

Project Erasmus+:



Biographies

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Anis Hidayah born 1976



Together with other activists, Anis Hidayah founded the NGO "Migrant Care", which campaigns for the rights of migrant workers in Indonesia. "Migrant Care" has been able to put pressure on the Indonesian government to enact laws for better working conditions for migrant workers. Another aspect of the work of "Migrant Care" includes providing counseling to women who have experienced violence or abuse, such as forced labor, as a result of their migrant work. Through public relations and lobbying, Hidayah has become a prominent advocate for migrant workers' rights.

Anna Hackl born 1931



Anna Hackl, née Langthaler, together with her family gave shelter to two escaped concentration camp prisoners during the inhumane "Mühlviertel Hare Hunt" during the National Socialist era. This saved the lives of the two prisoners imprisoned as Soviet prisoners of war in the Mauthausen concentration camp, Mikhail Rybchinky and Nikolai Zimkalo. The family hid the two men on their farm in Winden (municipality of Schwertberg) and they were not betrayed even when the SS and Volkssturm investigated the farm several times. Anna Hackl, who was 14 years old at the time, also accepted the honors for her late mother, Anna Langthaler, and visits schools every year to tell the young people about the horrors and difficulties of that time, and at the same time also to express admonishing words of "Stay alert!" to them.

Greta Thunberg born 2003



Greta Thunberg is part of the international climate protection movement "Fridays for Future" (FFF). The movement grew out of Friday school strikes that Thunberg helped initiate in Sweden. At numerous conferences and demonstrations, Thunberg warned of the consequences of a climate catastrophe. Choosing civil disobedience as a means, Thunberg argues that emissions in the countries of the Global North must be reduced faster than planned. These, she argues, are also in debt to countries in the Global South, which are least to blame for climate change and suffer the most from it.

Hans Maršálek (1914-2011)



Maršálek was an Austrian typesetter, political activist, and criminal investigator. In 1936, Maršálek joined the Red Aid as a member of the Socialist Workers' Youth and fought against the fascist-Catholic Austrofascism in the underground of Vienna. Arrested by the Gestapo in Prague in the spring of 1941, he was transferred to the Mauthausen concentration camp in September 1942. There, Maršálek played a leading role in organizing political resistance among the prisoners and orchestrated acts of sabotage related to armament production and prisoner transfers. From 1964 until his retirement in 1976, he served as the director of the Mauthausen Memorial and Museum.

Anna Pointner 1900-1991



Anna Pointner came from a humble background, was politically active and campaigned for social causes in the municipal committee. During the Nazi era, she made contact with young Spanish concentration camp prisoners who marched past her house every day on their way to the quarry of a local company. She had the youngsters listen to French and Spanish news on the radio, smuggling reports of it into the concentration camp. Before the end of the war, Anna Pointner hid numerous SS photo negatives smuggled out of the concentration camp, which became important evidence of Nazi crimes.

Anna Strasser 1921-2010



Anna Strasser was an Austrian resistance fighter against the Nazis. Working as an accountant in the Mauthausen camp community, she secretly helped concentration camp prisoners by providing them with medicine and food. In 1942, she was transferred to the Nibelungenwerk in St. Valentin, where she also secretly provided assistance to forced laborers. This led to her arrest for high treason in the fall of 1944, whereupon she was sent to the Oberlansendorf labor education camp and, after a serious illness, was released on April 1, 1945.

Anne Frank 1929-1945



The German-Jewish Anne Frank, born Anneliese Marie Frank, emigrated from Frankfurt to the Netherlands in 1934 with her parents and her sister Margot to escape persecution by the National Socialists. The family lived in the Netherlands from July 1942 in a hidden back house in Amsterdam, where Anne Frank recorded her personal experiences, the events in hiding and her thoughts on many subjects in the form of letters to her imaginary friend Kitty. The records begin a month before the family moves into hiding and end on 1 August 1944, a few days before the arrest and deportation to concentration camps of the hiding families and their helpers. Anne Frank and her sister Margot die in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp shortly before the end of the war. Her father Otto Frank survived the Auschwitz concentration camp and released the manuscript, which had been kept by Miep Gies, a friend of the family, for publication. In 1947, the original Dutch version of the historical document was published under the title "Het Achterhuis" (literally "The Back House"). The first German edition was published as "Tagebuch der Anne Frank" (Diary of Anne Frank) in March 1955. Anne Frank is regarded as a symbolic figure against the inhumanity of genocide during the National Socialist era.

