"Think Peace into Existence"

Austrian Peace Thinkers and Peace Activists since WWII

English author and novelist Virginia Woolf was thinking of the possibilities of peace as she was about to hide herself in an air raid shelter during a Nazi bombing raid on London in the darkest period of World War II. In her book Thoughts on Peace in an Air Raid, published in 1940, she uses the remarkable expression: “think peace into existence.” She knew peace should first be established in our soul to make it more than ‘negative peace’ meaning only the lack of war.

Austria is proud to have a long list of outstanding personalities whose dedication to peace, the way Virginia Woolf saw it, is exemplary. Let us just think of Bertha von Suttner, founder of the Austrian Peace Association (Österreichischen Friedensgesellschaft) and the first woman who was awarded the Noble Peace Prize, of Alfred Hermann Fried, Suttner’s colleague and publisher of Waiting for Peace (Friedenswarte), or the socialist, feminist peace activist, Rosa Mayreder.

From „Never Again War!“ …

Similarly to these early pacifists, the personalities presented here developed, during and following World War II, different concepts and strategies concerning long lasting, sustainable peace. Many of them had to flee from the persecution of the Nazi regime and had to experience the bitterness of exile. These thinkers represent different social layers, differ in their views of the world, they belong to different generations and also have diverse professional background. However, they all share a common objective: to offer a radical alternative to the system and culture of war and violence. They have learned the lessons of the destruction of WWII and of the inhumanity of the Holocaust. That is why they dedicated their life to the conception of „Never Again Racism and War!“ Due to their cosmopolitan spirit, however, only thinking of peace did not satisfy them. In their own way, they rather turned towards practice to overcome resistances and defy antagonism. It was these efforts that made them internationally recognized and turned most of them active pioneers of peace also worldwide.

… to building peace

In their own indirect or very direct way, these personalities have all contributed to the development of peace movements, peace education and peace research in Austria. Thus, it is all of them, not only the founder, Gerald Mader, who can be looked upon as ‘godfathers and godmother’ of the Schlaining Peace Centre (”Peace Castle”). Their optimism, vigour, resilience and their love for peace can still set us an example.

The lady and gentlemen portrayed here are only a small selection of the thinkers who would deserve to be honoured. The present exhibition is only a beginning. It should be expanded step by step so that the whole spectrum of peace pioneers can be presented to the visitors.

In this first exhibition, the work of Hermann Broch (1886-1951), Hans Thirring (1888-1976), Robert Jungk (1913-1994), Friedrich Heer (1916-1983), Gerald Mader (* 1926), Herbert C. Kelman (* 1927) and Hildegard Goss-Mayr (* 1930) are portrayed.

The concept of and texts for this part of the exhibition are by Werner Wintersteiner
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Hermann Broch
A poet and philosopher, forerunner of contemporary Peace Research

»We could see that war was but a senseless and bloody confrontation of contradictory value systems in which the parties aimed at total alienation. However, the process of the fragmentation, detachment and destruction of values was not at all softened, but rather intensified, by peace in Central Europe.«

(An Autobiography as a Work Plan)
LIFE:

Hermann Broch, born in a Jewish family of factory owners in Vienna, had worked as the managing director of his father’s company till his age of 41 while being active also as a writer. After selling the company, he dedicated his whole life entirely to scientific and literary work. He studied mathematics, philosophy and psychology. Following the German occupation of Austria in 1938, he was arrested by the Gestapo. Due to the intervention of James Joyce, he succeeded in emigrating to the USA. He worked there, in New Haven, as an Honorary Lecturer of Yale University for the rest of his life. In his poems and work as a political scientist, he focused on issues of democracy, human rights and peace.

PEACE EFFORTS:

• Throughout his entire life, Broch was in search of a new ethics. His artistic and scientific work is centred around the “loss of values.” His essay Disintegration of Values (Zerfall der Werte) is integrated in the third volume of his trilogy of novels – The Somnambulist (Die Schlafwandler).

• Broch’s theory in which he looks upon democracy as a system of values and his studies in psychology on the seducibility of the masses can be considered as his response to the advance of national socialism and fascism in Europe. The more the catastrophe caused by the national socialist and fascist dictatorships as well by the impending World War is visible, the more Broch shifts over from his literary activity to journalism and political engagement. In 1937, he completes his Resolution for the League of Nations (Völkerbund-Resolution) in which he articulates his initiatives concerning the restructuring of the international organisation to enable it to be an even stronger instrument for peace and against the advancing of fascism. In 1938-1939, his work The Theory of Democracy (Theorie der Demokratie) is published. In 1940, he is working on A Manifesto on World Democracy (Manifest über Welt-Demokratie) parallel with The City of Man. In his essay Comments on the Utopia of an »International Bill of Rights and Responsibilities« (Bemerkungen zur Utopie einer »International Bill of Rights and Responsibilities«), published in 1946, he summarises his human rights programme drafted much before the war. In 1939 and 1941 his Theory of Mass Hysteria (Massenwahntheorie) is published which is considered to be another key stone of his intellectual life work.

