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INTRODUCTION BY SARAH B. SNYDER, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

I am pleased to introduce this H-Diplo/ISSF roundtable on Emma Kuby's book *Political Survivors: The Resistance, the Cold War, and the Fight against Concentration Camps after 1945*, an intellectual history of the rise and fall of the International Commission against the Concentration Camp Regime (CICRC). It is also a transnational history based on archival research in at least six countries—Belgium, Spain, Paris, the United States, the Netherlands, and Great Britain. As the reviews suggest, Kuby has written a book that speaks to many fields and indeed many disciplines. Umberto Tulli praises Kuby's "originality," her "masterly" efforts to analyze the CICRC's history "through different lenses," and the "richness" of her account. In his view, *Political Survivors* is a "remarkable achievement" that contributes to our understanding of, among other things, the public memory of World War Two. Regarding that same dimension, Padraic Kenney characterizes Kuby's work as "excellent." More broadly, Kenney suggests that Kuby has, perhaps, undersold her findings. Lora Wildenthal argues that the book is "worthy of a broad audience," and she praises Kuby for the balance she strikes between broad themes and fine detail.

The reviews all ask in different ways, is the history of the CICRC a human rights story? Is it a Cold War story? Or is it a European politics story? At the heart of these debates is the question of the CICRC's motivations—was it guided by concerns about human rights or anti-Communism? Related to this is the issue of the CICRC's secret acceptance of U.S. government funding and the extent to which those dollars did or did not shape the organization's activities. From my perspective, it seemed as though David Rousset, the CICRC's founder, was fighting the Cold War. But his activism had the ancillary effect of championing human rights.

The reviewers answer these questions in different ways. Wildenthal situates Kuby's book in what she sees as a burgeoning new historiography about the history of human rights in France. Kenney similarly characterizes the CICRC as part of the "prehistory" of human rights organizations. Kuby, however, is careful in her claims and largely resists Kenney's suggestion that the book offers an origins story. In my view, Kuby has shown that the violence perpetrated by Nazi Germany during World War Two shaped early human rights activism, even if Holocaust consciousness had not yet emerged and even if CICRC members did not use that rhetoric to describe their concerns.

Tulli highlights the synergy of the CICRC and the early Cold War. Wildenthal, like Tulli, argues that Kuby's research illuminates the distinctiveness of the early Cold War years. In some ways Kuby's account is a story of efforts of state actors to "instrumentalize nongovernmental actors in the early Cold War." (136) What Kuby reveals is a case in which what we might now call human rights activism was fueled by the Cold War rather than inhibited by it.

Kenney also sees the CICRC as part of a story of human rights activism in the early Cold War, a period which is often regarded as a low point for that issue. He locates the CICRC on a continuum between the International Committee for Political Prisoners (ICPP) and Amnesty International. He emphasizes the similarities among all three movements and highlights in particular that the ICPP and the CICRC were each relatively short lived. Yet Kuby, like David Rousset, is uncomfortable using human rights rhetoric to describe the group's activism. This may be because as Wildenthal points out, these "concentrationary" spaces did not merely violate a number of human rights, but affected the very possibility of thinking and feeling as a human."

Tulli wishes that Kuby had brought the state, and specifically the government of France, into her story more. In his view, there was also the possibility of introducing a regional or comparative approach to this account. Kuby, however, rejects Tulli's push toward situating the CICRC within a history of European integration. She intends her work to disrupt neat narratives of the CICRC and postwar European integration

Kuby's book is certainly not a hagiography of the CICRC. She charges that CICRC members engaged in a process of "occluding and appropriating the legacy of the genocide." (101) Kuby also shows the CICRC's flaws in logic and ideological blind spots particularly surrounding its efforts to investigate the nature of detention camps in Mao's China. The CICRC's aim was to demonstrate its concern for the suffering of non-whites and non-Europeans. The process, however, raised

meaningful questions about the CICRC's claims to universality, and the organization ultimately foundered on its attempts to respond to French practices in Algeria in the 1950s. Kuby also shows how the CICRC struggled to keep its comparisons to the Nazi's "concentrationary" regime meaningful without absolving some repressive governments. She writes, "The German concentrationary standard not only set an impossible benchmark for a 'guilty' verdict." (207)

Kuby's work interrogates the meaning of surviving and witnessing. As part of this effort, she reveals the CICRC's hierarchy of victims, including the exclusion of Holocaust survivors from the organization—only political victims of the Nazi regime could be members (not its racial victims to use their language or the religious ones to use ours). She also highlights the group's near silence on anti-Semitism.

Wildenthal's review persuasively testifies to the significance and salience of Kuby's book as well as its timeliness given the widespread use of detention facilities today, notably in western China, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and southeast Texas. In her response, Kuby echoes Wildenthal's argument that such research is necessary if we are to "mobilize against its continuation."

Participants:

Emma Kuby is an associate professor of History at Northern Illinois University. Her research focuses on the legacies of World War II's violence in Europe, especially France, during the era of decolonization. *Political Survivors: The Resistance, the Cold War, and the Fight against Concentration Camps after 1945* (Cornell University Press, 2019) is her first book. She has also published articles in *Modern Intellectual History*, *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques*, *Contemporary French Civilization*, and *French Politics, Culture & Society*.

Sarah B. Snyder teaches at American University's School of International Service. She is the author of two award-winning books, *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy* (Columbia University Press, 2018) and *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Padraic Kenney is Associate Dean for Graduate Education and the Social and Historical Sciences and Professor of History and International Studies at Indiana University. He is the author of six books on East European and global history, including *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Cornell University Press, 1997); *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe, 1989* (Princeton University Press, 2002); and *Dance in Chains: Political Imprisonment in the Modern World* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Umberto Tulli is a postdoctoral fellow at the Department of Humanities and adjunct professor at the School of International Studies, University of Trento. Among his publications are: *Un Parlamento per l'Europa. Il Parlamento europeo e la battaglia per la sua elezione, 1948-1979* (Mondadori—Le Monnier, 2017); *L'Amministrazione Carter e il dissenso in Urss* (FrancoAngeli, 2013). He is currently working on a research project investigating the emergence in Western Europe of a human rights discourse based on anti-Americanism.

Lora Wildenthal is John Antony Weir Professor of History at Rice University in Houston, Texas. She is the author of *German Women for Empire, 1884-1945* (Duke University Press, 2001) and *The Language of Human Rights in West Germany* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013). Currently she is interested in labor rights as human rights and the history of wages.

