

From France, on gender, race & class - Toward a materialist approach to the question of race: A response to the Indigènes de la République

Saturday 6 August 2016, by [AMAUCHE Malika](#), [KATEB Yasmine](#), [NICOLAS-TEBOUL Léa](#) (Date first published: 25 June 2015).

Contents

- [Toward a materialist approach](#)
- [Political economy and Islamoph](#)
- [Insufficiency of the “colonial](#)
- [The question of race in \(...\)](#)
- [The wave of antisemitism](#)
- [Structural antisemitism](#)
- [Charges of “philosemitism”](#)
- [Review of the history of \(...\)](#)
- [Politicizing antisemitism](#)
- [Identification of Jews with](#)
- [A quenelle against the system](#)
- [Feminism: A luxury for indigèn](#)
- [Opposition to mixed marriage](#)
- [Conclusion](#)

The Charnel-House introduction

A few months ago, I wrote up a critique of the “decolonial dead end” arrived at by groups like the Indigènes de la République. Despite being welcomed in some quarters of the Left, wearied by the controversy stirred up after the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre, it was not well received by others. Last month, however, a French comrade alerted me to the publication of a similar, but much more detailed and carefully argued, piece criticizing Bouteldja & co. in *Vacarne*. I even asked a friend to translate it for the new left communist publication *Ritual*. But before he could complete it, someone describing himself as “a long-time reader/appreciator of The Charnel-House” contacted me to let me know he’d just finished rendering it into English.

The authors of the original piece — Malika Amaouche, Yasmine Kateb, and Léa Nicolas-Teboul — all belong to the French ultraleft, militant feminists and communists active in different groups. I am grateful they brought up the PIR’s execrable position opposing intermarriage and submitted it to ruthless criticism, offering a *Wertkritik*-inspired analysis of some antisemitic tropes reproduced by the self-proclaimed Indigènes. Regarding the provenance of “philosemitism,” a concept employed by Bouteldja which the authors critique: the term was invented by antisemites during the nineteenth century, as a reproach to supposed “Jew-lovers.” Not a title that would be claimed by those who were themselves sympathetic to the plight of Jews in Europe and elsewhere.

Translator's introduction

The following text, a critique of the Parti des Indigènes de la République by three of its former members, originally appeared in the French journal *Vacarme*. A radical anti-colonial party, Parti des Indigènes came to wide attention among the English-speaking Left for their sharp critiques of secularism and racism on the French Left following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks of 2015. While they seem to enjoy great respect in certain sectors of the Left, the translator of this document believes such respect is mistaken; that PIR's identitarian politics seeks an alliance with the identitarian far right of Le Pen, Dieudonné, and Soral; and that such an approach to politics poses a great threat to the Left.

Secondly, this document provides a much-needed insight into the problem of antisemitism. Following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, the media hysterically speculated that Europe was on the verge of a pogrom, to be carried out by its numerous Muslim immigrants; Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took up the hysteria, calling for French Jews to emigrate. The backlash among certain leftists, whom the present translator otherwise respects, was perhaps equally hysterical. Some questioned whether antisemitism was even extant in contemporary Europe; others seemed to blame antisemitic acts on crimes of the Israeli state, rather than the perpetrators. As this document's analysis shows, antisemitism is not only a threat against Jews, but against any movement of the working class.

Toward a materialist approach to the racial question: A response to the Indigènes de la République

Malika Amaouche, Yasmine Kateb, & Léa Nicolas-Teboul

Vacarme (June 25, 2015)

Les Indigènes de la République have helped to shed light on racism within the Left, supported by the racism of French society at large. But are they also prisoners of racism? We propose a systematic analysis of the forces exercised upon the most precarious: a critique of the erasure of race and gender; while escaping the identitarian project of the extreme right; remaining anchored in critique of political economy.

From the dead refugees of the Mediterranean, to the Baltimore riots, to the events of everyday metropolitan life, we are constantly drawn back to the question of race. It seems necessary to propose an analysis of the foundations of racism, which will not be merely a shallow response to current events.

