

# Report from the first discussion of the anti-racist research group (20.10.24)

1. Zoom recording of the meeting :
  - 📎 Introduction: 'A marxist approach to racism' (20.10.2024).mp4
2. '*From anger to resistance: how & why anti-racism is integral to Marxism – starting a review of our work internationally*', document drafted by members of the anti-racist research group of the PRMI :
  - 📎 From anger to resistance: how & why anti-racism is integral to Marxism (FINAL...
3. '*Descent based oppression in India : a Marxist overview for PRMI members*', document drafted by Daniel G (India / US) :
  - 📎 Descent Based Oppression in India.docx.pdf

#### 4. Report of the discussion by Pedro M (Brazil) :

Attendance (20) : Mita (India / US), Yash (Ireland), Yaara (England & Wales), Talia (South Africa), Pedro V (Portugal), Cristina (Portugal), Paul (Scotland), Ndumiso (South Africa), Maria (Brazil), Luiz (Brazil), Liv (Sweden), Jean-Mari (Québec), Buchule (Brazil), Alex (South Africa), Carmia (South Africa), Alain (Belgium), Pedro M (Brazil), Julia (Brazil), Ryan (France), Myriam (France)

On Sunday the 20th of October the first discussion on racism, xenophobia and colonialism took place organised by the study group on anti-racism that developed out of the July School commission on these subjects. Comrades from various countries participated including from France, Scotland, South Africa, Ireland, Brazil, India and others.

As a first discussion the main aim was to try and begin working in an area that has been historically neglected in previous international structures of the CWI and ISA as a whole and to try and develop and deepen the work in this central area of struggle. What was quickly evident during the discussion was that even though these subjects had not been given the centrality they deserved over the years, several comrades on an individual basis or in smaller groups had been studying, developing analyses and gaining experience from being directly involved in the struggles against racism and colonialism which lead to a rich and diverse discussion.

Myriam from France and Júlia from Brazil gave the leadoffs placing into context both the origins of racism, how it's origins is shown in the way this social construct was sharpened as a colonial and imperialist weapon to guarantee super exploitation and to sustain capitalism, how the transatlantic slave trade was a key turning point in the experience of black people and indigenous people and how racism and xenophobia manifests itself today. This is especially in the context of the rise of the far right with for example far right parties and figures gaining space in Europe on the basis of

xenophobic and racist rhetoric. The far right in other parts of the world has also gained ground on the basis of this as seen in the US elections.

Also the ongoing genocide in Gaza highlights the features of this era of capitalism of increased barbarism which fuels racism and colonialism today. As was said in the discussion, it has revealed to many people how genocide and racism is an integral part of the system and how the Israeli government's racist agenda as well as that of other governments and imperialist powers that support and supply the onslaught are perpetuating this situation at the same time that they repress any movement against it.

A feature of the discussion was on how our traditions had treated the questions of racism and the fight against it. Comrades recalled that many times there was a lazy and shallow approach to the question that stated basically that racism is used by the system to divide the working class and that the solution therefore is to fight against the system as a whole. Although this is true, comrades pointed out how this didn't go far enough and that on one hand it tended to ignore (sometimes actively) the actual subjective, daily experiences of racism that racialized people face whilst also looking at suspicion of movements that tried to focus on fighting racism. As was pointed out, this is a dangerous road to take because it obscures the concrete experiences, and the differences in how racism manifests itself in different parts of the world but also leads to the danger of "seeing the rebellion of the most oppressed against their oppression as being the problem rather than seeing the system as the problem that creates that oppression and its impact on the whole of the class" as Paul from Scotland put it.

Comrades from different countries brought to the discussion specific questions of how racism, xenophobia and colonialism developed in their regions. As Ndumiso pointed out, colonialism in Africa weaponized many characteristics of the region such as tribalism and today uses xenophobia to discriminate against immigrants from different countries and use them as scapegoats for the country's problems. Moumita from India explained how alongside the brutal caste system that exists in the country, there are also other forms of racism with prejudice existing against people from the northeast region of the country, where people tend to have more south east asian characteristics and culture. But also there is an enormous obsession and a large industry in skin whitening, with creams that are sold as ways to "get ahead in life". This is due to the colonial influences that still exist today that exacerbated the divide between the northern part of the country where many people are from the indo-aryan ethnic group compared with the southern part of the country where people tend to have darker skin.

