

Vidar Enebakk *

The second generation of historians of the social relations of science

THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS of the History of Science, at the Science Museum in London in 1931, is usually regarded as the origin of so-called externalism primarily due to the Russian delegation — Boris Hessen in particular — promoting the study of the social relations of science.

Today, as we commemorate the 75th anniversary for the 1931-conference, there is a remarkable and renewed interest in these historiographical issues recently described by Gary Werskey as a ‘third’ wave or movement addressing both science and its social relations and the social relations of the history of science.

My talk will be an exercise in reflexive historiography focusing on a particular group of historians of science (Mendelsohn, MacLeod and Werskey) which during the late 1960s and early 1970s contributed to the revival of the discourse from the 1930s. Some of the major contributions, apart from Werskey’s *Visible College* (1978), was the republishing of *Science at the Cross Roads* (1971) and the establishing in 1975 of a Commission on Science Policy Studies under the aegis of the International Union for the History and Philosophy of Science. As we today find ourselves standing on the shoulders of these giants it might be useful to reflect on how these predecessors, back then, connected to the previous generation of historians of the social relations of science.

* University of Oslo, Forum for University History, Oslo, Norway; email: vidar.enebakk@iakh.uio.no.