

## NA GERMANY

Hello dear members of the fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous, my name is Heinz, I'm an addict from Germany.

It's one of those nights when I'm up late drinking lots of coffee and hanging around with people. But today it's O.K. to be up till 2 or 3am in the morning, because today I'm clean and I know what, and why I'm writing - that makes a difference. Right now I'm in Paris, where, together with members from England, France and Germany, we are having a meeting to organize for the 1988 European Service Conference.

The last conference, in 1987, was held at Frankfurt in Germany and was a big step forward, a few more members got involved in service. The slogan of the conference was "Recovery depends on Unity", and there was unity...but that unity only appeared to last for those few days and then everyone returned to their respective countries. Several of the European countries came, but many didn't; Italy, Ireland, Greece, Portugal, Belgium, Sweden, Norway and a few more were sadly missed. Ideally, unity in Europe requires the participation of every country... Together We Can!

A lot of good things were discussed. We started a European Newsline - Our newsline. So far we have only had one issue, the reason being that only one article had been received for the next. It can only survive if we submit input to it. Everything is welcome: flyers for your conference, convention or learning day; articles about Service in your country, or about your personal recovery...even your meeting list can be printed. Please don't be shy or idle - We need your input.

Another thing that came up in '87 was members wanting to celebrate recovery at a European Convention, however, we didn't even manage to start to organize one. For me, in these situations, I find the best thing to do is not to bitch about it, but get on with it. If anyone has any ideas or wants to help, and I need help, please contact me.

I've been to quite a few conventions - they have been a big step forward in my recovery. I've found that I cannot have the power of a convention at a regular meeting. The American 'World' Convention in New Orleans was a turning point in my recovery, I felt like I was born anew; When I got back to Germany people thought I was crazy. I'm surprised that we are still calling this American Convention a World Convention since it has only been outside the U.S. once and is held in only one language....that's a shame. It appears that America is slowly starting to realise it is not the World, and English is not the only language of recovery, and God is not necessarily an American. A lot of our members didn't go to WCNA I7 because they couldn't understand, I believe this message of recovery is for everybody.

This year we in Germany are sending our RSR (Regional Service Representative) to the WSC (World Service Conference) to bring up this issue. Please do the same. If we are alone there is not a big chance to change it, but if we stand together we can change it. We need to ask where is the American Convention, where is the American Service Conference to discuss their specific problems - they shouldn't be discussed on a world level. This is just one example of why we need unity in Europe. We need to talk about these things...and more than once a year. We need to share with each other how we feel and what we need. I believe we need to make a file of contacts and addresses. Please send the addresses of your National Committee members, and others who are involved, either to my address or to Kevin in London. Probably the best thing to do is to send it to both addresses.

The last thing I want to share is that the taping of the 4th European Service

Friday 8.30pm - 38, Rue des Amandiers. Paris 20e. Metro: Pere Lachaise.  
- In French.

Saturday 7.00pm - 2 Bd D'Aurelle de Paladine, Paris 17e. (Pte des Ternes)  
Metro: Porte Maillot - In both French and English.

Saturday 8.30pm - Versailles, 76 Rue Champ la Garde, Centre Social Rauben.  
Train: Ligne St Lazard Versailles ( Station Montreuil)  
- In French.

Sunday 6.00pm - 2 Bd D'Aurelle de Paladine, Paris 17e. (Pte des Ternes)  
Metro: Porte Maillot - In French.

NICE.

Thursday 8.00pm - II Rue de la Buffa, 06000 Nice. - In French.

Saturday 8.15pm - 44 Ave Auguste Raynaud. 06000 Nice. -In French.

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## EUROPEAN UNDERGROUND

It was the end of January 1988. Here I was in the Paris Metro, buying a 'carnet' of tickets. The place smells of yesterday. Not unpleasant, but a strong whiff of nostalgia for the powerless beginnings of my life out in the big bad world alone. When I left school I went to Paris to learn how to smoke dope - between French and Beaux Arts lessons. Over the years I returned frequently to this city, sometimes to live for a while, sometimes just to pass through or score. It was always a field of great and wanton powerlessness. My visits characterised the progression of my addiction, as I moved through my drugs of choice, from dope to hallucinogenics, coke, smack and anything else that was going. Behaviour became more erratic and unmanageable. As I stood there buying my Metro tickets, a kaleidoscope of increasingly painful memories flickered through my mind's eye. From late sixties 'alterations' to trying to score smack in the bars down by the river and giving my sole-flapping boots to a tramp in the metro. Then on to desperate days sick and hitching to the suburbs for cut respite from pain, ripping off a kind, old grandmother who lent me the money supposedly to get home to England, when staying in her flat at the invitation of an absent grandson.

Here I was with that same smell in my nostrils, buying tickets six years later, to go to an NA meeting at a place called Pere Lachaise. Someone told me that Jim Morrison was buried in the cemetery nearby, true or false, it smacked of typical Parisian romanticism. My first time in Paris clean. To be here having not drugged or drunk for several years, with my memories, put so much of recent times in strong perspective. The miraculous and bizarre twists of life: I would never have believed this a possibility if you'd asked me five years ago.

