

Xenophobia

No. → Racism

Aleo Susan Arndt

Xenophobia is a term widely used to abnegate and euphemise racism. “Oh, it’s the nature of people to hate strangers, you know?”, said the German Götz Aly in a memorable conversation with me at the office of *Die Zeit* some years ago. Memorable—because Götz Aly aggressively defended racist terminology, while insulting people like me, who challenge him for this. And memorable – because Götz Aly eventually did not give his consent to publish this “conversation” and because the journalists from *Die Zeit’s* signaled that I was doing a “woke Kulturkampf”, while they were the only ones who are neutral and reasonable. This, in fact, is a common position of the so called “middle of *white* German society”. They hold that racism does not exist beyond the history of National Socialism and those who actively wish to reactivate it. This way, they keep sheltering in the comfort zone of not doing anything to fight racism. Yet, where racism is denied, it cannot be fought—and this is what keeps one of humanities longest and most violent catastrophes alive and active. Moreover, xenophobia is misleading whenever racism is at work. Xenophobia suggests that any British person, including white cis-man, would be affected, while an Afro-german person wouldn’t. Yet, the contrary is as true as xenophobia is thus misleading. And as for the second word part of xenophobia: demonization and (erotic) exotification are just two sides of the same medal. A white appraisal of a Black person’s alleged rhythmic talent is as racist as complimenting an Afro-German person for speaking “excellent German”.