



**Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Auroville International Association,  
held in St. Petersburg, Russia.**

**17 - 23 June 2001**

**Theme of the meeting: AUROVILLE AND RUSSIA, THE SPIRITUAL  
CONNECTION**

**Present:**

Members of AVI Centers and Liaisons:

Austria: Sylvia Körbler;

France: Alain Grandcolas;

Germany: Wolfgang Schmidt-Reinecke, Friederike Werner, Christoph Mühlhans,

Netherlands: Harrie de Koning, Jannet Klingenberg, Mia Berden, Cornelia de Steur;

Russia: Dimitry Melgounov;

Spain: Alfonso Galiana;

Sweden: Eveline Preibsch, Staffan Kleiner;

UK: Martin Littlewood, Caroline Davies, Forrest Corkery, Sonia Dyne, Patricia Kaye,  
James Hassell, David Widdicombe, Koolesh Shah;

USA: Julian Lines, Wendy Lines, Bill Leon, Roger Toll, Chandresh Patel;

Aurovilians: Andrei, Bhaga, Bindu, Bobby, Donald and Marie-Ange Kelman, Harini,  
Helmut, Ila and Dakshina, Janna and Jacques, Jaya, Jill and Svar, Namah, Peter A.,  
Radha, Sergei, Tine, Tineke, Vladimir, Youri;

Participants from France:

Hasi Grandcolas, Louis Cohen, Geneviève Hirschler;

Participants from Germany:

Michael and Manju Bonke, Mara Mandt, Vishwa (Bernd Langheit), Dorothee  
Reinecke, Helmut and Uschi Ernst;

Participants from the Sri Aurobindo Ashram: Purna Prema (granddaughter of the  
Mother), Hemangini, former member: Nini;

Russian participants:

From St. Petersburg: Vladimir Baranov, Igor Zaitcev, Valentina Zorina, Aleksei  
Klementiev, Dimitry Melgounov, Ekaterina, Stanovykh, Eugenia Fedoseeva, Nelli  
Hutuleva;

From Moscow: Ksenia Gol'tsove, Michail Grabilenkov, Igor, Olga and Nina Zenkina (they lived in Auroville for 6 years), Tatyana Kopteva, Eugenia Maslova, Svetlana Maslova, Ludmila Spitchenko, Elena Chepurnaya, Oleg Shuranov, Alla Shoustova, Egor Falev, Victor Sokolev;

From Orel (city near Moscow): Eleonora Saakova;

From Kazan (Central Russia): Valentina Gamaurova, Ruslan Rahmatullin;

From Saratov (South Russia, city on the Wolga): Irina Onanjeva, Nina Pilipenko, Oleg L. Nikolaev;

From Belorussia, city of Minsk: Larisa Karpovish, Tatyana Koval, Alla Kondrashova, Viktor Lukinskiy, Michail Luksiakov, Elena Sergeevich, Aleksander Sud;

From Ukraine: Andrei Haritonov, city: Kahovka;

From Balashov: Oleg A. Nikolaev, Vyacheslav Sherbakov;

Kazakhstan participants:

Ruslan Eskendirov, Nurlan Eskendirov, from the Kazakhstan capital Karaganda;  
Vitaly Shenkneht, from the city of Petropavlovsk;

Andrei Sankov  
Nijny Novgorod

Bulgarian participants from Sofia:

Tatiana Tasheva, Andrey Chebanov (Andrey is originally from Belorussia);

Notetaker: Tine

**The introductory note from Dimitry, AVI-liaison Russia for all participants reads as follows (excerpt):**

“Auroville and Russia, the spiritual connection” is the underlying theme for this year’s Auroville International meeting here in St. Petersburg. What does this mean for us in Russia? What are the common features, our common needs, advantages and achievements, and what are the obstacles that need to be overcome by Russia and Auroville?

Auroville is called ‘the city of dawn’, a city of the future, a city where people live and work to realize progressive human unity, a unity of embodied souls living in a truth-consciousness beyond all national, cultural and religious differences and manifesting in their life and environment spiritual oneness. But that necessarily implies a great

synthesis, the spiritual realization bringing about the inner perfection of man, and of the effective power of manifesting that perfection in the outer world. ...

Russia has a deep inclination for mysticism. The Mother once told, "*the Russians, in their soul, are mystics – the are AT LEAST (at least) as mystical as the Indians.*"

Through all ages she has been seeking and is still seeking her true soul, trying to know and possess her inmost self in all aspects of life. In this endeavor Russia is very close to the East. She always tended to religious life; many great saints were born on Russian land, many great mystics. She harbored many great religions, from Christianity to Buddhism – there are even some traditional Buddhist republics here. And now this mysticism, as was predicted by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, is bursting after decades of oppression. ... This mystical and aesthetic feeling in Russia is combined with a great rational power. Russia produced many world-famous scientists and became a world-leader in many scientific domains. She has become a great power on the world scene. And many of her supreme personalities combine all three sublime powers, the mysticism, aesthetic and rationality, bringing the great synthesis, preparing the way for the future.

As a living example of the synthesis, Russia can be of great help to Auroville. Besides, as the Mother said, Russia among other countries represents the ideal of brotherhood (she has also said that Auroville could have been built in Russia), and this ideal is very strong even now, despite the difficulties of the transitional period. The quality of brotherhood is very important for Auroville and Russia can share her living experience. ...

At the same time, Russia embodies in herself also the worst of East and West. Her mysticism has too much darkness, irrationality and inertia, often declining into religious obscurantism, intolerance and fanaticism. Her rationalism is still too rigid, ignorant and narrow, often degrading into soul-less materialism, blind witch-hunt or stubborn rejection of things spiritual. Her culture is still too much a thing in itself, not being the true basis of connection with the inner soul-reality and just vainly scattering her powers in fruitless fancies, careless of her goal of transfiguring life with the higher beauty and harmony. And here Auroville as the manifestation of the perfect and integral ideal of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother can be of a great help for Russia.

Auroville is the powerful and concentrated aspiration towards assimilating the best achievements of the East and the West and melting them into a new and greater realization. Becoming that more and more, it shall be a high example and living support to Russia in getting rid of all the misery, darkness, falsehood she has still to bear and confront. It shall help her to rise to the true mysticism and to realize her flaming soul, filling her inner life with bliss and happiness. It shall help her to possess properly her rationality, which, supported by the awakened soul-power, shall lead her to magnificent perfection and harmony in outward life. It shall help her to uplift her culture to divine heights. ...

This is the deepest hope of Russia and the greatest gift Auroville may present her. For in the inmost depths of her inner being there burns perennially her flaming Soul,

ever aspiring to the Divine. That unquenchable fire of aspiration leads her through all her sufferings, stumbles, and delusions towards her highest goal, towards re-union with her Divine Source.

Now we have the first AVI meeting here in Russia, which is actually the biggest meeting of Aurobindonian people ever being held here. We consider it as a special sign and blessing that the first AVI meeting in the millennium is taking place here. We hope that our meeting, where so many people come from Auroville, from countries all over the world, from all over Russia, will help all of us to make a new step towards the sublime synthesis. The Western people may partake of the deep warmth of the Russian soul, of its openness, brotherhood and generosity; they may experience the Russian unique and manifold culture of which St. Petersburg is the center and embodiment; they may get acquainted with Russian people from whom they were separated for so long. The Russians may learn from the western energy and activity, its capacity to organize and interact, which we lack so much. We all may learn a lot from Auroville's intense and manifold experience. Finally, we all may enjoy experiencing each other, coming in touch with each other, each of us being a unique personality adding a new beam and hue to our united constellation.

With this hope we are happily coming together for our meeting.

*Dimitry,  
AVI liaison, Russia*

## **AVI Meeting Program**

**Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> of June 2001**, arrival of AVI board members in the hotel "Znamenka", near Peterhof in the outskirts of St. Petersburg.

Wendy has been generously offering hatha yoga session every morning of the following week in our Znamenka hotel. The sessions were well appreciated and attended, especially by the Russian participants.

**Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> of June**, meeting of the AVI board in the morning and afternoon, and arrival of other participants;  
evening: first session with all participants (from Russia, AVI members, Aurovilians) at 8 pm;  
personal and individual introduction with translation into Russian and English provided; viewing of the AVI film "Impressions"(1995) in Russian language.

**Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> June**, sightseeing of St. Petersburg  
Bus tour around the city with the visit of Peter and Paul fortress, in the afternoon the Russian State museum. Evening: 'Swan lake' ballet by Tchaikovsky for the Western

guests and videos and discussions on Auroville in hotel Znamenka for the Russian participants.

Parallel to the sightseeing in the afternoon, some Aurovilians prepared the national pavilion panels, which the Auroville group has carried all the way from Auroville for the exhibition in St. Petersburg Town Hall and Znamenka. They worked for several hours and had lots of fun hanging the panels on the walls in the Town Hall.

**Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> of June**, first public day in the “Town Hall” in St. Petersburg - House of Officers.

