RESISTANCE TO THE CENSORSHIP OF HISTORICAL THOUGHT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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*** ABSTRACT ***

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This paper attempts to demonstrate that many historians have resisted the censorship of historical thought, either inside or outside tyrannical regimes, throughout the twentieth century. Those who actively struggled against persecution were either directly threatened and resisted the threat, or less personally involved but fighting for the cause of history, academic freedom and human rights. A third group, frequently in the background, consisted of all the outsiders who attempted to maintain solidarity with their persecuted colleagues. In addition, historians, in a unique professional reflex, are able to supplement contemporary resistance with retroactive resistance. They possess the power to reopen cases and challenge the rulers' amnesia and falsification of history.

The first group of historians were those directly affected by repression. Historians in prison taught history to their fellow inmates or were able to do some historical research. Outside prison, some historians engaged in clandestine activities such as publishing their work in the samizdat circuit, teaching at flying universities, or illegally gaining access to closed archives. Others defied likely censorship by refuting the cherished historical myths that supported the powers that be, or by uttering the unmentionable with historical metaphors. A minority adopted methods of open resistance. Some bravely refused to take loyalty oaths, and were dismissed. A stubborn few reoriented their work towards the eras and topics under embargo.

Historians of the second group were those living under repression without being as cruelly affected by it as their more unfortunate colleagues, and transforming their outrage in what I call insider solidarity. Some organised petitions and letters of protest. Others actively supported their colleagues fallen into disgrace at great personal risk or resigned in protest against their dismissal. As deans and rectors, some challenged violations of university autonomy. A wider circle of resistance was constituted by the struggle historians waged as peace and human rights activists, again at the risk of dismissal and prosecution. Once countries toppled their dictators and set in a process of transition towards democracy, new tasks fitted the historians' commitment: they took part in the work of official or unofficial truth commissions. Nowadays, truth commissions are so successful that the underlying principle, the right to know the truth about past abuses, and hence the right to history, is increasingly recognised in international law.

Historians living in countries and times without threats to their freedom or life formed the third group. They tried to apply the difficult principle of universality of human rights to the core right of the historical profession: freedom of information and expression. This principle meant that, wherever a colleague's freedom was threatened, one's own was too, and, conversely, that historians enjoying freedom had an obligation to use it for those who did not possess it. In short, the principle was translated into international solidarity. This solidarity took on many different shapes at the national level. Several historians wrote or taught on the controversial aspects, the blank spots and the falsified history of tyrannical countries, or on academic freedom, either in general or in response to concrete threats. Petition and letter writing campaigns were launched against the detention of colleagues. Also, the tragic fate of historians in exile was sometimes alleviated by the welcome prepared for them in the host countries. At the international level, the interventions of the International Committee of Historical Sciences are briefly discussed in the paper. The initiative of the Network of Concerned Historians is outlined.

From this overview, it may be concluded that the first social responsibility of historians is to defend their human rights, and particularly the freedom of information and expression central to their profession. Without these freedoms, historians cannot discharge their first professional obligation - the pursuit of historical truth - nor their other social responsibilities towards past, present and future.
society. When we look back at the twentieth century as historians and as human beings, the record of examples of commitment and integrity coming from dozens of countries on all continents inspires hope and pride: despite the vulnerability of the historical profession, there is a stubborn tradition of freedom among historians to be aware of, to care for, and to strengthen.
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INTRODUCTION: CONTEMPORARY AND RETROACTIVE RESISTANCE

Simon Dubnov (1860-1941) was a great Jewish historian and a double exile from the Soviet Union (1922) and Nazi Germany (1933). In the weeks before his death in December 1941, while living in the ghetto of Riga, Latvia, his library was seized. He was obliged to hide his manuscripts. Cut off from his daily work, he began chronicling life in the ghetto. His notebooks were smuggled out to some friends in the city. During one of the roundups in the ghetto, a Gestapo officer (a former student of his, some assert) murdered him. Later his daughter heard the rumour that Dubnov repeatedly exclaimed in the minutes before his death: "People, do not forget. Speak of this, people; record it all." These last words, an appeal to memory and responsibility, passed from mouth to mouth. Simon Dubnov could undoubtedly have said them, but whether he really uttered them in the dark and tragic moments just before his death will remain uncertain forever.

This risk of untraceability, and hence of oblivion, is even greater for the words and deeds of lesser-known historians writing and teaching in similar repressive conditions. In the mid-1980s, the Czech historian Jan Kren received the visit of a clever history student, who did research into a subject that Kren had worked on before his persecution. He did not know any of Kren's works written on the topic in the 1960s and had heard about him only vaguely. "I thought you were dead", he confessed. The courage to confront tyrannical power frequently passes unnoticed. Although for this reason it is not possible to give precise statistics, the following examples demonstrate that they must be many who have resisted persecution and censorship either inside or outside tyrannical regimes. Those who actively struggled against persecution found themselves in one of two groups: either they were directly threatened and resisted the threat, or they were less personally involved but fought for the cause of history, academic freedom and human rights. A third group, frequently in the background, consisted of all the outsiders who attempted to maintain solidarity with their persecuted colleagues.

