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The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare: Cold War Organizations

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The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare: Cold War Organizations, edited by Katalin Kádár Lynn, Saint Helena, Helena History Press, 2013, 610 pp., $75.00, €70.00, £65.00, ISBN 9780985943301

Those who have visited the Riga-based Museum of the Occupation of Latvia before its recent renovation will recall the message that this central organ of the Latvian grand narrative of national victimhood communicated in a clear, if old-fashioned, way: that both the Nazis and the Soviets (and especially the latter, given their 46-year-long presence on Latvian soil), had gotten the better of the Latvians in an interplay of totalitarian repression. Not unlike the House of Terror in Budapest, this museum externalizes agency and responsibility, telling a story of collective endurance. The intellectual origins of this narrative lay in the Latvian exile community in the United States, especially in the person of the University of Wisconsin history professor, Paulis Lazda. Born in Latvia before the German invasion, Lazda fled with his parents from the Red Army and lived in refugee camps in Germany before reaching the U.S.A. in 1950. He became one of many politically active expats who eventually co-determined the cultural, social, and political transitions in Eastern Europe after the fall of Communism in 1989. The history of the political role that these exiles played in the cultural Cold War waged by the United States against its Soviet foe is complex and ambivalent.

Around the time when the Lazdas began their perilous journey westwards, the Research and Analysis Branch of the US WW2 intelligence agency, the Office of Strategic Security (OSS, predecessor of the CIA), and the exiled intellectuals and academics working in it, expressed suspicion of anti-communist groups, such as, for example, the Latvian Freedom Committee, the composition of which appeared at the time to have been drawn from former Waffen-SS formations. This, however, was before the Cold War had turned the global constellations of alliances and antagonisms upside down. Less than a decade later, the CIA financed and mentored an organization with exactly the same name. This new Latvian Freedom Committee (LFC), renamed from the Latvian Consultative Panel, was one of many organizations of Eastern European refugees, coordinated by a CIA front named the National Committee for a Free Europe (NCFE), and from 1954 the Free Europe Committee (FEC), which strived to pool the anti-communist energy of several hundred-thousand new Americans from Eastern Europe. The composition of the two namesakes was, in fact, not wholly dissimilar. Indeed, one of the leaders of the American LFC (who took over in 1964, after the death of its president, the anti-Nazi, Vilis Masens) was a former Latvian officer, major Vilis Hāzners, who had been recruited by the CIA in the early 1950s, but was then, in the late 1970s, charged with having selected Jews for execution in the Dwinsk ghetto in Riga as an SS-Sturmbannführer in 1941. Although Hāzners was in the end acquitted and thus escaped deportation, his case represented a startling exposure of a former Nazi henchman working for the CIA's anti-communist agenda (as discussed in more detail by Ieva Zake, in *American Latvians: Politics of a Refugee Community*, Transaction, 2010, as well as in *Anti-Communist Minorities in the U.S.: Political Activism of Ethnic Refugees*, Macmillan, 2009).

It is this kind of contextual information that is largely missing from the otherwise very interesting volume on NCFE/FEC organizations, edited by the Hungarian-American scholar Katalin Kádár Lynn, known especially as the biographer of the ambiguous Hungarian politician Tibor Eckhart. It is above all in the editor's introduction that one also notes a somewhat combative Cold War tone – the use of phrases such as 'dangers of communism' (38), 'communist tyranny' (55), and 'keep[ing] the hope of democratic change alive behind the Iron Curtain' (60) – which

echo, somewhat anachronistically, the propaganda rhetoric of the discourses under investigation. Reading this volume, one gets the impression that a number of the contributors identify strongly with their research subjects. Frequent citation of Arch Puddington's controversial book *Broadcasting Freedom: The Cold War Triumph of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty* (University Press of Kentucky, 2000) is a case in point.

Nonetheless, this book proves to be an enriching read as it widens our view on the US cultural Cold War beyond the NCFE/FEC's most famous and thoroughly researched institution – Radio Free Europe (RFE). Based largely on records held by the Hoover Institution as well as materials from East European archives, nine researchers analyse several national committees (those responsible for Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Baltics) as well as the Free Europe University, the Collège de l'Europe libre, the Hungarian National Sports Federation, and the Assembly of Captive European Nations (ACEN). While these represent only a few of over one hundred organizations sponsored by the NCFE/FEC (and thus by the CIA), the editor is right to claim that they were the most important ones (aside from RFE), making this volume a welcome new resource for Cold War scholars – one saturated with previously neglected primary sources.

