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MEMORIAL

Georg G. Iggers (1926–2017)

On November 26, 2017, Georg Iggers passed away in a retirement home on the outskirts of Buffalo, where he had taught for four decades at the State University of New York (SUNY). After starting his scholarly career with a book on French social philosophy in the early nineteenth century, Iggers turned his attention to the transformation of historical thinking in Germany since the Enlightenment, exploring the development of history as a discipline. Over the years, he distinguished himself as one of the world's leading historians of historiography. He retained his focus on the writing of history in the German-language realm, but moved increasingly toward an analysis of historiography in comparative and global perspectives.[1]

Iggers belonged to the generation of Jewish refugees from Central Europe who had fled the Nazi dictatorship at a young age, received their academic training in the English-speaking world, and then gone on to become historians. This remarkable cohort included Peter Gay, Raul Hilberg, Gerda Lerner, Michael A. Meyer, George L. Mosse, and Gerhard Weinberg, among others.[2] As was the case for other members of this generation of young émigrés from Nazi Germany and Austria who became scholars in America, Iggers blended personal experiences of discrimination and displacement into his scholarly work. These experiences alerted him to forms of illiberalism in the contemporary world and fueled his commitment to a social activism that embraced civil rights and racial equality. Iggers cherished the heritage of the transatlantic Enlightenment and the values of civil society, and he respected the fact that these have distinctive meanings in different societies. Throughout his life, he remained a nonconformist who always questioned not only prevailing views but also, and especially, what he perceived to be authoritarian tendencies. Iggers accepted that this stance turned him into a migrant of sorts between cultural and political spheres that others viewed as

I would like to thank Volker Berghahn, Larry E. Jones, Peter H. Reill, and Christopher Notaro for their feedback on earlier drafts of this essay. My special thanks go to Wilma and to the late Georg Iggers for having shared with me over the years many insights into their work, as well as many personal stories.

[1] See the autobiographical account by Wilma and Georg G. Iggers, *Two Lives in Uncertain Times: Facing the Challenges of the 20th Century as Scholars and Citizens* (New York: Berghahn, 2006) [first published in German as *Zwei Seiten der Geschichte: Lebensbericht aus unruhigen Zeiten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002)]. The University Archives at the State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo hold the Georg G. Iggers Papers, no. 22/6F/270, c. 1955-2007; as well as the Georg and Wilma Iggers Oral Histories Collection, no. 22/6F/1261, 1988.

[2] Andreas W. Daum, Hartmut Lehmann, and James J. Sheehan, eds., *The Second Generation: Émigrés from Nazi Germany as Historians. With a Biobibliographical Guide* (New York: Berghahn, 2016), includes a short biography of Georg and Wilma Iggers (pp. 385-88), as well as an autobiographical essay by Georg Iggers: "History and Social Action Beyond National and Continental Borders" (pp. 82-96).

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separate. This was an important motivation for connecting historians across ideological borders, especially during the Cold War, and for forging friendships all over the world.

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Georg, as he liked to be addressed, was born Georg Gerson Igersheimer in the Eppendorf neighborhood of Hamburg on December 7, 1926. He always bemoaned the fact that his parents had shortened his last name to Iggers to make it sound more American after their emigration to the United States. Georg remained steadfast in his refusal to anglicize the spelling of his first name. Both his parents came from the world of small business and had a Jewish background. Georg's father grew up in a practicing Orthodox family. He worked as an employee at a bank and at two chemical companies before achieving economic independence by setting up his own business as a metal broker in Hamburg. The family of his mother, who was born in England, was not religious. Though both parents attended services in Hamburg's majestic synagogue at the Bornplatz, Georg's father also became increasingly secular.

Using his own upbringing as an example, Iggers stressed the idea that there is not one "German-Jewish legacy."[3] Not all Jewish refugees from Germany conformed to the image of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, i.e., the educated middle-class stratum that enjoyed an elevated social reputation. In fact, Georg's parents left *Gymnasium* prior to the final exam that would have granted them access to university study. They rarely attended theater or concert performances, and their collection of German classical literature appealed only to their son. Georg started going to the public elementary school in the *Knauerstrasse* in April 1933, a little more than two months after the Nazi seizure of power. As was the case for other Jewish youngsters in the Third Reich, his initial experiences at school were mixed. Georg "felt like a German" and was not subjected to antisemitic harassment in the classroom.[4] Yet, the language and ideology of the Nazis began to permeate school curricula and rituals, from the introduction of the "Heil Hitler" greeting to the singing of the Stormtroopers' *Horst-Wessel-Lied* at morning assemblies. Georg encountered mounting antisemitism outside of school, where the vulgarities of *Der Stürmer* and anti-Jewish signage ("Jews not welcome") became ubiquitous. At the age of ten, the boy from Eppendorf was physically attacked by a bunch of uniformed members of the Hitler Youth.[5]

The experience of increasingly systematic, antisemitic discrimination was decisive in making Georg more aware of his Jewish identity. Growing conflicts with his parents accelerated this process: they considered him a difficult, rebellious child, and Georg became ever more observant—to the point of refusing meat as non-kosher food. The young teenager also felt increasingly attracted to Zionism as a political and religious movement. He joined the Bar Kochba athletics club and, secretly, the Zionist youth group *Misrachi*. By 1936, Georg conceived of himself as an Orthodox Jew, with strong leanings toward the communal socialism of Zionists who strove to create a settlers' society in Palestine. At this point in his life, he felt

[3]Georg G. Iggers, "An Autobiographical Approach to the German-Jewish Legacy," in *The German-Jewish Legacy in America, 1938–1988: From* Bildung *to the Bill of Rights*, ed. Abraham J. Peck (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 39-40.

[4]Ibid., 36.

[5]Iggers and Iggers, *Two Lives*, 28.

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that he did not want "to have anything to do with the Germans. I'm Jewish."[6] He insisted on being transferred to the Talmund Torah School in Hamburg. His stay there was just a brief episode, however, as was one in the Israelite Orphanage and Reformatory in Esslingen near Stuttgart, where his parents sent him in December 1937.

Georg's father had, in the meantime, secured a way to emigrate to the United States. In early October 1938, the Igersheimer family, including Georg's sister Lena, departed from Hamburg. Had they stayed another month, they might have fallen victim to the large-scale pogrom the Nazis staged on the night of November 9–10, 1938, against Jewish citizens, their property, and synagogues. This is often referred to as *Kristallnacht*, of course, but the historian Iggers found the term inadequate, almost euphemistic, and preferred instead to speak of a pogrom. The family arrived in New York City on October 20, 1938. Here the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society helped the Iggers—as the parents would soon call themselves—to settle temporarily in the Washington Heights neighborhood, which was filling up with Jewish refugees from Central Europe. Like most of the younger refugees, Georg soon adjusted in many ways to life in the United States, yet, he also maintained some distance and cultivated parts of the heritage that linked him to German-speaking Europe.[7]

Georg Iggers's path in life led next to Richmond, Virginia, where he sailed through high school and graduated at the age of fifteen. Two years later, in 1944, he received his BA from the University of Richmond, with a major in French literature and a pronounced interest in the study of philosophy, history, and the social sciences. Throughout his life, Iggers retained a willingness to learn new languages and converse in other ones he had studied. The latter included Esperanto, which he taught himself and which conformed to his ideal of bringing together people of different origins. Iggers initially retained his Orthodoxy and attachment to Zionism while in Richmond, though he would distance himself from both after 1946. His self-perception as a "German Jew" in the tradition of the European Enlightenment became stronger over time, not weaker.[8] Moreover, Iggers's new social experiences acquainted him with the thought of ethically grounded Protestantism and Liberalism, which were themselves grounded in German traditions and espoused by Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr. This intellectual encounter fueled his distaste for American-style consumerism, as much as his repulsion toward any form of authoritarianism.

