eurozine

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The futility of one professor's life

Otto Hoetzsch and German Russian studies

In 1946, Otto Hoetzsch called upon scholars to incorporate Russia and eastern Europe into their view of history. This was the conclusion he had reached after a lifetime of research. In Berlin during the 1920s, Hoetzsch, who was a scholar, politician, and tireless man of action, created networks of people interested in Russia regardless of their ideological differences. He founded the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde and the journal *Osteuropa*. Hoetzsch organized and inspired Russian emigrants, Baltic Germans, and Soviet Russians. After World War I, Berlin was recognized throughout the world as the centre of scholarly work on Russia and eastern Europe. The Nazis defamed Hoetzsch as a "parlour Bolshevik", destroyed academic research on eastern Europe, and unleashed war in Europe. And after World War II, Otto Hoetzsch and his pan−European perspective suffered their final defeat in the shape of the division of Europe.

Berlin. Spring 1945. A man almost 70 years of age drags himself through the ruins of the German capital. The only thing in the briefcase he is carrying is a manuscript. He calls it his "A II" manuscript. It survived the war in a safe, while everything else he owned and held dear was destroyed: his apartment on Einemstrasse in the Tiergarten district as well as his unique private library with its 30 000 volumes. He ekes out a living by selling the last things he could salvage from the debris of his building. Frequently changing accommodations, the seriously ill man sometimes lives with friends and relatives, sometimes in hospitals. In July 1945, he writes a colleague: "I am here, a convalescent in a hospital, my apartment [is] 'bombed out' completely, after hard twists of fate like a fish on dry land, a scholar without books, without the physical ability to move and isolated, cut off. And despite that, something inside me is working; 'the spirit wants to inquire', as the Psalmist says."[1]

The old man illustrates more than just the philosopher's maxim omnia mea mecum porto (I carry with me everything I own). In him, one sees the tragedy of a German scholar and his science −− for buried beneath the ruins is also the field he co−founded after much exertion and pioneering work: modern Russian studies. Otto Hoetzsch has remained behind in the devastated city, alone and lonely. His wife died a few days before the Red Army conquered Berlin. Russia, to which he had dedicated his scholarly and political life, has now moved its troops into the city. What he prophesied in 1931 has come to fruition. The new war has ended with "the victory of Bolshevism" in Central Europe.[2]

The university where he worked during the best years of his life is preparing to reopen −− now under the direction of the Soviet military administration. The man who was once prohibited from practicing his profession is once again needed to get things running. What he brings back with him from his decade of

inner emigration, the manuscript "A II", is a history of Alexander II and his epoch; whether it will ever be published is known only to the stars. Many of his students and colleagues were killed or driven into exile by the Nazis. Many of those who got involved with the Nazis are sitting for the time being in detention camps awaiting their "de−Nazification". "The Hoetzsch School", of which the great British historian E.H. Carr once spoke, exists only in diaspora.[3] Berlin long ago ceased to be the centre of Russian studies, the place for "training for Russia" that the young American diplomat George F. Kennan had sought out back in the 1920s.[4] And to complete this misfortune, many of Hoetzsch's Soviet colleagues, such as David Ryazanov and Sergei Platonov, did not survive Stalin's terror of the late 1930s.[5]

Between the wars, every grain of knowledge connected with Russia and Soviet Russia had been accumulated in Berlin. In the spring of 1945, this vast harvest lay in ruins. A chapter of fascinating and dramatic academic history had come to an end. What were the reasons for this flowering of German Russian studies in such a short period? How could this academic discipline constitute itself amid the many interwar confrontations in Europe and the German−Soviet conflict? How was objectivity in an age of rapid politicization at all imaginable? Was not every attempt to make intellectual contact with the vilified opponent "treason"? Like few other disciplines, Russian studies became the theatre for the disputes and intrigues to which academics were exposed in the era of dual totalitarianism. And Otto Hoetzsch was at the centre of attention in this drama.[6]

Thrown back to the beginning again

Now, with Soviet troops in Berlin, it was time to take stock of things, in Russian studies as well. And so Otto Hoetzsch, with the strength left him before his death on 27 August 1945, went about assessing the intellectual capital that still existed. On 21 May 1946, at a meeting of historians where the future tasks of teaching and research were discussed, a presentation written by Otto Hoetzsch was read aloud as well. Hoetzsch himself could not be there due to illness. What he had in mind in his presentation, however, was nothing less than "the integration of eastern European history in universal history".[7] The most urgent task, as Hoetzsch saw it, was "clearing away the heap of intellectual debris [left over] from an unfertile and destructive period and overcoming, extinguishing and tossing aside assumptions of thoughtlessness, presumptuousness, and animosity".[8] With this, Hoetzsch meant not only the superficial remnants of Nazi propaganda that had settled in people's heads −− such catchphrases as "Asian hordes" −− but rather a comprehensive, penetrating revision of the reference points along which European history was directed and written. From there, the "idea of eastern European history" was to be reconsidered and defined anew, from there "the recognition of Russia as a historical−political individuality, developed according to its own laws and needs, according to its idea of the state and its people's nature, was initially to be determined".[9] That is a clear rejection of western Europe and "Occident−centrism". On top of this, however, Hoetzsch also made a plea for a modern, comparative method and an interdisciplinary school of history. If eastern and western Europe are considered in this new perspective, then "the old argument −− whether political or cultural history −− will lose all meaning".[10]

As modern as this sounds, the integration of Russia in the range of European experience and history Hoetzsch was calling for stood at the beginning of his efforts to create Russian studies in Germany. What he formulated in 1946 was

nothing fundamentally new but what he had expressed in February 1913 in his "Memorandum for the Purpose of Founding a German Association for the Study of Russia". This time, however, it had been radicalized by Germany's catastrophic experience under the Nazis. It seems as if Hoetzsch, after 1945, had been thrown back to the beginning of his efforts, for even in 1913 he had called for expanding and intensifying contacts with Russia in every imaginable way: through new journals, the establishment of chairs for language study, history and applied geography, professorial exchanges, the founding of societies to bring together all those interested in Russia, the encouragement of academic work, the exercise of influence on the press, the establishment of an academic bibliography, and much more. In short, the programme could read: be informed, be familiar, overcome ignorance and alienation −− and do so by combining scholarship and practical experience.[11]

