

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF PEACE MUSEUMS

Newsletter no 5

December 1995

SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF PEACE MUSEUMS

Some 25 peace museums from around the world, including several museum projects, participated in the Second International Conference of Peace Museums which was held from 16 to 20 August 1995. The meeting was hosted by the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Stadt Schlaining and took place in the picturesque medieval castle. It is in this castle that the Center aims to establish a European Peace Museum, thus complementing the European Peace University whose headquarters are already there.

The conference was opened by Dr. Gerald Mader, President of the Center, and by Ms Christa Pets, the Minister of Culture of the provincial (Burgenland) government. Directors of peace and related museums from the USA, Japan, Israel, Norway, Switzerland, and from half a dozen European Union member states, presented their institutions or projects, and discussed matters of mutual interest.

In order to develop the Network, an International Board was appointed with regional representatives. It consists of Ikuro Anzai (Japan), Denis Marechal & Ursula-Maria Ruser (Europe), Ruth Usher & Nigel Young (USA). Peter van den Dungen was appointed acting director. Initial discussions also took place about possible ways of financing the Network's secretariat.

Participants welcomed the proposal of the Japanese delegation to pursue vigorously the possibility of organising the third international conference in Japan in 1998. Professor Anzai, Director of the Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University, is taking the initiative in this matter. Several participants expressed an interest in the possibility of holding regional conferences in the meantime.

Many thanks are due to Dr. and Mrs. Mader for their hospitality which made the conference possible, and for its efficient organisation. At the same time we extend our congratulations to the Austrian Study Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution for having been awarded this year's UNESCO's Peace Education Prize. May it be an incentive to strengthen efforts and resolve for expanding Schlaining's role as a center for peace education by the creation of a peace museum!

NETWORK NEWS

Austria: Wolfsegg

Franz Deutsch reports that a seminar on 'Fifty years of peace in Austria' is taking place in the peace museum on 26 November with the participation of the former governor of Upper Austria, the former lord mayor of Linz, and other political figures.

Germany

Berlin

The Peace Library & Anti-War Museum continues to develop and display new photo exhibitions. Whereas at the time of the 1992 Bradford conference 469 exhibitions had been held in 180 cities which had been visited by 1,72 million people, three years later the number of exhibitions has increased to 678. They have been shown in 243 places, and have been visited by 2,15 million people. The main exhibitions prepared in the last few years are: 'The dream of another Germany' (1993); 'Mother Teresa and western poverty' (1994); 'Destruction and salvation: Desertion and conscientious objection in the Nazi Reich' (1995). Contact Jochen Schmidt for more information, or for borrowing any of the exhibits.

Lindau

- An exhibition of posters by Austria's most famous living artist, Friedensreich Hundertwasser, entitled 'Peace with Nature', was held in the Peace Museum in June-July.

- On 15 October, the Museum hosted a concert of classical music organised by the International Union of Friends of Disabled Composers. On this occasion - which was devoted to victims of anti-personnel mines - a piano was introduced especially designed for the disabled.

Remagen

- The Bridge of Remagen Peace Museum and its founder were centrally involved in activities commemorating the 50th anniversary of the capture of the Bridge on 7 March. The events were extensively covered in the press. In a guest column in which he reflected on the significance of the occasion, Hans Peter Kurten wrote: 'Working for peace means learning from the past, to turn foes into friends and to extend the hand of friendship'. The more than 1,000 guests who attended the ceremonies

(including 500 U.S. veterans) did exactly that, and proved that successful reconciliation and peacemaking between former enemies is no dream.

- Issue no. 29 of the Newsletter of the Museum was published in August and contains full reports of the ceremonies held on 7 March and of the preparations for it.

Japan

Kochi City: Grass Roots House

- Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings, an English-language booklet was published: The Flame of Hiroshima and Article 9 (July 1995, 72pp.). Apart from a children's story about Hiroshima the booklet contains the full text of the Japanese constitution and translations in 12 languages of Article 9 (Renunciation of War). Copies of the booklet are freely available for use by schools, libraries, peace groups, etc. The booklet was edited by Shigeo Nishimori, director of Grass Roots House.

