



Peace in Motion

Newsletter from Wali & Ariëne van der Zwan

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New! International Newsletter

Nine years ago we started our Newsletter Peace in Motion after a visit to the USA, where the Newsletters of Timothy Dobson, Oneness and others enthused us. We wrote our newsletter in Dutch and sent it out by mail, for who was on E-mail nine years ago?

Since we live in Belgium, our dance and Sufi life has changed drastically and our dance community, contacts and friends, mentees and mureeds are spread over Europe. Hence the first E-Newsletter in English as a way to keep the contact going beyond a visit once or twice a year and to give you an idea of what we are doing. Many people often have asked us how it is to dance in far away regions in Russia or the Crimea, so we enclose in this Newsletter a report on Balakova and the Crimea.

Please mail us if you want to be removed from this Newsletter E-mail list. We likewise appreciate it if you forward this to anyone who might be interested or let them send us their E-mail address.

Feel free to mail us for the PDF version of this Newsletter!

Heure, October 20th 2007
Wali & Ariëne

On with the Dance!

The Booklet '*On with the Dance!*' is doing well. Apparently there was a need for such a Dance instruction booklet, for it has been translated into Russian and German and we hope for a Spanish translation, to support the work in South America. A Bosnian version is also on its way.

The German and English versions are already reprinted. The Dutch network NDN, the UK Network, Oneness and different teachers in Germany and the US have bought copies wholesale to sell or use in their training programs

In the meantime Wali has worked on a similar book for dance musicians, especially guitar players. This project is supported by Oneness. The booklet is almost finished and *inshallah* will be accompanied by a DVD of the guitar classes Wali offered in New Zealand.

New CD

We have three copies left of our stock of our eleven year old CD Show me the Path, so it is time to start working on a new CD. We made arrangements with Honza, a Czech musician we met at the Czech Dance Camp and EU Retreat, to *inshallah* do a recording right after the 2008 EU Retreat in his recording studio. We hope to have the CD ready by the summer. We kept the month January free for preparation and some time after the EU Retreat for recording and finalization.

The CD will contain some of our original material like *Kadosh Shemayiem* and other Jewish dances and the *Muhammad Kemal Zikr*, and we will also honor the inspiration that came from other teachers we met on our travels.

Report Weekend Balakova, Wolga Area (October 19 -21)

Because the trains only go ever so often, this trip was longer than planned, from Tuesday 16th to Wednesday 24th of October, so we were a full week away for one weekend. Almost every time at the beginning of a project like this we ask ourselves: "Why are we doing this?" And almost every time we answer ourselves at the end of a project like this: "Because the faces and eyes of the new dancers are so rewarding after the weekend, because the effect of the genius of the dances is so touchable and real."

Train lore

So again we went. For the fourth time in six or seven years to the Wolga, for the first time to Balakova. We flew to Moscow where we saw the first snow of the year (rare for Moscow too) and then 22 hours on the train South to Balakova. As before, our mentee Anya from Moscow accompanied us.

In Russia people travel a lot by train and it seems a certain 'train lore' is part of their culture. Special teabags with the logo, special sugar with the logo and also special customs. Anything overnight is a 'short trip', so with 22 hours for 1,000 km we didn't even travel that far for Russian standards. Part of the lore is that men are supposed to close their eyes when women change clothes or undress for the night. "Wali close your eyes, please" was new to us, first coming from a woman we didn't know, but ended up in the same four person compartment with us. On the way back it came from friends we shared the sauna with less than a year ago, but that's the way it goes in Russia.

The train is noisy and overly hot, but fortunately the radio could be switched off. The view on the bright yellow birch trees was superb and we really enjoyed it, even though sleeping is more of a concept than a reality with benches measuring 190 by 55 cm and the overwhelming heat of the radiators. Anyway, it was great to spend so much time with Anya, on the way back joined by Zhenya.

Our surprise came in Moscow in the train to the airport. What a lovely and modern train! Unlike our Balakova train, this is a train that foreigners and visitors will use, Anya Hakima explained to us. We felt initiated in the real train lore of Russia!

Anya Hakima? Yes, in the train we also gave an initiation: on the way back, somewhere between Balakova and Moscow, Anya became Anya Hakima. How dervish can a bayat (initiation) be!

