

The early days of IFOAM*

CONCEPTION: Around the early 1970s, there was a foreign publicity manager at a famous French weekly magazine [*L'Express*] who, in the course of her duties, voyaged all over the world visiting clients. This person happened also to be a friend of the Organic agriculture movement in general and of the French association *Nature et Progrès* in particular. Her favourite sport was hunting down the pioneers of Organic agriculture who had for decades, usually unknown to each other, been doing original work in their very different countries. Karin Mundt was this intrepid hunter; if any obscure pioneers were anywhere near her flight path, she would track them down. Over several years, contacts were made all over the world. Already in Europe, the necessity was evident, if only to try overcoming the language [and cultural] barriers. During discussions about the name of a projected new organisation, the president of N&P, Roland Chevriot, insisted it should federate *movements*, as a clear signal that, in all their diversity, these movements own the concept of Organic agriculture. Try telling that to legislators today!

ANCESTRY: The basic unwritten ethical principles were self evident: the best of traditional peasant wisdom, plus the new biology & ecology of the 20th Century, including human ecology, plus a pivotal post-industrial innovation: an absolute ethical taboo on synthetic substances that « *sinned against the wisdom of the Creator*, as Justus von Liebig himself admitted in his '*Chemische Briefe*': *I had wanted to better His work and thought there be some link missing from the wonderful chain of laws that regulate Life and always maintain it anew on the face of the Earth, a link which I, feeble unconscious worm, must replace!* » Whether or not this great German was conscious of any humour in what he wrote, it is the mighty earthworm that provides a vital link.

Liebig's forgotten warnings remind us of the infuriating dilemma facing authors of scientific articles: their 'executive' summaries are often adjusted by those who pay the work and profit from it, ignoring part of the evidence in the body of the text and even distorting its conclusions. "Liebig became a defender of a truly biological agriculture, but he fared no better than the atomic physicists who warned against their own discoveries and who, though decorated with the Nobel Prize, were otherwise not taken seriously" [*Ifoam Nsltr N°15, Nov 1975*]. Synthetic agro-chemicals are nothing but bye-products of the armaments industry and modern pseudo-agronomy is their sales gimmick. Like any new taboo, the radical refusal of synthetic chemicals caught the public mood and was the moment of a new societal movement, like a stone dropped in a pond. It cannot now be neutralised.

The next great taboo we urgently need (can you hear it coming?), that would help really solve the problem of power, would be an ethical taboo on money-theism, i.e. on usury, that cynical abuse of credit and credulity via artificial debt & compound interest that drives human effort beyond the necessary, the prudent or the possible, so long as it profits the *growth* of abstracted capital (in German: *Wachstum = Wucher*), to incantations by the high priests of Sustainable Cynicism and the tragic chorus of Sustainable Stupidity.

But those who codified today's Organic production standards, private or public, simply forgot to consider the problem of money & debt. Why not limit an organic farm's rate of indebtedness, or limit the rate of interest acceptable for long term investments (close to zero)? Artificial and extortionate financial constraints are as toxic as artificial chemicals. They force the farm towards growth beyond the natural carrying capacity of land or farmer, and saturate the market with surplus product. The purpose should be to keep farms small enough to provide for infinitely more farmers per hectare than some of today's technically organic systems. By now, most conventional mass markets have been fatally monopolised, centralised to seem more like forced marches.. and less & less like local free markets.

The early writers on *humus farming* promoted the agronomy of autonomy as a way of saving the peasant class, i.e. family farmers & rural society, from predatory banks & industries but, by the time the first Organic standards came to be written, the most influential pioneers were scientists & big landowners, not smallholders, so the resulting text codified only an autonomous method of production.

What more could one expect? Whilst this is a necessary first step for any strategy of political rehabilitation of the peasant classe, it is not in itself incompatible with monopoly capitalism, debt-driven land-grabbing, far distant export-import and mass marketing. In any case, villages & market infrastructure in parts of England, in Northern France, or in today's Western Poland, for example, had long since been wiped out, providing cheap labour for industry. Maybe the resulting farming estates were pocket napkins compared to farms in the Ukraine, but Tolstoy's question remains on the agenda : *How much Land does a Man need?*

So it was that a first assembly took place in Versailles, during the 1972 congress of the association *Nature et Progrès* at which five organisations signed the founding of Ifoam and agreed, among other things, to keep in touch via periodical bulletins in three languages (Fr, En, Ger). The sub-prefecture, at which the first statutes were registered, was flooded some years later and the original registration papers were presumed lost, but no, they have been found. The three legal signatories were Roland Chevriot & Claude Aubert, respectively president & secretary of N&P, and Denis Bourgeois, staff employee of N&P. The five founders are reputed to have been Roland Chevriot (N&P France), Lady Eve Balfour (Soil Association G-B), Jerome Goldstein (Rodale Press, Pennsylvania USA), Pauline Raphaely (Soil Association of South Africa), Kjell Arman (Swedish Bio-Dynamic Association). Until written record, signatures & witnesses are found, it remains a foundation legend.

