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Plutarch's Thesis: the Contribution of Refugee Historians to Historical Writing (1945-2015)

Antoon De Baets

ABSTRACT

At the micro-level of the individual, the forced departure of exile and refugee historians in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries constituted a tragedy and often a career breach. At the macro-level of historical writing, the problem is different. Plutarch maintained that, generally, exile was a 'blessing in disguise', a form of beneficial historiographical acculturation. I test Plutarch's thesis here by drawing up a balance of the contributions of refugee historians to historical writing, based on 764 cases in 63 countries. I argue that it is unlikely that the losses for historical writing in the home countries were equalled by corresponding gains in the host countries. Regarding specific contributions of content, theory or method, the part of refugees, however precious, generally did not appear to be of vital importance. Some countries, domains and even refugee personalities, however, constituted strong exceptions to this general conclusion. In addition, institutional innovations by refugees were impressive. On balance, I suggest that the unique significance of refugee historians is located in the courage with which they kept alive the alternative versions of the historical writing of their home countries when the latter succumbed to tyranny. This was the real blessing in disguise for the historical profession. Plutarch's thesis passes the test, though only partially and mostly in unintended ways.

KEYWORDS: Balance of Exile, Benefits and Losses, Counterfactuals, Dictatorship, Exile Historians, Historical Comparison, Historiographical Acculturation, Home Countries, Host Countries, Institution Building by Historians, Persecution of Historians, Plutarch, Refugee Historians, Unemployment of Historians.

I. THE THESIS

WITHOUT mocking its tragic nature, can exile be seen as a blessing in disguise? The Greek moral essayist Plutarch, and others after him, argued that it can.¹ I shall call the thesis that exile is a blessing in disguise Plutarch's thesis and in this essay I shall attempt to test it.

¹ This is an updated version of an article previously published as "Plutarch's Thesis: The Contribution of Refugee Historians to Historical Writing (1945-2010)", in *In Defence of Learning-The Plight, Persecution and Placement of Academic Refugees, 1933-1980s: Proceedings of the British Academy* 169, eds S. Marks, P. Weindling and L. Wintour (London: Oxford University Press, British Academy, 2011), 211-224. I made a first attempt in 2001 in Dutch: "Een vermomde zegen? Gevluchte historici in de twintigste eeuw [A Blessing in Disguise? Refugee Historians in the Twentieth Century]" in *Cultuurcontacten: ontmoetingen tussen culturen in historisch perspectief*, eds A. Huussen, J. de Jong and G. Prince (Groningen: Stichting Ruggespraak, 2001), 177-189. Plutarch's text, almost an eulogy of exile, was written to comfort an exiled friend from Sardis: "On Exile (De Exilio)" [originally after 96 CE], in *Plutarch's Moralia in Sixteen Volumes*, volume 7, translation P. de Lacy and B. Einarson (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959, reprint 1968), 511-571 (523C-612B).

Founders of Western historiography such as Thucydides and Xenophon wrote their master works in exile, as did later historians such as Polybius, Josephus, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Francesco Guicciardini.² Undeniably, exile can have beneficial effects on historical writing, especially if the exiled historians find themselves working in relative peace, unfettered by dictatorial censorship and in a country that respects scholarly freedom. In addition, the change of perspective that accompanies exile can be advantageous. The exiled Polish philosopher and historian of philosophy Leszek Kołakowski maintained that the position of outsider, with its uncertain status and identity, confers a cognitive privilege: creativity arises from insecurity.³ When, for example, the French historian Charles-Olivier Carbonell asked why Western historiography emerged with Herodotus and Thucydides, he attached great importance to their exile and ensuing peregrinations. These experiences enabled them to transcend the particularism of the *polis*, and greatly enlarged their horizons.⁴

There is, of course, another side to the question. Many masterworks of history were not written by exiles. Nor do all exiles write compellingly. Often, their work is polemical and rancorous, and much of it could have been written in their native land. Still, the historian Christhard Hoffmann is right to assert that:

Plutarch's thesis may have a kernel of truth; the experience of persecution and exile usually causes a break in the refugee's biography. This, and their encounter with foreign countries and cultures, may set free productive forces, like new perspectives, unusual methods, and the ability to compare, all of which positively influence history-writing. In this sense, exile and emigration may function as catalysts for innovative historiography.⁵

Plutarch's thesis underpins the reflections that follow on the contributions of refugee historians to historical writing after 1945.

