En este tomo II sobre Historiografía Inmediata ponentes y congresistas reflexionan y debaten, desde la historia, sobre la democracia, los derechos humanos, la inmigración, el multiculturalismo, las historias oficiales, las transiciones, la sociedad civil: se estudian tendencias actuales como la idea Histórica de España y la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, así como diversos grupos y redes de historiadores. En el tomo I (Reconstrucción paradigmática) trata de tendencias internacionales, cuestiones como la objetividad, 'historia total' y usos de la historia, protagonistas individuales y colectivos de la historia y la historiografía.

El tomo III (Historiografía global) contiene ponencias sobre las diversas formas de hacer historia global, por un lado, e historia inmediata, por el otro.
Against Oblivion: The Activities of the Network of Concerned Historians

Antoon De Baets
University of Groningen, The Netherlands

The Network of Concerned Historians (NCH) was established at the History Department of the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, in October 1995. It serves as a link between concerned historians and the international human-rights movement. NCH seeks to be universal, impartial, and independent. It conducts activities in three fields: action, information, and research, in that order of importance. First, NCH forwards to its participants urgent actions for persecuted and censored historians (and others concerned with the past) issued by international human-rights organizations. Second, it publishes electronic annual reports with history-related news from these organizations and other sources. Third, it collects data on persecuted and censored historians that it forwards to the appropriate human-rights organizations. NCH does not, however, produce action-oriented information itself.

Origin of the Network of Concerned Historians

The idea crystallized as the result of the convergence of several factors. The first of these was my research on the censorship of history in the early 1980s. While working at Amnesty International’s former publication office in San José, Costa Rica, from 1980 to 1982, I regularly came across cases of persecuted historians. A historian myself, I was very interested in the fates of Hasan Kakar (Afghanistan), Ernest Wamba-Dia-Wamba (Zaire/Congo), Walter Rodney (Guyana), Mama wa Kenyatta (Kenya), and Raúl Canbom (Uruguay). I noticed that in every corner of the globe, historians were among those who suffered from political persecution because of their historical work, other activities, or both. I also realized that human-rights reports contained a great deal of useful information about these historians, much of which was probably unknown to their colleagues around the world, a particularly sad fact as organizations such as Amnesty International have long emphasized that campaigns waged by victims’ colleagues are the most effective. In addition, comparative analysis of the cases of persecuted and censored historians constituted a largely unexplored empirical base for interesting and important research into the relations between history, power, and freedom. In 1982 I began collecting material that caught my eye.

1 These organizations are the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Washington), Amnesty International (London), Article 19 (London), Human Rights Watch (Washington/New York), Index on Censorship (London), International PEN (London), the Network of Education and Academic Rights (London), and Scholars at Risk (New York, formerly Chicago). World University Service International (first located in Geneva, then Amsterdam) was also on this list until it ceased to exist.

2 See circular #1 (mandate) on the website of the Network of Concerned Historians: http://www.let.rug.nl/nch/ or its mirror site: http://dit.is/nch.

forced to interrupt this research project for many years, but it always remained at the back of my mind. In September 1988 I took it up again, more systematically than before. Two years after I began lecturing on the topic, I found an audience of history students at the University of Groningen. This resulted in a 1991 publication in Dutch entitled Palimpsest, for which students and I collaborated with a local human rights center. In correspondence with the journal Index on Censorship in 1992 and the Global Campaign for Freedom of Expression Article 19 in 1993, I launched the idea to create a working group called "Palimpsest", "Historians without Borders", or "Historians for Human Rights". In January 1995 I started research for a book on the censorship of historical thought between 1945 and (eventually) 2000. This research included current events, but while many cases I investigated were closed, others were still ongoing. This situation appealed to me, not only as a researcher but also as a member of the community of historians: The ongoing cases clearly called for more research; they called for action as well.

