



### **Paris, 30 and 31 August 2003**

At the invitation of the French National Committee, the Bureau met in Paris on 30 and 31 August at the Fondation nationale des Sciences Politiques.

**Present:** Jürgen Kocka, President; Eva Österberg, Vice-president; Romila Thapar, Vice-president; Jean-Claude Robert, Secretary General; Pierre Ducrey, Treasurer; Gregory Bongard-Levin, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, Michael Heyd, William C. Jordan, Koichi Kabayama, José Luis Peset, Assessor Members; Ivan T. Berend, Counselor.

**Invited guest:** Martyn Lyons, President of the organizing committee of the XXth Congress (Sydney, 2005).

### **Agenda:**

1. President's opening statements and remarks
2. ICHS affairs and Secretary General's report
3. Report on the scientific program of the Sydney Congress
4. Report on the organization of the Sydney Congress
5. Treasurer's report
6. Next Bureau meeting: Berlin 2004
7. ICHS-UNESCO relations
8. Regional meeting in China
9. Miscellaneous

### **1. President's opening statements and remarks**

The President welcomed Bureau members and, on their behalf, thanked the French National Committee for their hospitality in Paris. He particularly thanked Jean-François Sirinelli, President of the French National Committee and Director of the Centre d'histoire de l'Europe du vingtième siècle – Sciences Po, and the Centre's Secretary General, Pascal Cauchy, who were both on hand to meet Bureau members. The President reminded everyone of the main purpose of the annual meeting, which is to study the ICHS's activity report and check the progress of the next Congress in Sydney in July 2005. He acknowledged the presence of Martyn Lyons, President of the organizing committee.

The President said he was happy with the ICHS's favourable situation and with the progress noted this year regarding greater participation by historians worldwide in the ICHS. He pointed out, however, that progress towards the fulfillment of the ICHS's main mission should continue, i.e. expansion of the ICHS into every country in the world, and particularly into developing countries.

The floor was then given to Jean-Claude Robert.

### **2. ICHS affairs and Secretary General's report**

Preparing the scientific program of the Sydney Congress has taken up almost all the time of the Secretary General since he returned from the meeting of the Bureau restreint in Sydney in early March, a situation that his predecessor, François Bédarida, also experienced. The problem is not a lack of secretarial staff but rather the need for an executive secretary who would work part time and have the required history background to take certain initiatives.



## 2.2 *Bulletin*

The 28th edition of the *Bulletin d'information* was printed in 2002 and mailed in December. The web site was re-organized and is updated regularly. The site now has a direct e-mail link: [cish@uqam.ca](mailto:cish@uqam.ca).

The next *Bulletin* will come out this fall. Among other items, it will feature the minutes and the list of organizers and discussants for Sydney. In addition, we will resume the tradition of republishing historical texts by reprinting an article by Michel François, ICHS Secretary General from 1950 to 1980, who recounted the first 50 years of the ICHS in 1976.

## 2.3 *Bureau restreint*

The Bureau restreint (Jürgen Kocka, Jean-Claude Robert, and Pierre Ducrey) held a very productive meeting in Sydney on February 26-28. The minutes are in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

## 2.4 *Members*

The Secretary General met with the executive of the Association of Caribbean Historians in May, which would like to join the ICHS. That is good news because it would give the ICHS a window on a part of the world where we have no representation. The Secretary General gave a presentation of the ICHS before the Association's general assembly.

In closing, the Secretary General expressed his thanks to his institution, the UQAM, for supporting him in tangible ways since 2000. He also thanked Sylvie Freney, and his recent associate, Étienne Côté, for their hard work in performing daily tasks for the ICHS.

The President thanked the Secretary General for his excellent work, and proposed that the issue of an executive secretary should be discussed at the next ICHS Bureau meeting.

## **3. Report on the scientific program of the Sydney Congress**

### *3.1 Recruitment of organizers, discussants and communicators*

The Secretary General began by reminding members of the schedule. The National Committees, the International Affiliated Organizations, and the Internal Commissions had until December 31, 2002, to forward their suggestions for organizers, discussants and communicators. We have received proposals from 28 National Committees, 12 International Affiliated Organizations and 2 Internal Commissions. These numbers are similar to those obtained for Oslo (27-8-0). Five hundred and forty names in all, including 368 topics. For organizers and discussants, 172 proposals for 49 themes (141 proposals for organizers, and 31 for discussants).