II. A HISTORICAL COMPARISON

Before assessing some of the difficulties involved in balancing the losses and benefits of exile, it is instructive to pause first to reconsider a well-known comparison, the one between the exodus of scholars from Nazi-occupied Europe and the exodus of the Greek elite to Italy after the fall of Constantinople in 1453.⁶ According to the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees of the League of Nations, for example, writing in 1935: "[The refugee scholars'] presence in other countries could fertilize scholarship as significantly as the migration of Greek scholars [did] in the fifteenth century".⁷ This thesis about the effects of the 1453 exodus, first developed

² C. Hoffmann, "The Contribution of German-Speaking Jewish Immigrants to British Historiography", *Second Chance. Two Centuries of German-Speaking Jews in the United Kingdom*, ed. W. Mosse (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), 153-155.

³ L. Kołakowski, "In Praise of Exile", *Times Literary Supplement* (11 October 1985): 1133.

⁴ C.-O. Carbonell, *L'Historiographie* (originally 1981, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991), 12-13.

⁵ Hoffmann, "Contribution", 154. This was also A. Toynbee's opinion; see: N. Bentwich, *The Rescue and Achievement of Refugee Scholars. The Story of Displaced Scholars and Scientists 1933-1952* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1953), 94.

⁶ C. D. Krohn, *Intellectuals in Exile: Refugee Scholars and the New School for Social Research* (originally German 1987, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), ix, 11.

⁷ *A Crisis in the University World* (London: Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany, 1935), 7.

in the sixteenth century and repeated for centuries, is, however, only partly tenable. As Steven Runciman remarked, "Italy had for more than a generation been full of Byzantine professors",⁸ while Peter Burke showed that the revival of learning in Italy began in the fourteenth century, and perhaps as early as the twelfth. Intriguingly, he adds:

These immigrants [both before and after 1453] had an important effect on the Italian world of learning, not unlike that of scholars from central Europe [...] on the English speaking world after 1933. They stimulated Greek studies. However, their importance was that they satisfied a demand which already existed.⁹

Exile was only one, and not necessarily the most important, reason for this revival of classical learning; voluntary immigration and a receptive environment were other factors. Undeniably, repression and exile could profoundly affect the history written by refugee scholars, and often led to a shift in their modes of thought. Exile prompted questions about the history of their home country and why events there had taken such a cruel turn. This penchant for reflection fits with the more general theory that the historical awareness of peoples sharply increases after defeat and uprooting. Whereas victors can impose their version of the facts and therefore need little historical reflection or even afford themselves to forget the past, the defeated feel compelled to ask – sometimes to the point of self-castigation – why history treated them so badly.

The self-knowledge of the refugee historians is also frequently deepened by a new comparative perspective. In addition, by correcting clichés, refugees may also broaden their hosts' knowledge about their home countries. Thus exiles can become international and intercultural go-betweens.¹⁰ Although this may take place without exile (as the examples of Salo Baron's or Alois Schumpeter's voluntary emigration suggest), exile can accelerate cross-fertilization.¹¹ All these observations should induce us to compare exile experiences cautiously.

I define a 'refugee historian' or an 'exile historian' as one

who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.¹²

⁸ S. Runciman, *The Fall of Constantinople, 1453* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 188.

⁹ P. Burke, "Hosts and Guests. A General View of Minorities in the Cultural Life of Europe", *Minorities in Western European Cities (Sixteenth-Twentieth Centuries)*, eds H. Soly and A. Thijs (Brussels, Rome: Institut historique belge de Rome, 1995), 49; P. Burke, *The Italian Renaissance. Culture and Society in Italy* (originally 1972; Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 232.