In addition, historians, in a unique professional reflex, are able to supplement contemporary resistance with retroactive resistance. Nowadays, not many historians believe that they are judges before the tribunal of history charged with the vengeance of peoples, as René de Chateaubriand did in the early nineteenth century, but nevertheless they possess the power to reopen cases and challenge the rulers' amnesia and falsification of history. It is never too late for the historical truth, because truth is able to transcend its particular roots and context. Even when sources of information

1 Author's Note: The idea for this paper was articulated during inspiring conversations on the Network of Concerned Historians with Derek Jones, editor of Censorship: A World Encyclopedia, while he visited Groningen in March 1997. An unannotated version of this paper will appear in the encyclopedia.


6 Chateaubriand, F.-R. de, Mercure de France, 4 July 1807, also in his Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe I (originally 1848-50; Paris 1997) 916.
are disappearing, research on past crimes may always begin. It is a task with many risks. Without the passion of the survivors, historians may "normalise" the cruel abuses of the past by inserting them into the stream of history. They may omit crucial findings for fear of breathing new divisive fever into the collective memory. But it is the professional obligation of the historians to see that the dead do not die twice. Even Simon Dubnov was able to take posthumous revenge: the Nazis believed to have destroyed the entire run of the third volume of his autobiography. One surviving copy, however, rediscovered in 1956, served as the basis for a new edition in 1957.

I THE REBELLION OF THE HISTORIANS

Some historians who for various reasons were jailed, displayed moral and intellectual courage of the Dubnov type. They started teaching history when they were in prison or in prison-like circumstances. While living in German internment camps in 1916, the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne (1862-1935) lectured on history several days a week to a camp audience of more than two hundred. Even the German soldiers who were supposed to monitor what he said became so interested that they joined the prisoners in asking questions after the lectures. French historian Claude Cahun (1909-1991) gave informal lectures of history to his companions, while he was imprisoned in a German camp in 1940-45. Historian and co-founder of the Annales Marc Bloch (1886-1944), executed by the Gestapo near Lyons in June 1944, taught French history to one of the young inmates while incarcerated and tortured in the months before his death. Poet and historian Nina Gagen-Torn (1900-1986) taught Russian literature and history to a group of ill Ukrainian girls in a Soviet camp during 1947-53. Polish historian Władysław Bartoszewski (1922-) delivered some seventy hours of lectures during his five-month internment after the declaration of martial law in Poland in December 1981. The Sudanese school teacher Suleiman Mohamed Soail, detained in 1985 because of his research on the century-old Mahdist Revolution, taught history to his fellow prisoners. Indonesian author Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1925-) was imprisoned at Buru island in 1973. He was not allowed to write. In the evenings he told his fellow inmates stories about the incipient nationalist movement in early-twentieth-century Indonesia entirely from memory. When he was finally allowed to write in 1975, the other inmates gave him paper, and he transformed the story into a set of four historical novels while they did his duties. When the quartet was published after his release in 1979, each of the volumes was banned. This official censorship was partially inspired by fear that analogies would be drawn between the historical abuses of power and those occurring at the time.

In prison, the present is grim, the future inconceivable; only the past gives some comfort. The large amounts of time suddenly available provided some prisoners with the chance to develop an intimate relationship with history, at least when detention conditions allowed for a minimal level of activity beyond survival. Between 1921 and 1945, Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), India's future...
premier, stayed in British jails for nine years. There, he read and wrote as an autodidacistic historian about Indian and world history. Between October 1930 and August 1933 he sent almost two hundred letters on world history from different prisons to his daughter, Indira Gandhi. Their publication in 1934 as *Glimpses of World History* made Nehru the first non-western world historian of modern times. Another of his historical works, *The Discovery of India* (1946), was written between August 1942 and June 1945, when he remained under rigourous confinement. Like Nehru, some historians had the opportunity to write letters. Adam Michnik (1946-) had in Poland; some of his letters were real essays. Others kept notebooks, as Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) did in Italy. Still others were able to do some historical research, as could Adolfo Gilly (1928-) in Mexico. Often the prisoners had to draw on the powers of memory. French historian Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) was said to have written from memory large portions of his work about the Mediterranean while interned in German camps in 1940-45. Thai historian Jit Phumisak (1930-1966) wrote many songs and essays while imprisoned for his Marxist views in 1957-64. Most of them were smuggled out and published under various pen-names. In China, Gu Jiegang (1893-1980), a historian famous for his critical discussions of Chinese antiquity and described as "the first problem-centered historian to emerge from the more than two-thousand-year tradition of discipline-centered historiography in China" was branded a "reactionary academic authority" during the Cultural Revolution. His research was suppressed and he had to clean the desks and floors of the Academy of Sciences History Department. His library of 70,000 volumes was sealed. In spite of Red Guard inspections, he continued his research, relying mainly on his well-trained memory. He used a fountain pen and primary school copy books that he placed on his children's desks when the Red Guards paid him a visit. African National Congress leader Govan Mbeki (1910-), father of the current President of South Africa, established a programme of political education and wrote two syllabi during his twenty-three-year prison term at Robben Island (1964-87). The first was a detailed history of the African National Congress, the second a materialist history of the development of human society. Both were based on material taken from newspapers and texts that he received as part of correspondence courses.