Arriving near the end of the line, it once again all seemed a little familiar as I searched through a deserted block of residential flats for an assignation in a strange place - a huge complex of flats, not what I'd expected at all. I had no idea where to go. Like trying to score so many times before. Strange town, strange people - alone. Starting to feel a bit lost and unsure of whether I had the right place, I was beginning to get those old feelings of slight desperation. Backing out on to the street, thinking of my next move, suddenly someone called my name. There, leaping from his car was a familiar German form, bouncing down the pavement at me. Straight off the Autoroute, far from home, he made me feel as though the sun had come out. This thing we do is bizarre; the magic created by addicts reaching out across the continent to help each other is special like nothing else I've felt. Strangers with a common cause that know each other intimately.

We foreigners went along to the 8.30 meeting, to find it well-attended - about 20-30 members. They were already reading the preamble, in French. It sounded so weird and yet so familiar. The meeting opened immediately with discussion and the topic that soon developed was sharply honest and up-front. Talk of the difficulties dealing with the erratic extremes of emotions we have to cope with once we find ourselves clean. The swings of mood caused by unrealistic expectations and misplaced ideals of what life owes us, compared with moments of the dawning of hope for a new life and another chance. It was not long before the secretary realised that there were out-of-town (country) visitors and quickly took a group conscience on whether to change the usual format of the meeting which is French-speaking and make it bi-lingual. The continental groups are so much more hospitable than we, English-speaking fellowships when it comes to taking account of those who do not speak our language. For the rest of the meeting members translated sentence by sentence on a shared basis. The feeling of welcome that this creates must be said because its hard to share it at the time. You immediately feel on the inside when before, understanding or not, you feel a little on the edge. It was a great meeting and I was amazed at how big it was. I don't know what I'd expected, but I guess more of an NA outpost, which is far from what I found.

Over the next two days we had a series of 'committee' meetings at which members from France, Germany and Britain shared and discussed things to do with the upcoming European Service Conference to be held in Paris this July. The German members shared their great experience from Frankfurt last year and the Paris members had an opportunity to ask their questions about all kinds of details and issues that had been popping up since getting into the thing. The Paris fellowship had already found a suitable venue not only for the conference but also with hostel facilities at a really reasonable rate. One of the subjects that came up over the weekend was the finances of the conference. In the past the European Service conference has always been held in countries with relatively strong fellowships. The money side of things has never been talked about as we meet only once a year and its too late by then. We have had no established ways of communicating with each other in between. Now we find ourselves with the Conference being hosted by a small fellowship who, though they are willing, are going to find themselves using virtually all their funds on hand just to secure the venue. I am sure that it is not any of our's intention that a fellowship should use all its hard-gained money to put on our Euro-Conference, and thus seriously hamper their primary purpose of carrying the message in the meantime! No accounts have been published for previous conferences in Dublin and London, but a surplus of approximately I,000 Dm. was reported from Frankfurt last year. Whilst it is surely absolutely appropriate that the host fellowship should benefit from all the hard work of putting on the conference and there are also often costs involved in following up on the great interest created by the Conference, it is also appropriate surely that we set up some way for some of the surplus funds that may be created to be handed on to the next conference, wherever that may be. For example, if it should be in Barcelona next year, the problem would be even more obvious. Some kind of rolling fund needs to be set up, so that we can pass it on from one year to the next. To do this, however, we would need some kind of permanent standing committee of the European fellowship, elected by our Conference, to manage the details and to be available for communicating our needs throughout the year.

The Conference-funding issue was only one thing that brought up our growing need to have some way through the year to talk to each other and agree to do things together. There is so much that we can do to help each other

and agree to do things together. There is so much that we can do to help each other carry the message through Europe during the year. Not just doing our own thing in isolation and then getting together to share about it once a year. 'Together we can'. As our fellowships are growing, the potential of the things we can do together are really exciting. Most of the members over that weekend came up with urgent ideas of ways we need to work together. Communications are our biggest problem. Some kind of centrally compiled list of addresses and contacts seems vital. Files and records of our efforts with Public Information could help us all not just to avoid crossing our wires but to share our experience too. A European Convention was another idea that came up. There are so many ways to channel the energy that happens when we get together. Isn't it time that we started to do just that and throughout the year, to reach and give some hope to those of us still out there, still using, all over Europe, with no idea that there is a chance!

To do it we need to make a commitment. Our chance is at the Paris European Service Conference. The Paris host committee needs to hear from us all for ideas for the agenda of what we wish to discuss or share about. The time for complacency or isolation is over. It's time to act. Together we really can!

As I'm sure you can all see the excitement of us all getting together that Weekend was contagious. We all agreed it would be great to get together again before the Conference and knock some ideas around and offer any help any one can, to the Paris Fellowship in the run-up to the Conference. So we arranged to do it the last weekend of May. Anyone who can - I'm sure the French fellowship would love to see you then.

Thank you Paris for a special weekend. You've a great fellowship and I can't wait to come back. The Conference in July is going to be a blast and a huge success. The other fellowships have already made the commitment to help the money float; we are getting there. It makes me feel so proud to be a part of this thing. We know no boundaries.

Whatever happened to the cynic in me? Thank you.

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NA IRELAND.

NA in Ireland continues to flourish. The Hospitals & Institutions Committee continues to carry the message and Public Information is very active. They will be holding a public meeting in early March and anticipate a large attendance. The Irish office is looking into becoming a Limited Company (Corporation) much as the U.K. and Australian Fellowship Service Offices have done. They hope to be able to send their RSR (Regional Service Representative) to the WSC (World Service Conference) in April.

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