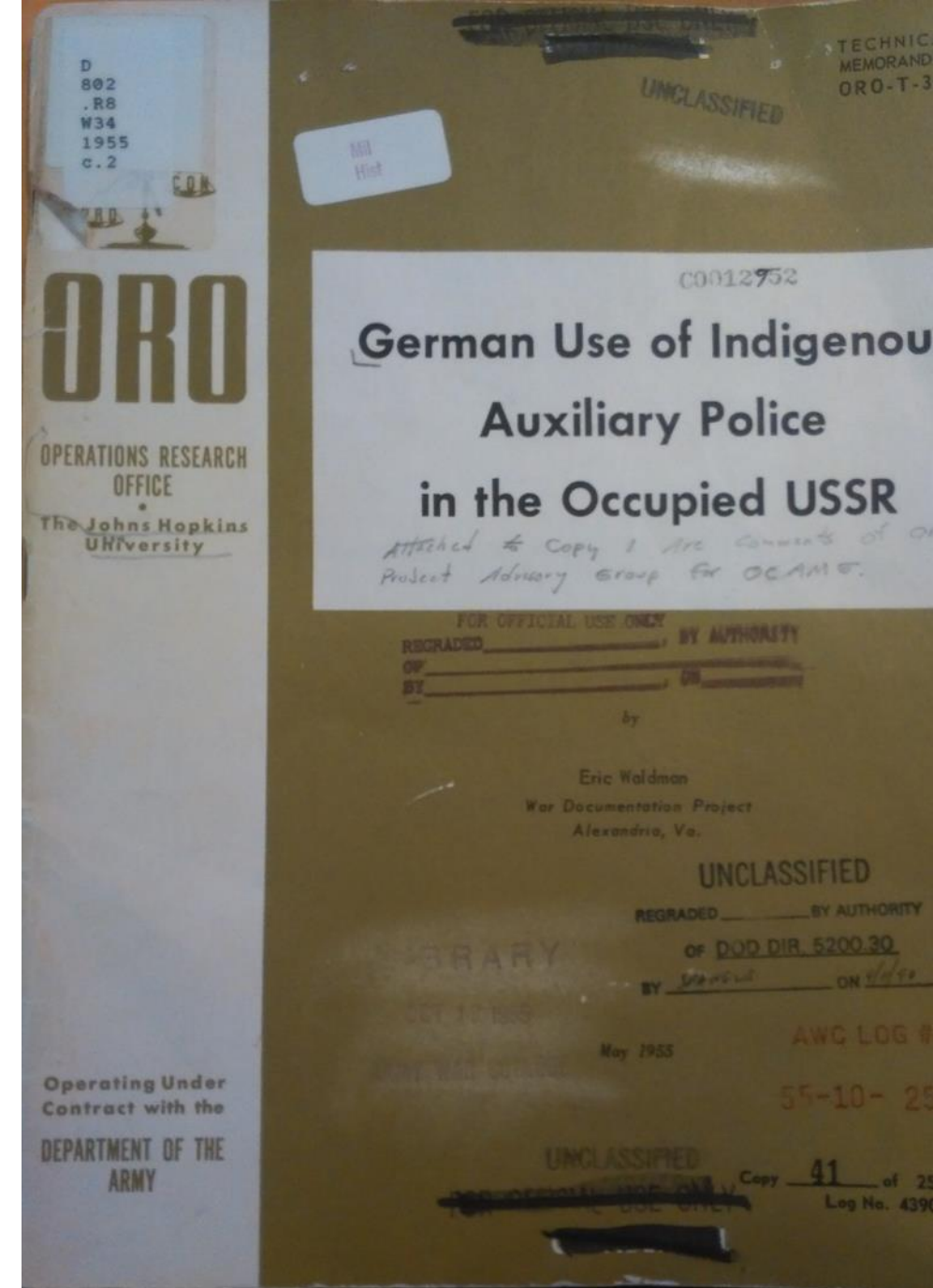# Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers? Defense-related funded research as scandals in the making

Christophe Wasinski
(Université libre de Bruxelles)

Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers? Defense-related funded research as scandals in the making

I. The ethically dubious record of defense funded research

- Operations Research Office – The John Hopkins University – Department of the Army – 1955

- « Problem : To analyze the utilization of Russian manpower by the German military government in the USSR during World War II in the field of public safety ».

