

Long-standing notions about academic freedom have been challenged by this month's conviction of a French writer for 'falsifying history'. Gitta Sereny reports.

## The judgment of history

IN TERMS OF VIOLENCE on British streets, the last few weeks may have seemed like good ones for the racists among us. But it has not been a good time for those people who are at the root of the racist enterprise — the apologists of Nazism, who intend to re-write contemporary history so that the consequences of racism might be in some sense bearable, or that its detectable operatives should go unpunished.

On 23 June in Cleveland, Ohio, John Demjanjuk, a 61-year-old Ukrainian, was stripped of his US citizenship: the court found that he had lied in his 1951 visa application, when he concealed his record as a Waffen-SS guard at the Treblinka death-camp. He will appeal, but is likely to be deported to face trial in Poland, Germany or Israel.

On 30 June, after five years, the Majdanek trial ended in Düsseldorf. This longest of Nazi crime trials heard 350 witnesses, but dealt with only nine defendants. One, Hermine Braunsterner Ryan — despite the passage of time — could be shown to have killed two people personally, and duly received a life sentence. Her speciality was kicking Majdanek inmates to death with steel-tipped jackboots.

'I was always fair,' she said, by way of comment on her sentence. Her American husband, stating that she would appeal, said that the Majdanek trial was all 'the doing of American Jews'.

The third event in this legal series ended not quite so grimly, but may have greater significance for the future, now that human mortality makes it unlikely that there will be many more trials of the criminals who personally organised the great racist slaughter of the 1940s. In a set of judgments which concluded last week, two Paris courts found Robert Faurisson, the 'revisionist' who offers to demonstrate that the Nazi gas-chambers were merely a lie — invented by Jews, for financial gain — guilty of libel, provocation to hate, incitement to murder, and falsification of history.

The French verdicts come as a sharp

challenge to orthodox liberal notions about the nature of historical debate and academic freedom — ones with which writers, editors and publishers have operated comfortably for generations. To many people, it will seem shocking that a law-court should be asked to judge when 'falsification of history' has occurred. But when the story of the Paris trials is spelt out, it becomes apparent that a book is not automatically an innocent artefact.

ROBERT FAURISSON, formerly a professor at the University of Lyons, is one of the number of writers, associated with extreme-right politics in France, Britain and elsewhere, who claim either that the Nazi genocide did not occur at all, or has been much inflated, or has been improperly attributed to the statesman Hitler. Richard Verrall, the National Front's 'intellectual', is one British representative of the tendency, connected fairly directly with the inner-city's exponents of aerosol swastikas. (The commercial historian David Irving peddles some of the same ideas in rather more respectable packages.) What is unusual about Faurisson is that he has managed to obtain serious assistance from the Left.

A few months ago, in a striking preface to Faurisson's book *A Defence Against Those Who Accuse Me of Falsifying History: The Question of the Gas-Chambers\**, Noam Chomsky took up the issue as a matter of liberty of expression. Given that Chomsky, Professor of Linguistics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is himself Jewish, was one of the bravest critics of America's Indochina war, and is a thinker whose work appears to cast new light on the processes of mind, this conjunction was bound to produce a heavy emotional charge.

What Chomsky wrote was originally an *avis*, or opinion, solicited by Faurisson's publisher Pierre Guillaume, acting

\**Memoire en Defense contre ceux qui m'accusent de falsifier l'Histoire: La Question des Chambres a gaz.* Vielle Taupe, Paris.

alongside the sociological writer Serge Thion, who also publishes with Guillaume. (Their common Marxist commitment is expressed in the firm's name, La Vieille Taupe, the 'old mole' supposed by Marx to be grubbing-out capitalism's foundations.) Chomsky stated in his third paragraph that his remarks were for consideration within a strictly limited context, and that he was addressing himself to the *principle* of freedom in speech, thought, conclusion and belief.

I will say nothing here of Robert Faurisson's work or his criticism, of which I know little, or about the specific subject matter he treats, on which I am not an authority . . .

