



"VWI goes to University Graz"

Monday, 20 November 2017, 1.30-3.00 p.m.

Institut für Wirtschafts-, Sozial- und Unternehmensgeschichte

Karl Franzens Universität Graz

Universitätsstraße 15/F2, SR 15.24, E2

8010 Graz

Vojin MAJSTOROVIC

The Red Army and the Holocaust, 1939–1948

The presentation examines the Soviet military's encounter with the Shoah. The geographical scope of the study covers all territories where the Holocaust liberated and occurred and which the Red Army occupied, including the western parts of the Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, and Bulgaria. It engages and builds on two sets of scholarly literatures: Soviet responses to the Holocaust and the Western allied armies' encounter with the genocide of Jews.



The presentation explores how the Soviet military confronted the Shoah, addressing the Kremlin and the Red Army's reactions to the Holocaust from above. More specifically, it describes how the Red Army, which occupied vast territories home to hundreds of thousands of Jewish Holocaust survivors, approached the issues critical to survivors, such as the high command's policies towards perpetrators of anti-Jewish violence, property taken from the Jews by their gentile neighbours, and Jewish emigration.

The presentation also discusses soldiers and officers' responses to the Holocaust from below, illuminating how much ordinary soldiers knew of Nazi policies towards the Jews, how they perceived the perpetrators, and whether popular antisemitism shaped how they

viewed the victims. Importantly, the study pays attention to how half a million Jews who served in the Red Army reacted to the genocide of their fellow Jews. Furthermore, it traces the fate of Jews who were freed by the Red Army from the Nazi clutches in the post-war period and their interactions with Soviet soldiers and officers. The research is based on archival records from the former Soviet Union, Central Europe, the Balkans, and American Jewish organisations. It also relies on personal Jewish and Soviet sources, such as interviews, memoirs, diaries, and letters.

Introduced by Stefan KARNER

Commented by Barbara STELZL-MARX

Vojin Majstorovic is currently Research Fellow at the VWI. He received his PhD from the University of Toronto in 2017. His research focuses on Soviet involvement in the Balkans and Central Europe in the 1940s. Before taking up the research fellowship at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, he held fellowships at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC and at the Centre for Holocaust Studies at the Institute for Contemporary History in Munich.

Barbara Stelzl-Marx is deputy director of the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research into Consequences of War (BIK), Graz – Vienna – Raabs, and vice-president of the UNESCO Commission, Vienna. She studied history, Russian and English/American studies in Graz, Oxford, Volgograd and at Stanford University. In 2010, she finished her prize-winning habilitation in contemporary history. She has published extensively, e.g. the monography *Stalins Soldaten in Österreich. Die Innensicht der sowjetischen Besatzung* (2012) and *Besatzungskinder. Die Nachkommen alliierter Soldaten in Österreich und Deutschland* (2015), that she edited together with Silke Satjukow.