

Bergen conference 2003

EASR General Assembly, Bergen, May 10, 2003, 2 p.m.

Report 2002-2003 by the General Secretary

Following the 1st congress of EASR in Cambridge September 2001 on *Religion and Community*, hosted by BASR, the 2nd congress on *Monotheism : Diversity. Exclusivism or Dialogue ?* hosted by the Société Ernest-Renan took place in Paris in September 2002. The Paris congress was as successful as the Cambridge congress, and the present 3rd congress in Bergen on *The Globalisation and Localisation of Religion* most certainly will be no exception to the rule.

As usual, the General Assembly, held once a year, took place in connection with the Paris conference, and the minutes from the GA has been communicated to all of You (via Your delegate to the committee) and made public at our website (www.easr.de) together with the reports from the President and the General Secretary.

Normally then, the EASR conferences as well as the annual GA take place in September. This year, however, we decided to locate it in May in Bergen, at the same time as the International Committee meeting of the IAHR. The reason for this, of course, was the firm wish of EASR to cooperate as much as possible with the IAHR, and the fact that it might have been hard for quite a few members to find time and funding for attending two meetings and two conferences in the same year.

To place the GA in May instead of in September does, however, mean that the year 2002/03 and the report of that year needs must be shorter than usual. It does not, however, mean, that nothing has happened.

Membership Status

As can be seen from the attached list of corporate members, i.e. national associations, the number (15) of corporate members has not changed. We are, however, confident that in the very near future we will be able to welcome more national associations to EASR.

We have received promising signals from the Ukrainian association, and our Greek colleagues, amongst them the first individual member to EASR, Panayotis Pachis, have established a Greek association and applied for affiliation to IAHR. As soon as the International Committee of IAHR has recommended the affiliation of the Greek association to IAHR and we have received a formal application for membership from our Greek colleagues, they can be adopted as a new member to the EASR. Besides, the committee is certain that it is only a matter of time before more associations will join, and we are all doing our best to establish the contacts needed.

The present number of individual members is nine but this number most probably will be reduced in a very short while. The reasons for this, however, are all very good: Panayotis Pachis will become a member of the new Greek association, Gary Lease

has become a member of DVRG and consequently a member of EASR, and most likely Francesca Prescendi is actually already a member of the Swiss association, and as a consequence of that in no need of an individual membership. As for the two Russian scholars they are doing their best to establish a Russian association, and the EASR has offered to help them in their efforts if at all possible.

Payment of fee

As earlier stated, the committee last year decided to terminate the period of transition as regards postponal of payment at the end of 2002. *This, however, did and does not prevent the associations to apply for and pay a reduced fee.* The committee is well aware that this option is of the uttermost importance to less affluent associations.

The problem, nevertheless, is that several associations have not paid their (ordinary or reduced) fees, neither for the year 2002 nor for the year 2003, and some of those which have signalled that they were going to apply for a reduced fee actually have not done so.

In order to make matters of payment of fees (ordinary or reduced) and applications for a reduced fee more transparent, and in order to make sure that the present and future members can stay members and exercise their rights as members (e.g. at the GA in 2004 and during the following elections to the committee), the committee has decided to send all the delegates from the national association a special letter regarding these matters. We have, likewise, decided upon a fixed deadline (May 31st, approximately 3 months ahead of the GA and the same time as the call for the GA is send to everybody) for the payment of the fee for 2004. Payment of the fee before the end of May 2004 consequently is of the uttermost importance since the right to participate in the GA as well as in the elctions will depend upon this, and we strongly recommend that the members who want to apply for a reduced fee do so as soon as possible. This goes for the fee for 2003 as well, and it pertains to the individual members as well as the corporate members. The ordinary fee for 2004 is the same as for 2003, that is (for corporate membership) 2 Euro per member/per head, and (for individual membership) 15 Euro.

(Please find at the end of this report the financial overview provided by the Treasurer)

Teachers-Exchange

During the year we launched the idea of a pool of scholars interested in participating in teachers-exchange schemes. We now have a list of approximately 15 scholars ready to do so, and in short time we will arrange for a meeting-point/platform for these scholars at our website.

Discussion-lists

Thanks to our internet-officer Michael Pye and the native speaking experts who are helping him, our 6 discussion-lists, Synkron, Yggdrasil, Dolmen, Most, Tonantzin, and Candide, covering the various regions and languages within the EASR, are

running ever so smoothly and the number of participants are steadily growing. Please take a look at the website or contact Michael Pye if You need more information about the lists, how they work and how to join them.

Committee-meetings and decisions taken

The committee, consisting of the designated and elected officers, the delegates appointed by the national associations, and representatives of the individual members, held its annual meeting Wednesday May 7, 2003 in Bergen. At the meeting the committee agreed upon several matters:

