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Natalia Tsvetkova. *The Cold War in Universities: U.S. and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy, 1945-1990.* Leiden: Brill, 2021. 264 pp. $132.00, cloth, ISBN 978-90-04-47177-1.

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Collegiate Cold War

How similar were Cold War-era attempts by the Soviet Union and the United States to transform educational systems, universities, curriculums, and faculties across the globe? What role did local communities and professoriates have in resisting or even driving the international policies of superpowers in the post-World War II era? Natalia Tsvetkova's *The Cold War in Universities: U.S. and Soviet Cultural Diplomacy, 1945-1990* answers these and related questions through a series of case studies ranging from Germany ("Europe"), Afghanistan ("Middle East and Central Asia"), Ethiopia ("Africa"), Vietnam ("Asia-Pacific"), and Guatemala and Cuba ("Latin America and the Caribbean"). Based on these case studies, she argues that local communities and specifically professors were able to successfully tame, sabotage, and resist the attempted reforms by both superpowers to their countries' education systems, granting them an important and underacknowledged role in shaping the enactment of policies in the cultural Cold War.

One of the main strengths of Tsvetkova's work is her ability to provide evidence from a range of geographic, cultural, and political spaces while also tracing how both Soviet and US policies gradually shifted away from ambitious attempts for radical transformation toward a more modest strategy of appeasement and compromise. The book begins with a chapter on newly divided post-WWII Germany at the height of Soviet and US confidence in transforming professoriates and introducing new disciplines. These policies were met with quick resistance on the part of local professoriates, a tendency that would continue and grow as both powers sought to impose educational transformations abroad.

Tsvetkova uses both US and Soviet archives to show how US and Soviet cultural diplomacy in higher education shared many more similarities than is suggested by the commonly invoked dichotomy of "soft" Americanization and "hard" Sovietization. Both the United States and the Soviet Union sought to transform local educational institutions and the professoriate, beginning with denazification. In the US zone, denazification was the stricter of the two and took the form of the purging of rectors and professors; in the universities of Bavaria, up to 70 percent of faculty were either purged or left their universities. Between May 1945 and September 1946, the Soviet Union carried out a similar but less intense form of the

US purges, which persisted for several years. After the initial purges, each power sought to impose their own transformations on the universities.

In the face of passive and active forms of opposition from the remaining local professoriate, American authorities attempted to avoid direct confrontation and instead bypass the professoriate by establishing new institutes independent of their influence. By the 1960s and early 1970s, however, they faced additional opposition from student demonstrators while enrollments in American-backed disciplines such as political science and American studies were at an all-time low. The Soviets, on the other hand, attempted to impose Marxism-Leninism and the Russian language as key disciplines despite resistance from the university teaching staff. While West German professors resisted US-led changes to syllabi and reductions in their own administrative power at the university level, the orthodox Marxist teaching and research methods imposed by the Soviet Union led to teacher shortages and resistance from those professors that remained, prompting an increase in basic hourly wages, a decrease in the income tax, and even higher salary increases for rectors and deans. Despite these concessions, the issue of Marxism and its imposition on the universities remained a major problem for the Soviet Union throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

In chapter 2, Tsvetkova takes the reader to another important site of Cold War conflict, exploring the similar cases of Americanization and Sovietization in institutions of higher education in Kabul, Afghanistan, where both superpowers failed in their attempts to impose their own visions and transformation of Afghan education. In addition to showing how local resistance and larger factors shaped this failure of both superpowers, the author also demonstrates how intense Cold War competition between the two powers could accelerate their respective attempts to disseminate and root opposing ideologies globally. The United States involvement at Kabul University began under the Truman administration, when the university (alongside other educational institutions) received modest funding. The situation changed after the establishment of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 1961 and a larger program of American reform that targeted the Faculty of Engineering beginning in 1962; the Soviets responded to these plans by paying for and building a Polytechnic Institute, which eventually superseded the US Faculty of Engineering.

Unlike the Polytechnic Institute, the US Faculty of Engineering did not offer master's degree-level teaching and lacked competent teachers, laboratories, and equipment, all of which resulted in poor preparation of their students. The success at the rival Polytechnic Institute led US officials to attempt to strengthen the curriculum and improve the teaching of English, but low salaries, resistance from local staff, the 1973 coup, and the 1979 revolution inhibited these plans. After the 1979 Saur Revolution and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, Kabul University came under Soviet control. More ambitious than their US counterparts, Soviet officials attempted to purge American influences and, in 1983, introduced major reforms, including mandatory courses in Marxism, political economics, Soviet history, and Communist Party history. Although there were modest successes in the face of the ongoing war in the 1980s and resistance from local students and professors, Soviet advisors on the eve of the Soviet withdrawal were unsatisfied with their progress, noting that the plan for expanding master's-level education had failed, that the newly introduced disciplines were not embraced by the majority of students, and that the war against Soviet troops undermined the efforts to reshape Kabul University to be pro-Soviet. It was through both silent and open resistance in the form of strikes, sabotage, and a growing Islamist movement that students and professors resisted attempts at external reform in Kabul University.

