

## Continental Members' Meeting - Hydra, Greece

29th September-2nd October 1995

by David Lorimer

Members ROB and AUDREY BROWNING came over to Bulgaria for the Continental Meeting in the autumn of 1994 and nobly volunteered to host this year's autumn meeting at their centre on the Greek island of Hydra, which is about an hour and a half by hydrofoil from Athens. About twenty-five Members converged on the island for the three-day meeting, whose ostensible title was 'The Winds of Change: Science, Medicine, Humanity'. I say ostensible as it was sometimes hard to detect the connection between the stimulating contributions and this theme!

I also use the term 'converge' advisedly. On arriving at Athens airport, the British contingent were informed that there was a taxi strike - plenty of taxis in evidence, but no drivers. Having left a good margin between the arrival of our flight and the boat to Hydra, we found this whittled away - to cut a long story short, the bus delivered us in the wrong part of the port and my attempts to find the right place were hampered by contradictory instructions given by passers-by. So we missed the boat and found ourselves en route for Poros - an intermediate stop - where we found a basic hotel for the night at a cost of just over [sterling]5. In the event we had a good dinner on the port and arrived intact the following morning to be greeted by Rob on the quayside.

Hydra is a large island with houses in the town nestling on the slopes above the port. Since no cars are allowed, transport is by mule, a system reminiscent of the Bulgarian mountains. EILEEN-THERESE LWIN, our most senior Member, made her way up the 600 steps to the centre on the back of one of these beasts and we managed to start the meeting only half an hour late. Among attenders were the organisers of the Bulgarian meeting from last year, ROUMEN and LILIA STOILOV, accompanied by PETER NAYDENOV and TZVETCO RANGUELOV. They had made the gruelling journey from Sofia by bus.

In view of our experiences on the way, it was not inappropriate that Prof. PAUL DIMOTAKIS, who has a house on the island, should begin his talk with a reference to the relationship between Greeks and Chaos! He reminded us that Chaos is the creative source of Kosmos and drew some interesting comparisons between Greek landscape and thought. He saw the mountains as examples of order in space to be and pointed out both fractal and Euclidian geometries in the island coastlines and classical architecture respectively. The clarity of the light finds its parallel in lucidity of thought and logic. As the meeting unfolded landscape acquired wider connections with culture and history - my own presentation on final causation took Aristotle as its starting point.

It emerged during the course of the says we spent together that the process of the meeting is as important as its structure and content. Members are motivated by a search for understanding and unity which goes beyond abstractions into personal experience and exploration. The Greek word *diakoinonia* expresses what happens through communication in this atmosphere of sensitive and subtle exchange. Two events in particular facilitated this process: the dialogue led by OLE and SUZETTE VAN HAUEN DRUCKER and the exploration which followed an exposition on myth by EMILIOS BOURATINOS.

In the Bohmian dialogue, the process and unearthing of presuppositions is more important than any goal. Then pondering on the meaning of a myth makes one travel inwards. The myth in question was that of Osiris from the Egyptian tradition. The essence of a myth is by definition elusive: it is a means of approaching inner truths and opening our minds to the mystery of the universe and our own minds. The word for knowledge - *alethea* - is the negation of forgetting, a lifting of the veil, a recollection on the Platonic sense. It was interesting to learn that the interpretation of myth was used as a test of initiation, ie insight beyond the fragmenting quality of the rational mind or *dianoia* - literally to know as two - compared with the integral insight of *noesis* or *gnosis*. In this sense, a myth can help us see fragments, forms and limits in the light of the whole. The exploration of the Osiris myth proved to be a profound experience of communication and inner contemplation.

The structure of the programme left us plenty of time for informal contacts and wandering round the island. The centre overlooks the sea towards the mainland beyond, and has a delightful terrace at the side, where we had lunch on two out of the three days. On the other day we walked down to the beach about twenty minutes away and swam before sitting down for a meal looking west towards the next island. In the evenings we went out to restaurants and enjoyed the local food and wine. Even these excursions involved the occasional power cut and long diversions for those who lost their sense of direction in the narrow alleys! All of this helped make the meeting one of the most congenial we have run. The Brownings kindly entertained us in their house on the Saturday evening for drinks and did an amazing job in coping with the various problems that invariably arise on such occasions - like the cook who had been laid on saying at the last minute that she could not make it!

Any meeting of people from different backgrounds, cultures and disciplines is bound to involve the translation of terms from one discourse to another. Awareness of epistemological assumptions is never far away as we try to reach an inclusive understanding of the various topics under consideration. How is knowing related to proving, experience to experiment? To what extent are our maps overlapping and consistent? In the final analysis, the spirit of enquiry is as important as its object. The qualities arising from our meeting on Hydra included subtlety, self-awareness, honesty, integrity, humility and passion; and the landscape of islands towering out of the sea reminded us that there are always perspectives beyond our immediate horizons.

Hydra meeting talks (in alphabetical order of speakers). Some available as Members' Articles (qv)

PANOS AXIOMAKAROS (G) - The triune brain evolution.

EMILIOS BOURATINOS (G) - 1) A new conceptual framework: going beyond the inadequacies of present scientific thinking. 2) Myth interpretation.

NAOMI CALLIGARO (UK) - 1) The winds of change - healthcare in Russia. 2) Journallin with illness: the consciousness connection.

DIANA CLIFT (UK) - A sense of community.

Prof. PAUL DIMOTAKIS (G) - The modern theory of chaos and the Greek miracle.

DAVID LORIMER (UK) - Whatever happened to final causation?

Dr. PETER NAYDENOV (BG) - Homoeopathy and astrology.

Dr. FOTINI PALLIKARI-VIRAS (G) - Awaiting breakthroughs in science.

Prof. RICHARD PREISMEYER (US) - Chaos theory and management.

Dr. TZVETCO RANGUELOV (BG) - Horary astrology.

Dr. ROUMEN & LILIA STOILOV (BG) - The current state of the earth and humanity.

Dr. OLE & SUZETTE VAN HAUEN DRUCKER (DK) - The importance of the new paradigm within the sciences for the future of medicine.

GEORGE VITHOULKAS (G) - A new model of health and disease (in absentia).