Introduction: racial disavowals – historicising whiteness in Central and Eastern Europe

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Since the 2008 economic crisis, postsocialist Eastern Europe has become a new hub of white nationalist organising. Hungary's Viktor Orbán, for instance, has consolidated his illiberal regime by cultivating a network of regional and global far-right allies, from the alt-right publishing house Arktos Media to the World Congress of Families – a focal point of the anti-gender movement. In August 2021, FOX News' Tucker Carlson took his cable show to Budapest for an entire week, interviewing Orbán and presenting his regime as a success story of populism from which the United States had much to learn. Tacitly or not, 'whiteness' is a main pillar of Eastern European populists' unapologetic nativist agenda, which idealises the heteronormative, white, Christian family and relentlessly demonises migrants.[1] The power of such a position lies in part in the claim that the region is racially innocent, untainted historically by complicity with Western Europe's imperialism overseas. Thus unburdened from a 'white guilt' supposedly found in a multicultural West, the region's nativists can become the true defenders of a white Europe, or white West. Often unmarked, but deeply powerful, this 'innocent' whiteness in Eastern Europe inspires today's global Right, and urgently demands attention from scholars of race and racism elsewhere.

Having not been involved in colonialism or transatlantic enslavement on the same terms, Eastern Europe has conventionally been viewed as 'beyond' the racial dynamics of the West or black Atlantic in scholarship too. Some of this absence is a consequence of how commonly racism is still perceived as consisting only of a black–white binary or a binary between 'white' and 'not white' – a system which is confounded by Eastern Europe and other global semi-peripheries.[2] Systems of racial classification in the global 'core' have racialised Eastern Europe's territories and people in ambiguous, contradictory and unstable ways, recently summed up by Ivan Kalmar as being a position of 'white but not quite'.[3] It has also been described as

conditional whiteness, liminal whiteness, peripheral whiteness, or the phrase lending its title to the volume, 'off white'.[4]

Yet Eastern Europe is not simply a racially denigrated victim of ideological projects developed elsewhere: claims to whiteness – only conditionally accepted in the West – were essential in the development of the region's nation-states. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, national movements identified with, and worked towards, a Europe increasingly defined by white imperialism. Scientists and anthropologists in Eastern Europe employed race science to pseudo-scientifically justify symbolic boundaries of racial difference between their own white European nations and darker neighbours, usually to the East or South; to legitimise antisemitism and anti-Romani eugenic policy; and to offer unifying myths of homogenisation for white Christian national communities.[5]

Eastern European state socialisms after 1945 employed a very different logic in their relationships with the newly decolonised Global South, producing numerous encounters across what W. E. B. Du Bois called in 1900 the 'global colour line'.[6] Presenting themselves as 'different' Europeans who were successfully industrialising but were not hidebound by colonial pasts, they claimed to offer alternative modernities that transcended racial difference.[7] Miglena Todorova describes Eastern European racial imaginations during the Cold War as 'socialist racialism', based not on Western visions of 'colonial and capitalist' separation between human groups, but on recruiting subordinated groups into a distinct – and very violent – redistributive project.[8] Even then, however, pre-1945 racial tropes not only survived but were also remade and even strengthened, in much socialist-era science, travel writing, and elite and popular thinking, to privilege white members of the titular nation over internal minorities, and white European socialists over their Third World contemporaries.[9] Following the Sino–Soviet split in 1960, Beijing's Communists accused their Eastern European counterparts of revealing a deeper attachment to a 'white West' through the policy of 'peaceful co-existence'.

As state socialism withered in the 1980s, new modes of connecting the region into global imaginations of race emerged. Eastern European intellectual and political elites arguably 'discovered' that identifying with whiteness could help persuade the West that their peoples too belonged within European modernity.[10] Roma were racialised as a barrier to the region's re-entry into a white developed Europe – and became an ever-greater target for prejudice and violence. Abuse chanted by Eastern European spectators at footballers of African descent suggested a transnational subculture of racist extremism.[11]

Large-scale migrations often produce new popular understandings of place in a racial order. Eastern European workers settling in Western Europe

after the 2004–13 eastward enlargement of the European Union (EU) often found themselves racialised as not quite fully white Europeans.[12] After 2015, meanwhile, Eastern Europe became a centre of the global 'refugee crisis', as more than a million people from the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia traversed the region, only to be treated as a mass racialised threat to European security and social cohesion. In the following years, with these rising fears of non-white migration, Ukrainian labour was admitted to the European Union in ever greater numbers: 1,390,978 Ukrainians were registered in Poland alone by 2020.[13] The crisis on the so-called 'Balkan Route', and later also on the EU–Belarus border, gave rise to new expressions of state racism but also fresh anti-racist solidarities.[14] After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the issue of race again came to the fore: migration regimes established to enable the exodus of mainly women and children speedily began to racialise the normative Ukrainian refugee as fully white – itself a novel development – while restricting mobility to those racialised as other, namely Afro-Ukrainians born in Ukraine, Global South nationals living in Ukraine, and Ukrainian Roma.[15]

Scholars seeking to understand Eastern Europe's place in the 'world-system' of capital, coloniality, and race view it as what Immanuel Wallerstein termed a 'semi-periphery'.[16] In this conception, semi-peripheries sit between the world-system's true core and the furthest periphery, producing numerous racialised identities which sit ambiguously between the imagined hierarchical poles of white and black. Accepting this multidimensional geography of race enables recognition of what Anca Parvulescu calls 'racial triangulation', that is, the 'multidirectional … racial field' where Eastern Europeans can be 'both … victims and agents of racism'.[17] Similarly, Kalmar explores the simultaneous 'illiberal racism *of*' and 'racism *against*' Central, and other Eastern, Europeans, not to *equate* their racial othering with anti-black racism but to show how the racial system that fundamentally subordinates blackness to whiteness also produces 'ambiguous positions' like these.[18]

Nevertheless, these dynamics concern a wider region. Following Parvulescu and Boatcă, we see Eastern Europe's semi-peripherality as the consequence of 'inter-imperiality', or having been historically controlled and contested by *different* empires.[19] The identity discourses and policies produced within Eastern Europe have been circumscribed by histories of interacting empires, and by the 'multiple subject positions' of individuals living 'within, between, and against' them.[20] With a broader spatial lens, and by placing in-depth historical examinations in dialogue with contemporary examples, we argue that sentiments of racialised belonging/exclusion mediated through attachments to whiteness were already being mobilised from the mid-nineteenth century.

Whiteness and disavowal in Eastern Europe

Despite the evidence that many Eastern European political movements have long worked towards belonging in a white Europe, the region's nationalists have denied the relevance of race.[21] Critical approaches to eruptions of racialised thinking are frequently declined – by omission, when ethnicity and nationalism are isolated from race, and sometimes by open dismissal.[22] Historicising whiteness in Eastern Europe thus requires confronting a powerful politics of disavowal – a phenomenon found not only in this region.

