

International Commission for the History and Theory of Historiography

Draft Minutes of the Board meeting of 25 February 2023

(to be approved at the next Board meeting)

Also available as <https://www.ichth.net/board/5.pdf>

In attendance (via Zoom):

Olufunke Adeboye (Vice-president); Antoon De Baets (President, in the chair); Ewa Domańska (Past-president, Non-voting); Efi Gazi; Allan Megill; Marek Tamm; Sanjay Seth; Veronica Tozzi Thompson; Daniel Woolf (Co-secretary); Xupeng Zhang

Regrets

Berber Bevernage; Dipesh Chakrabarty; Marnie Hughes-Warrington

The meeting came to order at 9 AM Eastern Standard Time with the President chairing

1. **Minutes:** approved by consensus. By agreement and consistent with the Constitution it was agreed to proceed through the meeting without formal motions.
2. **Newsletter:** O. Adeboye reported on the draft newsletter which was displayed on the screen. She expects to release this on 28 February. She thanked members who had contributed. The Chair thanked her and asked that the newsletter be sent to all Commission members and posted on the website.
3. **Prize:** M. Tamm addressed the book prize memo. The dissertation prize will be ended and converted into a first-book prize given that many dissertations are formally published. The cooperation with the International Network for Theory of History (INTH) will be continued. The next prize will be in two categories —Best First Book and Best Book— and cover the past 3 years up to Dec 31 2023, following which it will be biennial. The awards will be announced in spring 2024.

The proposal is to have a partnership with *Storia della Storiografia* with a forum on the winning book with commentators and rejoinder. On the part of ICHTH, there will be 3 members on the jury, M. Tamm, B. Bevernage and a 3rd member to be elected.

The issue of eligible languages of publication was discussed. The languages to be accepted will be decided once the full jury is empanelled; there will almost certainly be a need for external advice with special linguistic capacity, and it was agreed that there must be a limit on the number of languages.

The intent is also to keep the current prize name (ICHTH-INTH Prize for the History and Theory of Historiography) pending the change of names of the Commission later on the agenda.

The Chair thanked M. Tamm and B. Bevernage for all their work on the prize memo.
Action: M. Tamm and B. Bevernage to prepare a draft announcement/call for entries to be vetted by the executive committee with a view to publication later in 2023. It will be distributed as widely as possible including being sent to all ICHTH members and the journals in our focus area etc.

4. **CISH Congress:** July 2026 Jerusalem. The Chair reported that little has happened on this front and CISH has not yet circulated a call for organizing panels. There will be a CISH General Assembly in Autumn 2024 in Tokyo, Japan which A. De Baets will attend. Once the call for panels is open the Executive Committee will distribute it and begin to make proposals for panels. Lead responsibility for this will be taken by the two program co-chairs (M. Hughes-Warrington and D. Woolf). Anyone who has ideas for panels should contact them.

Action: None at present, pending communication from CISH.

5. **Other meetings:** The Chair encouraged Board members that if there are suggestions for other meetings that we can promote in our areas of interest, please do let him or other members of the Executive Committee know.

Action: Members to make suggestions to Executive Committee as appropriate.

6. **Calendar of meetings:** The calendar for future Executive Committee and Board and General Assembly meetings (<https://www.ichth.net/content/meetings.html>) was confirmed as to months and intervals, with precise dates to be determined by doodle poll a few weeks in advance of each meeting.

Action: M. Hughes-Warrington or D. Woolf to confirm dates by doodle poll at least one month in advance of each meeting.

7. **Budget:** The budget for 2022-23 was presented by the Chair in his capacity as interim Treasurer having been reviewed by internal auditor M. Tamm. In default of comments it was agreed to by consensus.

Action: None at this time.

8. a) **Membership:** ICHTH now has 109 members of whom 63 have paid fees for 2023 as of 25 Feb. 2023 (and 17 already paid for 2024). The Chair has sent reminders to others, and there remain challenges in paying internationally by PayPal or otherwise. The fees have been levied for two years 2023 and 2024. The Chair will send another reminder at the beginning of March.

b) **Honorary Members:** we now have several new honorary members (see <https://www.ichth.net/content/honorary.html>) including two founding members of the commission L. Boia and B. Valota Cavallotti. New members include R. Thapar, J. Scott, P. Burke, N. Davis, J. Kocka. There were no comments from the floor.

c) **Candidate members:** the Executive Committee assumed the task of drafting a list of potential candidates. The Chair had found old lists of past proposed members and also a list on *Cultura Histórica* of members who might be candidates for the Commission. A procedure of approvals among the Committee was developed. 38 have responded to invitations; the remaining 42 will be invited one more time on 1 March. Refusal or decline will put them on tab 4 of the Membership Excel sheet as “not approved” or “declined”.

Discussion followed. E. Domańska, Past-President, asked who is selecting the members and did not recall an agreement to proceed to invitations without Board approval. The Chair replied that in Poznan it was agreed that recruitment would be delegated to a small committee (point 3 of minutes of August 2022 board meeting). The Executive Committee assumed this task; other names are of course welcome. He explained the process followed. E. Domańska replied that the Board in the past has evaluated new

candidates for appointment. Currently, the Chair noted, other members do not have a role as it has been difficult in the past to do this expeditiously and discussing individual cases would be too time consuming in an actual board meeting. The Secretary outlined an alternative of the Executive Committee making nominations but the Board still having access to recommendations. E. Domańska believed there should be individual votes nominee by nominee. X. Zhang agreed expeditiousness was good but reminded us of Constitution article 5 that the Board must approve new members. M. Tamm and S. Seth supported the proposal of the Secretary in principle. The Secretary will draft a formal procedure for majority approval of the list, amendments possible. The Chair reminded us we are dependent on new memberships for revenue should unplanned expenses come up. The Chair thanked members for the discussion.