The second factor leading to the formation of the NCH was the escalating use of electronic mail in academic milieus in those years which facilitated communication with colleagues. The third and final factor was the 1993 announcement that the 18th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Montreal intended to organize a special roundtable on "Power, Liberty, and the Work of the Historian". This provided a new and lasting impetus to the idea. At the opening session of the congress in September 1995, the Secretary-General of the International Committee of Historical Sciences, the late François Bédarida, spoke about the social responsibility of historians. At the round table, I presented a paper, The Organization of Obvious Censorship and Persecution of Historians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Here is the final section.

What Can We Do?

[My] report demonstrates that history is an important, dangerous, and fragile subject. We now have to ask ourselves what historians, whose academic freedom is not in danger, can do to help their persecuted colleagues. We should join the efforts of human rights organizations already campaigning on their behalf. Before we consider the affinities of human rights work with the work of historians, it may be useful to distinguish three stages. First, the "time of repression", a period in which human rights violations take place. Second, the "time of memory", the time span during which the persecuted and their contemporaries remember past abuses. Third, the "time of history", when victims and perpetrators have died and the memory of the abuses is kept alive only by historians. It is clear that from stage to stage the efforts of human rights organizations generally diminish and those of historians increase. Their efforts thus complement each other.

Human rights organizations work for everyone's freedom of expression, including historians and those who commemorate past abuses. They also provide part of the source material for future historians who seek the "time of repression". Historians share the most important aim of surviving victims of persecution and human rights organizations to know the full truth: Historical truth is the natural extension of living truth, and the truth pursued by the victims and their allies while still alive. Historians should study the history of persecution. If the memory of past human rights abuses and the struggle waged against them must be kept alive, when historians fail to do so, the "time of history" may turn into a "time of oblivion and denial". The present report testifies to the fact that historians have engaged in human rights activities during the "time of repression" and the "time of memory". They have occasionally campaigned together for their censored or persecuted colleagues.

The time has come to give these efforts a structural basis. We hope that the following proposal will be discussed at the Congress and elsewhere.

1. The establishment of a Network of Concerned Historians prepared to participate in solidarity campaigns.
2. The formation of a Working Group to serve as a link between this Network of Concerned Historians and human rights organizations in order to provide action-oriented information about persecuted colleagues. The information could be disseminated by electronic mail or fax. The present author is prepared to function as a temporary contact person and coordinator.

With a structure such as this, protests could be lodged with the relevant authorities. Contact could be established with persecuted colleagues by inviting them to give lectures, write papers, exchange letters, or become members of a committee or editorial board, by supporting them financially, or facilitating the publication of their banned work. Cases could be publicized in newsletters, professional journals and at conferences, even when held in the country responsible for the persecution. The drawing attention to the fate of persecuted historians gives them some degree of immunity and protection. At the very least, it warns governments that their actions do not go unobserved.

Avers, against the activities of the Network of Concerned Historians.

Antoon De Baets, Historia a Debate Tomo I, pp. 189-201

Correspondence of author with Philip Spender (Index on Censorship's director), 5 and 13 February 1992, and with Susan York (Article 19's information officer), 5 April 1993. Spender wrote "Four ideas of a group of historians working for human rights for historians elsewhere should be followed up without hesitation. The fabrication of history is a universal problem and no-one is better placed to understand and publicize this than historians. Just as journalists, writers, filmmakers, psychiatrists, doctors write globally to monitor their colleagues so should historians" (13 February 1992).


See, among his many publications on the subject, François Bédarida, ed., "The Social Responsibility of the Historian" in Diogenes, 1994, no. 168. Vílem Precan, "Bound, Gagged and Robbed", Index on Censorship, 1975, no. 4, 53-57, here 57. German original in Berlin, Die Sieben Jahre von Prag 1969-1976 Briefe und Dokumente aus der Zeit der "Nennungserklärung" (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1978), 214-22. See also his follow-up letter in American Historical Association Newsletter, September 1976, and the report of "The Organization of Obvious Censorship and Persecution of Historians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America" (my) report demonstrates that history is an important, dangerous, and fragile subject. We now have to ask ourselves what historians, whose academic freedom is not in danger, can do to help their persecuted colleagues. We should join the efforts of human rights organizations already campaigning on their behalf. Before we consider the affinities of human rights work with the work of historians, it may be useful to distinguish three stages. First, the "time of repression", a period in which human rights violations take place. Second, the "time of memory", the time span during which the persecuted and their contemporaries remember past abuses. Third, the "time of history", when victims and perpetrators have died and the memory of the abuses is kept alive only by historians. It is clear that from stage to stage the efforts of human rights organizations generally diminish and those of historians increase. Their efforts thus complement each other.