Scholars of race have long claimed that 'whiteness' as an unmarked racial category and a structure of knowledge – *not* an inherent characteristic of people with pale skin colour – gains its power from granting its beneficiaries ignorance of its effects.[23] The philosopher Charles W. Mills termed such a relationship to global structures 'white ignorance'.[24] His phrase is challenging: nobody likes to be seen as ignorant. Yet he did not mean wilful choices to be ignorant, despite how racialised structures of power incentivise such an attitude. Rather, he suggested those same structures of knowledge, culture, education, and capital have produced a social reality where the people racialised into the category of 'white' do not perceive racism's effects or nature unless they specially strive to.[25] Mills proposed that this process had encompassed the whole world, '[i]nsofar as the modern world has been created by European colonialism and imperialism, and insofar as racist assumptions/frameworks/norms were central to' that process.[26] Scholars have interrogated how racism can be disavowed in many regions beyond the Global North which were subject to European colonial rule for centuries. Such is the case in Latin America, where a 'colorblind post-raciality' props up a white elite, or actors can fear losing whiteness during economic crises. Similarly in Ghana, where citizens customarily perceive their country as a non-racialised space yet everyday social practices (from beauty regimes to hospitality towards foreigners) reveal a status hierarchy linked to proximity to whiteness.[27]

Mills' 'ignorance' might take the form of professing racial 'innocence', as Gloria Wekker argues frequently occurs in Dutch society through 'stubborn' claims that the Netherlands 'is and always has been color-blind and antiracist'.[28] Those critical of ways in which commemoration of slavery in the UK or France privileges Westerners' role in abolition over their centuries-long maintenance of bondage might concur.[29] Claims of racial 'innocence' for Europe's East rest on its *disconnection* from Western European colonialism and from the transatlantic slave trade. This was a compelling alibi even for the empires ruling Eastern Europe in the later nineteenth century.[30] It was all the more so for the region's nationalist movements and then nation-states between the Soviet Union and Germany, which could argue

they themselves had then been under foreign imperial rule, sometimes to the point of being colonised: as such, they claimed, they were not fundamentally complicit in creating a world-system with racialised hierarchies at its core. Even those nationalists who fantasised or pursued colonial-type projects, such as the Maritime and Colonial League in interwar Poland, could claim these were fundamentally different from those undertaken in the West.[31]

Both Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union, meanwhile, developed strikingly similar expiatory discourses to justify their own expansionism and imperial practices – which have been increasingly critiqued in light of debates about 'Russian colonialism' following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[32] The Tsarist Empire professed its civilisation's spiritual superiority and rejected Western concepts of race: its advocates often arguing its capacity for a harmony between its peoples that eluded the German, French, and especially English, imperialist.[33] After the 1917 revolution, the Soviets publicly claimed class and nationality, based on sociohistorical consciousness rather than biologised race, as their overarching principles to make sense of and transform their extraordinary diverse new society.[34] Moscow claimed to be leading nationalities at its peripheries towards cultural uplift through a development programme that Terry Martin likened to 'affirmative action'.[35] Its anti-colonial internationalism fuelled the hope that Communism would end global racism. Communist states in Eastern Europe from the late 1940s similarly claimed that racism was always elsewhere, reproducible only under the conditions of capitalism.[36]

Prominent intellectuals in the African diaspora often fed this image of Communist states as belonging to a space beyond race as they sought the region's support in the anti-colonial struggle. During the 1930s and 1940s, George Padmore argued that the Soviet Union had overcome racial discrimination through an exemplary socialist experiment uniting an imperial core with its former colonies in a common project.[37] Black American intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois went even further, linking the fate of African Americans and of people fighting against colonial oppression to 'the white slaves of modern capitalist society', among whom he counted the now 'liberated' peoples in the Balkans.[38] By the 1980s, more critical attitudes emerged, especially among African elites, as the Bloc's anti-colonial and anti-racist commitments declined and violence against extra-European migrants increased.[39] Anti-racism was drowned out by a growing nationalist sentiment in European Communist states which fought to break from the Soviet Empire and return to western market civilisation.[40] An unexpected continuity between Communist regimes and twenty-first-century right-wing populist states in Eastern Europe is that both offered national visions unburdened from guilt for colonialism and racism.

Tracing the ideological work of 'whiteness' in Eastern Europe back to its roots in nation-building and global colonialism, this volume uncovers discourses that have rendered racialised hierarchies transparent and natural in the international state system; in national self-determination struggles; in cultural representation; in intellectual and academic discourses; and in Western imaginations projected on to the region which interact with local ideas. It understands 'Europe' as a collective space where the production of race and the construction of nationhood are inextricably linked, and into which Eastern Europe is fully integrated, as Bolaji Balogun argues in his chapter for this volume. Its novel demonstration of Eastern Europe's place within the global history of race expands perspectives on global white nationalism, the literature on which still remains predominantly Anglophone.[41] The full contexts of globalised networks of white supremacy extend beyond the West, towards what Andrzej Nowak and Marta Grzechnik term the 'racism of the semi-periphery'[42] – that is, racisms that manifest in regions where claims to whiteness are fragile – and act as intermediate racialised zones between the white core and postcolonial spaces.[43] With resonances across spaces such as Latin America, the Middle East, and North Africa, this history of Eastern Europe contributes to discussions over the complexities of racialisation and formation of racial regimes in regions defined by such inbetweenness.[44] Their liminality pushes them to work towards whiteness, while their nationalisms simultaneously deny its relevance – a pattern that then becomes a resource for sustaining and justifying white supremacy around the world.[45]

Eastern Europe and global racial orders

This volume's contributors each employ their own theoretical, methodological, and embodied standpoints, and make their own choices in naming their regions of study. Several shared principles nevertheless unite their questions about Eastern Europe and the global history of race. A first premise is that race is not an actual biological, genetic, or physiological characteristic but, following Stuart Hall, 'the centerpiece of a hierarchical system that produces differences … a *system of meaning*, a way of organizing and meaningfully classifying the world'.[46] Race in this sense is 'elastic', with its own 'mutability, adaptability and motility' reflecting the fact that 'racial meanings, arrangements, and orderings' have insinuated themselves across social, cultural, gender, and economic circumstances since colonialism began.[47] In Western and transatlantic spaces at least, they also insinuated themselves into emerging class structures, in the phenomenon Cedric Robinson termed 'racial capitalism' – which for him dated back to medieval, *infra*-European rationales for

slavery.[48] A second premise is that the notion of race embedded by Europeans' colonialism and transatlantic enslavement of Africans forges a nexus between bodies, territory, and time. It demarcates certain spaces of the globe as 'civil' or 'wild', fixes certain bodily signifiers as marks of origin from each space, and attaches supposedly enduring physical, mental, and social characteristics to each racial origin.[49] In racial logic, these still determine each people's civilisational status and readiness for modernity wherever their descendants live, polarising human societies into zones of civilization and barbarism.[50] These tropes take race well beyond biology and skin colour into fundamental questions about society, culture, and international order.

