Racism

von Boris Barth

Racism did not appear in one particular place or on a specific date. This article investigates the different aspects that characterised the development of racial thought. In doing so, it examines current research controversies and the different national historiographical traditions. It argues that racism was clearly a phenomenon of the modern age, largely confined to those regions dominated by Europeans. The article then explores the emergence of racial thought in the colonies settled by Europeans, the problem of Enlightenment philosophy and the triumph of biology in the late 19th century. Lastly, it discusses the question of whether – in the light of historical experience – racist thought is a thing of the past.

Introduction

Racism did not appear in one particular place or on a specific date. The etymology of the concept "race" is uncertain and, since the late Middle Ages, has been present in a number of languages and possessed numerous meanings. The term "racism", however, is relatively young and first appeared in the 1920s to characterise the National Socialist ideology in Germany. A clear-cut and undisputed definition of racism is not possible.[1] The phenomenon described by the term "racism" – i.e. the open or concealed discrimination of arbitrarily defined social or ethnic groups – is much older than the history of the expression itself. Nevertheless, only a few historians deny that this is a modern phenomenon emanating from complex social circumstances and the interpretation of social systems with biological categories.

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A comparative historiography of racism is impeded by the different traditions of research that emerged independently of one another. In the Anglo-Saxon world, racism is often equated with the oppression of black people in the USA, South Africa or the colonies. Consequently, many accounts focus on the problem of the perception of skin colour. In contrast, many historians from continental Europe have, following the Shoah, turned to the history of anti-Semitism (➜ Media Link #ab) because the genocide of the European Jews is seen as the benchmark of racist thought.[2] In this context, it is disputed to what extent novel racist concepts had, after the end of the 19th century, replaced older anti-Jewish prejudices possessing a primarily religious foundation. In addition, there is controversy over the question of how racist prejudices transformed into the rabid genocidal destruction perpetrated by the National Socialist regime.

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Racist ideas are never formed in a vacuum; they have always interacted and competed with the other opinions that grappled with them. For this reason, if one is to understand theories of race, it is not enough to provide a one-dimensional description of certain currents within the history of ideas. Above all, an analysis should constantly ask why racist concepts were attractive for social groups within the context created by the thought and behaviour of their time.

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There is also controversy over whether racism only existed in Europe and colonies settled by Europeans or whether there are other, non-European societies organised around racial hierarchies. For example, one can mention here the Indian caste system, the structure and origins of which are highly disputed. Some authors see "caste" as the marker of a class-specific racial conflict.[3] However, no systematic comparative studies have as yet been carried out.

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Premodern Concepts of Race and Racism

But for a few exceptions, most historians agree that racism, strictly defined, did not exist in the ancient world or the Middle Ages. Of course, there were perceptions of 'otherness' and stereotypes; as a rule, one set one's own city, people, speech community or culture as the norm. Xenophobia, i.e. the rejection of the foreign, seems to be an anthropological constant present in almost every culture. The ancient Greeks and Romans saw the alien as barbarian, but skin colour was not the distinguishing feature. Their claim to exclusivity was based on culture or politics: there is no doubt that at least in the late imperial period there were some black Africans who were Roman citizens.[4]

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The Middle Ages in Europe were primarily shaped by religion. Thus, the willingness to be baptised and convert to Christianity, not outward appearance, determined one's social position. The Christian church's claim to universality prevented the creation of racial criteria. However, black Muslim African troops provoked horror in the crusaders in the Holy Land. This did not create a general stigma: the European Christian mythology has many dark-skinned martyrs and saints (Gereon, Mauritius, Bathasar). Baptised Jews were, on the whole, integrated into society, while in contrast unbaptised Jewish communities had an uncertain position, which was particularly evident in times of crisis (for example, during the First Crusade).[5]

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The position of black Africans in Europe during the early modern period was ambivalent. On the one hand, almost all Africans who came to Central Europe were bought slaves. However, the institution of racial slavery did not exist in Europe. In the royal households of the Baroque, "Moors" were highly desired as an exotic accessory, as servants, musicians or soldiers. Beyond the court, they belonged to the lowest social classes. Some Africans raised in princely courts had impressive careers. For example, the case of Anton Wilhelm Amo (c.1703–1753) (➔ Media Link #ac) from Ghana, who for a short time was a professor of philosophy, is well documented, as is that of Ibrahim Hannibal (c.1696–1781) (➔ Media Link #ad), Alexander Pushkin's (1799–1837) (➔ Media Link #ae) great grandfather, who succeeded in rising to the position of general in the Russian Tsar's army.[6]

