in his position at almost any time before the mid-nineteenth century and certainly at any time after 1914: 'What I admire in Germany is, that while there too industrialism, that great modern power, is making . . . the most successful and rapid progress, the idea of culture, culture of the only true sort, is in Germany a living power also . . . If true culture ever becomes at last a civilising power in the world, and is not overlaid by fanaticism, by industrialism, or by frivolous pleasure-seeking, it will be to the faith and zeal of this homely and much ridiculed German people, that the great result will be mainly owing.'[5]

Arnold wrote during the initial phase of one of the most important formative periods in university history, namely that which involved the formation of the modern research-oriented university with the whole range of professional academic disciplines gradually being formally institutionalised. Much scholarly attention has been paid to the role of German universities in this process and to their importance as models for university reformers in a number of other countries, not least the United States. Similarly, George Weisz has observed that, in the contentious process of university reform in late nineteenth-century France, German universities also played an important role as models and reference points: 'If there is a single continuing thread in this complex story, it was the struggle to expand the social role of higher studies in France with German universities serving as a model.'[6]

Meantime, however, the Friedrich-Wilhelms-University of early twentieth-century Berlin had become an institution substantially different from the university conceived by the Humboldt brothers a century earlier.[7] German scholars such as Max Weber were fully conscious of this fact and actually perceived – at precisely the moment when the Berlin university was most admired and cherished, not least by US scholars and reformers – that an alternative model of a modern research-oriented university was already present, namely the modern US enterprise-like university. Here an ever-increasing specialisation in science was seen to tend towards an enterprise-like organisation, and Weber used the term 'state-capitalist enterprise' to describe

[5] *Ibid.*, 288.

[6] George Weisz, *The Emergence of Modern Universities in France, 1863–1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 369.

[7] For a short but interesting analysis of the situation of the Friedrichs-Wilhelms-Universität at the beginning of the twentieth century see Charles E. McClelland, '"To Live for Science": Ideals and Realities at the University of Berlin', in Thomas Bender, ed., *The University and the City: From Medieval Origins to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 181–97.

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this type of university. On the other hand there was also a sense that a real university had to be different from purely professional schools or research laboratories. This was seen among many German scholars and was echoed by US univesity reformers such as Abraham Flexner. In the final instance, the university had to be a real community of teachers and students. Humboldt had once expressed this by emphasising that, in contrast to the situation in a specialised or vocational school, the university teacher's role was not to transmit ready-made pieces of knowledge but to share with students a quest for knowledge and to join with them in serving science. To Weber, however, the assertion of the desirability of such a relationship was no guarantee of its possibility in an age of growing specialisation and bureaucracy. Weber, much like his contemporary Meinecke and leading scholars in later generations, such as Habermas, was caught on the horns of this dilemma. Finally all he could do was forcefully highlight the problem rather than provide a clear-cut solution.

Academia and the politics of total power

The disastrous vagaries of European universities in the years of the two world wars and their aftermath have recently been analysed in several important works. Maybe it is only now, more than a decade after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc that we are in a position to include the history of academic institutions in the eastern half of Europe in a more comprehensive historical account than has been common and, indeed, possible before access was granted to previously closed archives. This rewriting of European university history will probably also affect hitherto dominant accounts of the history of universities in western Europe and perhaps also in north America and other parts of the world. The need for such a rewriting is one theme that will strike readers of three important recent books about Russian and German experiences in the middle decades of the twentieth century.

Historians and sociologists have over the decades produced a wealth of studies of science, technology and universities during different Soviet periods. The works of Loren Graham have long been standard when it comes to debates on science and philosophy in the Soviet Union. More recently, Michael David-Fox's *Revolution of the Mind*[8] has become a standard source of reference. *Academia in Upheaval*, edited by him and Györgi Peteri,[9] is in the process of acquiring a similar status. *Im Dschungel der Macht. Intellektuelle Professionen unter Stalin und Hitler*, edited by Dietrich Beyrau, is based on a series of conferences aiming to compare Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union and involving German and Russian scholars. The volume contains no fewer than eighteen chapters. In addition, Beyrau himself has written an admirably balanced introduction that clearly lays out all the complications and pitfalls involved in an attempt at comparison within the contested framework of the study of totalitarian states. The focus in this opening text as in the book in general is on intellectual professions rather than on institutions per se.

[8] Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.
[9] Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey, 2000.