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It is our responsibility to use our academic freedom on behalf of those to whom it is denied. Only then can the organization of oblivion be successfully challenged. After the congress, the time for action seemed to have arrived. I attempted to unite colleagues I had met in Montréal who were willing to campaign for their persecuted colleagues in this Network of Concerned Historians. Scott Harrison, Amnesty International's Urgent Action Coordinator in the United States, revised the draft mandate I wrote in the days after the congress. On Friday 13 October 1995, historian George Welling, a colleague at the University of Groningen, created a website. He has continually updated and adapted it Ingrid Sennema, another historian and colleague at my university, volunteered to revise the language of the longer annual reports, a task she has performed unfailingly. NCH sprang from this informal cooperation with no central office, no personnel, no budget, no board, and virtually no meetings. NCH’s only assets were and are a clear mandate, spare time, email, the Internet, and daily perseverance. NCH’s goal was and is to function as a discreet bridge between human-rights organizations and the community of historians. Five years after its establishment, I briefly reported about NCH’s activities at the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Oslo. This time my paper was a tribute to all those historians who had resisted the censorship of historical thought in the twentieth century. I concluded as follows:

A Tradition To Strengthen

Although human-rights organizations emphasize 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 persecuted historians, as they apply the principle of universality not to their colleagues alone, but to all human beings. Moreover, novelists, playwrights, journalists, storytellers, and singers often preserved historical truth, keeping it alive when the collective memory was in danger because silenced and silent historians were not able to refute the heralded historical truths of official propaganda. Even in the darkest hours of tyranny the distorted past was challenged by versions whispered at home or written down by those who replaced silenced historians. At times these alternate versions were equally distorting, but through them the flame of plurality continued to burn.

In this tribute to courageous historians from vastly different countries on all continents, the basic principles of the historian’s ethic become visible. A precondition for the work of historians is that they defend their human rights, 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 social obligation to past, present, and future generations. Looking back at the twentieth century as historians and human beings, the record of commitment and integrity inspires hope and pride. Despite the vulnerability of the historical profession there is a stubborn tradition among historians to be aware of, to care for, and to strengthen freedom.

Early in 2000 I became involved in a UNESCO initiative to establish a network of networks for academic freedom. In June 2001 NCH consequently became one of the founding members of the Network of Education and Academic Rights (NEAR), a global watchdog for academic freedom. NCH has developed close ties with NEAR. Since 2003 NCH has also had a fraternal relationship with Académia Soldana, the academic freedom initiative of Histona a Debate, established in 2000.

Activities of the Network of Concerned Historians

Examining NCH’s modes of operation, we distinguish between activities, principles, and criteria. Table I provides an overview of the types of activities and the way in which they are (ideally) performed.

<p>| Table I: Mode of operation of the Network of Concerned Historians (NCH) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Principles and criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection of history-related appeals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing of introductory letters, summaries, and background notes accompanying urgent appeals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgent appeals format: standard and simple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual reports: reading of sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of history-related items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of sources that are reliable and identified for each item</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing of factual items with accurate time indicators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion of cross-referencing to earlier annual reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual report format: standardized and simple</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


7 This is what I wrote immediately after the congress to Frederik de Vlammg, Human-rights Officer of World University Services. I have just come back from the 18th International Congress of Historical Sciences in Montréal where I made public the proposal to establish a Network of Concerned Historians. The response to my appeal was very warm. As I had the chance to speak first in the Special Session on ‘Power, Liberty and the Work of the Historian,’ other speakers from Japan, South Korea, and Russia publicly supported the idea and at the end of the Session even the two chairmen from Spain and Russia did the same. The two remaining speakers, both from the USA, and, subsequently, historians from many countries including Canada, the USA, Mexico, Venezuela, Brazil, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Tanzania, Israel, China, and Australia expressed their support in private (15 September 1995).

