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# Perspectives on History

The Newsmagazine of the *American Historical Association*

## World Historians Launch New Global Organization

AHA Staff, September 2010

World historians have formed a new worldwide organization, and have thereby joined the growing community of international historical societies. When the International Committee of Historical Sciences (CISH) held its 21st congress in Amsterdam (August 22-28, 2010), it gave formal recognition to the Network of Global and World History Organizations (NOGWHISTO) as an affiliate specializing in global historical studies.

NOGWHISTO is thus formally parallel now to such CISH affiliates as the International Economic History Association and the international commissions on historical demography and the history of the French Revolution. The structure of NOGWHISTO, however, is distinctive; it is a federation of five continental organizations, based in North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Its structure thus encourages discussion of global historical patterns among scholars on each continent but brings the continental groups together for worldwide exchange. The CISH congress in Amsterdam included two days of NOGWHISTO sessions (August 22 and 25), with roundtable sessions on world-historical research and teaching and

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with research reports on the key issues of migration, economic history, world orders, global culture, and Big History. At a General Assembly meeting on August 22, this worldwide organization of world historians set its direction for the next five years.

After years of preliminary international discussions, NOGWHISTO convened and formed in Dresden, Germany, on July 2, 2008. Participants at that meeting selected Matthias Middell of Leipzig University as president and established a headquarters in Leipzig. The steering committee of 11 of NOGWHISTO includes Ahmed Abushouk (International Islamic Univ. Malaysia); Peter Adebayo (Univ. of Ilorin); Gareth Austin (Univ. of Geneva); David Christian (Macquarie Univ.); Steffi Franke (Univ. of Leipzig); Alejandra Irigoin (London School of Economics); Patrick Manning (Univ. of Pittsburgh); Katja Naumann (Univ. of Leipzig); David Simo (Univ. of Yaoundé); and Zhang Weiwei (Nankai Univ.).

The rise of the constituent organizations has been as distinctive as the formation of the NOGWHISTO umbrella. The World History Association (WHA, founded in 1980 in North America) is the largest organization, and holds annual conferences. The European Network in Universal and Global History (ENIUGH, founded in 2000) has held triennial conferences in Leipzig and Dresden; it meets next in London in 2011. The Asian Association of World Historians (AAWH, founded at a meeting in Tianjin in 2008) held a 2009 conference in Osaka and meets in 2012 in Seoul. The African Network in Global History—Réseau Africain d'Histoire Mondiale (ANGH/RAHM, a bilingual organization operating in English and French)—formed at Ilorin, Nigeria, in December 2009, and will hold its first triennial conference in 2011 in Cairo. The Latin American and Caribbean group is discussing plans for an initial conference in Buenos Aires. All of these organizations have web sites that can be located through their acronyms. According to its statutes, NOGWHISTO may admit other affiliates based on thematic or temporal foci in addition to its current regional affiliates.

Support for creation of the new organization has come from various directions. Matthias Middell conducted most of the negotiations with CISH officials that led to agreement on the form and admission of NOGWHISTO. David Christian, formerly at San Diego State University and now again at Macquarie University, led in the discussions within the World History Association that brought its active support for the creation of NOGWHISTO. Patrick Manning, with financial support from the World History Network, Inc. (an independent nonprofit) and the University of Pittsburgh, led in convening the meetings at which the AAWH and ANGH were founded, as well as in securing support for the NOGWHISTO meeting in Amsterdam. Alejandra Irigoin led in convening the organizing committee for the Latin American and Caribbean organization.

Interconnections among the regional organizations provide promising indications that global collaboration will continue. For instance, Shingo Minamizuka, president of the AAWH, attended the founding meeting of the African Network and subsequently arranged to provide scholarships for world history students at the University of Ilorin. In other examples of global interconnection, Ji-Hyung Cho of Korea has attended meetings of the WHA and ENIUGH; the African Network in Global History has affiliated with the continent-wide Association of African Historians; and the World History Association will hold its 2011 annual meeting in Beijing.

—Based on a communication from Patrick Manning (Univ. of Pittsburgh).