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NOTE



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I am very happy to have the opportunity, on this occasion, of speaking about the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions and its commitment in the various CISH meetings that have been held from the second half of the twentieth century onwards.

I can personally testify as to the scientific path, having taken part in those meetings, starting in 1975, where the ICHRPI has always held scientific sessions.

It is therefore appropriate for me to dedicate the first part of my report to make known the cultural motivation that led to the constitution of the ICHRPI long ago in 1936 (it was one of the first international commissions recognized by the CISH).

Running through the life of the International Commission, right from its outset and through to the present, means, so to speak, taking stock of the historical studies of European parliamentary institutions of the last century, starting with its founder, the Belgian Émile Lousse, professor at Louvain University. In 1933, at the seventh International Meeting of Historical Sciences, held in Warsaw, he promoted the creation of a permanent Commission – within the CISH – that could deal with the complex problem of the formation of the first state assemblies.

Professor Lousse's hopes were realized in 1936 when such a Commission was launched at the Bucharest International Meeting, and he became secretary-general. The Frenchman Colville was handed the presidency and the Italian Pier Silverio Leicht was the vice-president (recent research has revealed that he had a much more important role in the creation of the International Commission than was previously thought). The Commission's name was *Commission pour l'étude des origines des Assemblées d'États*; initially consisting of a limited number of scholars – 10- who gradually brought into being the French, German, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Hungarian and Belgian national sections, this last one being the most numerous and active.

Those were the years when it became more than ever interesting, even politically, to keep alive and increase the debate about representative institutions, neglected and scorned by the ruling authoritarian regimes that were favourable to a corporative order. And it was doubtless more simple – to avoid possible and predictable censorship – that discussion on these subjects should take place among academics within a scientific circle. It is no coincidence that precisely in 1935, in Belgium, the *Société Jean Bodin pour l'histoire du droit et des institutions politiques* was created, and also the prestigious periodical *Histoire politique et constitutionnelle* was started, edited by the noted scholar Boris Mirkine Guetzévich.

But let us come to the life and works of the Commission. Its first meeting was held in 1936 in Lausanne. Included in the speakers there were, as well as Professor Lousse, the British scholar Helen Cam and Pier Silverio Leicht who, on that occasion, publically sang the praises of the then young academic Antonio Marongiu, who would in following years become one of the most eminent and best known-scholars of European parliaments.¹

Among the scientific reasons that had led to the birth of the ICHRPI, there was certainly that of applying to the study of representative institutions using the comparative method. They had previously been analysed mostly in a national perspective, whose significance was touched upon by scholars of differing methodological orientation such as Otto Hintze and Marc Bloch. It was a case, therefore, of comparing varieties of historical experience in order to better evaluate specificities and common traits. Having as its thematic focus above all the birth and development of the assemblies of the *ancien régime*, the period under study covered most of all from the Late Middle Ages to the start of the modern age.

After the interruption caused by the Second World War, the ICHRPI restarted its activities in 1950 under the presidency of the Briton, Helen Cam. To the French title, that was partially modified and became *Commission internationale pour l'histoire des Assemblées d'États* (and, therefore, no longer limited just to origins), was added the English one of International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions, more suited to a wider spectrum of research. In this way, it was better to include the British experience (whose bicameral organization was distinct from the forms of social representation in continental Europe). In addition, the field of research was expanded to include post-revolutionary constitutionalism. The succeeding presidents of the ICHRPI were Emile Lousse himself (1960–1970), Antonio Marongiu (1970–1980), who injected notable impulse into its work, Helmut Georg Koenigsberger (1980–1985), Salvo Mastellone (1985–1990), John Rogister (1990–1999), William Brauneder (1999–2007) and Maria Sofia Corciulo (2007–2015), the current president being Joseba Aguirreazkuenaga, elected in 2015 and in office until 2023.