Balakova

Compared to earlier visited Wolga cities Samara and Saratov, (1 million +) Balakova – like Saratov a poor town – is relatively small with 300.000 – 500.000 inhabitants. The first thing we noticed however were flowers everywhere, in pots, in parks in window sills. Unlike anything we've seen in Russia, also for translator Zhenya. It made our Dutch heart beat faster!

The local people were proud of their city with its hydro energy plant and nuclear plant. We could even visit it. Much to their surprise and disappointment we turned the invitation down.

As we later found out, the energy here doesn't only come from the double source of water and uranium: We could do just about any dance and get the maximum out of it. These people really go all the way and seemed to have an inexhaustible source of energy, also inside. What a joy to work this way!

The workshop

The actual weekend was a record for us. We know Russians like to make long hours, but one evening from 6 – pm till 9 pm, followed by two full days from 10 am till 8 pm we have never experienced! This was a real dance marathon. Of course we were asked to 'do something' the evening before and after, so all in all we were two full days and three evenings busy with the dance & Sufi work. As said above, as all participants went all the way and everyone stayed the whole time and didn't miss a minute, let alone a full day, we were very inspired to work with this group.

The room had a lovely view over the Wolga over the full length, with gym preps and machinery on the other side. It is one of the most beautiful rooms we've seen in Russia, although in the

West you wouldn't accept a room with so many disturbing work-out equipment and even a large mirror.

Right at the beginning of the Saturday, someone one floor below started some repair work, happily hammering away. During workshops in Russia we've had a symphony orchestra, baseball game, disco, a live pop band during a wedding, but the hammering was new to us. No one seemed to care, so we just repeated some sentences that drowned in the hammering and started singing. Fortunately it stopped in the afternoon. On with the Dance!

Report MJR, Crimea Camp (August 29 – September 7)

Sun & Rain

The Crimea is on the North shore of the Black Sea, facing Mid Turkey, a holiday resort with a lovely climate. Organizers Shahodat and Masha had arranged an open court yard for us to dance in. It hadn't rained for half a year, but Allah is a trickster, so the rain started on the first evening of Camp. The first two nights we had to adapt the program and present an evening with Badjan singing and some dancing in the indoor meditation room (very tight oval dancing), the second rainy night we used for chanting the Fatiha, as the trip to the Mevlevi Tekke in nearby Efpatoria was planned early on in the program.

After the rain the sun came back as it should. We felt back home after the Crimea camps in 2002 and 2003!

The dancing was great, intense and deep, lovely and sweet, a perfect marriage between strength and gentleness. Many participants were new to us, and all were eager to dive into the process of spiritual dancing. Quite a few led their first ever dance on the supervision sessions. Much to our surprise and delight we counted three participants from Latvia and two from Lithuania, together with Russian participants from Perm, Vladimir, St-Petersburg and Moscow and other smaller places and several people from the Ukraine.

Mevlevi Tekke

From the very start we were looking forward and preparing the group for the trip on Sunday to the Mevlevi Tekke in Efpatoria, a town of over 2,500 years. This tekke is the oldest Mevlevi tekke outside of Turkey. We visited it on our earlier trips and first presented the Fatiha there on invitation on September 11, 2002, so one year after Nine Eleven. The power of the place is immense and the acoustics are superb. An ideal spot for a retreat. (Yes, we are talking about that with the organizers)

We were full heartedly welcomed by the caretaker Alifia who for seven years has lived inside of the tekke, never passing the gate to the outdoor world. There we led the Fatiha, the first line of the Lord's Prayer and some zikr for our group of 50+ plus an almost equally big group of local tourists and Sufi's, forming three large circles.

In the tekke we also met with a Ukrainian Naskhbandi Sufi group and we invited them over for a day. Some other participants at the tekke signed up for the whole rest of the camp, giving the event an extra Ukrainian flavor.

A danced Universal Worship, led by the whole team, was a lovely closing of this long (10 days) Sufi & Dance Camp.

Upcoming Events & Outreach

We will soon leave for **Faro, Portugal**. This will be our second trip to help Lila spreading the dances in this Southern European country.

Good news from **Flanders**, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. The first open dance day was a great success, with all active Flemish dance leaders present. For us it was a lovely reunion with people we only met years ago at PTA or elsewhere, as well as a meeting with new peace dancers. We moved to Belgium four years ago, so it seems like a slow train coming, but the waiting was worth while! All want us to do more in Belgium, so we are planning more open dance days in different places like Affligem and Gent.