- « The extent to which the findings of this study may be applied to a **future occupation of Soviet territory** is dependent on a number of factors, chief of which are : (a) change in the attitude of the Russian people since World War II ; (b) whether the territory liberated is a satellite area ; (c) general occupation policies ; (d) the course of the military campaign ; (e) the extent of partisan activities ; and (f) the size of the occupier's security forces » (p. 2).
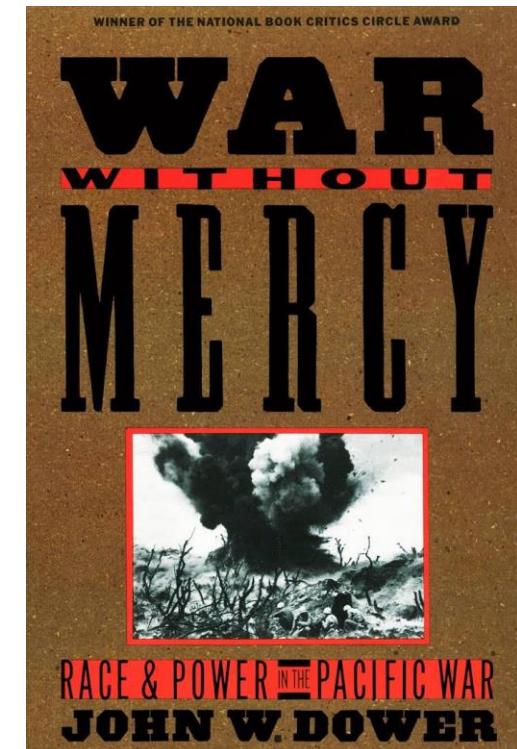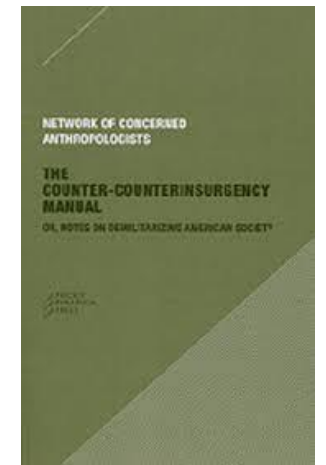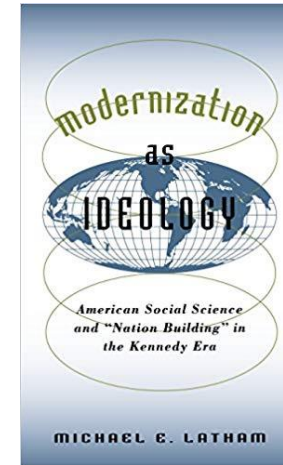
Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers? Defense-related funded research as scandals in the making

I. The ethically dubious record of defense funded research

Other examples

- Anthropology rationalizing Japanese racist stereotypes during World War II (John Dower)

- Social sciences supporting counter-insurgency projects in Vietnam (Andrew Latham)