Over its 80 years of life, the ICHRPI has been a significant place of discussion as to methodological directions and thematic paths, as well as in the use of new sources. One only has to think of the wide-ranging discussion regarding the origins of the parliamentary institutions of the *ancien régime*, that saw the constitutional-corporative and institutional-parliamentary theories assessed. The first, whose great exponent was

¹About his life and contributions, cf. M.S. Corciulo (ed.), *Ricordo di Antonio Marongiu* (Soveria Mannelli (CZ), 2013). Cf. also A. Marongiu, *Medieval Parliaments. A Comparative Study* (London, 1968).

Emile Lousse, tended to identify in the representative assembly the almost automatic reflection of a social composition founded on the mechanisms of corporative society. The second, advocated above all by French and British academics, paid more attention to the actions of the holders of political power and the internal dynamics of institutions, above all parliamentary ones. One of the main contributions to this debate was the report that Helen Cam, Antonio Marongiu and the German historian Günther Stöckl presented at the 10th International Congress of Historical Sciences, which took place in Rome in 1955, when the foundations of a 'neo-parliamentarism' vision were laid down, and which, over the following years, were developed above all in studies by Antonio Marongiu, who made the celebrated distinction between 'pre-parliaments' and 'parliaments', and which became a nodal point around which academics of parliamentary institutions debated during the following decades. With Marongiu's methodological framework, many historians of representative institutions deliberated, at times with complaints of certain limitations, such as those expressed 'by the critical *nouvelle vogue* of the history of parliamentary institutions' (Marongiu's own definition). These academics, starting in the seventies, placed the accent on the importance of the 'representative' impulse arising from society (obviously understood in a much wider and more dynamic meaning than that set out by Professor Lousse). In particular, I am thinking about – among others – the Italian Guido D'Agostino² and the Dutchman Wym Blockmans³; the latter, from observation of the structures, organizations and functions of representative institutions, identified five types corresponding to the same number of diverse social situations from which they sprang. An invitation not to get stuck in the rigid methodological methods also came from one of the most notable contemporary historians, Helmut Koenigsberger, president of the ICHRPI from 1980 to 1985. In a masterful lesson held at King's College, London, while appreciating the importance of typologies, he stressed their usefulness, above all if they were combined 'with the dynamic of socio-political forces in a continual fight for power'.

The importance of the work of the ICHRPI is made evident by its publications and by the annual Congresses. The series 'Studies Presented to the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions' now runs to more than 100 volumes. The ICHRPI also has a six-monthly magazine, circulated since 1981, and *Parliaments, Estates and Representation*, published by the well-known house of Routledge. The annual Congresses are held on prestigious university campuses and – frequently – at the Parliament houses of various nations.⁴

In the studies over the last two decades, aspects directed at enhancing the vitality and strength of so-called European 'regionalism' have been increasingly cemented into the framework of the dynamics of power and of the representation connected to it. This body of historical-institutional testimony has handed on to our days a much wider footprint than occurred at the time of Professors Lousse and Marongiu. Furthermore, during recent decades, the experts in parliamentary history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, members of the Commission, have become as numerous as those of the modern

²Cf. G. D'Agostino, *Le istituzioni parlamentari nell'ancien régime* (Napoli, 1980).

³Cf. W.P. Blockmans, 'A Typology of Representative Institutions in Late Medieval Europe', *Journal of Medieval History* 4, (1978).

⁴Cf. M.S. Corciulo, 'Contributions of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions (ICHRPI) to the Debate on Methodology', *Riev LXXXX*, (2010).

period, the Middle Ages, after being so much studied, or perhaps because of that, is currently rather overlooked, as duly noted by the well-known American academic Thomas Bisson.⁵

After this necessary preview as to the scientific aims of the birth and development of the ICHRPI, I come now to briefly recall (as I mentioned) its constant commitment in the various international meeting of the CISH, where the Commission has always organized at least three thematic sessions, often making reference to the historiographical balance of the preceding five years (given the five-yearly intervals of the CISH meetings).

