

EACLALS Newsletter October 1999

Executive Committee:

Gerhard Stilz, University of Tübingen (Chair)
Geoffrey V. Davis, RWTH Aachen (Secretary)
Svenja Kuhfuss, University of Tübingen (Treasurer)

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0. Personal letters to all members

As an attachment you will find (according to your current membership status) either a request to renew your membership or a letter displaying your personal data as they stand in our database. In both cases we ask you kindly to check

whether the data are correct and return the completed form to us.

1. Introduction

Dear EACLALS members,
since most of you will have returned by now for the winter term, this newsletter may come at the right time. It is the first newsletter produced by the new executive committee. Therefore we regard it as appropriate, above all, to thank our predecessors, Hena Maes-Jelinek (Chair), Geoff Davis (Secretary) and Bénédicte Ledent (Treasurer) for the good work they have done before we took over after the election on 8 April 1999 (please find the minutes under 2). The major outcome of the Tübingen business meeting was the new EACLALS constitution accepted with an overwhelming majority. Since the Tübingen conference (which received much praise from its 300 participants for its productivity, efficiency and friendly atmosphere), the new executive committee has not been idle. We met on 10 July, in Tübingen again, in order to discuss the resources and prospects of our work for the next three years. We will briefly inform you about our deliberations below (cf. 4). Moreover, the chair gave his report, presented the balance sheet and composed his funding application for the Commonwealth Foundation grant 1999/2000, on 3 September. He sincerely hopes that ACLALS will be more successful than in the previous year in securing this basic grant which has greatly helped us to do the work we did in the past years. Finally, this newsletter holds the usual news on conferences, book publications by members, and various matters related to the activities of EACLALS.

2. Minutes of the Tübingen Business Meeting of 8 April 1999

Triennial Conference Tübingen 1999 Business Meeting

"Brechtbau", Wilhelmstrasse 50, Room 036
Thursday, 8 April 1999, 16.15

AGENDA

1. Report of the Chairperson
2. Report of the Secretary
3. Report of the Treasurer
4. The Constitution
5. Elections of Officers
6. Fixing of the date and place of the next Triennial General Meeting
7. Appointment of Nominating Committee
8. Miscellaneous
9. Adjournment

MINUTES

1. Report of the Chairperson (Hena Maes-Jelinek)

In her report the chairperson summarised the activities of the outgoing committee over its three-year term of office. She mentioned the new EACLALS logo designed for us by the Belgian painter Georges Leclercq. She explained the new credit card subscription payment facility provided by the Citibank in Liège which overseas members in particular were taking advantage of. She recalled how, in an effort to run the organization on a democratic basis, a questionnaire relating to the projected ACLALS conference in Nigeria had been submitted to all members and the results communicated to the ACLALS board. She elaborated on the introduction of a constitution for the organisation, which had been promised in Oviedo and was now, after much effort and consultation, to be voted on. She reiterated EACLALS support for the journal *Kunapipi*, detailed the payments which had been made to the journal, and informed the meeting that gifts of complete sets of the journal had been made to a number of recipients, viz. the University of Guyana, the University of Fort Hare (South Africa), the University of Oradea (Romania), the University of Greifswald (formerly East Germany), the University of Trinidad, and the University of Presov (Slovakia). The chairperson also recalled the Association's commitment to supporting academics and institutions in Eastern Europe, regretting that this had not borne more fruit. As chairperson she had reported on the state of Commonwealth Studies in Europe for the Commonwealth Foundation in London and, in her personal capacity, had attended the ACLALS conference.

2. Report of the Secretary (Geoffrey V. Davis)

(a) **Committee Meetings.** Since our election as the EACLALS committee, we have held a dozen or so, often fairly lengthy business meetings in Liège. These have been easy to arrange, as Liège is only about 45kms down the motorway from Aachen. The meetings took place mainly to discuss EACLALS policy with regard to matters such as the contentious Nigerian ACLALS conference venue which resulted in a poll of our members, and to enable us to compile the newsletters. In addition, we made one joint visit to Tübingen in 1997 to consult with the local organiser, Gerhard Stilz, on the planning of this conference. We viewed the proposed venues, discussed the conference theme and made suggestions as to who might be invited. I subsequently made another visit together with Norbert Platz, in his capacity as the representative of GNEL, for the same purpose. I do not know whether such visits have been previously EACLALS practice, but they certainly proved useful on this occasion.

