

Subhadra Channa, Editor

RAISING A VOICE FOR ANTHROPOLOGY

The past couple of years have indicated that there is an almost global state level policy developing that would ease out Humanities and Social Sciences from educational institutions by cutting down on syllabus and funding. A big blow was dealt to anthropology when the British educational council, AQA, decided to withdraw Anthropology from A level in the British high school curriculum early this year. As known to all of us the first ever chair in Anthropology was established at Oxford University with Edward B. Tyler as the first recognized academic anthropologist. Great Britain has thus been viewed as a pioneer to establish and promote anthropology and this decision came as a severe blow to the anthropological community globally.

The IUAES Executive Committee, along with members of the WCAA's Organizing Committee, were deeply concerned and a decision was taken in the March 6th E.C. meeting of the IUAES that the IUAES, along with WCAA would send a joint letter to The Guardian and The Observer (two prominent UK newspapers) protesting the decision by the AQA Examining Board to end the A Level Anthropology curriculum and examination. Junji Koizumi and Vesna Vucinic Neskovic, the WCAA Chair, jointly sent a letter to Mr. Andrew Hall, Chief Executive Officer, AQA Examining Board. However, to our deep disappointment, on 6th May, 2015, Junji Koizumi reported that The Guardian did not publish this letter. The letter was then posted at our web site http://www.iaaes.org/letter_to_aqa.pdf. Following this, information was received that, in November 2014, the European Parliament appointed the New European Commission on the basis of an Agenda for 'Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change-in the New Framework'. However instead of meeting this professed agenda, the research program for Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) has disappeared and its budget has been dramatically reduced as compared to the previous European Framework programs. SSH has now become an 'add on' to policies led by 'Science and Technology' and following this 'message from Brussels', the funding for SSH has been drastically cut in other European countries like U.K., France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary and Poland.

The online forum Avaaz, raised this issue and we urge our members to go online and sign this petition that is still on. See:

https://secure.avaaz.org/en/petition/SSH_community_members_Call_to_Action/?pv=5

The most recent worries have come from Japan and, as per a report circulated by Junji Koizumi, MEXT (The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan) issued an official notice in June 2015 that all national universities in Japan should review its organization and operation and take up active steps "to serve areas that better meet society's needs."

It is evident that critical thinking and a discerning mind that is not bound by dogmas are increasingly being seen as liabilities if not a threat by even relatively liberal nations to say nothing of would-be oligarchic regimes. Even in a democracy like India, the center is imposing curbs on free thinking and trying to impose its own agenda on educational

institutions. The removal of Nobel Laureate, Dr. Amartya Sen, from the Chancellorship of an upcoming state run prestigious Nalanda University is one example.

The IUAES and the WCAA is considering a two pronged approach by writing letters of protest globally and in particular situations, where applicable, on behalf of each of the organizations. Another proposal is to flood the media with articles that will rationally and academically explore the dangers of a technology led world without anthropological and sociological knowledge and sensitivity, and that will create development that is disconnected from the political economy and the environment. We urge our members to reflect upon these issues and come up with some lines of action that may be collectively followed. We would also request members to inform us about similar situations in their own countries, such that we can connect with each other on a global platform.

EVENTS

The last major IUAES World Congress was held in Manchester, England, in August 2013 and became a landmark event as it raised a large amount of funds and left a surplus for the organization in addition to making outstanding academic achievements. It was also considered a most successful congress in terms of its level of participation and its contribution to membership. Due applause was given to the organizer of congress, John Gledhill.



The next Inter-Congress was held in Chiba, Japan, from 15-18th May 2014, with the IUAES Secretary-General, Junji Koizumi at its helm. This event also marked the 50th anniversary of JASCA, the Japanese Society of Cultural Anthropology. It too was a highly successful Inter-Congress with 937 registered delegates from 59 countries, of which 463 delegates were international. There was a total of 137 panels and three distinguished keynote speakers; Marilyn Strathern, James Ferguson and Claudio Lomnitz. Apart from individual members, thirteen international and four national associations were also represented. The WCAA also celebrated its tenth anniversary by organizing a symposium at this venue. IUAES President Faye V. Harrison and Yasuko Takezawa organized a panel inviting Gyanendra Pandey, a distinguished



critical scholar from India to speak on 'Race and Racism'. Due to lack of funds, only 20 guests were invited by the organizer and 21



participants were able to receive some form of financial assistance.

The recently concluded 2015 Inter-Congress in Thailand brought together many anthropologists and a large contingent from nearby countries like India and China. The main facilitator of this Inter-Congress was Dr. Anusorn Unno, the dynamic dean of the Faculty of Sociology and Anthropology, and the enthusiasm on the Tha Prachan campus of Thammasat University was a testimony that social sciences are seen as relevant in this region and have not lost their appeal. This university is also historical in being the site of the students' movements in 1973 and 1976. This Inter-Congress also commemorated the



faculty's 50th anniversary by choosing the theme 'Re-Imagining Anthropological and Sociological Boundaries'; theorizing an increasingly interconnected and fluid world where boundaries are collapsing between cultures, regions and disciplines. A total of 73 panels and 525 papers were accepted and 505 scholars and students participated from 27 countries and regions.