Today, we observe mounting Islamophobia and antisemitism. These two are a pair: in a context where social segregation is becoming stronger, and the logic of all-against-all becomes uncontrollable, we must work to think of these things in conjunction. That means to reject the logic of competition between different racial oppressions; but also to examine Islamophobia and antisemitism together in all their specificity. And in all this, the general context — growing social violence, a hardening of class segmentation, and effects of structural racism (in housing, work, and so on). It is harder and harder for the poor, and for those who are the most precarious (racial minorities and women).

With the [*Charlie Hebdo*] attacks in January, the left was hit with its own denial of the issue of racism. It made a specialty of denouncing the victimization, and of dismissing racism as a massive structural phenomenon. Institutional feminists' obsession with the veil functioned as a spotlight on the racism of a Left clinging to an abstract, ahistorical, and highly aggressive universalism.

This was why we were enthusiasts of the great work of exposing the racism of the Republican left — a project in which the Parti des Indigènes de la République has participated since 2004. There are many of us who worked to undermine this “respectable” racism, under which the indigènes were never truly equal. [1] If the Left was never explicitly against racialized people, its arguments were dismissive of the great values meant to emancipate them. An entire history of the condescension and paternalism of the French Left remains to be written. Such a history would note the way the discourse of class was used to stratify the hierarchies of the workers' movement itself.

Nevertheless, it seems to us that PIR is slipping. Riding the gathering wave of identitarianism, it proposes a systematic cultural, almost ethnocentric, reading of social phenomena. This leads to the adoption of dangerous positions on antisemitism, gender, and homosexuality. It essentializes the famous “Indigènes sociaux,” the subaltern it aims to represent. It is as if the racialized working class, who face the most violent racism, are being instrumentalized in a political strategy which basically plays in the arena of the white left and à la mode radical intellectuals.

For us, descendants of Muslim and Jewish Algerians, to lead the critique of the PIR, just as we led the critique of the Left, is a matter of self-defense. We believe we have nothing to win from a political operation which subsumes all questions under those of race. For us, not only the question of race, but also those of political economy, and the social relations of sex, are the order of the day.

Political economy and Islamophobia

Anyone who has taken the RER to Gare du Nord in the morning knows that those who look Arab, black, or Roma, face a constant pressure. “Face control,” police killings, housing in only the most distant banlieues — racial minorities face geographical, social, and symbolic segregation. This integral racism (to take up a phrase of Frantz Fanon), consubstantial with French society, begins with orientation in the fourth grade, or with the search for an internship, or the first job... and extends to all the dimensions of existence. In its multiple appearances, it extends from the streets of rich towns where ethnic men are turned away from nightclubs, to the edges of seas where they are let drown with all the indifference that attends to those who dare cross borders.

In France, Islamophobia — i.e., anti-Muslim racism — is to be understood not merely as a secular opposition to religion, but as a form of racism directed against all who are black or Arab. Its presence is seen in the public space, whether against veiled women, or young people loitering against a wall. The events of January only accentuated this process of stigmatization. From the attacks on mosques to the assaults on veiled women, to the police summons given to eight-year-olds who preferred not to say “Je suis *Charlie*,” it has become almost impossible for an Arab to speak politically without first prefacing that they are not an Islamist.

But it does not only operate through discriminations or prejudices. Islamophobia returns to a more central issue, the issue of race. This issue functions by assigning a place in the division of labor to certain sections of the population based on their origin or skin color. One need only observe a construction site to note that the heavy labor is performed by blacks, the technical work by Arabs, and that the overseers are white. [2] Racism is the regime of material exploitation which has organized the development of European capitalism.

In effect, capitalism promotes market competition not only between capitalists, but between workers as well. This competition takes the form of a process of “naturalization,” which allows a specific devaluation of labor power. Certain sociohistoric traits of the immigrant workforce (for example, qualification, disposition, specialization) are “essentialized”: they are stretched, “typecast.” And this permits employers to bring down cost of labor.

But this process cannot be simply reduced to a “racial premium” of exploitation. It is a total social phenomenon. One may therefore submit that racialization is an essential dynamic under capitalism, which always needs greater labor power, and produces, at the same time, a “surplus” of labor power, always too much. [3]

Insufficiency of the “colonial” framework

This racism marks, materially and symbolically, the European metropolitan space. Nevertheless, the strict decolonial framework proposed by PIR prevents us from comprehending the actual dynamics of racism, which exist only in conjunction with the development of global capitalism.