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Three early modern developments were responsible for the entry of racial stereotypes into the European view of the world: the emergence of the transatlantic slave trade, the formation of social structures in colonies settled by Europeans and the "limpieza de sangre" ("purity of blood") on the Iberian peninsular.

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The transatlantic slave trade developed from its modest beginnings in the middle of the 16th century into a complex, diversified and global branch of the economy whose impact was at times felt directly on three continents (Europe, Africa and America) and indirectly on a fourth (parts of Southern Asia). (➔ Media Link #ag) Controversy exists regarding whether racial concepts already existed at the beginning of the slave trade. Were Africans sent to the New World as slaves because they were seen as inferior, or did it start with a market system, and concepts of race only developed during the rise of slavery? The debate on this topic is fluid, and there are good arguments for both theses.[7] The establishment of the transatlantic slave trade worked strictly according to the rules of the early capitalist market. Moreover, this was characterised by the fact that Europeans bought people from the African coast who were already enslaved. This meant they needed to establish business relationships with African or Arab middlemen with whom they had to work as equals.[8] Nevertheless, the trade increasingly contributed to the perception that Africans in the New World were inferior.

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Social structures organised along racial lines arose in many agricultural colonies and colonies settled by Europeans, almost always in the context of slavery. Explicit justification for the creation of such hierarchies only developed much later, after these structures had already become established. In the early modern Spanish colonial empire, a social system appeared that, in theory, was organised by origin, in which strict distinctions were made between whites, blacks and Indians, as well as between mixes of every combination conceivable. However, in practice, this system proved to be more porous than the theory, and many people sought, often successfully, to improve their position.[9] For this reason, the concept of "social race" (Magnus Mörner) has become accepted. Racial elements existed in this system; however, it would be going too far to speak of a pervasive racism. From the very beginning, in both the Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires, a mixed-race class whose members had their own, distinct position developed, whereas such individuals remained the great exception in the Protestant British colonies.[10]

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Social hierarchies organised by race developed in Britain's colonial empire in Northern America "on the spot", despite the fact that in the British homeland, racial slavery did not exist as a legal institution. American historians generally agree that the early settlers in Virginia, the Carolinas and in the Caribbean did not have racial hierarchies. However, from the beginning, the planters sought to extend the de facto system of "indentured servitude" – a form of compulsory labour – on their plantations. The use of Indian prisoners of war proved to be impractical because the Indians knew the land, showed solidarity with one another and, at the same time, could count on the support of their people. The system could not work with whites because their open enslavement would have made it impossible to find workers or settlers in Europe. The import of already enslaved Africans, however, was possible without having to take such matters into consideration. Within two or three generations, a system of work emerged that was based upon unfree black labour.[11] At the end of this process, there existed a social structure in which the terms "Negro" and "servants" without rights or "slaves" were identical. A flood of regulations, which above all clearly defined the behaviour of whites towards blacks, cemented this social hierarchy, in which the free or freed black person was an anomaly. The most effective weapon for the conservation of this order was the "one-drop rule", which stated that just one drop of African blood stamped an individual as being an inferior black person. As a result, an independent mixed-raced class with a separate social status did not emerge.

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These processes characterised numerous colonies settled by Protestant Europeans from the 17th to the early 20th centuries. Even following the abolition of slavery, settlers – often in direct opposition to "their" colonial power – tried to impose social structures organised along racial lines upon the indigenous population. In this way, they ensured their political, social and economic privileges. These mechanisms were equally evident among the Boers in South Africa, the British settlers in Australia, French settlers in Algeria and, later, among German settlers in the colonies of German South-West Africa.[12]

