The ISCSC Newsletter

The International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations

Winter 2009
Vol. 49, No.1

www.wmich.edu/iscsc

The ISCSC was founded in 1961 by Othmar Auderle, Rushton Coulborn and Arnold Toynbee in Salzburg (Austria). Pitirim Sorokin was the first president (1964-71). In 1971 the Society’s leadership moved to the U.S. Over 30 foreign countries are represented in the Society’s membership. Benjamin Nelson became the Society’s first American president (1971-77). Sustainable Civilization Matters

The State of Civilization and its World-Systems

According to Immanuel Wallerstein (1974), the world-system concept helps to understand the dynamics of civilization. Capitalism and Communism are such world-systems, which define wealth accumulation and the well-being of humans in the last two millennia. Both are now in trouble. At the end of the 20th century (1989-91), Communism collapsed.

A few years later (October 2008), uncontested Capitalism, as a product of the ideas of Smith-Greenspan-Bush, has reached its limits and needs profound ideological and practical correction. Both “losses” are welcomed by people.

In 1941, James Burnham predicted the Managerial Revolution in his famous book. However, this kind of revolution should have followed the Bolshevik Revolution, when the apparatchiks took over the management of state enterprises. In fact, the Managerial Revolution took place in Capitalism. However, it poses an unpleasant question: Will it be followed by a “Bolshevik” Revolution here to complete the socialization of banks and other “capitalistic” institutions, as the U.S. government promised during the fall of 2008?

The growing world population challenges civilizational sustainability. In 2006, we reached the peak of oil production. Gas and uranium should last for 40-50 years. The climate changes, perhaps triggered by a too active civilization, which also contributes to the Death Triangle of Civilization (Population, Ecological, Resources Depletion Bombs connected), which should be more obvious to people about 2050.

The 2009 and 2010 ISCSC conferences will address these kinds of civilization issues, making our Society on a cutting edge of civilization-driven world affairs.

Matt Melko, in his excellent essay in CCR-Fall 2008, established all critical factors of the origins of civilization. However, we also need to establish key factors which should be applied today in supporting sustainable civilization. Will we be wise enough to do it?

Andrew Targowski (WMU)
President

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The State of the Society – Growing & Younger in 2009?

The Society is slowly growing (10% new members) and gaining new young blood. A new Vice-President for International-Europe – Prof. Kristofer Allerfeldt from the University of Exeter (UK), reminds all that this Society was co-organized by his great fellow countryman-Arnold Toynbee. Vice-President for International-Asia Prof. Jung Dong Hyeon (S. Korea), together with his students, sent 700 invitations to Asian scholars. Oleg Benesch, Vice-President for Organization, keeps us in touch with the Japanese Society. We also have young scholar Ayden Stevens-Arroyo in the Ways and Means Committee led by Tssegai Isaac. Great changes have taken place at CCR; Steve Blaha, as our new publisher, decisively helped to publish CCR in a new format by a new printer, at half the cost. New assoc. editors John Reilly, Connie Lamb, and Dario Fernandez-Morera maintain high quality of our flagship CCR. Norman Rothman, as always, is irreplaceable in his Membership Committee. Steve Blaha, as Chair of the Futures Committee, works intensively on organizing the next conferences. We also face the opportunity to nominate member Ashok Kumar Malhotra for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Andrew Targowski

Our colleague

Professor David Richardson died some time ago. He first attended an ISCSC meeting in 1972, the year after the association had moved to the United States. In the later Seventies he edited the Comparative Civilizations Bulletin, predecessor of the Comparative Civilizations Review. He taught philosophy at Edinboro State University in Pennsylvania. He published on Worldviews. He was gentle, diplomatic in disagreement, having a way of asking a question that expressed surprise and caused you to reconsider.

When, at one meeting, it was suggested that if a representative of the CIA were monitoring the ISCSC, it would be the person you least suspected. The consensus in the group, therefore, was that the CIA agent could be David Richardson.

Our colleague

Professor Headley and Von der Muhl -- great speakers-St. John 2008

Steve Blaha, Chair

The 40th ISCSC International Conference in Provo
Utah, USA – June 15-17, 2010

Can Civilizations Recover from a World-wide Depression? Impact on Culture, Progress and Societies

The 2010 Conference will be held in Provo, Utah on the campus of Brigham Young University. The meetings are scheduled for June 15-17 which is Tuesday through Thursday. We are experimenting with a new timeframe to avoid weekend travel and maybe the fares will be lower.