8 For many years, historian Joop Koopmans was in charge of circulating paper copies of NCH’s annual reports to interested colleagues not yet connected to the Internet. The staggering increase in e-mail traffic enabled us to cancel that service in January 2002.
Network logistics: digital and paper
* Website maintenance (http://www.let.rug.nl/nch) and http://dlt.is/nch)
* Address book management
* Correspondence
* Archives
* Network mobilization: ad hoc (for urgent appeals) and annually (for report)
* Urging members to write urgent appeals in their professional capacity,
to forward information (urgent appeals, annual reports) to colleagues
* Membership participation: number of members on 13 October 2004 450*2
* For membership
no conditions
* For membership management
strict Internet etiquette*3

It is useful to review some of the characteristics of NCH activities in summarized form

Tables 2 to 6 present some quantitative and qualitative indicators. As table 2 shows, NCH has
been activated 60 times since its inception. Circulars are of two kinds: information-oriented (annual
reports) and action-oriented (campaigns)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Annual reports</th>
<th>Organisers</th>
<th>Follow-ups</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995 (13 October)*4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004 (13 October)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The question arises as to the nature of the correspondence between the campaigns in
which NCH has participated and the real level of persecution of historians and others concerned

12 In May 1996, 165 in December 1998, 250, in January 2000, 300, in October 2003, 400 members. Many members have
e-mail addresses omitting their countries of origin, but most live in Western Europe and North America. In addi-
tion, some members from the South often “disappear” after some time on account of bounced e-mail

13 NCH’s standard text is “This message was first circulated to persons on the Network of Concerned Historians mail-
ing list. You have been included on this list either because you indicated your wish for updates on the NCH, or because
it was suggested to us that you or your organization might be interested in this initiative. If at any time you would
like to be removed from the list, simply send us a reply stating your request. We invite you to forward information
about NCH to other individuals and organizations who may be interested!” There are, in addition, two types of members
subscribers (requesting to be put on the list) and addressers (put on the list). Remarkably, the number of members, either subscribers or addressers, willing to unsubscribe is very low. Most deletions from the list occur when NCH
messages appear to be repeatedly undeliverable (at least three consecutive times)

14 The first circular: explaining NCH’s mandate—excluded

15 The distribution of a UNESCO International Petition to Safeguard Afghanistan Cultural Heritage (February 2001) was not
included

16 One may appreciate the difference when comparing the passages about 1995-2000 in De Baets, Censorship, with NCH
announcements of the same period

with the past. This difficult question leads to two considerations. First, correspondence is cer-
tainly not total, although degrees of completeness are difficult to gauge. It is certain that infor-
mation about persecution from human-rights organizations and from historical societies—two
sources of information in which NCH is interested—overlap only partly and that, until very
recently, NCH reported only information from the former.16 I regularly come across cases of cen-
sorship or persecution in the 1990s of which I was not aware and about which the international
human-rights organizations (despite their well-staffed and reputed research departments) did not
report at the time. Even so, after many years of research it is my strong conviction that the cumu-
lative campaigns of these international human-rights organizations reflect the real situation
rather well as far as the cruder cases are concerned. Second, of the campaigns these organiza-
tions send me daily and from which I make a selection (the result of which can be seen in table
4 and in the appendix), I recall at least twice having regretted that NCH did not join an appeal

The first time concerned the case of a Colombian who was abducted in April 1999 (and later
murdered), for at the time of the appeal I did not know he was a historian, in the second instance
an Austrian case involving a political scientist who had made a historical comparison that was
allegedly defamatory. I underestimated the importance of the case.17 It was sometimes possible,
however, to report about a case which was overlooked in the next annual report. It is my hypoth-
thesis, then, that the accumulated campaigns and annual reports of NCH give a fair impression of
the real situation as far as the cruder and more visible forms of censorship and persecution of
historians are concerned. As for the less visible types—from harassment to hidden forms of dis-
crimination—NCH’s ignorance is huge. It includes lack of data on many cases of dismissal—per-
haps the most common sanction against historians around the globe.

