

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND DEAN OF
THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

September 10, 2019

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

The integrity of our research is a matter of utmost importance to Columbia. As our Institutional Policy on Misconduct in Research states, “Misconduct in research damages the integrity of the profession and undermines the credibility of scholars. It is also antithetical to the values the University strives to maintain and promote.”

Generally, findings of research misconduct are communicated to the public through retractions or corrections published in the scholarly literature. Where such a retraction is not feasible, the University may choose to notify the relevant community.

It is therefore with regret that I must inform you that Professor Charles K. Armstrong, Professor of History at Columbia, has been found to have committed research misconduct, specifically, plagiarism, in his book, Tyranny of the Weak. These findings were made in accordance with our Policy, which required a confidential preliminary review by an Inquiry Committee, an Investigation by a separate ad hoc faculty committee, oversight and recommendations by the University’s Standing Committee on the Conduct of Research, and final decisions by the Executive Vice President for Research and the Provost.

Professor Armstrong, who is retiring at the end of 2020, will be on sabbatical for the academic year of 2019-2020.

If you have general questions or concerns about research misconduct, please visit <https://research.columbia.edu/content/research-misconduct>.

Thank you, and I wish you all the best for the new academic year.

Maya Tolstoy
Interim Executive Vice President for the Arts and Sciences
Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

CONFIDENTIAL - DRAFT 8/17/18

ORCT 2016-04:

**DRAFT Report of the Ad Hoc Committee to the
Standing Committee on the Conduct of Research
at Columbia University**

Confidential

[DATE, 2018]

Dr. Armstrong and Dr. Szalontai, as well as emails and other documents discussed below. Some of these were provided in response to requests from the Committee.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

1. Chronology

The Committee begins with a review of important dates in the development of this case.

A. Dr. Armstrong's Background and Columbia Employment

Dr. Armstrong received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Chicago in 1994 under the direction of Bruce Cumings. He joined the Columbia faculty as an Assistant Professor of History in 1996. With respect to languages at issue in this case, Dr. Armstrong explained that he has a "reasonably good reading knowledge of German"; his "Russian skills are relatively weak"; and he does not read Hungarian. (Armstrong 4/19/17 Tr. 21:14-15; Att. 7 at CKA11569; Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 32:21) He noted his stronger language skills in Chinese and Korean. (Att. 7 at CKA 11569)

B. 2002-2004: First Meeting; Szalontai Dissertation; Early Armstrong Chapters

First meeting: Dr. Armstrong said that he first met Dr. Szalontai in 2002 when Dr. Szalontai was a student at Central European University ("CEU") in Budapest; Dr. Armstrong took a side trip from Berlin to Budapest to meet with Dr. Szalontai and his mentor to discuss their common research interests. (Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 59:18-19; Armstrong 4/19/17 Tr. 16:5-18)

Szalontai Dissertation: Dr. Szalontai defended his dissertation in June 2003 and received his Ph.D. from CEU in June 2004. (Exh. A5) Dr. Szalontai provided the Committee with a scanned copy of his doctoral dissertation, titled "The Failure of De-Stalinization in North Korea: The DPRK in a Comparative Perspective, 1953-1964." (Exh. C4) The dissertation cover

includes an ink stamp indicating receipt by the CEU history department on May 21, 2003. (Exh. C4a) Dr. Szalontai informed the Committee that he may have provided a copy of the dissertation to Dr. Armstrong, or that Dr. Armstrong may have received a draft of the dissertation from Bruce Cumings (who in addition to serving as Dr. Armstrong's advisor also served as a reader for the Szalontai Dissertation). (Exh. A6) The dissertation acknowledgments thank Dr. Armstrong and nine other colleagues "who read early drafts of my manuscript, made thoughtful comments, and provided me with valuable literature, including their own manuscripts." (Exh. C4a at 7) Dr. Armstrong confirmed that he had read the Szalontai Dissertation, (Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 85:10-11), and documents sequestered from Dr. Armstrong's office included a copy of the Szalontai Dissertation.