(b) **Newsletters.** We produced and distributed through the good offices of our home universities five newsletters, in which we reported on forthcoming conferences and new publications. We also circulated the text of an EACLALS constitution in advance of this meeting, so that it could be debated and possibly adopted here.

(c) **EACLALS reports.** During our period of office we were required by the Commonwealth Foundation to compile reports on the activities of the Association. These were submitted for the years 1996, 1997 and 1998, and provided the basis for the continued payment of our annual grant.

3. Report of the Treasurer (Bénédicte Ledent)

The treasurer presented statements of account for the years 1996, 1997 and 1998 together with an interim statement for 1999.

4. The Constitution

Earlier this year we circulated copies of a proposed EACLALS constitution. This was largely inspired by that of our sister organisation in Canada, although we did have to make a number of changes to match conditions here.

We asked that whatever suggestions and amendments members might consider necessary be submitted in advance of this meeting and in writing, so that they might be discussed here today.

We actually received only two submissions. Both had some detailed suggestions to make which we found very sensible. The committee had one or two others to add which emerged out of our own subsequent discussions. As all members had ample opportunity to study the text of the constitution prior to the business meeting, the proposed amendments were put before the meeting and voted on individually before the constitution as a whole was put to a vote. A summary of the debate follows.

(1) It was suggested that "there needs to be some fixed constitutional and umbilical link forged in which it is quite clear that EACLALS is a branch of a global organisation [...] the Commonwealth Foundation would be dismayed if there was any sense that each branch had a constitutional identity technically separate from the central executive Association". We therefore proposed to add to §1 the line "It is a branch of the global Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS)". This was accepted.

(2) It was suggested that "something about the encouragement of reading of Commonwealth writing among ordinary readers who are neither academics nor teachers" should be added. "One of the problems with the Association," it was argued, "has been its exclusively academic nature, whereas there is really no reason why it should not reach beyond the university world to appeal to general readers, whether in the context of schools, libraries, bookshops or the internet." We therefore proposed to add to §2a the following: "and to spread knowledge about these literatures among general readers in Europe by every available means". This was accepted.

(3) The committee suggested that as a matter of policy we add to §3 the stipulation: "In order to attend the Association's Triennial Conference one must be a fully paid up member of the Association." This was accepted.

(4) It was suggested with reference to the Executive Committee's Terms of References in §9a, that if the officers of the Association "preferably belong to the same institution or proximate institutions," the result would be

"one country representing the whole of Europe for 3 and possibly 6 years". The point was made that the notion of "proximity" is not actually defined and would only be workable if prospective candidates for office organized themselves into "candidacy lobbies of geographically identical or proximate triumvirates" and even then would tend to "shut out innumerable capable and willing individuals who happen to be Europeans but not in proximate complicity with votable colleagues". The meeting decided that it was not necessary to stipulate in the constitution that committee members come from "proximate institutions".

(5) It was suggested that the provision in §18e allowing nominations for office from the floor at the TGM is open to abuse by "someone making a last ditch attempt to block the election of someone who has been constitutionally proposed" and "bypasses the circulation of information which other candidates will have prepared about themselves". The meeting decided to retain the possibility of nominations from the floor by 32 votes to 0.

(6) It was decided that student members should have the constitutional right to stand for election by a vote of 32:0.

The constitution was adopted as amended by a unanimous vote of 32 to 0.

A copy of the final draft of the Constitution with the amendments shown in bold is included here.

5. Elections of Officers

Two members of the previous committee having declined to stand for re-election, a vote to elect officers was carried out.

