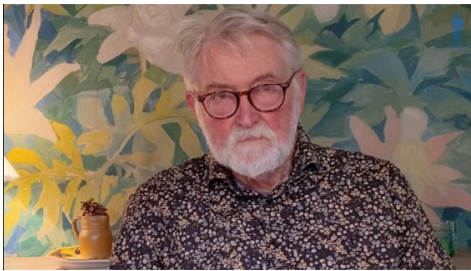


Prof. Henrik Marcussen (17 January 1938 - 22 February 2023)



Prof. Henrik Marcussen, former Editor-in-Chief of the Torture Journal passed away on the 22nd of February 2022. We had the joy to share with him the 30th anniversary of the Journal last November, where he addressed some words to the readers and colleagues. Prof. Marcussen led the process of transformation of the Journal from an international bulletin that aimed to denounce the situation of torture in the world and the efforts in the fight against it of the different centres worldwide, into a modern academic medical Journal. Furthermore, Prof. Marcussen was key, from his role, in pushing for strengthening the development of medical research and rehabilitation programmes. He managed to give the Journal a unique perspective and style where readers were at the centre. The Journal was conceived as a practical tool for practitioners that combined science and activism in a unique way.

We want, in these pages, to honour his memory through the words of those who knew, worked with him and loved him.

Henrik Marcussen licensed from the University of Copenhagen in 1964, specialised in internal medicine, and obtained his PhD in 1979 with the thesis »Ulcerative colitis and colony antibodies«. He published many scientific articles, especially on gastroenterological topics. He was chief physician at Ringsted Hospital from 1979 to 2004, and chief physician at Slagelse Hospital, Department of Gastroenterology, from 2004 to 2010.

Henrik held a number of positions of trust, including chairman at Yngre Lægers Fællesråd, Kbh./Frb. (1973-79), member of the board of the Copenhagen Medical Association (1973-79), chairman of the medical council at Ringsted Hospital (1982-90) and chairman of the County Medical Council, Vestsjællands County (1997-2001).

But most of all, Henrik Marcussen was one of the pioneers of international work against torture. His fight against torture began in the 1970s with his committed work at Amnesty International's medical group.

He was member of the boards of the Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims (1991-96) and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT) (1988-2002). He also worked as a consultant for the IRCT until 2011.

From 1991 to 2011, he was Editor-in-Chief of the Torture Journal, the International Journal

on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims and Prevention of Torture, which is a great inspiration for doctors and health professionals working with the treatment of torture victims and documentation of torture, as it seeks to produce state-of-the-art knowledge on methodologies and approaches on health-based rehabilitation and educational and preventive aspects of torture. Moreover, he was also member of the board of the Inge Genefkes & Bent Sørensen Anti-Torture Support Fund (ATSF) until 2019.

Henrik Marcussen also made his mark in a field quite different from medicine and the fight against torture: music. As a young man, he won the main prize in ‘Double or nothing’ on the basis of his extensive knowledge of the composer Carl Nielsen. He was also a co-founder of the Carl Nielsen Society (1991). His interest in music continued throughout his life. He was a member of the Society’s board for several years and a member of the editorial board of the opera magazine *Ascolta*, to which he contributed numerous articles. Henrik Marcussen was also revered as a doctor and was known for his constructive and result-oriented approach to the difficult challenges in the fight against torture and for his humanly positive approach to colleagues and patients.

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By the end of a lifelong friendship, it is difficult to sum up the essence of it in a few words. However, there will always be episodes you do not forget, and such an episode was my first meeting with Henrik. I was in the south of France with my French fiancé in the summer of 1970.

Henrik was in France with his wife, Marianne, the daughter of close friends of my parents. Marianne and I already knew each other, and very soon the four of us discussed Mstislav Rostropovich’s first performance in Aix-en-Provence of the cello concerto of Henri Dutilleux written for Rostropovich. So it continued for many years to come. For a long time, we were deeply fascinated by Maria Callas and spoke few words apart from the appraisal of her incredible interpretations. Later on, Kathleen Ferrier and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau became the focus of our interest. I was fascinated by Kathleen Ferrier’s interpretation of Schubert’s “An die Musik” (Du holde Kunst, in wieviel grauen Stunden, etc.) and so was Henrik, indeed. Henrik was a man of very few words when it came to expressing the emotional impact of music. Perhaps the modesty between friends which is not between men and women. It leaves the expression of emotions to poetry set to music and to wordless music by great composers.

You might get the impression that Henrik was not a man of strong emotions, but it wasn’t so. Not many years ago I invited Henrik and Marianne for dinner with my former professor of literature, who was also a composer.

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- 5 Former Head of the Department of Psychiatry of Copenhagen University and Former Medical Director of the Danish Rehabilitation and Research Center for Torture Victims
 - 6 Former member and vice-chair of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT)
 - 7 Former member of CAT & CPT, Senior Medical Advisor to the IRCT

He brought a CD with his latest composition, which we heard a part of. Since it was a complex one, he tried to explain to Henrik what it was about. Henrik listened but did not say much, to which my professor said: “Perhaps you do not understand it at all.” It triggered a reaction on Henrik that I’ll never forget. It showed a very characteristic trait of him - an amazingly disciplined way of expressing strong emotions which was also the signature of his commitment to the rehabilitation of torture victims.

Besides this, he was also a very hospitable person who for many many years brought together his friends for Christmas-dinners with all pertaining to the flavour and essence of Christmas. He was a loving husband to Marianne and father of his sons, Anders and Torben, and cared very much for the cats they had for years, perhaps too much according to modern veterinarians. At least they never missed anything.

I feel confident of saying we will all miss him very much.

Carl Kähler⁸

In his role as editor-in-chief of the Torture Journal, Henrik managed to balance between two competing concerns: he wanted to ensure that the quality and recognition of the Torture Journal was at the same level as other medical journals, and at the same time it was important for him that the main stakeholders – the rehabilitation centers and programs – had a place to publish their research, even if it was undertaken under different circumstances and showed signs of that. As we all know, Henrik solved that task excellently, and he managed to have the journal indexed with Index Medicus – the basic quality mark of medical journals. Henrik had noble motives for his work with the journal, and this is likely why his success was so evident.

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