The history of colonialism as such is behind us, but it has left traces. The West — that is, the historical center of accumulation now threatened by crisis — perpetuates, through its “War on Terror,” the continuation of structural exploitation on the world scale. Take, for example, the wars over access to natural resources (oil or “strategic” minerals). But equally at play is the intensification of exploitation in all class segments, beginning with the most fragile. This process of immiseration and marginalization ends by engulfing those subjects who are not black, Arab, or the descendants of the colonized.

In the riots of 2005, it was not only blacks and Arabs, but also vast portions of the “native proletariat” affected by general immiseration. So sorry to disappoint Fox News, but these were not ethnic clashes. The young rioters of immigrant backgrounds were in exact proportion to their importance within the population of the neighborhoods which revolted — neither more nor less. [4]

The question of race in the struggle

Often, the question of race in the struggle is posed in an immanent and non-“ethnicizing” manner. If certain struggles are massively racialized, it is because the proletariat is assigned this place in the division of labor. The mothers of Maghreb families organize collectively to obtain rent-controlled housing, the maids of the Park Hyatt hotel go on strike after the rape of a Guinean woman by a rich Saudi, the Chadian asylum-seekers occupy a building for the sake of their lives...

When the undocumented Chinese workers of the Strasbourg-Saint-Denis nail salons collectively demand their wage, go on strike, and then make the salon pay for their strike fund, they are joined by Ivoirian hairdressers. Despite divisions in race, wage, and culture, racialized workers come together in their struggles. The issue of race is central, particularly because the issue of salary is directly linked to that of [immigration] documents — but it is not a strictly identitarian or intra-communal issue. This is so even if the struggle does not immediately bring about unity between all class segments. As struggles mount, divisions become less and less significant. That is, on the condition that the most oppressed group is taken into account — that is, the undocumented, who are the most isolated and marginalized in a strike — and are joined by other migrants, and, after a small victory, by the other salons in the neighborhood. When the struggle is defeated or ends, the divisions sharpen, and each returns to their place. [5]

The racialization that we suffer is therefore not independent of cleavages in class. They do not disappear just because militants deny them in their discourse. On the contrary, they renew them, and risk deepening the incomprehension between different social groups, who are bound to encounter each other, and occasionally ally with each other in their struggles. Because the separations, the social contradictions are permanent, the appearance of struggles is inevitable. Encounters between exploited groups become possible — and are themselves a stake in the struggle. Encounters between those who are commonly exploited, if not equally exploited.

The critique of political economy: Just for les beurs?

To envisage race as a social construction, implies the ability to think of other social relations, such as gender and class, as equally socially constructed. Thinking of racism systematically must allow one to articulate race and gender, race and class. Thus, we take up the school of thought which refuses to consider the categories historically produced by our mode of production — property, labor, money — as natural. Or, to use the old phrase, we continue the critique of political economy.

And it is this very discourse which PIR systematically does away with. It is all as if the indigènes sociaux can only escape their subaltern position by redoubling the racialization of their position within capital. As if young immigrants from colonialism do not have the right to question the organization of labor, the ownership of the means of production, exploitation...in short, all which has founded, for the past thirty years, the separation between Left and Right. As if all these questions were simply “intellectual” stuff, or [white] French stuff, or worse, the highest insult, beur stuff.

To speak of structural racism without ever giving the causes of racism, is to leave the door open to all schools of “anti-system” thought. Thus only a firm position in relation to the core of this “system” allows one to keep a cool head in the Right’s great game of identity.

The wave of antisemitism

The murders of Jews in the last few years (in Toulouse, Brussels, Paris, Copenhagen) are only the tip of the iceberg. In Créteil, in autumn 2014, a couple was robbed: “They are Jews, therefore they have money” — this was the justification for the targeting and rape of a young woman in front of her husband. The “statements” of media personalities veered far to the extreme right. One student unionist explained that the Jews, quite numerous in the University, prevented him from being elected...in the Paris metro, an Eastern European lumpen insults an old religious Jew: “Jewwww! Shit! Jewww! ...” A bagel delivery man takes part, because he works for the Jews-who-have-the-money...