Could it be that on the subject Faurisson deals with, everyone has the duty to become an authority? But Chomsky continued with a vivid defence of the individual's right to express 'above all . . . the most dreadful ideas . . . It is too easy to defend the freedom of speech of those who don't need defending . . .' Soon after this statement of bright principle, he was in dubious territory:

Leaving aside this central question (however) one might ask oneself whether Faurisson is really an anti-semitic or a Nazi . . . As I have said, I don't know his work very well. But according to what I have read . . . I can see no proof whatever which would allow such conclusions.

The court, we shall see, found no lack of evidence. Until Chomsky's role came to prominence — chiefly through a brilliant analysis by the historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, *A Paper Eichmann\** — American academia tended to ignore Faurisson and his US equivalents.

Each year, I lecture to a Harvard seminar on 'Moral Dilemmas in a Repressive Society', which uses, among other books, my study of the commandant of the Treblinka death-camp, *Into That Darkness* (Deutsch/Picador). In April, I suggested that we might confront Arthur Butz, who also argues that the Holocaust was a 'hoax'. Academic opinion was that to do so would

\**Un Eichmann de Paper*, now reprinted in *Les Juifs, La Memoire et le Present* (Maspero, Paris, 1981).

only lend 'respectability' to a propagandist whom no-one could take seriously. The Faurisson case suggests that this judgment was not wholly correct.

It's necessary to repeat what has already been stated with detail in these pages (NS 2 November 1979): that terrible disservice has been done by those who have exaggerated, carelessly misunderstood, or even invented Holocaust events. Any trivial 'disproof' assists the revisionist lies. Nor should anyone pretend that these liars are participants in a free and respectable debate.

Suppressing them is not the answer. When Faurisson was sacked from Lyon, where he taught literature, on the flimsy grounds that his safety could not be guaranteed, this merely contributed to a martyr's image. But, after the attack on the synagogue in the Rue Copernic, after the desecration of Jewish cemeteries in Germany and Holland, and with the spread of the swastika across British cities, we dare not ignore them. Their lies must be confronted and exposed as often as they appear, and when their fanaticism turns to libel and to incitement, they must be submitted to due process and penalty.

AT THE PARIS courthouse, Faurisson & Co were surrounded by young, eager and even attractive acolytes. It is important to realise — for their influences may support each other — how these people differ from their more oafish Anglo-Saxon equivalents.

In France, with its history of German occupation, ambiguous resistance, native anti-semitism and colonial warfare (in Algeria and Indo-China), together with a tradition



Searchlight

Verrall: leading British 'revisionist'

of rarefied Marxist theorising, there has been a unique opportunity for anti-semitic propagandists to acquire socialist and radical allies with an international connection. Chomsky's Indo-China role is relevant here, and especially his recent attempts to challenge the evidence of atrocities committed by Cambodian Communists before the Vietnamese takeover.

Faurisson himself seems to be a genuine, haunted fanatic ('My battle is against a terrible faith'). But to an apologist like Serge Thion, who defends Faurisson in a hefty tract called *Historical Truths? Political Truths* (Vieille Taupe), the 'revisionist' position is of interest purely because it may assist in achieving the Marxist revolution.

For people such as this, it is necessary to prove to an oppressed proletariat that no

evil in the world — Gulag, the Nazi genocide, the Khmer Rouge — is sufficient to distract from the supreme evil of capitalism. Much of what the Nazis did — military conquest, labour camps, deportations, death by disease and exhaustion, even wholesale executions of Jews and others — can be fitted into this world view. These things are alleged to have occurred because the victims were no longer productive.

What cannot be fitted in is what has been acknowledged as the worst crime of all: the industrialised Nazi murder of the Jews. Because this was not a *capitalist* crime and could not be legitimised by any economic or military calculus, it must be shown never to have occurred. In an unsigned booklet distributed in the courtroom by Pierre Guillaume, called *From the Exploitation in the Camps to the Exploitation of the Camps*, this thesis is made explicit:

There is a constant need for class societies to present to oppressed populations false enemies and false horrors in the place of true ones.