The keynote speakers were Goh Beng Lan from the National University of Singapore, Engsens Ho from Duke University and Saskia Sassen from Columbia

University. All three addresses were woven around the central theme of the conference and received enthusiastic applause. The fall of boundaries was described in terms of political events by the first speaker, Goh-Beng Lan, the title of whose speech was, 'The urgency of the "Universal" in a Global Age: A view on new politics in South East Asia'. Her emphasis was on loosely framed yet positive political actions like the Arab Spring, that rise spontaneously and outside of formal and radical political platforms but nevertheless indicate a new alternative concept of society, arising from what she terms as 'anti-foundational' thought. The second speaker, Engsens Ho, emphasized the world markets and economy in terms of disappearing boundaries. He pointed to the resurgence of a pre-Imperial Asia that is finding a new identity based on religion and economy and how even the western world is now 'looking east'. He brought in the concept of 'externalist analysis and inter-regional studies that would be in between local and global ones'. The third speaker, Saskia Sassen spoke of what she termed as a 'hermeneutics of materiality', when the 'familiar' can become invisible when we cannot 'see'. She described the possibility of analytic tactics, before



methods, that can give voice to what has been rendered invisible. All three speakers were keen observers and commentators on a world turning into a mechanical landscape of commerce with human values disappearing.

Two roundtables were organized: one by Prof. Charles Hirschkind from University of California (Berkeley) on Religious Pluralism; the other by the WCAA (World Council for Anthropological Association) on 'Do Good Fences make Good Neighbours?: Perspectives on the Anthropology-Sociology Relationship from Plural Global Vantage Points'.

Cultural activities of the conference included a Chao Phraya River dinner cruise with traditional dances of Thailand and excellent music that was enjoyed by a large number of participants.



UPCOMING EVENTS

The World Social Science Forum 2015 by ISSC (International Social Science Council) is being held in Durban from September 13-17th (<http://www.wssf2015.org/>) and IUAES is being represented by Thomas Reuter, also a member of ISSC Executive Committee, who has organized a panel on social inequality in which two IUAES executive members, Faye Harrison and Subhadra Channa, will participate, among others. Reuter is also chairing the first plenary session; Channa has been invited to chair a session on 'Gender, Politics and Health'; and Harrison will chair a panel on 'Gender, Marginalisation, and Inequality'.

The CIPSH (International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences) has approved observer status for IUAES. IUAES Executive Committee member, Zhang Jijiao, was nominated to attend the General Assembly of this organization to be held in Beijing in 2015, from the 8-9th of December.

The European Union Joint research center Annual Conference, "Building a resilient Europe in a Globalised world" will be held in Brussels on the 30th of September. Prof. Gordon McBean, President of ICSU will be a speaker.

The CIPSH world Conference will be held in 2017, in Liège, from 6-12th August. This conference to be organized jointly with UNESCO may be attended by IUAES Executive Committee members, Noel Salazar, Rajko Mursic, Miriam Grossi and Thomas Reuter.

Chandana Mathur, on the executive of the WCAA, shared the news about an upcoming conference organized by the Royal Anthropological institute at the British Museum in May 2016 (<https://www.therai.org.uk/conferences/anthropology-weather-and-climate-change-2016>). The theme of the conference is 'Anthropology, Weather and Climate Change', and Chandana had proposed a panel (now accepted) on 'Disciplinary alliances and Disciplinary transformations in an Age of Climate Chaos' in which Mugsy Spiegel will represent the IUAES as a joint panel organizer. Members may consider participation in this event.

From the side of the IUAES the next Inter-Congress will be held in Dubrovnik, Croatia, in 2016, from 4-9th May. The theme for the Congress is:

‘World Anthropologies and Privatization of Knowledge: Engaging Anthropology in Public’

It will be hosted by the Institute of Anthropological research Zagreb, Croatia and the venue will be Hotel Palace, Dubrovnik.

The call for panels is now on. Please see <http://iuaes2016.com/>.

There is an additional symposium planned on Anthropology and Health, from the 8-11th of May for those who are interested in extending their stay in this picturesque region of the world.

The president of the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA), Kathleen Musante has also sent out a circular to all its members for teaming up with IUAES for the Dubrovnik Congress. Among other things, she mentions the convergence of interests of the two organization in the theme of the Inter-Congress.

The next World Congress of the IUAES will be held in Florianópolis, Brazil in 2018 from 30th July to 3rd August. The main host for this congress is Miriam Pillar Grossi, a member of the IUAES Executive Committee and former president of the ABA, the Brazilian Association of Anthropology. It has the support of eighteen scientific associations and should prove to be a major event. We look forward to seeing many of you there.

GAINS

As seen from the resume of events listed above, the IUAES has gained active relationships with many international associations, including the International Social Science Council (ISSC) of which it is a member, the IIPA, the ICSU and others. The CIPSH also lists IUAES among its members.

The IUAES has also forged a healthy partnership with the WCAA and these two organizations will be working in close cooperation in the future. The foundation was laid in Japan and strengthened in Bangkok.