One observes an important resurgence of the old idea of Jews as personifying money, the system, as possessing an occult power. The theoretical substrate of European antisemitism, sedimented at the end of the nineteenth century, is mobilized. A certain idea of the nation, of the Christian West, was founded on white supremacy, from which the Jews were excluded. Certain other political currents “whitened” them, and claimed that the Maghrébins would be the spearhead of an antisemitic resurgence. The vandalizing of Jewish graves in Alsace by those of French stock [Français de souche] (as M. Hollande called them) showed that it is not only the Maghrébins and blacks living in the projects of the banlieue who are antisemitic. In French society, antisemitism circulates in different social classes, in different cultural spheres. There is also a globalization of the circulation of this ideology. One thinks of the antisemitic commentaries aroused by Dominique Ouattara, the wife of the current president of Côte d’Ivoire, who is of Jewish origin.

The potentially “populist” and anti-hegemonic tenor of antisemitism has always been the key to its

success: “The Jews are the favorites,” “The Jews dominate the world.” On this basis, antisemitism may again begin to operate politically, redefining its alliances (for example, that of Dieudonné, coming from the antiracist Left, and the audience he shares with Soral).

Structural antisemitism

Modern antisemitism has a systematic dimension. It pretends to explain a menacing and rapidly complexifying world. Linked to conspiracism, it presents itself as the key to interpreting all the violence and nonsense which found the dynamics of a social order which has no goal but its own reproduction. This apparently delusional explanation of the world has real effects. The identification of Jews with money, with an abstract and menacing power, endures. In moments of social crisis, it returns in force, even on the left.

The German school of *Wertkritik* [6] attempted to understand the tendential link between certain forms of anticapitalist critique and antisemitism. The categories that dictate capitalist social relations — money, labor, commodity — possess a dual nature, which Marx characterized as “fetishism.” The concrete nature, which appears to us immediately, defines our sensuous world: the use of the commodity object, the content of manual or intellectual work, the lived time of vacations bought on credit... The abstract nature operates as a dynamic of the capitalist system (namely value), but also makes this infamous system knowable. Mediated by value, capitalist social relations rest therefore on relations of class, founded on exploitation, violently unequal — but do not take the form of direct relations between persons. The social violence of capital is exercised upon the exploited, the dispossessed, but its dynamic, by the same logic of the mode of production, carries an abstract dimension.

Not all anticapitalist traditions capture this dual nature of capitalist social relations, at once concrete and abstract. Often, they naturalize the concrete, and focus their critique on the abstract: against finance capital, for “true economy,” or industry, without seeing that the production of commodities, the simple exchange of bread for money, is also regulated by abstractions. Abstraction they therefore relate to a parasitic dimension, an excess of the system.

It is with this abstract dimension that the Jews are identified: with an impalpable, occult power, with money. Exaggerated, mythified, biologized; certain of their social and historical characteristics, certain of their economic activities are linked to the sphere of circulation; their presence over a very large geographical area is also taken up in this identification. Thus, antisemitism operates typically as a personification of the domination of abstract capital.

In this sense, the Jewish question is at once specific and central for the history of European capitalism. It does not function as an “absolute” question, or one “above history.” [7] If this type of structural racism was brought specifically against the Jews, the same racialization of sociohistoric traits could be brought against other populations. Today, for example, in Southeast Asia, racism against the Chinese takes on almost the same traits as that against the Jews (the double image of money and power).

We therefore must take the measure of this structural antisemitism, its historical importance and its resilience in a phantasmagoric image which is as alive as ever. Not to make this racism exceptional among all others, but to understand why antisemitism is pernicious and powerful. It leaves capitalism intact while solely attacking the phantasmagoric personifications of that social form. To deconstruct antisemitism is to see where it is found, where it is spoken, and attempt to decouple the identification of Jews with money and power.

