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Peace Leaflets

A Starting point for Dialogue

ACTIO - REACTIO

In the Peace Museum in Wolfsegg, there is a display that shows a panoramic view of destroyed Dresden and destroyed Coventry. The display card reads:

COVENTRY 1940 - DRESDEN 1945

Does Newton's law of "actio – reactio" apply to human affairs as well?

After 2000 years of Christianity we can only conclude that the idea "love your enemies" has remained wishful thinking. Who offers his right cheek after being struck on the left one?

The dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was preceded by Pearl Harbour. The question remains however, how such an over-reaction could have occurred. As a demonstration of deterrence, in conjunction with the understandable wish to finish World War II quickly, could not an uninhabited area have been selected? Why was it deemed necessary to drop a second bomb, this time on Nagasaki, for that purpose? Do these two examples not bring home to us the terrible consequences of the law of actio – reactio?

Wars of aggression are usually concealed as a reaction to flimsy and unsubstantiated causes. We know that there is no justification for starting an aggressive war. We also know that there are effective ways and means to solve conflicts without resorting to force. Of course this presupposes the strong solidarity of a future world community...

In conclusion, the question must be raised: Is the law of actio – reactio still valid in times of war? We must also consider that the unbridled escalation of a conflict may lead not just to reaction but to *over-reaction*. These experiences oblige us to keep a sharp eye on the origins of conflicts.