Welcome and introductory talks by organizers and honorable guests:

- ?? M. Grabilenkow, the vice-chief of the Department of Information technologies in Education of the Ministry of Education
- ?? A. Rychkov, the chairman of the Committee of Science and Higher School of the Administration of St. Petersburg
- ?? Rajiv K. Chander, the General Consul of India in St. Petersburg.
- ?? L. Verbitskaya, the Rector of the State University of St-Petersburg

Slide show “ Introduction to Auroville” by Peter, followed by the

Presentation “Introduction of Matrimandir” first by Bhaga and then by Michael.

In the afternoon, Aurovilians Jill, Helmut, Sergei and Jaya presented the International Zone:

- 1) Russian Pavilion by Sergei
- 2) Pavilion of the Americas by Jill
- 3) Unity Pavilion by Jaya
- 4) International Zone concept in general and Savitri Bhavan by Helmut

Splitting up in 3 groups for Question/Answer session for a deeper understanding of the topics:

- 1) Matrimandir presented by Bhaga, Michael, Tineke, Andrei;
- 2) International Zone presented by Helmut, Jill, Jaya;

In the evening, “Die Walküre” was offered to opera fans in the Mariinski theatre.

For others, “10 years of Matrimandir”, a the superb slide show by Dominique Darr, was shown by Michael. It was a silent slide show without talking, but with music of Joy singing devotional songs and mantras, a CD just finished being recorded in Auroville in Holger and Tina’s Sunshine studio. After the slide show, Alain and Michael shared some funny stories about the early construction of Matrimandir and kept everyone laughing.

**Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> of June**, second public day – Venue: “Town hall” in St. Petersburg - House of Officers.

1. Dimitry started the morning off with an interesting talk on the history of Sri Aurobindo's teachings coming to Russia. A very good translation of “Adventure of Consciousness” sold nearly one million copies in the early nineties (which would be the largest number sold anywhere). However, with the introduction of poor translations of Sri Aurobindo's works and the change in the economy and the fragmentation of the various groups in Russia, there has been a waning of interest. The work of Aditi to publish new translations and compilations along with this historic meeting should be a step in the right direction in renewing the study of Sri Aurobindo, Mother and Auroville.

2. The influence of spiritual ideas of India on Russian philosophical thought, by Michail Chiryatiev, the Vice-President of St. Petersburg branch of the International League for Protection of Culture, the Chairman of St. Petersburg branch of the International Roerich Centre (non-governmental organization under the patronage of UNO), the Vice-President of “Ramakrishna Society”. Michail Chiryatiev, whose connections to Roerich, Ramakrishna Society and Education all wove into a strong call for a reformation of the education system in Russia based on these more eternal values rather than specialization and commercialism.

3. Margarita Kojevnikova, a Buddhist who is also creative director of an interfaith movement called “The Common Care” spoke on the start of this movement in Russia. It seems it is still very early to find religious cooperation among those who are still trying to find their voice. As she is an acquaintance of Dr. Robert Thurman, she was pleased to know he had visited Auroville last fall.

4. Dr. Oleg M. Mogilever, a devotee of Ramana Maharshi, put a photo of his teacher on the lecture and filled the room with a glorious OM. He spoke about the famous method of inquiry “Who am I?”

5. Anna Shustova, the vice-chief editor of the journal, “Delphis” spoke about Russian philosophers and the spiritual tradition of Russia and how it related to Sri Aurobindo's thought. In the Soviet time, only one person had written a doctoral thesis on Sri Aurobindo, but recently there have been a number of them. She was very informed and we could have spent the whole day just listening to her and having a general discussion. Someone responded to her talk with a provocative statement about Roerich and spirituality and Sri Aurobindo, but there was no real opportunity to pursue it given the time constraints.

The talks were followed by presentation in a separate smaller room by Bhaga on the “Twelve Aspects of the Mother”, with question and answers, assisted by Tine. In the big hall, Don spoke about the new experiment in Auroville on economy and

the circles. Many interesting questions came, so it was fortunate Jaya and Jill and Harini chimed in.

In the afternoon, four Aurovilians were spontaneously asked to give an interview to a private Russian TV-station about AVI and Auroville. The interview took place in English without translation and went quite well.

In the evening, some had opera tickets for “Eugeni Onegin”, and the others went back to Znamenka hotel. Bill Leon showed a video about the student exchange with Washington State University and Auroville in spring this year at the hotel.

**Thursday, 21st of June** , Venue: Hotel Znamenka.

Morning: AVI General Assembly day – please see detailed report at the end of the program.

Split into 2 groups: AVI (English medium), reports from the AVI Centres, voting of new board members; two new AVI-liaisons, decision about the venue for AVI 2002 etc.

medium) Russian groups meeting amongst themselves (Russian

People from different regions present themselves, their work and the situation in the region. Discussion of possible future cooperation between different centres and followers in different regions of country for spreading the information and development of an active network.

Afternoon: Sightseeing of St. Isaac cathedral, afterwards visit of Hermitage.

Evening and night: A lot happened on the side of the meetings as well as down the center of the program. Three cultural programs were offered: The “Nutcracker ballet” by Tchaikovsky in the small opera, the “Matthew’s passion” by J.S. Bach in Mariinski theatre, and the “Requiem” by Verdi in the Philharmonic.

Today is the ‘Whitest Night’, so we wish you all a Happy Summer Solstice and a celebration of Light in your life. Everyone enjoyed the boat tour on river Neva around midnight. We walked down the river to the nearest bridge and waited until 2 am, until the bridges opened to let the big ships pass through.

**Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> of June**, Venue: Hotel Znamenka

Late morning: Continuation of the AVI meeting – General Assembly (please see detailed report at the end of the program);

Afternoon: Experiences with The Mother – personal memories and stories, a truly special session shared by Purna Prema, the granddaughter of the Mother, Manju, former member of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, having grown up in the Ashram, Alain, Roger and Nini.

Harini and Bindu presented “The Indian View of Auroville” followed by Q/A session.

In the evening there was a grand banquet to celebrate the closing night of this historical meeting with dancing and a Russian live band. The AVI board members had a last meeting (supposedly short) while the dance and celebrations were going on.

### **Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, Hotel Znamenka.**

All participants came together in the morning for a general sharing and feedback of the meeting; this was very moving and a highlight of the meeting, chaired beautifully by Bindu and translated by Sergei; some excerpts are printed here:

Sergei stressed the importance of setting clear aims for the work on the national pavilion theme, the first and all embracing one being the inner work of those connected, the searching for and contacting the soul of Russia, as we are not striving for superficial unity but, as the Mother put it, for the essential spirit of the soul of a nation. He also stressed that contacts with the Russian government should be established because for the country as a whole it is a question of life and death to return to the soul level after so many years of materialism, first in the form of communism and for the last decade in its westernized capitalistic form. This is the first Auroville meeting in Russia and it seems like another door has opened towards the East and to Asia.

The Russians exchanged their concern on Russian spirituality and the dominant Orthodox Christian religion and the probability of characterizing AVI and Auroville as a sect, and they were wondering how to move on from here and integrate the yoga of transformation into society. A research carried out by the Ministry of Education was quoted which said that only 5% in the Russian intelligentsia could be called orthodox. The church has its stronghold in the rural people and, generally speaking, it still acts in the same way as in tsarist and also in communist times, i.e. as power instrument of the government, for example by blacklisting spiritual movements outside the church. On the other hand the writings of Sri Aurobindo are highly esteemed inside the intelligentsia and are regarded by many as the basis for a new educational movement.

Wolfgang pointed towards the parallel situation we face in Germany: there was a similar spiritual vacuum after World War II because the spiritual aims deeply rooted in the German soul were so bluntly perverted by the Nazis. After the war only one official mainstream “spirituality” was supported which was Christianity. And in the recent years we, too experience a fairly large movement of people looking for alternatives. So our Christian churches also try to denounce every movement outside them as being a sect. He quoted a research carried out in the U.S. saying that about one third of the overall population in the Western world is prepared for an integral vision. Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga was even mentioned in the research report.

Michael Bonke reminded us of the inauguration ceremony of Auroville in 1968 when somebody approached the Mother and expressed his concern that the Soviet Union might not participate because of the sentence in the Charter “.... to live in Auroville one must be a willing servitor of the Divine Consciousness”. She said that for the Russians it should be translated by “widest consciousness”, as words really do not matter and the participation of the SU was crucial. So if we now want to win the co-operation of governments for Auroville we should also be flexible, refer to UN and UNESCO links and support of Auroville’s work for the ideal of human unity and not necessarily speak of the Integral Yoga as such.

In the following sharing of impressions of the different Russian groups -- the St. Petersburg Aditi group, the friends from Moscow, from Belorussia, from the Ukraine, from Kasakhstan -- wonderful thoughts and impressions were expressed, like “the new Russia has to be built along the ideal of brotherhood”, “visiting this meeting was like visiting Auroville again”, “I read a lot about human unity, but here I experienced it”, “it is more than symbolical that in the first year of the new millennium the meeting is taking place in Russia”, “Mother’s force became more and more tangible in the high spirit of one-ness we experienced here” and “I would like to thank all participants that they came to bring energies from their home countries for our budding Russian centers”.