On 9 March 1925, a boisterous crowd in New York City's Town Hall heckled speakers publicizing the plight of political prisoners around the world in a program staged by the newly-formed International Committee for Political Prisoners (ICPP). The ICPP's unpublished by-laws made it clear that the group would unite both those who could represent their incarcerated comrades as well as "persons interested in the general issue."¹ Under the guidance of co-founder Roger S. Baldwin (who envisioned it as an international counterpart to his American Civil Liberties Union, ACLU), the ICPP advocated for political prisoners across the political spectrum. Indeed, it was the efforts to publicize the plight of opponents to Soviet Russia that provoked pandemonium in that first public meeting.² The balance in their agenda was rooted in a commitment to the dispassionate accumulation of knowledge; as ICPP Secretary Eleanore von Eltz explained in a 1925 letter to Baldwin, it was better to avoid supporting the causes that prisoners had espoused and focus only on the facts of internment: "If we try to interest the public now in the issues of imprisonment we'll get nowhere. We'll make a statement on the basis of some class or racial group in regard to Poland, for instance, and the Polish nationalists will contradict it. The public will decide, correctly, that we don't know what we're talking about and refuse to get involved or to contribute. That leaves us in the 'Letters to the Editor' class."³

Peter Benenson echoed that concern in an appeal published in *The Observer* (London) in May 1961. Announcing the Appeal for Amnesty 1961, which would eventually become Amnesty International, he described it as "an initiative by a group of lawyers, writers and publishers in London, who share the underlying conviction expressed by Voltaire: 'I detest your views, but am prepared to die for your right to express them.'" Like the ICPP, Amnesty would privilege the gathering of verified information and the advocacy of prisoners of "contrasting politics"—so as "to avoid the fate of previous amnesty campaigns, which so often have become more concerned with publicising the political views of the imprisoned than with humanitarian purposes."⁴ Like the ICPP, Amnesty sometimes sparked intense political debate, as when it withdrew "prisoner of conscience" status from African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela for his refusal to renounce violence, in 1964.

In between these two efforts lies David Rousset's International Commission against the Concentration Camp Regime (CICRC), as recounted in Emma Kuby's engaging *Political Survivors: The Resistance, the Cold War, and the Fight against Concentration Camps after 1945*. The CICRC got its start in late 1949, as Rousset issued an appeal to a specific group of people: those who, like him, had been arrested and deported to Nazi concentration camps for their political activity. He argued that such survivors had an obligation greater than did the general educated public: if all "free men" should have been concerned about the "concentratory landscape" in the USSR (55-56), survivors should speak up first because they could deploy their intimate knowledge of camp experience. They were simultaneously experts and compelling witnesses.

The similarities among the three initiatives are striking: all three got their start from the vigorous actions of one man. Their founders were each in the process of departing from a more clearly-defined leftist position toward a conviction that concern for the physical suffering of others should not depend upon the political beliefs of either victims or witnesses. All three movements worked to balance cases from disparate regimes, even making an effort to highlight persecutions in their home

¹ Minutes, meeting of International Committee for Political Prisoners, March 30, 1925. ICPP Papers, New York Public Library, ZL 281, reel 1.

² "Call Police to End Free Speech Rally: Series of Assaults on Various Governments Halted When Soviet is Assailed," *New York Times*, 10 March 1925, 1.

³ Von Eltz, letter to Roger Baldwin, 18 April 1925. ICPP Papers, New York Public Library, ZL 281, reel 1. On the ICPP, see my *Dance in Chains: Political Imprisonment in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 122-24.

⁴ Peter Benenson, "The Forgotten Prisoners," *The Observer*, 28 May 1961.

countries. All three published extensively, focusing on the facts of incarceration—and emphasize the importance of active gathering and verifying of facts. All three, finally, sometimes tied themselves into knots in their efforts to determine prisoners' intentions. The criteria they use differed somewhat: Amnesty and the ICPP both excluded those imprisoned for committing or promoting violent acts, while that does not seem to have been a consistent criterion for the CICRC. Yet all three found a middle ground between partisan bodies (like the Soviet-sponsored International Red Aid) and organizations investigating all conditions of incarceration (like the International Committee of the Red Cross).

We can thus trace a twentieth-century history of international advocacy on behalf of political prisoners. The historiography on international human rights activism is still quite thin; even the history of Amnesty International has been relatively neglected, to say nothing of lesser-known movements and organizations.⁵ Kuby places her story in a different context: she is interested in how her subjects dealt with the challenge of drawing lessons from their persecution at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. Her account of how they understood (and then reevaluated) the moral and optical power of memory is excellent. She succeeds in making what could have been merely the story of a quixotic campaign by a few French intellectuals into a valuable investigation of transnational activism in the early Cold War. The CICRC was much more consequential than other contemporary groups, like the Association of Captive European Nations, that sought to raise awareness about repression behind the Iron Curtain. For all its shortcomings, the concept of the “concentrationary universe” proved a useful opening to critique of the Soviet Gulag. Though its influence on later movements is uncertain, the CICRC may be a key link in the genealogy of transnational protest of repression. As Kuby writes, it “helped to forge a path for future humanitarian and human rights projects.” (226) One could add that the CICRC also led the way for historians, who are only now starting to think about concentration camps having a history.⁶

I think one could go farther than this, and situate the CICRC fully in a continuum across at least a half-century; there are larger implications of her research that Kuby does not address. Like its predecessors and successors, the CICRC grappled with the tension between expertise and politics. Who should care about the suffering of someone of different political convictions, and how can one inspire interest in such cases? This question is surely one of the central debates of the twentieth century. David Rousset found what Roger Baldwin had a generation earlier: that political allegiances often negated humanitarian concern. Both men believed that the facts could and should overcome partisanship. Their organizations each lasted barely a decade or less; though the ICPP continued to publish an “Annual Survey of Persecution Abroad” until 1941, its activity declined markedly in the mid-1930s. Amnesty International has outlasted them both, of course; one reason may be its development of a grassroots model, in which subscribers wrote letters to prisoners and to their captors.

Kuby is right to note that the CICRC was not focused on rights as such. Amnesty International, of course, made human rights central to its campaigns, and the ICPP used the language of “civil rights.” This would seem to place the CICRC at the base of a different family tree, that of the struggle to remember the Holocaust. Without diminishing this genealogy, I would suggest that the CICRC fits well as a case study in the longer history of humanitarian activism. The difference between the CICRC and the other movements I have referred to here may lie in different political contexts. Baldwin and Benenson

⁵ See Jan Eckel, “The International League for the Rights of Man, Amnesty International, and the Changing Fate of Human Rights Activism from the 1940s through the 1970s,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 4:2 (Summer 2013): 183-214; Eckel, *The Ambivalence of Good: Human Rights in International Politics since the 1940s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Aaron Levenstein, *Escape to Freedom: The Story of the International Rescue Committee* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983); Tom Buchanan, “‘The Truth Will Set You Free’: The Making of Amnesty International,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 37:4 (2002): 575-597; Stephen Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁶ Key works are Andrea Pitzer, *One Long Night: A Global History of Concentration Camps* (New York: Little, Brown, 2017); Jonathan Hyslop, “The Invention of the Concentration Camp: Cuba, Southern Africa, and the Philippines, 1896-1907,” *South African Historical Journal* 63:2 (2011): 251-276; Joël Kotek and Pierre Rigoulot, *Le siècle des camps: détention, concentration, extermination, cent ans de mal radical* (Paris: Lattès, 2000).

sought, in eras of deep political polarization, to emphasize common values: ‘liberty’ in Baldwin’s case and ‘conscience’ for Benenson. In the aftermath of the horrors of World War II, Rousset focused not on values but on the repression experience itself. His position had to be different from that of his peers in other eras—and indeed Kuby shows how the positions of CICRC activists evolved. Their efforts to grapple with repression in Spain and Algeria pushed some in the committee toward an understanding of human rights not so far from that which moved Amnesty International.