In the Introduction, Kádár Lynn explores the origins and development of the NCFE/FEC in the early Cold War, its foundation in 1949, and its history as the other organizations' umbrella until its formal dissolution in 1971. She emphasizes the role of both George Kennan and Allen Dulles as chief executors of the Truman Doctrine and describes the allocation of funding within the NCFE/FEC and its organizational structure. She highlights the organization's double function as, on the one hand, a platform for intelligence and propaganda in Europe, and on the other, as a means of influencing US public opinion on the 'home front' (e.g. the 1950s' Crusade for Freedom). Alas, the last 10 years of this Cold War institution receive less attention than its beginnings. This gap, however, is closed in many of the following contributions which focus on specific organizations within the NCFE/FEC realm. Francis D. Raška details the history of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia, especially the ideological or simply partisan schisms within the different Czechoslovak expat communities. Marius Petraru's analysis of the Romanian National Committee reveals that the ending of the NCFE/FEC was due not only to the change of US policy in the late 1960s, but also to difficulties that the organization encountered in recruiting a suitable new generation of activists. This to varying degrees applies also to other national committees, and especially the Polish delegation of ACEN, as analysed by Anna Mazurkiewicz.

Kádár Lynn's article on the Hungarian National Council/Committee introduces interesting new material concerning the role of US propaganda in the 1956 Hungarian uprising. Tibor Frank's short chapter on the role of the parliamentarian and secretary general of the Hungarian National Peasant Party, Imre Kovács, adds an important dimension of exile agency to this context. Tony Rider's chapter on the Hungarian National Sports Federation makes Hungary the most prominently covered case in this book. Finally, another thrilling subject is the Western powers' intention to create anti-communist academic institutions for Eastern European refugees. Veronika Durin-Hornyik's chapter on the Free Europe University and the Collège de l'Europe libre highlights the connections between the activities of the NCFE/FEC and the propaganda strategies targeting Western European intellectuals.

In sum, those interested in the cultural dimensions of the Cold War are well advised to read this book. In it they will encounter otherwise little known and under-researched actors, institutions, and networks that were enrolled in fighting Soviet power across Eastern Europe. The book contains some spelling mistakes in foreign languages and the occasional typo, as well as a questionable characterization of some of the protagonists. For example, to describe Artur Koestler as a 'Hungarian-born British writer' (448) and Manès Sperber as a 'French

writer' (449) does not quite capture the role of these complex personalities in the context of the book. But none of the above undoes the outstanding contributions that this collection makes to Cold War scholarship. We can look forward to further volumes from this group of researchers, under the auspices of Helena History Press, founded in 2012 by Kádár Lynn herself as a platform for independent research on Central and Eastern Europe.

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Secret Cables of the Comintern, 1933-1943, by Fridrikh I. Firsov, Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes, New Haven, CT, and London, Yale University Press, 2014, 320 pp., $40.00, ISBN 9780300198225

Fridrikh Firsov, Harvey Klehr and John Earl Haynes' new book, *Secret Cables of the Comintern*, is a shortened, English-language edition of a book originally published in Russian by Firsov, a former archivist at what was once the Soviet Communist Party's archive. It is now a state archive called The Russian Centre for the Preservation and Study of Documents of Contemporary History (RTsKhIDNI). As it did in Soviet times, this archive contains not only the records of the Soviet Communist Party but those of the Communist International (Comintern) as well.

The Comintern was the organization which directed the international Communist movement on behalf of the Soviet regime. It existed from 1919 to 1943, when it was abolished at Stalin's command. One of the most secret parts of its archive was the enciphered cable traffic between its governing body, the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI), and the Communist parties around the world. The book is based on one collection in the archive – fond 495, opis' 184, which holds the enciphered cables transmitted between 1933 and 1943. Earlier cables, of which the authors believe there to be many, are not held in any particular collection and have not been used in writing the book. *Secret Cables of the Comintern* therefore analyses the significance of the ECCI's cable traffic for understanding key events in the years from 1933 to 1943, such as the Spanish Civil War, Stalin's Terror, the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, and Poland under German occupation. Other researchers have already drawn on this traffic to some extent, but Firsov, Klehr and Haynes' new book, together with the Russian-language edition on which it is based, are the leading works on the subject. All three authors are outstanding authorities on the Comintern and its involvement with the Soviet Union's intelligence services and have already collaborated on another fine book, *The Secret World of American Communism* (Yale University Press, 1995).

Secret Cables of the Comintern does not examine the Comintern's cable traffic in this period comprehensively; it analyses only certain key parts of the ECCI's communications with the principal national Communist parties. It focuses on the ECCI's communications with Communist parties in Europe, because this was the region of the world of greatest strategic interest to