

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL DES SCIENCES HISTORIQUES INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF HISTORICAL SCIENCES

Minutes of the meeting of the ICHS Bureau
The Hague, November 14 and 15, 2008

At the invitation of the Netherlands National Committee, the *Koninklijk Nederlands Historisch Genootschap*, the Bureau met in the Groot Auditorium of the National Archives (*Rijksarchief*), *Prins Willem Alexanderhof 20*, The Hague, on November 14. The meeting continued on November 15, 2008, at the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek (Prins Willem Alexanderhof 5)*.

Present: José Luis Peset, President; Koichi Kabayama, Vice President*; Jean-Claude Robert, Secretary General; Laurent Tissot, Treasurer; Mikhail Bibikov, Michael Heyd, Marjatta Hietala, Assessor Members.

* Professor Kabayama was in The Hague but was unable to attend as he did not receive notification of a last-minute change of location.

Excused: William Jordan, Vice President, Shahid Amin, Roger Chartier, Hilda Sabato, Assessor Members and Jürgen Kocka, Counsellor.

Invited guests: J.C. (Hans) Blom, President of the Congress Organizing Committee, W. (Pim) den Boer, L. (Lex) Heerma van Vos, members of the Organizing Committee.

Agenda:

1. President's opening statement and remarks
2. Secretary General's report on ICHS operations
3. Treasurer's report
4. Report on the program of the Amsterdam Congress
5. Report of the Amsterdam Congress Organizing Committee
6. Visit of congress venues (University of Amsterdam)
7. Miscellaneous

1 – President's opening statement and remarks

The President welcomed Bureau members and thanked his Dutch colleagues for their hospitality. He underscored how important this meeting was for preparations for the 2010 Congress. He also commented on the Netherlands' longstanding contribution to the ICHS, from the 1898 International Historical Congress on Diplomatic History in The Hague to the General Assembly of 2002, as well as the symposium that Bureau members had just attended. The President subsequently asked for one minute of silence in remembrance of two former Bureau members who passed away in 2008, Professor Alain Dubois, who was Treasurer from

1980 to 1995, and Professor Grigori Bongard-Levin, an Assessor Member from 2000 to 2005. He then gave the floor to the Secretary General.

2 – Secretary General’s report on ICHS operations since September 2007

Since the General Assembly in Beijing, the Secretary General has devoted a great deal of time to selecting session organizers and discussants for the 2010 Congress and to preparing the Bureau meeting and the scientific session in The Hague.

2007 and 2008 Bulletins. Publishing the *Bulletin* continues to be one of the Secretariat’s priorities. Volume 33 was printed in 600 copies in December 2007 and mailed out in January 2008. At 235 pages, it was larger than usual because it included the General Assembly documents (minutes of the meeting and reports of the two sub-committees). The 2008 edition, Volume 34, will be printed on November 30 and mailed out in late December 2008 or early January 2009. Given that this year’s Bureau meeting was held late, the *Bulletin* will not include the minutes of the meeting but will contain the Congress program and the rules and procedures for preparing and conducting the sessions. The 2008 edition will be more streamlined in appearance, with new fonts and formatting. As has been the case since 2005, all the information contained in the *Bulletin* will also be made available on the ICHS’s Website.

ICHS Website. The ICHS Website was extensively overhauled in 2008. It now features five sections:

1. *News* (editorials, minutes, report on the current quinquennium, necrologies)
2. *Events* (Amsterdam Congress and other symposiums [Chinese historiography, etc.]
3. *Presentation* (history, board, objectives, constitution, contacts)
4. *Members* (access to the directory)
5. *Archives* (previous minutes and reports, documents on the history of the ICHS, inventory of ICHS archives)

Although the ICHS Website may have been considered short on content a few years ago, users certainly will not be disappointed today. The Secretariat updates it more regularly (about every three months). A counter was added in March 2008 to follow traffic to the site, and some 650 visits per month have been recorded from countries around the world. For example, in October 2008, the site was visited by users in 67 different countries. The top ten countries by order of frequency of visits are France, the U.S., Canada, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, Sweden, and Australia. These results show how useful the site is for reaching our colleagues, as well as for posting important documents and making them available for online consultation.

