



# The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth

## Annual General Meeting

London Metropolitan University 1-2.30 pm 12th April 2007

**PRESENT:** Abram, Benthall, Blain, Callan, Candea, Caplan, Carrier, Degnen, Fardon, Gledhill, Hart, Hendry, Hitchcock, Houtman, Hughes-Freeland, Josephides, Kaur, Macleod, Marchand, Megan, Moore, Palmer, Papuga, Rohan, Scott, Shankland, Strang, Strathern, Theodossopoulos, Waldren, Wallis

### 1. Apologies

Alberto Corsin-Jimenez, Ian Harper, Andrew Garner, Nigel Rapport, Nayanika Mookherjee,.

### 2. Election of new committee members

Chair proposed appointment of Raminder Kaur as treasurer to replace Lisette Josephides who has completed a very successful period of service. Raminder Kaur was Duly elected as of June 30<sup>th</sup>

Networks officers – JP had to retire under pressure of work and family. Kate Degnen, elected as new networks officer.

The new officers were welcomed by the chair.

Chair offered many thanks to outgoing officers, in particular to Lisette for the tremendous work she has put in to turn around the ASA's finances.

### 3. minutes of last meeting.

The spelling of Glenn Bowman's name was corrected.

The minutes were approved.

### 4. Matters Arising.

All matters were included in the agenda.

### 5. Reports - circulated online prior to the meeting.

**5a.** Chair's circulated report omitted the information that ASA09 had been awarded to Bristol and will include reference to anthropology and archaeology – title to be confirmed.

AHRC is changing its pg funding system. Will be revealed in public meetings, starting in Manchester on April 28<sup>th</sup>. JG will attend as the representative of ASA.

HoDs meeting will be held tomorrow to discuss RAE matters.

It is true that the AHRC's budget has been cut by 30%. Budget least cut, proportionally, is ESRC. David Shankland requested that we write to express our dismay at this cut. Colleagues will need to be attentive to the way the new AHRC block grants scheme is implemented in their institutions and to try to participate

actively in discussions within their institutions to ensure that there is no reduction of access to postgraduate funding for the subject in those areas of anthropology eligible for AHRC support.

Ongoing saga of the 'radicalisation and violence' ESRC programme. Since report was written, the heads of Sociology depts have joined us in a letter to Ian Diamond, CEO of the ESRC. Most of the Area Studies associations have also written to the ESRC, as have a number of V-Cs. Consultation with HoDs and colleagues have produced a general level of dissatisfaction, but JG has also received correspondence from Mils Hills who does not agree, arguing that we are throwing away an opportunity to work with government. JG noted that his position starts from the premise that the UK government has a duty to protect its citizens from terrorist attack, through intervention in other countries. However, we are not arguing that anthropologists should not inform policy, but that tying research directly to interventionist policy abroad is objectionable.

Academy of Social Sciences did also write to express its concern and received a similarly anodyne response from Ian Diamond. The Academy has shown some signs of greater dynamism this year, and organized some activities outside London: although it is still difficult for those not living in London to participate in meetings, this represents a considerable improvement on the situation reported at the last AGM.

#### **5b. Treasurer's report.**

Lisette thanked everyone and said she will miss working so intensely with the association.

She noted 2 significant effects –upcoming new web design and new database – which have made it much easier to monitor the association's finances.

Berg publication agreement for conference volumes – it costs us to publish them.

From now on we must expect to subsidise volumes (for length, pictures, etc) so we must bear in mind that subscriptions – which are low – also finance this as well as the running of the association.

#### **6. membership.**

Election of new members. The meeting was shown the list of applicants and indicated which applicants had satisfactory references:

Nicholas Swann, Anna Waldstein, Thomas Wormald, Dario Novellino, Stefannia Klappa, Suzanne Goopy, James Staples, Gisa Wszkalnys, Mette Louise Berg, Cosimo Zene, Yarden Evav, Silvia Posocco, Evi Eftychiou, Vibha Arora, Matthew Hodges, Melissa Demian, Richard Vokes, Donald Sutton, Elizabeth Mei-Li Roberts, Filareti Kotsi, Petra Rethman, Jeremy Keenan, Thomas Grisaffi, Mariella Marzano. The list was accepted and all applicants approved, pending receipt of outstanding references in the cases where these were still lacking.

Rohan introduced Megan who communicates with members about subscriptions, etc.

Proposal to reduce fees for long standing members – over 50 years – to zero. They will still need to pay the £10 for the monograph. **This proposal was accepted unanimously.**

#### **7, publications.**

Trevor presented his report and encouraged members to go and look at the Berg series.

Qualities of Time set a benchmark as ASA monographs – including the graphic framework which is carried forward in the series. 2 new monographs about to appear.

Trevor encouraged future editors to balance the articles included in ASA monographs between established and newer authors. (NB Berg are experiencing a 10% annual decrease in sales and rising costs, and are looking to smaller volumes.)

