



# OS TRA KON

Natalia Artemenko  
Guest Editor

**Sustaining  
Academic Freedom  
for Scholars at Risk**

Vol. 2, no. 1 (2025)

Ostrakon – a small shard of broken pottery or stone used as a durable and convenient medium for writing scratched into the surface. Bound up with the notion of exile through its use in the voting process for ostracism in Ancient Greece, the ostrakon captures the spirit of this new imprint. With the more ephemeral notions of the chapbook or pamphlet in mind, *Ostrakon* welcomes multi- and interdisciplinary work which explores and develops themes broadly related to mass mobility, forced displacement, and exile brought about through conflict, climate change, and authoritarianism. *Ostrakon* welcomes contributions from a wide range of authors and artists that move beyond conventional scholarly presentational forms to alternative modes of creative and multimedia work. The intention is to attract both scholarly and general readers concerned about human rights, social justice, and the future of the planet and its inhabitants. Academic submissions undergo a peer review process. Submissions in English and German are considered with a maximum limit of 25,000 words. *Ostrakon* is published hard copy and online.

Referred to in the ancient sources as a just and honorable man, Aristides was nonetheless ostracized. At the behest of an illiterate voter who said he was tired of hearing Aristides constantly referred to as "the Just", Aristides wrote his own name onto an ostrakon and took leave of the city (Plutarch. *Life of Aristides*, VII, 5–6).

# OSTRAKON

**Vol. 2, no. 1 (2025)**

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# Sustaining Academic Freedom for Scholars at Risk

**Guest Editor: Natalia Artemenko**

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**Wirklich, ich lebe in finsternen Zeiten!**

**Bertolt Brecht, "An die Nachgeborenen"**

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the editorial board of the journal for the honor of being invited to edit this issue. For me it has meant not only an expression of professional trust, but also an important opportunity to contribute to the discussion of a topic critically important for the academic community, a contribution that was made possible by the substantive and thoughtful participation of the authors engaged in this issue.

My special thanks must be reserved for Lydia Schmuck, Vanessa Agnew, Kader Konuk, and Renate Poccia for their support, openness to dialogue, and intellectual collaboration at all stages of publishing the issue. For me this collaboration has become an example of genuine academic solidarity and mutual respect.



# INTRODUCTION

*Natalia Artemenko*

## **Between Exile and Freedom**

Academic freedom means having not only the right to speak up, but also the opportunity to think without fear. In recent decades, we have seen increasingly alarming signs: Universities have been turned into sites of political, ideological, and economic pressure. Those academics who dare to disagree more often find themselves, both metaphorically and literally, in a position of exile. They face not only physical but also existential exile, i.e., exile from the intellectual home which once empowered them to think fearlessly.

In a world where freedom of thought is, increasingly, falling under suspicion and universities are turned into arenas of political influence, we witness the way in which academics are losing their positions, their citizenship, and their security, yet still keep defending the right to reflect and express doubts and critique.

We dedicate this issue of our journal to those who, despite having lost their homes, have managed to retain their voices. We have collected contributions from researchers who have lived through exile, have found themselves in exile, or have been reflecting on it. Among these pages,

one hears not just first-person voices, but also the voice of the era as such.

This issue is dedicated to these very voices, the voices of those who have found themselves between borders, without an institute, yet not without their convictions. It comprises texts written against the background of relocation, forced isolation, and the loss of an academic context. The authors in the issue present different understandings of what it means to be an academic in exile.

These texts not only diagnose the situation but also pose a broader question: What remains of academic freedom when it is forced to exist in spite of – and not thanks to – institutions?

Over the past few years, the academic community has collided with a growing wave of political repression, censorship, and violence leveled against researchers. Many academics around the world have ended up in vulnerable positions: They have lost their jobs, faced legal or administrative prosecution, or been forced to leave their home countries. In response to these challenges, international organizations and university alliances have formed programs to provide emergency support for at-risk academics.

Such programs not only save individual lives and careers but also leave room for independent studies. Supporting academics in exile is not a case of charity but an investment in the future of thought; it is a form of resistance against intellectual destruction and an expression of

solidarity which allows the academy to uphold its very foundations.

Programs of academic solidarity have turned into an integral part of the global academic landscape. However, the noble goals conceal many structural, ethical, and practical obstacles.

### **1. Temporary nature of support**

The vast majority of programs provide only temporary contracts (which usually last 12–24 months). At the end of this period, the academic returns to a vulnerable position all over again, often without the right to renew their contract, with limited access to the labor market, and without the option of being fully integrated into the academic system of the host country.

### **2. Bureaucratic complexity and rigid selection process**

Application procedures are often complex and require extensive documentation. Sometimes this necessitates providing evidence of threat, references, and well-established academic contacts in the host country. As a result, they may exclude the most vulnerable cases, those who have ended up in dire circumstances but are not integrated into the international academic space.

### **3. Institutional inaccessibility**

While the programs work, only rarely do they become an integral part of the long-term strategy of universities. Host institutions rarely enter into commitments after the scholar's funding period, and the cases of academics

actually being integrated into the staff are the exceptions rather than the rule.

#### **4. Academic marginalization**

Academics in exile often find themselves marginalized within the academic space for several reasons:

- Their topics do not correspond to the local intellectual agenda
- Publications in “low-priority” languages are not recognized
- Opportunities to participate in grant activities are limited by their legal status
- Colleagues may treat them as “guests” rather than equals

#### **5. Trauma and psychosocial isolation**

Emigration; persecution; and loss of status, language, and professional community – all of the above leave deep scars. Many researchers work while suffering from depression, post-traumatic syndrome, and social disorientation, all of which complicates academic productivity.

#### **6. The problem of “academic refugee” qua category**

These programs have to deal with categories that do not match a legal status: An “at-risk academic” is often not the same as an official refugee with a right to state protection. A zone of legal uncertainty arises among humanitarian, academic, and migration forms of logic.

Support programs are essentially important, yet, as such, they do not solve the problem of exile. Without reviewing policies of integration, without transforming universities

into truly inclusive institutions, without recognizing both traumatic and political experience as a legitimate part of the academic biography, academic support tends to turn into symbolic compensation for systemic exclusion.

Where is it taking us, and what changes could be made?

The authors of this special issue explore these questions and offer their own responses.

This issue of the journal opens with a poem, “Dasein,” by **Kholoud Charaf**, a Syrian poet, writer, and activist who has been living in exile since 2018. After Poland, Sweden, Latvia, and Germany, she came to Vienna, where she is working on her new novel. The poet wrote this poem initially in German and then translated it into English herself – neither language is native to her. How does it feel to write texts in foreign languages because of and in connection with exile?

The article by **Jane O. Newman** and **Nancy Postero** outlines the University of California system’s two-decade-long efforts to support at-risk scholars across its ten campuses. Initially ad hoc, these efforts have drawn on diverse funding sources, including institutional support, crowdfunding, and partnerships with organizations such as Scholars at Risk (SAR) and the International Institute for Education’s Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF). To date, seventy-five scholars have found refuge through this system, though long-term career transitions remain a major challenge. In response, UC faculty have begun shifting from a purely humanitarian model to more structured academic and professional mentoring. Particularly notewor-

thy is the article's reflection on the growing emphasis on recognizing and centering the expertise of at-risk scholars themselves, moving beyond a one-directional model of support. The article shares key strategies and lessons that may be useful for institutions seeking to develop sustainable support for scholars in exile.

The reflective essay by **Cécile Accilien** and **Jessica Adams** explores the severe challenges faced by scholars in Haiti, including threats to personal safety and daily struggles with unreliable electricity, limited internet access, and limited availability of academic resources. These systemic barriers not only hinder research but also impact scholars' morale and productivity. Drawing on their own lived experience, the authors highlight the realities of working in marginalized academic contexts. This text explores how scholars from the "Global North" can engage in ethical, collaborative, and concrete support for at-risk scholars from the "Global South," especially amidst growing systemic inequalities. It emphasizes the need to recognize local contexts; rethink structures of academic exchange; and prioritize mutual understanding, access, and justice. The authors argue that writing and intellectual solidarity are not luxuries but necessary acts of resistance and survival in increasingly repressive global conditions.

The article by **Elsie Cohen** and **Gisèle Sapiro** examines how political persecution and forced exile have shaped the intellectual trajectory of Turkish sociologist and writer **Pınar Selek**. Despite her exceptional international recognition, Selek's experience illustrates key dynamics faced by exiled scholars, such as the disruption of academic routines, difficulties in maintaining research, and

unequal conditions for reintegration. The article explores how exile imposed both constraints and opportunities, fostering a form of reflexivity that reoriented her thought and expanded the scope of her work. Drawing on such concepts as “biographical accident” and “epistemological privilege,” it highlights how exile can lead to deeper critical awareness and intellectual innovation. Selek’s later publications reflect this shift, as she moves beyond being framed solely as an expert on her country of origin to addressing broader, universal questions.

The article is followed by a brilliant interview with Selek herself, where we hear the thoughtful voice of a scholar who has endured exile without breaking – someone who has reflected on her experience and, in doing so, offers others an example of how to preserve inner strength in displacement.

The essay by **Ruslan Loshakov** offers a powerful analysis of how authoritarianism has eroded academic freedom and university autonomy in Russia. Drawing on first-hand experience, the author traces the transformation of Russian higher education from a space of creative possibility in the 1990s to a tightly controlled, bureaucratized system under Putin. Key features include increased teaching loads, political surveillance, low wages, and the marginalization of educators in favor of managerial elites. The article argues that these changes have made Russian universities tools of state ideology, silencing dissent and discouraging independent thought. Ultimately, it concludes that meaningful reform of higher education in Russia is impossible without dismantling the broader authoritarian regime.

This issue ends with an article by **Yulia Sineokaya**, who continues the theme of exile, political conflict, and the possibilities of freedom. As the war in Ukraine enters its fourth year, Russia's philosophical community has grown increasingly polarized and radicalized. Marginalized ideologues are now joined by mainstream academics in targeting dissenting scholars, accusing them of treason and undermining professional solidarity. Many prominent journals and institutions have adopted Kremlin narratives. The war has destroyed trust and professional dialogue, replacing them with public denunciations and political loyalty tests. The author proposes a generational lens to understand the deepening divide among Russian philosophers. Through the prism of the concept of "philosophical generations," the author also shares her experience of opening the Independent Institute of Philosophy (IPHI) in exile. IPHI serves as a crucial platform for displaced and dissident thinkers, promoting free inquiry beyond political control despite being banned as "undesirable" by Russian authorities. The ongoing ideological split deeply affects newer generations, who face stark choices amid war and repression, yet the author remains hopeful that future dialogue and reconciliation among Russian and Ukrainian intellectuals will eventually emerge.

This issue is an invitation to a discussion.

# Dasein / Being There / Being Existence / Being Presence

*Kholoud Charaf*

Dasein, a German philosophical term meaning “being there” or conscious existence, is left untranslated to preserve its existential depth.

Originally written in German by Kholoud Charaf and rewritten in English by the author.

In this poem, “da” and “there” do not simply indicate physical location, but evoke a metaphysical and emotional space of presence, connection, and becoming. The repetition of “there” and “Dasein” reflects a state of being in relation to time, space, love, and the Other. The term “Dasein” is used in the Heideggerian sense, referring not just to existence, but to the uniquely human way of being aware of one’s presence in the world, especially in relation to mortality.

# Being There / Being Existence / Being Presence

Here I am  
Thinking of you  
I am there  
Forever there  
I am dimensions  
Time and space  
In order to be, to be there  
I am time  
Time as I am in one place  
I am realm  
Realm turned back through time  
Existence; with life and death  
Time and space  
The whiteness of Being  
Reflection through consciousness  
"Being-toward-death"  
Being-toward-the-Eternal  
Being-toward-There / Being-toward-existence /  
Being-toward-presence.  
I am not only here, but also there  
There; is: high, wide, and deep, not just a point.  
Here; is: a path to Being  
I am Being  
Existence / presence  
And there for you  
I occupy realm in order to be life

Language allows me to reach awareness.  
Indeed, I exist,  
While love reveals even more to me.  
Here I am  
There  
Dasein  
I am me  
I am you  
I am there / I am here  
We are there / we are here  
Yet I miss your presence / existence / your Dasein  
Even though you are here  
And we are there  
To Be / Being toward existence / toward conscious  
reflection / toward presence / toward being, in order  
to Be

# Dasein

Ich bin da  
Und denke an dich  
Da bin ich  
Für immer da  
Ich bin Dimensionen  
Zeit und Ort  
Um da zu sein  
Ich bin Zeit  
Zeit bin ich an einem Ort  
Ich bin Raum  
Raum drehte sich in der Zeit zurück  
Existenz mit Leben und Tod  
Zeit und Raum  
Weiße des Seins  
Reflexion durch Bewusstsein  
"Sein zum Tode"  
Sein zum Ewigen  
Sein zum da  
Ich bin nicht hier, sondern da  
da ist hoch, weit und tief, nicht nur ein Punkt.  
Da gibt es einen Weg zu sein  
Ich bin da  
Dasein  
Und für dich da

Ich nehme Raum ein, um Leben zu sein  
Die Sprache lässt mich verstehen  
Ich bin doch existent,  
und die Liebe lässt mich mehr erkennen  
Da bin ich  
Da  
Dasein  
Ich bin ich  
Ich bin du  
Ich bin da  
Wir sind da  
Und ich vermisse dein Dasein  
obwohl du da bist  
und wir da sind  
Da Sein



# Beyond Rescue: The University of California Scholars at Risk Project

*Jane O. Newman / Nancy Postero*

## **Scholar Rescue at Risk**

Recent decades have seen a startling increase in the number of scholars displaced by conflict or political repression, leading to a crisis unprecedented since the great exodus of artists and scholars from Nazi-dominated Europe in the 1930s. Numerous US campuses, committees, and foundations, famously including the Rockefeller Foundation, the New School in New York City, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, worked to help this earlier generation of refugee scholars escape the conditions of precarity they faced. In similar fashion, institutions, organizations, and initiatives around the world are stepping up now to offer refuge to threatened colleagues as universities and institutions of higher education continue to be targeted by authoritarian regimes. But, as we show below, scholar-rescue efforts now, almost a hundred years later, continue to encounter the same “moral, practical, and scholarly challenges” the US academy was confronted with when it faced the “decimation of Europe’s academic elite” in the early to mid-twentieth century: often deadly hierarchical choices about who is “worth saving,” insufficient funds to assist all at-risk scholars in need of assistance in a sustained way, and the difficulty of finding a good fit for scholars trained in other systems – all of these persist.<sup>1</sup> Rather than merely updating what

<sup>1</sup> Laurel Leff, *Well Worth Saving: American Universities’ Life-and-Death Decisions on Refugees from Nazi Europe* (Yale University Press, 2019), 2–3.

Laurel Leff describes as the “triumphal symphony” that so often characterizes accounts of earlier scholar rescue in the United States with information about contemporary efforts,<sup>2</sup> then, our interest here is, first, to reflect upon the “discordant notes” that sound within these efforts, and second, to describe some ways to adjust them via what – with Alfred Babo and Anita Fábos – we call “sharing the platform.”<sup>3</sup>

We of course do not wish to downplay the often extraordinary work that has been done internationally, in the US, and by our colleagues in California in particular to welcome at-risk scholars from around the world. Instead, we are interested in complicating the definitions of “risk” with which we have worked to date by examining the ways that our primarily humanitarian initiatives to bring threatened colleagues into the US academic system often rely on looking away from both the challenges these efforts entail and the perhaps well-intended but, in the end, hierarchical assumptions about those colleagues and the US academy that subtends them. When we fail to interrogate the downsides of what successful integration of international at-risk scholars as colleagues into the University of California (UC) system might actually mean and how it works, both they and we risk becoming implicated in narratives of security and networks of unequal power relations that not only are difficult to shed, but in the end serve neither group well. Both their and our academic freedoms

<sup>2</sup> Leff, *Well Worth Saving*, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Alfred Babo and Anita Fábos, “Share the Platform: Collaborative Strategies for Refugee Integration in Academia,” recorded webinar, Integration and Belonging Hub, May 9, 2024, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c\\_64eFpCKGk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_64eFpCKGk). See also Share the Platform, <https://www.sharetheplatform.org/>.

are compromised as a result. Sharing the platform can help mitigate these developments.

In this self-reflexive essay, we focus on the case we know best: the University of California’s systemwide Scholars at Risk (SAR) project, on which both of us have worked for nearly a decade.<sup>4</sup> The University of California is a public land-grant research university system, with ten campuses across the state serving nearly 300,000 students. Over the last decade, ad hoc groups of faculty, staff, and administrators have found ways to invite at-risk scholars to their campuses. Both authors have been involved in hosting projects at their own campuses, Newman at UC Irvine and Postero at UC San Diego. We trace here the collective efforts to create sustainable hosting projects at our home campuses as well as our recent efforts to scale up these local projects to a systemwide project, explaining what we think was successful and what needs rethinking. We rely on data we generated during our organizing process, acknowledging that it is likely incomplete. That said, we hope this history and our self-critical analysis will provide a case study that generates thought for other groups and institutions hosting endangered scholars.

### **Structures of Hospitality: Scholar Rescue at the University of California (United States)**

The term “hospitality” has its roots in the Middle English word *(h)ospital*, which was a place where travelers found

<sup>4</sup> While some of the University of California scholars at risk have come to a UC campus via the Scholars at Risk Network in New York (<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org>), others have been supported by the International Institute of Education Scholar Rescue Fund (<https://www.scholarrescuefund.org/>). Still others have been supported by generous donors and crowdsourcing initiatives. See below. We nevertheless refer to our program as the University of California Scholars at Risk (UC SAR) project and describe our efforts as “scholar rescue.”

lodging; the term derived from the medieval Latin word *hospitāle* (guesthouse or inn) and was related to the Latin word *hospes*, which in fact had multiple meanings, including not only guest and stranger, but also host.<sup>5</sup> As we prepared to write this essay on the history and structure of the hosting arrangements offered to at-risk scholars by the ten-campus system of the University of California, it became clear that attending to these several layers of meaning and especially to the convertibility of “guest,” or “stranger,” on the one hand, and “host,” on the other, would be crucial. While most such arrangements are premised, as ours were, on the assumption that we are welcoming at-risk strangers into US academe and thus offering them refuge from the fraught situations they have fled, it is clear that our campuses, which are of course by definition also strange for our guests, who for the most part have been trained in other academic traditions and systems, are themselves risky. While the same situation confronts US academics when they travel abroad for sabbaticals or guest research appointments, for example, the risks are considerably lower in these cases, since the temporary guest at-risk scholar on a US campus often has no home campus or even home to which she can return. The refuge we offer is thus by definition precarious. Acknowledging this fact introduces the question of how hospitable our campuses and programs really are. In our description of the history and structure of the UC SAR program below, we note this temporal precarity as well as several of the

<sup>5</sup> Brian Treanor, “Putting Hospitality in Its Place,” in *Phenomenologies of the Stranger: Between Hostility and Hospitality*, ed. Richard Kearney and Kascha Semonovitch (Fordham University Press, 2011), 50. Émile Benveniste addresses the complex etymology of the concept of hospitality in his article “L’hospitalité,” in *Le Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes*, vol. 1 (Éditions de Minuit, 1969). We are indebted to Tracy McNulty for this reference; *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity, and the Expropriation of Identity* (University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 237, note 1.

other forms of insecurity embedded in our program, and we describe our tentative response to them in our development of a program of professionalization designed to assist the scholars in their pursuit of more sustained academic and extra-academic careers. This assistance is itself inscribed in a problematic relation of power between the so-called guest and the humanitarian host, as we explain below. Our most recent efforts have been designed to try to address this imbalance by sharing the platform with our colleagues in more equitable ways based on the recalculation of who exactly is at risk, especially in the US, today.

We begin with a bit about our local context and the history of our program, since we are aware that some aspects of our work are transferable to other academic environments in the US and around the world while others are not. Geographically, California is the third largest subnational entity in the US after Alaska and Texas. Yet it is the most populous such entity by far, due to historically high levels of immigration to the state. California has also been on the front line in receiving and accommodating refugee populations, including Vietnamese, Salvadorans, Iraqis, and now Afghans, demographics that have included an increasing number of at-risk academics over the past twenty years.<sup>6</sup> In the course of organizing our UC SAR Collective over the last few years, we have gathered information from faculty, staff, and administrators at each of the ten UC campuses in order to trace the development and current status of hosting projects. While, again, in all likelihood incomplete, our data reveal that during the last two decades, more than seventy-five at-risk scholars

<sup>6</sup> "Indicator: Refugee Arrivals," California Immigrant Data Portal, 2022, <https://immigrantdata.ca.org/indicators/refugee-arrivals>.

have been hosted at the ten campuses of the UC system, the state's main public academic research institution.<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that the earliest of these hosting arrangements at the UCs more or less coincided with the founding of the Scholars at Risk network (SAR) in 2000 and of the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF) in 2002, with the first appointments made in 2001–2 at the Berkeley campus and in 2002–4 at the UC Davis campus. The structural similarities between these larger projects and ours – and the challenges presented to both – are thus not surprising.