¹⁰ L. Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants: The Intellectual Migration from Europe, 1930-1941* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 358; R. Gray, "Spanish Diaspora. A Culture in Exile", *Salmagundi*, nos. 76-77 (fall 1987-winter 1988), 69; Hoffmann, "Contribution", 171-173; C. Epstein, *A Past Renewed: A Catalog of German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933* (Washington, D. C.: German Historical Institute; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 17; *Out of the Third Reich: Refugee Historians in Post-War Britain*, ed. P. Alter (London, New York: I. B. Tauris; London: German Historical Institute, 1998), xix, xxi.

¹¹ Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 12.

¹² For a discussion of definitions about refugee historians and related concepts, see A. De Baets, "Exile and Acculturation: Refugee Historians since the Second World War", *International History Review*, 28, no. 2 (June 2006): 319-322, and the introduction to this Special Issue.

Strictly speaking, ‘refugee historians’ are *unwilling* to return and ‘exile historians’ *unable* to return, but I combine these categories in my analysis and use both terms interchangeably. A group of 764 such refugee historians – alive after 1945 and coming from 63 countries on all continents – will serve as the empirical basis for the following test of Plutarch’s thesis.¹³ When drawing up a balance-sheet of their impact on historical writing, we are in many respects dependent on data from the better-studied (especially German and Spanish) exile waves. A proper assessment requires answers to three questions.

III. HOME COUNTRIES

The first of these is whether the stream of refugees has exerted an effect on the historiography of their home countries. Each of the three stages of exile – departure, sojourn abroad, and return – had their effects on the countries of origin. The first effect consisted in the brain drain that coincided with the departure: it has invariably been described as a huge loss for the home countries. Although the work of many historians who stayed behind remained unaffected, the overall quality of historical research in the home countries impoverished because the departure of refugees saw the replacement of much critical historical writing by servile propaganda on behalf of a repressive regime. Work able to stand the test of time in such regimes was generally confined to specialized sectors not monitored by official ideology: constitutional history under the Third Reich is often cited as an example.¹⁴ A second effect was the impetus to produce new editions of sources: once the umbilical cord with the home country was cut and access to many sources lost, refugee historians frequently became influential as the editors of primary sources.¹⁵ Finally, the impact of the relatively small numbers of returnees on the historical writing of their home countries after the fall of the dictator generally remained limited. Most of the returnees, however, maintained their international networks, infused scholarship with ideas from

¹³ The 764 refugee historians do not constitute a sample but a universe. Statistically, a sample is valid only if the universe from which it is drawn is known. But here the universe was not known. Therefore, by means of systematic data collection worldwide in 1989-2004, I attempted to compile such a universe of refugee historians who were alive after 1945 as the basis for the analysis in the present essay. In 2004-2009, I have continued systematic data collection and found roughly 5% additional cases for the period 1945-2009 (about half of them were for 2004-2009). Given that these new cases displayed characteristics similar to the universe studied in this essay, my conclusions remain unaltered. During 2010-2016, I collected some new cases scattered across the entire period 1945-2016. Again, my impression is that they confirm rather than disturb the general patterns found for 1945-2004.

¹⁴ H. Möller, “From Weimar to Bonn: The Arts and the Humanities in Exile and Return, 1933-1980”, *International Biographical Dictionary of Central European Émigrés, 1933-1945*, part II, eds H. Strauss and W. Röder (Munich: Saur, 1983), lx; G. Iggers, “Die deutschen Historiker in der Emigration”, *Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland. Traditionelle Positionen und gegenwärtige Aufgaben*, ed. B. Faulenbach (Munich: Beck, 1974), 111; Gray, “Spanish Diaspora”, 68; Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 3-4.

For a sketch of the position of exile in the gamut of options open to historians living under dictatorship, see A. De Baets, *Censorship of Historical Thought. A World Guide, 1945-2000* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2002), 19-20, and A. De Baets, “Censorship and History (1945-present)”, *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 5, *1945 to Present*, eds A. Schneider and D. Woolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011 and 2015), 52-73.

¹⁵ Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 18-19.

abroad, and promoted scholarly and cultural exchanges.¹⁶ And the works of refugees who did not return home became known or were rediscovered in their home countries, usually after long delays and sometimes in translation.