Up to the meeting held in August 1985, in Stuttgart, the themes proposed by the ICHRPI still dealt with the traditional types of parliament, close to the methodologies of the history of law, such as ‘Deputies or Delegates’, and ‘The Reichstag in the Holy Roman Empire’.

An important thematic change came about at the August 1990 congress (Madrid), where, while a session of ‘general’ character was always present, in the other two, reference was made to a historiographical theme much talked about at the time, such as the institutionalization, let’s say, of the political heritage of revolutions.

At the following CISH meeting, in September 1995 (in Montreal), the ICHRPI proposed for the first time non-institutional themes *strictu sensu*, such as parliamentary language and theatricality (also in their definition, representative institutions in fact connect up to ‘staging’, in other words to the performance). In the years leading up to the CISH meeting of August 2000 (in Oslo), not only contemporary historiography, but also the political debates placed an accent on the crisis in parliamentary institutions, that is to say, precisely in democracy itself. This was fully recognized in the work of the ICHRPI, where, at a session dedicated to common antiparliamentary theories between the end of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries in some European nations, for the first time themes appeared that we would see as actuality in this most recent decade, such as ‘Parliaments and Assemblies in Time of War’.

In July 2005 (in Sydney), despite the presence of only six exponents of the ICHRPI, even so it was possible to organize a work session on institutional types of political representation. In addition, I took part, also in Sydney, in a joint session (no. 23) on the theme of ‘The Governance of Cities in History’.

At the following congress in August 2010 (Amsterdam), new ideas in the sphere of institutional history, also this time coherently with the historiography of those years were discussed: for example, one session was dedicated to the symbolism of parliamentary ceremonies, while another was on the rhetoric of assemblies. Furthermore, the theme of parliamentary bureaucracy surfaced for the first time. At the same meeting, I was discussant in a specialized theme both historiographically and ethically ‘conflictual’, and thus well-attended – that of ‘History of Political Historiography’, organized by the Giunta Italiana degli Studi Storici together with that of Switzerland.

From this necessarily short profile of the activity of the ICHRPI within the CISH, it can be clearly seen how, in studying representative and parliamentary institutions, neither the theories nor the ‘practices’ of politics have ever been neglected. Likewise the wider-associated cultural context, in particular social extraction and the politico-

⁵Cf. T. Bisson, ‘The Problem of Medieval Parliamentarism: A Review of Works Published by ICHRPI (1936-2000)’, *Parliaments, Estates, Representation* 21, (2001).

cultural development of their members (often in the case of parliaments closer to us in time, the importance of myth of representation has been demonstrated).

And now I come to the meeting of August 2015 in Jinan. From 1995, the Chinese Popular Republic had presented its candidature as host for the CISH congress.

Alongside the traditional themes of the models of political representation, two new objects of study were added for the first time: the first on *Prominent Figures in Public Life*, directed at underlining the importance of prosopographical research, rightly considered as being more and more useful in highlighting the contribution of so-called political personnel to functions and the effective political balance reached by the institutions, the second study being on the *Rapport between Parliaments and Public Opinion*.

The 67th conference of the ICHRPI, entitled *Parliamentarism: Theories and Practices (13th–20th centuries)* was thus arranged in three sessions and saw the participation of various speakers, as well as about 30 auditors.

The first session, presided over by me on the afternoon of 27 August 2015, was dedicated to *Models of Parliamentary Representation*.

This was followed by Professor Shen-Han of the University of Nanjing, a member of the Commission, who presented the interesting contribution on *Influences of Western Parliamentary and Constitutional Ideas from the 19th to early 20th centuries in China*. Our Chinese colleague had invited, in 2002, some members of the Commission to a meeting at his university, that had therefore already had an important moment of historiographical discussion.

The second session, on the morning of 28 August, was presided over by Coleman Dennehy of University College Dublin, and the theme was *Figures of Parliamentary Life [Biography and Prosopography]. Personalities [and networks] in Parliamentary History*.

The third and last session, on the theme of *Parliaments and Public Opinion*, had been chaired by the current president of the ICHRPI, Joseba Aguirreazkuenaga.

