

Some would argue that “independent policy” is too strong a phrase, but Békés is not the only author who has claimed that the East European countries had independent foreign policies. Békés insists that new evidence about the political struggle between the Soviet Union and its East European allies indicates that the “fraternal” countries at times deviated from the hegemon. Romania, in particular, gradually shifted to an autonomous course after the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, taking wayward stances on the Sino-Soviet split, the German question, relations with Israel, and the August 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Even though some of the disputes within the bloc did not flare into public view, Békés highlights the growing fissures within the Warsaw Pact.

Békés, the founding director of the Cold War History Research Center in Budapest, succeeds in offering a new perspective on the Cold War in several ways. He introduces more than a dozen new or newly conceptualized terms or theoretical innovations for consideration (“quasi-Sovietized” and “pre-Sovietized” East-Central European states, “stealthy revolution,” “the Mikoyan doctrine,” “the Brest-Litovsk syndrome,” etc.). He has also dramatically revised the traditional chronology of the Cold War, splitting it into two major periods. In so doing, Békés fundamentally alters our previous understanding of the Cold War. His careful reappraisal and new concepts replace the traditional “linear” depiction of the Cold War with a multilayered and more complex account.



Audra J. Wolfe, *Freedom's Laboratory: The Cold War Struggle for the Soul of Science*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2018. 302 pp. \$29.95.

Reviewed by James Schroeder, Washington State University

Cold War histories focusing on race, culture, gender, and geopolitics frequently acknowledge the importance of science as a tool of government policy, but the ideological underpinnings that define, legitimize, and perpetuate concepts of scientific freedom are seldom explored. Audra Wolfe innovatively addresses this gap in *Freedom's Laboratory* by examining how the U.S. government targeted the Soviet Union from 1947 to 1989 using the concept of “scientific freedom” (p. 2) as a form of ideological containment. Paradoxically, Wolfe argues that apolitical science and the free exchange of information were political constructions perpetuated by U.S. officials and academics seeking to win “global hearts and minds” (p. 7) by contrasting Western scientific benevolence and objectivity against perceived statist biases tainting the Soviet scientific establishment. Although many American scientists relied on government contracts, she claims few saw any conflict of interest with their commitment to apolitical science. Wolfe convincingly demonstrates that concepts of scientific freedom constituted critical elements of Cold War cultural diplomacy conducted on disparate fronts by scientists, journalists, and government officials.

Wolfe argues that these ideological divisions formed in response to Joseph Stalin's persecution of geneticists in the 1930s and the notorious Soviet geneticist Trofim Lysenko's subsequent rise to power in the Soviet scientific community. This controversy spawned "Lysenkoism" (p. 18), a term Wolfe defines as the perception that Soviet science was corrupt and brutally politicized. Wolfe focuses much of her research on how the field of genetics influenced concepts of scientific freedom, and U.S. geneticists such as Hermann Joseph Muller and H. Bentley Glass assume various roles as social commentators, ideologues, and scientific advisers. Wolfe concludes that Lysenkoism merged with a general critique of statist science inspired by Nazi Germany's failed nuclear program and that together these sentiments justified convictions that scientific progress lay with the free and democratic exchange of knowledge.

Scientific freedom easily translated into "scientific internationalism" (p. 9), a nebulous term Wolfe uses to define the international exchange of scientific information and the cultivation of a transnational scientific community. She argues that this concept was overtly incorporated into U.S. foreign policy in the 1950s through the establishment of State Department science attachés. Ostensibly assigned to cultivate international scientific networks, the attachés were also instructed to investigate foreign scientific developments. Wolfe concludes that inherent contradictions within this dual overt and covert program ultimately led to its failure once attachés found themselves distrusted by foreign colleagues and U.S. anti-Communists alike. As a result, Wolfe writes that U.S. intelligence organizations reduced their reliance on science attachés even while increasingly incorporating the ideology of scientific freedom into covert programs.

These connections are apparent in Wolfe's analysis of the Congress for Cultural Freedom (CCF), an ostensibly private organization covertly funded by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Although many historians have examined the CCF, an organization that sponsored private publications and conferences with the intention of influencing Europe's intellectual environment, Wolfe argues that scientific freedom formed an important element of these broader propaganda campaigns. Coordination between the CIA and private individuals proved unwieldy however, exemplified by difficulties the CCF main office encountered when pushing affiliate Michael Polanyi and his family-run periodical *Science and Freedom* to publish harsher critiques of Communist countries. For Wolfe, Polanyi's case is indicative of the awkward positions U.S. intelligence agencies were in when cooperating with private citizens and foreign nationals to mask governmental interference.