We see that the answer to the first question is mixed, although loss dominates. However, exceptions qualify the general rule, as the examples of apartheid South Africa and the German Democratic Republic demonstrate. The work of South African refugee and émigré historians, many of whom had left the republic for political reasons, transformed South African historiography during and after apartheid. Notwithstanding the academic boycott during much of apartheid, South Africa remained intellectually permeable. Some white émigré historians could visit the country, South African students studied in the United Kingdom, and work written abroad circulated in South Africa's universities. In the exiles' main hub, London, they met regularly to exchange ideas.¹⁷ As these scholars and their students were mostly white, however, their impact on the wider community was initially probably indirect, partial, and delayed.

The German Democratic Republic offers a clearer case of the influence of returnees on the historiography of their home country. Most of these returnees had gone into exile in the 1930s on account of their political activities. After the Second World War, several Communist refugee historians who had fled Nazi Germany returned to the Soviet occupation zone, which became the German Democratic Republic and where exile was perceived as a weapon in the struggle against Fascism. Historians such as Jürgen Kuczynski, Ernst Engelberg, Alexander Abusch, Alfred Meusel and Leo Stern (the last one an Austrian) played important roles in creating East Germany's historiography,¹⁸ of which little survived the challenge of reunification in 1989.¹⁹ Elsewhere, the impact of the relatively small numbers of returnees on post-dictatorial historiographies remained limited.

IV. HOST COUNTRIES

The second question centers on the manner in which refugee historians influenced their host countries. In general, it can be said that their experiences as refugees led them to ask roughly the same historical questions as always, while their responses were predictably diverse as they depended on method, concepts, world view, political position, and local circumstances. This variety meant that coherent historical schools founded by refugee historians were rare. The exception may be the Russian émigrés of the so-called Eurasian school, which postulated that Russia did not belong either to Europe or Asia but constituted a separate unit on account of the long Mongol occupation. This school, however, had no fixed geographical location. Among its leading spokesmen, some stayed in the USSR, others, like the geographer Petr

¹⁶ Möller, "From Weimar", lxii; Hoffmann, "Contribution", 168-171; W. Schulze, "Refugee Historians and the German Historical Profession between 1950 and 1970", *An Interrupted Past. German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States*, eds H. Lehmann and J. Sheehan (Washington, D. C.: German Historical Institute; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 213; Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 8.

¹⁷ S. Marks, personal communication to author (August 2002).

¹⁸ Iggers, "Die deutschen Historiker", 108; Möller, "From Weimar", lxi-lxiii; Krohn, *Intellectuals*, 3; M. Keßler, *Exilerfahrung in Wissenschaft und Politik. Remigrierte Historiker in der frühen DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), 317-318.

¹⁹ De Baets, *Censorship*, 223-234.

Savitsky, lived in Czechoslovakia, while the historian George Vernadsky left for the United States, after a stay in Prague.²⁰

Although quite a few refugee historians were active institution builders, the general picture is one of scattered, heterogeneous, and individualized influences.²¹ In Paris, for example, the Marxist-oriented works of the Greek historian Nikolas Svoronos, who went abroad before the civil war of 1946-1949, inspired a circle of Greek economic historians in Paris.²² In the case of the German-speaking emigration, the refugee political scientists and sociologists had greater influence than the historians, not only on their own disciplines but also on history. Explanations for this phenomenon differ widely. One scholar attributes it to the fact that the most eminent German historians (Friedrich Meinecke, for example) did not go into exile: the talent, innovation, and creativity of refugee historians was apparently less than in neighboring disciplines whose most eminent figures (such as an Erwin Panofsky in art history) did emigrate.²³ A second explanation maintains that the marked difference in quality between German and Anglo-Saxon works of history in the nineteenth century had disappeared by the 1930s, while this was not the case for younger disciplines such as psychoanalysis. A third (debatable) explanation simply states that few refugee historians specialized in the subject that would have given them the most influence, namely the history of the host country.²⁴

