Letter from the Secretary-General

Dear fellow-members of the IAHR,

At the time of writing preparations are at an advanced stage for the special conference of the IAHR to be held at Burlington, Vermont, in conjunction with our new affiliate the North American Association for the Study of Religion (NAAASR). In the context of this conference the annual meeting of the Executive Committee will be convened and it is hoped that a quorum will be achieved.

The most important single point on the agenda will probably be the question of IAHR finances. Following on the election of a new treasurer last year (Prof. Armin Geertz) these questions were discussed in depth by him and the Secretary-general during a three-day meeting in Marburg in June this year, the purpose being to try to bring forward budgetary planning into IAHR policy development. Further details will be set before the Executive Committee. Of general interest is above all the question whether significant additional income can be generated so that key conferences and planning meetings can be financed more easily. Any suggestions along these lines will be greatly appreciated.

During the Burlington conference a meeting of the reconstituted Editorial Board of our journal *Numen* will take place, this Editorial Board being the same as the Executive Committee plus the appointed Editors Hans Krippenberg and Thomas Lawson. This is the first such meeting of the Editorial Board which is now planned as an annual event to take place at the same time as the meeting of the Executive Committee.

It is necessary for the undersigned once again to bring a personal note into this letter, in that it has a direct bearing on the functioning of IAHR correspondence. From September this year I shall be taking up the professorship in Religious Studies at Lancaster University (England) previously held by Professor Ninian Smart. Lancaster University, though relatively new, has a good tradition of association with the IAHR, for it hosted the XIIIth Congress in 1975. Moreover I am assured that the university, and its large department of Religious Studies, will provide a hospitable environment for the enactment of IAHR business including the dispatch of this bulletin. In view of this, please note the change of address indicated on the back inside cover.

with all best wishes
Michael Pye

IAHR BULLETIN 17
JULY 1991

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Executive Committee of the IAHR

Minutes of meeting held in Rome on 3.9.1990 at 9.30 a.m.

Members present. Present at the meeting were Professors Antes, Bianchi, Kim, Pye, Schimmel, Werblowsky and Wiebe, and Dr. H. van Lier. Professor Schimmel presided (as President of the IAHR). Apologies were received from Prof. Awolalu and Prof. Tamaru. It was already known to members that Professor Witold Tyloch had died a few weeks before the Congress.

1. Minutes. The minutes of the last meeting were approved as a correct record.

2. Report by Secretary-General. The Secretary-General offered his report as printed in IAHR BULLETIN 15 (Special Congress Issue, September 1990) pages 3-7. One of the most important features of recent efforts had been the geographical extension of IAHR activities and the new affiliations to be proposed to the International Committee and the General Assembly.

3. Report by Treasurer. The Treasurer's report was circulated as an independent document preparatory to its presentation at the meeting of the International Committee to follow in two days' time. The financial situation was stable and in line with previous trends.

4. Future conference locations. These were discussed in some detail. Regional conferences were to be planned for Beijing (1991), Harare (1992) and Leningrad or Novosibirsk (1994). Special conferences were to be planned for Burlington (USA) (1991), Istanbul (1992) and Paris (1993). The new Executive Committee would meet at Burlington (1991), Harare (1992), Paris (1993), and Leningrad/Novosibirsk (1994). The International Committee would be convened at Paris in 1993, as already agreed provisionally by members of the Société Ernest Renan (the French affiliate to the IAHR).

5. XVII Congress. It was agreed that the Executive Committee would support the proposal to hold the XVII Congress in Mexico City in 1995.

6. Any other business. The electoral procedures to be followed at the forthcoming meeting of the International Committee were briefly reviewed.

Minutes compiled by Secretary-General (Michael Pye)
Minutes of a meeting held in Rome on 5.9.1990 at 10.00 a.m.