Iggers was shocked upon first hearing about the Holocaust in 1942, and the lack of attention that the mass murder of Europe's Jews was receiving in America greatly troubled him. At the same time, he distanced himself from the racialized wartime images of the Japanese as ethnic enemies. Such a critical stance contributed to Iggers's sympathy for the World Federalist Movement, and it alerted him to existing injustices in the United States. Iggers's nonconformity eventually brought him to the attention of the FBI, which started a file on the young immigrant shortly after his fourteenth birthday.[9] The intertwined issues of race relations, civil rights, and equality in the United States moved increasingly to the center of Iggers's political consciousness. He deeply felt that the ongoing discrimination against the African American

[6]University Archives at SUNY Buffalo, Georg and Wilma Iggers Oral Histories Collection, Georg Iggers, tape 1, side 2 (recorded in 1988).

[7]Andreas W. Daum, "Refugees from Nazi Germany as Historians: Origins and Migrations, Interests and Identities," and Volker R. Berghahn, "Thinking about the Second Generation Conceptually," in Daum, Lehman, and Sheehan, *Second Generation*, 1-52, 152-73.

[8]Iggers, "An Autobiographical Approach," 37.

[9]Iggers, "History and Social Action Beyond National and Continental Borders," 83.

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population was a blatant injustice—a specter he could not escape. At the age of seventeen, he began fighting against racial segregation, which reminded him of the antisemitism and authoritarian practices he had encountered in Nazi Germany: "Every time I looked at the wall of a classroom and saw Robert E. Lee, I saw Adolf Hitler."[10] Iggers nevertheless appreciated what the United States offered him: personal freedom, an amicable environment that allowed him to pursue his academic interests, and a place to develop a form of social activism that drew on his earlier experiences as a Jew in Germany.

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In 1944, Iggers entered the graduate program at the University of Chicago and became affiliated with the German department. But he found its courses uninspiring and the faculty's conservative imprint troubled him. Fortunately for Iggers, the other emigrants from Nazi-dominated Europe—both older and younger ones, and one female student in particular—made a difference. Since the 1930s, the University of Chicago had hired a number of distinguished German scholars, such as the historian Hans Rothfels, the philosophers Helmut Kohn and Leo Strauss, as well as the political scientists Hans Morgenthau and Arnold Bergstraesser.[11] Under the influence of Bergstraesser, Iggers turned toward the history of ideas and social theories. There were other young refugees—including Stefan Brecht, the son of playwright Bertolt Brecht—who shared Iggers's interest in revisiting the intellectual traditions of the "other" Germany. With an eye to the 1830s, the students founded a Hegel Club and used their native language to discuss the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and the social theories of Karl Marx.[12]

Graduate school in Chicago brought Iggers into contact with Wilma Abeles, another student in the German Department. They fell in love, married in 1948, and remained an inseparable couple—in both a personal and an intellectual sense—until Georg's death. His now widow Wilma, who was five years older than Georg, had been born in the western Bohemian region of Czechoslovakia. She shared with Iggers a Central European background, the experience of escape from the Nazi threat, and a pronounced intellectual curiosity. Wilma's Jewish identity differed, however, from that of Iggers: it was more secular, thus adding to the multitude of German-Jewish cultures that the refugees brought to America in the 1930s.[13] Wilma's family was engaged in the farming business and belonged more to the local German bourgeoisie than to the Jewish community. Similar to many other Jewish families with a similar social status, the Abeles felt compelled to leave Czechoslovakia in October 1938, shortly after the signing of the Munich Agreement. Wilma emigrated to Canada, where she pursued a BA at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, before attending graduate school at the University of Chicago.[14] Also working with Bergstraesser, she wrote her

[10]University Archives at SUNY Buffalo, Georg and Wilma Iggers Oral Histories Collection, Georg Iggers, tape 2, side 1.

[11]Wilhelm Bleek, *Geschichte der Politikwissenschaft in Deutschland* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2001), 250-51 (specifically on Bergstraesser, see pp. 290-91, 298-99, 302-4, 316-17); Hartmut Lehmann and James J. Sheehan, eds., *An Interrupted Past: German-Speaking Refugee Historians in the United States after 1933* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[12]Iggers and Iggers, *Two Lives*, 52.

[13]Daum, "Refugees from Nazi Germany," 8-12.

[14]Wilma Iggers, "Refugee Women from Czechoslovakia in Canada: An Eyewitness Report," in *Between Sorrow and Strength: Women Refugees of the Nazi Period*, ed. Sibylle Quack (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 121-28.

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dissertation on the Austrian writer Karl Kraus; this later became her first book. Until the mid-1960s, Wilma taught literature and languages at the universities that hired Georg. In 1965, she joined the faculty of Canisius College in Buffalo, where she rose to the rank of full professor. Over the course of her career, Wilma published important volumes on Jewish culture in Bohemia and Moravia, as well as on women in Prague since the eighteenth century.[15]

At the same time that Wilma provided Georg with a great deal of intellectual feedback, his interest in the Left Hegelians and in early nineteenth-century German and French social critics continued to increase during his time in Chicago. Karl Marx and the ramifications of Marxist thinking occupied Iggers throughout his life, but his encounters with Marxists in the United States only confirmed his criticism of the theoretical determinism and political dogmatism associated with classical Marxist thinking. Iggers already set the tone for his critique of ideology in his 1945 master's thesis (submitted in German!) on Heinrich Heine, his favorite German poet. He examined Heine's inner struggles about leaving Germany in 1830, and sketched the poet's growing preoccupation with the ideas of the Saint-Simonians, a French intellectual movement of the 1820s and 1830s devoted to a kind of utopian, technocratic socialism that had fascinated many contemporaries. Initially attracted by its synthesis of empirical analysis and religious inspiration, Heine turned to the social philosophy of the Saint-Simonians in his search for a model of social reform.[16]

In a revised summary of his master's thesis that appeared later in English, Iggers provided a vivid portrayal of the values that he personally embraced. He characterized Heine, the author of *Germany: A Winter's Tale*, as a representative of liberal cosmopolitanism, as a staunch critic of nationalism, and as a "son of the Enlightenment at heart" who affirmed "the role of reason and of individual inquiry as prime instruments of human progress."[17] Before this summary appeared, a year of study in 1945-1946 at the New School for Social Research in New York made up for what the Third Reich had prevented: it anchored Iggers further in the German heritage of critical philosophical and social thinking, as represented by the New School's émigré faculty. Seeking inspiration from other émigré scholars gathered in New York, Iggers also paid regular visits to the Union Theological Seminary, which allowed him to deepen his understanding of Niebuhr's theology and especially that of Paul Tillich, whose religious socialism strongly appealed to him.[18]

In 1951, Iggers concluded his dissertation at the University of Chicago, which expanded on the social philosophy of the Saint-Simonians.[19] Seven years later, he published his

[15] Wilma Iggers, *Die Juden in Böhmen und Mähren: Ein historisches Lesebuch* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1986) [in English translation as *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: A Historical Reader*, trans. Wilma Abeles Iggers, Káča Poláčková-Henley, and Kathrine Talbot (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1992)]; idem, *Women of Prague: Ethnic Diversity and Social Change from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Providence, RI: Berghahn, 1995) [in German translation as *Frauenleben in Prag. Ethnische Vielfalt und kultureller Wandel seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2000)]. Also see Joseph Seligmann Kohn, *Der jüdische Gil Blas*, ed. Wilma Iggers (Munich: Scaneg, 1993).