Bindu expressed for all of us how grateful we are for the immense efforts our hosts spent on making this meeting become a great success. Some other comments: Bill and Julian spoke for AVI USA saying that it was especially touching for them to see the Russian reality, to feel the connectedness. They warmly invited their Russian friends to next year’s meeting and added that America, in spite of her present government, undergoes also a lot of changes nowadays. Harrie of AVI Netherlands pointed towards the long-standing connection between Holland and St. Petersburg, mirrored by the recent visit of the Dutch queen who came to strengthen the cultural links. He promised that AVI Holland now will do everything possible to strengthen the spiritual links. Dimitry ended our sharing session by reading a passage from Savitri in English and Russian.

Afternoon: Sightseeing tour with two busses of the famous suburbs of St. Petersburg Pushkin museum and Ekaterina's palace in Pushkin. This is one of the most luxurious and beautiful palaces of St. Petersburg. Others walked to the nearby palace Peterhof.

Evening program:

### **AVI General Assembly meeting together with Russian participants Topic: International Zone and national pavilions**

The meeting made it evident that a lot of exchange is still needed between all those interested and concerned. There was an overall consensus that the International Zone should be livened up with fresh energy. But there were also a lot of reflections expressed whether we should push this energy into concrete forms/concrete pavilions straight away or first concentrate more on what the inner contents of these forms could be.

Speaking about Africa and Tekeste, the Aurovilian representative of the African continent, the following statement was said and agreed upon: "Although AVI is well aware that no one person can represent a continent as vast and dispersed as Africa, the group recognizes the need to plant an Auroville 'seed' there. Mother recognized Tekeste as available link between Africa and Auroville, and as such AVI hands its full-hearted support to Tekeste to act as a liaison to the continent."

The following resolution was passed:

### **AVI Resolution on Support of Pavilions**

As a facilitator of interaction between Auroville and the people and nations of the world, AVI can assist in the development of the International Zone by working with individual AVI centers and the International Zone Group to support the development of more pavilions. We can help and encourage pavilion groups in various ways:

- ~~to~~ to get started
- ~~to~~ to co-ordinate between each other
- ~~to~~ to co-operate in developing common infrastructure and projects that affect multiple pavilion sites and centers.

We encourage

- ~~to~~ individual pavilion development projects to document their processes so that those who start later can learn from them.
- ~~to~~ new groups to consider adopting leadership teams that include Aurovilians and members from their national centers and other helpful individuals (e.g. architects, funders). The U.S. pavilion team with 3 Aurovilians and 4 AVI-USA board members may be a model for this.

### **AVI General Assembly report:**

90 participants -- Russian and foreign – were assembled in the ballroom of our Znamenka palace. The Russians would meet in one room to begin the important process of interacting between the various Auroville/Sri Aurobindo/Mother groups scattered about in the various cities and former republics of the former Soviet Union. The rest of us, participants from AVI centers along with the 20 or so Aurovilians at the meeting, would meet in another room for the annual AVI General Assembly meeting.

Dimitry, as AVI liaison to Russia, gave the first report: In this first year of AVI-related activity, the small group in St. Petersburg has informed people about getting to Auroville, launched a Russian website in Russian and in English, translated and published about five books on Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, translated the Auroville film 'Impressions' into Russian, and did the enormous work of preparing the conference. Dimitry also introduced a new AVI liaison in Bulgaria, Tatyana, who told us that she had visited Auroville 'by chance' two years ago and is now dedicating herself to furthering knowledge about Auroville in Eastern Europe.

### **Report of members (AVI Centers and –liaisons):**

The national AVIs then gave their annual reports: (Please see the full detailed AVI-reports printed at the end)

Bill/USA – Nilauro has been appointed the executive director of AVI USA and manages the different projects. The publication of a regular newsletter is sent to 1,500 people on the mailing list; AVI USA is actively fund-raising for the American pavilion besides other projects; Bill reports of his program to create a network of universities to bring students and professors to Auroville. One such group will soon be in Auroville building a new dormitory for visiting students.

Alfonso/Spain – The group has been successfully raising funds from provincial government sources, providing information for people traveling to Auroville, and coordinating Auroville-related exhibitions and talks.

Martin/UK – Like the USA, Britain now has a paid person to help follow through on projects, one of which recently brought in \$300,000 from the European Economic Commission. In all, about a quarter million pounds a month passes through AVI UK for Auroville. Martin pointed out the importance of investing long term in the AVI centers, as Britain has done, for after a few years it has started paying out generously in money for Auroville. The next projects will be in the area of sustainable agriculture in Auroville. There are fundraising proposals together with Koolesh Shah for the inner skin of Matrimandir.

Alain/France - The group in Paris is reorganizing itself to become more effective and are studying new ways to operate. The 'local' in Paris would be closed in due time.

Friederike/Germany – gave a happy report of the successful annual AVI Germany meeting, which featured much discussion of a possible German pavilion, which in turn brought up a lot of discussion of the German soul, along with old wounds and deep questions. Ananda Reddy, a teacher and lecturer from the Ashram invited to the meeting, helped the discussions, especially when he pointed out that the existence of the Pavilions themselves in Auroville would serve to heal old national wounds, which all nations share in having. Friederike also reported that six civil servants per year are working in different work places in Auroville.

Harrie/Netherlands - The Netherlands group is happy to be sending some money to Auroville every month in support for the purchase of lands. Harrie reports new energy, more activity and signs of a possible new center in neighboring Belgium.

Eveline/Sweden -- Things are quiet in these northern lands, though more contacts from young people is a hopeful sign of greater activity. Otherwise, the Swedish group is mainly providing help to people seeking information and advice on visiting or living in Auroville.

**The NGO application of AVI** is still pending at the UN Department of Public Information. Follow-up is done by Julian (New York), Wolfgang (Berlin) and Mauna in Auroville.

### **Translation of Auroville Charter**

It was said that the Auroville Charter was translated at the foundation ceremony in 1968 into 18 languages. The charter should be published on the AVI-website in these 18 languages. There is an appeal to all AVI members to use and promote the Aurovilian translation service Avitra.

### **AVI-websites and homepages**

It is very important that all national AVI websites are updated with basic information at least once a year, before the annual AVI meeting. Please all AVI-centers and liaisons, cooperate with this request and update your site with current information.

Sonia reports that the Singapore website is updated once a month.

### **AVI facility in Auroville**

It is encouraged that a common office for AVI affairs and national pavilion development is created. The Unity pavilion as well as the upcoming plaza area near the solar kitchen would be able to offer some space in the near future.

### **Meeting place AVI 2002**

It was agreed that the AVI meeting next year would be held on the West Coast in the USA. Place and time will be announced by AVI USA later on.

### **Financial report 2000/ 2001**

The treasurer Alain presented an overview of the budget of the association and a draft for 2001/2002. It was decided to support the International Zone with a donation of Rs. 10,000 for their major efforts to prepare the exhibition of the national pavilion panels and bring the panels to St. Petersburg.

Annual contributions by major centers for the next year were proposed as follows:

Major centers (US, UK, Germany): Euros 500

Medium centers (France, Netherlands, Spain): Euros 400

Normal centers (Canada): Euros 200

Emerging centers (Sweden): Euros 20

Liaisons (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Russia, Switzerland): Euros 10

### **Election of AVI-board members**

According to the statutes, every two years a new board has to be elected and 2001 is an election year. Some changes of board members were announced: Dimitry replaces Martin as internal secretary; Sonia Dyne replaces Angiras (AVI UK), Bill Leon will become a coopted board member, replacing Aurotaranti (AVI USA).

Following AVI board members were announced for a term of two years:

1 Chair: Wolfgang (AVI Germany)

2 Vice Chair: Julian (AVI USA)

3 Secretary: Dimitry (AVI Russia)

4 Treasurer: Alain (Auroville and AVI France)

5 International Secretary: Tine (Auroville)

other members:

6 Alfonso (AVI Spain)

7 Sonia Dyne (AVI UK)

8 Martin (AVI UK)

9 Chandresh Patel (AVI USA)

10 Eveline (AVI Sweden)

11 Friederike (AVI Germany)

12 Harrie de Koning (AVI NL)

### Coopted members:

- 13 Bill Leon (AVI USA)
- 14 Satyakam (AVI France)

### Honorary members

Mia (AVI Netherlands) and Mauna (Auroville) remain AVI board members emeritus and are invited to join our meeting whenever possible.

### **New AVI-liaisons**

☞☞ Sonia Dyne lived 40 years in Singapore before moving to UK where she lives now, and worked for 20 years with the Sri Aurobindo Center in Singapore. She offered to look into the possibility of founding an AVI-liaison Singapore with the known members of the Sri Aurobindo Center there, like Nandlal Patel, Lok Kek Seng, and Kiruthika Ramanathan.

☞☞ The assembly looked briefly into an AVI-India liaison but came to the conclusion that such a center has to form and present itself.

☞☞ Tatiana from Sofia, Bulgaria introduces herself and talks about her connection to the yoga. She has been visiting Pondicherry and Auroville in 1999. She maintains a website on Auroville and Sri Aurobindo and offers to do liaison work in Sofia.

☞☞ The brothers Nurlan and Ruslan from Kazakhstan presented themselves. They have been visiting Auroville in spring 2000 together with Kaisha and plan to come again in January 2002. They also offer to become an AVI-liaison in Karaganda. In the long run, they would like to join Auroville. They report that in the cities Karaganda and Asthana is a group of 15 friends and other members closely connected with the yoga and Auroville.