By a vote of 29 in favour with two abstentions the following EACLALS committee was elected for the period 1999-2002:

Chair: Gerhard Stilz (Tübingen)

Treasurer: Svenja Kuhfuss (Tübingen)

Secretary: Geoffrey Davis (Aachen; re-elected)

6. Fixing of the date and place of the next Triennial General Meeting

No date or place for the next conference and general meeting could be decided upon. The matter will be taken up immediately by the new committee.

3. EACLALS Constitution

European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

CONSTITUTION

(Revisions agreed on at the EACLALS Triennial Conference Business Meeting in Tübingen on Thursday, 8 April 1999 shown in bold)

1. THE ASSOCIATION

The name of this Association is the European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (EACLALS). ~~It is~~ a branch of the global Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS). EACLALS is referred to in this Constitution as "the Association".

The Association is a non-profit, professional organisation.

2. AIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION

a. To promote teaching and research in the field of Commonwealth (Post-colonial) literatures throughout Europe and to spread knowledge about these literatures among general readers in Europe by every available means.

b. To maintain connections with other Associations with shared interests, in particular the parent Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS) and its regional branches overseas.

3. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to any academic, professional, university student or interested person engaged in the research, teaching or study of any Commonwealth (Post-colonial) literature.

In order to attend the Association's Triennial Conference one must be a fully paid up member of the Association.

There are four categories of membership: Ordinary, Associate, Student, Honorary.

a. *Ordinary*: Ordinary membership in the Association gives a member the right to vote, to speak, to present and support motions and to stand for election. Retired members

shall pay a reduced membership fee, but are Ordinary members.

b. *Associate*: Associate membership in the Association is open to persons resident outside Europe. They have full privileges of Ordinary membership, with the right to vote, to speak, to present and support motions, but not to stand for election.

c. *Student*: All full-time or part-time students studying in the field of Commonwealth (Post-colonial) literatures are entitled to Student membership in the Association. They have the full privileges of Ordinary membership, with the right to vote, to speak, to present and support motions, **and to stand for election**. Student members shall pay a reduced membership fee.

d. *Honorary*: The Executive of the Association, with the voted approval of the membership, may grant Honorary membership to persons who have distinguished themselves by their scholarly achievements in the fields of Commonwealth (Post-colonial) literatures, or who have rendered outstanding service to the Association. They have the full privileges of Ordinary membership, with the right to vote, to speak, to present and support motions, but not to stand for election. Honorary members are exempt from paying membership fees.

4. OFFICERS

The chief officers of the Association shall be the Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer.

5. CHAIRPERSON

The chairperson of the Association shall be responsible for the following:

- the overall management of the Association;
- convening and chairing the Triennial General Meeting and meetings of the Executive Committee;
- acting as the official spokesperson for the Association;
- representing the Association on the international Executive Committee of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS).

6. SECRETARY

The Secretary of the Association shall be responsible for the following:

- maintaining the membership lists of the Association;
- maintaining the records of the Association and handling its regular correspondence.

7. TREASURER

The Treasurer of the Association shall be responsible for the following:

- collecting the membership fees of the Association;
- preparing annual financial statements and presenting them to the Triennial General Meeting of the Association. They shall be audited by two members chosen at the General Meeting and shall be approved by the members present;
- providing each member with the financial statement of the Association for the three financial years of the outgoing committee's term of office.

8. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee of the Association ~~will~~ consist of the Chairperson, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Past Chairperson.

9. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Executive Committee shall observe the following terms of reference:

- The chief officers of the Association shall be resident in any of the countries of Europe.
- The position of Past Chairperson is an *ex-officio* appointment and a non-voting one.
- Each elected member of the Committee has one vote.
- The Executive Committee shall be convened at least once each year by the Chairperson, who will give notice of the meeting to its members by mail or telephone.
- An Executive Committee meeting shall always be convened during the regular Triennial Meeting of the Association as a whole.
- All policy actions taken by the Executive Committee shall be ratified by the Triennial General Meeting.

10. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: DUTIES

The Executive Committee has the following responsibilities:

- a) To authorise any expenditures necessary to the running of the Association.
- b) To establish ad hoc committees to facilitate and further the activities of the Association.
- c) To set membership fees.
- d) To delegate the organisation of the Triennial conference to a locally based member of the Association and to liaise with such persons.
- e) To produce and circulate the Association's *Newsletter* twice a year.
- f) To decide on all questions touching on the interpretation of this Constitution.

11. TERMS OF OFFICE

- a) The Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer shall be appointed for a term of three years. This is renewable only once.
- b) Elections for all Officers of the Association shall take place at the Triennial General Meeting.
- c) The official headquarters of the Association shall be the institutional address of the current Chairperson.

12. VACANCY

The position of an Officer shall be considered vacant under the following circumstances:

- a) Death or incapacity.
- b) Resignation, in the form of a letter to the Secretary.
- c) Failure to pay membership dues to the Association.
- d) Removal from the Executive Committee by a vote of three-quarters of the membership present at an Extraordinary Meeting of the Association.

13. STANDING COMMITTEES

There shall be two standing committees of the Association: the Nominating Committee and the Programme Committee.

14. NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Nominating Committee shall consist of the immediate Past Chairperson and two members of the Association.

Members of the Nominating Committee, apart from the Past Chairperson, shall be

elected by a vote taken at the Triennial General Meeting of the Association.

The Nominating Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) To present the names of candidates for all positions on the Executive Committee to the Triennial General Meeting. This does not exclude other nominations that may be proposed and seconded by members in good standing from the floor of the Triennial General Meeting of the Association.
- b) To establish its rules of procedure and methods of balloting and submit them to the Triennial General Meeting of the Association for approval.

15. PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

The Programme Committee shall consist of two officers of the Association together with the local conference organiser and his/her deputy.

- a) The Programme Committee shall decide which papers are to be presented at the Triennial Conference of the Association.
- b) In cases where the conference is hosted jointly with another organisation, a representative of that organisation shall be delegated to the Programme Committee.
- c) The Programme Committee shall be reconstituted at each Triennial General Meeting and confirmed by a vote of the membership.

16. REVOCATION OF MEMBERSHIP

Membership of any standing committee may be revoked by a vote of three-quarters of the members present at an Extraordinary General Meeting.

17. NOTICE OF ELECTIONS

Notice of Elections shall be sent out to all current members three months before the Triennial General Meeting of the Association at which the elections are to take place.

18. NOMINATIONS

Nominations for all positions on the Executive Committee shall be conducted in the following manner:

- a) The call for nominations to all Executive positions in the Association, most particularly for the institutional (Headquarter) positions of the chief officers of

Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer, should be included in the Notice of Elections.

- b) Written nominations, including the written consent of the nominee, and the supporting signatures of two paid-up members of the Association, shall be submitted to the Secretary two months before the Triennial General Meeting of the Association.
- c) A full list of candidates for a prospective Executive Committee, together with the site(s) of a proposed Headquarters, shall be prepared by the outgoing Executive Committee for presentation at the Triennial General Meeting of the Association.
- d) The list of candidates and the submitted nominations shall be included in a mail ballot to be sent out to all members one month before the Triennial General Meeting of the Association.
- e) **Nominations for any position may be made from the floor at the Triennial General Meeting, with the consent of the nominee and the support of two members of the Association, present at the Triennial General Meeting.**
- f) Mail ballots shall not be tabulated until the day of the election and then not counted until the completion of the vote from the floor.
- g) Mailed ballots should be submitted in a plain, sealed envelope. This envelope should then be placed inside another envelope, sealed, with the member's signature written across the sealing strip. These ballots shall be verified by the Secretary against the current membership lists. The signed envelopes shall be opened by the Secretary at the appropriate point in the agenda of the Triennial General Meeting. A member of the Association approved of by the general membership present shall then record the ballots in the plain envelopes.
- h) All members shall have one vote.
- i) Members who have voted by mail, but who are present at the Triennial General Meeting of the Association, shall be considered to have already cast their vote.
- j) Voting at all elections of the Association shall be by secret ballot.

