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3rd AWSF, Paris, 2-4 November 2017 :

Everything's Going Great, Monsieur le Président.

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The third Antinuclear World Social Forum (FSMA in French) met in Paris on 2-4 Novemeber 2017. Around 450 people from over 20 countries took part. It was a clear success.

On 5 November a delegation went to Bure, a key site in the struggle against the burial of nuclear wastes.

Below, you will find echoes of the event, which included a song-message which the participants sang the previous day, on the Place de la République, directed at President Macron, using the [famously ironic] tune of "Tout va très bien, Madame la marquise".

"Hello, Hulot (Minister of the Environment), what news for us?..."

Letter to Partners of the Forum

Your support contributed greatly to the good functioning of the third FSMA which ended on the evening of Sunday 5 November after three days of discussions and a visit to Bure, site of resistance to the unacceptable Cigeo Project.

This international gathering was a success, with the participation of about 450 people, of whom 70 were foreigners from twenty countries: Germany, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Spain, USA, Finland, India, Japan, Luxembourg, Niger, Portugal, Russia, UK, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.

Three plenary sessions, 32 workshops, seven films and a piece of street theatre touched on a great diversity of problems related to nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

There were detailed presentations on topics from pollution caused by uranium mines to the problems of radioactive waste, via the health and societal impacts of the Fukushima catastrophe, the future of plants needing to be dismantled, the the power exercised by the nuclear lobby through the strategy of ignorance and threats to workers, the question of halting reactors, and the risks resulting from use of the atom.

Citizens, economists, philosophers, sociologists and technicians exposed the strategies of investment and survival practised by an industry in world decline.

At a time when nuclear disarmament is stronger than ever, the Nobel Peace Prize highlighted the urgency of this, and participants were very aware of the stakes surrounding nuclear weapons.

As a place for meetings and exchanges, this Forum fulfilled its objectives, strengthening a network of international solidarity which will enable us to be more effective in our local and national struggles. In particular, the activists of France, Great Britain, India and Finland have come away determined to unite forces against the AREVA octopus as they oppose the establishment of EPR reactors in their countries.

The Forum ended with a visit to Bure, and thereby a reaffirmation of international solidarity against the burying of

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radioactive wastes - a brief account of this visit is found in the attachment entitled "The Bure of Merlin".

More than ever, the Antinuclear FSM calls for a halt to nuclear power-generation and nuclear weapons across the entire world. During the third plenary session, the Spanish activists announced already their intention to organise an FSMA in Madrid in 2019.

Dear Partners, you will find all the information about the Forum's various sessions on the website - reports will be posted as soon as we receive them.
With our warm greetings,

Jacqueline Balvet
for the Facilitating Committee

The Bure of Merlin

Account by Anne-Marie Bonnisseau & Bernard Elman - 7 November 2017

We left the Place de la République at 7 a.m. In addition to participants from all regions of France, there were folk from Finland, Japan, UK, Mexico, Russia, Belarus and Brazil. 32 courageous people had preferred to discover a corner of "Deep France" (very deep?) rather than sleep late on a Sunday morning.

In the bus were thirty of us - Christine and Catherine had left by car. Still sleepy, we crossed the French countryside where a beautiful sun lit up the superb colours of autumn. The drivers granted us a useful half-hour pause: after that we were all fully awake. Our friends from Bure, along with the journalists of FR3, joined us in a village near Bure. In the bus we had heard details of the burying project and of the recent events, and then we stopped at the ANDRA lab where we awaited other comrades.

There were new explanations about the planned burying project... We felt a few drops of rain, and all that time we were observed by an unmarked car parked not far away. Inside was a cop who photographed us continuously. We photographed our group outside the lab and we sang with Anne accompanying us on the concertina (an accordeon, though the word can mean barbed-wire): a little demo to fire us up for the task - our opposition to the nuclear rubbish-bin!

We ate a delicious meal at the « Maison de la résistance » [Resistance House] and heard a large amount of indispensable information. Then we set out for the
Lejuc Woods, still accompanied by two cars of gendarmes. It started to rain, but that did not stop us from entering the magic woods with some local inhabitants. We crossed the barricades and protection ditches, and we marched 1.5 km along the wall which resisters had flattened.

There were very moving images of the fall of the wall, with all the implied symbolism. "The Bure of Merlin", said our new friends, a spoonerism for the Mur de Berlin [the Berlin Wall].We detoured to discover in the middle of the woods, high up a very tall tree, a cabin perched like a nest for huge birds. Our guides led us to see some other cabins at ground level deep inside the woods, then we returned to our bus. Some distant gendarmes watching from a distance noted the car numberplates of our local friends...

Thanks to that excursion, notable for friendly exchanges, we could grasp more concretely what the general setting is in Bure, and the situation of the resisters who welcomed us so generously. We got back to Paris at 9pm exactly,

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amazed by our drivers' precision. Everyone was happy with this excursion and thanked the organisers warmly.

France 3 TV

Visite à Bure

Reporterre : Policy's Violences in Bure, 15 August 2017

France 3
Visite à Bure
Reporterre : Violences policières à Bure le 15 août 2017

One of some 30 workshops was devoted to the question:
"What Strategy to make an end to Nuclear Power and Nuclear Weapons?"
Here is a brief synthesis of it:

The workshop heard 3 exposés and discussed the following ideas:

1. The Utopia group showed, with plenty of number-crunching, that if the money for the "grand renovation" of nuclear power (80 billion Euros according to EDF) was devoted instead to insulating buildings, it would produce only benefits the nation and for its households. So our campaigns would gain a lot by highlighting the financial argument - which would need to be strengthened to make it indisputable and to give it wider economic dimensions.

2. SDN Suisse romande [a Swiss group] described the complex but positive process of "votations", which are referendums initiated by ordinary citizens (100 000 signatures are all that are required). The success of the ideas we share is not guaranteed, but their audience doubled in ten years and in 2017 they nearly won, with 46% YES votes for phasing out nuclear power-plants. This gave more weight to their cause in the minds of the leaders. In order to succeed, one must seek for supporters beforehand, supporters not already inside antinuclear circles.

3. For ACDN, the 2017 treaty banning nuclear weapons is a very important advance. But the new treaty does not condemn them as a crime against humanity, and authorises member-states to withdraw in the case of "extraordinary events" - so it does not open a good path to multilateral disarmament, and it reaffirms the "inalienable right" to nuclear power. All that will make it hard to call for a referendum aimed at getting France to ratify.

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