All three movements, waypoints in the complicated history of transnational humanitarianism, sought to expand the ways that people thought about political persecution, and asserted that one could and should draw attention not just to the suffering of one’s comrades, but of others who had expressed their political convictions. The CICRC is thus an important link in the prehistory of the “universalizing” (58) human rights apparatus, based upon impartial research, that functions so smoothly today.

REVIEW BY UMBERTO TULLI, UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO

In August 2008, newspapers around the globe published a wide array of articles commemorating the death of former Gulag prisoner and Nobel laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn. The almost-simultaneous opening of the Beijing Olympic Games became an opportunity to remind the global public about the existence of the *Laogai*, the Chinese forced-labor camps. Comparisons among the *Laogai*, Soviet Gulags, and Nazi camps were not new. During the 1990s, Harry Wu's best-seller *Laogai: The Chinese Gulag* became a quintessential manifesto of the continuities among different systems of political repression and different 'concentrationary' camps. It is also a demonstration of how the Nazi camps became both a paradigm that scholars have used to make sense of the "concentrationary universe," and the archetypal symbol of States' violations of human rights.¹

This brings us to Emma Kuby's *Political Survivors: The Resistance, the Cold War, and the Fight against Concentration Camps after 1945*, which traces the origins and evolution of the International Commission against the Concentration Camp Regime (CICRC), an organization of Nazi camp survivors, and its decade-long struggle against a "global landscape of political repression, imprisonment and forced labor" (165). In so doing, Kuby adds tremendously to our understanding of the construction and the evolution of a public memory of Nazi crimes and camps, public ethics after the Second World War, French intellectual history, and the ways in which the Cultural Cold War was fought in postwar Europe.

With cogent arguments and meticulous research, Kuby places the origins of the CICRC within the intellectual debate of postwar France, which was already "heavily oriented" toward a "concentrationary rather than an exterminationist paradigm for understanding Nazi criminality" (19). The real turning point arrived in November 1949, when prominent French intellectual and political survivor of the Buchenwald camp, David Rousset, published an "appeal" to his fellow survivors to identify with the suffering of victims of Soviet political repression. Crafted with an apolitical and a-ideological language, the appeal was formally addressed to survivors but directed in reality at a broader public. It offered a narrative in which Nazi concentration camps were the central event of the war and an "absolutely new collective crime, an unprecedented attack against man" (30). This understanding translated into an immediate equation between the Nazi and the Soviet regimes, based on the very existence of the camps. By the time the appeal was published, two ideas were already central. First, the dramatic novelty of the concentration camp was not a guarantee against its replication. Second, being witness to, and experts on, these inhumane atrocities, survivors had the "obligation to the dead themselves" and "the moral imperative directed toward the living" (30) of bearing witness and warning humanity against its replication.

Despite its intended apolitical rhetoric, Rousset's appeal to investigate the Soviet Gulag was immediately sublimated and appropriated by Cold War logics. Coming from a former Trotskyist who had grown skeptical at Soviet Communism, it attracted attention from British and American Cold Warriors as well as vitriolic attacks from French Communists and their fellow travelers. Within months, the appeal was followed by the establishment of the International Commission against the Concentration Camp Regime, which immediately demanded that the Soviet Union allow its members' governments to carry out an investigation within its borders. After the Soviet rejection, the International Commission opted to put the Soviets on trial for possessing camps and for having committed crimes against humanity.

From 1952 onwards, the CICRC launched broader investigations and campaigns, targeting Francoist Spain, Greece, China, and French repressive policies in Tunisia; establishing official contacts with the UN and ILO; and opening new dossiers on Yugoslavia and other Eastern European countries. While the latter went nowhere, the fracas surrounding the mock trial against the Soviet Union, the evolving nature of the Cold War, and Rousset's determination to present his association in

¹ Harry Wu, *Laogai: The Chinese Gulag* (Boulder: Westview, 1992). Harry Wu's Laogai Foundation was at the forefront, along with several human rights NGOs, of a transnational campaign calling for a boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. See: Susan Brownell, "Human Rights and the Beijing Olympics: Imagined Global Community and the Transnational Public Sphere," *The British Journal of Sociology* 63:2 (2012): 306-327, and many of the essays in Barbara Keys, ed., *The Ideals of Global Sport from Peace to Human Rights* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

apolitical and a-ideological terms led the CICRC to conduct onsite inspections and interviews with political prisoners in Spain and Tunisia. These investigations documented the brutal repression occurring there. Yet they were unequivocal in denying that these repressive systems could be considered part of the concentrationary universe.

The decision to investigate Chinese *Laogai* proved controversial both within and outside the organization. Many contested the universality of the lessons imparted in Nazi camps and the possibility of projecting a European tragedy beyond Europe. Determined to investigate the Chinese system of forced labor and political repression, Rousset accepted opening the CICRC to non-Europeans and non-survivors. Yet, as Kuby convincingly argues, this opening proved double-edged since it represented the acceptance of the idea that European survivors' experience was not universal and could not apply to Asia.

The now-weakened CICRC found a tombstone when it turned its attention to Algeria, where it met the violence of decolonization. The Algerian investigation isolated the CICRC from both its American supporters and French backers. It also shifted the focus from the concentrationary dimension to torture and opened new, unsolvable problems for the adequacy of testimony without political action. Moreover, by the mid-to-late Fifties, the CICRC was losing effectiveness. Its encounter with the violence of decolonization and French repression in Algeria, the shifting boundaries of the Cold War, the emergence of a new paradigm that positioned the Holocaust – not the creation of concentration camps – as the Nazis' major crime, and the broadening of the CICRC's agenda to other humanitarian issues, all converged in reducing the CICRC's efficacy.

This general and mostly factual overview of Kuby's book does not do justice to its real richness and originality, namely the capability to develop a constant dialogue among different approaches and levels of analysis. In a masterly blend, Kuby often reads the history of the CICRC through different lenses: the evolution of the Cold War, the ongoing redefinition of memory of Nazi crimes and the intellectual debate it fueled, the impact of decolonization, and the doubts and contradictions in the alleged universal experience and mission of witness-survivors.

Three points deserve particular appreciation.

