Working Group "Archive of Migration" [Arif Akkılıç | Vida Bakondy | Ljubomir Bratić | Wladimir Fischer | Li Gerhalter | Belinda Kazeem | Dirk Rupnow]

# Brainstorming / Working Paper / Concept for the creation of an Archive of Migration

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50 YEARS OF LABOUR MIGRATION TO AUSTRIA:
A PLEA FOR THE CREATION OF AN ARCHIVE OF MIGRATION – NOW! MIGRANTS ARE NOT WITHOUT HISTORY!

Austria is a country of immigration. It is about time that this fact is officially recognised – recognised also by the country's politics of memory, which, after all, perpetually seeks to define what "Austria" was, is and shall be.

Why is it that there is virtually no acknowledged history of migration in Austria? So far, this central aspect of Austrian history has been neglected in both historical narratives and museum representations, apart from somewhat nostalgic reviews of the multi-ethnic organisation of the Habsburg Empire, the romanticised neighbourly help for refugees from Hungary in 1956 and from Czechoslovakia in 1968 and a seminal exhibition at the Wien Museum in 2004. We assume that this lack of migrant histories did not just come about – by chance, so to speak – but that it attests to deliberately placed gaps within the national politics of memory. The state apparatus regulates which meanings are attributed to symbols of the past and ensures that textbooks, museums, street names, holidays, etc., only disseminate pre-arranged contents. The key question thus is: Whom do we commemorate – and whom do we fail to commemorate? There is no acknowledged history of migration and especially no acknowledged history of migrants precisely because this is not intended to be an integral part of the official discourse of the nation state.

The asymmetry of memory mirrors an asymmetry of interests. There is a racially motivated desire not to acknowledge the history of migration as a part of the national history. This desire finds direct expression in decisions as to what is deemed worth knowing and what is repelled, what is worth preserving and what is considered ineligible for commemoration. The migrants who came to Austria in the 1960s and the years thereafter, and who have consequently stayed in this country for over half a century now, do not merely have their own idiosyncratic histories, however; as a matter of fact, they have long since become an integral part and parcel of the Austrian national history, irrespective of whether or not this is publicly acknowledged or made visible. Through their activities, they shape and define daily life; they are actors whose actions inform the worlds in which they live.

We act on the assumption that social participation must not be taken for granted, but that it requires serious engagement with, as well as additions and complements to, the institutional fabric. What is crucial is the way in which social institutions position themselves with regard to migrants as actors. Most institutional settings in Austria, however, have a small number of migrant employees – or none at all. This is but a symptom of a much bigger deficit: The reality of migration is not mirrored in the institutions of our society. Segregation is a verifiable fact and can be identified in all social fields.

One important step into the right direction might be the creation of an "Archive of Migration": a centre for documentation aimed at the collection and systematic review of hitherto dispersed records; a place for scientific research, dialogue and encounter which complements the already established institutions for the preservation of national memory, filling in the blanks; a place that does not cater to the demands of a boutique multiculturalism by creating exploitable commodities, but one that is sustainable and symbolic; a place which allows for migration past and present to be seen from various perspectives – not least the perspective of the migrants themselves – and thus be fully appreciated within a transcultural space that has long since existed; a place, in short, that allows for migration to have a positive social impact.

This paper seeks to outline a number of basic considerations and discuss different options. Our aim at this point is not to present fully fledged concepts but provide the foundations for a public discussion, which could be the first step toward a re-evaluation of migration in the "collective memory". Since the topic concerns all members of our society, it is hoped that as many groups and individuals as possible will participate in this necessary discussion and share their viewpoints.

We are well aware of the fact that many groups and individuals are already working on this subject matter, seeking to find nuanced answers. We hope to engage in fruitful discussions with these groups and individuals and jointly obtain wide-ranging and comprehensive answers to this obvious challenge and the underlying desideratum.

