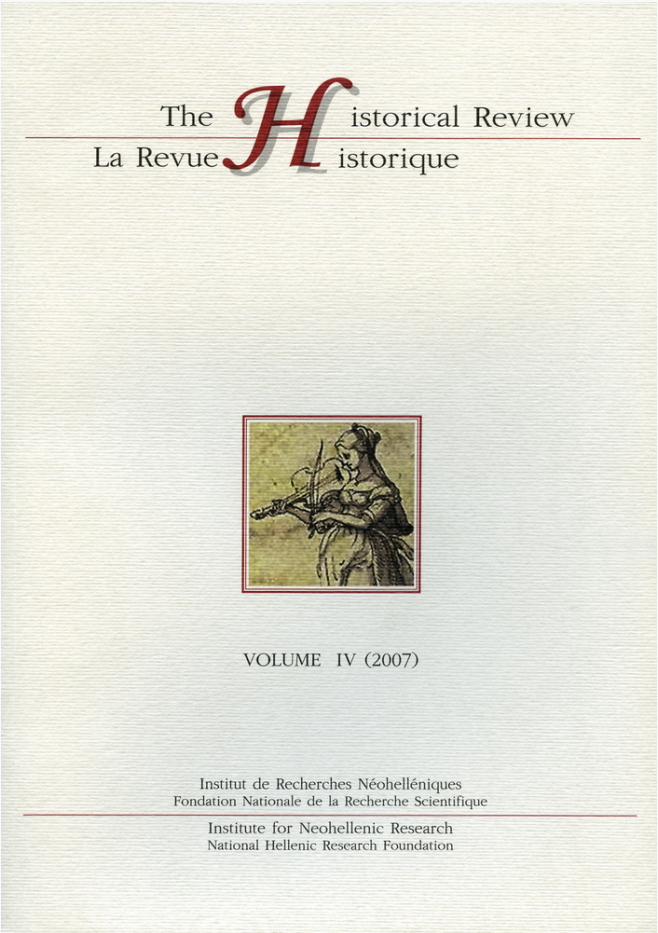
ePublishing

ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΤΕΚΜΗΡΙΩΣΗΣ
NATIONAL DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

The Historical Review/La Revue Historique

Vol 4 (2007)

Vol 4, No (2007)



Using Natural Sciences for Cultural Expansion: The National Socialist Agenda for the Balkans

Maria Zarifi

doi: 10.12681/hr.215

To cite this article:

Zarifi, M. (2008). Using Natural Sciences for Cultural Expansion: The National Socialist Agenda for the Balkans. *The Historical Review/La Revue Historique*, *4*, 199–233. https://doi.org/10.12681/hr.215

https://epublishing.ekt.gr | **e-Publisher:** EKT | **Downloaded at:** 12/10/2024 08:57:37

USING NATURAL SCIENCES FOR CULTURAL EXPANSION: THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST AGENDA FOR THE BALKANS

Maria Zarifi

ABSTRACT: This article highlights the political merit natural sciences were awarded under the totalitarian regime of Nazi Germany and their propagandistic role in Hitler's foreign policy agenda for the Balkans, a region which was expected to replace Germany's colonies lost in World War I. It accounts further for the policies and strategies National Socialists used to exert cultural influence on the countries of South-East Europe, namely through a number of institutions with which natural sciences were in one way or another involved in order to promote German culture abroad. The promotion of the German language and, to a certain degree, the Nazi ideology was a precondition for familiarising the Balkan countries with German scientific achievements, which would pave the way for an economic and political infiltration in that region. Therefore, natural sciences, as part of the German intellect, acquired political and economic connotations hidden behind the euphemistic term of cultural policy, designed for this region of geopolitical importance. The article is based almost exclusively on unpublished German records.

Introduction

After the end of World War I and the signing of the Versailles Treaty in 1919, Germany was forced to withdraw from the group of colonial powers, as it was deprived of all its territorial and other acquisitions abroad. The sanctions of the Treaty dramatically affected the young Republic's international affairs. At the scientific level, the country lost all of its institutions that had been created or supported by the Germans since 1900, losing at the same time its long-lasting influence on local scientific communities.[1] German science and research was cut off from the international scientific community and was restricted to its national borders, threatened with provincialism and backwardness. What was at stake was Germany's culture and its national image abroad; in other words, its economic and political hegemony.

[1] At the beginning of the twentieth century, Germany expanded natural sciences beyond European borders, setting up four scientific centres overseas: the Centre of Theoretical Physics in La Plata, in Argentina, the Geophysical Observatory located at Apia, capital of Western Samoa in the South Pacific, the German-Chinese University in Tsingtau, and the German Medical School in Woosung, a suburb of Shanghai, China. See Lewis Pyenson, *Cultural Imperialism and Exact Sciences: German Expansion Overseas, 1900-1930*, New York 1985.

The Historical Review / La Revue Historique
Institute for Neohellenic Research
Volume IV (2007)

In the inter-war years, Germany, having nothing left to defend from its glorious past but its culture, focused on advertising it abroad by making it an essential part of its foreign policy planning. The Weimar Republic established a number of institutions dedicated to the cultivation and promotion of its culture beyond its borders. The creation of the Cultural Section at the Foreign Ministry, in 1919, was the first decisive step towards this direction. During those years, the Balkans, which traditionally were one of the regions the foreign cultural policy of German imperialism concentrated on, regained its particular significance for the deprived Germany.[2] German cultural and economic interests in the Balkans led to the establishment of a number of institutions to serve as a tool for strengthening German presence there and, in particular, in friendly territory. These conditions were primarily met in Bulgaria, Germany's ally in the war. Educational institutions, such as the German Academy, created branches for disseminating German culture, primarily the German language. The cultural presence of Germany abroad was not confined, however, to the foundation of language schools or to the creation of philological and archaeological societies and institutes. Moreover, it took a practical and applied character with the establishment of research and experimental centres that turned out to serve Germany's economic and military interests. In Europe, the only such institutes were the zoological stations in Naples and Rovigno, both under German control. The former was a model for international scientific co-operation, and the latter was a branch of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Biology in Berlin-Dahlem since its establishment, in 1911. Both of them, however, were confiscated according to the provisions of the 1919 Peace Agreement.

Nevertheless, language was the precondition for attracting young promising people from "good families" to visit German universities, because a co-operative native élite, even a small one, was regarded as vital. "No imperial power," observed Sreberny-Mohammadi, "could rely on its own nationals alone"[3] and educating or training teachers of technology, civil engineers, architects, mechanical engineers, mining engineers and science teachers, as well as doctors, economists, lawyers and civil servants, was crucial for Germany to re-establish

[2] Other such areas were the Near East and Latin America. Otfried Danckelmann, "Aus der Praxis auswärtiger Kulturpolitik des deutschen Imperialismus, 1933-1945", *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 6 (1972), pp. 718-737, here p. 724.

[3] Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Many Cultural Faces of Imperialism", in Peter Golding and Phil Harris (eds), *Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Globalisation, Communication and the New International Order*, London 1997, pp. 49-68, here p. 60.

political and economic influence abroad.[4] Therefore, Germany launched a scholarship programme for students who could facilitate its interests in their home countries. This policy was not a German originality, and the Weimar Republic had to deal with the established French influence, not only in Bulgaria, but also in other Balkan countries, such as Greece.

Although Greece was not as favourably disposed towards Germany as Bulgaria was after the end of World War I, there was a strong affiliation between the two countries that dated back to the creation of the modern Greek state and the arrival of King Otto in Greece, in 1832. Many Greeks, primarily from the local élite, decided to study in Germany. On their return, they staffed the most important administrative institutions of the Greek kingdom and apparently felt favourable to their intellectual "homeland". Although this trend was not the result of the Reich's well-designed foreign cultural policy, it created a fertile soil for a more systematic cultural effort in Greece in the years to come. Despite the fact that Greece was under the strong cultural influence of France after World War I, Germany was the indispensable leading technological and scientific power in Greece, having the absolute monopoly in certain fields, such as engineering and medicine. Germany encouraged and promoted the Germanophile climate in the small Balkan country basically through the German schools, the activities of the German-Greek Society and a number of scholarships granted to teachers and young scientists. In addition, the Kaiser Wilhelm Society, being the only remaining German scientific and research institution that enjoyed international recognition at that time, approached two Balkan states, Yugoslavia and Greece, in quest of favourable conditions to continue the research projects carried out in Naples and Rovigno. However, it was only in the late years of National Socialism and during World War II that the Kaiser Wilhelm Society succeeded in expanding to the Balkan Peninsula, establishing a network of research centres, which were also supported by the German Army. In addition to the Kaiser Wilhelm Institutes, other networking institutions such as the German Academy, the German Scientific Institute and the South-East European Society contributed not only to the promotion of Germany's culture, but also to the establishment of its economic control over the Balkans.

---

[4] Lewis Pyenson, "Pure Learning and Political Economy: Science and European Expansion in the Age of Imperialism", in R. P. W. Visser, H. J. M. Bos, L. C. Palm and H. A. M. Snelders (eds), *New Trends in the History of Science: Proceedings of a Conference Held at the University of Utrecht*, Amsterdam 1989, pp. 209-278, here p. 239.

Organising Nazi Foreign Cultural Policy and Propaganda

Although a complete theory for the role of technology in Germany had existed since the last quarter of the nineteenth century and its significance for the state's reorganisation and rearmament was acknowledged by the Nazis, this was not the case for science. Having succeeded in integrating German engineering technology into the German national culture and soul through "a process of selectively borrowing from past cultures", the conditions were created for the full technological programme launched by the Nazis after 1936.[5] Scientists and modern German science, on the other hand, being theoretical in nature, clashed with Hitler's ideology, as theory was regarded as alien to the German soul. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that when the Nazis came to power they did not have any particular science policy agenda. The official texts of the Party[6] did not give any guidelines as to what National Socialist science should be. Even the so-called "Aryan", "Nordic" or "German" physics was not a clearly defined set of beliefs, as Alan Beyerchen argues.[7] The only thing that was explicitly proclaimed was the denouncement of what the Nazis called liberal, Jewish, rational, theoretical, materialistic science and the rejection of objectivity and internationality in science.[8] Aryan technology and science should be based on experiment and observation. It is remarkable, however, that even some works written by some distinguished ideologues and despite the fact that they had all the requisite credentials to become textbooks of Nazi ideology were rejected by the Ministry of Propaganda. This was the case of Ernst Krieck, a professor of education who was the author of *Das Reich als Träger Europas*. Krieck was embittered by his rejection by the Nazis and he decided to put an end to his scientific work, confessing that he no longer knew "what science can

---

[5] See Karl-Heinz Ludwig, *Technik und Ingenieure im Dritten Reich*, Düsseldorf 1974, chapter three; Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, Cambridge 1984. p. 210. About the "cultural policy" or "cultural revolution" of the German engineers, as Herf calls it, see chapter seven of his book.