Early Drafts of Armstrong Book Chapters: The Armstrong Book chapters primarily at issue in this case (Chapters 2 and 3) appear to have been substantively completed as early as September 2003. Dr. Armstrong told the Committee:

I finished the first half of [*Tyranny of the Weak*] in 2004, 2005, I believe, when I was up for tenure. And I submitted half of the book, manuscript, and I sort of put it to the side. And I went on to other research and I did not get back to it for a couple of years actually. And the book itself, as you know, was not published until 2013. So by the time that the final manuscript was submitted, it had been five or six years since I had done that original research in the first half of the book.

(Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 39:16-40:7) In seeking to clarify the chronology and in light of Dr. Armstrong's testimony above, the Committee obtained a copy of his tenure file. (Exhibit F6a)⁹ Dr. Armstrong's tenure review statement was dated September 2, 2003, and noted that he had completed about half the writing of a book provisionally entitled *Tyranny of the*

⁹ Exhibit F6a includes redacted copies of selected pages from Dr. Armstrong's tenure file. Because the University treats tenure files as uniquely confidential, this exhibit is not being made available for review except on a case-by-case basis where there is a need to know.

Weak: North Korea and the International System, 1950-2005. His “List of Publications for Tenure Review Dossier,” also dated September 2, 2003, included the following entry:

Draft Book Manuscript (contents, bibliography, and three of eight chapters)
Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the International System, 1950-2005

(Exh. F6a at CKA13212)

The tenure file obtained by the Committee did not include the submitted chapters, and the Committee requested them from Dr. Armstrong. He responded that he was not able to locate copies, but provided chapter drafts from 2009 that he said were similar:

I have searched my computer files and physical files and cannot find copies of the original draft chapters I sent with my tenure file in 2003. The earliest versions of the chapters I could find were the ones I sent to Cornell University Press in 2009, which I attach here. I believe they are not substantially different from the drafts I sent in 2003.

(Exh. B8) The Committee reviewed these chapter drafts (Exhs. B8a-B8d) (the “2009 Chapters”) and found they closely matched corresponding chapters in the 2013 first edition of *Tyranny of the Weak*, with the exception of certain style and punctuation revisions.

C. 2005: Armstrong Article; Szalontai Book

2005 Armstrong Article: In May 2005, Dr. Armstrong published an article titled “‘Fraternal Socialism’: The International Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953-62” in *Cold War History* (the “2005 Armstrong Article”) (Exh. B9). He wrote in the article acknowledgments: “The author would like to thank Dr. Ruediger Frank, Dr. Balazs Solantai [sic] and Professor Greg Castillo for their advice, criticism, and assistance with sources in the preparation of this article.” (Exh. B9 at 181) The Armstrong Book notes that “an earlier version of Chapter 2 appeared” as the 2005 Armstrong Article. (Exh. C2, Armstrong Book at viii) Dr. Armstrong told the Inquiry Committee that the “article came out after I drafted the chapter.” (Armstrong 4/19/17 Tr. 16:25-17:3)

(Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 66:7-69:2)

Fairbank Prize Revoked: Also in 2017, the American Historical Association (AHA) began its own investigation of the charges against the Armstrong Book. Dr. Armstrong provided the following documentation relating to the AHA's investigation:

- a January 26, 2017 letter from AHA notifying Dr. Armstrong that it was initiating an investigation into "charge[s] that parts of the book were plagiarized and that the book contains incorrect facts and citations" and asking that Dr. Armstrong provide responses to each of 76 allegations from Dr. Szalontai. (Exh. B3)
- a May 1, 2017 letter from Dr. Armstrong to AHA. (Exh. B4)
- a June 9, 2017 letter from AHA to Dr. Armstrong notifying him that the AHA Council had "revoked" the Fairbank Prize. The letter stated: "The book contains at least 50 violations of professional standards (plagiarism and citations to apparently fictitious documents) and, therefore, the Council concluded that the prize was awarded improvidently." (Exh. B5)
- a June 29, 2017 letter from Dr. Armstrong to AHA returning the Fairbank Prize. (Exh. B6)

On June 29, 2017, AHA released the following public statement under the heading "2014 Fairbank Prize Returned":

In 2014, the American Historical Association (AHA) awarded its John K. Fairbank Prize to *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950–1992*, by Charles K. Armstrong. After careful review the AHA identified a set of citations that did not meet professional standards. In response to AHA queries, Dr. Armstrong reviewed his work and the underlying scholarship and identified a number of instances where the source citations were incorrect. Dr. Armstrong has corrected the citation errors and, out of respect for the AHA, has returned the Fairbank Prize.

