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DAVID C. ENGERMAN

THE IRONIES OF THE IRON CURTAIN

The Cold War and the rise of Russian Studies in the United States*

The many critics of American Sovietology portray it as an academic discipline with deep, even fundamental, flaws. Born in “the worst years of the Cold War,” these critics argue, the field came into being to serve geopolitical goals. From its first days, Sovietology gave into pressures that made “usable scholarship... in America’s national interest” more important than “detached academic pursuits.” The “overconcentration on ‘applied scholarship’ to the detriment of straight academic topics” was “regrettable,” leading to a “neglect of social and cultural trends.” A common explanatory strategy is to follow the money: critics blame support from governmental and philanthropic sources for creating a field that was “ideological” in its very structure. “Capillary lines of state power” criss-crossed Sovietology and area studies more generally. The funders called on universities to “produce a large supply of skilled specialists for public service and private business.” This focus on training, in turn, limited the disciplines involved; knowledge of “the Cold War enemy” required only social scientists, rendering humanistic fields “invisible.” Accusations of the field’s political biases are ubiquitous; scholars engaged in “self-censorship”; a “feverish atmosphere” of “anti-Communist purge” excluded unorthodox views and scholars. These factors

* This essay benefited from the comments and suggestions of many readers, including Andrea Graziosi, Ethan Pollock; Terry Martin and Harvard’s Russian/East European History workshop (both its Cambridge-based and diasporic elements); the participants in the workshop, “The humanities and the dynamics of inclusion, 1945-1985” at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, especially organizer David Hollinger; and an anonymous reader. I learned a great deal about the flavor and the facts of the period through informal discussions with many scholars active in the 1940s and 1950s. None of these individuals, of course, should be held responsible for errors of fact or interpretation.

shaped the field's output, enforcing an intellectual consensus about the "uniqueness of the Soviet regime" rooted in analogies to Russia's past.¹

There is a strong *prima facie* case for the indictment of Russian Studies as a creature of the Cold War.² Few areas of American academic life experienced a more rapid and thorough transformation than Russian Studies did in the two decades after World War II. Before the war, only a handful of isolated scholars, many self-declared cranks and misfits, devoted themselves to the study of things Russian. Only a few works from this era were of lasting value, and those came primarily from journalists and/or participants in left-wing political disputes.³ By 1965, the field was booming: more than two dozen universities had Soviet/East European area centers; over three thousand scholars identified their principal interest as Slavic or Soviet; they belonged to Slavic-oriented professional associations and read numerous journals devoted to Russian affairs; students of Russian language numbered in the tens of thousands. The expansion of Soviet

1. The quotations' sources are, in order: Stephen F. Cohen, *Rethinking the Soviet experience: Politics and history since 1917* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985): 8; Alexander Dallin, "Bias and blunders in American studies on the USSR," *Slavic Review*, 32 (September 1973): 567; Stephen White, "Political science as ideology: The study of Soviet politics," in *WJMJ: Political questions — Essays in honour of W.J.M. MacKenzie* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1974): 260; Bruce Cumings, "Boundary displacement: Area Studies and International Studies during and after the Cold War," in *Universities and empire: Money and politics in the social sciences during the Cold War*, ed. Christopher Simpson (New York: New Press, 1998): 163; S. F. Cohen, *Rethinking...*, *op. cit.*: 10; Immanuel Wallerstein, "The unintended consequences of Cold War Area Studies," in *The Cold War and the university: Toward an intellectual history of the postwar years* (New York: New Press, 1997): 210; Ron Robin, *The making of the Cold War enemy: Culture and politics in the military-intellectual complex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001): 54-56; Charles Thomas O'Connell, "Social structure and science: Soviet Studies at Harvard" (Ph.D. diss., UCLA, 1990): 11; Alfred G. Meyer, "Coming to terms with the past... and with one's older colleagues," *Russian Review*, 45 (October 1986): 402; Sigmund Diamond, *Compromised campus: the collaboration of universities with the intelligence community, 1945-1955* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992): 54; A. Dallin, "Bias and blunders..." *art. cit.*: 566, 571. Alan Wolfe, *The rise and fall of the Soviet threat: Domestic sources of the Cold War consensus* (Washington: Institute for Policy Studies, 1979). While most of these sources refer to Soviet Studies in particular, others are to area studies programs more generally.

2. While the distinctions between "Russian Studies," "Slavic Studies," and "Soviet Studies" are relevant in some contexts, I will use the terms, along with Sovietology, interchangeably here. The founders of Sovietology's major journal (and later, professional association), conferring in the early 1950s, banished the word Soviet and insisted that the titles begin with "American"; hence *American Slavic and Eastern European Review* (later *Slavic Review*) and the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (AAASS) — see Chauncey D. Harris, "Russian, Slavic and Soviet Studies in the United States: Some memories and notes," *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 24 (Winter 1997): 444-445.

3. For aspects of Russian Studies before World War II, see Stephen Marshall Arum, "Early stages of Foreign Language and Area Studies in the US, 1915-1941" (Ed.D. diss., Columbia University Teachers College, 1975); Terence Emmons, "Russia then and now in the pages of the *American Historical Review* and elsewhere: A few centennial notes," *American Historical Review*, 100 (October 1995): 1136-1149; David C. Engerman, "New society, new scholars: Soviet Studies programmes in interwar America," *Minerva*, 37 (Spring 1999): 25-43; and Eduard Mark, "October or Thermidor? Interpretations of Stalinism and the perception of Soviet foreign policy in the United States, 1927-1947," *American Historical Review*, 94 (October 1989): 937-962.

Studies in an era of heightened American-Soviet tensions has led many observers to attribute the field's primary purpose to "knowing the enemy."

Yet conceiving of Russian/Soviet Studies as a Cold War enterprise yields at least three important ironies. First, though the original conception of Sovietology placed political science, economics, and the emergent field of behavioral sciences at its center, humanists — scholars of history, literature, and language — benefited as much as (if not more than) their social-scientific colleagues. Second, while the field may have attracted attention for its role in analyzing the actions of a Cold War adversary so different from the United States, intellectual trends within the field were just as like to promote the inclusion of Russia alongside Western Europe and the United States. Finally, though critics place Soviet Studies at the center of Cold War conformism, its practitioners, especially in its early years, brought an impressive array of political views to the topic. These ironies are readily explained if the field's World War II origins are considered. Important organizational work for postwar Russian Studies centers took place during the war against Germany, not the Cold War against the USSR. America's Soviet experts in the 1940s typically saw the Soviet Union as an unreliable ally, not an implacable foe.

World War II and the foundations of Soviet Studies

Sovietology's critics and fans often attribute the field's early character — usually meaning its contributions to national security and its emphasis on the social sciences — to the institutions of World War II. For instance, presidential advisor and one-time Harvard dean McGeorge Bundy celebrated the "curious fact" that "the first great center of area studies" was in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the wartime predecessor to the Central Intelligence Agency.⁴ Indeed, the OSS's Research and Analysis Branch housed an impressive array of scholars, divided up according to world region: Latin America, Europe/Africa, Far East, and the USSR. In analyzing each region, political scientists and economists worked alongside historians. The research aims — estimates of military and economic capabilities and predictions of political stability — placed a premium on social-scientific research on current events. Researchers worked closely with each other irrespective of disciplinary training; the result was an interdisciplinary research program for the Soviet Union that one historian aptly termed "social science in one country."⁵ Intelligence research had little room for the humanities; the historians there performed little work of a historical nature.

4. Bundy, "The battlefields of power and the searchlights of the Academy," in *The Dimensions of diplomacy*, ed. E.A.J. Johnson (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964): 2. Compare S. Diamond, *Compromised campus...*, *op. cit.*: 73.

5. Barry Katz, *Foreign intelligence: Research and intelligence in the OSS, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Betty Abrahamsen Dessants, "The American academic community and United States-Soviet relations: The research and analysis branch and its legacy, 1941-1947" (Ph.D. diss., University of California-Berkeley, 1995).

According to an oft-told tale, OSS veterans returned to their old universities and departments at the conclusion of the war and transplanted that successful experience into educational institutions.⁶ Tracing the field's origins to wartime intelligence serves both to emphasize the applied nature of the work as well as the field's social-scientific origins. This genealogy, from intelligence agency to academic field, is misleading in many ways. There were significant differences between the intelligence model and the university programs that soon emerged. The universities expanded the definition of area studies to include not just research, but also training a new generation of area experts.⁷ Focusing on training, the university area studies programs included the humanities in ways very much unlike the OSS.

The wartime model for the training component of postwar Slavic Studies came from the Armed Services. The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) sought to train personnel for wartime cooperation and possible postwar occupation. Nineteen American universities hosted ASTP programs in Slavic, teaching Army soldiers a combination of history, culture, and language of the Slavic areas. The Navy's Oriental Languages School, housed at the University of Colorado for most of its short life, had a Russian section as well, more focused on language than area studies.⁸ Language and literature scholars played important roles in both designing and implementing these military programs. Not surprisingly, these scholars drew lessons from the military education programs for the future of language and area instruction. Among the most important lessons was the technique of intensive language instruction that combined lectures on grammar with drill sessions supervised by native-speakers (many of whom had minimal training).⁹

6. See for instance, Philip E. Mosely, "The growth of Russian Studies," in *American Research on Russia*, ed. Harold H. Fisher (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959).

7. The training imperative was, of course, not limited to area studies programs. A very suggestive article by David Kaiser argues that the intellectual content of postwar physics was shaped by the conceptualization of Physics Departments' "products" as physicists, not physical knowledge. See David Kaiser, "Cold War requisitions, scientific manpower, and the production of American physicists after World War II," *Historical Studies in the Physical and Biological Sciences*, 33 (2002): 131-159.

8. Oleg A. Maslenikov, "Slavic Studies in America, 1939-1946," *Slavonic and East European Studies*, 25 (April 1947): 531-532. The Navy program trained, among others, psychologist Raymond Bauer, historian Martin Malia, and literature scholar Hugh McLean. On the Oriental Language School, see A. E. Hindmarsh, *The Navy School of Oriental Languages: History, organization, and administration* (c. May 1945): appendixes 36-37 — in University of Colorado Archives. See also William Nelson Fenton for the Commission on Implications of Armed Services Educational Programs, *Area Studies in American universities* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1947).

9. See, for instance, Paul F. Angiolillo, *Armed forces' foreign language teaching: Critical evaluation and implications* (New York: S.F. Vanni, 1947); Alonzo G. Grace, *Educational lessons from wartime training: The general report of the Commission on Implications of Armed Services Educational Programs* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1948); and Robert John Matthew, *Language and area studies in the armed services: Their future significance* (Washington: American Council on Education, 1947); David H. Stevens, "Proposal for national plan of work on foreign languages, institutions, and customs," 7 June 1944, RF Records (Rockefeller Archive Center), RG 3.2, Series 900, Box 31, Folder 165.