Anton Afritsch, 1873-1924



Founder of the Austrian "Kinderfreunde"

Born the son of a factory worker, Anton Afritsch first learned the carpenter's trade. After moving to Graz, he made contact with the social democrats and became editor of the party newspaper "Arbeiterwillen". His love of children gave him the idea of founding a proletarian organisation to look after children.

On 26 February 1908 the official founding meeting of the workers' association Kinderfreunde took place in Graz. Within a few years the organisation spread throughout Austria. The Anton Afritsch Children's Village near Graz and Afritschgasse in Vienna's 22nd district were named after the founder of the Kinderfreunde.

Carola Rackete born 1988



Carola Rackete campaigns as a captain for the rescue of refugees at sea. For the Berlin-based association Sea-Watch, she has repeatedly steered ships to rescue people from the Mediterranean. When Rackete wanted to call at the Italian port of Lampedusa in 2019 with 53 refugees coming from Libya on board, Italian authorities kept her waiting for weeks for permission. As a result, Rackete decided to dock at the port despite the outstanding permit. Arrested and charged for her actions, Rackete was acquitted in 2021.

Comandanta Ramona 1959-2006



Comandanta Ramona is the code name of a Mexican Zapatista fighter. She took a leading position in the "Zapatista Army of National Liberation", which advocates autonomous self-government for the indigenous population and against capitalist economic policies. With their way of life threatened by free trade agreements, the Zapatista movement demands a right to life and dignity, which they militantly assert. Ramona embodies a feminist role model for many indigenous women in the struggle for their rights.

Emma Goldman 1869-1940



Emma Goldman was a feminist anarchist who campaigned against poverty, capitalism and for workers' and women's rights in various arenas of social struggle. She published numerous writings, publicising the link between anarchist and feminist ideas: self-determined and solidary coexistence of people could not be lived without equal rights for women. Goldman gave lectures on contraception and workers' health, supported workers' strikes through speeches at demonstrations and condemned militarism as an instrument of oppression.

Sophie Magdalena Scholl (1921 - 1943) and Hans Fritz Scholl (1918 - 1943)



Together with their Munich psychology professor Kurt Huber and other students, the siblings founded the student resistance group "White Rose", which attempted to fight against the war and the National Socialist regime by distributing leaflets and calling for resistance. Other members included the students Christoph Probst, Alexander Schmorell and Willi Graf. During the distribution of leaflets at Munich University on 18 February 1943, Sophie and Hans Scholl were denounced, arrested and sentenced to death by the People's Court under the direction of Roland Freisler. Today, the "White Rose" and especially the Scholl siblings are regarded as important symbolic figures of resistance against National Socialism and stand for civil courage - not only in politics but also in everyday life.

Helena Kuchar 1906-1985



Helena Kuchar fought as a partisan against the Nazi regime. When the Nazis began the deportation of Slovenian Carinthians in 1942, she joined local partisan groups under the code name "Jelka". She provided them with food, clothing and information, was responsible for educational work among the population and part of the illegal local committee of Lepena. She used her farm as a refuge for partisans. After her second arrest in the course of a betrayal, she was tortured at Gestapo headquarters in Klagenfurt. Towards the end of the war, Kuchar was released and remained active against right-wing extremism after 1945.

Hermine Weinreb



Pedagogical visionary of the Kinderfreunde, 1862-1922

Hermine Weinreb came from a middle-class (???) family. Her parents prevented her from becoming a teacher. After the death of her husband, she joined the Kinderfreunde. In 1912 Hermine Weinreb set up a Kinderfreunde day-care centre on the Alsergrund in Vienna. Her idea of working closely with the district group of the Kinderfreunde Brigittenau to bring together the middle-class children of the Alsergrund with the proletarian children of the Brigittenau and in this way overcome social barriers was revolutionary. Hermine Weinreb led her children's group with completely new methods: The focus was no longer on authority and coercion, but on the principles of democratic self-administration and self-determination. In 2017, a greenspace in Vienna-Hernals was renamed Hermine Weinreb Park.

Hugo Lunardon 1893-1940



The post commander of the Dornbirn gendarmerie is an example of "fulfilment of duty" of a different kind: while his deputy sabotaged his work, Lunardon took action against the illegal Dornbirn National Socialists and the Vorarlberg SS in 1933-34. After the National Socialists seized power he was sent to a concentration camp, where he died in the quarry in March 1940. His wife fought a desperate battle for his life for two years.

Johann Gruber - Priest 1889-1944



Dr. Johann Gruber was a priest and committed reform pedagogue. As director of the Linz Institute for the Blind, he was arrested by the Gestapo in May 1938 because of his rejection of National Socialism and an alleged offence against morality, finally sentenced and transferred to the Gusen concentration camp in 1940. There he was responsible for archaeological excavations and for looking after a camp museum. He founded a secret camp school and used his position to develop an illegal aid organisation with which he saved the lives of several people. Gruber was cruelly murdered by camp commander Seidler in the Jourhaus on Good Friday, 7 April 1944. He was only fully rehabilitated by the Vienna Criminal Court in 2016.

Johanna Dohnal 1939-2010



Johanna Dohnal was Austria's first Minister for Women's Affairs. She was committed to the equality of women both within party structures (SPÖ) and in associations and NGOs. Her political achievements include the decriminalisation of abortions, equal treatment laws for the public service, and the anti-violence campaign to address domestic violence against women. Dohnal had to defend her feminist positions many times: The establishment of the first Vienna women's shelter was criticised not only by political opponents. In 1995, Dohnal was dismissed from her office as Minister for Women's Affairs against her will by Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky.

Kailash Satyarthi born 1954



Kailash Satyarthi received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, together with Malala Yousafzai (picture XY). He fights against child slavery in India and is active in several children's rights organisations. As Secretary General of the organisation "Bandhua Mukti Morcha", he campaigns against bonded labour. The organisation's central effort is to combat child slavery as a result of the children's parents being in debt. The organisation "Bachpan Bachao Andolan - Save the Childhood Movement", which Saryarthi co-founded, helped to raise public awareness of children's rights and to free numerous children from debt slavery.

Malala Yousafzai born 1997



Malala Yousafzai campaigns for children's rights, especially for the education of girls in Pakistan. At the age of 11, Yousafzai began publishing on a blog. There she reported on the violence and discrimination she experienced as a girl at the hands of the Pakistani Taliban. After Yousafzai gained prominence through her BBC-hosted blog, Taliban soldiers attempted to assassinate her. Yousafzai survived. In 2014, she became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for her commitment. Yousafzai has been a UN Messenger of Peace since 2017.

Marcel Callo (1921-1945)



Marcel Callo was a French Catholic youth worker who was beatified in 1987. At the age of 22, he was deported from France to Germany for forced labour and did not take the opportunity to escape because he was determined to help and proselytise. After being held in Gotha prison for five months, he was taken to the Mauthausen concentration camp. There he was put to work in the underground B8 Bergkristall aircraft factory in St. Georgen an der Gusen, where he died in KL Gusen II on 19 March 1945.

Nadia Murad, born in 1993.



Nadia Murad survived the Yazidi genocide in 2014. The militia of the Islamic State committed systematic persecution, murder, and enslavement of Yazidis living in Iraq, an ethnic and religious minority. Yazidi girls and women became victims of mass rape in the thousands, many of whom are still captive. Murad herself was raped and tortured during her captivity. After managing to escape to a refugee camp in the Kurdish border area, she was able to seek asylum in Germany through assistance programs. She publicly shared her experiences of violence and the Yazidi situation, and in 2016, she was appointed as the "UN Special Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking." In 2018, Murad received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Nelson Mandela 1918-2013



Nelson Mandela was a central figure in the battle against apartheid in South Africa. While "Nelson" was Mandela's British name, his father gave him the name "Rolihlahla". Mandela was repeatedly expelled or imprisoned from institutions such as his university for his activism. Because of his political efforts in the African National Congress "ANC - Youth League" for the rights and equality of black people, he was no longer allowed to leave South Africa - moreover, the National Congress was banned. After Mandela defied the order, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. Only after 26 years was he pardoned and elected the first black president. This enabled him to repeal racist laws of the apartheid regime.