[16] Georg G. Iggers, "Heine und der Saint-Simonismus," MA thesis, University of Chicago, 1945.

[17] Georg G. Iggers, "Heine and the Saint-Simonians: A Re-Examination," *Comparative Literature* 10, no. 4 (1958): 289-308 (quotes on pp. 308, 303).

[18] Among the émigré scholars Iggers encountered in New York were the sociologists Carl Mayer and Albert Salomon, the economists Eduard Heimann and Frieda Wunderlich, and the philosopher of law Felix Kaufmann. Iggers did not meet Hannah Arendt. See Iggers and Iggers, *Two Lives*, 53-54.

[19] Georg G. Iggers, "The Social Philosophy of the Saint-Simonians (1824-1832)," PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1951. In addition to Bergstraesser, Iggers was advised by Louis R. Gottschalk, a historian of France, and James Luther Adams, a Unitarian theologian and later professor at Harvard University. Iggers

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arguments in a monograph titled *The Cult of Authority: The Political Philosophy of the Saint-Simonians*, which was based on an analysis of a broad range of published sources.[20] Iggers later added a second volume, *The Doctrine of Saint-Simon: An Exposition*, which offered an English translation of the first part of a series of lectures the Saint-Simonians had delivered in 1828-1829 in Paris.[21] Both publications built on the premise that it was not the movement's eponymous patron, Henri Comte de Saint-Simonde Saint-Simon, but rather his immediate followers (i.e., Auguste Comte, for some time, and especially Olinde Rodriguez, Barthélémy Enfantin, and Amand Bazard) who had provided a technocratic model of society that served as an inspiration for socialists of different outlooks. Iggers delineated the ways in which these men had emphasized the need to rationalize society, curb the excesses of *laissez faire* capitalism, and create social cohesion in a society increasingly fragmented as a result of industrialization. But Iggers turned this story upside down. His Saint-Simonians advocated international peace but did not have any notion about the equality of nations. They were against exploitation but also against a new redistribution of property; they dismissed as well the idea of class struggle. For them, societies needed a hierarchical structure—an idea that created one of several intersections with the beliefs of traditional Catholics thinkers in France. Iggers stressed the Saint-Simonians' belief in mankind's continuous, progressive development toward a greater associational life. They wanted the study of history to be a social science, though their self-proclaimed scientific method aimed primarily at confirming what they saw as the inevitable law of perfectibility.[22]

Iggers's studies of the Saint-Simonians displayed a penchant that would leave a mark on his later works, which tended to group historical thinkers in "schools" and to pinpoint their ideas as "doctrines" or "conceptions" whose political implications and continuities he then traced. Yet, the emerging master of *Ideologiekritik* was himself enmeshed in the political ideologies of his time—a hardly surprising tendency that surfaced as well in the work of other young refugees who later became historians.[23] In the 1950s, Iggers subscribed to a bold theory of totalitarianism that focused on the emergence of the modern "mass state."[24] These ideas, which experienced a heyday in the decade after 1945, seemed to provide an explanatory model accounting for both the emergence of fascism and National Socialism, as well as for the West's hardening Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union. The Saint-Simonians appeared in Iggers's studies not only as authoritarian in their understanding of society and state, but also as "theorists of the modern totalitarian state." Driven by their "myth of efficiency," they aimed for control of all sectors of society, and they carried the "conception of the supremacy of the state over the individual to the extreme."[25] Iggers followed

admired Adams's integrity and ethics, and dedicated his second monograph to him; see Georg G. Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), xi.

[20] Georg G. Iggers, *The Cult of Authority: The Political Philosophy of the Saint-Simonians. A Chapter in the Intellectual History of Totalitarianism* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1958; 2nd ed., 1970).

[21] *The Doctrine of Saint-Simon: An Exposition. First Year, 1828–1829*, trans. Georg G. Iggers (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958).

[22] See Georg G. Iggers, "Further Remarks about Early Uses of the Term 'Social Science,'" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20, no. 3 (1959): 433-36.

[23] See Volker Berghahn, "Fritz Stern (1926-2016)," *Central European History* 49, no. 3/4 (2016): 312-14.

[24] Iggers, *Cult of Authority*, 3.

[25] Iggers, *The Doctrine of Saint-Simon*, ix, xxxvi; idem, *The Cult of Authority*, 3.

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here the lead of émigrés of the older generation, from Carl Joachim Friedrich, Hannah Arendt, and Emil Lederer, to the sociologist Albert Salomon, who had advised him at the New School in New York. Over time, however, Iggers realized that he had placed the Saint Simonians too boldly in the broad trajectory of twentieth-century European dictatorships.[26]

When Iggers addressed modern totalitarianism, he was referring primarily to Benito Mussolini's fascism and to Stalinism. Not yet on his agenda were the cultural criticism and illiberalism of nineteenth-century German writers, whom Fritz Stern, another young émigré from Germany who had embarked on the study of history, was researching at the time.[27] Iggers's comments in the *Cult of Authority* about the Nazis' antidemocratic beliefs and racist *Weltanschauung* remained sparse, essentially arguing that the "Germans were fairly powerless to stop the excesses of the Hitler regime until it had destroyed itself."[28] Intellectual history in the 1950s had a hard time situating its findings within the structural transformations of society prior to and during Hitler's rule. The requisite research did not exist until Karl Dietrich Bracher, Ralf Dahrendorf, and others provided a more complex picture. Furthermore, the spectrum of historical themes that preoccupied the younger émigrés was not dominated by the National Socialist dictatorship, but was much broader than those that had captured the interest of the older refugees.[29] European and transatlantic perspectives were important even for those among the younger cohort who did focus on the Nazi experience. This comparative angle was evident in the works of Walter Laqueur, George L. Mosse, and Fritz Stern, who all grappled with the dazzling array of ideologies on which the Nazis had built their own, as well as in the studies by Gerhard Weinberg, Joachim Remak, Hans Rogger, and Hans Jonas on the history of twentieth-century foreign policy.

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The 1950s signalled a new departure for Georg and Wilma Iggers. They forcefully began to embrace social activism and, more specifically, the fight against racial segregation in America. After an interlude as an instructor at the University of Akron in Ohio, during which Georg became a US citizen, both Iggers accepted an offer in 1950 from Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas, a private black college founded in 1877. Their three children, Jeremy, Daniel, and Jonathan, were all born there. In 1957, the Iggers moved on to Dillard University in New Orleans, another historically black college, and immersed themselves there in

[26] In the second edition of the *Cult of Authority*, which appeared in 1970, Iggers dropped the second subtitle ("A Chapter in the Intellectual History of Totalitarianism"), and, in a new foreword, he profiled the Saint-Simonians as political thinkers in their own right, rather than as predecessors of twentieth-century political ideas and practices; he also acknowledged the humanitarian core of their thinking.

[27] Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961); idem, *The Failure of Illiberalism* (New York: Knopf, 1972). Iggers later dealt more generally with antirational forms of the philosophy of history in Europe; see Georg G. Iggers, "The Idea of Progress in Recent Philosophies of History," *Journal of Modern History* 30, no. 3 (1958): 215-26.

[28] Iggers, *Cult of Authority*, 105. Four decades later, Iggers used new findings on the involvement of German scholars, including historians, in Nazi research on the East (*Ostforschung*) to articulate a much more critical position; see his foreword to *German Scholars and Ethnic Cleansing 1919–1945*, ed. Ingo Haar and Michael Fahlbusch (New York: Berghahn, 2005), vii-xviii.