(Exh. B7)

Corrected edition: Dr. Armstrong notified Cornell University Press of the Second Set of Cases (14) on June 27 and was informed that it was too late to incorporate additional revisions into the pending corrected edition. (Exh. F5; Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 85-5-8) Cornell University Press issued a corrected edition of the Armstrong Book in July 2017 that included [over #]

source that the Committee believes he had not actually consulted, regardless of whether the source existed or not, and regardless of whether it supported the proposition for which it was cited. Absent actual knowledge that the source supported the proposition for which it was cited, Dr. Armstrong's citation of that source to support a proposition was equivalent to "the making up of data or results and the recording or reporting thereof," and, therefore, a fabrication according to the Columbia policy.

The Committee finds that in at least 61 instances, Dr. Armstrong included passages in *Tyranny of the Weak* that reported information taken from Dr. Szalontai's work. Rather than citing Dr. Szalontai (or the Hungarian primary sources that Dr. Szalontai cited), Dr. Armstrong instead cited nonexistent or irrelevant sources with a date matching the date of a Hungarian source cited by Dr. Szalontai. The 61 cases are:

Initial Allegation (Att. 6): Case #s 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33, 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 69, 70

Second Set of Cases (Att. 9): Case #s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13¹⁷

Through these actions, Dr. Armstrong engaged in both plagiarism and fabrication as defined by the Misconduct Policy and in accordance with the standards set forth in the AHA Statement. The Committee has focused on these 61 cases where Dr. Armstrong listed dates identical to Dr. Szalontai's sources. The Committee considered other allegations among the 98 Cases, but the Committee believes that the 61 cases described above offer sufficient and incontrovertible evidence of research misconduct.

¹⁷ The Committee found 60 of these 61 cases to be identical between the 2009 Chapters and the 2013 Armstrong Book. The only discrepancy of note is Case #62 from the initial 76 Cases, which pertains to Chapter 3, footnote 169 in the Armstrong Book ("*Ibid.*" referring to the previous footnote "GDR Embassy in DPRK, Report, 29 March 1962. MFAA A 7126). The corresponding footnote in the 2009 Chapters (Chapter 3, footnote 152) is "GDR Embassy in DPRK, Report, 29 April 1962 MFAA A 7126." (Exh. B8d at 194, footnote 152)

In addition, there are many passages in the text of *Tyranny of the Weak* where the substance of a passage in the Szalontai Book is reworded but essentially reproduced, again without acknowledgment. This also constitutes plagiarism. The Committee provides a sample of ten such passages as Attachment 15; it is only a sample. An eleventh example is discussed below, corresponding to Case #6 in the Second Set of Cases (14):