• At the end of the war, Broch developed some suggestions also concerning higher education: Remarks to the Idea of an ‘International University’- Why it is needed and how it can be established (Bemerkungen zum Projekt einer ,International University’, ihrer Notwendigkeit und ihren Möglichkeiten) and The Philosophical Tasks of an International Academy (1946) (Philosophische Aufgaben einer Internationalen Akademie). In Kern, Broch urges the foundation of an “international university” which should be established through a close cooperation between three institutions: a research institute, that is an International Academy, an international educational institution and a department with the task to disseminate the results. It is historically unique that it is the cause of peace that Broch identified as the major task of this complex university. He intended to establish an institute, “which, as a research institute, serves as an armoury for the weapons of peace, and, as an education institution, provides an opportunity for practicing their implementation.” His ideas and suggestions set the ground for tasks and objectives for peace research which are still up-to-date and have not been realised yet.
»It is a tragedy of global consequences that now, when we are on the threshold of the greatest act in world history, that is the final abolition of the barbaric nonsense of wars, none of the world powers muster the courage to take on a temporary short-term threat, which may then lead to a status of the world that would correspond to the dignity of a human race having left behind the state of a predator.«

(From the author’s scientific heritage)
LIFE:

Hans Thirring was a Professor and Member of Board of the Institute for Theoretical Physics of Vienna University. His most outstanding scientific achievement was his contribution to the general theory of relativity in 1918. This Lense-Thirring Effect was proved empirically in 2004. He was also active as an inventor. In the 1920s, he developed a process for the sound film using Thirring selenium cells, which also form the basis for today's photoelectric sensors, alarm systems and sensors. One of his especially interesting invention was the Thirring Coat, a gown which makes it possible for the skiers to evenly float over the slope. As a result of his anti-fascist attitude and his research related to the “Jewish” theory of relativity, in 1938, following the “Anschluss” by the Nazis, he was forced to retire. It was this time when he wrote his two-volume main philosophical work Homo Sapiens in which he presented the journey “from nationalism to world citizenship.” He was allowed to continue his work at Vienna University only in 1946. As the first scientist in the world, in 1946, he published his standard work The History of the Nuclear Bomb (Die Geschichte der Atombombe) in which he already forecast the construction of the hydrogen bomb. After that, he dedicated all his energy to the fight for disarmament and peace.

PEACE EFFORTS:

• Militarism and war had been regarded by Thirring since his youth as a „stain of civilization.“ To eradicate them, though a physicist, he turned to psychology and politics.

• By publishing his book Nuclear War and World Politics (Atomkrieg und Weltpolitik) in 1948, Thirring clearly identifies himself as a peace activist. In this capacity of his, he does not only consider the technical, but also the political dimensions of the bomb.

• For a short time, he was a member of the World Peace Council, but, following the invasion of South Korea, he resigned no to be obliged to participate in the east-west conflict representing one side only.

• As the only scientist from a German speaking country invited to the first Pugwash Conference organized in Canada in 1957, he became a co-founder of an association of the same name incorporating natural scientist who warn of the dangers of nuclear armament. He brings the Pugwash conferences to Austria two times contributing to the dissemination of the idea of peace including both ideological sides of the Cold War.

• As an MP supported by the Austrian Socialist Party (SPÖ) (not being a member of the party himself), he composed the memorandum More Security without Weapons (Mehr Sicherheit ohne Waffen) in 1963. This so-called Thirring Plan calls for the unilateral disarmament of Austria. According to it, the federal army should be dissolved and the borders should be guarded by UN soldiers. The neutrality of Austria, in this way, should give an impulse for worldwide disarmament and outlawing of the wars. This most controversial plan stirred waters intensively in the Austrian Parliament, however, its author was nominated for the Noble Peace Prize for it two times.
»If, with all my knowledge of the seriousness of the situation of the world, I still consider a change for the better to be possible, then this hope is based above all on such processes of human change that shake shocked people more and more, and make the disappointed make plans.«

Humanquake (Menschenbeben)
Robert Jungk (born Robert Baum) was an author, journalist, political activist and one of the first futurologists. In 1986, Jungk received the Right Livelihood Award, the „Alternative Nobel Prize“, for his life’s work.