- Human Terrain System in Afghanistan and Iraq (2000s) (Network of Concerned Anthropologists)
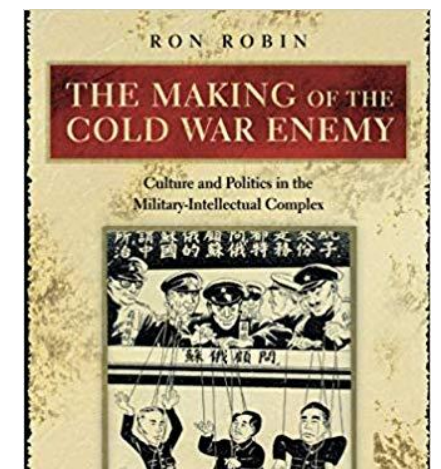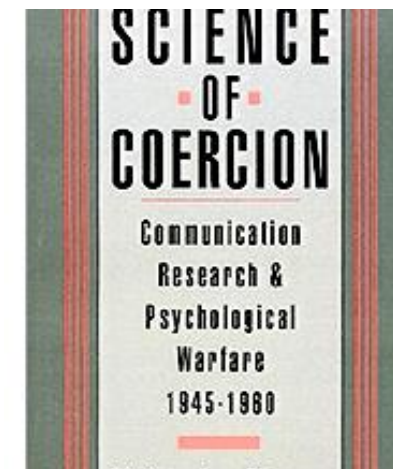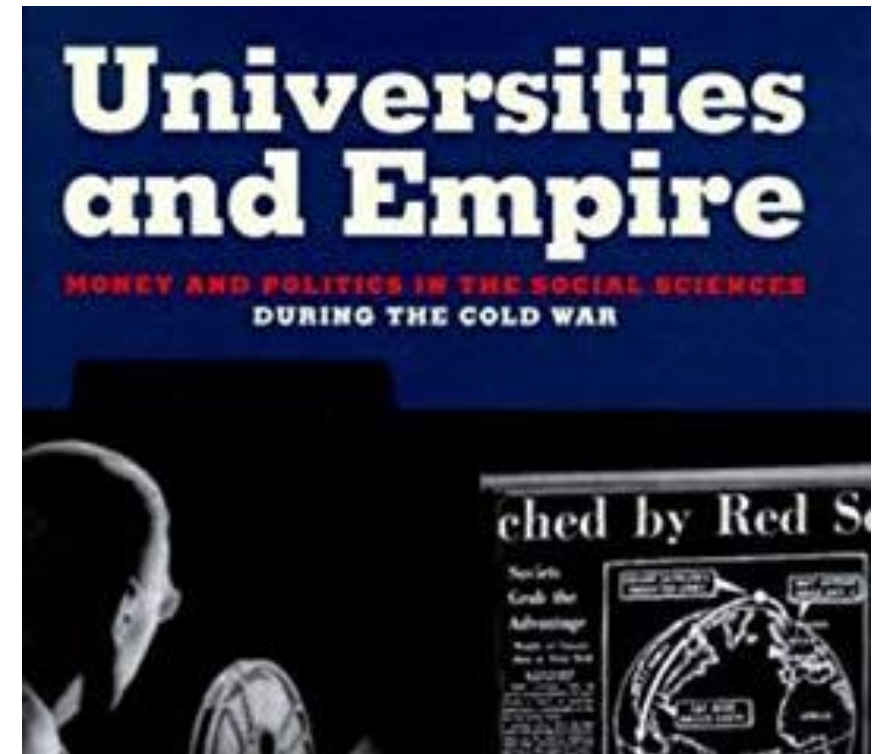
Projects often supported by fantasies about social sciences as means to « humanize » war

Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers? Defense-related funded research as scandals in the making

II. Impact on scientific fields

- Asymmetry between Military-Industrial Complex and regular academic resources

- Influence on the structure and interests of scientific fields could be dramatic

- (40% physicists in 1980s involved in military works in the USA)

- Communications studies (ex: Public Opinion Quaterly) during 60's (Simpson)

- Behavioral research in political sciences during 60's (Robin)

- Fantasies about « psychological warfare » as a possible substitute for war

- Normalization of Cold War « us versus them » mentality in academia

Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers? Defense-related funded research as scandals in making

- Those who did not share this vision and who criticized ; risked being "punished"

- When submitting funding requests, they will be told that they have not cited the "good references" nor asked "relevant questions"

