

"VWI Invites the International Institute for Holocaust Research in Yad Vashem"

Wednesday, 10 May 2017, 1:00 pm
1010 Vienna, Rabensteig 3, Research Lounge

Sharon PARK

Narrating Humanitarian Aid to European Refugee Children after the Second World War (1945–1953)

This presentation addresses the challenges with accessing the voices of Jewish refugee children and youth in both contemporaneous and retrospective personal narratives. In addition to questionnaire responses and social agencies' case files collected from archives in Austria, the United Kingdom and the United States, this project works closely with interviews from the "Refugee Stories" oral history collection of the Association of Jewish Refugees, "The Girls" oral history collection at the Wiener Library, and the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University.

Young refugees' accounts offer glimpses of how their childhood and experiences of displacement, persecution, and resettlement shaped their developing conceptions of family, citizenship, and belonging after the Second World War. However, these sources have been selectively framed or filtered by social professionals or the passage of time. This talk will explore the role of gender and age categories – or the expectations for girl and boy refugees articulated by social workers, relatives, and the refugees themselves – in shaping personal narratives about their wartime and post-war lives. In the case of oral history interviews, this talk will also analyse how child survivors presented and attempted to reconcile their "two selves" as adult and child refugees.



Commented by Rita HORVÁTH

Sharon Park is Junior Fellow at the VWI. She holds a PhD in history from the University of Minnesota and has worked as a graduate assistant at the Center for Austrian Studies in Minnesota and an editorial assistant of the *Austrian History Yearbook* from 2013–2015.

Rita Horváth will be a Research Fellow at the VWI in 2017/2018. She is a literary scholar and a historian. She received her PhD from Bar-Ilan University (Ramat Gan, Israel) in 2003. In the spring semester of the academic year 2009/2010, she was a scholar-in-residence at Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, Brandeis University (Waltham, MA, USA). At present, she is a research fellow at the International Institute for Holocaust Research in Yad Vashem.