## Situation Today

It has been repeatedly stated in recent years that the history of migration must be inscribed into the "collective memory" of Austria. There is obviously a wide blank in the country's politics of memory, mainly (but by no means exclusively) as far as organised labour migration is concerned. Labour migration was encouraged in the early 1960s and has had a profound and lasting social impact. The fallacious image of a homogeneous nation is still widely accepted and violently defended - even though such a uniform nation state never existed to begin with. The long-time usage of the word "Gastarbeiter" ["guest worker"], which dates back to the Nazi regime, attests to this public imaginary and has surely contributed to the current situation: "Guest workers" were expected to leave the country as soon as their work was done and they were no longer needed. Yet how can one inscribe something into the collective memory? Textbooks are essential in this regard, as are museums and exhibitions. First of all, however, the migrants' (hi)stories and experiences have to be collected in an archive, which is the most fundamental infrastructure of the "collective memory": Migration needs an archive! So far it is poorly represented in the established institutions and there is virtually no systematic collection of material on the topic; if there is, it is scattered, scarcely known or even destroyed. Historical knowledge and experience as well as orally transmitted stories and personal narratives risk being lost due to generational change. Public discourse is dominated by deplorable polemics and racisms and socio-scientific analyses and statistics, but not by historical knowledge and (hi)stories - not least because there is an eminent lack of such knowledge.

Our call for an "Archive of Migration" is closely tied to the largely eclipsed history of labour migration since the 1960s and its current accumulation of anniversaries (50 years of labour recruitment agreements between Austria and Spain 1962, Turkey 1964 and Yugoslavia 1966). However, this should not be taken to mean that the history of migration in Austria can and should be reduced to these historical dates. Migration in its various forms has existed in all times. Even after the 1960s it cannot and should not be reduced to state-controlled labour migration on the one hand and unorganised labour migration on the other hand. Some predominantly older chapters of this diverse and complex history have been integrated more easily and thoroughly into the Austrian commemorative culture; some have even come to be romanticised and engulfed by a sense of nostalgia. In view of the profound and lasting social changes following labour migration since the 1960s, and considering the widespread ignorance or even hostility with which these developments have been met, it seems more than justified to begin our investigation here. Of course, this does not imply that other, differently motivated forms of migration will be forgotten or excluded.

What is essentially needed in addition to extensive historical research is a debate: a public debate, not merely one held among experts behind closed doors. For what ultimately counts is a change in the public opinion: Migrants must be acknowledged as a natural, visible and audible part and parcel of the Austrian past and present. Unfortunately, many still refuse to admit that Austria is a country of immigration and that the Austrian society is thus ultimately a migration society. It is likely that such a debate will point to a number of measures and structures that are necessary to reach this goal. Moreover, a public debate, as well as the creation of such an institution, would mark an important step toward the inscription of migration into the collective memory of Austrians.

It is of vital importance that migrants participate – both as subjects and as actors – on all levels and during all phases of such a project: Their voices must not only be made audible, but also be heard. The results of such a project must by no means reproduce the hegemonic structures of our society, nor must it appropriate migrant (hi)stories in the interest of the social majority. On the contrary, such a project must attempt to make visible what has hitherto been eclipsed and thus help transform social power structures.

# Mission Statement

In order to render visible the history of Austria as a migration society, relevant material must be collected and conserved for long-time preservation. The established national institutions will not always manage to do so, be it for lack of responsibility and resources or because migrants have limited confidence in the existing infrastructure. The creation of a special place, entirely dedicated to the history of Austria as a migration society is thus a desideratum.

The fundamental task of such an "Archive of Migration" is to collect, preserve, process and provide relevant material for both an academic and a generally interested national and international audience.

This includes written records and publications as well as audiovisual sources and material objects supplied by institutions, associations, other groups and individuals. The archive should also systematically review the products and findings of other relevant research and exhibition projects so as to secure long-term sustainability for this field of research.

In addition to its essential activity as a collector, the "Archive of Migration" should

- 1) establish a library of relevant literature (including "grey literature", unpublished research documents, etc.) and open it to the interested public;
- accommodate a research department (possibly with workspace for international guest researchers):
- 3) initiate and organise events such as series of lectures, conferences and exhibitions (possibly in collaboration with different partner institutions, etc.)

#### An "Archive of Migration" could thus

- 1) help build an important network between the scientific community and other relevant institutions in Austria and abroad;
- 2) acquaint a larger national and international audience with the diverse projects that take place in Austria;
- 3) serve as both a platform for intensive exchange and an important gateway to the general public.