The SfAA has also extended its hand to IUAES in partnering with it in the forthcoming Dubrovnik Conference.

Good news comes in the form of an announcement about a journal, **The International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology** to be published by Springer, hopefully in a formal association between the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the IUAES. This proposal for an online international journal is being discussed intensively and members will be informed of developments in due course of time.

LOSSES

The world of anthropology lost a stalwart with the demise of Sir John (Jack) Rankine Goody, IUAES Honorary Member, who passed away on July 16th, 2015, at the age of 95.

Ian Lilley of IPPA, informed about the death in Tonga of eminent archaeologist, Prof. Bill Dickinson, on the 30th of July, 2015.

Professor Martin West, a leading South African social anthropologist who enabled a major paradigm shift in the regional practice of the discipline during the 1980s before becoming a long-term academic administrator during South Africa's most turbulent period of socio-political transition, passed away on 8 July 2015.

[Members are requested to keep us informed about the loss of important people from the discipline, from their own countries and regions. Brief obituaries may also be sent.]

NEWS FROM THE COMMISSIONS

Commission of Anthropology of the Middle East announced its annual conference to be held in Krakaw, Poland, from the 9-11th of September, 2015. This conference, organized by Soheila Shashahani and Soraya Tremayne, has its program all set and published on the IUAES web site.

The Commission on Urban Anthropology reported that their online journal *Urbanities*, has been accepted for inclusion in SCOPUS, the largest abstracts and citation database for peer-reviewed literature. The reviewers from SCOPUS praised the journal for publishing excellent ethnographic research from a global array of urban anthropologists. This news was passed on by Italo Pardo, who is also co-editor of the journal.

[The newsletter will be very happy to receive more news from the various commissions that may be passed on to Subhadra Channa at her email address channa.subhadra@gmail.com]

ACTIVITIES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Council of Commissions

A significant event in terms of the constitution of the Executive Committee was the resignation of the Head of the Council of Commissions, Giuliana Prato, and the subsequent election that followed. The vacant post was filled by Heather O'Leary, chair of the Commission on Anthropology and the Environment. The election was held electronically with former IUAES president, Lourdes Arizpe, as the independent auditor. Giuliana Prato had been elected in a face to face election at the Manchester conference, and had made significant contributions to the working of the IUAES executive. The members were reluctant to let her go and President Faye Harrison wrote a letter on behalf of the executive in a collective attempt to persuade her to reconsider her decision.

Unfortunately the decision was not reversed and an election thus became necessary.

Heather O'Leary was welcomed into the executive at the Bangkok Inter-Congress where she participated with youthful enthusiasm.



Relationship with WCAA

A significant matter for discussion in the meetings at Bangkok was the proposed relationship between the IUAES and the WCAA. To facilitate this relationship, a task team

with representatives from both organizations had been set up earlier. The task team had come with a tentative proposal of forming a larger World Anthropology Union with two parallel chambers of the IUAES and the WCAA where the original constitutions of each were to have been maintained. However, extended discussions inclusive of the chairs of various Commissions present in Bangkok, led to a reorientation of this proposal. It is now decided that two proposals will be developed for consultation with members: Option 1 is to create a combined organization with IUAES and WCAA as two self-managing and largely autonomous chambers under a joint coordinating committee, and Option 2 is for the two organizations to continue as separate organizations but with a formal agreement to co-operate and support each other in all matters pertaining to the anthropological community across the globe. A further detailed communication will be distributed in due course by the IUAES president.



Website

The website of the IUAES has been redesigned and a new front page is now seen with a lot more additions and links that make it much more informative than it used to be. The page is now linked to IUAES Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn so that we could communicate via social media. Credit goes to our Secretary-General and his staff who took this initiative and put in many hours of hard work. It also goes to Noel Salazar who developed social media for the IUAES.

Finances

The financial statements of the IUAES, already accessible on the IUAES website (<http://www.iaaes.org/minutes/index.html>), were presented at Bangkok by the Treasurer, Andrew 'Mugsy' Spiegel and the Secretary-General Junji Koizumi. There was a decision to



give some financial support to the various Commissions and a total of £15,000 has been earmarked for possible award to Commissions. Applications and funding proposals – to be assessed by a task team of international experts – will be considered for amounts of between £750 and £2,000 for project seed funding. Details regarding applications will be circulated later in 2015.

The Executive Committee also decided to set aside a small budget to support proof reading and minor editorial work for publications resulting from Congresses and Inter-Congresses.

The publication of the Newsletter and its design was discussed in the meetings held at Bangkok. The present newsletter is an outcome of those discussions.



Members are urged to actively participate in the publication of this newsletter by providing information about events such as

conferences and workshops, jobs in their respective organizations. Most importantly members are encouraged to maintain their membership by paying their annual membership fees which remain extremely modest (<http://www.iaaes.org/membership.html>). This is important as it is such fees that can enable the IUAES to raise funds that can expand the activities of the Union, including intention to provide members with more facilities and support by helping them form international networks and links for their research and academic activities.

The editor acknowledges the input and effort of all members of the EC, with special thanks to the Secretary-General.