The sub-committee, composed of Jürgen Kocka, Eva Österberg, Pierre Ducrey and Jean-Claude Robert, had to prepare a selection proposal to the Bureau, keeping in mind certain important criteria such as striking a balance among regions, men vs. women, and young vs. experienced researchers, and so forth. The sub-committee worked in two stages. During the trip to Sydney, J. Kocka, J.-C. Robert and P. Ducrey conducted a



preliminary study and produced a list that was submitted to Eva Österberg. There were further discussions by e-mail, until a consensus was reached in mid-April. The overall proposal was sent to Bureau members on April 25. Members made their comments at the end of May. The proposal was then modified in light of these comments, and the dossier was ready on June 18.

Between June 20 and 27, invitation letters were sent out by e-mail and regular mail to the 114 individuals accepted. Reminders were sent out in early August. On August 20, the Secretariat sent to all confirmed organizers (52 out of 61) the guidelines, the list of topics proposed by the Committees and Commissions, and the actual proposals, whichever ones we had. As of August 28, we had received answers from 52 out of 63 organizers, and 38 out of 51 discussants. The Secretary General then gave Bureau members draft lists for all the sessions, indicating the problem cases. He also distributed a copy of the Guidelines.

After the presentation, the President noted that some Committees like France and the United States are very active and therefore widely represented on the list of participants, contrary to others who did not even respond to the Secretary General's repeated overtures. In response to remarks by Koichi Kabayama and Gregory Bongard-Levin on unequal representation of countries on the list of organizers and discussants, the President emphasized that it was difficult to have a fair blend of countries, ages, subjects, and men and women. The Secretary General said that the representation of countries at the Sydney Congress was wholly comparable to the representation at the Montreal and the Oslo Congresses. Time was spent discussing proposals to improve the list within the limits imposed by the needs of the Congress. Members put forward some additional proposals.

Some members suggested that Congress proceedings might veer off into slippery ground when themes like terrorism are discussed. The President stressed again that the ICHS's vocation was not only international but historical as well, and therefore it was not a matter of the ICHS taking a position but shedding light on a major theme like terrorism from a historical perspective.

The timing of the sessions also sparked some discussion as some members wanted the Guidelines to be tightened up with regard to certain points such as the length of the discussants' interventions and the minimum time allotted for general discussion. But since the text had already been submitted to the Bureau and approved, and then distributed to the people in charge, it is no longer possible to make any changes. Lastly, the Bureau was reminded that the experience with previous Congresses showed that the role of the organizer or coordinator was crucial to the outcome of the sessions. The President concluded by stating that the procedures and guidelines put forward by the Secretary General must be kept.

### *3.2 Opening and Closing Sessions*

The topic of the opening and closing sessions was raised. The idea put forward last year concerning a media presence was raised again, particularly a film with a historical scope, and the presence, if possible, of a well-known film personality like Steven Spielberg. But this was dropped. The President sketched his plans for the opening session. It should deal with the place of the Sydney Congress in the history of CISH. It should deal with the opportunities and challenges of the advancing internationalization of the discipline. He noted that there should be also an occasion for presenting a book like the history of the



ICHS and opening the floor to dialogue. Everyone agreed that the closing ceremony should not exceed two hours.

#### **4. Report on the Organization of the Sydney Congress**

Martyn Lyons presented his report on the organization of the Sydney Congress and was congratulated by the President. He stated that the web site would soon be operational and that it would contain information on the Congress, the programs of the sessions, and registration procedures. For the time being, the site would only be in English, however. Funding is difficult to find, despite the fact that some universities, government agencies and institutions have come forward. It is difficult to get funding from the corporate sector. The university presses of New South Wales University will be offering participants a free booklet with ten or so pieces on major challenges in contemporary Australian historiography.

He then raised the question of well-known historians giving one or two public lectures to enhance the visibility of the Congress. It was suggested that an internationally acclaimed African or Asian historian be invited, thereby reaffirming the ICHS's international character and the fact that the Committee is not limited to Western countries alone. The Congress should also provide a window on the International Committees. Names were proposed, contacts would be made. Funding to help participants with no means to come to the Congress is yet to be found. Lastly, given that the use of French is also a priority for the ICHS, simultaneous translation would be available for the major themes, but the cost is too high for all the sessions.

#### **5. Treasurer's Report**

Pierre Ducrey presented his report and commented on the financial statements that were distributed. He analyzed the profits and losses and the balance sheet for fiscal 2002. The losses (mostly on paper) recorded by the ICHS were mainly due to the stock exchange market.

The treasurer emphasized once again that membership fees in arrears were hurting the budget. In answer to a question, he explained that the notice of membership fees is sent out in December and must be paid by the end of the first quarter of the following year. If the fees are unpaid, a first reminder is sent out in June.

It was suggested that membership fees be raised according to a sliding scale by country. The floor was open to discussion. Two ideas were advanced, one to create tiers (two-tiered payment). The other was to grant a transitional period for payment. The Secretary General said that while we can be flexible on the subject of payment, it was nevertheless important to remain firm because the ICHS is a service provider and must be acknowledged as such. The President concluded by reaffirming that it was necessary to ensure that the fees were paid because the ICHS itself has some financial problems. He said the assembly should consider a hike in fees, but he had his doubts as to a two-tiered payment because that would not guarantee payment. The question would be raised again during the next meetings of the Bureau restreint (February 2004) and of the Bureau (August 2004), the last meeting before the ICHS general assembly in Sydney in 2005.

#### **6. Next meeting**



The next meeting will be held in Berlin on August 26-29, 2004, to be immediately followed by a meeting of the nominating committee, which three of our members belong to.

### Program

August 26, 2004	Arrival of Bureau members
August 27, 2004	A.M.: symposium on German historiography P.M.: Bureau meeting
August 28, 2004	A.M.: Bureau meeting P.M.: free time, and arrival of the other members of the nominating committee
August 29, 2004	Excursion
August 30, 2004	Nominating committee meeting and departure of the other Bureau members
August 31, 2004	Departure of the Commission members

At this point the idea of the necessity for the Bureau to hold yearly meetings was raised, some members feeling that a biennial meeting was sufficient particularly in light of the Internet. Everyone agreed, however, that while the Web provides a platform for easy exchange, it does not allow for deeper intellectual discussion. The President concluded by saying that the ideas and the dialogue of the day had been very productive and that the meeting in Berlin should deal with three topics in particular: creating tiers within the ICHS, increasing membership fees, and deciding how often the Bureau should meet.

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### Continuation of the meeting, August 31, 2003

#### 7. ICHS-UNESCO Relations

##### 7. ICHS / ICPHS

The International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies held its regular meeting in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, from September 18-21, 2002. The meeting was preceded by a symposium on rationalities. The ICPHS's activities are unfolding as planned, but the recurring problem of securing financing from UNESCO may become a concern in time. In reality, UNESCO is reducing its overall funding to the ICPHS because the unavoidable costs of publishing *Diogène* magazine is putting a serious strain on the budget. In view of the situation, the subsidies the ICPHS was paying out to member organizations, including the ICHS, may be in jeopardy. The Secretary General has nonetheless prepared and submitted a funding request for the Sydney Congress (US\$10,000 to cover travel expenses for colleagues from developing nations). In addition, the Secretary General has been elected to the budget committee. The ICPHS General Assembly has approved the subsidy request, but the final amount must be reviewed in light of the overall budget the ICPHS has obtained for 2004.



During the meeting the Secretary General asked the representative of the International Academic Union about holding joint regional meetings, a question that had been raised by Gregory Bongard-Levin in Amsterdam. A fruitful discussion ensued with Deputy Secretary General Jean-Luc De Paepe, but the Union is only interested in specific search projects rather than regional symposiums.

## *7.2 Joint Committee*

The joint Committee held its most recent regular meeting on December 10, 2002, at UNESCO's head office. Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch and Jean-Claude Robert represented the ICHS at the meeting. Professor Jerzy Kloczowski is the Committee Chairman. UNESCO was represented by Mrs. Katérina Stenou, Director of the Division of Cultural Policy and Intercultural Dialogue, Mr. Bocar Dia, Coordinator of General and Regional History Projects, Mr. Mohamed Ziadah, Program Specialist and Publication Coordinator for Aspects of Islamic Culture, and Mrs. Isabelle Tarnowska, Secretary of the Joint Committee. Mrs. Paulette Forest took notes and wrote the minutes.