In consequence, the archive should not merely be a place of collection, preservation and scientific research but encourage a lively exchange of ideas and foster a public discourse.

What is needed alongside an independent institution that seeks to secure the history of Austria as a migration society in order to ensure adequate social visibility, however, is a thorough rethinking within the established institutions and a critical evaluation and possible widening or alteration of previous practices of collection ("mainstreaming"). It is also of central importance to bear in mind that this task is by no means limited to the federal capital Vienna but equally concerns all other states. An "Archive of Migration" will thus need strong ties to other institutions, both on a national and international level.

In addition to the creation of a physical archive equipped with an adequate infrastructure, it also seems reasonable to establish an online repertory which provides an overview of relevant source material, i.e. the contents of the "Archive of Migration" as well as pertinent contents from other institutions. The website "Materialien zum Nationalsozialismus: Vermögensentzug, Rückstellung und Entschädigung in Österreich" [www.ns-quellen.at] could serve as a model for such a site. The online repertory should also comprise interactive elements, enabling users to upload their own stories, photos, documents, etc., to the site and make them available to the archive. It would thus allow for a contemporary preservation of material, establish a virtual archive (media library) and, most importantly, encourage participation. (It is part of the FWF project P24468-G18, entitled "Deprovincializing Contemporary Austrian History" and directed by Dirk Rupnow, Institute of Contemporary History, University of Innsbruck, to launch precisely such a website: www.archivdermigration.at.)

#### Legal Structure / Organs / Organisation / Place of Location & Facility

It is crucial that some preliminary decisions be made as to the legal structure of such an institution. It can be affiliated to existing structures or stand as an entirely separate institution; it can be run by the state or be organised as an independent association.

Depending on its legal structure, certain organs will be needed. It is of crucial importance that migrant groups and organisations be included in the process, possibly in the form of an executive committee, which, in regular meetings, seeks to represent a plenary or general assembly.

Furthermore, it will be necessary to institute an international advisory board whose task is to oversee the institution's performance and establish ties with the scientific community.

Staff will comprise the executive level (directorate, executive board), the secretary's office, a number of archivists/historians which is yet to be determined, consultants for users and researchers, IT staff, possibly additional scientific personnel and conservators, as well as other employees (caretakers, etc.). The scientific personnel should be very well trained in their respective fields of work and speak the relevant languages. It is of crucial importance that migrants be among those considered and recruited for the scientific positions.

The form of an adequate facility and the place of location will depend on the institution's intended functions. If the institution is meant to have a public impact that goes beyond that of a traditional research establishment, the place of location and the facility's infrastructure and design will be of utmost importance. As far as the place of location is concerned, questions as to the institution's radius of action and operation need answering: Is it going to be devised as a national institution (based in Vienna?) or are other structures preferable (e.g., the establishment of branches in the individual states)?

## Comparable Institutions

on the same topic, in Austria

Bodensee Amateur Fotografen BAF, Dornbirn www.bafart.com [currently in talks with the government of Vorarlberg about an annual funding of an estimated € 80,000 p.a. plus rooms]

Institute of Rural History, St. Pölten – Centre for Migration Research www.ruralhistory.at / www.migrationsforschung.at

on the same topic, abroad

National Site for the History of Immigration, Paris www.histoire-immigration.fr [initial funding of about € 20 million; national subsidy within the framework of the cultural budget of about € 6 million p.a.]

Documentation Centre and Museum of Migration in Germany DOMiD e.V., Cologne www.domid.org

[annual funding by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia of € 180,000; rooms and storage space are provided free of charge by the City of Cologne; in addition, regular funding of projects by regional authorities and others]

Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis hwww.ihrc.umn.edu [annual budget of \$ 420,000]

on different topics, in Austria

Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance DÖW, Vienna www.doew.at

Collection of Women's Records at the Department of History, University of Vienna www.univie.ac.at/Geschichte/sfn

Labour History Society VGA [including the Research Centre for the History of Minorities] www.vga.at [www.fzhm.at]