In 1933, Jungk, a Jewish antifascist, emigrated to Paris and later to Switzerland. During the World War he worked for Swiss newspapers under various pseudonyms and was despaired to see that no one would publish his warnings of the looming mass murder of Jews in Nazi Germany. After 1945, he lived in Paris and in the USA. In 1957, he moved with his wife Ruth to Austria and finally settled in Salzburg. He addressed nuclear threat already at an early stage. In his first book The Future Has Already Begun (Die Zukunft hat schon begonnen [1952]), which suddenly made him famous, he reported on American armament laboratories, secret nuclear facilities and nuclear weapons tests. For his second book, Brighter Than a Thousand Suns (Heller als tausend Sonnen [1956]), he interviewed the inventors of the atomic bomb, in his third, Radiating Ashes (Strahlen aus der Asche [1958]), he was the first western journalist to let the radiation victims in Hiroshima speak for themselves.

But Jungk also sharply criticized the subjugation of all nature to the logic of profit. It was especially in his book The Atomic State (Der Atomstaat [1977]) in which he warned of the political dangers of the „peaceful use“ of nuclear energy, by which he also created a new, now commonly used term. Jungk, so to speak, „invented“ the profession of a scientist-journalist, who explains the findings of his research in a generally understandable way and discusses their political consequences. Thus, he became one of the most important pioneers of the international environmental and peace movement. In 1985, he founded the Robert Jungk Library for Future Studies in Salzburg. He ran in the presidential election in Austria in 1992 as a candidate for the Greens.

PEACE EFFORTS:

• Robert Jungk was an internationally highly respected admonisher against nuclear hazards, belief in technology and feasibility. He personally stood up for what he demanded in his journalism. That is why, in the 1960s, he became one of the founders of the Austrian Easter March movement against nuclear weapons in the East and the West (along with Günther Anders and Friedrich Heer).

• „The apocalypse in mind, Robert Jungk remained a daring optimist.“ (Karl-Markus Gauss). He saw the future as an open, configurable space, therefore he spoke of „the futures“ in plural and gave the impetus for a critical future research.

• His motto was „Make sufferers involved.“ Everyone should be able to decide on future developments. For this, he invented the Workshops of the Future (Zukunftswerkstätten), a procedure to enable as many people as possible to participate in politics. How important this was to him, can be seen even in the title of some of his publications: Humanquake (Menschenbeben), The Uprising against the Unbearable (Der Aufstand gegen das Unerträgliche), And Water Breaks the Stone (Und Wasser bricht den Stein) or The Catalog of Hope (Katalog der Hoffnung).
»All human hostilities are, in the strict sense of the word, family feuds, fratricidal wars and civil wars. That is why they incorporate so often murderous, fanatic, neurotic and hysterical elements.«

Encounter with the Enemy (Begegnung mit dem Feinde)
LIFE:

A determined opponent of National Socialism already as a student, Friedrich Heer was arrested soon after the occupation of Austria by Hitler in 1938. Having released from prison, he founded a small Catholic resistance group which he stayed in contact with also after his recruitment to the army. Following the war, he was editor of the weekly The Furrow (Die Furche) till 1961. Later he worked as the chief dramatic adviser at the Burgtheater in Vienna. In 1963, together with Günther Anders und Robert Jungk, he founded the Austrian Easter March movement against the nuclear arms race. As a historian, author and writer, he dedicated his entire scientific and publicist’s work against antisemitism, to a Christian-humanist Austria and Europe, as well as to peace. He was an intellectual and a visionary also highly acknowledged internationally and stayed in close exchange with the leading thinkers of his time. His intrepid criticism, rooted in his deep Christian conviction, of the Catholic Church and the reactionary tendencies in the society did not only bring him recognition but also hostility from some circles. He was denied a department at an Austrian university till the end of his life.

PEACE EFFORTS:

- Friedrich Heer is not appreciated only as a peace activist, but rather, and above all, as a peace thinker. As such, perhaps his reconstruction of Christian Europe in the spirit of humanity is not as outstanding as his harsh criticism against any form of Manichaeism which he describes as the »shadow« of European Christianity. His analysis of European wars of religion, especially in the context of the contemporary debates on Islam, is most up-to-date. Heer presents us that everything that Islamism is accused of today was historically also the characteristics of Christianity. As a true world citizen, he argues for a dialogue with Islam.