1. Ascertainment of membership and observers.

Members present (in accordance with Article 4b of the constitution): A. Schimmel (presiding), Executive Committee members as follows: P. Antes, U. Bianchi, S. Kim, M. Pye, H. van Lier, Z. Werblowsky, D. Wiebe (apologies from J. Awolalu and N. Tamaru); for the affiliated associations as follows: P. Masefield (Australia), J. Ries (Belgium), M. Nefsky, J. Rousseau (Canada), A. Geertz, E. Sand (Denmark), N. Holm (Finland), J. Leclant (France), (P. Antes), H. Seiwert (Germany), I. Lovász (Hungary), G. Stroumsa, (Z. Werblowsky) (Israel), G. Gnoji, N. Saralpi (Italy), M. Araki, M. Sonoda (Japan), (S. Kim) (Korea), I. Garriga, Y. Gonzalez, (Mexico), L. Leertouwer, J. Platvoet (Netherlands), R. Abubakre (Nigeria), (Norway not represented), J. Margul, J. Szmyd (Poland), P. Maxwell (Southern Africa), J. Bergman, F. Olsson (Sweden), F. Stolz, J. Waardenburg (Switzerland), P. McKenzie, T. Thomas (UK), W. Oxtoby, N. Smart (USA); coopted member: M. Heerma van Voss (for Numen). The presence of the following as observers was proposed and approved: B. Daya (Indonesia), E. Masferrer (Mexico City, for ALER), L. Mitrohin and J. Pischik (USSR), L. Martin (USA, for NAASR), H. Kippenberg and T. Lawson (for Numen).

It was reported with great regret that Professor Witold Tyloch, who would otherwise have been present, had passed away after a difficult illness, in Warsaw, shortly before the Congress. Special appreciation was expressed for his work in upholding the Polish affiliate to the IAHR, for his organisation of a Regional Conference in 1979 and a Special Conference in 1989, and for his service as a member of the Executive Committee, all during a period of extended political difficulty.

2. Cooption of further members.

In accordance with Constitution 4,b,iii and on the recommendation of the Executive Committee H. Kippenberg and T. Lawson, as recently appointed editors of Numen, were coopted to membership of the International Committee (thereby acquiring voting rights).

3. Minutes of last meeting.

The minutes of the last meeting (Marburg 18.6.1988), as distributed in IAHR BULLETIN 9, were approved as a correct record.

4. Report by Secretary-General

The Secretary-General spoke briefly to his report which had been distributed in advance in IAHR BULLETIN 15 (Special Congress Issue September 1990) pages 3-7. One of the most important features of recent efforts had been the geographical extension of IAHR activities and the new affiliations to be considered during the
current Congress. The report was received by the International Committee.

5. Report by Treasurer

The Treasurer spoke briefly to his statement of accounts tabled as a separate document, indicating that the financial situation was stable and that income and expenditure had been in line with previous experience. The wish was expressed that statements in future should be expressed in a single currency if possible. The statement of accounts, which had been duly audited in the Netherlands, was accepted.

6. Recommendation of amendments to the Constitution.

The Secretary-General requested consideration of the following amendment to the Constitution of the IAHR:

Replacement of the first sentence of article 4c by the following: "The Executive Committee is composed of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Secretary-General, a Deputy Secretary-General, a Treasurer, and six other members."

He explained that the proposed amendment included Deputy Secretary-General as an office, following the informal practice of the past fifteen years, and that it increased the total number of members from ten to twelve thus allowing for wider representation of various regions of the world. It was agreed that this proposal should be recommended to the General Assembly by the International Committee together with those already agreed for recommendation in 1988 and since published in Numen.

7. New affiliations.

It was agreed that the following new affiliations should be recommended to the General Assembly:

Asociacion Latinoamericana para los Estudios de las Religionas (ALER)
Chinese Association for the Study of Religions (CASR)
Czechoslovak Association for the Study of Religion (CZASR)
Indonesian Society for the Comparative Study of Religion
Société Québécoise pour l'Etude de la Religion (SQER)
Sovietskaya Assatsiatsiya Istorikov Religii (SAIR)

In connection with the above it was noted that an understanding had been reached that (i) ALER would not be in competition with the existing Mexican Association for the History of Religions and that (ii) SQER would share voting rights with the existing Canadian association on a one to one basis.


Nominations for the incoming Executive Committee had been invited in accordance with the rules in the Constitution and the following had been received (from the Nominations Committee and from others)
by the closing date: (for President) U. Bianchi, (for Vice-President) J. Leclant, W. Tyloch, Z. Werblowsky, (for Secretary-General) M. Pye, (for Treasurer) A. Geertz, H. van Lier, (for Deputy Secretary-General L. Sullivan, and (as further members) R. Abubakre, F. Antes, M. Araki, L. Bäckman, Y. Gonzalez, S. Kim, M. Nowaczyk, D. Wiebe. Professor Tyloch's name was withdrawn from the list.