In Brazil, Pedro spoke about how the Brazilian slave trade was the biggest, longest lasting and most brutal in history and how this was the foundation and a principal pillar of Brazilian capitalism. The massive disequality that disproportionately affects black people and indigenous people, the police violence and lack of access to public services are all direct results of how the country was founded. Yash from Ireland spoke about racism and prejudice against the traveller communities in Ireland that has existed for centuries and how it is also linked to the development of capitalism

and how now these communities face more unemployment and have a harder time accessing public services.

These and other examples highlighted the need for more discussions on the development of capitalism in different regions, how this went hand in hand with original or primitive accumulation and the development of racism. But also that we need to go beyond just an economic discussion and as Ryan from France put it, to make concrete the actual experiences and to humanise the people that lived through these processes.

At the end of the meeting it was discussed and decided to have regular meetings every two months with the next one being in early January. But, in order to keep the momentum going a work in progress meeting will happen in December. There are many different topics to discuss in future meetings such as Xenophobia, the rise of reaction and the far right, how colonialism and neo colonialism developed, Indigenous rights and struggles and anti-semitism to name a few. For the next meeting the discussion will focus on islamophobia which is a central subject in many parts of the world but certainly in Europe in the context of the genocide in Gaza but also in India where islamophobia is a central part of Modi's approach and which is having concrete repercussions.

These discussions will help deepen our understanding of racism, xenophobia and colonialism and help us not only to review and correct the gaps from the past but also to prepare us for the new explosions of oppressed peoples against their oppression.

## 5. Proposal for research subgroups (and their current members)

- **Defining and defying Islamophobia (which we agreed would be the first meeting in January)** - James McC (Ireland), Robert Cosgrave (Ireland), Myriam PM (France), Eva M (Ireland), Bianca (Austria), Yash (Ireland)
- **Compiling lists of black, brown and indigenous activists, writers and marxists – and identifying their key texts to study** – Myriam PM (France), Pedro V (Portugal), Paul M (Scotland), Mauro E (Mexico), Ophélie (Belgium)
- **The historical and material development of racism under capitalism and imperialism** – James McC (Ireland), Bianca (Austria), Ndumiso (South Africa), Pedro V (Portugal), Paul M (Scotland), Alain M (Belgium), Yash (Ireland)
- **The impacts of colonialism and post colonialism (including development of racism within post colonial countries)** – James McC (Ireland), Julia C (Brazil), Robert C (Ireland), Bianca (Austria), Mita (India / US), Paul M (Scotland), Alain M (Belgium), Mauro E (Mexico), Bryan (Belgium)
- **Indigenous rights and struggles in Latin America, North America, Australia, New Zealand and French colonised territories** – Julia C (Brazil), Mita (India / US), Alain M (Belgium), Mauro E (Mexico), Daniel G (India / US)
- **Safeguarding around racism within our international project** – Myriam PM (France), Ndumiso (South Africa)
- **The rise of the far right and reaction internationally** – Robert C (Ireland), Eva M (Ireland), Bianca (Austria), Ndumiso (South Africa), Alain M (Belgium), Yash

- **Caste system & other forms of racism in India / South Asia** – Mita (India / US), Daniel G (India / US), Yash (Ireland), Ophélie (Belgium)
- **Antisemitism (historically and in the current age)** – James McC (Ireland), Robert C (Ireland), Eva M (Ireland), Alain M (Belgium), Daniel G (India / US)

If you would like to join the anti-racist research Whatsapp, here is the link :

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/EV886GrzFTIJbGILAZN8bs>

If you would like to join any of the subgroups, either join the above WhatsApp group or message Myriam PM (+33 7 64 53 86 20) or Paul M (+44 7934 513165).