[6] Some of the most propagandistic and influential texts were: *Das Manifest zur Berechnung der Zinsknechtschaft des Geldes* (Munich 1919) by Gottfried Feder; *Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich 1930) by Alfred Rosenberg; and of course Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (Munich 1925).

[7] Beyerchen argues that Aryan physics was more politics than physics. Alan Beyerchen, *Scientists under Hitler: Politics and the Physics Community in the Third Reich*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977, pp. 123-140. See also Mark Walker, *German National Socialism and the Quest of Nuclear Power, 1939-1949*, Cambridge 1989, pp. 60-66.

[8] Beyerchen, *op. cit.*, pp. 131, 136.

be, is allowed to be, or must be".[9] Such incidents could not be avoided as long as there was no established institution that could provide guiding principles to the fundamental problem of the "Aryanisation" of German science and research. Several attempts were made to set up such an organisation, but all proved unsuccessful. The main reason for these failures was the rivalries between the State and the Party or within the Party itself.

Although the Nazis ruled out the notion of internationalism in science, they aspired to make German science and technology not only internationally accepted but also dominant. The lack of a systematic and coherent science policy, however, was to prove no bar to them putting that aspiration in the Reich's foreign cultural policy agenda. As the priorities of the Third Reich until 1936 were the organisation of the State and its economic recovery from the Depression, the Nazis made use of institutions already established in the Weimar Republic to support and promote German culture and intellect abroad. Despite the fact that the structure and personnel of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained more or less the same until 1937, some changes were indeed made. Therefore, the director of the Ministry's cultural sector was replaced because of the 1933 "Law for the Restoration of the Career Civil Service" (*Gesetz zur Wiederherstellung des Berufsbeamtentums*). A new director was appointed in March 1933, in the person of the historian Dr Stieve, the former ambassador in Riga, who for ten years had been in charge of publishing the "Foreign Ministry Archives against the Lies for Germany's Responsibility in the Great War". However, he was not a Nazi sympathiser, as his successor, Fritz von Twardowski, reported in 1970.[10] Additional small changes were made when the Ministry for the People's Enlightenment and Propaganda (*Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*) also wanted to get involved in the Reich's foreign cultural relations.

It should be noted that the Nazis perceived the development and cultivation of those relations through the prism of their ideology, namely only as potential political propaganda.[11] This perception was quite different from the rationale of the Foreign Ministry, which resisted Goebbels' plans to transfer and incorporate the cultural sector of the Foreign Ministry into his own. Ultimately, the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Public Instruction (RfWEV or REM)[12] was

---

[9] Cited in Michael Gruettner, "Wissenschaft", in Wolfgang Benz *et al.* (eds), *Enzyklopädie des Nationalsozialismus*, Munich 1997, pp. 135-153, here p. 144.

[10] Fritz von Twardowski, *Anfänge der deutschen Kulturpolitik zum Ausland*, Bonn 1970, p. 29.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] In May 1934 the Reich and Prussian Ministry for Science, Education and Art (*Reichs*

also involved in Germany's foreign cultural affairs, seeking funds from the Ministry of the Interior intended for the Foreign Ministry's cultural department. In particular, the REM sought responsibility for the Reich's scientific, academic, student and educational relations abroad from the Foreign Ministry.[13] In 1935, the ministry also took under its control part of the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst*, DAAD) and the *Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung*, the two major academic exchange organisations,[14] and went even further, signing cultural agreements with other countries, without the acquiescence of the Foreign Ministry.[15] After strong protests from the latter ministry, it was decided that academic exchanges should be organised, supported and controlled by both ministries, sharing responsibility for this area. Furthermore, the establishment of the National Socialist Organisation for Issues Abroad (*Auslandsorganisation* (AO) *der NSDAP*), in 1934, put extra obstacles in the path of the Reich's foreign cultural policy. The purpose of the AO was to organise the German minorities into a solid and effective group for Germany's political interests abroad.[16] In the course of time, the organisation intervened in academic travels to foreign countries and the selection of lecturers, professors and researchers to travel abroad, very often excluding the foremost scientists. When the war broke out, however, the involvement of the AO in propaganda abroad – and in particular its Cultural Service (*Kulturamt*) –[17] was increased. South-East Europe became the focus of that propaganda, and a series of

---

und Preussische Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Kunst – also known as the *Preussische Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung*) was incorporated into the Reich Ministry of Science, Education and Public Instruction (*Reichsministerium für Wissenschaft, Erziehung und Volksaufklärung* or *Volksbildung*), and Bernhard Rust became its head.

[13] Volkhard Laitenberger, *Akademischer Austausch und auswärtige Kulturpolitik. Der Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD), 1923-1945*, Göttingen 1976, pp. 81 f. (footnote 3).

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 82 (footnote 6). Under the auspices of the *Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung* were the *Deutschland-Stiftung des Mitteleuropäischen Wirtschaftstages*, the *Stipendien des technisch-wirtschaftlichen Beratungsdienstes*, the *Stipendien der Zwischenstaatlichen Verbände*, the *Friedrich List-Stipendien der deutschen Wirtschaft* and the *Deutsche Luftfahrt-Stipendien*.

[15] This was the case with Hungary. See Twardowski, *Anfänge*, pp. 32 f.

[16] Emil Ehrich, *Die Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP*, Berlin 1937, pp. 11-15. The author was *Gauamtsleiter der AO der NSDAP*. See also Seppo Kuusisto, *Alfred Rosenberg in der Nationalsozialistischen Aussenpolitik, 1933-39*, Helsinki 1984, in particular chapter IV.

[17] For the structure and the several departments and services of the AO see Ehrich, *Die Auslands-Organisation der NSDAP*, pp. 18 ff.

scientific travels by prominent German scholars to major Balkan cities was organised in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[18] The propaganda plan intended to invite German and foreign scholars (university professors, doctors, teachers, journalists, economists and industrialists) to lecture on their area of expertise in local closed circles of ten to twelve people and, through the scientific interest that would be raised, to serve Germany's political concerns. The reliability of the National Socialist convictions of those people was, however, a prerequisite to any involvement, while personal acquaintances were essential. The propaganda-related thrust of the whole undertaking was to be kept secret.[19] From April to July 1940, for example, about fifteen scientists were sent to Bulgaria, Greece, or both.[20]

Table 1

Name	Towns in visit order	Date of travel beginning
Baeumler	Thessaloniki, Athens, Sofia	20-4-1940
Berve	Athens	20-5-1940
Boehme	Zagreb, Athens, Patras, Thessaloniki, Sofia, Budapest	2-5-1940 [That date was later altered.]
Doelger	Athens	2-5-1940
Fiala	Sofia	15-4-1940
Kaftan	Sofia	10-5-1940
Kindermann	Belgrade, Neusatz, Ossijek, Athens	2-5-1940
Kroh	Sofia, Plovdiv, Burgas, Varna, Russe, Thessaloniki, Athens, Budapest	15-5-1940
Muehlens	Belgrade, Athens, Sofia	15-4-1940
Nordmann	Neusatz	15-5-1940
Schmidt	Athens, Thessaloniki	20-5-1940
Staebel	Belgrade, Ossijek, Thessaloniki, Sofia, Plovdiv	1-6-1940
Unverricht	Zagreb, Athens, Patras, (Volos), Thessaloniki, Sofia	15-5-1940
Vogt	Neusatz, Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna	1-6-1940
Weltzien	Zagreb	10-5-1940

Source*:* Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PAAA), R 60661: "NSDAP. Die Leitung der Auslands-Propaganda (Heinz Otto)" to Herrn Gesandten Altenburg Auswärtigen Amt, Berlin, 18-03-1940.

[18] The focus was set on Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece. See "NSDAP. Die Leitung der Auslands-Propaganda. (Heinz Otto)" to Herrn Gesandten Altenburg Auswärtigen Amt, Berlin, 18-03-1940 (paragraph: "Entwurf"), in the Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PAAA), R 60661. [The PAAA is located in Berlin.]

[19] *Ibid.* (paragraph: "Aktion für Kulturpropaganda").

[20] Undated document [1940]: "Aufzeichnung. Betr.: Besucheraktion", in PAAA, R 60661. About the lectures held by German scholars in the Balkans from September 1940 until June 1941 see table A of the document: "Kulturpolitische Planung in den Balkanländern während dees Winterhalbjahrs 1940/41", in PAAA, R 61415.

The Ministry of the Interior, which supported the German cultural institutes and the Archaeological Institute in Rome, as well as the Zoological Station in Naples and the Institute of Art History in Florence, also participated in the German culture campaign abroad. These institutes were under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which in 1934 handed over the direction to the above ministry. Last but not least, party organisations like the Archive Administration of the Mobilisation Echelon Rosenberg (*Archiveverwaltung Einsatzstab Rosenberg*) and the *Ahnenerbe* Office of the *Reichsführer SS* also aspired to participate in the activities and research abroad, whether planned or already under way.[21]

It is clear that since the early years of Hitler's regime, there were differences among these various institutions. Those differences were developed in the following years into power ambitions, reflecting the profound antagonisms between the Party and the State, and the chaotic bureaucracy brought about by this dynamic. "Too many services are working side by side, usually without knowing of each other's existence", noted the director of the cultural department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fritz von Twardowski, in 1942.[22] The pressure this situation exerted on the Foreign Ministry, which bore the main responsibility for cultural policy abroad, forced Twardowski to plead desperately with several Party organisations to avoiding any intrusion in the Ministry's affairs, because this would create conflicts that would eventually damage the nation's interests.[23] In 1936, the "cultural desk" of the Foreign Ministry was renamed the "cultural political sector".[24] That change indicated the fact that foreign cultural policy had begun to be recognised by the Nazis as a significant factor on the international political stage.