It was considered desirable to cast votes in secret ballot even for those offices which were not contested (this practice is usual in some countries, though not in others). To ensure the election of officers voting took place in two rounds, first the officers, then the further members. As a result the following Executive Committee was elected for the period 1990-1995:

President: U. Bianchi (Rome)
Vice-Presidents: J. Leclant (Paris)
Z. Werblowsky (Jerusalem)
Secretary-General: M. Pye (Marburg)
Treasurer: A. Geertz (Aarhus)
Deputy Secretary-General: L. Sullivan (Cambridge, Mass.)
Further members: R. Abubakre (Ilorin)
P. Antes (Hannover)
M. Araki (Tsukuba)
L. Bäckman (Stockholm)
Y. Gonzalez (Mexico City)
D. Wiebe (Toronto)

The total number of votes cast for each position was 37. The designation of the office "Deputy Secretary-General" and the extension of the number of further members from 4 to 6 were conditional on the previously proposed constitutional amendment being formally accepted by the General Assembly. The results of the election will be presented to the General Assembly "for endorsement" (in line with the current constitution) or in the event of this phrase being withdrawn (as proposed) simply for information.


The Secretary-General reported on various plans for future conference venues as discussed at the meeting of the Executive Committee. In particular, the International Committee welcomed the proposal for its next meeting to be held in Paris in 1993. It was explained that this repeats the pattern of holding a meeting of the International Committee three years after one major, quinquennial Congress and two years before the next, thus providing a convenient rhythm for the prosecution of business.


It was agreed that the Executive Committee would support the proposal to hold the XVII Congress in Mexico City as proposed by Professor Elio Masferrer Kan of the School of Anthropology, and
that an organising committee should be established including both
Mexican and IAHR representation.


(i) Numen. The revised editorial arrangements for Numen discussed
by the Executive Committee at its meeting in 1989 (Warsaw) and
explained in IAHR BULLETIN 13 were recalled for the attention of
the International Committee. It was reported that Professor Thomas
Lawson had been appointed as a further new Editor by the Executive
Committee in accordance with Constitution 2d. Appreciation was
expressed for the work of Professors Heerma van Voss and Werblowsky
whose editorial activity was now coming to an end. While for many
years Professor Werblowsky (like Bleeker before him) had combined
the office of Secretary-General with that of Editor of Numen this
arrangement had come to an end. For this reason a new way of
correlating editorial policy with the interests and expertise to
be found in the IAHR had been sought. The most clear-cut solution
(following many conversations with the parties involved, including
the publishers) was to equate the Executive Committee (itself
elected as a spectrum of international scholarship in the field)
with the Editorial Board for the journal Numen, the official organ
of the IAHR. Apart from creating the required identity of interest
this would also make an annual meeting of the Editorial Board
possible, i.e. on the same occasion of the meeting of the Executive
Committee. This proposal met with approval and was agreed by the
International Committee.

(ii) Science of Religion. It was reported that additional
contributors of abstracts would be very welcome in various fields.

(iii) Revista Latinoamericana para los Estudios de las Religionas.
It was reported that this proposed new publication would include
an annual bibliographical issue which could attract a UNESCO
subsidy. It was therefore agreed to provide seed funding from the
IAHR, details to be arranged by the Treasurer.

(iv) Congress and conference proceedings. Attention was drawn to
those proceedings still in print and to the guidelines agreed in
Sydney for the publication of Congress proceedings. In answer to
questions it was stated by the Secretary-General that no plans had
been agreed to publish parts of the Congress proceedings
separately, and that it was normal for the organising committee of
the Congress to make the first proposal for publication.

12. Language policy.

In view of the fact that there were currently no guidelines on
languages to be used at conferences the Secretary-General advanced
the proposal that, rather than adopting the four traditionally used
in the journal Numen (English, French, German and Italian), it
would normally be advisable to adopt three, namely English, French
and the language of the country in which the Congress or conference
takes place. Thus the official languages of the next Congress in Mexico City would be English, French and Spanish. This policy was approved as a general guideline.

13. Legal incorporation and contractual obligations of IAHR.

It was pointed out that the IAHR, in spite of its long history, was nowhere legally incorporated and that therefore it was scarcely possible for its officers to enter into contractual obligations, for example with respect to its journal Numen. The Executive Committee was requested to look into this matter and take action as appropriate.


(i) Some complaints were made about the organisation of the Congress and it was proposed that in future strict rules should be established for the organisation of IAHR Congresses and conferences. The matter was referred to the Executive Committee.

(ii) Dr. T. Thomas, for the British Association for the Study of Religion proposed (a) an intensification of contacts between the associations in North-Western Europe and (b) a conference linking the associations of countries in the European Community to celebrate the closer integration due to take place in 1992. These proposals met with general welcome. Proposal (a) was referred to the representatives of the relevant associations, and it was pointed out that if proposal (b) took on specific form the question of overlap with the planned conference in Paris to host the International Committee (see above) should be considered.

