

TOWARDS AN ASIA-EUROPE UNIVERSITY

An Interview with Dato' Prof. Dr. Shaharil Talib*

By GARETH A. RICHARDS, *AEI Senior Research Fellow*

The idea of establishing an Asia-Europe University has been on the ASEM agenda since the first summit held in Bangkok in 1996. The major impetus for the realisation of this project has so far come from the government of Malaysia. It established the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) (formerly the Asia-Europe Centre) at the University of Malaya in 1997. Over the last seven years the AEI has become one of the major sites of research, learning and teaching through cooperation between institutions of higher education in both Asia and Europe. This year has seen a major step forward towards the transformation of the AEI into a fully-edged Asia-Europe University. In this interview, Dato' Prof. Dr. Shaharil Talib, the Executive Director of the AEI, spells out his vision for this innovation in global education.

The Asia-Europe Institute has been established for several years now. Could you outline its major achievements so far?

Since its founding as a fully-edged postgraduate institution, the AEI has advanced its brief mainly through international partnerships and curriculum development. Our research pillars have gained international visibility and recognition through conferencing, seminars, workshops and publications. At the same time, we have successfully developed innovative instruments in higher education collaboration through our International Masters Programmes which are jointly endorsed by leading institutions in both Asia and Europe. Internships have also helped to strengthen Asia-Europe networks. Novel entrepreneurship programmes have been designed to provide a better understanding of how firms, institutions and relationships are networked across the two continents. We have also programmed a cultural showcase which offers an interface between the ASEM embassies and the local community. All in all, the AEI has emerged as a global portal promoting internationalisation, liberalisation and democratisation of knowledge management through faculty exchange, student mobility and research collaboration.

What has been the role of the Malaysian government in underwriting the AEI concept?

At a general level, this unique knowledge enterprise is Malaysia's contribution towards the noble vision of student and scholar exchange, with a long-term view of developing a better understanding of the histories, cultures and business practices in Asia and Europe. To this extent it was fully supported by the Office of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya, our home institution. And this bold vision was also consciously



Dato' Prof. Dr. Shaharil (right), with Gareth Richards

created in the initial phase through the unilateral sponsorship of the government of Malaysia, notably the invaluable efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education. Now we propose to invite bilateral and multilateral participation of ASEM member states in sharing and widening this responsibility.

Tell us something of the general rationale for the establishment of a new Asia-Europe University.

As an ASEM project initiated by Malaysia, the AEU will be a series of centres of excellence in strategically located universities in Asia and Europe with the hub in Kuala Lumpur. As such, the AEU will serve as an umbrella University with AEI establishments in partner Universities undertaking research and delivering teaching and learning programmes. We hope that the AEU will be supported financially by all the ASEM member states. As I mentioned earlier, as the initiator of the project, Malaysia has so far borne the full financial burden in setting up the AEI. But as the AEI evolves into the AEU, the financial commitment should be shared equally by other member states in a spirit of partnership and mutual benefit. I believe that with the support of all, the AEU will become the driver of all the global knowledge chains—led from Malaysia but deeply embedded in both Asia and Europe—and thus establish itself as an internationally renowned brand among ASEM member states.

You speak a great deal of the innovative nature of the AEU project. How will it offer something new in the world of higher education?

The AEU will consciously seek to distinguish itself from existing student exchange, degree and postgraduate programmes in Asia and Europe. In the first place, it will do

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so by pioneering the birth of a new generation of Asians and Europeans who are deeply knowledgeable of and comfortable with each other. In this way, the AEU aims to bring together the two continents in curricula and faculty as well as students and researchers, sharing a multicultural and multi-developmental learning experience to further the goals and objectives of ASEM. If there should be any doubt, the lack of appropriation of research and learning faculties of Asian institutions is evident from the trade in education between the two continents. The Global Education Digest for 2003 published by UNESCO, for example, shows that there are 230,735 Asian students studying in Europe, while only 10,835 European students study in Asia. The AEU will help to ameliorate this imbalance and its distinct group of graduates will make a significant contribution to defining global knowledge. Thus the AEU will help to reshape the existing configurations of knowledge based on the traditional North-South divide or First, Second and Third World distinctions and East-West constructs. It will define new directions in research, teaching and learning.

What about some of the specifics in respect of the AEU's research goals? How should the proposed research culture be situated?

Above all, the University will be a focal point for multi-disciplinary social science research where academics and user groups can collaborate on projects to establish

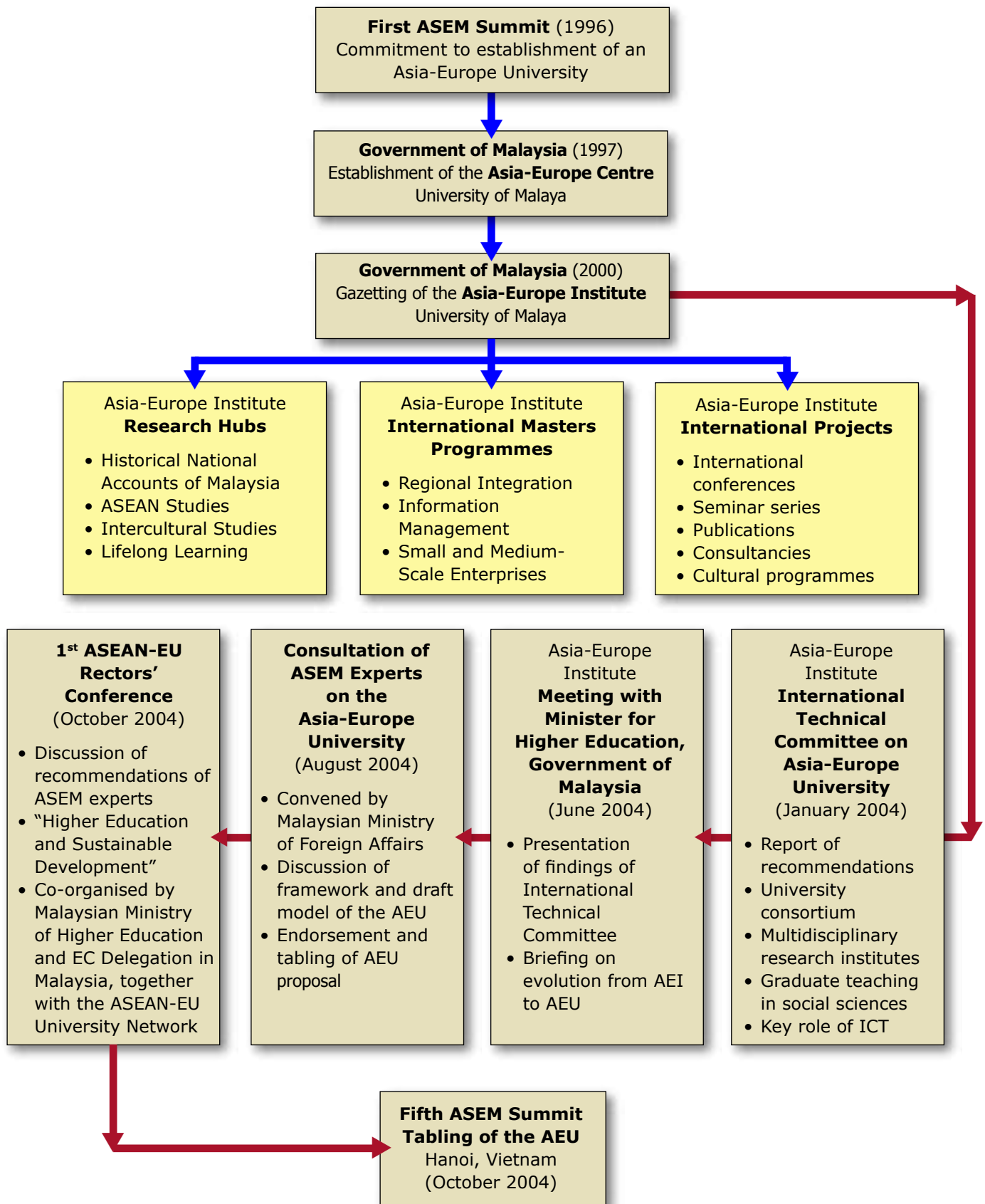
and facilitate the formation of world-class research. This would also constitute the basis of teaching and learning. We are proposing four complementary research clusters: globalisation, regional integration and development; multiculturalism and community development; sustainability, governance and social change; and, business networks, knowledge management and competitiveness. Let me spell out something on the thinking behind each. In respect of the first pillar, it will offer an opportunity to examine the complex processes associated with globalisation from the perspective of countries located in different developmental trajectories. In an analogous way, the cluster on multiculturalism and community development is situated within larger questions of culture, identity and ethnic coexistence in a comparative context. This area of research is especially important for critical questions of conflict management and issues of ethnic accommodation and integration. Turning to the third pillar, here we envisage a research effort to meet the challenges of sustainable development that are becoming global in scope and are linked directly to questions of governance, equity, transparency, participation and distribution. The final research cluster will focus on the policy relevant dynamics of the forces that influence entrepreneurship, innovation and economic performance in both Asia and Europe. As you can see, the research and teaching portfolio of the AEU will attempt to construct a genuinely multi-disciplinary, complementary and holistic knowledge base—one that will be both novel and creative.