Hoetzsch was born in 1876. In 1913, when he formulated these tasks and his *Russia: An Introduction Based on its History from 1904 to 1912* appeared, he was already a respected scholar and politician. He experienced the First World War and the Russian Revolution not long after turning 40, the end of the Civil War in Russia and the establishment of relations between Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia with 50, National Socialism's seizure of power at just under 60, and Nazi Germany's collapse with almost 70. Such was the course of the man's life who had managed to combine political engagement and academia −− or as it was called elsewhere, scholarly life and civic duties −− like hardly anyone else in his day; his was a life mostly in tune with the times, but for more than a decade out of tune. In twelve years of Nazi dictatorship, everything he had worked for was destroyed. His prominence at the high tide of "the spirit of Rapallo" as well as his inner emigration in the Third Reich are a rather exact measure of German−Russian relations in terms of academic and intellectual activity.

Hoetzsch's most fruitful period coincides with that of the Weimar Republic, which he supported as a "republican of reason" (as opposed to a "republican at heart"), but the ingredients that made his career possible were older. To understand this, one has to go back in time to the German Empire's rise in the late nineteenth century. The domestic surroundings in which Hoetzsch grew up were civic−minded, non−aristocratic, middle−class, conservative, and national. He came from a Protestant−Lutheran household, his father a master plumber in Leipzig. It was a part of German society that revered Reich founder Otto von Bismarck and historian Heinrich von Treitschke and read the novels of Gustav Freytag. Leipzig University, where Hoetzsch enrolled in 1895 after leaving Thomas Gymnasium and serving a year in Saxon's infantry, was at the time one of Germany's most stimulating and modern institutes of higher learning. The young Hoetzsch was fortunate enough to study under Karl Lamprecht and Friedrich Ratzel, two leading representatives of the "Leipzig school". And it is certainly no coincidence that during his studies he met not only William E. Dodd, later a US ambassador to Berlin, but also Mikhail Tereshchenko, the future foreign minister of the Russian Provisional Government of 1917.[12]

While the crucial moment when Hoetzsch turned to eastern Europe came only later, he had already become interested in Russia during his Leipzig years, particularly in the economic development of the tsarist empire under Alexander II and in the industrialization and modernization policies of Sergei Witte, the Russian minister of finance from 1892 to 1903. It was not just an academic interest that drew him to Russia and led to his first trip there in 1904. Hoetzsch had a feel for the historical dynamic, the force of Russian capitalism, the peasants' hunger for land and for the danger facing the ancien régime. In

1900, he went to Berlin, and in 1906, he received his doctorate. That same year, Hoetzsch was called to the Royal Academy in Posen (Polish, Poznan). This institution, which had been founded just three years earlier, was supposed to become an academic centre of "the German east" and to promote and consolidate the germanization of Prussia's Polish province.

In Posen, Hoetzsch was militantly German National: The situation of the German ethnic group was more than precarious. Hoetzsch agitated for settling hundreds of thousands of German peasants in Polish populated areas −− a "new, large−scale eastward movement in German domestic ethnic history". It was here that Hoetzsch became sensitive to the significance of German−Russian relations −− and at the same time developed a massive anti−Polish complex. It would appear over long stretches of time as if his orientation toward Russia sprung above all from this inclination. Many years would pass before he came to terms with Poland's statehood, as a formulation from 1930 shows: "Without wanting to be a prophet, one must say that there will always be a Polish state in the future, and that a situation in which a nation of 20 million people of such economic, spiritual, and national vitality is divided among three great powers will not return".[13]

From Posen, Hoetzsch also tapped into eastern Europe. He travelled to the Baltic lands, to the Russian Empire's Polish provinces and to Austrian Galicia. At the Royal Academy in Posen, he built up an audience that was always more than an academic gathering. "I see in historians holding such lectures a piece of civics that would otherwise be easily overlooked and see in it as well a possibility for constituting anew the connection between the historical science and the educated public that was lost in the last decade", Hoetzsch wrote in the autumn of 1911.[14] As a tireless speaker, he was in action everywhere where the concerns of Germans in the world were at stake −− in the German Borderlands Union (Deutscher Ostmarkenverein), at the Treitschke celebrations, in the Naval League (Flottenverein), or in the Colonial Society (Kolonialgesellschaft). He must have had a talent for academic management. He founded an eastern archive and made contacts with interested parties and financial backers in industry and large estates. In addition, from his post in Posen, he also served Berlin: From 1907 to 1911, he lectured twice a week, mainly on Polish history, at Theodor Schiemann's Eastern European History Department at Berlin's Friedrich Wilhelm University.

In 1913, Hoetzsch was summoned to the Berlin university, not, however, for Schiemann's chair, but −− despite resistance from a large part of the faculty −− for an extraordinary chair created for him. In 1913, his history of Russia also appeared. In 1913, just in time for the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Nations near Leipzig (where Austrian, Prussian, Russian, and Swedish forces routed Napoleon), the Association for the Study of Russia (Gesellschaft zum Studium Rußlands) was founded in the Prussian House of Representatives, an accomplishment in which Hoetzsch played a significant role. One year before the outbreak of the First World War, nothing stood in the way of Otto Hoetzsch's career as interpreter, analyst, and promoter of German−Russian relations.

But things turned out differently. The outbreak of the First World War interrupted the aforementioned association's activity. It had taken more than ten years before that project, which had been so timely before 1914, became reality. At the end of a research trip in 1912, Hoetzsch had been able to write with confidence: "Another 25 years of peace and 25 years of zemleustroistvo (building self−administration in the countryside, K.S.) −− and Russia has then

become another country". With the start of the First World War, such future prospects were cast aside. All reasonable hopes for German−Russian relations had been overtaken by events.[15]

A political professor mixes with Berlin society

Otto Hoetzsch appears to belong to that rare type of individual in whom two opposite and as a rule mutually exclusive talents did not paralyze one another in competition and rivalry, but instead, when combined, brought out the best of a person. Hoetzsch was not only a recognized representative of his field; he was simultaneously a public figure.