Minutes compiled by Secretary-General (Michael Pye)

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A Visit to the
Soviet Association for the Science of Religion

by Armin W. Geertz

By invitation from Prof. Dr. of Philosophy Jurij B. Pishtshik and Prof. Dr. Sc. Leonid Ya. Smolyakov at the Academy of Social Sciences in Moscow, Peter Antes and I visited the new Soviet Association in January of this year and took part in the first General Assembly of the Soviet Association for the Science of Religion in order to speak about the activities of the IAHR and to meet with the sponsors of the IAHR regional conference to be held in Leningrad in 1994.

We enjoyed the fine hospitality and comfort of the Hotel Yugo-Zapad, which is part of the enormous building complex housing the Academy of Social Sciences. Chauffeured vehicles were placed at our disposal, as well as talented translators and guides. Our excursions into Moscow, however, were somewhat restricted because of the extreme temperatures which remained between minus 24 and minus 30 degrees centigrade. But the warmth of Soviet hospitality more than made up for the Siberian frigidity.

At the General Assembly of the Soviet Association for the Science of Religion, which was attended by about 50 people, the President of the SASR was elected. He is the 84 year old Prof. Dr. of History, Alexei I. Klibanov, a specialist in Russian Orthodox history who has spent several years in prison for his views. His election is, therefore, symbolic of the times. He was very pleased to have us witness their General Assembly, and he agreed with the characterizations which Peter Antes and I gave of the goals of the history of religions. He also remarked that the initiative shown by the Institute of Scientific Atheism in establishing the SASR was commendable and that their interest in increasing cooperation between the different branches of the academic community was promising.

Besides the president, there are two vice-presidents: Prof. Dr. of Philosophy and Vice-director of the Institute of Philosophy, Lev N. Mitrochin and Jaroslav N. Schapov of the Institute of the History of the USSR of the Soviet Academy of the USSR; there are three secretaries: Sergei V. Deriugin at the Institute
of Scientific Atheism, Prof. Dr. of History at the Institute of Scientific Atheism, Dmitrii V. Mikulskii, and Prof. Dr. of Philosophy Vera P. Mazalova at the same institute; and the treasurer is Jurij B. Pishtshik.

The new organization faces important problems for the future. One of these problems is to ensure that its membership reflects not only the various branches of Soviet science and education, but also to attract former dissidents (some of whom have been imprisoned) to join them as well. This has of course been difficult for the Institute of Scientific Atheism because of its former ideological stance. But it should be noted that all of the branches of education have accommodated party ideology and therefore are presently confronted with the need to reevaluate their position both nationally and internationally. Today, the younger generation is trying to change the goals, activities, and even the names (to the History of Religion) in order to participate in the growing democratization. The Soviet Association for the Science of Religion has been established, among other things, in order to facilitate the coordination of all those who are interested in pursuing the academic study of religion.

The growing interest in, and freedom of, religion in the Soviet Union has also led to a great deal of interest in initiating dialogue between Church and State. The problem is to reconcile communist atheism with dialogue, and here it seems that the Soviets consider the History of Religions to be a legitimate way of entering into such a dialogue. Earlier attempts have been made, such as the establishment of the Association of Secular Culture which arranged round-table conferences for the scientific organizations and the churches. But it was evidently too rigid, and so the IAHR was chosen as a more honorable solution to the many needs of the Soviet situation. As an aside, we visited the Imam-Khatib of the Moscow Jami Mosque, Ravil Gainutdinov, who said that he was very happy to learn that organizations such as ours existed, since other scientific organizations have not treated them very well in the past.

The IAHR newsbulletins will appear in the new journal called "Disput". As the enclosed announcement indicates, it is not the
organ of the SASR, but it is a forum for the many interest groups mentioned above. The editors of the journal are Prof. Pishhtshik and Sergei V. Deriugin. The editors informed us that they will write an English digest at the end of each annual volume, which they hope will attract Western subscribers (a yearly subscription will cost around US$3-4). They also would like to elicit manuscripts from Western scholars which they will publish in Russian in the journal.

Concerning the Regional Conference in Leningrad in 1994, 15 scholars will be invited from the West and about 50 participants from the Soviet Union itself. They offer a 5-star hotel (probably Hotel Europa which is presently being renovated along with the many other cultural buildings of Leningrad presently under renovation), simultaneous translation, cultural events, and the meeting of personal interests. The theme of the conference will be "The Religions of the Orient through the Eyes of the West."

In Leningrad, I was under the excellent care and guidance of Dr. of Philosophy at the Museum of the History of Religion, Anne Mary Shakhnovitch. I was given a guided tour of the Museum of the History of Religion which is housed in the former Kazan Cathedral.

