

International Scientific Committee for the UNESCO History Project
Report of the Second Meeting, 23 February 2007

1. The following participants attended the meeting:

- Members: Mr. Robert Frank, Mr. Ilya V. Gaiduk, Mr. Mohieddine Hadhri,
Mr. Akira Iriye, Ms. Emma Rothschild, Mr. Jean-François Sirinelli,
Ms. Glenda Sluga, Mr. Ibrahima Thioub and Mr. Thomas G. Weiss
- Observers: History Club of AFUS, represented by Mr. Georges Kutukdjian
ICPHS, represented by Mr. Maurice Aymard and Mr. Luca Scarantino
ISSC, represented by Mr. Ali Kazancigil
- Secretariat: Ms. Françoise Rivière, Mr. Philippe Ratte and Mr. Jens Boel

Ms Romilla Thapar, Mr. José Paradiso and the ICSU observer (Mr. Thomas Rosswall) were unfortunately unable to attend this meeting and had excused themselves.

Introduction and general information

2. The meeting was opened by Ms Françoise Rivière and Mr. Jean-François Sirinelli, who recalled the main conclusions of the Committee's first meeting on 30 June 2006. They pointed out the necessity of today's meeting to arrive at conclusions with regard to the methodology of the Committee's work on the History Project. As a starting point for the discussions the Secretariat had prepared a working document with recommendations for orientations and actions to be taken (HP/2007/2 of 19 February 2007).
3. The Committee invited Mr. Jean-François Sirinelli to continue as Chair during the present session and professor Sirinelli accepted this proposal
4. Mr Georges Kutukdjian and Mr Jens Boel presented overviews of developments since the last meeting, in particular with regard to the AFUS publication of personal accounts of former UNESCO staff and other recent publications related to the Organization's history, the oral archives initiative, the forthcoming publication of the proceedings of the November 2005 history symposium, the creation of UNESCO history web pages, lists of accomplished and ongoing research on the history of the Organization and information on history project initiatives within other UN agencies.
5. Ms. Carmen Piñán Salazar-Alonso, UNESCO programme specialist in the Section for International Cooperation in Higher Education, Division of Higher Education, presented the UNESCO Chairs programme. This presentation highlighted the fact that in some cases the creation of Chairs in fields relating to the study of UNESCO's history (preferably in a larger context, such as the study of the history of international organizations in general). Initiatives can be taken by individual

universities or by networks of research institutions and they should comply with UNESCO's overall strategic priorities.

Project strategy

6. The Committee discussed the priorities and research themes for the project during the period 2007-2010 and agreed upon the necessity to focus on specific topics, as suggested in the above-mentioned working document, on the basis of clearly defined criterions. In conclusion, the Committee decided to focus on three major research themes. The working titles of these themes are the following: "*UNESCO and the problems of colonization and decolonization*", "*UNESCO through the prism of the Cold War*" and "*Towards a transnational history of international organizations: Methodology/epistemology*". The third, methodological, theme emerged during the discussions as innovative and important for understanding the specific problems encountered during research on the history of international organizations in general and UNESCO's history in particular. All three themes should be seen in interplay, mutually inspiring each other, rather than isolated research objects. The Committee emphasized that none of the selected topics should be limited to political history, scholars should be invited to open the field of research to intellectual, cultural, social and interdisciplinary approaches.
7. Final titles and the problematic of each of these overarching themes will be identified by sub-groups, which are provisionally composed as follows:
Theme 1 (UNESCO and decolonization): Mohieddine Hadhri, Thomas G. Weiss, Jean-François Sirinelli and Ibrahima Thioub
Theme 2 (UNESCO and the Cold War): Akira Iriye, Robert Frank, Mohieddine Hadhri and Ilya V. Gaiduk
Theme 3 (Methodology/epistemology): Emma Rothschild, Ibrahima Thioub Akira Iriye, Robert Frank, Jean-François Sirinelli and Glenda Sluga
The composition of the sub-groups is determined by interest and Committee members are welcome to become part of any of these.
8. Each of the sub-groups will discuss orientations to be taken and will take initiatives to ensure follow actions relating to each theme. Such actions will include the launching among students and scholars worldwide of calls for expressions of interest in carrying out relevant research. If the chair agrees, the sub-groups may also act on behalf of the Committee if this is necessary in order to ensure follow up action on the various research themes before the next Committee meeting.
9. The Committee agreed that three conferences shall be organized in 2009/2010 on the three research themes, i.e. in principle one conference on each theme - although other approaches may be taken by the Committee at its next meeting, on 18 January 2008, upon recommendation of one or more sub-groups. At each of these conferences, papers will be presented by students and scholars who have replied to calls for expressions of interest. If funds for the organization of these conferences are not available on the Special Account for the UNESCO History Project, UNESCO will ensure minimal, required funding.

10. The Committee also decided that the funds on the Special Account for the UNESCO History Project up to the amount available by the date of the meeting (i.e. \$32,425) can be used by the project coordinator for temporary assistance to facilitate the launching of research works within the three themes, to develop the web site and for any other tasks that would be useful for the project. The project coordinator is therefore authorized by the Committee to use these funds and shall report back to the Committee on their use at its next meeting, on 18 January 2008.
11. During the discussions, Committee members recommended that the selected research themes (in particular the topical ones, on UNESCO and the Cold War and decolonization issues, respectively) were kept in mind throughout the implementation of UNESCO's oral archives initiative. Thereby, oral sources could constitute interesting complements to the written sources available to researchers.
12. As stated above, the next meeting of the Committee will be on 18 January 2008; this meeting will take place at UNESCO in Paris.

Jean-François Sirinelli (Chair)

Jens Boel (Project coordinator)