Centre of queer/lesbian Culture and History QWien, Vienna www.qwien.at

#### About Us

**Arif Akkilic** works for the institute "Im Kontext", Vienna; for many years he has been assisting the work of the Confederation of Workers and Adolescents of Turkish Origin in Austria (ATIGF), e.g., by co-organising a "Long March" from Vorarlberg to Vienna against xenophobia and the Aliens Act (1987); from 1987 to 1993 he worked as a counsellor at the migrants resource centre in Lower Austria; he contributed to the youth centres "Back on Stage" and "Back Bone" and served as a community worker and educational consultant for the Integrationshaus; he co-organised the exhibition "Gastarbajteri" at the Wien Museum in 2004, supporting the institution's public relations and management; he contributed to the projects "Cafe Melange", "City in Vision" and "Meidling is...."; in 2011/12 he helped develop an association between various clubs and the public libraries in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> municipal districts of Vienna; in 2011/12 he created the show "Öneri Report" for Okto-TV; together with L. Bratić he developed and executed the campaign "50 years of Labour Migration – Archive Now!" for the Wienwoche 2012.

Vida Bakondy, Mag.a, has been working as a research assistant at the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Innsbruck since 2012, contributing to the FWF project "Deprovincializing Austrian History: Migration and the Transnational Challenges to National Historiographies (ca. 1960 to today)"; she studied history, gender studies, development studies and social and cultural anthropology at the University of Vienna where she graduated in 2005 (Mag.a phil.); since 2010 she has been working on her doctoral thesis on the legacy of the Viennese Hakoah swimmer Fritzi Löwy (1910-1994) at the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna; from 2008 to 2010 she coordinated and directed the research department of the transnational research and exhibition project "Good Luck! Migration Today: Vienna, Belgrade, Zagreb, Istanbul" for the Initiative Minderheiten Wien; from 2001 to 2004 she was a member of the research group that devised and organised the exhibition project "Gastarbajteri: 40 Years of Labour Migration"; she has been widely published, e.g., Viel Glück! Migration heute: Wien, Belgrad, Zagreb, Istanbul / Good Luck! Migration Today: Vienna, Belgrade, Zagreb, Istanbul, ed. V. Bakondy, S. Ferfolgia, J. Janković, C. Kogoj, G. Ongan, H. Pichler, R. Sircar, and R. Winter (Vienna 2010); "Nicht alle Weißen schießen:" Afrika-Repräsentationen im Österreich der 1950er Jahre im Kontext von (Post-)Kolonialismus und (Post-)Nationalsozialismus (together with R. Winter) (Innsbruck, Vienna, Bolzano 2007); together with Renée Winter she worked on a film project on Austrian memories of forced labour and labour migration (research, production and direction) (Austria 2006).

Ljubomir Bratić, Mag., MAS in social work, has worked for the Viennese Integrationshaus since 1995; since 2006 he has been a writer for the magazine "Kulturrisse"; he works as a scientific advisor for the project "Romanistan" funded by IG Kultur Austria; he studied philosophy, Slavonic philology, art history, education and data processing for the humanities at the University of Innsbruck where he graduated in 1995 (Mag. phil.); from 1990 to 1996 he contributed to the Yugoslavian association "Jedinstvo" in Innsbruck; in 1992 he directed the project "Guest Workers and Minorities: Menace or Cultural Enrichment" (together with E. Binder); from 1992 to 1995 he worked for the migrants resource centre in Tyrol; from 1995 to 1998 he contributed to the magazine "MOSAIK"; from 1999 to 2004 he was the federal spokesman of the Austrian Network against Racism (ANAR); in 2000 he initiated and co-found the "Bunte Zeitung;" from 2002 to 2005 he contributed to the project against racism "Open Up", EQUAL ESF; from 2003 to 2004 he contributed to the exhibition "Gastarbajteri - 40 Years of Labour Migration" at the Wien Museum, curating the section "Self-Organisation and Resistance" (together with A. Akkilic) and developing the exhibition's communication concept (together with A. Akkilic and the agency trafo.K); in 2006 he supervised the project "Hidden Histories - Remapping Mozart" for the Mozartjahr 2006 (together with A. E. Arthur-Johnston, L. Ponger, N. Sternfeld and L. Ziaja); in 2007 he was in charge of the production of the play "Love Research: istrazivanje ljubavi, rodimos e kalimpesko" which was part of the European project "Work in Process"; together with A. Akkilic he developed and executed the campaign "50 Years of Labour Migration - Archive Now!" for the Wienwoche 2012; he has been widely published, e.g., Die zweite Generation: Migrantenjugendliche im deutschsprachigen Raum (together with E. Viehböck) (Innsbruck 1994); Landschaften der Tat: Vermessung, Transformation und Ambivalenz des Antirassismus in Europa, ed. (St. Pölten 2002); Kunst, Kultur und Theater für Alle! Studie zu Perspektiven der Kunst- und Kulturpolitik 2010-2015 mit besonderem Fokus auf Migrationsrealität (together with Ü. Akbaba, S. Galea, A. Görg, and G. Pfeifer) (Vienna 2010); Politischer Antirassismus: Selbstorganisation, Historisierung als Strategie und diskursive Interventionen (Vienna 2010).

