



European Association for South Asian Studies

EASAS Newsletter Autumn 2011

1. Report on the 5th European PhD Workshop (by Stéphanie Tawa Lama-Rewal and Ines G. Zupanov)

The 5th European doctoral workshop took place in Paris and was organized by the CEIAS. It was supported by a grant from the *European Association for South Asian Studies* and in collaboration with the *Association des jeunes études indiennes* (AJEI, www.ajei.org). The AJEI organized a meeting and a lunch with the French students on the last day.

The workshop gathered together 12 students and 5 staff members representing, besides the CEIAS, the South Asia Institute (Heidelberg), the Centre for South Asian Studies (Edinburgh), The Swedish South Asian Studies Network (Lund) and the Centre for Third World Studies (Ghent). The format of the workshop was decided at the Edinburgh meeting (in 2009) and first applied in Heidelberg (in 2010). The goal is to provide the students with maximum quality feedback on their work in progress (often a chapter of the PhD thesis).



The Paris workshop involved students in political science, history, sociology, anthropology and development studies. In spite of disciplinary diversity, we all found common ground, and profited from our different or specific points of view. After the sessions, the discussions went on informally, and certain key topics cropped up again and again. There was a general awareness that we all participated in the designing of the “future” of social sciences and the humanities in/on South

Asia by commenting on the appropriate topics to study and on the shortcomings or advantages of certain analytical and methodological tools. IE, we were thinking about what *should* be, rather than what is done currently in our fields. This prospective (rather than retrospective) feature gave this workshop its most important quality.

The success of this type of workshops, and of this particular yearly event, is clearly visible in the fact that more and more students apply to participate in it, even from institutions that are not (yet) part of the network. An important issue for future workshops will be how to make it possible to include more students while retaining the closed, limited nature of the

group that plays an important role in the quality of discussions. The 6th *European PhD Workshop in South Asian Studies* will be hosted by Lund University in 2012.

2. Website update

The EASAS website – www.easas.org – has been up-dated by Julia Velkova, a member of the SASNET team at the University of Lund. She has done a magnificent job. We have received very positive feedback on her work. The website relies on members feeding information to the EASAS team which can then be put up on the website in the news category, for instance.

If you have any news or suggestions for additional material to be included on the website, please send them using the contact form on the web-site.

3. News on the ECSAS Conference, Lisbon, July 2012

Professor Rosa Maria Perez and her colleagues in Lisbon have been doing a tremendous job over the past few months to ensure that this conference will be a success, in the face of considerable additional external problems as a result of the current financial crisis gripping Portugal. We now have confirmed 51 panels, as usual spread over a range of disciplines and with a mix of new faces and frequent attenders, as well as participants from Europe, South Asia and from other parts of the world. Lisbon is an exceptionally attractive destination, and the organising committee received over 140 panel proposals. The challenge of reducing these to a number that could be accommodated within the ISCTE premises, as well as in the social and other events proposed by the organisers, meant an unusually large number of very good panel proposals had unfortunately to be rejected. Furthermore, the conveners of many panels that were accepted found that they were offered less time than they had hoped for.

So in October, the organising committee reviewed the number of panels and the requests from conveners and others to allow space for more papers to be accepted, and they have managed to make possible a limited number of additional slots. Panel conveners were asked whether they wish to apply for an additional session, and as a result, more panels have become ‘open’ to new requests for inclusion of additional papers.

Since the European Conferences on South Asia have always worked on the principle of being a ‘conveners’ conference’, panel conveners are given as much freedom as possible to organise their own panels. We have not had a tradition of ‘open’ panels, nor have we required conference conveners to try to create panels by combining varied individual papers into panels. Therefore there has been no call for individual papers, and those who wish to give a paper at the Lisbon conference should contact the conveners of appropriate panels to find out whether they still have space for additional papers.

4. Membership and payments from non-European members

For those potential members of EASAS who dwell in North America, outside the Eurozone or without bank accounts in Europe, we have been struggling to find an easy, efficient and cost-effective means for them to pay their fees, either for membership or subsequently for

conference registration. Since the cost of a € 25.00 cheque from banks in the USA, for example, at the moment costs US\$ 25.00 in fees, we have been attempting to find a credit card mechanism for submitting payments. This turns out to be more complicated than we had thought, as we try to mesh the practices of PayPal, for example, with the requirements of charity law in Germany (where EASAS is registered). We hope to have resolved this by the beginning of 2012.

In the meantime, there are three ways to pay membership fees for people living outside the Eurozone or without access to Euro or sterling bank accounts:

- electronic funds transfer to the EASAS account at the VR Bank (see application form Eurozone).
- to send a cheque to cover membership and bank charges for US\$50.00 (for **full annual** membership) or US\$40.00 (for **student annual** membership*) to Professor Ulrike Müller-Böker, Treasurer EASAS, Human Geography Unit, Department of Geography, University of Zürich – Irchel, Winterthurerstr. 190, CH-8057 Zürich, Switzerland.
- to send an e-mail to our Treasurer, Professor Ulrike Müller-Böker at ulrike.mueller-boeker@geo.uzh.ch confirming your intention to pay membership in cash at the Lisbon conference, for both 2011 **and** 2012 (i.e. € 50.00 for full members, € 30.00 for student members*).

*Those who wish to join as student members should send evidence of their status, e.g. a letter from their supervisor, or a photocopy/scan of a student card.