The year 1937 was the turning point in Nazi Germany's foreign cultural policy. At the Party's extravagant annual festivities in Nuremberg Hitler made his first speech about cultural policy, in which he placed this kind of policy in the framework of the general State policy:[25] "This state should not be an authority [*Macht*] without culture, a power [*Kraft*] without beauty. The armament of a nation is morally justified, only when its shield and sword have a higher mission. Therefore, we do not aspire to the brutal force of a Genghis

---

[21] "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942". (*Geheim!*), in PAAA, R 60608.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

[24] Twardowski, *Anfänge*, p. 33.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

Khan, but the affluent power to create a strong social and patronage community as a bearer and guardian of a higher culture!"[26]

How seriously Hitler meant those words, as Hausmann remarks, remains in question. What is certain, however, is that the Nazis echoed the Weimar Republic's conviction that Germany had lost the war because the country lacked intellectual rather than material weapons. "We did not lose the war," argued the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, "because our cannons failed, but rather because our intellectual weapons did not fire."[27]

In 1938 Joachim von Ribbentrop was appointed as the new foreign minister and one year later Fritz von Twardowski became head of the cultural-political sector. The distinction between "cultural policy" and "propaganda" present in the Weimar Republic was now abandoned, despite Twardowski's reservations.[28] "Cultural propaganda" was now used as a synonym of "cultural policy" and the Ministry of Propaganda itself tried anew to take the cultural affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under its control. The latter regarded "the lighter muses" as propaganda, namely the concerts, theatre, art and other exhibitions, and poetry reading.[29] These undertakings, as well as sports events and radio broadcasts, were the only areas that eventually came under Goebbels' control and were sponsored by his ministry.[30] Furthermore, the bilateral cultural societies, like the German-French Society, the German-Bulgarian Society, the German-Greek Society and so forth, which for decades had been supported by private funds, were recruited by Goebbels for propaganda purposes.[31] However, the most important issues, namely German education, language and scientific affairs abroad, remained the responsibility of the Foreign Ministry. In 1937, its cultural sector was further divided into eleven departments. Among them were the department *Kult W*, which was responsible for the promotion of German science

---

[26] Quoted in Frank-Rutger Hausmann, "Auch im Krieg schweigen die Musen nicht", *Die Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Institute im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Göttingen 2001, pp. 19 f.

[27] Joseph Goebbels, *Reden* (25 March 1933), cited in Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, p. 195.

[28] "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942". See also Hausmann, "Auch im Krieg", pp. 20 f. (footnote 21). Kurt Düwell made in his 1976 work a basic distinction between the notions regarding foreign cultural relations: *Deutschlands auswärtige Kulturpolitik, 1918-1932. Grundlinien und Dokumente*, Cologne 1976, pp. 35 ff.

[29] "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942".

[30] Twardowski, *Anfänge*, p. 31.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 40.

abroad, i.e. congresses, travel, lectures and German books; the department *Kult U*, responsible for university affairs, professors and students and their relation with other countries, as well as scholarships; and the *Kult I* department, in charge of the German institutes abroad.[32] The Foreign Ministry, and in particular Fritz von Twardowski, strongly and explicitly emphasised that propaganda and cultural policy had to remain separate for the sake of Germany's influence abroad. Twardowski, in his revealing and forceful speech in the meeting of cultural councillors (*Kulturreferententagung*) on 13 August 1942, made a clear distinction between propaganda, cultural propaganda and cultural policy:

> By "propaganda" I understand the effort to influence a country's public opinion, in relation with an acute political, economic or military situation. Propaganda works, therefore, in the short term. There is also, of course, the cultural propaganda – *Kulturpropaganda* – but this is for the big cultural nations only a repercussion of a hostile propaganda that denies our cultural achievements. […] In addition, exerting cultural policy means presenting and establishing an intellectual leading ambition; it means organising an intellectual co-operation between nations; moreover, it means achieving an enduring intellectual influence over a select intellectual élite of other nations and making it, as far as possible, dependent on the German intellect.[33]

Warning about the damage a blunt cultural propaganda policy might cause to Germany's influence, Twardowski stressed that the candidate country with which Germany planned to develop cultural relations should decide of its own free will about any future cultural collaboration with the Reich: "No political or economic pressure [should be applied] for the sake of cultural work of any kind. Equality and reciprocity, no violence but dialogue, cultural exchange at its broadest, not one-sided performance [should be our principles]. In short, we must exercise our cultural policy with soft gloves [...]"[34]

In 1932-33, the dean of the faculty of philosophy at the University of Leipzig, Professor Weickmann, in his opening speech talked about a global cultural community and echoing the post-war trauma he stressed that Germans wished not only economic, but also cultural relations with countries that could understand the German spirit. Nevertheless, the cultural exchange, he argued further, should have a national character and Germany should try to promote

---

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

[33] "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942".

[34] *Ibid.*

its own to the young foreign scholars, particularly to those supported by the Reich's scholarship foundations, namely the DAAD and the *Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung*. South-East Europe should have priority, underlined the German professor.[35]

In 1939, though, when the war broke out, Germany's scientific communication with the English-speaking world was interrupted. The Nazis turned to Europe, which they regarded as their future territory, where – among other things – they could impose the New Order of learning, inspired by the National Socialist ideals. In occupied countries, the existing organisations for the cultivation and promotion of German culture received additional State support for their propaganda purpose. The German Academy with its branches in several cities in occupied European countries was the leading organisation in co-ordinating and controlling the Reich's cultural activities, focusing on the expansion and dissemination of the German language. Planning documents drawn up in 1933 suggest that the Academy should focus its activities on five geographical areas: the Near and Far East, South Africa, Latin America and the Balkans.[36] The numerous "German Institutes" (*Deutsche Schule*) and the "Goethe Institutes", which operated under the auspices of the German Academy, increased the number of language courses offered to the local population and scientists. In addition to propagating the German language, these institutions promoted the German universities that young scientists could visit to become familiar with the "superior" German intellect and achievements. Exchange programmes for lecturing, as well as summer schools, were organised for senior scientists. It is interesting to note that the Nazis were very eager to create professorial chairs for language and literature at foreign universities, even at technical institutes, as was the case in Greece, seeing these as the ultimate corroboration of their cultural influence abroad. This tactic was expected to ensure that German would gradually become Europe's common language and also the international second language of choice overseas.[37]

---

[35] "Akademische Auslandsstelle der Universität Leipzig. Tätigkeitsbericht, 16-07-1932 / 30-09-1933", in PAAA, R 64028.

[36] At the end of 1933 seven out of seventeen branches of the Academy were located in Greece. Hagen Fleischer, "Europas Rükkehr nach Griechenland. Kulturpolitik der Grossmächte in einem Staat der Peripherie", in Herald Heppner and Olga Katsiardi-Hering (eds), *Die Griechen und Europa. Aussen- und Innensichten im Wandel der Zeit*, Vienna 1998, pp. 125-191, here p. 141. As for the activities of the German Academy in Greece see Fedra Koutsoukou, *Die deutsche auswärtige Kultur- und Sprachpolitik in Griechenland, 1933-1944* (chapter five), thesis defended at the Technische Universität Berlin in Spring 2006.

[37] Pamela Spence Richards, "The Movement of Scientific Knowledge from and to

Nevertheless, the creation of language and literature chairs abroad, and in particular in the Balkans, was not a policy pursued only by Germany in this regard. France, Britain, even Italy and Spain had the same ambition: to gain a foothold in the foreign academic élite and to influence as many as they could for their own interests and prestige, transforming the foreign learning and research institutions into cultural-political arenas.

One of the early important organisations created by Nazi Germany, in order to serve its cultural political battle in the Balkan field, was the "Association of Bi-national Unions and Organisations" (*Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen*). The *Vereinigung* was established in 1938 and brought under its aegis the existing bilateral societies. It was subject to the SS and its president was the *SS-Obergruppenführer* Werner Lorenz. In November 1938 Lorenz demonstrated the purpose of the *Vereinigung* by underlining the Reich's contribution to the preservation of world peace.[38] More precisely, Germany had committed itself before the other big European nations to promoting mutual understanding and friendship among peoples, to securing their rights and to contributing to an enduring balance of their interests. That commitment was stronger than ever, declared Lorenz in 1938, and this was due to the creation of the *Vereinigung*.[39] The bilateral unions and societies Germany had set up many years ago were, according to him, better organised, while new ones were planned, primarily for neutral states, including Greece.[40] Those societies, clubs and unions, such as the German-French Society, the German-Turkish Society, the German-Greek Society and the like, were practically the standard cultural bearers and transmitters of German culture, even though they were described as organisations of cultural reciprocity. Their mission was the exchange of cultural goods, through which the nations could understand each other. Education should have pride of place in those bilateral organisations.[41] Lorenz's argument sounds strange, even unreal, at a time when Germany was preparing for war and the Four-year Plan had already been put into practice. So how can his peace declaration be reconciled with Germany's

---

Germany under National Socialism", *Minerva* XXVIII, no. 4 (Winter 1990), pp. 401-425, here p. 416.

[38] "Mitteilungen der 'Vereinigung zwischenstaatilicher Verbände und Einrichtungen e.V.'" by gez.: Lorenz, *SS-Obergruppenführer*, (*Geheim!*), on 01-11-1938, in PAAA, R 61274.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] LS. Dr Grosche, "Tätigkeit der zwischenstaatlichen Gesellschaften im Ernstfall (Aufzeichnung)" on 02-09-1939, in PAAA, R 61280.

[41] "Mitteilungen der 'Vereinigung zwischenstaatilicher Verbände und Einrichtungen e.V.'".

war planning? Did he have his own vision for the state's foreign cultural policy or was something else hidden behind his peace rhetoric? It is interesting that his note was confidential. Therefore, if it was not some kind of diplomatic rhetoric addressed to the people or the authorities of some other nation in order to convince them of Germany's good intentions, how could his language be justified in terms of Nazi ideology?