4. Information from the Executive Committee Meeting (Tübingen, 10 July 1999, 9-17)

At their first meeting the new executive committee discussed and agreed on:

- 1) **Basic rules of sharing information, knowledge, work and competences.** The committee will meet 2-3 times a year. The newsletter (which is supposed to be sent at least twice a year) will be the joint production of chair, secretary and treasurer.
- 2) **Resources.** The EACLALS office will be situated in the English Department of the University of Tübingen. Postal/phone/fax/E-mail address: c/o Prof. Gerhard Stilz, Seminar für Englische Philologie, Universität Tübingen, Wilhelmstr. 50, D-72074 Tübingen, phone: [+49] (0)7071 297-6871 or -6709, fax: [+49] (0)7071 29-5760, e-mail: gerhard.stilz@uni-Tübingen.de or hk-g.stilz@uni-Tübingen.de. A new e-mail account exclusively reserved for EACLALS business is being planned and will soon be opened with the Computer Centre at the University of Tübingen.

The **financial resources** of EACLALS are tight, partly due to the failure to obtain the Commonwealth Foundation grant in 1998/99, partly due to the low payment morale of many EACLALS members, and partly due to structural problems in budgetting. Only £ 5 out of each membership subscription remain for the association's budget, the rest goes into our subscriptions to *Kunapipi* and the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. The executive committee envisaged a number of remedial steps for this situation, while it is clear that *Kunapipi* and *JCL* will continue to be supported by the EACLALS membership policy.

For the next three years, EACLALS will hold bank accounts with the Bank of Scotland in Stirling and with the Kreissparkasse Tübingen in Germany. Membership fees will therefore be payable in Pounds Sterling and in DM respectively. Members are asked to pay their dues in these currencies only, either by cheque or by credit card. The Euro will not be an economically viable option for payment until 2001. For details please see

the personal letter enclosed with the new membership form.

- 3) **Presentation and publications.** The executive committee has decided to put some additional energy into developing the EACLALS logo; meanwhile the old logo will be used.

Likewise, the EACLALS **homepage** on the Internet is being developed. It will be used for updating and supplementing the information given in newsletters. Links to other related associations and organizations will be provided.

In order to save money and time in international and intercontinental communication we plan to send the **newsletter** to members by e-mail. This presupposes a comprehensive and current list of all paid-up members of EACLALS, along with their e-mail addresses. Members who do not have an e-mail address will continue to be served with more traditional forms of information. Our newsletter will regularly contain news on forthcoming conferences (above all those hosted by EACLALS and related organizations) and a list of books published by members (PLEASE INFORM THE EACLALS OFFICE OF YOUR NEW RELEASES).

Other EACLALS publication projects envisaged are a new edition of *Who is Who in EACLALS* (by 2002), a joint EACLALS research project in the form of a handbook, and the Tübingen conference publications.

- 4) **Membership policy.** While every effort should be made to win new members at all levels of academic achievement, the executive committee will also put some energy into clarifying the membership status of a considerable number of persons on our membership list. It must be the association's policy that only paid-up members will receive *Kunapipi*, *JCL* and our printed newsletter and that only paid-up members can register for EACLALS conferences. Non-paying "members" will be given notice and, failing their active renewal of membership, will be removed from the list of members in due course.
- 5) **Areas of activity, productivity, investment.** According to its new constitution, EACLALS has two major tasks, the first being academic, the second being to address the "general reader". In order to do justice to

the second target area, the executive committee plans to support and help to organise public readings and symposia with the participation of select researchers and authors and with particular emphasis on Eastern European countries. Likewise, EACLALS intends to support workshops with students and young university staff, especially in places where there is not yet a sufficiently experienced and consolidated academic infrastructure supporting the spread of the New Literatures in English.

- 6) **Areas of Collaboration.** As in the past, EACLALS will, on a global level, invite members of ACLALS to participate in its conferences. In cases of such invitations, EACLALS membership is, of course, not regarded as obligatory for attendance. On a European level, EACLALS seeks friendly relations and modes of cooperation with ESSE, EASA, and other European or national associations devoted to the global dimensions of English language, literatures and cultures.