GESTATION: Other organisations were in touch and, by the time the author of this article arrived in Paris in springtime 1974, there was at the N&P office a big drawer of a filing cabinet, looking rather empty, containing correspondence with all of 14 organisations!! Yours truly had been recruited in Austria by the same intrepid head-hunter, possessed two languages that were not French and had various kinds of farming apprenticeship behind him, as well as a consuming interest in human history. He had narrowly escaped being recruited by the chief of UNEP, feeling Nairobi was too far away. In Paris, he was to work unpaid on correspondence with members of the embryonic Ifoam and with the foreign speakers invited to the N&P congress of November 1974, after which a second Ifoam General Assembly was to take place [*proceedings in: Ifoam Nsltr N°12, Jan 1975*].

Memory is often selective: much of that summer at N&P headquarters seems to have been mainly spent high up in a forest of cherry trees within the walled garden of two hectares, the property of an exiled Kurdish emir, whose flute I inherited but cannot play. Roland was a metallurgical research engineer, a keen horseman and gardener, a persuasive organiser. His great fear was that the huge number of new young members of the association would turn it into a radical agrarian movement that he would have difficulty leading whilst remaining respectable. His head gardener and stable mistress was Claudine, a Corsican. You knew when she was looking at you from behind, because the hairs would rise on the back of your neck. The odd job man was a rescued hereditary alcoholic called Pierre. One volunteer was a grand-daughter of White Russian émigrés. The layout man for the quarterly journal of N&P was Marc Dronne, chain-smoker of Gitane sans filtre, who worked for the glossy magazine, *La France Agricole*, and came after work, when needed. On one such occasion, I got the idea of tracing the outlines of France and all its *départements* (counties), putting asterisks where N&P members existed, and Marc put this on the otherwise empty back cover of the journal. The subsequent organisation of local N&P groups by the members was apparently inspired by this map.

A former volunteer called Yves Michel is now a fairly well known publisher of books. There was a young agronomist called Jean-Paul Thorez, today still writing articles and giving lectures, employed by the quarterly gardening magazine *Les Quatre Saisons* that was founded by Karin Mundt and Claude Aubert, inspired by Rodale Press whose journal had a similar format at the time. Founded in May 1942, Rodale's *Organic Farming & Gardening* had hundreds of thousands of readers, obliging anglophones to settle for Rodale's favoured term 'Organic', no doubt inspired by Lord Northbourne's 1940 book: *Look to the Land* which apparently first used this term in this way (page 103), and ultimately by their mutual friend Ehrenfried Pfeiffer who had so inspired the English-speaking world just before war began. In 1954 the co-founder of the Soil Association, Lady Eve Balfour nonetheless wrote: « *It would save much confusion if we all adopted the name 'biological' farming rather than*

'Organic' farming. We should then keep the emphasis where it belongs, on the fostering of life and on biological balance, and not on just one of the techniques for achieving this which, if narrowly interpreted, may be effective only in a certain set of circumstances » [Ifoam Nsltr N°17, July 1976].

Now we can see that the other, broader interpretation, regarding the soil and the farm as Vital Organism (which was Rudolf Steiner's concept), has now even rehabilitated the term after its kidnapping by the organic chemists of the 19th century. They had hijacked this name because the element from which they synthesised so many deadly molecules also happens to occur in all living organisms, whereas Northbourne simply coined the term *organic* farming as his way of translating Steiner's concept into English when it was not the right time to popularise fanciful German terminology. Fast forward to 1974 in Paris and the imminent Congress; volunteers milling around; excitement intense..

