

# A PEACE VISIONARY HAS PASSED AWAY

Obituary for Gerald Mader (April 1, 1926 – May 6, 2019)

## **Gerald Mader was a peace visionary.**

Through his lifetime achievement, the founding of the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in 1982, Gerald Mader substantially shaped the field of peace studies and peace work in Austria and well beyond. Everything he did, he did with passion and profound conviction. His dedication was that of a committed peace visionary.

## **Gerald Mader was a great thinker.**

Be it through questioning, contesting, conducting critical research and engaging with bold theories, his innovative and pioneering spirit distinguished him and brought many great thinkers to Schlaining to engage in a critical dialogue about the state of the world and the opportunities to promote peace.

## **Gerald Mader was a motivator.**

Many peace activists accompanied him in his engagement for peace. He had the gift of providing anyone with enough

liberty to achieve self-actualization while staying committed to his vision of a peaceful world. He saw and supported potential in people. He thereby had a substantial impact on the lives and works of many peace scholars in Austria and beyond.

## **Gerald Mader was a fighter.**

“This does not work” was never an excuse. His peace projects frequently seemed to have reached their limits and some situations appeared almost hopeless. But Gerald understood the search for a way out and of new possibilities,

and thus always found a way to overcome the boundaries of the impossible.

## **Gerald Mader was a role model.**

He taught us what it means to stand up for the realization of an utopia. Despite all adversities, he always remained cheerful and never seized to remind us with a wink that the circle can be squared, if only we were willing to try.

Gerald Mader was and will continue to be a part of the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Schlaining. Together with his wife, Gertrud (+2017), and many fellow peace advocates, he succeeded in manifesting his vision. Till the end, he had been closely following new developments at the ASPR and remained interested in the national and international political landscape. Gerald never ceased his efforts to promote his vision of a peaceful world, one that we will continue to share on his behalf through our work.

Founder and longstanding President of the Peace Centre in Schlaining, Dr Gerald Mader, passed away on May 6th, 2019 at the age of 94.

What can we say about this exceptional man, who has had such an immense impact on so many of us?



Dr. Gerald Mader

**Gerald Mader in “Von der Utopie zur Wirklichkeit. Friedensarbeit in Stadtschlaining (“From Utopia to Reality. Peace Practice in Stadtschlaining.”) – Review and Reflection, 2016**

We can only achieve changes within our ruling political sphere in Europe if we succeed in establishing a general rethinking with the support from the civil society. Such change in thinking means,

- Moving away from friend/foe paradigm towards a global cooperation and solidarity between all nations and cultures;
- Moving away from competitive thinking of the neoliberal ideology towards community spirit, social justice and ethics of enlightenment;
- Moving away from Realpolitik perpetuated by national interests towards a cosmopolitan consciousness;
- Moving away from hierarchical power politics towards more self-restraint, mitigation and a sense of humility.

**Biography of Dr Gerald Mader**

Gerald Mader was born on April 1st, 1926 in Payerbach. After the end of the Second World War, he began his studies at the University of Vienna. He graduated in 1948 with a Doctor of Jurisprudence and commenced his first profession as a solicitor for the federal Chamber of Labour in the state of Burgenland from 1949 until 1951. Afterwards he worked as a lawyer in Mattersburg until 1971, while pursuing his duty as the Vice-President of the Austrian League for Human Rights.

Gerald Mader was the initiator and first Chairman of the Adult Education Institute of Burgenland (Volkshochschule Burgenland) as well as the Association of Cultural Centres in Burgenland. From 1966 to 1989, he was the founding Chairman of the Alliance of Social-Democratic Academics, Intellectuals and Artists in Burgenland. He further acted as a constitutional expert for the federal bureau of the Social Democratic party.

In 1971, Gerald Mader became State Minister for Culture, Health and Social Affairs and remained part of the state government of Burgenland until 1984. In this capacity he contributed to the drafting of the new Burgenland State Constitution and to the establishment of important cultural centres.

In 1982, Gerald Mader founded the Institute for Peace Studies and Peace Education (today, the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution) at Schlaining Castle, where he held the position of President and then Honorary President until 2011. He was also the President of the Austrian commission for UNESCO. On Mader’s initiative, the UNESCO General Conference agreed to establish a “European University Centre for Peace Studies (EPU)” in Stadtschlaining in 1990. In 2000, he organized the Provincial

Exhibition “From a Cult of Violence to a Culture of Peace” for the state of Burgenland, which was later converted into a permanent museum for peace at the castle.



Gerald Mader in the courtyard of Schlaining Castle –through his achievements, it became renown internationally as the Peace Castle