- He also organised a 4th peace trip to China for members of the House in August. The group was disappointed to discover that the Chinese government is suppressing a Chinese grass roots movement which is active in demanding compensation for the damages caused by Japan in the war.

- Grass Roots House Newsletter no. 6 (July) provides details of other activities such as the annual Kochi Peace Festival, and the planting of trees for a Constitution Forest, a symbol of the concern for both peace and the environment.

- Kazuyo Yamane reports that exhibitions on World War II were held in Kochi City in the

University, the Women's University, and the Medical College. Grass Roots House lent various exhibits and supported the exhibitions also in other ways. Perhaps one day, she muses, Ritsumeikan will no longer be the only university in Japan to house a peace museum.

- She also reports on new initiatives for peace museums and memorials in Japan such as that by Ms Hiroko Matsuba to try to create a peace memorial at Matsuyo (Nagano Prefecture), site of the imperial Japanese headquarters during World War II. A society has been formed to have the site designated as a 'world heritage'.

Kyoto Museum for World Peace

- In their draft paper prepared for the Schlaining conference, Ikuro Anzai and Kentaro Hayashi provide an overview of the several events and activities the Museum organised in the period 1992-1995. The number of visitors has steadily risen from 26,000 in 1992 to 42,000 in 1993 and 54,000 in 1994. The Museum has taken a leading role in the establishment in 1994 of a national Peace Museums Conference.

- A major activity in 1995 has been the planning and organisation of The World University Students' Peace Summit, taking place in Kyoto from 4-6 December. Proposed by the President of Ritsumeikan University, sponsored by several other universities in Japan and supported by UNESCO, the Summit provides a forum for students from all over the world to review peace efforts of the last 50 years and to discuss their visions for the promotion of peace in the coming century.

Maruki Gallery

Sadly, Iri Maruki died on 19 October, aged 94. Together with his wife Toshi he was a candidate for the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize. Apart from the many obituaries which appeared in the Japanese press, a lengthy article appeared in the Independent newspaper in the U.K. (21

October). The author referred to the Marukis' Hiroshima panels as constituting 'the finest artistic protests ever made against the folly of war'.

Okinawa

This summer saw the inauguration of 'The Cornerstone of Peace' in the Peace Prayer & Memorial Park at the southernmost tip of the island. It was erected to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Pacific War and the Battle of Okinawa, and consists of a series of memorial walls (and peace sculptures) with the inscribed names of all those who lost their lives in the Battle of Okinawa (close to a quarter of a million soldiers and civilians). The new Okinawa Peace Memorial Museum will be established in the same park in the next few years. The Peace Promotion Division of the Okinawa Prefectural Government has published an informative and colourful leaflet on the monument (in English).

Osaka International Peace Center

Since its opening in September 1991 the Center has organised an impressive number of exhibitions, film shows, lectures, symposia and other happenings. Major past and planned events are described in a 13-page document (in English) which clearly illustrates the varied and imaginative ways in which the Center is engaged in peace education (for all age groups). Following two International Peace Museum Exchange Exhibitions (at which materials borrowed from museums in China and Korea were displayed), the Center is planning a third one in the Spring of 1996, this time showing materials borrowed from museums in Singapore and Malaysia.

Saitama

The Peace Museum of Saitama's information leaflet is now also available in an attractive English-language version.

Switzerland

Geneva

- A report on the First International Artists for Peace (AfP) Conference (which was held from 16-18 June in Ferney-Voltaire, France) is available from Ursula-Maria Ruser, AfP founder & president. The Second Conference, 'Beauty will save the world', is scheduled to take place from 24-27 May in Darmstadt, Germany.

- In October, AfP presented its second annual exhibition, on South African artists. It was opened in the UN in Geneva and among its distinguished visitors was the South African President. The South African ambassador to the UN in Geneva writes in a foreword to the striking and colourful guide to the exhibition: 'since the birth of the New South Africa a culture of reconciliation and peace has begun to permeate our society ... South African art and artists ... have been instrumental in contributing to this awakening'.

- Now that the very successful and widely-travelled Bertha von Suttner exhibition has returned home, and has been dismantled, Ursula-Maria Ruser has started preparations for another major exhibition, to be held in 1996 in the UN in Geneva. This will focus on the League of Nations, 1920-1946 and will provide a retrospect on the first world organisation for peace.