Once, religion with its threats of hell and perdition fulfilled the role — 'extreme mythical horrors were produced in order to make bearable the daily pain and poverty' — but today, religion and morals are losing their force. Therefore

exaggerated or invented horrors are produced in order to permit the proletariat to appreciate by contrast their present good fortune and to conceal the true nature of their real misery.

There are miseries, without doubt, in poverty and unemployment, but the 'real misery' of the young, to which this curious alliance of left and right appeals, derives not so much from physical deprivation as from a lack of faith and purpose.

Many people today offer lures to faithseekers — Moonies, Scientologists, or the various brands of fanatics who operate on the fringes of movements which genuinely seek political, economic or sexual emancipation. It is within this context of the 'lost' young that Faurisson's offer of what he calls his 'good news for poor suffering humanity' can be dangerously appealing.

The 'good news' is that, although human beings do awful things to each other, the worst thing *never happened*: there were no gas chambers. Rejoice, for my news is that humanity has never sunk to that depth.

HOW COULD THE FRENCH 'legitimise' these ravings by examining them before judges? This is what I have been asked in Britain and America. The significance of the three trials (two for criminal libel, and one in a civil court for 'falsification of history') is that on each occasion Faurisson was essentially accused of anti-semitism, whether by speech or writing. In a broadcast over Europe 1 on 17 December 1980 he said (and repeated in print) that

The claim of the existence of gas chambers and of genocide of Jews by Hitler constitute one and the same historical lie, which opened the way to a gigantic political and financial fraud of which the principal beneficiaries are the state of Israel and international Zionism, and the principal victims the Germans... and the entire Palestinian people.

To this he added, in his book *A Defence etc*, an assertion that the venerable historian



Camera Press

Chomsky: 'I am not an authority'

Leon Poliakov was a 'fabricator and manipulator' because of his handling of two critical documents, the 'Gerstein Report', and the diary of the Auschwitz SS doctor Johann Paul Kremer.

After much uncertainty, seven organisations came together behind LICRA (the League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism) to take proceedings. LICRA's advocate Robert Badinter, one of the most formidable in France, summed up their reasons in court:

If the Jews have invented this immense catastrophe, all to gain political and pecuniary profit, then it is the most heinous fraud in history. How can we allow such an accusation to stand unchallenged?

Faurisson's claim against Poliakov was the absurd one that he had presented the 'Gerstein Report' slightly differently in different editions of his book *Harvest of Hate* — though obviously any historian worth the name will correct his work if better evidence becomes available. But Poliakov was picked on only as a means to the end of discrediting the testimony of Kurt Gerstein, which continues to haunt the 'revisionists' long after Gerstein's own death.

A passionate Christian, Gerstein joined the SS in 1941 on a project of personal espionage (as he wrote later in his four Reports), his initial motivation being the death of a relative in the euthanasia programme which pre-dated the Final Solution. In August 1942 he provided the first eyewitness accounts of the gas-chambers when, travelling between Warsaw and Berlin after having seen massacres at Belsec and Treblinka, he revealed the terrible story to Baron Goran von Otter, a Swedish diplomat who chanced to be on the same train.

Inaction by the Swedish Foreign Office frustrated, until after the war, Gerstein's hope that his account would reach the Allied governments. Nonetheless von Otter, now 73, gave testimony in Paris which demonstrated that Gerstein's information became part of the record once it had been told to him.

Faurisson's writings attempted to discredit Gerstein by suggesting that he was inconsistent on the sizes and capacities of

the gas-chambers (Richard Verrall, in Britain, goes further by blandly misquoting Gerstein). But von Otter's testimony, given with great dignity — together with accounts from two Dutch witnesses — portrayed Gerstein in human reality, as a tortured man, less heroic than he had hoped to be, but still the bearer of horrific truths. From beyond the grave, Gerstein reduced Faurisson to silence.