CASE #6 from the Second Set of Cases (14) (Att. 9 at 7)	
<i>Armstrong Book text (Exh. C2c at 86)</i>	<i>Armstrong Book citation (Exh. C2c at 86, footnote 146)</i>
“An April 26 editorial in the Rodong Sinmun mentioned the food crisis for the first time, suggesting that citizens supplement their diets with grass and tree bark. The issue was quickly withdrawn from circulation.”	Soviet Embassy in DPRK, Report, 10 May 1955; Report, 26 May 1955. AVPRE, Fond 0102, Opis 11 Papka 60, Delo 5
<i>Szalontai Dissertation text (Exh. C4c at 102)</i>	<i>Szalontai Dissertation citation (Exh. C4h at 333, footnote 326)</i>
“On April 26 <i>Nodong Sinmun</i> published an editorial which, for the first time, mentioned the food crisis. Its author warned readers to be sparing with food, and called upon the population to gather bark and grass. Half an hour after publication, the copy was withdrawn from circulation.”	Hungarian Embassy to the DPRK, Report, 10 May 1955, KTS, 5. doboz, 5/c, 006048/1955; Hungarian Embassy to the DPRK, Report, 26 May 1955, KTS, 7, doboz, 5/f, 006053/1955
<i>Szalontai Book text (Exh. C1d at 71)</i>	<i>Szalontai Book citation (Exh. C1k at 295, footnote 4)</i>
“On April 26, <i>Nodong Sinmun</i> published an editorial that, for the first time, mentioned the food crisis. Apart from this admission, the article’s stance was by no means self-apologetic or self-critical. On the contrary, its author essentially shifted the responsibility onto the starving population itself by warning readers to be sparing with food and instructing them to gather bark and grass. For some KWP leaders, even this half-hearted admission must have been too bold, since half an hour after publication, the paper was withdrawn from circulation.”	Same as Szalontai Dissertation: Hungarian Embassy to the DPRK, Report, 10 May 1955, KTS, 5. doboz, 5/c, 006048/1955; Hungarian Embassy to the DPRK, Report, 26 May 1955, KTS, 7, doboz, 5/f, 006053/1955

In response to the above allegation, Dr. Armstrong acknowledged a citation error, but did not propose a new citation to the Szalontai Book. Rather, he wrote that the citation “should refer directly to the relevant Rodung Sinmun article[] which I am in the process of reviewing.” (Att. 11, Case #6).¹⁸ The Committee does not find it credible that Dr. Armstrong arrived at the wording of this passage independent of Dr. Szalontai’s text, and finds this to be a case of plagiarized text without recognition of the source (in addition to source fabrication).

2. Dr. Armstrong’s state of mind

Dr. Armstrong attributed citation errors to his use of “placeholders” created to indicate that he needed to find archival documents in non-Hungarian sources (German or Russian) to replace Hungarian documents cited by Dr. Szalontai, partly because Dr. Armstrong does not know Hungarian, and partly because he wanted his account to be “independent” of Dr. Szalontai and other secondary accounts. The placeholder dates were drawn directly from Dr. Szalontai’s references (e.g., Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 41:12-16), thus explaining the very high percentage of dates identical with those given by Dr. Szalontai for Hungarian sources. Dr. Armstrong told the Committee:

I, in a number of cases, did not examine the source behind that sufficiently to check if it exactly corresponded with what I had noted.... “Placeholder” was the note to myself of a document, a reference to a document which then, with the passage of time, I simply did not corroborate sufficiently.

(Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 34:2-6; 34:9-13)

The Committee does not find “the passage of time” to be a mitigating factor to a finding of misconduct. The pivotal documents for assessing Dr. Armstrong’s state of mind with respect to research misconduct are not the Szalontai Book (2005) and the Armstrong Book (2013) but

¹⁸ This response was provided in Att. 11, and refers to a correction of “p. 86, fn31.” The reference to “fn31” in this response appears to be a typographical error.

rather the Szalontai Dissertation (2003) and chapter drafts of *Tyranny of Weak* completed contemporaneously, by September 2003. The Committee finds it more likely than not that around this time Dr. Armstrong inserted citations into chapters 2 and 3 of his book draft that he knew to refer to the documents that he never checked, and that he inserted passages into the same chapters that he knew that he borrowed from the Szalontai Dissertation in draft chapters he wrote in 2002-2003. Given the chronology of the case, and assuming Dr. Armstrong's placeholder explanation to be accurate, the Committee does not find it credible that Dr. Armstrong had forgotten that his chapters contained numerous unexamined citations at the time he submitted Chapters 2 and 3 as part of his tenure packet in 2003. He then compounded the offense by failing to revise those citations before publication of *Tyranny of the Weak* in 2013 (or in the 2005 Armstrong Article).¹⁹ Not even the publication of Brian Myers's 2013 review in *Acta Koreana* (Exh. F9), with its statement about similarities to the Szalontai Book, appears to have triggered any such check of sources. (Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 50:21-51:24)

Given the many dates in sources cited in the *Tyranny of the Weak* that exactly match dates in Dr. Szalontai's sources, Dr. Armstrong's characterization of incorrect sources as mistakes (e.g., "not that I invented them, but in the rush of note-taking I think I mis-transcribed sources" (Armstrong 4/19/17 Tr. 23:16-18)) is not credible.