Hoetzsch took his work as a member of the German parliament between 1919 and 1930 very seriously, but this did not prevent him from pursuing his studies. He was an exceptionally gifted organizer. His activity as an academic instructor was inspired by his spirited grasp of reality and his political engagement profited from an understanding of history that went beyond the daily news. From Karl Lamprecht, his doctoral supervisor, he had taken up the practice of giving lectures on contemporary issues or opening lectures on historical subjects with discussions of the present situation. George F. Kennan refers to Hoetzsch's Wednesday lectures, which drew almost 1000 listeners from all semesters and from outside the university.

In his work, academic study and political briefing freely interacted with one another. Hoetzsch was convinced, "that the historian who is as preoccupied by such questions as I am and also bases them as exactly as possible on regular travel and relations with diplomatic circles may not elude the wishes of [his] listeners. [Such wishes] are all too understandable, because in the present situation the possibility of orienting oneself has been fully lost to an educated newspaper reader as well".[16]

Hoetzsch was a historian who allowed his view of the world to be confirmed or called into question by examining it. He had to see the subject of his lectures with his own eyes. He had to hear "the bells of the Moscow churches" every now and then.[17] Travel was for him a delightful form of study and research, a form of self−affirmation. He used visits that were actually dedicated to an edition of First World War documents for trips to the cinema and strolls through cities, in short, for studying life.

What was it about Russia that fascinated him? What was the real Eros of his infatuation with Russia? His negative attitude toward Poland certainly remained something of an emotional and intellectual constant for a long time −− until the end of the Weimar Republic. Emotionally, because as a German National he identified deeply with the "Germans in the east" and could not at all imagine Prussia−Germany without this diaspora. The detachment of the eastern territories of Posen, West Prussia, and Upper Silesia from Germany in the Treaty of Versailles was plainly unthinkable, something he was unwilling to accept for a long time. The strategic alliance with Russia fed on this revisionist complex and aimed at the eradication of Poland. But there was an impetus other than the purely negative.

Perhaps his long preoccupation with Alexander II, the great reformer−tsar, and the modernization of the economy set in motion by him shows us the essence of Otto Hoetzsch's Russian experience: He was fascinated by the dynamic of the late tsarist empire, which he himself had experienced on trips, and by the new type of self−made man, to which he himself belonged. In Hoetzsch's view,

the future belonged to the Russia of factories, craftsmen, entrepreneurs and initiative. He was doubtless a conservative, but he did not cling to the ancien régime, which he considered ossified, out−of−date, and incapable of reform. It was important for him that something take shape in Russia −− whether brought about by his friends among the constitutional monarchists of the bourgeois Octobrist Party, or later by the Bolsheviks, or much later by Stalin's party. He was confident that this peasant country would develop no matter its ideology and proclaimed confessions. Access to Russia was not a matter of worldview, but a kind of understanding based on empathy and instinct.[18]

What interested Hoetzsch about Bolshevism was more related to real power than any ideological project. He had no more difficulty with Soviet Russia's homines novi than he did with the "has beens" who lived in emigration in Berlin and belonged to his closest associates. Hoetzsch rejected Stalin's cultural revolution and collectivization. The "standardization of city and apartment construction as a prerequisite and basis of a coming fully mechanized social culture" was for him deeply repugnant. Yet he was still fascinated by the "will to live" he could discern even in the hyperactivity of the Soviet Union in the 1930s.[19] Hoetzsch would have never realized anything −− neither as a professor nor as a politician −− without this somewhat inexplicable openness to new and different things. Right up until the time of the five−year plans, he was convinced that Russia would go the way of evolution, that it would overcome the revolutionary excesses, and that it would develop into a kind of peasant republic. Trotsky's defeat and removal from power, for example, was in his eyes an indication of Russia turning away from revolutionary Marxism and toward "normalization".

Hoetzsch coped not only with an enormous academic workload,[20] but also with his tasks as a politician, as a member of parliament, as a member of different commissions and, above all, in the executive of the German National People's Party. Alongside Max Delbrück, Ernst Troeltsch, and Theodor Schiemann, he belonged to the important and influential political publicists of the late German Empire and the Weimar Republic. From 1914 on, he wrote a foreign policy weekly review in the Wednesday morning edition of the *Kreuzzeitung* newspaper, producing until 1924 around 500 articles. He read all of the important foreign newspapers, above all the Russian ones.[21] His biographer writes, "His ambition to play a political role was quite great and led him to overestimate his ability to exercise influence".[22]

Hoetzsch's position at the intersection of politics and academia was absolutely one of a kind. Since his studies in Leipzig, he had wandered through various circles, from which he drew strength and which in turn relied on him for his interesting and rare expertise in eastern Europe. During his rise from modest circumstances, his education at a university with such outstanding scholars as Ratzel and Lamprecht had been helpful. The ties established during his service in the army and his close collaboration with the Posen garrison not only helped Hoetzsch to obtain a teaching position at the Prussian War Academy, but also gave him access to the highest levels of the military: General Paul von Hindenburg, for example, asked Hoetzsch for help in composing his memoirs.[23] Of greatest significance on "the way up" were certainly his party activities and the endless publications and lectures in organizations associated with the national right, such as the Naval League, the Eastern Borderlands Union and the German Conservative Party.

When Hoetzsch was called to Berlin, this happened with a well−intentioned promotion from on high, over the heads of the university's faculty. He did not

disappoint his patrons: For almost two decades, he proved himself to be the most energetic motor behind German relations with Russia and eastern Europe, bringing together all those people and organizations to whom the expansion of contacts in the east could matter. A group of 108 researchers sent to Russia in 1912 by the Society for Further Education in Government Studies (Vereinigung für Staatswissenschaftliche Fortbildung) was probably characteristic in composition for all of Hoetzsch's future endeavours. Among its members were administrative specialists and judges, business representatives and academics, journalists and politicians. We find a similar mixture the next year at the founding of the German Association for the Study of Russia: The association's board of directors included leading representatives of universities, publishing houses, and newspaper editorial boards as well as consuls, company managers and a member of the Reichsbank's board of directors.[24]