5. Conferences

- Bruce Clunies Ross (Copenhagen) has extended an invitation to the executive committee to convene the **next EACLALS Triennial Conference in 2002** at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. The committee welcomes this invitation and energetically supports the idea of having the conference, once again, in Denmark. A visit to the provisional site has been proposed for next spring when the planning perspectives for the organizers and the association will be discussed in more detail.
- **Second International Conference on Caribbean Literature (I.C.C.L.)** Bermuda, November 3-5, 1999, organized by Purdue University Calumet, Morehouse College and Bermuda College. Contact: Melvin Rahming, Co-Director, Morehouse College, Dept. of English and Linguistics, 830 Westview Dr. S.W., Atlanta, GA 30314, USA. Phone 404 681 2800 Ext. 2512, Fax 404 525 6272, E-mail mrahming@morehouse.edu.

- k) No member of the Executive Committee may stand for more than two consecutive terms.
- l) The new Executive Committee shall assume office at the conclusion of the Triennial General Meeting of the Association at which the elections have taken place.

19. GENERAL MEETING.

The Triennial General Meeting of the Association shall take place at the time and location of the Triennial Conference of the Association. Any other Extraordinary General Meeting shall take place at a time and location decided by the Executive Committee.

- a) The membership convened at the Triennial General Meeting constitutes the Association's highest authority.
- b) The order of business at the Triennial General Meeting of the Association shall proceed, where appropriate, in the following manner:
 1. Report of the Chairperson.
 2. Report of the Secretary.
 3. Report of the Treasurer.
 4. Reports of the Standing Committees.
 5. Elections of Officers.
 6. Fixing of the date and place of the next Triennial General Meeting.
 7. Appointment of Committees.
 8. Unfinished Business.
 9. New Business.
 10. Adjournment.

20. CONVENING A MEETING

- a) In order to convene a Triennial General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting, the Chairperson or the Executive Committee shall:

Give written notice to all members at least three months in advance in the case of a Triennial General Meeting and at least one month in the case of an Extraordinary General Meeting.
- b) A quorum shall consist of those members present at the Triennial or the Extraordinary General Meeting.
- c) Each member shall have one vote.
- d) All decisions shall be based on a majority vote.

- e) Notice to convene or to postpone a General Meeting shall be mailed to the most recent address of members in the records of the Association.
- f) An Extraordinary General Meeting may be convened by the Executive Committee or the Chairperson upon the receipt of a petition signed by at least twenty members, or by five percent of the membership if this figure is higher.

21. FINANCIAL YEAR.

The financial year of the Association shall run from January 1 to December 31.

22. SIGNATURES

Except where otherwise provided for, contracts, documents, cheques or other notes made out in the name of the Association shall bear the signatures of the Chairperson and the Treasurer or Secretary.

23. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

- a) Any member may propose an amendment to the Constitution. Such amendments shall require the signatures of ten current members of the Association.
- b) Notice of amendment motions should be sent, with the correct number of supporting signatures, to the Secretary twelve weeks in advance of the Triennial General Meeting at which it is proposed to have these amendment proposals considered.
- c) The Secretary shall circulate these motions to the membership six weeks before the Triennial General Meeting.
- d) Ratification of amendment motions shall require a two-thirds vote in favour by members in good standing at the Triennial General Meeting.

24. CHANGE OF NAME, STATUS OR TERMS OF REFERENCE

- a) The Association may change its name, status or terms of reference only after a referendum indicating that three-quarters of paid-up members are in favour of such a change.
- b) A motion to this effect must be submitted by twenty-five members.

- c) Such a motion should reach the Secretary at least three months before the date of the Triennial General Meeting at which it is proposed to consider it.
- d) Approval of such a motion shall require the assent of two-thirds of the members present at that Triennial General Meeting.
- e) The referendum shall then be organized by the Executive Committee between October 1 and December 31 of that year.

25. DISSOLUTION

- a) The Association may be dissolved only after a referendum organized according to the same methods, procedures and time-frame covering the preceding section dealing with Change of Name, Status or Terms of Reference.
- b) In the event of the dissolution of the Association, its remaining assets shall be given over to a registered charity reputed for its work in the developing countries.