Peter Kammerstätter 1911-1993



As a member of the Austrian Communist Party, Peter Kammerstätter resisted representatives of the Dollfuß government during the February 1934 fights in Linz. In September 1939 he was arrested and taken to Buchenwald concentration camp. He was released in 1940, but remained under strict surveillance. From 1945 Kammerstätter was actively involved in the reconstruction of the trade union movement, resigned from his position as KPÖ provincial secretary in 1964 and worked in a VÖEST group company until his retirement in 1971, where he was elected to the works council. From 1967 Kammerstätter collected material on the history of the workers' movement in Upper Austria, received the professional title of professor and became a consultant to the Upper Austrian provincial government.

Rina Chiarini 1909 – 1995



Anti-fascist and partisan from Empoli (Tuscany)

At the age of 11 she had to leave school to help support her family because her father, an anti-fascist, had been arrested. Soon she became involved with the "Red Aid" and later, at the time when the fascist regime was eliminating all parties, she joined the Italian Communist Party, which operated in a conspiratorial manner. Together with her husband Remo Scappini, she is active first in Milan and then in Genoa, where she adopts her fighting name "Clara". On 6 July 1944, she was arrested by the fascist police. She is interrogated for days and brutally tortured, yet she reveals nothing. In a trial she was sentenced to 24 years in prison, which she served first in Milan's San Vittore prison and then in the transit camp Bolzano-Gries. From there, Rina managed to escape in March 1945 together with a fellow prisoner and make her way to Milan, where they both participated in the preparations for the liberation of this region as well. After the war, Rina continued to be involved in the democratic and anti-fascist movement for peace and social justice. For her contribution to the anti-fascist resistance, she was awarded the Silver Medal for Bravery of the Italian Republic and the Golden Star of the Partisan Brigade "Garibaldine".

Rosa Parks 1913-2005



Rosa Parks campaigned for the rights of People of Colour (PoC) in the USA, the civil rights movement. After refusing to give up her seat on the bus for a white person, she was arrested and fined. On the day of her trial, Parks and other civil rights activists organised the "Montgomery Bus Boycott". PoCs were asked not to use public buses. In response to Parks' conviction, more bus boycotts were organised. A parallel court case in which four women of colour sued the city of Montgomery was decided in favour of the women. They refused to vacate their seats for white people (in front of Rosa Parks) and were also convicted. After the confirmation by the Supreme Court, segregation ("racial separation") in buses and schools had to be abolished.

Shirin Ebadi born 1947



Shirin Ebadi is an advocate for human rights in Iran. She worked as a lawyer and the first female judge in Iran's history. After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, she was removed from office and taught at the University of Tehran. Ebadi co-founded the Society for Protecting the Child's Rights in 1994 and another human rights centre in 2002. This offered legal support to opponents of the regime. Since 2009, Ebadi has been living in exile in Great Britain. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003.

Sussan Tahmasebi



Sussan Tahmasebi fights for women's rights in Iran. She is co-founder and chairperson of FEMENA, an organisation supporting feminist movements in the Middle East, North Africa (MENA) and Asia. Tahmasebi has been repeatedly arrested for her activism. For example, for the campaign she initiated, "One Million Signatures to Demand Legal Equality for Women in Iran."

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, born 1931



Adolfo Pérez Esquivel is dedicated to the promotion of non-violence and education for children and indigenous people in Latin America. In response to the military dictatorship in Argentina, an umbrella organization for human rights organizations was founded in 1968 ("Servicio Paz y Justicia"), in which Esquivel was active. There, as secretary general, he coordinated various human rights groups in Argentina and supported indigenous peoples and peasant women in social struggles through campaigns. After a lengthy imprisonment for his dissident efforts, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980.