First, the Committee reviewed the activities planned for the end of the current biennium (2002-2003). On the subject of Africa: the Bureau of the Association of African Historians held a meeting in Bamako in March 2002, and the proceedings of the 1999 symposium of African historians are almost ready for publication. On the subject of Latin America and the Caribbean: the conference to be held in Mexico City in November 2003 (Democracy in America) is on track and should be held as planned. However, the Association of Caribbean historians has not contacted us with respect to holding a limited regional conference in 2003. The Kingston regional office of UNESCO is responsible for contacting the president of the association. On the subject of Arab nations: Jean-Claude Robert submitted a plan for a conference on the theme of reform and changes in the Muslim Arabic world. The Moroccan National Committee has agreed to lend logistical support for a conference in Rabat from October 9 to 11, 2003. Lastly, on the subject of Central-Eastern Europe, a conference on people and cultures of Europe and Central-Eastern Europe is planned for November 2003, in Lublin.

The discussion turned to the 2004-2005 biennium. The ICHS Secretary General underscored the importance of ensuring that the 2005 Sydney Congress is well attended. It was stated that for every regional meeting held so far, a workshop would be organized at the Congress to allow for wider dissemination of the results. For Africa, the project involves an additional Bureau meeting in Addis Ababa in 2004, and a further workshop in Sydney; for Latin America, the Caribbean and the Arab nations, three workshops in Sydney in 2005. For Central-Eastern Europe, the project consists in two preparation seminars and a workshop in Sydney in 2005 on the theme of Central Europe in the European space between the West and the East during the 1000-2000 millennium. Lastly, the idea of organizing a regional meeting in Asia was floated. All the projects approved by the joint Committee for 2004-2005 largely exceed the budget for the previous biennium. It is important to adjust the projects to the funds UNESCO will be actually allocating. The Committee will therefore return to these issues during its statutory meeting in 2003. The question of UNESCO's formal recognition of the joint Committee was also addressed.

### *7.2.1 Annual Conference of the Association of Caribbean Historians, San Juan, May 1, 2004*



Since meeting in December 2002, the Joint Committee tried to contact the Caribbean Association, with no success. They delegated the task to the Secretary General, who was finally contacted by the President of the Association and invited to make a presentation on the ICHS and the Joint Committee at the General Assembly in Puerto Rico. Given the importance of the group and the many problems experienced so far, the Secretary General agreed. He dispelled misconceptions as he explained the ICHS's mission and purpose to both the General Assembly and the executive.

#### *7.2.2 Meeting with Professor Jerzy Kloczowski, June 5*

The Secretary General took advantage of the fact that Prof. Jerzy Kloczowski was visiting Montreal to meet with him and discuss the outcome of the last official meeting and the future of the Joint Committee. As of next year the Joint Committee will no longer be associated with the Culture sector but will come under the arm of Human and Social Sciences. Developing some projects around the theme of the future of the history discipline was also discussed.

#### *7.2.3 Conference in Rabat*

After much hesitation, planning for the conference was resumed. The Secretary General contacted the Moroccan representative who had taken part in the General Assembly in Amsterdam, and asked his advice on themes that would interest the Muslim Arab world. He also asked the Moroccan National Committee to look after the logistics of holding a conference in Rabat because their abilities were so apparent during their 2001 symposium, which the Secretary General attended. And thanks to Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, the Secretary General had the opportunity of partnering with Mrs. Chantal Chanson-Jabeur, a specialist of Arab civilization working at the S.E.D.E.T. Laboratory of the Université de Paris VII. They decided on a theme and started the process of organizing the conference. After a few problems the conference date was moved to December 11 to 13, 2003, and is now on track.

Michael Heyd asked whether it was possible to broaden the conference to include all Mediterranean countries. Although that would seem like a good idea, this particular conference on the Arab Muslim world may not be the right occasion. First of all, with less than six months to go, it is impossible to change the theme; moreover the conference would then no longer correspond with the objectives of the UNESCO program, which governs the Joint Committee. Additionally, the scope of the conference would widely exceed the Joint Committee's financial and organizational capabilities. The Secretary General said a project of this type was more consistent with the scope of the ICHS's quinquennial congress and would require similar logistics. The President asked Michael Heyd to think about a project after 2005, which would be discussed informally in Sydney.

#### *7.2.4 Mexico City conference*

The conference will be held from November 26-28 at the Colegio de Mexico. Its objective is two-fold: to discuss the theme of the road to democracy in Latin America, and to establish a network of Latin American historians. The Secretary General was invited to deliver an address during the opening ceremony. He thanked José Luis Peset, who has guided the project from the beginning. Mr. Peset gave further details on the conference.