Much of the funding and inspiration for the development of postwar area studies programs, and of Slavic Studies in particular, came from the Rockefeller Foundation (RF), though an alphabet soup of governmental, educational, and disciplinary organizations played supporting (and occasionally competing) roles. RF staff began discussing the shape of postwar academic life only months after American entry into the war; the Foundation's Director for the Humanities, David H. Stevens, for instance, noted in 1942 that "The face of the future is not hard to read — demands for people who can handle languages and cultures of the Far East is bound to increase." He saw the creation of regional programs as "food for the present and future."¹⁰ RF officials had long included Russia within the "Far East" in its grants to universities and freestanding organizations like the Institute for Pacific Relations.

In 1943, the Rockefeller Foundation hosted a small conference on Slavic Studies that brought together a dozen leading Slavic experts, many of whom were active in campus-based training programs for the military. As one participant (and later Columbia faculty member) wrote, the main emphasis of a new field of Slavic Studies should be to create and disseminate knowledge about the importance of the "Slavic peoples" in the world's culture, politics, and economics. The discussions frequently cited the USSR's role in the postwar economy, and the opportunities for expanding US-Soviet trade relations after the war.¹¹

The Cold War and the expansion of Slavic Studies

The Rockefeller Foundation's programs on Slavic Studies, discussed during the last years of the war and coming to fruition in 1945 and 1946, had three goals. First, they sought to establish a bilateral exchange program, bringing Soviet scholars to the US to teach Americans about Soviet life.¹² These attempts, half-hearted at best, quickly came to nothing. More serious was the RF's support for Far Eastern-Slavic Studies to a handful of universities in the American West. Long a supporter of Asian Studies in the American West, the Foundation seemed to add Slavic nations into its funding mix with little discussion or publicity. The most enduring Rockefeller program was its major role in establishing the Russian Institute at Columbia University in New York. In spite of an explicit goal of building a geographically diverse set of institutes, the net effects of Rockefeller support tilted the center of gravity of Slavic programs to the East Coast. The impact of these grants, rooted in wartime discussions about Slavic Studies, varied widely. The variations came about because of institutional and individual idiosyncrasies,

10. Conference on "Analysis of program in relation to changing world conditions," fall 1942 — in RF Records, RG 3.1, Series 900, Box 23, Folder 173.

11. Philip E. Mosely to David H. Stevens, 9 March 1943, RF Records, RG 1.1, Series 200R, Box 208, Folder 3338. *Conference on Slavic Studies* (New York: Rockefeller Foundation, 1943): 25-26.

12. See, for instance, Roger F. Evans interview with George E. Taylor, 9 February 1945, RF Records, RG 2, Series 785, Box 311, Folder 2108.

especially as universities adopted different responses to a rash of deaths among scholars prominent in prewar Slavic Studies.

Its grants to Western universities were add-ons, both administratively and intellectually, to its well-established Far Eastern programs; Slavic programs suffered for these circumstances. The broad scope left Russian as only one of many languages at each institute. Individual quirks hindered the growth of some RF-supported programs. The University of California-Berkeley (which had one of the oldest Russian language courses) suffered the death of one leader, émigré George Z. Patrick, just as WWII ended. Next in line was historian Robert F. Kerner, yet Foundation officials did not want him in charge; even the university president admitted that Kerner's "rough edges" might cause some trouble.¹³

Stanford University, home to the Hoover Institute and Library on War, Revolution, and Peace, seemed like a natural site for a major center in Slavic Studies. The Hoover had an extraordinary collection of documents related to the Russian revolution as well as international communism; it is hardly a surprise that the Rockefeller Foundation staff looked hopefully to Palo Alto. Like the Foundation, the Hoover Institute and Library leaders looked at Slavic Studies very much in the mode of the wartime Grand Alliance. Thus the Hoover proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation emphasized how much its scholars had learned from their participation in the campus-based military programs. The political goals, too, emphasized wartime internationalism; one goal of regional studies was to "build up a consciousness of our common humanity." Yet the Foundation steered clear of major grants to Stanford. The death of its capable Russian teacher left it without a leader. More distressingly to the Rockefeller staff, the Hoover Institute and Library seemed promiscuous in the projects it organized, working well outside of its areas of expertise. The lack of integration between the Hoover Institute and Library and Stanford departments also caused concern.¹⁴ Only the University of Washington built an effective Slavic Studies institute with the Rockefeller funds; its Far East and Slavic Institute was a small but productive program.

All of these postwar programs drew explicitly upon wartime models of organization and instruction as well as personnel active in military, intelligence, or diplomatic work. And what was true for the smaller programs out West also applied to the largest Slavic programs, those at Columbia and Harvard Universities.

13. The grants were offered to the Claremont Colleges, Stanford University, and the Universities of California, Colorado, and Washington — see "The Far West looks to the Far East," in RF Records, RG 1.1, Series 253R, Box 3, Folder 22. Joseph H. Willets to Stevens, 16 September 1947, RF Records, RG 1.2, Series 205R, Box 9, Folder 66; and the correspondence between Stevens and Robert Sproul in Office of the President Records, University of California, Series 4, Box 27, Folders 7-8.

14. H. H. Fisher, "Memorandum on the study of Foreign Affairs," 6 January 1945, in RF Records, RG 1.1, Series 205R, Box 8, Folder 58. Report of interview with Merrill Bennett, 1948, RF Records, RG 1.2, Series 205R, Box 9, Folder 59; Charles Fahs interview report with John Gardner, 15 September 1947, RF Records RG 2, Series 200, Box 366, Folder 2480; Charles Fahs diary, 18-22 September 1949, in RF Records, RG 1.1, Series 205R, Box 17, Folder 258.

The transplantation of the OSS to Columbia's Russian Institute (RI), founded in 1946, seemed most direct — yet deceptively so. The RI's founding director was Geroid Tanquary Robinson, a historian who had run the office's USSR Division; economist Abram Bergson (who had led Robinson's economics branch) was also on the founding staff of the RI. The other key RI faculty (legal scholar John Hazard and historian Philip Mosely) had served in the State Department during the war. From its beginnings, the Columbia program emphasized training over research, the reproduction of knowledge over the production of new knowledge. In 1944, while Robinson was still leading the OSS's USSR Division, he argued that Columbia could perform a useful "national service" by "doing all that an academic program can do to prepare a limited number of American specialists to understand Russia and Russians." The RI's founding document reiterated this claim. Recognizing the expansion of instruction on Soviet topics, Robinson insisted that the most urgent task was "to raise the standard of existing instruction in this field and to promote research interests among those who carry on instruction." (Much to Robinson's continuing dismay, the RI's research program never reached the same level as Harvard's.) The RI's M.A. degree, in particular, aimed to train Russia experts for work in government agencies. (In the argot of Sovietology, references to unspecified "government agencies" usually meant the CIA, though it could include the State Department.) This training regimen included significant work in the humanities. Because, as Robinson put it, the Soviet Union exhibited "an extraordinary degree of uniqueness in the major elements of its life and thought," careful analysis of Russian culture and ideas became essential. Columbia's orientation, then, called for a major augmentation of humanities offerings, including both languages and history.¹⁵

One of the first orders of business for the four scholars leading RI was bring fresh blood into the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. While Columbia was one of only four universities that had graduate-level instruction in Slavic Languages and Literatures before World War II, its department was hardly a powerhouse. The mainstays of the department represented the pre-war model of scholarly curios. One of the three tenured members was a classicist who spread his limited talents thinly across both fields; another was a linguistically gifted diplomat who published a Pequot-English dictionary; the third edited a number of undistinguished translations from Polish and Ukrainian. The department faded at the end of the war, with the death of one member and the resignation of another.¹⁶

15. G. T. Robinson, "The Russian Institute," appendix to "The report of the Committee on the Proposed Graduate School of Foreign Affairs" (27 November 1944), Columbia University Central Files [hereafter CUCF] (Columbiana Collection), Personal Subseries: Schuyler Wallace. G. T. Robinson, "A program of advanced training and research in Russian Studies" (24 April 1947), in CUCF, Personal Subseries: Philip Mosely.

16. Albert Parry, *America learns Russian: A history of the teaching of the Russian language in the United States* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1967): 83-86, 124; William B. Edgerton, "The history of Slavistic scholarship in the United States," in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Slavistik in nichtslawischen Ländern*, ed. Josef Hamm and Günther Wytzens (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1985): 494-495.

The RI quickly arranged for the appointment of Ernest Simmons, a Harvard-trained literary scholar who had administered an experimental Russian Studies program at Cornell during the war. From this inauspicious start, Columbia's Slavic Department expanded dramatically in the postwar decade, adding faculty, courses, languages, and students.

The rise of Soviet area studies at Harvard was a more complicated affair. Harvard divided research and training into separate institutions. An interdisciplinary M.A. in Soviet Regional Studies emerged under the aegis of a new International and Regional Studies Program in 1945. That program, devoted exclusively to teaching, incorporated a range of disciplines; the founders hoped to "make use of the lessons learned during the war in the intensive teaching of foreign languages as well as the techniques of a joint attack of social sciences and humanities on a given civilization." Its model was as much the ASTP as the OSS, complete with the militaristic metaphor.¹⁷

A new organization, the Russian Research Center (RRC), soon joined the Regional Program. Established in 1948 at the behest of the Carnegie Corporation, the RRC's mission was "develop a program of research upon those aspects of the field of Russian Studies which lie peculiarly within the professional competence of social psychologists, sociologists, and cultural anthropologists."¹⁸ Indeed, internal Carnegie memoranda refer to the RRC as Harvard's "research on problems of Russian behavior." It was perhaps the first major venture in the emerging field of behavioral sciences.¹⁹

Scholars at Harvard and elsewhere saw the expansion of area studies programs as a grand opportunity to both expand and deepen their disciplines. One influential report, by University of Chicago sociologist and dean Robert Redfield, hoped that area studies would help social scientists overcome their "European and American cultural provincialism." Harvard sociologist Talcott Parsons, similarly, celebrated area studies for the possibility that they could bring about the integration of the social sciences. At stake was scholarship, not foreign policy.²⁰ The goal, as the

17. *Report of the President of Harvard College, 1945-46* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard College, 1946): 37.

18. Senior administrators insisted on calling the new unit a "center" rather than an "institute" because it would seem less permanent. Like predictions about the Soviet Union's imminent demise, this was long unfulfilled; the RRC's successor, the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, is still going strong. Paul Buck Oral History, Carnegie Corporation Project (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University): 53-54. Special thanks to Mickey Keller for first relating this item to me.

19. [John Gardner, Carnegie Corporation.] "Russian Studies" (15 July 1947), in RRC Correspondence (Harvard University Archives), Series UAV 759.10, Box 1. Devereux Josephs to Clyde Kluckhohn, 20 January 1948, Carnegie Corporation Records (Columbia University Archives), Series III.A, Box 164, Folder 4. See also R. Robin, *Making of the Cold War enemy....*, *op. cit.*

20. Robert Redfield, "Social science considerations in the planning of regional specialization in higher education and research" (10 March 1944), in RF Records, RG 3.2, Series 900, Box 31, Folder 165. Talcott Parsons, "Notes for panel discussion on the objectives of area study" (28 November 1947), in Records of the Graduate School of Public Administration (Harvard University Archives), Series UAV 715.17, Box P-R.