United Kingdom

- In Bradford, the Peace Museum Project Office has moved. Its new address is: c/o Bradford Council, Jacobs Well, Manchester Road, Bradford BD1 5RW. Tel. +44 1274-754009.

- The progress of the Bradford project was reported in a short article in the weekly Quaker journal, The Friend (3 November, pp. 1407-8): 'Exploring the story of peace'.

- The new Bradford office was visited in October by Ms Miyoko Matsubara, a hibakusha from Hiroshima who, until her retirement in 1993, was a curator at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. She has made it her life's mission to tell people of the reality of nuclear war and to promote disarmament and she has learnt English especially for the purpose. She now travels the world and speaks to peace groups, pupils and university students, church groups, etc. Her address is: 2-14-21 Asahi, Minami-Ku, Hiroshima 734. Tel. & Fax 082-254-7835.

- Margaret Glover is pursuing research on the symbolism of peace at Reading University and would like to hear from readers who have information on the subject or who would like to discuss the topic. Her new address is: 19 Shenstone Road, Reading, Berks. RG2 0DT. Tel. & fax 01734-867-292. Among her artistic work at the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford is a pencil sketch of Joseph Rotblat, the 1995 Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

USA

Chicago

- The Summer 1995 issue of The Peace Museum's newsletter, The Peace Release (vol. 3, issue 2) appeared as a special issue, namely on the back of a large interactive poster advertising the 'Get Help - Peace Begins at Home' project. It lists the names and helpline numbers of 25 local domestic violence support groups. The project includes the creation and installation of some 400 metal street signs with details of the nearest shelter and Helpline number.

- The Chicago Tribune reported on 24 July the donation to the Museum of a collection of some 600 posters against the American war in Vietnam. One of the largest collections of its kind in the USA, it was donated by Michael

McCain, a former leader of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (who started the collection so that Americans would not forget the mistakes of the past).

- The Peace Museum held its final exhibition at its Ontario site from 8 September until 24 October (at the time of writing, the new address was not yet available). The exhibition, entitled '50 Years, Human Re-Visions/or/The Nuclear Neighbourhood', presented the work of ten artists who have taken a new look at the continuing impact of World War II on life today. Among the displays was the famous 'Doomsday Clock' popularised by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. The clock was designed by Chicago artist Martyl Langsdorf and has told the world graphically of the time since 1947 when it first appeared on the cover of the Bulletin as a symbol of the nuclear threat. Over the years the long hand has moved from indicating seven minutes (1947) to seventeen minutes before midnight (1991), the most optimistic setting so far. In its issue of September-October, the Bulletin published a short article on the exhibition entitled 'Time flies - to Peace Museum'.

- On 12 October a panel discussion entitled 'Building then Banning the Bomb' was held in the Museum. It featured Manhattan Project scientists who started the movement against nuclear weapons.

Detroit

- From 3 March until 25 May Swords into Plowshares Peace Center & Gallery organised a very successful exhibition of prints by Kathe Kollwitz. An attractive catalogue was published to accompany the exhibition.

- To mark the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings, the Center & Gallery showed what the Smithsonian could not, or would not, show - the reality of nuclear war. Some of the exhibits in the 'Never again!' photo exhibition came from Grass Roots House in Kochi,

Japan.

- In honour of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, the Center & Gallery is showing 'Transforming Visions '95' (from 20 October 1995 until 20 January 1996).

- Please note the correct fax number: 313-965-4328 (different from that given in the directory of peace museums).

Uzbekistan

- Anatoly Ionesov of the International Museum of Peace and Solidarity in Samarkand has written to say that since 1994 the Tashkent Peace Museum no longer exists. Its exhibits were forwarded to the State Archives in Tashkent and subsequently a selection was given to the International Museum in Samarkand. The Tashkent Peace Museum was established in the late 1980s by John Melenevsky, and grew out of a museum dedicated to the history of the international communist and labour movement which he had established in 1970.

- In October 1994, celebrating UN day, the International Museum (together with the Central Children's Arts Palace of Samarkand) organised the 5th Children's Peace and Disarmament Festival. A variety of events, including exchanging war toys for creative, nonviolent toys and games, took place. The festival was sponsored by the US Peace Corps in Uzbekistan. A 6th festival, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the UN, has been planned for 1995.