Nonetheless, in some specialized fields of research, their impact was significant. In many countries, they developed the genre of diaspora studies.²⁵ In the United States and the United Kingdom, they excelled in Central European history, most notably German and Jewish history, and in Renaissance studies.²⁶ Meinecke's numerous exile students, who made their way to the United States, brought with them their emphasis on the history of ideas, but they began to place this history of ideas increasingly within its social context, thus advancing the field of the social history of ideas.²⁷ Finally, interest in comparative and world history increased, especially after the United States intervention in the Second World War in 1941.²⁸

The situation of Spanish exiles was more clear-cut. Among professional historians, the preferred discipline was the history of Spain; among politicians and journalists, it was the history of the Second Republic and the civil war; and among both groups, it was the topic of the Spanish influence on American history.²⁹ In this case, too, the

²⁰ A. Mazour, *Modern Russian Historiography* (Princeton NJ: Van Nostrand, 1958), 236-242.

²¹ P. Walther, "Emigrierte deutsche Historiker in den USA", *Berichte zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte*, 7 (1984): 50; Hoffmann, "Contribution", 172; Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 10; *Out of the Third Reich*, xiv.

²² A. Kitroeff, "Continuity and Change in Contemporary Greek Historiography", *European History Quarterly*, 19 (1989): 271, 291.

²⁴ Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 9.

²⁵ See, e.g., Joseph Walk (Jewish); Pyotr Kovalevsky (Russian); Vilém Prečan (Czechoslovakian); Javier Malagón Barceló, Juan Antonio Ortega y Medina, Vicente Lloréns Castillo (Spanish); Herbert Strauss, Hanns Reissner (Central European).

²⁶ Iggers, "Die deutschen Historiker", 104; Walther, "Emigrierte deutsche Historiker", 49; Hoffmann, "Contribution", 164, 173; Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 1, 8, 11; *Out of the Third Reich*, xix.

²⁷ Iggers, "Die deutschen Historiker", 106; E. Schulin, "German and American Historiography in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", *Interrupted Past*, 27; Hoffmann, "Contribution", 163; Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 10; Walther, "Emigrierte deutsche Historiker", 41-44, 50.

²⁸ Fermi, *Illustrious Immigrants*, 353-354.

²⁹ *El exilio español en México, 1939-1982* (Mexico: Salvat, Fondo de cultura económica, 1982), 888.

history of ideas was notable, owing to the influence on refugee historians of José Gaos, an exiled philosopher, socialist, and former rector at the University of Madrid, who inspired them with his study of ideas in their historical context. Gaos translated German philosophers into Spanish and introduced the work of his mentor, José Ortega y Gasset; he influenced history departments throughout Latin America.³⁰ It would be a fascinating study to compare the impact of intellectual historian Friedrich Meinecke and exile philosophers Hu Shi (John Dewey's student) and José Gaos (Ortega y Gasset's student) on scores of German, Chinese, and Spanish-speaking refugee historians respectively. The history of ideas thrived so much perhaps because it depended less heavily on access to the archives.

Some individuals created a renaissance in certain fields almost single-handedly. Arnaldo Momigliano and Moses Finley, for example, both became political exiles after dismissal from their academic positions, the former chased from Italy after the introduction of Mussolini's race laws in September 1938, the latter chased from the United States in 1952 during the McCarthy era. They influenced the study of ancient history far beyond the United Kingdom where they found a new home. For them, exile, as Plutarch contended, raised the quality of their work to towering heights.

For a complete insight into the influence of refugee historians upon their host countries, one needs not only to know what they *thought* or *wrote* but also what they *did*. Which professional activities did they deploy, for example, as founders of boards of historical institutions and journals? Table 1 tries to provide an answer to this question.

TABLE 1. Refugee Historians As Founders of Historical Institutions and Journals during Their Exile.

Origin	Historian	Destination	Year	Historical institution / journal
Argentina	Emilio Ravignani (1886-1954)	Uruguay	[1950]	Instituto de investigaciones históricas, Facultad de humanidades, Universidad de Montevideo.
Austria	Arnold Wiznitzer (1899-1972)	Brazil	?	Instituto judaico brasileiro de pesquisa histórica.
Belgium	George Sarton (1884-1956)	USA	1924	History of Science Society.
			1936	<i>Osiris: Studies on the History and Philosophy of Science, and on the History of Learning and Culture</i> (companion to <i>Isis</i> , 1913-).
	Henri Grégoire (1881-1964)		1941	Transfer of <i>Byzantion: Revue internationale des études byzantines</i> , co-founded by him (1924), to New York (1941-1946) [Also founder-president École libre des hautes études, New York].

