H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk. *Geist im Dienste der Macht: Hochschulpolitik in der SBZ/DDR 1945 bis 1961.* Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2003. 608 S. EUR 24.00 (broschiert), ISBN 978-3-86153-296-5.

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Published on H-German (February, 2005)

Cadre Factory: Reproduction of Elites in the GDR

At the end of the Second World War the socialist administration in eastern Germany identified the construction of a new intelligentsia as being of central importance for the development of a "democratic" German society. "The solution to the great tasks of socialist construction," Walter Ulbricht claimed, "is firmly dependent upon the education, range and promotion of the [Party] cadre."[1] This cadre was to be trained within a higher education system that needed a drastic overhaul after 1945: teaching staff required a thoroughgoing purge of politically compromised academics; the curricula were to be cleansed of Nazi and supremacist content; buildings reconstructed; students vetted, and the campus politicized to reflect the polemics of the new socialist order. Yet despite the vast complexity of such an undertaking, by 1961 the East German university system had indeed become the *Kaderschmiede* of the worker-peasant state. And unlike other areas of the East German society and economy, the state's reform measures met with only sporadic and largely disorganized resistance. This initial phase of construction and consolidation in the GDR's campuses is the subject of Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk's *Geist im Dienste der Macht.*

Geist im Dienste der Macht arrives at a critical juncture in the historiography of the East German higher education system. This 604-page tome is the first of its kind to provide a systematic and scholarly analysis of the intellectual-ideological basis of the "reconstruction" of the East Germany's universities in the fifteen years between unconditional surrender and the erection of the Berlin Wall. With very few exceptions (and Ralph Jessen's *Akademische Elite und kommunistische Diktatur* is here singled out as one rare exemption), the bulk of current literature consists of political histories that are mostly unable to address or contextualize the dilemmas in the process of socialization that they have uncovered (p. 17).[2] Quite simply, this failure has occurred because political historians have avoided a thoroughgoing analysis of the notion of *Intelligenz* and its erratic meaning within the evolving discourses of intellectualism and higher education, particularly in the context of the former GDR.

Indeed, the first section of Kowalczuk's book, entitled "Intelligenz–zwischen Theorie und Politik," addresses this dilemma in considerable detail and evokes theorists from Plato to Marx and Habermas to demonstrate the inherent slipperiness of such vague terminology. Should, for instance, the intelligentsia be understood as a distinct social class or as a stratum that transcends class boundaries? And is "intelligence" confined to the campus or does it live amongst engineers, teachers, medical doctors, and other specialists beyond the watchful eye of the university administrators? As Kowalczuk rightly points out, this second question is particularly loaded. If the intelligentsia is defined simply as those with a university qualification, then the socialist regime's legitimacy as representative of the working masses no longer seems quite so assured, especially when universities across Germany produced a flood of graduates in the post-war higher education boom. The SED itself was also

changing: in April 1946, 60.1 percent of the party's membership was identified as working class, and this percentage fell to only 39.9 percent by March 31, 1961, while white-collar employee categories expanded accordingly. These figures, Kowalczuk notes, demonstrate that "the SED had rapidly lost its character as a workers' party" (p. 48). Yet such statistics are also indicative of an intricate, constructed relationship between the Party and the intelligentsia. The SED became infused in the major domain of "intelligence"–the university campus–not simply to expropriate the remaining vestiges of bourgeois influence in the so-called "anti-fascist-democratic" order but also to create a new generation of elites loyal to the ideology of the worker-peasant state. Concomitantly, "intelligence" entered the party-state machinery because it held such a pivotal role in the continual reproduction of these socialist elites. Far from indicating some inherent weakness in the SED, the increased representation of the intelligentsia and white-collar professionals illustrates the speed with which academic work became merely a different form of labor and the extent to which the campus-based ideological onslaught had been successful. This symbiotic interrelationship between the intelligentsia and the ideologues and the speed with which the transmogrification was completed lies at the basis of Kowalczuk's study. His opening analysis of *Intelligenz* in socialist theory and politics forms the backbone of an engaging analysis.

The second section, "Die Umgestaltung des Hochschulwesens 1945 bis 1961," introduces the practical reforms implemented in the higher education system between 1945 and 1961. Kowalczuk identifies three major tasks that stood "at the centre of the university reform process" at the beginning of the occupation: a thoroughgoing purge of the university teaching corps; revision and adjustment of the composition of the student body through rigid controls over admission procedures; and the alteration of underlying university structures and curricula (pp. 107-108). These platforms formed an interconnected strategy to revolutionize a university system and an academic clique that, according to the Soviet Military Administration (SMA) and the SED, had so clearly failed in the face of National Socialism in 1933.[3]