National Committees, AIOs and ICs. In the wake of the Beijing General Assembly's discussions about the sub-committees' reports on the Congress program, relations with ICHS members and expanding the ICHS, the President of the British National Committee (Royal Historical Society) raised a number of issues about the relevance of the ICHS and its relationships with members. In March 2008, the Secretary General travelled to Cambridge to meet with the Committee's President, Professor Martin Daunton, to discuss these issues. The Secretary General proposed some solutions and invited the President to join Marjatta Hietala, Arnita Jones and Brunello Vigezzi on the sub-committee. However, the Royal Historical Society, which has essentially taken on the unofficial role of National Committee for specific events, wishes to consult with other historian organizations in Great Britain in order to reorganize a new British National Committee. On another front, the sub-committee on the Congress program has been pursuing its work and is scheduled to submit an interim report during the next Bureau meeting (September 2009), before presenting its final report to the General Assembly in Amsterdam.

ICHS expansion. Bureau member Hilda Sabato was unable to attend the meeting but prepared a report on involving Latin American historians in the ICHS. This document was distributed to each member and briefly discussed. Efforts have been made to increase Latin American participation in the Amsterdam Congress. Three individuals have already been recruited as organizers or discussants, but more work is needed to find communicators. H. Sabato has established contacts with Latin American organizations and committees and is working on getting some of them to resume their activities.

Bureau members acknowledged these developments, while noting the continuing problem posed by the lack of historians from Arab/Muslim areas in the ICHS.

Admission request. The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP), founded in 1991, has requested admission to the ICHS. The Society is well established, with 1,200 members in 30 countries. Its Web address is <http://www.sharpweb.org/>.

A duly completed admission request was sent to the ICHS Secretary General. The Society's constitution was deemed to be fully compatible with the ICHS's, and its Board has international representation. The Secretary General therefore moved that the Bureau approve the admission request and submit it for approval to the next General Assembly. The Bureau also agreed to allow the Society to hold two half-day conferences during the Amsterdam Congress as invited guests.

International Commission on the History of the Russian Revolution. The General Assembly in Beijing agreed not to follow through on the Bureau's resolution to strike the Commission off the ICHS's membership rolls. In return, the Commission agreed to undertake a reinstatement process with the help of the Secretary General. However, the Commission now finds itself at an impasse,

and the matter appears to be impossible to resolve at a distance. The Commission must therefore convene a General Assembly in neutral territory to elect a new Board. The Secretary General moved not to authorize this Internal Commission to hold a scientific meeting in Amsterdam, but instead to allow it two half-days to hold a General Assembly to enable its President and Secretary General to report to members and hold discussions. The motion was carried.

Relations with UNESCO. The Joint UNESCO-ICHS Committee, which operated from 1999 to 2005 and was financed by UNESCO funds, made it possible to hold regional conferences of historians in countries where the ICHS was under-represented. In 2005, UNESCO decided to abolish the Committee. In 2006 and 2007, the Secretary General held discussions to explore the possibility of reviving the Committee or of obtaining a grant to organize UNESCO sessions during the Amsterdam Conference. A formal attempt to re-establish the Committee was made in 2008, but to no avail.

The International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS) has managed to normalize its finances after experiencing a steady decrease in subsidies from UNESCO and paying the cost of publishing the *Diogène* journal. The Council is gradually resuming its activities, including awarding small grants to help scholars from developing countries travel to international congresses and symposiums. The Secretary General submitted a grant request for the Amsterdam Congress. He plans to attend the Council's next General Assembly, which will be held in South Africa.

3 - Treasurer's report

Treasurer Laurent Tissot presented the profit and loss accounts and the balance sheet for fiscal 2007, which had been prepared by Pierre Ducrey, who was the Treasurer until December 31, 2007. The profit and loss account shows a negative balance of CHF -1,663.42, mainly because of the increased cost of publishing the Bulletin, and to a lesser extent the cost of holding the Beijing General Assembly. The ICHS should consider whether publishing hard copies of the Bulletin will be necessary in the future. The balance sheet shows a balance of CHF 113,504.50. The Treasurer gave Bureau members copies of these documents as established by the Financial Department of the Université de Lausanne, and a bank statement dated December 31, 2007. He then reported on the status of membership fees. A reminder will be sent out in June 2009 to advise members in arrears to settle their accounts. In regard to fiscal 2008, he explained that the economic crisis is expected to decrease the ICHS's capital by 25%.

4 – Report on the program of the Amsterdam Congress

Selection of organizers and discussants

The selection process was delayed after the Beijing General Assembly decided to add joint sessions. ICHS members were therefore given until February 28, 2008 to submit their proposals to the Secretary General. The number of members who submitted proposals for the upcoming Congress is consistent with numbers from the last Congress: 39 in 2008 versus 40 in 2003. On the other hand, the total number of proposals for organizers, discussants and contributors for all sessions is higher at 624. In addition, the new round table format seems to have been misunderstood because the Secretariat received proposals for discussants for these sessions even though they were not required.