- In January 1995, the Museum launched a children's art exhibition entitled 'Children of Iran look at the world'. Among the co-organisers was the Iranian Red Crescent Society. Previous exhibitions organised by the Museum have featured children's art from such countries as Australia, Egypt, France, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Canada

Plans are underway for the establishment of a Peace Museum at the Sharon Temple Museum and Historic Site at East Gwillimbury Township, York Region, Ontario. In the early 19th century, a new local Quaker sect known as the Children of Peace built a grand temple as a monument to their vision of a society characterised by peace and social justice. The current Museum is dedicated to interpreting the social and cultural contributions of the Children of Peace to Canadian society. The proposed Peace Museum will creatively explore the history of religious pacifism, its moral basis, and the contributions of conscientious objectors to the cause of peace in Canada. The project has the approval of the Yearly Meeting of Canadian Quakers and a committee of concerned Friends is currently being formed in order to bring the project to fruition.

Italy

Piera Caramellino reports from Milan on tentative plans to establish a peace museum in the city. A possible site is the area where on 20 October 1944 two elementary schools were bombed from the air (in the mistaken belief that they were harbouring German Nazi commandos). About 300 children died in one school, an episode still vividly remembered in the city. Each anniversary provides an opportunity for local schools to engage in peace education activities. In the Spring, Milan County Council will be sponsoring an exhibition on 'Milan and War', and there will also be a day school on 'Milan and Peace'. In order to promote the idea of a peace museum, a series of lectures and public meetings on peace education and peace museums is being planned. The organisers are keen to hear from network members. Contact: Dr. Roberto Guerri (chief manager of historical museums in Milan), Civiche Raccolte Storiche, Via Borgonuovo 23, 20100 Milano; Dr Dean, Archivio di Stato, Via

Senato 10, 20100 Milano. Further details from Piera Caramellino, Via Mazzucotelli 22, 20138 Milano. Tel. 02-738-1484, fax 02-463-269.

Japan

From among the various recent initiatives in Japan mention should be made of the establishment in 1994 of the Sakima Art Gallery in Okinawa. A central goal of the Gallery is to preserve and display the memory of the horrors of war through their artistic representation. On display are no less than 30 works by Kathe Kollwitz, 50 works by Iri and Toshi Maruki (including the monumental 'Battle of Okinawa'), and 160 works by Makoto Ueno (including a set on the Nagasaki atomic bombing). Contact Michio Sakima, 358 Uehara, Ginowan-City, Okinawa 901-22. Tel. 098-893-5737; fax 098-893-6948.

Netherlands

At a meeting in April in Utrecht, ten Dutch peace organisations decided to establish an Anti-War Museum Foundation to bring about a water-borne museum which can reach all parts of the country (and even travel abroad). In October, the Foundation published its first bi-annual newsletter, entitled De Vredesboot (The peace boat). It reports on the progress made and the activities undertaken in the following areas: organisation, publicity, finance, and international contacts (the latter includes participation in the Schlaining conference). An exhibition is being planned in Amsterdam for April so as to provide a foretaste of what the Anti-War Museum is about. Contact Anti-oorlogsmuseum, Minahassa-straat 1, 1094 RS Amsterdam. Tel. 020-668-1868.

South Africa

Peace Visions, a South African non-governmental organisation working towards the building of lasting peace structures on the African continent, is committed to the establishment of the Robben Island International Peace Institute. The creation of a South African Peace Museum on Robben Island (as part of the Institute) is also under consideration. In October-November 1995, Peace Visions inaugurated an International Peace Studies training programme for a total of fifty students - the first formalised course of its kind in Africa. Contact Amiene van der Merwe (Operations Director), Peace Visions, P.O. Box 51112, Waterfront, Cape Town 8002. Tel. 27-21-439-9847/8/9; fax 27-21-439-9907.