The International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions had also collaborated in the realization of specialized theme 6, entitled *Impact of the Parliamentary System Through the World*, organized by John Register (former president of the ICHRPI (1990–1999) and member of the Bureau of the CISH), in which I had the role of discussant.

At the closing session, August 2015, held at Shandong University, as president of the ICHRPI, I was present and contributed – with voting powers – at the election of the new board of the ICHS/CISH (2015–2020), which was replaced in an online meeting in April 2021 with president Catherine Horel (France) and secretary-general Sacha Zala (Switzerland). It that meeting, it was also decided by a majority to choose as location of the next CISH meeting, in 2026, the city of Jerusalem.

Concluding, if the scientific aim of the ICHRPI is certainly that of promoting research into the origins, evolution and changes in the parliamentary institutions of the whole world and in all times – the noted academic Helmut Koenigsberger, president of the same from 1985 to 1990, added another, more truly ethical and political, in the closing speech of his presidential mandate: ‘The existence of parliaments has not resolved the great problems of humanity: freedom and equality, war and peace. However, no other societal organization has been able to do so. I believe that political dialogue must

remain open. The history of this problem is the object of the work of the International Commission’.

Report on session 13 Specialized Themes (ST 13), Wednesday 24 August 2022

Title: Les Parlements transnationaux dans leur évolution historique après la Deuxième Guerre mondiale: limites et perspectives

As part of the international conference in Poznań 2022, a session of the specialized themes was dedicated to the topic: *Les Parlements nationaux dans leur évolution historique après la Deuxième guerre mondiale: limites et perspectives*. The session included five papers and was chaired by Professor Maria Sofia Corciulo (Sapienza University of Rome), who also organized the session.

The general aspects of the problem were pointed out by Professor Corciulo in her introduction. The most important transformations of globalization concern not only the economic sphere, but also the institutional one. On the one hand, national institutions have been weakened by international processes. On the other hand, transnational institutions have emerged. As far as the parliamentary dimension is concerned, transnational forms of parliaments have developed over the years. The history of transnational parliamentarism began with the foundation in 1889 of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. In 1949 the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe was created, which was at the origins of the European Convention of Human Rights, signed on 4 November 1950. From the following decade, a very large network of transnational parliamentary institutions was formed (among others: Common Assembly of the ECSC in 1951, Assembly of the Western European Union in 1954, Assembly of the NATO in 1955, Latin American Parliament in 1964, Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie in 1967, Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1974, Joint Parliamentary Commission of Mercosur in 1991). Only one, the European Parliament, acts today as legislator; the others are limited to debating and sending recommendations to the executives of the member States. It would certainly be important for these transnational assemblies to be able to participate in a more influential way in the events which concern the citizens they represent; this essentially entails the right to exercise decision-making powers and not only advisory powers. The session analyses some of the main characteristics of transnational parliamentarism in its historical development and its perspectives. Special attention is devoted to the European Parliament as a model for transnational or multinational parliaments.

Professor Joseba Agirreazkuenaga (University of the Basque Countries) has examined the issue of the relationship between post-national citizenship and supranational parliament in the European Union. He has moved from the present crisis of the sovereignty of national States that are counteracted both by subnational and supranational entities. It is up to historians to elucidate the real situation against the determinism of jurists who consider that the legal situation is equivalent to the real one. The historical analysis of the European Union institutional asset shows how sovereignty is more and more spread over various levels: local, regional, national, state, international. The thesis of the paper is that only cooperation among parliamentary bodies of the different levels of

sovereignty is the way to institutionally ensure a Europe that is closer to citizens, more transparent and a guarantor of diversity.