We meet Otto Hoetzsch everywhere in Berlin where German−Russian affairs were discussed: at the home of Ago von Maltzan, state secretary in the German Foreign Office, at breakfasts organized by diplomat and writer Harry Graf Kessler, at receptions held by the Soviet embassy on Unter den Linden, and at meetings of the German Association for Russian Studies.[25] Hoetzsch also belonged to the executive of the Working Community for the Study of the Soviet−Russian Planned Economy (Arplan), where in the early 1930s, leading intellectuals from the right and the left came together: Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Hermann Duncker, Georg Lukács, and others.[26]

Hoetzsch's circle of acquaintances was apparently not limited by ideology; he ignored the boundaries of camps based on worldviews and politics. There are his academic colleagues such as Karl Stählin, Eduard Meyer, Max Weber, Max Delbrück, and Otto Hintze. He knows the brain researcher Oskar Vogt, who looked after Lenin; army chief Colonel−General Hans von Seeckt; German ambassadors to Moscow such as Ulrich Graf Brockdorff−Rantzau and Herbert von Dirksen; and the chairmen of the large companies and sponsors of the German Association for Eastern European Studies (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Osteuropakunde) such as Felix Deutsch of AEG or Herman Josef Abs of Deutsche Bank. In the June Club, he would meet with his fellow politicians Ernst Troeltsch, Georg Bernhard, Heinrich Brüning, and August Müller. He also belonged to the foreign policy committee of the German Association of 1914, a kind of brain trust for the Foreign Office that brought together a closed circle of 50 to 100 diplomats, civil servants, professors, officers, businessmen, and bankers at its evening gatherings in the Kirchstrasse in Neustadt. Finally, Hoetzsch's home itself was a meeting place for Berlin's "German−Russian society". "His house in the Bendlerstrasse, conveniently located in Tiergarten and near the government quarter, saw many known faces. It should be mentioned that even during the peak of the inflation, he could hold a reception, always supported by his wife on such occasions, for Hindenburg and a circle of invited guests. In 1929, he gave a confidential presentation on the Soviet Union to around 20 personalities from the business world whom he had identified".[27]

The jour fixe was continued even after the rise of the Nazis in 1933, just no longer in the apartment on Bendlerstrasse −− which the Hoetzsches had to give up to make way for the expansion of the army ministry −− but on Einemstrasse, between the squares Lützowplatz and Nollendorfplatz. "Numerous intellectually independent, important people who found themselves either tacitly or not so tacitly in opposition to the ruling regime [would meet there]... Hoetzsch occasionally told me about the famous Wednesday

gatherings and the presentations heard there, for example, about Colonel−General [Ludwig] Beck and the Prussian Finance Minister [Johannes] Popitz".[28] As a member of the German parliament's Committee for Foreign Affairs, he had to deal with completely different friends of Russia −− namely, the members of the Reichstag from the Communist Party of Germany −− for example, Wilhelm Koenen, Paul Frölich, and Ernst Thälmann.[29] Hoetzsch maintained various close contacts with the Russian Soviet side, not only with his historian colleagues −− such as David Ryazanov, Nikolai Pokrovskii, and Sergei Platonov −− but also with the political and cultural establishment: foreign ministers Georgii Chicherin and Maksim Litvinov, Olga Kameneva, who chaired the All−Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and others. As if it were the most natural thing in the world, one would find him on the grandstand for foreign guests of honour, not far from the Soviet leadership, at the May Day Parade on Red Square.

If Hoetzsch was able to become spiritus rector and the "internal centre" of Berlin's German−Russian society, then it was not only because he was an especially ambitious and exceptionally gifted communicator: There was a need for a figure such as Hoetzsch, a void he filled with energy and tact.

Syntheses: German Tory and parlour Bolshevik

In his memo on the founding of the German Association for the Study of Russia of February 1913, Hoetzsch had identified the association's primary challenge as "maintaining a proper neutral centre position" in its activities.[30] If preserving a "neutral centre position" presented a challenge under normal circumstances, it would have had to appear almost utopian in light of the permanent crises and tensions between 1914 and 1945: neutrality in an era of radicalization and party building, defence of the centre in an "age of extremes", and maintenance of the apolitical in a realm of thorough politicization! But that of course basically amounted to nothing other than the self−assertion of middle−class civil society in an era dedicated to rallying the masses and mobilizing the troops. The ability of Otto Hoetzsch and his kind to defend their way of life within a polarizing and radicalizing environment is a rather exact indicator of the strength of the culture that carried the Weimar Republic −− just as the extent of danger facing the republic and the tempo of its demise can be considered an indicator of the erosion of middle−class civil society. Although Otto Hoetzsch was a politician who sometimes embraced nationalist tones −− one recalls the election campaigns in Posen before 1914 and his praise for the "national revolution" just after 1933 −− his interest in his field of study and his ability to appeal to the members of so many political parties and schools of thought show quite clearly that intellectual, and material, independence mattered more to him than party politics.[31]

To preserve this cross−party but not indifferent position was no small thing at the time. It was always being challenged, attacked, and denounced. There were pretexts enough in Hoetzsch's field of activity. In a discussion of war aims, in which Hoetzsch represented more moderate positions, he was accused of tepidness, appeasement, even treason. Hoetzsch personified the "Russian danger in the German house", wrote the Tübingen−based Medievalist Johannes Haller in 1917.[32] Paul Rohrbach, a leading pan−German publicist, called him an "old Russophile".[33] Herman Greife, a "Russian specialist" who was blissfully ignorant of scholarly activity, maligned Hoetzsch as a "notorious cultural Bolshevik" after the Nazis came to power. And Adolf Ehrt, chairman of the Anti−Comintern, denounced Hoetzsch and the German Association for Eastern European Studies to the Gestapo in late September 1935: "This

association is a product of the November republic and its Rapallo policy. It stands as their last remnant and today has basically no task and no justification for its existence. In this regard, the Anti−Comintern is virtually the antipode of this association, the soul of which is, as is generally known, Professor Hoetzsch, who was recently fired".[34]

Lectures by the Soviet film director Vsevolod Pudovkin or the economist Eugen Varga under the auspices of the association were attacked as propaganda for cultural Bolshevism and as a threat to the liberal, middle−class, civic order, while support for Russian emigrants and the appearance of their work in magazines published by Hoetzsch were a thorn in the Soviet's side.[35] There were attacks from the left and the right as well as protest rallies at the technical college in Charlottenburg against the German−Soviet historians' week, which Hoetzsch brought about after enormous effort in 1927.[36]

This is not surprising. As a German National, Hoetzsch was immune to Bolshevism. What repulsed him was probably above all the treatment of the old elite, the "cultural stratum". As a man of graces with a broad range of interests, he could not deny himself contact with this radical other, especially when he could fall back on ties from before the First World War. That certainly applied to Sergei Oldenburg, the secretary of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and to Georgii Chicherin, the people's commissar for foreign relations. "Cultural Bolshevism" became denunciation codeword against such openness. The struggle against a "cultural Bolshevik" such as Otto Hoetzsch was just another word for anti−bourgeois and anti−intellectual resentments and aggression. In this case, they were directed against a rare species of German political culture: a Tory on German soil.

