

ZOOM:
NATIONAL SOCIALISM
AND THE HOLOCAUST

erinnern.at

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When the days start passing me by, and people and landscapes race by me, I pause to remember that which has passed forever. I think of those people who will always remain unknown to me, and I hear their unspoken sentences. That is what I mean by remembrance.

EVELINA MERHAUT
NATIONAL FUND, VIENNA



APPROACHES TO THE TOPIC

The beginning is usually full of questions:

- . Isn't the topic of the Holocaust really too problematic?
- . How can I go about defining the term "Holocaust"?
- . How do I deal with people who deny the Holocaust?
- . Haven't my students already heard enough about the Holocaust?

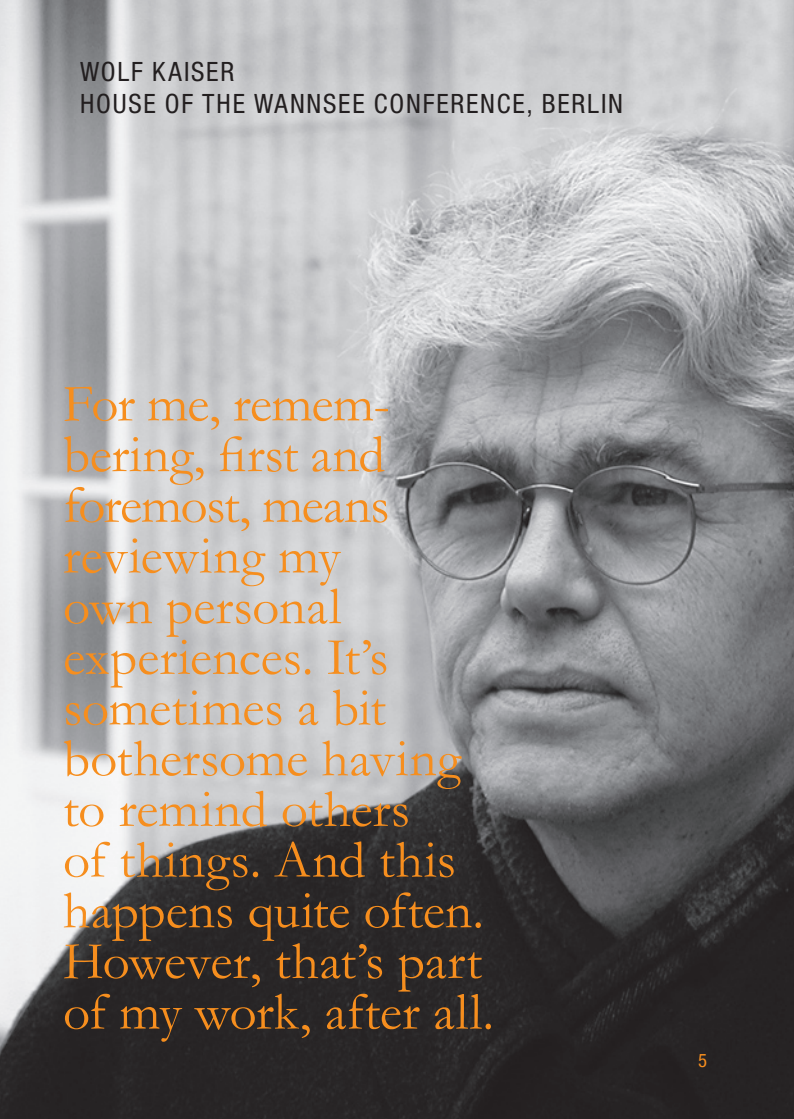
On behalf of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, **erinnern.at** provides support for teachers of all school types and subjects as well as for teachers in adult education.

Goals: to make learning about the Holocaust and National Socialism relevant for the present, to accept

responsibility, to communicate historical knowledge, and to develop methodological and pedagogical skills.

erinnern.at develops teaching materials, organizes teacher education courses, and brings teachers together with researchers and institutions.