It is an ambitious prospect. What are the concrete steps that need to be taken from this point onwards?

Earlier this year, the AEI brought together a technical committee of experienced academics from Asia and Europe. This committee undertook the task of drafting a concept paper and a revised version of this has now been given to the relevant authorities to be tabled as a Cabinet Paper with the Malaysian government. We hope that the government will see fit to sponsor the AEU proposal to the ASEM process later this year. What the proposal envisages is a five year period (from 2004 to 2009) for the implementation of the first phase of the project. What this will concentrate on is essentially capacity building in order to demonstrate in practice the potential for deepening the working relationships between higher education institutions in Asia and Europe. One of the most important aspects of this will be to build the human resources of the proposed University by, for example, reversing the Asia-Europe brain drain. Of course, there will also be considerable financial implications—and the goal will be to persuade other ASEM member states to progressively match Malaysia's contribution. But I want to stress two things. We are very conscious of the need to optimise limited resources. This is why the aim is not to invest so much in bricks-and-mortar but to create a real knowledge infrastructure. The second thing is that our greatest assets are those of human capital in the mobile world of the twenty-first century. The long-term benefits for Malaysia are obvious. The new University would undoubtedly help to project a globally developed 'Malaysian brand'. But the overall knowledge synergies will benefit all the ASEM member states and their peoples. Above all, the AEU will develop an innovative knowledge emporium appropriate to the information age.

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From Asia-Europe Institute, University of Malaya to the Asia-Europe University



The Promises and Limits of Civil Society Engagement in Asia-Europe Relations

By GARETH A. RICHARDS*

One of the most prominent features of international politics since the end of the Cold War is the extent to which scholars, activists, policymakers and political practitioners have invoked the notion of 'civil society' in their discussion of global issues. The turning point was the famous UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 when thousands attended the parallel non-governmental forum and, arguably, helped to shape the post-Rio environmental governance agenda in significant ways. Since that time it seems that no major international meeting has been complete without the voice of civil society organisations and movements. The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process is no exception.



The Asia Europe People's Forum (AEPF) is a coalition of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from Asia and Europe working on issues of common concern to both regions. Its main activities include the organisation of parallel civil society conferences on the occasion of the official ASEM Summits. A fifth AEPF will take place in Hanoi, Vietnam, in September 2004, one month before the ASEM V summit. Since its emergence in 1996 the AEPF has evolved by reflecting upon, shaping strategies for and intervening in a range of economic, political and social concerns. These have included 'transborder' issues such as social development, the environment, gender equality, human rights and labour standards which, it is argued, would not possess their contemporary prominence without civil society's sustained activism. Set in this light, the underlying rationale for civil society engagement is to construct a site both for reflective dialogue as well as critique of what are perceived as the narrow preoccupations of official ASEM politics.

The political significance of civil society engagement in Asia-Europe relations derives from four major claims. First, engagement offers the potential for broadening the range of interaction between NGOs and social movements operating at national, regional and interregional levels in order to promote new forms of transnational solidarity. Second, it opens up regularized, systematic access to important sites of interregional governance and decision-making. Third, it helps to articulate an alternative policy agenda—one that is critical of liberal globalisation of which ASEM is seen to be an element. And finally, engagement proposes to advance new possibilities for civic participation and democracy which have been, it is contended, weak in contemporary Asia-Europe relations.

If these are the critical impulses which animate civil society engagement in Asia-Europe relations, then the substantive agenda advanced at individual meetings of the AEPF has been shaped by a confluence of two major factors. In the first place, even though the AEPF has been an attempt to construct a complex transnational coalition of non-state actors the political character of the host country and its constituent civil society organizations remains important. This helps to define what interests emerge to the fore, whether often

loosely integrated policy networks are able to coalesce around common goals and the extent to which non-state actors may play a role in the processing of issues at the detailed level once key agenda decisions have been reached at the official ASEM level. For fairly obvious reasons, it will be fascinating to observe how transnational civil society organizations establish a working relationship with the Vietnamese government as well as local NGOs.

At the same time, systemic events in the global political economy have also affected the AEPF agenda and its responses. Among the most important developments have been the fall-out of the Asian financial crisis and especially its impact on social welfare, the heightening of conflict on the Korean peninsula, the discontents with globalisation, and the consequences of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks for the future of multilateralism and international order. The willingness of the AEPF to respond to systemic developments clearly reflects a widely-held understanding that specific dimensions of Asia-Europe relations are inextricably embedded within broader trends associated with economic and political globalisation. At the same time, the very volatility of global events creates a 'politics of uncertainty' which offers an environment that is *both* constricting and conducive to non-governmental participation in interregional relations. What the AEPF represents, then, is an attempt to focus on issues of specific concern for the peoples of Asia and Europe while, at the same time, developing an awareness of how these issues are understood, opened up, debated and resisted across a number of levels in the contemporary world order.

While it is relatively straightforward to identify the general claims made by and on behalf of civil society and the context in which it operates it is important to be realistic about what the AEPF has been able to achieve so far. The picture is decidedly mixed. In certain policy initiatives—for example, in pushing for comprehensive 'safety nets' in the aftermath of the financial crisis, in extending the range of environmental concerns or in drawing attention to the problems of human trafficking—NGOs have become important stakeholders in the ASEM process. More strategically, it is arguable that the AEPF has successfully voiced more generalised concerns about the downside of intensified market-led globalisation, and this has found sympathetic echoes among some of the ASEM member states. But the real impact of AEPF has also been constrained for various structural and institutional reasons. Perhaps the biggest disappointment has been the failure to convince the member states of the desirability of including a Social Forum as part of the ASEM process (to have a status similar to that of the Business Forum) despite more than four years of concerted lobbying.