Carnegie Corporation's behavioral science impresario put it, was to turn a center for the study of Russian behavior "from a free-floating idea into a working program with a roof (presumably ivy-covered) over its head and identifiable figures scurrying around it, and one or more men of sense and wisdom to lead it gently by the hand."²¹

This particular orientation helps explain one remarkable fact about the RRC's leadership at Harvard: however expert they were in behavioral sciences, none of the four members of the founding Executive Committee had studied Russian affairs or knew the Russian language. Its first director, Clyde Kluckhohn, was a specialist in Navaho culture who had spent the war analyzing the "culture and personality" of the Japanese for the Office of War Information.²² Returning to Parsons's new Department of Social Relations, Kluckhohn had any number of skills to contribute to the RRC — administrative, methodological, and personal (he was well-connected to the wartime and postwar intelligence community) — that, in a way, compensated for his near-total ignorance of Soviet affairs.²³

In spite of this social-scientific emphasis, the RRC soon helped support a range of scholarship outside its original fields, and in the humanities in particular. The expansion of Harvard's Slavic humanities had dual sources. On the one hand, the M.A. degree in the Soviet Regional Program required linguistic competence as well as knowledge of Russian culture. And on the other, the RRC's particular emphasis on understanding Russian behavior entailed some knowledge of that nation's culture. Even if behavioral scientists defined "culture" along anthropological rather than artistic lines, they recognized the need to know something about Russian literature and the arts.

Harvard's offerings in Slavic languages and literatures, minimal before World War II, quickly expanded and improved. Samuel Hazzard Cross, whose original training was in medieval Germanic literature, was the key figure at Harvard before the war. Typical of the taxonomic mess of pre-WWII Slavic Studies, Cross taught in the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures until his death in 1946. Two years later, Harvard established its Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, though its first chair was a historian. With the establishment of a Cross Chair in 1948, however, the department came into its own. In the next dozen years, the department produced twenty graduate degrees in language (up from one before 1948) and eighteen in literature (compared to two before 1948).²⁴

21. John Gardner to Clyde Kluckhohn, 28 July 1947, in Carnegie Corporation Records, Series III.A, Box 164.

22. Virginia Yans-McLaughlin, "Science, democracy and ethics: Mobilizing culture and personality for World War II," in *Malinowski, Rivers, Benedict and others: Essays on culture and personality*, ed. George W. Stocking (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986). For a critical view, see Christopher Shannon, "A world made safe for differences: Ruth Benedict's 'The chrysanthemum and the sword,'" *American Quarterly*, 47 (December 1995): 659-680.

23. For a more generous assessment, see Alex Inkeles, "Clyde Kluckhohn's contribution to studies of Russia and the Soviet Union," in *Culture and life: Essays in memory of Clyde Kluckhohn*, ed. Walter W. Taylor, et al. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973).

24. Derived from Jesse J. Dossick, *Doctoral research on Russia and the Soviet Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1960).

The dominance of the Slavic humanities

Newly minted experts in Slavic languages and literatures quickly found teaching appointments, thanks to the dramatic increases in Russian enrollments at the undergraduate level. A number of contemporary sources — based on woefully inadequate data — indicate that the boom in Russian-language enrollments began in the early 1940s, and then steadied by 1950 or so. One language teacher credited the initial spurt to the optimism of the wartime Grand Alliance: “Only after the Russians had proved that their resistance to the Nazis would not collapse did widespread interest in things Russian grow.” Another source, entirely consistent with the first, concluded that the rate of growth for Russian enrollments was greatest between 1942 and 1950.²⁵ Much of this increase came by the time that the Columbia and Harvard centers were established. In 1941-1942, American universities offered only 27 courses in Slavic languages and literatures; only six years later, 140 institutions employed more than 240 Russian teachers.²⁶ The boom in Russian language, then, predated the rise of Soviet-American hostilities in the late 1940s.

The spike in enrollments, combined with the rapid spread of intensive language programs after the war, created bifurcated departments of Slavic languages and literatures. While the split between scholars with Ph.D.’s and drill instructor was not unique to the Slavic languages, it was especially noticeable in that subject, thanks to a large pool of émigrés employable as language teachers. Vladimir Nabokov described the divide in typically savage terms. At the bottom were those of his compatriots — female in his recounting — engaged in language teaching: “those stupendous Russian ladies... who, without having had any formal training at all, manage somehow, by dint of intuition, loquacity, and a kind of maternal bounce, to infuse a magic knowledge of their difficult and beautiful tongue into a group of innocent-eyed students in an atmosphere of Mother Volga songs, red caviar, and tea.” His self-inspired narrator, while better educated, had allowed his social-scientific degree to lapse into a “doctorate of desuetude” while he taught elementary Russian. Then there were those professional scholars of language, residents of “the lofty halls of modern scientific linguistics, that ascetic fraternity of phonemes wherein earnest young people are taught not the language itself but the method of teaching others to teach the method.”²⁷ Nabokov, however, did not discuss another crucial figure in such departments: the scholar of literature. Even

25. O. A. Maslenikov, “Slavic Studies,” *art. cit.*: 530. Jacob Ornstein, “The development and status of Slavic and East European Studies in America since World War II,” *American Slavic and East European Review*, 16 (October 1957): 375. For an even more precise contemporary dating of the rise of the interest, see Maurice W. Rosenbaum, “Slavonic Studies in America,” *Journal of Higher Education*, 14 (January 1944): 9, 58.

26. Josef Brozek, “Slavic Studies in America,” *Journal of Higher Education*, 14 (June 1943): 293. J. A. Posin, “Russian Studies in American colleges,” *Russian Review*, 7 (Spring 1948): 64. AATSEEL *Bulletin* (15 December 1947).

27. V. Nabokov, *Pnin* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957): 10-11.

while departments hired native-speakers to teach basic language courses, they also sought to hire and train scholars in Slavic literatures, up to date in the latest techniques of literary analysis. Indeed, these new scholars not only created a full-fledged profession in about a decade; they also had impacts far outside their own departments, helping to remake literary studies in the postwar era.

The field of history was spared this division between those whom language teachers called “native experts” and American scholars because Russian-born and Russian-trained scholars held some of the key positions in American universities. Indeed, the two leading US-based historians of the early postwar era, Michael Karpovich (at Harvard 1927-1957) and George Vernadsky (at Yale 1927-1956), had both studied history in Russia, where they had been classmates. Their paths to the Ivy League differed greatly, as did their contributions to the field: Vernadsky published much and taught few students, while Karpovich did the reverse.²⁸

Almost all of the first postwar generation of historians had studied with Karpovich. He had trained a handful of scholars before the war (including Philip Mosely at Columbia), but literally reinvented the field in his Russian History seminar in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The contrast to Geroid Robinson at Columbia is striking; he had only one Ph.D. student in the two decades after he joined the faculty in 1928. One prospective student described Robinson as “austere...in both appearance and personality... [and] incapable of exuding warmth.” When the postwar generation of students contemplated historical training, most opted for Karpovich’s amiability and availability. As one Moscow-based historian aptly noted, “subjective factors” made Harvard and not Columbia the home base for Russian history after World War II.²⁹

While history did not have quite the same “service” function that language departments did, its role in the rise of Soviet Studies is even more striking. Situated between the humanities and the social sciences, historical scholarship contributed greatly to the field in both quantitative and qualitative ways. Harvard’s Regional Program and Columbia’s Russian Institute — like smaller programs elsewhere in the United States — required significant coursework in Russian history. Furthermore, history was the single largest discipline among American scholars of Russia.

The early years of postwar Soviet Studies marked a tremendous expansion in all disciplines. Thanks to an unusual confluence of events, though, the Slavic

28. Vernadsky’s own role in shaping American interpretations of Russian history is complex, but is in any case different from Karpovich’s. Vernadsky borrowed a great deal from the Eurasianist movement among Russian émigrés in the interwar period, suggesting that Russia represented a distinct region with its own unique culture. For varying views, see V. N. Kozliakov, “‘Eto tol’ko personifikatsiia ne nashego ponimaniia istoricheskogo protsessa’: Georgii Vladimirovich Vernadskii (1887-1973),” in G. V. Vernadskii, *Russkaia istoriografiia* (Moscow, Agraf, 1998); and Charles J. Halperin, “Russia and the steppe: George Vernadsky and Eurasianism,” *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 36 (1985): 55-194.

29. Samuel H. Baron, “Recollections of a life in Russian history,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 17 (Spring 1990): 35. N. N. Bolkhovitinov, “Rol’ russkikh istorikov v stanovlenii rusistiki SShA,” *Voprosy istorii*, 4 (2001): 10.

humanities had an especially impressive growth. Professional opportunities and extramural funding targeted Soviet Studies as American-Soviet tensions worsened in the late 1940s. But the existing structure of the field, shaped by wartime discussions at the Rockefeller Foundation and elsewhere, highlighted cultural understanding over economic/political competition. As a result, the Cold War expansion of Sovietology benefited historians and other humanists more than social scientists by any of a number of measures. (Rather than resolve the old debate about whether history is a humanistic or social-scientific discipline, the tables below include it separately.) The field’s first decade set a pattern that would not change significantly over the course of the Cold War.

Table 1 — Degrees in Russian Studies by field, 1946-1956

	M.A. degrees	Ph.D. degrees
Social Sciences	59.4%	47.6%
History	24.3%	28.0%
Humanities	16.3%	24.4%

Source: Recalculated from data in Cyril Black and John M. Thompson, “Graduate study of Russia,” in *American teaching about Russia*, ed. C. Black and J. M. Thompson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957): 63.

Over half of the doctorates in Russian Studies came in history and the humanities. M.A. recipients, however, were more likely to study the social sciences — not surprisingly, given that most were destined for non-academic careers. (According to the results of a survey conducted in 1956, the universities had fulfilled their plan to train experts for government careers; almost 45% of those who received graduate degrees on Russian topics went to work for Uncle Sam.)³⁰ Other quantitative indicators, while varying slightly in the specifics, confirm that the humanities disciplines — especially if they include history — were major beneficiaries of the inflow of money into Soviet Studies. This trend is visible in Soviet exchange programs, fellowships, professional associations, and publications throughout the Cold War.

The emergence of scholarly exchange programs with the USSR marked a major change in Soviet Studies.³¹ The winds of the post-Stalin Thaw led, by the late 1950s, to a bilateral exchange program administered by a consortium of major universities

30. Cyril E. Black and John M. Thompson, “Graduate study of Russia,” in *American teaching about Russia*, ed. C. E. Black and J. M. Thompson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1957): 65.

31. A useful history of the exchanges, written by a scholar active in the organization of programs, is Robert F. Byrnes, *Soviet-American academic exchanges, 1958-1975* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976); one recent account argues that the exchanges contributed to the end of the Cold War: Yale Richmond, *Cultural exchange and the Cold War: Raising the Iron Curtain* (State College: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003). For a compendium of exchange experiences over the decades, see *Adventures in Russian historical research: Reminiscences of American scholars from the Cold War to the present* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003).

