

MINUTES FROM NACS BOARD MEETING, 23 SEPTEMBER 2000, OSLO

Present: Torstein Hjellum (deputy chairman), Taru Salmenkari, Marina Thorborg, Bent Nielsen (deputy), Jørund Buen (reporter), Leni Stenseth (deputy), Marita Siika (deputy).

Absent: Björn Kjellgren, Outi Luova, Stig Thøgersen, Raisa Asikainen, Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard (chairman), Marina Svensson, Marita Carlsson, Hans Jørgen Hindrup, Ole Bjørn Rongen.

*Both deputies and regular Board members were invited to the meeting.

1. Approval of agenda .

The Board approved the Agenda without comments.

2. Approval of minutes from last Board Meeting.

The minutes were approved with comments. Deputy Chairman Torstein Hjellum commented that he would send a letter to the Nordic Centre in Fudan as soon as possible. Many of the Nordic universities are members of the Centre, but still contact with the Centre has not been included in the activity of NACS. Hjellum suggested that NACS should be represented in the Centre's Board, as we are the users of the centre. According to Hjellum, the Centre's Board does not have close enough links with Nordic researchers and students focusing on China.

3. NACS conference 2001.

· Location :

The Board decided that Aarhus University's conference centre in Sandbjerg, in the southern parts of Jutland (Sønderjylland) should be the conference venue, and asked Stig Thøgersen to book accommodation for 40 persons. The Board preferred accommodation in the pavilions at the centre instead of the main building because of the price - unless this should prove difficult due to the number of people attending the conference.

· Date :

Two dates, 1-3 and 8-10 June, had been reserved at Sandbjerg in advance. As the first turned out to be during the Whitsun holidays, the Board decided to ask Stig Thøgersen to confirm the date 8-10 June 2001 for the conference.

· Thematic focus:

The conference proposal debated on the Board meeting in March 2000 was "Ideological currents and theoretical discourses at the turn of the 21st century". Since then, the conference topic has been debated by e-mail.

Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard has suggested broadening the focus of the conference, by highlighting China's challenges at the turn of the 21st century. Taru Salmenkari argued that it would require too much work to change the original conference proposal, that Brødsgaard's proposal had an elitist bias, and that one should beware of putting our own preferences into the formulation of the conference theme. Brødsgaard, as well as the secretary, argued that neither was the case, as the suggested topic could include the originally proposed theme as a subtopic, and included subtopics like civil society and grassroots democracy. Brødsgaard also emphasised the need to understand the Chinese and communicate this knowledge - instead of uncritically accept the Chinese's self-perception. He also suggested that the role of the Internet in building civil society in China should be covered at the conference. Salmenkari then suggested that one should try to integrate Brødsgaard's proposed topic into the originally suggested topic, and make a distinction separation between ideologies and intellectual discourses.

Stig Thøgersen suggested by e-mail that the conference invitations should state that contributions outside the stipulated conference topic would be welcome.

On the Board meeting, it was pointed out by the secretary that it was important that the topic be broad enough to include as much of the Nordic research community on China studies as possible - and to assure funding. It was also pointed out that the topic should concentrate not only on ideologies and intellectual discourse familiar to Sinology, Chinese philosophy and some parts of political science, but also on practical questions more familiar to sociology, geography, social anthropology etc.

The Board agreed that the conference should focus on contemporary China in a historical perspective. It was decided that the conference should be titled "China's challenges at the turn of the 21st century", and have four subthemes, concentrating on social development, political development, ideological currents, and economic questions. Each of these four subthemes should have a keynote speaker - one from each of the participating Nordic countries.

Bent Nielsen agreed to hold the keynote speech for the ideological currents subtheme. The Board decided to ask Matti Nojonen to hold the keynote speech on economic developments; Søren Clausen to hold the keynote lecture on political developments (other suggestions: Clemens Stubbe Østergaard,); and Børge Bakken to hold the keynote speech on social development (other suggestions: Mette Halskov Hansen).

In the discussion on subthemes, the revival of traditional ideologies and the question as to what actually is political in China today (economic life? NOKIA?) and legitimacy were forwarded.

The Board agreed that the objective should be to avoid parallel sessions, so that all conference participants will be able to appreciate the breadth of Nordic China research. However, if many students come, parallel sessions will be necessary in order for all students to present their papers.

· Invitations:

Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard and Torstein Hjellum are responsible for writing the invitation letter to the conference - including the conference's focus and planned topics. Apart from being published on the NACS mailing list, this invitation should be posted at NIAS' Agenda Asia and SUPRA mailing lists, respectively, and on mailing lists at all Nordic universities. The secretary will do this.