Professor Marie-Claude Drummond (University of Brasilia) **has** discussed the transnational Parliament of Mercosur, focusing on the issue of how the suspension of Venezuela from Mercosur, due to the violation of the democratic principles and of human rights, impacted the parliament of this organization, named 'Parlasur'. The suspension of Venezuela had the automatic consequence of the suspension of Venezuela's parliamentary delegation from the Parlasur, or was the Parlasur autonomous in its evaluation of the matter? In fact, the Mercosur's Parliament decided that the Venezuelan representatives continued to be members of the Parliament. However, it could not ignore the decision of the governments of the member States of Mercosur, so that it adopted a compromise: the Venezuelan representatives were allowed to speak in plenary and committee sessions, but their voting rights would be limited.

Two papers were devoted to European parliamentary institutions.

Professor Sandro Guerrieri (Sapienza University of Rome) examined the development of political groups in the European Parliament, which has taken place since the beginning of this parliamentary experiment, when its representatives were appointed by national parliaments. The political groups have assumed an increasing role in the life of the assembly and their consolidation has been a crucial factor in the growth of the assembly's role. However, the development of a federal form of cooperation between the national parties of the different political families has proved quite more difficult, so that the European elections that started in 1979 have been described as 'second order national elections'. Nevertheless, in the last two European elections (2014 and 2019) the European parties have been perceived as a more substantial entity by the European electorate. And this strengthening of the identity of European parties could be the premise for a further consolidation of the European Parliament's role in the European Union political system.

Professor Maria Manuela Tavares Ribeiro (University of Coimbra) examined the specific case of the three Portuguese presidencies of the European Council, which took place in 1992, 2000 and 2007, and the relationship that the Portuguese presidency established on these three occasions had with the European Parliament. The first presidency was marked by the realization of the single market in 1992 and the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. The Portuguese Presidency immediately established a constructive dialogue with the EU institutions, also making use of the contribution of Portuguese MEPs in Strasbourg. The last of the three presidencies, in 2007, was characterized by a further strengthening of this dialogue: the main political groups in the European Parliament and its president, Hans-Gert Pöttering, praised the dynamism of the presidency and, in particular, its effective coordination of the intergovernmental conference that led to the signing of the Lisbon Treaty.

Professor Paul Seaward (the History of Parliament, UK), analysed the origins and the development of the parliamentary dimension of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association has its roots in the Empire Parliamentary Association, created in 1911, composed of members of the United Kingdom and of the Dominions. The association was reorganized in 1948, with a formal secretariat based in London. The most important mission of the Commonwealth became the maintenance of a link with the countries who became independent. The Commonwealth Parliamentary

Association was a significant network of parliaments, and it pursued the goal of supporting parliamentary democracy in the Commonwealth member states.

After the five presentations, Professor Jorge Alberto Luengo Sanchez (University of Pompeu Fabra of Barcelona), competently discussed the most relevant aspects highlighted by the speakers. Then, as an interesting debate took place, with the participation of the European Parliament's member Sophie In 't Veld who underlined the growing importance of the institutional and political role of the European Parliament, thus concluding a session that generated interest among the attending audience.

Notes on contributor

Maria Sofia Corciulo is Emeritus Professor of History of Political Institutions at the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy. She is Past President of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions (2007-2015). She is now Honorary President. She is member of the Commission of the Academy of Lincei for the publication of the Acts of Italian Constitutional Assemblies. She is Correspondent Member of Arcadia Academy. Her main research interests are related to the first decade of the nineteenth century in France and in Italy, particularly the Napoleonic domination in South Italy and the Neapolitan Constitutional Revolution of 1820–1821. Her recent publications include: *Una Rivoluzione per la Costituzione. Agli albori del Risorgimento meridionale (1820-21)* (Rome, 2017); 'Political conflicts inside the Neapolitan Parliament of 1820-21', in G. Karvunaki (ed.), *Pre and post Europe revolutions and parliamentary institutions. The case of Greece on the occasion of the bicentenary since the war of independence (1821-2021)*, Proceedings of the 72nd Conference of the ICHRPI, Athens, 20–23 October 2021, *Studies presented to the ICHRPI* (Hors série, online), (Athens, 2022); 'In tema di costituenti: Francia e Italia (1945-1947)', in *Nomos* 3, 2022.

Disclosure statement

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