In the early years, SAR scholars came to the UC campuses from a wide range of countries of origin (Uganda, Rwanda, Myanmar, Colombia, Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan). Since approximately 2012, there has been a heavier representation of Near and Middle Eastern colleagues (from Syria, Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey) as well as colleagues from several African nations (Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Sudan). Beginning with the political unrest in Turkey in 2015–16, the need for hosting international at-risk scholars exploded and was accompanied by an increased interest in scholar rescue efforts on the part of both systemwide and local leadership within the UC system, particularly after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August 2021, followed by the onset of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. Other contexts of political instability and unrest less prominent in the media, such as the ongoing civil war in Cameroon, contributed to a spike in applicants for

<sup>7</sup> This number represents self-reported data from colleagues at our ten campuses. It is in all likelihood an undercount. There are of course other important research universities in California, including Stanford and the University of Southern California, which may have also hosted at-risk scholars. These institutions are private, stand-alone universities, however, while the UC system is an interconnected publicly funded network.

academic hosting opportunities, as did rising assaults on academic freedom in Brazil, China, Ethiopia, Hong Kong, Iran, Russia, Sudan, and Yemen – and now Gaza. While at-risk colleagues from all of these countries have found hosting opportunities at a UC campus, the shifting patterns of which countries of origin dominate at any given time reveal one of the inevitable weaknesses of relying on a humanitarian model of support. The ebb and flow of UC administrative interest and the wider community's willingness to fund scholar rescue through charitable donations often track with the headlines, resulting in less sustainable programs. Moreover, as institutional and public support waxes and wanes, some threatened scholarly communities are privileged over others. Ideological filters and political conditions on the ground in the US also play a role in determining donor interest and campus openness to supporting our programs.

To date, UC SAR scholars have found placement in a number of disciplines, including journalism, law, human rights teaching and advocacy, history, anthropology, political science, and international relations, as well as gender studies and women's rights advocacy, alongside filmmakers and artists; these are fields that are often the targets of government repression. There has nevertheless also been a wide range of colleagues from STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields in our program, among them chemistry, medicine and public health, neuroscience, optical engineering, engineering, applied and theoretical physics, and statistics. Other scholars have been hosted in agricultural sciences, cognitive psycholo-

gy and education, women's literature, and environmental humanities. The work of handling each placement on an individual level, negotiating the appropriate job title for teaching and research appointments in case-by-case fashion, is time-consuming. Although the information is anecdotal, the evidence suggests that the at-risk scholars across the UC have been both at earlier moments in their careers (postdoctoral scholars, assistant and associate professor level) and at more advanced stages. (There has been a smaller number of hosted student scholars at both the undergraduate and graduate levels [MA, PhD, and MD].<sup>8</sup>) This wide range of career stages has presented challenges in setup costs and mentoring, with advanced scholars in STEM fields requiring larger commitments in terms of lab space, for example, and early-career colleagues needing more intensive mentoring relationships over a period of time that often exceeds the two-year support fellowships typical of SAR placement. Scholars in STEM fields often find places with established mentors who can pay them through their ongoing research grants. UC San Francisco has been especially successful in bringing at-risk scholars into their medical and public health programs.<sup>9</sup>

The institutional mechanics of securing these placements have varied across the UC system. On some campuses, efforts to host at-risk colleagues have been centrally organized in collaboration with IIE-SRF, SAR, and other funding and/or advocacy groups. In these cases, the human

<sup>8</sup> This is surely an undercount. There are many refugee students in the UC system, especially at the undergraduate level.

<sup>9</sup> As of this writing (May 2025), the UCSF SAR program has nevertheless experienced severe budget reductions due to political changes in Washington, DC, with much of its federal funding cut.

resources-related work of making the appointment has been absorbed by staff members at the central campus level who are committed to the program on a volunteer basis. On other campuses, the hosting arrangements have been managed by staff at individual campus centers, including the Human Rights Center at UC Berkeley and the Center for Near Eastern Studies at UCLA, who also volunteer their time and expertise on top of their regular duties. The time frames for processing the scholars' academic appointments thus vary, according to when staff members' other responsibilities change or when experienced support staff move on to other positions, resulting in delays as their replacements become familiar with the SAR program. In all cases, sponsoring units have worked closely on visa arrangements with the International Centers that all UC campuses have due to the large number of non-US faculty and students. Changes in immigration policies at the federal level have nevertheless caused delays in visa processing even for experienced professionals. With no centralized UC SAR office either on any of our campuses or at the systemwide level, the all-important work of helping colleagues not familiar with the US system resettle after often traumatic events – such as assisting with housing, school placement for children, the securing of Social Security numbers, and the opening of bank accounts – has generally also been provided on a volunteer basis, either by individual faculty members acting as campus liaisons for the scholars or by campus-based SAR steering committees or groups.<sup>10</sup> Mentoring arrangements and

<sup>10</sup> Systematic efforts to provide the all-important mental health support to the scholars have proven difficult to mount for a variety of reasons. On the history and challenges of refugee mental health care beyond the specifically academic population, see Robert Tyminski, *The Psychological Effects of Immigrating: A Depth Psychology Perspective on Relocating to a New Place* (Routledge, 2023).

efficacy have varied as a result, with research agendas, sabbatical plans, and funding streams for the individual faculty hosts changing from year to year, leading to shifts in the amount of time they can devote to the individual scholar.

Funding mechanisms to support the scholars have varied across the UC system, with compensation ranging from \$55,000 to \$100,000/year (including benefits, such as health insurance), depending on qualifications and appointment title. Appointment length has also varied, but in no case exceeded two years. The sources of funding have included IIE-SRF awards of \$25,000/year, matched and also supplemented by campuses, centers, units, and individual Primary Investigator (PI) external funding agency monies; dedicated campus funds allocated by provosts, chancellors, offices of research, and offices of global engagement; and private gifts. As above, some scholars have been able to teach and work in labs for compensation; others have held primarily research positions. The nature of the appointment may in some cases have depended on English-language proficiency, especially if the scholar was funded either partially or largely through a teaching agreement. In specific cases, such as for Afghan and Ukrainian colleagues, crowdsourcing was very effective. In one case, the campus administration matched a major donation from an individual to support scholars at risk, making it possible to fund just shy of twenty master's students for two years each. In addition to its grants, the IIE-SRF covers relocation costs for its awardees and allocates a subsidy for travel to professional meetings, relieving the campuses of the need to provide such funding. The SAR network has occasional funding sources benefiting

particular groups, and is able to add resources to campus efforts. In a number of cases, SAR also contributed travel funds and covered emergency visa fees. Acknowledging the heterogeneity of these funding sources and agreements, which are, again, negotiated on a case-by-case and often year-by-year basis, underscores the precarity of such support structures. Funding shortfalls at the campus level or in state and federal funding also mean the unexpected reduction of support for at-risk scholars at public institutions like the UC. Such fluctuations reinforce the scholars' uncertainty regarding the longevity of their positions and make it exceedingly difficult for them to plan both their research agendas and their personal lives.

Finally, a variety of search and review procedures have been used in the appointment of the UC scholars. As indicated above, a good number of the hosted at-risk scholars have come to the UC via the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund or the Scholars at Risk network, each of which has its own review protocols designed to assess risk rather than academic fit. The work is thus correctly left up to the local UC campus representatives to match the scholars with mentors and programs. Yet, because the campuses in many cases depend on the support of these organizations to be able to host scholars and thus want to accommodate the scholars they nominate, it is often extremely time-intensive to find productive placements for the nominated at-risk colleagues in departments, centers, and programs with their own expectations about collegial and academic fit. Delays in the appointment of a scholar facing immediate threats can result. Other at-risk scholars have come to a UC campus through discipline-specific support organizations or through personal professional contacts. Here,

finding common ground in terms of academic and professional expectations and securing committed and capable mentors are easier lifts.<sup>11</sup> Most campuses have local SAR committees that review the files of the at-risk scholars submitted by departments, labs, and centers and recommend appointments to the central personnel offices, which then follow standard hiring procedures in each case, assuring treatment of the scholars equal to that of all UC faculty. Adequate funding nevertheless has to be guaranteed in advance of such reviews, and receiving such guarantees from a variety of offices draws the process out. When combined with the often cumbersome review process for academic appointments in the UC system, which, again, guarantees the all-important equity of treatment of the at-risk scholars by the apparatus of the university, securing the official hosting offer for the scholar can take more time than she has when faced with a crisis situation. Most scholars are of course not even able to begin to apply for a visa to enter and work in the US until they have the campus offer in hand, and negotiating the visa application procedure under often complex conditions (US embassies closed or facing their own staff reductions, for example) itself contributes to making securing such permissions a protracted affair. That the UC system has been able to host as many at-risk scholars as it has is testimony to the tenacity and commitment of whole villages of administrators, staff, and faculty across our system.

### **Beyond Rescue, Beyond Humanitarianism**

The UC-wide scholar rescue programs described above have in many cases literally been life-saving for these

<sup>11</sup> These organizations nevertheless often do not have the capacity to provide the financial assistance or other support mechanisms that IIE-SRF and SAR provide.

scholars and their families and permitted them to continue their research in the absence of the threats they faced at home. Yet our well-intended efforts are also part of a larger system of humanitarian power that Didier Fassin calls “humanitarian reason.”<sup>12</sup> Scholars of humanitarianism make three central critiques, which we have taken seriously as we evaluated our project.

First, critics have shown that humanitarian aid in principle often acts as a “fig leaf” covering over the fact of political or military inaction and the failure to resolve human rights violations.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, scholars have shown that humanitarian programs to allow asylum to certain categories of migrants can obscure long-term patterns of colonial violence that cause significant ongoing suffering.<sup>14</sup> Fassin argues that, as a result, humanitarianism has a remarkable capacity to “illusorily bridge the contradictions of our world and make the intolerableness of its injustice somewhat bearable.”<sup>15</sup> Following these scholars, we ask: How do our own humanitarian programs of hosting at-risk scholars at our campuses likewise conceal or obfuscate the university’s complicity in the colonial/military situations that in some cases may have helped to create the conditions necessitating their rescue in the first place?<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Didier Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason: A Moral History of the Present*, trans. Rachel Gomme (University of California Press, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Hugo Slim, “Wonderful Work: Globalizing the Ethics of Humanitarian Action,” in *The Routledge Companion to Humanitarian Action*, ed. Roger Mac Ginty and Jenny H. Peterson (Routledge, 2015), 21.

<sup>14</sup> Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*; Miriam Ticktin, *Casualties of Care: Immigration and the Politics of Humanitarianism in France* (University of California Press, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, xii.

<sup>16</sup> See Henry A. Giroux’s classic analysis, *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex* (Routledge, 2016); and, more recently, Indigo Olivier, “Inside Lockheed Martin’s Sweeping Recruitment on College Campuses: The Engineering Degree to Defense Industry Pipeline,” *In These Times*,

How, in other words, might our program merely contribute to making us feel good in light of the larger indebtedness of the US academy to these and other structures of oppression that create suffering both around the world and in the US, or to making us feel that we are making intolerable situations bearable?

Second, Fassin has argued that the humanitarian project is based on a “politics of compassion” and a “mobilization of empathy” rather than the recognition of rights.<sup>17</sup> “While the old vocabulary of social critique has certainly not entirely disappeared, the new lexicon of moral sentiments tends to mask it in a process of semantic sedimentation that has perceptible effects both in public action and in individual practices.”<sup>18</sup> This has produced a regime in which people “often prefer to speak about suffering and compassion than about interests or justice, legitimizing actions by declaring them to be humanitarian.”<sup>19</sup> We ask: What have been the political costs of our language and practices of compassion – upon which we often rely when we seek to raise funds to support our efforts?

A third, equally troubling issue is the asymmetry of power produced by the terms of our hosting structures. Fassin makes clear that such inequalities are not simply the result of condescension; instead, he says, they are politically produced because compassion always presumes a relation of inequality. Such a biopolitical project is a “politics

August 11, 2022, <https://inthesetimes.com/article/lockheed-martin-recruiting-military-industrial-complex-student-debt>; and Eve Darian-Smith, *Policing the University. The Antidemocratic Attack on Scholars and Why It Matters* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2025).

<sup>17</sup> Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, 3, x.

<sup>18</sup> Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, 3.

of life” that produces a subject: the precarious victim in need of help.<sup>20</sup> Compassion, he suggests, “is always directed from above to below, from the more powerful to the weaker, the more fragile, the more vulnerable – those who can generally be constituted as victims of an overwhelming fate.”<sup>21</sup> This echoes Makau Mutua’s provocative argument that the entire Human Rights/humanitarian regime is underlain by a metaphor of the Savage-Victim-Savior (SVS): “The grand narrative of human rights contains a subtext that depicts an epochal contest pitting savages, on the one hand, against victims and saviors, on the other.”<sup>22</sup> We thus ask whether and how our efforts have participated in this kind of government of the scholars’ precarious bodies. How does the structure of hosting represent our hosted scholars only as victims rather than agential political beings and represent our institutions as saviors? And how does this power imbalance play out in relations of care between the hosts and the hosted?

These complex ethical questions, along with the challenges described above – particularly the short-term arrangements into which we welcome the scholars, on the one hand, and the increasingly labile academic landscape in the US under the current administration, on the other – have made clear to us the necessity of, first, developing more robust infrastructures of hosting at-risk colleagues and longer-term strategies whereby the scholars can thrive in the new worlds of their placements that move beyond these efforts, and second, recalibrating the host-hosted relation. The political and social, material and ideological

<sup>20</sup> Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, 224.

<sup>21</sup> Fassin, *Humanitarian Reason*, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Makau Mutua, “Savages, Victims, and Saviors: The Metaphor of Human Rights,” *Harvard International Law Journal* 42, no. 1 (2001): 201.

conditions that move scholars from being at risk in their home countries to being in danger there – risk being the “anticipation” of danger, as Ulrich Beck writes, and thus always virtual, whereas danger is actualized and concrete – are what originally necessitated their relocation.<sup>23</sup> Yet this very relocation can also mean that scholars move from that original situation of danger back into a situation of not just anticipated risk, but also actual danger in the new environment as well, as they grapple with the afterlives of their often traumatic experiences in an inevitably new and strange short-term context – and an increasingly perilous one for non-citizens (even those with valid visas). At a recent meeting of UC SAR hosted scholars, an Afghan researcher explained that in his home country, he was scared to publish the results of his research because the government did not want to hear what he had found. Yet, reflecting on the risks inherent in his position as a hosted scholar at the UC, he said, “I am still scared,” and pointed to cuts in research funding, the uncertainty of his hosted position, the threats to foreign scholars who speak out about political issues, and the hostile environment for migrants in general.

Moreover, it is not only external factors that expose these scholars to this combination of risk and danger. Like most academic institutions worldwide, US higher education is often less than inclined to make significant changes in its operations for the sake of newcomers; rather, it expects them – as do we – to integrate into our status quo. The result is a new set of risks for the international scholar who may require time, mentorship, and material support, as

<sup>23</sup> Ulrich Beck, “Living in the World Risk Society,” *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006): 332.

well as, possibly, additional training and credentialing, to thrive in the institutional space that is US academe.

### **Next Steps in the University of California Scholars at Risk Program: Sharing the Platform in the Prefigurative Academy**

In recognition of the extent to which the very structures of the university, on the one hand, and our initial inability to fully recognize the power relations at the heart of our efforts, on the other, were implicated in the challenges of humanitarianism writ large, the UC SAR program began to reimagine itself.

The first step was the organization of a major gathering on the UC Irvine campus in 2023. The Refuge at Risk conference was hosted by the UC Humanities Research Institute and was the first systemwide meeting of UC SAR scholars, liaisons, and allies.<sup>24</sup> At this meeting, we began by listening to the at-risk scholars as they voiced their concerns.<sup>25</sup> The following issues emerged as central:

- the need to find ways to secure permanent employment in the US for those unable to return to their countries of origin;
- the concomitant need for mentoring in numerous areas, including acclimatization to US academic

<sup>24</sup> UC Irvine School of Humanities, "Refuge at Risk: Concepts, Infrastructures, Futures," February 2023, <https://www.humanities.uci.edu/events/refuge-risk-concepts-infrastructures-futures>.

<sup>25</sup> It was at this conference that Babo announced his plans for the volume that has since become *Exiled Scholars in Western Academia: Refugees or Intellectuals?* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2025), which consists of eleven chapters by displaced academics in which they give first-person accounts of the challenges they faced as they entered western academe.

- protocols and how to navigate academic conferences, publishing, and the job market;
- the need for networking with other scholars.

The underlying question articulated by the attendees was thus: What is the relation of what scholars do in the first year or two of placement to their post-placement careers and lives? This question underscored the reality that it was not just conditions in their countries of origin that had placed the UC scholars at risk, but also our program itself, which had failed to examine the new conditions of precarity in which that very placement involved them.

In the months that followed this conference, a sub-committee of faculty from across the UC system worked to address these concerns by developing additional infrastructures for supporting scholars at risk over the longer term via a program designed to provide targeted mentorship and professionalization for displaced scholars. The goal was to afford these colleagues the much-needed opportunity to develop the professional skills, institutional understanding, cultural and linguistic fluency, and research and publication records that would enable them to secure meaningful long-term employment in academia, industry, or the public sector in the US. We drew up a major grant proposal for the Mellon Foundation that targeted these needs. While the hosting arrangements on the individual UC campuses would continue, the grant proposed a new set of initiatives that would include a series of capacity-building workshops for at-risk scholars designed either to enhance the scholars' ability to find academic employment or to aid them in transitioning to "alt-ac" (alternatives to academia) career paths where their research skills

and experience would be of particular value to industry or NGOs. Coaching would be offered to help the scholars translate their skills and experiences in their home countries into assets for the job market in the US. A fundamental weakness in this planning was the absence of scholars at risk from our planning committee.

While Mellon declined to fund this proposal, the process of designing the programs for it led us to launch a pilot series of online workshops in the fall of 2024. This timing was crucial to what we now understand as step two of our process, which also involved the realization of the central role that the at-risk scholars themselves could and should play in our program.

Because this series of workshops coincided with the US election in November 2024, and the resulting changes in administrative postures coming out of Washington, DC, regarding both immigration and higher education in general after January 20, 2025, we quickly adapted the series to include sessions on questions of legal status and asylum as well as Know Your Rights training. In this context, it soon became clear that the UC-hosted scholars were in fact more than victims or the objects of our humanitarian efforts. Rather, they were, and are, agentive political actors with years of experience facing the very kinds of precariousness the US academy was now facing. We remain grateful to have them as models of persistence and strength. After four successful online events in this series, we designed a final in-person meeting on the UC Irvine campus in April 2025, again hosted by the University of California Humanities Research Institute. While legal issues, academic and extra-academic job placement, and

at-risk scholar mental health and self-care in challenging times continued to comprise the thematic foci of this meeting as we sought to assess the kinds of protection needed by each at-risk scholar and his or her dependents in the longer run, the design and corresponding infrastructure of the meeting took on a new shape. Rather than following a humanitarian model that assumed that the international at-risk scholar needed expert help to integrate into a stable academic world, we reconfigured our understanding of hosting as a strength- or asset-based relation between equal partners, indeed, as an opportunity to challenge our local knowledge systems by engaging with what the scholars already brought to the table both professionally and experientially about how to negotiate danger and risk.

The April 2025 meeting thus strove to follow the guidelines endorsed by the “Share the Platform” program developed by Professors Anita Fábos (Clark University) and Alfred Babo (Fairfield), which centers refugee-based knowledges. Such sharing follows the logic of “prefigurative politics,” which calls for “the deliberate experimental implementation of desired future social relations and practices in the here-and-now,” as Paul Raekstad and Sofa Saio Gradin write.<sup>26</sup> The Share the Platform model recommends featuring refugee and non-refugee, or at-risk and not-at-risk, scholars from domestic and international backgrounds together, working together in lateral fashion to further the pursuit of the common good of collaborative knowledge-based projects and institutional change. The result is the removal of the “us”/“them” or

<sup>26</sup> Paul Raekstad and Sofa Saio Gradin, *Prefigurative Politics: Building Tomorrow Today* (Polity Press, 2020), 10.

“at-risk”/“not-at-risk” tags of “hosts” and “hosted” in order to better explore how to move beyond these positions in the direction of the possibility of beginning the academic project anew each time such collaboration is centered. The goal is thus to go beyond seeking to integrate the foreigner into a notionally superior domestic regime by creating a relation between what Babo and Fábos call, rather, “settled” and “mobile” colleagues, both of whom are revealed – in the collaboration – to be at risk, if in different ways.<sup>27</sup> On the one hand, blinded by their inclusion, settled scholars often run the risk of complicity with the reifying universalization of the US academy’s contingent practices and fail to see their knowledges as provincial or outdated. Moreover, as has now become clear, even as insiders, these scholars are of course also often not at all safe if and when they express opposition to evolving authoritarian norms. On the other hand, mobile scholars have already faced the doubled danger-cum-risk of having been subjected to multiple life- and mind-threatening oppressions back home and then caught up in the new web of uncertainty they entered at our invitation, an environment in which their professional survival is an unknown. Sharing the platform introduces the possibility of creating not only a more level playing field to the benefit of settled and mobile scholars alike, but also a measure of critique of the knowledge systems within which an all-too-self-assured US academy has worked for so long.