A third premise for a global history of race is that the legacies of colonialism and enslavement are themselves global, and the idea of racialised civilisational hierarchies has spread far beyond the spaces directly ruled by past or present colonial and settler-colonial regimes. Some studies of Europe's northern periphery (where Denmark and Sweden were colonial powers, but Norway, Iceland, and Finland were not yet independent) already suggest national cultures could absorb ideologies of white supremacy without territories colonised in their own name.[51] Daria Krivonos' chapter bridges the study of Nordic coloniality and Eastern Europe in noting that the production of whiteness among Finns occurred through racialising the indigenous Sámi people while struggling not to be classified as a 'Mongol' people by the West.

Yet Eurocentric histories still tend to present the development of Eastern European nations between Russia and Germany as a series of continental and local entanglements with little global interconnection.[52] Postsocialist politicians and intellectuals, particularly in Poland and the Baltic states, instrumentalised postcolonial thought in so far as it provided a language of empire and apartheid to demonise Communism as Soviet imperial oppression, but generally refused any real sense of solidarity beyond Europe. Sharad Chari and Katherine Verdery's encouragement to think 'across the posts', to view the aftermath of state socialism's collapse in Europe and post-1945 decolonisation in the Global South as mutually constitutive of the contemporary world, however, opened up new ways to think about the relationship between Eastern Europe and the global politics of race.[53] Rejecting the idea of separate postsocialist and postcolonial spaces around the globe sweeps away the fallacy that Eastern Europe has 'ethnicity' whereas the West and its postcolonies have 'race'. Rather, global racial hierarchies, and ideas about the positions of peoples and places within them, become visible *within* the production of ethnic and national identities. The expansion, decline, and end of empires and formation of Eastern European nation-states exist together in entangled histories which link the region's development with a wider world.[54]

We can usefully consider Eastern European actors' own contributions to the growth of racialised thinking too. Eastern European peoples did not have significant overseas empires of their own, and were ruled over at the time by other imperial powers, but traces of aspirations and attachment to ideas of empire still connected the region into the history from which race was born. Indeed, it is a mistake to think that the region was free from extra-European colonial encounters, ambitions, or practices. It was indirectly entangled with the 'transatlantic colonial economy', in, for example, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's supply of timber and grain to the colonial powers, or the mass demand for colonial sugar which entered the region through Habsburg and Baltic ports.[55] Short-lived colonial ventures even originated from Eastern Europe, such as the two eighteenth-century Habsburg colonial trading companies which sought a presence in the Indian Ocean, nineteenth-century Habsburg proposals to colonise the Nicobar Islands, or Duke Jacob of Courland's seventeenth-century aspirations to enter the transatlantic slave trade by purchasing Tobago and a trading station on the River Gambia.[56] Proceeds from these ventures flowed to each polity's ruling elites, but not into a base of intergenerational wealth that fed through to elites in today's nation-states.

The notion of colonial activity as the mark of being a free and prestigious European power animated nationalist visions in the region. Advocates of colonial projects in interwar Poland, as chapters by Balogun and Grzechnik demonstrate in this volume, believed they would show their country catching up within Europe and overcoming backwardness.[57] Austria-Hungary's rule over Bosnia-Herzegovina after being granted it as a protectorate in 1878 (and annexing it in 1908), inspired Hungarians to imagine a new trade-based maritime colonialism emanating from their potential control over the Adriatic.[58] Habsburg officials themselves viewed Bosnia-Herzegovina as a model European protectorate, claiming that their supposedly humane rule could provide a blueprint for Western Europeans' civilising missions in Africa or Asia.

Even if Eastern Europe was not at the centre of the continent's expansion and the concomitant production of ideas of white supremacy, racial ideologies could still become part of its intellectual landscapes through the region's identification with Europe as an imperial formation. Recently, historians have turned to 'transimperial history': they demonstrate many nationalities from eighteenth century 'pre-national and pre-imperial' European regions served in other states' Empires as merchants, explorers, mercenaries, or even officials.[59] In so doing, they contributed to the growth of an imperial idea of Europeanness that extended well beyond France, the Netherlands, or Britain.[60] By the late nineteenth century, a growing Central European urban bourgeoisie identified with pan-European colonialism and consumed

its culture, including those 'ethnic shows' which helped to naturalise the region's identification with an increasingly racialised vision of Europe or a broader white West.[61] By the first decades of the twentieth century, adventure novels began imagining Poles and Hungarians on colonial expeditions or fighting for Western European colonial projects.[62]

Moreover, the region did not exist apart from the slave trade; beyond the black Atlantic, Eastern Europe's southeast in particular was connected to the enslavement of both Africans and Roma.[63] Between 1500 and 1650, about ten thousand people annually were trafficked across the Black Sea, most of them from sub-Saharan Africa, Ethiopia, and Sudan. As the Ottoman Empire became ever more integrated into the growing world capitalist economy through international commerce, slave markets in the Balkans and the Caucasus thrived, especially after European powers agreed to combat the transatlantic slave trade from the early nineteenth century.[64] In the Romanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, meanwhile, Roma had been subject to enslavement since migrating there in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the practice worsened once grain from these lands became sought-after on Western markets.[65] Late eighteenth-century Habsburg 'gypsy' studies were already using the language of colour: Roma were African and black, and Europeans were white.[66] Even after their formal liberation from slavery in 1855–56, the Roma remained on the periphery of the modern Romanian state, an ethnic group constantly considered a 'biological threat' to the emerging nation.[67] Victoria Shmidt's contribution shows how Communist-era Czech anthropology used colonially inspired comparisons to brand Roma as 'non-white' and 'primitives' who stood out through their 'self-isolation' from national, white society. Chelsi West Ohueri's chapter too explores how, to this day, Albanians use terminology about Roma that indicates their racialisation as 'black', their origins externalised to a space outside the nation.