- To adress all the members regarding membership status and payment of fees.
- The deadline for the payment of the fee for the year 2004 (May 31st).
- The establishment of a special account to help funding scholars from less affluent countries as well as post-graduates with no national funding opportunities to participate in the conferences of EASR.
- To ask the BASR delegate as well as other members from the BASR and the vice-president Halina Grzymala-Moscinska to draw up guidelines for applicants and guidelines for the administration of the money accumulated on this account.
- To immediately transfer the grant we hope to get from Donnerska Institutet and the Aabo Academy Stiftung to this account.
- To accept the generous offer from the Finnish association to host the 5th congress of the EASR in August (18.-20) 2005 in either Aabo/Turku or Helsinki.
- To produce an EASR information sheet, similar to the one produced by the IAHR.
- To set up of a nominating committee (Helena Helve, Kim Knott, Nils Holm, Tim Jensen) as regards the nomination and election of designated officers and representatives of the individual members to the committee for the period January 1st 2005-December 31st 2007.
- The deadline for nomination: September 10/11 2004, i.e. the date for the GA as this will be decided upon in agreement with the Spanish association and the organisers of the 4th EASR congress in Santander
- To accept the proposed dates (8.-11 September 2004) and theme (*Religious Tolerance and Intolerance*) for this congress which will be held under the auspices of the Spanish Association and in association with the Department of Historical Science at the University of Cantabria, as well as provide the venue for a meeting of the executive committee of IAHR.

Concluding remarks

Thanks to our President, Giulia S. Gasparro, the establishment of EASR and aspects of the study of religions in Europe has found its way into a publication: *Themes and Problems of the History of Religions in Contemporary Europe*, G. S. Gasparro (ed.), HIERA. Collana di studi storico-religiosi 6, Edizioni Lionelli Giordani, Cosenza, ISBN 88-86919-15-8. Also, the publication of the papers read at the conference last year in Paris is in progress.

Thanks to the many devoted members of the EASR, and not the least to those national associations that host our annual conferences, I find it safe to say that EASR by now is firmly established. EASR and its annual conferences have managed to construct

and establish itself as a tradition, and no doubt the conferences ahead will attract more and more scholars from all over Europe.

Last but not least: Thank you to our Norwegian colleagues for arranging the present 3rd congress, and thank you to our Spanish colleagues who are already working on the next one. If not for the hard work of the national associations, the efforts of EASR to promote the academic study of religions in Europe would be in vain. Also, the Norwegian organisers deserve many thanks for their successful effort to help fund the participation of scholars from less affluent countries as well as post-graduates with no or minimal possibilities for funding from their universities.

Tim Jensen, General Secretary, Bergen May 10, 2003

Financial overview

The credit of EASR as of May 10.2003 amounts to 3.682.22 Euro. The debts amounts to 979.96 Euro (transfercosts, membership of Chambers of Commerce, and a loan, 933.40 Euro, from the IAHR). As the loan is at this very moment about to be paid back to the IAHR, the actual credit is 2.702.26 Euro.

We strongly urge the delegates to the committee to adress their association and treasurer in order for them to pay the ordinary or reduced fees as soon as possible (for 2002 as well as for 2003) and/or to contact the treasurer, Willem Hofstee by e-mail (hofsman@xs4all.nl)(NB please note that this is new e-mail adress for W. Hofstee!). Fees are payable by giro or electronic banking to EASR, Kamillestraat 9, NL-2565 PZ Den Haag, account number: 53.23.58.015, adress of Bank is ABN Amro Bank, PO Box 82003, NL-2508 EA Den Haag. Please remember to metion "'Annual fee' and 'the year'".

It should be added that the General Secretary has been informed that Donnerska Institutet and the Stiftung of the Academy of Aabo, Finland, will deal with our application for a special grant at the end of May 2003.

Member Associations

- BASR, British Association for the Study of Religions (James Cox)
- Ceska Spolecnost Pro Studium Nabozenstvi (The Czech Society for the Study of Religion) (Bretislav Horyna)
- DAHR, Dansk Selskab for Religionshistorie (Danish Association for the History of Religions) (Marianne Q. Fibiger)
- DVRG, Deutsche Vereinigung für Religionsgeschichte (German Association for the History of Religions) (Hubert Seiwert)
- NGG, Nederlands Genootschap van Godsdiensthistorici (Dutch Association for the History of Religions) (Herman Beck)
- NRF, Norsk Religionshistorisk Forening (Norwegian Association for the History of Religions) (Knut A. Jacobsen)
- Polskie Towarzystwo Religioznawcze (Polish Association for the Science of Religions) (Halina Grzymala-Mosczeinska)
- RAHR, Asociaia romani de istorie a religiilor (Romanian Association for the

History of Religions) (Eugen Ciurtin)

- SECR, Sociedad Española de Ciencias de las Religiones (Spanish Association for the Science of Religions) (Santiago Montero)
- SGR/SSSR, Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Religionswissenschaft/Société Suisse pour la Science des Religions (Swiss Association for the Science of Religions) (Maya Burger)
- Società italiana di storia delle religioni (Italian Association for the History of Religions) (Fabio Scialpi)
- Société Ernest-Renan. Société Française d'Histoire des Religions (French Association for the History of Religions) (Charles Guittard)
- Société Belgo-Luxembourgeoise d'histoire des religions (Association for the History of Religions of Belgium-Luxembourg) (André Motte)
- SSRF, Svenska Samfundet för Religionshistorisk Forskning (Swedish Association for Research in Comparative Religion) (Britt-Mari Näsström)
- Suomen Uskontieteilijä Seura (Finnish Society for the Study of Comparative Religion) (Nils Holm)

Individual Members (cf. above)

Pachis Panayotis, Gary Lease, Gustavo Benavides, Gilani Fawsia, Svetlana Gorbunova, Alexandre Krasnikov, Ekaterina Elibakian, Michiaki Okyama, Francesca Prescendi.