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Perhaps not unexpectedly, it is the differences between the two regimes that stand out rather than their similarities. One fundamental difference has of course to do with the different historical legacies of the educated professions, the *Bildungsbürgertum*, in Wilhelminian Germany relative to that of the intelligentsia in Tsarist Russia. The *Bildungsbürgertum* was by and large well integrated into the state and loyal to the state and its ruler. In Russia, on the other hand, the educated strata tended to be deeply suspicious of the Tsarist regime and inclined to support opposition movements aiming at a more or less radical change of government. One interesting outflow of these different attitudes was, as noted in passing by Beyrau, a greater readiness among Russian intellectuals than among their German counterparts to encourage and welcome female intellectuals.

A fundamental difference between Nazi Germany and communist Russia was, as pointed out by Klaus Fischer in his chapter on science policy in the Third Reich, that even by 1931 the Nazis controlled the majority of student organisations and could use these as an means of asserting their position in German academia, not least against the *Ordinarien*, the full professors, who, although certainly not characterised by political radicalism, were only to a relatively limited extent members of the National Socialist party at the time it seized power. Nazi Germany immediately engaged in purges of university teachers who were of Jewish origin or explicitly hostile to the new regime. This had disastrous effects not only for the individuals concerned but also for the general standing of the sciences in Germany. In some disciplines, and physics is a case in point, up to 30 per cent of the faculty were discharged or driven into exile; on average some 15–25 per cent of German scientists and scholars were directly hit by the measures. On the other hand, in the cultural sphere at large there was in the Soviet Union but not in Nazi Germany an active and coherent cultural policy and a demand for artistic expressions of solidarity with the regime. Such outspoken solidarity, a *Bekenntniszwang*, was not imposed in Nazi Germany.

In the early years of the Soviet Union, the relative weakness of the Communist Party in the most prestigious academic institutions stands out. As analysed by several of the contributors, this is perhaps most apparent in the case of the Russian Academy of Sciences in the 1920s. In the first decade of the new regime, the academy and its members were hardly touched at all by measures that affected other parts of society. As late as the beginning of 1929 there was not a single communist among the members of the academy. Other institutions involving the educated classes were also by no means fully controlled by the regime. However from roughly 1927 onwards, there was a concerted and persistent campaign by the party to conquer all such institutions. Yet even four decades after the October Revolution, the Academy of Sciences was one of the few elite institutions in Soviet society, if not the only one, where party membership was not a *sine qua non*.

However, in the educated professions at large, membership of the party was also quite limited in the 1920s and early 30s, a situation that did not change permanently until the effects of the years of terror came to create a new kind of educated class that henceforth came to form something of a backbone of the party and the regime.

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In the early 1920s there was an immediately perceived need in the party to secure new cadres of loyal intellectuals who could fill positions in the universities and higher education institutions and elsewhere. One of the most famous of these initiatives was the creation of the Institute of Red Professors, the IKP, in Moscow in 1921, to be followed by a number of provincial institutes in the late 1920s. This institution has been studied by Michael David-Fox, and in Beyrau's book there is an interesting chapter written by Lutz-Dieter Behrendt. The Institute for Red Professors existed between 1921 and 1938, and had a total of more than 6,000 students and about 2,500 graduates. One reason why this vehicle for creating a new type of intellectual did not develop even further might have been that step by step the party, to some extent with the help of graduates of the institute, was gaining sufficient control of the regular universities. Another might have been that, in the years of purges of real or imagined enemies of the regime, an explicitly political institution such as this institute could not avoid being affected: one of the famous faculty members for instance had been Bukharin. The institutes seem to have reached the high-point of their effectiveness in the two decades after the Second World War, when graduates came to occupy highly prominent positions, one of them being the leading dogmatic representative in the Politburo, Suslow.

One the relatively few actual parallels between academia in Nazi Germany and in communist Russia concerns the role of the social sciences. In both states, measures were quite soon undertaken to subject these fields to the control of the party. Already in the autumn of 1920 Lenin demanded, as pointed out by Anschelina Kupaigorodskaja, that all professors of social science should be re-educated and required to deliver courses in historical materialism and party history, courses that were to become compulsory for all university students. During Nazi rule, faculties of economic and political sciences, *Staats- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften*, were to be those most completely permeated by Nazi control and membership.