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A particular from of pre-modern racism, the "limpieza de sangre" ("purity of blood") was introduced in early modern Spain following the expulsion of the Moors. This doctrine, the mediaeval origins of which are controversial, was aimed at converted Jews and their descendants, who were accused of possessing corrupted blood as a result of their ancestry. This cult of blood had popular roots and was only slowly adopted by the state and church; however, following the expulsion of the Jews, it won acceptance over the Catholic Church's claim to universal validity, above all among the nobles. Despite their conversion to Christianity, former Jews and their descendants were not recognised as full members of society; instead, they were subjected to the surveillance of an increasingly closely meshed network of spying and inquisitorial fanaticism. Every Spaniard who desired a particular position in the clergy, the orders of knights or the universities had to prove the purity of his blood through a laborious and drawn-out process. During the early modern period, the cult of blood remained confined to Spain and did not provide a model for other cultures; even in the Spanish colonies, it only existed in a milder form. Moreover, the exclusion of the "conversos" was never implemented consistently. Many "conversos" achieved wealth, honour and position because the bureaucracy was corruptible.[13]

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The early modern world contained social orders that were organised along racial criteria; however, the theoretical justifications for discrimination against people with a different skin colour did not exist. The transatlantic slave trade managed to do without a rationale. Explicit theories of race clearly belong to the modern era.

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The Problem of the Enlightenment

Fierce controversy surrounds the questions of whether and to what extent the Enlightenment was a turning point in the history of racism. Some authors emphasise that the Enlightenment's attempt to organise the world, and in some cases arrange it into a hierarchy, paved the way for new theories of race. Even before the Enlightenment itself, thinkers sought to organise nature into a "great chain of being" beginning with inanimate objects and ending with humans and the heavenly beings at the highest rank. The idea of a "great chain" ("lex continui") had already been expressed by Aristotle (384–322 BC) (➜ Media Link #ai) and was further developed by Baruch de Spinoza (1632–1677) (➜ Media Link #aj), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) (➜ Media Link #ak) and John Locke (1632–1704) (➜ Media Link #al) and could be reconciled with church teachings. The theory of the great chain normally did not include value judgements, and Leibniz, in particular, adhered to a climate theory in which every creature had its own, specific right to exist. The conjectured transitions between plants and animals and from animals to humans met with particular philosophical interest.[14] It was less the philosophers and more the European anatomists who developed the thesis that Africans could be the link between the humans and the manlike apes. Phrenology created a connection between skull shape and intelligence or behaviour and, from the end of the 18th century, enjoyed a considerable upsurge in popularity; however, its scientific status always remained contentious.[15]

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From the 17th century onwards, the increasing number of natural history collections inspired naturalists with the desire for further classification. This reached its apex with the Swedish botanist Carl von Linné (1707–1778) (➜ Media Link #an). He created a consistent scheme in which the animal and plant worlds were divided into genera, species and races.[16] Some textbooks count many other scholars among the forefathers of racism because they created the theoretical foundations that were later misused for racist purposes. Many of these individuals, however, were not racists; instead, in the best Enlightenment tradition, they passionately opposed racial discrimination (to use a modern term) and racial slavery. These included, for example, Pieter Camper (1722–1789) (➜ Media Link #ao), who conducted extensive skull measurements and believed to have found differences between the African and European "facial angles". At the same time, he wrote uncompromising treatises against discrimination on the basis of skin colour.[17]

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Many Enlightened thinkers used the term "race"; it would, however, be incorrect to associate today's understanding of the word with this. Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) (➜ Media Link #ap) vehemently criticised the method of collecting all those passages that mention the word "race" with excessive thoroughness. This places quite inoffensive authors on the same level as explicit ideologists.[18] In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the term was used naively, without today's pejorative overtones. This has also contributed to misunderstandings in historical research. The Göttingen physician and anatomist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) (➜ Media Link #aq) wrote, for example, a book in Latin in which he presented the various "nationes" (peoples) of the world according to his state of knowledge; he wrote passionately against slavery and rejected any implication that Africans were inferior.[19] Blumenbach's English translator rendered "nationes" as "races", and the concept of "races" was from there, in turn, taken up in the German edition. Since then, Blumenbach has occasionally been included among the originators of racial theories, despite the fact that his writings intended something else. Indeed, many Enlightened thinkers created the stereotype of the uncorrupted "wild savage" as a moralising antithesis to the reprehensible situation in Europe.