First, Kuby makes an important contribution to studies on the shifting boundaries of memory, its public meaning and its public use. She points out that the CICRC was not the first organization to focus on camps and political prisoners, but it was the first to put under the microscope the survivor as witness and testimony. Accordingly, she correctly argues that the CICRC's investigations anticipated the 1961 trial in Israel of Nazi SS-Obersturmbannführer Adolf Eichmann. In so doing, CICRC's activities harbingered the "era of the witness" (13) that turned survivors and victims into expert witnesses, who bear truth and are called to warn mankind against the universal and inhumane forms states' repression could assume. To Kuby, this is a sort of *fil rouge* for all CICRC's activities. It is also what inspired the public trial against the Soviet Union, which became a sort of model for similar initiatives. Departing from procedural neutrality and individual responsibility, not only did the witness-based trial against the Soviet "concentrationary universe" confirm the central role of testimony in the pursuit of truth, but it also contributed to crystalizing the concept that crimes against humanity could take place in peacetime, rather than exclusively during wars.

By placing survivors-witnesses within the French intellectual debate of the late forties, a debate that placed the concentration camp and the political prisoner, rather than Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's "racial genocide," at the core of the Nazi project, Kuby contributed to decentering the Holocaust from the widely-accepted narrative on the origins of the postwar human rights and humanitarian regime.² Rousset and other CICRC members did not ignore the Holocaust.

² A similar point is in G. Daniel Cohen, "The Holocaust and the Human Rights Revolution: A Reassessment," in Akira Iriye, Petra Goedde, and William I. Hitchcock, eds., *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2011): 53-71; Marco Duranti, "The Holocaust, the Legacy of 1789 and the Birth of International Human Rights Law: Revisiting the Foundation Myth," *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:2 (2012): 159-186, DOI:

Instead, they accepted a hierarchy among victims of Nazism that had at its top political prisoners. As the CICRC's 1951 constitution clarified, only deportees to Nazi concentration camps, "because of their patriotic, selfless or anti-Nazi activity," and not because of racial persecution, could be admitted as members (101). By 1953, mirroring an ongoing reinterpretation of Hitler's racial extermination as the Nazi regime's *crime majeur*, and news of anti-Semitic episodes in the Soviet Union, the CICRC began discussing the opportunity of enlarging its membership to Holocaust victims and its scope to racial persecution. Although the distinction between the "political" and the "racial" deportees remained for some time, by the mid-1950s, Rousset had reached a new perception of the concentration camp as a "Dantesque hell comprising multiple circles" (185). Whereas Jews occupied the central circle of Nazi camps, political prisoners took the central circle in the Soviet gulag. The logical conclusion reversed previous ideas: if "in the USSR the political is the Jew of the Nazi camp," then Jewish racial victims of Hitler's camps should be part of the International Commission (185). Yet, the emergence of the Holocaust paradigm undermined the Resistance/deportees narrative that inspired and gave legitimacy to the CICRC.

Second, far from reproducing a static and conventional understanding of the Cold War, Kuby's book traces complex and multiple intersections between the CICRC and the Cold War. First, as one can expect, anti-Communism and the Cold War gave momentum to Rousset's appeal, to the establishment of the CICRC, and to growing contacts between Rousset and American (and British) Cold Warriors. The Cold War was fundamental for the trial against the Soviet Union and China, for the material and organizational support that the CICRC received from American trade unions, from the Congress for Cultural Freedom and, ultimately, from the CIA. For the same reason, it is not entirely surprising that the United States was in opposition to the CICRC's Algerian investigation.

What is more interesting is a second link between the Cold War and the CICRC, namely the threat posed by Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's death to the survival of the organization. On one hand, Minister of Internal Affairs of the USSR Lavrenty Beria and First Secretary of the Communist Party of the USSR (CPSU) Nikita Khrushchev's amnesty for gulag prisoners confirmed the soundness of the CICRC's investigations and trials; on the other, it opened a Pandora's Box regarding the relevance of an organization that was founded with the explicit aim of condemning the Soviet Union for maintaining its concentrationary system.

Moreover, Kuby's major contribution to the study of the relationship between the CICRC and the Cold War is in her rejection of those narratives that tend to consider the Cold War as an "impediment to the development of norms and practices of international justice" (134). Put simply, the Cold War was a fundamental motivation for Rousset and the CICRC that contributed to renewing the codes, the languages, and the rituals defined during the Nuremberg trials.

Third, Kuby convincingly argues that discussions of the concentrationary universe remained relatively autonomous and different from parallel discussions of human rights and the ongoing definition of the totalitarian model that equated the Nazi regime with Stalin's Soviet Union.

While the convergence around the totalitarian model may appear almost natural, Kuby argues that Rousset avoided taking into account the totalitarian discourse. Not only did the totalitarian model encompass broader features that do not fit perfectly in Rousset's scope of witnessing and warning against the concentrationary camp, but it also constituted an alternative path for a destination – the substantial equivalence between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union – that he had already reached by denouncing the concentrationary universe. Yet, such a separation did not last. Rousset himself seemed to turn to the totalitarian model. By 1956, with Soviet tanks rolling in the streets of Budapest, the terms totalitarian and concentrationary had become almost synonymous, and Rousset had no hesitation in claiming that the Soviet repression of Hungary was *concentrationnaire* in its methods. There was a bitter irony in this shift. The year 1956, the year of the

<https://www.randfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14623528.2012.677760>; Samuel Moyn, *Human Rights and the Uses of History* (New York: Verso, 2014), 87-98.

substantial equivalence between totalitarianism and the concentrationary paradigm, was also the year of the Twentieth Congress CPSU that led many to question the usefulness of the totalitarian model to study the Soviet Union.³

Similar consideration applies to Rousset's firm avoidance of the language of human rights to legitimize his project. Discussions of human rights were everywhere in postwar Europe. Yet, to Rousset, they provided a vague and universal language that failed to capture the ineffably inhumane nature of the concentration camp. Moreover, to a French leftist intellectual and atheist, as Rousset was, the lexicon of human rights was a "tainted" language (58), for it was associated with Conservatives' and Christians' endorsement of human rights in order to fight both the ideological Cold War and the definition of domestic policies they believed would be in opposition to their conception of liberties.⁴ However, by the mid-1950s, not only were the CICRC's members debating other humanitarian issues (like anti-Semitism and torture), but the organization itself would also become a model for many of those non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that would put human rights in the spotlight years later.

Kuby's main arguments and narrative are convincing and breathtaking. Her book is culturally rich and intellectually stimulating. Yet, there are two minor issues that deserve larger consideration and hopefully will inspire future historical works.

First, there is a sort of gap between the French dimension and the international framework of Kuby's analysis. An historian of France and its intellectuals,⁵ Kuby has many good reasons (that are well illustrated in the introduction) to place these issues primarily within the intellectual and political debate of postwar France. The absence of a discussion of the position of the French government before the International Commission turned to Algeria is thus surprising. The reader is left wondering whether the French government was supportive of the CICRC's early initiatives, whether it was in opposition, or neutral, or just absent.