Outside prison, possibilities for resistance were of course somewhat greater. For purposes of presentation, they are divided here in two categories (clandestine activities and open resistance) although, in reality, in-between them there is a large zone of legal but dangerous activity. In the decades before 1990, numerous historians in the USSR, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and, to a lesser

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degree, other Central and Eastern European countries, preferred fighting censorship by publishing their manuscripts in small underground circles. An example is the Politicheskii dnevnik (Political Diary), a monthly magazine circulated secretly in the USSR by historian Roy Medvedev (1925-) among a small group of people between October 1964 and March 1971. One of its pieces was a 1965 letter on the duty to search for the historical truth written by a group of prominent historians to the newspaper Izvestiia, which had refused to publish it. Many historians also taught the forbidden historical subjects at "flying universities", series of educational self-help lectures given at private homes. In Poland, similar clandestine classes had existed under Tsarist and German occupation. In Czechoslovakia, plenty of manuscripts from the samizdat circuit were written while their authors were still in office before the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion. The "normalisation" following the invasion led to the dismissal of hundreds of historians. The samizdat current gained strength there after the establishment of the human rights movement Charta 77. Large unofficial debates were held, like the 1984 one on "The Right to History", which re-evaluated several episodes and persons in Czechoslovak history. In Slovakia, Jozef Jablonicky (1933-) was constantly harassed for more than fifteen years, because he systematically revised the official truths on the 1944 Slovak National Uprising in his samizdat writings. Plenty of times the police confiscated his manuscripts and documents, but each time he would stubbornly begin his research again. Elsewhere, in Iran, hundreds of titles known as cap-e safid (with blank covers), including many previously banned books on the political history of Persia, were published between late 1977 and the final collapse of the monarchy in February 1979.

Some historians illegally forced their way into the archives, those suppliers of raw materials for historical research under perpetual danger of destruction or closure for political reasons. In some instances they were rescued from oblivion by daring gophers. Since 1976, at the age of twelve, Dmitry Yurasov (1964-) had been compiling a file of victims of the Stalinist repression from archival and published sources. Barely eighteen, while studying at the Moscow Historical Archives Institute in the evenings, he went to work in several archives. He did the job for sixteen months at the central state archives in 1981-82 and for twenty-two in 1985-86 at the Supreme Court and Military Collegium archives, and meanwhile he secretly recorded information, and smuggled it out. In late 1986 his activities were discovered and he was dismissed. The following year, he was summoned for questioning by the Committee of State Security KGB after his first public appearance, a speech about his work at a Moscow Writers' Union meeting. After an article in the underground magazine Glasnost, in which he denounced the burning of archives, he was again interrogated by the KGB. In September 1987, 150 notebooks and 15,000 to 20,000 index cards out of a total of hundreds of thousands were confiscated at his apartment. Although frequently harassed, he started lecturing on Stalinism all over the country after a television appearance in the autumn of 1988, acting as a liaison officer for Memorial, the "historical-enlightenment" and human rights society. In 1991 he accepted a position at the Communist Party archives. Since 1992, microfilmed copies of Memorial's archives have been deposited at the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, and at Columbia University, New York, for security reasons. Another almost unbelievable case of retrieval took place in Brazil. From 1979 to 1985, a team of thirty-five lawyers working with the Catholic Church secretly photocopied and microfilmed the complete records of the Supreme Military Court...
(containing the proceedings of all the political cases tried in military courts in 1964-79) and stored duplicates of them outside Brazil. The records covered the 1964-79 dictatorship years. The copying and analysis of the materials was done in complete secrecy, because an amnesty law approved in 1979 deterred investigation. In addition, when caught, the lawyers could be subject to reprisals and the archives in danger of destruction. The team maintained its anonymity even after the shocking and best-selling publication in 1985 of their analysis, *Brasil: Nunca Mais* (Brazil: Never Again).

