



Franz Deutsch

## **Peace Leaflets A Starting point for Dialogue**

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### ALL IS VANITY

Among the art works in the Wolfsegg Peace Museum is a drawing by the artist Paul Flora. In it, a grim reaper confronts the viewer with a leaflet inscribed with the following statement: All is Vanity!

I think this piece tries to address the following question: Where does it begin?

Political blunders of great magnitude do not originate from a collective psyche but are the brainchild of certain persons. Examples of this are wars, which do not start on the battlefield, but in the heads of individuals. This raises another point. And that is that peace must have its genesis in the heads of individuals as well. This idea is symbolised in the UNESCO preamble, and in the emblem of the First Austrian Peace Museum.

Does Paul Flora's drawing give us a broad hint? If we let the "lunatics of history" parade before our eyes and examine their motivations, we encounter personal ambition culminating in thirst for glory beyond death. Paul Flora's pithy commentary "All Is Vanity!" expresses it perfectly.

Personally, I cannot believe that demons are born, and I also have trouble believing that "vain" people are born. This raises yet another issue: How does a human being become a "vain" person? I want to continue this line of inquiry. Is there any reason for a self-confident person to become "vain"?

To put such academic insights into practice is a slow process. It is a hard road, but it may be the best in the long run.