[29] Daum, "Refugees from Nazi Germany," 21-27.

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instruction, with teaching loads that left little time for research. Most important, they now directed their ethically and historically grounded sense of justice toward tackling the omnipresent forms of racist discrimination they encountered in the segregated South.[30] Georg and Wilma were not, of course, the only white European academics of Jewish background who had found a place at black colleges since the 1930s.[31] But they translated with particular verve their personal history into a commitment to supporting civil rights. As Georg Iggers later noted, their efforts "seemed like a sort of very natural struggle … a continuation of the German experience. And I think I was always very much aware of my own past as a Jew in Germany."[32]

It was a result of an initiative by Georg that the board of the Little Rock public library system decided to do away with racial barriers at that institution. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) subsequently invited the erudite couple to join its Arkansas chapter, and Georg was asked to chair the education committee of the Little Rock branch.[33] Since schools in Arkansas still followed the Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* "separate but equal" decision of 1896, Iggers invested considerable effort in compiling data to prove that the school facilities and curricula for black students were not equal to those for white pupils—allowing him to make the case that black students be admitted to courses at white high schools. When local opponents delayed the implementation of the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954, Georg and Wilma vigorously collected testimonies from black families, identified witnesses and potential plaintiffs, and even invested their own money to file a lawsuit.

Their hands-on approach to fighting segregation in the local arena led them in many different directions. Together with colleagues from Philander Smith, for example, Georg founded a film club that explicitly welcomed African Americans to its showings. The Little Rock chapter of Phi Beta Sigma, one of the oldest black fraternities in the country, also decided to induct him as its first white brother. On a more personal level, the interracial setting of life in the South made the Iggers feel at home for the first time since their emigration from Nazi-dominated Central Europe. A desire to improve their academic situation nevertheless prompted them to spend a sabbatical year at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, before moving on to Dillard in 1957. Besides remaining active in the

[30]See David A. Gerber, "From Hamburg to Little Rock and Beyond: The Origins of Georg Iggers's Civil Rights Activism," in *Geschichtswissenschaft vor 2000: Perspektiven der Historiographiegeschichte, Geschichtstheorie, Sozial- und Kulturgeschichte. Festschrift für Georg G. Iggers zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch, Jörn Rüsen, and Hans Schleier (Hagen: Rottmann, 1991), 509-22.

[31]Gabrielle S. Edgecomb, *From Swastika to Jim Crow: Refugee Scholars at Black Colleges* (Malabar, FL: Krieger, 1993).

[32]University Archives at SUNY Buffalo, Georg and Wilma Iggers Oral Histories Collection, Georg Iggers, tape 3, side 2.

[33]Larry E. Jones, ed., *Crossing Boundaries: The Inclusion and Exclusion of Minorities in Germany and America* (New York: Berghahn, 2001), includes three essays that are particularly relevant in this context: Tony A. Freyer, "Objectivity and Involvement: Georg G. Iggers and Writing the History of the Little Rock School Crisis" (pp. 172-92); Manfred Berg, "Activists, Leaders, and Supporters: On the Role of Whites in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People" (pp. 193-210); Tony A. Freyer, "Crossing Borders in American Civil Rights Historiography" (pp. 213-32). On the controversies at the Little Rock branch of the NAACP with regard to seeking litigation, see Tony A. Freyer, *Little Rock on Trial:* Cooper v. Aaron *and School Desegregation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 18-48.

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NAACP, Iggers, who now considered himself to be a pacifist, would eventually join the anti-Vietnam War movement in New Orleans as well.[34]

It was at this earlier time, in the late 1950s, that Iggers refocused his attention on scholarship and the study of history, which, when "philosophically approached," he emphatically stated, "still leads us to truths, values, and beauties which enlighten and inspire."[35] He initially conceived of a project on the decline of the idea of progress. Yet, when fellowships from the American Philosophical Society and the Guggenheim Foundation allowed him to return to Europe for almost two years in 1960-1962, Iggers used the opportunity to devote himself to a critical review of historical thinking in Germany since the late eighteenth century. The changing social context played a role in this turn of interest. In France, England, the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany, where he spent most of his time, Iggers began what would become a life-long exercise: tirelessly seeking out conversations with scholars of different backgrounds to test out his ideas in cross-border dialogues. Among those whom he met and with whom he conversed were Fernand Braudel and Robert Mandrou, Herbert Butterfield and Karl Popper, Pieter Geyl and Othmar Anderle, Gerhard Ritter and Reinhard Wittram, Dietrich Gerhard and Hermann Heimpel. Heimpel's invitation in 1961 to use the Max Planck Institute (MPI) for History in Göttingen as an informal base for his work was the beginning of Iggers's close personal affiliation with this institution. Particularly important were encounters there, beginning in the 1970s, with Rudolf Vierhaus and Hans Medick, as well as conversations with visiting scholars from the United States, such as Peter H. Reill.[36] The Iggers returned regularly to the MPI, and Göttingen became their second home, where they cultivated a lasting friendship with historian Rudolf von Thadden, who taught at the University of Göttingen.

Iggers's systematic reading of German-language intellectual history resulted in his second monograph, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present*, which came out in 1968 and was his personal "Sixty-Eight" of sorts, for the study clearly had both a scholarly and a "political purpose."[37] Iggers set out to show that the belief in history as a meaningful process—i.e., historicism understood in metaphysical terms, grounded in German idealism and Lutheran religiosity, and coupled with a belief in the state as an embodiment of positive values—had enjoyed an amazing continuity in Germany deep into the twentieth century. Previous historians would have agreed with this outline of the history of historicism, but Iggers reversed the value judgment they had adopted. Iggers saw the continuity of German historical thinking as "unique," as something that had created a kind of great divergence.[38] Beginning around 1800, he suggested, Germany had deviated from Western liberal traditions based on natural law, universal human rights, and the idea that the state was subject to outside ethical standards. Biographical considerations played a role in Iggers's interpretation, as they did in his emphasis

[34]University Archives at SUNY Buffalo, Georg and Wilma Iggers Oral Histories Collection, Georg Iggers, tape 5, side 2.

[35]Iggers, "The Idea of Progress in Recent Philosophies of History," 226.

[36]See Georg G. Iggers, Hans Erich Bödeker, Jonathan B. Knudsen, and Peter H. Reill, eds., *Aufklärung und Geschichte: Studien zur deutschen Geschichtswissenschaft im 18. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986).

[37]Quote from University Archives at SUNY Buffalo, Georg and Wilma Oral History Collection, Georg Iggers, tape 5, side 1.

[38]Iggers, *German Conception*, 13.

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on the close connection between the German conception of history, on the one hand, and the German professoriate and, more broadly, the *Bildungsbürgertum*, on the other. At the time, Fritz K. Ringer published a similar provocation in his critique of the elitist, political self-centeredness of the so-called German mandarins.[39]

Iggers set a wide chronological frame for his narrative. He began his account by stressing that Wilhelm von Humboldt, influential around 1800 as a philosopher and scholar of the history of languages, had already departed from his own earlier emphasis on the principle of individuality as part of the Enlightenment heritage. Iggers then moved to Leopold von Ranke and the Prussian School of History, and, ultimately, to Wilhelm Dilthey, Max Weber, and Ernst Troeltsch. He conceded that an ethical relativism had emerged over the course of the nineteenth century, and that new methodological approaches to history were being tested, both of which called into question the intellectual foundation of historicism, as exemplified by Karl Lamprecht's approach to cultural history. *The German Conception of History* concluded with a critique of Friedrich Meinecke's oeuvre at the beginning of the twentieth century, even though Iggers acknowledged that Meinecke had eventually become disillusioned with the supposed harmony between spirit and power in Germany.