Others adopted legal ways that, however, were dangerous and therefore implied much courage. Some historians vigorously preserved the highest scholarly standards in the face of likely censorship and, by so doing, tried to maintain their professional integrity. We think, in the first place, of that peculiar brand of destroyers of cherished historical conceptions: historians who doubted the authenticity of ancient myths and legends that supported the powers that be and endured much hostility and worse for it, such as Gu Jiegang, already mentioned, in China, and Tsuda Sokichi (1873-1961) in Japan before World War II, or Aleksandr Zimin (1920-1980) in the USSR after the war. In the second place, some defied censorship indirectly through the use of Aesopian language. Beginning in the 1920s, Victor Ehrenberg (1891-1976), a historian at the German University of Prague, warned against the rise of the Nazis. He did so by lecturing about anti-Semitism, militarism, war and dictatorship in ancient Greece. In Iran, historian and sociologist Ali Shariati (1933-1977), the ideologue of the Iranian Revolution, criticised the Shah during his tremendously influential Tehran lectures in the 1970s. He compared him to the Pharaoh or to Umayyad caliph Yazid, but it took the secret police six months to realise what was going on. Under martial law in Poland (1981-83), no discussion of current political affairs was possible. However, substitute historical polemics did occur. The introduction of martial law in the Polish Kingdom in 1861 was discussed or the repercussions of the Targowica Confederation in 1792-93, when, nominally, Polish traitors had called in the Russian army. Nowhere did Aesopian writing reach such heights as in China, where for centuries it had been a frequently used technique. The most notorious case was perhaps that of Ming historian Wu Han (1909-1969). As early as the 1940s, when Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) and the Guomindang suppressed open discussion of contemporary problems, Wu Han made use of historical allegories in his short satirical essays as a form of indirect criticism. He would repeat this in the early 1960s, under Communist rule. In 1961 he also wrote a play, *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, in which the upright Ming official Hai Rui defends the peasants against bureaucratic arbitrariness, and is, as a result, dismissed. At the time of its appearance, the play created no great stir. Chairman Mao Zedong urged that Hai Rui's criticism be emulated. He later became convinced, however (erroneously, many believe today), that Wu Han's Hai Rui was in fact a historical symbol for Peng Dehuai, the Minister of Defence whom he had dismissed in July 1959 for his criticism of the Great Leap Forward policies. Thus the play was read as an indirect criticism of Mao. Wu Han was attacked for having written the play. In November 1965 he became the first victim of the Cultural Revolution. He died in 1969 as a


In the field of archival rescue, the efforts of the Genealogical Society of Utah (the Latter-Day Saints or Mormon Church) since 1938 to preserve records on microfilm all over the world, should also be mentioned; see S.W. Blodgett, "The Role of Microfilming in the Preservation and Reconstitution of Documents", *Archivum: International Review on Archives*, 1996, no. 42 (special issue: *Memory of the World at Risk: Archives Destroyed, Archives Reconstituted*) 299-310.


result of prolonged ill-treatment and refusal of medical attention. Sadly, it was this experience that made his reputation immortal.

Acts of open resistance were of two kinds. Some did not bend for political intervention in their work and were dismissed. Others reoriented their work towards the eras and topics under embargo. Both phenomena did occur also under democratic regimes, especially during their less democratic episodes, or because their culture of secrecy did hamper historical research. With regard to political intervention, the late Edward Shils, the foremost authority on academic freedom, reminded us that the most common sanction against academics was dismissal. Therefore, refusing to take a loyalty oath was a real act of courage and resistance. In Italy, historians Gaetano De Sanctis (1870-1957), Giorgio Levi Della Vida (1886-1967), Ernesto Buonaiuti (1881-1946) and art historian Lionello Venturi (1885-1961) were among the twelve professors out of a total of 1,225 university lecturers who refused to take the Fascist Oath in November 1931. They were consequently dismissed. In August 1950, the heyday of McCarthyism in the United States, historians John Caughey, Ludwig Edelstein (1902-1965), Ernst Kantorowicz (1895-1963), Charles Mowat and psychohistorian Erik Erikson (1902-1994) refused, on grounds of conscience, to sign the text of an anti-Communist loyalty oath circulated at the University of California, Berkeley. They, too, lost their jobs.

Many historians reoriented their attitude when the profession came under fire. They did take the oath or withdrew in the safer areas of research. A few, however, gradually shifted their attention and research towards the eras and topics under embargo. Historian Ienaga Saburo (1913-) sued the Japanese state in three different cases in order to protest the Ministry of Education's censorship of his history textbooks. The cases, begun in 1965, lasted more than thirty years and were partially won in 1997. Through the years, Ienaga also started writing about history textbook censorship. From the beginning, he received wide and organised support from many researchers and educators and from the Japan Teachers' Union. In 1992 an appeal for fairness in the textbook cases had been signed by five hundred Japanese historians. In Czechoslovakia, historians Vilem Precan (1933-), and Milan Otahal (1928-) compiled an illegal Black Book about the first week of the August 1968 Warsaw Pact occupation. In the autumn of 1968, they distributed 2,900 copies of it before it was withdrawn. Both were dismissed and indicted on charges of subversion. Precan became the historian who documented the persecution of his profession in detail. He risked police reprisal and punishment for it. In 1975 he wrote an open letter to the participants of the Fourteenth International Congress of


