

ERSTES ÖSTERREICHISCHES FRIEDENSMUSEUM FIRST AUSTRIAN PEACE MUSEUM



INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PEACE MUSEUMS

Newsletter no 6

September 1996

NETWORK NEWS

Austria; Schlaining

On 9th December 1995 many Austrian and foreign dignitaries attended a ceremony in the castle on the occasion of the presentation of the 1995 Unesco peace education prize to the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, and the European Peace University. In his address, Unesco Director-General Dr. Federico Mayor stressed the centrality of education in the building of a culture of peace.

In his acceptance speech, Dr. Gerald Mader (founder of both institutions) drew attention to the plan to turn the Schlaining Teace Castle' into a comprehensive peace exhibition and peace museum which would pprrtray the past, present and future of peace, and to the contribution towards this goal made by the International Conference of Peace Museums held in Schlaining in August 1995.

The ceremony was widely reported in the Austrian press; press comments and the texts of various speeches are reprinted in the February 1996 issue of Friedensforum, the Journal of the Austrian Study Centre.

Austria: Wolfsegg

The founder-director of the First Austrian Peace Museum, Franz Deutsch, is currently writing up his experiences äs a young teenager in the Austrian resistance during 1944-45 and äs a school-teacher in remote villages during the years of Russian occupation. At the same time he is continuing his collections of thoughtful and inspirational "Peaceleaflets" and "Key-experiences". The former now number almost eighty, and await publication. (A listing of the titles/subjects is now available also in English).

They aim to provide impulses for communication and discussion, especially in schools and similar educational institutions äs well äs in peace museums and peace academies. The foundation of the endeavour to promote peace has to be the realisation on the pari of every individual that he or she can make a contribution to peace - an idea which the "leaflets for peace' encourages.

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France; Verdun

Denis Marechal, director of the World Centre for Peace, Freedom and Human Rights in Verdun, has sent us an interesting article which appeared in the leading French newspaper, Le Monde on armistice day (11th November 1995). It focuses on the centres of remembrance opened in recent years in Caen, Peronne and Verdun and notes that they not only give an account of past tragedies but also provide food for thought on present-day conflicts. In the words of the title, "The new war memorials aim also to be museums of peace". The article concludes by quoting Denis Marechal: "Caen, Peronne and Verdun are exceptions but should be the rule. There are very few places in which people can actually reflect on war. The Verdun Centre is the first one to escape fully from the fascination with battle and warfare".

From an accompanying article in the same paper we learn that the Peronne Historial attracted 68,000 visitors in 1994, whereas almost ten times that number visited the Caen Memorial in the same year (the anniversary of the Normandy landings).

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