BUT FAURISSON remained vocal on the subject of Dr Kremer's diary, which has made several generations of readers gag through its association of domestic complacency with routine homicide:

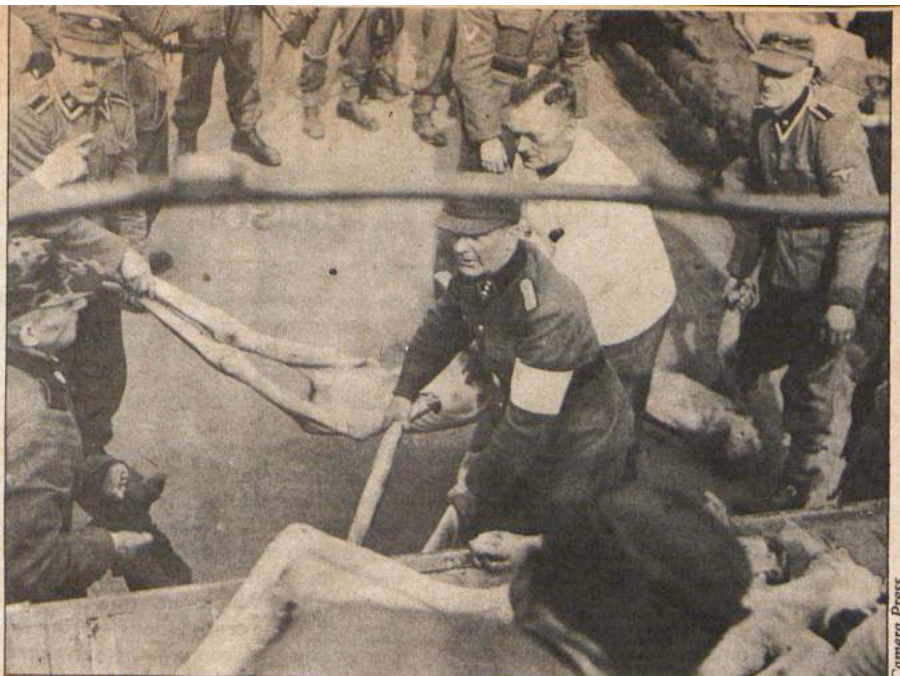
Today, Sunday, an excellent lunch: tomato soup, half a chicken with potatoes and red cabbage, petit fours, a marvellous vanilla ice cream . . . Left at 8 in the evening for a Special Action (ie Sonderaktion: mass shooting or gassing).

About half of *Defence etc* is devoted to linguistic and other nit-pickings designed to expunge any sinister element from the good doctor's account, while another chunk applies similar treatment to the confessions of Höss, the Auschwitz commandant. Serge Thion, in his own book, adds Faurisson's attempt to demonstrate that *The Diary of Anne Frank* is a fraud.

All these lovingly paraded details are — let me hasten to say — quite irrelevant to the great fact the revisionists so disgustingly contest: the murder of the Jews, first by the Einsatzgruppen in Russia — remarkably, never mentioned by any of these gentlemen — and then in the gas-chambers of Birkenau, Majdanek and, above all, Treblinka, Sobibor and Belsec. A single example of Faurisson's semantics ought to do. On 2 September 1942 Kremer recorded in German:

Zum 1. Male draussen um 3 Uhr früh bei einer Sonderaktion zugegen. Im Vergleich hierzu erscheint mir das Dant'sche Inferno fast wie eine Komödie. Umsonst wird Auschwitz nicht das Lager der Vernichtung genannt!

This appears to translate straightforwardly, if hideously as:



SS guards being made to bury corpses after the liberation of Belsen. Belsen was not an 'extermination camp', all of which were totally destroyed before any Allied armies arrived. The popular confusion of the two sorts of camp has been heavily exploited by today's fascists.

For the first time outside at 3am present at a Special Action. By comparison to this, Dante's Inferno seems to me almost like a comedy. It is not for nothing that Auschwitz is called the camp of extermination.

Faurisson's argument is that 'Vernichtungslager' really means a camp of destruction (it doesn't) or annihilation and that this was just a reference to typhus destroying or annihilating the camp, and that 'Sonderaktion' really meant selection for work, or possibly hospital care, which was why the doctor had to be present.