One final and important divergence between Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia had to do with the general orientation of science policies. To the extent that there existed some kind of coherent science policy in Nazi Germany, it tended to emphasise applied rather than basic research, if possible of relevance to the armaments industry. In the field of the social sciences, theoretical and historical social science in a more classic tradition was mistrusted. Instead there was an emphasis on 'useful research' such as demography, urban and social planning or psychology.

In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the analyses of Alexei Kojevnikov and Nikolai Korenjuk seem to indicate that gradually the very success of the regime in mobilising science for large projects, leading to the production of nuclear weapons and weapons carriers and to the space programme, also meant that leading scientists could claim an elite position on almost equal terms with that of the leadership of the party and the state. It seems fairly clear that they often used this position to promote scientific endeavours of a pure rather than an applied nature. On the other hand, acquiring this elite position also opened a widening gulf between these prominent academicians and the vast majority of intellectual professionals.

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In the shadow of disaster: German universities under occupation and state socialism

Im Dschungel der Macht is an interesting and well-edited, if sometimes uneven, volume that deserves a large readership. It may profitably be read in conjunction with two new volumes that focus on the restructuring of German universities in the aftermath of the Second World War, namely Corine Defrance's *Les alliés occidentaux et les universités allemandes, 1945–1949*, and Ralph Jessen's *Akademische Elite und kommunistische Diktatur. Die ostdeutsche Hochschullehrerschaft in der Ulbricht-Ära*. Both volumes are impressive accounts that probably will become authoritative in their respective fields.

Defrance's analysis starts with the discussions and preparations among the Western Allies relatively early during the war regarding policies for occupied enemy territory. As of 1943–44 the first principles guiding a British policy for the re-education of Germans had been formulated, and during 1944 all three Western Allies elaborated extensive plans for such policies. The British were the most liberal in the sense of limiting the responsibilities of the Allies to denazification and demilitarisation, and emphasising that educational matters must, as far as possible, be left to the Germans themselves, a policy the French distrusted, whereas the Americans were for a long time internally divided about the future policies regarding occupation.

Apart from analysing the various institutional mechanisms envisaged and implemented by the Allies, Defrance also provides a valuable review of the state of German universities during the Third Reich, estimating the effects of the different waves of nazification of the universities. Defrance estimates that by 1939 more than 3,000 university teachers had emigrated and many others had been excluded or had withdrawn from their positions but remained within Germany. Drawing on previous research, she also highlights the effects of Nazi rule on the universities of Bonn, Heidelberg and Freiburg. Thus, towards the end of the Third Reich, forty of the fifty-eight *Ordinarien* at Heidelberg were members of the NSDAP. However, even for Bonn, Defrance estimates that towards the end of Nazi rule roughly a quarter of full professors were members of the party and that the corresponding figure for other teachers was more than two-thirds. For Freiburg she gives the figure of 43 per cent for the *Ordinarien*.

Given such figures, the problem of reopening the universities while implementing a process of denazification could not but be a highly complex one. In addition, by the end of the war most German universities had suffered massive material damage. In autumn 1944 the buildings of the universities of both Bonn and Freiburg were largely destroyed by aerial bombardment, as were the cities in which they were located. Heidelberg was a notable exception in being spared – but also in being targeted for use by the US occupying authorities. Prior to the most damaging bombardments, the collections of many university libraries had, however, been dispersed, and wholesale destruction was avoided.

The bulk of Defrance's analysis is devoted to a detailed study of the processes of reopening German universities and their denazification, first and foremost as it affected university professors but also in terms of admission policies, library holdings

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and other aspects of university life. Her focus is on the three universities mentioned, one in each of the three Western zones of occupation, but her analysis includes many points of comparison. There are also interesting examinations of the re-emergence of co-ordinating bodies, in the form of university rectors' conferences, first in the British zone of occupation in autumn 1945. The study of criteria for the admission of new students, many of whom had served as reserve officers in the German army during the war, in the different zones in the first years after the war are also highly interesting. In the latter respect the universities in the British zone were characterized by comparative openness, whereas those in the French tended to be closed to former officers of the *Wehrmacht*, and in the Soviet zone to reserve officers as well.