The National Socialist Party, which was attracted to the idea of cultural domination of the world, strove to get involved in areas of activity that at that time were the responsibility of the Foreign Ministry. After the hard and justified criticism had been made by the Ministry of the impact a Nazi-oriented cultural propaganda might have for German interests, it is possible that Lorenz, as a senior Party member, wished, in his note, to underline the "careful and smooth introduction" to the Nazi ideals. It is also likely, that the Party authorities adopted a new moderate language as a concession to the demands made by the Foreign Ministry for a cultural policy abroad that steered clear of any overtly political propaganda. However, the cover of "understanding other peoples and preserving world peace" provided by the party has proven to be mere rhetoric, if one believes the reciprocity of the "understanding" declared by Lorenz. It seems, however, that what the Nazis desired was to be understood by other nations rather than to understand them. In addition, the way they perceived world peace and the means one should use to preserve it were governed by their *Weltanschauung,* which incited hostility depending on the perceived status of the race concerned. The confidential character of the *Mitteilungen der Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen e.V.*, which are the official records of the organisation's activities, advocates the propagandistic nature of the *Vereinigung*, as the material published on an irregular basis was strictly controlled.

Among the tasks of the *Vereinigung* was its engagement in several organisations in the Balkan states. In 1938, for example, the *Vereinigung* became involved in the change in directorship of the South-East European Institute in Vienna (*Südosteuropa-Institut in Wien*).[42] The Institute was of great scientific and economic significance for the entire Viennese administration. The extent, however, of the *Vereinigung*'s involvement in the directorship of the *Südosteuropa-Institut* is not clear. What is certain, though, is the role the bilateral societies had to play, as they were regarded as the unofficial vehicles of Germany's cultural campaign

[42] Report No. 5 of the "Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen e.V. (Geschäftsführener Vizepräsident), betr. Südosteuropa-Institut in Wien", on 20-09-1938, in PAAA, R 61273.

abroad.[43] Nonetheless, the question that still troubled the foreign cultural policy-makers was whether the "cultural vehicles" should be engaged in a covert political undertaking and, if so, to what extent. In 1939 a working programme for those societies was drawn up, in case they should eventually be used for political propaganda purposes. The programme focused on the organisation of the two-sided leagues, the undertakings abroad and at home, and the affiliation with other institutions.[44] As for the organisational part, the first thing to be done was the liquidation of the organisations that were set up by enemy states, implying essentially France, and their replacement either by new societies with Germany as a partner or by old ones, which should be re-established. The external cultural undertakings organised by the *Vereinigung*, according to the working plan, should include the development of propaganda material, and the promotion of exhibitions and lectures by German politicians, the military and other personalities who were supporters of the Nazi ideology. Additionally, the two-sided societies and leagues abroad would be responsible for the promotion of the institutes planned to be established in the countries where they were active, as well as for the creation of German libraries and the promotion of German, or rather Nazi, writings. The publication of journals regarding cultural activities in the local community and the surveillance of the cultural developments of other countries, particularly of those hostile to Germany, should also be among the duties of the bilateral leagues. Equally important would be the influence they could exert on the public opinion of the country in question. Ultimately, the bilateral unions, acting as an intermediary intelligence agency, should develop close ties with the information department of the Foreign Ministry and the defence section of the *Wehrmacht*, as well as with the Secret Police Office.

At the beginning of 1939 the *Vereinigung* made an agreement with the "German Central Office for Congresses" (*Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale,* DKZ*)*, the chief organisation for the support and control of delegations for academic meetings abroad.[45] It was established in December 1934 by the Reich Ministry of Propaganda in agreement with the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of the Interior. Its origins lay in a branch of the Medical Society of Berlin and its aim was to provide help in organising medical congresses. It was initially called the "Central Office for Scientific Congresses" (*Wissenschaftliche Kongress-*

[43] LS. Dr Grosche, "Tätigkeit der zwischenstaatlichen Gesellschaften im Ernstfall".

[44] All the points discussed below are based on the above document.

[45] "Rundschreiben von der 'Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen e.V.' von den Geschäftsführenden Vizepräsidenten Dr. Grosche und Dr. Springer", 18-02-1939, in PAAA, R 61274.

Zentrale). Soon the organisation comprised all scientific disciplines, and the Ministry of Propaganda together with the Ministry of Education changed its name to the *Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale*. The task of the DKZ was, on the one hand, to advise all the existing scientific institutions that organised international meetings in Germany and, on the other, to assess the experience of the undertaking for future cultural-political planning. In this framework, co-operation with Germany's bilateral organisations abroad was essential, in order for the DKZ to be informed about the foreign participants who were going to attend the relevant congresses.[46] Foreign scientists who had been educated in German technical schools or universities tended to defend Germany's prestige, not only in their own countries, but also in the international scientific community. After 1938 the DKZ was eager to revive and strengthen the foreigners' affection for Germany, which in the previous few years had been diminished as they had turned to Britain, France and the United States. The reason, argued the Nazis, was the anti-German propaganda by those nations that derived from a "ridiculous misunderstanding [of German culture] that was due to their political economy".[47] On the other hand, in cases in which Germany was invited to international meetings, the DKZ should come to an agreement with the ministries in charge and other institutions – whether State or Party – and choose a "selected group of appropriate participants" to represent the Reich.[48] Repeating the post-war arguments about Germany's catastrophic cultural collapse, the head of the DKZ, Dr Knapp, stressed the cultural-political significance of national and international scientific associations and their meetings.[49] He argued further that the system of congresses combined with high politics would allow Germany to influence international organisations, as France had done at the end of the Great War.[50] Nevertheless, Germany's cultural-political struggle, specified Knapp, aimed at having the foreign nations understand and recognise the Reich's cultural achievements and at having them exchange experiences with them on knowledge, ideas and values.[51] When the war

---

[46] *Ibid.*

[47] H. G. von Studnitz, Berlin to the Foreign Ministry, "Expose über die Errichtung eines deutschen Kulturinstitutes für die Balkan– und Donau – Staaten", on 25-05-1939, in PAAA, R 61270.

[48] Dr Knapp, "Deutsche Kongress-Zentrale". Annual report 1935 to Auswärtiges Amt a.o., on 15-01-1936, p. 1, in PAAA, R 60598.

[49] In 1936 the DKZ planned to get involved in twenty-one congresses and in ten cases would be represented by its own leading figures. *Ibid.*, pp. 10 f.

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[51] *Ibid.* See also "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942".

broke out in 1939, the DKZ, the *Vereinigung* and the DAAD began to collaborate closely to increase the number of foreign scholars in Germany and thus to activate what was called "supporting troops".[52] The cultural-political dimension of congresses organised by national or international institutions had been very well known in Germany since 1919. So was the impact of the country's isolation from them at France's insistence. Their country, they argued, at that time had been completely undefended against the Allies' strategy, which paralysed its voice and actions abroad. The DKZ was a response – albeit belated – to any potential similar threat for Germany's culture, either by France or by any other would-be imitator. About a thousand international organisations, reported the DAAD in 1940, from every possible field of human activity still presented a common front against German science and culture. A thousand more existed in Germany for its defence but they were weakened by their lack of manpower – a direct result of their downsizing by many authorities.[53] The role of the DKZ was to centralise power by taking the organisation of congresses and other external activities of the German scientific institutions under its control and thus mounting its defence of German culture.

Trying to Conquer the Hearts and Minds of South-East Europe

In 1940 the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs inaugurated a network of institutes abroad, with the mission to champion German achievements in humanities in specific European countries. The German Scientific Institutes (*Deutsche Wissenschaftliche Institute*, DWI), as they were named, under the cover of science aimed at exploring those countries in which Germany was interested and preparing them to align themselves with the Nazi regime. This overture clearly involved "space research" (*Raumforschung*) in order for these territories to be "repopulated and exploited" (*Umvolkung und Ausbeutung*).[54] Nevertheless, the basis of this campaign was aimed at scientific collaboration with the countries in question and the development of relations with the

[52] During 1939 seventy-eight scholarships amounting to 42,000 Reich Marks in total were given to foreigners via the bilateral unions. See the report of the DAAD to the "Vereinigung zwischenstaatlicher Verbände und Einrichtungen", about the "Vorläufigen Jahresbericht über die Verwaltung der Stipendien der zwischenstaatlichen Verbände und Einrichtungen im Rechnungsjahr 1939 (1-4-1939 bis 31-3-1940)", on 28-03-1940, in PAAA, R 61280.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Hausmann, "Auch im Krieg", p. 9.

foreign élite.[55] During the following four years, sixteen branches of the DWI were established not only in major European cities, i.e. Paris, Brussels, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Stockholm, Lisbon, Madrid, Venice, Budapest, but also in the following Balkan cities: Sofia, Bucharest, Bratislava, Belgrade, Athens, Zagreb and Tirana. The DWI co-operated with the German Academy to arrange receptions, exhibitions and lectures. Even though a network of several institutions (State, industrial or private) existed in the disciplines of technology, medicine and natural sciences before 1933, a similar network in humanities was a Nazi creation and indicated the special role allotted to humanities by the Third Reich.[56] The DWI was not another organisation with a number of branches spread over Europe, but it offered, as Hausmann notes, the means for an intellectual war in the "third front" (*Dritte Front*).[57]

The structure of each DWI branch abroad consisted of at least three main departments: the *scientific department*, which was financially supported by the Emergency Office for German Science (*Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft*), which had been founded in the very first years of the Weimar Republic, and organised the exchange of professors, lecture trips, exhibitions, concerts and book fairs; the *academic department*, supported by the German Academic Exchange Office (DAAD), existing since 1925, and therefore responsible for the exchange of students, teachers, etc.; and the *department of language issues*, which received funds from the Goethe Institute.[58] However, none of the above departments conducted research independently. The DWI was involved in joint research under the auspices of academies or other institutions. The scientific results, though, of those projects were very poor.[59] Even though it was part of the scientific sector, which, by definition, includes both the exact and the theoretical sciences, the DWI was usually confined to

---

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[57] See also Herbert Scurla, *Die Dritte Front. Geistige Grundlagen des Propagandakrieges der Westmächte*, Berlin 1940.

