

“VWI goes to University of Vienna – Institute for Eastern European History“

Tuesday, 10 MAY 2022, 6.00 pm
Institute for Eastern European History, Spitalgasse 2/Court 3
Lecture Hall, 1090 Vienna

Péter APOR

BACKYARD REVOLUTION

MASS VIOLENCE, ANTI-SEMITISM, AND POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN POST-WWII HUNGARY



Poland was not the sole exception where Holocaust survivor Jews were brutally attacked. Series of horrific crowd violence against surviving Jewish communities occurred in post-WWII Hungary, too. This lecture explores how collective violence produced categories and divisions in society and how those in turn attempted to shape the institutions of the postwar state. It focuses on the social composition of the groups of perpetrators, which consisted predominantly of industrial and agricultural workers and links the explanation of collective violence to those cultural

notions that were endemic to the perpetrators themselves. This lecture points out that physical qualities of the body played a crucial role in the unfolding of the atrocities. These material qualities were intrinsic to a social categorization that made a sharp distinction between those who did manual work and those who did not, which was decisive in shaping the outcome of violence. The lecture considers collective violence a particular form of political participation and examines post-Holocaust antisemitic violence as one of its perverse ways. It seeks to understand anti-Semitism and collective violence as elements of a cultural code, which were used as a means of expressing popular concerns with society and politics. Focusing on popular expectations towards the state, which antisemitic violence expressed, this lecture has implications on the understanding of growing populist governance worldwide.

Commented by Christoph AUGUSTYNOWICZ

Péter Apor is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Between 2003 and 2011, Apor was a research fellow at the Central European University (Budapest), and an associate researcher at the University of Exeter. His main research interest includes the politics of memory and history in post-1945 East-Central Europe, the mechanism of collective violence and ethnic hatred as on the history of empires and colonialism in the Cold War.

Christoph Augustynowicz is an associate professor and head of the Institute for Eastern European History at the University of Vienna. His research interests include Galician-Polish borderland studies, social history of Poland(-Lithuania) with special reference to Jews, and images and stereotypes of Eastern Europe.

Cover illustration to Péter Apor by Péter Hegyi, Jaffa Publishers, Budapest, 2021

Please register by noon on 9 May 2022 under anmeldung@vwi.ac.at! The 2G rules (fully vaccinated or recovered) apply at this event. FFP2 masks are mandatory.

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