**Trevor announced the launch of a YouTube style space on the ASA space to enable films to be viewed by the public.**

**SA announced the launch of ASA online pamphlet series.**

Jackie Waldren noted that Berg's policy is specific – Berghahn, for example is calling for more monographs and edited volumes. (although this may need to happen after RAE). JW also noted that film courses are now available at Oxford specifically for ethnographic film, plus a workshop will be held in Mallorca.

TM welcomed information which will be put on the website.

Hilary Callan reminded members that the RAI biannual film festival is in Manchester in June and there will be a debate about anthropology on television – arising from the email discussion about the BBC4 anthropology week - in which the ASA chair has accepted an invitation to participate. The film Festival also encourages student submissions. HC encouraged continued dialogue between RAI and ASA. HC also noted that the RAI is also hoping to generate online publications and would like to work with the RAI.

Felicia Hughes-Freeland urged the committee to look very carefully at how films are put online. A meeting of visual Anthropologists in 2001 raised lot of ethical issues about how film may be used by others for purposes not appreciated by anthropologists. Some of the papers from this meeting were published in Working Images, ed Sarah Pink.

David Shankland reminded members that he organises a film festival for the Association of British Science and **will be delighted to show the winning films of the competition at the festival.**

## **9 ASA confrence**

Veronica Strang introduced plans for the 08 conference – an unprecedented joint event with 3 organisations. Some of the keynote speakers are already confirmed, and the conference has a very inclusive theme. They already have interest from journals to do special issues from the conference. A website with all details will be up very soon. The key deadline to note is for **panel proposals on November 1<sup>st</sup>**. Grants are already being sought.

**ASA committee has also announced their decision to offer studentships to assist PhD students to attend the conference in NZ.**

**9b.** JG made a formal call for proposals for ASA2010. Anybody who wants to host the conference should read the conference organisation notes on the ASA website, and **proposals were invited by the end of 2007.**

## **10. Members resolutions.**

Pat Caplan firstly thanked JG for the tremendous work he has put in, in relation to the ESRC's programme on Radicalisation and Security. Marilyn Strathern seconded this, and noted the very great contribution that John has made in mobilising colleagues and garnering support to address this issue.

**Resolution 1** came out of email exchanges concerning the ESRC's Radicalisation programme. Mike Hitchcock spoke in support of the ASA's response to the issue.

He has been doing research on terrorism (funded by British Academy). One of the most important groups to talk to are terrorists, and if he had been funded by ESRC under this scheme, it would have cut off a very important area of research. He went to the trial of people convicted of terrorism (self-acknowledged) and his Indonesian colleague was able to interview them.

JG wished to clarify that the ASA is not a tribunal, we do not sanction anyone for any breach of our ethical guidelines. What this motion does is strongly to urge people to consider the implications of taking funding under this programme. JG noted, without breaching confidence of committees, that there is realpolitik behind the programme call.

Members noted that this required a revision of the wording of the proposal.

A revised paragraph b was proposed.

### **Revised resolution 1**

The meeting notes with concern the formulations of the recent ESRC/AHRC/FCO funding initiatives (Programmes) on 'New Security Challenges'. While welcoming the withdrawal of the first proposed Programme, it considers that the revised initiative, particularly as set out in section 3.2. (that the research should inform UK Counter Terrorism policy overseas), is prejudicial to the position of all researchers working abroad, including those who have nothing to do with this Programme.

**This meeting thus proposes as follows:**

- a) that all anthropologists in the UK, and members of the ASA in particular who might have applied for funding under this Programme, consider carefully the position in which they could place themselves, the people with whom they work in the field, and other colleagues. They should also note that research of this kind may well conflict with the ASA's Code of Ethics,**
- b) that the office-holders and Committee have the confidence of the ASA membership to discuss these issues with colleagues within this and other disciplines, both through networks and professional associations, and decide on what further actions are appropriate.**

**The resolution was approved unanimously.**

### **Resolution 2.**

A discussion was held which considered the focus of the resolution on conditions for Iraqi academics in particular.

Veronica Strang suggested including a phrase about the potential for anthropology to offer alternative conflict resolution. MH pointed out that ASA already offers expert witnesses on asylum issues, so this positive contribution should be emphasised.

Marilyn Strathern suggested that the ASA has to be considered a serious body and that any resolution should relate to our standing as a discipline.

Gustaaf Houtmann pointed out that one of the current architects of the counter-insurgency campaign in Iraq is an Australian anthropologist.

### **Revised Resolution 2:**

**The ASA is committed to conflict resolution through cross-cultural understanding. This meeting views with concern the deteriorating international climate, and in particular the policy of the current British government in relation to Iraq. In particular it notes the increasing difficulties faced by many Iraqi academics, who are forced to flee their country in fear of their lives, yet are often refused asylum by the UK.**

**It calls upon the government to ease its restrictive policy on Iraqi asylum-seekers coming to this country, until such time as the political situation in Iraq stabilises. It requests the executive of the ASA to convey this resolution to both the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and to the Minister of State at the Home Office.**

**The revised resolution was seconded by James Carrier. It was carried unanimously.**

**NB the AGM'08 will be held during the course of a conference on 17-18 March 08 at LSE.**

The chair thanked members for attending the meeting and closed the meeting at 2.30pm.