The Asia Foundation had fewer internal problems, in part because, as Wolfe argues, it was wholly operated by the CIA. Drawing on carefully mined Asia Foundation records, Wolfe details how this organization funded the production of U.S. Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) textbooks in the 1960s as part of broader U.S. modernization and development initiatives in Asia and Latin America. She argues that BSCS Director Arnold Grobman and officials at the Asia Foundation were convinced that developing school curricula that emphasized evidence-based scientific inquiry helped promote healthy democracies and that such lessons cultivated

free-thinking individuals resistant to Communist propaganda. In an attempt to “avoid even the appearance of cultural imperialism” (p. 148), the BSCS relied heavily on input from local educators and officials while carefully translating and modifying texts to accommodate regional cultural and linguistic differences.

Wolfe uses the examples of the CCF and the Asia Foundation to argue that the U.S. government often secretly intervened in foreign countries to facilitate the activities of myriad nongovernmental organizations, ranging from the American Medical Association to the Girl Scouts. She carefully notes that most were “genuinely voluntary groups” (p. 162) whose members were unaware of government intervention on their behalf. Such pervasive interference could not remain secret forever. In 1967 public revelations that the CIA maintained financial ties to the National Students Association (NSA) set off a chain reaction of negative publicity that brought the U.S. government under increasing scrutiny. The Asia Foundation survived under the auspices of the State Department, but the CIA’s covert funding capabilities were diminished.

Covert state-private cooperation may have been damaged, but overt scientific organizations and conferences prospered as diplomatic forums. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) was a nongovernmental organization, but it represented U.S. interests abroad by facilitating international conferences, promoting the exchange of scientific information and personnel, and championing human rights. International conferences such as Pugwash provided useful forums for U.S. and Soviet scientists to discuss issues such as disarmament and arms control informally. Wolfe concludes that overt interactions proved the most detrimental to long-term Soviet interests once Soviet scientists themselves came to believe that legitimate science was free science. These scientific converts played a small but significant role promoting human rights and undermining Soviet strictures in the 1970s and 1980s. Wolfe includes a useful appendix at the end of her book detailing her extensive efforts to research and catalog archival material. Describing her experience collecting and analyzing federal and organizational records and personal interviews, this section is useful for anyone interested in navigating through mazes of government archives.

Wolfe’s analysis reveals the close and often secret relationships the United States cultivated with private entities throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. Her work raises important questions about the influence of covert programs on U.S. foreign relations and pushes historians to analyze the significance of transnational scientific networks on culture and diplomacy. Despite the value of Wolfe’s research, readers may desire additional information about some of the themes within *Freedom’s Laboratory*. Although Wolfe argues that the elite white men who were early proponents of scientific freedom often ignored racial, gender, and class structures that afforded them special privileges and opportunities, these areas of inquiry could be explored further. In addition, although Wolfe provides extensive research into the influence of the genetics community in U.S. foreign policy, the breadth of her book limits discussion about how other fields of academia contributed to late-twentieth-century ideological dialogue. Nevertheless, *Freedom’s Laboratory* uses extensive original research to provide a fresh analysis of U.S. cultural diplomacy and is a useful source for readers

interested in the history of U.S. scientific exchanges, ideologies, and psychological warfare campaigns during the Cold War.



Jörg Echternkamp and Stephan Jaeger, eds., *Views of Violence: Representing the Second World War in German and European Museums and Memorials*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2019. 271 pp. \$135.00.

Reviewed by Paweł Machcewicz, Institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, and founding director (2008–2017) of Poland's Museum of the Second World War

Historical museums attract millions of visitors each year (or at least did until the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 severely affected operations). At a time when the reading of books has fallen out of favor with young people, museums play an outsize role in shaping popular perceptions of the past. The public role of museums also makes them relevant for conflicting political agendas that spark vocal controversies around museum exhibitions and their connection with other institutions and with audiences. This volume, edited by two German researchers, explores the recent landscape, focusing on museums and memorials exhibiting or commemorating the experience of the Second World War, mostly in Germany and Austria, but also including examples from the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Canada.

A recurrent theme in the volume is the fragile political position of museums, which are exposed, on the one hand, to pressures from politicians and institutions that supervise and fund them and, on the other hand, to the divergent expectations of civic or veterans organizations, media, and local populations. Jörg Echternkamp and Stephan Jaeger in their introduction refer to highly publicized political controversies of recent years: the House of European History in Brussels, contested by Euroskeptical politicians (mostly British, as the authors mention, but one should add that they were soon joined by Poles) who rejected the idea of a common European identity and the need for a common museum; the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk that came under attack from Poland's ruling Law and Justice Party as allegedly "cosmopolitan" and not "Polish enough"; and the Memorial to the Victims of the German Occupation erected in Budapest. This last entity was the product of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's use of history for his own political purposes, glossing over Hungary's alliance with Nazi Germany and its role in the Holocaust. Other authors analyze less-well-known but very interesting conflicts around other museums and monuments. Karola Fings describes controversies related to the Museum Hürtgenwald 1944 und im Frieden, the museum commemorating the fierce battle in Hürtgen Forest in 1944. For many years the site was glorified, but under recent pressure from various political and civic actors some modifications to this "heroic" representation were introduced.