

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Utopian Studies Society University of Limerick 5th. July 2008

Present: Fátima Vieira (Chair), Jim Arnold (Treasurer), Lorna Davidson (Secretary), Greg Claeys, Vince Geoghegan, Alex-Alban Gomez, Ruth Levitas, Tom Moylan, Nicole Pohl, Jorge da Silva, (committee members) and 45 ordinary members.

- 1. Apologies:** Laurence Davis, Lyman Tower Sargent, Lucy Sargisson, Artur & Ludmilla Blaim
- 2. Minutes of the AGM held in Plymouth, 13 July 2007: posted** on website, and available at the meeting - approved unanimously on a motion by J Fischer, seconded by R. Levitas.
- 3. Matters arising.** Requests for the Abstracts to be provided as part of the conference programme were noted – F Vieira said that this would be done in Porto. Secretary advised that Abstracts for the 2008 conference would be posted on the USS website as soon as possible.
- 4. Finance:** Treasurer's Report 2007/8. (available at meeting). Since AGM 2007, income of £810 had been received from Uni. of Plymouth, representing the levy on 2007 conference reg. fees, plus bank interest. In accordance with USS policy, grants to 10 recipients had been disbursed at a cost of 1,025 Euros. Other expenditure related to website hosting and upgrades. Balance currently stands at £2,420.04. J Arnold's financial statement was unanimously approved on a motion from H Near, seconded by J da Silva.
- 5. Office Bearers and Committee** – existing members were elected at the AGM 2006 for a period of 3 years. No changes. Noted.
- 6. Conference Plans**
 - a) 2009, University of Porto. Jorge da Silva reported that plans were already being made for the 10th.conference, to take place 2-4 July 2009. It was hoped that the registration fee would not exceed 160 Euros, and it was noted that Portugal was a generally less expensive destination than Ireland.
 - b) 2010, Lublin, Poland – Artur Blaim was unable to be present as hoped, but Greg Claeys provided brief details of the proposed venue, (modern university buildings within the mediaeval town) and it was generally agreed that this would be suitable. FV will write to AB to welcome this proposal; she will be meeting him later this year, when she will have the opportunity to discuss the issue in more detail.
 - c) Proposal for 2011. Antonis Balasopoulos offered the University of Cyprus, Nicosia, as the venue for 2011. He anticipated that funding would be available to assist with

conference costs, keeping the registration fee low. Some financial assistance might also be available to support post-graduates. The proposal was approved in principle, and A Balasopoulos will have further discussions with the Committee in due course.

7. Website /E Mailing List. Secretary advised that all conference delegates not already on the e-mailing list would be added, unless they requested not to be. She also reminded everyone to let her know of changes in e-mail address.

8. Invisible Islands project update – “Eurotopia 3000”. Fátima Vieira reported latest progress with this proposed 3 year project, which she wished to be associated with USS. She explained that the name-change reflected emphasis on Europe, because of EU funding considerations. In a brief presentation she provided examples of the types of questions and guidance to be provided to young people (under 30) who are invited to imagine a Utopian society in the year 3000. Materials, to be assessed by an editorial committee, will be produced in 6 European languages, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. After some interesting but inconclusive discussion about exactly how far into the future the date should be set, RL proposed that FV and her colleagues should be authorised to agree on the exact year chosen. RL referred to item 7 on the AGM minutes for 2007 relating to the requirement for a policy to ensure that no inappropriate materials were posted on the Eurotopia website; FV agreed to prepare a draft policy for USS committee approval.

9. Any other competent business:

Visas. A Milner expressed concern, echoed by many members, that it appeared some potential participants had been unable to attend the Limerick conference because they had been refused Visas to enter Ireland. LD advised that accurate information about this issue was required, but when this was available, it was agreed that a letter on behalf of USS should be sent to the appropriate body in the Irish Government. Tom Moylan said that the University of Limerick would also wish to write formally about this, and agreed to check the factual information.

Fátima Vieira concluded the meeting by reiterating her thanks on behalf of USS to Tom Moylan and his colleagues at the Ralahine Centre for organising a successful and enjoyable conference. She looked forward to welcoming many USS members to Porto in 2009.