Following this model, each session at the April 2025 conference featured – indeed, began with – a presentation by one or several mobile colleagues, who were then joined by

<sup>27</sup> Babo and Fábos, “Share the Platform.”

a settled academic colleague or other professional whose role it was to complement the scholars' expertise. The very presence of the mobile scholar(s) in each session was designed to challenge the dangerously solipsistic monisms that have inhered in US debates both within and outside the academy about what defines risk or security; just as, if not more importantly, it provided a reconfiguration of the host-hosted relation. Regularly throughout the meeting, there were collective sessions designed as opportunities for other scholar-attendees to alert the group to additional concerns; these and extended breaks for meals (and thus additional conversations) created a participatory academy that went beyond the standard hierarchical design on which most academic conferences are based. In the midst of what has now all too often been called an age of the "bonfire of certainties,"<sup>28</sup> we experienced a new kind of solidarity, as the mobile scholars in the room offered their settled colleagues models of resilience in the face of shifting contexts and lessons about how to survive in a permanently changing world. Of course the political geographies and timetables of risk of the former group did not necessarily coincide with those of the latter. But their displays of agency provided a salutary platform for comparative risk assessment in troubled times and thus offered a means of exploring new ways of exchanging expertise and support beyond the humanitarian model.

## Conclusion

In this essay, we have traced the successes and challenges of our UC SAR hosting program in an effort to shed light

<sup>28</sup> The reference is to the phrase used by NATO Secretary-General George Robertson in 1990 to refer to the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, and is now much (over-)cited. See John Roper, "Strategic Implications of the End of the Cold War," *Contemporary Security Policy* 20, no. 3 (1999): 102.

on our efforts to go “beyond rescue” by turning away from humanitarianism and toward a shared evaluation of risk. As we mentioned, this is an example of prefigurative politics, an effort to “build tomorrow today.”<sup>29</sup> We conclude by urging others to join us in this effort, understanding that every institution faces its own conjuncture of challenges and resources. We especially urge programs that host at-risk scholars to adopt the model of sharing the platform that we used at the April meeting, since it could, in exemplary fashion, enable elliptical models of analysis, critique, and re-invention. These models are elliptical because they have no one center; rather, they encourage participants to travel continually around the ellipse and always engage in a discussion of what risk is from at least two positions. When we share the platform in this way, we engage in constructing what – varying Carl Boggs’s definition of “prefigurative politics” as “the embodiment, within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of [alternative] social relations [and] decision-making... that are the ultimate goal”<sup>30</sup> – we might call “a prefigurative academy” in the small laboratories of each occasion of at-risk scholar hosting. Craig Jeffrey and Jane Dyson describe “anticipatory politics” in ways that have become increasingly overt on US campuses, whereby institutions preemptively deploy “discourses” about hypothetical future risks of “emergency, crisis, and threat[s]” to safety in order to “justify various acts and interventions” that shut down debate and thus control the

<sup>29</sup> Raekstad and Gradin, *Prefigurative Politics*.

<sup>30</sup> Carl Boggs, “Marxism, Prefigurative Communism, and the Problem of Workers’ Control,” *Radical America* 11, no. 6 (1977): 99–122, cited in Craig Jeffrey and Jane Dyson, “Geographies of the Future: Prefigurative Politics,” *Progress in Human Geography* 45, no. 4 (2021): 643.

future only in the interest of preserving the status quo.<sup>31</sup> A prefigurative academy based on sharing the platform is also future-oriented even as it self-consciously models the desired long-term changes in local academic practice now. The aim is to convert what is traditionally thought of as a risk of the unknown to be contained by force into an open-ended platform for experimenting with change via the exchange of experiences and ideas. What such exchanges might mean in each hosting relation will depend upon the specifics, of course, but they may in the end allow us to create a more robust academy from within. While this academy may not be the academy of expertise with which we are familiar, its reconfiguration may be necessary as we confront new forms of risk and danger. We call our colleagues to join us in exploring its promise.

<sup>31</sup> Jeffrey and Dyson, "Geographies of the Future," 642.

# Supporting Haitian Scholars at Risk

Cécile Accilien / Jessica Adams

What does it mean to be “at risk” as a scholar in Haiti and, indeed, in the Caribbean as a whole? In essence, it means to be subject to an unfolding history of unequal power relationships. To be at risk is to be subject to neocolonialism, which takes those living in its matrix back to the days before the “advancements”/evolutions associated with industrialism.<sup>1</sup> To be at risk is to grapple with the realities of what we might call, following Antonio Benítez-Rojo, “the plantation machine.”<sup>2</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot urges us to examine the interconnectedness of power, politics, and knowledge production, illustrating how powerful groups often struggle to accept history as

<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive definition of the term *neocolonialism* is as follows:

the control of less-developed countries by developed countries through indirect means. The term neocolonialism was first used after World War II to refer to the continuing dependence of former colonies on foreign countries, but its meaning soon broadened to apply, more generally, to places where the power of developed countries was used to produce a colonial-like exploitation – for instance, in Latin America, where direct foreign rule had ended in the early 19th century. The term is now an unambiguously negative one that is widely used to refer to a form of global power in which transnational corporations and global and multilateral institutions combine to perpetuate colonial forms of exploitation of developing countries. Neocolonialism has been broadly understood as a further development of capitalism that enables capitalist powers (both nations and corporations) to dominate subject nations through the operations of international capitalism rather than by means of direct rule.

Sandra Halperin, “Neocolonialism,” *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/neocolonialism>.

<sup>2</sup> Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective*, 2nd ed., trans. James E. Maraniss (Duke University Press, 1992).

it truly occurred. This is a reality that we continue to see, as economic power dictates accepted truths and controls destinies, silencing voices deemed irrelevant. Scholars are at risk all over the world because those in power do not want them to talk about certain topics and shed light on certain truths. As Trouillot notes, "History is the fruit of power, but power itself is never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous. The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the reality of scholars at risk is deeply connected to economic, political, geopolitical, historical, and social issues, including climate change and environmental degradation.

We write as longtime scholarly collaborators whose positionality is linked to issues of risk in the Caribbean context. Cécile is a Haitian American scholar deeply connected to the Haitian and diasporic communities. She has supported Haitian and Haitian American scholars through her work with the Haitian Studies Association and other entities, through her mentoring of students, and through direct engagement with those in need and at risk in the face of ongoing political and economic pressures within Haiti, as well as in spaces such as the United States, where prejudice against Haitians and Haitian Americans has become so intense in recent times that it has made headlines. After Hurricane Katrina compelled Jessica to leave her teaching position in New Orleans, she began work in the Caribbean, in the US Virgin Islands and now Puerto Rico, where the pressures associated with both neocolonial politics and unstable weather create a consistent climate of

<sup>3</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon Press, [1995] 2015), xxiii.

risk. (Within the last decade alone, students and teachers in Puerto Rico have had to contend not only with draconian budget cuts to education, but also with Hurricane María, a series of significant earthquakes, and ongoing regular power outages.) Over the years, we have worked together on a variety of projects focused on Haiti. We share our perspectives throughout this essay, sometimes highlighting our individual experiences.

Scholars at risk reflect a country at risk. In Haiti in particular, this means living in a state of ambiguity, ambivalence, anxiety, and fear. It can mean that one minute you are living in poverty and wondering how you are going to pay your rent, and the next day you are staying in a fancy hotel if you happened to be invited to travel somewhere else and if you are lucky enough to secure a visa to be able to accept the invitation. It means waiting and hoping, sometimes not sure what exactly one is waiting or hoping for. Cécile recalls the silencing of scholars and artists while she was growing up under the Duvalier regime in Haiti. When the stories they wanted to tell did not align with the regime's ideologies, these scholars would be killed or, if they were lucky, given the opportunity to go into exile, a reality that led to a brain drain in Haiti in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. Victor Hugo wrote, "On résiste à l'invasion des armées; on ne résiste pas à l'invasion des idées," which might be translated as "It is possible to resist armed invasion; it is not possible to resist an invasion of ideas."<sup>4</sup> Yet by the same token, a scholar who is living where they are not able to share their ideas with the world exists in a painful state of being akin to a fish living without water. Being

<sup>4</sup> Victor Hugo, *L'histoire d'un crime: Déposition d'un témoin*, 5th ed. (J. Hetzel & Cie/Maison Quantin, 1877).

a scholar at risk in this context is very much about being in a constant state of displacement and living with an ongoing feeling of unfreedom, yet dreaming of freedom and looking for it in spaces and places both imaginable and unimaginable, here and there, now and future. Scholars in Haiti are constantly “creating dangerously,” in the words of Edwidge Danticat.<sup>5</sup> They are also living dangerously in the midst of gang violence, and bodily insecurity signals emotional instability and intellectual instability. As a result of Haiti’s ongoing crises, the brain drain has continued as scholars leave to survive, impacting the country’s intellectual landscape.

When working in a place where electricity and internet are stable (sometimes called the “Global North”), it can be very challenging to understand what it means to be in a place where those things are subject to disappearing randomly and without notice.<sup>6</sup> Technology is not equally available to scholars who are trying to have conversations across diverse spaces. It is critical to keep in mind that in the Caribbean, the infrastructure that supplies electricity and internet, so essential to productivity and connection in the modern world, is profoundly intertwined with colonial histories, including the history of debt. Haiti is marked by the infamous debt imposed on it by France in the first moments of its independence – a debt that France, as the now former colonial power, claimed that Haiti owed that

<sup>5</sup> Edwidge Danticat, *Create Dangerously: The Immigrant Artist at Work* (Vintage, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> We use the terms “Global North” and “Global South” to refer to industrialized, “developed,” and often historically colonizing nations/spaces on the one hand, and on the other, nations/spaces that have been historically subject to colonization and therefore economically disadvantaged. We recognize the limitations of these terms as potentially essentializing, but use them for lack of better ways to refer to these concepts in the context of discussing this material.

country for the value of its own people, the very people who had just defeated France militarily. They had cast off their imposed status as “slaves,” but were pursued by the shadow of their former status as property in the form of the French government’s massive demands. In this sense, the French government simply refused to acknowledge that it had lost the war, and the colonial matrix being what it is, they retained the geopolitical power to enforce their unilateral notion of value. This history and its sequelae still wrap their tentacles around the institutions of modern Haiti, including its educational institutions, and continue to impact the work of Haitian scholars.

When we talk about Haiti, then, these are some of the factors that put scholars at risk:

- Not having access to basic everyday necessities for survival because they are living under siege in a country where daily life has been impacted by gang activities over the past several years.
- Not having access to scholarship due to lack of resources such as electricity, internet access, and journal access, as well as not being able to view some websites and articles due to the fees that they have to pay. Databases such as Project MUSE, Web of Science, and JSTOR may well be unaffordable; moreover, they require credit card payments for access to certain articles, and scholars may not even have a credit card.

- Not being able to attend international conferences as a result of a basic inability to leave Haiti due to visa access or lack of financial resources.

On a practical level, therefore, from the perspective of academic institutions and organizations in the “Global North,” creating opportunities for scholars in Haiti to be able to present virtually at a conference can be a very complex process involving elements that those outside the context of “risk” may not consider. For example, when the Haitian Studies Conference took place in Atlanta in 2023, conference organizers (including Cécile) worked to set up a location in Haiti where Haitian scholars who could not travel to Atlanta would be able to both present their work and attend conference presentations. Organizers considered paying a hotel in Port-au-Prince to provide access for these scholars, but many of those scholars did not feel comfortable entering this kind of space because of issues stemming from historic colonial hierarchies that continue to influence daily life in Haiti. Hotels in Port-au-Prince are intrinsically marked by issues of class and colorism, for example, and for scholars who understandably did not want to enter that environment because they would be discriminated against based on their dark skin tone or language use (speaking Kreyòl), this would not be a viable option. It was therefore necessary for the conference organizers to find a space where all students and colleagues could feel at ease as well as have access to the necessary technology. Another factor complicating this situation was the fact that people in Haiti are not necessarily familiar with the Haitian Studies Association, and those who are often consider it to be an “American” organization. In other words, they perceived an important distance between the

members of this organization and themselves. This is an issue that the Haitian Studies Association has been working on in the past decade in its commitment to decolonize Haitian Studies.

Overall, even people who share the same background or national origin as scholars in Haiti may not think about community, and the way that the lack of access experienced by Haitian scholars in Haiti stems in part from the survival of colonial structures, as well as current issues such as gang violence. People in Haiti cannot simply walk to a place that has internet. They cannot simply drive to the next coffee shop. Yet when working to involve Haitian scholars in events taking place, say, in North America, scholars in these “Global North” spaces may implicitly be counting on everyone having that access. When we are inviting these scholars to participate in conferences and other events, we may not be thinking about a reality that includes the fact that a scholar in Haiti may not have electricity at the moment when they are scheduled to present. It may not be safe for them to be outside. A concept such as a hybrid conference, including some remote participants and some on site, is not simple to organize. For a scholar in Haiti, even something such as pre-recording a conference presentation can itself take days.

It is important to keep at the forefront of our minds, then, the diversity of resources. Students are likely disadvantaged financially, and professors are paid very little. How are we helping to ensure that they have resources that will help facilitate their scholarship? We may be making things open access, but open access for whom? For these scholars, such resources are still out of reach. In other

words, we may identify solutions to systemic inequalities, but these solutions may not, in fact, be sustainable or adapted to actual lived reality. We have to think about equity as well as inequality, and we must think about how these factors operate in specific contexts.

In addition, the language that people use to communicate in academic contexts in Haiti and the language(s) that Haitian scholars use is a sphere that is likewise marked by colonial histories. In general, Kreyòl is the language of Haiti as a whole, and since 1987 the Haitian Constitution has recognized Kreyòl as one of its official languages; meanwhile, in many instances, French continues to be the primary language of academic discourse. This linguistic bifurcation raises key questions and issues, such as for whom scholars are writing and in what context. A question that emerges here is, How do we decolonize the space of academia for scholars at risk from Haiti, as well as from other spaces characterized by long-standing inequalities? It is not enough to simply say that you are working to understand and benefit Haitian people – and this is true even if you are Haitian. These situations demand more nuance. It is necessary to be or become aware of tensions related to social and cultural issues; the need for flexibility and constant negotiation is paramount. And things don't always work out.

For Haiti, the ongoing political and economic situation that has become a permanent way of life has pushed many scholars to seek survival elsewhere. Yet as Haitian American scholar Felix Jean-Louis has pointed out, Port-au-Prince, where the majority of the gang activity that has been prominent in global news has taken place, is only

one small part of Haiti.<sup>7</sup> While people in other parts of the country continue to live their lives, we hear about only those people, including scholars, who are wanting to leave Haiti; we don't hear about people choosing to remain and work in Haiti, or choosing to return. We don't hear about the intellectual work that people continue to do in Haiti, or the work of journalists who are at risk trying to tell the truth. For instance, Haitian authors Nadève Ménard and Evelyne Trouillot are still living in Haiti at the time of this writing. Haitian journalist Roberson Alphonse from *Le Nouvelliste*, one of Haiti's oldest and most important newspapers, survived an assassination attempt in October 2022.<sup>8</sup> Two years later, he was awarded the 2024 International Press Freedom Award by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) as a result of his courageous reporting in spite of gang threats, violence, and political instability. Even after the assassination attempt, he has continued to report on crime, politics, and other social issues in Haiti. And despite the extremely challenging conditions for scholarship and education in general in Haiti, some colleagues are courageously still making the difficult choice to teach under siege when they can reach their classes and when students can come to class. A colleague shared with Cécile that there were instances when he heard guns being fired outside the classroom and instructed his students to get under their desks. Together they waited for the shots to die down before continuing the class.

<sup>7</sup> Felix Jean-Louis, "Response to Michael Diebert, 'Haiti: La lucha en el corazón del Caribe,'" *Conferencia Caribeña*, February 4, 2025, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras.

<sup>8</sup> "Prominent Haitian Journalist Survives Assassination Attempt," *Al Jazeera*, October 26, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/26/prominent-haitian-journalist-survives-assassination-attempt>.

Thus we underscore the importance for those in the academic community of recognizing the nuances in the issues of risk in academia, and of orienting themselves in the realities of context. When we think of scholars at risk, for example, we may not consider future scholars who are currently at risk – such as those taking refuge under their desks as volleys of gunfire echo outside their classroom walls. As we look at the migration of Haitians in South America and the long, dangerous routes they traverse, which include travel through the Darién Gap en route to Tijuana, for example, in hopes of reaching the United States, we must consider that these are future scholars at risk, their potential perhaps lost to the world due to the hostile conditions that pursue them as they seek peace and stability to think. Many of the people who are migrating in these risk-filled conditions are young scholars who yearn to be able to go to college. These young people have a broad range of experiences, have gathered information in a wide variety of registers, and have considered both regional and global problems as well as solutions, yet they may be barred from opportunities to build on and share their knowledge due to forces beyond their control. Indeed, some Haitian scholars are currently doubly and triply at risk. For instance, Cécile has two colleagues who worked for the State University of Haiti and had to leave due to ongoing gang violence and threats made against them and their families. Yet living in the United States, they are once again at risk: at risk of being deported, at risk of microaggressions from their students and colleagues because of their point of national origin, their race, their accents, and so forth. It is difficult to overestimate the toll that such stresses may take on one's ability to produce

intellectual work and to perform the work of the university on a daily basis.

On a macro level, when countries in the “Global North” ignore or refuse to acknowledge the ways in which their histories are interconnected with the histories of countries in the “Global South,” this itself puts scholars at risk, because it suggests the existence of a false meritocracy, and makes it that much more difficult to challenge ongoing colonial hierarchies that date back to the seventeenth century. For instance, in her inaugural lecture to the Collège de France titled “Littérature haïtienne: Urgence(s) d’écrire, rêve(s) d’habiter,” Haitian writer Yanick Lahens, the first chair of Francophonie at Collège, recounted her shock at the ongoing absence of Haiti and its history from accounts of French history, despite the fact that Haiti was a colony of France from 1697 until it gained its independence in 1804.<sup>9</sup> In Lahens’s view, this absence or lacuna is intentional, because Haiti’s history as a Black country that dared fight and win against France does not make France appear as the mighty imperial force it prefers the world to see.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in order to truly have a conversation around aiding scholars at risk, it is essential that we engage in decentering and decolonizing knowledge. We must rethink the process of knowledge creation, noticing how epistemology has intersected with power, and how these intersections have affected issues such as language and access to learning.

<sup>9</sup> Yanick Lahens, *Littérature haïtienne: Urgences d’écrire, rêves d’habiter*, édition numérique 289 (Éditions du Collège de France, 2019), <https://www.college-de-france.fr/fr/editions/lecons-inaugurales/litterature-haitienne-urgences-ecrire-reves-habiter-9782722605213>.

<sup>10</sup> Lahens, *Littérature haïtienne*.

Yet it is also essential that we not reiterate the problematic long-standing narrative of Haitian exceptionalism even as we consider the significant factors that have caused scholars in Haiti to experience considerable risk. In the context of the Caribbean, the hemisphere, and the circum-Atlantic world, Haiti has been viewed as unique in a variety of ways. Haiti is the first Black Republic in the “New World”; Haiti is also “the poorest country in the western hemisphere.” Helping scholars at risk in Haiti involves, in part, dismantling the notion that Haiti is unique in the challenges its people face. Of course Haiti should be viewed as a place with its own history and set of variables, but it should also be viewed as a Caribbean place that has been dealing with the realities of a colonial past, like every other Caribbean island or archipelago.

When we juxtapose the situation of scholars in Haiti with that of scholars in places such as Puerto Rico and Cuba, we see that scholars in Haiti are struggling with post-colonial/colonial conditions that also affect scholars in these other contexts. Issues such as frequent blackouts, lack of internet access, lack of databases, and isolation due to political issues are shared across these Caribbean places. When Cécile visited Havana in 2025, for example, she experienced a national blackout; in the city, only the lights of the Malecón were illuminated, due to a generator in that area. In such moments, what it means to do the work of scholarship may look very different than it would in a context in which power and internet access can be taken for granted. One’s focus shifts to adjusting to a level of quiet that may be unaccustomed for those living in the “Global North,” finding some way to simply see where one is going at night, or, during the day, observing, inter-

acting, reading books, writing by hand. Cécile spoke with colleagues who had lived through the Cuban Revolution and participated in the Cuban Literacy campaign, which they considered one of the most important achievements of the Revolution because of the social transformation (in gender, class, social, territorial, and economic terms) it effected. Still, it was clear that despite the important achievements in literacy that Cubans enjoy, young people are living under a blockade, and in a context of insufficient basic resources, even food.

Thus, although Haiti has been an independent nation for over two hundred years, its history clearly intersects with that of other Caribbean places, including Puerto Rico, where blackouts due to crumbling infrastructure and mismanagement mark daily life. (Puerto Rico's energy is now supplied by a private company called LUMA that, working as a public-private partnership, has replaced the public utility. Its tenure has been marked by even more frequent blackouts, including both rolling blackouts and sudden mechanical failures.) Life in Puerto Rico, like life in Haiti, is marked in highly significant ways by colonial and neocolonial histories; these include the debt that the Commonwealth owes to bondholders, which led to the imposition of the Ley PROMESA by the US Congress, and the fiscal oversight board (Junta de Control Fiscal) that was put in place by this law to enforce austerity measures. The measures imposed by the Junta have heavily impacted higher education, with many millions of dollars cut from the public university system. Buildings are falling apart and few new professors can be hired. Those who receive promotions must wait years to receive the corresponding salary raises, in a system in which salaries have been fro-

zen for almost two decades. Needless to say, the library system and access to resources also bears the brunt of these cuts, which impact students and faculty alike.

