



Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung
Universität Wien, Universitätsring 1, 1010 Wien

EINLADUNG

zum 182. Institutsseminar
am Montag, dem 1. Juni 2015, um 17 Uhr c.t.
im Hörsaal des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung

Prof. Dr. Cathleen M. Giustino
(Auburn University)

Locating Czechoslovakia's Missing Parliament Building: Technocracy and the Politics of Representative Space in Interwar Prague

National parliament buildings can be powerful symbols of civic unity – symbols that function to build a sense of common identity and shared commitment to democratic government among diverse communities. The First Czechoslovak Republic, created in 1918, had multiparty rule, universal adult suffrage, a multinational population, and Prague as its capital city. Yet, it had no building designed for the purpose of holding national parliamentary meetings in which the country's elected representatives debated and passed the laws of the land. During the interwar period a number of competitions were held and many architectural drawings were created for the construction of a building designed with the dedicated role of housing the new independent state's parliament. Prague's Letná Plain, a large undeveloped space just north of the Castle and overlooking the historic downtown, was discussed as the best location for the construction of a Czechoslovak national parliament building. The State Regulation Commission, a technocratic administrative body conceived to have unrivalled control over the urban planning of Prague, led efforts to secure the parliament's construction on the Letná. However, this potential symbol of shared Czechoslovak civic identity and commitment to democracy was never built there or anywhere else. This paper tells a story of unbuilt architecture and empty space. It presents the interwar history of Czechoslovakia's missing national parliament building and reasons for the absence of this representative site, including the de-centralized nature of central-state power and the limits of technocracy in the young republic.

Cathleen M. Giustino is Mills Carter Professor of History and World History Coordinator at Auburn University in Auburn, Alabama. She earned her Ph.D. from University of Chicago in 1997. She is author of *Tearing Down Prague's Jewish Town: Ghetto Clearance and the Legacy of Middle-Class Ethnic Politics around 1900* and co-editor, with Catherine Plum and Alexander Vari, of *Socialist Escapes: Breaks from Ideology and the Everyday in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989*. She published "Rodin in Prague: Modern Art, Cultural Diplomacy and National Display" in *Slavic Review* and "Socialist Industrial Design and the Czechoslovak Pavilion at EXPO '58" in *Journal of Contemporary History*. She received research awards from Fulbright, American Council of Learned Societies, International Research Exchange Board, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, American Philosophical Society, and TEMA Erasmus Mundus European Master's Programme. She holds Auburn University's College of Liberal Arts Award for Excellence in Teaching the Humanities.

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Thomas Winkelbauer
Institutsdirektor

Gäste sind herzlich willkommen!