Of course, 'Sonderaktion' and 'Sonderbehandlung' invariably meant mass murder, whether by gas or gunfire: so much so that the usage was employed by Dr Richard Korherr, Himmler's Chief Statistician, in his April 1943 report *On the Final Solution of the (matter of the) European Jews*, referring to 1,714,031 Jews who were no longer 'there' (i.e. alive) as of 31

December 1942. Korherr, who is alive and available for consultation, was ordered by Himmler to remove the word 'Sonderbehandlung' as it might be 'offensive to posterity', and replace it with the euphemism 'evacuation'.

The method, aimed especially at the young and the uninitiated, is to use masses of irrelevant detail to distract attention from the real issue. If Faurisson and his like were really interested in a 'debate', their eyes would turn eastwards from Auschwitz and Majdanek, which were labour camps as well as death camps, and where ambiguity and survival were real possibilities, to Belsec, Sobibor and Treblinka, hidden in the Polish forests, which were purely death camps, with no possibility of misunderstanding.

One person survived Belsec. No-one knows how many were murdered there. Gerstein saw it in operation, but he was not the only outside witness. Jan Karski, a heroic courier of the Polish exile government, spent a day at Belsec in 1942, disguised as a Ukrainian guard: his account was given to the Allied governments in October 1942 and his book *The Story of a Secret State* was published in 1945. Today, he teaches in Washington DC. Neither Faurisson nor Butz has bothered to consult him.

At Sobibor, where at least 250,000 died, 30 survived. And, as the Demjanjuk trial in Cleveland has just reminded us, some 900,000 died at Treblinka, and 42 survived: 15 from the nightmarish upper camp where they had to transport gassed corpses, burn them, and spread the ashes. Five witnesses, brought from Israel, Uruguay and Germany, identified Demjanjuk from his 1951 visa photograph as 'Ivan', one of two guards who for 13 months operated the diesel engine which provided carbon monoxide for the gassing. I recall that Franz Stangl, the Treblinka commandant, told me in his prison-cell in 1971 that the gassings had been done by 'two Russians, Ivan and Nicolau'. (To Stangl, a Ukrainian would be the same as a Russian.)

But evidence is of no interest to these

## Günter Grass THE MEETING AT TELGTE

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'historians'. In April, at the preliminary hearing, I spoke to Pierre Guillaume, who said that he had been troubled by *Into That Darkness* and its account of my direct conversations with Franz Stangl. I offered to meet any of his friends who wished to have questions answered.

Yes, he said, if I could say when I would next be in Paris. I gave them two weeks' warning and a choice of five different days, but somehow Faurisson's young allies were 'too tired', 'too preoccupied' or 'too overworked'.

'IT IS NOT LIBERTY of speech which is threatened', said Maitre Charles Korman during the trial. 'It is responsibility which creates liberty: you are free *because* you are responsible.' Faurisson, having lost, faces a three-month suspended prison sentence, the payment of a symbolic one franc, and other fines totalling some £11,500 most of which are to finance announcements on radio, television and in the newspapers.

The 17-page judgment which finds that he 'falsified history' agrees that Faurisson calls himself only an expert on documents, but says that, because he claims to substitute 'historical truth' for the merely 'political truth' of the Holocaust, he pronounces essentially as a historian and makes himself answerable to judicial procedure. The courts, it continues, are not empowered to decide how any particular episode in history is to be described.

And, as scientist and researcher, the historian may question any ideas or testimonies. But he cannot avoid the common rule linking the exercise of freedom to the acceptance of responsibility: historical research cannot be an 'intellectual game' applied to tragic and painful historical events whose witnesses, still alive or dead, merit respect and consideration.

In such circumstances, it is incumbent upon him to exercise the prudence which is a point of honour for any scientist dealing with uncertainties. Faurisson, they found, had done the reverse, 'assigning to the universe of myth anything that he cannot or does not wish to admit' and then proclaiming himself the definite bearer of 'the good news' that the gas-chambers never existed.

Thus, he created a moral prejudice against those who had survived the ordeals whose existence he denied, or who had lost their families through them.

By lodging a claim that the victims . . . were the authors, or beneficiaries . . . of a gigantic politico-financial fraud, and by, with marked frivolity and apparently untroubled conscience, allowing others to use his polemics with the intentions of justifying Nazi crimes and incitement to racial hatred, M. Faurisson is guilty as charged.

