



HELLO FROM YOUR NEW SECRETARY GENERAL

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In November 2019, I took over from Stephen Hughes as TICCIH's Secretary General. Although many of you TICCIH folks may know me personally already from having met at one of our World Congresses, most of you definitely don't. So I take this opportunity of the new issue of our bulletin to say a few words about who I am, my fields of work and my commitment and the missions I have in mind for the forthcoming years in this position, from which I hope I can make a contribution to further expand our worldwide network of industrial heritage experts and enthusiasts.

It's 15 years from now when I first came in touch with TICCIH, while working on the first steps of the world heritage nomination of the Northern France Coal Mining Basin in late 2004. This project, which was finally successful in 2012, aimed at nominating a whole region as an industrial cultural landscape for world heritage. At the time, most people still perceived this as a crazy idea, not least for its unprecedented scale. As a staff member of the association which took on the challenge to organize the nomination process, it was my task to establish international contacts and get the necessary expertise into the project. Starting from a promising meeting with Louis Bergeron in Paris, I quickly came in touch with other industrial heritage experts around Europe, especially in the UK where I did a field trip in May 2005, visiting sites that were already on UNESCO's World Heritage list and interviewing people in charge of their management and previous nomination processes.

For me, as a young woman who had grown up in the German Ruhrgebiet, holding a geography degree from Humboldt University of Berlin and a French masters degree in geopolitics from University of Paris 8, discovering TICCIH as a global community of experts working on the interpretation, conservation and dissemination of industrial heritage, was great in both intellectual and personal terms. It linked back to so many issues I had been observing unconsciously in my surroundings from a very young age. Since 2006, I have participated in all TICCIH's World Congresses, in professional contexts that have changed continuously over time.

My professional career started with the Bassin Minier's World Heritage project, and ever since, I kept in touch with my French former colleagues. In this sense, it was a highlight when the 2015 TICCIH World Congress in Lille and its region gave us the opportunity to work together again after ten years, this time guiding one of the congress tours to the former Coal Mining Basin. More recently, I have been involved in another World Heritage project, of even



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bigger a scale. From 2016 until 2018 I was part of the Industrial Cultural Landscape Ruhrgebiet project team led by the Foundation for Industrial Monuments and Historic Culture, representing one of their partner institutions, the Regional Association of the Ruhr (RVR), as Vice-Director of RVR's Industrial Heritage Department.

But it's not only high-profile World Heritage projects that I have dedicated my time and efforts. Understanding myself as an intellectual activist, I have worked for and with a range of industrial heritage associations in the past, and I keep on doing so. From 2011 until 2015, for example, I was the first coordinator of the newly established Berlin Centre for Industrial Heritage (BZI), which came into being as a joint cultural project of the University of Applied Sciences HTW Berlin and the Foundation of the German Museum of Technology, and is today an institutionalized research unit co-financed by the Land of Berlin. When BZI started work, highlighting the touristic potential of Berlin's industrial heritage was supposed to be our core task. We benefitted from the special circumstances in Berlin during the Cold War, which had prevented the modernization of industrial facilities on both sides of the wall. As a consequence, a lot of industrial facilities which would otherwise have been dismantled or replaced were still there and now served as a basis for us to re-visualize Berlin's industrial past as one major centre of the global electric revolution.

It was in this context, developing narratives around Berlin's historic role as 'Electropolis', and even representing a potential candidate for World Heritage status, that I started to critically interrogate the

dominating narratives about technology 'Made in Germany' and its supposedly great contribution to modernity, social progress and local development in many cities around the world. My work quickly shifted from not only ensuring the conservation of the physical remains of these processes by setting up a network of industrial heritage actors in Berlin, but also to find new ways to interpret and disseminate this industrial heritage, creating new forms of story-building and story-telling that would allow for a more outward looking and socially more self-reflective perspective. This kind of reasoning was where I took my motivation from over the following years, researching for my doctoral thesis on the German electrification of two Chilean cities in the late 19th and early 20th century, while at the same time I kept on working for BZI and a little later for RVR.

