

CALL FOR PAPERS:

QUOTAS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: HISTORIES AND CONTROVERSIES

Budapest, May 18-20, 2020

Organized by the Nationalism Studies Program and Jewish Studies Program at Central European University (Budapest/Vienna) and the Tom Lantos Institute (Budapest)

In 1920, the Hungarian parliament introduced an anti-Jewish quota for admission to universities, thus making Hungary the first country in Europe to pass antisemitic legislation in the post-World War I period. On the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the so-called “*numerus clausus* law,” we are organizing an international conference to examine the history of restrictive ethnic and racial quotas in the first half of the twentieth century and the emergence of affirmative quotas some decades later. The three-day conference will be divided into three sections. The first will examine the Hungarian context of the “*numerus clausus* law.” The second will examine explicit and “hidden” ethnic quotas as well as other restrictive policies on both sides of the Atlantic in the interwar period. The third will examine the reappearance of quota policies in the 1960s, often with the opposite purpose of encouraging greater participation of ethnic and racial minorities (and at times majorities) in higher education.

The conference aims to explore the ideologies of quota regimes and the ways they have been justified, implemented, challenged and remembered. We invite paper proposals on the historical origins of quotas; the moral, legal and political arguments developed by their supporters and opponents; the domestic and international debates surrounding anti-minority and pro-minority quotas; and the consequences – both intended and unintended – of their implementation. We are particularly interested in the role played by the Hungarian “*numerus clausus*,” not only as a model for other restrictive quotas, but also as a touchstone in the larger debates about liberalism, the “Jewish Question,” and the “Refugee Question” in the interwar period.

We are also interested in the contemporary debates about quotas, especially with regard to “affirmative action” and “positive discrimination” at institutions of higher learning. Today, arguments for and against affirmative action sometimes echo earlier arguments about quotas, and these continuities merit further examination. We welcome papers that attempt to compare quota systems synchronically and/or diachronically, especially across national borders.

Please submit a paper abstract (300 words) and a one-paragraph bio to kissp@ceu.edu by May 15, 2019. We intend to publish the papers in a peer-reviewed conference volume.

The conference will take place on May 18-20, 2020, at Central European University in Budapest, Hungary.