Eastern Europeans claims on whiteness were always ambiguous. On one hand, as white Europeans, they could move: the United States permitted emigration from Austria-Hungary in 1876, and 3.5 million migrants left between then and 1910, sending significant remittances home.[68] Many were purposefully invited to Latin America to help whiten and Europeanise nations too – and some returned, bringing racialised ideologies of the New World back with them.[69] However, they participated in this settler colonialism from weaker positions. Some of the 120,000 Poles who relocated to southern Brazil between the 1880s and 1918, many from territories then in the German Empire, moved to seek space for Polish culture and language free from the assimilatory pressures of German rule.[70] In the United States, Slavic migrants, just like the Irish, Italians, Jews, and Syrians, were initially denigrated as lesser whites – often to the alarm of intellectuals back home. Nevertheless,

settler-colonial countries still offered the possibility of becoming white through actively aligning oneself with local structures of white supremacy, and separating themselves culturally and politically from racialised others.[71]

Eastern European nationalist movements had long had to battle Western perceptions that they were 'lesser whites'. The founding father of Aryanism, Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, stated in the mid-1850s that 'the Russians, Poles, and Serbians, even though they are far nearer to us than the negroes, are only civilized on the surface'.[72] Such characterisations became ever more numerous during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as racial imperialism gripped the world.[73] With Eastern European nationalist movements resisting imperial rule and later building nation-states, many Western observers equated their economic marginality, absence of experience in the exercise of power, lack of extra-European colonies, or continued political fragility with not being fully white.[74] James Mark's chapter addresses how nationalists in Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia responded to their racialised denigration at the peace negotiations after World War I, exploring the importance of their development of white racial solidarity and distancing from extra-European claims for independence.

Gradations in whiteness also fractured the region: who was more and less white, and hence supposedly had a greater claim to civilisation and power? These boundaries were renegotiated across time and space, as nationalist movements sought to mark themselves out as whiter than their neighbours. Maciej Górny's chapter explores how Polish ethnographers in the mid-nineteenth century 'blackened' their Russian overlords to cement the image of their own superior democratically minded Europeanness. Along the way, Polish intellectuals created racialising theories which were later plagiarised in France where they were turned against Prussians.[75] With a weakening Ottoman Empire, and an accelerating Scramble for Africa, Austrians and Hungarians developed their own imperial designs over the Balkans from the 1870s. Experts drew on wider colonial discourses to frame their expansion in Europe: a 'Balkan Columbus' would advance into the 'terra incognita' of 'darkest Europe'.[76] Mark's chapter details how, in a race to prove one's Europeanness, and hence right to sovereignty and territory, Slovak, Czech, and Romanian nationalists sought to orientalise Magyars as barbaric Mongols after World War I.

Despite frequent denigration both from the West and their neighbours, Eastern European nationalists often presented themselves as morally superior European whites. Such discourses were particularly prominent in response to the increasing violence of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Western imperialism. Grzechnik outlines the Polish nationalist claims to a morally superior colonialism informed by the sensitivities engendered by their own histories of subjugation. Zoltán Ginelli's chapter addresses the

two-century long Hungarian appropriation of Native American culture in 'Indian play'. He shows how a 'semi-peripheral' nation might incorporate the exotic, natural, or anti-colonial to portray themselves as being the better kind of white: such positions were mobilised as claims to European belonging rather than as challenges to global racial hierarchy.[77]

It may sound odd to claim that this sense of a morally superior whiteness was further developed during the Communist period. After all, Communist states' declarations of their own incapability to reproduce racism might be presented as an important exception to the story of a peripheralised Eastern Europe working to become part of a white West. Whatever was publicly stated, Communist cultures still bore the marks of earlier national longings for recognition as equal or even superior whites.[78] Madina Tlostanova has argued, in a different context, that Russians accepted a Western frame in self-definition, even under Communism: 'even when claiming a global spiritual and transcendental superiority', Moscow's 'subaltern empire … has always been looking for approval/envy and love/hatred from the west, never questioning the main frame of western modernity, only changing the superfluous details'.[79] Anti-colonialism gave Communists the opportunity for a short time to become morally superior and politically significant Europeans whose global reach might now rival that of the West. Yet this committed anti-colonialism was also underpinned by the cultural revival of fantasies of Western imperial power. As decolonisation accelerated in the late 1950s, anti-colonial education was accompanied in some Communist countries by the republication or adaptation of colonial adventure stories, a nostalgia for white hunters, explorers and missionaries, and a fascination with safari and big-game hunting.[80] Irina Novikova's chapter in this volume analyses how Soviet cinematic audiences in the 1930s and 1940s were socialised into a white modernising gaze through popular adaptations of Western literary classics, which critiqued Western racism and imperialism but did so from the viewpoint of the ethically and politically superior white European liberator, who the Soviets believed themselves to be.

From the 1970s, with the seeming degradation of the anti-colonial project, and détente in Europe, the attraction to a culture of superior anti-colonial white Europeanness declined; a 'coloured' socialist internationalism needed to be thrown off in the name of a return to Europe.[81] As a *Pravda* headline criticising the economic turmoil of the late 1980s declared: 'We are Africans in a European home'.[82] Many former anti-colonial allies saw in this moment the affirmation of an essentially white continent allied to the neoliberal Washington Consensus, built around hard civilisational and racialised boundaries.[83]

This rapprochement did not eliminate the sense that the region's claim on whiteness remained fragile. Despite the embrace of Eastern Europe as

an organic part of Europe, such acceptance remained conditional, with notable gradations: 'Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic sprint[ed] into the future of democracy and market economics', while the Balkans were, as Ernest Gellner put it in 1994, 'the third time zone of Europe', that is, the continent's own 'Third World'.[84] The fall of the Berlin Wall, and the real prospect of mass East-to-West movement within Europe, revived and remade older forms of racialised othering, exacerbated by the mass displacement of the Yugoslav Wars.

Migrants from Eastern Europe were conditionally accepted in the West, but only along a gradient of whiteness, mostly coded in the language of Europeanness. In 1994, less than three years after the end of the Cold War and during the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the right-wing British *Spectator* magazine proclaimed that the UK, as 'English-speaking, Christian, and white', should advocate for Poles, and Hungarians, and Russians to be brought 'slowly into the EEC … we should try to open our doors to their people'; such hesitant acceptance would not be applied to 'Muslims and blacks, [who] … should be kept out strictly as at present'.[85] However, the East's integration into European whiteness would only be possible if former socialist countries discarded their Easternness and proved their will to Westernise (arguably very similar to the compact that had been asked of East European settlers 'working toward whiteness' in North America a century before). Eastern European countries would have to show they belonged on the right side of Samuel Huntington's 'Velvet Curtain of culture', which separated white Christianity from 'abnormal' civilisations – particularly from Islam, seen as allegedly inimical to Eurocentric modernity.[86] As Balogun and West Ohueri note in their chapters, hope for and membership in the EU was often seen across the region as a confirmation of racial belonging intrinsic to what was then being called 'Europeanisation': a political, economic, juridical alignment undergirded by civilisational codes of whiteness.