- Cold War in the USA : massive funding of "strategic studies" ; put scholars in the shoes of "strategists"; "us versus them" state of mind

- Exclusion of "peace research" because considered as "ideological", "not objective"

- *De facto* militarization not only of physics but also of social sciences

- "Embedding social sciences" : making scholars see the world as soldiers rather than making "soldiers see the world as scholars"

ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

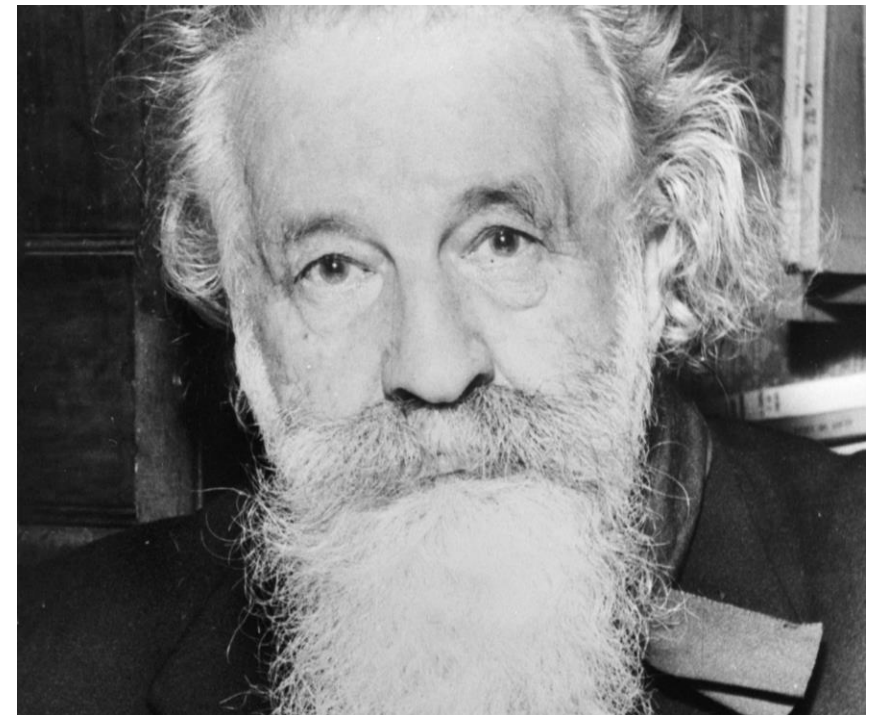Strategy and Ethnocentrism

Ken Booth

R REVIVALS

Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers ? Defense-related funded research as scandals in making

Financial and institutional proximity between universities and armed forces / defense industries results in real difficulties for scholars distancing themselves from the "security narrative"

"Limited war", "nuclear deterrence", "terrorism", "radicalization" are military and/or police concepts ; considered as as scientific as Max Weber's legitimacy

Risk of academics reasoning within the military categories ; no genuine "epistemological break" (Gaston Bachelard) or "distance from preconceptions" (Emile Durkheim)

Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers? Defense-related funded research as scandals in making

- The question of secrecy
- Academic knowledge is intended to be public; need to be discussed freely
- What about defense-funded research (as shown on slide 2 – classified report) ?

Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers? Defense-related funded research as scandals in making

- How can you disengage from a project when you discover that it is not ethically correct from academic standpoint?

- Withdrawing from a research project means repaying the money

- If the money has already been spent, the researchers will be tied up

Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers? Defense-related funded research as scandals in making

- Would you like the toxicity studies of certain products to be carried out by academics who receive money from chemical companies?

- Would you like that research about war and peace be mainly conducted by academics funded by defense industries and armed forces?

Academics as (adjuncts to) soldiers ? Defense-related funded research as scandals in making

(Social) sciences as weapons

Responsibility towards those who will be killed

(ex. Human Terrain System in Iraq and Afghanistan ; help identity terrorists to kill them)

University of Notre Dame Archives