[58] Twardowski, *Anfänge*, p. 42; Hausmann, "Auch im Krieg", pp. 27 f.; copy of a letter referring to the "Richtlinien für die Arbeit der Akademischen Abteilung des Deutschen Wissenschaftlichen Instituts" of gez. Schaefer-Rümelin from the cultural department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Foreign Minister, 30-11-1940, in PAAA, R 64287.

[59] Such was the case of the "Arbeitsausschuss für die Neuerlegung der internationalen wissenschaftlichen Zusammenarbeit", which resulted in little more than a few French prisoners of war being used by the Prussian Academy for editorial work on the *Jahrbuch über Fortschritte der Mathematik*. See Spence Richards, "The Movement of Scientific Knowledge", p. 416.

activities regarding only the latter. In some cases, agricultural science belonged to another separate section,[60] but as far as the rest of the natural sciences were concerned, they did not seem to be seriously represented in any of the DWI branches. No matter how awkward it may sound, in the war years the Nazis seemed to have believed that the *litterae* should not stand behind the *arma*. Moreover, the theoretical sciences should also become "fighting sciences" (*kämpfende Wissenschaften*) and make their contribution to the final victory.[61] The Aryans believed their higher mission in this world would not be accomplished only through territorial but also through cultural expansion. It is interesting to note, though, that in 1942 the leader of the cultural department of the Foreign Ministry, von Twardowski, argued that the societies of lesser importance, such as the Union of Authors or of Composers, should not play a leading role in the international organisations and congresses. On the contrary, priority should be given to other more important disciplines like medicine and chemistry. The importance of language remained, however, in any case, very high, and he underlined that "in the centre of every cultural policy stands language".[62] Therefore, the director of a DWI branch, appointed by the German Academy in Munich, usually occupied the Chair of German at a foreign university.

Nevertheless, Germany, complained Twardowski, did not appreciate the political significance of purely cultural activity abroad during the war, even though everyone in the country admired the well-planned cultural policy of France and acknowledged how much damage it had made to Germany, after 1919. He stressed that cultural policy presented "missed opportunities" and Germany was about to miss one this time as well. Everything in Europe was fluid and there were many areas, argued Twardowski further, in which Germany could get a foothold, provided the Reich could accurately assess and make use of the situation before its rivals took action.[63] What Germany should do, according to the German cultural specialist, was to invest time, money and qualified people, allowing for the fact that patience and understanding were also important elements in the war years.[64] Despite the fact that no serious

---

[60] "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942".

[61] Hausmann, "Auch im Krieg", p. 13.

[62] "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942".

[63] *Ibid.*

[64] *Ibid.*

research was conducted in the DWI branches, they were designed to play an important role in disseminating German culture abroad, in Europe in particular. Nevertheless, it was not an easy task, as the DWI, like every other institution in the Third Reich, was subject to the "polycratic principle", according to which a number of ministries and offices were involved in and were entitled to have their say in its affairs.[65]

The campaign of German culture as such was the task of a number of other scientific centres in Europe that had been established before the Nazis' seizure of power. The Bibliotheca Herziana in Rome, which the Kaiser Wilhelm Society owned since 1914, was one such example.[66] Meanwhile, the Society became partner in a number of scientific institutes abroad, which according to the official statutes were created for the cultivation and promotion of cultural and scientific relations between Germany and their respective host countries. In that framework, the Zoological Station in Rovigno, which had belonged to the Society since 1911, was transformed in 1930 into a German-Italian Institute for Marine Biology. The Reich's effort to establish similar bilateral scientific research centres in Europe was accelerated in 1940 against the backdrop of the continuing war. The eagerness to have German scientific bases beyond its borders at that particular time is obviously not irrelevant to its political and military plans. The first such institute was created in Sofia, named the "German-Bulgarian Institute for Agricultural Research". It was followed by the "German-Greek Research Institute for Biology" in Piraeus, while serious plans were made for the creation of a "German-Hungarian Institute for Agricultural Research" in Budapest, and a "German-Bulgarian Research Station for Microbiology" on the Greek island of Thasos, which had been annexed by Bulgaria.

All the above feverish efforts to make the Nazis' cultural presence noticeable in Europe were sealed by a number of cultural agreements between the Reich and some European countries, focusing on the South-East European states. The initiative for the accords was taken by the Reich's Foreign Ministry. The main concerns of these agreements were the inclusion of German in the

---

[65] The different sources from which the DWI departments were funded prove the enforcement of that principle. In addition, the scientists of the DWI departments were appointed by the Ministry of Education, while the language teachers (*Lektoren*) were chosen by the German Academy, which after 1941 were administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Propaganda Ministry. Last but not least, the DWI depended on the Foreign Ministry for the exchange of professors and other minor scholars. See Hausmann, "Auch im Krieg", pp. 33f.

[66] In 1934 it was renamed the "Kaiser-Wilhelm Institute for Art and Cultural Sciences".

curricula of other countries as the main foreign language, the creation of cultural institutes, the exchange of scholars, and the status of German schools abroad. In other words, the bilateral contracts confirmed at the State level almost all the cultural initiatives Germany had taken in the past. For the Foreign Ministry, the dissemination of German was the number one priority of the Reich's cultural policy abroad, with scholarships following next in order of importance.[67] In 1936 the Third Reich signed its first bilateral cultural agreement with Hungary. The agreement was initiated by the German Ministry of Education and it was the first (and also the last) such accord to be initiated by a ministry other than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[68] The contract stipulated, among other things, the strengthening and intensification of scientific relations between the Reich and the named country. This meant in practice the mutual creation of "guest chairs" at universities in both countries to host short or long-term lecture series. It also meant the exchange of university assistants, the creation of positions for scholars at local universities, and the granting of scholarships for student exchange by the DAAD and the *Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung*.[69]

Two years later, when the changes in the cultural section of the Foreign Ministry were completed, a number of contracts were signed between the Reich and the Balkan countries.[70] In 1938 Germany signed a cultural agreement with Greece, in 1940 with Bulgaria, in 1941 with Romania, and in 1942 with Slovakia. Meanwhile, in 1938, the Nazis had signed similar agreements with the Axis countries, namely Italy and Japan, and in 1939 with Spain. The priority of all these agreements was the promotion of German culture, i.e. music, theatre, literature, fine arts, and above all the language. Germany "discovered" the cultural agreements in a period in which the State was intensifying its foreign policy, thereby securing its alliances with countries that were ideologically affiliated to the Reich.[71] On the other hand, the Nazis aspired to create a larger

[67] "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942".

[68] The personal relations between the Minister of Education, Bernhard Rust, with his Hungarian counterpart, Hóman, was the main reason that the Reich's Ministry of Education and not the Foreign Ministry represented the Reich in its first bilateral agreement. That contract became, however, the model for similar agreements that the Reich signed with a number of countries a few years later. Laitenberger, *Akademischer Austausch*, pp. 86 f.

[69] Jan-Pieter Barbian, "'Kulturwerte im Zeitkampf'. Die Kulturabkommen des 'Dritten Reiches' als Instrumente nationalsozialistischer Aussenpolitik", *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 74 (1992), pp. 415-459, here p. 421

[70] See PAAA, R 61415, R 61416, R 61417.

[71] Barbian, "'Kulturwerte im Zeitkampf'", pp. 415 ff.

Europe under their control, where German would be the dominant language. South-East Europe had a particular importance in the Reich's foreign policy agenda. It had a great geographical, political, economic and cultural significance for German interests in territories far beyond that region. The National Socialists regarded the Balkan states as a bridge to the Near and Middle East and beyond.[72] These were territories influenced by the British, while the Balkans were in general influenced by the French. To a certain extent Nazi Germany saw the Balkan Peninsula both as colonial territory as well as the threshold for its future colonial plans, when the Reich would annex the possessions of its defeated enemies, namely France and Great Britain. The occupation of France by the Nazis in 1940 did not, however, mean that French cultural dominance in the Balkan states was ended and that the Germans could continue their cultural propaganda undisturbed. In 1942 the number of French nationals travelling to South-East Europe for cultural-political reasons, as the Germans believed, increased. Therefore, they decided to prohibit French travellers from entering any Balkan state, even if they tried to do so via Italy, where they could get the necessary documents.[73] Germans were also aware that they were not popular abroad. "They respect us, they admire us for our achievements, they are afraid of us, but they don't want to be like us," noted Twardowski in 1942. The ideal German life resembled the military life, characterised by discipline, work, efficiency and sacrifice. It was not surprising, therefore, that such a way of living was not attractive to other nations, which preferred the French or the English lifestyle.[74] Nevertheless, Germany continued to champion its culture through language propaganda in the several institutions abroad, scholarships and new types of research institutes. Two such developments were the Institute for Seed Research in Bulgaria and the Institute for Marine Biological Research in Greece, both branches of the Kaiser Wilhelm Society. In addition, plans for the creation of hospitals affiliated to German clinics in Athens and in Galatz, Romania, for research into rare diseases was a cultural-political undertaking that seriously troubled the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[75]

---

[72] "Kulturberichte des Ges. Johann Kirchholtes betr. Bulgarien u. Rumänien 1939-1944", in PAAA, R 60662.

[73] F. von Twardowski to the German Embassy in Rome, 26-11-1942 (*Geheim!*) [date and month are noted in blue pencil by hand]. In PAAA, R 60608.

[74] "Vortrag von Twardowski, anlässlich der Tagung der Kulturreferenten am 13 August 1942".

[75] *Ibid.*

From 1938-40 all cultural institutes abroad were also controlled by the Reich Ministry of Education, which because of its inexperience in such matters was a force for stagnation to Germany's cultural-political work abroad. It should be noted that the Ministry of Education, because of its close relations to the Nazi Party and the *Wehrmacht*, was able to get involved in the Reich's foreign cultural policy, thereby by-passing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which would normally have played a leading role in these undertakings. It is true that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had great experience in the management of cultural affairs since the Bismarck era. Its greatest advantage was the specially trained personnel spread all over the world that the Ministry had at its disposal. A number of people working at several embassies or consulates gathered valuable information about the local conditions that would facilitate or hinder a successful cultural policy. Very often, they used their personal networks in the country of interest, something that demanded diplomatic skills and time for the development of relationships of trust with the local élite. The Ministry of Education had none of these resources and its involvement could damage German interests. Nonetheless, in the end, in a number of undertakings the two ministries eventually shared responsibility and supervision.