Each board member and deputy should recruit conference participants from his/her university. Torstein Hjellum agreed to take the overall responsibility for follow-up of mobilisation of conference participants. Abstracts should be e-mailed to Torstein Hjellum by 20 April 2001.

· Financing:

The Board signalled that participating at the conference should - if possible - be free for the participants, apart from the fact that they need to be NACS members. The secretary briefed the Board on the possibilities for NorFA funding for the conference. NorFA funds networks, but gives priority to new and cross-disciplinary fields, and the application deadline was 1 May. NorFA also funds workshop, with a maximum of NOK 70000. NorFA does not sponsor publications, expenses for participants outside Nordic countries, or fees to keynote speakers. Under the workshop category, NorFA accepts applications continuously. NorFA also funds "Other activities", and applications for funding for this category are accepted continuously as well. It was decided to apply for funding as soon as possible. The secretary was asked to contact NorFA quickly to ensure that NACS applies for funding under the appropriate category, and to acquire the application for funding for the 1999 conference from the organisers of that conference. [Note from the secretary: NorFA responded that NACS could apply for network funding within 1 May 2001, and that applications for funding of other activities should be of extraordinary high quality; new, exiting; and not fit in under any other NorFA category. The maximum funding for workshops is NOK 70000 in order to limit the number of participants, but NorFA has no problems with co-financing a workshop. However, the workshop category most probably will not exist in 2001, and thus, to receive funding under this category in 2001 one needs to apply before 1.1.2001.

Thus, the following strategy is suggested:

1) NOK 70000 will not be enough to cover the expenses for the conference. Thus, NACS should apply for funding under NorFA's workshop category as soon as possible, and provide arguments and documentation for co-financing. The Danish NACS representatives should preferably be the ones applying for such funding (while not necessarily being the ones writing the application).

2) If NACS does not receive funding under the workshop category, NACS should apply in early 2001 for funding under the "other activities" category.

3) NACS should apply for funding within 1 May 2001 under NorFA's network category - regardless of whether funding for the 2001 conference has been secured or not.

4) Specific funding sources for a conference publication should be approached. jb - 02.10.00]

· Distribution of responsibilities/tasks to be completed:

The Board discussed the opportunities for anchoring the responsibility for holding the conference in Denmark. Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard is in Singapore until shortly before the conference, but will be able to contribute by e-mail. Stig Thøgersen has signalled that he will not be able to take active part in the planning and implementation of the conference because of lots of travelling and a heavy workload. Torstein Hjellum that it was not needed to locate the responsibility for organising the conference in Denmark, as only details related to the conference venue need to be organised from there. While there was some disagreement on this point, the Board decided to establish an organising committee for the conference, of which each member was given the responsibility for mobilising participants and providing help with presentations from their country. Leni Stenseth and Marina Thorborg agreed to be members of the committee, as did Bent Nielsen. In addition, Leni Stenseth will contact Kristen Nordhaug (who is currently working at Roskilde University), Marina Thorborg will ask a representative from Stockholm University to join, and Taru Salmenkari will ask Outi Luova to be the Finnish member of the committee.

The economic responsibility for the conference was given to Björn Kjellgren, NACS' cashier; the conference's economy is an integrated part of NACS' economy as a whole, and Kjellgren had this function in the preparations for the 1999 conference as well.

· Publication of conference papers:

The contributions of the keynote speakers at the conference may constitute introductory chapters for the respective sections in a publication from the conference. A conference newsletter was also suggested, however, no agreement was reached on that point. The secretary will ask Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard to examine the possibilities for publishing selected contributions

from the conference in a possible first edition of a Nordic Journal of Asian Studies. However, this is very tentative, and the Board agreed that if this did not turn out to be possible, separate proceedings from the conference would be published, with the conference organising committee as editors.

4. Economic status.

Björn Kjellgren was not able to attend the meeting, but gave the following account for NACS' economic situation, in the period 04.03.00 - 010900:

Utgifter

Ersättningar i samband med mötet 000304 12.628,21

Kontoavgifter (utlandsbetalningar) 435,00

Delåterbetalning av medl avgift 220,00

Studenthjälp med nyhetsbrev 1/10 500,00

Summa 13.783,21

Intäkter

Medlemsavgifter (2 st) 480,00

Summa 480,00

Resultat för perioden -13.303,21

Tillgångar

Postgiro 23.541,10

Wasa-banken 24.080,45

Summa 47.621,55

5. Status for recruitment efforts (updating of addresses; representatives from more universities; pamphlet).

Björn Kjellgren gave the following update on NACS membership, in absentia:

Medlemmar

Nya under perioden 2

Utträdna under perioden 0

Antal betalande medlemmar 34

Personer i vårt register

som inte betalt medl avgift 119

He commented: De flesta betalande medlemmar finns i Sverige vilket kan bero på att det är lättast att betala avgifter inom sitt eget land; men det kan kanske också bero på bristande genomförande av betalningskampanjen i våras?