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One of the key questions to which the Enlightenment devoted considerable attention was the origins of humanity. If all humans descended from one couple (Adam and Eve), an explanation was needed for the fact that the peoples on the different continents had different appearances. The supporters of monogenesis faced a problem that seemed almost impossible to solve. Admittedly, the climate theory, which identified the strength of the equatorial sun as the reason for Africans' black skin, offered a starting point. The climate theory could, however, not explain three factors conclusively. If the world – as most Enlightened thinkers assumed – was only slightly more than 5,000 years old, then, firstly, the development of different physiognomies had to have been very quick. Secondly, however, similar changes could not be seen in the present in that Africans brought to more temperate climes remained black, as did their children. The solution that skin colour had originally been changed by the climate, but then had become permanent, was, it is true, often stated, but it could not convince entirely. The climate theory was also unable to explain why Africans were black while people in similar climes (e.g. South America) looked different and why black people lived on the Cape of Good Hope, which had a climate similar to that of Europe.

The alternative explanation of polygenesis was in no way reconcilable to church teaching. This theory began with the assumption that mankind appeared separately in more than one part of the world. A prominent exponent of this view was Voltaire (1694–1778) (➜ Media Link #as), who was also one of the first Europeans to admit that the European path to civilisation was by no means the only one conceivable and other peoples could also find their own way independent of Europe. Polygenesis was popular among many Enlightened thinkers due to its decidedly anti-clerical accent. At the same time, the polygenetic explanation offered an approach taken up by later racial theorists. If mankind had no common progenitor, it made sense to speak of different races with different characteristics.

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Many of the Enlightened thinkers' ideas were consciously formulated as hypotheses. Consequently, it would be an exaggeration to talk of a developed theory of race. Most of the questions with which the Enlightened thinkers wrestled in their search for the origins of mankind were, given the state of knowledge then, legitimate and did not contradict the claim to cosmopolitan universalism. Africa possessed – in contrast to the often highly regarded Asia[20] – a subordinate position in the imagination of Enlightened thinkers because there were no observable achievements of civilisation or advanced state structures in which the Enlightenment was interested. One must view the highly disputed writings on race by Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) (➜ Media Link #au), which are often drawn upon to provide evidence of a racist dimension to the Enlightenment, in the light of this. Against such claims, Christian Geulen emphasises that Kant was the first author to try to organise systematically the scattered and inconsistent ideas of Enlightened thinkers and naturalists on race in order to demonstrate their limited scope.[21] The controversy over Kant's exact position in the development of racist perceptions remains open.

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In contrast, David Bindman and George L. Mosse have, above all, seen the development of new aesthetic concepts at the end of the 18th century as being responsible for the emergence of racial ideas.[22] This included the rediscovery of the ancient Greek ideal of beauty, to which some peoples seemed to conform better and others not at all. This went hand in hand with the desire for harmony, and classical beauty symbolised the perfect human form, which was also associated with the perfect human spirit. Debates on morals, taste and aesthetics so dominated the European upper classes of the 18th century that black Africans and Eskimos almost inevitably became the complete antithesis. Moreover, there was sometimes a predominant cult of "white" skin as a mark of distinction distinguishing non-working nobles from the rest of the population. However, it would be incorrect to draw a direct causal line from this mode of thought to modern racist thinking because here, too, the authors often expressed the opinion that Africans were equally as capable of education and development as Europeans.

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By the end of the 18th century, unabashedly racist statements remained the exception. This can be seen in the hate-filled pamphlet by the Göttingen philosopher Christoph Meiners (1747–1810) (➜ Media Link #av) on the nature of the African "Negro" published in 1790. Meiners put forward an assortment of prejudice, primitive hierarchical views of the world, justifications for slavery and – in another section – anti-Semitic tirades. He was, on the one hand, undoubtedly an early theorist of race who anticipated the racist argumentation of the late 19th century. On the other hand, at the end of the 18th century, he was discredited as a prolific but superficial writer; his works barely achieved an audience and met with vehement criticism and accusations of unscientific bigotry from scholars.[23]