Charges of “philosemitism”: Antisemitism in disguise

The text of Houria Bouteldja, which in the name of antiracism, calls on us to march “against the philosemitism of the State,” troubles us. [8]

When Segré utilised the term [philosemitism] some years ago, it called attention to those ideologues who, in the guise of defending the Jews, proposed a defense of whiteness, of the West. [9] It did not mean that the French state or the reactionary intellectuals were in fact philosemitic, much less the “white Left”! Now “philosemitism” has come to mean the opposite, designating the idea of the Jews as responsible for the construction of an identitarian order. Antisemitism would be understood, then, as a reaction to the philosemitism of the State, to the role played by Jews as allies of the racist republican State. To struggle against antisemitism, would be to struggle against philosemitism.

A clever dialectic, this, recalling the old idea that the Jews, linked to power, pull the strings! A picture based on a reading of colonial history that would play the Jews against the Arabs and vice versa.

Review of the history of the Jews in Algeria

The comparison of the Jews to the Senegalese tirailleurs who committed the massacres in Southern Morocco, implies that the Jews had massacred the Muslims, or participated directly in colonial repression. Certainly, the Jews in Algeria were in an ambiguous position vis-à-vis independence. Attached to France (citizens since 1870, having seen therefore an improvement of their quality of life and their cultural assimilation), their ancient and recent also history distinguished them from the European colonists, and they were the targets of antisemitism (from the colonists, as from the the Vichy regime).

To consider today that the Shoah concerns only the Jews and the Europeans, whereas antisemitism in Algeria is interwoven with this history, or to forget the few but significant Jewish figures (communists) engaged in the struggle for independence, is a choice of historical reading. Politically, in 1956, at the Soummam conference, the FLN envisaged the opposite choice in proposing an alliance with the Jewish minority, calling for solidarity with the struggle for national liberation and promised to them “the honor of independent Algeria...” [10]

Politicizing antisemitism

This politicization performed by the PIR took place while going back and forth between a conference in Oslo for the intellectual elite of the world, and a protest in Barbès.

To become acceptable, this political legitimization of antisemitism had to be distinguished from historical antisemitism. It is the “anti-Jewish resentment” of today’s wretched of the earth, the Maghrébin, “sympathetic,” homegrown... It emanates from a popular fantasy of a pure Maghrébin culture, which may be abstracted from fifty years of history. Like all cultural processes, antisemitic prejudices are hybridized, even among the dominated. To construct a pure subaltern culture is a model of theory that recalls what Edward Said called Orientalism. This construction of radical alterity is thus a feat of cultural domination, which endows the absolute Other with positive or negative traits.

Therefore, if one ceases to read antisemitism as an ethno-cultural problem, one sees that the

antisemitic Maghrébins who become political do not go to the PIR, but directly to Soral. In desiring to embody a popular Maghrébin antisemitism, leaders of the PIR do nothing but ride the wave of confusion on the left. They flirt with the white Left in replaying their historical tactics of minimizing racism.

Identification of Jews with Israel

The Jews of France are a minority that is being directly linked to the state of Israel. But there exists a de facto link because Israel represented a “solution to the national fate of the Jews” after the extermination of the European Jews, and welcomed a great majority of the Jews from the East. A recent state, founded on violence, Israel perpetuates the oppression of the Palestinian population, which implicates Zionism as a national solution to antisemitic violence. We criticize as such the exactions made on Gaza, in the Territories, the accelerating colonization in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

But the identification of Jews with Israel functions in a larger way. It is the political racket of Netanyahu, who, following the *Charlie Hebdo* attacks, invited the Jews of France to make *aliyah* — in reality, he invited them to live in the West Bank, to become the apprentices of the extreme Right, because Israeli society, in crisis and war, has nothing else to offer them. In parallel, the same thinking is at work among the antizionistes. For them, Israel embodies all the problems of the world. But this antizionisme is not the criticism of a state, its functioning, its nationalist ideology, its violence; it is not a call for international solidarity with the populations of victims of the State (even less for the necessity of their self-defense). A consistent international solidarity means to prioritize, first of all, the attack against the imperialism of one’s own state, and not to engage in exoticism. Otherwise, one could not be scandalized by the presence of Netanyahu and Lieberman at the “Je Suis Charlie” marches. Israel would be the pawn of the West, the unique representative of universal imperialism, responsible for all the ills that befall the Arabs, and even all others; for the repression of social movements, and so on.