The general assembly warmly welcomed two new AVI-liaisons, Nurlan and Kaisha in Kazakhstan, Karaganda and Tatiana Tasheva in Bulgaria, Sofia. Here are their respective addresses:

Tatiana Tasheva  
ul. Chervena roza 31A  
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tel (office, Kaisha): +7 3212 48 37 59  
email: [ems@nursat.kz](mailto:ems@nursat.kz)

Bindu offered subsidized AV Today subscriptions to the new liaisons.

## **AVI Canada Report 2001**

### **Toronto Chapter – Report 2000-2001**

Prepared by Catherine Blackburn, board member of AVI Canada

1. Vigyan from Toronto moves to Auroville.
2. Devan Nair is a guest speaker in Auroville and comes back to Toronto with the idea of doing something for Auroville.
3. I join him and we raise money for Vérité.
4. I contact AVI Canada and meet Georges several times. Georges explains his views of extending AVI Canada to Ontario and his fears that AVI Canada will die as no one wants to be part of the board. Georges and I make plans to save the situation.
5. Devan and I attend the board meeting on August 2000 and manage to be elected on the board. We find out the board must stay in Montréal as it has a Québec provincial charter.
6. A new board is formed with inexperienced people. We are left with no money, few members and board members living far apart in two provinces. I managed to have an old friend of mine, who has lived in Auroville, to become a member and to help on the board, Françoise Boudreault. At the moment she is going through all the files to sort things out.
7. August 2000, Inauguration of the Toronto Chapter of AVI Canada.
8. First bilingual newsletter of AVI Canada, fall 2000.

9. The Montrealers members conduct meetings, receive Tapas, celebrate Auroville and AVI Canada birthdays. The Montreal Sri Aurobindo Centre offers to help AVI Canada, by providing meeting place.
10. In Toronto, we realize we must have a special event to let people know about Auroville. A conference is planned. I write a funding proposal to FWE and manage to have Julian Lines as a guest speaker.
11. Work to organize conference with Paula Caesar, winter 2001
12. Several meetings in Hamilton with Devan and Paula.
13. Indeed, it is difficult to go to Montreal. We form the idea to become independent, like having a federal charter, instead of a provincial charter. Work is in progress.
14. Second newsletter, spring 2001.
15. May 5 conference held at the Toronto Library.
16. Project for Toronto: to form a working group who will decide on some projects to help Auroville.
17. Between Montreal and Toronto, we managed to sell 100 AVI calendars for 2001.
18. For 2001-2202, AVI Canada must change the charter in order to give legal rights to all the provinces to form AVI groups. In Toronto we would like a federal charter (National charter).
19. Paula will move to Auroville in August 2001. We hope she will be a good link between the Canadians in AV and the members in Canada.

## **AVI Canada – Montreal**

### **Report 2000-2001**

Prepared by Claude Daviault, president of AVI Canada

Dear friends in Yoga,

AVI Canada regrets to be absent at the St-Petersburg gathering. Be assured we would have been really pleased to visit your attractive and legendary city.

This year our Association has elected a brand new board of directors and created an Auroville office liaison in Toronto. During the last months, we got to know each other and have decided, in the next months, to modify Toronto's status to a fully autonomous Center as per our Canadian legislation, what some of you call an "antenna". Doing so, modifying our actual charta, we hope Aurovilians from other Provinces in our country will join our Association and give it a real nationwide cover.

This year we saw a small increase of our individual membership, from 13 to 20, and with the creation of "antennas" we can expect more. In spite of our precarious financial situation, we succeeded to publish two newsletters, a first 75 copies edition last fall and a 200 copies edition this spring. Also we have sold 125 Auroville calendars, on which we made a small benefit. We are still maintaining our website.

The Toronto chapter presented a Conference in May about Auroville, in a public library with guest speaker Julian Lines, who then traveled to Montreal to meet with a small group of people.

So, despite of our modest resources and other difficulties, this year is a very positive and constructive one. As soon as we can, we will create a working committee to bring forward the Canadian pavilion construction project in the International Zone. Other projects are also on the agenda, (to be followed up). We need time to reinforce our association.

AVI Canada would like to take the opportunity, to present its candidature to host an AVI Meeting in our country for the year 2005, which sounds realistic to us, with Mother's help.

This August, we will host a special gathering to celebrate our 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary, where elders, members from Sri Aurobindo Center and all friends in yoga will be invited.

That's all for now, we wish you a great time in St-Petersburg.

Claude Daviault,

on behalf of our Association.

### **Auroville International Germany Report for 2000/2001**

1) At the end of 2000 AVI Germany had 164 registered members. Additionally there were about the same amount of people who are registered as receivers of our mailings against postage fee. Compared with 1999 there is a slight increase in membership and mail receivers.

2) One-day regional meetings of AVI members and other people interested in the Integral Yoga and Auroville were organized in some German cities (Munich, Stuttgart and Berlin).

3) Towards the end of 2000 three of the six officially approved places for young men doing their civil service (Anderer Dienst im Ausland) in Auroville were taken. After some initial problems we received and still receive a very positive feedback concerning performance, moral and integrity of these young men.

4) Since 2000 AVI Germany is working with a much better and more professional database (Filemaker). The new system makes it much easier for us to fulfill the high requirements regarding donation receipts, which came up due to new legislation on charitable organizations.

5) In 2000, as in previous years, there were several media reports on Auroville and the Integral Yoga. (A list of these reports is available on request).

6) In the end of 2000 AVI Germany asked for donations for a research project in the field of Integral Yoga. This sponsoring appeal was released in cooperation with the German Transpersonal Society (Deutsche Transpersonale Gesellschaft) and resulted in a private contribution for a thesis, which is presently being prepared at the University of Heidelberg.

7) As in previous years AVI Germany organized in January/February 2000 a very positively received introductory journey to Auroville. The three-week trip offered to the participants the possibility to help out in different working spheres of the AV community, accompanied by talks, workshops, round-trips and much more. For August 2001 we plan for the first time a special parent/child journey.

8) Since the end of 2000 a group of AVI Germany members has come up with a new approach for the conception of a German pavilion in the International Zone of Auroville. The c. 12 members meet several times a year for a working weekend.

9) The active members of the worldwide AVI Centers meet once a year for about one week of intense exchange. Each year a different country host this meeting. In 2000 AVI Germany had the pleasure to fulfill this role again (last meeting in Germany was 1993). The beautiful location was the "Lebensgarten Steyerberg" near Hannover, one of the biggest spiritual communities in Germany with links to a network of other communities worldwide. So this location favored the linking of Auroville and AVI with other international communities.

10) Wolfgang Schmidt-Reinecke, a member of the AVI Germany board, is also chairman of the Auroville International umbrella organization since two years. In those two years AVI launched the appeal to be accredited by the UN (with good prospect of success). Other activities are a campaign supported by specially

designed posters aiming at the foundation of new AVI centers in other countries. Russia, Switzerland and Norway were recently welcomed as new members of the AVI family. AVI Germany put forward the idea to hold the 2001 AVI meeting in St. Petersburg in order to support and strengthen contacts with the AVI center in this most important country. During the recent years a joint AVI website with national sub-pages was created and put on the internet.

11) The "Verein zur Förderung der Auroville Region" (VFAVR = Association for the Support of the Auroville Region), founded on the initiative of AVI Germany last year/beginning of 2001 prepared an application for project support to the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation (BMZ). Benefiting from this support will be mainly women and youth from the villages in the Auroville region. The project will be held in close co-operation with the Village Action Group of the Auroville community. The application is for DM 160.000,--.

### **ACTIVITIES OF AVI SPAIN 2000-2001**

During the AVI meeting in Steyerberg (Germany) in June 2000, some activities were arranged with Jivatman, an Auroville resident, in Pamplona (North Spain). Jivatman was on a journey around Europe.

- An interview in "Radio Euskadi" with Jivatman and Itxaso (AVI Spain president) called "The city of Auroville".
- A short course of creativity and music directed by Jivatman for children from 4 to 7 in the cultural centre "Jus La Rocha".
- A recorded interview on "Radio Nacional de España" about projects of cooperation and development by AVI Spain in India, with Kitxu and Yolanda (AVI Spain members) and Jivatman.

This last interview happened after some contacts with Teresa Celaya, manager of the department of cooperation and development of the "Universidad Popular de Navarra".

In July 2000, a translation of some texts of "*Mère parle d'Auroville*" were made by AVI Spain and printed in nº 22 of the review Savitri (published by Fundación Centro Sri Aurobindo, Barcelona).

On 15 August 2000, collective meditations were organised in Pamplona, Barcelona and Tortosa with the aim "Peace between Pakistan and India". An invitation letter was sent to the embassies of India and Pakistan, and a very gentle answer was sent back by the embassy of India.

In October, AVI Spain turned down an invitation to give a conference about Auroville in the “Escuela Espiritual Universalista de la Nueva Era de Amor Universal”.

A member of AVI Spain was presented in the conference “Two years living in Auroville” given by Lola Pardo (AV resident) on 6 November 2000, in Biocultura, Madrid.

On 23, 24 and 25 November 2000, AVI Spain participated as a NGO in the forum for solidarity and cooperation in Zokatin, Pamplona.