We can therefore simultaneously see Haiti's challenges as part of a specific history, and see how these challenges compare to those of other parts of the region. On December 31, 2024, all of Puerto Rico was plunged into darkness. (Blackouts have been common around this time.) There was no sense of when the power would be coming back on and, at first, no sense of what may have caused it. Jessica's daughter's applications to universities in the United States were due, and there would be no accommodations for a blackout in Puerto Rico. After failing to power the computer in the car, in a Starbucks (that emblem of US imperialism) running on a gas generator, Jessica's daughter tried to complete an essay on resilience. Resilience in these contexts means adapting to instability and listening for the rhythm of survival. Scholars in Haiti cannot simply drive to Starbucks and plug in for as long as the diesel generator is running, because of the distinct ways in which Caribbean history plays out across the region. Yet there are fundamental connections among these former and current colonies in the sense that they remain shaped by the interventions and the damage and the relationships that continue to play out and evolve over centuries.

Given these realities, how can scholars from the "Global North" work collaboratively, ethically, and respectfully with scholars from the "Global South" to have real exchanges and support scholars at risk? The suggestions below are deliberately practical and focused on what not

only organizations such as universities, but also individuals, can do in the face of overwhelming systemic inequalities. It is necessary to offer manageable steps to mitigate larger issues of inequality and risk, or people may become paralyzed and despairing.

1. We can understand and recognize what it means to be a scholar at risk in different contexts. As the geopolitical landscapes around the world change, especially in countries in the “Global North,” there are both independent and interconnected changes taking place in “Global South” countries. And while these “Global South” countries share realities, they are also distinct. For example, an approach that may work in Puerto Rico may not work in Haiti. And what about local holidays and other factors that shape the rhythms and realities of daily existence? Awareness of what we may not know, a willingness to listen, and empathy are critical tools in communication in general, and are relevant here.
2. We should be mindful of how research is disseminated, and how to cite the work of colleagues in the “Global South.” To truly support scholars at risk, we must rethink the structures of knowledge production and exchange. The goal is not just to support Haitian scholars but to work toward a more just and equitable academic world. For example, can we develop systems whereby scholars from the “Global South” can attend conferences without having to pay fees? Can we ensure when we are teaching that 20–30 percent of our readings are from scholars in the

“Global South”? With the availability of translations, this is becoming more doable.

3. International exchanges between countries in the “Global North” and the “Global South” must involve an intentionality to build bridges and not walls, to have meaningful exchanges and complex dialogues that take into account historical contexts, positionality, and the various identity/ies of all involved.
4. If those of us who live and work in spaces in the “Global North” are truly conscious of social justice and want a more just and equitable world as it relates to research, education, and the sharing of information, we need to think about these issues in terms of access to technology and real and equitable exchange and commit to contributing to positive changes. Even when solutions such as open access publishing are proposed, they often fail to account for the fact that scholars still lack stable electricity or internet access. Hybrid and virtual conferences require significant infrastructural considerations that are often overlooked.

The issues that we have discussed here are only becoming more relevant and more challenging with expressions of xenophobia on the part of the US government coming to the fore, such as the 2025 pausing of the Fulbright Scholar program, founded in 1946 during the presidency of Harry S. Truman with the objective of fostering international academic exchanges between the United States and other countries.<sup>11</sup> Risk in the context of scholarship now exists on a kind of continuum. Cécile specializes in

Francophone post-colonial studies, primarily Haiti, teaching in the United States, while Jessica lives and works in Puerto Rico; although we are not based in spaces that may typically be considered at risk, given the work that we do in our teaching and research, the geography of scholars at risk has expanded significantly within the United States as well. Cécile, who had traveled to Cuba in mid-March, called Jessica concerned about what might happen when she traveled back to the United States and had to go through customs in Miami. As a naturalized citizen with a US passport that clearly states that she is Haitian born, Cécile remained concerned that ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) would challenge her right to enter the country, especially when traveling from a site on which the US government has placed numerous travel and other restrictions. This did not happen, but Cécile's trepidation about returning to a country of which she is a citizen speaks to the way in which safety and freedom cannot be taken for granted even in a nation where "freedom of speech" is a founding principle. The police state tactics that the US government exercised on graduate students such as Mahmoud Khalil serve as a deliberate and glaring demonstration by authorities that "freedom of speech" does not necessarily mean anything in particular.<sup>12</sup> Or perhaps more accurately, it means as much as we (the people, the collective) insist that it does.

As we write this piece, we have a sinking, dreadful feeling that we are about to understand even more what it feels like to try to exist in a fascist and dictatorial state, in a po-

<sup>11</sup> Johanna Alonso, "Fulbrighters in Flux," *Inside Higher Ed*, March 27, 2025, <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/global/international-students-us/2025/03/27/fulbright-scholars-face-uncertainty-about-visas>.

<sup>12</sup> See Jake Offenhartz, "Immigration Agents Arrest Palestinian Activist Who Helped

lice state. The organization Scholars at Risk was founded at the University of Chicago in 1999 as part of its Human Rights program.<sup>13</sup> What does it mean now when the very place that was considered as a beacon for academic freedom is seeing its academic freedom threatened? We can hope that it will bring scholars together, developing understanding and empathy, as it invites us to think more consciously and in more complex ways about how power and freedom interact. As Yanick Lahens describes, in spite of being at risk, writers continue to find ways to create a “habitable” space, to dream despite the material conditions that make parts of Haiti unlivable.<sup>14</sup> Writing is not a luxury; it is an act of resistance against erasure. And it is necessary to create history.

Lead Columbia University Protests,” *Associated Press*, March 9, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/columbia-university-mahmoud-khalil-ice-15014bcb921f21a9f704d5acdcae7a8>.

<sup>13</sup> Scholars at Risk Network, “Mission and History,” 2023, <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/mission-and-history>.

<sup>14</sup> Lahens, *Littérature haïtienne*.

# Engagement and Reflexivity in Exile: The Case of the Feminist Writer and Sociologist Pinar Selek

*Elsie Cohen / Gisèle Sapiro*

Writer and sociologist Pinar Selek was forced into exile from her native Turkey in 2009 because of her commitments and intellectual work, in particular her research on the Kurds. Compared to that of the vast majority of exiled intellectuals, her social trajectory is quite exceptional in terms of the international recognition she has gained. Indeed, not all of them manage to successfully convert their skills and other intellectual resources in the host country. Her itinerary nonetheless reveals paradigmatic aspects of the trajectories of political refugees, such as the pursuit of commitment in relation to the country of origin, reflexivity, and the difficulty of pursuing one's intellectual work when cut off from one's sources and terrain, but also the unequal conditions of insertion: being endowed with cultural and social capital that can be converted in the host country, mastering the language of the host country, being part of transnational networks, and having access to host structures for refugees.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, "Exil et intellectuels transnationaux," *Cahiers d'études germaniques* 84 (2023): 55–69; Sapiro, "Intellectuals in Exile: Toward a Comparative Approach to the Conditions of Creativity and Unequal Opportunities," in *Academics in a Century of Displacement*, ed. Leyla Dakhli, Pascale Laborier, and Frank Wolff (Springer, 2024), 313–31.

The present article sets out to analyze how political persecution and exile reconfigured the trajectory of this engaged intellectual. It seeks in particular to understand the effects of exile and political persecution on her thought and work. While it shares many features with other types of migration, exile is a situation of forced migration that differs in this respect from migrations prepared and driven by an intellectual project, economic reasons, or a life project. It entails a disruption in the social trajectory that can be sorted among what is called in sociology “biographical accidents” (such as disease or accidents that interrupt a career and constrain individuals to change their lives and reorient their activity). In the intellectual world, there is a mythology of creativity under constraint, sometimes conceived as an emancipation from ordinary social frameworks, a form of liberation. In his “Reflections on Exile,” Edward Said evokes this mythology, while recalling the darker side of exile, that of dispossession, isolation, loss of bearings and identity, also described by Hannah Arendt in her famous 1943 article.<sup>2</sup> The capacity to resume intellectual work and the opportunities for converting assets in the host country depend, as said, on the parameters listed above. However, due to the rupture of routines, the disruption of the trajectory implied by these exceptional conditions and constraints favors, in any case, a form of reflexivity, which takes a specific form for intellectuals. Exile provides, according to Enzo Traverso, an “epistemological privilege,” an intellectual disposition rooted in the social and cultural position of the exile as an outsider, which enables them to perceive what remains

<sup>2</sup> Edward W. Said, “Reflections on Exile,” *Granta* 13 (1984), <https://granta.com/reflections-on-exile/>; Hannah Arendt, “We Refugees,” *The Menorah Journal* 31, no. 1 (1943): 69–77.

invisible to others, thereby fostering epistemic reflexivity and intellectual innovation.<sup>3</sup>

Reflexivity can be understood as a “reflection on reflection, or self-reflection.”<sup>4</sup> In the sociology of science, it is defined as “the result of the complete historicization of the contents of thought, which compels one to apply the categories of the sociology of knowledge to oneself and to elucidate the social reasons for the emergence of those contents.”<sup>5</sup> This self-reflection leads the researcher to question the biographical reasons behind their intellectual choices, including the subject matters, the biases and incorporated blind (i.e., unconscious) spots that operate when engaging with a subject, and the institutional frameworks through which knowledge is produced. In *Sketch for a Self-Analysis*, Pierre Bourdieu offers an example of this approach by analyzing his own intellectual path as a social trajectory evolving in the successive space of possibilities offered by the academic field, but also marking events such as his military service in Algeria during the war.<sup>6</sup>

We first trace the trajectory of this public intellectual from the formation of her habitus, shaped by the ethical-political dispositions inherited from her father’s line in particular, in a context of political crisis created by the 1980 coup and the advent of an authoritarian regime, to the militant socialization of her student years and her subse-

<sup>3</sup> Enzo Traverso, *La Pensée dispersée. Figures de l’exil judéo-allemand* (Léo Scheer, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Yves Gingras, “Réflexivité,” in *Dictionnaire international Bourdieu*, ed. Gisèle Sapiro (CNRS Editions, 2020), 718–20; our translation.

<sup>5</sup> Gingras, “Réflexivité,” 718–20; our translation.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Esquisse pour une auto-analyse* (Raisons d’agir, 2004), trans. Richard Nice as *Sketch for a Self-Analysis* (University of Chicago Press, 2008).

quent commitments. We then analyze the unforeseen conditions under which she went into exile, and the networks that formed around her to support her intellectual projects and her engagement. Exile led her not only to redefine her research objects, given the distance from her field, but also to take a reflexive look at her own intellectual trajectory. Whether she is revisiting old investigations or opening new files, the hindsight and reflexivity induced by exile lead her to generalize and give her analyses a universal scope – against the attempts, typical of expectations from refugees, to assign her to her position as an exile specialized in her society of origin. Reflexivity and generalization will be exemplified through an analysis of some of the books Pınar Selek published after settling in France.

### **The Habitus of a Committed Intellectual**

The habitus of this committed intellectual was first formed by the transmission of ethical-political dispositions inherited from her father. Pınar Selek was born in Istanbul in 1971, into a family endowed with significant cultural and political capital. She is the granddaughter of a left-wing revolutionary, founder of the Workers' Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP*), and the daughter of a renowned lawyer, journalist, and human rights activist, Alp Selek. Her father was imprisoned alongside thousands of opponents following the military coup of September 12, 1980, which established an authoritarian regime. Educated at Istanbul's Notre-Dame-de-Sion secondary school, "a secular establishment run by nuns, reserved for wealthy girls from a certain elite," she visited him every week.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Pınar Selek, *Parce qu'ils sont arméniens*, trans. Ali Terzioğlu (Liana Levi, 2015), 18.

A poetry lover, she secretly read the banned poets Aragon and Éluard, exposing herself to prosecution for communism, and plastered the corridors with verses by that other banned “communist,” Nâzım Hikmet. In class, she stubbornly spoke of equality, freedom, and peace, even daring to utter the words “capitalism” or “fascism.”<sup>8</sup> She wore disciplinary board sanctions “like medals.”<sup>9</sup>

Her “calling” as a sociologist is also linked to this socialization in oppositional circles. As she recounts in the interview we are publishing in this same issue, after high school, she left to study in Ankara, where the sociologist Behice Boran, who had been dismissed from the university and died in exile, had worked. The department had been closed, but Pınar Selek had taken an interest in her after her death, had read her books, and was looking for a way to “structure” the questions she had about the upheaval in Turkish society. She set off in Behice Boran’s footsteps, telling herself that she had to go “where she lost.”<sup>10</sup> She went on to study at the Mimar-Sinan University of Fine Arts in Istanbul. In the effervescence of the early 1990s, she took part in the renewal of thinking outside the university, contributing to the creation of the journal *Asociologie*. She also co-founded the Workshop of Street Artists with other Istanbul intellectuals and artists. At the same time, she contributed to *Agos*, a bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper published by opposition intellectuals, whose editor-in-chief, Hrant Dink, was later assassinated. As part of her master’s program, Pınar Selek started con-

<sup>8</sup> Selek, *Parce qu’ils sont arméniens*, 21–22.

<sup>9</sup> Selek, *Parce qu’ils sont arméniens*, 25.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Pınar Selek, conducted by Giséle Sapiro and Elsie Cohen on October 26, 2024, in this issue.

ducting research on minorities and marginalized groups such as sex workers, transsexuals, gypsies, Armenians, and political prisoners, with a particular focus on the question of violence, from its creation to its reproduction and experience. Her dissertation brought to light the joint action of the media, the police, and the gentrification process on these marginalized populations. Her immersive, qualitative approach meant that she spent many months with her interviewees. Her work resulted in the first book on trans people in Turkey.<sup>11</sup> In 1995, she undertook research on the Kurds, going out into the villages to investigate. There she discovered “how the Kurdish population had preserved its cultural and historical treasures.” The aim was not to do “a sociology of the PKK organization [Kurdistan Workers’ Party, considered a terrorist organization by the Turkish government], but rather of the social movement and what was going on around it, on a cultural, historical, and political scale,” she explains in the interview.

On July 11, 1998, the researcher was arrested by the Turkish police and tortured in an attempt to make her confess the names of her interviewees, whom she refused to hand over. Pınar Selek thought of sociologist İsmail Beşikçi, “the first [person] to work on Kurdish issues”: “I was afraid [...] [He] had spent fifteen years in prison because of his research.” Imprisoned for “complicity with the PKK,” she learned a month after her imprisonment that she had been charged with a bomb attack on Istanbul’s Egyptian market. The “bombing” turned out to be an accidental explosion. Although she maintained her innocence and drew

<sup>11</sup> Pınar Selek, *Maskeler Suvariler Gacılar: Ülker Sokak: Bir Altı Kültürün Dışlanma Mekanı* (Aykırı Araştırma, 2001).

attention to the link between this arrest and her refusal to hand over the names of her Kurdish informants to the intelligence services, she remained in prison for two and a half years.

During her imprisonment, Pınar Selek strove to resume her intellectual work. She learned Kurdish, and when she regained the use of her fingers, tried to rewrite her diary, confiscated and destroyed by the secret services during her interrogations, with all the material she had collected during her three years of research in the villages.<sup>12</sup> While in prison, she wrote a historical and critical analysis of social movements for peace, which her lawyers published in Turkey (“We Haven’t Been Able to Make Peace,” untranslated).<sup>13</sup> Released on bail in 2001 by the High Court, Pınar Selek continued to exercise her freedom of research and expression despite the threat, and became a renowned writer and intellectual. Although she did not get a job in academia, where repression had become very strict, she published a number of works, taking advantage of the freedom that publishing enjoys in Turkey, even though research can be “criminalized” there. Pınar Selek has published a dozen books in Turkish, including fiction and children’s stories.

Having become a leading figure in the feminist movement, she organized a major feminist march across the country in 2003, rallying in the city of Konya, and established the Amargi cooperative, which launched a magazine in 2006. Funded by the European Union and the Ger-

<sup>12</sup> She has just written a book on her confiscated materials, which will appear in September 2025: Pınar Selek, *Lever la tête* (Presses de l’Université Paris-Cité, forthcoming).

<sup>13</sup> Pınar Selek, *Barışamadık* (İthaki Yayınları, 2004).

man Heinrich Böll and Rosa Luxemburg Foundations, the peer-reviewed magazine sold 3,500 copies. Pinar Selek was also involved in a number of other actions, as part of a convergence of struggles – anti-militarism, peace, defense of the rights of transsexuals – all commitments that echo her research work published in periodicals such as the Turkish-language Kurdish periodical *Özgür Gündem*, and in scientific journals.

Her trial for “terrorism” was marked by numerous irregularities and a lack of tangible evidence. The media coverage created a popular movement around the sociologist. The prison and the court became arenas for mobilization and demonstrations of solidarity on the part of the people she had met in her research fields – the homeless, street children, transsexuals, prostitutes, gypsies – relayed by female sociology students who, at a later trial, held up placards reading “We continue to ask questions.”

The Turkish Supreme Court finally upheld her acquittal in 2006 and 2007, but the case was reopened in 2009, when her investigation into the role of military experience in the construction of masculinities was published. Entitled *Becoming a Man by Crawling*, the book was a resounding success, reprinted several times in Turkey and translated into French and German.<sup>14</sup> Initially reluctant to flee the country, Pinar Selek was forced into exile when her lawyers learned that the Court of Cassation had decided to reverse the acquittal and intended to remand her in cus-

<sup>14</sup> Pinar Selek, *Sürüne Sürüne Erkek Olmak* (İletişim Yayınları, 2008); trans. Ali Terzioğlu as *Service militaire en Turquie et construction de la classe de sexe dominante: Devenir homme en rampant* (L’Harmattan, 2014); trans. Constanze Letsch as *Zum Mann gehätschelt. Zum Mann gedrillt: Männliche Identitäten* (Orlanda Verlag, 2014).

today. Having had no time to prepare her departure, she traveled to Berlin to stay with a French friend.

### **Time in Exile: New Objects of Research, Old Struggles**

A solidarity movement sprang up to support Pinar Selek in exile, and she was able to benefit from hosting structures for intellectuals. Since her novels had been translated into German, she was offered a four-month residency as a writer by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, which had supported her research on military service in Turkey. She was then awarded a grant from the German branch of the PEN Club, of which she was a member in Turkey, as part of the “Writers in Exile” program, enabling her to live there for a further two years. During this time, she wrote a novel inspired by her own experience, which follows the fictional journeys of four Istanbulite characters belonging to a generation in search of freedom since the 1980 coup. This would be her first novel translated into French, under the title *La Maison du Bosphore* (The House on the Bosphorus).<sup>15</sup> Unwilling to learn German under the pressure of exile – she had no plans at the time to seek political asylum – she chose to settle in France, mainly for linguistic and cultural reasons, as she had learned French at school and was familiar with French literature. She enrolled in a PhD program at the University of Strasbourg, which enabled her to renew her visa, and began researching the transformation of the activist space in Turkey, continuing her fieldwork on the internet.

<sup>15</sup> Pinar Selek, *La Maison du Bosphore*, trans. Sibel Kerem (Éditions Liana Levi, 2013).

In the chapter “Partir ou Rester” (“Leave or Remain”) of her autobiographical account *Parce qu’ils sont arméniens* (“Because They Are Armenians”), she evokes the feeling of guilt toward friends and the struggle to which the choice to leave gave rise – a feeling found in many committed intellectuals.<sup>16</sup> However, the writer-sociologist dispels the guilt by explaining the reasons for her exile: “I held out until the threat of life imprisonment,” and, through the retrospective exercise of writing, turns the responsibility for exile onto the oppressor state: “We didn’t leave. We were driven out.”<sup>17</sup>

Her first texts began to be published in French when she moved to France in 2011. In 2014, she defended a thesis in political science at the University of Strasbourg on protest movements in Turkey and their repression, without renouncing her literary work or her political commitment from exile. That same year, she moved to the École Normale Supérieure in Lyon, where she was awarded a doctorate *honoris causa* in 2013, and began researching the Armenian diaspora.

It was also in 2013 that she sought asylum in France, as Turkey requested her immediate extradition after a judge on duty had taken over her case at the Court of Cassation, conducting an urgent investigation. Despite her acquittal at her fourth trial, on the basis of irrefutable evidence of her innocence, the Court of Cassation annulled the acquittal on June 21, 2022. Her fifth trial started, suspended

<sup>16</sup> Elsie Cohen, “Penseurs de l’exil. Enquête sur les migrations forcées d’intellectuels vers la France et l’Allemagne au 21<sup>e</sup> siècle,” thesis in progress (forthcoming with De Gruyter, 2026), Paris, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, and Sarrebruck, Université de la Sarre.

<sup>17</sup> Selek, *Parce qu’ils sont arméniens*, 79, 81.

by an international arrest warrant and a request for immediate imprisonment, with the threat of a life sentence. Since then, the Turkish authorities have kept her under constant judicial and psychological pressure, postponing the hearings of the fifth trial one after the other, allegedly pending her extradition.<sup>18</sup> In fact, it would appear that the judges are intimidated by the imposing French delegation that turns up at every hearing, a delegation made up of her lawyers; presidents of academic associations (Association française de sociologie, Association des sociologues enseignants du supérieur, Association française de science politique, Observatoire des libertés académiques); political representatives; and members of her support committee, composed of artists, intellectuals, and academics. Indeed, the network of academic and artistic solidarity has been organized to support her in her high-profile trial.