The result is that today, the political field of antizionisme does not cease to drift rightward. The antizionist Left is at great pains to decouple the conflation of the Jews with Israel in this toxic political space. Toxic for the Jews, but also for the working class in France, racialized or not, who have nothing to win from this sole focus on the Palestinian question, powered by nostalgia for Pan-Arabism and French leftists.

A quenelle against the system, for the restoration of masculinity

When giving her feelings about what motivated the January 2015 attacks, Houria Bouteldja explained that male indigènes might have been driven “crazy” by the whites’ denial of their manliness. According to her, nevertheless, “the residents of the quartiers do not wish to politicize their sexuality.” At the same time, in her intervention in the colloquium “Penser l’émancipation,” she gives us an essentialized description of the questions of manliness of young Muslim Arab men, complimenting Soral in passing for offering a program for the restoration of the masculinity stolen by colonialism and racism. To speak of the protesters of the ’80s, she poses to us the hypersexualized bodies of male indigènes, “bringing the first batterings against the immaculate white Republic” (as if she were not objectifying these men). She noted in passing that these young Arab men lacked clear judgement. Then, she drew the silhouette of Dieudonné, brandishing his quenelle, but “poorly endowed, intellectually, because he does not possess a correct program.” Finally, to justify this antisemitic salute, she brings up its effect as a woman, in declaiming her love

for Dieudonné: “I love him because he has done an important thing in terms of dignity, of indigène pride, of black pride: he has refused to be a House Negro. Even if he does not have the correct political program in mind, he has the attitude of resistance. And I would add, that this was true of him long before his allies, those who take notice of the indigènes. An upstanding man.” [11]

On the one hand, this representation of the “young Arab male” is no different from that constructed by white feminists, secularists, and republicans, as intrinsically, culturally, biologically almost, masculine and sexist. [12] On the other hand, this essentialization of Arab Muslims leaves no place for any other identity within that of the indigène. This is the whole limit of the program sketched by the PIR under the notion of “domestic internationalism”: a supremacy of [the concept of] race which in fact annuls any other articulation — race and class, race and gender, race and sexuality. [13] According to this reasoning, therefore, an indigène social movement cannot develop tools for struggle or demands according to its present situation; according to gender, or sexuality. It must only refer to eternally to its post-colonial positionality; those models of emancipation belong to the past. If it makes a defense of other causes, or articulates, for a random example, race and gender, it thereby adopts the white agenda. [14]

Feminism: A luxury for indigène women?

We find ourselves refusing the the injunctions of white feminism, which defines the terms of emancipation according to the norms that construct the domination of the subaltern and function to its benefit. But for Houria Bouteldja, feminism is a luxury which indigène women may not profess to claim. In that regard, she declares: “The indigène male is not the principal enemy. The radical critique of indigène patriarchy is a luxury.” [15] It is not a priority in the face for racism from whites, police violence, or discrimination. It is therefore impossible for indigène women to denounce sexism and patriarchy, which could only be oppressions among others, without betraying the men of their community. Furthermore, they depend financially on the men of their communities, which would reduce still further their flexibility.

Now, questions of economic survival are the norm for women in the common quarters. In Seine-Saint-Denis, the poorest section of Île-de-France, women take up the parental functions in 89.9% of single-parent families; this, in a general context of a greatly increasing number of families (cf. figures from INSEE and Efgip). The men have deserted the family and women find themselves alone to raise the children and ensure the survival of the family. Those women, therefore, are the pillars in the poorest homes. The disintegration of the nuclear family, the “disappearance” of the men, does not imply the disappearance of patriarchy: violence against women, the structure of commodified labor, and of the family, are such that (for example), a divorcee remains under the guardianship of her ex-husband, especially for the education of the children. But that does not authorize Bouteldja to therefore void all feminist aspirations for these women.

Opposition to mixed marriage

In singing the praises of “unmixed” marriage, [16] Bouteldja makes as if the act of conversion to Islam, for a white, would amount to an abandonment of their privileges and dominant position. Here again, it seems that an essentialization of religion is superimposed onto race, as if the two were intrinsically linked. One cannot deny that mixed marriage is also marriage between dominant and dominated. But to represent conversion as a purification of social class, and to advocate racial segregation, is chilling.