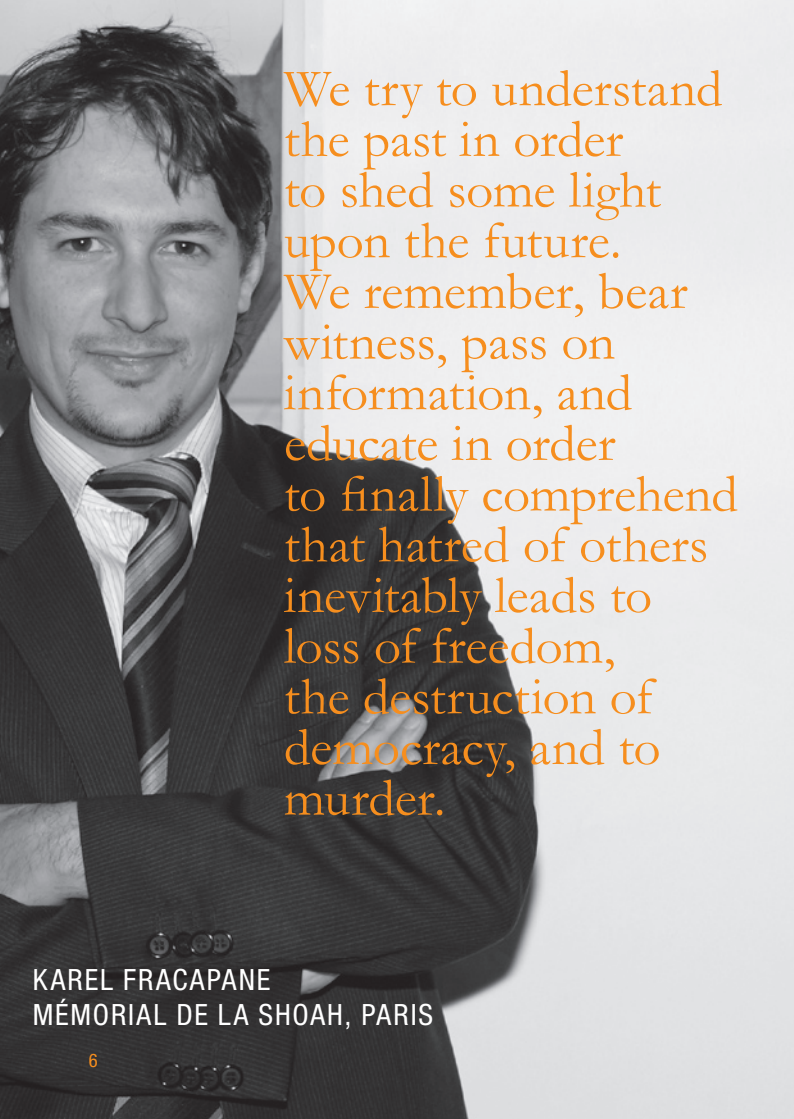
The Internet platform **www.erinnern.at** provides teaching and learning resources and reports on network activities at the state and federal level in Austria (further education courses, seminars, conferences).

A black and white close-up portrait of Wolf Kaiser, an older man with wavy, grey hair and round glasses. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is out of focus, showing what appears to be a window with a grid pattern.

WOLF KAISER

HOUSE OF THE WANNSEE CONFERENCE, BERLIN

For me, remembering, first and foremost, means reviewing my own personal experiences. It's sometimes a bit bothersome having to remind others of things. And this happens quite often. However, that's part of my work, after all.



We try to understand
the past in order
to shed some light
upon the future.
We remember, bear
witness, pass on
information, and
educate in order
to finally comprehend
that hatred of others
inevitably leads to
loss of freedom,
the destruction of
democracy, and to
murder.

KAREL FRACAPANE
MÉMORIAL DE LA SHOAH, PARIS

IN-DEPTH TREATMENT OF THE TOPIC

The initial questions awaken the desire to understand.

As learners are active and critical participants, they want to independently understand “history” and talk about their own personal approaches. Of course, this requires guidance.

The **challenge** for teachers is to create a stimulating learning environment and to support the learning process. The goal is to promote a reflective understanding of history.

Society has various high expectations of schools. Teachers and learners also bring their own personal experiences to bear on the teaching and learning process.

Teachers are expected to communicate a knowledge of history, while at the same time promoting respect for other people and cultures in order to prevent radical right-wing thoughts and Antisemitism.

erinnern.at helps teachers to define and achieve these goals. Educationalists and historians support them in the development of teaching models.

