

“VWI invites the University of Bern”

Wednesday, 22 January 2020, 3.00 pm
1010 Vienna, Rabensteig 3, 3rd Floor

Roland CLARK

SCHOOLS OF HATE
Antisemitic Student Organisations in 1920s Austria

Between 1919 and 1923, antisemites violently campaigned for student control of universities across East-Central Europe, attacking Jews, and supporting extremist right-wing parties. As sites of cultural reproduction, universities became hotly contested spaces where young people tried to impose their agendas on politicians and other elites. Students had been calling for a *numerus clausus* since the end of the war and in 1918 the University of Graz established a separate, discriminatory admissions system to reduce the number of ‘non-Aryan’ students.



Decisions by university leaders were frequently knee-jerk reactions to student violence, which oscillated between small-scale battery and major riots. In April and May 1921, for example, student riots shut down the university and Jewish students were attacked with swords and clubs. Students at the Polytechnic Institute revived demands for a *numerus clausus* in May 1922. In November, students in all the universities in Vienna went on strike demanding restrictions on Jewish enrolments. The authorities immediately ordered the suspension of classes. The universities opened the following day, but pickets of *deutschnationale* students demanded baptismal certificates of all students who sought entrance. In November, students armed with knuckledusters and ‘life preservers’ assaulted Jews in lecture theatres in both Vienna and Graz following a ban on political uniforms and insignia. Once again, the universities were closed. Violence against Jewish students continued in Austrian universities until 1938.

Commented by Regina FRITZ

Roland Clark is a Senior Lecturer in Modern European History at the University of Liverpool and a Senior Fellow with the Centre for Analysis of the Radical Right. His first book, *Holy Legionary Youth. Fascist Activism in Interwar Romania* (Ithaca 2015), examined the experiences of rank and file fascists during the 1920s and 1930s. He has also published a number of book chapters and specialist journal articles on fascism, religion, and East European cultural history. He is currently a Research Fellow at the VWI.

Regina Fritz is a Research Assistant in Institute of History at the University of Bern. She specialises in the history of Hungary and Austria with a particular focus on Jewry, National Socialism, and the Holocaust. Her recent publications include the edited VWI-volumes of *Alma Mater Antisemitica. Academic Milieu, Jews and Antisemitism at European Universities Between 1918 and 1939*, Vienna 2016 and *Before the Holocaust Had Its Name*, Vienna 2016.

Please register at anmeldung@vwi.ac.at by latest January 21, 12.00 am and bring your ID.

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