This brings us to the subject of arranged marriages where the women are not consulted in the choice of a spouse, and the repression of conjugal and intra-communal violence perpetrated against women. And here, one would like to interest oneself in the desires of indigène women, and in the consequences of the denial of their autonomy and the frustrations that follow this communitarian model. We recognize that the subject risks once more the pitfall of dividing the community. Once more, women are asked to sacrifice themselves for the group. Even if the question of conjugal and intra-communal violence is used to stigmatize racialized men, even if Arab machismo is instrumentalized to absolve that of white men, that is not a reason to cultivate a code of silence among ourselves.

Effectively, the links of community strengthen the need for material solidarity in a context of crisis, impoverishment, and the loss of social benefits. To identify these phenomena of mutual aid with a simple identitarian retreat, is to deny that which could be a strategy of survival for the most poor. That is, for the community to support a party of jobs, care for the sick, visits for prisoners, and so on. But, structurally, to cook, to bring people together, to put young children to sleep, to take care of the old mothers, all these tasks fall to the women. To idealize communitarian links, then, is to redouble the erasure of the work of women at the core of the family and the community.

One may also analyze the “manif pour tous” as a retreat to the familial sphere and an increasingly violent relegation of women to the private sphere in a context of generalized survival. But for the Blanches du 93, it evokes a return to the values that may speak of communitarianism for racialized women.

Conclusion

Therefore, we think that the actual context of generalized impoverishment and economic crisis must be understood from the point of view of race and feminism. Because women are assigned to the sphere of reproduction, a time of crisis always implies for them a drastic augmentation in the portion of labor, and increasing violence. Everything linked to consumption is more expensive, harder to obtain, and it is they who bear in part the cost of diminishing welfare, in money and time: if one must spend three hours in line at the CAF, it will be women working part-time who do it. Domestic labor increases, and with it, the violent reassertion of women into their gender-role, which is not at all intrinsic.

Only a really materialist reading of the question of race, and not simply a moral reading, like that of the Left, or a political one, like that of the PIR, allows us to articulate the different forms of racism from one another, to not divide the victims of racism, and to draw the link with the question of women, in the current context.

Such a reading furthermore offers the possibility of escaping from a dichotomous vision of these questions. In effect, on one hand, there is a denial of the Islamophobia at the core of the government, and this minimization has been prepared for a long time in the Left antiracist movements. On the other hand, a part of the field of social criticism undervalues the question of antisemitism. Between the government, the antiracist left, and the PIR, the field is small and suffocating.

To exit this impasse, it is necessary to simultaneously recognize what is happening in the present, and leave the shadow of violence suffered in the past. In this sense, the battle for memorial recognition is an essential labor, but it makes sense only if it is effectively connected to social struggles.

The reading offered by the Indigènes de la République on the issue of racism seems rather feeble, in the final analysis, because it systematically excludes questions of political economy. In this sense the PIR remains a prisoner to issues of the Left, white or otherwise.

We think, on the contrary, that it is necessary to maintain a reading of class and racism, even if, historically, the relations of class have been utilized to erase the questions of race and gender. If a decolonial reading helps us also understand today's current dynamics, such a model serves to construct an homogenous subject, as was previously done with class. Thus, race subsumes all other questions. It has become the only paradigm to designate oppressions linked to capitalist domination. Now, it is not a question of hierarchizing between struggles of class and race, but on the contrary, to seize the entanglement of the questions of class and race (it is not possible to think class without race, and vice versa).

What has come to pass in Baltimore demonstrates once again: "Today, there is no legitimate black leadership. If anything the ascension of a handful of blacks into positions of power has demonstrated the structural impossibility of finding a place for the majority of blacks in America. A black mayor, a black police chief, a black president, and Baltimore still burns." [17]

P.S.