MIDWIFE AT THE BIRTH : Lawrence Hills arrived, struggling with a heavy suitcase full to bursting with HDRA documents and his wife with her oxygen mask. He was what Dickens would be proud to hear is known as a dickensian original, wore corduroy knee-breeches and never admitted to listening to anybody. His Henry Doubleday Research Association at one point had 14,000 mostly working class members, organising effectively decentralised, participatory gardening experiments, all run on a shoestring, and initiating the first popular campaign to save seed propagation from the commercial monopoly dressed up as bureaucracy. Colonel Shewell-Cooper arrived, very worried about his hotel room, and told us all about the Queen Mother's visit to his experimental gardens. Some slightly sinister German-speaking Argentinians arrived, the very essence of discretion & politeness. In the congress auditorium, I distinctly remember seeing the N&P treasurer parading up the side aisle proudly brandishing a bottle of wine from his Burgundy vineyard, the same man who imported Organic sugar from tropical countries and whose château in the Sologne marshlands I once visited, inherited from ancestors who had evidently profited from the work of slaves in the colonies. He was later seen trying to dissuade an agronomist from the South-West, called Max Crouau, from leading a disreputable anti-nuclear demonstration around the congress building. For one happy year, I lived for free in a tiny servants room in the attic of the treasurer's town house, with an amazing view over Paris and wonderful separate staircase all the way up, that kept the servants away from respectable people.

Whilst the last of the ten thousand visitors were leaving the 1974 N&P congress at Porte Maillot, yours truly discovered that the magical bottle of Austrian white wine, a gift from his Austrian mentor Ernst Winter, had been stolen from his desk.. but the show must go on. Of 43 organisations (in 17 nations) that were Ifoam members at the end of 1974, 27 sent speakers to the N&P congress, 19 stayed for the assembly &/or subsequent meeting in Switzerland, excluding many as observers. A report appeared in *Ifoam Newsletter N°12, Jan 1975*, by this time only in En. & Fr. editions, copies of which gather dust in many places. They shall be collector's items and shall fetch astronomical prices. The principle of these newsletters was pure mythology : edit & translate credible extracts from journals & letters, compile a package for each newsletter to hold up as a mirror to the various movements. The readers see this and come to believe that this federation of movements really exists and, then they go about, relating to it as if it existed. A sign that the trick worked was the extent to which nobody afterwards remembered seeing how it was done. The whole thing appeared to have happened naturally and, so it had. The trap for many was that they forgot to relate fraternally or horizontally to other organisations close by, preferring a direct or vertical relation to central authority. This still goes on.

The newsletters were typed on stencils of silk and duplicated on either Roneo or Gestetner machines. The atmosphere was sometimes like the cartoon that once appeared in the dissident periodical *La Gueule Ouverte*, depicting a raging rebel turning the handle of one of these duplicating machines, turning like crazy, beard flying, triumphantly shooting out sheets of literature in the face of an advancing military tank... I still have the portable Olivetti typewriter that Roland bought me, as well as his ancient giant stapler which hangs on my wall looking rather like a Sten-gun, and even have a box of original stencils, very black & inky, and a set of mouse-eaten newsletters with rusty staples. I gave a complete set in good condition to the Ifoam secretariat in the year 2000 but, it disappeared obviously

into a private collection.

FIRST EUROPEAN TOUR: In the evening, after the 1974 assembly, a 50-seater bus left Paris for a ten day tour of Europe, organised and interpreted by yours truly, visiting farms and institutes in several countries, after which the group flew on to Britain & boarded another bus. From Paris, a couple of penniless Swiss students hitched a lift to Switzerland: one was Otto Schmid (this trip inspired his life's work), the other was heard of years later in South America, organising peasants. Near the Swiss frontier, this bus-load of pilgrims from five continents visited a wild boar breeder.. and, in the evening, all politely ignored how rapidly our Japanese guests got tipsy on the white wine, served with Marcel Petite's cheese fondu, in the fortress near Pontarlier where his cellars contained hundreds of tons of slowly maturing Conté cheese. Over the border, the Basel cantonal Agriculture school at Ebenrain was visited, where Dr Buess had decided to convert the entire establishment to the Organic method, no messing about. On the Swiss side of Lake Constance, we visited a famous factory making delicious lacto-fermented vegetable juices, and your interpreter translated rather selectively the mad scientist's explanations, leaving out the mystical digressions. Our South African guest, one of the founders of Ifoam, started complaining about the brevity of the translations compared to the speeches, got offended by the harassed interpreter's subtle sign language and started a vendetta against him that went on for some years. The company later abandoned its pioneering method and now sells inferior pasteurised juices. In Innsbruck we met agronomist Josef Willy, who had decided to convert to the Organic method the entire public farm advisory service of Tirol, which he directed, no messing about. On a small hill farm in the Tirol, our Nebraska farmers in their big hats, whose land rolls over the horizon, started trembling when they saw grass being hand mown for the stable. They were itching for a go and readily followed instructions, obediently bent their knees and very soon rediscovered how to do what their fathers did, and shed a tear or two.