³⁰ J. Malagón, "Los historiadores y la historia", *El exilio español de 1939*, volume 5, *Arte y ciencia* (Madrid: Taurus, 1978), 247, 281, 310, 321, 324, 328, 331, 333, 336, 338; J. A. Ortega y Medina, "Historia" and "Antropología", both in *Exilio español en México*, 237-242; *Exilio español en México*, 775-776; Gray, "Spanish Diaspora", 70-71; *Historiadores de México en el siglo XX*, eds E. Florescano and R. Pérez Montfort (Mexico: Consejo Nacional para la cultura y las artes, Fondo de Cultura Económica 1995), 146-147.

Origin	Historian	Destination	Year	Historical institution / journal	
China	Fu Sinian (1896-1950)	Taiwan	1948	Transfer of Academia Sinica Institute of History and Philology (with help of Qian Mu, Luo Jialun, Li Ji, Dong Zuobin).	
	Zhang Qiyun (1901-1985)		1954	National Historical Museum [founder]. [Also re-established three universities].	
Czechoslovakia	Joseph Kirschbaum (1913-2001)	Canada	1992	Chair in Slovak Culture and History, University of Ottawa (held by Mark Stolarík).	
Egypt	Ahmad Shalabi (?1914-)	Sudan	[1965]	Department of History and Islamic Civilization, Islamic University of Omdurman [founder].	
Germany	Fritz Saxl (1890-1948), and others	UK	1933	Transfer of Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg (Warburg Library for Cultural Research) to London	
	Guido Kisch (1889-1985)	USA	1938	<i>Historia Judaica: Journal of Studies in Jewish History, Especially in the Legal and Economic History of the Jews</i> (from 1962 part of <i>Revue des études juives</i>).	
	George Hallgarten (1901-1975)		?	American Committee To Study War Documents (later: American Historical Association Committee for the Study of War Documents) [co-founder].	
	George Urdang (1882-1960)		1941	American Institute of the History of Pharmacy, Madison WI [co-founder].	
	Ernst Posner (1892-1980)		1945	Organized summer courses in archival education (on Archive Administration, 1945-1961; on Genealogical Research, 1950-; in Records Management, 1954-; on Interpretation of Historic Sites, 1949-1950).	
	Albrecht Goetze (1897-1971)		1947	<i>Journal of Cuneiform Studies</i> (journal about ancient Mesopotamia and Anatolia; Baghdad School of American Schools of Oriental Research) [co-founder].	
	Stephan Kuttner (1907-1996)		1955	Institute of Medieval Canon Law (Washington, Yale, Berkeley, from 1991 Munich; from 1996 called Stephan Kuttner Institute of Medieval Canon Law).	
	<i>Council of Jews from Germany</i>		1955	Leo Baeck Institute for the Study of the History and Culture of German-speaking Jewry (New York; branches in Jerusalem, London, Berlin). (President: Leo Baeck [1873-1956], chairman of the board: Siegfried Moses [1887-1974], editor of <i>Year Book</i> (1956-): Robert Weltsch [1891-1982], and others).	
	Poland	<i>Various exiles</i>	France	1962-	<i>Zeszyty historyczne</i> (Historical Notebooks), Paris, Instytut Literacki. Published about blank spots of contemporary history; copies illegally introduced in Poland, sometimes in miniature versions.