Once the citizens of new EU member states gained freedom of movement after the EU's 2004–13 expansion into Eastern Europe, the phenomenon that scholars have variously called 'contingent', 'liminal', 'ambivalent', or 'ambiguous' whiteness became a mass lived experience for numerous Eastern Europeans.[87] Markers of language, accent, and appearance all contributed to Eastern European workers in Western Europe being racialised as 'not quite white'.[88] Suddenly confronted with Westerners' curiosity about where they belonged within the global racial hierarchy, Eastern Europeans became subjected to 'the will to power and the regime of truth' that, according to Stuart Hall, give racialised signifiers of difference their material force.[89] Some migrants, from both within and outside the EU, sought to protect their fragile whiteness by racialising in turn people of African and Asian

descent. They learned the codes of Western racism as a form of integration, as their counterparts migrating to the US in the late nineteenth century had done.[90] Špela Drnovšek Zorko's chapter underlines that Eastern European migrants' own interpretations of whiteness should be read against longer-term histories of emigration from the region, postcolonial migration flows, and the geopolitics of coevalness that have shaped postsocialist racial subjectivities in purportedly multicultural societies. Krivonos' contribution addresses how Russian-speaking migrants in Finland struggle to distinguish themselves from the image of the 'less modern' postsocialist subject, while simultaneously distancing themselves from non-white 'asylum-seekers' and 'refugees' who threaten to darken them by association. In her turn, Sunnie Rucker-Chang explores how both the Chinese and people of African descent in Serbia are collapsed into the category of migrant or 'perpetual foreigner'. She traces racialised ideas of whiteness within a national tradition where such conceptions of race are often denied, or ignored.

The prominence of populist Islamophobia often hides the fact that liberal politicians in Eastern Europe have long produced Islamophobic discourses too. As Monika Bobako puts it in her work on Polish political culture, Islamophobia was 'a way to confirm symbolically … belonging to "the West" and commitment to the normative project of European modernity, with its affirmation of individualism, human rights, sexual freedom and secularism'.[91] Social categories that stubbornly failed to embrace the transitological teleology of capitalist liberal democracy were orientalised. Mental maps morphed into social spaces, and the 'losers' of the transition were marginalised along axes of internal orientalism that ran within postsocialist societies.[92] Sometimes this went as far as full-blown racialisation. Those deemed inimical to this civilising mission from within and without were racialised as non-white. During protests in Bulgaria and Romania in the 2010s, for instance, people who did not show solidarity with liberal anti-governmental movements were labelled 'black' or 'dirty', sometimes with directly discriminatory remarks regarding the Roma and other minorities.[93]

Twenty-first-century Eastern European populists build on exclusionary *liberal* discourses of the early transition period – but are nevertheless quite distinct. Whereas the racism of liberalism was forged in an alignment with the West, populists cast themselves as committed to a white Christian Europe and thus as superior Europeans, untainted by colonialism – confronting a Western Europe which, after the fall of empire, had become 'too open' to non-European immigration and multiracial society.[94] This racialised myth of redeeming a continent undermined by the West has, we should emphasise, a much longer lineage. Since the late nineteenth century, nationalists in Eastern Europe have claimed to be 'better' whites in the sense of being more humane or more civilised, a result of them not having been barbarised by

the exercise of imperial violence as Western Europeans had. Such visions have nevertheless often generated their own regional version of a racialised supremacy. Paul Hanebrink's chapter in this volume, for instance, details how Christian nationalism in post-World War I Hungary began as an ideology of counter-revolution: here conservatives considered themselves Europe's bulwark against Jewish Asiatic Bolshevism. This ideology was used domestically to purify the nation of Jews as carriers of Communist 'barbarism'.[95] Contemporary populist fantasies of whiteness, Hanebrink argues, share much with these older paranoid fears of Jewish conspiracy. Today's populists are thus only the latest political movement to claim that Eastern Europeans embody a superior whiteness, he argues. Yet this is not in the name of a progressive internationalism, as it was under Communism, but in defence of a white heterosexual Christian Europe – a struggle that the multicultural West is accused of abandoning.[96]

Populist politicians claimed that Eastern Europe would be a more effective guardian of Europe's heritage than the West: it did not commit the sin of imperialism and thus had no obligation to address its legacies. After the so-called 'migrant crisis' of 2015 began, populist leaders insisted their nations' non-imperial Christian heritage should exempt them from having to host resettled refugees like the rest of the EU. As a result, Orbán and others have been able to cast their opposition to EU refugee quotas into a novel anti-colonial disavowal of race which in fact supports a colonial white supremacist vision of Europe.[97] Hungary was nevertheless faced with labour shortages in the late 2010s. Looking for an alternative to what they claimed were culturally and racially debilitating effects of the Western liberal multicultural migration regime, the Hungarian authorities turned back to an imaginary white world that had linked Eastern Europe and Latin America through population flows from the late nineteenth century onwards. He invited South Americans of Hungarian descent – particularly anti-communist Venezuelans wanting to escape Nicolás Maduro's regime – to return to the 'motherland'.[98]

Such fantasies were not only homegrown. For Western conservatives and latterly right-wing populists, Eastern Europe has slowly become a centre for the production or fantasy of the defence of a whiteness increasingly embattled since the era of postwar decolonisation. At the height of the Cold War, those struggling against an alien 'Asiatic' Bolshevism in Hungary or Poland in 1956 were integrated by Western conservatives into the idea of a white Western anti-communist struggle – and often contrasted with the supposedly rowdy black anti-colonial radicals disrupting Western European imperialism. This framing in part explains why those who fled westward to escape 'Communist oppression' during the Cold War were by and large not considered 'lesser whites' but rather heroic

defenders of the West.[99] In these conservatives' minds, Eastern European dissidents fighting to return 'stolen lands' to Europe further confirmed that narrative.

While the region's mobile workers became 'not quite white' in the Western imagination after 1989, Western white nationalists developed their admiration for Eastern Europe from afar – for having, in their view, protected a space of racial purity abandoned in a now multicultural West. In the mid-2010s, populists in the Americas such as Jair Bolsonaro and Donald Trump became the latest to venerate strongmen like Putin or Orbán, who for them helped 'to confirm white logics and to reassure anxieties concerning White vitality and universality'.[100] They have looked to a 'semi-peripheral' masculine potency both unsoftened by the excessive trappings of a modern civilised West and unreconciled to a post-imperial multiculturalism, which would now be mobilised to defend the idea of a white West.[101] Hanebrink's chapter addresses such transnational links, examining contemporary mutual affinities between Orbán and the French writer Renaud Camus, notorious for his conspiracy theory of the so-called 'Great Replacement' of white Europeans by immigrants from Europe's former colonies.

Further dimensions of affinity and exchange between Eastern Europe and Western cultural conservatives and white supremacists are explored in Anikó Imre's chapter. She analyses how a transnational media industry uses Eastern European locations and people as raw material for visualising settings which are imagined as bastions of whiteness in other parts of Europe or in fantastical alternative worlds. Catherine Baker's chapter addresses how far-right movements invent a version of Eastern European history as a struggle for white Christian supremacy that is intended to inspire militant far-right political networks around the world. She explores how the historical mythology of warfare against the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, which was already used as a legitimising myth for perpetrators of the Bosnian Genocide, has enabled participants in contemporary global white nationalist digital networks, including the perpetrator of the Christchurch massacre in New Zealand, to position themselves within a fantasy of defending white European Christendom from Islam.