Iggers incorporated into his narrative liberals like Max Weber, whom he praised for his innovative methodology but chastised for having bequeathed a "dangerous heritage" by not questioning the "idol of the nation."[40] He went even further in his criticism, however, seeing the very concept of reason and the hermeneutics of "understanding" (*verstehen*) history as having been compromised in Germany since Wilhelm von Humboldt and Leopold von Ranke. The development from the early historism of the period around 1800 to the type of historicism that emerged a century later—a terminological distinction that Iggers consciously made—did not primarily appear as an increasing departure from the ideals of objectivity and strict empiricism.[41] It was Peter Novick who depicted such a development years later in his study *That Noble Dream*, which focused on the evolution of American historiography.[42] Instead, for Iggers, the claim to scholarly objectivity was a not-so-noble dream from the very beginning: it was distorted by the ideological premises of historians and by their belief in the metaphysical, beneficial quality of the state—only to clash in the 1930s and 1940s with the "demonic and diabolic aspects of the German

[39]Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890–1933* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969).

[40]Iggers, *German Conception*, 173. Max Weber's political position increasingly became the subject of critical scrutiny following the publication of Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber und die deutsche Politik: 1890–1920* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1959).

[41]Georg G. Iggers, "The Idea of Progress: A Critical Reassessment," *American Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (1965): 5. Iggers repeatedly discussed the issue of how best to translate the term *Historismus* into English. Early in his career, he differentiated between an early *historism* (a term he preferred) and *historism* (the term that became common), only to accede later to the more commonly used term *historicism*; see "Historicism," *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. 2, ed. Philip P. Wiene (New York: Scribner, 1973), 456-64; Georg Iggers and Konrad von Moltke, eds., *Leopold von Ranke: The Theory and Practice of History* (Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), xviii, n. 11. Late in life, Iggers returned to the term *historism*, which, he believed, best signified the idealist assumptions of the early nineteenth century. See Georg Iggers, "Historicism: The History and Meaning of the Term," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56, no. 1 (1995): 136-37; Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers, trans. Wilma A. Iggers (London: Routledge, 2011), xiii, n. 11; Iggers, "History and Social Action," 91.

[42]Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

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political tradition."[43] The experience of Hitler and the Holocaust, as well as the emergence of a younger generation of postwar historians, were necessary for freeing the dominant historiography from its foundation in German idealism, for allowing it to depart from the intellectual *Sonderweg*, and for committing German historical thinking to a belief in Western democracy.

The German Conception of History made a difference for understanding German history and, more broadly, the development of historical thinking since the late eighteenth century. It offered a history of ideas that was necessary for critically identifying those intellectual traditions in Germany that had nourished an authoritarian understanding of society and state. Even more profoundly, Iggers's book—a German translation became available within three years—contributed to what many historians in Germany were diagnosing around 1970 as a *Grundlagenkrise*, i.e., as a fundamental crisis of the epistemological and historical foundations of their discipline. This was a moment when basic assumptions about the guiding principles and methodological strategies of history were being shattered. As a refugee from Nazi Germany, Iggers brought a personal degree of credibility to these debates, not least because he differed politically from those older émigrés who had been students of Meinecke—especially the historian Hans Rothfels, whom Iggers had met in Chicago in the 1940s.[44] Iggers's critique of the historicist traditions appealed to the new cohort of scholars represented by Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Jürgen Kocka.[45] Around 1970, they were beginning to conceive of a "historical social science" (*Historische Sozialwissenschaft*) that systematically embraced the social sciences and followed Max Weber's reconciliation of empirical observations and ideal-type generalizations.

Even those who criticized Iggers for supposedly imposing a linear development on Germany's historical thinkers appreciated his provocative and timely arguments. After all, West German historian Wolfgang J. Mommsen had also recently called for a scientific study of history "beyond historicism."[46] Iggers felt almost "ennobled" by the criticism provided by Thomas Nipperdey, who was on his way to becoming a leading historian of Germany, though without subscribing to the idea of history as a social science. In a personal letter addressed to Iggers, Nipperdey articulated his major reservations about Iggers's take on objectivity and what he saw as the latter's attempt to write "the history of science as a history of ideology" (*Wissenschaftsgeschichte so als Ideologiegeschichte*).[47] It is interesting that, at around

[43]Iggers, *German Conception*, 177.

[44]Iggers and Iggers, *Two Lives*, 57-58; Georg G. Iggers, "Die deutschen Historiker in der Emigration," in *Geschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland: Traditionelle Positionen und gegenwärtige Aufgaben*, ed. Bernd Faulenbach (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1974), 97–111; idem, *Refugee Historians from Nazi Germany: Political Attitudes towards Democracy* (Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2006). Also see Iggers's preface to Marion Keβler, *Exilerfahrung in Wissenschaft und Politik: Remigrierte Historiker in der frühen DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), 9-11.

[45]Iggers contributed a chapter to Wehler's anthology on German historians; see Georg G. Iggers, "Heinrich von Treitschke," in *Deutsche Historiker*, ed. Hans-Ulrich Wehler, vol. 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), 66-90. Also see David Blackbourn, "Hans-Ulrich Wehler (1931-2014)," *Central European History* 47, no. 4 (2014): 700–15.

[46]See Lewis D. Wurgaft's review of *The German Conception of History* in *History and Theory* 8, no. 2 (1969): 404-18; Helen P. Liebel, "Reply to Georg Iggers," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 5, no. 4 (1972): 594-603; Friedrich Jaeger and Jörn Rüsen, *Geschichte des Historismus: Eine Einführung* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992); as well as Wolfgang J. Mommsen's 1970 inaugural lecture as professor in Düsseldorf, published as *Die Geschichtswissenschaft jenseits des Historismus* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1971).

[47]Letter from Nipperdey to Iggers, Feb. 15, 1971 (private collection of Georg and Wilma Iggers).

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the same time, Nipperdey was calling on historians to "de-idealize" historicism, which was anything but remote to the "demythologization" of historical thinking that Iggers attributed to Otto Hintze.[48]

Iggers's work became an important reference point in the heated discussion about historicism taking place in Germany at the time. It was in these years that he also gained a firmer institutional base in the United States. After an interlude at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Iggers accepted a full professorship in 1965 at the State University of New York in Buffalo, where he was promoted in 1978 to distinguished professor. SUNY Buffalo was an intellectually stimulating place with high academic ambitions. Iggers enjoyed discussing new varieties of Marxism, teaching (for the first time) courses dealing with topics that stood at the center of his research, and encountering European intellectuals who came to campus, including Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. He put Buffalo on the map of historians from Germany, and, in 1974, he initiated, together with Helmut Böhme, an exchange of graduate students between SUNY Buffalo and the Technical University of Darmstadt. He also invited colleagues, whose critical take on German history and engagement with historiography he cherished, to hold lectures, such as Karl-Georg Faber, Wolfgang Mommsen, Hans Mommsen, and Hans-Jürgen Puhle.[49] Demonstrating the warm hospitality that Georg and Wilma Iggers cultivated throughout their life, they reserved a "historian's bed" in their home to accommodate these and other guests. At the same time, and parallel to his academic work, Iggers continued his social activism in Buffalo, working with the local NAACP branch and cofounding a local Draft Counseling Center.