Hoetzsch belonged to that rather small part of German bourgeoisie that did not close its eyes to the new reality of 1918. The change of constitution was for him definite. He placed himself "surprisingly unsentimentally, quickly, and resolutely on the side of parliamentary democracy. Cold realism determined his position toward the monarchy".[37] Hoetzsch was convinced that the new order would only endure if it succeeded in creating a "democratic mass basis", gathering together the non−aristocratic property owners and professional elites in the Conservative Party and winning over the old−Prussian aristocracy as the leading core. His role model here was England. Again and again, he reminded his party colleagues that "today it is possible [for us] to make policy only together with the masses, that the future of our people even in an independent state will be decided by our success in drawing the masses into a national state". The road there lay not in a nationalist ideology, but "in creative social reform, the new building of an organic state and an organic social order where each class stands next to the other with equal rights and a new religious realism". From this position, Hoetzsch could even promote critical engagement with Soviet political thought.[38] It was this position between the extremes, between Soviet Russia and anti−Bolshevism, that accounted for the peculiar tension and productivity of Russian studies in Berlin.

"Training for Russia": Berlin as the centre of Russian studies

It was due primarily to Otto Hoetzsch's personality and hard work that Berlin became recognized around the world as the centre of Russian and eastern European studies after the First World War.[39] His genius consisted of bringing together the disparate forces present in Berlin and leading them to create a new aggregate. The variety of institutional forms in which the new discipline was organized merely reflected the rich fund of knowledge Berlin then represented.

A young American such as George F. Kennan, who was preparing for duty with the U.S. foreign service in the Soviet Union, found in Berlin, and in the Baltic capitals, everything he needed to that end: the Institute for Oriental Languages, which was created in Bismarck's time to educate diplomats, and the Department of Eastern European History and Applied Geography, which was home to an outstanding library with one of the best collections of contemporary Soviet periodicals, numerous specialized journals, and outstanding experts whose lectures and courses were open to attendance. Above all, however, there was the rich and lively "Russian context".[40] One could take language lessons with Russian emigrants, go to Russian bars and cabarets, consume the Russian daily press, attend lectures at the Russian Scientific Institute, experience the eastern rite calendar and take in performances of Soviet ensembles and events at the embassy. Berlin was a transit point, the terminal station for the lost Russia of yore and the starting point of every journey into the Soviet present.

Many elements came together here. Even before the First World War, Berlin had been an important place for Baltic Germans, and their presence in the German capital was strengthened by the end of the tsarist empire and their displacement from the newly founded Baltic states. Several of their names are to be found in Russian studies: Theodor Schiemann, for example, Hoetzsch's predecessor and the Russophobe commentator for *Kreuzzeitung*.[41] Hoetzsch himself believed the influence of the Baltic Germans to be quite great: "The Balts have dominated our view of Russia for almost three decades. Nine−tenths of all books about Russia come from Balts, even far left−oriented newspapers have a Baltic co−worker for Russian affairs. As much as I empathize with what is happening in the Baltics, it is clear to me that the enormous questions facing the east cannot be oriented according to the wishes of 165 000 Germans in the Baltic provinces".[42]

The Moscow and Petersburg Germans who had left Russia in 1914 or 1917 constituted another integral part of Berlin society. They too could not be overlooked in terms of personal or cultural clout −− from Pastor Masing's Russian university preparatory school, to the Café Ruscho, which was run by the Moscow−German family Mehnert, to the leading lights of the Foreign Office.[43] This element was prominently represented in Hoetzsch's entourage as well: Arthur Luther, who hailed from a Moscow industrialist's family and was responsible for the rubric "Literature and Culture" in the journal *Osteuropa*; and Klaus Mehnert, who earned his doctorate under Hoetzsch and also belonged to the editorial board of *Osteuropa*.[44]

The energetic editor and organizer of the journal, Hans Jonas, had come into contact with Russia in another way: as a prisoner of war. For a scholar such as Max Vasmer, it was an insult that an outsider such as Jonas, who ran the association and managed the journal with great resourcefulness and élan, could hold such an important position.[45]

"Hoetzsch's empire", however, profited from no other milieu nearly as much as it did from the large group of Russian refugees and emigrants. The entire old society was represented accordingly. Otto Hoetzsch had put to work his ties at the Prussian Ministry of Culture and the Foreign Office in order to establish a Russian Scientific Institute centred on a group of Russian scholars. Hoetzsch was the only German in the institute's board of directors. For several years, the scholars there −− historians, literature specialists, philosophers, sociologists, and others −− formed the intellectual core of "the other Russia" in Berlin.[46] However, as a result of invitations from the Czechoslovak government and

offers from American universities, the institute's ranks soon thinned out, and its renown evaporated with the depletion of its personnel and intellectual capacity in the early 1930s.

Soviet Russia, however, remained well represented in Berlin: The German capital was the gateway to the capitalist world and visitors from the Soviet Union were at the top of the agenda everywhere in town. Nowhere could one find Soviet authors −− as well as politicians, academics, or men of letters −− more easily when information about the foreign Bolshevik empire was in short supply.[47] None of this would have gone beyond a highly interested circle of intellectuals had Hoetzsch not also been a talented academic manager, the link to practical experience in the business world, diplomatic circles, and the press. He was a figure of the Wilhelmine and the Weimar establishments, and when he put something in motion, it had a good chance of being promoted and taking on an institutional form. The doors of the Foreign Office, especially those of the Russian Department, were open to him. He had excellent connections to every important research and cultural institution −− the Prussian Ministry of Culture, the Emergency Committee German Science (Notgemeinschaft Deutsche Wirtschaft), the Kaiser Wilhelm Society (Kaiser−Wilhelm−Gesellschaft) and its illustrious representatives Friedrich Althoff, Friedrich Schmidt−Ott, Wilhelm Westphal, and Carl Heinrich Becker. He personally knew the leading figures of those firms that were interested in doing business with Russia and belonged to the German Association for the Study of Eastern Europe as corporate members, from Felix Deutsch to Otto Wolff.