The essential aim of my intellectual work is to challenge the usual viewpoints on technology transfer from the North, and contrast them with differing interpretations of the same processes from the global South. Thus, the Eurocentric perspective from which most of the industrial processes have been interpreted up to date becomes evident, and for me, there was in fact no way back from this endeavour. In 2018, I resigned from my leading position in the Ruhrgebiet, finished my doctoral thesis, and in August started working as an Associate Professor at the Pontifical Catholic University of Valparaíso, in Chile, where I am now teaching Global Urban Geography and establishing my own Centre for Critical Industrial Heritage Studies (ESPI). The switch from a professional to an academic career also allowed me to realize a long-cherished wish: to live globally, with one foot in Valparaíso and the other in Berlin and my body serving as a bridge between two urban places in our globally interconnected world.

With regard to my missions as TICCIH's new Secretary General, this translates into two main issues. The first is about content: I want to contribute to decolonize the interpretation of industrial heritage, promoting conceptual proposals from the global South and especially Latin America. And the second one is about our network: our membership could still be much more diverse in terms of disciplines, professions, age and gender, but also culturally and geographically.

Concerning the reinterpretation of industrial heritage and of industrial processes from a truly global instead of Eurocentric perspective, I would like to deepen our reflection on the time frame we usually limit ourselves to when we define industrial activities. Rather than starting with the Industrial Revolution in England, we might take into account earlier periods of technology and knowledge transfer processes that were already in place in the context of the global expansion of the European economic model from the Middle Ages. Our Cuban colleagues never tire of repeating this view.

Also, I think that we need to talk much more about branches that have been essential in our global industrial production and consumption system ever since, such as the coffee, sugar and tobacco industries - global food chains, to make it short. There is no point any more in sticking to the 'classic' sectors of the industrial revo-

lution from a European point of view, like coal mining and steel making. Understanding global power relations and the profoundly unequal terms of trade between the North and the South, and between urban centres and the peripheries, is essential. Especially as we, as experts in the field, are actively constructing and attributing values to the physical and immaterial evidences of former (and current) industrial activities and processes. Their inevitable 'dark' sides, including global injustice and climate change, have to be addressed critically and even self-critically, particularly in the societies of the North.

Aspects like these have been at the core of my intellectual work with colleagues in and outside the TICCIH community over the past years, for example designing the annual conference 2017 of the German-speaking Working Group on Theory and Education on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage (see Bogner et al. 2018; and Massimo Preite's review in TICCIH Bulletin #84, p. 24-27:), and the round table discussion at the TICCIH Latin America Congress in Guatemala last November, and I hope to continue this reflection at our next World Conference in Montreal in 2021.

Concerning the future of our TICCIH network, the new subscription system now offers differentiated rates for individual membership, depending on your geographic region and income. Secondly, remember that once you are logged in to the TICCIH website as a member, you can create your own profile, accessible for other TICCIH members (only!) - a great opportunity for effective networking within our community. Thirdly, as you may have already noticed, we have refreshed the Bulletin's design together with my staff in Valparaíso. And lastly, at the time of writing we are finalising some nice material for a TICCIH membership campaign to be launched soon. This will be downloadable in different languages from our website, and can be used in whatever events TICCIH members and their friends organize locally. Thus, we hope to get in touch with a range of interesting new people from differing disciplines, professions, age and gender, and especially from Asian, Latin American and African cultures.

In short, my motivation is to bring people and continents closer together and to build bridges, by challenging and changing traditional viewpoints from a global perspective. I also see this job as a moral duty. My participation in the TICCIH World Congresses, every three years since 2006, each time meant a big push for my motivation and a lot of inspiration, which kept me happy and running over the next few years thinking about new research topics, becoming familiar with unknown perspectives, getting in touch with more and other people, setting up new projects and networks... Now, I feel it's time to put something back to our global community: invest my time so that others can benefit from similar experiences, especially younger people who think globally and act correspondingly at their local scale, shaping our way into a global society, maybe also more just and more peaceful. Let's hope that all this works out well – and that we still have some time left at the end of each day to talk nonsense and take a deep look at the wide-open sea.

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