¹⁹ Cornell University Press forwarded Dr. Armstrong an email in 2011 containing comments from a reader of the Armstrong Book manuscript. The reader commented about the manuscript's lack of reference to primary sources accessed by other scholars, including Dr. Szalontai: "Armstrong has paid more attention to conducting [sic] research on and using documents of the former Soviet Union and other East Bloc countries. But there are also obvious loopholes as it seems that his consultation of these sources are far from systematic, and that he has not consulted with many of the newer sources (available in recent years). For example, it seems that, for whatever reason, in writing the book, Armstrong has not consulted with the newer sources that several other scholars have accessed and used: James Person (Korean and various other new sources), Sergey Radchenko (newer Russian and Mongolian sources, especially the ones covering the 1970s and 1980s), Bernd Schaefer (newer East German sources), and Balazs Szolontai [sic] (newer Hungarian and other East European sources). To bring the book to the highest possible level, Armstrong needs to enhance his research efforts and update the documentary basis on which he writes the book." The Committee asked Dr. Armstrong about these comments, and he said, "I wish I could have spent several more years reading all of the new materials, but I felt that it was time to draw this very long process to a close and give what I had." (Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 48:21-25)

In his March 2018 written submission to the Committee, Dr. Armstrong described his use of placeholders as follows:

[I]n the course of manuscript revision I failed to go back and correct these notes, and the original placeholder references remained in the published version. This does not entail the deliberate fabrication of sources on my part but rather my failure to corroborate references adequately and double-check my manuscript. . . . In almost every case I am certain relevant primary sources do exist – Szalontai's Hungarian sources are mostly duplicates of, or very close to, Russian materials in the Soviet archives – but it was simply not feasible for me to go back to the archives to find the correct primary sources.

(Att. 13) Whether “relevant primary sources exist” is not germane to the question of whether Dr. Armstrong knowingly fabricated sources. In his first Response to the Initial Allegation, Dr. Armstrong wrote: “The main Soviet material to which I referred are contained in some 13 bound volumes which I retrieved in Seoul in 2001, and the German material include hundreds of documents I examined in the Berlin archives or later on microfiche.” (Att. 7 at CKAI1569) Since fall 2016, checking by Dr. Armstrong or research assistants appears to have uncovered only a handful of “relevant primary sources”; hence, few are cited in the corrections in the second edition of the Armstrong Book. In some cases, Dr. Armstrong told the Committee the sources he listed (apart from dates) were drawn from lists of documents available to him; he has offered no satisfactory explanation of how the other sources came to be listed. Dr. Armstrong's assertion that primary Russian or German documents probably exist (e.g., “[I]f I had gone back to Moscow and spent several months in the Russian archives, I probably could have found [them]²⁰”) does not indicate any actual knowledge—now or at any relevant time in the past—that documents outside the Hungarian archives exist, only a guess that they might.

²⁰ Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 68:22-25

Dr. Armstrong's systematic erasure of Dr. Szalontai and of Hungarian sources provides further support for a finding that the misconduct was committed knowingly. It is particularly noteworthy that Dr. Armstrong used an indirect citation style²¹ frequently throughout the book for documents of which he owed his knowledge to other secondary works, but never with respect to Dr. Szalontai's work. Dr. Armstrong has acknowledged that his "narrative" (although not his "interpretation") in Chapters 2-3 particularly is dependent on other recent scholarship. He cites some of these, but never Szalontai, even though more than 50 cases where he relies on Szalontai's narrative are present (and acknowledged by the references in the revised edition). Dr. Armstrong did not provide a satisfactory explanation for his differing treatment of Dr. Szalontai's work. The pattern is too systematic to be chance error, and the Committee concludes that Dr. Armstrong knowingly omitted references that would show his reliance on the Szalontai Dissertation.

