

Executive Summary: Workshop II „Austrian Emigrant Scientists“ Residence of the Austrian Consul General Los Angeles 09/28/2002

Participants in alphabetic order

Florian Gstrein (Caltech)

Thomas Just (Austrian State Archives)

Ambassador Peter Moser (Austrian Embassy Washington DC)

Lynn Reitnouer (Crowell&Weedon)

Jorun Johns (CSU San Bernardino)

Moderator

Christoph Sonnlechner (UCLA)

Summary

We approached our assignment by first defining the term „Austrian Emigrant Scientist“ itself. We decided to restrict our discussion to Austrians who were forced to leave Austria prior, during or shortly after the Nazi rule, because of their race or religious, political or sexual orientation and who pursued research (academic and non-academic) before and/or after their emigration. This was followed by a general overview of existing Austrian contributions to this topic and by discussing possible future contributions under the leadership of ASCINA.

First, the participants of this workshop shared their knowledge and experiences regarding Austrian Emigrant Scientist. It turned out that several participants of this workshop have personal contacts to Austrians, who were expelled from Austria in 1938 and who pursued an academic career in the United States of America. Notably, Ambassador Moser and Lynn Reitnouer have the most promising personal contacts. For instance, Lynn Reitnouer offered his help in establishing a personal contact to Prof. Walter Kohn (UC Santa Barbara, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry 1998) and he offered to arrange a meeting between Florian Gstrein, Christoph Sonnlechner and Dr. Kohn.

Thomas Just from the Austrian State Archives is aware of archival data relating to Austrian Emigrant Scientists in the Austrian State Archives, which he offered to share with

ASCINA. Ambassador Moser pointed out, that a number of books have been published dealing with Austrian Scientists in exile (see attachments). Following Ambassador Moser's recommendation we will seek to establish contact with Prof. Dr. Thomas Albrich, Institut für Zeitgeschichte der Universität Innsbruck, who has been active in this field as a historian since the 1980's and we count on Ambassador Moser's help in establishing a contact to Dr Albrich to win him as a scientific advisor for our future activities. In her function as a book editor, Prof. Johns has personal contacts to a number of Austrian emigrants, who published their autobiographies through her publishing company. It remains to be seen how many of her clients fall into the category of emigrant scientists.

Our discussion then moved to future activities of ASCINA Pacific South, Since the number of people interested in making an active contribution is rather small, we seek collaboration with other ASCINA members nation wide. We will ask the Attaché for Science and Technology at the Austrian Embassy to coordinate these efforts and mediate promising contacts, although ASCINA Pacific South plans to keep the leading and shaping role in these activities.

As far as the organization of a symposium devoted to Austrian Emigrant Scientists is concerned, we want to initiate the following steps: (1) Coordination of activities with other regional ASCINA groups, (2) formation of a group of ASCINA members, which establishes contact to Austrian Emigrant scientists who are still alive, (3) formation of a scientific advisory board (with prominent researchers from the fields of history, German literature, history of science etc. like Profs. Albrich, Pfanner, Johns), to propose the structure and organizational details of the planned symposium, (4) contact with local organizations like the Skirball Center or the University of Judaism, which might serve as platform for a future event, (5) formation of a group of ASCINA members, who raises funds from both Austrian and US sources.

Names

Peter F. Drucker (Kontakt: Karl Battlogg)

Walter Kohn (Kontakt: Lynn Reitnouer)

Felix Kopstein (ASCINA member)

Fritz Redlich (Kontakt: Peter Moser)

John Ross (Kontakt: Florian Brody)

Books

- Gernot Heiß (Hrsg.), Willfähige Wissenschaft. Die Universität Wien 1938-1945 (= Österreichische Texte zur Gesellschaftskritik 43, Wien 1989).

- Ernest Wilder Spaulding, The quiet invaders. The story of the Austrian impact upon America (Wien 1968).

- Martin Krist, Vertreibungsschicksale. Jüdische Schüler eines Wiener Gymnasiums 1938 und ihre Lebenswege (2. Auflage Wien 2001).

- s. weiters die Publikationen von Thomas Albrich (Homepage des Inst. f. Zeitgeschichte Uni Innsbruck).