At each stage of the tour, we were met & guided by a local expert and, in Bavaria, this was George Siebeneicher, an ancient legend among agricultural journalists. He knew more than anybody about the more obscure pioneers, such as Ewald Könemann whom he knew, and wrote one of the best summaries of the scientific antecedents of biological agriculture in a *Garten-Lexikon* that he edited [translated in *Ifoam Nsltr* N°17, July 1976]. The tour visited a castle that was both romantic & sinister, belonging to agronomist Wolfgang von Haller, who published a booklet about the great pioneering research done in the USSR on allelopathic plant relationships via root exudates. We saw light-weight Fiat caterpillar tractors, doing very little damage to the soil in November, built by one of the pioneers of Bioland. In England, near the Welsh border, we visited a famous peasant character called Arthur Hollins. Perhaps he sold more ice cream and yoghurt than he had cows but, the recital of his original self-taught agronomy was an unforgettable masterpiece. If Marc Dronne taped it, the tapes are lost. Some months after this tour, the organiser recognised our French bus driver in the Metro, looking rather sad: he had lost his job after a nervous breakdown, because of our bringing so much November mud into his spotless bus several times a day through several countries.. He cleaned up every night and nobody noticed. Our tour organiser had suffered his own anxiety, sitting at the front under the noses of our immensely courteous Japanese guests, who said not a word to him during the whole trip, nor thereafter wrote a single word.

INFANCY OF A SIMPLE SECRETARIAT: The tour made a small profit by mistake and your guide went on as Acting General Secretary of Ifoam under the umbrella of N&P until after the 1976 assembly, held in Seengen, Switzerland, with over 70 participants, when only 30 had been expected. During all this time, there were quarterly newsletters published in Fr. & En. editions, from N°11 to N°19. In the first few years, there came occasional generous [cheques](#) from Robert Rodale in Pennsylvania, by way of encouragement to N&P. After the end of the USSR, Robert set about creating a Russian version of his famous quarterly journal on Organic Farming, but was killed by a deliberate traffic accident in Moscow in 1990, within hours of a disastrous interview with the Agriculture minister. The Austrian interpreter-diplomat who accompanied him later described the circumstances in some detail. Even if Rodale's timing was inept, Russia knows the soul of the nation lies in the soil.

Little by little, from 1975 there came into the Ifoam bank account a modest and erratic income from membership fees and newsletter subscriptions, enough for postage stamps, typewriter ribbons & subsistence for the acting general secretary and his assistant Myriam Denolle from Normandy, a student of Spanish & Russian, whose gardener father had permanent eczema all over his body, after a career in oil tankers. The editing of the newsletter involved seeking & sifting all sorts of printed, typed & handwritten material, drafting & translating articles, and also listing details of everything remotely relevant for the press lists at the end of each newsletter. These were an artistic ritual resulting in a complex mosaic of themes & authors & titles & dates & sources, all collated & typed onto silk stencils at the last minute with little leeway for correction of errors. It is hard now to describe the art of judging lay-out on a manual typewriter. It is nearer to steering a ship than it is to printing. Then, after all the over-inking & under-inking of the stencils, there is the walking round the table, collecting single pages in the right order, detecting blanks & half-blanks, ending up with as few as possible orphaned pages, composing a last complete copy from pages printed on only one side, using left-overs as folders for the next issue's drafts, selecting & writing addresses, sticking stamps, finally struggling against a westerly Atlantic gale to the Post Office. There was life before computers!