It is a valuable feature of Defrance's analysis that she is able to bring out clearly the tensions and contradictions in the policies pursued by the Western Allies. Thus the Americans were long torn between their own advocates of reconstruction versus those, most closely associated with Roosevelt's Treasury Secretary, Henry Morgenthau, who feared any German reconstruction. Eventually the former gained the upper hand. The French on the other hand were insistent on a policy emphasising demilitarisation and 'deprussification' but were considerably less stringent when it came to denazification per se. Unlike the other Western allies the French were also prepared to take important steps to create new higher education institutions, establishing a new university at Mainz and a school of public administration, inspired by the French Ecole nationale d'administration, at Speyer.

The British were originally highly unwilling to let German authorities have any influence on the process of purging the universities of former Nazis but were on the other hand more liable to let Germans handle regular university matters themselves. However, they reserved for themselves the right to intervene decisively when they saw fit, as they did for instance in intervening against the rector of Bonn university when in 1948 he tried to resist British efforts to impose a *numerus clausus* on university admissions.

Defrance's study, as already indicated, centres on the universities of Heidelberg (US zone), Bonn (British zone) and Freiburg (French zone). In all these universities, the earlier rectors, more or less closely tied to the Nazi party, had handed over responsibilities to successors before the arrival of the allies. Committees of non-compromised professors were also formed almost immediately to establish organs of representation and dialogue with the allies. At Heidelberg, for instance, Karl Jaspers and Alfred Weber, both of whom had left their chairs when the Nazis gained power in Germany, played an important role. In the process of denazification, different forms of collaboration between the new German university authorities and the Allies ensued, but with clear ultimate Allied control over deciding whether or not to retain a person on the faculty. On the basis of extensive questionnaires efforts were made to distinguish between different categories ranging on a scale ranging from university professors, who were mainly responsible for Nazi policies, to compromised and less compromised to collaborators and fellow-travellers to those without any involvement at all with Nazi policies.

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On the basis of earlier studies, Defrance estimates that almost half of the university academic staff was permanently or temporarily suspended in the US zone of occupation, almost three-quarters in the Soviet zone, and a little more than a third in the French zone. For the three universities at the centre of her own study, she refers to a report of the US military government in July 1946, stating that, by then, 70 per cent of academic staff in the university of Heidelberg had been suspended. The detailed analysis she conducts herself focuses on the category of chair-holders, a minority of the entire teaching staff. For this category she estimates that 62 per cent of the generation of 1944/45 were suspended at Heidelberg in 1945, while roughly 60 per cent of the full professors at Bonn and Freiburg still held their chairs by the summer semester of 1946.

Such figures contradict the impression sometimes given that no substantial process of denazification occurred in the Western zones. However, as already indicated, removal turned out to be temporary in many cases. Some of those suspended were reinstated in late autumn 1945, others in 1947 and still others in the ensuing years. Defrance comes to the conclusion that for the University of Heidelberg, of the professors who were forced to leave their chairs in 1945, a quarter were able to regain them at Heidelberg and a quarter gained a chair at another university, while half remained permanently excluded from a university position. Of the teaching staff of the two universities in the French zone, almost half of the staff at Freiburg were neither temporarily nor permanently excluded, while the corresponding figure for Tübingen, which had been more permeated by Nazi ideology, was only a little more than a third. Of those removed, roughly half were permanently excluded and half were suspended but later allowed to resume teaching.

In the end a common understanding gradually emerged between the occupiers and the German university leaderships as to the need for universities fully to resume their activities. Both practical considerations and, to some extent also, the growing tensions of the Cold War led to a situation where innovative university reforms were no longer seriously contemplated. The German professoriat was by and large content to restore what it perceived to be the core of the Humboldtian tradition and to do away with the forms of state intervention designed by the Nazi authorities. A more fundamental rethinking of the meaning of the Humbodltian tradition in the contemporary age in the light of a need for thorough-going reform was never seriously contemplated, although there were a few notable exceptions – the most outstanding one being Karl Jaspers; it is only appropriate that on the cover of the book is a photograph of Jaspers lecturing at Heidelberg in the winter semester of 1945/46.

Ralph Jessen's book is devoted to a study of East German universities in the first four years of Soviet occupation and then during the first two decades of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). In almost all respects, Jessen's book reflects the strength and the achievements of that strand in modern German history that is known as *Geselleschaftsgeschichte* and closely associated with the so-called Bielefeld historians such as Jürgen Kocka, now in Berlin, and Hans-Ulrich Wehler. Jessen's book in fact represents modern university history at its best. The empirical analysis is thorough and

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employs a diversity of methods, the theoretical discussion is explicit, and the choice of key theoretical concepts, in this case that of academic professions, is carefully considered and argued. Though Jessen, like Defrance, devotes considerable space to the question of the social position and political orientation of German university teachers before the Second World War, and to the importance of denazification in the Soviet zone, this review will focus on his treatment of the following years.