By the same token, at the international and transnational level, Kuby recalls that the French debate on memory of the Nazi camps and the construction of a narrative based on resisters, internees, and deportees was part of a broader debate that was developing across Europe. It is then somewhat puzzling that Kuby avoids an in-depth discussion of the debates taking place within other European countries, or of the experience of the camp as a vehicle for a process of Europeanization.⁶

Second, in describing the emergence of the post-1968 constellations of human rights NGOs as an indirect legacy of the CICRC's parabola, it is surprising that Kuby does not consider the creation of nongovernmental tribunals. Indeed, initiatives such as the Russell Tribunal on American crimes in Vietnam or the one on Latin American violations of human

³ The very same year, Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski published *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. See David Engerman, *Know Your Enemy. The Rise and Fall of America's Soviet Experts* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 206-232; Patrick G. Vaughan, "Zbigniew Brzezinski: The Political and Academic Life of a Cold War Visionary" (PhD Dissertation, West Virginia University, 2003).

⁴ Marco Duranti, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution. European Identity, Transnational Politics, and the Origins of the European Convention* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁵ Among Kuby's publications, see, for example "Our Actions Never Cease to Haunt Us': Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, and the Violence of the Algerian War," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 41:3 (Winter 2015): 59-78; and "From the Torture Chamber to the Bedchamber: French Soldiers, Anti-War Activists, and the Discourse of Sexual Deviancy in the Algerian War (1954-1962)," *Contemporary French Civilization* 38:2 (Summer 2013): 131-153.

⁶ Pieter Lagrou, *The Legacy of Nazi Occupation: Patriotic Memory and National Recovery in Western Europe, 1945-1965* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Henning Grunwald, "'Nothing more cosmopolitan than the camps?' Holocaust Remembrance and (de)Europeanization," in Martin Conway and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century. Historical Approaches* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 253-270.

rights, as well as the International Sakharov Committee that conducted public trials regarding Soviet violations of human rights, shared many common assumptions with the CICRC's mock trials. Combining a genuine indignation for human rights violations, a never-hidden ideological commitment, and a call for victims to testify, all these experiences were modeled after the CICRC's mock trials. In doing so, not only did they cement the central role of the victim-witness, something that the CICRC harbingered, but they also advanced a subversive conception of justice that found its legitimacy in peoples' conscience, rather than in states' laws, and put states' inhumane repression in the dock, rather than individual perpetrators.⁷

These two quite marginal reservations apart, Emma Kuby's *Political Survivors* is a remarkable achievement that helps us refine, complete, and complicate our understanding of public ethics in the postwar era, of transnational activism, and of the ambivalent and complex role the Cold War played in the rise of humanitarian concerns.

⁷ Arthur W. Blaser, "How to Advance Human Rights. Without Really Trying: An Analysis of Nongovernmental Tribunals," *Human Rights Quarterly* 14:3 (1992): 339-370, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.2307/762370>; Zachary Manfredi, "Sharpening the Vigilance of the World: Reconsidering the Russell Tribunal as Ritual," *Humanity. An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 9:1 (2018): 75-91, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/hum.2018.0004>.

REVIEW BY LORA WILDENTHAL, RICE UNIVERSITY

Emma Kuby, a historian of France and its empire, has written a compelling book on Europeans' activism against deportation and camp detention in the wake of World War II.¹ The book joins a still new and growing body of critical history of human rights in France by historians such as William D. Irvine, Todd Shepard, G. Daniel Cohen, and Marco Duranti. This new human rights history is inseparable from recent work on French colonialism, such as that by Todd Shepard, Benjamin Brower, and Emmanuelle Saada, on the one hand, and the critical historiography on Vichy and memory in postwar France on the other hand, by Robert Paxton, Henry Rousso, Tony Judt, Julian Jackson, and Samuel Moyn.² Kuby's book can hold its own in the company of theirs. What makes this book so successful are the strong connections she develops between her empirical case study and her larger themes of memory, justice, and moral authority—themes that make this book worthy of a broad audience. She moves between detail and large-scale conclusion with an excellent sense of proportion. It can be hard for historians and others to ground readers in a historical moment with respect to such vast themes as these that trigger such diverse associations in readers, and then to take readers to a different historical moment, showing change over time in their meanings. At this, the book excels.

Political Survivors is a local study of a universalist project. Here, 'local' does not mean minor. On the contrary, Kuby's is the best approach for a convincing examination of universalist claims. The voluntary organization around which the book is organized was small, short-lived, and today no longer well-known: the *Commission internationale contre le régime concentrationnaire* (CICRC), which existed between 1950 and 1958 under the leadership of David Rousset, a former Trotskyist, concentration camp survivor known for his 1946 book *L'Univers concentrationnaire*, and anti-totalitarian writer. *Concentrationnaire*, or 'concentrationary,' was Rousset's neologism. All CICRC members were—and were required to be—former members of the anti-Nazi Resistance and as such political, not racial, victims of the Nazis. They hailed from France, Belgium, and other countries under Nazi domination, and had survived deportation for their political activities and

¹ Her article-length publications to date include: "From Auschwitz to Algeria: The Mediterranean Limits of the French Anti-Concentration Camp Movement, 1952-1959," in Patricia Lorcin and Todd Shepard, eds., *French Mediterraneans: Transnational and Imperial Histories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016); "'Our Actions Never Cease to Haunt Us': Frantz Fanon, Jean-Paul Sartre, and the Violence of the Algerian War," *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 41:33 (2015): 59-78; "In the Shadow of the Concentration Camp: David Rousset and the Limits of Apoliticism in Postwar French Thought," *Modern Intellectual History* 11:1 (April 2014): 147-173; "From the Torture Chamber to the Bedchamber: French Soldiers, Anti-War Activists, and the Discourse of Sexual Deviancy in the Algerian War (1954-1962)," *Contemporary French Civilization* 38:2 (2013): 131-153; and "A War of Words over an Image of War: The Fox Movietone Scandal and the Portrayal of French Violence in Algeria, 1955-56," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 30:1 (2012): 46-67.

² See William D. Irvine, *Between Justice and Politics. The Ligue des droits de l'homme, 1898-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Todd Shepard, *The Invention of Decolonization: The Algerian War and the Remaking of France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); G. Daniel Cohen, *In War's Wake: European Refugees in the Postwar Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Marco Duranti, *The Conservative Human Rights Revolution: European Identity, Transnational Politics, and the Origins of the European Convention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). On French colonialism, see e.g. Benjamin Brower, *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009) or on the postwar era his "Partisans and Populations: The Place of Civilians in War, Algeria (1954-62)," *History and Theory* 56:3 (2017): 389-397, and the definitive book by Emmanuelle Saada, *Empire's Children. Race, Filiation and Citizenship in the French Colonies*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). On Vichy France and memory, see Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944* (New York: Knopf, 1972); Henry Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome. History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991); Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals 1944-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Julian T. Jackson, *France: The Dark Years, 1940-1944* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Samuel Moyn, *A Holocaust Controversy: The Treblinka Affair in Postwar France* (Lebanon: Brandeis University Press and University Press of New England, 2005).

internment in Nazi concentration camps. CICRC members claimed to have a unique ability, based on their experience in Nazi camps, to perceive and to call attention to ‘concentrationary’ spaces in the post-Nazi world.