The secretariat had moved to Brittany in 1975, for the sake of the economies to be made from 2000 square metres of garden, a move that predictably resulted in being almost forgotten in Paris. This did not hinder the organising of the 1976 third General Assembly and of another study tour. Letters & journals were sporadically forwarded from Paris. Handwritten airmail letters of ten pages came from Alex Podolinsky in Australia, describing how, to inspect thousands of hectares in conversion in his adopted country, he had to fly over them. I finally met him in 2005 when he filled a small auditorium to bursting point at eight o'clock in the morning while the main event in the grand auditorium was half empty at ten o'clock. Professor Julian Aleksandrowicz sent his report on soil magnesium deficiency or blockage as a factor in cattle leukaemia, shown by comparing data from the three zones of Poland formerly partitioned and occupied by neighbouring empires for over a century. The Russian & Austrian landlords were as poor as church mice, compared to huge Prussian estates that pioneered costly experiments with chemical fertilisers, abusing to the limit both their Polish workers and Liebig's scientific work. The resulting mineral imbalance in the soil affected cattle half a century after the end of those empires, but only in the Prussian zone, as became apparent when this man from Krakow toured today's Poland, sampling soils & scraping shit off cowshed walls for aflatoxin cultures. [*Ifoam Nsltr N°17, July 1976*].

It is sometimes all too easy to confuse fact & fiction in a world where so much fiction passes for fact. Who would ever have believed the paranoid barbarity of British government scientists ordering the slaughter & burning of eight million animals who had little worse than influenza, rather than let the virus follow its course within the affected herds & flocks, stimulating collective immune response? They could so simply have recorded the immunological evidence and correlated Foot-&-Mouth disease with blocked or leached soil minerals such as Magnesium. Same story with Bovine TB & Selenium.

ADOPTIVE PARENTS: GOOD TECHNOCRATS: The number of Ifoam correspondents and members increased continually until 1977, when full responsibility for the secretariat was finally, with the archives, put in the hands of the embryonic research institute FiBL, then based on a farm near Basel. Now there were 80 organisations involved in Ifoam, in 20 countries. We had felt overwhelmed by the success of the first endeavours, and it showed, so now was the time for some germanic efficiency. Our battered Citroën 2cv was so heavy with the archives that it touched the road at every bump. Because the Swiss cantons refuse to pay for federal police, it was the police of the Republic of Neuchâtel who dismantled the car at the frontier and let us put it together again. After handing over responsibility for Ifoam's secretariat, the executive of N&P had seemed rather relieved to be no longer holding both baby and umbrella. They had been reassured by our old Austrian friend, the interpreter-diplomat, that the Swiss-germans were "good" technocrats who, in their turn, were convinced they were saving the baby from kidnapping by anti-science fanatics. That 1976 assembly that bestowed on

FiBL the responsibility for the secretariat, also set a new fashion for no longer pronouncing Ifoam like *IF-O'Wamm* ; all must henceforth say *Eye-foam* which Germans thought sounded like English. After all, there had been an informal decision that, in future, English would be Ifoam's only working language. The early correspondence 1972~1977 had been in several languages, but most of that was lost when entrusted by our successors to a nice American named Elliot Coleman. Hardy Vogtmann, the erstwhile director of FiBL, later reported he subsequently flew over and tried in vain to recover the precious archive. For years I struggled to forget the pain of knowing that the safeguard file of photocopies of every important letter and carbon copies of every reply had gone into the same box as the originals (that the idiot lost), instead of into a bank vault.

ANGLICISATION AND WORSE: As a direct result of the decision to impose English as the only working language, there was for the next twenty years in the French Organic movement (not to mention any others) practically no grass roots knowledge of Ifoam, except for a Breton named Hervé La Prairie who had been present in Versailles in 1972, who let me use his dad's phone for the last minute organising of the 1974 study tour and who, after I lost sight of him, did what sons of naval officers sometimes do, became a farmer, and was the first farmer to be elected to the Ifoam World Board, served several terms and presided when the congress was in Africa for the first time, in Upper Volta. By this time, yours truly had long since taken to the hills and became a small farmer out of necessity, which is a good reason for doing anything. For over twenty years there was nothing but children's birthdays & school committees & breton dances & unfinished buildings & not enough capital & pregnant animals & willing apprentices & trusty old tractors & endless woodcutting & windy fields & heavy manure & tilling & sowing & planting & weeding & harvesting vegetables & fixing old cars & street markets & paying off debt... the very existence of Ifoam was forgotten.