40 The Czech Black Book. Prepared by the Institute of History of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences Ed. R. Littell (English title of Sedm Pražských Dne: 21.-27. srpen 1968; Seven Days in Prague: August 21-27 1968; London 1969). Among the other historians who protested against the invasion were Frantisek Graus, Jiri Hajek (the Minister of Foreign Affairs at the time), and Josef Macek.
Historical Sciences in San Francisco, a lashing complaint against "normalisation". He presented them with a brochure, *Acta Persecutionis*, that gave an overview of the persecution of the historical profession in his country. The day after the Congress, he was interrogated by the police. As an exile in West Germany since 1976, he established an archive of *samizdat* manuscripts. In 1985 British historian and civil servant Clive Ponting (1946-), acquitted of charges that he had disclosed some Falklands/Malvinas War documents without authorisation, immediately began to study the notorious culture of official secrecy in Great Britain. He published the results in such books as *The Right To Know* and *Secrecy in Britain*. In all the cases, summarily depicted here, historians served the historical truth in one way or another, and took pride in it.

**II INSIDER PROTEST FOR THE GREATER CAUSE**

Edward Shils thought that the prevailing attitude towards academic freedom among university teachers was indifference. This may be true, but there are examples stemming from repressive and non-repressive countries that contradict this opinion. The most obvious signs of insider solidarity were the petition and the letter of protest. In India, Japan, Colombia and the United States, the authors of history textbooks threatened with censorship were defended by petitions from academics, teachers and students. In 1982 thirty Polish historians protested to President Henryk Jablonski, also a historian, against the detention of medievalist (now Minister of Foreign Affairs) Bronislaw Geremek (1932-) - who had gone on hunger strike in prison for fifteen days. In 1987 thirty-six professors, including historians, signed an open letter calling for an end to political interference in their work and citing the Geremek case. In Romania, prominent intellectuals protested against the massive demolition of historical monuments in the 1980s. Historian Andrei Pippidi (1948-) sent a letter to several Romanian journals in which he denounced the demolition of the house of Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940), Romania's most famous historian and former Prime Minister, killed by the Iron Guard in 1940. Stronger actions involving personal risks were not always avoided. Italian historian Federico Chabod (1901-1960), the future president of the International Committee of Historical Sciences, actively supported his colleagues who fell out of grace after the Fascist race laws of November 1938. Elsewhere, historians resigned in protest against the treatment of their colleagues. Such was the case in the United States with Arthur Lovejoy (1873-1962), who in 1900 left Stanford University over a famous academic freedom case in which an economist was dismissed. Fifteen years later, he became co-founder and first secretary of the American Association of University Professors. Charles Beard (1874-1948) resigned from Columbia University in 1917, in protest against the failure to re-appoint one faculty member and the dismissal of two others who opposed United States
A wider circle of resistance is constituted by the struggle historians were engaged in as peace and human rights activists. Ludwig Quidde (1858-1941) gained worldwide recognition when he was granted the Nobel Peace Prize. He was a German historian excluded from the profession in 1894 after he had published a highly successful book on Caligula with satirical allusions to Kaiser Wilhelm II. After the boycott, he became a leader of the international peace movement, which earned him the prize in 1927. He spent two spells in prison, one for lèse majesté in 1896, and one for his revelations on the Schwarze Reichswehr in 1924. In 1933 he went into exile in Geneva where he died in 1941.


In addition to the following cases, also worth mentioning is the case of the blind writer and literary historian Taha Husayn (1889-1973). He was a staunch defender of academic freedom since the 1920s and Minister of Education (1950-52). After the Egyptian Revolution of July 1952, he was dismissed as rector of Farouk I University in Alexandria (which he founded in 1942). See Current Biography 1953 (New York 1954) 290-92; J.-J. Waardenburg, Les Universités Dans le Monde Arabe Actuel I (Paris/La Haye 1966) 92, 96, 226-27; D.M. Reid, "Cairo University and the Orientalists", International Journal of Middle East Studies, 1987: 66-68.


Hispanic American Historical Review, 1989: 559-61 (obituary).

IOC 2/82: 47.


