

UPF Bridge of Peace between the Czech Republic and Russia

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FFWPU NER: The international event Bridge of Peace "Czech Republic – Russia" scheduled within the general theme "Ways to forgiveness and reconciliation" with a purpose of healing historical wounds and building better relations between our countries, took place at the UPF HQ in Prague on October 24 ~28, 2014. There were altogether 50 participants.

We feel this Bridge of Peace program was only the beginning. Still many things need to be healed and restored. That is why we really want to continue such programs on the way of building One Family under God.



The program was initiated by WFWP chapters of Czech Republic and Russia. Because of the events in 1968 when the states of the Warsaw Pact sent tanks to Prague, a great many representatives of the intellectual elite had to immigrate to other countries. Therefore, many Czech people nursed a deep grudge against Russia. Eleven people came from Moscow and St. Petersburg to take part in the Bridge of Peace with sincere motivation to heal historical wounds. Among them were film directors, honored artists of Russia, writers, honored workers of culture, and University professors. Guests from Russia were deeply moved by amazingly warm welcome on the side of the Czech WFWP.

During the Bridge of Peace program, it became clear that the Russian people felt deep compassion for Czech people who suffered from the Communist regime, because many Russian families also suffered a lot from repressions during the soviet period. Moreover, when Russian participants sincerely and with tears apologized for the pain that the Soviet Union caused the Czech people, the resentment was broken and we could really shed tears of reconciliation together. One woman, member of the Czech WFWP, was born in 1968; she harbored so much pain and resentment in her heart that she even felt reluctant to participate in the Bridge of Peace. But after the event she shared: "Now my Czech heart has really been liberated."

The Czech and Russian participants laid flowers to the memorial of Russian soldiers who lost their lives

while liberating Prague from fascism and to the memorial of the Czech people who lost their lives during the events of 1968. Women of both nations prayed together in tears. We also held a beautiful family night with accordion. Czech and Russian women were happy to sing and dance together.

Doubtless, this Bridge of Peace program was only the beginning. Many more things need to be healed and restored. That is why we really want to go on with such programs aimed at building the One Family under God.