The Conference Chair is Connie Lamb and the Program Chair is Dario Fernandez-Morera. Campus housing will not be available, so conference attendees will stay in nearby hotels which are reasonably priced. More information forthcoming.

The Futures Committee

The Sociology chair at Harvard has his administrator looking into conference possibilities for us for 2011 (50th Anniversary-Sorokin).

The 38th ISCSC International Conference in Saint John – NB,
Canada - June 26-28, 2008

Exploring Multiculturalism in Globalizing Civilizations

The 38th ISCSC annual conference was hosted by the University of New Brunswick, Saint John, Canada, from June 26-28, 2008. The overall theme was Civilization in the Americas--for which many papers were presented--but ongoing themes were also included.

Professor Ricardo Duchesne, who teaches at that university, was responsible for all the arrangements and Dr Steve Blaha was program chair. Both the accommodations and the program met all expectations and beyond.

Development of the idea and campus was lovely, and because its distance from town was difficult to manage without a car, most of us stayed in perfectly comfortable dorms and guest quarters. Our first Keynote Address was delivered by Professor Toby Huff, Harvard University, who is a world famous specialist on Islam--particularly the era of Islamic Science. His paper was: "Nine-Eleven and Afterwards: A Twenty-First-Century Civilizational Encounter.

Our second Keynote Address was provided by Professor John Headley, University of North Carolina: "Of Civilization: Origin, Composition, and Development of the Idea and the Term." Although we are an association that focuses on Civilization, we still have lively discussions just trying to define that institution.

The papers and book reviews were meaty and interesting, and many will be appearing in our publication: Comparative Civilizations Review. We look forward to seeing you all at our next conference in Kalamazoo-Michigan, June 3-6, 2009. Invite your colleagues.

1968 - 2008

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As of Fall, 2008, the society has published 59 refereed issues on:
(1) the comparison of whole civilizations,
(2) the appropriate methodology to use in comparative civilizational studies,
(3) inter-civilizational contacts, or
(4) significant issues in the humanities or social sciences studied from a comparative civilizational perspective.

Joseph Drew
CCR Editor-in-Chief

Wayne Bledsoe (our former President) was a candidate (D) for the 149th District of Missouri. He was a Blue (grass) candidate in a Red County-(R), which is not ready for “White Obama.” Your time for change Wayne will come again!

"You say you’ll change the constitution. Well, you know. We all want to change your head"
-Lennon/McCartney, Revolution

Are we going to change our heads 40 years later?

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The 39th ISCSC International Conference in Kalamazoo, Michigan, USA – 2009

June 3-6 Civilization in a Time of Change and Crisis

The 39th international meeting will take place at Western Michigan University, where every year about 4,500 medieval historians meet in May. We, the civilizationists, will meet June 3-6. The first part of the Congress will be on Civilization in a Time of

Sorokin Rediscovered

Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968) was imprisoned three times by the czarist regime of Russian Empire; during the Russian Revolution he was a member of Alexander Kerensky’s Russian Provisional Government. After the October Revolution he engaged in anti-Bolshevik activities, for which he was condemned to death by the victorious Bolshevik government; the sentence was commuted to exile. He emigrated in 1923 to the United States and was naturalized in 1930. Sorokin was professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota (1924–30) and at Harvard University (1930–55), where he founded the Department of Sociology. He was a vocal opponent of Talcott Parsons’ theories.

Sorokin’s Legacy

In his Social and Cultural Dynamics he classified societies according to their ‘cultural mentality’, which can be ideational (reality is spiritual), sensate (reality is material), or idealistic (a synthesis of the two). He suggested that major civilizations evolve through these three in turn: ideational, idealistic, sensate. Each of these phases of cultural development not only seeks to describe the nature of reality, but also stipulates the nature of human needs and goals to be satisfied, the extent to which they should be satisfied, and the methods of satisfaction. Sorokin has interpreted contemporary Western civilization as a sensate civilization dedicated to technological progress and prophesied its fall into decadence and the emergence of a new idealistic or idealistic era.