Kuby’s choice of the CICRC as a case study allows her to home in on the Cold War years that lay between the 1945-46 Nuremberg Trials on the one hand, and the early mass human rights politics and Holocaust consciousness on the other. Those surviving *résistants* who came together in the CICRC claimed a uniquely complete knowledge of Nazi evil and drew upon that knowledge to insist on the comparability of cases of major political violence to Nazi violence. Kuby shows us why that combination of actors and claims was so powerful in its moment and yet did not age well through the 1950s into the early 1960s. The CICRC’s self-imposed task confronted it with questions that seemed easy to answer at the outset, but that became ever more complicated as the organization shifted into action. First, did it make sense to compare instances of large-scale political violence? Obviously the CICRC position was ‘yes,’ but on what would such a universalism ground itself, if political ideology was to be discarded as a road map? How were they to analyze political violence, if not in terms of ideological commitments? And if political ideology was no longer a road map, what was the specific significance of political persecutees’ suffering as opposed to that of racial persecutees or others? Did the knowledge of other sufferers of Nazi oppression, notably racial persecutees, make them also credible—even as credible as the political persecutees? What exactly justified that hierarchy of survivors’ credibility? What about sufferers of colonial and non-Nazi racist oppressions? Second, if CICRC members called upon the public to act against resurgences of Nazi evil, what exactly defined them as such? What was the essence of the Nazi regime’s criminality? Without that criterion, how could comparisons between Nazi and other instances of political violence be made? Internal horse-trading produced a tripartite formula of arbitrary arrest, forced labor, and inhuman conditions, a formula that is pretty capacious, probably too capacious, to our ears. Much less capacious from today’s point of view was the consensus in the CICRC that persecution on racial grounds, notably of Jews, was not as central to defining Nazi evil as political persecution was. Third, if surviving members of the Resistance had unique expertise in discerning recrudescences of Nazi evil on the basis of their own bodily experience of Nazi camps, could these ‘political survivors’ ever err? How long could claims to unique expertise last?

The specific context of France is important to the story. It was there that the prestige of surviving *résistants* was especially high, which meant that the CICRC’s claim to speak for all victims of the Nazis did not hold up as well outside France. And it was there that Stalinist and Maoist forms of Communism and the *Parti communiste français* (PCF) were especially influential in the postwar era, which ensured that the debate that Rousset launched, on the comparability of Communist political violence to that of the Nazis, gained immediate and strong attention.

Indeed, the CICRC qua voluntary organization is not the main point; it was just a location where resources and the goal of collective publications led individual voices to converge for a while. The CICRC was a platform for Rousset and others, but they had their own platforms before and after its existence. As was typical of humanitarian and human rights activism in those years, CICRC members were highly articulate public intellectuals (Germaine Tillion and Louis Martin-Chauffier, along with Rousset, receive the most attention from Kuby). They drew yet more public intellectuals into vehement and well-publicized debates, especially Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and even into legal proceedings. CICRC as an organization was just one manifestation of larger political and intellectual phenomena.

The CICRC story begins to unfold in 1949, when Rousset published “Appeal,” a newspaper piece urging action against the present evil of the Soviet network of labor camps. Kuby urges us to look past our likely expectation that the “Appeal” was about calling out a human rights violation. In fact, Rousset consistently avoided human rights terminology (58) although it was available to him. He probably found it too inadequate, diffuse, and perhaps too much occupied at that time by Christian conservatism. He wanted to confront the public with the persistence of radical evil after 1945; ‘concentrationary’ spaces did not merely violate a number of human rights, but affected the very possibility of thinking and feeling as a human.

Rousset’s “Appeal” predictably enraged orthodox Communists, and the battle lines were soon drawn. Over the short term, the ensuing debate led to a libel trial in 1950-1 that vindicated Rousset in the face of Communist claims that he had fabricated and distorted evidence of the Gulag in the “Appeal.” The trial generated yet more publicity, creating the conditions for the founding of the CICRC. A second short-term outcome was covert funding from the U.S. government for

the new CICRC, a matter known to Rousset and very few others. The money flowed between 1950 and 1957. In that year, the CICRC insisted on reporting on detention camps in French Algeria, and the U.S., irritated at what it saw as the hounding of a key NATO ally, cancelled further funding. Over the longer term, the impact of Rousset's "Appeal" was the imperative to examine multiple locations for their possible 'concentratory' nature, including in capitalist states. The proliferation of comparisons was imperative if the CICRC's whole effort was not to be discounted as just another Cold War tactic.

This is where the real interest of Kuby's study emerges, for the definitional problem regarding the essence of Nazi evil now became pressing and remained so. At the same time, other key elements were in motion and never really stabilized, be they CICRC members' subjectivities and opinions, actual Soviet and Chinese Communist policy, the perception of Nazi racism as distinctive to Nazi evil, the European public memory of Nazism and World War II, or the meaning of terms such as fascism or totalitarianism.

The thin organizational narrative is that the CICRC undertook a series of off- and on-site investigations and publicized its findings (or tried to, after its funding was cut off). Its first event, a tribunal of the Soviet camp system (Brussels, 1951), presented survivors of Nazi political persecution as judges and Gulag victims as testifying witnesses. The verdict was 'Yes,' the Soviet camp systems were 'concentratory.' Next were on-site investigations of camps in Spain and Greece (both in 1952), and, after much internal debate, a closed-door session on Maoist China presenting research gathered off-site (Brussels, 1956). These investigations led to the publication of white books. Tunisia was investigated on-site in 1953, then Algeria, also on-site, in 1957. The verdicts were all "No," with the exception of Maoist China, which, like the Soviet Union, was found to be 'concentratory.' No surprise there, and so much for proving to opponents that the CICRC was not merely anti-Communist. But that was just one of the CICRC's problems. The sites chosen and conclusions reached are of course important to know, but Kuby's study really concerns the processes of these investigations and the investigations' impact on the organization itself. It is the concrete detail here that allows her to illustrate the stakes of her large-scale themes. The process of choosing a location, assembling a team, debating with opponents outside the organization, and developing a common position on the findings to be presented over the 1950s ultimately corroded consensus among CICRC members and ultimately dissolved the organization. The very enacting of its mission undermined the form of credibility on which members had staked everything, namely the unique knowledge of the political survivor of Nazi camps. It was not that members ceased being politically active. Rather, the fact that Germaine Tillion, for example, turned to other means to pursue the same goal (in her case, the goal of spotlighting extreme oppression in Algeria) proves that CICRC members were stepping away from the organization's original premises.

Kuby deftly interrupts readers' assumptions that are likely to adhere to the thin organizational narrative, from the nature of the influence of the covert U.S. funding (strong but not invalidating) to the importance of the findings, especially on the Soviet Union, Spain, and Algeria (of lasting empirical and precedent-setting value, even though the judgments reached were predictable). For example, the tribunal of the Soviet Gulag, which readers might be likely to dismiss as another Cold War moment, reached beyond Nuremberg in its argumentation by foregrounding a state's peacetime 'crimes against humanity' against its own citizens (116). Nuremberg, of course, had been unable to reach beyond the legal construct of wartime aggression and alleged conspiracy to wage that war.