R. Rüup, "Ludwig Quidde", in: H.-U. Wehler ed., Deutsche Historiker III (Göttingen 1972) 124-47; F.W. Haberman ed., Nobel Lectures Including Presentation Speeches and Laureates' Biographies: Peace II (Amsterdam etc. 1972) 29-34, 47-67. Two Presidents of the United States, who were also, inter alia, historians, received the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1906, it was awarded to Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) for his mediation between Russia and Japan leading to the 1905 peace treaty. In 1919
There is a rich record of cases where historians were involved in human rights work at the risk of dismissal and prosecution. In 1904-05 Belgian historian Henri Grégoire (1881-1964) was the secretary of an official commission of inquiry into King Leopold II's misgovernment of the Congo Free State (1885-1908). As the commission's critical report was not well received by the King, he was obliged, according to some sources, to leave Belgium. He returned only in 1909. He was active in the anti-German resistance during World War I. During World War II, already a Byzantinist of international fame, he helped gather French and Belgian refugee scholars into the New School for Social Research in New York. German historian and archivist Veit Valentin (1885-1947) was a pacifist and an active defender of the democratic constitutional state during the Weimar Republic. He headed the history department of the German League for Human Rights. He was dismissed twice, in 1917 and 1933, the year he went into exile. After the war, he returned to Germany to help prepare the Nuremberg trials. In 1960 Pierre Vidal-Naquet (1930-), then a lecturer in ancient history at the University of Caen, France, was suspended. He had signed the "Declaration on the Right of Insubordination in the War in Algeria", a manifesto issued during a campaign against torture in the North African colony. In 1963 he published a work about the colonial torturers. In later years, he incessantly opposed Holocaust deniers. Soviet historian Petr Yakir (1923-1982) spent seventeen years of his youth in prisons and camps. He defended many colleagues, including Aleksandr Nekrich (1920-), whose book June 22, 1941 was beleaguered, and Andrei Amalrik (1938-1980), author of the essay Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984. He was a member of the Action Group for the Defence of Civil Rights in the USSR. Between June 1972 and September 1974, he stayed in prison, where, broken, he co-operated with the KGB. Ostracised by dissident circles upon his release, he died isolated in 1982. Between 1975 and 1987, historian and literary specialist Sergei Grigoryants (1947-) spent nine years in Soviet jails because he had published samizdat human rights bulletins. The original charter of the Czechoslovak human rights organisation Charta 77 was signed by forty historians: one sixth of all signatories. In Chile historian Pablo Arturo Fuenzalida Zegers, a member of the Human Rights Commission harassed for months, was arrested on 10 December 1981, Human...
Rights Day, and tortured for five days\footnote{Amnesty International Report, 1982}. Afghan historian Hasan Kakar (1932-), head of the History Department at Kabul University, was imprisoned for five years in 1982 for his membership in a campus group that suggested peaceful solutions to the armed conflict and protested against the arbitrary arrest of a number of teachers and students.\footnote{IOC 4/82: 42, 28/4: 43; Amnesty International Report, 1983} In 1986-87 Cuban historian Ariel Hidalgo Guillén (1945-), serving a prison term for “enemy propaganda” because he had criticised the regime in a manuscript, became vice-president of a human rights organisation while in jail, and began hunger strikes to ameliorate prison conditions.\footnote{Amnesty International Report, 1986} In May 1989 South African social anthropologist and historian David Webster (1945-1989) was shot dead in Johannesburg, inter alia because, as a member of the Detainees' Parents Support Committee, he was engaged in research into death squads.\footnote{IOC 6/92: 31, 5/96: 58-60} In June 1994 Brazilian historian Hermógenes Da Silva Almeida Filho was shot dead in Rio de Janeiro, apparently in retaliation for his investigation into massacres of street children.\footnote{Y. Bangert, "Drei Preise für Menschenrechtsarbeit: Tilman Zülch, Fadila Memisevic und die GfbV wurden 1996 geehrt", Pogrom, December 1996/January 1997: 40-41.} In 1996 Croatian historian Ivo Banac (1947-), a member of the Croatian Helsinki Committee, was labeled an “internal ennemy” by President Franjo Tudjman, also a historian, because he had pleaded for the repatriation of Croatian Serbs.\footnote{IOC 4-5/94: 232; Amnesty International Report, 1995} Once in exile, historians sometimes became human rights activists. In 1967, Yugoslav historian Vladimir Dedijer (1914-1990), who had fallen into disgrace in the 1950s and moved to the United States, served as the co-President of the Russell International War Crimes Tribunal, a commitment he continued after his return to Yugoslavia.\footnote{Human Rights Watch, World Report 1997 (New York 1996) 213.} The Algerian historian Mohammed Harbi (1933-) spent eight years in prison and under house arrest for criticising Boumédiène’s 1965 coup, escaped to France, became a historian in Paris, and was involved in human rights campaigns for the Islamic world.\footnote{Human Rights Watch, “Dedijer as a Historian of the Yugoslav Civil War”, Survey, 1984, 3: 98; Stroynowski ed. 1989: 228.}

