

**"VWI goes to the Collegium Hungaricum"**

**Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2014, 6.00 – 7.30 p.m.**  
**Balassi Institute – Collegium Hungaricum Vienna**  
**1020 Wien, Hollandstraße 4**

**Gábor SZEGEDI: The Battle with the Giant Squid – Racial and Gender Stereotypes in Sex Education and Race Defilement Cases in Interwar Hungary**



In interwar Hungary, the wave of antisemitic legislation after 1938 and the closely related social and economic policies that aimed at redistribution of wealth at the cost of 'the Jews' led to a number of attempts of defining Jewishness. Jews became both a separate body, a 'race' and an 'alien spirit' and therefore, aside from rolling back alleged Jewish economic and social influence the Hungarian state started a project aimed at separating 'Jews' and 'non-Jews' on a physical level, marking out desirable and undesirable bodies. The most far-reaching measure of this body politics was the 1941 Marriage Law: It introduced prohibitions on marriage between 'Jews' and 'non-Jews' and a practice of race defilement that persecuted certain acts of 'miscegenation'. In the race defilement proceedings, individual bodies were then used to mark the boundaries of the nation using 'respectable sexuality' as the threshold between belonging and otherness. These procedures became sites of a dual, racial and sexual normalisation, which operated from pre-existing racial and gender stereotypes. I have examined various discourses on sexuality in interwar Hungary, with a particular emphasis on producing sexual knowledge for young, unmarried adults – many of which provided the ideological groundwork for these racial and sexual categories. I will juxtapose these texts and practices of sex education with the sexual and racial normalisation process of the race defilement cases after 1941.

**Comments by Helga AMESBERGER**

*Gábor Szegedi* studied American Studies and Political Science at ELTE and History at the Central European University in Budapest, but also in Turku/Åbo, Berlin, and Durham. He defended his doctorate on sex education, marriage counseling and premarital health examinations in 20th century Hungary in June 2014 at CEU's History Department. He has worked as a translator, as history teacher in a secondary school and for five years as policy analyst at the Australian Embassy in Budapest.

*Helga Amesberger* studied ethnology and sociology (Mag.<sup>a</sup> phil.) and political science (Dr.<sup>in</sup> phil.) at the University of Vienna. Employed at the Institute of Conflict Research (IKF) since 1993. She occasionally lectures at various Austrian universities. Her main research topics are: National Socialist persecution of women, violence against women, oral history, racism.