(the Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants, or IUCTG, the predecessor to IREX). In the first decade of exchanges, the social sciences got very short shrift. The reasons for this are many: the high level of language competence expected of participants; the social scientists' emphasis on disciplinary competence; and the expected times-to-degree in different departments. Nevertheless, the skew is striking:

Table 2 — Junior scholars selected for exchanges to USSR, 1958-1968

Social Sciences	15.6%
History	35.5%
Humanities	35.5%
Sciences	6.3%
Professional Schools	6.8%

Source: Inter-University Consortium for Travel Grants (IUCTG), "Policies and procedures of the Inter-University Consortium" (1968), in CUCF, Subject Subseries: IUCTG.

A more even distribution is visible in the largest program for funding graduate students in area studies: the Foreign Area Fellowship Program sponsored by the Ford Foundation. While favoring the social sciences, Ford still awarded a majority of its grants to those whose disciplines were not central to contemporary political or economic analysis:

Table 3 — Foreign area fellows by field

	1952-1962	1962-1972
Social Sciences	49.1%	44.6%
History	35.3%	46.3%
Other Humanities	15.5%	9.1%

Source: *Directory: Foreign area fellows, 1962-63* (New York: Foreign Area Fellowship Program, 1963): iv; and *Directory: Foreign area fellows* (New York: Foreign Area Fellowship Program, 1973): iii-iv. These data include recipients of Ford grants as well as certain Ford-funded grants administered by other organizations.

These tables suggest that the development of Soviet Studies was a boon to the humanities. In the course of the Cold War, scholars in Slavic Languages and Literatures transformed their field, in the words of one participant, from a loose agglomeration of "self-styled amateurs" into a "mature" discipline.³² Similarly, Russian history, once the province of a few isolated scholars, became the largest discipline in the growing field of Soviet Studies. At the first national meeting of the

32. Lauren G. Leighton, "Thirty years of *SEELJ*," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 31 (1987): 2. See also Victoria Bonnell and George W. Breslauer, "Soviet and post-Soviet area studies," in *The politics of knowledge: Area Studies and the disciplines*, ed. David L. Szanton (Berkeley: UCIS Publications, 2002).

American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies in 1964, for instance, historians accounted for 29.7% of the registrants; language and literature scholars, 17.8%; political scientists, only 15.0%.³³ Their role in the association's leadership was even greater.³⁴ In short, humanistic scholars dominated the field. Though the financial supporters of Soviet Studies — including both foundations and government agencies — had created the field to learn more about the Politburo, they ended up creating experts on Pushkin. Though they sought insights into Lenin, they also boosted the study of Lermontov.

Slavic humanities and the inclusive impulse

Not only did specialists on the Slavic world tilt towards the humanities, but their scholarship hardly was about isolating the Russian enemy, dealing only with what one Columbia official called Russia's "extraordinary degree of uniqueness." Indeed, the universalistic impulses of the 1950s found full expression in American Slavic humanities scholarship.³⁵ Four of the most influential US-based scholars of Russian culture each promoted a vision of Russia that stressed its similarities and connections to other nations, including the United States. That all four were born and educated in Eastern Europe no doubt helps explain their fierce resistance to the exoticizing orientation that had defined prior scholarship in their fields. Historian Michael Karpovich described Russia as a fully European nation, not just culturally but also economically. His Harvard colleague, the economic historian Alexander Gerschenkron, similarly promoted the idea that imperial Russia was a European nation, well on its way to "normalization" when the Bolshevik revolution derailed it. As these historians situated Russia within Europe, distinguished Slavists developed more rigorously universal systems of thought that placed Russia on equal footing with the rest of the world's languages and literatures. Yale's René Wellek, a native of Czechoslovakia, joined forces with native New Critics to erase national boundaries in American literary scholarship. Linguist Roman Jakobson brought structuralism into American linguistics, arguing that scholars must develop a set of analytical techniques applicable to any language. All four scholars trained

33. C. D. Harris, "Russian, Slavic and Soviet Studies..." *art. cit.*: 453.

34. Almost half of the presidents of the AAASS have been historians, thus continuing a longstanding trend in area studies. When the American Council of Learned Societies and the Social Science Research Council established the Joint Committee on Slavic Studies in 1948, three of its eight members (including the chair) were historians — Gordon B. Turner, "The Joint Committee on Slavic Studies, 1948-1971: A summary view," *ACLS Newsletter*, 23 (Spring 1972): 9.

35. For an overview of 1950s universalism, see David Hollinger, "How wide the circle of we? American intellectuals and the problem of ethnos since World War II," *American Historical Review*, 98 (April 1993): 317-337. For universalism in social-scientific work on the USSR, see David C. Engerman, *Modernization from the other shore: American intellectuals and the romance of Russian development* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003): epilogue.

impressive number of students, helping to define their fields for generations to come. Three of them (all but Karpovich) made their own important contributions not just to the understanding of Russia, but to the direction of their disciplines. Taken together, Karpovich, Gerschenkron, Wellek and Jakobson represent the finest contributions of an intellectual “sea change” less studied than the outflow from Germany, but its own area just as dominant.

Michael Karpovich came to the United States during World War I as a representative of the Russia’s short-lived Provisional Government. Karpovich had already completed his historical training, earning an advanced degree from Moscow University with additional studies at the Sorbonne. By the time he arrived in Washington, the government he represented was barely functioning. The Bolshevik takeover in November 1917 might have deprived him of a job, but the ambassador’s dogged optimism, combined with the uncertain fate of the revolution, meant that the embassy continued to function for five years. His reentry into the historical profession came after an urgent plea in 1927 to teach courses in Russian history at Harvard, where he would stay for thirty years.³⁶ His progress through the ranks was slow, taking two decades to attain the rank of full professor. With the new attention to Russian topics in the late 1940s, though, he cut a larger profile in and beyond his own department; in 1949, he became the first chairperson of the newly formed Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures.

His few books were broad overviews of Russian history. In them, he outlined the case that Russia had become a part of Europe by the early nineteenth century, “the golden age of Russian civilization.” While this label applied to Russian cultural and intellectual history — it was the era of Pushkin, Turgenev, and Gogol’ — he also extended it to show how the Russia of Alexander I (1801-1825) and Nicholas I (1825-1855) advanced economically and politically. The process of westernization, started by Peter the Great (1688-1725), had taken hold in the eighteenth century. Though Peter was most interested in technological innovations, “Western technique and Western ways of living were inevitably followed by Western ideas” such as constitutional government, civil equality, and personal liberty. Belying its nickname from the period, “gendarme of Europe,” Russia had become a Western-style monarchy. A similar story held economically. Far from being backward, Karpovich wrote, Russian economic development in the early nineteenth century “exhibited a more dynamic character than that of any other European country.” In certain branches of industry (metallurgy, for instance), Russian industry was ahead of any nation in Europe, even England.³⁷

36. Biographical details from Philip E. Mosely, “Michael Karpovich, 1888-1959,” *Russian Review*, 19 (January 1960): 56-60; and George Vernadsky, *Russian historiography: A history*, ed. Sergei Pushkarev, trans. Nickolas Lupin (Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1978): 366-368.

37. M. Karpovich, *Imperial Russia, 1801-1917* (New York: Henry Holt, 1932): 8, 14. Witt Bowden, Michael Karpovich, and Abbott Payson Usher, *An economic history of Europe since 1750* (New York: American Books, 1937): 289, 301. A brief and insightful overview of Karpovich’s historical thinking is provided in Martin E. Malia, “Michael Karpovich, 1888-1959,” *Russian Review*, 19 (January 1960): 60-71 (quoted p. 60). See also N. N. Bolkhovitinov, “Rol’ russkikh istorikov...,” *art. cit.*: 5.

By the mid-1930s, Karpovich had taken charge of the latter half of History 1, on Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire. His lecture on Russia in that course — fortunately published in Russian for use in language classes — opens by sounding the theme of Russia as a European nation. He complained that the historical literature describes Western Europe in the early nineteenth century as in the midst of “an epoch of uninterrupted and rapid progress” while demeaning contemporaneous Russia as wallowing in “immobility” and “stagnation.” Yet this could not be further from the truth: Russia was full of “dynamism”; its economic development was “gradually remaking the social structure”; it had taken on the responsibilities of a “great European power.”³⁸

The notion that Russia was wholly European had few adherents in the United States before the 1930s; even by the 1940s it was hardly the dominant view. Karpovich waged a public and private battle against any doubters. In 1945, for instance, he chastised historian Hans Kohn in a letter: “I would not stress the peculiarity of Russia’s development”; its future, he wrote “would not... [be] so different from the path of Western liberalism.” In another work, he railed against the notion that Soviet institutions were “legitimate successor[s]” to elements of tsarist Russia. Karpovich bristled at those who associated Russian literature with Dostoevsky’s psychological musings about the Russian soul, or with the revolutionary tendencies of later Russian thought. The best writers of his homeland, he believed, addressed universal, not national, themes.³⁹

The Bolshevik revolution, in Karpovich’s view, was not the result of Russian backwardness, still less of some essential Russian character. By the early twentieth century, he wrote, Russia was in the midst of its “constitutional experiment.” Conceding that there was no actual constitution, and that parliamentary powers were sharply limited, Karpovich nevertheless held that Russia was “in the process of a profound internal transformation.” Its economic and political opportunities had expanded greatly and its cultural scene was the sign of “a stronger and healthier soul.” The eruption of World War I, however, derailed Russia at its most hopeful, yet most vulnerable, moment.⁴⁰ In his writings, then, Karpovich kept alive the hopes of the European-oriented intellectuals of Russia’s silver age.

He also imparted this perspective to many of his students. The cohort of his post-war students both redefined the study of Russian history and trained many younger generations of historians. They studied primarily Russian history rather than the Soviet period; they explored intellectual history; and they explored Russian thought

38. M. Karpovich, *A lecture on Russian history*, Russian text annotated by Horace G. Lunt (The Hague: Mouton, 1962): 8-10.

39. M. Karpovich to H. Kohn, 20 March 1945, Michael Karpovich Papers (Bakhmeteff Archive, Columbia University), Series I, Box 5. M. Karpovich, “The historical background of Soviet thought control,” in *The Soviet Union: Background, ideology, reality*, ed. Waldemar Gurian (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1951): 16-17. M. Malia, “Michael Karpovich...,” *art. cit.*: 63-64, 67.

