

Peace Memorial Ceremony in Volgograd – 6th August 2014

On August 6, 1945, the first nuclear explosion in the history of humankind sounded in the sky above Hiroshima, taking the lives of 160 thousand civilians. Traditionally, on this day Volgograd, a twin-city of Hiroshima, hosts a memorial ceremony which unites honorary citizens, city officials, young people and enthusiasts of peace movement in general.

69 years after the bombing, the Peace Bell – an exact copy of the original bell in Hiroshima – sounded really special, literally piercing the hearts with concern over the fragility of peace and human lives. This was remarked by all speakers who attended the event in the museum-panorama “The Battle of Stalingrad”.

Volgograd Mayor **Andrey Kosolapov** emphasized, ‘Historic memory speaks louder than any words about the absolute necessity to prohibit nuclear weapons. On this, we are totally at one with the population of the Japanese city. I hope sincerely that in today’s uneasy world we will still have enough wisdom not to repeat this terrible mistake.’

Yuri Starovatykh, an honorary citizen of both Volgograd and Hiroshima, stated, ‘The movers and shakers of the planet are enjoying a unipolar world, literally pushing the international community towards the new war. It’s at this time that we shall raise our voices in front of all types of audiences, urging the good and the great to take a closer look at the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, because these lessons must lead us to moderation.’

Volgograd, as the founding city of international twinning movement and people’s diplomacy, pursues the traditions of peace cementation. Today, students and pupils of the city are among the most active promoters of peace, and for this ceremony they prepared reports about Hiroshima.

Ekaterina Ionova, secretary of the “Volgograd-Hiroshima” Friendship Society, delivered a presentation about the nuclear bombing and its appearances in mass culture. ‘It’s scary even to talk about what happened on that day,’ she said in her interview. ‘The movie I mentioned – “Barefoot Gen” is focused on the explosion itself. People with charred skin. Terrifying. God forbid it should happen again.’

Apart from the usual participants, the ceremony was attended by youths from Germany and Cyprus who came to Volgograd on an international exchange program. **Asaf Dunder** (Cologne, Germany) admitted that he had learned much during the event, ‘Of course, in Germany, we know about this tragedy, and we’ve heard about it on TV, but there are no such memorial events. This day has made me think more responsibly about what had happened many years ago.’

Video reports about the event (in Russian):

http://ahtubatv.ru/news/kolokol_mira_vnov_o_zhertvah_vzryiva_v_hirosime

<http://www.1vtv.tv/news/obshchestvo/2012614/>