Much to our surprise and delight, Alan Ahmed and Linda invited us to co-lead the **New Year Retreat** in Hazel Hill Forest. It has been years since we did these retreats (then called Year End) with James Burgess, so we didn't think twice and said YES.

Our focus of course is also on our yearly **EU Winter Retreat**, for the third time in the Czech Republic. Like last year, Russiandance leaders will undertake the long journey to the Czech Republic, so we hope again for the East meets West atmosphere that makes this retreat such a unique experience.

As you can see on the agenda below, we are for the first time invited in **Slovakia** (East of the Czech republic and just North of Vienna) and in **Lithuania**. We visited this Baltic country several times, but never lead the dances there. We met with several Lithuanian dancers in the Crimea (of all places!) and are looking forward to work in this third Baltic country.

Also for the first time we will lead a longer **Sessheen**. We called the event **Zikr & Zen**, to honor the two traditions of sitting (silent meditation) and moving (DUP & Zikr, the Walks) that merge in this format, introduced by Pir Shabda. See under May below.

Events *Fall 2007* – *Spring 2008*

November

- 2 – 4 **Dance Weekend Faro** (Portugal)
Contact Fatima ☎ tatita.guerreiro@gmail.com
- 17 – 18 **Dharma and Unity**. Buddhist Center Bristol (UK)
Contact John Rees ☎ +44 1453 731 424 *Non residential*

December

- Nov. 30 – **Dans Route: Be a Lamp unto Thyself** (De Weyst, Dec. 2 Handel, NL).
Dutch spoken
- 13 – 16 **Haus Regenbogen** (Bad Munstereiffel, Germany)
Third training weekend. Open for participants of the whole training only. Contact:
Claudia ☎ haus-regenbogen@t-online.de
☎ www.regenbogen-seminarhaus.de
- 23 **Christmas Celebration** (Oostraven, Epe NL)
Open Dance Day. *Dutch spoken*
- 29 – Jan 2 **New Year Retreat** (Hazelhill Forest, UK)
Retreat to end the old and start the New Year.
Info through Wali & Ariënne, registration:
Linda Joyce ☎ linda@southamcottage.fsnet.co.uk

2008

February

- 2 – 9 **EU Winter Retreat** (*Tunechodsky Mlyn, Czech Republic*
(Plzen Area near the German border))

This retreat is for all lovers of the Dances and also serves as training for those who are in the process of becoming a dance teacher. For those further on the path of Dance leading the retreat offers training in mentoring skills. With dances, storytelling, dharma talk, walks etc. Sponsorship possible through Oneness at www.onenessproject.com. Max of 25 participants.

Please E-mail for more info.

March

- 14-16 **Dance Weekend Bratislava** (Slovakia)
Contact Blanka Puskarova ☎ blanka.puskarova@centrum.sk
- 22 **Easter Celebration: The Aramaic Lord's Prayer**
Affligem, Belgium *Dutch Spoken*
- 24 **Easter Celebration: Resurrection**
Woudkapel, Bilthoven (NL) *Dutch Spoken*
- 29-30 **Dance Weekend Cologne** (Germany, non residential)
Contact Shivadas ☎ shivadas@web.de

April

- 14 -18 **Annual French Training** Ariège (Toulouse / Carcassonne area)
Contact: Nathalie Fradin ☎ jmfradin@free.fr
- 19 **Open Dance Day** Ariège See above

25-27

Residential Weekend Kaunas (Lithuania)

Contact Audrone Daskeviciene ☎ audronemeister@gmail.com

May

9-12

Zikr & Zen (Haus Regenbogen, Germany)

Dance Sessheem with alternate Dances and silent meditation.

Contact: Claudia ☎ haus-regenbogen@t-online.de

🌐 www.regenbogen-seminarhaus.de

Summer Activities (Preview)

June 28 – July 5

Ruhaniat EU Summer School

Special guest from the USA: Wali Ali Meyer

Aug 4– 10

Czech Dance Camp with Wali & Ariënne, Lida and others

Aug 18 -24

Latvian Dance Camp with Wali & Ariënne, Fatima, Bashiran and others

All Seminars & Camps are in English and the local language, unless otherwise stated.

All Camps and Weekends are residential, unless otherwise stated.

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