Table 3 details the geographical distribution of NCH annual reports. Almost 120 coun-
tries (out of 193 on all continents) have been the object of an annual report item. The increase
noticed in the post-2000 years is not due to any real increase of the persecution index, more
efficient and experienced consultation of sources is the decisive factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia/Pacific</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe/</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East/</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>North Africa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>117</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
* Country entries were counted regardless of their length or the number of items catalogued under them.
* Country entries without any item (referring to other country entries only) were excluded.
* Countries covered in 50 reports: 4 (China, Guatemala, Japan, USA), 5 (3 (Croatia, Iran, South Africa, Turkey, Vietnam), 1 (Argentina), in 7 in 6 in 11, in 15, in 4 in 17, in 3 in 18, in 16, in 1 22

17 For Anton Pelmka (Austria), see De Baets, Censorship, 56-57, and NCH #17, #23, for Dario Betancourt Echeverry
(Colombia), see De Baets, Censorship, 135-36, and NCH #17
Table 4 details action-oriented information. The increase of the numbers of circulars sent in later years is due primarily to the increase of campaign follow-ups. Indeed, it is part of NCH's philosophy to follow up after as long and closely as possible and renew efforts as needed.Initiating campaigns is one thing, showing tenacity with repeat campaigns another.

Table 4: Geographical distribution of NCH campaigns (1995–2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of different</th>
<th>Campaigns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia/Pacific</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe/Central Asia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East/North Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note
Countries covered in four campaigns: China, Guatemala, in two: Ethiopia, Myanmar, Palestinian Authority, Turkey

Tables 3 and 4 may be interpreted as proof of NCH's professioned universality principle. They also illustrate the impartiality principle to the extent that countries with diverse political and ideological regimes are included.

Turning from quantitative to qualitative impressions, we can draw tentative conclusions about the type of topics and victims to which NCH is attentive. Among the topics regularly appearing in annual reports and campaigns, the following main groups are identified in Table 5.

Table 5: Issues in NCH annual reports and campaigns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Including:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>history</td>
<td>* historical research and sources, archives, archeology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* history teaching and textbooks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* popular history channels (film, television, theater, novels, Internet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memory</td>
<td>* commemorations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freedom of information</td>
<td>* freedom of information laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and expression</td>
<td>* censorship, defamation, secrecy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>impunity</td>
<td>* forensic anthropology, truth commissions, reparations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activism</td>
<td>* politics, journalism, human-rights work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and others concerned</td>
<td>* activities, politics, journalism, human-rights work, and others concerned</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Most categories are self-explanatory. Although the fourth category, impunity, deserves some comment. Impunity (exemption from punishment) is a "hot" issue within the United Nations and one of paramount importance for historians because it implies a crucial time dimension and a broad conception of who the victims of human-rights violations are. Regarding time, it is increasingly acknowledged in international law that grave abuses of human rights (genocides, crimes against humanity, war crimes) are imprescriptible, regarding the victims, those directly subject to violations are not the only victims, but those who survive them, their relatives, friends, and society at large are as well.

19 As far as I am aware, reactions to NCH have generally been positive, sometimes critical (especially the first year), but never negative, except for one instance. In 1997 I discovered an anonymous attack in the Nizkor website guestbook (dated 17 April 1997) calling NCH "the Network of Concerned Neo-Nazi Propaganda Artists" apparently because in one of NCH's annual reports a news item from Index on Censorship about a Holocaust denier was mentioned (probably NCH #2 under Germany). We never replied to this anonymous and nonsensical attack.