As Kuby shows, consensus also wore off inside the CICRC as members gradually saw that their own claims to expertise and objectivity were setting them up to, in effect, exonerate oppressors. If the standard of the Nazi 'concentratory universe' was to be suitably extreme, hardly any post-1945 case would meet that standard once those of the Soviet Union and Maoist China were decided. Did that mean the non-'concentratory' locations were not that bad? The alternative was to risk hollowing out the power of the standard of Nazi evil, by categorizing many places as 'concentratory.' The CICRC claimed that political resister-survivors had absolute knowledge of the nature of 'concentratory' spaces—but as in any human rights or humanitarian organization, credibility is something that has to be continually shored up. Predictably, and much to their embarrassment, a con man infiltrated the CICRC so well that he briefly served as an investigator in the Spain

case. Many human rights and humanitarian organizations have had to deal with such episodes.³ More important was CICRC members' own growing hesitation to claim the forms of authority and mode of critique by comparison that they had developed back in 1950.

Kuby gives extended attention to how the CICRC spoke for Jewish victims of racial persecution, but refused to permit victims of racial persecution to speak for them, or even share in their authority as bodily knowers of Nazi evil (99-101), even as the CICRC relied on the work and expertise of key Jewish colleagues who were not survivors of political deportation and internment, Léon Poliakov and Théo Bernard. CICRC members gave even shorter shrift to victims of Nazi labor deportation. Clearly, for them, suffering, to be meaningful, had to have a structure of conscious, political-ideological confrontation. That makes them seem not so very distant from their frequent critics Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, who argued that suffering per se was not sufficient grounds for condemning state violence (70).

The human cognitive impulse toward narrative as a method of creating meaning is well known. We historians will be preoccupied for some time to come with the problem of narrativizing suffering while preventing such narratives from taking on an unintended structure and implicit justifications of a political ideology. Yet how are we to explain state violence without recourse to political ideology? And what politics underlies what comparisons? As we confront the growing prominence of deportation and camp detention around the world, from southeast Texas where immigrant families are separated as a low-tech tool of state intimidation, to western China where Uighurs are the target of innovative carceral technology, the need to compare and distinguish will continue. The construction of compelling narratives about the suffering caused directly by state violence remains a vital political project; the story of the CICRC is timely. Without narratives, political action is difficult, if not impossible.

³ For an extended West German example, see my *The Language of Human Rights in West Germany* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 17-44.

RESPONSE BY EMMA KUBY, NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Let me begin by offering my thanks to Sarah Snyder for organizing this roundtable and conveying my deep appreciation to the three reviewers for their meticulous, insightful, and generous engagement with my book. It is a rare pleasure to have one's work read so closely by such gifted scholars as Padraic Kenney, Umberto Tulli, and Lora Wildenthal. I am particularly delighted that H-Diplo selected the reviewers from outside my own field of French intellectual and cultural history, since I deliberately crafted *Political Survivors* to address fellow historians working across a wide range of geographic and topical specialties.

This was not, however, originally my intention. Indeed, experts on Germany, Eastern Europe, and international relations are hardly the commentators I would have predicted for the eventual book when, many years ago, I began to investigate 1950s-era debates over state violence among Parisian intellectuals. I came to the story of the International Commission against the Concentration Camp Regime (CICRC) via the story of French writer David Rousset, who initially interested me less as the founder of a Cold War-era non-governmental organization than as a theoretician of the relationship between memory, ethics, and politics in the wake of World War II's catastrophes. As a survivor of the Neuengamme and Buchenwald concentration camps, Rousset posited the existence of a singularly evil "concentrationary universe" whose reproduction had to be guarded against by all members of postwar society—especially his fellow survivors. Rousset aligned himself after the war with existentialist figures including Jean-Paul Sartre; in 1948, the two men even founded a short-lived political party together. But Rousset broke decisively with Sartre and other left-leaning allies the next year when he issued a historic "Appeal" calling on men and women who had survived the Nazi camp system to condemn the Soviet Gulag as its "hallucinatory repetition."¹

Rousset's "Appeal," it transpired, had consequences beyond the spectacular polemic it produced among French intellectuals: the document also launched a decade-long crusade on the part of survivors of Nazi camps to investigate and condemn ongoing cruel detention systems around the world. This crusade, I eventually realized, ought to be the subject of my book. But it could not be treated effectively in a narrative that was rigidly framed by the hexagonal borders of France (nor, despite the centrality of the Algerian War to the story, even by the wider boundaries of the French empire). That even an author with no particular ambition out of the starting-gate of taking "the transnational turn" found herself drawn ineluctably beyond the confines of nation-state or imperial history is, perhaps, symptomatic of the globally interconnected nature of the subject matter of post-1945 political and intellectual endeavor. Ultimately, it was necessary for me to adopt a transnational approach in *Political Survivors* because the movement spawned by the "Appeal" was itself fundamentally transnational, in three senses: first, it drew participants from throughout Western Europe; second, it intimately involved American and British political actors as supporters, critics, and—eventually—funders; and third, it targeted ongoing internment systems around the world, from the USSR and Maoist China to Spain, Greece, and French Tunisia and Algeria.

What is more, the story of the rise and fall of the CICRC had implications for post-1945 Western and global histories that spilled well beyond France. My excavation of the group's decade-long project—what Wildenthal aptly calls the book's "thin organizational narrative"—permitted me to make a set of "thick" claims intended to challenge predominant transnational narratives about the postwar period. These specifically concerned the 1950s, an era which is too often cast as a space of absence and repression or as a blank "before" to later developments in the West (the human rights revolution, the "ethical turn," the burgeoning of Holocaust consciousness, the "second age" of international humanitarianism, and so on). I make three chief arguments in this regard.

First, I aim to show that although Holocaust consciousness, as such, indeed did not yet exist in the immediate postwar years, other modes of remembering Nazi violence—modes which often occluded, obscured, or appropriated the Jewish genocide—played a major role in shaping Europeans' approaches to ongoing forms of injustice worldwide. I am specifically interested in

¹ David Rousset, "Au secours des déportés dans les camps soviétiques: Un appel de David Rousset aux anciens déportés des camps nazis," *Le Figaro littéraire*, 12 November 1949.

demonstrating that the valorization of atrocity survivors as bearers of sacred testimony began in these years, well before the “advent of the witness” linked by Annette Wieviorka and others to the landmark 1961 Eichmann trial in Jerusalem.² Second, I insist that Cold War imperatives in the early post-1945 period, far from blocking or delaying the development of universalizing moral projects aimed toward international justice, played a constitutive role in shaping them. I use the CICRC’s 1951 mock trial of the USSR, for instance, to illuminate how Cold War anti-Communism helped cultivate widespread acceptance of the premise (still rejected at the time of the Nuremberg trials) that “crimes against humanity” were justiciable by international bodies even if committed in peacetime. Third, I explain how the violence of decolonization destabilized Europeans’ beliefs about the meaning and lessons of World War II by the late 1950s, throwing into question both the conceptual moral categories as well as the pragmatic and ideological alliances that the fight against Nazism had temporarily produced.