For the Soviet authorities and their communist allies, the prospects of transforming the universities in their zone into socialist strongholds were not immediately propitious. There were, as in the American and British zones, six universities, namely Berlin, Jena, Leipzig, Halle, Rostock and Greifswald. In the pre-Nazi era all were strongholds of the German *Bildungsbürgertum* and the few left-wing socialists in their faculties had been removed during the Nazi years. Yet, when the East German regime fell in 1989, university staff were certainly not among those who helped topple the regime, quite the opposite. How was it possible for the regime to achieve a high degree of penetration and ideological control of the universities in these few decades?

The policies of the new rulers in East Germany were aimed at achieving both an expansion of the educational system and a fundamental change in its social composition as well as its general political orientation. These measures, difficult to implement under the most propitious of circumstances, were furthermore being pushed through in a situation where universities had lost the vast majority of their most qualified teaching staff. As for expansion, the number of students in higher education institutions increased from 31,000 in 1951 to roughly 100,000 in 1960, a number comparable to that for all of Germany in 1934. In 1960 the decision was made to double this figure once again in the course of the new seven-year plan, a goal that was never reached. In these years of expansion, there was a constant shortage of qualified university teaching staff. Whatever growth in the training of new generations of university teachers could be achieved, it occurred against a background of increasing demands for such personnel from industry and from the expanding system of institutes of the Academy of Sciences, but also against the background of demands in the expanding West German university and research system. Eventually, however, the East German authorities were able to impose control on the universities and to mould the system in their own image. The main thrust of Jessen's book is an analysis of how this was achieved and what the effects were.

In the first decade after the war, the policies of the regime were characterised by radical political interventions that then, for pragmatic reasons, had to be revised so as to achieve a kind of working compromise with the existing academic staff. Measures were introduced in the immediate postwar period to set up institutions preparing new categories of students for university study but new faculties of education and of social science were also established, where political reliability was an explicit condition of admission. One focal point of dispute concerned control over the recruitment of the new generation of university teachers. Generally speaking the regime was bent on wresting such control from the hands of the traditional professors. One small step in this direction was the decision that, in reviewing Nazi regulation concerning the

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advanced doctoral degree, the *Habilitation*, one essential measure introduced by the Nazis in 1934 was not revised, namely the separation of the right of the faculty to award a higher degree and the right to lecture in a university, the latter being retained as a decision to be made by the educational authorities.

More comprehensively, the so-called second reform of higher education, initiated in 1951, included a decision to establish a new pattern for training the new generation of researchers. Thus, instead of the traditional pattern of young research students serving as assistants to senior professors, it was proposed that henceforth a Soviet system of *Aspiranty* should be introduced. This meant that the control of admission for a research career and the awarding of stipends to research students was to be removed from chair-holders and handed over to authorities that were for all practical purposes controlled by the ruling party, the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany). These measures were met with criticism from university professors, particularly in the faculties of natural science and medicine, and were only partially implemented, and in the wake of the 17 June 1953 revolt, the programme was reconsidered. Students admitted by this means of research recruitment never made up more than a relatively small minority. Another focus of dispute concerned the recruitment of new professors. The traditional German system meant that a list of three candidates was drawn up by the faculty of a university and then forwarded for decision to the Ministry of a given *Land*. Within the new format of the Soviet zone of occupation this system theoretically meant that, in the last instance, no new appointments could be made unless they were at least acceptable to new German educational authorities and approved of by the Soviet military administration in Germany, the SMAD.

The influence of the party on faculty decisions was gradually extended through the new practice that acting professors, *Wahrnehmungsprofessoren*, normally less qualified than the *Ordinarien*, and more politically reliable, were included in the process at the faculty level as were teachers of so-called social science basic studies, which were in practice compulsory courses of political indoctrination. Thus faculty autonomy was undermined from within and in the next step of the process the SED-controlled authorities could in any case veto persons not acceptable to them. However, the 'market' situation of high demand and low supply meant that traditional professors, particularly of natural sciences and medicine, long retained a substantial influence over appointments. At Halle for instance, the dean of the Faculty of Medicine continued at least until the end of 1953 to send out requests to all medical faculties in Germany, including West Germany, asking for nominations of suitable candidates to chairs that were open. At the medical faculties at Rostock, Berlin and Jena, the tradition of proposing shortlists with three ranked candidates was continued, and up until the mid-1950s it was not uncommon that such lists mainly, or even exclusively, contained names from West German universities.