Chapters 3 and 4 build on the previous chapters to show two cases (Ethiopia and Vietnam) where international Cold War rivalries again shaped the success and failures of the superpowers on the ground, while also showing the important role played by local professors and students in shaping and often resisting the implementation of those reforms. Another strength of Tsvetkova's work comes out in chapter 4, namely her use of documents from USAID and other agencies that allows her to show the important role played by a range of (mostly) public universities in the US in implementing cultural diplomacy efforts in the Cold War. Whereas faculty from Columbia University, the University of Wyoming, and the University of Nebraska were heavily involved in earlier attempts to reform education at Kabul University, teams from universities across the Midwest—including Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and Southern Illinois—played an important role in implementing projects in Vietnam. With the support of these teams, US attempts to transform Vietnamese education and create reliable experts in Saigon began in the mid-1950s and continued until the gradual withdrawal from the country in the early 1970s.

In the final chapter, which compares US policies in Guatemala with Soviet policies in Cuba, Tsvetkova focuses on the last years of the cultural Cold War rivalry. She highlights how the strategic importance of Latin America allowed local professors and students to shape and limit external policies to an unprecedented degree, primarily because of the fear each power had of losing influence in the region. She also demonstrates the end point of a gradual shift away from the early ambitions of the two superpowers in Germany and Afghanistan. In Guatemala, for example, the unpopularity of US experts led them to avoid direct contact with their local partners at the University of San Carlos, a policy which emboldened local professors to resist the US focus on training teachers and instead maintain their own preferred goal of producing scientific knowledge. In Cuba, the Soviet Union and its educational reformers faced similar problems, despite the allegedly strong relationship between the two countries. At the University of Havana, Cuban professors, students, and even government members resisted Soviet reforms and any challenges to the university's autonomy. While continuing to play a major role in training Cuban specialists, the Soviet Union's attempts to change local education curriculums were restricted to the Maxim Gorky Russian Language Institute, a separate pedagogical institute formed in 1962 after efforts to create change at the University of Havana failed. In each of these cases, the geopolitical significance of Latin America as a region and the shift away from an ambitious plan of radical transformation in other countries resulted in a higher degree of control for local education partners in the field of cultural diplomacy.

The chronological and geographic scope of Tsvetkova's work is impressive but comes with a few tradeoffs that deserve mention. First, one major shortcoming of the book is that the voices of local academic communities, an important part of her analysis, are primarily heard only through the voices of USAID actors and their Russian equivalents. Access to other sources that could help illuminate the thoughts and motivations of local professor and student communities could have enriched her study and added more nuance to the recurring dichotomy between "local traditions," "conservatism," "traditionalism," and the efforts of US and Soviet cultural diplomats. Related to this issue, the author does not always critically scrutinize reports from the bureaucrats who carried out US and Soviet cultural diplomacy. The book would have benefited from a more critical reading of these bureaucratic reports. When reading about the inherent "conservatism" of German professors or the "traditional" or even "tribal" nature of Afghan educators and learning institutions, for example, one wonders to what degree these attitudes have been carried over from bureaucrats of a bygone era (p. 95). Finally, instead of talking about the desire for local groups to preserve local

"traditions" in teaching and learning, it may have been more constructive to focus on the desire for autonomy among local groups, a concept that only appears significantly in the Cuba chapter. Because little information is provided about the educational traditions of places like of Addis Ababa and Kabul, themselves places of exception from the norm in their respective countries, the repeated use of the term serves as a catchall with limited analytical value.

While important, these criticisms do not detract from the main contributions made by Tsvetkova. ***The Cold War in Universities*** deserves praise and attention because it covers a long period of US and Soviet cultural diplomacy and does the important job of explaining the similarities between Americanization and Sovietization and dispelling the notion of an alleged soft/hard diplomacy dichotomy between them. More importantly, Tsvetkova shows the importance of grassroots organizations in resisting outside pressures and the necessity of appealing to local groups and interests in the realm of cultural, political, and educational change. ***The Cold War in Universities*** will be of interest to anyone interested in twentieth-century international politics, the implementation of educational reforms, development politics, and of course, the history of the Cold War.