If Berlin was able to become the centre of eastern European studies for a generation of academics, then it was because of these strengths, and because the fruits of an intensive and dynamic exchange from the pre−war era had combined with the present−day knowledge about post−revolutionary Russia to form a unique constellation. Russian studies in Berlin, between 1918 and 1933, were "at the forefront of the times". Here one could not only learn something about the Russian Middle Ages and the conditions of land ownership in the nineteenth−century tsarist empire, but one could also gather information about the planned economy, the activity of the people's commissariat for finances, and Soviet architecture and family policy.[48] The journal *Osteuropa* −− which after a long start−up phase first appeared in 1925 and was published by Hoetzsch until 1934 −− was the only periodical, not only in Germany but outside of the Soviet Union, to report on Russia regularly, thoroughly, and comprehensively. Although the circulation was not very high −− in 1931 it was around 850 copies −− the publication's influence was considerable. It was studied at all of the important institutions and organizations most likely to disseminate its contents: news agencies, embassies, foreign ministries and business associations. *Osteuropa* was even delivered to the Soviet Union. In 1932, there were 60 subscribers there.[49]

The dismantling of Otto Hoetzsch's "eastern European and Russian conglomerate", which encompassed academic, publishing, editorial, and organizational activities, was quickly carried out. This was not just a human tragedy. It was a disaster in German academic history. After the Nazis came to power, Hoetzsch, a man of the November republic, didn't have a chance. At first, there was, in many respects, remarkable continuity on the surface. After Karl Stählin's retirement, Hoetzsch took over the chairmanship of the Department of Eastern European History and Applied Geography at the university in Berlin. He journeyed to the Soviet Union −− part of the way with Klaus Mehnert −− in 1933 and 1934, so as to continue his work on a collection

of published sources, of which one volume appeared in 1941. But this kind of academic activity also had its limits. The new regime in Berlin was making different demands of Russian studies, and there were men standing in the wings who harboured their own ambitions for accomplishing something very different in the field.[50]

After only two years in office, on 14 May 1935, Hoetzsch was informed of his dismissal from the university based on Article 6 of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service.[51] This had been preceded by a denunciation campaign inspired by Nazi instructors in which Hoetzsch was attacked as a representative of a "liberalistic Soviet research" who had acted as a tool of pro−Soviet policy. With his work, Hoetzsch had allegedly "opened the floodgates... to German parlour Bolshevism, cultural Bolshevism, and national Bolshevism". The German Association for the Study of Eastern Europe, which he had led for years, was attacked as "a shelter and collecting point for all Jewish−Free Mason−liberalistic Soviet friends and parlour Bolsheviks".[52] A "struggle−oriented scholarship" that interpreted Russia and the Soviet Union within the coordinate system of National Socialist racial doctrine had to replace this academically "naïve" and "objectivist" activity regarding Russia, which was ostensibly politically dangerous.

Hoetzsch had joined the National Socialist Teachers Federation (NS−Lehrerbund), almost certainly out of a mixture of fear and genuine approval, and had tried to avoid the pressure of being persecuted with a compliant publication on the "national revolution". The forced retirement showed, however, that the Nazis would not be content with verbal concessions. After his dismissal and a failed attempt to obtain a guest lecturer's post in America, Hoetzsch finally withdrew from all of his other functions −− from the executive of the Association for the Study of Eastern Europe and from the editorial board of *Osteuropa*.

With Hoetzsch's inner emigration, the heart and soul of Eastern European Studies in Berlin had been struck a mortal blow. For his students and colleagues, there was no longer any possibility of working −− soon no possibility of living: Abram Heller could not even defend his dissertation; Misha Gorlin, Raisa Blokh, and others who had worked for *Osteuropa* had to leave Berlin. After the occupation of Paris, they fell into the Gestapo's hands and were killed in Auschwitz.[53] Another student, Wolfgang Leppmann, also of Jewish origin, hid in Berlin, but was arrested and also killed in Auschwitz.[54]

There could hardly be any talk of contact with Soviet experts and colleagues after 1933. Embassy personnel and Soviet citizens in Berlin had to endure all kinds of harassment. Working with them had become risky. Thus Berlin lost its important and unique access to first−hand information from the Soviet Union. The works of Soviet authors also ceased to appear in the pages of *Osteuropa*.[55]

The Russian émigré community disintegrated. In Berlin, only the militant anti−Bolsheviks remained or those who did not want to give up their social position so readily. The decline of the Russian Scientific Institute was obvious. Gradually, it was transformed into a kind of predecessor of the Anti−Comintern Institute.[56]

Academic work was almost only possible in fields that were very far removed from the present, fields that could not be politicized and ideologized so easily. Specialists who dealt with contemporary problems concerning the Soviet Union faced the danger, or the temptation, of getting involved in the National

Socialist regime's eastern Europe policies. In the Berlin institute, the historian Hans Übersberger of Vienna took over as chairman, and at the German Association for Eastern European Studies and the journal, it was a young Werner Markert, also a NSDAP member. In 1939, *Osteuropa* suspended publication.[57]

The great practical test for Germany's Russian and eastern European specialists came after the invasion of Poland and the attack on the Soviet Union, when they had to lend their special knowledge to the war effort and various occupation regimes. Many well−known names are to be found in the government institutions and agencies concerned with eastern European policy under the Nazis: the agrarian specialist Otto Schiller, the Russia expert Otto Auhagen, the Turkic affairs specialist Gerhard von Mende and the Tartar expert Berthold Spuler.[58]

The language of the cannons did not need the differentiated, complex, and fine words and ideas of academia. The field of Russian studies was pushed into inner emigration as in the case of Hoetzsch. It was driven into exile as in the case of Loewenson and Epstein. It was physically destroyed as in the case of Gorlin and Leppmann. Or it became a weapon in the hands of National Socialist eastern policy −− as in the case of so many of Germany's experts on eastern Europe during the war. A life's work was destroyed, a place of knowledge erased from the map of academic learning.

