

the minutes of

EUROPEAN MEETING IN BERLIN

**On the possibility of a European presence in the international Zone (IZ) in Auroville (AV)
October 9-11, 2009**

Friday 09 X 09 Start at 17h15

Present : Adri, Christoph, Dagmar, Devasmita, Francine, Friederike, George, Isa, Linda-Grace, Martin L., Martin S., Satyakam, Sonia, Wim.

After a word of welcome, a 2 minutes of inner silence was observed. Before raising the points on the agenda it was asked to remember that exactly 20 years ago, October 9, 1989, a demonstration against the East German regime took place in Leipzig, threatened by fierce repression. Nevertheless 70.000 people attended, their peacefulness, candles and prayers making it impossible for the regime to react violently. The following days more peaceful demos were held everywhere in East Germany, leading eventually to the Demolition of the Berliner Wall exactly one month later, on November 9, 1989.

Everyone was asked to present her or himself briefly.

Activities of the National Pavilions (NP)

D – Germany: Starting from 1992, an odd 20 people met 2/3 times a year: a soul searching journey in the end. Looking for the genius of D, the country's history and especially the Nazi times came into focus. Since everybody had its own family history closely linked with this dark era a very deep personal exchange followed and the group went through times of intense personal encounters. In the second half of the nineties the group initiated a lighter phase discussing about D's positive sides, contributions & characteristics. In 2001 the Sri Aurobindo Center Berlin was founded and first plans for the realisation of the D pavilion followed. An architect drew up sketches (2001), a pavilion brochure was published (also in English) & a consecration ceremony of the allotted ground for a German pavilion in AV took place in August 2001. Also a sapling from the Samadhi service tree was planted during a ceremony in 2003 and a water supply study for the International Zone was funded by AVI D in the same year. This enthusiasm presently is on hold due to various reasons, but an important meeting was organised this year by the pavilion group, trying to look into the deeper reasons for the ongoing difficulties in IZ manifestations. It was suggested that not enough attention was and still is being paid to the predecessors on the land, to their history and to today's neighbours. A process of inclusion, of honouring the past and coming together in the common quest for the soul of our countries might unblock the situation. D cultural programmes in AV are initiated in the name of the D pavilion; D students going to AV are also considered as part of D "cultural contributions". As an ongoing process D AV Group met & will meet with the departing and returning students.

Fr - There was a new openness inside AVI France concerning the IZ. The main question for the moment to be solved is the existence of the group called 'Pavillon de France', a heritage of Mireille Albrecht's efforts to build a French Pavilion in AV. AVI France has good links with the active French nationals in AV (e.g the recent Jean Monnet exhibit).

NL - A group on the Dutch pavilion was linked to an international school in Breda, some 5 to 10 years ago. It ceased its existence when the said school ceased to exist. The discussions and reports are still there. Recently several questions have been asked to L'Avenir d'Auroville on the drawings of the European zone, how many square meters for the European 'Plaza' & how many for the Dutch Pavilion, who is responsible for what. Until now L'Avenir was not able to come back with any other

answer than it is on the agenda... (please see for some answers Luigi's e-mail of 11 Oct 09 in the annexes)

If plans submitted by the Europeans are concrete & money available, AV will follow was an opinion expressed by several in the discussion that followed.

UK The IZ is an occasional item on the agenda, but not many are interested. Some are even disinterested about the IZ in the UK as well as in AV. Mention was made of a thesis by Ann Guilbert on the British soul.

It was mentioned for the record that Spain did research on the Spanish soul and published a brochure.

What do we expect of this meeting?

Various points were put forward, seemingly contradictory sometimes, but all in the spirit of the Mother's Vision. They could be summarised as follows. Concrete results tend to fade away as soon as they are proposed. Somewhere, somehow, the inner connection seems to be missing between the wish to have the ideas materialise and the concrete steps to be taken for that materialisation. The general feeling was that an agreement on the European side could persuade AV groups to join forces in order to open the gate to the IZ, which was so strongly blocked in the past, while not forgetting to stay connected with the construction of the city. The concept of a Plaza (to be specified in further discussions here & in AV) was put before the group. It was felt that Auroville is on earth also to prepare peace, thus it must interact with the world. The IZ is a very important link/tool for that endeavour.

We were remembered of an aphorism of Sri Aurobindo on 4 crucial events changing the course of the history of mankind:

- the siege of Troy, leading to the creation of Hellas, changed the consciousness in the world. It taught on the physical level, the love of beauty & the creation of an ideal harmony through perfection, and on the political level, democracy, which though imperfect (women nor slaves could vote) through Rome trickled into Europe, leading ultimately to the Declaration of Human Rights.
- the life of Christ and his crucifixion humanised the slaves and empowered them, gave them the human dignity of beings equal to the emperor or senator before God
- the exile of Krishna initiated the devotional religion, spiritualising human relations (in Europe God is outside this world, whereas the Divine is next to you)
- in the Gita the dialogue between Krishna & Arjuna teaches the transfer of authority to the highest authority of the highest aspiration of ourselves. Love will save humanity but we also have to act: the karma yoga

"41. There are four very great events in history, the siege of Troy, the life and crucifixion of Christ, the exile of Krishna in Brindavun and the colloquy with Arjuna on the field of Kurukshetra. The siege of Troy created Hellas, the exile in Brindavun created devotional religion, (for before there was only meditation and worship,) Christ from his cross humanised Europe, the colloquy at Kurukshetra will yet liberate humanity. Yet it is said that none of these four events ever happened.