It is enormously gratifying to see the three reviewers engaging substantively and critically with these central arguments. Of course, in order to make them effectively (while also maintaining lines of argumentation specific to France and its empire, which I will not dwell upon in this forum), I necessarily had to say less about other important issues. Chief among these was the historical relationship between the CICRC and other twentieth-century international non-governmental organizations. Tulli regrets that I include little about mock trial-style initiatives of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s like the Russell Tribunal or the International Sakharov Committee, while Kenney wishes I had done more to situate the CICRC within a longer history of “international advocacy on behalf of political prisoners” since the end of World War I. His review offers an intriguing sketch of what this genealogy might look like, positioning Rousset’s Commission as a heretofore missing link between the 1920s-era International Committee for Political Prisoners, spearheaded by American civil liberties activist Roger Nash Baldwin, and Amnesty International, founded by British lawyer Peter Benenson in 1961. Baldwin, for one, was keenly interested in the formation of the CICRC—in fact, via fellow political organizer James Loeb, he passed along some advice on ethical universalism to David Rousset in 1950: “If the job is fairly done to include ALL phases of forced labor and concentration camps, it might have results. If it is only cold war stuff it won’t.”³ Rousset’s archive holds no such exchanges with Benenson, but (as I note in the book’s epilogue), the CICRC nevertheless presaged many key features of Amnesty:

Its espousal of ethical minimalism, its discourse of apoliticism or antipolitics rooted in disappointment with earlier revolutionary dreams, its privileging of testimony, its focus on prisons as paradigmatic institutions of authoritarian power, its emphasis on negative liberties—in particular, the right to dissent—and, last but not least, its activist orientation toward knowledge production, on-site inquiry, and public reportage (226).

I agree that it would be fruitful to continue exploring these connections, as well as the important lines of continuity raised by Tulli. But, ultimately, I remain more struck by the fundamental strangeness of the CICRC when judged in comparison with later human rights and humanitarian projects than by its familiar qualities. The group’s story helps to reveal that the moral landscape of the 1950s—before “the Holocaust” existed as such, before excluding Jews from an organization of Nazi concentration camp survivors caused a single raised eyebrow, before “human rights” crystallized as a universal language of protest—was a surprisingly foreign one. Perhaps most importantly, the rigid, backward-glancing categories that the CICRC articulated in determining, first, whose suffering demanded a response and, second, which individuals were ethically

² Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 88. See also Samuel Moyn, “Bearing Witness: The Theological Roots of a Secular Morality,” in *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012): 127-142; Lawrence Douglas, *The Memory of Judgment: Making Law and History in the Trials of the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001); Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious: Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002). For arguments about the significance of the early 1960s in this history that emphasize factors beyond the Eichmann case, see François Azouvi, *Le Mythe du grand silence: Auschwitz, les Français, la mémoire* (Paris: Fayard 2012); Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

³ James Loeb, letter to David Rousset, 10 February 1950. F Delta 1880/61/2/1, Fonds David Rousset, La Contemporaine (formerly the Bibliothèque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine), Paris, France.

responsible for offering that response were significantly distinct from those that Amnesty, Human Rights Watch, Doctors Without Borders, and other groups have employed since roughly the 1970s. Thus my goal in *Political Survivors* was not simply to insert Rousset's Commission into existing genealogies of international activism but rather to suggest that the triumph of today's dominant models was deeply contingent, by demonstrating that profoundly different ways of conceptualizing the call to bear witness proved more persuasive to many Europeans in the immediate postwar years.

Europeanization is another broad twentieth-century historical arc into which the CICRC's story might be better incorporated. Tulli wishes that *Political Survivors* itself had taken on a larger share of this work, observing that I "avoid[ed] an in-depth discussion...of the experience of the camp as a vehicle for a process of Europeanization." Indeed, I might strengthen his language: I *rejected* such a discussion, for I do not believe that the camp experience itself served any such function. With some exceptions—notably priests held in Dachau—non-Communist inmates' sense of belonging to a common, cosmopolitan European community was not meaningfully fostered by incarceration in a Nazi camp; if anything, the cruel hierarchies of the "concentratory universe" actually heightened their sense of national difference. As I argue in the book, the discursive construction of the Nazi camps as spaces of intra-European fellowship in victimhood was a later Cold War invention. I agree heartily with Tulli, however, that there remains much more to be discovered about how *memory* of the camps (and, later, distinctly, of the Holocaust) was instrumentalized by proponents of the European project—and how such memory is being reshaped today by processes of de-Europeanization.

I am less sure, meanwhile, about Kenney's suggestion that the CICRC might be viewed as having forged an early path for "historians, who are only now starting to think about concentration camps having a history." It is true—and notable—that the Commission propagated the notion that such camps had outlived the Second World War. But members' belief that the Nazi regime had invented this hellish form of internment erased concentration camps' pre-1933 history, from the British use of them in the Boer War to Spanish *reconcentración* policy in Cuba and the similarly wretched system of the United States in the Philippines. The CICRC's narrow understanding of what counted as a "true" concentration camp also helped to block recognition that the detention facilities that France used to incarcerate Spanish republicans, Jewish refugees, and other foreign nationals beginning in 1939, or those in which the U.S. interned Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor, might well be labeled as such. And, in the end, clinging to the impossibly high (or, rather, low) standard set by Dachau, Buchenwald, and Mauthausen impeded rather than facilitated members' ability to comprehend ongoing uses of political internment in places like French Algeria. Thus, rather than framing the Commission's participants as pioneers in historicizing the camps, I prefer to read their story as a cautionary tale about the limits of universalizing models of state violence based upon the specific examples set by mid-twentieth-century authoritarian regimes in Europe.

Of course, such models had—and continue to have—an unparalleled emotional resonance and rhetorical power in the post-1945 West. Thus, if there is a "lesson" to be taken away from the CICRC's eventual collapse, it is not that we ought simply to avoid comparing ongoing forms of injustice to Nazi crimes. Tragically, such comparisons remain politically imperative in an America of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids, child detention camps, and mass deportations. As Wildenthal writes in the searching, provocative conclusion to her review, the act of comparison permits us to narrativize the suffering produced by state violence and thereby to mobilize against its continuation. It offers a potent, visceral language of protest—hence the very real accomplishments of the CICRC as a moral and political project in its era, and hence the moving recent initiatives of U.S.-based groups with such pointed names as Never Again Action. At the same time, however, from its rejection of Jewish Holocaust survivors to its difficulties addressing colonial torture, the CICRC also does exhibit some of the potential dangers of "Never again!" as a moral logic. Comparison to past atrocities is vital as an activist strategy for awakening righteous outrage; as an actual means for deciding whose present-day suffering matters and whose does not, it falls short. It is in this sense, ultimately, that I think the history in *Political Survivors* matters most, and I wish to offer my sincere thanks once again to Sarah Snyder and the reviewers for helping to share it with H-Diplo readers.