

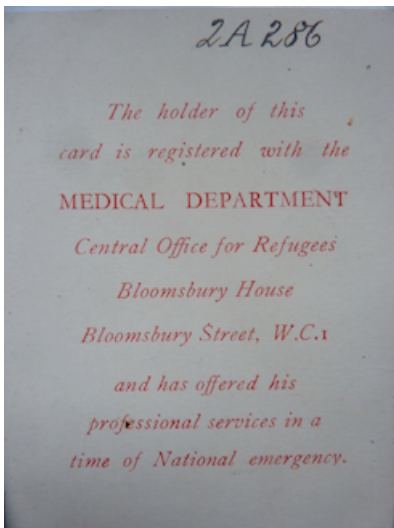
"VWI goes to the IKT..."

Wednesday, 24. Februar 2016. 14:30-16:30 pm
Institute of Culture Studies and Theatre History
Austrian Academy of Sciences
Clubraum
Dr.-Ignaz-Seipel-Platz 2
1010 Wien

Paul WEINDLING

Experiencing Persecution and Forced Migration: Jewish Medical Refugees from post-Anschluss Vienna to the UK

Studies of what is euphemistically called “emigration” and “exile” of persons escaping Nazi persecution have traditionally focused on high achievers rather than the *kleine Leute* and their wider experiences. Austrian medical refugees coming to the UK have a distinctive history in that the persecution in Vienna after the Anschluss was intense, and the Nazi systems of professional exclusion and migration worked with vicious efficiency. In medicine and other medically related areas, Jews were



rapidly excluded from insurance and state employment, and lost the status of *Arzt*. While the Nazi systems are administratively well documented, less known is their effect on individual life histories. I examine the medical refugees, who came from Austria both in terms of individual experiences and in structural terms. The life history approach allows one to examine cases of failure and hardship, as well as adaptation.

My talk will focus initially on the experience of persecution in Vienna, considering the exclusion of Jews from mainstream medicine and the development of a specifically Jewish medical system exacerbated by persecution of Vienna's Jews. For forced migration, it is necessary to examine sources of support with the system of “guarantors” and a range of facilitating organisations. The UK saw a number of group schemes, including limited concessions for Austrian physicians and dental surgeons. *Kristallnacht* had a profound response in the UK in terms of relaxing restrictions. Thus many

more medical refugees came to or through the UK, and their experiences such as re-qualifying and internment in 1940 merit more systematic analysis than hitherto. The Austrian medical refugees became caught up in domestic British politics of the modernisation of health care provision and medical research, ultimately creating a demand for clinical specialists, which many Austrians came to fill.

Comments by Michaela RAGGAM-BLESCH

Paul Weindling is Senior Visiting Fellow at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute and professor at Oxford Brookes University. He is member of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina where he is developing collective biographical studies of forced migration of medical professionals, and of victims of Nazi medical experiments. This research is supported by the Anneliese Maier Prize of the Humboldt Foundation. His book *Victims and Survivors of Nazi Human Experiments* was Yad Vashem book prize finalist.

Michela Raggam-Blesch is a historian at the Institute of Culture Studies and the History of Theater (IKT) at the Austrian Academy of Sciences with an APART post-doc scholarship on *Everyday life and persecution of women and men of half-Jewish descent in Vienna, 1938-1945*. From 1999–2003 she worked for the Leo Baeck Institute in New York and was a fellow of the Center for Jewish History in 2003. Main fields of research: Austrian Jewish history of the 19th and 20th century, Oral History, Autobiography and Memory studies, Holocaust Studies, Gender Studies.