Wladimir Fischer, Mag. Dr., has worked for the Department of History at the University of Vienna since 2009 and supervises the FWF project 21493 "Difference and the City: Minority Migrants in Vienna around 1900"; he studied Slavonic philology and history in Vienna where he graduated in 1997 (Mag. phil.) and earned a doctorate in 2002 (Dr. phil.); in 2010 he was a guest researcher at the Immigration History Research Center and the Center for Austrian Studies at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis; in 2006 he was an Honorary Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Urban History at the University of Leicester; from 2006 to 2008 he was a research fellow of the BMBWK at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Urban History in Vienna; from 2004 to 2005 he was involved in a FWF project at the Departments of German Philology and History at the University of Vienna; in 2003 he was a visiting fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities (KWI) in Essen and worked for both the Institute for European Integration Research at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the Centre for Social Research at the University of Bergen; in 2002 he was responsible for a preliminary study of the "History and Culture of Migrants from the Former Yugoslavia in Vienna" commissioned by Wien Kultur/Magistratsabteilung 7; from 2000 to 2001 he was a research associate at the Canadian Centre for Austrian and Central European Studies at the University of Alberta in Edmonton; from 1999 to 2001 he worked on a FWF project at the Department of Romance Philology at the University of Vienna; from 1998 to 1999 he was a guest researcher at the Research Centre on the European Enlightenment; from 1997 to 1998 he was in charge of a project at the Department of Economic and Social History at the Vienna University of Economics and Business: from 1996 to 1997 he contributed to a project at the Institute of Austrian Historical Research; since 2004 he has worked as a lecturer within the framework of an interdisciplinary series of lectures on the Balkans at the University of Vienna; he has published extensively on the politics of identity and the cultural production of migrants from Southeast Europe, e.g., Räume und Grenzen in Österreich-Ungarn 1867-1914: Kulturwissenschaftliche Annäherungen, ed. (together with W. Heindl, A. Millner, and W. Müller-Funk) (Tübingen and Basle 2010); Dositej Obradović als bürgerlicher Kulturheld: Zur Formierung eines serbischen bürgerlichen Selbstbildes durch literarische Kommunikation 1783-1845 (Frankfurt/Main 2007).

Li Gerhalter, Mag.a, is a historian; she studied history, gender studies, sociology and literature at the University of Vienna and at the TU Berlin; since 2000 she has been supervising the Collection of Women's Records at the Department of History at the University of Vienna; she is a lecturer at the Danube University Krems and the University of Vienna; from 2003 to 2006 she worked for the Bruno Kreisky Archives Foundation and the Johanna Dohnal Archive; in 2005 she was a research assistant to the project "Women Bethink Differently" for the Women's Department of the City of Vienna/MA57 on the occasion of the "Gedenkjahr 2005"; her research focuses on strategies of remembering, material cultures, the politics of collecting and archiving, gender history of the twentieth century, diaries and (auto)biographical research and friendships among women; she currently works on her doctorate entitled "Swooning over the Woman Teacher" in which she looks at hierarchically determined relationships between women on the basis of diary entries that document young girls' adoration of their woman teachers in the first half of the twentieth century; she has been widely published, e.g., "Wrapped-Up Memory: Things and Their Order in the Estate of Martha Teichmann (Saxony/New York 1888-1977)" (together with E. Saurer), Migrations: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, ed. M. Messer, R. Schröder, and R. Wodak (Vienna and New York 2012); Apokalyptische Jahre: Die Tagebücher der Therese Lindenberg (1938 bis 1946), ed. (together with Ch. Hämmerle) (Cologne 2010).