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Iggers became a historian of historiography following the publication of *The German Conception of History*, thereby entering a scholarly arena that was relevant for understanding the intellectual contexts surrounding Germany's road to dictatorship.[50] Iggers continued to publish on Ranke, whose different meaning in Germany (as the godfather of the idealist tradition) and in the United States (as the founder of a scientific, objective method) he had long stressed.[51] It was important for him to show that Ranke was guided by conscious

[48]Thomas Nipperdey, "Historismus und Historismuskritik heute," in *Gesellschaft, Kultur, Theorie: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur neueren Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), 68 (Nipperdey's essay was first published in 1975). See Iggers, *German Conception*, 235; idem, "Objectivity and Involvement: Writing the History of Historiography," in Iggers, *Crossing Boundaries*, 233-41.

[49]Karl-Georg Farber, Wolfgang Mommsen, and Walter Grab, *Three Lectures in Modern German History*, ed. Georg Iggers (Buffalo, NY: Council on International Studies, 1976); Hans Jürgen Puhle and Michael Stürmer, *Two Lectures in Modern German History*, ed. Georg Iggers (Buffalo, NY: Council on International Studies, 1978).

[50]It might not be a coincidence that other émigrés also used their familiarity with European traditions to trace the development of historical thinking in a comparative perspective. See Theodore H. von Laue, *Leopold Ranke: The Formative Years* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950); Fritz Stern, ed., *Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present* (New York: Meridian Books, 1956); Karl-Joachim Weintraub, ed., *Visions of Culture* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Hans A. Schmitt, ed., *Historians of Modern Europe* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971); Peter Gay and Gerald J. Cavanaugh, eds., *Historians at Work*, 4 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972-1975); Peter Gay, *Style in History* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); Friedrich Meinecke, *The Age of German Liberation, 1795-1815*, ed. Peter Paret (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Theodore S. Hamerow, *Reflections on History and Historians* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

[51]Georg G. Iggers, "The Image of Ranke in American and German Historical Thought," *History and Theory* 2, no. 1 (1962): 17-40; Iggers and Moltke, eds., *Leopold von Ranke* (1973); Georg Iggers and

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theoretical assumptions and a political philosophy, both of which were implicit in his oeuvre but often overlooked. In short, Ranke was more—and more problematic—than his reputation as a champion of positivist thinking suggested.

New Directions in European Historiography, published in 1975, epitomized Iggers's turn toward history as a discipline. The book emerged from lectures he had given in Europe during a sabbatical funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. In this survey of historiographical trends following the crisis of historicism, Iggers highlighted the social and institutional context of historical scholarship. He also introduced a comparative perspective, with a focus on Germany, France, and Britain.[52] To a greater extent than his previous works, *New Directions*—whose German translation had a catchier title, *Neue Geschichtswissenschaft*—recognized important alternatives to the Rankean worldview. Iggers added a balanced account of the *Annales* school, as well as a review of recent works by representatives of the "new history" in West Germany, which was inspired by the concept of history as a social science. The book concluded with a chapter on Marxist interpretations of history. In comparison with his earlier works, Iggers had become more open to appreciating diverse forms of historical understanding. In the "absence of an Archimedean platform from which the historian can judge scientific truth," Iggers now argued, the "historical character" of both scholarly cognition and historical writings deserved recognition.[53] With regard to his previous interpretation of historicism, he began to take a middle road between condemning historicist traditions and attempting to appreciate anew historicism as the incubator of a critical, scientific form of historical writing, an argument advanced by Jörn Rüsen, Germany's foremost expert in the field.[54]

As a result of his publications on the traditions of history as a discipline, Iggers acquired an international reputation beginning in the mid-1970s. As Leonard Krieger put it in the *American Historical Review* in 1976, Iggers became the "foremost guide to the historiography of continental modern Europe."[55] Students from Europe, East and South Asia, Africa, and the United States came to SUNY Buffalo to write dissertations with Iggers.[56] In his own work, Iggers eventually went beyond the still dominant Eurocentric view of historiography

James M. Powell, eds., *Leopold von Ranke and the Shaping of the Historical Discipline* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1990).

[52]Norman Baker, a colleague of Iggers in Buffalo, contributed the section on British social history. For the German edition, Iggers added a chapter by Michael Frisch on new trends in American social history; see *Neue Geschichtswissenschaft: Vom Historismus zur Historischen Sozialwissenschaft. Ein internationaler Vergleich* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1978), 219-57.

[53]Georg G. Iggers, *New Directions in European Historiography* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1975; rev. ed. 1984), 42.

[54]See Iggers's review of a volume on the emergence of historicism, edited by Horst Walter Blanke and Jörn Rüsen, in *History and Theory* 26, no. 1 (1987): 114-21, as well as Georg Iggers, "Das Programm einer Strukturgeschichte des historischen Denkens. Anmerkungen zu H. W. Blanke," in *Geschichtsdiskurs*, vol. 1: *Grundlagen und Methoden der Historiographiegeschichte*, ed. Wolfgang Küttler, Jörn Rüsen, and Ernst Schulin (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1993), 331-35. Iggers expanded on the discussion in Germany in "Historismus—Geschichte und Bedeutung eines Begriffs. Eine kritische Übersicht der neuesten Literatur," in *Historismus am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Internationale Diskussion*, ed. Gunter Scholtz (Berlin: Akademie, 1997), 102-26.

[55]Quote from a review of *New Directions* in *American Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (1976): 851.

[56]His doctoral students, listed here in chronological order from 1969 to 2004, include Zdenka Gredel, Clarence Pate, Micah Tsomondo, Henry Darce, Walter Peterson, William Wright, Peter Th. Walther, Richard A. Cohen, Sangwoo Lim, Liang-Kai Chou, Garth Montgomery, Alan Nothnagle, Christopher

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when he edited in 1979, together with Harold T. Parker of Duke University, the *International Handbook of Historical Studies*.[57] He later added a volume, *Social History of Politics*, which introduced English-language audiences to the broad spectrum of scholars who had enriched West German historical writing in innovative ways since 1945.[58] Iggers incorporated into this study the recent work of David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, who had just begun to dethrone the *Sonderweg* thesis that had informed much of Iggers's previous work.[59] He also recognized the impulses coming from historical anthropology and the new history of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*), which some of his colleagues in Göttingen were promoting. An invitation in 1980 to cofound the International Commission on the History of Historiography confirmed Iggers's central role in the field, and he cherished the fact that the commission's leadership transcended the East-West divide. Iggers, who served as its president from 1995 to 2000, pushed this even further by inviting historians from both West and East Germany to contribute essays on the biography and oeuvre of German-language historians for a massive anthology issued by the commission.[60] He also began coediting the journal *Storia della Storiografia* in the 1990s, and later joined the editorial board of *History and Theory*, another leading journal in the field.

Personal life, academic interests, and political border-crossings outside the mainstream coalesced, in a fashion typical for Iggers, in his outreach to the German Democratic Republic (GDR) during the Cold War. A private trip in 1966 from Göttingen to Czechoslovakia led to a meeting with East German historians in the city of Halle. Over the years, Iggers established many contacts with historians in the GDR, ranging from Hans Schleier and the Marxist grand seigneur Jürgen Kuczynski, to the non-Marxist Karl-Heinz Blaschke. Several of these colleagues visited Buffalo, and Iggers introduced them to the annual meetings of the German Studies Association in the United States. He also persuaded the East German Academy of Science to agree to a regular exchange of graduate students in history; the first arrived in Buffalo in 1987.[61] At the same time, Iggers reconnected with the Jewish community in both Göttingen and Leipzig, and even managed to attend services in small synagogues in East Berlin and in Moscow.[62]

Forth, Lixin Shao, John Hinde, Supriya Mukherjee, Thomas Behr, Bruce Hall, Gregory Witkowski, and Axel Fair-Schulz.

[57] Georg G. Iggers and Harold T. Parker, eds., *International Handbook of Historical Studies: Contemporary Research and Theory* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979).

[58] Georg G. Iggers, ed., *The Social History of Politics: Critical Perspectives in West German Historical Writing since 1945* (Dover, NH: Berg, 1985), 40-45.

[59] David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung: Die gescheiterte bürgerliche Revolution von 1848* (Frankfurt/Main: Ullstein, 1980) [in English translation as *The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984)].

[60] Lucian Boia, ed., *Great Historians from Antiquity to 1800: An International Dictionary* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), with Iggers, Ellen Nore, and Keith Hitchins serving as associate editors. Iggers reserved for himself the entries on Ranke (pp. 302-3) and on Treitschke (pp. 318-19). It should be noted that the commission was renamed the International Commission for the History and Theory of Historiography in 1995, and that Iggers succeeded Wolfgang J. Mommsen as president that year. By that time, he had already joined, together with Peter H. Reill, Jörn Rüsen, and Hans Schleier, the editorial board of a new German-language book series devoted to the history of historiography: *Fundamenta Historica: Texte und Forschungen* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog). Four volumes appeared by 2012.

[61] Iggers and Iggers, *Two Lives*, 163.

[62] Ibid., 154, 162, 184, 190.

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Iggers's interest in the historiography emerging from the GDR was not geared toward constructing an almost exotic "other" or toward pinpointing dogmatic, Marxist beliefs—only to demonstrate his distance from both. He wanted readers in the West to appreciate that some historians in the GDR were adopting innovative approaches to historical themes, especially in the fields of social history, demographics, and regional history. The Cold War was already over, and only one German state existed in Central Europe, when Iggers published an anthology with excerpts from the work of Jan Peters, Helga Schultz, Hartmut Zwahr, and other East German scholars. This was part and parcel of Iggers's post-*Wende* efforts to historicize GDR scholarship.[63] He sympathized with those East German historians who had fallen victim to the unification process after 1990, and he felt close to the Center for Contemporary History in Potsdam, which tried to provide a home to some of these scholars, both young and old.

The role as a mediator did not prevent Iggers from taking a firm stance in the debate about postmodern approaches to history. He had read Hayden White's 1973 book on *Metahistory* very critically, and developed over the following years counterarguments that culminated in several articles published in the late 1990s.[64] Iggers agreed with White that historical narratives have a literary character and that there is a continuum between fact and fiction. Empirical evidence alone, he acknowledged, "does not contain its own explanation." Iggers's arguments against naïve empiricism were similar to Reinhart Koselleck's plaidoyer to grant a veto power to primary sources to prevent historical interpretations from becoming arbitrary. However, Iggers sharply repudiated what he saw as White's radical denial of the "ability of the historian to approximate any understanding of historical reality."[65] He conceded that historical writing implied judgments and ideological assumptions, but nevertheless now insisted on focusing primarily on the empirical substance of historical studies, not on their authors' theoretical premises. This meant almost a reversal of position vis-à-vis his *ideologiekritische* arguments in *The German Conception of History*. In dealing with White, Iggers emphasized the objective existence of "facts," as in the case of the Holocaust, and argued that these should be beyond the "free play" of theoretically unlimited interpretations of the past.[66] According to him, White reduced the historical past to verbal structures and texts. Iggers believed that conceptualizations, especially those derived from the social

[63]Georg G. Iggers, *Ein anderer historischer Blick: Beispiele ostdeutscher Sozialgeschichte* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991). For the translated and expanded edition, see Georg G. Iggers, *Marxist Historiography in Transformation: East German Social History in the 1980s* (New York: Berg, 1991); as well as the summary by idem, "New Directions in Historical Studies in the German Democratic Republic," *History and Theory* 28, no. 1 (1989): 59-77. Iggers joined Konrad H. Jarausch, Matthias Middell, and Martin Sabrow in coediting *Die DDR-Geschichtswissenschaft als Forschungsproblem* (Munich: Oldenburg, 1998).

[64]Hayden V. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). See Iggers's review of White's study and of Peter Gay's *Style in History*, which he found less original but more convincing: "Style in History: History as an Art and as Science," *Reviews in European History* 2, no. 2 (1976): 171-81; also see Iggers and Iggers, *Two Lives*, 126-27.

[65]Iggers, "Style in History," 175-76. Also see Reinhard Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 155.

[66]Georg G. Iggers, "Historiography between Scholarship and Poetry: Reflections on Hayden White's Approach to Historiography," *Rethinking History* 4, no. 3 (2000): 378. See White's response: "An Old Question Raised Again: Is Historiography Art or Science?," *Rethinking History* 4, no. 3 (2000): 391-406; also see Iggers's more general remarks on the linguistic turn: "Zur 'Linguistischen Wende' im Geschichtsdenken und in der Geschichtsschreibung," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 21, no. 4 (1995): 557-70.

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sciences, offered an important leverage against the claim that the historian's subjects were primarily imaginary. Until the end of his life, he maintained his skepticism about White's approach, as well as about postmodern theories more generally, including Frank Ankersmit's emphasis on the representational character of history.[67]

Iggers expanded on his criticism of White and of postmodernism in his 1993 volume, *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert: Ein kritischer Überblick im internationalen Zusammenhang*. For the first time, he published a book in German before it was translated into English, testifying to the extent to which his academic networks had now found their center of gravity in Central Europe.[68] In any event, the 2007 edition of *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert* forcefully demonstrated how Iggers had broadened his analysis of historiography.[69] The work featured succinct summaries of the "scientification" (*Verwissenschaftlichung*) of historical studies since the nineteenth century, and of the rise and crisis of historicism and its counterpart, i.e., history as a social science, since the late 1960s.[70] Iggers emphasized nontraditional forms of Marxist history, as well as the new social history popular in Britain, the United States, and Italy. His conversations with scholars at the MPI in Göttingen had clearly left an imprint on his account—for example, in its emphasis on recent research about the history of protoindustrialization and everyday life. Reiterating his reservations about postmodern historiography, Iggers also addressed the linguistic turn, as well as the rise of gender history and the new cultural history. He insisted on maintaining "standards of rational analysis" of reality, which the international community of scholars needed to test again and again.[71]

Iggers's plea to appreciate the plurality of competing research strategies could have been one of his scholarly legacies. But he took yet another turn once his retirement from SUNY Buffalo in 1997 provided more time for writing. Iggers now reoriented himself toward understanding different regional and national cultures of history in global comparison.[72] His trips to and increasing contacts with East Asia and other regions played an important role in the development of these new interests, which he documented in a 2002 volume, *Turning Points in Historiography*, coedited with Chinese-born historian Q. Edward Wang.[73] The collected essays went back to ancient Mediterranean histories and concentrated on East and South Asia, as well as on Africa. Iggers's interest in placing national historiographical traditions in global contexts culminated in his last monograph, *A Global History of Modern*

[67] Georg G. Iggers, "Comments on F. R. Ankersmit's Paper, 'Historicism: An Attempt at Synthesis,'" *History and Theory* 34, no. 3 (1995): 162-67.

[68] Iggers also coedited, with Wolfgang Bialas, *Intellektuelle in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1996), to which he contributed a critical summary: "Einige kritische Schluβbemerkungen über die Rolle der Intellektuellen in der Weimarer Republik am Beispiel der Historiker" (pp. 445-60).