Around 1938 an unsigned note addressed to the Foreign Ministry, with the title "Establishment of German Cultural Institutes Abroad", presumably from the Ministry of Education, gives some idea of the character and the guidelines for the institutes abroad, but also the rationale for their establishment. The rationale put forward was anti-French, not surprising perhaps as France was Germany's oldest and biggest cultural rival, particularly in South-East Europe. The note underlined that the German institutes should have a different profile from their French equivalents.[76] The latter were more or less affiliated to the French higher education system. This meant that the foreigners who attended them had to follow a series of courses like French, literature, history, art history and so forth, and at the end of their studies they gained the appropriate certificate.[77] Unlike France, Germany's plans were to establish cultural institutes that were less academic and more adapted to the present.[78] What was meant by "present" was quite clear. The mission of the cultural institutes abroad should not be the dissemination of German culture in general, but the promotion of modern Germany. The institutes should rather try to spread the Party's ideals,

[76] Undated document, probably of 1938: "Errichtung deutscher Kulturinstitute im Ausland", in PAAA, R 61270.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *Ibid.*

focusing on recent German history, namely National Socialism. The French Revolution brought no serious change in the world, argued the Nazis, and "despite all the vague contemporary notions, like naturalism and materialism, as a result of its strong formalism and logical intellectualism", its content remained empty. In contrast to French cultural ideals, National Socialism transcended the liberal thinking introduced by the French Revolution, bringing a deep change, as it was claimed, to political thought.[79] However, the rest of the world knew almost nothing about this change and did not seem to understand it. Therefore, in order for the new political theory – which, according to the Nazis, was superior to the existing Western political system introduced by France – to be further transmitted, they had to follow a different strategy from their rivals.

It is clear that what the Nazis understood by "culture" was everything that derived from the National Socialist ideology, and they believed that cultural policy should have political connotations. Consequently, the Reich's cultural institutes abroad should not be limited to the propagation of language and science. They should provide other elements of German greatness as well, like the history of the National Socialist movement, the organisation of young people according to National Socialist ideals, national, social and educational policy, as well as books, the arts and sports.[80] The Nazis were very much aware of the possible resistance their views might meet in Western democracies, like France and Britain. Therefore, they had to introduce those people to the merits of their ideology gradually. As for those countries with similar political regimes, like Italy and Japan, they could act in a more open and direct fashion.[81] However, the blunt political profile that the Nazis so strongly proposed for the Reich's cultural propaganda abroad seemed to be moderated in the following years, mainly because of the resistance of the Foreign Ministry and particularly its cultural-political department. Nevertheless, many of the Nazi elements penetrated the Reich's cultural political agenda, even when the Foreign Ministry was in charge of most of the projects abroad.

Besides the "Western democracies" and the "politically allied" countries, South-East Europe had a different significance for Germany's cultural plans. Unlike the rest of Europe, the Balkans were crucial for the Nazi geopolitical enterprise. This territory was seen as their "living sphere" (*Lebenssphäre*) and the economic and political completion of the Reich in the South-East.[82] The

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] H. G. von Studnitz, Berlin, to the Foreign Ministry, "Expose über die Errichtung

Balkan states were the second most important territory after Ukraine that could provide Germany with agricultural products and could make the country self-sufficient for the planned war.[83] However, this sort of colonisation would not be successful without a well-organised cultural policy. Germany would secure its political and economic hegemony over the South-East countries only if it could dominate them culturally.[84] The cultural initiatives that were taken to influence them after World War I seemed inadequate for the Reich's purposes in the region; and despite the historical links that some of the countries had had with the Habsburg Empire, these were not enough for Germany to overcome its cultural stagnation in those territories caused by financial and bureaucratic deficiencies. If the Third Reich did not want to see those potential colonies turning towards Paris, Rome or even London, then Berlin should inaugurate a systematic and competitive cultural policy.[85]

The Südosteuropa Gesellschaft *and Its Cultural-political Role in the Balkans*

In 1940 the person in charge at the politico-economic section in the IG Farben industry, Anton Reithinger, underlined the capital importance South-East Europe could play for the Reich's economy, more precisely its war economy.[86] Having occupied France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, the Nazis were certain that the French and English competition in the Balkans would be eliminated and the Reich could almost exclusively exploit the mineral resources as well as the agricultural production of the region.[87] Wheat, corn, olives, oil, wood and other forest resources, minerals and textile fibres made up the Balkans' natural wealth, which was to prove essential for the Third Reich's economy. The region, argued Reithinger, would be important as an investment

---

eines deutschen Kulturinstitutes für die Balkan– und Donau – Staaten", on 25-05-1939, in PAAA, R 61270.

[83] It was believed that Ukraine alone could provide Germany with agricultural products, particularly grains, for some generations.

[84] H. G. von Studnitz, Berlin, to the Foreign Ministry, "Expose über die Errichtung eines deutschen Kulturinstitutes für die Balkan – und Donau – Staaten".

[85] *Ibid.*

[86] Anton Reithinger, "Südosteuropa und seine wirtschaftliche Bedeutung für Deutschland", Schriftenreihe der Finanzwochenzeitschrift *Die Bank*, H. 12, o.O.u.J. [1940], p. 21, cited in Wolfgang Schumann (ed.), *Griff nach Südosteuropa. Neue Dokumente über die Politik des deutschen Imperialismus und Militarismus gegenüber Südosteuropa im Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Berlin 1973, p. 9.

[87] *Ibid.*

market area that, after the end of the war, would secure Germany's export profits in the long term. In addition, Germany's investment of industrial capital in South-East Europe, particularly in road, water or railway networks, would create the necessary technical preconditions for larger and cheaper exploitation of its raw materials.[88]

Achieving that goal, Germany did not escape the complexity of distribution of duties and power by several institutions, a complexity that was characteristic of the polycratic Nazi regime. What was also characteristic were the rivalries among those institutions, often leading to the establishment of new umbrella organisations, transferring the tension onto another level. This was the case of the two most influential organisations for Germany's expansion to the South-East, namely the *Mitteleuropäische Wirtschaftstag* (Central European Economic Council, MWT) and the *Südosteuropa Gesellschaft* (South-East European Society, SOEG), both of which had their central offices in Vienna. Even though both were created for the same purpose, to establish economic influence over the Balkans and to exploit its resources, they did little to co-operate with each other towards their stated goals. The SOEG, unlike the MWT, was a newly established organisation. On 14 October 1939, within the framework of the Economic and Commercial Fair in Vienna, the Minister of Finance, Walther Funk, and the *Gauleiter* and Governor of Vienna, Josef Buerkel, made a speech about the initiatives Austria should take with regard to the Reich's war economy and the role of South-East Europe.[89] They further presented the foundations for the creation of a department dedicated to the South-East European economy in Vienna. Austria was regarded as the indispensable geopolitical area for Germany's interests, the "bridge pillar" (*Brückenpfeiler*) to the South-East,[90] which traditionally had close relations with the region. The department, therefore, was considered a "vein of life" (*Lebensader*) for Germany's war economy.[91] Its role was to put Austrian companies and the Austrian economy, in general, at the disposition of the Reich, taking measures to secure industrial production, the promotion of exports and the tariff policy.[92] At the same time, it was expected that the commercial exchange with the Balkan countries would help Germany to break

---

[88] *Ibid.*

[89] E. Pistor's report, "Die Schaffung einer ostmärkischen Wirtschaftsstelle für Südost" on 24-10-1939, p. 1, in the Bunderarchiv Berlin (BAB), R 63/37.

[90] Schumann, *Griff nach Südosteuropa*, p. 20.

[91] E. Pistor's report.

[92] *Ibid.*

Britain's efforts to blockade the Reich's economy.[93] Several months later, on 8 February 1940, those first plans to "decentralise the activities and the administration of Germany's economy from Berlin to Vienna",[94] took shape in the new institution, the SOEG.

According to its founding articles, the role of the SOEG was "to cultivate, strengthen and foster Germany's relations with the South-East countries".[95] In fact, what was hidden behind this euphemistic declaration was the co-ordination of research for the East on the ulterior motives of the unification and Germanisation of the Balkan people and their economic exploitation, as the region was considered the "economic supplementary space" of Germany.[96] The organisation should be in close co-operation with all authorities, unions, institutes, societies and other similar institutions that were connected to the Balkan countries or aimed at establishing economic or cultural relations with them.[97] In June 1941, in order to avoid further rivalries between the SOEG and the MWT, it was suggested by the latter and the Reich's industrial circles that the SOEG should be engaged in the scientific preparation of the industrial activities in South-East Europe. A committee with economic-scientific competencies was constituted in the SOEG at the beginning of 1942. The SOEG was subjected to the Reich's Ministry of Finance and worked under the auspices of the Minister of Finance and president of the German Bank, Walter Funk.[98] Nevertheless, the organisation was not to be attached to any state, party, industrial or other economic organisation, but to be autonomous.[99] In addition, it was to take necessary action to avoid conflicts and rivalries with other organisations. Moreover, it should rather be careful, even wary of co-operating with all of them, operating as an umbrella organisation.[100] The president of the society was initially appointed the Reich Commissar for the Reunification of Austria with the German Reich, Josef Buerkel, and a year later the Governor and

---

[93] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[94] Abstract of Minister Funk's speech, quoted in Pistor's report, p. 1.

[95] Undated document (presumably of 1941): charter of the "Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft", paragraph 3, in BAB, R 63/1. See also "Der Aufbau der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft", December 1942, Vienna, in BAB, R 63/2.

[96] Schumann, *Griff nach Südosteuropa*, p. 10.

[97] Undated document (presumably of 1941): charter of the "Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft". See also "Der Aufbau der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft".

[98] *Ibid.*, paragraph 2, in BAB, R 63/1.

[99] "Tätigkeit und Aufbau der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft 01-03-1942", in BAB R 63/4.

[100] "Tätigkeitsbericht der SOEG" to its president Baldur von Schirach on 29-05-1942, in BAB R 63/4.