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However, at the turn of the 18th and 19th century, the European perception of other peoples changed. In the past, the Chinese and other inhabitants of Far-Eastern Asia had been generally defined as "white"; now, they were increasingly perceived as "yellow".[24] In addition, an assumption of superiority over other peoples and cultures grew in Europe from the beginning of the 19th century as a result of the expansion of colonialism. In connection with the appearance of nationalism, myths which later could be interpreted in exclusively racial terms appeared in numerous European states. Examples include the legends of the Franks and the writings (whose impact at the time is, however, often exaggerated) of "Count" Arthur de Gobineau (1816–1882) (➜ Media Link #aw), which from a reactionary perspective postulated differences in social standing as immutable racial characteristics.

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Racial Theories as Ideologies of Justification

In the context of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade and slavery within the British Empire, slave owners in the USA came under increasing pressure from reformers motivated partially by humanitarian and partially by religious considerations. (➜ Media Link #ax) Consequently, they sought arguments to justify slavery, for which racial theories seemed well suited. The idea of Africans' "childishness" was derived in part from the bible and in part from novel scientific methods of categorising the world. In addition, the supposedly patriarchical side of slavery was defended with the thesis that slavery was beneficial to black people. The developments on Haiti were restyled as a warning example: one of the most brutal regimes of slavery in the world had existed on the once prosperous French sugar island until the French Revolution; through many years of risings and wars, the island won its independence, leading to the creation of the first black republic, which, however, soon degenerated into a dictatorship. The price of independence was the almost complete destruction of the island, which became the poorhouse of the Caribbean. This provided slavery's supporters with some munition for their arguments

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American racial theory responded directly to the arguments of the growing anti-slavery movement (➜ Media Link #ay). The reactive character is especially apparent when one compares the developments in the USA to those in the South-African Boer republics. Here, although racial slavery was officially abolished, conditions very similar to slavery existed on many farms. Because the black Africans' lack of freedom provoked barely any criticism, hardly any theories developed to justify the existing social order of racial hierarchies. Only the end of the Boer war at the beginning of the 20th century brought forth theoretical concepts that resulted in strict racial segregation – the later Apartheid.[25] Racism reached its highpoint in the USA's South not during the period of slavery but rather following the end of the Civil War and the emancipation of the slaves.[26] A ferociously violent racism accompanied the Reconstruction era. White terrorist organisations such as the Ku Klux Klan, (➜ Media Link #az) white lynchings of blacks (➜ Media Link #b0) and a high degree of everyday violence shaped life in the Southern states. On top of this, there were numerous laws that severely discriminated against Afro-Americans, depriving them of political rights and excluding them from all forms of education wherever this was possible.

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A further important source of modern racism was the heightened pace at which the European colonial powers expanded during the Age of Imperialism. The fact that Europeans had brought a large portion of the world under their control with apparently very little effort gave rise to the assumption of a natural superiority. However, it would be wrong to view the entire period of imperialism only from the perspective of racism; competing concepts always existed. For example, theses of a European civilizing mission assumed that many people were currently inferior and needed European help, but that they were quite capable of ruling themselves independently in a distant future after colonialism. This understanding of a civilizing mission was often found in France and, connected with the ideology of free trade, characterised the justification for rule in the British Empire as well.[27] However, the acquisition of colonies contributed to the rise of racist ideas in all European metropoles. In many colonies in Africa and Asia, the lack of explicit theories of race did not prevent indigenous peoples from being relegated to second-class citizens in practice. This was not only evident in the political and economic reality, but also at a social and symbolic level: for example, Europeans created their own, better and insular residential areas using the hygienic justification of preventing the spread of disease.

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The Triumph of Biology

The decisive turning point in the history of modern racism was the biological revolution which is inseparable from the name of Charles Darwin (1809–1882) (➜ Media Link #b2) and gave theories of race a tremendous boost. Darwin himself was not a racist and seems to have seen the potentially dangerous consequences of his Theory of Evolution. However, Social Darwinism became a dominant world view in the second half of the 19th century in Europe and those parts of the world influenced by the West. Its attractiveness rested on the fact that it seemed to explain otherwise incomprehensible social phenomena in an incontrovertible, scientific way.