In 2020, Pinar Selek had been granted a fellowship from the PAUSE program, recently created in France to support academics at risk, before obtaining a temporary teaching-research position (non-tenured associate professor) at the Université Côte d'Azur in Nice, within the URMIS research center specializing in migration issues and inter-ethnic relations. In 2022, she became honorary president of the Association des sociologues enseignants du supérieur, and in 2023 she was awarded a medal from the Université libre de Bruxelles. On January 31, 2025, she was awarded the Grenoble Medal for her commit-

<sup>18</sup> The hearings were postponed on March 31, 2023, on September 29, 2023, on June 25, 2024, on February 7, 2025, and again on April 25, 2025. Just before this last session, her lawyers obtained the information that Interpol has refused the demand for extradition from the Turkish government. The next hearing has been scheduled for October 21.

ment to human rights, which she dedicated to Pakhshan Azizi and Warisha Moradi, two young Iranian women sentenced to death.

At the June 2024 hearing of her trial, the Minister of the Interior submitted as incriminating evidence a document equating a round table organized by the URMIS center that she moderated on Kurdish women in migration<sup>19</sup> with an event organized by a “terrorist” group. The Université Côte d’Azur has also been targeted, demonstrating the interference of illiberal regimes in the academic freedom of liberal democracies.<sup>20</sup>

Despite her integration into the academic community, the persecution to which she is subjected affects her work and concentration. She is deprived of her academic freedom, fearing to leave France, where she is protected as an employee of a public institution and by her French nationality. Even on French territory, she is threatened by the Grey Wolves, an armed ultranationalist Turkish organization, and cannot leave her home alone. “It’s not just exile that’s difficult, it’s also what you bring in your suitcases. I’m a researcher who continues to be persecuted and threatened,” she explained during our interview.

Exile has had an impact on her work and her writing. Her position as an exile also generates specific constraints, in particular that of being assigned certain themes. For

<sup>19</sup> The round table was held on April 11, 2024, as part of the “Printemps des migrations,” under the title “Mouvements des femmes en exil: Le cas des femmes kurdes”; <https://printemps-des-migrations.org/2024/03/2024-jeudi-11-avril-mouvement-des-femmes-en-exil/>.

<sup>20</sup> Gisèle Sapiro, “Contemporary Threats to Academic Freedom,” lecture at Heidelberg University, October 2024, forthcoming in *Sociologica*.

example, several French publishers refused to publish her second novel, *Azuneca ou Les fourmis zinzines*, on the grounds that it did not deal with Turkey, Armenian women, or the Kurds.<sup>21</sup> This novel, imbued with surrealism and magic, depicts how marginal lives intersect and help each other in the Mediterranean setting of Nice. We meet a group of exiles, “the ants,” from various backgrounds – Bulgaria, Italy, descendants of Spanish republicans, etc. – who form a collective resistance, fighting against state and social oppression. Pinar Selek protests against the explicit injunction of certain publishers to produce narratives linked to her origin or exile:

It’s true that this book is about exile, but when publishers asked me: “Is it about exile or Turkey?” I’d reply, “It’s got nothing to do with Turkey or exile; the novel takes place in Nice and recounts an experience of madness.” [...] I was told: “If you don’t play the media game, we won’t talk about you anymore, you’ll be marginalized in France.”<sup>22</sup>

In the end, the book was published by Éditions des femmes-Antoinette Fouque, which became her main publisher (after Liana Levi).

Her research continued to be linked to Turkey, but the inaccessibility of her former fields also took on a new dimension. First, this inaccessibility forced her to break free of Turkish borders by investing in new research objects at the European level. After investigating the Armenian dias-

<sup>21</sup> Pinar Selek, *Azuneca ou Les fourmis zinzines* (Des femmes – Antoinette Fouque, 2022).

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Pinar Selek, conducted by Gisèle Sapiro and Elsie Cohen on October 26, 2024 (this extract is not included in the version published in this issue).

pora, she turned her attention to Kurdish migrants and the transnational networks of Turkish musicians.<sup>23</sup> Her work focuses on the mechanisms of domination not only within Turkish society, but also in democratic European countries. She is involved in collective projects on the criminalization of solidarity with migration, based on fieldwork in the Alpes Maritimes,<sup>24</sup> and on the convergence of struggles between asylum seekers and feminists.<sup>25</sup> Her academic work is mainly published in France and in European journals, with only one article published in 2018 in Turkish, in the critical social science journal *Toplum Bilim*, an article that reopens the file on the investigation into military socialization in Turkey she carried out before her departure.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the second displacement induced by exile consists in a return to past investigations and a rise in generality, as illustrated by her book *Le Chaudron militaire turc*, to which we will return after addressing her self-reflection regarding the invisibilization of the Armenian question in Turkey, which coincided with her investigation into the diaspora of this oppressed minority.<sup>27</sup>

### **A Self-Reflection into the Invisibilization of the Armenian Question in Turkey**

In her book of investigation and autobiography, *Parce*

<sup>23</sup> Pinar Selek, "Musiques anatoliennes en exil: transformations, transgressions," *Hommes & migrations*, no. 1342 (2023): 43–50.

<sup>24</sup> She is co-chair of the Observatoire des migrations of Alpes-Maritimes.

<sup>25</sup> Pinar Selek and Daniela Trucco, eds., *Le Manège des Frontières: Criminalisation des migrations et solidarités dans les Alpes-Maritimes* (Le Passager clandestin, 2020); Selek, "Feminists and Asylum Seekers: A Common Struggle? A Research in the Maritime Alps," *Mondi Migranti*, no. 3 (2021): 113–32.

<sup>26</sup> Pinar Selek, "Şiddetin öznesini kurmak ya da erkek yapmak," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no. 145 (2018).

<sup>27</sup> Pinar Selek, *Le Chaudron militaire turc: Un exemple de production de la violence masculine* (des femmes-Antoinette Fouque, 2023).

*qu'ils sont arméniens*, published in 2015 (and reissued in 2023) by Liana Levi, Pinar Selek carries out a "self-analysis" aimed at "unpacking the hidden nationalism" that had contributed to "shape" her.<sup>28</sup> She looks back at the role played by her family and school socialization, both individual and collective, in the genesis of her intellectual project and her commitments. In so doing, she brings to light the incorporation of prejudice against the Armenians, victims of the Turkish genocide in 1915, who acquired minority status.<sup>29</sup>

Her account shows that, in a state constituted as a "sacred entity," which "builds and consolidates its power by means of a mythical-religious vocabulary that proscribes all debate," official propaganda is capable of imposing its "negationist ideologies" on a young woman socialized in a left-wing and oppositional milieu, without her being conscious of it.<sup>30</sup> Paradoxically, the propensity of the left wing, to which her family belonged, to ignore ethnic origins contributed to making the fate of these minorities invisible, as she explains:

In my family, allegiance to the left forbade the slightest allusion to ethnicity. The refusal of racial stigmatization and internationalization can make you insensitive to ethnic hierarchies in the country where you live. We never talked about where our grandparents had come from, or how they had mixed. In any case, to be a Stambouliau was to carry with you a little of the Balkans, a little of the Cauca-

<sup>28</sup> Selek, *Parce qu'ils sont arméniens*, 91.

<sup>29</sup> Protected status defined by the Treaty of Lausanne of July 23, 1923, which stipulates the obligation for the Turkish state to recognize the civil and political rights of non-Muslim minorities.

<sup>30</sup> Selek, *Parce qu'ils sont arméniens*, 70.

sus and a little of Anatolia. So, as a left-wing Stamboulia family, we had adopted the dominant Turkish identity.

And if, through the thousand variations of slogans, you're reminded every day that you're the master of the house, an armor of self-assurance envelops your soul. The armor of the master of the house. I cannot lie, I have worn this armor.<sup>31</sup>

In this extract, the metaphor of the "armor" worn by the "master of the house" is used to indicate both the protective and belligerent aspects of belonging to the "dominant Turkish identity."

One of the main vectors of Turkish nationalism, an exclusive nationalism that marginalizes the oppressed and even persecuted Armenian and Kurdish minorities, is the school institution: "On the morning of the first day of school, I had barely crossed the school gate when I discovered a huge banner stretched across the façade: Happy is he who calls himself a Turk! [...] With time, I came to understand that in Turkey, it was difficult for Armenians to be happy."<sup>32</sup> As in other nation-states, but in a way exacerbated by nationalist ideology and its ethnic and religious definition, the school thus contributes to the hierarchization of legitimate identities and the reproduction of symbolic violence against the Armenian minority.<sup>33</sup>

Pinar Selek's experience as an activist in "a militant space riven by profound inequalities" raised questions that she

<sup>31</sup> Selek, *Parce qu'ils sont arméniens*, 34.

<sup>32</sup> Selek, *Parce qu'ils sont arméniens*, 16.

<sup>33</sup> See Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *La reproduction* (Editions de Minuit, 1970), and on the role of the state in the production of legitimate identity,

later addressed in her research, and in particular a reflexivity about her intellectual position at the time, which she sees as tinged with the “arrogance” inherent in her majority Turkish identity. This “arrogant” disposition contrasts with that of oppressed Armenian women, who are said to be “cowardly” according to prejudice:

I observed how a protest movement is also characterized by social relations. How it brings together individuals with different trajectories: differences of gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, generation... How these disparities lead to varying opportunities for the movement and for activists, but also to differences in priorities, ways of positioning oneself, of being listened to. [...]

But it’s not easy to free oneself from an arrogant identity. The demeaning image of the Armenian insidiously engraved in my mind in high school didn’t leave me so easily. “Where are these Armenians? Why don’t they support our action?” I couldn’t help thinking from time to time.<sup>34</sup>

Her research with a communist collective in Istanbul called Hay Gin, which organizes “exchanges of experience, joint presentations” on the history of the feminist movement in Turkey, provided the answer to her last question about the absence of Armenian men and women in protest movements. Several feminist movements had emerged in Turkey in the late nineteenth century, echoing their formation in Europe. Many Armenian women had

see Pierre Bourdieu, *Sur l’État, Cours du Collège de France* (Seuil/Raisons d’agir, 2012), 25.

<sup>34</sup> Selele, *Parce qu’ils sont arméniens*, 63.

played a decisive role in their creation, before they were dismantled and “Turkified”:

Gradually, we came to understand with amazement how the genocide, the deportation of the Greeks and the assimilation of the Kurds had homogenized and Turkified the feminist movement.

[...] I stopped asking “Where are the Armenians?” I realized that Armenians were now very few in Turkey, that they had been reduced to almost nothing.<sup>35</sup>

Like feminism, sociology, which Pinar Selek discovered at university and which “deconstructed the myth of the Nation,” presented itself to her as a space for building this observation, this listening, and this ability to bear witness, which she associated with the figure of “defender of freedoms” with which she intended to identify.

Rising up against injustice and opposing power does not de facto make you a defender of freedoms. It opens a door, but going through that door, observing, listening and learning to bear witness is a very long journey toward freedom... which cannot be accomplished simply by opposing.<sup>36</sup>

This work of anamnesis of the Turkish nationalist collective unconscious is mirrored by her research into the foundations of nationalist and patriarchal authoritarianism.

<sup>35</sup> Selek, *Parce qu'ils sont arméniens*, 64–65.

<sup>36</sup> Selek, *Parce qu'ils sont arméniens*, 55.

### **Military Service as an Observatory of the Making of Authoritarianism**

Deconstructing the myth of the nation also means studying the modes of production of legitimate violence, of which, according to Max Weber, the state has a monopoly. At the funeral of her friend Hrant Dink, a journalist murdered by the Grey Wolves, the latter's companion invited those present to "probe the darkness that makes a baby a murderer." Pinar Selek's book *Le Chaudron militaire turc. Un exemple de production de la violence masculine*, published by Éditions des femmes-Antoinette Fouque in 2023, opens with this question. This book takes up the investigation carried out in Turkey before her departure, the 2009 publication of which had led to the reopening of her trial (the book was translated into French in 2014). Based on an oral history survey of seventy-nine men, she gave voice to these rare testimonies of the military experience of men in many countries.

This second essay returns to the survey, systematizing the analysis and moving up in generality to reflect on how the militarist and patriarchal order is reproduced through the training of male bodies for the exercise of violence. Military service, she explains, is the third rite of initiation into hegemonic masculinity, after circumcision and penetration, and before marriage and fatherhood. Although it takes on particular forms in Turkey, a country with a genocidal past, where several coups have structured the political field, this experience is part of a patriarchal system that underpins adherence to legitimate violence exercised by the state in the name of the "Reason of State" (or state rationale; in French "Raison d'État"), and leads to its daily practice. Pinar Selek shows that power and domination,

of which male domination is a cornerstone, are achieved, paradoxically enough, through submission, humiliation, annihilation of personality, infantilization, internalization of hierarchy, and, of course, violence. In the course of this series of ordeals, referred to by the metaphor of the “military cauldron,” what she calls the “crawling man” is created, predisposed to reproduce trivialized violence – from brawls to individual and gang rape (particularly that perpetrated in military settings), pogroms, state violence, and paramilitary violence – as well as various forms of paternalism.

Her analysis draws on numerous references, including Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil, Michel Foucault, and James Scott, as well as feminist theorists Christine Delphy, Monique Wittig, Colette Guillaumin, Anne-Marie Devreux, and Raywen Connell, but this sophisticated theoretical framework is underpinned, embodied, by the testimonies she has collected. Access to the reality of the experience of that “total institution” (Erving Goffman) that is the army enables her to apprehend militarism as a social process, and to bring to light the role of normative heterosexist masculinity in the organization of political violence, as well as in violence against women and against homosexuals and transsexuals, stigmatized by the institution as “rotten,” mocked, humiliated, excluded from the social order. The analysis can be generalized to other countries, with variations. The conclusion also opens up, in a pertinent and timely manner, to questions about the conditions of submission to the neoliberal order and the system of generalized surveillance that are nibbling away at political liberalism in capitalist democracies, in the name of security policies and the fight against terrorism.

Faced with the submission to violence that leads to its reproduction, Pinar Selek wields the weapons of sociology, peaceful but intellectually sharp and disenchanting, with which she deconstructs the mechanisms of physical violence and those of the symbolic violence that legitimizes it, revealing them in their sad, sheepish, reiterative banality. She does this without being acrimonious or denouncing her interviewees, describing their experiences with an objectivity and critical distance that does not exclude a form of empathy for these men subjected to such tests of virility. Nourished by feminist critiques of patriarchy and nationalism, this survey is part of her feminist commitment, which exile contributed to redefining.

### **Exile and Transnational Feminism**

In exile, Pinar Selek continued to participate in transnational feminist activist networks, which in turn organized to defend her from the repression to which she was and still is subjected. The preface to her book *Loin de chez moi mais jusqu'ou*, an autobiographical account of her exile, published in French by iXe and signed by the Collectif de Solidarité avec Pinar Selek, attests to the pre-existence of feminist networks between France and Turkey.<sup>37</sup> These were organized as soon as Pinar Selek arrived in France in the early 2010s. It was her transnational activist capital that enabled her, through feminist movements and links built before exile, and also through her previous research fields, to benefit from visibility in France and a supportive welcome.

<sup>37</sup> Pinar Selek, *Loin de chez moi mais jusqu'ou*, trans. Esther Grandjean (Éditions iXe, 2012).

In this autobiographical text, she evokes the mantra she repeats to herself and her friends, borrowed from the British writer Virginia Woolf: "As a woman I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world."<sup>38</sup> Then, immediately afterward, she refers to her own subjectivized identities or belonging: "Through various intertwined processes of subjectivization, then collapsed and reconstructed, I stretched the boundaries of my space, which always seemed narrower than it was."<sup>39</sup> This evocation shows that she sees the feminist struggle as deterritorialized, freed from national borders and identities. The effect of this evocation is to draw a parallel between female existence and existence in exile. Deleuze's term "deterritorialization," which she uses to reflect "on the conditions of possibility of deterritorialization," interferes, according to her account, very early on in her thoughts on her life as a woman: "That's where my rejection of marriage and the domestication mechanism of everyday obligations comes from. Because I'm a woman, I didn't want to live in one of those houses filled with identical furniture."<sup>40</sup> As she implies through the use of her retrospective narrative thread, her sense of exile would have begun long before her concrete exile: "Physically knowing the places where you live is only part of the question: Feeling at home also means not feeling alienated from the dynamics of the place." In Istanbul, however, because she "is a woman," she couldn't "really master" the "dynamics" of the place, "impregnated by relations of domination."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Virginia Woolf, *Trois guinéés* (Des femmes, 1977), quoted in Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 23.

<sup>39</sup> Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 23.

<sup>40</sup> Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 25.

<sup>41</sup> Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 27.

However, if this “widening of internal frontiers” begins in Istanbul, where she was born, “there’s a difference,” she says, between this “kind of slippage,” that which moves away from shackles and learned things, from the known frontiers of reality, and the “brutal uprooting” represented by concrete exile. In several texts, she evokes what exile – the uprooting that made her abandon “the olive tree in [her] garden,” “the novel [she] started reading and the article [she] started writing on the table,” “the photos of [her] mother,” “[her] friends,” “the political campaign launched and the speech” she was to deliver – has transformed in her militant and intellectual itinerary.<sup>42</sup> In her text “Écrire la déchirure,” she raises the question of the conditions of intellectual production in exile. She discusses the difficulty of finding a place for herself in France, and the meaning of writing for her in the traumatic context of political exile:

How do you keep writing when your suitcase gets heavier and heavier? How do you keep concentrating, keep writing, when you’re in exile? Especially when you’re being pursued? Constantly threatened with death? When your family is threatened too? When you go into exile, you don’t just take your knowledge with you, but also your trauma and your worries. The after-effects of torture and threats. I took with me the images of 38 friends who died in front of me in prison, and the after-effects of the hunger strike I went on for 28 days. These after-effects open up in exile and bleed.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Selek, *Loi de chez moi*, 29.

<sup>43</sup> Pinar Selek, “Écrire la déchirure,” *L’Entre-deux*, no. 7 (2020), <https://www.lentre-deux.com/?b=100>.

Exile leads her to read “writers” and “scientists” who have also experienced exile, notably the European intellectuals exiled during the Second World War. She evokes Adorno, for example, and his text that questions the possibility of poetry after Auschwitz, and the feeling of impotence and superficiality that culture inspires in him after the experience of annihilation.<sup>44</sup> “And today? What’s the point of writing in this burning world [...]?” echoes Pınar Selek. “These questions make more sense when you suddenly find yourself in horror, when you’ve been abruptly cut off from your space, and when you’re bleeding from the tear.”<sup>45</sup> Exile is experienced, through her words, as a borderline experience, an impediment to thought that renders “theories and metaphors obsolete.”

When I arrived in France, I realized that mastering the language wasn’t enough, that it didn’t provide the knowledge of landmarks that are built through relationships, mastery of space and context. I’m talking about a practical, living mastery that involves the body. You learn by doing. I’m trying to learn to flow by flowing. I still don’t understand all the wind directions. I haven’t yet gotten used to my new sail to set my course. I’m holding the rudder... but it’s not easy. Because when experience renders theories and metaphors obsolete, your tongue gets tied. To keep talking, you read, you read, to learn, to understand what’s going on. How have writers or scientists described this situation? What have they proposed?<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, “Critique de la culture et société,” in *Prismes*, trans. Geneviève Rochlitz and Rainer Rochlitz (1949; Payot, 2003), 7–23.

<sup>45</sup> Selek, “Écrire la déchirure.”

<sup>46</sup> Selek, “Écrire la déchirure.”

But the loss of meaning inherent in exile is also a factor of freedom and “widening” the boundaries of reality:

The loss of a sense of security has also cut me off from the symbols, ties, motives and habits that had hitherto given me this security. And although this distance leaves me in a void, my gaze is now looking further afield, and the horizons of my boundaries are widening.<sup>47</sup>

The personal and intimate transformation that exile has brought about in her, and which she addresses in her autobiographical texts, also mirrors a reflection on what forced migration does to intellectuals on a collective scale, on their productions and their capacity to act. Also adopting the position of a mediator between cultures, she sees the circulation of idea-bearers as the guarantee of research that perpetuates “transnational traditions” and “solidarity,” a freedom that makes us “stronger”: “The transformation of our lives not only makes us freer and happier, but also stronger. We build bridges between different roads.”<sup>48</sup> She insists on the “transformation” and “innovation” that such circulation can generate, through “new modes of action and organization on the margins of collective routines”:

The circulation of ideas and experience can sometimes lead to clashes, but it can also give rise to new processes of transformation. Broadening the range of influences makes possible a new vocabulary, innovative interpretations of

<sup>47</sup> Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 31.

<sup>48</sup> Selek, “Écrire la déchirure.”

<sup>49</sup> Selek, *Parce qu’ils sont arméniens*, 84.

the world, new modes of action and organization on the fringes of collective routines.<sup>49</sup>

Drawing once again on the words of Adorno, who describes exile as the beginning of a time without attachments and without a home, she questions the specificity of the female experience of exile, and makes exile the universal condition of women. As you read on, you realize that her autobiographical text, *Loin de chez moi mais jusqu'ou* (Far from Home, but How Far), is in fact a reflection on the female condition:

But what does that mean for a woman? Is it possible for me, a woman, to live like Adorno in hotels and boarding houses? If not a witch? So where to live? Aren't women always in exile in the world, even in their own homes? And isn't it to combat this feeling of exile that they cling to their homes, their loved ones, their relationships? Questions and answers. Questions.<sup>50</sup>

Also keen to distance herself from romantic visions of exile, Pınar Selek emphasizes that before living the ideal of deterritorialization without attachments, exile is first and foremost an experience of "disorientation." She chooses the analogy of the labyrinth in Berlin's Jewish Museum to represent the psychology of exile: "The ground you're standing on seems treacherous, unstable. We don't know how to deal with the people, institutions, and structures that exist here. Everything seems oddly tilted, it's a bad feeling."<sup>51</sup> She goes on to underline the inequalities of ex-

<sup>50</sup> Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 33.