The thoughts of Bodo von Borries proved to be helpful concerning materials:

- . Less, but more in-depth
- . Simpler, but yet more stimulating
- . More cautious and more true to actual events
- . Less exaggerated and more deliberate

For me, remembering is about making connections between the past, the present, and the future. The Hebrew word *zachor*, to remember, captures what I mean by this: an individual's inward impressions are supplemented by outward expressions, that is, transported into society at large.

NOA MKAYTON
YAD VASHEM, JERUSALEM

A black and white portrait of Anton Pelinka, a man with short hair and glasses, wearing a suit and tie. The portrait is the background for the text.

ANTON PELINKA

POLITICAL SCIENTIST, VIENNA AND BUDAPEST

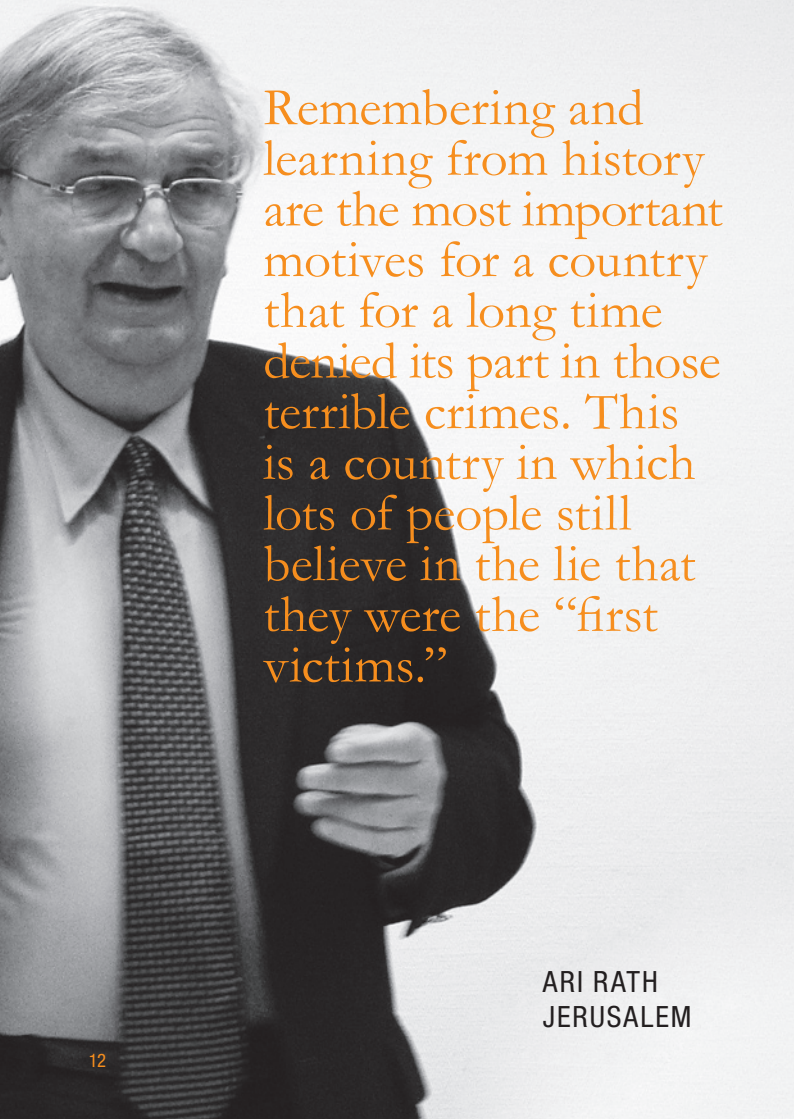
The present only exists in thought. It is a notional site at which the future becomes the past. Remembering means recapturing the future that has already passed. It means asking what made that past future so particularly good, and also what made it so particularly terrible. Remembering means learning lessons from yesterday's future for tomorrow.

TO UNDERSTAND AND TO AFFECT PEOPLE

Where there is knowledge, there are emotions.

We see learners as people with emotions and a personal history of their own. Knowledge and emotions (empathy) are closely intertwined.

erinnern.at is a virtual café where learners can exchange experiences.



Remembering and learning from history are the most important motives for a country that for a long time denied its part in those terrible crimes. This is a country in which lots of people still believe in the lie that they were the “first victims.”

