Deadly Communities: 
Anti-Jewish Pogroms in the Shadow of the Holocaust

Part of IERES’ European Politics Series

with

Jeffrey Kopstein
Professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Toronto

Why, after the outbreak of World War II in Eastern Europe, did the inhabitants of some communities erupt in violence against their Jewish neighbors? Dr. Kopstein will argue that the greater the degree of preexisting intercommunal polarization between Jews and the titular majority group, the more likely it was that a pogrom would occur. Where Jews supported ethnic parties that advocated minority cultural autonomy, the local populations perceived the Jews as an obstacle to the creation of a nation-state in which minorities acknowledged the right of the titular majority to impose its culture across a country’s entire territory. These communities became toxic. Where determined state elites could politically integrate minorities, pogroms were far less likely to occur. The results of Dr. Kopstein’s study point to the theoretical importance of political assimilation and are also consistent with research that extols the virtues of interethnic civic engagement.

Jeffrey S. Kopstein is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at the University of Toronto. His publications include various books and edited volumes, including Growing Apart? America and Europe in the 21st Century; Comparative Politics: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in a Changing Global Order; and The Politics of Economic Decline in East Germany.

Friday, March 4, 2011
12:00-1:30 p.m.
Voesar Conference Room
1957 E Street, NW, Suite 412

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This event is on the record.