Change and Crisis. The second part will be on Civilizational Responses to Crisis (Past & Present). A new component of this meeting will be a contest for the best student paper/art.

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He is best known for his contributions to the social cycle theory.

He was the first president of the ISCSC in 1964-71.

My name is Nikolay Zyuzev. I’m from Russia, and I was born and live in the Komi region where the founder of your organization Pitirim Sorokin was born. Next February we are having a conference on Pitirim Sorokin, so would you or other members of the society come or contribute a paper? We would be very glad to see you here and I believe to see this corner of Northern Russia which is basically unknown in the world could be very interesting and inspiring for anyone. I’m a member of the organizational committee, and have a long interest in Sorokin’s philosophy and sociology (published two books and a dozen papers about him).

I hope you will answer.

Best wishes.

Nikolay Zyuzev,
Doctor of Philosophy.
Professor of the Komi State Pedagogical Institute,
The Chair of the Department of Philosophy at the Uhta State Technological University, Russia

nyzuzev@gmail.com

Civilization versus Culture? Or Pedro versus Dario?


Dear Andrew Targowski

This letter deals with the matter that I started yesterday through a E-mail to you, and that I believe you have received.

AT the ISCSC 2007 Asilomar, Monterey meeting, during a speech by Professor Wilkinson, I made an oral comment about the difference between Culture and Civilization. By the opportunity I said that to have Civilization it is not enough to have a city, but also some monuments at the place, what means a level of representation and institutionalism. There for, it was with surprise and anger that I noticed on the ISCSC Newsletter, 48(1), Sprig 2008, page 3, that Dario Fernandez-Morera used the ideas I presented in an oral way in Asilomar, without any reference to my intervention, in the section Civilization versus Culture?

I believe that all members of the ISCSC who where at Wilkinson’s conference will recognize that I am saying the truth. Therefore I am asking you to provide, with Dario’s knowledge a written rectification in the next issue of the ISCSC Newsletter, and to notice the rectification at the Saint John meeting, June 2008.

As I wrote you yesterday I will not be in Saint John because of health problems, but hope to be present in 2009, in Kalamazoo. Best wishes for the Conference and for you personally. Anna Bella is sending her greetings. Your,

Pedro P. Geiger
(Brazil)

Call for Papers and Panels-2009
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Dr Laina Farhat-Holzman
Dr Steven Blaha
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About the Society and Members

The Nobel Peace Prize?  

For the exemplary development of schooling for poor students in India initiated by private savings and effort of a professor of philosophy at the State University of New York in Oneonta, NY, and an active and contributing member of the ISCSC.

Dr. Ashok Kumar Malhotra

My Indian grandfather used to say: “Morning comes and evening follows. This way, the entire life time swallows.” Life is too short. Please do not wait: Make a difference by offering a gift of education to a child in India. Your generous gift will keep giving for generations to come.

India, with a population of 1.1 billion people, is the world’s largest democracy. At present, there are approximately 700 million people who have some form of education from the lowest to the highest, whereas there are 400 million children and adults from the lower classes who are illiterate. In order to bring parity among the diverse people of this great country, we need to provide education to these 400 millions.


Dr. Ashok Kumar Malhotra

Membership Report

We have 15 new members, to whom I sent a letter. Andrew has now sent out information for a call for papers and has posted other information in regard to accommodation, meals, transportation, and recreation on the website. I posted a copy of the call for papers on my departmental website (the department has 600 members in history, government, and related disciplines). I have also posted the call for papers and conference information at the h-net website put out by Michigan State.

Norm Rothman, Chair

Ways and Means Committee Report

The Ways and Means Committee is attempting to solicit funds for the purpose of expanding membership of students. In order to accomplish this purpose, students will need to be exposed to ISCSC conferences first. We would like to take this opportunity to encourage ISCSC to contribute funds to be used for travel expenses of students. Thank you.

Tseggai Isaac, Chair

Members’ New Books

Published in January 2008 by BookSerge Publishing about Islam in Turkey, Egypt and Iran

www.amazon.com

Published in October 2008 by Information Science Reference Hershey-New York, www.info-sci-ref.com www.amazon.com

According to the Author the book is about the contingency theory of civilization.