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One consequence of the biological interpretation of social relationships since of the end of the 19th century is Eugenics,

which is closely related to the appearance of new racial stereotypes. This discipline is based on the observation that certain illnesses are clearly inheritable and that, as a result, biological measures targeted at heredity could considerably improve the quality of an entire people. The same was considered to be true if certain "inferior" groups of people were prevented from reproducing. The Eugenicists contradicted, however, the assumption of the "survival of the fittest" in their belief that the "undesirables" reproduced more energetically than the "desirables", creating unwanted underclasses or peoples who in a biological sense were to be seen as inferior. This had theoretical consequences that would have a lasting effect on the 20th century. It seemed obvious that in Western societies natural selection had been overridden by state regulation and the civilizing process so that the quality of the people threatened to degenerate dramatically. This had dire implications because the individual process of rise and decline was transferred to whole peoples and the international system. The struggle for existence took place, according to this view of the world, not only between species and genera in the animal world, but also between peoples, nations and races, depending on one's individual perspective.[28]

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The rise of Social Darwinism was, for this reason, closely bound up with the growth in nationalism throughout Europe in the 19th century. Nations, peoples and states were increasingly viewed as subjects that, in accordance with their particular characters, had to fight for their place in the world or face an inevitable downfall. Although it is not clear in every individual case, at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, Social Darwinist perceptions, dreams of racial superiority and imperialistic ambitions were almost irrevocably connected in all the European metropoles.

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Anti-Semitism was present in all European societies of the late 19th century and received a considerable boost from the populisation of Darwinist thought. In contrast, in Eastern Europe (Russia and Rumania), particularly, traditional forms of hostility towards Jews continued to exist. With the exception of Britain, in Western and Central Europe, older anti-Jewish prejudices, in part fuelled by Christian ideas, were increasingly combined with the new racial concepts. This mixture was evident at the end of the 19th century in France when the affair concerning Captain Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935) (➔ Media Link #b3) almost brought the republic to the brink of the abyss. The fact that the Jewish captain was wrongly prosecuted with espionage is less interesting here than the reaction from parts of the French public to the attempts, initially led by a small group of republican intellectuals, to exonerate Dreyfus. The opponents of Dreyfus mobilised the whole arsenal of anti-Semitic religious and scientific/racial arguments. In the medium term, however, they were unsuccessful and the republic emerged strengthened from this debate.

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In contrast, open racial anti-Semitism was less common in the German Empire before 1914 and exhibited itself in more subtle forms. Unbaptised Jews were, admittedly, legally equal, but there were considerable restrictions on their entrance to the officer corps and many student fraternities. The Berlin debate on anti-Semitism sparked off by the historian Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896) (➔ Media Link #b4) showed that racist thought had found a place among the university elite. Other, more esoteric, ideas existed in the circle around Richard Wagner (1813–1883) (➔ Media Link #b5). Moreover, at the turn of the century, the imperialist Pan-German League adopted anti-Semitism in its repertoire of arguments in order to increase its attractiveness. The relative lack of success of the Stoecker movement and other anti-Semitic parties demonstrated, however, the limits of politically organised anti-Semitism in Imperial Germany.

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The First World War represented a turning point in the history of the anti-Semitic variant of racism in Germany. The war and the period directly after it gave a powerful boost to racist, openly anti-Semitic and *völkisch* groupings which vociferously propagated the stab-in-the-back legend and a shrill anti-Semitism.[29] The *völkisch* and National Socialist ideologies never formed a consistent view of the world, instead combining primitive racial prejudices with a pathological hate that could barely be rationalised. (➔ Media Link #b6) At the same time, the National Socialist ideology took Social Darwinism to its logical extremes for the first victims of the coming genocide were those with mental and physical disabilities, who had been defined as leading lives not worth living by the euthanasia campaign.