40. M. Karpovich in W. Bowden *et al.*, *An economic history of Europe...*, *op. cit.*: 694-696; M. Karpovich, *Imperial Russia*, *op. cit.*: 74, 85, 94.

in relationship to European ideas. These students and protégés included a handful of young historians who, like Karpovich, were part of the Russian intellectual emigration (Marc Raeff and Nicholas Riasanovsky) as well as others like Leopold Haimson, Martin Malia, Richard Pipes, Hans Rogger, and Donald Treadgold. With one exception, all of these historians shared aspects of their advisor's historical vision and sensibility. A contemporary historian thus exaggerates only slightly when he concludes that Karpovich was the "principal 'founding father' of the American school of Russian Studies."⁴¹

Though Karpovich himself was born in Georgia, he and most of his students rarely explored Russia's extensive (and expanding) empire. The one exception, again, was Karpovich's eventual successor at Harvard, Richard Pipes, who had termed his teacher's influence on him "more personal than intellectual." The slippage between the Russian Empire and Russia proper was a common feature of Slavic Studies for many decades.⁴²

Meanwhile, across Harvard Yard, Alexander Gerschenkron shared many of Karpovich's attributes and ideas. Like his colleague, he insisted upon the viability of the Russian economic and political system up until World War I — when the great promises of tsarist Russia were stolen by the Bolsheviks. He was legendary around Harvard for his ability to master languages in pursuit of some passing interest; for the breadth of his knowledge; and for his passionate if painful devotion to baseball's Boston Red Sox. Coming to the United States in 1938, he spent the war working as an economic analyst at the Federal Reserve Board and consulting with the OSS. Harvard's Economics Department — with the enthusiastic support of Kluckhohn — offered him a permanent post in 1948. He quickly established himself as a fixture there, advising students in European economic history as well as Soviet economics and publishing on these and many other topics. His occasional forays into Russian literature led to persistent, if unconfirmed, rumors that administrators offered him the Cross Chair in Slavic Languages and Literatures.⁴³

Gerschenkron's most famous article, "Economic backwardness in historical perspective" contained his usual trademarks: an interweaving of intellectual and

41. Though Riasanovsky earned his doctorate at Oxford, he relied on Karpovich (who knew his parents) as an academic mentor, sharing both intellectual and professional concerns with him; see the correspondence in Karpovich Papers, Series I, Box 6. Malia's antipathy for the Soviet system is ideological rather than national; see Yanni Kotsonis's insights in "The ideology of Martin Malia," *Russian Review*, 58 (January 1999): 124-130. N. N. Bolkhovitinov, "Rol' russkikh istorikov..." , *art. cit.*: 9.

42. Richard Pipes, *Vixi: Memoirs of a non-belonger* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003): 61-62. While some of Karpovich's students (Treadgold and Raeff) wrote of Russian expansion in Siberia, none but Pipes wrote extensively on the multinational nature of the Russian empire.

43. For biographical details on Gerschenkron, see Lewis A. Coser, *Refugee scholars in America: Their impact and their experiences* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984): 154-163 and especially a very personal biography by his grandson: Nicholas Dawidoff, *The fly swatter: How my grandfather made his way in the world* (New York: Pantheon, 2002). On his "loan" to the OSS, see Director, FBI to SAC-Washington, 13 July 1946 — FBI document 77-30528-4.

economic history; confident and sweeping characterizations of industrialization all across Europe; the frequent use of Latin phrases; and literary references ranging from Matthew Arnold to Emile Zola. It makes for an unusual form of economic analysis. While he makes loose references to rates of industrial production and of capital accumulation, Gerschenkron does not cite a single statistic in support of his argument. In short, it was about as humanistic as any economic article could be. Though Gerschenkron's career is closely tied up with the term "economic backwardness," the title was not his own; a conference organizer vetoed his proposed title because of its wordiness.⁴⁴ The new title fit well the major themes of the article. He defined backwardness as the tension between "the actual state of economic activities in the country" and the "great promise inherent in... [industrial] development" — a tension, as he later put it, between "what is" and "what can be."⁴⁵ Gerschenkron described some of the key substitutions that latecomers could use to close the gap. For moderately backward economies like France and Germany in the mid-nineteenth century, a banking system would aid progress by facilitating capital accumulation. In nations like Russia, with a greater disparity between what was and could be, even German-style banks were insufficient to spark industrialization. Direct government investment in industry was the only solution. Ultimately, however, even the most backward economy would catch up enough to render further state investment unnecessary.

Gerschenkron argued that the Russian economy on the eve of World War I had "graduated from the government-instituted... school of industrialization." It was undergoing "westernization" — it was becoming more European in form. The government's role in economic life, he argued, was waning, with the slack taken up by an expanding financial sector.⁴⁶ The war interrupted a particularly dynamic phase of Russian development, disrupting the economy, weakening governmental power, and rendering it incapable of rebuffing the Bolsheviks' grab for power.

Like Karpovich, Gerschenkron maintained an optimistic view of Russia in the silver age. Russia had traveled a long way toward becoming a Western nation in the first years of the twentieth century, only to see World War I disturb the pattern. In this claim is a counterfactual argument, in Karpovich's case implicit, in Gerschenkron's explicit: "If not for the war..." For both scholars, this phrase took

44. The original title was "Historical bases for appraising economic development in a bipolar world." The conference resulted in a book edited by the organizer: *The progress of underdeveloped areas*, ed. Bert Hoselitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952); his essay reappeared in *Economic backwardness in historical perspective: A book of essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962). On the title, see Hoselitz to Gerschenkron, 31 March 1951, Alexander Gerschenkron Papers (Harvard University Archives), Series HUG(FP) 45.10, Box 8.

45. A. Gerschenkron, "Economic backwardness...", *art. cit.*: 8; A. Gerschenkron, "Russian agrarian policies and industrialization, 1861-1914" (1965), in Id., *Continuity in history and other essays* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968): 152.

46. A. Gerschenkron, "Reflections on economic aspects of revolutions" (1964), in Id., *Continuity in history...*, *op. cit.*: 273; A. Gerschenkron, "Problems and patterns of economic development, 1861-1958" (1960), in Id., *Economic backwardness...*, *op. cit.*: 141-142.

on a nostalgic, even longing, tone. The notion that the war diverted Russia's path towards a liberal state and an industrial economy, as future generations of scholars pointed out, must reckon with the unevenness of economic development, the rising social tensions, and the incapacity of tsarism and indeed the tsar himself. (As one of Karpovich's students reported, a joke around Nicholas II's court questioned whether a limited monarchy was necessary in Russia, which already had a limited monarch.)⁴⁷ These wistful tones suffused much American historical scholarship on Russia. They served at once to delegitimize the Bolshevik regime and to portray tsarism in the rosiest possible light.⁴⁸

As this emphasis on "westernization" suggests, Gerschenkron assessed Russian history in a broad European context. While not placing Russia on par with Germany, France, and England, he sought to demonstrate how it was becoming more and more like those nations. Russia's differences from Europe were in degree rather than in kind. Even economic forms that seemed specifically Russian were part of a single process of industrialization; the national particularities would fade away. Gerschenkron provided a single heuristic for the process, one that placed Russia fully within a continental context. Indeed, in the late 1960s, he gave a set of lectures that examined "Europe in the Russian mirror," using Russian circumstances to shed light on major questions in European history.⁴⁹ Gerschenkron's discussion of "economic backwardness," originally adumbrated to explain the evolution of Russian political economy, has found resonance and impacts among economic historians of all world regions.⁵⁰ His students Joseph Berliner, Gregory Grossman and Alexander Erlich (among others) wrote important works in the Soviet field.⁵¹ He taught European economic history in equally renowned undergraduate lectures and graduate seminars. He advised numerous students on European topics, spreading his influence well beyond studies of Russia. Other students rose to prominence for studies of other areas: China, Japan, and early modern Europe.

47. Hans Rogger, *Russia in the age of modernization and revolution, 1881-1917* (New York: Longman, 1983): 15, 22.

48. On the power and implications of this strain of argument, see George W. Breslauer, "Counterfactual reasoning in Western studies of Soviet politics and foreign relations," in *Counterfactual thought experiments in world politics: Logical, methodological, and psychological perspectives*, ed. Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). For an influential effort to dethrone the World War I counterfactual, see Leopold Haimson's articles on "The problem of social stability in urban Russia, 1905-1917," *Slavic Review*, 23:4 (December 1964): 419-441 and 24:1 (March 1965): 1-34.

49. A. Gerschenkron, *Europe in the Russian mirror: Four lectures in economic history* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

50. The effect of Gerschenkron's writings on the field of economic history is evident in *Patterns of European industrialization: The nineteenth century*, ed. Richard Sylla and Gianni Tonolio (New York: Routledge, 1991); and Donald N. McCloskey, "Alexander Gerschenkron," *American Scholar*, 62 (Spring 1992): 2141-46; on banks in particular, see *The origins of national financial systems: Alexander Gerschenkron reconsidered*, ed. Douglas J. Forsyth and Daniel Verdier (New York: Routledge, 2003).

51. James R. Millar, "Where are the young specialists on the Soviet economy and what are they doing?," *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 4 (1980): 317-329.

Émigré scholars of literature and language shared the historians' impulse to understand Russia within Europe. Though both Wellek and Jakobson considered their ideas universal, they shared with virtually all of their contemporaries the notion that the universe was coterminous with Europe. Both of these scholars drew on the intellectual dynamism of interwar Prague, but had their source in approaches developed further to the east. The Prague Linguistics Circle, of which Jakobson was a major figure and Wellek an important interpreter, devoted much of its work to drawing out the implications of Russian Formalism.⁵² The Russian Formalists, a group of literary scholars, poets, and writers, investigated the philosophical content of literary works, trying to disentangle those works from sociological or political arguments. Works of art, they insisted, were not merely byproducts of their own time, but efforts to transform existing artistic forms.⁵³

For Wellek, the Formalist project entailed recognizing the literariness of literature, as distinct from its social and political contexts. His work shared much with the American New Critics, with whom he had a long and productive relationship.⁵⁴ Wellek's encounter with these New Critics was in large part accidental. Raised in Vienna and Prague, his interests reflected the tensions between his father's "ardent" Czech nationalism and his own cosmopolitan education. He interrupted advanced work at Charles University in Prague to study at Princeton in 1927, where he found the courses to be "a bore." Returning to his alma mater in 1931, Wellek published his dissertation on the reception of Immanuel Kant's ideas in England. He then took a post at the School of Slavonic Studies at the University of London; funded by the Czech government, Wellek gave public lectures for the Czech cause and against Hitler in the late 1930s. With the arrival of the Nazis in Prague in 1939, Wellek's funding, not surprisingly, evaporated. He soon found a post at the University of Iowa, where he quickly made common cause with New Critic Austin Wallace. During the war, he taught Czech language in Iowa's ASTP program. The nationwide growth of interest in Russian topics soon took him to Yale, where he was the founding (and for some time the sole full-time) member of its Slavic and Comparative Literature Department. He trained a handful of important Slavic scholars, including Victor Erlich (the brother of economist Alexander) as well as a generation of Comparative Literature specialists, including A. Barlett Giamatti, future president of Yale and the National League.⁵⁵

52. R. Wellek, "Prospect and retrospect," *Yale Review*, 69 (December 1979): 311. On the Prague Circle's approach, see especially F. W. Galan, *Historic structures: The Prague school project, 1928-1946* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985).