In this regard, the next meeting of the AEPF in Hanoi offers a major opportunity not only to reflect on specific issues of immediate concern but also to rethink the long-term goals that the AEPF could plausibly establish for itself. This

year's generic theme—human security—is well chosen. It is now exactly a decade since the UNDP Human Development Report first articulated the shift in normative thinking and policymaking about human security as a means for protecting people from severe and pervasive threats, and empowering individuals and communities to develop the capabilities for making informed choices and acting on their own behalf. Although the debate about broadening human security has been going on in the UN and among many governments, scholars, practitioners and NGOs, it has barely surfaced at the official ASEM level. The time is therefore opportune to rectify this omission.

Beyond these particulars, however, the AEPF has considerable work ahead to establish itself as the leading forum for advancing a critical understanding of Asia-Europe relations through policy formulation, advocacy and campaigning. To do so it needs to create the kind of 'critical mass' that sustains inter-regional connectivity, expertise and collaboration on a long-term basis. This will not be easy for a number of reasons, partly to do with the character of civil society itself and partly to do with ASEM as a governance system. First, not all NGOs and social movements inside the AEPF share common frames of reference or policy priorities. To take the concept of human security, the theme of this year's AEPF, there are frequent disagreements about its nature and its practice, mainly between a broad or holistic approach in relation to human fulfilment or a more pointed focus on situations of violent conflict.

Political pluralism may indeed be a virtue but the diversity of approaches also renders consensus-building more problematic and prevents the AEPF from acting either as a coherent policy community or as a knowledge-based epistemic community capable of shaping interests and choices. Second, while many ASEM member states do acknowledge that civil society has a role to play in interregional relations, most avoid the full implications of this for the deepening of civic participation. Despite the complexity of ASEM decision-making procedures and the multiple access points for policy actors, the reality is that political space for civil society in the official ASEM process is quite restricted.

None of this is to suggest that civil society engagement in the operation and policies of the ASEM process has been an irrelevance. The very existence of the AEPF is a reminder of how much international politics has changed over the last decade and, more than this, the extent to which emerging sites of governance are being contested by social forces pressing for a different possible world. At the same time, it is important to recognize the limits to what has so far been achieved. Asia-Europe relations have emerged as a relatively new terrain of active socio-political struggle even while the transformative potential of civil society activism is still far from being realized.

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Report on:
**Connecting Civil Society of Asia and Europe:
An Informal Consultation**
16–18 June, Barcelona, Spain

By GARETH A. RICHARDS

After years of relative neglect, there appears to be a growing appreciation of the contribution that civil society organisations can make to the political, socio-economic and cultural development of relations between Asia and Europe. Since its inception in 1996, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) has often been accused of being a top-down and elitist process, pursuing a business-led agenda to the exclusion of almost all else. Persistent attempts to advance a more people-centred agenda—for example through the efforts of the parallel Asia-Europe People's Forum to establish a 'social dimension' to ASEM—have been rebuffed or marginalised. As a result, ASEM has been struggling not only to widen its constituent base but also to respond with credibility to a range of political and economic challenges that have arisen over the last few years.

But real change does seem to be in the offing. A major international consultation meeting recently took place in Barcelona, Spain, in a concerted attempt to 'connect' the contributions of a multiplicity of civil society actors. More than 180 participants, drawn more or less equally

from Asia and Europe, represented virtually every facet of civil society such as non-governmental organisations, trade unions, universities, research institutes, think tanks, foundations, resource organisations, cultural workers and the mass media. The meeting was co-organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (Singapore), Casa Asia (Barcelona, Spain), the International Institute for Asian Studies (Leiden/Amsterdam, The Netherlands), and the Japan Center for International Exchange (Tokyo, Japan) with the support of the Government of Japan. The premise of the meeting was a belated acknowledgement that civil society organisations are indispensable to the building of a genuine sense of community in the two regions. In this respect, then, connecting the civil societies could be a key element for a greater and more fruitful cooperation between Asia and Europe.

The opening keynote addresses to the first plenary session (held in the magnificent Gaudi-designed *La Pedrera*) set the tone for the intensive discussions that followed. In a wide-ranging and engaging presentation, the former Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs, Surin

Pitsuwan, who is now a member of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, situated the evolution of Asia-Europe relations in the broader context of globalisation and the changing world order. He pointed to the dangers of uneven development in blocking the chances of genuine interregional cooperation, especially in the context of the uncertainties of the ongoing 'war of terror'. Surin's watchwords were sustainability and fairness in relation to key global processes and he argued that Asian and European civil societies had an important role in ensuring more equitable outcomes. The keynote address of Jan-Paul Dirkse, the Director General of Constitutional Affairs and Royal Relations at the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, The Netherlands, was an interesting contrast to Surin's wide-ranging analysis. Drawing on examples of the Dutch experience, Dirkse chose to focus on the efforts made by civil society organisations to widen and deepen democratic political space. He acknowledged that this had not always been a straightforward process of incremental change but had reflected the normal ebb and flow of political contestation. Nonetheless, he made a strong plea for more open communication between governments and their citizens. In many ways, the contributions of Surin and Dirkse were complementary; the former highlighted the significance of the broad international context which provides both possibilities and constraints for civil society activism, while the latter offered a micro-level analysis of the political opportunity structure that conditions government-civil society partnerships.

These two approaches thus offered a sense of what was at stake as a prelude to the intensive discussions that followed in the workshops on key thematic issues and the sectoral working groups over a period of two days. On the first day, six simultaneous thematic workshops were hosted by various civil society organisations with relevant background and expertise in the field of enquiry.

1. *Workshop on Governance, Human Rights, Gender Issues and Labour Relations*. Hosted by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Sweden, this workshop attempted to cover a very broad series of topics which was, as the organisers acknowledged, too complex and ambitious for the time allocated. Nonetheless, the workshop did establish some common ground on some outstanding issues, especially to do with the good governance agenda, and suggested possible areas for future collaboration between civil society organizations in the fields of labour standards, gender equality and minority rights.
2. *Workshop on Environment and Urbanization*. Hosted by the Foundation for the Future, Malaysia, this workshop sought to explore the relationship between problems of environmental management and the phenomenon of urbanisation, especially in Asia. It acknowledged the tensions between cities as the engines of economic development and the need to develop adequate mechanisms to deal with increased pressures on natural resources, how to encourage participatory governance and the best ways of regenerating historical sites.
3. *Workshop on Education, Academic Cooperation, Science and Technology*. Hosted by the Asia-Europe Foundation, Singapore, this workshop brought together a wide range of educationalists to discuss general aspects of educational policy and curricular innovation, as well as specific examples of academic cooperation between institutions in Asia and Europe. Concrete initiatives considered included the Asia-Europe Institute's plans for a future Asia-Europe University and the University of Leiden's International Institute for Asian Studies' tentative plans for an institute for advanced studies in China.
4. *Workshop of the Dialogue of Civilisation, Interfaith Dialogue, and Cultures*. Hosted by the Asian Dialogue Society, Singapore, this workshop drew directly on one of Surin's keynote themes to explore ways to counter the self-fulfilling prospectus of the so-called 'clash of civilisations'. This acknowledged the long-term need to develop modalities of inter-civilisational dialogue in the context of globalisation and, in doing so, to demonstrate the way that cultural diversity can be a source of change, creativity and innovation in the search for commonalities and solidarities.
5. *Workshop on Trade, Development Cooperation, Social Issues and Migration*. Hosted by the Asian and Pacific Regional Organisation of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU-APRO), this workshop considered some of the most controversial issues of the current ASEM process. Discussions derived from an unease with the current market liberalisation thrust of many ASEM policies and asked what needed to be done to meet the concerns of developing countries for more equitable trading arrangements and sustainability in the context of Asia-Europe relations.
6. *Workshop on International Relations, Regionalisation Processes and Security Issues*. Hosted by the European Institute for Asian Studies, Belgium, this workshop focused on the multiple attempts made by Asia and Europe to formulate and implement policies to tackle emerging regional and global issues, especially in the security domain. The debate acknowledged the many differences in the process of region-formation in Asia and Europe, and how the basis for greater mutual understanding might be constructed. The significance of civil society in enhancing future cooperation was acknowledged even though its present role is rather restricted.