Today, a third of a century further on, our vegetables get produced more by experience than by hard work. No need to worry about the natural effects of time, after all they are but entropy. A previously unknown weed has appeared from nowhere (*Galinsoga parviflora*) which swamps everything in summer but, where it is left to grow, has proven to be a great green-manure and is edible too. There are now three adult children and four grandchildren and there is pain in the back, yet there is ever greater need to carry on organising a network of primary producers to help rehabilitate the peasant class and resist this strange heretical money-theism that has polluted everything unto the remotest corners, including our moral sovereignty. A suicidal sect of powerful cynics has been busy disorganising the terrestrial economy for several centuries and again the farmers must survive, re-organise and play their part, leaving some chance of their children surviving tomorrow's powerful cynics.

The editor of the Ifoam Newsletter found this quotation in 1975 but put it aside for later use:

On the place of the peasant class in society: "Admittedly the life of the peasant is much less agreeable than that of the scholar, the roaming politician, the manufacturer of luxuries and toys. For this very reason the state must do everything in its power to stem the inevitable drift from agriculture, on which the existence of the country depends, into unessential occupations. Above all, the rising influence of the merchant must be checked, for the whole power of the state lies in its power to punish or reward, and the existence of a class which rewards itself, and consequently has no incentive to seek public reward, is a menace to society. The number, then, of those who enrich themselves whether by commerce or by any form of unessential craft, is to be limited to the barest minimum, and their social position is to be the lowest in the state." Extrapolation from the end of chapter 49 of the works of Han Fei Tsü, of 22 centuries ago, in *The Way and its Power, A study of the Tao Te Ching and its place in Chinese Thought*, by Arthur Waley 1934.

CAREER PROSPECTS FOR AN ADOLESCENT FEDERATION:

Ifoam has acquired three serious & unnecessary handicaps in its career so far.

a) It runs a centralised assembly every three years, somewhere on the planet, to which delegates from the rest of the planet must fly, and many do not. In Australia 2005 there were almost no Germans, for example, even though their country has a hugely disproportionate number of affiliated

organisations, for many years one third of the total. For Canada 2002, many South & Central American delegates were refused a USA transit visa. Yet in *Ifoam Nsltr N°19, Dec 1976*, there had appeared a policy statement from the Eastern North American regional IFOAM assembly, signed by 11 organisations on 12-IX-76. A month later, they sent a small delegation to the assembly in Switzerland (which joined the subsequent tour). Almost all other delegates were Europeans (there were almost no members in Southern countries). This could thereafter have become standard practice, all a region's organisations having better chances of participating closer to home in regional assemblies, thereafter sending statements and a delegation to other assemblies, each in its region. As things are, every world congress & assembly draws a disproportionately large number of delegates from the immediate region, each in turn. A confederal configuration could be envisaged that would complete this existing scenario, easily involving more of each region's organisations, who would join & pay only the Regional Group, which in turn would share political & financial responsibility with the central organ as well as with other regional groups. It will happen of necessity when kerosene is correctly taxed, although the live debate & contact in a worldwide GA would be missed.

b) The hundreds of affiliated organisations join Ifoam by applying directly to Bonn, are just listed by country and it is entirely their choice whether they organise themselves for trans-national or even national consultation with neighbouring affiliates or with others of professional affinity. Frequently they do not. The same applies within Regional Groups, whose members are also listed nationally and whose Regional board is constituted by elected delegates mandated from each nation, supposedly representing multiple professional interests, according to the One-Big-Happy-Family theory. In both instances (world & region), it is hard to see who speaks for whom. At the slightest hint of controversy, the weakest possible pseudo-consensus tends to be imposed, preventing any open dialogue between differing views or interests. This is slowly changing, as self-organised professional structures arise** to express the views of differing professional groups.

c) In the annual Ifoam Directory of affiliates, there is no basic description of each organisation. There is no objective description of each organisation. Each one provides a string of vague abstractions that do not say who owns it, how big it is, what territory it covers, how it relates to others in that country or other countries, whether it is a farmers union (primary sector), a processing company (secondary sector), or any kind of service provider (tertiary sector) such as in rural development, promotion, trading, consultancy, certification, research or teaching, or indeed any combination of these. So, neither insiders nor outsiders can discover much about the affiliates without visiting them. Yet the federation was created precisely in order to facilitate direct contact and consultation between identifiable organisations. CAN DO BETTER.

*International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, Versailles 1972, registered in France as *Fédération internationale des mouvements d'Agriculture biologique, FIMAB*.

** such as INOFO the *Inter-continental Network of Organic Farmers Organisations*, since 2008 a self-organised structure in IFOAM... with one vote in GA.

Anton Pinschhof, Brittany, 27-XI-2008, from memory, notwithstanding later study of archives.

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