On 5 December 2000, the translation of the radio programme of Davide Montemurri “Sri Aurobindo e Mère” was finished, printed and made public.

On 27 December 2000, the meeting of the AVI Spain General Assembly was held.

In February 2001, the web domain “auroville.net” was bought and reserved for one year, with the option of renewal. It's useful for any needs of AV or AVI.

On 16 May 2001, Alfonso, from AVI Spain, was interviewed for 30 min. in a local TV channel of Catalunya.

AVI Spain gave information and answered to requests from all over Spain but also from Argentina, Mexico, and Peru, and Spanish speaking people from Brazil and USA.

### **Next projects:**

A short article called “Auroville, an end and a means”, will be published in nº 23 of the “Savitri” review.

We are watching out for a possible article about Auroville, prepared without our help, in the magazine “Integral”.

We are expecting some possible radio interviews on “Radio NET 21” from Pamplona, and “La Plana Radio” from Santa Barbara, Tortosa; and an audiovisual conference in October in Valencia.

### **Fundraising efforts:**

Government of Navarra:

- Project for manual water pumps in Vanur Bloc. 4,000,000 ptas. (\$ 22,000)
- Project for a Model Town: 11,000,000 ptas. (\$ 61,000)

Pamplona city council:

- Educational project "The Pyramid". 2,800,000 ptas. (\$ 15,000)

We are expecting two new projects from the Government of Navarra:

- Women's promotion and economic development. 12,618,680 ptas. (\$ 69,500)
- Ilaigarkal School: 14,988,000 ptas. (\$ 83,000)

Hugs from AVI Spain.

Alfonso

## **AUROVILLE INTERNATIONAL FRANCE in 2000-2001**

### 1. Local

The activity of our association has taken place mainly around our « local », a shop cum exhibition hall cum office, which is usually open 6 days a week. Each day of the week one volunteer is present in the shop and to attain regularity is not always easy.

The monthly sale of books, incense and some handicraft articles is hardly reaching 250 \$/month. Therefore most of the cost of maintaining this local, which is roughly 1000 \$/month, is covered by donations from some members, and also by weekly dance courses given by Devasmita and hatha-yoga courses given by Marie-Juliette.

The cost of renting the premises and running the shop is a burden on our finances. Therefore, it has been decided to stop renting these premises and to share wide premises with another association concerned with Pondicherry activities: "Les Amis de l'Inde".

Another possibility studied is an office within the UNESCO.

In the local, we had the following gatherings:

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> of May: we kept a stand at the "portes-ouvertes" day of as franco-indian association: "Les Amis de l'Inde".

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> of September: meeting with the reverent Losang Kosar Tenpa Rimpoché

Every first Tuesday of the month, a lecture on Auroville is proposed to introduce Auroville. Croquette is usually the main speaker. Attendance is usually between 4 to 6 people.

The General Assembly is being held each year in June.

Last one was on 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2000: we had an interesting meeting with Cristo who explained to us the problem of AV lands, and also Gilles Guigan about the solar kitchen. This year it will be held on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Our antenna in Alsace has organized one evening with Indian classical music to keep a contact with all the people known in this region who have some contact and interest for Auroville. It is a place where people from Alsace may have information on Auroville, may borrow books and videos. They often tape films/documentaries from the TV channels and send them to Auroville where they are shown each Thursday evening.

## 2. Functioning

The French association is a legal charitable trust with 12 board members, out of which 4 members form the executive body:

- chairman: Croquette,
- vice-chairman: Dominique Darr,
- general secretary: Satyakam,
- treasurer: Jean-Pierre Fredet

The organization of the association is performed by a set of active members, which have each a specific responsibility to assume. Presently, 20 active members are listed. They are regularly meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, in the « local » in order to review the work to be done.

## 3. Donations

Donations, as well as membership contributions, allow a tax deduction of 50% of the amount donated.

Donations to Auroville in 2000 will be given by the AIF treasurer the day of our general assembly on 16<sup>th</sup> of June. Donations to the Land Campaign have been very significant (about 15.000\$).

During the year 2000, 104 persons have paid their yearly contribution of 40 USD (or more) to become a member of our association and support its activities, compared with 108 last year. They received the two bulletins, which were published.

Moreover, numerous parcels, which were sent to Auroville, have transited through our «local».

**Annual report of Auroville International in the Netherlands**  
**Period: autumn 2000 - spring 2001**

Prepared by Harrie de Koning

## Summary

This report gives an overview of the activities in the Netherlands during the end of 2000 and the first half of 2001 by the Auroville International the Netherlands. This report is unable to give a complete survey of all the activities, small and big, which are going on to support on a personal scale or project scale the activities in Auroville. Intended for help to realize the Vision of the Mother: Auroville becoming an example of a living Human Unity. We thank all the people in the Netherlands who have supported us to help Auroville.

### Main topics:

- ?? News from the board AVI the Netherlands.
- ?? Overview of activities
- ?? Other interesting issues this year
- ?? Fundraising for the Tamil population in and around Auroville
- ?? Overview of contributions for supporting projects in Auroville and the Land Fund action.

### AVI Board Members and other related news:

- ?? Jannet Klingenberg
- ?? Wim de Jong
- ?? Mia Berden
- ?? Jan Lohman
- ?? Harrie de Koning
- ?? Nelli de Steur

Meeting frequency 10 times in a year.

Jan Pieter left this year the board.

Around the board is a growing group of active participating people.

Surya who supplied the newcomers to Auroville with the necessary information, has indicated that he wants to stop with this activity. He has performed this job in an excellent way the last many years.

Now Wim gives information about Auroville and other relevant sources. The beautiful Auroville website <http://www.auroville.org> is becoming more and more an important source of information.

### Overview of activities

A lot of activities happened during this year. On one side there was the focus on interested people and friends of Auroville and on the other side was the focus on new public.

The following activities took place:

- ?? Regional Open Days in the East (Zwolle), West (Haarlem) and the South (Eindhoven).
- ?? An Savitiri study weekend in the North (Groningen).
- ?? Lectures of Ananda Reddy in the community in Venwoude and Middelbeers.
- ?? An intensive introspective day of board members and other close friends of AVI Nederland
- ?? Celebration of New Year 2001 by friends of Auroville.
- ?? Inspiring meetings for renewal introspection of mutual contacts from where new ideas were born.
- ?? On-going meditation/study groups, group of peoples coming together to study and reflect on the literature of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.
- ?? Namaste supplies the literature of Sri Aurobindo, the Mother and Auroville in different languages and re-sells products of Auroville (e.g. incenses)
- ?? Changes in the content and the redaction of the Dutch Auroville Journal
- ?? Jan Lohman is starting on the translation in Dutch of a book of George van Vreckhem, his time becomes limited thereby, therefore he looks for fresh blood for the redaction of the Dutch Auroville Journal.
- ?? Jannet contributed this year more interviews to the Dutch Auroville Journal
- ?? Kireet from the Gaia Garden community in Auroville contributes a column about the events in Daily Life in Auroville.
- ?? Jopy has administrated and collected the funds for the Auroville Land project from people who donate some money on a regular basis every month.

#### Other interesting issues this year

#### **Contacts and cooperating with two groups in the Netherlands**

- ?? School voor Integrale Yoga in Middelbeers

It is a group of 24 people concentrated around Nell Wagemakers who are already a number of years very active in studying the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.

They visited The OPEN DAGEN in Netherlands, the Savitri weekend of AVI the Netherlands. They organized and hosted the visit of Ananda Reddy to the Netherlands

- ?? **Centrum Venwoude**

A former Bhagwan community with a great New Age Center in the middle of the Netherlands. Searching for a new spiritual content. They have visited Auroville with a large group (35 people) and have established already some contacts with members of the Auroville community. The board invited the members for a meeting, which was very rewarding. This establishes new contacts. They organized a lecture in Venwoude, 4 June 2001, given by

Ananda Reddy for members of their community and members of AVI the Netherlands. Over 30 people visited this lecture.

### **Contacts with Belgium**

After a silent period of no activities in Belgium, Annita Bijmens has now a place available for activities in Antwerp. She wants to start on a small scale to awake the interest in AVI Belgium. A major activity was the organization of a lecture of Ananda Reddy in Antwerp in the beginning of June 2001.

### Fundraising for the Tamil population in and around Auroville

### **Djoewie Leegwater is very successful in raising funds and support for the projects:**

- ?? Village-Action Bommayapalam school project  
Kireet in Auroville is building a school on the soil of Auroville to enable children aged between 4 to 12 from the village Bommayapalam to go to school supported by the Village-Action program.
- ?? Village-Action Elderly Project 'Sappadu'  
Ries Korse is supporting in this project the elderly people, the handicapped and the widows without children in the village Edyanchavady in Tamil Nadu. Djoewie has the gift to enable people to support these project with small and big sums of money.
- ?? Isai Ambalam school  
Jannet Klingenberg, herself being a teacher, was successful in raising money and support for the Isai Amalam school project. Lot of materials for education has found their way to the school. During the last 2 years 10 people supported a child with fl 250 (\$100) a year. During the last few years Jannet has established contact with Subash, the co-ordinator of the school. On a regular basis, exchange of knowledge in the area of education gives extra value to this project.