In countries that toppled their dictators and set in a process of transition towards democracy, opportunities for commitment gradually increased. There, newly installed official truth commissions were writing, as it were, a first version of history. Those commissions acted as protohistorians. Logically, some historians participated in them, as did Gonzalo Vial Correa, a former Minister of Education under Augusto Pinochet, in Chile or Joan Kakwenziri, a historian from Makerere University, in Uganda. Bernd Faulenbach (1943-), Hermann Weber (1922-) and several other historians served as experts or eye witnesses in two German truth commissions. Some experts and researchers for the El Salvador commission had received a historical training. Historians also participated in civic groups that investigated past abuses. In the late 1930s, French historian Lucien Febvre (1878-1956), co-founder of the Annales, and active anti-Fascist, was the president of a commission of enquiry into the April 1937 destruction of Guérnica, Spain.\footnote{Amnesty International Report, 1983} In the USSR, Yuri Maitron, Dictionnaire Biographique du Mouvement Ouvrier Français 27 (Paris 1986) 280-81; M. Wessel, "Lucien Febvre, Marc Bloch et de Annales: Biografische Elementen voor de Geschiedenis van..."
Afanasiev (1934-) and Medvedev were among the sixteen founders of *Memorial* in 1987. Others, such as Yurasov and Arseni Roginsky (?1947-), were collaborators of the first hour. In the final days of the Ceausescu regime in Romania, on 25 December 1989, four Romanian historians wrote a declaration, which, signed by thirteen historians, was given to the press (access to the television was refused). It condemned the historical lies of the former regime and proposed the outline of a new program for Romanian historiography. It could not be ascertained whether historians took part in initiatives such as *Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica* (Recuperation of the Historical Memory) in Guatemala, or *Direitos Humanos e Memória Popular* (Human Rights and Popular Memory) in Brazil, but at the University of Malawi a History Project was started to collect testimonies about the Banda era (1964-94) for use by a future truth commission. Worth mentioning too in the context of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* is the fact that, in 1991, the doyen of Afrikaner historiography, Floors van Jaarsveld (1922-1995), publicly apologised for the distorted way in which he had for four decades depicted South African history. Nowadays, official and unofficial truth commissions are so successful that the underlying principle, the right to know the truth about past abuses, and hence the right to history, is increasingly recognised in international law. This principle of obligatory investigation of abuses even after a change of regime was rapidly taken up by human rights observers. In 1995, Leandro Despouy, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on States of Emergency, called the principle “the right to truth” and “a rule of costumary international law”, and made a plea to recognise it as non-derogable. In 1997, the International Council of Archives published a report for UNESCO on the archives of the security services of former repressive regimes, in which this body for the first time formulated three rights crucial to the profession: the right to historical truth, the right of the people to the integrity of their written memory, and the right to historical research.

### III SOLIDARITY ON THE PART OF OUTSIDERS

Many historians living in countries and times without threats to their freedom or life tried to apply the difficult principle of universality of human rights to the core right of the historical profession: freedom of information and expression. This principle meant that, wherever a colleague's freedom was threatened, one's own was too, and, conversely, that historians enjoying freedom had an obligation to use it for those who did not possess it. In short, the universality principle was translated into international solidarity. This solidarity took on many different shapes at the national level. First, several historians wrote or taught about the controversial aspects, the blank spots and the falsified history of tyrannical countries. Second, they could be found writing about academic freedom, either in general or in response to concrete threats. Third, petition and letter writing were sent to the victims of persecution. Examples of such solidarity were:

86. See also *The Lima Declaration on Academic Freedom and Autonomy of Institutions of Higher Education*, Article 16: “All institutions of higher education shall provide solidarity to other such institutions and individual members of their academic communities when they are subject to persecution. Such solidarity may be moral or material, and should include refuge and employment or education for victims of persecution.” World University Service, *Academic Freedom 1990: A Human Rights Report* (London 1990) 189-90.
87. E.g. in the United States: Arthur Lovejoy (his reports for the American Association of University
campaigns were launched against the detention of their colleagues. In the case of Belgian historians Henri Pirenne and Paul Frédéricq, who were arrested because they resisted the reopening of Ghent university by the German authorities as a Flemish university in 1916, even President Wilson, himself a historian, twice requested the Kaiser to release them. Other campaigns, too numerous to describe here, included those in favour of Luis Vitale (1927-) in Chile, Ernest Wamba-dia-Wamba (1942-) in Zaire (Congo), Amalrık, Yakir, and Roginsky in the USSR and Mushirul Hasan in India. Fourth, the tragic fate of historians in exile was sometimes alleviated by the welcome their colleagues prepared for them. Mexican and other Latin American historians helped their colleagues who had fled Spain during or after the Civil War. Many of the refugee historians from Nazi Germany were given assistance in the United States, the United Kingdom and elsewhere. To name just one out of plenty examples, archivist Ernst Posner (1892-1980) could escape Nazi Germany in 1939 with the help of such American historians as Eugene Anderson, Waldo Leland, Merle Curti and Solon Buck. He became the dean of American archivists.