Towards the end of the 1950s and in the 1960s recruitment policies gradually changed and extra-scholarly criteria came to be ever more pronounced. At the same time technocratic reforms were introduced to secure a 'planned' supply of new university teachers. In the early 1960s, the tradition was finally broken of the old university dominated by the *Ordinarien*, to be replaced by an ethos of scientific

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achievement, competition and career uncertainty. The so-called third reform of higher education of 1968/69 formalised these developments. Henceforth the time for the completion of the dissertation was to be shortened and university professors only had the right to propose which candidates were to be selected for doctoral studies, while the final decision now rested with the rector. Furthermore, all scientific achievements were in future to be more closely assessed according to considerations of practical usefulness. In addition the old *Habilitation* was discarded and replaced by a new examination, the *Promotion B*, in which it was required that the candidate 'should make a contribution to science and to the formation of the developed societal system of socialism'. This new degree did not necessarily presuppose that a dissertation had been written for the *Promotion A*. The contributions to the development of socialist society could and should also be of a practical nature. Furthermore, after the construction of the Berlin wall in 1961, planning procedures were gradually introduced that meant that lists of coming openings for 3,346 positions were drawn up and individual young scholars could be pre-programmed for individual slots in this appointment plan.

It is a merit of Jessen's work that he traces this process in great detail as it affected not only the old universities, and the Technical University at Dresden, but also other institutions of higher education. Such institutions, were set up in several areas, namely technology, medicine, and economics, in addition to those in education. Their establishment was often criticised, but to little avail, by the professors at the older universities and the Dresden University of Technology. These new institutions tended to be characterised by a more narrow and utilitarian orientation than the older institutions.

Within just a few decades, academic careers in East Germany had been completely transformed from an academic gamble, about which Weber spoke so eloquently in his lecture, 'Science as a Vocation', to a question of technocratic planning for the bureaucratic recruitment of reliable teaching personnel of a modern socialist state. Jessen demonstrates in detail the mechanisms by which this transformation occurred. In one important respect, however, for all the other changes taking place, the German universities, East and West, remained unchanged, namely in terms of the recruitment of women to university chairs: in the late 1980s the proportion of female professors in both Germanies remained at only some 5 per cent.

In the end the very success of this conquest of the universities produced unintentional and undesired effects. One such change concerned mobility. Whereas a high degree of mobility had always been a characteristic of the German university system, the new pattern meant that the majority of university teachers pursued their entire career at a single university. There were also increasing signs that the new system had difficulties in bringing out truly outstanding scholars. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the scientist who was completely devoted to science for its own sake was depicted as a bourgeois relic and an ideologically suspect figure. By the 1980s, university planners had long started to worry about the lack of charismatic, leading scholars characterized by complete devotion, *Besessenheit*, in their attitude to research and scholarship and able to inspire new generations of leading scientists. Despite

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the radicalism of the policies during the years when Stalin's Soviet Union was the model for the East German leadership, the transformation of the universities was a protracted process where the older generation of professors persistently defended the traditional values of the autonomy of science and of universities. When the party had finally conquered the universities, after a quarter of a century of contestation, and secured itself a cadre of politically reliable professors, it had also eradicated a large part of those features that have tended to make the best universities such outstanding resources for society at large.

These studies of universities in an age of turmoil and upheaval ultimately raise the question as to what extent it may be possible to preserve European research universities on a par with the best US research universities. Maybe the European universities today face a challenge of the same magnitude as those faced by European universities two hundred years ago. If so, it is high time to overcome the automatic sneers at 'the Humboldtian university' in which higher education policy-makers and policy-researchers have indulged for decades. Rather the task is to engage in a deeply critical reflection on the nature and historical preconditions of different European experiences. One element in such rethinking will probably be to question the habitual assignment of guilt to the Humboldtian tradition for the contemporary disasters of German history. Jessen's book takes some initial steps in the direction of a rethinking of the European university traditions.

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