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The blog briefly describes the 6-day Peace Road in German, English and Hungarian with pictures.

PEACE ROAD Austria 2020 - WAYS CAN CONNECT

On the route of the death march of Hungarian Jews in 1945 by bicycle in 6 stages

from 21 October - 26 October 2020

75 years after the end of the 2nd World War and the foundation of the UNO

30 years after the fall of the Iron Curtain

70 years after the beginning of the Korean War - N- and South Korea still have no peace treaty!

In 2017, 2018 and 2019, UPF-Upper Austria, together with mayors of neighbouring communities, organised a Peace Roads on a section of the death march of Hungarian Jews, which took place 75 years ago at the end of the Second World War. One year ago, we had the strong feeling that the Peace Road 2020, to be authentic, must include the whole more than 400 km route. In 1945, many thousands of Jews from Hungary had to make this journey to the Mauthausen concentration camp under inhuman conditions during the last days of the war. They were given hardly anything to eat and many of them went barefoot. Many hundreds of them were shot on the way when they collapsed exhausted.

21 October, the cyclists for peace set off for the Hungarian border. Because of the corona rules we could not start in Hungary itself, but we met a group of UPF Hungary at the border to Austria. The two national leaders of the Family Federation of Hungary and Austria set a symbolic sign and exchanged the national flags.



The first commemoration took place in Rechnitz at the so-called Kreuzstadl, where around 200 Jews were murdered in one night. Mrs Simon, lecturer of the Protestant Church in Rechnitz, opened with a prayer and Mr Reis, director of the Austrian Jewish Museum in Eisenstadt, explained the facts known so far.



On this day the peace cyclists covered 95 km, passed memorials and were welcomed by two mayors in the communities of Eberau and Güssing.

22 October: We stayed overnight in Fürstenfeld and were welcomed in the morning by the mayor in front of the town hall.



Then the peace cyclists drove about 80 km to Graz/Liebenau. At the memorial in Nitscha a historian spoke and at the memorial in Gleisdorf the cultural officer welcomed us. Afterwards we were invited to lunch by the community. The next day a very good report about the Peace Road appeared on the website of the Gleisdorf community.

https://www.gleisdorf.at/fahrradfahren-fuer-den-frieden-peace-road-2020_5790_188.htm



In Graz/Liebenau, the last stop on this day, not only the victims of the death march are remembered, but also the many forced labourers who were subjected to inhuman treatment. We laid down a stone from the place of the liberation ceremony in the quarry Mauthausen at all the memorial sites we passed on the Peace Road.



23 October: On this day the peace cyclists covered 100 km. We prayed at the memorial site in Peggau, a wonderful landscape, but where 75 years ago a concentration camp was located and people from many conquered countries in the 2nd World War lost their lives.



Via Bruck/Mur, after a small reception by a local council and passing a memorial in Leoben for Austrian resistance fighters in the Second World War, we reached Trofaiach. Here we concluded the day with a prayer at a memorial erected for 14 Austrians who lost their lives in the resistance against National Socialism.



24 October: On this day too, the cyclists covered almost 100 km, plus a mountain pass at 1226 m altitude. This is where the massacre of Hungarian Jews took place 75 years ago. Random shots were fired into the crowd and more than 200 people were killed. We read the passage from the book of the survivor Ernő Lazarovic, a peace ambassador, who participated in the MEPI, and a representative said a deep prayer.



At the foot of the mountain, in the community of Eisenerz, we prayed in the Jewish cemetery, which houses many of the unknown victims who died on the way here.



25 October: We stayed overnight at the Workshop Centre of the Austrian Family Federation and drove through the Enns Valley, which was bathed in the bright colours of autumn. Our peace cyclist from Syria was especially impressed by the reception of the Vice Mayor of Reichraming at the Peace Bridge, which was built in 2009 by young adults from Israel and Palestine together.



The day ended with an invitation to the opening of the House of Remembrance in St. Georgen/Gusen, a subcamp of Mauthausen.

http://bewusstseinsregion.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Bergkristall/BEW_Folder_Bergkristall_web_de.pdf



26 October: is the Austrian national holiday.

Our next destination was the quarry of the concentration camp memorial Mauthausen

Here we remembered that on April 30, 2018 Mr. Lee Ki-seong, on behalf of Mrs Hak Ja Han Moon, Mother of Peace, and together with 150 parliamentarians and religious leaders from over 40 nations, conducted a liberation ceremony here. The ceremony was specifically designed to acknowledge and release the accumulated historical and spiritual resentment of victims and perpetrators associated with World War II.



After the peace cyclists have arrived at the quarry, the catholic bishop Christine Mayr Lumetsberger led us through a very moving memorial service. She attended in Dec. 2019 the WCLC in New York with Mother Moon.



Afterwards eight representatives laid down the stones brought along from the memorials on the route of the death march to connect these places with the place of the liberation ceremony.



The representative prayer specifically expressed our regret that so much suffering had been inflicted on people by people on Austrian soil.





The very last stop of the 6-day Peace Road was the Citykino in Steyr, where, following a video message by Jewish filmmaker Josua Sinclair, interviews were made with the peace cyclists.

All expressed that they became more aware of the suffering of these people 75 years ago at these memorial sites and that they were more concerned about coming to terms with this history and about liberation and redemption for victims and perpetrators. Our friend from Syria in particular is experiencing a feeling of liberation after the initial severity.

Mr. Peter Haider, President of UPF Austria, spoke about the worldwide importance of the Peace Road Project. The 6 days ended with a few minutes of silence in which everyone could reflect on their experiences and insights and thank God for the protection we received on the way. Although two cyclists had an accident on the way, they all came home healthy and also regarding the weather we had a great blessing. Although intense feelings often came up because of the spiritual background, we were able to do the Peace Road in harmony among ourselves.

We hope a basis for further cooperation was established with mayors and active groups dedicated to coming to terms with history and reconciliation.

Mag. Maria Pammer (UPF-Upper Austria)