

Newsletter November 2009

Dear colleagues,

this Newsletter is to inform you about the XVth World Economic History Congress which took place in Utrecht in August 2009.

First of all, I would like to thank once again Jan Luiten van Zanden and the Organization Committee for the great job they did. Everyone who attended the congress will agree on that, I trust. Furthermore, I am happy to report that we had a very successful congress with more than 1300 participants from 43 countries. More details on the congress are available on www.wehc2009.org. On this page you will also find the papers which were presented during the sessions. On the one hand they are a rich source to get particular information and on the other hand they provide an impressive overview over the latest research in our discipline. The congress was opened by the Dutch minister of finance Jan Kees de Jager followed by a lecture of Professor Daron Acemoglu "The Historical Roots of Poverty".

The prizes of the dissertation competition were awarded during the closing session on Friday, 7th to the following scholars:

- Pre 18th Century: Danielle van den Heuvel - Women and entrepreneurship. Female traders in the Northern Netherlands, c.1580-1815
- Long 19th Century: Se Yan - Real Wages and Skill Premia in China, 1860 to 1936
- 20th Century: Kerry Jane Hickson - The contribution of improved health to standards of living in twentieth century England and Wales

For the first time the WEHC introduced poster sessions which proved to be very successful. More than 20 junior researchers took part in the two Poster Sessions on Monday and Thursday and presented their high-quality posters to the interested audience. The Winner of the Poster Competition was Eric Golson with his poster 'Swedish Economic Neutrality in the Second World War?'.

Moreover, I would like to report on the meeting of the General Assembly which was held in Utrecht on Thursday, 6th. Main topics of this meeting were the election of new members of the Executive Committee, the reports of the president, of the treasurer and of the secretary general. Additionally, the General Assembly adopted new statutes. The bank account and the seat of the IEHA moved to the Netherlands, because higher additional interest rates in the new bank account allow additional support for young scholars and similar issues. Further, the annual membership fee, which has not been inflation-adjusted for decades, changed from 250 Swiss Francs to 200 Euro.

After many years of dedicated service to the IEHA, the following members of the Executive Committee stepped down: Forrest Capie, Naomi Lamoreaux, Carlos Marichal, Om Prakash, Gianni Toniolo and Rolf Walter. At this point, I want to thank all of them on behalf of the

IEHA for their contribution and the great work they did for the IEHA. After two terms, Christopher Lloyd also stepped down as treasurer; the president expressed her gratitude for his organizational commitment during the previous terms and thanked him and the Executive Committee members warmly.

For the new Executive Committee, the following members were elected in Utrecht:

Jan-Luiten van Zanden, president
Grietjie Verhoef, vice president
Riitta Hjerpe, honorary president
Luis Bértola, treasurer (first term)
Joerg Baten, secretary general (second term)
Beverly Lemire (second term)
Phillippe Minard (second term)
Yuri Petrov (second term)
Leandro Prados de la Escosura (second term)
Kaoru Sugihara (second term)
Bozhong Li (second term)
Catherine Schenk (first term)
Thirthankar Roy (first term)
Price V. Fishback (first term)
Franco Amatori (first term)
Salomón Kalmanovitz (first term)
Martin Shanahan (first term)
Luis Bértola (first term)

The General Assembly also welcomed two new member associations: the European Business History Association (EBHA) and the Columbian Economic Association (CEHA). The number of member associations of the IEHA has therefore increased to 45 members worldwide!

The congress ended with a debate on Friday, 7th between Bob Allan and Joel Mokyr. Their debate 'Why was the Industrial Revolution British?' can be downloaded on the Congress webpage www.wehc2009.org. Keeping the appreciated opening lecture of Professor Daron Acemoglu in mind, the Closing Session built a perfect ending of this very informative congress.

Finally, I am happy to announce the XVith World Economic History Congress which is going to take place from the 9th to the 13th of July 2012 in Stellenbosch (South Africa). I encourage all of you to take this congress as an opportunity to socialize with other economic historians and share the latest research results. The first call for session proposals will be sent out in November 2009. For further information please check the website www.wehc2012.org.

In the end we would like to provide you as usual with some additional information about the biographies and research profiles of our former EC members. In this newsletter we dedicate this section to our friend and appreciated colleague Tamás Szmrecsányi who passed away recently.

With kind regards

Joerg Baten, Secretary General

Tamás Szmrecsányi

(Tamás Szmrecsányi answered these questions a few months before he passed away.)

1. Short biography

Born in Budapest in 1936, I am a citizen of Brazil, where I arrived in 1951. Twenty-five years later, I got my PhD in Economics at UNICAMP (Universidade Estadual de Campinas) in the state of São Paulo, of which I became a full professor (*professor titular*) in 1994. Although formally retired since 2003, I am still working there as a teacher and researcher.

2. Which situation, person, or event brought you into economic history, and which motivation kept you there?

My PhD dissertation on the governmental planning experiences of the Brazilian sugar industry between 1930 and 1975 (published as a book in 1979) had an essentially historical character. But even from the time of my first graduation, in Philosophy at the University of São Paulo (USP) in 1961, through my 1969 M.A. degree in Economics at the New School for Social Research in New York, economic history has always been my preferred subject.

3. Please report five publications typical for your research fields (any language).

- a) “Por una História Econômica da Ciência e da Tecnologia”, *Economia Aplicada*, 4(2), April/June 2000, pp.399-407.
- b) “Esboços de Econômica da Ciência e da Tecnologia”, in Luiz Carlos Soares (Org.), *Da Revolução Científica à ‘Big (Business) Science’*, (São Paulo: Ed.Hucitec, 2001), pp. 155-200.
- c) “Origens e Consequências do Funding Loan de 1898”, *Análise Econômica*, 20 (38), Sept. 2002, pp. 155-200.
- d) “Efeitos e Desafios das Novas Tecnologias na Agroindústria canavieira”, in M.A.F. Dias de Moraes & P.F.A. Shikida (Orgs.) *Agroindústria Canavieira no Brasil: Evolução, Desenvolvimento e Desafios* (São Paulo: Ed.Atlams, 2002), pp.93-119.
- e) “Retomando a Questão do Início da Historiografia Econômica no Brasil”, *Nova Economia*, 14(1), January/April 2004, pp.11-37.

4. Could you describe one of your most important research findings?

Publications a) and b) refer to my teaching in the Economic History of Science and Technology; my most important findings in it were the variable interrelationships between scientific progress, technical progress and economic development which set in during the last three centuries. With regard to publication c) it has been the confirmation of Brazilian economic and political elites’ continual allegiance to the interests of foreign capital. Publication (d) can be viewed as a distant offspring of my PhD dissertation, and points to the arguable competitiveness of Brazil’s sugar and ethanol industry. Finally, publication (e) allowed me to reconstruct the origins of our country’s modern economic historiography and of the role played in it by the writings of Celso Furtado (1920-2004).