### Overview of contributions for supporting projects in Auroville and the Land Fund action

| Projects                                   | Dutch Fl     | Euro     | US Dollar   |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| Matrimandir                                | fl 11.485,00 | 5.211,66 | \$ 4.594,00 |
| Land purchase                              | fl 20.129,00 | 9.134,14 | \$ 8.051,60 |
| Village-Action Elderly Project 'Sappadu'   | fl 18.501,00 | 8.395,38 | \$ 7.400,40 |
| Village-Action Bommayapalam school project | fl 7.325,00  | 3.323,94 | \$ 2.930,00 |
| Isai Ambalamschool                         | fl 2.650,00  | 1.202,52 | \$ 1.060,00 |

|                                  |                  |                  |           |                  |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Savitri Bhavan                   | fl               | 317,65           | \$        | 280,00           |
|                                  | 700,00           |                  |           |                  |
| Health Centre                    | fl               | 703,36           | \$        | 620,00           |
|                                  | 1.550,00         |                  |           |                  |
| Kailash – youth resident complex | fl               | 512,77           | \$        | 452,00           |
|                                  | 1.130,00         |                  |           |                  |
| Transition School                | fl               | 90,76            | \$        | 80,00            |
|                                  | 200,00           |                  |           |                  |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>fl</b>        | <b>28.892,17</b> | <b>\$</b> | <b>25.468,00</b> |
|                                  | <b>63.670,00</b> |                  |           |                  |

This annual report has been concluded with latest remarks on 14 June 2001

### AVI SWEDEN

#### **Report 2000 / 2001**

The Swedish center is mainly focused on keeping information available to people interested in knowing about Auroville and giving advice to people wanting to visit Auroville.

There are about 20 people in touch with the center as members or friends donating regularly to Village Action Work and in the last year also to land purchase. As the work is done by two persons only (Staffan and Eveline) we have tried to interest a few more people to be part of the work, but so far without success.

We try every year to have a slideshow and talk in a public place where people are interested in transformation and spirituality. The last years it has been at the Ethnographical museum in Stockholm (in connection with an exhibition on towns in a spiritual context where Auroville has been presented). Last year's talk rendered a few more members.

That is about our level of activity, which has been the same for the last couple of years. Which also means our economy is practically zero apart from a few membership fees. We will therefore contribute to the AVI organization as a "budding" center this year rather than as a growing center as in previous years. Still we are fortunate to have the personal means to gather with the "Aurovilian famil" most years.

#### **Auroville International UK Report for 2001**

## Introduction to AVI UK

### **Membership**

AVI UK invites anyone interested in its work, and in the work of Auroville, to become a member of the organisation. There is a sliding scale of subscriptions, such that members can contribute according to their own wishes. For this contribution, members receive a bi-annual newsletter and an invitation to meetings. AVI UK also offers a special rate for the "Auroville Today" magazine along with its own membership.

### **Providing Information about Auroville**

AVI UK provides information about Auroville and gives help and advice for those wishing to visit or to live there permanently. We provide assistance regarding guest facilities, working in the community, visas, travelling arrangements, joining the community and about the work of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. We carry a range of information leaflets, brochures, and videos and can obtain detailed information on most projects and activities in Auroville. Members of AVI UK visit Auroville regularly and we try to have the latest information available.

AVI UK publishes a newsletter for its members twice a year, giving up to date information about various activities and projects in Auroville, particularly those which we are presently supporting. We also give information about activities in the UK, such as meetings and lectures.

Members of AVI UK are often invited to give lectures by universities and organizations having similar interests. In recent months, AVI UK has provided photographic material for an exhibition on future cities, called "Future Perfect" which was held in Cardiff and Manchester. Martin was invited to give a lecture at each location as part of an education programme associated with the exhibition.

### **Providing Assistance to Auroville and Aurovilians**

AVI UK helps to provide a link between members of the community of Auroville and the UK. We are in close contact with Auroville by means of e mail. We provide assistance with obtaining information and materials from the UK, liaising with UK organisations, on behalf of Auroville, and providing expertise where this is not available from within the community.

### **Meetings**

AVI UK holds two general meetings held each year, and committee meetings approximately quarterly. General meetings are announced in the newsletter and we invite anyone interested in Auroville to attend. Often at these events we have the chance to see the latest video from Auroville, or slides taken by one of our members during a recent visit.

### **Development Projects**

AVI UK is an NGO which supports development projects in the Auroville and the bioregion. Projects are implemented, in partnership with Auroville, and in cooperation with the residents of the many villages of the bioregion who are also beneficiaries and stakeholders. Projects are supported in areas including Education, Environment, and Community Development.

### **Fund Raising**

The organisation applies for funds from funding agencies such as the EC, National Lotteries and private trusts, for work being carried out in the Auroville bioregion. Donations are also received from individuals and organisations which are used to

support a number of projects in Auroville. Being a registered charity gives us the benefit of being able to recover tax from donations made by UK taxpayers. Individuals may make donations designated for specific projects. AVI UK supports one project (New Creation School) on a regular basis, ensuring continuity of funding.

### **Auroville International UK Committee Members:**

Caroline Davies - Chairperson and Trustee.

Forrest Corkery - Treasurer

Martin Littlewood – Secretary and Projects Coordinator.

Dick Batstone - Vice Chairman and Trustee

Shirishbhai Patel - Trustee

Sonia Dyne - Trustee

Pat Kaye - Trustee

David Widdicombe - Trustee

Michael Tait - Trustee (Auroville)

### **Auroville International UK News**

#### **Development Projects**

Since June 1997, AVI UK has been working steadily to increase its involvement in supporting development projects in Auroville, and to seek funds from organisations such as the European Community and the UK National Lotteries. Martin Littlewood has been working part time for the organisation writing projects in association with Auroville. We have also been assisted by our retained consultant Greta Jensen, who has helped us prepare project applications to the EC and National Lotteries. Projects are being developed in areas of Education, Environment, Tropical Forests, Communication and Community Development.

#### **Gateway Project**

A substantial private donation of company shares was made to Auroville, by Ulli, an Aurovilian, via AVI UK, which have been sold, and the proceeds held by us for the benefit of projects in Auroville. The donor requested that the proceeds from their sale are to be used for Education, Community Development and Communication projects in Auroville. Projects are being proposed by a working group in Auroville called AGateway@, and when approved by AVI UK, are developed in cooperation with our organisation. Although projects are managed in Auroville, AVI UK monitor the projects and release funds as required. More than 20 projects have so far been funded, or part funded by Gateway.

#### **Membership**

Work has continued throughout the year, to encourage more members to join. Lists of visitors to Auroville, who have stayed awhile, have been sent to us, and we try to encourage them to join our organisation, by sending out our newsletter. We encourage our members to subscribe to “Auroville Today”, by offering a reduced rate membership along with the subscription.

## **Pestalozzi Children's Village**

Auroville and AVI UK have continued to develop their relationship with Pestalozzi Children's Village in Seddlescombe, near Hastings. Increasing numbers of students from Auroville are now at Pestalozzi, studying for their International Baccalaureate. AVI UK has participated at the Pestalozzi Village Festival of Culture for three years running, with a stand presenting Auroville and its work.

## **Capacity Building Seminars**

In November 1999, AVI UK sponsored capacity building seminars in Auroville by Greta Jensen, the charity's retained consultant, for the benefit of project holders and those seeking funds from organizations such as the European Commission of the National Lotteries. The seminars were held over several days and was intended to build capacity of project holders in a number of areas:

Measurement, and effective presentation of past project inputs - the celebration and dissemination of past successes (establishing a track record).

The design, development and presentation of project proposals to major European and UK funding agencies such as EC, DFID and the National Lotteries.

Embedding sustainability into each project proposal - including environmental sustainability, social and economic sustainability.

The seminars were a great success, with all the participants enjoying the experience and greatly benefiting from Greta's knowledge and experience.

More recently, in January 2001, Greta returned to Auroville to set up the "Youth Education and Training Project" being sponsored by the EC (See below), giving further training for the project holders.

## **Projects Supported by AVI UK**

### **Development Projects**

*Two development projects were drawn up in conjunction with Auroville units. Both projects benefit the inhabitants of the many Tamil villages of the Auroville Bioregion. These projects will be administered by AVI UK, although largely managed and implemented by a number of Auroville units such as AVAG (Auroville Village Action Group), Pitchandikulam Bio-Resource Centre, Shakti, SAIER (Sri Aurobindo International Institute for Educational Research), and the Bioregional Coordination Group.*

### **Auroville Youth Education and Training Project**

This project is a joint venture between three schools in Auroville under the umbrella of AVAG and SAIER:

*Ilaignarkal School* provides vocational training for 10 -14 year olds and evening school classes for young workers from the villages is run on an interactive basis with its students; thus the project is a co-operative venture of the Tamil village communities it serves. The project provides new school buildings, desperately needed for the school's work

Isai Ambalam School and Life Education Centre provide school programmes for children who have dropped out of Government schools, either due to economic hardship in their families, or incompatibility with mainstream educational methods. One section focuses on preparing dropout children, from age 9 - 14, for either work or open examinations. Another section is especially for girls, providing training for 30 girls between the ages of 14 - 25, in tailoring, needlework and typing, with an emphasis on counselling and gender awareness. There is also a crèche and kindergarten for children of working mothers. The project will expand the work of the School, and develop new and innovative education methods for use in Government schools in the region.

New Creation School is run principally for the children of the adjacent local Tamil village of Kuilapalayam, by three long-term international residents of Auroville, who have taken the initiative for this project in consultation with the local villagers. The project will provide vocational training facilities.

The project, worth approximately, 180,000 has been accepted by the EC for co-funding (50%), and started in February this year. In 2000, land has been purchased at New Creation for the Vocational Training Centres, and work has started on the new school buildings at Ilaignarkal School. This early start was enabled by some donations already received from other sources, including money from the Gateway fund.

We made an application to the National Lotteries Charities Board (NLCB) in January this year for the co-funding of this project, but unfortunately we were unsuccessful, despite a large amount of work being put into the application. We understand that the competition for grants from the NLCB is increasing year by year, but the funds available for international projects are decreasing.

The Restoration of the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF) - Coromandel Coast, South India

This is an integrated project to document and restore portions of the tropical dry evergreen forest (TDEF) of the Coromandel Coast (an area which includes the Auroville bioregion) and develop management structures to maintain them using a Shared Forest Management (SFM) approach. The project aims to reverse the degradation of the Tropical Dry Evergreen Forest (TDEF) of this region.

Specific objectives are:

- Raise awareness in the local bioregion of the need to regenerate the Kaluveli tropical forest and the benefits to the local people and the environment.
- Involve the communities of the Kaluveli Bioregion in developing and adopting a workable Shared Forest Management method and to establish the human resource base.
- Help ensure the preservation of bio-diversity by:
  - ✍ Creating sanctuary areas in Auroville and at specific sites in the bioregion, and
  - ✍ Upgrading the existing Auroville herbarium as a resource for the forest regeneration activities.
  - ✍ Documenting the region's biotic systems and cultural heritage and sharing this information.
- Increasing the availability and range of medicinal plants to help revitalise local health traditions so that many primary health care needs can be addressed through the use of local medicinal plants.

Part of this project has already been presented by CHEC (Commonwealth Human Ecology Council) to DFID (British Government overseas funding) for funding and this part of the project is in progress. The remainder was submitted by AVI UK to the EC under the Tropical Forest budget line. The total project has a value of approximately 290,000.

The project was accepted by the European Commission for funding in 1998 as one of six projects making up the Shared Forest Management Program@ (SFM) being funded by the European Commission in India. However, due to unforeseen problems with the EC in instigating the SFM program, the project has been delayed for almost two years.

We have recently heard, however, that at last the project has been given the go-ahead, as a stand-alone project not part of the SFM program, and it is due to start early in 2001. This is good news indeed, as these delays have caused many difficulties in Auroville and with the villages involved in the project, with much credibility being lost.

## **AVIUSA – Report 2000 / 2001**

### **Newsflash from the AVI USA Headquarters**

*Nilauro, AVI USA's new Executive Director reports on AVI USA's recent changes and accomplishments. –ed*

Pulse check... Yes, our pulse is pounding – we've been busy and have made some changes at AVI USA that we want to tell you about! First of all, in the fiscal year 1999-2000 AVI USA received nearly three quarters of a million dollars for Auroville. Part of this money was received as a direct result of a Land Fundraising Tour that AVI USA's board organized for Aurovilians Guy and Shivaya in the summer of 1999. Other funds were also raised at an auction in Los Angeles and through a telephone fundraiser performed by Aurotaranti, then AVI USA's executive director. Large donations were received in the form of stock for the Auroville Land Fund, and for the initial phases of construction of the USA Pavilion in Auroville's International Zone. More recently, AVI USA received a large donation for the Creativity Housing Project, and was also given a plot of land in Baca, Crestone, Colorado.

In order to give momentum to the realization of the USA Pavilion, we engaged Jill Navarre to spearhead the project in Auroville, and created a group of seven Americans to find an architect, sanction the construction and manage the USA Pavilion funds. One of the USA Pavilion's functions will be to foster cultural and academic exchanges between Auroville and the USA. In the meantime, Bill Leon, Auroville International USA's President, organized a student exchange program between the University of Washington and Auroville.

Apart from this outreach work, AVI USA has also made some internal changes. On the financial front, our various bank accounts were all consolidated into one Bank of America account, a stock account was opened with Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, and AVI USA's accounts were handed over to Olsen & Sims, a Santa Cruz CPA firm. We also lowered the percentage taken from donations channeled to Auroville to cover our operating expenses from 10% to 8.33% (which is 1/12<sup>th</sup>, inspired by the 12 aspects of The Mother.) Changes also occurred in AVI USA's organization when Aurotaranti had to withdraw from her work at AVI USA in order to pursue her education. In her absence, the AVI USA board felt that its volunteer efforts would not be enough to sustain the current open channel between the USA and Auroville. The board thus decided it would engage a full time Executive Director to keep the contact and energy flow between Auroville and the USA alive. Nilauro Markus was unanimously nominated, and he accepted to take on this important work as of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001. Nilauro, who was born and raised in Auroville, brings a wide experience, training and enthusiasm to the work.

We would like to invite all of you to work together with Nilauro to help him keep the link between Auroville and the United States open and alive. We are looking forward to an exciting, productive and collaborative year.

## **REPORT 2001 ARGENTINA**

HOLA! First of all, I would like to send my deep love for you Aurovilians all over the world. I am with you as always. Secondly I would like to share with you a feeling of REAL start for an Auroville, which the Mother has envisioned. I do not think that it is an accident that this happens at the moment that Auroville has reached 33 years. Mother used to say that no real yoga could start before 33. Could it be the same for our dearest City of Dawn? Another very important thing is that this years' AVI meeting is taking place in Russia. This is a symbol of one of the challenge which Sri Aurobindo has pointed out as indispensable, for Humanity is the union of East and West. Well done!

I feel strongly that the very challenge now is to get the South into the World Consciousness as the next step for Human Unity. For this I would like to use some words from Shanti from Ecuador, one of the South American countries in this huge Continent AMERICA, titled "Making Auroville truly international:...

Everyone makes a big sacrifice to come to Auroville. Sometimes it is important, however, to realize that the capacity to make such sacrifices is actually a tremendous privilege based on economic status and nationality, and not only a function of one's spiritual growth. This kind of awareness can make one very humble and also it can be very powerful on a collective level. Ultimately to understand the material conditions which facilitate one's choice to participate in the Auroville experiment, and limit other possibilities to do so can be an important step towards recognizing - and

eventually overcoming - some of the concrete obstacles to achieving human unity.”

Somehow Buenos Aires, Argentina's Capital, where I was born and where I live now as a contact person for Auroville, is a bit more tricky, because at a quick glance the city seems to be a first world capital, one of the more wealthy places in the world with “banana country” wages. At this very moment, corruption, drugs and arms etc. are coming up. It looks scary and powerful enough to shake the political, economical and social basis. In the middle of all that there are quite a few people who are strong within and who have developed a remarkable consciousness so that for the first time in these 14 years I feel also strong in spite of working on my own. After the AVI meeting in St. Petersburg dear Bhaga will come to Argentina to do some work here. It is for the first time that an Aurovilian is coming here to do spiritual work in this country. So I am very grateful. I have to say that these last two years were so hard that I almost quit the liaison-work for Auroville, but the Auroville News, Auroville Today and Invocation, which I receive regularly, were keeping me on track. Please keep in touch, and know that any kind of help is warmly received.

#### Last Year's Activities

Talks and videos on different aspects of Auroville were shown. Quite a lot of participants have been visiting Auroville. Unfortunately it was not possible to go to Auroville as a group together so that I could have come to Auroville as well. But they all came back very happy from Auroville. Articles in newspapers and magazines were published, interviews in TV. The most powerful thing was the translation of “The Eternity Game”, a book by Medhanadna based on Sri Aurobindo's yoga. It was incredible how the energy was up. Workshops in Argentina and Uruguay took place. A lot of people want to read Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It's almost normal here. Just are only a few bad translations. But I knew that this book would inspire the activity in this part of the world. Since an article in a very important New Age Magazine was published, a very good publisher asked me for some texts by Sri Aurobindo for a new collection “The Wisdom of ...” I did some translations and compilations and they accepted. It is being published soon. Well, the energy is flowing, now it seems to be the right place and the right moment. Nowadays here it looks like there is a big battle of forces going on. Has - as Sri Aurobindo said – “The hour of God” arrived?

Thanks a lot for the money you have sent me sometime ago for the computer. But I have to say that sometimes I do not rush because of the price of the telephone charges here. It is impossible for me as I am unemployed for the last five years. But I am not going to stop doing what I am doing just because it is difficult, because this work as an AVI liaison keeps me alive. So far away from Her powerful Presence in the Matrimandir, from the samadhi and all over the red soil of Auroville, that sometimes we take for granted when we are there.

Now I start dreaming and I am proposing to you to come to Argentina for the next AVI meeting in 2002 to THE IGUAZU FALLS, which is just on the border to Brazil and Argentina and very close to Paraguay, Bolivia and Uruguay. This could allow us to help people everywhere on the continent to come and help to spread the energy of the Southeastern part of the world onto the Planet. It is a very powerful place and we can manage to get good prices for you. On y va ? On sémbarque ?