3. Dr. Armstrong's plagiarism and fabrication were material and constituted a significant departure from accepted practices

"Departure from accepted practices" is clear in this case, as Dr. Armstrong's actions specifically violated academic standards in history described in the AHA Statement. Moreover, the improper citations of Russian and German sources were neither rare nor insignificant, despite Dr. Armstrong's suggestions that the historical documents he cited incorrectly were of secondary importance, or that Chapters 2 and 3 of *Tyranny of the Weak* were simply "background" to the

²¹ By "indirect citation style," the Committee refers to the practice of citing both a primary source and the secondary source through which the primary source was identified. For example, in chapter 3, footnote 2, Dr. Armstrong cites "Diary of Ambassador V.I. Ivanov, February-March 1956, RGANI, Fond 5, Opis 28, Delo 411, 1.163. Cited in Nobuo Shimotamai, 'Pyeongyang in 1956,' *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* 16 (fall-winter 2008), 456."

rest of the book.²² In print, both Drs. Szalontai and Armstrong put great emphasis on the value of archival sources, e.g.:

- *Szalontai*:
 - “Moreover, a substantial part of the related Russian and Chinese documents are still unavailable for research, and North Korean archives are hermetically closed. The documents to be found in the archives of Hungary (and other East European countries) may help fill that gap.” (Exh. C4, Szalontai Dissertation at xiv)
 - “Moreover, most of the Russian and Chinese documents from the period are still unavailable for research, and North Korean archives are hermetically closed. The documents to be found in the archives of Hungary (and other East European countries) are therefore particularly valuable.” (Exh. C1a, Szalontai Book at xiv)
- *Armstrong*:
 - “One of the major challenges for writing this book has been finding sources.... [T]here are many important sources outside North Korea that have yet to be fully exploited in studies of the DPRK. These include Western diplomatic and intelligence sources, testimonies of North Korean refugees and defectors, and above all materials from North Korea’s present and former allies. The richest sources of information to date, and the ones most open to research, are the archives of the Soviet Union and North Korea’s allies in Eastern Europe, including East Germany, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.” (Exh. C2a, Armstrong Book at 7)
 - “But it is a much closer view than we have had before, and until the DPRK opens its own archives to scholars, the perspective from North Korea itself can be inferred only through this multiarchival, multiperspectival assemblage.” (*Id.* at 8)

The importance of archival sources in draft chapters of *Tyranny of the Weak* also was recognized, a decade before the book was published, in written comments included in Dr. Armstrong’s tenure file (which Dr. Armstrong would not have seen).²³ For example:

²² For example, Dr. Armstrong told the Committee: “I cannot fully explain the fixation of Dr. Szalontai and those allied with him on uncovering citation errors in my work, especially since these errors are not matters of substance.” (Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 16:7-8)

²³ As discussed in Footnote 9 above, these materials are uniquely confidential and must be treated as such.

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In addition, Dr. Armstrong would have known that readers of his submitted chapters in 2003-2004 likely would not have been aware of the Szalontai Dissertation. One foreseeable outcome would be that readers might attribute original findings to Dr. Armstrong that were not in fact his own. And in at least one letter in the tenure file, this appears to have happened:

Redacted

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As discussed earlier, discussion of the 1955 famine in *Tyranny of the Weak* was mentioned specifically by Dr. Szalontai as the initial trigger for his concerns about plagiarism. (See “Statement of Facts,” Section D, above.)

4. Dr. Armstrong’s Defenses

Dr. Armstrong has raised several defenses, which the Committee considered but ultimately found not exculpatory.