53. Victor Erlich, *Russian formalism: History, doctrine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1955).

54. Gerald Graff, *Professing literature: An institutional history* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). A useful antidote to Graff's skepticism about professionalizing motives — especially vis-à-vis the New Critics — is Catherine Gallagher, "The history of literary criticism," in *Academic culture in transformation: Fifty years, four disciplines*, ed. Thomas Bender and Carl E. Schorske (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). Ewa M. Thompson, *Russian Formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism: A comparative study* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971).

55. R. Wellek, "My early life," in *Contemporary authors: Autobiographical series*, ed. Mark Zardzony, vol. 7 (Detroit: Gale, 1988): 205-226 (quoted p. 217). Other details from Martin Bucco, *René Wellek* (Boston: Twayne, 1981).

Wellek contributed to a 1941 volume that helped introduce New Criticism to an academic audience, demanding a new approach to studying literature, one that “should, first and foremost, concentrate on the actual works of art themselves.” While acknowledging that writers had concerns other than the purely artistic, he sought to “restrict attempts to account for literature in terms of something else.” Wellek sought to bridge the “dangerous gulf between content and form” with reference to the Prague Circle’s interpretation of Russian Formalism. He recognized the “transformation [that] every experience must undergo in the artistic process,” yielding a literary form that was related to, but not the same as, its social or political content.⁵⁶ Wellek reiterated this point in his most widely read work, *The theory of literature* (co-written with Warren, 1949). That book also proposed a distinction between “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” realms. The intrinsic consisted of the artistic elements of a work of literature, and was the proper subject of study and evaluation. Wellek and Warren relegated everything else — history, biography, psychology, politics and sociology — to the extrinsic realm, where it should relate only minimally to literary scholarship’s main concerns.⁵⁷

Wellek demanded a restructuring of graduate education; it is in these institutional forms that the universalistic implications of his work are most visible. He predicted that the United States — wealthy, relatively untouched by war, and with a potent combination of American and European critics — would lead the next generation of scholarship. Its graduate education in literature thus took on added importance. His most radical proposal here was to reorder literature departments; they should make appointments by “types of mind and method,” not by nations and periods. The same techniques of criticism were of universal interest and application; the specific literatures covered were secondary to the methods employed. He brought the same approach to Comparative Literature, demanding that the field abandon the study of influences — which created a “strange system of cultural bookkeeping” — and turn instead to the study of literature as a whole; he envisioned a critical enterprise that was “a unified discipline unhampered by linguistic restrictions.” He criticized departments set up along national traditions; they were institutional manifestations of the “romantic ideal of the study of a national spirit” and obscured the “unity of European literature.” A new approach to literature would involve a “new systematic theory,” capacious enough to be “applicable to any and all works of literature.”⁵⁸ Wellek, trained and employed as a professor of Slavic Literature, had no little ambition: the literature of the world (which he defined as the European literature) was his subject.

56. R. Wellek, “Literary history,” in Norman Foerster, *et al.*, *Literary scholarship: Its aims and methods* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941): 97, 130, 103. René Wellek and Austin Warren, *The theory of literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1949): 285.

57. R. Wellek, A. Warren, *The theory of literature*, *op. cit.*: parts III-IV.

58. *Ibid.*: 288. R. Wellek, “The crisis of comparative literature” (1959), in *Id.*, *Concepts of criticism*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols, Jr. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963): 289-90. R. Wellek, “Literary scholarship,” in *American scholarship in the twentieth century*, ed. Merle Curti (New York: Russell and Russell, 1953): 115, 123.

At the same time as Wellek sought to reconstitute literary criticism and reconfigure the study of literature, he also continued to work along the more conventional national lines that had previously organized the field (and some of his own work). For instance, he wrote all forty-two articles on Czech and Slovak authors for a reference work on European literature. He continued to publish on Czech topics throughout his career, especially around the time he assumed the presidency of the Czechoslovak Society of America in 1962.⁵⁹

Wellek and the other New Critics, even if under direct challenge since the mid-1960s, left a powerful legacy in the study of literature. In Catherine Gallagher's assessment, the New Critics permanently shifted the subject and approach of literary studies. Their "cosmopolitanism," furthermore, "was largely responsible for making English departments hospitable to theoretical diversity."⁶⁰ The growing interest in Slavic topics thus helped bring new, and more universal, approaches to literary studies.

Even more than Wellek, linguist Roman Jakobson had an impact well beyond Slavic Studies. After receiving a first degree in Oriental Languages in Moscow, he moved to Prague in 1920 with the Soviet Red Cross mission. He completed his doctoral work at Charles University and stayed in Czechoslovakia. When the Nazis took control in 1939, Jakobson escaped, ending up in the United States in 1941. He held the Czech Studies chair at Columbia before becoming the first occupant of the Cross Chair in Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard in 1949. Jakobson's work with graduate students in Slavic languages and linguistics was legendary; as one student put it, Jakobson trained "virtually all of the major Slavists in that [1950s] generation."⁶¹

Like the other Russian Formalists, Jakobson sought to reconsider the relationship between form and content in literary expression. Focusing on the study of language, they insisted that poetic attributes such as meter, rhyme, and alliteration were not external impositions on artistic expression, but were themselves part of that expression; the formal modes of communication, in other words, were an essential part of what made literature literary. Jakobson's linguistic innovations emerged from his study of poetry, which he called his "first passion" during his student years. He sought to understand the formal structures of poetic language — and, by extension, all language — through careful study of all the elements that made up that language. His first works explored the evolution of Slavic languages, with particular attention to how they began to differentiate from a common source. Though previous scholars had described phonemes as indivisible "atomic entities," Jakobson claimed that phonemes were themselves further divisible into "distinctive features," the most basic building blocks of speech. These distinctive features were so basic that they comprise the building blocks of

59. M. Bucco, *René Wellek...*, *op. cit.*: 50-51, 70. *Columbia dictionary of modern European literature*, ed. Horatio Smith (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949).

60. C. Gallagher, "History of literary criticism..." *art. cit.*: 151, 158.

61. Horace Lunt in *A tribute to Roman Jakobson* (New York: Mouton, 1983): 76-77.

all languages; by organizing them, the linguist could develop “structural laws of universal validity.”⁶² According to one protégé, Jakobson treated linguistics as “a science that sought to discover something fundamental, something real and invariant in the real world.” Jakobson’s conception of the elements of communication steered semiotic theory in a new direction; no less a semiotician than Umberto Eco claimed Jakobson for his approach: “his entire scientific existence has been a living example of a Quest for Semiotics.”⁶³ From his work on Slavic languages, then, Jakobson quickly leapt to the discussion of universal themes. His approach to linguistics, dominant for many years, still has many adherents among Slavacists as well as linguists.⁶⁴

The career of Russian Formalism in American studies of literature and language does not properly end, as this analysis does, with René Wellek and Roman Jakobson. Since the 1970s, at least two major trends in literary criticism — within and beyond the Slavic field — took their inspiration from Russian theorists and their interpreters, many of whom held positions in America’s Slavic departments. Fredric Jameson, perhaps the most important American literary scholar today, reckoned with the Russian Formalists in his first Marxist works, expressing disapproval, even disgust, with American scholars who treat Formalism as “the spiritual property of the Slavacists.”⁶⁵ The insights of the Formalists, he indicated, applied to all literature, not only that emanating from Eastern Europe. Similarly, the present-day fascination with the notions of Mikhail Bakhtin dates back primarily to the reinterpretation of his ideas by Caryl Emerson, Katerina Clark, and Michael Holquist, the latter two in Wellek’s former department at Yale.⁶⁶ Thus Russian Formalism’s impact on America, which émigrés like Wellek and Jakobson brought with them via Prague, has continued to reshape literary studies. The universalist project of these Slavacists has succeeded: Bakhtin has become a social theorist, not a critic of Russian literature; linguists apply insights originally derived from analysis of Slavic tongues to all languages.

62. Roman Jakobson and Krystyna Pomorska, *Dialogues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983): 2. R. Jakobson, “Phoneme and phonology” (1932) and R. Jakobson and M. Halle, “Phonology and phonetics” (1955), both in R. Jakobson, *Selected writings*, 2nd ed., 7 vols (The Hague: Mouton, 1971): vol. 1. See also Hugh McLean, “A linguist among poets,” in *Roman Jakobson: What he taught us*, ed. Morris Halle (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1983).

63. Umberto Eco, “The influence of Roman Jakobson on the development of semiotics,” in *Roman Jakobson: Echoes of his scholarship*, ed. Daniel Armstrong and C.H. van Schooneveld (Lisse: Petter de Ridder, 1977): 42.

64. N. Chomsky, in *Tribute to Roman Jakobson*, *op. cit.*: 81-83. Barry Scherr, “Formalism, structuralism, semiotics, and poetics,” *Slavic and East European Journal*, 31 (1987): 127-140.

65. Fredric Jameson, *The prison-house of language: A critical account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972): 85. Also F. Jameson, *Marxism and form: Twentieth-century dialectical theories of literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971). Sean Homer, *Fredric Jameson: Marxism, hermeneutics, postmodernism* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998): 27.

66. M. M. Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination: Four essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist, *Mikhail Bakhtin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1984).

Of course, the ideas of the Russian Formalists, like Gerschenkron's notions of economic backwardness, did not require the Cold War. The expansion of Slavic Studies in the 1940s, though, paved the way for key scholars and their innovations. Jakobson inaugurated the chair in Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard — a department led by Michael Karpovich. Wellek created (indeed, for a time, was) Yale's department in that field. Gerschenkron entered the academy as Russia specialist. All four, furthermore, were involved in the rise of Slavic Studies in the postwar period. Wellek served as a founding member of the ACLS/SSRC Joint Committee on Slavic Studies; Gerschenkron and Karpovich both served on the Russian Research Center's Executive Committee for many years; and Jakobson remained in close contact with AATSEEL, in part because so many of its leaders were his students.⁶⁷

These four scholars helped shape American knowledge of the Slavic world in ways that promoted inclusion. Russian history was a chapter in European history, undergoing the same processes and explicable with the same categories. Slavic writers were full and equal participants in the world tradition. Slavic languages illustrated not "Balkanization," but important aspects of grammar and syntax that could shed light on other tongues and indeed on the nature of language itself. These scholars' rapid advancement was a sign of the growing importance of Slavic Studies as well as an indicator of the acceptance of universalistic premises in the postwar era.

The politics of Sovietology

The diverse national origins of the scholars in Soviet Studies were matched, more surprisingly, by an impressive range of political perspectives. Both the institutions and the individuals in the field exhibited a political complexion more consistent with an attitude of wartime mobilization than Cold War conformity. This accident of timing is reflected in the composition and aspirations of the early centers for Soviet Studies. For instance, the original plans for Columbia's Russian Institute included a permanent slot for visiting scholars from the USSR.⁶⁸ The wartime circumstances also reduced the political barriers, even for intelligence work. Scholars with left-wing connections found employment at all sorts of government agencies, including the OSS — which hired a significant percentage of the Frankfurt School émigrés for its Research and Analysis branch.⁶⁹

This acceptance of a wide range of political views — so long as scholars were anti-Stalinist — carried well into the 1950s, as non-Communist radicals found new

67. A. Parry, *America learns Russian*, op. cit.: Appendix I; J. Thomas Shaw, "AATSEEL: The first fifty years," *Slavic and East European Journal*, 35 (1991): 76.