<sup>51</sup> Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 36.

periences of deterritorialization: “Those exiled from war and misery don’t enjoy the benefits of deterritorialization, they experience poverty, insecurity, and bottomless despair.”<sup>52</sup>

Pinar Selek’s story reveals the importance of solidarity networks and how they can influence the experience of exile. She points out that “women have a particularly hard experience of exile,” yet she herself feels “lucky to be a woman,” as it enables her to “experience the international solidarity of feminists” who share with her their “deterritorialization.” Pinar Selek sees her intellectual position as one of marginality, a position previously constructed in the country she left behind, and despite the recognition she gained in her country of exile within intellectual fields: “With them [feminists], I find the strength to live on the edge of social institutions and politics the world over.”<sup>53</sup> In addition to transnational feminist networks, her exile enabled her to perpetuate the struggle waged in Turkey from a distance, by organizing actions in conjunction with networks of young Armenians in exile: “It’s a magical encounter with the children and grandchildren of a country built on extreme violence. This country no longer exists. We no longer have a country. The years go by. We are building our world.”<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion

Pinar Selek, persecuted by the Turkish government, fights tirelessly for freedom of thought and research. Exile has

<sup>52</sup> Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 35.

<sup>53</sup> Selek, *Loin de chez moi*, 38.

<sup>54</sup> Selek, *Parce qu’ils sont arméniens*, 94.

sharpened the sociologist's epistemological vigilance and encouraged a self-reflection, even an anamnesis of the collective unconscious.

The woman who says she "likes to cross red lines" by investigating Kurdish and Armenian issues continues to raise questions that embarrass Turkish public authorities through her research in France. The convergence of the struggles and research subjects that have marked her intellectual itinerary from the outset endows her interventions with a universalizing scope. She sheds light on the universal mechanisms of violence and their roots in power structures, and focuses on those who perpetuate or suffer it: minorities, marginalized people, exiles, survivors.

Furthermore, Pinar Selek considers the specifically female experience of exile, questioning the links between the female condition and uprooting. She also reflects on intellectual engagement and what it means in contexts of survival, evoking Gramsci's words: "We must combine the pessimism of intelligence with the optimism of will."<sup>55</sup> Connected to the dramas that continue to bind her to the places she has left behind, suspended in her commitments, she nevertheless directs her gaze toward the horizon – and beyond borders.

Through her commitment, her determination, her audacity, her incisive thinking, and her sharp writing, Pinar Selek embodies the antithesis of this "creeping man" that she has sociologically dissected.

<sup>55</sup> Pinar Selek, "Programme Pause, de l'accueil en urgence des scientifiques en exil," *Blog Mediapart*, October 2, 2019, <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/pinar-selek/blog/021019/programme-pause-de-laccueil-en-urgence-des-scientifiques-en-exil>.

# The Strength to Resist: Interview with Pınar Selek

*Gisèle Sapiro / Elsie Cohen*

This interview was conducted on October 26, 2024, for the Observatoire des atteintes aux libertés académiques [OALA]; some extracts were published in French in the journal of the French Political Science Association, *MagAFSP* no. 7, December 2024.

**Q: Pınar Selek, how did you become a sociologist?**

**Pınar Selek:** How did I become a sociologist? I didn't want to become something. I wanted to do something. But sociology attracted me because, when I was nine, there was a coup in Turkey. I grew up in a big family that received a lot of people, there were discussions, debates, we were interested in what was going on in the country, in the world, etc. With the coup, everything changed. People around me disappeared, my father was imprisoned. I didn't understand anything, I tried to read. Among the people who used to come to us was a great sociologist [Behice Boran] who in the '60s had done work on two villages, talking about social classes: She was dismissed from the university, the department was closed down, the Military General Staff had said that Turkey didn't need sociology. After she died in exile, I asked my mother who she was, and I started reading her books, and that really, really attracted me. Apart from that, I had a lot of questions. I couldn't understand what had happened, this sudden change. I needed to structure my questions, to find a lead, a method. So after high school in Istanbul, I went to

Ankara, where she had worked and where her department [sociology] had been closed. She was dead. But I said to myself: I've got to go where she lost. I spent two years there before returning to Istanbul.

During my university years, in the early 1990s, Turkey was going through a rather extraordinary process. There was an effervescence, the birth of new social movements, a cognitive liberation. Professors were very committed, as were artists. There was a lot of debate. So, for example, in my first year [at the Mimar-Sinan University of Fine Arts in Istanbul], I took part in the creation of a journal called *Asociologie*.<sup>1</sup> And we had debates and discussions, we worked with some of our professors, and we were on first-name terms. So that was a pretty important period for me. However, I began to understand that repression had always been going on. And although there was a small opening, it wasn't enough. In fact, scientific research and reflection were structuring outside universities, around journals, around foundations, and so on. In this context, there weren't just sociologists, there were anthropologists, philosophers.... I was also involved in creative circles. So sociology contributed to my reflections, but I never defined myself as a sociologist.

**Q: How has your research and academic freedom been affected by political conditions?**

**Pınar Selek:** In 1995, I started research on the Kurds.

<sup>1</sup> This journal, led by students, received contributions from professors. It continued until Pınar Selek was imprisoned. It is now being relaunched by students of the same university.

I had previously carried out fieldwork among marginalized populations, those condemned as deviant by dominant discourses: brothels, Istanbul gypsies, trans people. I discovered a counter-culture organized in networks, and using the gypsy language so that the police wouldn't understand. In 1996, there was police violence to clear the neighborhood of trans people. My master's thesis analyzed how the media, the police, and the gentrification process work together. This led to the first published book on trans people in Turkey. And there was the war with the Kurds. When there's war, asking questions is dangerous. You have to use the terms of the state: "enemy," "terrorism," and so on. Power wants to govern emotion and thought. In the context of war, reflection can get you killed. Beyond the context of war, Turkish nationalism operated like a religion. After the Armenian genocide, war had been institutionalized. In elementary school textbooks, Armenians were openly referred to as enemies from within. They didn't speak of the Kurds, because the word was forbidden, but of the "Turks of the mountains." Even though my family was progressive, there was no real reflection on the nationalism that is also prevalent in the Turkish left. But as I grew up, I had come across feminist ideas, sexism in Turkey, and at the same time patriarchy. I began to question this nationalism. My research on the Kurds lasted three years. I went out to investigate in the villages and discovered how the Kurdish population had preserved its cultural and historical treasures: with the troubadours, the music, the dance. It wasn't a sociology of the PKK organization, but rather of the social movement and what was going on around it, on a cultural, historical and political scale. I was writing and trying to find paths of analysis, when one day [in July 1998], I was arrested.

I was afraid when I undertook this investigation, since sociologist İsmail Beşikçi, the first to work on Kurdish issues, had spent fifteen years in prison because of his research. Others, like the painter Abidin Dino and the poet Nâzım Hikmet, were imprisoned for several years. I lived in a country where asking questions, writing, criticizing, or even reflecting – and not only scientifically – could be dangerous. Despite all this, there were persons who wrote, who continued to think. I told myself that I would go on too, that I had to be courageous, but I never imagined what would happen to me. It's not easy when you're in a context of repression. You're taught to keep a low profile. Even if you're a critical sociologist, you have to criticize some things, but not others, and not go too far. It's a field of power. You have to learn to play the game. This harms the autonomy of thinking. And that's what's dangerous: Hannah Arendt talks about the banality of evil, and one of its conditions of existence is the loss of autonomy of thought.

When the police arrested me, they confiscated all my materials. They told me, "Give us the names behind the letters you write X, Y, Z. You won't publish your book and you'll say you're still working, otherwise things will happen to you." After that, you know the story. Prison and torture created post-traumatic effects and a lot of imprints on my body. I couldn't move for about a year, not even my fingers. Still, it was important for me to say no. I was right to carry out this research, even if the costs were high. I defended my academic freedom, my freedom to research, to think, to always ask questions. I don't believe that everything that doesn't kill us makes us stronger. Everything that doesn't kill us also hurts us. But my resistance has

spread a lot of hope. When I was in prison, all the people my research had touched and whom I'd met – the homeless, street kids, trans people, prostitutes, gypsies – came outside the prison. It was incredible. These people had also confided their secrets to me, in the course of other research, and mobilized because I had defended other secrets.

The State of Emergency didn't expect such popularity, but rather the mobilization of people on the left, the League of Human Rights, some feminists and academics. This gave me and others great strength. In one of the trials that followed, female sociology students held up placards reading "We keep asking questions." I keep talking, thinking, smiling. It gives a lot of strength to young people who ask questions. Alongside my scientific activities, I'm an activist who's trying to change things in the world, in life, and who's also trying to transform herself, to revolutionize herself all the time. I believe that these resources have served me well in my scientific journey, to be able to resist.

**Q: You are currently writing a book about this confiscation, which deprived you of your research materials.**

**Pinar Selek:** I spent two and a half years in prison, in a large dormitory. I learned a lot, especially Kurdish. The old "witches" healed me, they gave me massages, they were my doctors. I also wrote a lot.

Before the arrest, I was always writing field diaries, or my diary. I also had diskettes on which I saved the interviews.

Everything was confiscated during my arrest. Under torture, they read my diary, brutally tore up my notebooks, hurt them, shouted in my ears while I was tied up. Reading my diary, they made fun of me, they laughed... because I had love torments... it was horrible how they turned my words imitating my voice... I had never thought that my diary... I put a lot of effort into rewriting my diary once I was in prison. The first year I couldn't, because I had lost the use of my fingers. But little by little, when I was able to rewrite, even with difficulty, I wrote short texts about myself. Then I began two major research projects. One I was able to get out of prison by entrusting my lawyers with the manuscript they had published in Turkey, and which has not been translated into French: *We Haven't Been Able to Make Peace*. It's a historical book and a critical analysis of the social movements for peace.

When I was released, I was able to bring out another part of my research that I had hidden on my person. But the rest was destroyed just before my release, during a terrible police operation in prison during which many people were burned to death. Thirty-eight of my friends died under their bombs in my prison. We had gone on hunger strike to resist being transferred to a new prison built so that prisoners would be totally isolated. I was on day twenty-five, I think, twenty-six. After the operation, they transferred us to this other prison and I couldn't get back all my essays that I'd put in a bag. It was all gone. Some time later, I was released. Three years of research carried out before prison, and two and a half years of research carried out in prison, were confiscated. But I never stopped writing or asking questions during that period. And I moved on.

**Q: So you're just out of prison, and at what point do you decide to go into exile?**

**Pinar Selekt:** When I got out of prison, I committed myself to the creation of several spaces. I told myself that if my attempt at autonomy, reflection, questioning, and commitment to peace had been punished in this way, I was now going to be even more active in all these areas than before. I organized major peace actions, particularly feminist ones, which have gone down in history. I also published a lot of texts, but I didn't go to university. At university, repression had become very harsh, and the autonomy of research was organized outside universities. We created a mixed, analytical, feminist journal, *Amargi*, with the participation of university colleagues. This journal enjoyed great legitimacy, because we worked collectively, on a peer-review model. Colleagues from the university, who were a bit taken hostage, came to our editorial meetings to breathe a sigh of relief. We had also developed coping tactics: We found grants for our research from the European Union, or from the Heinrich Böll and Rosa Luxemburg Foundations in Germany. Each issue sold around 3,500 copies. I also organized neighborhood oral history projects through the creation of a cooperative on urban ecology. At the same time, I also began my last research project before leaving, on military service.

I stayed in Turkey until 2009. I didn't want to leave, despite the repression. There were some incredible events. For example, we were taking part in a big demonstration, and were getting beaten up by police repression. At the same time, below a cinema, there was a debate on Hannah Arendt. We would rush from the protest to take part in the debate.

**Q: While you were in prison, you were accused of carrying out a terrorist attack, a charge that has dogged you ever since. Is this what led you into exile – first in Germany from 2009 to 2011 – before settling in France?**

**Pınar Selek:** In Turkey, you can be criminalized, but books are not banned. I have around ten books published in Turkish. Initially, I was only interrogated about my research. I had just been in prison when I heard on TV that they had turned an accident into a PKK attack, and found a young Kurd, not even a militant, to make him say I had done it with him. It was a huge shock. I found myself in a science-fiction film. What was in fact an accident, a gas explosion, had happened at the home of the police chief's cousin at the time, a well-known Grey Wolf.<sup>2</sup> They tried to save him by making me endorse the responsibility, for the insurance. It was also the period when they were preparing the extradition of the PKK leader, then in Syria, to Turkey. They needed this type of action to underpin the criminalization of the Kurds. Later, the boy finally said he didn't know me. I claimed in one of my pleadings that he was a bigger victim than I was, because he had lost a lot, including his honor. There had also been an expert report proving that the explosion was accidental, but the trials continued. Each time I was acquitted, the prosecutor appealed, except in the case of this young boy. It was solidarity that gave me the strength to resist. My sister went back to university to become my lawyer. Many people around me changed their lives to support me.

<sup>2</sup> The Grey Wolves form an extreme-right ideology based on the belief in the superiority of the Turkish nation.

Thanks to the power of love, I was able to resist. And the power of love – and I mean love in general – is magic. I was surrounded by this magic. I resisted, but it wasn't easy. My mother had two heart attacks. Then she passed away. My mother was my greatest support. It wasn't exactly an easy time.

In 2009, my lawyers were informed that the Court of Cassation had decided to overturn the acquittal for the second time, this time with the intention of placing me temporarily in prison pending the court's decision. I had just come out of a rape trial; we had conducted a small survey on rape in Turkey with the feminist organization, and it was I who read the press releases in these trials. My father told me: "You have to leave tomorrow." We didn't even have time to prepare the departure and choose where to go. I had to take just a small bag so as not to attract attention. In it I put a photo of my mother, one of my childhood friend, stuff like that. Then I went to Germany, to Berlin, to stay with a French friend.

All my friends in Turkey, my colleagues, the PEN Club, feminist and LGBT organizations, anti-militarists, libertarians, mobilized: "Don't leave Pınar alone." I was first contacted by the Heinrich Böll Foundation, which had supported my research on military service in Istanbul. This house was founded for exiled writers. I was welcomed as a writer, because I also had novels translated into German, and my trial had received media coverage. I lived there for four months, during which I met Sri Lankans, Iranians.... It was a rich experience. I wrote a lot, which was important to get through the shock. Then the PEN Club, of which I was a member in Turkey as part of the local branch, took

over and offered me a grant. I was able to finish my novel, *La Maison du Bosphore*,<sup>3</sup> but I still felt the vertigo of exile. In my book *Loin de chez moi... mais jusqu'où*,<sup>4</sup> I reflected on this vertigo. I went to visit the Jewish Museum in Berlin, thinking that the Jews could teach me something. In the courtyard, there's this monument in the shape of a labyrinth that you can walk into and lose your sense of direction. Alfred Schütz used to say that when a foreigner arrives in a new world, he loses his sense of direction because of his transitory state. Exile is the vertigo of losing one's landmarks. Analyzing it is very liberating. It's not enough to overcome it, but it's important to say and face up to the realities that impose themselves on you.

I stayed in Berlin until 2011. The conditions were good because I received money, and I didn't pay rent. And in Germany, when you're invited to give talks, they do you the honor of paying you. At first, I thought exile would only last two years at most. Then I realized that exile would last a very long time. I decided to go to France, because I couldn't speak German. I love German, but I didn't want to have to learn it under duress, and once you reach a certain age, it's more difficult. I'd learned French at school. I knew its literature, Rabelais, Barbara... I chose a country whose songs I knew, to put an end to exile. I'm not a nationalist, I'm not a patriot, I know that these borders are made with violence, so I don't feel I belong to this territory. Virginia Woolf said she had no country as a woman. But I needed landmarks. I didn't want to be invit-

<sup>3</sup> In German: *Halbierte Hoffnungen*, trans. Sabine Adatepe (Orlanda Verlag GmbH, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> In German: *Frau im Exil*, trans. Karin Karakaşlı (Orlanda Frauenverlag GmbH, 2013).

ed, exiled. I didn't want to be determined by this context. I had made some savings in Germany, and I wasn't planning to apply for political asylum until I was condemned. I made the pragmatic choice of enrolling for a thesis at the University of Strasbourg, in order to renew my visa. At the university, I experienced great solidarity. I began researching the transformation of the activist space in Turkey, while continuing my fieldwork on the internet. Isabelle Sommer, a political scientist specializing in social movements and protest, and other colleagues, helped me to understand the debates in France around these issues, which I still knew little about.

In January 2013, an on-call judge withdrew the case from the Court of Cassation, which is not done. He conducted an emergency trial and sentenced me. I immediately applied for asylum, because Turkey had requested immediate extradition, and the university couldn't save me, even though the mobilization of the university president and colleagues, alongside Strasbourg associations, had been very important.

I defended my thesis quickly, in March 2014. A great Turkish feminist [Şirin Tekeli] – she's Turkey's Simone de Beauvoir – had lent me her little hideaway in Nice. She called me, saying she needed me urgently, and sent me a round-trip Strasbourg–Nice train ticket, then gave me her keys, urging me to finish my thesis. Within a few weeks, I had written it all down, like some kind of revelation.

**Q: How do you experience your work as a lecturer-researcher here in France? How does exile affect your work as a researcher and writer?**

**Pinar Selek:** When you're alone, it's difficult. But when you're part of a group of reflection like at university, discussing things with your colleagues, it's more comfortable. After defending my thesis in 2014 and spending a year at the École Normale Supérieure [ENS] in Lyon, I joined the URMIS [Unité de Recherches Migrations et Société] laboratory at the University of Nice [Université Côte d'Azur] in 2015. All of 2014, at the ENS, I worked on Armenian diasporas in Europe. This work fascinated me. I learned a lot. Before this research, I had written a book called *Parce qu'ils sont Arméniens* [Because They Are Armenians].<sup>5</sup> It's a very personal book about my relation to the Armenian question. But with the research, I learned a lot more. And I enjoyed researching, discussing, and coming back to my initial questions. I got a taste for it. I had carried out research in Turkey, but under conditions of repression. We had created other ways of doing things. Even though in France, I benefited from conditions that were more conducive to research, I didn't immediately get rid of what had happened to me. To give you an example, one night in Strasbourg, I heard a noise in the corridor of the student residence where I was staying. I was startled, jumped out of bed, and had the impulse to hide my USB key containing the backups of my research.

What is more, my trials were continuing. My last acquittal was in 2014. Since the first trial, I have been constantly

<sup>5</sup> In German: *Weil sie Armenier\*innen sind: Essay*, trans. Dorothea Dieckmann (Orlanda Buchverlag GmbH, 2023).

threatened. I couldn't go out alone, and I still can't today. It's not just exile that's difficult, it's also what you bring in your suitcases. You can't wind up what's going on in the country you've left, because you continue your commitments. My family still lives in Turkey, and what happens there determines the future of the trial. I'm a researcher who continues to be persecuted and threatened.

These conditions make concentration more difficult. Despite everything, I have multiplied my research subjects here in Nice. I co-created the Observatoire des Migrations dans les Alpes-Maritimes [Observatory of migrations in the Maritime Alps], in France and Italy. I investigated the effects of the criminalization of migration. I met migrant women, prostitutes, and people who are "slaves" of sorts in the domestic service sector. I then worked on military service, feminist movements, musicians in mobility, and creation in exile.

**Q: How do you work on migration and displacement when you've experienced them yourself?**

**Pinar Selekt:** You learn in the fieldwork that there is no such thing as a single exile. Everything changes according to your resources, your capital, your position in social and intersectional hierarchies. And then, what is exile? Adorno said, for example, that everyone is in exile. Virginia Woolf said that all women are in exile, even in their own homes. In my opinion, forced exile makes you lose a lot of means because of displacement, whether for economic, political, or other reasons. You lose your bearings and your ties. Everyone experiences this, even if they are

in different positions in the social hierarchy. In exile, you spend a lot of time trying to restructure these ties. I experienced these difficulties in my own way, but it helped me in my research.

**Q: How did the *Chaudron militaire turc* [Turkish Military Cauldron] project come about? And how did you take it up in France?**

**Pınar Selek:** It's the product of my latest investigation in Turkey. When my friend Hrant Dink, a journalist, was killed by fascists, by Grey Wolves, his partner, during the funeral, said that we should "probe the darkness that turns a baby into a murderer" rather than look for the culprits. I took that as an order, and went ahead with the job. The fieldwork had gone well. I had collected a lot of material, over fifty testimonies. I wanted to publish the book quickly. I had worked very hard to write it, to give a voice to the witnesses, and I made sure that everyone would understand the book. The research became very popular. There have been a dozen publications in other languages, and a play. Around the time of the trial, the debates were very violent: In all the media and newspapers, people talked about the feminist who wrote about men. I was threatened, and photomontages of me were circulating online, depicting rapes. But I didn't want to leave Turkey. Then came the decision to overturn the acquittal, which I mentioned earlier, and my departure.