USA

New Jersey

At the Schlaining conference Lynne Knudsen (Executive Director) and Ruth Usher (Secretary) introduced the Peace Pavilion Project. Its aim is to build a multi-cultural museum and resource centre where people from all walks of life can come to broaden their understanding of the issues underlying the desecration of the environment and the growing violence and prejudice in communities, schools and homes. The Pavilion's various components will be centrally connected by a Spiritual Atrium, a contemplation space dedicated to the pursuit of lasting peace. Contact Lynne Knudsen, The Peace Pavilion Project, P.O.Box 1020, Maywood, N.J.07622. Tel. 201-646-9597; fax 201-489-8980.

New York

In 1994 Sandy Hinden took the initiative to form an Advisory Council to develop an interactive Peace Museum in Manhattan. Its purpose is to celebrate peace through exhibits, activities and events; to honour the

peacemakers and peacekeepers from past, present and future; to promote peace within, peace with others, and peace with nature. As an initiative for the United Nations World Week of Peace (October 24-30, 1995), a meeting was planned to develop a committee to help create the Peace Museum. Sandy Hinden comments: 'I wish Albert Einstein was still with us to join our "Manhattan Project - for Peace". His address is: Creative Source, 19 Post Street, Glen Head, N.Y. 11545. Tel. 516-759-2573; fax 516-759-2236.

CONFERENCES

An international symposium on 'The Presentation of War in Museums' was scheduled to be held in Berlin from 19-21 November 1995, organised by the Deutsches Historisches Museum in collaboration with the International Association of Museums of History and the working group Museums of Contemporary History. Fifty years after the end of World War II, the symposium aimed to look at how museums convey war - its causes, development, and consequences. Among the topics listed on the programme are: 'Can the culture media convey the reality of war?', 'International cooperation in the presentation of war', and -interestingly- 'Museums for Peace?' Contact Heidemarie Anthony or Dr. Hans-Martin Hinz at the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Zeughaus, Unter den Linden 2, D-10117 Berlin.

Following the Schlaining conference, the possibility of one or more Japanese peace museums organising the next International Conference of Peace Museums in 1998 is now being vigorously pursued by our Japanese colleagues, including Professor Ikuro Anzai, the Director of the Kyoto Museum for World Peace at Ritsumeikan University, who has taken the initiative in this matter.

PUBLICATIONS & MATERIALS

- The controversy surrounding the exhibition of the Enola Gay at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C. is well documented in the resource packet produced by the Fellowship of Reconciliation (Box 271, Nyack, N.Y. 10960): Remembering Hiroshima: The Smithsonian Controversy (rev.ed. February 1995).

- A comprehensive overview of a similar controversy raging in Japan over a proposed national War Dead Peace Memorial Hall is given by Ellen H. Hammond in her article 'Politics of the War and Public History: Japan's Own Museum Controversy', in Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (vol. 27, no.2, April-June 1995, pp. 56-59). The whole issue is devoted to the theme: 'Remembering the Bomb: The Fiftieth Anniversary in the U.S. and Japan'.

- The impressive growth of peace museums in Japan in recent years is documented by the following two books, both in Japanese, which were published in 1995: Masaru Nishida, ed., A Guide to the Peace Museum (Tokyo: Nihon Tosho Center, 1995) and Conference of Teachers of History, ed, Guide to Peace and War Museums (Tokyo: Aoki Syoten, 1995).

Peace Museums Worldwide (Geneva: United Nations Library), a provisional version of which was distributed at the Schlaining conference, has just been published.

Each museum listed in the directory is being sent fifty complimentary copies. Other institutions, and individuals, who would like to receive copies can do so by writing to Dr. Ursula-Maria Ruser, The Library, United Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland (fax 41-22-917-0028).

Spare copies of several of the publications by peace museums referred to above (available at the conference in Schlaining), are available

from Peter van den Dungen, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP, UK. (fax 44-1274-385240).

Does your museum have a Peace Pole?

The World Peace Prayer Society was founded in 1955 by a Japanese philosopher named Mr Goi to spread the message and prayer "May Peace Prevail on Earth". Peace Poles are silent prayers for peace. They are 2.3m high, made from wood and carry the peace message in four different languages. There are already more than 100,000 peace poles in nearly each country of the world. You can find them in schools, embassies, hotels, private gardens, parks etc.

Contact the European office: Knobelstrasse 4a, 80538 Munich, Germany

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