Gauleiter in Vienna, Baldur von Schirach, while the vice-president became the Reich Brigadier and Mayor of Vienna, Hans Blaschke.[101]

Despite the scientific role the SOEG was called on to play, it did not run any scientific programme of its own. It operated rather as a coordinating organisation for numerous other institutions focused on South-East issues, either engaged in theoretical science or in practical economy, without obstructing the execution of their projects.[102] Many of these programmes conducted research on nutrition, export and import trade, industry and transportation. The practical issues the SOEG supervised were focused on two major areas: agriculture and industry. A number of leading enterprises became interested in the new organisation and among those that joined its projects were the IG Farben Industry, the Coal Syndicate and the German-American Petroleum Society.[103] After 1938 the Nazi successive march to the East and the war developments in the following years increased the Reich's interest in exploiting the raw materials of the Balkans. Iron, manganese, copper, chrome, bauxite, coal, liquid petroleum gas and, above all, oil were the most important resources that Germany desperately needed, in order to buttress its war economy. Manganese, for example, was among the most important minerals required for the production of iron and steel, while bauxite was significant for the fabrication of aluminium, a material used by *Luftwaffe* for building planes. The aluminium economy in the Balkans was very large and therefore of great importance for Germany. The Italian exploitation of Balkan bauxite deposits made German eagerness to gain a foothold in the region ever greater.

In 1942 European shortages in food supplies increased the importance of the Balkans, as they were also a valuable agricultural and cattle-breeding resource, with great potential for farming plants rich in fat and proteins.[104] As

---

[101] By 1944 two more vice-presidents were appointed: Karl Hermann Frank, who was the State's Minister in the protectorate Böhmen und Mühren and *SS-Obergruppenführer*, and the engineer Walter Rafelsberg, who was *Gauwirtschaftsberater Stadtrat SS-Oberführer*. See the document about the structure of the SOEG, mid-February 1944, in BAB, R 63/2.

[102] Undated document (presumably of 1941): charter of the "Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft", paragraph 3; "Geschäftsführer der SOEG, Heinrichsbauer to the Sonderbeauftragten des Führers General der Infanterie von Unruh" on 25-05-1943, in BAB, R 63/3; "Der Aufbau der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft".

[103] Heinrichsbauer to the Minister a. D. Dr Hans Fischboeck, Creditanstalt-Bankverein, Vienna, 06-04-1940, in BAB, R 63/33.

[104] "Protokoll der am 25. März 1942, 17 Uhr, unter dem Vorsitz des Herrn Karl Meywezedt und im Beisein des Herrn Stellvertretenden Gauleiters SS-Brigadeführer Scharitzer", in BAB, R 63/27.

autarky in food supplies was one of the major problems of the German war economy, the SOEG established in 1941 the "South-East Agricultural Institute" (*Südost-Agrarinstitut der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft e.V.*), also based in Vienna. The institute reported to the University for Agronomy (*Hochschule für Bodenkultur*). It was underlined that the *Südost-Agrarinstitut* should not be engaged in the economic undertakings of any commercial enterprise.[105] On the contrary, it should carry out its own business, namely to consult the SOEG at a scientific level about the provision of supplies and agricultural and forest exploitation issues. Among the responsibilities of the new institute were agriculture and "territorial research" in the South-East. To these ends, the institute would grant scholarships to young scientists of that region to study at the University for Agronomy in Vienna.[106] The work carried out should be focused on practical applications, that is to say, to meet the war needs. If the institute was engaged in other projects than these, stressed the general director of the SOEG, August Heinrichsbauer, the *Südost-Agrarinstitut* had no future.[107] Some of the experiments carried out at the agricultural institute were on soya beans, oil-reach pumpkins, olives, corn, and even on different sheep breeds for milk production and other milk-based products.[108] Other projects that were planned to be carried out at the *Südost-Agrarinstitut* had to do, among other things, with the so-called "industrial plants", namely fruits and vegetables that could be canned, hemp, and above all kok-saghyz, from which one could take rubber, so essential for the Reich's war economy. Bulgaria had a highly developed canning industry; moreover it was regarded as the right place for potential rubber plantations.[109] Even though the Kaiser Wilhelm Society was engaged in research on almost all the above problems, only some departments of its institutes, such as the Department for Animal Pathology at the Institute for Heredity Research, contributed to the SOEG's projects with its directors giving lectures to the *Südost-Agrarinstitut* in Vienna.[110] All the above

---

[105] Undated document (presumably of June 1941): "Satzung des Südost-Agrarinstituts der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft e.V.", paragraph 2, in BAB, R 63/49.

[106] *Ibid.*

[107] A. Heinrichsbauer to Prof. Hausmann, *Geschäftsführer des SOagrarinstituts*, on 03-02-1943, in BAB, R 63/74.

[108] "Kurzer Taetigkeitsbericht 1944" from Prof. Hausmann, *Geschäftsführer des SOagrarinstitut*, to the SOEG on 08-08-1944, in BAB, R 63/5.

[109] Prof. Hausmann to the *Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft – Ernährung und Landwirtschaft-z.Hd.* Herrn Dr von Rischka, 06-01-1943, in BAB, R 63/74.

[110] Prof. Hausmann to the SOEG z.H. des Herrn Min. Rat Dr Hans Augenthalter, 25-02-1944, in BAB, R 63/74.

projects, whether carried out in the SOEG or in the Kaiser Wilhelm Society were classified important or decisive for the war (*kriegswichtig/kriegsentscheidend*). Other important research institutes with which the organisation was involved were: the Institute for Economic Research in Vienna; the Institute for Consumption and Commerce, also in Vienna; the South-East Seminar organised by the SOEG and the German Academy; and the South-East Institute for Forest and Timber Research created by the SOEG.[111]

Among the problems investigated by the first institute was that of bauxite exploitation, while the Institute for Forest and Timber Research was engaged in research on malaria, and particularly in mapping malaria-infested areas and those in which the Anopheles mosquito reproduced. Experiments on fighting the Anopheles with healing herbs like quinine in Bulgaria and northern Greece were also part of the institute's project.[112]

The SOEG also planned to develop the industrial sector of the Balkans – that is to say to exploit its production – and, in order to influence the region economically, politically and culturally, it used the network of authorities, unions, institutes, societies and other organisations that Germany had already developed in the Balkan states. The bilateral friendship unions that had existed for many years between Germany and those countries, like the German-Greek Society and the German-Bulgarian Society, created branches in Vienna for closer collaboration with the SOEG. The work performed under the supervision of the SOEG soon transcended the borders of Austria, and the organisation set up branches in almost all the Balkan states, i.e. Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Greece, for gathering information valuable for the economic planning of the area. Branches were also created in Berlin and Munich. It should be underlined that in their effort to exploit the wealth of the Balkans, the Nazis activated not only the full panoply of the state economic mechanism, but also some of the bearers or representatives of German culture, such as the German Academy. The number of interdisciplinary projects the SOEG undertook demanded co-operation with other scientific institutes. If

---

[111] "Der Aufbau der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft", December 1942, and "Gliederung der SOEG", mid-February 1944: both documents in BAB, R 63/2. See also the untitled document of 1943 about the institutes with which the SOEG was related, in BAB, R 63/14.

[112] "Bericht über die im Rahmen der SOEG bearbeiteten theoretisch-wissenschaftlichen Untersuchungen (Vertraulich) 01-08-1943", in BAB, R 63/2; undated document (probably of 1941): "Aktenvermerk von Dr. Rischka, Amt für Agrarpolititk der Gauleitung der NSDAP, Wien", in BAB, R 63/49; Schimitschek to the *Südostinstitut für Wald– und Holzforschung*, Vienna, 06-02-1943, in BAB, R 63/5.

these institutes happened to have branches in the South-East countries, so much the better. The only such institution was the German Scientific Institute (DWI), with which the SOEG developed close relations.

Vienna had the great potential to become the educational centre of South-East Europe for the Nazis, as it had been in the past, particularly for agrarian studies. Therefore, the universities of the Austrian capital could play an important role not only in the promotion of research on the Balkans, but also in the Reich's foreign cultural policy.[113] Nevertheless, there were a number of problems that had to be dealt with, in order for Germany and Austria to be able to attract as many students, economists and other experts or interested scholars as possible, not only from the Reich but also from the Balkans. In 1942 agronomic studies in Germany were neither as intensive nor as broad as they had previously been, nor as they had been in the South-East countries or Italy. In addition, the three-year courses in Germany were considered insufficient, as the Balkan countries offered four-year courses of studies. As for the practical application of theory, this was something lacking in Germany in contrast to the Balkans. The high fees, compared to France, charged at Vienna University and its poor equipment also made the institution unattractive.[114]

Nevertheless, it seems that in order to meet the Reich's wishes, at least to some extent, the SOEG took some measures for promoting Germany's cultural relations with the Balkan states. The cultural-political undertakings of the organisation gained almost equal importance to the theoretical-scientific and the practical-economic projects. Most of these initiatives took place in the framework of the cultural activity of the city of Vienna, even though they had or they should have had their own character. One of the closest relationships the SOEG had developed with Vienna's cultural organisations was with the "Society of Friends of the German Academy". In 1942 the city of Vienna, the SOEG and the German Academy established the "South-East seminar" (*Südostseminar*).[115] The director of the seminar was Otto Kunz and its stated aim was to familiarise those who were interested in South-East Europe with the region through language courses, lectures, expeditions and other cultural

---

[113] Dr von Rischka, *Leiter u. Geschäftsführer der Abteilung Ernährung u. Landwirtschaft* to the SOEG, "Geschäftsbericht zur zweiten Tagung des Beirats der Gruppe 'Ernährung und Landwirtschaft der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft' ", 30-11 / 1-12-1942, in BAB, R 63/262.