Action: D. Woolf to draft a process for future vetting and appointment of members (item 8c) and circulate to Board.

9. Journals. A slide displaying all subscription-based journals in our focus area that we have approached with respect to cooperation and discount rates on subscription: *Storia della Storiografia*, *Rethinking History*, *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, and *History and Theory*. *Storia* has agreed to a discount of 75 euros vs 95; the other 4 responded with agreement to consider. In some instances this decision depends on the publisher and not the journal board (e.g. Wiley, Brill). A. Megill, K. Pihlainen and F. Ankersmit were thanked for intervening with JHI, RH, and JPH respectively. A Megill reported that the entire editorial team of JHI had approved, but it must be passed through the publisher U of Pennsylvania Press. We will need a mechanism to verify to journals that those seeking a discount are bona fide Commission members. This has the potential to be a good outlet for announcement of ICHTH events.

Action: None at this time.

10. Website: <https://www.ichth.net>. The Chair indicated that the goal is transparency: documents are posted, but if members have suggestions for missing items please write to him so the site can be adjusted. The technology has some limitations. The former websites are available via the links page and the archives page, including a zip file.

Action: Members to advise A. De Baets of any missing elements in website.

11. Constitution and legal status: the Chair gave an oral report. He consulted human rights lawyer Toby Mendel, director of the Centre for Law and Democracy in Halifax, Canada = to provide an extensive and close review. The Executive committee will discuss a new text at its next meeting and bring it forward for discussion at the next Board meeting and ultimately to the General Assembly. Members may request a copy of the draft at any time. Any plans will be communicated well before the draft is more widely circulated.

At the December 2022 executive meeting the committee agreed to found a non-profit association in the Netherlands. The Chair has consulted with the Royal Netherlands Historical Society, the Dutch Research Network Theory of History a local law faculty member and several relevant websites for advice. Should we do this it will be neither simple nor cheap. The link in the document is for foundations not for associations but the procedure is similar and no further information is available in English. If we establish an association Dutch law will require that all paperwork is either in Dutch or officially translated. Currently we have only two Dutch-speaking members, both Belgian, one of whom lives in Belgium (B.

Bevernage). Chair proposes to continue the exploration and discuss both these issues in the July Executive Meeting. D. Woolf queried the reasons for establishing an association and the Chair explained that this seems to be a wish of many generations of ICHTH Boards and that it would make the ICHTH more stable and less vulnerable to corruption. Also, a personal bank account implies personal liability for taxes on the dues. A. Megill, supportive of the initiative, reported on the experience of JHI having done this, and it was very expensive; it will be less expensive in the Netherlands, and basically a one-time investment. M. Tamm suggested that in case of extraordinary expenses we could consider a donation drive. M. Hughes-Warrington had suggested this previously, with a view that tenured persons consider paying double the annual fee to support this — and this is now part of the regular fee-raising procedure (see <https://www.ichth.net/content/membership.html>). A few members have indeed doubled their fees. V. Tozzi Thompson pointed out that in South America there were many problems with regional associations. The Chair replied that while legally it would be a Dutch association we would retain our international reach. At least one member would have to be resident in the Netherlands and speak Dutch. The same is true of CISH, based in Switzerland. A. Megill pointed out we might need a smaller and distinct Board of Directors separate from the current Board, which is the practice in North America. Chair replied that under Dutch law this will not be necessary, although there will be a legally binding Statute in Dutch and verified by the notary on the one hand and more flexible bylaws (that is, our Constitution) on the other. In cases of conflict, the Statute will prevail..

Action: Continued investigation of the procedures for conversion to association status to be undertaken by the President in consultation with the Executive Committee, and to update Board as needed. Draft Constitution to be discussed by the Committee and then circulated to Board for discussion and potential decision at its next meeting, and ultimately to the full membership of ICHTH.

12. Proposal for new name: changing it to International Commission for the History and Theory of History not Historiography. Not for decision but discussion. The problem is that outsiders do not understand the name of our commission and many insiders neither. The Chair received a suggestion that a third alternative would be reverting to original name (pre 1995) International Commission for Historiography. Given the limited time remaining in the meeting the Chair proposed that we organize a poll among Commission members proposing 3 names, perhaps 4 or 5 merely to collect opinions then distribute results to the Board for discussion. M. Tamm supported the poll with 3 options and a 4th write in choice. Our Constitution does not provide a fixed procedure on this issue, noted the Chair. E. Domańska proposed the poll commence with the Board only, and expressed preference that historiography is not dropped. It was agreed that should there be a clear majority against a change we would not then proceed to a full-membership poll. V. Tozzi Thompson queried whether anything could be suggested in the poll or whether the "International Commission" wording would remain. The Chair confirmed that "International Commission" would be a mandatory part of any new name.

Action: Executive to organize the poll.

13. Wikipedia page. Chair invited people to spread word of need for a Wikipedia page for ICHTH which might be an ideal group task for a Historiography course.

14. **Closure.** Under “any other business” no points were raised. The Chair thanked all members for their participation and the meeting adjourned at 11:03 AM Eastern Standard Time.

Respectfully submitted by:
Daniel Woolf, Co-Secretary General

Feb. 26 2023