From the comments of the various workshop rapporteurs it is possible to get a sense of the scope and

intensity of the discussions. Frustration was expressed by participants that some individual workshops simply tried to cover too much ground and this led to rather general or even superficial recommendations. Nonetheless, the workshops did provide a stimulating venue for drawing diverse participants together and at least opened up new agendas for consideration.

The second day's discussions adopted a sectoral approach, organized in six simultaneous working groups. This had the effect of highlighting the sheer diversity of civil society approaches to Asia-Europe relations, an important corrective to the commonplace view that civil society shares common frames of reference and similar orientations.

1. *Working Group on Research Institutes, Think Tanks, Academics.* Hosted by the International Institute for Asian Studies, The Netherlands, this working group built on the previous discussions on educational policy and academic cooperation to emphasise the importance of new knowledge creation and the role of research in the formulation of effective policymaking for both Asia and Europe. There was a growing consensus on the need to move away from a conventional area studies approach to research and build genuinely interregional and global knowledge hubs to reflect the complexity of the global order.
2. *Working Group on Non-Governmental Organisations.* Hosted by the Asia-Europe People's Forum, this working group drew on the longstanding commitment of numerous Asian and European NGOs and social movements to develop an 'alternative' ASEM. Despite the differences in the visions and strategies offered by various NGOs there was considerable optimism about the possibilities for meaningful networking and cooperation at the Asia-Europe level in order to address issues such as international trade, people-centred development and human rights that have been neglected in the mainstream agenda.
3. *Working Group on Trade Unions.* Hosted by the European Trade Union Confederation, Belgium, this working group considered the major challenges faced by working people in the face of economic globalisation. There was a general acknowledgement that social and employment issues have been given inadequate attention in the main ASEM process. Trade unions have joined with NGOs in calling for a social pillar of ASEM to be established as a means for foregrounding concrete measures on pressing social and labour issues. This would then form a concrete basis for a longer-term rethinking of the policies and institutions of global governance that should include greater emphasis on social dialogue.
4. *Working Group on Cultural Institutions.* Hosted by the Asia-Europe Foundation, Singapore, this working group considered the emergence of many independent art and cultural centres, spaces and

projects in Asia and Europe and how best to draw together these initiatives into a creative symbiosis. Cultural exchange between Asian and European institutions has been relatively successful but this did not preclude thinking about more opportunities especially for independent artists.

5. *Working Group on Media.* Hosted by the Asia-Europe Foundation, Singapore, this working group began by acknowledging the pivotal and multiple roles of the mass media in shaping and reflecting contemporary political and economic agendas. Given their power, debate turned on clarifying the sometimes contradictory roles of the media as promoters of ideas and information, as facilitators for fostering understanding and awareness, as watchdogs over governance processes, and as a knowledge entrepreneurs in the media market place.
6. *Working Group on Civil Society Resource Organisations and Foundations.* Hosted by the Japan Center for International Exchange, Japan, this working group focused on the role played by civil society resource organizations in both Asia and Europe in mobilizing financial and human capacities to strengthen civic participation. Different legal and social environments conditioned the scope and success of CSRO activity. Nonetheless, there were fruitful exchanges on concrete measures to build a sustainable resource base for civil society in general.

At the conclusion of the working group sessions, reports were presented to the final plenary session and this was followed by a lively, sometimes fractious, debate over some of the findings and some of the strategic plans for future action. What this clearly demonstrated is two things. First of all, whatever else it is civil society is a very open, eclectic space in which numerous actors—often with very different goals and visions—can come together to debate, argue, disagree and (sometimes) build consensus. In this sense, civil society really does reflect the messy realities of democracy, pluralism and openness. Secondly, the possibility for so many civil society organizations and individuals to come together in this fertile way was indeed opportune. But this can only be the beginning of a much longer process of change. For too long, the member states of the ASEM process and the European Commission have paid only token attention to the demands of civil society. Nor should we forget that the Barcelona meeting was an informal consultation whose status in the real politics of ASEM is a little hard to fathom. The hard work for civil society begins now. Over the next few months the results and recommendations of the Barcelona deliberations will be conveyed to the ASEM governments. It is at that point that the real substance of the civil society dialogue will come to fruition or else founder in a wave of broken promises. ■

Movies during the months of April–June 2004

April

- 7th ~ MAMAY (Nobody) ~ Ukraine
- 14th ~ NICHTS BEREUEN (No Regret) ~ Germany
- 21st ~ HEAVEN & EARTH ~ USA
- 28th ~ 2009 LOST MEMORIES ~ South Korea

May

- 19th ~ MADRASTA (Stepmother) ~ the Philippines
- 26th ~ DIVINE INTERVENTION ~ Palestine/France

June

- 2nd ~ I SOLITI IGNOTI ~ Italy
- 9th ~ THE SEA IS WATCHING ~ Japan
- 16th ~ VIKTOR VOGEL ~ Germany
- 23rd ~ MANDELA: Son of Africa, Father of A Nation ~ South Africa
- 24th ~ THE NATIVE WHO CAUSED ALL THE TROUBLE ~ South Africa
- 30th ~ POSTMEN IN THE MOUNTAIN ~ China

REVIEW By YANNIE WAHAB, *AEI Research Assistant*

First Ever Ukranian Nite in Malaysia

On 7 April 2004, the Asia-Europe Institute had the opportunity to screen the first Ukrainian movie in Malaysia entitled “Mamay” (Nobody) for the April Cultural programme. His Excellency, Olesander Shevchenko, Ambassador of Ukraine to Malaysia and his staff gave strong support and commitment to this cultural collaboration by providing the film with English subtitles and refreshments. Further, His Excellency graced the occasion by giving an introduction/synopsis and comments on the film. The film had been nominated for the “Best foreign-language film” award by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences. It is a blend of drama, history and romance.

Produced in 2003 by Chamil Hanna in association with the Ministry of Culture and Arts of Ukraine, the film incorporates an element of religion, i.e. Christianity and Islam, in addition to the historical figure of Ukrainian folklore which can be traced back in time to the 15th and 16th centuries. There are countless folk paintings, folk stories and songs devoted to Mamay that may be found in many parts of Ukraine. This film is basically based upon two epic poems, one Ukrainian (*Duma pro vtechu tryokh brativ z Azovu* (“The Duma of the Escape of Three Brothers from Azov”); and the other Tartar (The Song of a Dervish about Three brave Mamlyuks) but Sanin weaves them into become one, and comes up with a swashbuckling historical epic.