In short, the courts did not attempt to ban Faurisson's opinions. He was penalised for treating history in a grotesque and irresponsible fashion; for libelling the living and the dead; for having dishonoured French scholarship. And finally, most gravely, the courts confirmed that his claims and actions and those of all the 'revisionists', in the context of present-day politics and perils, constitute an incitement to murder. It will be surprising if other Western courts are not soon called upon to deal with similar issues. □



## The commissars of literature

The Faurisson case in France has raised the issue of whether 'objectively dangerous views' may be legitimately suppressed. NOAM CHOMSKY here argues they cannot and replies to Gitta Sereny.

GITTA SERENY wrote (*NS* 10 April) that in the Faurisson case, 'The court will have to undertake the remarkable task of deciding what is historically acceptable' — that is, it will have to serve as a revived inquisition. She concluded (*NS* 17 July) that justice was served, as Faurisson 'was penalised for treating history in a grotesque and irresponsible fashion; for libelling the living and the dead; for having dishonoured French scholarship,' and for 'allowing others to use his polemics with the intentions of justifying Nazi crimes and incitement to racial hatred' (a quote from the tribunal). The verdict is, she writes, 'a sharp challenge to orthodox liberal notions about the nature of historical debate and academic freedom,' as was also the suspension of Faurisson from teaching under threat of violence, to which Sereny objects on the sole grounds that 'this merely contributed to a martyr's image'.

Sereny is wrong, however, in thinking that this is a novel challenge. Her view supporting the verdict of the court merely reiterates the familiar Zhdanov doctrine: 'objectively dangerous' views may legitimately be suppressed, or in her words, the historian 'cannot avoid the common rule linking the exercise of freedom to the acceptance of responsibility'. She claims that 'the courts did not attempt to ban Faurisson's opinions,' but merely punished him for expressing them. Any commissar would say the same.

Instead of debating Sereny's neo-Stalinist view that 'irresponsible' historical work makes one 'answerable to judicial procedure,' let us consider the implications of her final comment that 'It will be surprising if other Western courts are not soon called upon to deal with similar issues'. Candidates abound.

Many, probably most American historians deny that the US committed crimes in Vietnam; it was guilty only of 'intellectual error'. Some have written lengthy tracts in support of this view, grossly falsifying the documentary record and producing vulgar apologetics for massive atrocities. Surely they have 'created a moral prejudice against those who had survived the ordeals whose existence [they] denied, or who had lost their families through them,' and are

'answerable to judicial procedure' under the Sereny version of the Zhdanov doctrine. In fact, they are much more obvious candidates than Faurisson, since in this case, the institutions that committed the atrocities still function without challenge, the individuals responsible retain power and prestige, and the state responsible is led by a President who calls the US war in Indochina a 'noble cause'.

But why limit the scope of the inquisition to history? Consider those scientists who allege that blacks are genetically inferior, as shown by race-IQ correlations. They too have been charged with falsification of evidence by their colleagues, and by Sereny's standards, they are guilty of 'allowing others to use [their] polemics with the intentions of . . . incitement to racial hatred'. Indeed, British National Front organiser Martin Webster wrote that 'the most important factor in the build-up of self-confidence amongst racists and the collapse of morale amongst multi-racialists was the publication in 1969 by Professor Arthur Jensen in the *Harvard Educational Review*' (cited by Steven Rose, *Race & Class*, Spring 1981). Surely this issue must be moved from the pages of journals to the inquisition, though it would be wrong to drive these people from their academic positions by violence since this would make them martyrs.

SERENY lists me among the 'socialist and radical allies' of Faurisson; my role is relevant 'especially' because of my 'recent attempts to challenge the evidence of atrocities committed by Cambodian Communists . . .' As Sereny wrote (*NS* 10 April), I have 'dissociated [myself] from the version of history being defended' by Faurisson, or to put it more accurately, I have emphasised that Faurisson's views are 'diametrically opposed' to mine, quoting my characterisation of the holocaust as 'the most fantastic outburst of collective insanity in human history' (1974) and my statement that one degrades oneself by even entering into debate over the matter (1969). Thus I am hardly an 'ally' of Faurisson.