In France, I found the conditions to take the time to think again about this question of violence, the society of control and its new mechanisms. In repressive contexts, we

don't take the time to do things slowly. When there's a fire, you try to understand and analyze it quickly. I felt I hadn't gone far enough in my analysis in the first book. I wanted to contribute to a more general analysis of the production of political violence and the social production of the actors of violence, to shed light on how normative masculinity played a role in this production, and the link between the class of the dominant sex and political violence. I wanted to show that in Turkey, with neoliberal globalization, military service was no longer the only place to discipline men, to create the class of the dominant sex. The state no longer has a monopoly on legitimate violence. We are witnessing a privatization of violence around the world: in the United States, with private prisons, for example, or companies that see war as a market. In Turkey, the Grey Wolves are a good example of paramilitarization, because they are also integrated into the country's economy and transport sector. I wanted to show how Turkey is changing by opening up internationally.

In 2023, the Supreme Court made a decision. After ten years, they decided to put an end to my acquittal and send the case back to the Criminal Court. I had finished the book by then. Even though my Turkish lawyers tried to dissuade me, and told me to keep a low profile, I called my publishing house [des femmes-Antoinette Fouque] and asked them to work quickly on the publication.

Now I'm writing a new book about my confiscated research. I'm pulling the thread of my memories and trying to visualize what I had written in my confiscated research notebooks. The period I was researching in the villages was a time of war. I wanted to investigate the popula-

tion's survival mechanisms. Conditions were very difficult, and I thought that if I returned to the field two years later, this population would have disappeared. The destruction caused by violence is immense.

You never really leave your country in exile. Maybe it's better to keep both. To take advantage of the possibilities of our space here in France, but never to leave the other space.

**Q: How do you see the future of social and feminist struggles in Turkey and around the world? In particular, you've begun a dialogue with Narges Mohammadi on this subject.**

**Pinar Selekt:** I am currently talking to several women in exile, who find themselves in the diaspora. Women from Afghanistan, Argentina, and elsewhere, and women who haven't experienced exile either. We're thinking about creating a transnational feminist anti-militarist front. The experience of exile, of diaspora, also gives us the opportunity to meet. We, exiled feminists, can have the strength to mobilize something, because we have multiple networks, different types of intelligence, which we can pool.

**Q: A final question concerns the way in which attacks on academic freedom in illiberal countries have repercussions in liberal countries. During the third hearing of the fifth trial against you (adjourned until February 2025<sup>6</sup>), the Turkish government crossed a boundary by now attacking**

**your academic research in France: A document assimilating a debate you co-hosted with your URMIS laboratory on Kurdish women in migration was submitted by the Ministry of Interior to the case file as incriminating evidence of an event organized by a “terrorist” group. It seems that it is always your professional activity that is targeted, rather than your activism. What is the impact of this on your work and projects, and, more broadly, in your eyes, on academic freedom in liberal countries?**

**Pınar Selek:** A year ago, when the Supreme Court decided to sentence me, there was once again a huge mobilization around me. They couldn’t reach a decision because the academic world mobilized. I am an example of someone who hasn’t been defeated, who continues to write and analyze. This destabilizes the judicial state. I know that the Turkish Interior Minister (since it’s a Ministry document) has targeted the French university because it supports me and I am part of the French university. I have been fighting this fascist power for twenty-six years, and I know its logic and diplomatic capabilities very well. I think that this strategy of accusation, this document, is, in the short term, an operation to intimidate those around me. In the long term, it’s an attack on my research questions. Specialists on the Armenian question, such as Yves Ternon and Raymond Kévorkian, explain how diplomatic ties between France and Turkey prevented French universities from carrying out academic research on the Armenian

<sup>6</sup> The Court once again adjourned the trial on the fourth hearing of the trial on February 24, 2025, to April 25.

genocide until the late 1970s. Academic freedom shrinks when political powers intervene in the scientific field. Not long ago, accusations were made in France against “Islam-leftism” at the university.<sup>7</sup> It all makes you think.

The Turkish state has now succeeded in locking me up within French territory. But I will never allow them to limit my thinking. I continue to go further. And I have many friends who feed my courage with theirs. I write tales, so I feel like I am in a tale. I am a bit of a witch. There are monsters who want to attack witches who get together to join forces. This freedom to reflect, research, and think is magical. I discover sedimentary layers within myself that violence has created, between woundedness and courage. Repression allows me to go even further in freeing my thoughts.

<sup>7</sup> In February 2021, the French minister of research, Frédérique Vidal, declared in the media that the university was touched by “islamo-leftism” and announced that she would expedite an investigation about this (a threat that was not carried out; the CNRS had refused to undertake such an investigation). Pinar Selek wrote an open letter to Vidal urging her to stop intervening in the scientific debate with her political hat. <https://blogs.mediapart.fr/pinar-selek/blog/210221/lettre-frederique-vidal>.

# The Crisis of Higher Education in Russia

Ruslan Loshakov

History provides many examples of dictatorial regimes that see higher education as a potential threat to their power and therefore seek to bring it under their control. The main goal of authoritarian power is to abolish the autonomy of universities, to eliminate academic freedoms, and to make teaching a vehicle for state propaganda. As a former professor at a Russian university, I had the opportunity for almost two decades to observe how and with what tools the Russian authorities have pursued their goal of completely subordinating universities to the state and depriving them of any autonomy.

The collapse of the USSR put Russian universities in a difficult situation. On the one hand, due to the general economic crisis, state funding of higher education was sharply reduced, which had the most disastrous impact on the living standards of university professors and lecturers. In the 1990s, a professor's salary was not enough to meet the most basic needs of food and clothing. On the other hand, for the first time in seventy years of the Soviet system, state control over universities disappeared, thus giving universities the opportunity to determine their own policy, with all its pros and cons. Although the introduction of many educational courses was due solely to economic interests and was not ensured by either the level or

quality of education of the teaching staff, at the same time many professors were given the opportunity to develop and hold original courses at a high level, without regard for the state standard. Enthusiasts created a system of multilevel education, where bachelor's and master's degrees were introduced even before the Russian Federation joined the Bologna system. The actual absence of the state in the field of education opened enormous opportunities for creativity. There is no doubt that if the state authorities had been interested in the development of education, they would have supported these positive trends, especially since the late 1990s, when the economy gradually began to recover and opened up many more opportunities for development.

However, when Vladimir Putin came to power, authoritarian tendencies gradually began to increase, affecting the sphere of education as well. For example, the restriction of academic freedoms was directly linked to the growth of the university bureaucracy, which was gaining more and more power. This was also the aim of the new system of labor remuneration introduced during Putin's second term, which enabled Russian rectors to control the salary fund and to set salaries for themselves and administrative staff that far exceeded the salaries of professors and lecturers. The internal autonomy of universities and departments was completely abolished in the federal universities that were being created, as was the election of rectors, who were now appointed by direct presidential decrees. At the same time, although the financial situation of professors and lecturers improved somewhat, their activities were subject to increasingly stringent rules. First of all, this was reflected in a significant increase in teaching load, which

in many cases doubled. At the same time, the teaching load of a professor was virtually equalized with that of a lecturer who had not yet obtained a doctoral degree. The aim of all these measures was to turn the lecturer into a talking tool who had neither the energy nor the time to think about his or her situation, much less try to change it in any way.

Added to this was the increased role of the security services in all Russian universities, with no exceptions. Since the beginning of Putin's presidency, the Soviet practice of political surveillance of professors and students has been recreated. Universities reestablished secret sections whose members are representatives of the Federal Security Service (FSB). Many professors and students began to inform the secret service about the mood at their university. Federal universities introduced the position of pro-rector for security, which was held by an FSB officer.

Unfortunately, it should be said that the teaching staff of Russian universities did not offer any more or less organized resistance to this state arbitrariness. Since most Russian professors were trained in the Soviet system, they were immune to the growing authoritarian tendencies and, in any case, did not see them as any particular threat to their status.

Thus, over the past twenty years, a semi-feudal system has been firmly established in Russian higher education, which has nothing in common with the principles of academic freedom that are the basis for the activities of European universities. This system is incompatible with the true objectives of education, and in its main features it repro-

duces the ugly political regime of modern Russia. Here are its characteristic features:

- Lectures are socially and legally disenfranchised. Russian professors are defenseless against the arbitrary rule of university authorities.
- The salary of lecturers at Russian universities is one of the lowest not only in Europe, but also in the world.
- The huge teaching load does not leave time for meaningful teaching activity, let alone for scientific work. Since the size of the teaching load is not fixed in any way, the administration has opportunity to increase it without increasing the salary. In addition, the lecturer is under the pressure of increasing and mostly meaningless bureaucratic reporting. The performance-based employment contracts between the administration and lecturers are strikingly reminiscent of the Soviet collective farm worker reporting for “labor days” (meaning the payment for agricultural products that existed in the USSR during Stalin’s time). The current state of the Russian university teacher suggests the Roman qualification of the slave as *instrumentum vocale*.
- There is a parasitic layer of managers in higher education institutions, whose work is reduced to the regulation of lecturer labor and the introduction of new forms of such regulation. The upper echelon of the university administration is distinguished by its status and income, in stark contrast with lecturer salaries. Since this stratum usually recruits people who

have not shown anything of themselves in the field of teaching and research, or even anything to do with this activity, a cynical and arrogant view of the lecturer's work is widespread among its representatives: The lecturer is treated like a freeloader, with whom it is possible to do anything. Today, it is these people, and not the professor or associate professor, who feel that they are the masters of the university.

- The social apartheid characteristic of Russian higher education is clearly represented by the incomes of rectors of Russian universities, which are ten or more times higher than the average salary of lecturers. This gap between "income" and "salary" plays an extremely important role in the overall economics of Russian higher education being nothing more than a way of buying rector' political loyalty.

In general, this explains the fact that with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the instructional faculty of Russian universities, with the exception of a very small number of their representatives, either supported the war or did not express their political position in any way, while Russian rectors almost entirely signed the shameful *Appeal of the Russian Union of Rectors*, expressing their full support for the war and calling on everyone to rally around President Putin.

At present, the Russian higher education system has unified itself with the system of state power, and it cannot be reformed without the complete dismantling of Putin's political regime.



# The Russian Philosophical Community Between War and Exile

Yulia Sineokaya<sup>1</sup>

Changes within the community of professional Russian philosophers mirror broader transformations taking place in Russian academia. The choices made by various philosophical associations and individual scholars – whether in favor of open protest, silent conformism, or active support for war and domestic repression – were predictable long before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Nothing unexpected has happened. Like Russian society at large, the academic community has always been composed of people with diverse values. During the perestroika and post-perestroika years, few feared repression or concealed their views. The situation began to shift in 2011–2012, with divisions hardening after Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014. Nevertheless, until the full-scale war in Ukraine, the philosophical community functioned within a relatively normal reality: Colleagues debated, argued, and sometimes

<sup>1</sup> The author of this article is a Russian philosopher, former deputy director for research and former head of the Department of History of Western Philosophy of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, where she worked for more than thirty years before leaving Russia in February 2022 because of her disagreement with Russian military aggression against Ukraine. Yulia Sineokaya has been designated a “foreign agent” in Russia since February 2024. In 2023, she founded an international association in Paris, the Independent Institute of Philosophy. The mission of the Institute is to resume cooperation between Russian-speaking researchers in the humanities and social sciences outside of Russia, foster a free and critical understanding of new international realities, and execute joint academic projects with colleagues over the world. The Institute was recognized by the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation as an undesirable organization for Russia in January 2025.

quarreled loudly without sharing one another's political positions, but refrained from personal insults, calls for violence, or denunciations.

In the context of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and the numerous tragic events associated with it, it is evident that the dramatic changes in the Russian academic environment since February 2022 have split the Russian academy into supporters and opponents of the Kremlin's militaristic and repressive policies.

Today, intellectual life in Russia is increasingly subjected to strict censorship. Scholars are labeled "foreign agents" and "terrorists," face criminal charges, and see their books removed from stores and libraries. The Russian Academy of Sciences has come entirely under state control. The social sciences and humanities are being reshaped in a Soviet-style mold, turning into instruments of political propaganda. Universities are actively reforming curricula and introducing new courses. One such ideologically driven course, "Fundamentals of Russian Statehood," now mandatory for all first-year students at all Russian universities, is presented by the authorities as a "sovereign model of humanitarian knowledge." The ideological foundation of these processes is the new identity of Russia as a civilization-state: a vast Russian World opposing the "collective West."

As the war enters its fourth year, a segment of the philosophical community has become increasingly radicalized. Marginalized figures and Z-activists in philosophy – the letter Z being used by state authorities as a symbol of the war – along with radical ideologues calling for the

eradication of disloyal scholars and accusing opposition intellectuals who have left Russia of betraying their homeland, are now being joined by members of the philosophical establishment. For example, Yuri Puschaev, a lecturer in the Faculty of Philosophy at Moscow State University, warns the public of the danger: “Can you imagine what they [researchers with liberal views] might do here if they really return to power? It would be a real pogrom, where banning opponents from the profession would probably be the least of it.”<sup>2</sup>

Respectable academic journals, until recently considered serious publications, have begun to publish Kremlin ideologies, thereby legitimizing their views and discrediting Russian scholarship.<sup>3</sup> Visits by prominent Russian scholars to lecture in occupied Ukrainian territories, which sparked outrage among colleagues in the early months of the war, by the third year have come to be perceived by the public as a new normal.

The war has virtually destroyed trust, professional solidarity, and communication within the Russian philosophical community. Argumentative discussions have been replaced by personal attacks on social media, public political denunciations, and accusations of treason by Z-philosophers in far-right fringe and state media outlets. Calls

<sup>2</sup> Y. Puschaev, “Filosofiya relokantov: opyt intellektual'nogo autizma” [Philosophy of Relocants: An Experience of Intellectual Autism], 2024, <https://politconservatism.ru/articles/filosofiya-relokantov-opyt-intellektualnogo-autizma>.

<sup>3</sup> Thus, during the war years, *Voprosy Filosofii*, Russia’s leading philosophical journal, has increasingly published articles by Oleg Matveychev, PhD candidate in Philosophical Sciences and member of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, who has been included in the sanctions lists of the United Kingdom, the European Union, Canada, and the United States (November 2022; January 2024; July 2024; November 2024; February 2025). Additionally, in 2024, the academic

of “crucify them” have become routine. The split within the philosophical community has been followed by its polarization, leading to the consolidation of both anti-war and pro-war camps.

The group of the undecided – the so-called “waiters,” those waiting to see who will emerge victorious – consists of conformists who present themselves as “insiders” in each of the opposing camps, saying whatever their current interlocutor wants to hear. They are unwilling to actively support the authorities or to criticize them. Separately, there are loyalists focused on career advancement under any regime. These colleagues justify their position by citing their commitment to truth, concern for their families, responsibility for preserving their institutions, duty to educate the youth, and mission to develop science in their country. They argue that if they are replaced by radical traditionalists, things will only get worse for everyone.

The philosophical community within Russia is now intimidated and demoralized. Clearly, it is facing the prospect of complete “statization.” The Kremlin and the State Duma are increasingly turning to philosophers not only for expert opinions but also for participation in research projects and the development of new educational programs aimed at shaping a “holistic worldview” based on “traditional spiritual and moral values,” in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 809 “On Approving the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and

Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values” (dated November 9, 2022).<sup>4</sup>

Some scholars who left Russia after the outbreak of the war have now integrated into the routines of their host countries, finding their place in foreign universities. They are making efforts to establish communication with colleagues scattered across different countries. Others, unable to apply their expertise abroad, have been forced to change their specialization. Some colleagues, failing to find their footing in exile, have returned to Russia.

Almost all humanities scholars who managed to leave Russia have, often unknowingly, become publicists, political analysts, and chroniclers documenting and interpreting their immediate lifeworld. For safety reasons, the vast majority of colleagues who continue to work in Russia have also shifted their professional identities, becoming chroniclers of bygone eras or immersing themselves in emotionally detached levels of abstraction in their research.

Colleagues are sounding the alarm over the growing number of researchers in Russia suffering from depression. At the same time, they are observing a steady trend in the academic community from passive protest toward active conformism. The emotional momentum today is with those who have bet on career advancement under the new conditions, transforming into “meaning-makers” of Putin’s war.

<sup>4</sup> Decree of the President of the Russian Federation No. 809 of November 9, 2022, On the Approval of the Fundamentals of State Policy for the Preservation and Strengthening of Traditional Russian Spiritual and Moral Values. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/48502>.

The reconfiguration of the Russian academic community can be viewed through different frameworks. The result of analyzing any social phenomenon largely depends on the chosen perspective. I propose examining the humanities wing of Russia's wartime academic community through a generational lens.

Today, four philosophical generations are professionally active in Russia: (1) the generation of the 1970s–1980s, those who entered philosophy from the late 1960s through the start of Gorbachev's perestroika; (2) the generation of the 1990s, those whose university years coincided with perestroika (from the late 1980s to the early 1990s); (3) the generation of the 2000s, those in their forties today who entered the profession in the late 1990s; and (4) the generation of the 2010s, the "grandchildren of perestroika," now in their early thirties.

The generational approach is relatively new. Its most comprehensive expression appeared in the collective volume *Philosophical Generations*,<sup>5</sup> published on the eve of the war in January 2022. Written as a history of Soviet and post-Soviet philosophy, this collective work has gained exceptional significance as the last living group self-portrait of the Russian philosophical community, now shattered by the war. By piecing together its fragments into a new mosaic, we have a chance to access the code of the war-reassembled Russian-speaking philosophical community.

<sup>5</sup> Yulia V. Sineokaya, ed., *Philosophical Generations* (YASK Publishing House, 2022).

What do I mean by a “philosophical generation”? It is a community of people who differ in style and ideological preferences but share the same professional jargon, are connected by common memories of integrating into official and unofficial philosophical institutions, have a shared bibliography and filmography and a common register of blogs and social media, carry youthful impressions of the same exhibitions and concerts, have traveled similar routes, and have lived through comparable social experiences.

This is not about a single age group or a circle of like-minded individuals, but rather about those dissimilar people who are destined to collectively shape the discursive meaning of their time. In the case of philosophical generations, the standard sociological time frames of fifteen or twenty years do not apply. For instance, the generation of the 1970s–1980s spans almost three decades, while the period of the 1990s generation lasted no more than five or six years (1987–1992).

The concept of a “philosophical generation” does not correspond to biological, genealogical, or socio-psychological notions of generation, nor to the archaic biblical understanding of the term. Traditional metaphors like the “caravan” or “waves” are ill-suited for this concept. However, certain aspects of the classical sociological approach by Karl Mannheim (notably the ideas of “social entelechy” and “spirit of the time”), Ortega y Gasset’s thesis that “contemporaries” are not necessarily “peers,” and the generational theory of William Strauss and Neil Howe<sup>6</sup> are partially applicable. To some extent, modern generation theory, which distinguishes “boomers,” “Gen-

eration X,” “millennials,” and “zoomers,” using sociological criteria based on specific consumption patterns and media preferences, is also relevant.<sup>7</sup>

In simplified terms, the four philosophical generations can be described as the generations of stagnation,<sup>8</sup> glasnost,<sup>9</sup> market reforms,<sup>10</sup> and war and relocation.<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, they could be framed as the generation of reformed Marxism, Kant, and Derrida; the generation of Nietzsche, Foucault, Berdyaev, and Solovyov; the generation of Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Ivan Ilyin; and the generation of Deleuze, Arendt, Dennett, and Chalmers.

1. The 1970s–1980s generation is a long-spanning cohort that began its philosophical journey at the end of the Khrushchev Thaw and came of age during the Brezhnev stagnation. This is a generation of loners, whose most talented members, upon reaching their peak, established their own philosophical schools

<sup>7</sup> Jean Twenge, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* (RIPOLO Classic, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> The “Era of Stagnation” is a term coined by Mikhail Gorbachev in order to describe the negative way in which he viewed the economic, political, and social policies of the Soviet Union that began during the rule of Leonid Brezhnev (1964–1982) and continued under Yuri Andropov (1982–1984) and Konstantin Chernenko (1984–1985). It is sometimes called the “Brezhnevian Stagnation” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Era\\_of\\_Stagnation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Era_of_Stagnation).

<sup>9</sup> In Russian, the word “glasnost” has long been used to mean “openness” and “transparency.” In the mid-1980s, it was popularized by Mikhail Gorbachev as a political slogan for increased government transparency in the Soviet Union within the framework of perestroika. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glasnost>.

<sup>10</sup> Economic market reforms in Russia, carried out at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the Russian Federation, included price liberalization, liberalization of domestic and foreign trade, and privatization of former Soviet state-owned enterprises.

<sup>11</sup> The Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 led to people leaving Russia being referred to as “relocants” rather than “emigrants,” emphasizing their temporary stay outside the Russian Federation and their willingness to return home once the war ended and democracy was restored.

while avoiding generational mythologies and not perceiving themselves as a distinct generation in the spirit of the 1960s. These scholars are pragmatic and unsentimental, uninterested in grand projects, and focused on deep immersion in specific research topics. They are critical of the “Thaw” generation, which had excluded them from professional circles in their youth. Deprived of career opportunities in the stifling atmosphere of Brezhnevism, they sought spiritual grounding in the absolute, beyond history and time. Their professional growth was slow and arduous.