The story itself revolves around three Cossack brothers escaping Turkish captivity and three Tatar janissaries are in pursuit of them. As the runaways have only 2 horses, the third brother is left to die in the steppe. A young Tartar girl Nazl finds the young man in the steppe dying of thirst and exposure and nurses him back to life. She calls him Mamay which in Tartar means “nobody.” They fall in love and get married. But it turns out that Mamay’s beautiful young wife is the sister of the warriors who bring back the Golden Cradle stolen by the two Christian escapees. The Tartars cannot accept

their sister’s marriage to a Christian and non-Tartar and challenge the young husband to do battle with them. He comes out the winner, but cannot stay with his wife who saw her brothers die at the hands of her husband. If you like to read more about the film (synopsis/reviews etc), you may surf these websites:

www.molodist.com/eng/program/konkurs/full/mamay
<http://kinokolo.1plus1.net/up/news.en.php?id=958>
<http://us.imdb.com/title/tt0319147> ■

REVIEW By WALLACE JUNHUI, *AEI Research Assistant*

South Africa: A Decade’s Journey 1994–2004

This year, South Africa celebrates 10 years of glorious achievement. The year 1994 is very important in the history of South Africa. After decades of struggle, South Africa finally achieved its freedom and democracy in 1994.



H.E. Dr. Abraham Nkomo

In celebration with this achievement, the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) proudly presented a special South African film festival entitled “South Africa: A Decade’s Journey 1994-2004” in collaboration with the South African High Commission in Kuala Lumpur in the month of June 2004. The South African High Commissioner, H. E. Dr Abraham S. Nkomo, strongly supported this cultural collaboration between the AEI and the South African High Commission.

The programme featured two screenings courtesy of the South African High Commission. On 23 June 2004, AEI screened the Academy Award Nominee for Best Documentary, “Mandela: Son of Africa, Father of A Nation”. This event was officially launched by the High Commissioner of South Africa. Various officers from the South African High Commission also attended this event. Besides, various promotional materials on South Africa such as leaflets, brochures, as well as handouts



The packed AEI auditorium during the launch

MAMIKO HADA*

REPORTING LIVE, FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

were distributed to the audiences in order to promote this truly amazing country and enhance mutual understanding across the continent.

Directed by Jo Menell and Angus Gibson, this highly acclaimed documentary takes us through different moments in Nelson Mandela's life, his childhood and tribal education, his move to be assistant to a village chief, his time working with the African National Congress, his election as South Africa's first black president to the Nobel Prize he shared with F. W. de Klerk, the white South African president who freed him from prison. We are given glimpses of moments in his life and discover how he was named "Nelson" by a teacher who did not like his tribal name and of his passion for his second wife, Winnie Mandela, through hundreds of affectionate letters that he wrote to her from prison. But during the years of his imprisonment certain things happened that led to his painful decision to divorce her. This documentary captures the remarkable spirit and life that Nelson Mandela has while also sharing the struggles and poetry of Africa.

On 24 June, AEI screened the film "The Native Who Caused All the Trouble". Produced and directed by Manie van Rensburg, this film was nominated for 8M-NET Vita Awards in 1989 in eight categories including Best Director, Best Actor, Best Script, Best Editor and most importantly, Best South African Film.

Based on an actual event in Cape Town in the year 1937, this film tells the story of Tselilo, a deeply religious Xhosa man who was evicted from his land on the Cape Flats. Armed with an axe and a fighting stick, Tselilo convinced himself that "the land is a gift from God, as is the water and air..." He therefore wanted to build a church on a piece of land which was occupied by a couple. He claimed that he paid £10 for the land the previous year. Finally, Tselilo was tried in court. He had problems in understanding the difference between "God's law and the white man's law". Furthermore, even the white men didn't always understand their own law. This film in fact reminds us of religious and cultural differences and the need for everyone to be tolerant and understanding to overcome these differences. ■

The country of destination, the United States of America. It was a return to my 'adopted' home after a year in Malaysia where my husband conducted his dissertation research while I worked at AEI. I felt mixed about our return to the U.S.—a relief of returning to a familiar 'home', an excitement of embarking on our new phases of life, a bit of a concern for the unknown future, and a sense of 'witnessing the history' as the U.S.'s foreign policy was making a significant turn in direction.

In October 2002, we settled in Baltimore, Maryland, just north of Washington, D.C. It is the city where my husband's university is located, and it was a good start for me to embark on job-hunting. After a long search, I finally found a position with the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES), a non-profit organization located in Washington, D.C. which is best-known for the administration of the Fulbright Scholar Programme. The Fulbright Programme is an international exchange programme sponsored by the United States federal government and by many countries all over the world. At CIES, I administer two new programmes that are similar in mission and spirit, i.e. enriching and deepening understanding of Muslim societies and cultures by the people in the U.S. through inviting scholars from majority-Muslim countries to lecture on and off campus to U.S. audiences. In turn, we hope the scholars will return to their respective countries with accurate knowledge of the U.S. and serve as a cultural and social bridge between their countries and the U.S.

People sometimes mistakenly think that the Fulbright Programme is sponsored by the citizens of the U.S., but this is not accurate—first of all, the financial support to the Fulbright Programme comes from the U.S. Government, which means that it is supported by the tax dollars collected from everyone who paid any taxes to the U.S. government, including immigrants and expatriates. Secondly, the Fulbright Programme is what is called a 'bi-national' programme, which means that often times, the Programme is at least partially run by the support from the governments of other nations. People in the U.S. who will be exposed to the Fulbright scholars from the Islamic world are, of course, mainly U.S. citizens, but the U.S. being a country of immigrants, there are a lot of people that the scholar reaches who are not U.S. citizens. Plus, universities in the U.S. have a large number of international students and faculty members. So in that sense too, the Fulbright Programme is truly an international programme.

When the two Islamic programmes that I help administer at CIES are combined, we will be hosting more than 80 scholars from countries, such as Egypt, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Malaysia, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia just to name a few. Both programmes have been quite successful, and it is very rewarding to realise that I am part of this endeavour to bring closer understanding between the U.S. and the Muslim world.

When I was interviewed by the *AEI Newsletter* for the January 2003 issue, I said that I would like to work on something that connects me between the United States and Asia, contributing to mutual understanding. In this regard, I must say that I have the *dream job* at this point in my professional career.

My everyday work involves a lot of communication with my colleagues overseas, scholars from the Islamic world, and faculty members in the U.S.—mostly via email and telephone, but sometimes face-to-face, which is one of the most exciting parts of my work. In this position, my experience in Malaysia helps me tremendously. I feel confident that I *know* a majority-Muslim country and feel personally connected to it. I lived in Malaysia and came to know a lot of people there, understanding the differences and similarities between my cultural and societal values and upbringing and those that I found



Mamiko Hada (second from left) with her colleagues at CIES, Washington, D.C.

in the people in Malaysia. And despite the differences, I received such wonderful hospitality, I feel lucky and somewhat ‘destined’ to come to be involved in these programmes. I often stop and think, ‘look what I am doing now. Isn’t it strange how life presents itself?’ I was born and raised in Japan, and then came to the US for my graduate training. Back then, my mental picture of

the world was often focused around the “Japan-US” relationship, but having had a chance to live and work in Malaysia, it prised the door wide open for me.

And through my work at CIES and through the people whom I work with, I am sure the door will continue opening up and will take me to new directions in life. I may need to knock and open the door myself, but it is another interesting turn of life and I look forward to these challenges.

**Mamiko Hada, former Senior Research Assistant at AEI, is now Senior Programme Coordinator at the Council for International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) located in Washington, D.C., where she administers Islam-related programmes for the U.S. Department of State and the American University of Beirut. ■*

“Oral History” Project on Malaysian Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

The Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR) of Malaysia is embarking on a project to compile records of perspectives of retired Malaysia diplomats on their involvement in Malaysia’s diplomatic activities since independence in 1957.

The aim of this project is to compile material that will become a treasury of information as well as records of the history of Malaysia’s involvement in international relations, diplomacy and world politics since independence. Apart from that, the records



Tan Sri Dato' Ajit Singh

will also form an important database for use as input into research as well as training and teaching materials for courses in the field of foreign policy and diplomacy at the Institute in future.