Yet whereas Western right-wing populists essentialise and idealise Eastern European whiteness, populists in the region often locate the strength of their projects in a civilisational liminality or racial inbetweenness. As Imre points out, connections to traditions more primordial than white Christianity, whether pre-Christian paganism or supposed solidarity with Native Americans, are today most often invoked to reinforce cultures of 'authentic' white masculinity undiluted by the supposed weakening effects of Western multiculturalism. This move away from the West's 'feminine' whiteness has been reinforced in Hungary by massive state investment into

DNA analysis of samples from early Hungarian graves meant to prove Turanian descent – a whiteness that increases its virility through claiming attachment to 'authentic' pre-Christian traditions. Such appeals to a fantasy of a heteropatriarchal gender regime have been constitutive of a transnational community of white supremacy stretching from the US to southern Africa to postsocialist Eastern Europe. Whiteness in Eastern Europe has, therefore, become visible both to scholars of far-right imaginaries and scholars of migration. Where the literature has been slowest to acknowledge whiteness, however, is in the history of nation-building within the region itself.

Global whiteness and Eastern European nation-building

The history of nation-building in Eastern Europe is customarily understood as a matter of strengthening and defending collective identities based on ethnicity, often in tandem with religion. Until recently, direct articulations of how racial frameworks functioned in these nation-building processes have been rare outside the specialist literature on eugenics and race science. As Dušan Bjelić remarks, the study of nationalism has largely conceptualised it 'as a "unified tradition" rather than a history of racialized conflicts', rendering Europe's East raceless while also disentangling its peoples from the global history of Eurocentric colonialism.[102] Yet the cultural 'renaissance' pursued by modern nationalists to 'awaken' their communities from the mid-nineteenth century was fundamentally entangled with practices of biological identification: as Marius Turda and Maria Sophia Quine argue, the co-determination of culture, geography, economy, and biology placed race 'within the interstices of collective and individual identities' as they crystallised and evolved in modern Eastern Europe.[103]

This volume demonstrates that national identities in Eastern Europe were maturing in the context of the so-called 'global reach of whiteness', amid imperial expansion, the growth of race science, and an idea of Europe that was ever more tightly connected to civilisational and racial superiority.[104] The proponents of nation-building and state-building projects in the region were thinking and acting within racialised world hierarchies structured according to the self-proclaimed universal standards of a white European imperial civilisation.[105] They were also aware their nations and homelands occupied an intermediate and contingent place in relation to those standards. The engineering of ethnic 'revivals' by local elites, who merged confessional belonging with visions of cultural and economic modernity, projected their nations back into the past as historical defenders of Christianity. This

phenomenon began as early as the late eighteenth century in certain places, and was widespread by the mid-nineteenth.

Even before independence, nationalist movements in the Balkans inscribed ideas about race onto their struggle for independence. Their fight was for a Christian Europe against the Ottoman Empire's 'political yoke', whose 'Turkish character' made it 'fatally incapable of civilisation'.[106] This trope was rooted in European imperial triumphalism, perceptions of the Ottoman administration's incomplete or failed modernisation, and the 'alien' nature Europeans projected onto its Islamic character.[107] Importantly, it was also formulated in the broader, inter-imperial context of Western and Russian competition over influence and territory in the Ottoman Empire (deemed in European politics 'the sick man of Europe'). This European consensus legitimised views such as those of the prominent Bulgarian nationalist Hristo Botev, who concluded that the 'Turks' and the 'Bulgarians' were incompatible races.[108] No nation-building project in Eastern Europe developed independently of the racialised premises of Great Power diplomacy.[109]

In the 1870s, Western powers supported the establishment and consolidation of Christian states in the Balkans, seen to mark out 'new European racial frontiers' which 'naturalized a binary differentiation of non-European and non-Christian outsiders and European and Christian insiders'.[110] Fears that the diversity of such new nations would undermine racial aspirations to belong to a Christian Europe were already embedded in the outlook of their elites. Islamic, Roma, and Jewish populations potentially became 'racial dangers' for nationalisms that combined Christianity with visions of racially homogeneous states.[111] In 1878, for instance, the Congress of Berlin recognised Romania's independence, but requested the modification of article 7 of the Romanian Constitution of 1866, which provided that non-Christians could not be citizens, specifically targeting the Jewish population.[112] Two years later, a flurry of publications warned against the weakening of the dominant Romanian ethnic element and the perceived proliferation of the urban Jewish population.[113] These publications in fact translated the debate over racial degeneration in France, which had been ignited by the Franco–Prussian War of 1870.[114] In Paris, elites feared that the French nation's racial demise would dislodge its standing as the white, imperial civiliser of the globe. In Bucharest, racialised demographic anxieties targeted 'aliens' within the state, particularly the Roma and the Jews, who threatened Romanians' Europeanisation. Attempts to 'de-Ottomanise' the Balkans led to further campaigns of violence against national minorities elsewhere, most notably against South Slavic and Albanian Muslims. By the interwar period, racialised discourses against 'oriental' Muslim communities facilitated projects of eugenic purification in Bulgaria and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.[115]

The foundation of new Central and Eastern European states such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary after World War I occurred at a moment when racialised fears for the future of Western imperialism – the so-called 'White Crisis' – were at their peak. Much more explicit languages of whiteness had been developing in international politics since the 1890s, and these developing racial vocabularies would be turned inwards.[116] Echoing the West's othering of Eastern Europeans as poorer whites who potentially threatened this fragile racial order, the governments of some states sought in turn to 'civilise' their own 'darker' peripheries to confirm their nations' full membership of a white European civilisation. Nation-building projects mixed questions of race with class: elites imbued their peasantries with the stigma of belonging to other races requiring improvement.[117] As successive projects of modernisation failed to improve the lot of the peasantry, states and elites sought to expand their reach into the countryside in order to stave off racial degeneration.[118] Peripheries in particular were deemed to be populated not only by racially 'dangerous' minorities, but also by members of the dominant ethnic group who were mired in 'backwardness', lacking hygienic education, struggling with poverty, and culturally inferior. In Poland, primitivism was associated with its rural eastern lands close to the Soviet Union, a space where nationals could be particularly vulnerable to Bolshevik 'infection' and Asiatic barbarism.[119]

