

Nazi Racism and Japanese- German Intermarriages

How Foreign and Racial
Policy clashed during the
Nazi Era

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18:30 – 20:00
Room 301, 3F, Building 10,
Sophia University

In *Mein Kampf* (1924), Hitler had suggested a three-fold division of races, designating the Japanese as merely “culture-bearing” and thus inferior, positioned between the allegedly superior “culture-creating” Aryans and the “culture-destroying” Jews. This essentially became official policy after the Nazi rise to power in January 1933. The Nuremberg Race Laws of September 1935 changed the above-mentioned system into a binary one, singling out the Jews as the only subordinate race, elevating all others to an unofficial (and insecure) “honorary Aryan” status.

Following a short introduction to the position of the Japanese within Hitler’s race system and the Nazi’s admiration of Japanese “racial purity”, this talk is going to take a closer look at some of the problems Japanese-German couples (and their children) faced during the Nazi era. The main focus of this talk will be on such couples living in Japan. The Japan

branch of the Nazi Party (*Landesgruppe Japan*) excluded Jews as well as many Germans married to Japanese from the German community (*Deutsche Gemeinde*). Yet, they made a distinction between those who had married before 1933/35 and those who either married or wanted to marry afterwards. The latter group was exposed to extreme Nazi agitation. Even during the “Axis” years, when Japan and the Third Reich were allies, the Nazis made every effort to prevent such marriages. Young German men living in Japan, for example, were threatened to be drafted into the navy (*Kriegsmarine*) and sent on extremely dangerous blockade breaking missions to render planned weddings impossible. These actions expose a strong feeling of racial superiority even vis-à-vis Nazi Germany’s main wartime ally.

Christian W. Spang got his PhD in 2009 from Freiburg University in Germany for his dissertation *Karl Haushofer und Japan*, published in 2013. He has been researching and teaching in Japan since 1998. After three years at Tsukuba University (2009-2012), he moved on to Daito Bunka University in Tokyo, where he is professor for German Studies and German-Japanese relations. Currently, he is visiting professor at the Japanese Department of Friedrich-Alexander-University (FAU) in Erlangen, Germany (<https://www.japanologie.phil.fau.de/personal/lehrtstuhl-i/christian-spang/>). Over the last 20 years, he has extensively published about German-Japanese relations and is co-editor of *German-Japanese Relations 1895-1945*, published with Routledge in 2006, and *Transnational Encounters between Germany and Japan*, London: Palgrave 2016. He is also the co-editor of the autobiography of a German Jew who lived in Kobe during the Nazi era: *Heinz Altschul: “As I Record These Memories ...”*, 2014. In March 2018, his latest book *Karl Haushofer und die OAG*, was released by Iudicium in Munich. Dr. Spang is a Professor at Daitō Bunka University.

Lecture in English / No RSVP required
This talk is organized by Professor Sven Saaler (FLA)

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