In pursuit of this objective officials from the IDFR interviewed Tan Sri Dato’ Ajit Singh, Former Secretary-General of ASEAN at the Asia-Europe Institute on 15 April 2004. Tan Sri Ajit is now the Distinguished Research Fellow at AEI. ■

Bicara at Déjeuner

[Discussion Over Lunch]

By ASH ABU HASSAN, AEI Research Assistant

On 10 June 2004, *Bicara* was privileged to have Mr Joseph Lau, the General Manager of IKEA Malaysia IKANO Pte Ltd and Executive Director of IKANO Corporation Sdn Bhd, as its speaker. The topic for that day's *Bicara* was as simple and straightforward as "IKEA in Malaysia". He was accompanied by Ms Yap Poh Choon, Marketing and Communications Manager. An accountant by profession, Lau acquired his Bachelor of Business in Accounting from Curtin University, Perth, Australia and is an Associate Member of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants and a member of CPA Australia. Prior to joining IKEA in August 1995, Lau had worked with several companies in Australia such as Budget Rent a Car Corporation Australia and Budwest Pvt Ltd.



Mr. Joseph Lau

Like many successful corporations, IKEA had a humble beginning in 1943 when the then 17 years old Ingvar Kamprad founded the company and named it after a combination of the initials of his name (Ingvar Kamprad, farm (Elmtaryd), and village (Agunnaryd). In 1953, the first IKEA furniture showroom was opened in an old barn in Almhult, Sweden. In 1956, after realizing that shipping readily assembled items also meant shipping a lot of air thus less space maximization, IKEA began to introduce at-packed furniture.

IKEA is the world's largest home furnishing retailer with turnover in excess of Euro12billion and 188 stores worldwide with visitors worldwide in excess of 200 million with the top five Sales Countries being Germany – 20%, United Kingdom – 13%, USA – 12%, France – 9%, and Sweden – 8%.

IKEA Malaysia, which commenced operation in August 1995, is operated by IKANO Group, a member of IKEA/IKANO Group of companies. With the move from an 80,000 sq ft showroom in One Utama to a 380,000 sq ft of IKEA agship standalone in Mutiara Damansara, IKEA's turnover is expected to exceed RM200 million in 2004 (In its Millennium Sales, IKEA had raked in the highest sales of RM1.4 million in a day).

The IKEA business concept focuses on two main areas: its customers and suppliers. For the customers, this corporation tries to ensure a comprehensive and wide product range, long term priorities, and high quality products with low price (low price with meaning). At IKEA,

the ways used to ensure low prices are self-serve, meaning the customers are left alone from making their own choices to picking up the products that they want to buy themselves (including the bulky items), thus reducing the need to hire employees to hang around and entertain the customers. Instead, the workers are specifically hired to manage the products in the store and assist the customers only when their assistance is sought. The "everything

under one roof" IKEA store is the most important medium for presenting and communicating the wide IKEA products range. Other marketing tools used are IKEA Catalogue (main), press, television, radio, outdoor as well as internet. Even though IKEA's target market is to reach as many people as possible and IKEA products are priced so that as many people as possible will be able to afford IKEA products, still "the

primary target group is families with children and all those people who, regardless of age, need smart solutions in order to create a better everyday life at home, often in a limited space".

With the suppliers, IKEA ensures that it works hand-in-hand with them to produce good quality products with

low prices. Maximum use of (inexpensive) materials is also an important aspect of the production as IKEA products are made for efficient production, distribution and sales e.g the at-packed furniture. The corporation's relationship with its suppliers also focuses on capacity development and commitment by developing and intensifying co-operation with key-suppliers and taking calculated business risks. Engaging

in long-term capacity commitments with the suppliers/manufacturers also ensures low cost (thus low products prices) as ordering large volumes would mean bigger discounts for IKEA. One interesting business practice of IKEA is the maximizing of spare capacity i.e a product developed by a supplier for another company, meant for other utilization is then acquired by IKEA and the same product in its original physical shape is utilized in a completely different way.

All in all, IKEA targets to be the source of home furnishing ideas and

inspiration and recognized as a responsible entity for the community and environment and also a reputable employer which basically suggests that IKEA is "the way of living your life". ■

"We shall offer a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them"

IKEA HUMAN RESOURCE IDEA - "To give down-to-earth, straightforward people the possibility to grow, both as individuals and in their professional roles, so that, together, we are strongly committed to creating a better everyday life for ourselves and our customers"

INTERVIEW

with visiting professors

Dr René Jansen and Mr. Ilya Devèrs
from the Netherlands

29 March 2004 – 9 April 2004

1. Have you been to Malaysia before this visit? What is your impression of the country?

Ilya: This is actually the second time we are visiting Malaysia and Asia, the first time we visited Asia was last year when we were also teaching the IMIM course. That time the impression was much bigger for me than this year and I was looking forward to coming back because of the great impressions I had last year.

And I think last year for me was a real eye opener as I had visited North America and North Africa so it was the first time in this part of the world. I knew the cuisine a little, but the cultural and the overwhelming impressions, the colours, the people, the sounds and smells it was a fantastic experience. So far it has been good as last year or better maybe.

René: I really looked forward to it as well. It was an honour for us to be asked again. And I think Kuala Lumpur is a very interesting city, it looks very mature and modern and I like the multicultural setting of it.



Mr. Ilya Devèrs



Dr. René Jansen

2. Could you tell me more of your impressions of AEI?

Ilya: I think the hustle and bustle of a year's worth of experience shows in a sort of a routine with which the students are accommodated, and as to the way we are received, or the reception that we have had is as perfect as the first time. So it is really good. The cooperation between us and the Staff really helps making it pleasant and enjoyable. So we can just focus on the subject matter and not the details surrounding it.

René: I think the facilities are all really excellent. I remember from last year I didn't expect that much of facilitation. And this year it is even better with the room downstairs and the rooms allocated for us. It is all creatively built, there is a beamer you can just plug in your laptop, everything works and everything is fine so the physical enabling is very good.

3. What were your expectations of teaching the International Master students and what are the similarities and differences that you have found compared with the students you have taught prior to this?

René: Again to answer that question it is better this year. I have never worked or taught in Asia. I expected the students to be quite hesitant to discuss with me I had assumed they would be quiet and in the listening mode, be laid back. But they were really participating and this year to me it seems as if there are hardly any barriers to

discussions. I think the students are very open. I am also learning a lot of the Asian culture here by teaching these students.

We have been asking them how they liked the whole year and from the reactions it seems as if there is some room for improvement of the whole course, which I think is good. What we hear from the students is that

the whole programme can be more focused around information management topics as there are quite a lot of non-information management topics in the course. Apart from that I would appreciate if we could have the opportunity to share more knowledge with the other lecturers as well, because right now it is a little bit like some Professors would come here and have a wonderful time just like we have and teach the

students for two weeks and leave. It's just a block to the students it does not seem like one coherent course. This is where it would be useful also to better know about the other Visiting Professors so that we can share on a

person to person basis. I think by saying this I really don't want to give the impression that the course is not good but it can be improved. And I think with the base that is here, with the facilities, processes, people and everything else there is room to make the Institute a more interesting place.

Ilya: Last year our course coincided with Professor Schiff's programme. Therefore

this year we adjusted our expectations to the various programmes the students would be having again. And I would say luckily for us (perhaps unfortunate for the students) Professor Schiff's programme didn't coincide with our programme. Which meant the students had more time to internalise their knowledge for our module. They have really impressed us with their level of English and their level of understanding. It is interesting to see the entrepreneurship in the students as well. So not only do we have the different Asian and European cultures mixing and also the role of the Academic world mixing with the economic, financial and business world preparing students for their internships.

René: That is also with how we are teaching as well. We first ask the students to give a position paper, to know a bit about the experience and background and during the two weeks course we are all the time checking the topics we are teaching to align with what they already know.

Q: Is this the method of teaching you follow in your country when you teach? Or do you follow a different style of teaching?

René: Actually back home I know much more about the background of the students, the regular Master course and the Postgraduate courses, we know so much about them, we know the level of their knowledge. I do use the same interactive course style there. But I don't ask them to send upfront a position paper.

Q: So do you find any similarities from these students with your students back home?

René: Yes, I expected a little bit less from the Asian students, it's a totally false idea I know now. I thought they would be more hesitant in interacting in the class, the education style they are used to perhaps is a bit more authoritative. But on the contrary they are really very open to discussion, and they really question the questions that we pose them.

Ilya: I think one of the difference that we had last year was with students from Korea and China and their cultural barrier was much bigger than what we faced this time. For them it was really new to ask questions.

René: I am not sure whether it is cultural background or the multi-language background.

Ilya: But it could also be that we do not know Asia really well and so much so it is more of personal view than of the culture. Being in Asia for the second time we came to know more than the politeness. This year we spent more time with them and also found out the sense of humour which is another big important aspect of peoples lives.

René: Another thing is that we are teaching about – e-marketing and management – the methods we used for teaching are based on the methods we use in our commercial lives, we call it soft skills and it is about getting people to make them feel more comfortable and willing to share not only high level thoughts but also about themselves. And I think this year we really got to know what drives them.

Ilya: So in Holland to come back to your question, ideally we teach one or two days as visiting professors and there I don't prepare as the way I prepare here, but I use the same type of workshop to structure my courses.

Qn: How would your course contribute to the International Master Degree Programme?

Ilya: The E-marketing or marketing contributes nicely to Information Management. Because what we try is to balance the academic and the pragmatic or the business like side especially of our module and we also try to take elements from other teachers' modules and put them into perspectives, for example, like business modelling into e-marketing and how it fits in the information architecture model.

René: I would like to quote one of the other Visiting Professors that I know. He has a very nice saying about teaching in general. That is: when teaching we must as quickly as possible bring the students to our level of understanding. So that it is easier to link all the courses they have studied so far and can build from that level of understanding. Then you have innovation and exchange of ideas. Well the interesting thing about our teaching together is that we have both backgrounds in teaching in universities and in business schools and we have a background in science and in commercial life. All three

combined gives a very good base for discussing the topic of information management which is still quite a young science and some people even still doubt it a science or still an art. (I think it is a science). What is interesting about our topic is that all the functions in a company come together in the broad heading of Information Management and especially e-marketing.

For example when you talk about an Internet site of a company you have to deal with marketing, with information technology, with operational departments to make it work and information management is the binding factor between all those disciplines that you need for effective market solutions.

The method of teaching is based on a scientific publication or a PhD thesis. We refer to it as a user model. You can see that nothing is practical as a good theory because you can put the theory to work.

Ilya: And to add to that we use examples of actual companies and governmental functions so that the students have more governmental focus in their work. Assignments are all based on actual application of the field of the knowledge, the practical application of the theory and models that we apply.

Q: What do you consider to be the main benefits of a multicultural learning environment such as AEI ?

Ilya: This year it is less noticeable than last year. We formed different sets of groups in different groups for assimilation and tasks and small assignments and they are sort of blending seamlessly into various settings of mixtures of backgrounds. Last year we had to work not to make the three Korean students work together and the four Europeans together and the Asians together.

And this year it is more automatic, it sort of goes by itself, and it looks more like one group and so their cultural differences are not so at the forefront. But we still feel confident that when we are talking about cases for examples, the perspective of their countries, we see an interesting exchange of experiences on certain aspects.

René: We had just discussed successful internet sites that we should operate with different companies and to create one internet sites. The students came up with a handicraft website with handicraft from their own countries and it was interesting to see the handicraft from the various countries. So I think it is good and indeed the students really inspire us with their different backgrounds. I would like to stress my appreciation for the ambitions of the Institute.

Q: In summing up could you tell me your views on your teaching experience at AEI?

Ilya: Like last year it has been a wonderful experience to be here and to participate in this exchange of knowledge. I really like the opportunity that I have to add my views on the practical side of things and I think in the fast moving world of the internet where the rate of

development and the speed of new ideas are faster than any thing else it is good that we can integrate some of the commercial aspects as well into it. I feel honoured to be able to participate in this wonderful experience.

René: Well I am honoured as well. When I am here I am inspired to do more articles as well just by teaching and having discussion on the topics as well, new models and new approaches to the topic and bringing it down to paper and write articles about it. For me it has been very

Dr. John Todd

from the World Bank, Washington, D.C.

12 April 2004 – 17 April 2004

1. Q: Have you been to Malaysia before and what is your impression of the country?

I came to Malaysia once before in 1965, so it has almost been 40 years. I was here in a Concert tour in the year after I graduated from College and at that time Kuala Lumpur was a sleepy and a much smaller town as you can imagine today. I don't really recognize anything compared to what it was like 40 years ago. So it feels like



Dr. John Todd

as if I am coming to a new country for the first time. And it is a very comfortable place to come to work for normally a short time, just a week. I have enjoyed my stay, I have enjoyed the small chance I had to look around Kuala Lumpur and hope I get to come back to see more of the country in the future.

2. Q: Could you tell me your impressions of AEI?

Oh I like AEI a lot. I personally see one aspect of AEI. I don't know about its research but in terms of the students I think it has been an excellent idea to pull together students from two areas of the world put them together in an environment where they get a chance to work with each other and get a chance to be exposed to a much wider range of experience and thinking than they would have had if they had continued their studies in their own countries. And I have enjoyed spending one week with them, teaching this course and certainly have enjoyed working with all the rest of the AEI staff as well.

3. Q: What were your expectations of teaching the International Master students? What are the similarities and differences that you have found compared with the students you have taught prior to this?

There aren't many similarities for a variety of reasons. I had the opportunity to get a briefing from Dr Enrique Sabater who had taught here before and as well as some communications with Professor Fernando Rodrigo so I think I had a fairly good understanding of what the students were like and where they came from. The teaching I had done in the United States first of all was a long time ago. I taught Economics in Williams

College in Massachusetts...and there you had a text book and an entire year to sort of go through the principles of economics. There is a different teaching experience and here you have one week to go through such an enormous amount of material. And the other teaching that I had done is in the World Bank so there, there is great deal of shared understanding, vocabulary and experience that I can count on. With these students I have had to spend some time understanding what vocabulary we share, what vocabulary needs to be taught, experience that I took for granted. And it has always not been easy within one week to be on the same page, but they have at least been very attentive and lively students.

4. Q: How would your course contribute to the International Master Degree Programme?

I think the issues of regional integration look, in some depth, at the broader context of the process of economic growth in the role of the international financial institutions and promoting the growth international financial institutions and the like. And even though these students can't be expected to study that as a speciality I think it is kind of an important background for them to have in order to have a better understanding of the more detail things of what they are looking at as students of the regional integration programme in particular. So I have tried as much as possible to convey this larger particular with enough details to make it realistic but obviously with only a few details that we had time for.

5. Q: What do you consider to be the main benefits of a multicultural learning environment such as AEI ?

I think my experience from education both as a student and a teacher has been that students learn from each other as much as they learn from the Professors. A multicultural environment such as AEI gives them a much broader range of learning from each other because they pick up the history, the culture, the perspectives that each of them bring to the class and it gives them a much better appreciation of the fact that their way of looking at the world is only one of the many ways of looking at the world. And if they are going to work in an international sphere whether be in information management, or regional integration they need to be more aware of these different perspectives and how different people think, including Professors from the World Bank. I think this structure of AEI gives them a much greater opportunity to do that kind of learning.

6. Q: Considering the multi-cultural setting of AEI, do you consider cultural diversity as a catalyst in fostering educational and intellectual exchange?

Yes, I think it is particularly a good kind of education, in that it is not just the technical material that is learnt but the broader context in which it has to be implemented.

7. Q: As summing up could you tell me your views on teaching experience at AEI?

Hectic, rewarding and pleasant. ■

OBITUARY

In Loving Memory of



TRAN LE NA
8 July 1977–28 June 2004

Those who bloom in the hearts of others will never fade away....

On Monday 8 June 2004 the staff of the Asia-Europe Institute experienced a tremendous loss with the sudden demise of our former colleague, Tran Le Na, in a tragic car accident near Malacca. She was just 27 years-old.

Le Na was born in 1977 part of the first generation born in the aftermath of the long struggle for independence in her homeland, Vietnam. She was the daughter of H.E. Tran Trong Toan, the former Vietnamese Ambassador to Malaysia and close friend of the Institute. Le Na graduated from the Asia International University, Hanoi in 1999 before joining the Institute in December 2000. Here she contributed valuable work as a research assistant on the historical national accounts of pre-independence Malaya project, assisting in the compilation of this vital statistical database. In September 2002 Le Na resigned her post in order to pursue her studies in the AEI International Masters Programme in Regional Integration from which she successfully graduated in 2003.

As if to cement the special relationship she had with the Institute, in 2002 Le Na married Dang Minh Quang, who is currently the Institute's Foreign Coordinator. His great loss is shared by all of us.

Le Na will be remembered as a person of principle and warmth, who exuded grace, charm and friendliness towards her colleagues, friends and co-students alike. She was a dear friend to all of us and we were privileged to have known her and worked with her. She was a joy to be around, always upbeat and filled with creative energy, and she was always capable of making others smile. She was dedicated, thoughtful and filled with great promise. We will always treasure the time we spent with her.

Le Na was cremated at the Petaling Jaya Chinese Cemetery on 1 July 2004 and her ashes were taken back to Vietnam on the following day. She is survived by her husband, Quang, her parents and her sister.

RUHANA PADZIL

BOOK NOTICES ON ASIA-EUROPE RELATIONS

Gilson, Julie (2002) *Asia Meets Europe: Inter-regionalism and the Asia-Europe Meeting*, London, Edward Elgar, pp. 240.

Asia Meets Europe raises questions about the nature of regions and, in particular, about the role of inter-regionalism in a rapidly changing environment. Julie Gilson considers the correlation between Asia and Europe within the framework of the unique post cold-war inter-regional Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). The author then examines the nature of this new type of interaction and its various economic and political forms by exploring the historical precedents and prevailing ideas of region that shape and distort it. The book also encompasses the challenging roles of private enterprise and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) when faced with state actors who continue to regard regional and inter-regional co-operation with ambivalence. *Asia Meets Europe* will be of special interest to academics and researchers of Asian studies, Asia-Europe relations and international political economy. Practitioners involved in policy making in East Asia and Europe will also find the book of use.



Contents:

Preface
Concepts of inter-regionalism
East is East . . .
Economic exchanges
Political dialogue
On the margins of summitry
Conclusion: interpreting inter-regionalism
Chronology
Bibliography
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Julie Gilson is Lecturer in International Studies, Department of Political Science and International Studies, University of Birmingham, UK.

Lawson, Stephanie (ed.) (2002) *Europe and the Asia-Pacific: Culture, Identity and Representations of Region*, London, RoutledgeCurzon, pp. 272.

The many points of contact and conflict about culture and identity that exist between Europe and the Asia Pacific are highlighted in this book. *Europe and the Asia-Pacific* surveys a variety of issues relating to culture, identity and representation from an interdisciplinary perspective, with contributions from sociology, economics, history, politics, international relations, security studies, museum studies, translation studies and literary and cultural studies. Each brings a different perspective to bear on questions of culture and identity in the contemporary period, and how these relate to the politics of representation.

Contents:

Stephanie Lawson: Culture, identity and representations of region
John Clammer: Europe on Asia's imaginary: disciplinary knowledges and the (mis)representation of Cultures
Michael S. Drake: Representing 'Old Countries': the strategic representation of culture as heritage in the Asia-Europe summit meetings
Julie Gilson: Making uncommon cause: forging identities on the margins of ASEM
Philomena Murray: Lack of symmetry, lack of summitry: the European Union in Australia
David Lockwood: Europe in the Asia-Pacific: the Russian Far East faces its future
Lee Marsden: Northern Territories or Southern Kuriles: a question of identity
Dirk Nabers: Security communities in East Asia and Europe: German and Japanese politics of alliance
Judith Mehta: An inalienable narrative? Property rights in China and the West
Red Chan: Stories of representation: translating China in the 1980s and 1990s
Taku Tamaki: Constructing 'Japan in Asia'
Doug Slaymaker: Yokomitsu Riichi and the longing for home in the Japanese imagination of France
Nicole Rousmaniere and Simon Kaner: Collecting East Asia in nineteenth-century Britain
Minou Reeves: The enduring power of stereotypes: images of Islam in Western writings

Stephanie Lawson: The politics of cultural identity: critical perspectives from Southeast Asia and the South Pacific

Stephanie Lawson is Professor of International Relations at the University of East Anglia, UK.

Robles, Alfredo C. (2004) *The Political Economy of Interregional Relations: ASEAN and the EU*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 218 pp.

Using ASEAN-EC relations as a case study, *The Political Economy of Interregional Relations* raises the broader question of whether a new level of international relations, the interregional level, is emerging. In order to answer this question, this perceptive book draws on the recent literature on regionalism and on the relationship between social structure and human agency. Based on previously neglected official documents (for example, EC antidumping investigations), NGO reports on development projects, scholarly work in other European languages (notably German and French) and interviews in Europe and Southeast Asia, the book will greatly interest political economists and scholars of ASEAN-EC relations.

Contents:

Theoretical approaches to interregional relations
Transforming the international order
Promoting development in Southeast Asia
Constructing interregional frameworks for firms: trade
Constructing interregional frameworks for firms: investment
Protecting human rights in Southeast Asia
Summary and conclusions
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Alfredo C. Robles Jr. is Professor in the Department of Political Science at De La Salle University-Manila, the Philippines.

Lay Hwee Yeo (2003) *Asia and Europe: The Development and Different Dimensions of ASEM*, London, Routledge, pp. 256.

This book provides a systematic and thorough examination of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process which brings together the fifteen EU member states, the European Commission and ten East and Southeast Asian countries. The author not only traces the actual development of the ASEM process, but also contextualises ASEM within three different international relations theoretical frameworks, as viewed by realists, social constructivists and institutionalists.

Contents:

Introduction: ideas: three images of ASEM
Ideas and forces behind the conception of ASEM
From Bangkok to Copenhagen
ASEM as an instrument for diplomacy
ASEM as an instrument for regional integration
ASEM as an instrument for regime creation
From rhetoric to reality
Conclusion: the three scenarios for ASEM

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