- As discussed above, Dr. Armstrong’s primary defense is that he made honest errors. As also discussed above, the Committee does not find this a credible defense.
- Dr. Armstrong stated that the substance of his book is not in dispute, and that substantive points of the book and its main arguments are correct and sound, e.g.: “None of Szalontai’s criticisms undermine the basic historical narrative I trace in the book, nor do he or other critics dispute any fact, or even the basic thrust of the argument of the book. Indeed, Szalontai’s work is consistent with mine and the corrections that he called for actually support my argument.” (Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 12:13-22) The Committee considered this argument irrelevant, as a book can reach correct conclusions but still contain masked sources or be the result of plagiarism.
- Dr. Armstrong has asserted that other evidence not cited in the book can be found that supports the points at stake in the various passages in question in the allegations. (See, e.g., Att. 13) The Committee considers this defense irrelevant to the question of whether source fabrication or plagiarism occurred.
- Dr. Armstrong wrote in his response to the Initial Allegation that “the material in [Chapters 2 and 3] had always been intended as background for what I believe to be the more original contributions of the book..” (Att. 7 at CK11568) To the extent this lack of importance is offered as a defense to misconduct, the Committee finds it irrelevant. The same standards are applicable whether text is considered “background” or not.

- Dr. Armstrong has sought to discredit Dr. Szalontai's allegations by situating them in the context of a broader academic dispute. (See, e.g., Armstrong 5/1/18 Tr. 15:12-16) The Committee finds this issue to be irrelevant. Moreover, having taken a careful look at Dr. Szalontai's allegations, the Committee finds they were brought in good faith.
- Dr. Armstrong has described his efforts to narrate the historical events through primary sources. Although this may explain why he cited primary sources rather than secondary sources, it is not a relevant defense to charges of fabrication of sources and plagiarism.
- As noted earlier, Dr. Armstrong attributed 17 citation errors among the initial 76 Cases to "[m]istranslation or misreading of source content: Case #s 2, 9, 17, 21, 25, 37, 38, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 50, 52, 57, 58, 66." (Att. 7 at CKA11569) In the table that accompanied Dr. Armstrong's Response to the Initial Allegation (Att. 8), his explanations accompanying these 17 cases do not specifically address how mistranslation or misreading contributed to the error.²⁴

RECOMMENDED CORRECTIVE ACTION

Under the University's Institutional Policy on Misconduct in Research,

The purpose of the procedures described in this Policy is remedial. The corrective actions with respect to any finding of Research Misconduct shall be commensurate with the seriousness of the Research Misconduct, including, without limitation, the degree to which the Research Misconduct was knowing, intentional or reckless; was an isolated event or part of a pattern; or had

²⁴ In response to Case #37, for example, Dr. Armstrong writes: "Although the Puzanov diaries I examined contain other relevant information the specific information can be found in Szalontai." (Att. 8) He proposes a change to footnote 73 on page 108 from "Soviet Embassy in DPRK, Report, 20 March 1960. AVPRF, Fond 0102, Opis 16, Papka 85, Delo 6" to "Szalontai, Kim Il Sung, 136." This correction does not appear to have been included in the reprinted edition of the Armstrong Book. (Exh. C3d at 108)

significant impact on the Research Record, Research subjects, other researchers, the University, other institutions or the public.

(Misconduct Policy, § K.8)

The Committee finds Dr. Armstrong knowingly engaged in research misconduct. The 2017 corrected edition of *Tyranny of the Weak* was a first step in remedying the misconduct, but the Committee recommends that significant additional corrective action is needed:

1. In light of Dr. Armstrong's denials of his own wrongdoing, the Committee believes appropriate remediation would include a requirement that Dr. Armstrong provide Dr. Szalontai with a formal acknowledgment of the University's findings. The findings also should be communicated to the AHA and Cornell University Press, either by Dr. Armstrong or by Columbia. Moreover, given the public character of the dispute over the past two years, the Committee recommends that a public announcement of some kind by Columbia would be appropriate. Such a release would publicly validate the accuracy of Dr. Szalontai's statements.

2. In recognition of the time, effort, and resources expended by Dr. Szalontai in documenting the problems in the Armstrong Book, and the potential harm to Dr. Szalontai's academic reputation, Columbia should provide Dr. Szalontai with a gift of research funding in a suitable amount, e.g., \$25,000.