68. See the correspondence between Abram Bergson, Geroid Robinson, and Ernest Simmons in fall 1945 — all in Geroid Tanquary Robinson Papers (Columbia University Archives), Box 50.

69. B. Katz, *Foreign intelligence*, op. cit.: chap. 2, "The Frankfurt school goes to war."

audiences. The Frankfurt School's Herbert Marcuse, for instance, received support from both Harvard and Columbia for his work on the USSR; the two institutions competed against one another to support his work.⁷⁰ The need for scholars who could work with Russian sources seemed, at times, to outweigh the need for political conformity.

Indeed, the participants in Russian seminars at Harvard and Columbia might easily be confused with denizens of radical salons decades earlier. They all shared not just a topic — the Revolution, of course — but also a range of experiences with radicalism. At Harvard, participants included two Russian émigrés, one who had been jailed for his participation in the Socialist-Revolutionary Party (Karpovich) and another once active in the Austrian Social Democratic Party (Gerschenkron); an American whose enthusiasm for the Bolshevik Revolution led to his membership in the Student League for Industrial Democracy (Parsons), and a one-time member of the American Labor Party who had supported Henry Wallace's 1948 campaign (the historian H. Stuart Hughes).⁷¹ As the group looked to hire additional scholars, politics definitely came into play. The sociologist Barrington Moore received wary treatment at first; Harvard staff members were concerned that he was "not as objective as one might hope" — because he was too firmly attached to the notion of inevitable Soviet-American conflict. Meanwhile, Karpovich wanted Center funding for three émigré socialists, all of whom he described as participants in the Russian "labor and socialist movement."⁷²

At Columbia, the political complexion was similar if somewhat less cosmopolitan; the conversations about Revolution were in the bland English of small-town America. At least three of the five founding members of the Russian Institute had radical connections. Geroid Robinson had spent his 20s in Greenwich Village, writing for its small and left-leaning magazines (including *The Dial* and *The Freeman*); one 1919 essay on Russia, for example, offered an endorsement of the Bolshevik Revolution from a syndicalist perspective.⁷³ Fellow historian Philip Mosely reported traveling to Atlanta in 1921 to celebrate the release from prison of

70. Minutes of 12 April 1952, RRC Executive Committee Minutes (Harvard University Archives), Series UAV 759.5.

71. On M. Karpovich, see M. Malia, "Michael Karpovich," *art. cit.*: 56; on Gerschenkron, see N. Dawidoff, *The fly swatter*, *op. cit.*: 96-104; on Parsons, see Howard Brick, "The reformist dimension of Talcott Parsons's early social theory," in *The culture of the market: Historical essays*, eds. Thomas L. Haskell and Richard F. Teichgraber III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993): 365. On Hughes, see H. Stuart Hughes, *Gentleman rebel: The memoirs of H. Stuart Hughes* (New York: Ticknor and Fields, 1990): 205-210.

72. John Gardner to Clyde Kluckhohn, 17 October 1947 (reporting on a conversation with Geroid T. Robinson about Barrington Moore), RRC Correspondence, Box 1. Karpovich to Kluckhohn, 4 March 1948 (nominating George Denicke, Boris Nicolaevsky, and Solomon Schwartz), RRC Correspondence, Box 2. Karpovich, in fact, proposed a litmus test; he wanted individuals "of Russian origin, who have been associated with the background of the present-day Russia, both as students of Russian affairs and as direct participants in Russian political and social life."

73. G. Robinson, "Russia re-examined," *Freeman*, 1 (21 April 1920): 132-133. G. Robinson, "Russia's double experiment" (8 May [1919?]), Robinson Papers, box 16.

socialist leader Eugene Victor Debs.⁷⁴ Ernest Simmons had more extensive and recent experiences in American radicalism; he had been a member of the League of American Writers and had served as vice-chair of the American Labor Party in New York.⁷⁵ Among the early postwar appointments in the Slavic Department, furthermore, was a Danish linguist who was denied re-entry to the United States under the terms of the McCarran Act, which excluded foreigners who had been members of any communist party.⁷⁶

Many of the key figures in the early years of American Sovietology, going well beyond the ones listed above, had political commitments to one or another group on the far left. Commentator Sigmund Diamond called Harvard a front in the Cold War's "hot war against dissent." While he does present important evidence that some faculty members ran into trouble with the administration for their past radicalism, Diamond's examples — which include his own case — were not necessarily representative. The RRC was at the center of one important case. Historian H. Stuart Hughes, an OSS veteran hired to be the Center's Associate Director, was forced to resign his administrative post after pressure from the Carnegie Corporation. Thanks to quick back room negotiating by RRC director Clyde Kluckhohn and some ethical hairsplitting by Provost Paul Buck, Carnegie covered Hughes's salary while he taught in the History Department. The issue was not Hughes's cheerfully acknowledged lack of expertise in Russian matters, but instead his support for the Wallace campaign, which Carnegie officials considered "offensive." While Hughes later presented a number of mitigating factors, including the fact that he withdrew his support for Wallace (for his own reasons) by summer 1948, Carnegie officials were adamant that they would not support a project employing him.⁷⁷

Other troubles came from eager congressional investigators. One target was the most important research program in the RRC's first decades: the Refugee Interview Project. The project hired dozens of junior scholars to conduct interviews with Displaced Persons located in Allied-occupied Germany. It was, perhaps, the best-

74. S. H. Baron, "Recollections," *art. cit.*: 37. Mosely himself ran afoul of the security clearance process, in 1954, based apparently on accusations of association with Popular Front organizations in the 1930s; see Philip Edward Mosely Papers (University of Illinois Archives), Box 12.

75. Simmons to Provost Albert Jacobs, 5 August 1948, CUCF, Personal Subseries: Ernest Simmons. James A. Hagerty, "Hilman is elected state head of ALP," *New York Times* (9 April 1944). He faced public charges for his past in the late 1940s and again in the early 1950s; see, for instance, *The Lamont case: History of a congressional investigation*, ed. Philip Wittenberg (New York: Horizon, 1957): 24, 30.

76. On Adolf Stender-Peterson, see Ernest J. Simmons to Dean John Krout, 23 November 1951, CUCF, Personal Subseries: Ernest Simmons. Also Stender-Peterson to Roman Jakobson, 19 July 1951 and Simmons to Jakobson, 12 October 1951, both in Roman Jakobson Papers (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Box 46; Stiven Rudi [Stephen Rudy], "Jakobson pri Makkartizme," in *Roman Jakobson: Teksty, dokumenty, issledovaniia*, ed. Kh. Baran *et al.* (Moscow: RGGU, 1999); and Report of interview with Roman Jakobson (21 June 1948) RF Records, RG 1.2, Series 200R, Box 319, Folder 2945.

77. S. Diamond, *Compromised campus*, *op. cit.*: 69-76; Seymour Martin Lipset and David Reisman, *Education and politics at Harvard* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975): 184-185; H. S. Hughes, *Gentleman rebel*, *op. cit.*: 205-209.

funded research project in the behavioral sciences. Funded by a wing of the United States Air Force — itself enamored of the behavioral sciences — the project aimed to produce a “working model of the Soviet system.” It also produced a number of influential and widely read books about Soviet society and economy, including an overview, *How the Soviet system works*.⁷⁸ Even its all-star scholarly line-up and significant military support, however, could not protect the Refugee Interview Project from accusations of wrongdoing. According to one Air Force officer, the project came “under attack” by Congress in 1953 and required “intervention by individuals high in government” in order to keep it running.⁷⁹ Yet these cases, as serious as they were, did not represent the treatment of all of those with radical beliefs in the field of Soviet Studies.

In the early years of Sovietology, the World War II-era attitude held sway; those studying the USSR did not necessarily consider it a permanent foe. A number of younger scholars in the field, including Hughes, entered in the field in the hopes of helping to improve international understanding. Caught up in the optimistic spirit of wartime alliance rather than the growing mistrust of the postwar years, they wanted to work toward Soviet-American rapprochement.⁸⁰ Other students, including CP members, wrote to senior Sovietologists asking to get involved with the Center. Harvard, for instance, received inquiries from both labor historian Philip Taft and future historian Staughton Lynd; Lynd wrote openly of his CP membership, but explained that he was on the right wing of the Party.⁸¹ Similarly, Columbia offered William Mandel a senior fellowship at the RI; one internal memorandum praised Mandel’s “impressive” record “in spite of his lack of formal education.” What it did not directly mention was that Mandel had built up his record as a member of the Communist Party.⁸²

Some of the former radicals who populated early Sovietology had close ties to government agencies. The State Department appointed Abraham Brumberg as editor of its influential journal, *Problems of Communism*, without regard for what he called his “socialist values.”⁸³ Many of these connections emerged out of the

78. Raymond Bauer, Alex Inkeles, and Clyde Kluckhohn, *How the Soviet system works: Cultural, psychological and social themes* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956). Books by Joseph Berliner, Mark Field, Alex Inkeles, and other Interview Project alumni were influential in the field.

79. George W. Croker, “Some principles regarding the utilization of Social Science research within the military,” in *Case studies in bringing behavioral science into use* (Stanford: Stanford Institute for Communication Research, 1961): 122-124.

80. H. S. Hughes, *Gentleman rebel*, *op. cit.*: 205; S. H. Baron, “Recollections,” *art. cit.*: 46; William Edgerton, “Adventures of an innocent American professor with the CIA and the KGB,” *Russian History/Histoire Russe*, 24 (1997): 321-327; Robert F. Byrnes, *A history of Russian and East European Studies in the United States: Selected essays* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1994): 248.

81. Walter Galenson to Kluckhohn, 13 February 1948, RRC Correspondence, Box 1; Staughton Lynd to Kluckhohn, 6 February 1948, RRC Correspondence, box 1.