Origin	Historian	Destination	Year	Historical institution / journal
Spain	Francisco Barnés (1877-1947)	Mexico	[1939]	Museo nacional de historia, Chapultepec, Mexico D.F.
	Juan Comas Camps (1900-1979)		1941	Escuela nacional de antropología e historia [co-founder]. [Also founder of Instituto de investigaciones antropológicas, National Autonomous University of Mexico, 1973].
	José María Miquel i Vergés (1904-1964)		1941	Centro de estudios históricos, Colegio de México [co-founder].
	Ángel Palerm Vich (1917-1980)		1973	Centro de investigaciones superiores, Instituto nacional de antropología e historia (from 1980: Centro de investigaciones y estudios superiores en antropología social) [co-founder]. [Also founder-director of Department of Social Anthropology and Instituto de ciencias sociales at Universidad Iberoamericana (1967-1980)].
	Claudio Sánchez Albornoz (1893-1984)	Argentina	1940	Instituto de historia de España, Universidad de Buenos Aires.
			1944	<i>Los cuadernos de historia de España</i> .
	Juan María Aguilar y Calvo (1889-1948)	Panamá	?	Organized academic curriculum for universal and American history, Universidad de Panamá.
	Pedro Bosch Gimpera (1891-1974)	Guatemala	[1945]	Facultad de humanidades, Universidad de San Carlos, including its history curriculum [co-founder].
		El Salvador	[1947]	Similar activities as in Guatemala.
	Manuel Tuñón de Lara (1917-1997)	France	1970	Conferences of Centro de investigaciones hispánicas, Pau University (1970-1980).
USSR	<i>Various exiles and émigrés</i>	Czechoslovakia	[1923]	Russian Cultural and Historical Museum and Russian Foreign Historical Archive, Prague (archives confiscated in 1946).
	Lev Bagrow (1881-1957)	Germany	1935	<i>Imago Mundi: International Journal for the History of Cartography</i> .
	Natalya Gorbanevskaya (1936-)	France	1979-1983	Edited volumes 2-6 of <i>samizdat</i> journal <i>Pamyat: Istoricheskii sbornik</i> (Memory: An Historical Anthology), 'temporarily' published as <i>tamizdat</i> in Paris.

Notes:

(1) Belgium, China, Germany: three important transfers are included.

(2) Germany, Poland, USSR: it is unknown whether the collective actors (in italics) included historians.

(3) Ravignani is not a refugee historian but a 'commuting' historian; USSR: Gorbanevskaya is not a historian but a poet and translator.

Source: Author's own database.

The table could be entitled 'Plutarch's dream' and cited as corroboration of his thesis. The institutional and editorial activities of refugee historians were substantial but,

naturally, far from covering the entire institutional and editorial landscape in the host countries. In addition to the historical activities mentioned in Table 1, ten historians founded institutions which encompassed history but were larger, and nine founded institutions unrelated to history altogether during their exile. And to these, one could add the many refugee historians who founded institutions or journals *after* returning from exile. Even so, the table reflects only part of the exiles' real performance.

On the whole, the contribution of refugees, however precious, was not of cardinal importance nor did it make a crucial difference to scholarship in their host countries. However, this finding should be qualified on its turn. Indeed, what I allege about refugee historians, is applicable to all historians, exiled or not: many, if not most, historians do not realize critical, large-scale or enduring breakthroughs in their fields.

V. ON BALANCE

The final and most difficult question is whether loss for the home country was of corresponding benefit to the host country. Pondering this question for German refugee historians in the United States, Peter Walther speaks of the benefit for the receiving country ('sicherlich ein Gewinn'), but emphasizes the huge loss for Germany ('nicht messbarer Verlust'). In addition, career change complicates the answer. For Catherine Epstein: "The fact that so many refugees changed careers challenges the common notion that American scholarship benefited from what the German scholarship lost".³¹

Career change is an intriguing factor and quantitative analysis of this factor is complex. The following figures in Table 2 are only meant to give an impression. They show perhaps that micro-research is better suited to studying career change than a macro-approach. Nevertheless, the quantitative results are meaningful.

TABLE 2. Refugee Historians and Career Change during Their Exile.

	N	%
1. Universe (total population)	764	
2. <i>Of which:</i> cases where occupational data are known both before and during exile.	653	
3. <i>Of which: the 'historically minded'</i>		
- before exile	439	
- during exile	468	
- before and/or during exile	544	100
4. <i>Of which:</i> - before and during exile	363	66,7
- mutations or career changes	181	33,3
5. <i>Of which:</i> - before but not during exile	76	14,0
- during but not before exile	105	19,3

Note: The 'historically minded': those whose education or occupation contained an important historical component. Source: Author's own database.