42. *They say that the Gospels are forgeries and Krishna a creation of the poets. Thank God then for the forgeries and bow down before the creators"*

This point of the agenda was closed by reading a text by Medhananda

Quote 'What is important in the experiment 'Auroville' is not the possibility of discovering a clever new way of organising human communal life. It is the possibility of a first step beyond man. Even if this step is faltering, it does not matter. What matters is that for the first time man tries out if evolution itself can evolve, whether man and thinking and common sense are forever his final limitations. A clever organisation, an illusive success of common life, would be the end of the experiment. As long as mental endeavours fail, there is hope. There are many pious communities in the past trying to build the city of God, who succeeded to live peacefully together for some time. A success of such a kind would be catastrophic for Auroville. The oneness which Sri Aurobindo explored was not to be imposed by rules and regulations of saintly behaviour. Only a sudden mutation can take us beyond man. Auroville is such a force-field for mutation.'

Unquote

Saturday 10 X 09

A participant had to leave for personal reasons. Others joined.

The meeting started with a two minutes inner silence.

As at the previous session, a text was read. This time the vision of an American on Europe. He saw the European dream adopting an new consciousness beyond & below boundaries. The American dream was originally a European Dream, which is based on protestantism, science & market capitalism, but tempered by democratic socialism. In the USA the last aspect is lacking. Freedom is autonomy and more wealth provides more autonomy thus more freedom. The new European dream focuses on freedom embedded in communities. It is inclusive, not exclusive. Its past should never be repeated. The European future is one without (*a European my add*) war. It is diverse, indeterminate. Not a nation in the classic sense, though it encompasses 27 states and has a flag, a capital (? mine), one currency (? mine), a parliament, a supreme court & no tax.

What is my dream regarding the IZ ?

Various times reference was made to the work of the Dreamcatchers on the actual International Zone.

Though the gist of the following discussion can be found in the provisional conclusions, it is important to underline the flow of ideas bouncing between the participants, taken up by some, turned around by others. A symbol of Europe should be present, a sculpture, fresh water flowing through the IZ; an artistic festival; a multipurpose hall; a multipurpose campus, various scientific institutes, a hostel; a 'plaza'; Europe in the IZ as the pavilions in a world exhibit, the different

countries represented in one building, each keeping its own characteristics, unity in diversity so to speak, a cluster of facilities; The European countries can give the world their peaceful integration, Europe is an idea(1), Europe was the king of fire, Europe should bow to the Indian spirituality, behind the occult body is Europe as a Devi, Europe is constantly changing, its representation in AV should be open-ended.

We are all aware that AV is the cradle of the new consciousness. We should be prepared for what is to come. We are also aware of our (lack of) physical capacities....

Common Focus

What if AV has other priorities? Will the land be ready to receive a European contribution to the IZ?

Before asking for funding (EU Commission, UNESCO, national authorities) we should possess a clear idea what we are asking for. We thought the time has come to start with a 'plaza' in the sense of a platform to which national pavilions could be linked later. This space should be open to all plans (exhibitions, conferences, performances, even a hostel). A hectic but peaceful place. Many of us thought it wise to think seriously about the European symbol and not to start erecting buildings but light structures.

The following points were discussed Saturday evening & Sunday morning 11 X 09 and regrouped

Agreements in order of importance

1. We agree on a common European approach, but agree to retain individual national pavilions.
2. We would like to create a symbol of Europe to be situated in the European area of the International Zone
3. We wish to participate in the creation of a European festival and conference to inaugurate and celebrate the creation of the European area. We wish this festival to contain an interaction with local people. AVI groups will prepare a concept, which will be presented to Auroville groups at the AVI meeting in Auroville in February.
4. We agree to participate in the creation of a European "plaza", having common infrastructure and common facilities which have yet to be decided and agreed amongst European groups.
5. An important aspect of the European zone will be the development of a place for education and research, according to Mother's wish that Auroville should be a place of unending education. Structures and activities will be developed accordingly.
6. We aim for the creation of a guest facility in the International Zone in support of the education and research activities.

Actions

1. There will be an integrated approach to our work, which will comprise planning, agreements and fundraising.
2. We agreed on the formation of a work group to coordinate the initial work, comprising: Friederike, Linda-Grace, Martin L, Satyakam.
3. We agreed to communicate the results of this meeting with the following groups:
 - L'Avenir
 - International Zone Group
 - Pavilion groups in Auroville
 - AVI Centres & Liaison groups
 - AVI Board

- Dreamcatchers
 - AVIS
 - UHU
 - CIRHU
4. We will organise a meeting in Auroville in February, during the AVI meeting, to discuss the common European approach, and will invite all the above groups. *Action by working group*
 5. We will create a WIKI (a collaborative website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it) for the European section of the International Zone in order to facilitate communication amongst all who wish to participate. *Action Martin S*

At the end a suggestion was made for a next meeting without a facilitator.

Before leaving we all thanked the German group for having facilitated the possibility of a meeting of unity, energy, also thanks to an efficient & lavish organisation.