As for my 'recent attempts to challenge the evidence' of Pol Pot atrocities, these do not exist. In the book to which Sereny

refers (Chomsky and E.S. Herman, *Political Economy of Human Rights*, 2 volumes, 1979), we criticised Western propagandists for falsification of history in two respects: denial and apologetics in the case of atrocities for which the West is responsible, and fabrication of evidence in the case of official enemies. With regard to Cambodia, we concluded that the assessment of atrocities given by US intelligence during the Pol Pot years and by such commentators as Francois Ponchaud was credible and probably accurate, while documenting how others grossly falsified the evidence they had presented, among numerous other examples of fabrication. Sereny can no doubt cite many lies concerning this work, but lies do not become truth by dint of constant repetition, except in those circles that accord the state the right to punish people who are 'irresponsible' with regard to historical fact.

Furthermore, there is no connection between my support for academic freedom and the right of free expression — in the case of Faurisson, American war criminals, and others — and my objection to apologetics for atrocities or fabrication of evidence. By Sereny's logic, I could hint darkly that her silent acquiescence in atrocities in Timor, Central America and Lebanon is 'especially relevant' to her advocacy of the Zhdanov doctrine.

Sereny also objects to my observation that 'I am not an authority' of the 'specific subject matter' that Faurisson treats. 'Could it be,' she writes, 'that on the subject Faurisson deals with, everyone has the duty to become an authority?' This remark was considered sufficiently profound that the caption for my accompanying photograph reads: 'I am not an authority' — an attribute that I share with the editors of *NS*. What exactly is the meaning of Sereny's rhetorical question? Is it that everyone has the duty of becoming an authority on the Kremer diary? Surely that would be absurd. Is she suggesting that one should denounce Faurisson's treatment of the diaries without such specific knowledge? Again absurd. Is she suggesting that one should be enough of an 'expert' on the holocaust to condemn it in the terms I have used (e.g., those quoted above)? In this case, her comment is simply dishonest.

Presumably, what lies behind Sereny's comment is her belief that I have some special responsibility to critically analyse Faurisson's work because I support his civil rights and academic freedom. This is precisely the view of Vidal-Naquet, whom she cites with respect, and who argued that it is 'scandalous' to defend Faurisson's rights without judging his views (*Democracy*, April 1981). By this doctrine, I have often been engaged in 'scandalous' behaviour without evoking criticism, e.g., in efforts in defence of East European dissidents who hold horrendous views, which I never mention in defending their rights. No doubt every commissar is scandalised. If we treat their reaction with deserved contempt, no different response is appropriate in this case. In fact, it is obvious that this doctrine effectively undermines the defence of the right of free expression for those who hold horrendous or unpopular

views, precisely the case in which the issue of civil liberties arises.

Sereny writes that my 'striking preface to Faurisson's book 'was originally an *avis*, or opinion, solicited by Faurisson's publisher Pierre Guillaume . . .' It was in fact requested by Serge Thion, not Guillaume, and was not written as a 'preface' to a book that I did not know existed; as Sereny knows, when I learned that it was to be used in this way, I wrote requesting that it be withdrawn, but too late. In her 10 April article, the caption for my picture reads 'published erroneously'. Apparently she had forgotten these facts by 17 July.

Sereny writes that the court's verdict is justified because 'a book is not automatically an innocent artefact'. True, books are not 'innocent artefacts'. Is it therefore legitimate for the state to punish those who write them? Sereny holds that it is. The headline reads: 'Long-standing notions about academic freedom have been challenged' by the judgment she supports. That is quite true, and if this challenge stands, the implications are grim indeed. In commenting on this affair in the past, I stated that a trial for falsification of history would be regarded as ludicrous in a country with an Anglo-Saxon civil libertarian tradition, and that 'It is a poor service to the memory of the victims of the holocaust to adopt a central doctrine of their murderers'. Sereny's article demonstrates that the first of these statements is false, and the second, very apt. □