ARI RATH
JERUSALEM

THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST

erinnern.at supports teachers on three different levels: pedagogical and methodological, historical, and personal. We are constantly expanding our course offerings and materials.

International

Further education seminars for Austrian teachers in Israel in cooperation with the International School for Holocaust Studies in Yad Vashem and other centers of learning, such as the Center for Humanistic Education in Lohamei Hagetaot.

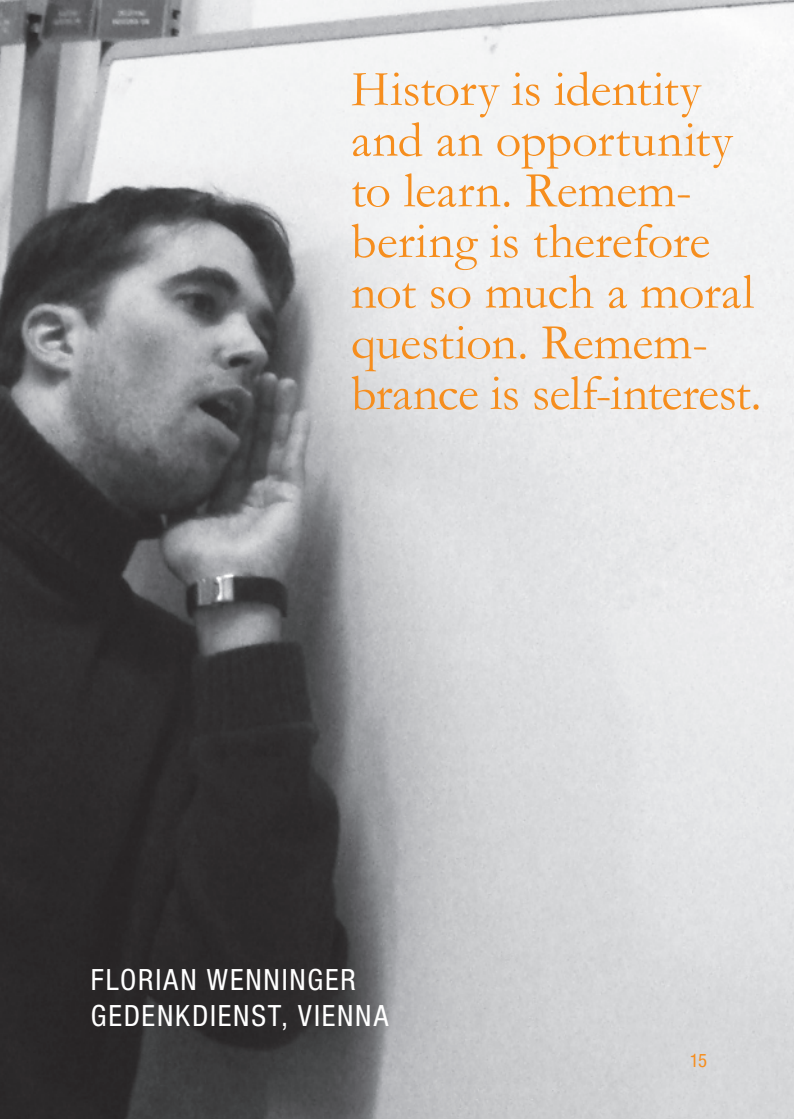
National

The **erinnern.at** community comes together at seminars. Pedagogy specialists, educationalists, and textbook authors discuss with researchers how to treat National Socialism and the Holocaust in an appropriate manner in the Austrian school system.

The various seminars offered include the “Contemporary Witness Seminar” and other courses of study. Teaching and learning materials include new content presented in an engaging manner, for example, the DVD *Das Vermächtnis* / “The Legacy” (www.erinnern.at/das-vermaechtnis).

Regional/Local

A decentralized network has been established in each state. Each individual network cooperates in teacher education with universities of education. They examine and create teaching materials. The coordinators maintain the Internet pages of the individual states (www.erinnern.at/bundeslaender).



History is identity
and an opportunity
to learn. Remember-
ing is therefore
not so much a moral
question. Remem-
brance is self-interest.

FLORIAN WENNINGER
GEDENKDIENTST, VIENNA

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