- For Heer peace means life that incorporates conflicts. He argues against the authoritarian and extremely violent models of closed peace such as Pax Romana, the peace of the Church of Rome, Pax Americana or Pax Sowjetica. Instead, he represents the concept of open peace which accepts conflicts »that we have to face in a complex system of the past-present-future. There is no conflict in the individual, in the nation, in the civilization which is not reinforced by certain elements, or nuclear explosive devices from our past.« Sunset and Daybreak. Contemporary Critical Considerations (Abendrot und Morgenröte. Zeitkritische Betrachtungen).

- Perhaps his greatest achievement for peace is his engagement towards »conversation of the enemies« which, in his view, starts in the inside of every person, with the split off and repressed elements of the own ego, then continues to the agonal but non-violent dialogue with political opponents and declared enemies.
» One of the central messages of the Holocaust, that I have concluded for myself, is that we must be extremely alert to any kind of attitude that handles and devalues the others primarily based on the category that they are classified in, and excludes them from their own moral community. «

*Dignity and Dehumanization: The Impact of the Holocaust on Central Themes of My Work*
Herbert C. Kelman, born in Vienna, had to flee with his family already as a child escaping from anti-Semitic Nazi persecution finding refuge in the USA. There, at Harvard University, he became one of the most renowned professors of Social Psychology and Ethics (Richard Clarke Cabot Professor of Social Ethics). He played an active role already in the early phase of the American anti-war and Civil Rights Movement. In 1946, he was arrested while participating in a demonstration, organized by one of the earliest Anti-Nuclear Movements in the USA, against nuclear tests at the Bikini Atoll. He had his first experiences in Conflict Transformation while fighting against racial discrimination in Baltimore. As a member of the Congress of Racial Equity (CORE), he applied the methods of non-violent resistance introduced by Gandhi. During the Korean War, he refused being enrolled in the army and it was only after some back and forth that he was recognized as a conscientious objector.

It was Herbert Kelman’s political engagement that turned him towards Peace Research. He started studies in Social Psychology to be more prepared professionally in his work for peace and justice.

PEACE EFFORTS:

• Today, Kelman is looked upon as a pioneer and founder of contemporary Peace Research. In 1952, as a young scientist, he organised the Research Exchange on the Prevention of War, from which the Journal of Conflict Resolution was developed later. It was one of the first forums for Peace Research internationally.

• His first significant research topics were conformism and obedience. They are in the focus of his book Crimes of Obedience with Lee Hamilton as a co-author. In this work he analyses the background of the public outrage in the US concerning the conviction of the offenders of the My Lai Massacre in the Vietnam War.

• Kelman has never considered himself to be a reserved scientist, but rather an intervening researcher, as well as a conflict transformer with a scientific education and a peace mediator; a kind of a scholar practitioner.

• His special contribution is the invention and development of a new form of unofficial diplomacy that he called interactive problem solving in the professional jargon. As part of the process, options for the solution are elaborated during preliminary, informal negotiations ("Track 2" discussions) involving key persons in the second line who have more or less a direct access to decisionmakers.

• Since the 1970s, Kelman’s focus has been mainly, though not exclusively, on the Middle East conflict. He played and is still playing a key role in the mediation process between the Israelis and the Arabs, in particular the Palestinians. In 1989 he contributed to the establishing of an unofficial contact between the PLO and Israel. With this he paved the road to the Oslo Accords. Today he is still active as an informal diplomat and mediator.
»We should not underestimate the subversive, revolutionary, at the same time liberating and healing power of non-violence. Has not truth revealed itself as the power of the poor? Is it not the case that peaceful solutions are being sought with intensity, while they should indeed be sought where deadly violence escalates?«

(How Enemies Become Friends) (Wie Feinde Freunde werden)
LIFE:

A daughter of Kaspar Mayr, one of the founders of the Austrian branch of the International Association for Reconciliation, she was engaged in non-violence already very early. It was this movement where she got acquainted with her would-be-husband, Jean Goss, a French peace activist. Together, the couple has set a whole series of extremely important activities which actually »changed the world« there and then.

In the 1950s, during the Cold War, Hildegard Goss-Mayr was active in an east-west dialogue. During the Second Vatican Council, she and her husband were working on putting the issue of world peace on the agenda and that it is included in the Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et spes. Since the early 1960s, the couple got in contact with liberation theology in different Latin American countries and established contacts with personalities such as Camillo Torres, Hélder Câmara, Paulo Evaristo Arns, António B. Fragoso or Oscar Romero. Building non-violent movements against poverty, oppression and dictatorial regimes was a courageous and dangerous enterprise. Hildegard Goss-Mayr and her husband were among the co-founders of Peace and Justice (Servicio Paz y Justicia - SERPAJ), a transnational human rights organization the first coordinator of which was Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, later a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

The work of Hildegard Goss-Mayr, receiving a number of awards, also had an important impact on the non-violent movement People-Power-Revolution in the Philippines in 1986, which toppled dictator Marcos' regime. The non-violent ecumenical movement in Madagascar, which succeeded in 1991 in the ousting of the dictator Ratsiraka, was inspired by the ideas and practices of the Austrian peace activist.