[114] *Ibid.*

[115] "Geschäftsführer des Kulturpolitischen Arbeitkreises Felix Kraus Abschrift. Abkommen zwischen: Stadt Wien, Deutsche Akademie und SOEG, 27-10-1943", in BAB R 63/175.

and scholarly, economic, activities.[116] The extension of the programme to foreigners was also anticipated. The SOEG affiliated with the Department of South-East Union of the Vienna universities (*Abteilung Südostgemeinschaft der Wiener Hochschulen in der SOEG*) and the laboratories of Vienna universities, in order to study the scientific problems of the region.[117] The Department of South-East Union embraced about twelve universities in Austria and the Protectorate, and its role was to centralise and manage scientific work of every kind related to the South-East and conducted at universities and institutes.[118] The programme of the *Südostseminar*, which lasted a week, included a series of lectures on agricultural and economic issues, but also a number of cultural activities dedicated not only to the Reich but also to one or more Balkan countries at a time. Scientists from several German universities and research institutes usually lectured in front of students but very often their audience also comprised military officers and soldiers. It is interesting to note that to cater to the needs of the seminar the authorities of the city of Vienna, the German Academy and the SOEG signed an agreement for the establishment of another institute, the *Prinz Eugen-Institut*. The role of this new institute was to co-ordinate the scientific and cultural activities of the above three partners, namely to promote joint propaganda initiatives through courses, the organisation of big cultural events and other cultural-political and scientific undertakings.[119] In the framework of the *Prinz Eugen-Institut*, the German Academy, in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, offered language courses for foreign students at Vienna universities and technical schools. The increase in the number of foreign students who took language courses from 1942 to 1944 is quite impressive:[120]

---

[116] Document of December 1942 "Der Aufbau der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft", in BAB, R 63/2.

[117] *Ibid.*

[118] "Tätigkeitsbericht der SOEG 29-05-1942" to the President of the SOEG, von Schirach, in BAB, R 63/4.

[119] "Geschäftsführer des Kulturpolitischen Arbeitkreises Felix Kraus Abschrift. Abkommen zwischen: Stadt Wien, Deutsche Akademie und SOEG, 27-10-1943", paragraphs 3b, d.

[120] "Tätigkeitsbericht für Südostseminar, SOEG u. Deutsche Akademie 17-04-1944", in BAB, R 63/5.

Table 2

DATE	NUMBER OF FOREIGN STUDENTS
October 1942 – February 1943	138
March 1943 – June 1943	150
October 1943 – February 1944	227
March 1944 – June 1944	312

The seminar was divided into two sections: one for foreigners and a second for Germans and Austrians. The latter offered a series of courses in almost all the Balkan languages,[121] as well as introductory seminars on the land, culture and the people of the region. The foreigners, on the other hand, could take similar courses for language, organised by the personnel of the German Academy and the Ministry of Education,[122] as well as for politics, economy and the culture of the "Great German Reich". Language learning was the first step the SOEG should take in order to attract foreigners to enrol in the universities in Vienna and to continue their studies there subsequently, usually in trade and industrial economy, agriculture and the related sciences. These young scientists were expected to become Germany's "extending hand" after returning to their homelands, strengthening at the same time the ties with Germany and eventually being well disposed towards the Reich's interests.[123] The number of young Balkans who visited the Reich's universities seemed to be quite big, given the fact that the war was in progress and Germany exercised brutal occupation policies against some Balkan peoples. The cultural-political and the economic-political significance (*kultur- und wirtschaftspolitisch*) of granting scholarships to young scientists from the Balkans, basically to do Ph.D. research at the University for Agronomy, was well acknowledged by the director of the SO-*Agrarinstitut* and professor at the above university.[124]

---

[121] There were organised Slovak, Bulgarian, Romanian, Croatian, Hungarian and Russian language courses. Greek is not mentioned. *Ibid.*

[122] "Geschäftsführer des Kulturpolitischen Arbeitkreises Felix Kraus Abschrift. Abkommen zwischen: Stadt Wien, Deutsche Akademie und SOEG, 27-10-1943", paragraph 1.

[123] "Südost-Seminar, Wien. Anlage zum Fragebogen 23-04-1943", in BAB, R 63/3; Prof. Hausmann, *Geschäftsführer der Südostagrarinstitut der SOEG* to *Geschätsführer der SOEG* Heinrichsbauer, 26-11-1942, in BAB, R 63/74.

[124] Prof. Hausmann to Heinrichsbauer, 26-11-1942.

Table 3
Percentage of foreign scientists who visited German/Austrian universities from October 1941 to October 1942

Bulgarians 22.9%	Japanese 3.84%	Ukrainians 2.15%	Indians 1.25%
Romanians 8.85%	**Greeks 3.84%**	Belgians 1.96%	Arabs 1.16%
Chinese 7.33%	Spaniards 3.75%	**Slovaks 1.8%**	Peruvians 1.07%
Hungarians 7.4%	Dutch 3.6%	Swedes 1.7%	
Croats 6.6%	Swiss 3.04%	Tuerks 1.6%	
Italians 6.08%	Persians 2.5%	Danes 1.34%	7.24% from 24 other states

Source: Bundesarchiv Berlin (BAB), R 63/174: H. Baatz. "Auslandsamt der Dozentenschaft der deutschen Universitäten und Hochschulen. Jahresarbeitsbericht 1 Oktober 1941 bis 30 September 1942. (Streng vertaulich!)"

Even though prizes and grants were funded for German students, like the *Prinz-Eugen-Preis* of the *Goethe-Stiftung* and the *Prinz-Eugen-Studienstiftung*, that strong cultural propaganda tool was not applied to foreigners, at least at the beginning, something that troubled the authorities of the SOEG very early on.[125] However, it is unlikely that similar grants were later given to Balkan scholars directly by the SOEG. As the granting of scholarships to foreigners was the responsibility of the Foreign Ministry, the SOEG tried to avoid any conflicts with it. Thus, the cultural-political programme of the SOEG was only involved in occasional and carefully selected cultural activities.[126]

---

125 "Tätigkeit und Aufbau der Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft" 01-03-1942, part III, in BAB, R 63/4.

126 "Tätigkeitsbericht der SOEG to the President of the SOEG Baldur von Schirach, 29-05-1942", paragraph number 3, in BAB, R 63/4. Grants were also allocated or planned to be allocated to young scientists who wished to work on a dissertation on South-East European agricultural issues. In 1943 two Romanians were doing such research in Vienna, while publication of relevant dissertations was planned to be financially supported by the German Academy in Munich, for contemporary works of that kind were lacking. That lack was well presented on the list of dissertations carried out at the University for Agronomy in Vienna, of which most of them were quite old. Among those were the works of two Greeks: Orphee-Papadopoulos Dimitri: "Das griechische brachyzere Rind. Die Rinderschläge von Hellasfestland, der Insel Euboea, Peloponnes u.d. Insel Kreta." Diss. v. 25. Apr. 1933. 67 S; and Vlissidis Thrassybulos: "Studien über die Aufforstung Griechenlands." Diss. v. 1. Apr. 1919. 41 Bl. See "Verzeichnis der Dissertationen an der Hochschule f. Bodenkultur mit einer Beziehung zum SO", 1943 in BAB, R 63/74. Vlissidis was appointed professor at Athens University in 1933. See "Κατάστασις. Εμφαίνουσα το σύνολον των αποδοχών των Εκτάκτων Καθηγητών Χρήσεως 01-04-1933 – 31-03-1934" [Table showing gross salaries

Conclusion

If the argument that culture alone does not justify the eagerness of any power to expand abroad seems to be distinct, focusing on a totalitarian regime, as it was Nazi Germany and the complex organisation of its foreign cultural policy, makes it more evident, if not apocalyptic. Driven by its nationalistic ideology, Hitler's Germany developed an acute cultural nationalism that it was eager to impose on the rest of Europe. Hitler used the existing cultural propaganda mechanism that had been developed in the Weimar Republic. However, unlike that period, in which only two Ministries (Foreign Affairs and Education) were involved in the country's foreign cultural policy, the Third Reich involved a number of institutions in propagating German culture abroad. These included the Ministry of the Interior, *Amt Rosenberg*, the *Ahnenerbe* Office of the *Reichsführer SS* and the National Socialist Organisation for Issues Abroad (*Auslandsorganisation* (AO) *der NSDAP*). The involvement of so many institutions for the same purpose reveals the polycratic structure of Hitler's regime and the rivalries among them, which was often at the expense of the originally designed policy.

In the early years of National Socialism, the cultural role of natural sciences, unlike humanities, was marginalised. With the announcement of the Four-year Plan in 1936-37, natural sciences, together with technology, came to the fore, however, not so much as essentially cultural tools, but rather as the instruments that could set the military machine in motion and make it triumph. The cultural-political role of science was regarded at that time as complementary. It was at that time that South-East Europe regained once more its chief importance for Germany's foreign policy. The cultural-political or propagandistic plan seemed to be easier to be realised in the Balkans, which were less powerful that the other European countries, and therefore more receptive to Germany's cultural infiltration. During the war years, South-East Europe became the main target for the Reich's cultural-political plans. This cultural rapprochement was due to Germany's war-time economic and political interests in the region, which was regarded by the Germans more or less as a future colony. Therefore, from 1936 onwards the Nazis signed bilateral cultural agreements with a number of Balkan countries as well as with their allies. For the former, however, the trend in uni-directional communication was to take on new tones, as the National Socialists considered the region to be underdeveloped, and thus it was very likely to become dependent on

---

of non-tenured professors for the period 01-04-1933 – 31-03-1934], in the Historical Archive of Athens University (IAPA), 1-1, Διορισμοί καθηγητών. Προκήρυξις πληρώσεως εδρών και άλλες διαδικασίες [Appointments of Professors], 1934-1935.

Germany's science and technology and hence on its economy. It must be underlined, however, that the real dependent partner in this relationship was Germany itself, as the natural resources of the Balkans became essential for its war economy. The German systematic penetration into this region and its efforts to dominate its cultural life were the forerunners to its economic exploitation. The exploitation of natural resources was perhaps the most important reason for Germany to acknowledge cultural-political credentials to science, as its advertising abroad could attract young scholars to its universities, who could pave the way for Germany to material success, when they returned to their home countries. Exerting cultural influence on the Balkan youth was nothing else than educating and training them in the Reich. Germany's cultural nationalism does not appear to be far from cultural imperialism or "cultural synchronisation".[127] Economic and political influence was among the major goals of cultural infiltration, that is "to capture markets for cultural commodities and to establish hegemony by shaping popular consciousness".[128]

University of Thessaly

[127] The term was coined by C. J. Hamelink, cited in Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi, "The Many Cultural Faces of Imperialism", p. 49.

[128] Golding and Harris (eds), *Beyond Cultural Imperialism*, p. 6.