Recent scholarship has emphasised that the violence of nation-building in Eastern Europe from the late nineteenth century should be understood as part of a process linked to settler colonialism and imperialism globally.[120] Attempts at homogenisation drew on racial scientific trends tied to colonial expansion into Africa, Asia, and the Americas, and were premised on imagined human geographies that erased ethnic diversity by physical elimination, assimilation, or expulsion.[121] Working to construct new nations, experts, notably in the emerging disciplines of anthropology and ethnography, drew on racialised international scientific practices and discourses.[122] The Institute for Balkan Studies in Belgrade, for instance, used European anthropology to construct racial hierarchy within the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.[123] Shmidt's chapter here explores how an internationally well-connected Czech anthropologist drew in the interwar period on ideas of race and primitivism from British colonial thinking and studies of African and Indigenous peoples in North America, in seeking to 'improve' 'backward', 'white primitive' populations in Carpathian Ruthenia – the so-called 'Czech Palestine'. She notes these views on the interconnection between primitivism, non-whiteness, and pathology influenced several generations of anthropologists during state socialism and beyond.[124]

Interwar states also targeted minorities through emigration policies that were designed to clear out poor, rural, dependent, and less nationalised

communities, whose removal would 'improve' the health and homogeneity of the nation. The new Kingdom of Yugoslavia pursued ethnically differentiated policies with a view to hastening the departure of 'anational' non-Slavic Muslims to Turkey, while restricting 'national' Slavic emigration to the Americas.[125] Grzechnik here explores how Polish elites' ambiguous attitudes towards the large Jewish minority were shaped by their own fragile grip on a racial Europeanness; at home, Jews were seen to threaten the idea of the white nation; if forced to emigrate abroad, however, they could be racialised as defenders of a white colonial world on behalf of Poland.[126] Once World War II began, this political biology would be used by Nazis to justify genocide against Jews and Roma.[127]

Eastern European elites also challenged Western theories – particularly those embedded in German racial science – that had labelled Eastern European peoples inferior because of their 'mongrel' racial background. Indeed, interwar scholars at times argued that their peoples' strength derived from an absence of racial purity, which was regarded as a positive mark of distinctiveness. In the mid-1930s, the Czechoslovak government funded the publication of *The Races of Central Europe: Outputs of Anthropological Surveys*, which emphasised the value of racial mixing in the region.[128] Nevertheless, even for these advocates, as Shmidt's and Balogun's chapters indicate, some groups could only be partially assimilated in such healthy mixing – if at all: the Roma, the Jews, and other ethnic minorities remained 'Asiatic' because of their 'blood' and/or their civilisational 'backwardness'. Yugoslav anthropologist Vladimir Dvorniković, for instance, was repulsed by Romani singing, while praising the lyricism and masculine heroism of songs from the mixed South Slav tribes.[129] Vocal opposition to Nazi racial science, Shmidt concludes, often served to conceal a more complex relationship to whiteness, ethnic hierarchy, and violence.

Nor did the establishment of Communism in the Soviet Union after 1917 do away with race in nation-building processes. It inherited ideas of nationality from a collapsed empire in which ethnic difference had become ever more threatening. As Vera Tolz has argued, culture and biology had been invoked to construct threats at Russia's expanding imperial borders in central Asia and the Caucasus in the nineteenth century – even if the language of race did not feature in imperial Russian legislation as it did in the West. The empire invoked 'the concept of nationality, often perceived as heritable identity'; this, she suggested, 'was also racialized and utilized to draw boundaries, create hierarchies, and justify colonial policies'.[130] Nationality groups in turn started to utilise race to assert group identity, to challenge imperial discrimination, and develop ethnonationalist projects.[131] After the revolution, the Soviets claimed that differing levels of development found across an extraordinarily diverse human population were not the result of

unalterable biological characteristics. Nevertheless, the category of nationality, which territorialised ethnic groups and assigned to them levels of progress, could be read as racial hierarchy; and in eras of extreme politics, as during the period 1937–53, entire groups could be purged and deported on the basis of an immutable racial identity.[132] 'Rhetorics of sibling unity' afforded Ukrainians and Belarussians conditional assimilation into the Russocentric Soviet centre, but at the cost of leaving ethnic and linguistic tradition behind.[133] Arguing that Ukraine is 'among the most flagrantly neglected cases of Soviet colonialism', Maria Malksöo quotes Mykola Riabchuk in explaining how 'colonial relations were ethnicized: "local language and culture became a stigma, a sign of backwardness, 'blackness', and inferiority vis-à-vis the superior Russophones who represented both wealth and power"'.[134]

Yulia Gradskova's chapter in this volume suggests that the debate over whether the Soviets thought racially can be helpfully extended through the prism of whiteness. 'Invisible rules' of racial hierarchy, she argues, cut across a system that officially classified by nationality – an approach that Piro Rexhepi extends to postwar socialist Yugoslavia.[135] The 'look and appearance' that granted privilege in the Soviet Union were linked to proximity to European whiteness. Darker skin, non-Orthodox names, the absence of modern European clothing or etiquette, or less developed facility with the Russian language became the basis for racial othering. She analyses how even those who came from the southern periphery and were utilised on the international stage to represent Soviet ethnic uplift as part of anti-colonial internationalism had to conform to white European norms of Soviet officialdom. Central Asian and Transcaucasian nationalities – alongside the Roma – constituted the core platform for racially inscribing state socialism, and making this illiberal modernity white.

Many theoretical tools applied to reveal the globalised dynamics of whiteness in Eastern Europe were, we must acknowledge, produced in the Anglophone world to explain social and material relations in societies where the fruits of extractive colonialism and plantation slavery were systemically channelled into institutional and generational wealth. A major objection to translations of US-centric concepts such as 'racial formation' into explaining the politics of race in Eastern Europe, voiced in Miglena Todorova's path-breaking work on racialisation under state socialism, is that imperial collapses, fascist expropriation, and socialist revolution put Eastern Europe through such radical transformations of class structures and capital that race did not become the same 'foundational code' of nation-building or material accumulation there.[136] These historical differences are irrefutable. Nevertheless, as Rucker-Chang's chapter in this volume suggests, the idea of whiteness as an unmarked category against which the difference of 'perpetual foreigners' is constructed still has value in explaining why, for instance, African or

Chinese migrants in Serbia are understood as presenting a *different* otherness to the otherness of ethnic neighbours. It also shows starkly what is at stake in eliminationist versions of nationalism that force certain minorities and neighbours into the category of an 'enemy race'.[137]

More studies contextualising ideas of Europeanness, modernity, and civilisation in Eastern Europe within a global politics of race and whiteness, especially in the present moment, are now emerging and finding readers. What our volume distinctively contends, however, is that notions of whiteness and their links with Europeanness, modernity, and civilisation were already circulating in Eastern Europe well before the state socialist revolutions and even further back into the nineteenth century – not least as a result of the very system of international relations within which Eastern European national movements had to pursue self-determination. At the same time, the potential for resistance to global white supremacy in Eastern Europe through theorising the region's own marginality should not be minimised. Eastern European capacities to build transversal solidarities with racialised minorities and the Global South were both celebrated and instrumentalised under state socialism. In the postsocialist transformation they were largely silenced before starting to be recovered since the late 2000s by intellectuals and artists, and the many Eastern European theorists whose work informs ours. Indeed, Sudeep Dasgupta's chapter for this volume explores how the artist Yael Bartana has used the fantasy of Polish Jews' return to Poland to critique both the idealisation of a white Europe by contemporary Polish populists *and* the Israeli state's exclusive and expansionist nationalism.

