



## International Wednesdays



universität  
wien



### Professor Richard Whatmore

St Andrews University, UK

BiWi-International Lecture Series

Wednesday, **November 22th**, 5 pm, Hörsaal 1

Sensengasse 3A, 1. OG

### Fanaticism and liberty

Fanaticism historically has always been associated with theological conflict, especially marked during and after the Reformation. Enthusiasts were those who believed they were directly inspired by God and fanatics carried out God's orders by whatever means necessary. During the Enlightenment era fanaticism was widely seen to have moved into the secular sphere, being associated with addictions to the pursuit of war and empire, the widespread paradox being that as states became more free, they also became more fanatic. This assertion marked 20th century debate, especially after 1945 when history and education were deployed to search for antidotes to the virus of fanaticism and its tendency to recur time after time especially in Europe. Significant in the controversy were the many Jewish scholars responding to J. H. Talmon (*The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*) and Karl Popper (*The Open Society and its Enemies*). The paradox remains and its history merits reconstruction.

**Richard Whatmore** is Professor of Modern History at the University of St Andrews, UK, and Co-Director of the St Andrews Institute of Intellectual History. He is the author of *Republicanism and the French Revolution* (2000), *Against War and Empire* (2012), *What is Intellectual History?* (2015), *Terrorists, Anarchists and Republicans* (2019) and *The History of Political Thought* (2021). His latest book, *The End of Enlightenment* will be published by Penguin in December.



This event is organized by the Department of Education of University of Vienna and will be followed by an open reception.