Otto Hoetzsch's final defeat

After the liberation of Berlin, Hoetzsch, by then almost 70, returned to the places where he had spent his most productive years. In the year remaining before his death, he produced a textbook of Russian history and a sketch on integrating eastern Europe into a comprehensive history of Europe. Soviet troops stood in the centre of Berlin. Russia's rise from a great power to a world power had completely changed the map of Europe. There would be no more European history at the exclusion of eastern Europe. Presumably, only such an outlook could embolden a severely ill old man to make such a great effort.

However, this outlook existed only for the short moment "in between": The old order had finally been levelled; the new world had yet to take shape. But in due time, it would develop its contours as the division of the world, as Yalta Europe, as the Cold War between capitalism and socialism, between Occident and Bolshevism, between West and East. Hoetzsch's observations regarding the integration of European histories were overtaken by events almost as soon as they were spoken. Out of the European history he had imagined emerged an eastern European and a western European history. Half a century of estrangement and mutual separation followed the brief moment "in between". Out of Russian studies emerged Soviet studies, its centre no longer in devastated Berlin, but in the ideal world of Harvard.

In the divided world, patterns of thinking based on "either−or" began to form. The historical site where "as−well−as" had been tried had vanished. Berlin, which had once harboured a thriving German−Russian society, became a laboratory of division, polarization and political camps.

Berlin's academic community, where the pure and impure had once mixed, was now partitioned. Russia moved far away, while in the West, the Occident boomed once again, an ideology of defensiveness and compensation for a continent that had been struck to its core. Much of what Hoetzsch had worked

for in life, the deepening of knowledge about Russia, the expansion of language instruction, became reality in an almost macabre way with obligatory Russian classes in the schools of the German Democratic Republic and with the activities of the Society for German−Soviet Friendship.

Thus Otto Hoetzsch's last great initiative also ended in defeat: Just as he was formulating his ideas on a comprehensive European history, an Iron Curtain fell across Europe and would remain there for half a century. "As a student of Karl Lamprecht, Gustav Schmoller, and also Otto Hintze, something like a sociological−historic method swayed before me... I have in mind as a goal first of all a comparative economic, legal and constitutional history of eastern Europe compared to that of the West and thus the actual organic placement of eastern European history in that of Europe's".[59] Hoetzsch's design for an integrated and comparative history had no chance of being realized in the coming decades. But the end of Europe's division has most unexpectedly given his 1946 program new timeliness.

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1 Quoted in Gerd Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch 1876−1946. Wissenschaft und Politik im Leben eines deutschen Historikers*, Berlin 1978, 275; the phrase "A II" manuscript appears in a letter to Ambassador ret. Herbert von Dirksen, 1 March 1941, in Gerd Voigt, *Rußland in der deutschen Geschichtsschreibung 1843−1945*, Berlin 1994, 396.

2 Quoted in Christoph Mick, *Sowjetische Propaganda, Fünfjahrplan und deutsche Rußlandpolitik 1928−1932*, Stuttgart 1995, 445.

3 Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 192.

4 George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925−1950*, New York 1967, 24ff.

5 Concerning the historian S.F. Platanov, see *Akademicheskoye delo 1929−1931 gg.*, St Petersburg 1993; concerning David Ryazanov, Evgenii Tarle, and the "academy affair," see Irina Aref'eva, *Tragicheskie sud'by. Repressirovannye uchenye Akademii nauk SSSR*, Moscow 1995.

6 There are two impressive accounts of Otto Hoetzsch's life and work, one from West Germany, the other from East Germany: Gerd Voigt's aforementioned work *Otto Hoetzsch*, and Uwe Liszkowski, *Osteuropaforschung und Politik. Ein Beitrag zum historisch−politischen Denken und Wirken von Otto Hoetzsch*, 2 Volumes, Berlin 1988. Both works have their merits. Voigt integrates Hoetzsch's life and work, Liszkowski is more interested in certain aspects of academic history. For several reasons, I follow Voigt's account.

7 The text of Hoetzsch's presentation to the meeting of historians on 21 May 1946, is excerpted as Document 20 in Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 340−350.

8 Ibid., 343.

9 Ibid., 345.

10 Ibid., 348.

11 Ibid., 310.

12 Ibid., 112, regarding their contact with one another in the 1930s, see William E. Dodd, *Diplomat auf heissem Boden*, Berlin 1962, 42 and 337.

13 Quoted in Liszkowski, *Osteuropaforschung*, 541.

14 Quoted in Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 34.

15 Ibid., 51.

16 Hoetzsch in autumn 1911, quoted in ibid., 34.

17 Letter from Hoetzsch before his Moscow visit to Brokdorff−Rantzau, 28 June 1923, quoted in Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 319.

18 Concerning former Prussian Minister of Culture Friedrich Schmitt−Ott, Hoetzsch once remarked, "He has a feel, an instinctive understanding for the Russian world. One has it, or one doesn't have it. Whoever doesn't have it should keep his hands out Slavic affairs." Quoted in Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 138. The same could be said for Hoetzsch.

19 Ibid., 227.

20 A list of Hoetzsch's publications −− incomplete, it should be noted −− shows more than 1200 titles, Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 351ff., and Liszkowski, *Osteuropaforschung*, 577ff.

21 Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 73.

22 Ibid., 137.

23 Hans von Heppe, "Erinnerungen an Otto Hoetzsch", in *Osteuropa*, 25, 1975, 629; Wilhelm von Pochhammer, "Mein Nachbar Hoetzsch", in ibid., 631f.

24 Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 74.

25 Wipert von Blücher, *Deutschlands Weg nach Rapallo, Erinnerungen eines Mannes aus dem weiten Gliede*, Wiesbaden 1951, 95; Helmut Weidmüller, *Die Berliner Gesellschaft während der Weimarer Republik*, diss., Berlin 1956, 71; Harry Graf Kessler, *Tagebücher*, 1918−1937, Wolgang Pfeiffer−Belli (ed.), Frankfurt am Main 1961, 345 and 358; Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 67.

