

09.06. until 10.06.2022 in Marburg, Germany

The Heterogeneity of Racism and Modern Antisemitism in Eastern Europe, 1880–1945

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09.06. until 10.06.2022

Event language: English

Deadline for submissions: 15.10.2021

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Event location: Herder-Institut

Type of Event: Call for Papers

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Due to its cultural heterogeneity, East Central Europe became a multi-racist space in the late 19th and early 20th century. Racism, modern antisemitism and eugenics originated in Berlin, Paris and London. It was, however, East Central and Southeastern Europe, especially the multi-ethnic territories of the Austrian, Russian and Ottoman Empires, as well as the eastern provinces of the German Empire, where a variety of Social Darwinism, racism and modern antisemitism spread among segments of the population. Due to the multi-ethnic setting and the increase of conflicts between nationalities, the rising nationalism triggered racism and vice versa. This interdependence strengthened the discourses and repertoires among the political (and social) elites in terms of securing their dominant positions, as well as within the different national groups, who feared the loss of their own cultural identity.

In contrast to the creation of these concepts inspired by the biologicistic ideas of French, English and German thinkers such as Herbert Spencer, Arthur de Gobineau, Houston Stewart Chamberlain and Wilhelm Marr, the multi-faced receptions and creative inventions of racism and antisemitism, antiziganism and eugenics in East Central Europe have, to date, not been studied in a comparative and transnational way.

Since nationalism played a crucial role in the discourses regarding the dissolution of empires and the creation of states, racism became an ideologic ingredient, helping to secure newly gained statehood. Consequently, racism became an integral element of nationalizing politics in spite of or because of the implementation of the rights of minorities.

Following this political pattern, the historians, writers, politicians, physicians and intellectuals of East Central Europe invented their own forms of racism, eugenics and modern antisemitism. Racism contributed significantly to violent conflicts during and after World War I, to collaboration in the Holocaust, as well as to ethnic cleansing in mixed regions of East Central and Southeastern Europe by various nationalist and fascist movements, such as the Croatian Ustasha, the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists.

The organizers are interested in contributions that investigate the "invention", adaptation and application of racism and related ideologies, such as modern antisemitism, Social Darwinism and eugenics in the discourses of East Central Europe between 1880 and 1945. Some of the key questions regarding this subject include:

- How did the multi-ethnic and heterogeneous nature of East Central Europe contribute to the creation of racism, modern antisemitism, Social Darwinism and eugenics?
- Who were the actors in the societies of East Central Europe? Who adopted ideas from the English, German, French and other early discourses regarding race, racism, eugenics and modern antisemitism?
- How did the historians, writers, politicians, physicians and intellectuals of East Central Europe actually receive racism and how did they invent their own racist concepts?
- What enemies were created in the racist and modern antisemitic discourses in East Central Europe? Did the adaptation of racism and eugenics change the way in which people in East Central Europe viewed themselves?
- How did the reception and invention of racism, modern antisemitism, antisemitism, social Darwinism and eugenics affect lives in the multi-ethnic regions and cities of Eastern Europe? Did it also have an impact on gender relations?
- In which situations did racism emerge or racist discourses were applied?
- What kind of impact did racism have on securitization discourses and security politics in Eastern Europe before the Cold War? What was the impact of racism on the heuristics of securitization, on the perception of threat and the construction of threat scenarios?
- What role did racism, antisemitism, eugenics and Social Darwinism play in the ideologies of fascist movements and authoritarian regimes in East Central Europe?
- What impact did racism have on political practices, such as administration, cultural politics or social politics?
- How did racism and modern antisemitism in East Central Europe contribute to the ethnic conflicts of World War I, ethnic cleansings in World War II and collaboration during the Holocaust?

Deadlines and procedure:

We are planning a two-day international conference at the Herder Institute in Marburg, Germany on June 9-10, 2022. All participants are asked to give a 20-minute presentation on their perspectives and findings. The deadline for submitting paper proposals (in English, approx. 300 to 500 words) and short (15-line) biography:

October 15, 2021. Proposals should be sent on one Word document to: forum@herder-institut.de

Notification of acceptance of the paper proposals: November 30, 2021.

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