

# Constructing 'Anti-Racist' Authoritarian Science, 1950-Present

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How did proponents of theories of racial hygiene under the National Socialist regime in Germany come to serve as experts who drafted and commented on the UNESCO Statements on Race? For nearly seventy-five years, these Statements have served as paradigmatic reference points for scholars and activists who have sought to argue that the concept of race has no meaningful basis in biology, and that all are human, deserving of fundamental rights. What sense can be made of this troubling puzzle that lies at the heart of their drafting? The answer, I argue, lies in unraveling how during the early years of the Cold War, scientists, political leaders and bureaucrats forged an understanding of 'science' as a moral force of 'truth' that could undergird liberal democracies and oppose ideologies of racism and Communism. This talk documents how Cold War constructions of science and science policy worked to rehabilitate the moral status of geneticists and physical anthropologists who supported the eugenics and sterilization policies of the National Socialist regime, but who after WWII opposed Lysenkoist theories of genetics propagated by the Soviet Communist Party. I conclude by considering how this episode can help shed light on the current moment in which many once again attempt to mobilize 'science' as an anti-racist, anti-authoritarian force. How far have liberal democracies moved from a Cold War politics of science and truth that fosters racism even as it claims to be anti-racist?

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