26 On Arplan, see Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 250; Mick, *Sowjetische Propaganda*, 238; Klaus Mehnert, "Memorandum über die 'Arbeitsgemeinschaft zum Studium der sowjetrussischen Planwirtschaft' 8.1.32," in Voigt, *Russland*, 381.

27 Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 155.

28 Heppe, *Erinnerungen*, 629f.; see also Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 270. The young diplomat Hans−Berndt von Haeften, who, alongside Helmuth Graf von Moltke, later became one of the leaders of the opposition group Kreisau Circle, was a secretary in the Committee for Foreign Affairs. Hoetzsch and Haeften worked together for several years, ibid., 128.

29 Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 137.

30 Document 2, ibid., 307.

31 Cf. Foreword in Otto Hoetzsch, *Osteuropa und Deutscher Osten. Kleine Schriften zu ihrer Entstehung*, Königsberg and Berlin 1934, xi, which contains an expression of gratitude to "the Führer of the national uprising".

32 See Liszkowksi, *Osteuropaforschung*, 176ff.

33 Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 98.

34 Document 18, ibid., 340.

35 Document 14, German Federation for the Protection of Occidental Culture to Schmidt−Ott, ibid., 343f.

36 Ibid., 240ff.; see also Lutz−Dieter Berendt, "Die Sowjetische 'Historikerwoche' 1928 in Berlin", in Heinz Sanke (ed.), *Deutschland−Sowjetunion. Aus fünf Jahrzehnten kultureller Zusammenarbeit*, Berlin 1966, 201−208.

37 Liszkowksi, *Osteuropaforschung*, 200.

38 Ibid., 201 and 206.

39 On the university in Berlin, see Othmar Feyl, "Die Universität Berlin und das östliche Europa zwischen 1890 und 1933. Eine kontaktgeschichtliche Studie", in *Ost−West−Begegnung in Österreich. Festschrift für E. Winter*, Vienna, Cologne, and Graz 1976, 51−71.

40 On the founding of German East European studies, see in addition to Voigt and Liszkowski, Gabriele Camphausen, "Die wissenschaftliche historische Russlandforschung in Deutschland 1892−1933", in *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 42, 1989, 7−108; Gerhard Volmer, "Die deutsche Forschung zu Osteuropa und zum osteuropäischen Judentum in den Jahren 1933 bis 1945", in *Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte*, 42, 1989, 109−214; Michael Burleigh, *Germany Turns Eastwards, A Study of Ostforschung in the Third Reich*, Cambridge 1988.

41 Klaus Meyer, *Theodor Schiemann als poltiischer Publizist* Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg 1956.

42 Document 3, Letter from Hoetzsch to Kuno Graf von Westarp, 21 January 1915, Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 313.

43 Cf. the chapter "Sankt Peterburg am Wittenbergplatz" in Karl Schlögel, Berlin. *Ostbahnhof Europas. Russen und Detusche in ihrem Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1998; on the Russian Department in the Foreign Office, Ingmar Sütterlin, *Die 'Russische Abteilung des Auswärtigen Amtes in der Weimarer Republik*, Berlin 1994.

44 A study of the key role played by translators Arthur Luther, Elias Hurwicz, Alexander Eliasberg, and Walter Groeger, most of whom came from the German−Russian−Jewish milieu, has yet to be written.

45 Document 11, Letter Prof. Dr. Vasmer to Ministry Director Richter, 11 December 1928, in Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 328ff.

46 On the conflict−ridden history of the Russian Scientific Institute, see Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 179f.

47 On Soviet authors and co−workers at *Osteuropa*, see Jutta Unser, "*Osteuropa*. Biographie einer Zeitschrift in *Osteuropa*", 25, 1975, 555−602.

48 Kennan, *Memoirs*.

49

Information in Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 187f.; Fritz T. Epstein, "Otto Hoetzsch und sein Osteuropa 1925−1930", in *Osteuropa*, 25, 1975, 541−553. In addition, Hoetzsch was also co−publisher of *Zeitschrift für Osteuropäische Geschichte*, which appeared between 1911 and 1914 as well as 1931 to 1935.

50 Obligatory for gaining orientation, Werner Markert, "Das Studium Osteuropas als wissenschaftliche und politische Aufgabe", in *Osteuropa*, 9, 1933−34, 395−401.

51 Gabriele Camphausen, *Die wissenschaftliche historische Russlandforschung im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt am Main 1990), 20.

52 Quoted in ibid., 29f. Characteristic for the level of Nazi eastern studies: Hermann Greife, *Sowjetforschung. Versuch einer nationalsozialistischen Grundlegung der Erforschung des Marxismus und der Sowjetunion*, Berlin and Leipzig 1936.

53 On the fate of Mikhail Gorlin and Raisa Blokh, see "Pamiati ushedshikh. Vosponimaniya Evgenia Kannak o poetakh Mikhaile Gorline i Raise Blokh", in Mikhail Parkhomovskii (ed.), *Everei v kul'ture ruskogo zarubezh'ya, Vol. 1, 1919−1939 gg.*, Jerusalem 1992, 242−236.

54 Klaus Mehnert, *Ein Deutscher in der Welt* (Stuttgart 1981), 212; Wolfgang Leppmann produced an important bibiographical study, "Die russische Geschchtswissenschaft in der Eimigration", in *Zeitschrift für Osteuropäische Geschichte*, 5, 1931, 215−248.

55 Statistics concerning authors before and after 1933 in Unser, "*Osteuropa*", 555−602.

56 Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 264.

57 On "eastern studies" in the Third Reich, see Werner Philipp, "Nationalsozialismus und Ostwissenschaften", in *Nationalsozialismus und die deutsche Universität. Universitätsgage 1966*, Berlin 1966, 43−62.

58 Voigt, *Russland*, Chapter 14 (Personnen und Vorgänge aus den Jahren 1933−1941), here 234ff.; Alexander Dallin, *Deutsche Herrschaft in Russland 1941−1945. Eine Studie über Besatzungspolitik* (Düsseldorf 1958).

59 Document 20, The integration of eastern European history into a comprehensive history by conception, research, and instruction, in Voigt, *Otto Hoetzsch*, 34.

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