Belinda Kazeem is a cultural worker and freelance writer; she is part of the Research Group on Black Austrian Past and Present; she works on the past, future and present of decolonisation; she studied development studies at the University of Vienna and currently works on her master's thesis on bell hooks's teaching theories; she has been widely published, e.g, "Talking back: bell hooks und Schwarze feministische Ermächtigung" (together with J. Schaffer), Schlüsselwerke der Postcolonial Studies, ed. A. Karentzos and J. Reuter (Wiesbaden 2012); "Energie sparen!" Der Standard 15 Oct. 2011; Das Unbehagen im Museum: Postkoloniale Museologien, ed. (together with schnittpunkt ausstellungstheorie&praxis/Ch. Martinz-Turek and N. Sternfeld) (Vienna 2009); "Keine Atempause: Über Sauerstoff und antirassistischen Widerstand," Kampfzonen in Kunst und Medien: Texte zur Zukunft der Kulturpolitik, ed. K. Becker and M. Wassermair (Vienna 2008).

**Dirk Rupnow**, Ass.-Prof. Priv.-Doz. Mag. Dr., has worked for the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Innsbruck since 2009, currently as assistant professor and head of department; he studied history, German philology, philosophy and art history in Berlin and Vienna, graduated at the University of Vienna in 1999 (Mag. phil.), earned his doctorate at the University of Klagenfurt in 2002 (Dr. phil.) and habilitated at the University of Vienna in 2009; from 1999 to 2000 he was a research assistant at the Historical Commission of the Republic of Austria; from 2000 to 2001 he was a junior fellow at the International Research Centre for Cultural Studies (IFK) in Vienna; from 2004 to 2007 he

was awarded a postdoc grant by the Austrian Programme for Advanced Research and Technology APART (part of the Austrian Academy of Sciences); in 2007 he was a Visiting Assistant Professor at the Jewish Studies Program at Dartmouth College; from 2007 to 2009 he was a visiting fellow at the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM) in Vienna; since 2007 he has been a lecturer and since 2009 a senior lecturer at the Department of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna; since 2008 he has been a member of the "Young Curia" of the Austrian Academy of Sciences; he was a visiting researcher at the History Department of Duke University, at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at Leipzig University and at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; he has been awarded numerous international prizes and grants, e.g., the Fraenkel Prize in Contemporary History by the Wiener Library (London) in 2009, the sponsorship award for rising young academics of the state of Tyrol in 2010 and the "Humanities International" award by the German Publishers and Booksellers Association; he has published extensively on contemporary history, Holocaust and Jewish studies, memory studies and the politics of history, migration history and intellectual history/history of science, e.g., 'Judenforschung' im 'Dritten Reich': Wissenschaft zwischen Politik, Propaganda und Ideologie (Baden-Baden 2011); Zeitgeschichte ausstellen in Österreich: Museen - Gedenkstätten - Ausstellungen, ed. (together with H. Uhl) (Vienna 2011); Pseudowissenschaft: Konzeptionen von Nichtwissenschaftlichkeit in der Wissenschaftsgeschichte, ed. (together with V. Lipphardt, J. Thiel, and Ch. Wessely) (Frankfurt/Main 2008); Aporien des Gedenkens: Reflexionen über 'Holocaust' und Erinnerung (Freiburg/Br. and Berlin 2006); Vernichten und Erinnern: Spuren nationalsozialistischer Gedächtnispolitik (Göttingen 2005); Die 'Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung' als Beraubungsinstitution (together with G. Anderl) (Munich 2004); Täter-Gedächtnis-Opfer: Das 'Jüdische Zentralmuseum' in Prag 1942-1945 (Vienna 2000).