3. All copies still in stock of the first edition of the Armstrong Book must be withdrawn. Dr. Armstrong and Columbia should take steps to ensure this withdrawal occurs. Columbia should withdraw copies available to students.

4. If a third edition of the Armstrong Book is released, it should correct further errors, and at a minimum, all cases in which the first edition of the Armstrong Book cited a document with a date identical to that cited in the Szalontai Book. The third edition preface should also include the acknowledgment described above.

5. The Committee notes that the purpose of the Misconduct Policy is explicitly remedial.

The Committee recommends that the Provost be provided a copy of this Report to determine whether further steps are needed.

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH

January 11, 2019

Via FedEx

CONFIDENTIAL

Balazs Szalontai
Korea University, Sejong Campus
Division of Public Sociology and Korean Unification
2511 Sejong-ro
Sejong, 339-700
Republic of Korea

Re: RCT 2016-04

Dear Dr. Szalontai:

I write regarding the research misconduct proceedings in the above-captioned case. In accordance with Columbia University's Institutional Policy on Misconduct in Research, this letter is to notify you that the University's Standing Committee on the Conduct of Research (the "Standing Committee") has completed its review of the Final Report of the Ad Hoc Committee (the "Report") investigating your allegations of research misconduct against Dr. Charles Armstrong relating to his 2013 book *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (the "Armstrong Book"), as well as earlier publications.

The Standing Committee met on December 14, 2018 and voted to accept the Report's findings that Dr. Armstrong committed research misconduct through plagiarism and fabrication. The basis for the decision was that the investigation had been carried out in accordance with the Misconduct Policy, and that the conclusion was reasonable and supported by the record.

The Standing Committee voted to modify the Report's recommendations for corrective action. The Standing Committee's recommended corrective actions, in their entirety, are as follows:

1. Following the completion of the administrative procedures under the Institutional Policy on Misconduct in Research, the University should notify the American Historical Association, Cornell University Press, and the Weatherhead East Asian Institute of the outcome. Moreover, given the public character of the dispute over the

past two years, the University should consider issuing a public notice of some kind. Such a release would publicly validate the accuracy of your statements.

2. With respect to existing copies of the Armstrong Book, the University should request that Cornell University Press take the following steps to avoid confusion between the first edition of the book and subsequent, corrected editions:
 - a. Modify the electronic version of the Armstrong Book to indicate clearly that it is a corrected version of the original edition, including a new cover.
 - b. Modify the hard copy of the Armstrong Book to indicate clearly that it is a corrected version of the original edition, including a new cover or banner or sticker that would indicate "corrected edition."
3. Neither the original first edition nor the corrected first edition of the Armstrong Book should be used as a textbook in Columbia courses.
4. If a new edition of the Armstrong Book is released, Dr. Armstrong should address further errors you identified. Cornell University Press should be notified that Dr. Armstrong has been directed to correct any further errors.
5. The Provost and the Executive Vice President for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences should be notified of the outcome of this Investigation and the Provost should receive a copy of the Report, even if there is no appeal by Dr. Armstrong.

The bases for the modifications to the Report's recommended corrective action included the following:

1. The Standing Committee rejected the Report's recommendation that the University should provide you with a gift of research funding. The Standing Committee determined such an action would be beyond the scope of the Misconduct Policy.
2. The Standing Committee rejected the Report's recommendation that Dr. Armstrong be required to provide acknowledgment of misconduct to you and in the preface of any future editions of the Armstrong Book. The Standing Committee did not think it would be feasible to compel Dr. Armstrong to take such action, and that such a recommendation would be inconsistent with the purposes of the Misconduct Policy.
3. The Standing Committee found the research misconduct identified in this case to be egregious and that its role includes assuring that appropriate notifications are made to relevant institutional leaders, in this case the Provost and EVP for the Arts and Sciences.

This case now will move to the adjudication phase during which the Executive Vice President for Research may accept, reject, or modify the recommendations of the Standing Committee.

Please feel free to contact _____ if you have any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely, _____

cc: _____