The Board decided that bank accounts to which new and current members can pay their membership fee were to be established in Finland (by Taru Salmenkari), Norway (by Joerund Buen) and Denmark (by Bent Nielsen), all

in NACS' name. Every publication and/or news message from NACS should include information about how to pay the membership fee.

The Board signalled that making a pamphlet would enhance recruitment efforts, but that this was not a top priority. The secretary agreed to contact Outi Luova in order to get hold of an earlier pamphlet [the contents of this is about the same as what is currently on the web page - the web page will thus be used as a starting point for making the pamphlet - jb 02.10.00]

6. Newsletter and home page status, incl. plan for next newsletter.

Newsletter editor Raisa Asikainen reported in absentia that no material for the next newsletter had been received.

The Board decided that the newsletter should be given a more continuous character. The best way to do this, it was agreed, was to create a mailing list, for which Raisa Asikainen (the current editor of the newsletter) will be the editor. In other words, there will be no more printed-version newsletters. Leni Stenseth will send Asikainen an e-mail explaining how to create and edit a mailing list.

Apart from saving time, paper, ink and expenses for paper and printing, creating a mailing list also opens for interactive communication: every member may in principle send things to all members of the mailing list - as long as the mailing list editor approves. It was highlighted that e-mails sent to the lists should have clear headers specifying the contents, e.g. conferences (in Nordic countries or elsewhere), news of funding sources, suggestions for co-operation projects, discussions on curriculum etc.

Because of the above, no particular theme for the next newsletter was suggested, but there were some suggestions for material/articles:

- Pieces on Chinese studies in Portugal, on the activities of the East Asia Institute and on China studies in Singapore in general, all by Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard
- More reports on China studies in other Nordic countries than Norway (cf. Harald Böckman's report in the last newsletter).
- A report on the China Workshop in Gothenburg 18 October (theme: China's economic and political development), by organisers Eva-Lena Neth Johansson and/or Arne Bigsten
- A summary of NORASIA 2000 (Norwegian conference on Asian studies in June 2000) by Harald Böckman.
- A presentation Kauko Laitinen of the plans so far for a program in Pacific Asia Studies at the University of Helsinki.
- Tentative plans for doctoral courses in Sweden (Jon Sigurdson), and Finland (Marita Siika). Even if these courses are not yet received necessary funding, it is very relevant for Ph.D. students to know about such courses as early as

possible because they need to plan the whole Ph.D. early in the process.

- A note on the future role of the Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies by editor Viggo Brun

- Information about the proceedings from the workshop "Education in and on China and Chinese", held by NACS in Lahti 1997.

The web pages have still not been updated, because the editor is not allowed to edit web pages at the University of Turku. It was suggested that web pages could be updated locally and sent to Turku for updating, or to invest in a workspace on an independent server, to which every member of the NACS Board could in principle have password access.

7. Copenhagen Journal for Asian Studies (CJAS) as a Nordic journal?

Torstein Hjellum briefed the Board on the results of his conversation with Viggo Brun, editor of CJAS, Copenhagen University. The Journal's editorial committee has not taken any decision yet as to whether the journal should become Nordic - or even European. The main reason is response from the Nordic universities on a request sent by the editorial board of CJAS. The Board agreed to report to the editor of CJAS that we are interested in the future development of CJAS, and that we would like to take discuss this with the editorial board of CJAS. It was suggested that being responsible for publishing two issues every two years (conference proceedings, review of the fields) of such a journal would be realistic for NACS.

8. Next Board Meeting

The Board decided that the next Board meeting should be 17 February 2001 in Lund, Sweden . Deputy Board member Marina Svensson will be asked to organise the meeting, while Marina Thorborg and Bent Nielsen will provide for dinner and accommodation in Copenhagen after the meeting. The main subject of this meeting should be the NACS 2001 Conference cum General Assembly (GA). The organising committee for the conference/GA should have a separate meeting in relation to the Board meeting.

9. Other issues

Marita Siika mentioned the co-operation between the universities of Turku and St.Petersburg under the FIRST exchange program between Finland and Russia, which has resulted in the finding of very important and interesting archives in St.Petersburg from the early People's Republic period.

Marita Siika brought copies of the proceedings from the workshop "Education in and on China and Chinese", held by NACS in Lahti 1997. The proceedings were edited by Pertti Nikkilä, and published at the Dept of Pol History, Univ of Turku.

The secretary highlighted the need for a distributed network as NACS to have a digital, web-based archive, and agreed to distribute invitations to the BSCW group software as well as to explain how it works.

The secretary will try to scan - or make layout according to - the NACS logo decided upon ahead of the 1999 NACS conference.