



DEPARTMENT OF MIDDLE  
EASTERN STUDIES  
Faculty of Arts  
Charles University

## Call for Proposals

### **Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Disability: Intersectional Perspectives on the Holocaust**

When her parents wanted to place two-year-old Irene Tobias in a home for the mentally disabled in 1937, the director of the Protestant charity in Hamburg, Friedrich Lentsch, refused to accept her because she was Jewish. He argued that by taking in a Jewish child, the institution might lose its status as a charitable and non-profit organization because the treatment of Jews might not be exempted from paying tax. Even the state institutions that were supposed to take Irene refused to do so, citing the precedent set by Lentsch.

Rose Steinberg was born in 1917 in Pinsk. At the age of three she became deaf and was later sent to the best Jewish school for the deaf in Berlin, where she met her future husband Max. They moved to Paris, where Max played football in a sports club for the deaf. During the Nazi occupation of France, Max was arrested for being Jewish. During that time, he and Rose and their young child were selflessly supported by their non-Jewish deaf friends whom Max met at the sports club. Max was eventually deported to Auschwitz where he was killed. However, Rose and the baby lived to see the end of the war.

When noma, a rare water cancer, was discovered among Romani children in the so-called G\*psy camp at Auschwitz, Josef Mengele selected two German-speaking doctors from Bohemia - Berthold Epstein and Rudolf Weiskopf - from among the Jewish prisoners to study the disease. After some time, the Jewish doctors managed to cure some of the children, albeit under limited conditions. As soon as Mengele learned of this, he had the cured Romani children put to death in the gas chambers. Jewish doctors could not save many Roma and Sinti in the camp, and the vast majority of those who were healed ended up in the gas chambers. Even so, strong bonds of friendship were formed between the doctors, both of whom survived the war, and some of the Romani survivors, which lasted even after the war, as in the case of Weiskopf and Josef Chadraba, who lost his wife and their seven children in Auschwitz.

Historical research in general and Holocaust studies in particular tend to cluster around specific contexts and perspectives: genocide of Jews only, or genocide of Roma and Sinti only, the Holocaust from gender and family perspectives, and the history of people with disabilities and the euthanasia program, to name at least a few. This development in research is well founded, and many of the important studies that advance our understanding of the Holocaust are the result of research that focuses on one of these specific perspectives.

However, we also believe that there is a need to break up these clusters of research from time to time and to combine approaches in novel ways, by acknowledging intersections and their impact

on accounts of the past. While Holocaust scholarship on Jews and Roma has already produced publications that combine research on the genocide of these two (internally very diverse) communities (e.g., Joskowicz 2023, Adler - Čapková 2020), the linking of perspectives on race and ethnicity on the one hand and disability on the other has been neglected in Holocaust studies and more generally in research on European history.

We welcome proposals for articles that combine the categories of race and ethnicity with that of disability and focus on various life situations (both inside and outside camps).

Articles may focus on questions such as:

To what extent did the Holocaust experience of people with disabilities differ if they were Jewish or Romani?

What were the responses of people with disabilities or of (local / international) activists who supported people with disabilities, to the racial discrimination of Romani or Jewish disabled people?

How did the diverse Romani or Jewish communities and families treat their disabled members during the Second World War?

To what extent did gender play a role in solidarity networks that bridged identities based on race/ethnicity and disability?

Proposals that use the sources produced by Roma and Sinti, Jews or people with disabilities themselves are especially welcome.

We welcome potential authors of articles for a special issue that we plan to publish with one of the leading peer-reviewed journals in the field. Abstracts – approx. 800-1000 words – should be submitted to Monika Baar at [monika.baar@eui.eu](mailto:monika.baar@eui.eu) by 31 July 2024. Questions about the project may also be sent to this address. Decisions about the acceptance of abstracts will be made shortly after the submission deadline.

The first drafts of the articles will be due by 20 November 2024 to be discussed during a hybrid workshop taking place at the European University Institute in Florence on 6 December 2024 under the organization of Monika Baar (EUI) and Kateřina Čapková (Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague).