

WFWP Peace Festival in Zürich, Switzerland

Jean Metz
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On 13 September 2015, the Family and Peace Festival was held in Zurich in the Volkshaus.

It was followed by an outdoor concert and a peace march around the central part of Zurich. Goya Cheytanov-Ordonez, president of Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) for Switzerland, organized the event. Winfried Schwager and Andrea Nakamura were the MCs.

The festival launched with exceptional performances from Arnold y sus Azabaches a Hispanic band, Ejder Sabanci who played his Turkish ney (type of flute), Nathalie Komagata's rhythmic dance, Esteban Garzon's guitar picking and Sascha Kramer's opera singing with Gertrud Wullschlegler's piano accompaniment.

After the performances, Lisette Müller-Jaag, former cantonal politician in Zurich, gave an opening address about freedom. Afterwards, Heiner W. Handschin, standing representative of UPF and UNO in Geneva, spoke about "Die Familie als Ort des Erlernens von Menschlichkeit, Friedfertigkeit, Respekt für Menschenrechte und Menschenwürde." "The Family as a Place of Teaching Humanity, Freedom, Respect for Human Rights and Human Virtues." He talked about how creating and building peace within the family is an important factor in bringing peace into the world. A film was then shown about the UPF organization and the building of peace.

After the film, a few musical performances were given by Adrian Trachsel and Ruilong Wäckerlin, who played the violin and piano, respectively. Julia "Jayhan" Handschin performed "The Greatest Love of All" by Whitney Houston.

At the end of the performance, a panel discussion was held about "Erziehung zum Frieden in der Familie und in einem multikulturellen Umfeld" ("Education to Peace in the Family and in a Multicultural Environment"). The panelists were Christof Meier (leader promoting integration in the city of Zurich), Monika Eishuku Leibundgut (Zen Dojo Zurich), Noëmie Komagata (Youth leader FFWPU Switzerland),

Chantal Chételat Komagata (General Secretary of UPF Switzerland), Lisette Müller-Jaag and Carolyn Handschin-Moser (Director for the UN office WFP).

Each panelist shared about their thoughts about the topic and the panel concluded with a Q&A session.

Afterwards, a Water Ceremony for Freedom and Peace was conducted. A representative from each main world religion, political, state and civil societal standing and UNO came up to the front and held a jar containing water. In turns, they poured their jar of water into a chalice symbolizing the unity of each religion, faith and political standing. This ceremonial gesture is reminiscent of making a promise to uphold their mission for promoting peace.

The ceremony was followed by some musical performances given by Hitomi Kutsuzawa and Kotaro Nishishita, who sang and played guitar, respectively. The piece they performed was a tribute to the victims of the tsunami disasters in Japan. Mélanie Komagata performed “Claire de Lune” with her flute. The first half of the festival concluded with all the participants singing together “One Family Under God”. For the second part of the festival, everyone gathered outside of the Volkshaus, on the Helvetiaplatz. Each person received a balloon for the march. Again, people representing the main world religions held a dove in their hands and in unison, released the birds while yelling out peace. The festival kicked off again with the band Arnold y sus Azabaches playing a few songs from their album, Olivia Handschin with a song and Esteban with a thrilling guitar-picking performance.

Then participants marched onto the street, holding the festival banner, balloons and posters of various peace and philosophical figures. As they were marching, with the assistance from Zurich police, they chanted different songs on peace, love and unity.

The group ended up in Werdmühleplatz and gathered around as the Buddhist monk Bhante Anurudha recited a sutra in both German and original language.

To commemorate the completion of the Family and Peace Festival, the balloons were released into the air in unison and a group photo was taken.