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There has been no lack of attempts to present the genocide of European Jews and the more comprehensive programmes for systematic mass murder in the East (➔ Media Link #b7) as the products of economic imperatives.[30]

Even though the "Aryanisation" in Germany before the Second World War and the looting of Jews after the beginning of the Holocaust were, without doubt, part of the genocide, this was – from the point of view of the National Socialist regime – just a desirable by-product. The genocide was "racism gone berserk".[31]

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Racism Today

Racism has ostensibly been on the retreat throughout the Western world since the Second World War. Following the defeat of National Socialist Germany, the most racist of systems in world history, public racism only existed in South Africa. Apartheid was introduced here in 1948, although it had existed in practice since before the First World War. It was the only social system in the world officially based on segregation after 1945. The segregation that in practice existed up into the 1960s in some of the USA's Southern states has been constantly pushed back. After the late 1960s, it is difficult to find racism among Western elites; daily racism has become a phenomenon of the underclasses that faces constant opposition.

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However, there are some indications that mutated forms of racism can occur today as before. At the beginning of the 1990s, extremist organisations such as Hutu Power in Ruanda propagated racist concepts that in their primitiveness and radicalism recalled National Socialism and which contributed to the genocide against the Tutsi. There also appears to exist racist elements, as yet unresearched, in some versions of Islamic fundamentalism that go beyond the movement's open anti-Semitism. Discrimination, to which numerous ethnic, religious and language groups in many countries are subjected, should not – as is often the case in everyday language – be simply equated with racism because normally it is justified on the basis of culture rather than immutable genetic characteristics.

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The history of racism remains a promising field for future research. In particular, the gender perspectives present in all racist concepts and social systems have only recently come to the attention of researchers and offer considerable potential for future avenues of investigation. Moreover, there is a growing international trend towards studies from cultural history and discourse theory; it is still too early, however, to assess the value of their contributions.

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Appendix

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Notes

1. ^ For a comprehensive definition see Memmi, Rassismus 1987.
2. ^ See, for example, Mosse, Rassismus 2006, p. 23.
3. ^ Cf. von zur Mühlen, Rassenideologien 1977, pp. 18f.
4. ^ Cf. Snowden, Color Prejudice 1983.
5. ^ For the position of Jews see Poliakov, Antisemitismus 1977, vol. I und 1978, vol. II.
6. ^ Cf. Martin, Schwarze Teufel 2001, pp. 303–327.
7. ^ For authors who assume that racial prejudice caused slavery see Introduction, in: Toplin, Slavery and Race 1974, p. 5f.; Allen, Invention 1994, vol. 1, p. 6. For Eric Williams and others racism was a consequence of the growing economic disparity between blacks and whites, cf. Introduction, in: Boxill, Race 2001, pp. 3f.; Bowser, Racism 1995, p. XVII; Postma, Dutch 1990, p. 259.
8. ^ For an introduction, see Klein, Slave Trade 1999.
9. ^ Cf. Chance, Race and Class 1978.
10. ^ The controversy about the differences between the Spanish and British colonial empire as well as their religious motives started with Tannenbaum, Slave 1946.
11. ^ Cf. Malcomson, One drop of blood 2000; Wood, American Slavery 1997; Oakes, Ruling Race 1982; Higginbotham, Matter of Color 1978; Morgan, American Slavery 1975.
12. ^ Cf. Barth, Zivilisierungsmission 2005, pp. 201–228.
13. ^ For "limpieza de sangre" see Poliakov, Antisemitismus 1981, vol IV; Pietschmann, Staat 1980, pp. 36, 48; vivid examples in Torres, Rassismus 2006.
14. ^ For "great chain of being" see Lovejoy, Kette 1985.
15. ^ Cf. Martin, Schwarze Teufel 2001, pp. 205f., 271; Poliakov, Mythos 1977, pp. 174f.; Oehler-Klein, Einleitung, in: Soemmering, Verschiedenheit 1998, p. 67.
16. ^ Cf. Mayr, Gedankenwelt 1984, pp. 82f.
17. ^ For Camper see Mosse, Rassismus 2006, pp. 47–54.
18. ^ Cf. Arendt, Elemente und Ursprünge 1996, pp. 355f.
19. ^ Cf. Blumenbach, Verschiedenheiten 2001.
20. ^ For Asia see Osterhammel, Entzauberung 1998.
21. ^ Cf. Geulen, Rassismus 2007, p. 59.
22. ^ Cf. Bindman, Ape to Apollo 2002; Mosse, Rassismus 2006, pp. 8f., 49.
23. ^ Cf. Meiners, Neger 2000, pp. 67–77.
24. ^ Cf. Demel, Chinesen 1992.
25. ^ For the South-African Boer republics see Fredrickson, White Supremacy 1981; Marx, Ochsenwagen 1998.
26. ^ Cf. Fredrickson, Rassismus 2004, p. 101.
27. ^ Cf. Barth / Osterhammel, Zivilisierungsmissionen 2005; Kiernan, Lords 1986; Eldridge, England's Mission 1973.
28. ^ Cf. Grosse, Eugenik 2000; Kappeler, Traum 2000; Hawkins, Social Darwinism 1997.
29. ^ Cf. Barth, Dolchstoßlegenden 2003.
30. ^ See, for example, Gerlach, Völkermord 1998; Aly, "Endlösung" 1995.
31. ^ Browning, Path to Genocide 1992, p. 85.

