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Press release: Critic of psychiatry is awarded the honorary doctoral degree

Honorary Doctorate for Peter Lehmann

Anyone who pays attention to human rights violations in psychiatry, to the movement of users and survivors of psychiatry, and to alternatives beyond psychiatry will invariably encounter the name Peter Lehmann.

The certified social-pedagogist, born in 1950 in Calw (Black Forest, Germany), personally experienced involuntary psychiatric detention and treatment in the 1970s, and has worked for the rights of psychiatric patients and their world-wide networking for the past 30 years. He was a founding member of the European Network of (ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry (ENUSP), of PSYCHEX (Switzerland) and of the Runaway-house Berlin, among many other organisations. Currently, he is ENUSP board member for the North-East European region. Based on experiential knowledge, his books, such as *Coming off Psychiatric Drugs* and *Alternatives beyond Psychiatry,* describe current self-help possibilities for individuals experiencing madness, as well as the risks and harms of psychiatric drugs and electroshock, alternatives beyond psychiatry, and strategies toward implementing humane treatment.

In acknowledgment of his "exceptional scientific and humanitarian contribution to the rights of the people with psychiatric experience," the School of Psychology of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, decided unanimously to award him the Honorary Doctoral Degree. The ceremony will take place on 28th September 2010 at 12 a.m. at the Aristotle University; on 5 p.m. the **international congress "Determing our own future: The way forward for all European users and survivors of psychiatry"** will start, organised by ENUSP, Mental Health Europe, The Panhellenic Committee of (ex-) Users and Survivors of Psychiatry and The School of Psychology and the Self-Help Promotion Programme of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Peter Lehmann is the first survivor of psychiatry anywhere in the world to be honored with an Honorary Doctoral Degree for pioneering achievements within the realm of humanistic anti-psychiatry. The award was initiated by Prof. Kostas Bairaktaris from Aristotle University. Since the end of the 1970s, Bairaktaris has played a key role for many years in dismantling the scandalous psychiatric prison on the Island of Leros, and in beginning the process of de-institutionalisation from the state-run psychiatric facility of Thessaloniki in the mid-1980s. Prof. Bairaktaris is certain that the tribute to Peter Lehmann, which he initiated, will stand as a symbol for the growing significance of the international self-help movement of users and survivors of psychiatry and other socially marginalized individuals.

For more information about the conference see www.enusp.org/events, for more information about Peter Lehmann see www.peter-lehmann.de/inter or contact him still today directly: Peter Lehmann, Zabel-Krüger-Damm 183, 13469 Berlin, Germany, Tel. +49 / 30 / 85963706, Fax +49 / 30 / 40398752, mail@peter-lehmann.de

Kind regards

M. E. Nettle

Chair of ENUSP

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