[69] Georg G. Iggers, *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert: Ein kritischer Überblick im internationalen Zusammenhang* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993; new ed., 2007); idem, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1997).

[70] Iggers, *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert*, 30. Iggers continued to expand on these themes; see idem, "The Intellectual Foundations of Nineteenth-Century 'Scientific' History: The German Model," in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 4: *1800–1945*, ed. Stuart Macintyre (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 41-58.

[71] Iggers, *Geschichtswissenschaft im 20. Jahrhundert*, 144.

[72] Iggers and Iggers, *Two Lives*, 195-98.

[73] Georg G. Iggers and Q. Edward Wang, eds., *Turning Points in Historiography: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002).

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Historiography, which appeared in 2008, coauthored by Wang and with contributions from Supriya Mukherjee.[74] With stunning erudition, the authors moved from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment to the post-postmodernism of the twenty-first century. They followed historiographical transformations that had primarily taken place in Europe (mainly represented by Germany, France, and Britain), in Muslim cultures (with a particular interest in Egypt and Persia), and in South and East Asia. The biographical portraits contained in this narrative make the volume an important reference work for historians, with readers finding more information on the thinking of Egyptian scholar Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti, for example, than on Hegel's philosophy of history.[75]

This landmark study demonstrated the difficulties involved in writing a global history, and it also raised important questions. The authors clearly moved beyond a Eurocentric standpoint by including various regions throughout the world and by dealing with the interactions among them—as in the case of Japanese scholars interested in appropriating the methods of Ranke.[76] Moreover, *A Global History of Historiography* highlighted the globalization of postmodern and postcolonial debates. But the volume's approach followed traditional paths by synchronizing the history of historiography with major phases in the processes of modernization—as manifest in the transatlantic realm and especially in the few European countries on which it concentrated. Readers might ask whether it was useful to differentiate between "the West" and the "rest of the world," or to apply geopolitical categories (such as the "Middle East") that are in themselves historically loaded concepts.[77] *A Global History of Modern Historiography* nevertheless ultimately provides a critical stimulus for continuing ongoing discussions about how best to understand the myriad practices and social contexts of history writing around the globe.

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By the first decade of the twenty-first century, Iggers could look back on a long career devoted to the study of historiography, which he had turned into both a scholarly exercise and a deeply personal project. Beyond the academic context of his studies, he had managed to connect scholars across ideological—and national—divides. Building bridges and establishing conversations across the Iron Curtain during the Cold War era was arguably one of Iggers's most remarkable achievements. In addition to his native Germany, Iggers found particularly receptive audiences in East Asia, where students and scholars appreciated him as an intercultural translator of historiography. His life was also marked by a sustained desire, grounded in his early experiences as a transatlantic refugee and migrant, to act as a world citizen and to stand up for human rights. Equally distinctive was the way in which Georg and Wilma Iggers acted in these various contexts as a close and erudite couple, one that traveled together and established friendships and connections around the globe. Besides developing a growing interest in Spanish-speaking America, especially Cuba, Iggers continued to articulate criticism of contemporary politics, from US foreign policy to the remaining forms of state socialism and the perceived excesses of global capitalism.

[74]Georg G. Iggers and Q. Edward Wang, eds., *A Global History of Modern Historiography* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2008; 2nd ed., 2017) [in German translation as *Geschichtskulturen: Weltgeschichte der Historiografie von 1750 bis heute* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013)].

[75]Iggers and Wang, *A Global History*, 80-87, 120-25.

[76]Ibid., 217-18, 331-32.

[77]Ibid., 5-12, 14, 19, 32.

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Among the last books he was able to read was Thomas Piketty's 2013 study, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*.

Iggers reflected on his life and career in a series of oral history interviews that David A. Gerber, his colleague at SUNY Buffalo, conducted with him and Wilma in 1988. The process of self-reflection culminated in a jointly authored autobiography that appeared in 2002—yet another book that appeared first in German, before being translated into English as *Two Lives in Uncertain Times: Facing the Challenges of the 20th Century as Scholars and Citizens*.[78] Numerous honors, including the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation's Research Prize in 1995-1996, complemented Iggers's record as an author and scholar. Beginning in the late 1980s, he spent time as a fellow at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research at the University of Bielefeld, at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, DC, and at the International Research Center for Cultural Studies in Vienna, Austria, where he and I met for the first time in person in 2000, before later becoming colleagues and friends in Buffalo.

There were also new editions and translations of almost all his books into multiple languages, both European and non-European, and he was especially pleased when *Historiography in the Twentieth Century* became available in Icelandic.[79] In 2001, the University of Richmond acknowledged its alumnus with an honorary doctorate; Philander Smith College followed suit a year later, as did the Technical University of Darmstadt in 2006. Iggers was visibly moved when the general consul of the Federal Republic of Germany awarded him—a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany renaturalized in the 1990s—the Cross of Merit First Class in 2007. That same year, Phi Beta Sigma honored Iggers and his support for the struggle against segregation on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Little Rock Crisis. By 2007, no less than four *festschriften* in his honor had appeared—yet another sign of the great appreciation Iggers enjoyed across borders and on all continents.[80]

As a German-American migrant and cross-border mediator, and as a historian of historians and social activist, Georg Iggers worked indefatigably to the last year of his life. He continued to provide generous support to younger scholars, and maintained ties to colleagues around the world. He and Wilma retained their capacity for cultivating friendships and extending their generous hospitality to visitors, even after moving to a retirement home. Georg remained a living encyclopedia on the history of historiography; no one loved talking about the discipline and its actors as much as he did. Iggers also continued to honor his Jewish heritage and celebrate the Jewish holidays; the fact that he had been able to bring his young rabbi from Buffalo on a trip to Göttingen meant a great deal to both of them. Germany remained an important reference point for Iggers, who, even in his eighties, smiled about the fact that, as opposed to Wilma, he had never shed his German accent. Georg followed the German-language news (in addition to reading the *Guardian*, *Haaretz*, and American newspapers online), and he continued to reflect on his early experiences under

[78]Iggers and Iggers, *Zwei Seiten der Geschichte*; Iggers and Iggers, *Two Lives*.

[79]For a survey of the book translations through 2015, see Daum, Lehmann, and Sheehan, *Second Generation*, 386-87.

[80]Iggers, *Geschichtswissenschaft vor 2000*; Gerald Diesener, ed., *Historiographischer Rückspiegel: Georg G. Iggers zum 70. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 1997); Iggers, *Crossing Boundaries*; Q. Edward Wang and Franz L. Fillafer, eds., *The Many Faces of Clio: Cross-Cultural Approaches to Historiography. Essays in Honor of Georg G. Iggers* (New York: Berghahn, 2007).

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the Nazi dictatorship, generously sharing with students his insights into this early part of his life, as well as into its later stages when invited back to campus after retirement.

Iggers returned in 2016 to his life-long contestation with Marxism in a coedited volume on Marxist historiographies in a global perspective.[81] His essay on Marxism in African historiography attested to the long way he had come from his early work on the Saint-Simonians and Ranke. Yet, Iggers remained true to his continuous interest in analyzing the intellectual traditions of historical thinking, once more demonstrating that these traditions need to be examined on a global scale and that they are inseparable from their political context. The study of history remained, for Iggers, a call to analyze past and present reality in a critical manner, and to live up to a "commitment to a more just and equal society."[82]

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[81] Georg G. Iggers and Q. Edward Wang, *Marxist Historiographies: A Global Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[82] Georg G. Iggers, "The Role of Marxism in Sub-Saharan and South African Historiography," in ibid., 244.

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