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Link #ab
- Antisemitism (http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/international-social-movements/samuel-salzborn-antisemitism)

Link #ac
- Anton Wilhelm Amo (c.1703–1753) VIAF 🔗 (http://viaf.org/viaf/93663953) DNB 🔗 (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118502603)

Link #ad
- Ibrahim Hannibal (c.1696–1781) VIAF 🔗 (http://viaf.org/viaf/18540739)

Link #ae
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Link #ag

(http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-and-the-world/resolveuid/3360d860675a7f9b1dd63313e792173b?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500)
A slave auction at the south 1861

Link #ai
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Link #aj
- Baruch de Spinoza (1632–1677) VIAF 🔗 (http://viaf.org/viaf/22149024) DNB 🔗 (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118616242)

Link #ak
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) VIAF 🔗 (http://viaf.org/viaf/9849392) DNB 🔗 (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118571249) ADB/NDB 🔗 (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118571249.html)

Link #al
- John Locke (1632–1704) VIAF 🔗 (http://viaf.org/viaf/34459614) DNB 🔗 (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118573748)

Link #an

- Carl von Linné (1707–1778) VIAF ☑ ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/34594730) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118573349) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118573349.html)

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- Pieter Camper (1722–1789) VIAF ☑ ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/46924807) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info/gnd/119291827) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd119291827.html)

Link #ap
- Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) VIAF ☑ ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/105151053) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info/gnd/11850391X) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd11850391X.html)

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- Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) VIAF ☑ ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/71570755) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info /gnd/116208503) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd116208503.html)

Link #as
- Voltaire (1694–1778) VIAF ☑ ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/36925746) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118627813) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118627813.html)

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- Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) VIAF ☑ ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/82088490) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118559796) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118559796.html)

Link #av
- Christoph Meiners (1747–1810) VIAF ☑ ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/64133843) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info /gnd/116863498) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd116863498.html)

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- Arthur de Gobineau (1816–1882) VIAF ☑ ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/7390794) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info /gnd/118695568) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118695568.html)

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Link #ay
- Abolitionismus im transatlantischen Raum (http://www.ieg-ego.eu/de/threads/transnationale-bewegungen- und-organisationen/internationale-soziale-bewegungen/birgitta-bader-zaar-abolitionismus-im-transatlantischen- raum-abschaffung-der-sklaverei)

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Link #b0

- (http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/npcc.12928)
  Lynching, USA ca. 1925, LoC ☑

Link #b2

- Charles Darwin (1809–1882) VIAF ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/27063124) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118523813)
  ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118523813.html)

Link #b3

- Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935) VIAF ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/19676856) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118527460)
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Link #b4

- Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896)   VIAF ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/95211206) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info
  /gnd/118623761) ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118623761.html)

Link #b5

- Richard Wagner (1813–1883) VIAF ☑ (http://viaf.org/viaf/29732107) DNB ☑ (http://d-nb.info/gnd/118594117)
  ADB/NDB ☑ (http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd118594117.html)

Link #b6

- (http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/mediainfo/boycott-of-jewish-businesses-1933?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500)
  Boycott of Jewish Businesses 1933

Link #b7

- (http://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-and-the-world/resolveuid/04856d4fb60790a4ecf921a264a74136?mediainfo=1&width=900&height=500)
  Concentration camp Auschwitz 1945