The first and most obvious reform occurred prior to the reopening of all campuses in 1945-1946. Denazification afforded an unprecedented opportunity for central administrators to purge faculties of politically "undesirable" elements, and the SMA undertook this task with a fervent zeal. By the beginning of 1946, more than 70 percent of eastern Germany's professors had been dismissed as a result of denazification (p. 111), and when Leipzig University's Philosophy Faculty reopened on February 6, 1946 not a single professor remained with previous official ties to the National Socialist regime.[4] Denazification also necessitated the screening and rejection of degree candidates and, coupled with the construction of the so-called Workers' and Peasants' faculties (*Arbeiter- und Bauern-Fakultaeten*), the demographic of the campus and the social background of graduates changed with remarkable speed. Until 1945, only between 2 and 4 percent of the student population were identified as of working class origin, but by 1953, some 12,689 students were enrolled in the Workers' and Peasants' faculties across the GDR (p. 159). Finally, the introduction of compulsory courses in Marxism-Leninism and the foundation of the "red" social sciences faculties (*Gesellschaftswissenschaftlichen Fakultaeten*) placed official state ideology at the fore of even the most innocuous and notionally "apolitical" of university subjects. These themes are continued in the third section ("Hoffnungstraeger und Zukunftsgaranten"), where Kowalczuk explores the composition of the student body and, importantly, the role of women in the forthcoming intelligentsia.

Part Four, " 'Zuckerbrot und Peitsche': Foerderung–Vertreibung–Widerstand," examines the interchange between the state and the university in the form of official rewards and sanctions imposed in response to academic conformity and resistance. Here Kowalczuk ably demonstrates that the dialogue between the rulers and the ruled was far from omnidirectional. Despite a careful "programmatic" agenda for the construction of this socialist intelligentsia, the Party's goal of complete academic subservience was never truly realized, necessitating the use of both carrot and stick to mollify potential sources of discontent (p. 347). On the one hand, students paid no tuition fees and many received stipend payments while academics qualified for higher income rates and accelerated access to scarce consumer goods. On the other hand, the "militarization" of the campus and the infiltration of ideological dogma across the faculties served as pre-emptive measures to stifle dissent within the ranks of the current and forthcoming intelligentsia. Most importantly, the politicized campus created an intricate web of Party organisations that infused the work of scholarship with that of political socialism. Following the SED's call of July 1950 to dispose of "reactionary bourgeois ideology," seminar groups emerged in all faculties and student organizations to instigate "discussions and campaigns with, against and about bourgeois professors" as well as international political affairs (p. 382). Pressure to conform to

the new order was therefore not merely imposed by ideological automatons in East Berlin directing the work of the socialist peripheries but also came from within the student and faculty bodies themselves.

Over the past decade, Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk has established himself as a doyen of East German higher education and *Geist im Dienste der Macht* should cement his place firmly within this bourgeoning field of historical investigation. Kowalczuk has contributed a methodical, lucid, and well-researched piece of scholarship that complements not only his own previous publications but also those of other eminent scholars within this field.[5] Such an investigation provides an important insight into the manner in which East German socialism was constructed not only as a social and political reality but also as a cultural entity that sought to reproduce itself over successive generations. *Geist im Dienste der Macht* is therefore welcomed as a valuable contribution to the history of East German higher education and will no doubt form the basis for further research in this field.

Notes

[1]. Saechsisches Staatsarchiv Leipzig (SSAL) IV/4/14/020, Bl.66.

[2]. Ralph Jessen, *Akademische Elite und kommunistische Diktatur: Die ostdeutsche Hochschulherrschaft in der Ulbricht-Aera* (Goettingen: Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1999).

[3]. Hans-Uwe Feige, "Zur Entnazifizierung des Lehrkoerpers an der Universitaet Leipzig," *Zeitschrift fuer Geschichtswissenschaft* 42, no. 9 (1994): p. 800.

[4]. Universitaetsarchiv Leipzig (UAL) Rektorat 238 Band 3, Bl.17-20.

[5]. See also: Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, "Anfaenge und Grundlinien der Universitaetspolitik der SED," *German Studies Review* 17 (1994): pp. 113-130; Hans-Uwe Feige, "Der Aufbau der SED Betriebsgruppe an der Universitaet Leipzig 1945-1948," *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung* 26, no. 2 (1984): pp. 247-256; John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech and Polish Higher Education, 1945-1956* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); John Connelly, "Ulbricht and the Intellectuals," *Contemporary European History* 6, no. 3 (1997): pp. 329-359; John Connelly, "East German Higher Education Policies and Student Resistance, 1945-1948," *Central European History* 28 no. 3 (1995): pp. 259-298; Alexandr Haritonow, *Sowjetische Hochschulpolitik in Sachsen 1945-1949* (Koeln: Boehlau, 1995); Alexandr Haritonow, "Entnazifizierung an der Bergakademie Freiberg, 1945-1948," *Bildung und Erziehung* 45, no. 4 (1992): pp. 433-441; Carlo Jordan, *Kaderschmiede Humboldt-Universitaet zu Berlin: Aufbegehren, Saeuberungen und Militarisierung 1945-1989* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2001).