



Franz Deutsch

Peace Leaflets A Starting point for Dialogue

MIGRATING BIRDS OF THE FUTURE

"Migrating Birds of the Future" is an image created by the artist Friedrich Heer. It is inspired by the peace activist Bertha von Suttner who once wrote:

".....the battles of the future can no longer be fought with suicidal weapons such as those employed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The future demands that conflict be seen through. In some cases they will be resolved, in others not..."

A small number of "migrating birds of the future" have now demonstrated that this is amply true. At the end of von Suttner's novel, "Lay Down Your Arms," are the following words: "As long as we cling to the past, we shall remain savages." This statement, written in the final days of the 19th century caused some controversy. However, this did not stop Bertha von Suttner from repeating it. The words would stir up sentiments even today.

There is, in the Peace Museum in Wolfsegg, a richly carved old German chair. On it are top hat, a pair of kid gloves, and a cane with a silver-knob. Some visitors think these objects belong to a magician. I often use the occasion to say, "I wish it were that simple, to produce peace in a peace museum by magic." The display is also accompanied by another quote from Bertha von Suttner from 1904:

"...and the supporters of the old system, of the status quo, shall have a mighty ally in the natural law of indolence, in inertia, which is inherent to all things as if it were a protection against the danger of vanishing. Therefore, it is not an easy struggle which lies ahead of pacifism"

Surely, Bertha von Suttner did not mean to condemn the "old times," but rather the effects of traditional thinking that employed and warped such concepts as God, fatherland, country, truthfulness, honor and heroism to the detriment of others.

In "Lay Down Your Arms", the character Rudolf proposes the following toast to celebrate the birth of a child, "...To the future! Let us temper ourselves for the tasks it will bring! Let us not try as the hackneyed saying goes, to prove worthy in the eyes of our forefathers. No. Let us be worthy to our grandsons!"

**ERSTES ÖSTERREICHISCHES FRIEDENSMUSEUM
FIRST AUSTRIAN PEACE MUSEUM**



Bertha von Suttner has left us a legacy and a challenge: “Before the 20th century ends, human society shall have eliminated its greatest scourge: war as a legal institution.”

Time is running out and we have not yet turned this vision into reality...

Note: A memorial hour was held at the Peace Museum Wolfsegg on August 15, 1993, in honor of Bertha von Suttner (the 150th anniversary of her birth). A display case was also dedicated to this champion of peace.