At the international level of action, official and unofficial initiatives should be distinguished. The International Committee of Historical Sciences (CISH), founded in 1926, has always been keenly aware of both the crucial importance and the problematic character of the freedom of historians in many parts of the world, but it was not always able or willing to campaign for individual cases. The discussions about this aspect of its work were unavoidably heightened time and again when the doyen of historians in a particular country - often a CISH member - or other prominent historians became the target of persecution, or when the entire profession in a particular country came under fire. In such cases, CISH was presented with a dilemma: it had either to speak out in order to help the historians under attack or to remain silent in order to avoid conflict with the official delegation of the new, abusive, regime that usually tried to downplay the situation. At stake were the neutrality,

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international character and the very existence of CISH on the one hand and the fate of individual persecuted historians on the other. Despite the lack of official collective intervention in individual cases, several CISH Bureau members made individual *ex officio* efforts on behalf of their endangered colleagues, such as the Austrian Alfons Dopsch (1868-1953) in 1934 and the Hungarian Domokos Kosary (1913-) in 1958. Kosary, for example, a professor of history at the University of Budapest, had been dismissed as director of the Academy of Sciences Institute of History in 1949. He was sent to work as a librarian at the Agrarian Sciences University in Godollo. He participated in the 1956 Revolution. In 1958 he was arrested and sentenced to four or five years’ imprisonment because he had compiled a documentation about the Revolution and deposited it at the university library. He was released in 1960 and entirely rehabilitated later. The then CISH president Chabod and secretary-general Michel François had intervened on his behalf. Another telling case was the attempt by some delegations to boycott the International Congress of Historical Sciences in Moscow in 1970 because of the pogrom of historian unchained by the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia. This was prevented, but Congress after Congress the fate of Czechoslovak historians was highlighted.

In October 1995 a small international *Network of Concerned Historians* (NCH) was established in the wake of the Eighteenth International Congress of Historical Sciences, to provide a bridge between historians and the human rights movement. NCH participated in the urgent actions for historians issued by seven recognised international human rights organisations. In 1996 it campaigned for two Albanese historians, Elvira Shapplo and Vladimir Qiriaqi, who had published a photograph of a former Communist ruler in a guide book, and for former history student Wang Dan (?1969-) in China, a leader of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests; in 1998 for Rwandese college director Philomène Mukabarali (?1942-), who apparently possessed leaflets expressing support for the (pre-1959) monarchy of Rwanda, for the Burmese authors Ko Aung Tun (?1967-) and U Myo Htun, who were imprisoned for writing a history of the Burmese student movement, for the Palestinian history student Waël Ali Farraj (?1972-), detained on the assumption that he supported an Islamist group, and for the Mexicans Andres Aubry, a historian and anthropologist, and Ángelica Inda, an archivist, intimidated and harassed for their assistance in the peace talks between the government and the Zapatistas; in 1999 for Ethiopians Moti Biyya (?1957-), Garuma Bekele (?1960-), and Tesfaye Deressa (?1959-), three writers strongly interested in the Oromo past, detained for their peaceful activism on behalf of the Oromo minority, for Guatemalan Bishop Juan Gerardi (?1923-), who was assassinated days after he had presented the report of the Project Recuperation of the Historical Memory about human rights violations committed during the 1960-96 civil war, and for the Palestinian history professor Abdulsittar Qassem (?1949-), who had signed a petition criticising the government; in 2000 for Chinese historian and librarian Song Yongyi (1949-), arrested for his research on the Cultural Revolution. In addition, NCH forwarded to its members historical news as reported by these seven organisations. The Network is slowly growing.

**CONCLUSION: A TRADITION TO STRENGTHEN**

Although human rights organisations emphasise that campaigns waged by colleagues of the victims...
of human rights violations are most effective, it should never be forgotten that many outside the historical profession have made efforts on behalf of the persecuted historians, because they applied the principle of universality not just to their colleagues but to all human beings. Moreover, novelists, playwrights, journalists, storytellers, and singers often took care of the historical truth, and kept it alive when the collective memory was in danger because the silenced and silent historians were not able to refute the heralded truths of official historical propaganda. Even in the darkest hours of tyranny, the distorted past was challenged by the versions whispered at home or written down by those who replaced the silenced historian. At times, these alternative versions were equally distorting, but they were alternative, and through them the flame of plurality continued to burn.

The first social responsibility of historians is to defend their human rights, and particularly the freedom of information and expression central to their profession. The reason for this priority is clear: without these freedoms, historians cannot discharge their first professional obligation - the pursuit of historical truth - nor their other social responsibilities towards past, present and future society. When we look back at the twentieth century as historians and as human beings, the record of examples of commitment and integrity coming from vastly different countries on all continents inspires hope and pride: despite the vulnerability of the historical profession, there is a stubborn tradition of freedom among historians to be aware of, to care for, and to strengthen.  


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101 Werner Kaegi wrote: "Knowledge of the examples of freedom in all times and all parts of the earth is a spiritual patrimony that, although it can be distorted in certain places and certain peoples, cannot be obliterated." ("Freedom and Power in History", in: L. Krieger & F. Stern, *The Responsibility of Power* [New York 1969] 247).