20 The list of historians and others who encouraged NCH's work is too long to reproduce here. We are very grateful to all of them. Let me just recall two generous examples. The Association of History Students of Ghent University (VKG), Belgium, announced their willingness to participate collectively in NCH campaigns (e-mail 22 January 2002), the steering committee of the Norwegian Historical Association (HIFO) unanimously decided that HIFO would become a NCH member. "We hope..." HIFO wrote, "that our small organization can contribute to the release of persecuted colleagues around the world," (e-mail 8 June 2004). Two months later, the Swiss Historical Society (SGS-SHF) followed. Other signs of support came from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay.

21 For the current status (13 October 2006) of cases on whose behalf NCH campaigned, see the appendix to this essay.
ifies existing initiatives and coordinates its own efforts with others, such as the Network of Education and Academic Rights (NEAR) and Academia Solidana. Perhaps its prime importance is that it spreads awareness among historians of the difficulties with which their colleagues and others concerned with the past must live.22 NCH’s work amply demonstrates that persecution of historians has not been consigned to the past and does not take place only in distant countries. In the future, censures panibus, NCH will continue that work. Before I conclude, I want to take the opportunity to cordially invite the international network of Historia a Debate to affiliate itself to NEAR, as the Norwegian Historical Association (HIFO) and the Swiss Society of Historians (SGG–SSH) did before.

Why should we fight for historians’ rights? For three good reasons. The first is solidarity. We should use our academic freedom on behalf of those to whom it is denied. Our professional rights are meant for bona fide historians everywhere, regardless of where they live, in democratic or non-democratic countries, and regardless of who they are, mainstream historians or their opponents. The second reason is self-interest. When our colleagues’ right to free expression is in danger, then our own right to information is also endangered because we are deprived of the rich works produced by our colleagues. In the longer term, our own right to free expression will be damaged as well for we shall have to write history based on an impoverished array of information sources. The third reason is an extension of the second, but switches the focus from the historian to historiography. The integrity of historiography must be safeguarded, organized forms of oblivion should be prevented. What George Orwell said almost six decades ago, remains true “At present we know only that imagination will not breed in captivity.”23


23 George Orwell, “The Prevention of Literature” [originally 1945], in John McCormick and Marj Machienx, eds,
Guatemala

* coordinated Catholic truth commission report Guatemala. Nunca mas (detailing abuses in 1982-96 civil war) * assassinated, witnesses, lawyers, prosecutors, judges involved in trial threatened, guilty verdicts of four perpetrators under review, one perpetrator killed in prison.

Palestinian Authority

Abulalctr (Assam Hir) (1949-) historian, political scientist, et al (IA) (AAAS)

* signed petition accusing government of corruption * no

- arrested, released, rearrested, released

China

Song Yang (1949-) Chinese born American historian, librarian (3) (AAUP) * collected published documents on Cultural Revolution * perilous and illegal provision of intelligence to foreign people

- detained, 6 months' prison, released, expelled

Annual Report 1999

Burma

M. Khan Khan (1979-), history teacher, et al (IA) (AAAS)

* (with others) planned pro-democracy march on Martyr's Day

Annual Report 2000

India

Anonymous (1954-) art historian, archeologist (1) (SAR)

Kazakhstan

Badada Bayene (1926-) history student, et al (IA) (Al)

Yasser al-Habib (1973-) writer (5) (AI/PEN)

* research into mechanisms used by military to control local communities

Annual Report 2000

Argentina

Fredy Peccerelli (1947-) forensic anthropologist, et al (IA) (Al)

Humayun Azad (1947-) author of historical novel (1) (PEN)

Annual Report 2000

Turkmenistan

Matilde Leonor Gonzalez Izas (1966-) historian (1) (AAAS)

Abbreviations

AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science), AAUP (American Association of University Professors), AI (Amnesty International), PEN (International PEN Writers in Prison Committee), SAR (Scholars at Risk)