I was impressed with the museum, not only by its impressive surroundings, but also by the various exhibits, many of which were interestingly put together and containing interesting objects. The museum has its own publishing house which puts out about 4 books a year. They are, by the way, interested in receiving manuscripts also by Westerners in order to meet the increasingly growing needs of especially Soviet youth to learn about religion.

The conference will be held in the center of Leningrad close to the Hermitage along the shores of the Neva River. I think that it will be a very pleasurable experience.

A.C.
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***

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LA COMPLUTENSE CREEA UN INSTITUTO UNIVERSITARIO DE CIENCIAS DE LA RELIGION

La puesta en marcha de un Instituto de Ciencias de la Religión fue anunciada por el doctor Villapalos, rector de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid, en la clausura del Congreso Internacional sobre los Manuscritos del Mar Muerto, organizado por esta universidad (18-21/3/91). El objetivo del instituto será la investigación científica y la docencia universitaria sobre la religión y las religiones.

ONCEBIDO para postgraduados, estos estudios tendrán una duración de dos cursos con una programación de nivel de doctorado, a cuyo final podrá obtenerse el título de maestro universitario en Ciencias de la Religión. La institución de este centro universitario pretende además el aprovechamiento de tantos trabajos realizados en este campo desde el ámbito personal en España y la formación de nuevos investigadores en estas disciplinas.

DIÁLOGO INTERDISCIPLINAR Y EQUILIBRIO FE-CIENCIA

A la vez, el centro cultivará especialmente el diálogo interdisciplinar, ineludible en el terreno de las religiones comparadas, por su misma naturaleza y dado que en estas investigaciones se aglutinan muy diversas materias: sociología, psicología, filosofía, teología... De igual manera el instituto exigirá el conocimiento de las lenguas propias de las religiones que se estudian, sin olvidar las lenguas antiguas de las religiones de Asia.

Es muy posible que los programas presenten estos aspectos generales y disciplinares: Antropología de la religión, Sociología de la religión, Hermenéutica de la simbología y mitología religiosa, Fenomenología de la religión, Filosofía de la religión, Historia de las religiones, Metodología de la ciencia de las religiones, Estudio de la teología y desarrollo de las teologías.

El instituto tendrá como órgano de gobierno un consejo y un director nombrado, mientras no exista el consejo, por el rector de la Universidad Complutense. El director ejercerá todas las competencias inherentes a su cargo y estará asistido por un secretario del instituto.

INCORPORACIÓN A UNA LARGA TRADICIÓN UNIVERSITARIA

Por fin España va a contar con un centro de estudios de la religión. En 1986, el Religions Periodicals Directory subrayaba la escasez de la participación española en estos estudios. El año pasado varios países del Este se inscribían ya como miembros de la Sociedad Internacional de Historia de las Religiones, mientras España permanecía todavía sin ninguna representación en este organismo.

Una vez más, el rector Villapalos, su equipo y algunos otros intelectuales van a tener un importante acierto al integrar en la universidad estudios ya vinculados desde finales del siglo pasado en la tradición universitaria de muchos países de Europa, Norteamérica e incluso hispanoamérica. Francia creó en 1879 una cátedra de estos estudios, desarrollando luego una amplia investigación en la sección V de L'Ecole Practique de Houtes Etudes. Ahora mismo, en esta nación vecina, cuando nosotros andamos debatiendo la enseñanza de la religión en la escuela, intelectuales franceses y su sociedad laica promueven el estudio de las religiones desde la educación general básica.

Pero no sólo a finales del siglo pasado y principios de éste con la celebración en Estocolmo del Primer Congreso sobre «Ciencias de la Religión» en 1897, la creación de 1908 de la International Association for the History of Religions o la publicación de la Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, sino en las décadas de los años 60 y 70 de nuestro siglo ha tenido lugar una gran eclosión de los estudios de la fenomenología e historia comparada de las religiones en multitud de centros de investigación y docencia de muchas universidades.

GRAN CONTRIBUCION AL HOMBRE Y A LO SOCIAL


Por otra parte, como fe y ética desde la perspectiva religiosa presentan al hombre interpelado desde lo trascendente y desde sí mismo, supone una indiscutible ayuda para el arreglo de muchos problemas sociales, políticos, económicos e intelectuales planteados hoy por el ser humano.

Estos y otros son, sin duda, los motivos que han llevado al rector de la Universidad Complutense y a su Junta de Gobierno a dar en enero pasado el visto bueno a este proyecto, probablemente en marcha para el curso próximo.

José Luis DIEZ

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