The Bureau sub-committee (José Luis Peset, Hilda Sabato, William Jordan, Jean-Claude Robert) examined and discussed the proposals session by session before coming up with a final list. These discussions were held by e-mail, given that finances prevented the sub-committee from meeting in person. A relatively complex final file was prepared by the Secretariat and sent to sub-committee members on April 11. After more e-mail exchanges, the members agreed on a list on June 1. On June 5, the final list was sent to Bureau members for consensus and then adopted by default on June 20. In July and August, the Secretary General contacted all the organizers and discussants selected. In view of some refusals, names were changed, and as of October 22, almost all the organizers and discussants had been selected. The list of sessions, with the names of organizers and discussants was sent to all ICHS members and posted on the Website.

For the Amsterdam Congress, the ICHS is trying out a more open method by allowing any interested party to submit a presentation proposal directly through the Congress Website (www.cish2010.org or www.ichs2010.org). The proposals will be forwarded to session organizers, who will have until February 28, 2009 to make up their teams.

The rules and procedures for preparing and conducting the sessions (Guidelines) were revised to take into account the redefined sessions and the maximum number of participants in each session. Separate rules and procedures have been prepared for the round tables. These documents have been sent to all organizers and discussants and have also been published in the *Bulletin*, Vol. 34 (2008) and on the ICHS Website.

AIO and IC sessions

To highlight the sessions of the Affiliated International Organizations (AIO) and Internal Commissions (IC), the ICHS developed a new scheduling strategy for Congress week. Beginning on Monday, the first day of the Congress, sessions

organized by the AIOs and ICs will be held alternatively with the general program sessions. The official program has thus been divided into seven sections, as follows:

1. Major themes
2. Specialized themes
3. Round tables
4. Joint sessions
5. Special sessions
6. Affiliated International Organizations
7. Internal Commissions

The sections have been posted on the ICHS Website as well as on the Congress site. The sessions will be scheduled according to their scientific and thematic relationships and logistical and equipment needs.

5 – Report of the Amsterdam Congress Organizing Committee

Professor Hans Blom, President of the Committee, presented his report. The procedures for registration and organizing the sessions were established in collaboration with the ICHS Secretary General. The Amsterdam Congress Website is now fully operational.

The opening session will take place at the *Amsterdam Muziektheater* (Opera) on August 22, 2010 at 4 p.m. The Prime Minister of The Netherlands will probably attend and will deliver a short address. He will be followed by the President of the ICHS. Since the Congress is being held in The Netherlands, the Organizing Committee is planning to hold a session on water and its historical importance. Four guests will present short reviews of Europe/The Netherlands, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. If the Heineken Foundation becomes a Congress sponsor, the 2010 winner of the Heineken Prize for History may be announced and invited to deliver a short address on the theme of water. The presentations will be given in either English or French, with the translation projected on a giant screen. It will therefore be necessary to receive the texts ahead of time. There will also probably be a musical program, to be finalized after consulting with sponsors. A reception will follow the opening session.

The Committee is also planning a second reception later in the week. The closing session will be held in the University *aula* on August 28 at around 2 p.m. The program is still to be decided, but the Organizing Committee is leaning toward a presentation that will be open to the public. Professor Blom presented the different advertising strategies and reviewed the budget highlights, which have remained unchanged since the Beijing General Assembly. The solidarity fund will have a separate budget and be managed by a foundation duly incorporated under Dutch law. The fund's purpose is to provide assistance for historians from countries on the OECD's List of Aid Recipients (ODA - APD). The session organizers will be enlisted to help target and prioritize needs in this regard.

Lastly, the Committee is organizing a cultural program for participants and their escorts, which will include visits to museums, cultural institutes, tourist sites, and so forth.

6 – Visit of Congress venues (University of Amsterdam)

The Bureau travelled to Amsterdam for a guided tour of the main Congress venues. The University of Amsterdam is centrally located. Bureau members were able to visit some of the classrooms and amphitheatres selected for the sessions. They also visited the areas where registration and the special sessions will be held. Other meeting rooms are available, including public areas in the imposing municipal archives building (former ABN-AMRO bank – NHM). Bureau members returned satisfied with their tour.

7 - Miscellaneous

In the absence of further business, the President concluded the meeting and thanked the members of the Bureau and the Dutch Organizing Committee for their contributions.