#### *7.2.5 Lublin conference*



A conference organized by Professor Jerzy Kloczowski on Central Europe in the European space between the West and the East during the 1000-2000 millennium will be held on November 15. At that time the Joint Committee will take the opportunity to hold its annual meeting on November 16.

#### *7.2.6 Association of African Historians*

Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch reported on the work of the Association of African Historians. Thanks to financial support from UNESCO, the Bureau of the Association was able to meet this year in Addis-Ababa.

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After the activities of the Joint Committee were reviewed, Gregory Bongard-Levin pointed out the importance for the ICHS to integrate new National Committees such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, suggesting that the ICHS contact the various Academy of Sciences. Everyone was reminded that a first contact should be made before a new member is proposed, and then provisional information should be sent to the Secretary General, who would then make formal contact. The final approval of membership would then be put to the General Assembly.

### **8. Regional symposium in China**

The President said he was satisfied with his trip to China in December 2001 when the planning of a regional conference in Beijing was started, involving CISH, the Association of Chinese Historians and the Institute of World History of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Nevertheless, the situation is complex, but contacts with Chinese historians are important for the ICHS. The regional symposium had to be postponed because of SARS, and has been re-scheduled for April 2004. Koichi Kabayama offered to help intensify relations with China and extend his efforts to neighbouring countries like Korea and Taiwan.

### **9. Miscellaneous**

#### *9.1 Book by Karl Dietrich Erdmann*

The translation of the book by K.D. Erdmann on the history of CISH and the International Congresses and the new chapter on the 1985-2000 period by Wolfgang Mommsen are on track. The President is satisfied with the progress and believes that each member will find something to interest him or her. Given the time it takes to translate from German to English and to review and edit the text, the book should be ready for the Sydney Congress, where it will be the subject of a brief presentation.

#### *9.2 Future of the Bulletin*

The question of the future of the *Bulletin* was raised. Members had many suggestions, particularly to add articles to each edition. The Secretary General said that it was a heavy and time-consuming task to make the *Bulletin*, and that any addition would have wide-ranging effects on deadlines, organization and cost. The idea to make the *Bulletin* into a



scientific magazine was put forward, as were other ideas, such as adding a section on historiography or an opinion section, provided the author is careful about the opinion he or she expresses. The President wrapped up the discussion by saying he was satisfied with the productive dialogue and that the question might be raised at the next meeting in Berlin.

### *9.3 History research in India*

The discussion turned to the difficult climate for historical research in India, a topic that came up at the Bureau's first meeting in Oslo in 2000. After an arbitrary decision decreed the removal of two documented histories from print, the Secretary General wrote to the Indian National Committee (Indian Council for Historical Research) asking for explanations, but his letters of 2000, 2001 and 2002 went unanswered.

At the request of the President, Professor Romila Thapar presented a detailed report of the situation. She explained that the situation has worsened and that the new government has intensified its interventions in history education at all levels. Textbooks used in middle school and high school have been removed without the benefit of a standard review by a committee of historians. The textbooks have been replaced by new, hastily written books that have been widely criticized. In fact, a committee formed by the Indian History Congress has found countless factual errors in the textbooks and their approach to history which conforms to the hinduist identity as the center of history. Their interpretation marginalises the way most Indian historians take into account India's multicultural past and offer a more rational view of the country's history.

In the case of schools of higher learning, the University Grants Commission (UGC), which is the central funding agency, claimed that it was authorized to direct the content of undergraduate and graduate programs in colleges and universities. The universities were sent a detailed course outline along with a hint that funding may be affected if they refuse to conform. The UGC's course outline is seriously deficient as it ignores developments in history in the past 50 years, both in methodology and historiography. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has also been intervening in the hiring process of academics in the Social Sciences, despite objections from the concerned universities.

Professor Thapar concluded by describing intimidation campaigns organized by the party in power aimed at disparaging historians who oppose the hindutva philosophy. The President concluded that CISH has hardly any power to influence the deplorable situation to the better. CISH will, however, continue to look for ways in which it can be helpful. The Sydney Congress should prominently deal with the present problem of the relationship between politics and history, including censorship and political intervention into the discipline.

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In the absence of other miscellaneous items, the President concluded by thanking Bureau members for their many contributions and congratulating them on a particularly constructive meeting. Once again, he thanked the French National Committee for its hospitality and invited everyone to meet again in Berlin in 2004.

COMITÉ INTERNATIONAL  
DES SCIENCES HISTORIQUES



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