³¹ Walther, "Emigrierte deutsche Historiker", 50; Epstein, *Past Renewed*, 4.

Of those whose education and/or occupation were known *both* before and during exile (653 of 764 cases), the 'historically minded' (a short formula to indicate those whose education or occupation contained an important historical component) rose slightly from 439 before exile to 468 during exile. Career changes, however, went in two directions. On the one hand, 76 of the 'historically minded' did jobs during exile unrelated to history. On the other, 105 persons who were not particularly 'historically minded' before their exile became so during exile: the experience of exile apparently urged many of them to reflect on history. Hence, there were 181 relevant career mutations: an estimated *one-third* of the exiles experienced (fundamental) career change. Thus, career change remains an intriguing phenomenon – and Plutarch's thesis appealing and puzzling.

This is not the whole story. Many who did not change their careers experienced dismissal and unemployment either before or during exile (experiences which are invisible in Table 2) and generally worked in worse conditions than before exile. Age and poor mastery of language, for example, limited the career opportunities of older refugees and often led them to private study. It was easier to succeed in the more internationalized fields of ancient, medieval, and oriental history than in modern history, in which national differences were more pronounced.³² Many younger historians were unemployed for short or long periods, and on taking up their profession again had to accept more junior positions. In addition, not a few refugees and exiles were also persecuted by their home countries *after* they left: their citizenship, title, or right to teach was revoked, they were spied upon, or their work was published without their authorization or even under another name.³³ To all this, one could add that the more political the reasons for exile were, and the more time refugees dedicated to political activities, the less their impact generally was on the profession itself. On the whole, the balance shows that loss for the home country probably outweighs benefits for the host country.

VI. CONCLUSION

Only if viewed from the particular angle of institutional innovation, can the effect of exile be called wholly positive. Usually, forced departure was a tragedy at the micro-level of the individual refugee and often career breaches were only laboriously repairable. At the macro-level of historical writing, our analysis strongly indicates that loss for the home country was not generally equalled by gain for the host country. Although counterfactuals cannot be proved, it is plausible to assume that the international cross-fertilization embodied in, or emanating from, refugee historians would probably have happened anyway in an increasingly globalized world, if more slowly and more indirectly. Of course, some countries, subdisciplines of history, or even individual refugees constitute strong positive exceptions.

³² Hoffmann, "Contribution", 161-163; *Out of the Third Reich*, xv.

³³ Some committed suicide: Theodor Mommsen (Germany), Ramón Iglesia (Spain). Others were assassinated: Ioan Culianu (Romania), Jesús de Galíndez (Spain), Sabarotnam Sabalingham (Sri Lanka) and, possibly, Ali Shariati (Iran). See also A. De Baets, "Political Murders of Historians (1945-2014)", *Historians as Engaged Intellectuals*, ed. S. Berger (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, forthcoming [2016]).

The unique contribution of refugee historians may, I suggest, be located elsewhere, although this is rarely mentioned by exile researchers. It is located in the courage with which they kept alive, in unenviable circumstances, the alternative versions – and often the critical principles of logic and evidence – of the historical writing of their home countries when the latter succumbed to tyranny, falsification, and lies.³⁴ *This* was the real blessing in disguise for the historical profession, embodied in output and even more in principles, in thoughts and activities and even more in symbolic value.

Even so, with their frozen memories and new horizons, refugee historians were certainly not the only custodians of sound method and interpretation. To maintain this would be to underestimate the integrity of those historians who stayed home and lived, sometimes for decades, under the severest of dictatorships and still were able, with frozen horizons but lively memories, to create small margins of freedom in their unrelenting search for historical truth. Plutarch's thesis, therefore, passes the test, though only partially and mostly in unintended ways.

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³⁴ See also E. Tortarolo, "Historians in the Storm: Émigré Historiography in the Twentieth Century", *Transnational Challenges to National History Writing*, eds M. Middell and L. Roura (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 389-390.

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