

2008 – EUROPE’S HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS
COMING TO TERMS WITH EUROPE’S TRAUMATIC PAST – AN INTERNATIONAL
COMPARISON
curated by Ruth Wodak

The Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue kindly invites to the panel discussion

**Commemoration:
Staging the Past or Critical Debate?**

Elazar Barkan (Columbia University), **Beate Klarsfeld** (Klarsfeld Foundation, Paris),
Oliver Rathkolb (University of Vienna), **Ruth Wodak** (Lancaster University)

Thursday| September 25, 2008 | 19.00 h

Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue, 1190 Vienna, Armbrustergasse 15

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The many functions of commemorating and commemoration events as well as the wide range of expectations directed towards such events will be discussed while focussing on ‘the Why?, the When?, the How?’, and their possible implications.

All societies have to come to terms with traumatic pasts, since all attempts at repressing/forgetting/tabooing them are bound to fail. Past events inevitably influence (visions of) the present and the future: People may deliberately distance themselves from certain events or actors or identify with them. They may try to find perpetrators and/or to name victims after the event. In any case, differing and competing narratives are put forward which (re)construct the past according to specific interests and agenda.

Elazar Barkan, Professor of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University, New York, and co-director of the University’s Human Rights Center. Barkan’s research interests focus on the role of history in contemporary society and politics, with particular emphasis on the response to gross historical crimes and injustices, and human rights. He is the author of *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (2000) and *Claiming the Stones/Naming the Bones: Cultural Property and the Negotiation of National and Ethnic Identity* (2003).

Beate Klarsfeld, President of the Klarsfeld Foundation, has undertaken research in order to identify the 700 German and Austrian Jewish children who were deported from France, and to prepare an exhibition in Germany on the subject: *German Jewish Children Deported from France*. Serge Klarsfeld and his wife Beate are best known to the public as ‘Nazi hunters’. It’s a term they’re not fully comfortable with, since the restoration of the names and faces of the victims is more important to them than the punishment of the murderers.

Oliver Rathkolb, Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna. Since 1980 Oliver Rathkolb regularly presented papers in scientific conferences and at universities in the U.S. and Europe (Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, SHAFR; American Political Science Association; German Studies Association; Berkeley, Harvard, Princeton and Stanford University). Among others he published: *Die paradoxe Republik, Österreich 1945 – 2005*, Wien 2005, Paul Zsolnay Verlag; (Ed.): *Außenansichten: Europäische (Be)Wertungen zur Gegenwartsgeschichte im 20. Jahrhundert*, Innsbruck-Wien-Bozen-München 2003, Studienverlag; *Vertreibung und Instrumentalisierung. Die Vertreibung der Sudetendeutschen und ihre verspätete Rezeption in Österreich*. In: Coudenhove-Kalergi B., Rathkolb O. (Ed.): *Die Beneš-Dekrete*, Wien 2002, Czernin-Verlag, 138-151; (Ed.): *Revisiting the National Socialist Legacy – Coming to Terms with Forced Labor Expropriation, Compensation and Restitution*, Innsbruck-Wien-Bozen-München 2002, Studienverlag; *Führertreu und Gottbegnadet. Künstlereliten im Dritten Reich*, Wien 1991, Deuticke.

Ruth Wodak, Distinguished Professor of Discourse Studies at Lancaster University (and affiliated to the University of Vienna). Besides various other prizes, she was awarded the Wittgenstein Prize for Elite Researchers in 1996 which made six years of continuous interdisciplinary team research possible. Current funded research projects include DYLAN (EU funded integrated project, 6th framework) and ‘New Discourses in Contemporary China’ (NDCC) (funded by Leverhulme; with Paul Chilton, Lancaster University). Publications include *Politics as Usual - The Discursive Construction and Representation of Politics in Action* (Palgrave; 2009); *The Construction of History. Remembering the War of Annihilation* (with H. Heer, W. Manoschek, A. Pollak; Palgrave; 2008); *Migration, Identity, and Belonging* (with G. Delanty, P. Jones; Liverpool Univ. Press; 2008); *Qualitative Discourse Analysis for the Social Sciences* (with M. Krzyżanowski; Palgrave, 2008); and the *Handbook of Applied Linguistics, Vol. 4 - Communication in the Public Sphere* (with V. Koller; De Gruyter, 2008).