CIAO  
IN HER LOVE AND CERTITUDE  
Anandi

### **AV-Liaison Austria**

#### **Report 2000-2001**

There is not much to be said

I am a single liaison person and my “work” consists of answering e-mails or phone-calls of very few persons who contact me before traveling to Auroville. At the moment I have neither time nor money nor energy nor helpers to organize some Auroville-event somewhere in Austria.

I feel very connected with Auroville and hope that the situation will change.  
Namaste,

Sylvia from Austria

### **Report from Carlos**

#### **Liaison-Brazil 2000-2001**

The liaison has been more of the kind of a web presence giving feedback in Portuguese to occasional requests for information. For those who wish, I cut and paste parts of the Auroville-News and send them as attachment. More related to my work as a university teacher has been a presence in conferences and seminars where I can present papers which relate to Auroville. As I see it, one should spread the news: Auroville exists and it is worth knowing about it and helping it in the measure of our resources.

I am invited for a conference in New York from May 30th to June 4th. There I will also present a paper on Auroville. If the people who publish the conference papers will permit, I will send you a copy.

Carlos Gohn, Belo Horizonte, Brazil

### **AVI liaison ITALY**

#### **ANNUAL REPORT 2000/2001**

Dear friends of the Auroville International Meeting in St. Petersburg, I'm Marco, the promoter of AVI L.Italy, and now the organizer of Auroville Network Italy.

First of all I want to say that actually we are together in this very moment, 'cause I feel a strictly connection with all of you, through our common involvement in the Auroville development endeavour and through the Love we feel for the Mother. It was impossible for me to attend this important meeting due to the hard work we are doing here in these weeks in order to officialize the Italian centre. As you may know, in this season several Aurovilians are travelling in the West, and some Italian Aurovilians are here in Italy at this time, like Sauro for instance or Anna-Maria, so I have to meet them and together prepare all the bureaucratic papers needed to make the centre official. As you know well, this procedure is difficult and it needs lot of time and attention, so I decided to stay here to do this work. This year 2001 was announced to be a crucial one for AVI Italy, and it really manifested itself as a crossing point between the past and the future. Decisive steps were taken, confiding in Mother's guidance and in the AVI board's concrete help, as last February I attended the AVI meetings during my last stay in Auroville. As consequences of those formal and informal meetings and talks, I decided to turn the AVI-liaison into a real AVI-centre, but with a very particular communication network, means 7 or 8 AVI-antennas spread all over Italy, from North to South.

The public presentation of the project occurred during our Italian annual Integral Yoga meeting 8th edition, promoted by ADITI, the Sri Aurobindo and the Mother Italian Association in collaboration with AVI Network Italy, that took place in

Perugia from 21st to 25th April in a very nice place upon a hill in the countryside of Perugia, a very ancient city in Umbria, close to the sacred place of Assisi. About 50 persons attended the long meeting that had as a guiding theme "Harmony and collective yoga", with special regards to Auroville as a leading experiment in this direction. The agenda included meditation classes, hatha yoga classes, collective readings from the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother about harmony, sex and yoga, political and social aspects of their yoga and of course a full afternoon was dedicated to Auroville.

Considering the fact that almost all of the participants have already visited Auroville at least once (many have been there several time), the presentation was not a basic introduction, but a very deep and involving analysis of some particular aspects of the city: in particular we talked about the housing fund program, the land purchasing, the new procedures for the newcomer period, the Aurose experiment, and of course the big step AVI Italy is going to take in the direction of the making liaison into an official AVI-centre and the building of the network of antennas all over the country.

Well, I tell you the whole thing was really great, the day was the 24th darshan, a strong energy all around in the spring sunshine of middle Italy, and what a surprise and what a gratitude when at the end of the Auroville session not only I found the concrete help of those antennas, but I collected donations for more than 20 million lira (10.000\$)!!! especially for the housing fund. In the following days other 3 millions lira (1.500 \$) for the land came from other friends. I consider this as a clear sign that we are on the right path and that we are doing the right thing in the right way.

But I would like to explain better what are the antennas, as some of you asked me when I posted on the AVI Forum the report of the Perugia meeting.

With the term "antenna" I mean a place, a yoga center, a cultural association, that gives its willingness, its availability, to be a point of reference for those who are interested in Auroville and want to know more about the city and its projects, for those who want to meet each other and talk about that.

It is also a place in which you can buy info materials (video, brochure, books, incense, CD Roms, music or whatever you want from Auroville products) and have updated information.

Moreover, it's a place where we can organize presentations, meetings, exhibitions, and promote conferences on the themes connected to some aspects of the city (integral yoga collective practice, ecological solutions, sustainable development, experiments in economy and so on).

It is also a place where you can talk directly to persons that are strictly connected with the city, I mean to have a face to face dialogue that seems to be a very important feature here in Italy, much more effective than email or website solutions (but we are working at websites as well and we already started a newsgroup for internal communications).

Finally, it's a place where you can make donations for Auroville projects directly in the hands of the promoter of the center, looking him/her in the eyes, in an atmosphere and with a feeling of trust and confidence.

The antennas have their own autonomy in organizing activities, but in full coordination and agreement with me and the other antennas, and in accordance with the supervision of the international umbrella of the board of AVI, to whom the entire project of the network in its guidelines was proposed 2 years ago. It's important to say that the promoters of the antennas DO IT AS VOLUNTEERS as a special kind of karma yoga and because they deeply believe in the Auroville project. On the contrary, they of course keep on promoting their own activities as yoga centers. About this last point, I would say that the choice of the antennas was not only a question of my personal preference, but a meditated process that saw the active participation of a number of friends, most of them Aurovilians, like Anna-Maria, Marika, Luigi, Sauro, and Maggi of the Ashram and of course other Italian friends.

The fact you have to consider, is that those centres already run this kind of work for Auroville for a long time and that all the persons in charge have been to Auroville at least once recently (but most of them have been there many times and for long periods). But they did it in a totally un-coordinated way and with a bounded, limited access to news, information, materials and initiatives. Now they are becoming the crossing points of a real network, non hierarchic and horizontal in its shape and development, with an increasing facility in sharing information and with much more effectiveness in answering the requests of the inhabitants of their local venue.

At the moment, the experiment includes 8 Antennas (look at the number my friends):

-Milan ; -Turin ; -Siena ; -Naples ; -Rome ; Bari ; -Cosenza ; -Marsala

The briefing point is in Bergamo, where I live and where Patrizia is trying to find time to help me.

Another coordination point will be in Bologna, where Sauro indicated in common friends the solution for legal and administrative support.

We still have to consider the legal position of the antennas, but Sauro is in Italy at this time, so we look forward to solve together this crucial point.

All the antennas are already members of a Newsgroup, they are subscribers of AV Today, and they started to sell materials from Auroville. We are translating a lot of brochures and are planning to publish a book with Mother's sentences on Auroville, as the concrete and practical sign of becoming an AVI centre.

Please, consider we are in-to the process, trying to face whatever we encounter on the path day by day.

The next event we are organizing, is a 3 days meeting close to Modena, in the centre of Italy, for the 15<sup>th</sup> August darshan day, and, please remember Tine!, for that date we need some panels of the Auroville exhibition.

It's understood that every kind of suggestion and encouragement is welcome.

I hope you find interesting the notes I posted to you for this annual report, and wishing all the best to all or you participants. I remind you that I'll be in Russia, in

the city of Samarna, next 9<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> September, and that I'll be pleased to meet some Russian friends on that occasion.

My email is [manarada@spm.it](mailto:manarada@spm.it)

That's all, be the Grace of the Mother always with you!

Cheers.

Marco.

### **AVI liaison Norway**

#### Report 2000-2001

Some computer problems here and the latest emails got lost.

Why do I love Auroville? A difficult question to answer. I feel a strong affinity for Auroville's ideals and goals. One could say that I feel connected to Auroville through "destiny", the contact with a few individuals like yourself, our shared ideals and

dreams. A sense of inbuilt duty to serve those ideals and dreams to my best ability as nothing else makes much sense in a world like ours.

I don't think this is useful as a report, but it's all that comes to my mind right now so this is more a personal note. I am off to Ikaria, Greece, in a couple of days, will be back on the 1st of July.

Wishing you a terrific experience in Russia.

Hans

### **AVI-liaison Switzerland**

There was not much activity around this year in Switzerland.

But I sent an e-mail to the two Swiss person Tine told me who proposed to become a second AVI-liaison in Switzerland. I am still waiting for an answer, but of course, this could help having a more active Swiss liaison and - why not one day a Swiss AVI-center.

I really hope that your meeting in St. Petersburg will be a great success and a great time for sharing the beauty of life.

I received a few phone calls/e-mails these last months from people who are interested to travel to Auroville or to work there during the summer (students from a Swiss university).

In Her Light

Jerôme

**AVI-liaisons Russia, Australia, Austria:**

The report from Dimitry, [AVI liaison Russia](#), is incorporated in the General Assembly report. Jan, [AVI-liaison Australia](#) emailed that she had computer problems and could not get the annual report ready on time. Dorith Teichman from [AVI-liaison Israel](#) did not send her comments.