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<https://thecharnelhouse.org/2015/07/24/toward-a-materialist-approach-to-the-question-of-race-a-response-to-the-indigenes-de-la-republique/>

Footnotes

[1] One may cite Sylvie Tissot and Pierre Tevanian, *Dictionnaire de la lepénisation des esprits*, Paris, *L'Esprit frappeur*, 2002, sur la déconstruction du racisme républicain; Abdelmalek Sayad "le Mode de génération des générations immigrées," in: *Migrants-formation* № 98, September 1994; Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Le PCF et la question algérienne," *Entre mythe et politique*, Seuil, 1996. We cannot resist reopening this citation, utilized by Said Bouamama, who demonstrated the deep colonialism at the base of the agreement unanimously adopted by the inter-federal congress of North Africa of the Communist Party in September 1922: "The emancipation of the indigenous of Algeria can only be a consequence of revolution in France (...). Communist propaganda directed towards the indigenous is in fact pointless and dangerous. It is pointless because the indigenous have not yet attained an intellectual or moral level that will allow them to reach communist ideas...It is dangerous...because it would provoke the demoralization of our factions," in: Bouamama, "Les fondements historiques et idéologiques du racisme respectable de la gauche française," March 4, 2015.

[2] See Nicolas Jounin, *Chantier interdit au public. Enquête parmi les travailleurs du bâtiment*, La Découverte, 2008.

[3] See Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Ch. 23, "The general law of capitalist accumulation," P.U.F, 2006 (« Quadrige »), and more specifically, the agreement between Irish and English workers, in the framework of the sclerosis of the reserve army of labor.

- [4] According to the agreement of the Direction Centrale des Renseignements Généraux (DCRG), 11/23/05, published by Le Parisien 7/12/05.
- [5] See the declaration of the Combahee River Collective, 1979, on the revolutionary potential of the struggle of black lesbians, the most oppressed group (according to sex, race, and class).
- [6] While affirming our reading of structural antisemitism, we are very critical of positions of support for Israel taken by certain of its representatives, and of the manner in which this undermines the class struggle.
- [7] See Enzo Traverso, *La violence nazie, une généalogie européenne*, La Fabrique, 2002.
- [8] The tract of PIR titled, "Non au(x) racisme(s) d'État, non au philosémitisme d'État!" was distributed at the March 21 2015 demonstration.
- [9] Ivan Segré, *La réaction philosémite, ou La trahison des clercs*, Éditions Lignes, 2009.
- [10] August 1956, an important moment in the political structuring of the FLN.
- [11] Au-delà de vous : Avec vous, Contre vous. Dieudonné au prisme de la gauche blanche ou comment penser l'internationalisme domestique?" published February 25, 2014 by Houria Bouteldja on the website of the PIR. Translated into English on Richard Seymour's blog, Lenin's Tomb: "Dieudonné through the prism of the white left."
- [12] See Nacera Guénif Souilamas & Éric Macé, *Les féministes et le garçon arabe*, ed. l'Aube, 2004, and Isabelle Clair, "Le pédé, la pute et l'ordre hétérosexuel," *Agora Débats Jeunesse*, 2012/1 N° 60, p. 67-78.
- [13] One may take up the theory developed by Sadri Khiari, of the PIR, in the notion of the "Domestic International," as it were, in the French context, to substitute the class struggle "with a domestic internationalism in which the racial question, in all its dimensions, would be central. In a word, a decolonial internationalism." See <http://indigenes-republique.fr/internationalisme-decolonial-antiracisme-et-anticapitalisme/>
- [14] Malika Amaouche, "Les gouines of colors sont-elles des indigènes comme les autres?" p. 159.
- [15] See "Méditations d'une femme indigène quelques mois après l'affaire DSK : Pierre, Djemila, Dominique...et Mohamed," published March 8, 2012, by Houria Bouteldja on the website of the PIR: <http://indigenes-republique.fr/pierre-djemila-dominique-et-mohamed/>
- [16] See the interview with Houria Bouteldja in *Vacarme* N° 71, Spring 2015, revendiquer un monde décolonial, pp. 44-69: <http://www.vacarme.org/article2738.html>
- [17] "Déclaration d'un camarade natif de Baltimore sur le soulèvement," *Des Nouvelles du Front*, May 1, 2015: (translated from English, original text published in sicjournal.org April 30, 2015, "A Statement from a Comrade and Baltimore Native About the Uprising There")