82. John Hazard to Geroid Robinson, 15 September 1947, Robinson Papers, Box 50.

83. Abraham Brumberg, “*Problems of Communism* and early Soviet Studies,” unpublished paper (2000): 1.

wartime experience; Mosely and Robinson at Columbia, for instance, remained in constant contact with CIA officials. Harvard's relationships with U.S. intelligence were more frequent and more formal. As Kluckhohn told a review committee in 1952, the RRC had "provided services to numerous Government agencies" from its very inception. Indeed, he complained privately that the Center had been "swamped... by representatives of various government agencies."⁸⁴

The involvement of former (or more rarely, current) radicals in intelligence work had a number of curious side effects. Take, for instance, Kluckhohn's preparations for a leave of absence in 1953-1954. He had been the RRC's main contact with the CIA and needed to find a successor. The Executive Committee's first choice was the Center's assistant director, a young political scientist. Even though he warned his supervisor that he might not be able to obtain the necessary security clearances, Kluckhohn was optimistic — unjustifiably so as it turned out. Kluckhohn then turned to political scientist Merle Fainsod, a professor who had traveled to the USSR in the 1930s. He too failed the security clearance, an event that "infuriated" him. Fainsod's actual involvement in radical activities was minimal; though one colleague considered Fainsod "left of center," another described his crime as simply "being interested in Russia too early."⁸⁵

Sovietologists who performed classified work also provided evidence about their past political involvements. A group of twenty-two junior scholars working in Harvard's Refugee Interview Project, for instance, required FBI approval to conduct their interviews of Soviet Displaced Persons in Germany. The clearance form asked all participants to list any organizations, of any sort, to which they had ever belonged. One scholar listed only his membership in the New York Yacht Club. Many of his less pedigreed colleagues, mostly graduate students at Harvard and Columbia, were involved in Popular Front organizations. About half of the scholars who attended American universities had been involved with the American Student Union in the 1930s or the American Veterans Committee during and after the war; a handful had been members of both.⁸⁶ (The ASU's history is typical of 1930s radical groups, born a joint socialist-communist effort, it split into factions within two years and fell under Communist control in 1939. Some of the Sovietologists involved in the ASU had left by this point, but others remained until the organization's collapse in 1941. The American Veterans Committee went through a similar process about a decade later and slightly faster, split apart by the

84. "Confidential background material for the President's review committee" (January 1952), Merle Fainsod Papers (Harvard University Archives), Series HUG 4382.8, Box 4. Kluckhohn to Provost Paul Buck, 13 June 1949, RRC Correspondence, Box 3.

85. Adam B. Ulam, *Understanding the Cold War: A historian's personal reflections*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 2002): 107. Alfred Meyer correspondence, 19 June 1987, cited in C. T. O'Connell, "Social structure and science..." *art. cit.*: 145. The story also appears, without naming names, in Alfred G. Meyer, "Coming to terms with the past..." *art. cit.*: 403.

86. See the Personnel Security Questionnaires in Harvard Refugee Interview Program Correspondence (Harvard University Archives), Series UAV 759.175, Box Mo-P.

Wallace campaign.)⁸⁷ The Sovietologists' early connection to these Popular Front organizations hardly proves that their field was rife with card-carrying Communists — but it does suggest that pioneering scholars had come from a wide range of political perspectives, including some with tendencies on the farther side of the left.

It is hardly a coincidence that many of the first students attracted to Soviet Studies had radical attachments. Many Americans interested in the USSR in the 1930s came from one or another precinct of the left. The most incisive and most vocal critics of Stalinism, in the 1930s as in the postwar period, came from the anti-Stalinist left.⁸⁸ Some of the most widely read analyses of the USSR in the 1940s came from beyond the groves of academe, and often from the ranks of present or former leftists: for instance, the biographical work of former Communists Louis Fischer and Bertram Wolfe received (deservedly) both popular and scholarly acclaim. Less distinguished works by others with radical pasts flooded bookstores in the early years of the Cold War. Even those who had not renounced leftist attachments earned the respect of early Sovietologists. Briton E. H. Carr was the second speaker ever invited to Harvard's seminar and received offers from leading American universities; his compatriot, one-time Trotskyist Isaac Deutscher, received more guarded acclaim.⁸⁹ These scholars' left leanings shared one crucial trait with mainstream American opinion: an antipathy for Stalinism.

The major institutions of Sovietology were open to a wide, but not infinite, range of political affiliations. Members of a Communist Party could not gain full access to the Harvard or Columbia programs. The case of Ruth Fischer, a one-time leader of the German Communist Party (KPD) reveals the limits of Harvard's political openness. Even before the Center opened its doors, Kluckhohn contemplated having Fischer write up her years of research on Stalin's interference in the KPD, an event that led to her own removal as party head. In internal correspondence, Kluckhohn wrote that Fischer "might be useful to us" not as a staff member but as a "consultant or informant." In its early years, the Center awarded her numerous grants for research assistance. After the first such grant, RRC's Executive

87. Robert Cohen, *When the old left was young: Student radicals and America's first mass student movement, 1929-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Robert C. Tyler, "The American Veterans Committee: Out of a Hot War and into the Cold," *American Quarterly*, 18 (Fall 1966): 419-436.

88. See, for instance, John Patrick Diggins, *Up from communism: Conservative odysseys in American intellectual history* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), or, in a less triumphalist spirit, Judy Kutulas, *The long war: The intellectual people's front and anti-Stalinism, 1930-1940* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1995).

89. On Carr, see Minutes of the Russian Seminar, 5 March 1948, Russian Research Center Seminar Notes (Harvard University Archives), Series UAV 759.8, Box 1; Dean Schuyler Wallace to Robinson, 9 September 1945, in Robinson Papers, Box 50. Jonathan Haslam, *The vices of integrity: E. H. Carr, 1892-1982* (New York: Verso, 2001): 120-124. On Deutscher, Talcott Parsons Oral History, Carnegie Corporation Project, 34; RRC Seminar Notes, 27 January 1950. Deutscher's biography of Stalin received mixed reviews; compare Hans Kohn's (*Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 272 [November 1950]: 282-283) and Merle Fainsod's (*Political Science Quarterly*, 65 [March 1950]: 131-143).

Committee revised its treatment of Fischer and extended it into a “general policy”: those with “definite political convictions” could maintain affiliations with the Center as “informants,” but not as “consultants,” let alone staff members; the policy was necessary to “protect the Center... from the charge of political bias.” Even while supporting her work with varying degrees of patience (for missed deadlines), the Center kept ex-Communists like Fischer at an arm’s length.⁹⁰ The political diversity engendered by the mobilization of Russia expertise had its limits.

The nationalization of Soviet Studies after 1957

As the intensity of anti-Communist politics receded in the mid and late 1950s, Soviet Studies began to change dramatically in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The domestic and international events shaping a new generation of Russia specialists differed sharply from those affecting the founding generation. The early leaders went through their training in the radical 1930s, when support for the Soviet Union was common among intellectuals and students; they served as Soviet experts (mostly in government positions) during the wartime Grand Alliance. In contrast, those of the generation rising in the 1960s who had served in the war were more typically soldiers or sailors, not intelligence analysts. The headlines during their graduate training tracked not the Red Army defeat of Nazi advances, but the Sovietization of Eastern Europe, the domestic turmoil of late Stalinism, and, most importantly, the Korean War.

Soviet events influenced institutions as well as individuals. In the aftermath of the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite in 1957, federal investments in teaching and training increased dramatically in two areas: science education and area studies. The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) transformed the financial basis of area studies, designating some existing programs “National Resource Centers” and spurring the creation of many more. They also provided for Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships that became a staple for generations of graduate students, up to the present day. Prior to 1957, Sovietological resources were concentrated in Cambridge and Morningside Heights, with small and relatively insignificant outcroppings along the west coast. Federal funding accounted for the expansion of Soviet Studies into a national enterprise in the early 1960s.⁹¹

90. Kluckhohn to Donald McKay, 12 November 1947, in RRC Correspondence, Box 1. Executive Committee Minutes, 7 February 1948, in RRC Executive Committee Minutes, Series HUG 759.5, Box 1. Sabine Hering and Kurt Schilde, *Kampfname Ruth Fischer: Wandlungen einer Deutschen Kommunistin* (Frankfurt: Dipa-Verlag, 1995): chap. 4.

91. On the institutional and funding frameworks supporting Soviet Studies, see Alexander Dallin, “Soviet and East European Studies in the United States,” in *Soviet and East European Studies in the international framework*, ed. Arnold Buchholz (Berlin: Berlin Verlag, 1982); and C. D. Harris, “Russian, Slavic and Soviet Studies...,” *art. cit.* The founding editor of the major journal in Slavic language and literature, *Slavic and East European Journal*, identified World War II and Sputnik at the landmarks in that field — see J. T. Shaw, “AATSEEL...,” *art. cit.*: 8.

The impetus to expand and improve training in Russian and Soviet affairs goes a long way in explaining the increase in language departments, in terms of both faculty and students. Russian language enrollments went from 16,300 in 1958 to 30,600 in 1960. But interest in languages was hardly limited to the Cold-War enemy: Spanish enrollments also came close to doubling in a similar period.⁹² Cold War competition — the “language gap” — sparked an increase in student demand as well as in the supply of courses and scholarship.

The NDEA-led expansion of Russian Studies shaped not just language and literature, but all scholarship in the field. Early scholarship had brought together students of Russian/Soviet history, culture, politics, society, and economics. The Columbia and Harvard institutes had explicitly interdisciplinary aims for their research and training programs. While they never succeeded in transcending disciplinary divides as much as they had hoped, the reigning notion for the field was one that celebrated mastery of a country or region over adherence to disciplinary standards. As the field expanded, however, historians began speaking primarily to other historians, economists to other economists, and so on. New specialized journals competed for attention with journals, like the *Slavic Review*, that reflected an area-studies orientation. Some leading scholars of the postwar generation, such as sociologists Alex Inkeles and Barrington Moore, Jr., left Soviet Studies to pursue broader projects.

The expansion of the field in the 1960s did not change its basic distribution of disciplines. Even the financial crises that buffeted the field in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as major foundations reduced their funding for international studies, had minimal effect on the role of different disciplines. Publications by faculty at NDEA centers on the USSR and Eastern Europe favored the humanities over the social sciences even into last years of Brezhnev’s rule.

Table 4 — Publications by NDEA Center Faculty, 1976-1981

Social Sciences	40.3%
History	16.6%
Humanities	43.1%

Source: Richard Lambert, *et al.*, *Beyond growth: The next stage in language and area studies* (Washington: Association of American Universities, 1984): 357-358.

The 1970s also brought a sharpened political edge to the field as the turmoil of The Sixties arrived in earnest. Numerous scandals involving scientists and social

More generally, see Robert A. McCaughey, *International studies and academic enterprise: A chapter in the enclosure of American learning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984): chap. 7; and Roger L. Geiger, *Research and relevant knowledge: American research universities since World War II* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993): chap. 6.

92. Richard Lambert, *Language and area studies review* (Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science, 1973): 150-154.

scientists on the payroll of the Pentagon or the CIA made younger scholars deeply distrustful of the ties between scholars and government that had been a hallmark of the WWII generation. A controversy involving the role of government agencies in scholarly exchanges to the Soviet Union resulted in the end of the Inter-University Committee and the formation of IREX in 1968. Critics, especially younger scholars, lambasted the founders of Soviet Studies for promoting a Cold War sensibility, for letting geopolitics shape scholarship. Scholars coming of age in the 1970s opened up new venues and vistas for scholarly work: the political and cultural history of the 1920s, for instance, and the role of Soviet bureaucracies. While these scholars were hardly the first to criticize the scholarship of their elders, they did so with a particular vehemence. In so doing, they also contributed to the critical vision of 1950s Soviet Studies distilled at the start of this essay. The 1970s thus bequeathed both innovations for understanding the Soviet Union and obstacles to understanding the history of Soviet Studies.

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