

Entangled Others – Other Entanglements:

Critical Perspectives on the Relationship of Racism and Antisemitism

International Conference, Berlin, June 24-26, 2019

Organized by the Center for Research on Antisemitism, Technische Universität Berlin, in cooperation with the International Consortium for Research on Antisemitism and Racism (ICRAR) and the Martin Buber Chair for Jewish Thought and Philosophy, Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

Convenors: Anna Danilina, Felix Axster, Stefan Vogt

Deadline: February 4, 2018.

Keynote Speakers:

Ann Laura Stoler (New School for Social Research)

Sander L. Gilman (Emory University)

Charles W. Mills (City University of New York, t. b. c.)

Call for Papers

Critical inquiry into the relationship of racism and antisemitism is more urgent than ever. Due to the global resurgence of authoritarian movements and governments, the proliferation and acceptance of racist and anti-Semitic views is dramatically increasing. At the same time, the missing connection between the struggles against racism and against antisemitism has been all too often a serious political handicap. Despite all this, the conceptual and historical relationship of racism and antisemitism remains both strongly contested and unclear. Historical research often presupposes a specific understanding of this relationship but hardly ever inquires into it or even acknowledges it. For example, although this relationship is central to the controversy about possible continuities from (German) colonialism to National Socialism and the Holocaust, the ways racism and antisemitism actually interrelate in the context of either Nazism or German colonialism have hardly been addressed. There is, therefore, a strong need to confront the relationship of racism and antisemitism on a theoretical, historical and political level.

Historically, racism and antisemitism often intertwined. The structure, significance and theoretical status of this relationship, however, are neither clear nor have they been sufficiently explored. Many scholars have argued that a central aspect of modern antisemitism

was the adoption of a biological-racist definition of the “Jew”. Others have maintained that the linking of “culture” and “religion” with “race” was not an invention of the late nineteenth century but could be found in the very formation of the concept of “race” and that therefore racism and antisemitism were even more fundamentally connected. Additionally, the scaffolding of modern racism depended upon prior religious persecution and theological categories. Scholars have pointed out that the forms of racism have varied according to different targeted groups, historical and social contexts, and modes of expression. Thus, forms of colonial racism, anti-Black, anti-Asian or anti-Muslim racism should not be subsumed under a monolithic concept counterposed to antisemitism. Whether antisemitism is one particular form of racism remains open to debate. At the same time, researchers have emphasized a number of differences between the historical forms of racism on the one hand and of antisemitism on the other. It has been argued, for instance, that in racist ideology, the other is not ascribed a destructive, demonic power comparable to what the antisemites ascribe to the “Jew”, that only Jews have been simultaneously identified with capitalism and communism (or modernity as such), and that racism has not developed an idea of “world conspiracy” that is so central to antisemitism. It has also been claimed that (colonial) racism has not produced the organized exterminatory dynamics of the antisemitic “solution to the Jewish question” as developed during the Holocaust. Hasty equations of historic forms of racism and antisemitism should therefore be avoided. Instead of a-historical comparisons or the construction of abstract causal links, a search for tangible and empirically verifiable connections and genealogical overlappings is required. In addition, it seems important to investigate the location, significance and interaction of racism and antisemitism within an overarching history of violence in the modern age.

Entangled Others – Other Entanglements invites participants to discuss the potentials and pitfalls of an analysis of the relationship between racism and antisemitism. The conference aims to approach this relationship from a wide range of topical, theoretical, and methodological perspectives. The main goal is to create a platform on which an open debate of this relationship is possible, and to bring together scholars with different or even conflicting approaches. Contributions to the conference could address, but are not limited to, the following questions:

Concepts

- In which ways do conceptual frameworks of the research on racism and on antisemitism overlap, inspire or contradict each other? What work do the politics of comparison or relational perspectives entail?
- How do we understand the relationship between racism and antisemitism in connection with other ideologies/practices of denigration and exclusion, such as sexism or classism? How do we understand and address the central categories of these ideologies/practices, such as race, class, gender, religion, culture, biology, *Volk*, or nation?
- What are the potentials and pitfalls of an integration of the Holocaust into a wider history of violence, especially in regard to the singularity thesis (i.e. the claim of the uniqueness of the Holocaust)?
- How are the debates on the relations between racism and antisemitism influenced by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Histories

- How has race been constituted historically and how do different constructions of “Jews”, “Blacks”, “Asians”, or “Whites” operate? Who were the protagonists of these constructions?
- What is the role of non-discursive practices and emotions in the constitution of the Self and the Other, for the homogenization of groups and for the experience of belonging? And how do racism and antisemitism shape bodies, their habits and perceptions?
- How do racism and antisemitism relate to the historical development and to the various historical constellations of capitalism and nationalism?
- How can the relationship between racism, antisemitism and colonialism be investigated – in regard to the debate concerning the (dis-)continuities from colonialism to National Socialism and to the Holocaust as well as in other contexts?

Politics

- What are the differences and commonalities between forms of remembrance of racist and antisemitic persecution? Is there a possibility for, and have there been instances of, a linkage between the respective narratives of the past?
- Is there a connection between the respective strategies of subaltern self-constitution and self-affirmation of those targeted by racism and those targeted by antisemitism?

- Which processes, structures or narratives constitute a competition of victimhood and could they be framed otherwise?
- Which alliances of common action against racism and antisemitism have existed and what has foreclosed them?

The conference will take place in Berlin, Germany, from June 24 to June 26, 2019. We are hoping to be able to cover travel expenses.

The conference will be held in English. Please submit a proposal of no more than one page, along with a brief CV in English to the following address:

Felix.axster@tu-berlin.de

Deadline for the proposals is February 4, 2018.