Bringing together literature on Eastern European migration and whiteness, on Eastern Europe and the far right, and on nation-building, our volume historicises and globalises Eastern Europe's ambiguities of race. In so doing, we suggest these very ambiguities in fact make the region a place from which the simplifications of racism can be exposed – that is, in Hall's words, a place from which to show 'how deeply our histories and cultures have always intertwined and interpenetrated'.

Notes

1 Ivan Kalmar, *White But Not Quite: Central Europe's Illiberal Revolt* (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2022), 6.
2 See Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Linda Martín Alcoff, 'Latino/as, Asian Americans, and the Black–White Binary', *Journal of Ethics*, 7:1 (2003), 5–27.
3 Kalmar, *White But Not Quite*.

4   A volume with this title appeared in the USA in 1997/2004 but was dedicated to whiteness, education, and psychology in a space largely confined to the US, with a few chapters about Britain: Michelle Fine, Lois Weis, Linda Powell Pruitt, and April Burns (eds), *Off White: Readings on Power, Privilege, and Resistance*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2004).

5   See, e.g., Marius Turda and Paul J. Weindling (eds), *Blood and Homeland: Eugenics and Racial Nationalism in Central and Southeast Europe 1900–1940* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2007); Tomislav Z. Longinović, *Vampire Nation: Violence as Cultural Imaginary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

6   Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1–2.

7   James Mark, Bogdan C. Iacob, Tobias Rupprecht, and Ljubica Spaskovska, *1989: A Global History of Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Theodora Dragostinova, *The Cold War from the Margins: A Small Socialist State on the Global Cultural Scene* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021).

8   Miglena S. Todorova, *Unequal Under Socialism: Race, Women, and Transnationalism in Bulgaria* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 16.

9   Marius Turda, 'Introduction: Whither Race? Physical Anthropology in Post-1945 Central and Southeastern Europe', *Focaal*, 58 (2010), 1; James Mark, 'Race', in James Mark and Paul Betts (eds), *Socialism Goes Global: The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the Age of Decolonization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 221–54.

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11 Cas Mudde, 'Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern Europe', *East European Politics and Societies*, 19:2 (2005), 161–84.

12 Jon E. Fox, Livia Moroşanu, and Eszter Szilassy, 'Denying Discrimination: Status, "Race", and the Whitening of Britain's New Europeans', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 41:5 (2015), 729–48; József Böröcz, and Mahua Sarkar, 'The Unbearable Whiteness of the Polish Plumber and the Hungarian Peacock Dance Around "Race"', *Slavic Review*, 76:2 (2017), 307–14.

13 Olena Lyubchenko, 'On the Frontier of Whiteness? Expropriation, War, and Social Reproduction in Ukraine', *LeftEast*, 30 April 2022, https://lefteast.org/frontiers-of-whiteness-expropriation-war-social-reproduction-in-ukraine (accessed 16 June 2023).

14 See Nicholas de Genova, 'The "Migrant Crisis" as Racial Crisis: Do *Black Lives Matter* in Europe?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 41:10 (2018), 1765–82.

15 Victoria Shmidt and Bernadette Nadya Jaworsky, 'The Ukrainian Refugee "Crisis" and the (Re)Production of Whiteness in Austrian and Czech Public Politics', *Journal of Nationalism, Memory and Language Politics*, 16:2 (2022), 104–30, 125.

16 E.g. Kalmar, *White But Not Quite*, 12; Anca Parvulescu and Manuela Boatcă, *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania Across Empires* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2022), 7.

17 Anca Parvulescu, 'Eastern Europe as Method', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 63:4 (2019), 470–81, 472.

18 Kalmar, *White But Not Quite*, 6–7 (emphasis original).

19 Parvulescu and Boatcă, *Creolizing*, 9.

20 Laura Doyle, 'Thinking Back through Empires', *Modernism/Modernity*, 2:4 (2018), https://modernismmodernity.org/forums/posts/thinking-back-through-empires (accessed 7 January 2023).

21 Piro Rexhepi, *White Enclosures: Racial Capitalism and Coloniality Along the Balkan Route* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2023), 13.

22 See Sunnie Rucker-Chang and Chelsi West Ohueri, 'A Moment of Reckoning: Transcending Bias, Engaging Race and Racial Formations in Slavic and East European Studies', *Slavic Review*, 80:2 (2021), 216–23, 218.

23 Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (London: Routledge, 1997), 1–2.

24 Charles W. Mills, 'Global White Ignorance', in Matthias Gross and Lindsey McGoey (eds), *The Routledge Handbook of Ignorance Studies* (London: Routledge, 2015), 218.

25 Mills, 'Ignorance', 218.

26 Ibid., 217.

27 Edward Telles, *Pigmentocracies: Ethnicity, Race, and Color in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Ignacio Aguiló, *The Darkening Nation: Race, Neoliberalism and Crisis in Argentina* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018); Jemima Pierre, *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

28 Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 1.

29 Wekker, *White Innocence*, 1; Doris L. Garraway, 'Memory as Reparation? The Politics of Remembering Slavery in France from Abolition to the Loi Taubira (2001)', *International Journal of Francophone Studies*, 11:3 (2008), 365–86; Marcus Wood, 'Packaging Liberty and Marketing the Gift of Freedom: 1807 and the Legacy of Clarkson's Chest', *Parliamentary History*, 26 (Supplement) (2007), 203–23.

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31 Piotr Puchalski, *Poland in a Colonial World Order: Adjustments and Aspirations, 1918–1939* (New York: Routledge, 2022); James Mark and Steffi Marung, 'Origins', in Mark and Betts (eds), *Socialism Goes Global*, 31–2.

32 See Maria Mälksoo, 'The Postcolonial Moment in Russia's War Against Ukraine', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 25:3–4 (2023), 471–81.

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McGill–Queen's University Press, 2019), 46–7; Marina Mogilner, 'When Race Is a Language and Empire Is a Context', *Slavic Review*, 80:2 (2021), 207–15, 208.

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43 For this conception, see Rexhepi, *White Enclosures*, 8–9.

44 Parvulescu, 'Eastern Europe'; similarly, see Leila Tayeb, 'What is Whiteness in North Africa? Cultural Constructions of Race and Racism in the Middle East and North Africa', *Lateral*, 10:1 (2021), https://csalateral.org/forum/cultural-constructions-race-racism-middle-east-north-africa-southwest-asia-mena-swana/whiteness-in-north-africa-tayeb/ (accessed 15 June 2023).

45 Rexhepi, *White Enclosures*, 13.

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