PEACE EFFORTS:

• Hildegard Goss-Mayr has put her entire life, as no one else, at the service of peace, justice and reconciliation. She has been involved in practical peace work since her youth, has achieved considerable successes and she has always reflected on and published these experiences soon after. Her work makes her one of the world’s leading exponents of active non-violence. The theologian Martin Arnold has characterized and analyzed her concept with the expression good will activity (Gütekraft).

• Hildegard Goss-Mayr has lectured in countless seminars and workshops. She was particularly involved in education and training work on active non-violence with victims, mostly in the global south.

• Her special commitment to peace can be characterized in the following three ways:
  – a strong spiritual anchorage of her peace thinking and peace practice in the Christian faith, from which she draws strength and inspiration;
  – her sharp, analytical and fact-based criticism of the system of political violence and of an unjust world economic order, which also includes criticism of the participation of the individual and that of the church hierarchy wherever they place themselves on the side of injustice;
  – and finally non-violence as a basic orientation as well as a practical method of social change.
»Peace is not only an objective, but also a way and process. It is not a terminal, not a boundary, but an open road that has no end. Due to the characteristics of the process, it can always run in the vicinity of peace only, as absolute peace can never be achieved in human society. Each stage in this process creates a new starting position.«

(From Utopia to Reality. Peace Work in Stadtschlaining. Retrospection and Reflections)
(Von der Utopie zur Wirklichkeit. Friedensarbeit in Stadtschlaining. Rückschau und Reflexion)
LIFE:
A lawyer by profession, Gerald Mader started his career as a company lawyer at the Workers’ Chamber of the Province of Burgenland. Later he worked in his profession as a private attorney. Between 1971 and 1984, he held a position in the Provincial Government of Burgenland as a Minister of Culture and Social Affairs, delegated by his party, the Austrian Social Democrats. During this period, he established cultural centres all over Burgenland and played an active role in the work of the Austrian League for Human Rights.
In 1982, he turned his ‘utopian idea’ into reality by founding, together with Hertha Firnberg, Austrian Federal Government Minister for Science in those days, the association Austrian Institute for Peace Research (Österreichisches Institut für Friedensforschung - ÖIF). In 1984, due to a disagreement with Theodor Kery, Governor of the Province of Burgenland, he resigned from his political positions and, “in the third era of his life”, focused his activities entirely on peace work. Between 1985 and 2011, Gerald Mader served as Managing President of the ÖIF, called, since 1992, the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution – ASPR (Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung). With a handful of staff members and with limited financial means only, but energized by great visions and supported by excellent connections, he managed here, in the small Burgenland community of Stadtchlaining, to build a centre for meetings, trainings and research for the cause of peace gaining international recognition. The first step, however, was the reconstruction of the partially damaged castle together with the development of the necessary infrastructure to make it suitable to function as an international Conference Centre. In 1988, together with 40 NGOs, he founded the European University Center for Peace Studies (EPU) which, soon after, started to offer courses in English. The EPU operated as a Private University between 2010 and 2014. For their activities, the ASPR and the EPU were awarded a UNESCO Prize for Peace Education in 1995.
With all these activities, Gerald Mader did not only deliver a great service to peace work, but he also contributed to a large extent to the regional development of the Province of Burgenland.

PEACE EFFORTS:
• Gerald Mader did not simply establish a Peace Institute, but he was the founder of the Peace Institute in Austria. For many, it was him who made it clear for the first time how necessary scientific, publishing and educational efforts for peace are. Through his own example he also demonstrated that it is possible.

• The ASPR is one of the few institutes in Austria which provide an example of what active neutrality politics can or rather could be. In this way, the work of Gerald Mader could also be considered as an essential contribution to an active foreign policy focusing on peace.

• Through the foundation of the European Peace University, even if it could not operate much longer, Gerald Mader managed to shake up the academic circles in Austria. This initiative inspired and encouraged all the efforts that aimed to establish Peace Research at the universities.

• The foundation of the Schlaining Peace Centre („Peace Castle“) is of outstanding European and even of global importance. With its programmes in German and English, it has become one of the international centres of peace activities providing a stage for peace researchers and peace activists of the civil society as well as serving as a venue for meetings and also as a reference point.