2. The 1990s generation consists of those who studied philosophy under the mentorship of the 1960s generation, absorbing their teachers’ ideals of openness at the dawn of perestroika. This generation entered the profession during the brief historical window of Gorbachev’s “glasnost,” in an atmosphere of freedom and open debate. It was a time when previously banned books were published in massive print runs, archives and special collections were opened, the revolutionary tradition of communication was revived, and borders were reopened. During these years, it seemed that Russia’s history was making a permanent turn toward freedom and openness. Professionally, this generation has been among the most successful.
3. The generation of the 2000s comprises those now in their early forties, who entered philosophy at the dawn of Putin’s rule. Their professional development was guided by the 1970s and 1980s generations. Like their mentors, they gravitated toward auto-

my and small, closed communities. This generation entered the profession during a period when hopes for a meaningful historical path for Russia had faded after the fall of the repressive regime, as the humanities boom gave way to a commercial one. The 2000s generation accepted the logic of events and submitted to the objective course of things. They witnessed the collapse of hopes that Russia could quickly adopt the European model and become a full-fledged part of the West. Despite everyday hardships, many chose to dedicate their lives to the accumulation of knowledge. Others, on the contrary, rejected “knowledge for the sake of knowledge,” which had become an insurmountable barrier between themselves and their lives. Within this generation, a clear divide emerged between followers of the analytic tradition and proponents of continental philosophy.

4. The generation of the first decade of the twenty-first century consists of those who came into philosophy during the era of advanced Putinism – the “grandchildren of perestroika,” now around thirty years old. They inherited from their 1990s mentors the intuition of the unity of culture and life, tradition and freedom, European history and Russian specificity. A hallmark of this generation is its openness to interaction. It is a vibrant, cohesive generation that feels equally at ease within Russia and abroad. This generation has received an excellent education, is free and professional, enjoys its work, and is oriented toward success. The war has disrupted their ascent just as they were taking off.

How are each of these four philosophical generations acting today in the context of Russia's war in Ukraine?

The 1970s–1980s generation, which holds leadership positions in most Russian academic and educational institutions, has actively engaged in the process of isolating Russian science and aligning Russian education with traditional Russian spiritual and moral values. In practice, this means rejecting international educational standards (withdrawing from the Bologna system, discontinuing the alignment of domestic academic journals with scientometric databases such as WoS and Scopus, and abolishing the requirement to publish research results in leading foreign journals as a condition for obtaining academic degrees).

This generation's most influential proponents of shifting education and science onto a war footing are the leaders of the Zinoviev and Izborsk Clubs, as well as the Institutes of "Heritage and Contemporary Society" and "Tsarigrad." This camp advocates for the de-Europeanization of Russia and the dismantling of its institutional and cultural ties with the West, and supports Russia's geopolitical "pivot to the East." Their goal is to construct the Russian World as a civilization-state with boundless borders and to develop a new educational canon through which future generations of Russians will be raised according to traditional Russian values within a neo-Eurasianist paradigm. They oppose peace negotiations, insist on continuing Russia's war against Ukraine at any cost, and call for its escalation into a broader conflict with the EU and the United States.

Opposing the neo-Eurasianist camp are philosophers from the same generation, such as Alexander Dobrokhoto, Marina Bykova, and Nikolay Plotnikov, who, in addition to their academic and teaching work, engage in critical analysis of the ongoing anthropological catastrophe. Most of them reside outside Russia, ensuring their personal safety and access to independent media. This philosophical generation was the first to take practical steps in criticizing Russia's full-scale military aggression against Ukraine. Notable examples include Nikolay Plotnikov's 2023 collective volume *Facing the Catastrophe*<sup>12</sup> and Marina Bykova's 2024 edited collection *At the Vanishing Point of History: Critical Perspectives on the Russian-Ukrainian War*.<sup>13</sup> Bykova's book united the opposition forces of the 1970s–1980s philosophical generation, becoming an anti-war manifesto for the liberal wing of this cohort.

As for those anti-war philosophers from this generation who remained in Russia, they have chosen a path of “internal emigration” (escapism), seeing their mission in refraining from contributing to the patriotic indoctrination of their fellow citizens, preserving the philosophical tradition in the Russian language, and passing on their values and knowledge to students. These scholars view their contribution to resistance as ensuring that neither they nor others are convinced by official propaganda.

The 1990s generation (to which I belong) – the glasnost generation – began its philosophical journey during the

<sup>12</sup> Nikolai Plotnikov, ed., *Facing the Catastrophe: A Collection of Articles*, Philosophie Forschung und Wissenschaft, vol. 57 (LIT Verlag, 2023).

<sup>13</sup> Marina Bykova, ed., *At the Vanishing Point of History: Critical Perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine War* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2024).

freest years of modern Russian history and actively participated in the country's democratic transformations of the 1990s. This was the first generation of scholars who were neither Soviet nor anti-Soviet, fully integrated into the global academic community. With the outbreak of the war, this generation split into two antagonistic camps. The first group supports Russia's growing isolationism from the rest of the world. The second consists of researchers who view Russia as an integral part of the Western *oikoumene*. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of this generation advocates for ending the bloodshed by any means necessary and as soon as possible.

The most radical ideologists of the new Russian military philosophy from this generation are Vladimir Varava, Alexander Sekatsky, Vasiliy Vanchugov, and Yuri Puschaev. All are staunch supporters of Kremlin policies. Unlike Alexander Dugin, they refrain from criticizing the government as a whole or President Putin personally. Some of these intellectuals were among the founders of the right-nationalist group "United Russian Philosophical Movement." This generation actively uses social media to promote its views and to build virtual alliances.

The academic mainstream of this generation currently working in Russia is represented by philosophers forming the most professionally accomplished and internationally recognized segment of the Russian philosophical establishment, now engaged in reinterpreting Russia's philosophical heritage in light of wartime challenges.

While the previous generation tends to align with neo-Eurasianist ideas, many in the 1990s generation sympathize

with isolationist theorists such as Vadim Tsybursky (author of the “Island Russia” concept) and Mikhail Yuriev (author of the “Fortress Russia” concept). The core of this group consists of younger conservatives who envision Russia’s mission as building within itself a classical Europe, which they believe has been lost by the modern European Union.

Many members of the 1990s generation still working in Russia and belonging to the “silent protest” group continue with their academic research, focusing on the “pure” history of philosophy, archival work, and teaching. They emphasize that in their interactions with colleagues and students, they increasingly have to resort to Aesopian language.

This generation has formed the most active group of academic émigrés, launching significant research and educational initiatives. Among the most successful university projects in the humanities and social sciences are FLAS<sup>14</sup> (Montenegro), the Free University (Latvia), the Nemtsov Program in Russian Studies (Czech Republic), and Smolny Beyond Borders: A Liberal Arts Initiative (Germany).

The first research institute established by the Russian academic diaspora of this generation is the France-based association Independent Institute of Philosophy (IPHI).<sup>15</sup> I will focus on IPHI in more detail, as I was among its founders and currently serve as its president.

<sup>14</sup> Faculty of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

<sup>15</sup> <https://independentphilosophers.com/>.

IPHI is a transnational intellectual community dedicated to critical philosophical and social thought beyond national and institutional constraints. It was founded by Russian researchers who held academic positions at leading Russian universities and institutes. IPHI welcomes Ukrainian colleagues who wish to join our projects and events. The Institute provides a platform for displaced and dissident thinkers to continue their work and contribute to global intellectual life. IPHI is not a political organization; it does not pursue political goals and does not engage in political advocacy. Rather, it is a professional non-profit association that aims to support colleagues who have left their home countries and to carry out joint academic research with specialists around the world.

IPHI affirms the value of free inquiry, critical solidarity, and the preservation of intellectual life beyond state control. It seeks to offer a “fire exit” from oppressive systems. The Institute sees philosophy not merely as a discipline but as a mode of life and resistance in dark times. In addition to philosophers, the association includes academics specializing in political science, sociology, anthropology, philology, history, and psychology.

The projects and seminars of IPHI focus on analyzing contemporary interdisciplinary issues in light of current social and political developments, scientific advancements, and cultural trends. This activity responds to growing criticism that contemporary philosophy fails to engage with social sciences, remaining preoccupied with abstract problems disconnected from real life. IPHI organizes research sem-

inars (both offline and online), public lectures, and working groups. The association brings together scholars from across the globe, with members who are now in France, Germany, Israel, Italy, the US, China, Greece, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and other countries. Our working languages are English, Russian, and French.

The Institute hosts both personal and collective research projects. One of our collective projects is titled *Concepts in Contemporary Russian Political Discourse: Lexicon*. The Lexicon project explores the origins and development of key concepts in Russian political discourse from 2000 to the present, focusing on the official language of the political elite and ideologists. It offers an interdisciplinary analysis of these concepts, their role in political rhetoric, and their practical application. Each article follows a tripartite structure aligned with the project's goals: clarifying concept origins, analyzing their meanings and uses in Russian politics, and examining their historical appropriation and international dissemination. The diversity of fields covered is ensured by the joint expertise of the project's contributors, who include scholars from political science, sociology, linguistics, philosophy, history, economics, and psychology.

Another key IPHI project is the *Observatory for Comparative Bioethics*. The Observatory monitors developments in Russia and Belarus across three domains: conspiracy theories affecting health decisions, ethically compromised biomedical knowledge, and healthcare management practices that suppress individual freedoms in autocratic regimes. This focus is driven by the growing activity of Russian and Belarusian authorities in these areas, includ-

ing propagating conspiracy theories about human-made epidemics (from HIV to COVID), conducting ethically questionable biomedical research involving military personnel, and restricting women's reproductive rights. Such policies undermine international solidarity in healthcare and human rights, posing threats to global epidemiological security.

To address these challenges, the Observatory conducts comparative analyses of ethical and legal regulations in healthcare and biomedicine in Russia and Belarus, as well as biopolitical trends evident in public discourse and bioethical cases. The Observatory is committed to interdisciplinary collaboration with legal scholars, social scientists, and healthcare professionals.

Over the past two and a half years, our Independent Institute of Philosophy has achieved a great deal. Our projects were thriving, and our membership was approaching two hundred. However, on January 30, 2025, the Russian Ministry of Justice added our Institute to the list of "undesirable organizations" in Russia. This news hit our community very hard. For Russian citizens, collaboration with an undesirable organization now involves administrative fines and even criminal prosecution. Despite these severe restrictions, we have decided to continue our work and to appeal the Ministry's decision, including through the Court of Justice of the European Union. Nevertheless, one-third of our colleagues have left. But our work continues.

The most severe and painful ideological split within a single generation is currently experienced by the generation of the 2000s, caught by the war at the peak of their professional careers, just as the most active among them were beginning to ascend the social and professional hierarchy. They have been forced to make their ideological choices explicitly, without relying on past achievements.

The protesting part of this generation, still living in Russia, has begun to identify with a new wave of “catacomb philosophy.” Meanwhile, the pro-Kremlin wing of the 2000s generation (including Dmitry Vinnik, Anatoly Chernyaev, Nikolai Arutyunov, and the late Darya Dugina, among others) has taken a leading role in state militarist propaganda, actively working in ultra-right institutions established by their senior colleagues. Among the organizations created by members of this philosophical generation is the Cultural Space “Sun of the North,” founded in 2022 by Nikolai Arutyunov under the leadership and participation of Alexander Dugin.

The protest wing of the 2000s generation includes well-known critics of the Putin regime, such as Kirill Martynov, Viktor Vakhshayn, Dmitry Dubrovsky, and others – many of whom have been designated “foreign agents” by Russia’s Ministry of Justice. “Foreign agents” is a new term for people who criticize the Kremlin’s militaristic policies. During Stalin’s time, they were called “enemies of the people.” The actual ground for declaring persons “foreign agents” is their expression of disloyalty to the current political agenda, made in any form, or even suspicion of such disloyalty on the part of officials. An April 2025

ruling by the Ministry of Justice prohibits foreign-agent scientists from engaging in educational or public outreach activities starting September 1, 2025, under threat not only of fines but also of prosecution. In effect, this is a ban on their profession.

The generation of the 2010s, which entered the profession in the pre-war years, was preparing to become an organic part of international academic communication. A significant portion of this generation has relocated abroad and is now facing the difficult task of integrating into global university structures. Those who remained in Russia either have immersed themselves in academic work to enhance their professional qualifications or are actively pursuing administrative careers, taking advantage of wartime conditions for social advancement.

Today, we all find ourselves trapped in the deadlock of war. How and when this catastrophe will end remains unknown. But in time, Aristotle's prophecy from *On the Heavens* will be fulfilled once again: "Nothing contrary to nature is eternal" (οὐδὲν παρὰ φύσιν αἰδιον). Scattered across the world, Ukrainian and Russian intellectuals, who now follow a strategy of divisions, mutual accusations, and suspicion, will eventually seek a way out of this hopeless situation of enmity, resentment, and grief. Some will choose solitude forever; for others, their attachment to the righteousness of their position will block the path to communication. But most will learn once again to look each other in the eye, to speak, to listen, and to understand... will learn to apologize and will learn to forgive. New generations will take over. Life will overcome death.



# CONTRIBUTORS

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**Kholoud Charaf**, born in 1981 in southern Syria, is a Syrian poet, novelist, and human rights activist who has been living in exile since 2018. She first studied medical technology and later pursued a degree in Arabic literature at the Damascus University. Charaf has been awarded multiple international fellowships as a guest writer, including residencies in Poland, Latvia, Sweden, and Germany. She also received an IIE America Fellowship and, in 2023, a two-year Writers-in-Exile Fellowship in Vienna, sponsored by the IG Authors and the City of Vienna. Her poetry has been translated into more than ten languages. In 2019, she was honored with the prestigious Ibn Battuta Prize for Travel Literature from the Arabic Center for Geographic Literature (Abu Dhabi) for her autobiographical book *The Return to the Mountains: A Diary in the Shadow of War*. Her latest novel, *Diaries I Have Nothing to Do With*, was shortlisted for the 2024 Arabic Booker Prize. *With All My Faces* is her first book to be translated into German (translated from Arabic by Kerstin Wilsch).

**Jane O. Newman** is professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine. She currently serves on the Steering Committee of the US Section of Scholars at Risk (SAR) and the Advisory Board of Academy in Exile (Dortmund, Germany) and is co-chair of the University of California (UC) Systemwide SAR Co-ordinating Committee. She is the English-language translator of essays by the German-Jewish refugee scholar from Hitler's Germany, Erich Auerbach. Newman has held Fulbright, Guggenheim, and Humboldt fellowships and was a fellow at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina and at the American Academy in Berlin. In 2023–24, she was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.

**Nancy Postero** is a socio-cultural anthropologist at the University of California, San Diego, whose academic work focuses on Indigenous politics in Latin America. She is the author of two monographs, *Now We Are Citizens: Indigenous Politics in Postmulticultural Bolivia* (Stanford University Press, 2007) and *The Indigenous State: Race, Power, and Performance in Plurinational Bolivia* (University of California Press, 2017), along with numerous edited volumes, special issues, and journal articles. Her most recent book is a co-edited volume, *The Routledge Handbook of Indigenous Development* (2023), which brings together Indigenous scholars and allies to discuss their visions of Indigenous futurity. She co-founded the Human Rights program at UC San Diego and coordinates the Scholars at Risk program there. She serves on the UC SAR Coordinating Committee and the Board of Directors of the US Section of Scholars at Risk.

**Jessica Adams** is an associate professor of English at the Universidad de Puerto Rico, Recinto de Río Piedras. She served as editor of the journal *Caribbean Studies* from August 2023 to December 2024. Her publications include *Wounds of Returning: Race, Memory, and Property on the Post-Slavery Plantation* (University of North Carolina Press, 2007), and the edited volumes *Guantánamo and American Empire: The Humanities Respond*, co-edited with Don E. Walicek (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); *Just Below South: Intercultural Performance in the Caribbean and the U.S. South*, co-edited with Michael P. Bibler and Cécile Accilien (University of Virginia Press, 2007); and *Revolutionary Freedoms: A History of Survival, Strength, and Imagination in Haiti*, co-edited with Cécile Accilien and Elmide Méléance (Caribbean Studies Press, 2006). She also co-edited a new scholarly edition of Arna Bontemps's novel *Haiti, Drums at Dusk*, with Michael P. Bibler (Louisiana State University Press, 2009).

**Cécile Accilien** is professor of French and Francophone Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her publications include *Bay Lodyans: Haitian Popular Film Culture* (2023), *The Antiracist World Language Classroom* (2022, co-authored), and *Teaching Haiti: Strategies for Creating New Narratives* (2021, co-edited with Valérie Orlando). Her writing has appeared in the *Journal of Haitian Studies*; *Women, Gender, and Families of Color*; *Truthout*; and *Latin American Commentator*. She chairs the editorial board for *Women, Gender, and Families of Color* (since 2019) and is the outgoing president of the Haitian Studies Association (2023 & 2024). She is currently working on a biography of singer, manbo and activist Carole Demesmin.

**Gisèle Sapiro** is professor of Sociology at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and Research Professor at the CNRS. A member of Academia Europaea and a laureate of the Humboldt Research Prize in 2024, she is the author of *The Sociology of Literature* (Stanford University Press, 2023 [2014]), *The French Writers' War, 1940–1953* (Duke University Press, 2014 [1999]), *La Responsabilité de l'écrivain. Littérature, droit et morale en France, XIXe–XXIe siècle* (Seuil, 2011), *Los Intelectuales* (Eduvim, Cordoba, 2017), *Les Écrivains et la politique en France* (Seuil, 2018), *Peut-on dissocier l'œuvre de l'auteur?* (Points, 2020), *Des mots qui tuent. La responsabilité de l'intellectuel en temps de crise, 1944–1953* (Points, 2020), and *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur mondial?* (Gallimard/Seuil/EHESS, 2024). Among the books she has edited are *L'Espace intellectuel en Europe* (La Découverte, 2009), *Ideas on the Move in the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020) and *The Routledge Handbook of the History and Sociology of Ideas* (Routledge, 2023).

**Elsie Cohen** was a doctoral researcher in the ERC project *Minor Universality: Narrative World Productions After Western Universalism* at Saarland University. She has taught at the University of Angers in France and is currently completing her PhD in cultural sociology in co-tutelle with the EHESS (Paris). Her research focuses on intellectual and creative work under conditions of exile. Among her publications are *Penseurs de l'exil. Enquête sur les migrations forcées d'intellectuels vers la France et l'Allemagne au 21e siècle* (De Gruyter, forthcoming 2026), and, with Anne Schult, "Intellectual Migration(s)" in *The Routledge Handbook of the History and Sociology of Ideas*, edited by Gisèle Sapiro and Stefanos Geroulanos (Routledge, 2023).

**Pinar Selek** is a sociologist, a writer, and a political activist. She is lecturer at the University of Côte d'Azur and researcher at the Unité de Recherches Migrations et Société (Urmis, Université Côte d'Azur/CNRS/IRD). Her work explores issues of gen-

der, migration, minorities, and state violence. She is the author of numerous books, including sociological studies such as *Zum Mann gehätschelt. Zum Mann gedrillt. Männliche Identitäten* (Orlanda Verlga, 2014) and, most recently, *Le Chaudron militaire turc. Un exemple de production de la violence masculine* (des femmes-Antoinette Fouque, 2023), as well as novels, such as *La Maison du Bosphore* (Liana Levi, 2013) and *Azucena ou les fourmis zinzines* (des femmes-Antoinette Fouque, 2022). She also wrote an introspective autobiographical essay, *Parce qu'ils sont arméniens* (Liana Levi, 2015), and has a new one in press, *Lever la tête* (Presses de Paris-Cité). Targeted for her research and activism in Turkey, she has faced multiple political trials over more than two decades, despite repeated acquittals. She now lives in exile in France.

**Ruslan Loshakov**, Doctor of Sciences in Philosophy, is a professor at the Free University (Riga, Latvia), and researcher at the Independent Institute of Philosophy (Paris). His main publications are *Between Ego and World: Vladimir Solovjev – Descartes – Husserl* (Vestnik RGGU, 2020); *The Proof of the Third Analogy of Experience in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason: Between Possible Experience and the Possibility of Experience* (Transcendental Turn in Contemporary Philosophy: Transcendental Metaphysics, Phenomenology, Epistemology, Transcendental Philosophy of Science and Theory of Consciousness, Aesthetics, 2020); *Mikhail Bakhtin's First Philosophy* (Philosophy in the Border Zone, Orkana Akademisk, 2015); *Sense as the Event of Language* (The Human Being in European Philosophy, Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2015); *Intentionality as an Event* (Philosophy, Language, Culture, St. Petersburg, Aleteia, 2013); and *Difference and Identity in Greek and Medieval Ontology* (St. Petersburg, 2007).

**Yulia Sineokaya**, Doctor of Sciences in Philosophy, is professor and president of the international association Independent Institute of Philosophy (Paris). She is an associate researcher at the Centre for the History of Modern Philosophy of the Sorbonne University (HIPHIMO) and the Centre of Europe-Eurasia Research of the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations (CREE INALCO), France. She is a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, former deputy director for research of the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences (2016–2022), and former head of the Department of History of Western Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences (2013–22).



Based at TU Dortmund University, Academy in Exile offers scholars, journalists, and cultural producers who are threatened because of their academic work or civic engagement in human rights, peace, and democracy, the opportunity to resume their work in Germany.

With funding from the Volkswagen Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Freudenberg Foundation, IIE-Scholar Rescue Fund, German Academic Exchange Service, Allianz Foundation, Open Society Foundations, and Rudolf-Chaudoire-Stiftung, Academy in Exile has, since its inception in 2017, generated more than 80 long-term fellowships, emergency stipends, and guest professorships, along with a wide range of programming. Academy in Exile's offerings include the Garden(s) of Refuge, a tandem-teaching project and artist-in-residence program, the journal *Ostrakon* and other publishing initiatives, workshops, conferences, exhibitions, public outreach, and international collaborations. These variously provide a space for invigorating creative expression and the historically-inscribed principles of freedom in teaching and research.

