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**CHALLENGING RACISM**



## Race and Racism

What follows is intended to encourage discussion amongst tutors who come across race and racism in their everyday work. You may be working in any subject area, not necessarily connected with politics or social issues, but need to think about how to counter some of the comments and opinions which might come from students in your classes.

There's some history here, some discussion about what 'racism' is, why people are attracted to racist ideas, and the changing face of racism. It's a difficult area and there's lots of controversy.

I want to open up the complexity of the race debate - or at least the complexity of the emotions and circumstances which fuel it. I have always argued that adult education is in part about 'giving voice' to those who feel they are marginalised and not heard. Around race, we may not always agree with what we hear but at least we must allow space to hear it.

**Graham Birkin**

Yorks and Humberside WEA.

### Sign of Hope

Muslims are more than twice as likely to be unemployed than the national average (16. per cent compared to 7.7 per cent). (The unemployment rate among black people is even higher, at 17.9 per cent). Worryingly, unemployment is especially high among young Muslims under the age of 30 (23 per cent), which is again higher than the UK average for young black people (29 per cent).

The jobless rate for the least educated young Muslims – those with no qualifications – is even higher, approaching 40 per cent. One encouraging sign is that a considerably higher proportion of young Muslims under the age of 25 are students than is the case for non-Muslims (36 per cent and 19 per cent, respectively).

It is important that public policy is designed to ensure that Muslims in general, and young Muslims in particular, do not become further marginalized. Joblessness would be much higher among Muslims without the labour-market measures implemented by the Labour government. A lost generation of young Muslims would be very bad indeed, for all of us.

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[Newstatesman.com/writers/david\\_blanchflower](http://Newstatesman.com/writers/david_blanchflower)

15th Feb 2010 New Statesman

## Why now?

The obvious answer is the electoral emergence of the extreme right, here in Britain and across the European Union.

In the UK, the relative success of the right in local council and European elections is evidence of a more general shift in atmosphere and attitudes. Ten years ago it was unacceptable to hold a person's race against them, but now it is increasingly common. We're not so much witnessing the end of tolerance as a rejection of the perceived shibboleths of the liberal left.

Many people argue that the left's championing of 'diversity' and 'multiculturalism', its apparent toleration of 'un-British' ways of behaviour, its 'bending over backwards' to ethnic minority needs, has fuelled racism, contributing towards a break in trust between mainstream parties and sections of the electorate.

I don't think that this 'championing' is the real reason for the rise of racism. I'd argue it's linked to government policies on housing, employment and regeneration rather than a worry about 'multiculturalism', or women and the veil. If people feel secure in their everyday lives, they don't need to reach for simple solutions. So, rather than a diversionary debate about how people dress, we should be thinking about jobs, wages, housing supply, and the allocation system.

For me, the rise of the right is part of the blowback from deregulated globalisation. When people see jobs going abroad and cheaper labour coming here, then their solutions may be wrong but their worries and fears are legitimate.

Ideas are important, and racist and anti-foreigner sentiment can either be encouraged or confronted. Attempts by the mainstream parties to win back the disillusioned and disaffected have often meant they have taken up the slogans of the far right. The banner "British Jobs for British Workers", for instance, was on prominent display at the 2008 Labour conference, giving further legitimacy to the extreme right and anti-foreigner prejudices.

Whilst for most people it's unacceptable to be openly racist and xenophobic, there is a significant current which says 'enough is enough and 'we, the British' have to reassert 'our rights in our own country'.

## The background

It's hard to assess the mood of the nation and there are certainly contradictory currents in this midwinter of 2010. The recent British Social Attitudes survey, for instance, notes there is increased acceptance of homosexuality as an unremarkable way of living. Perhaps this is not so much a celebration of difference as simply an indifference: let each of us get on with our own ways, and, as long as behaviour doesn't adversely affect others, then let it be.

This is welcome, given that attitudes towards race, 'the other' and sexual orientation are often tied in a bundle of intolerance. David Copeland, the convicted bomber of a London gay pub in 1999, openly stated that "first of all it was gonna be the blacks, then the Asians, then the queers", and the Holocaust wasn't just about the Jews: homosexuals, gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses were gassed too.

But there is no doubt we're living in darker times. John Beddington, the Government's Chief Scientific Adviser, predicts 2030 as the year of the 'Perfect Storm' with food, energy and water shortages leading to public unrest and mass migrations. That coupled with rising racism doesn't bode well.

And our country now? The hopes engendered by the Labour victory of 1997 have hardly been realised. Take inequality for example. The National Equality Panel was commissioned by Harriet Harman, the Minister for Women and Equality, to map the distribution of income and wealth in the UK. The results, published in January 2010 as the Hills' Report, showed that the richest 10% of the population are more than 100 times as wealthy as the poorest 10%.

The banking crisis and the credit crunch have alerted us both to all this and the impotence of government to do much about it. Stephen Hester, the Chairman of the Royal Bank of Scotland (now nationalised) has a salary of £1,200,000; Jonathon Ross, BBC presenter, has a three - year £18m deal; Adam Crozier chief executive of the Post Office (still locked in a dispute with the postal workers) took home £995,000 in 2009 (a reduction from £3.04m in 2008).

In contrast the public sector median salary is just above £27,000.

This wealth gap has been called 'the mother of all evils'. Wilkinson and Pickett in their book 'The Spirit Level' compare UK inequality with other industrialised countries. They show that the bigger the gap the greater the number of social evils. Apart from obvious indicators such as health and life expectancy, the book details how the income gradient heavily influences rates of educational attainment, mental illness, literacy levels, obesity, interpersonal violence and, what is most important in our context, trust.

For trust demands a minimum of mutual recognition and respect. To trust someone, you must know a little about them and at least like a little of what you know. There must be a perceived commonality between you and others, an understanding that the values we share are greater than the values we don't. When trust is weakened so is social cohesion.

Of course it's not just the income gradient which is weakening trust. Other influences operate. Over the last twenty years there have been changes in the world of work, with a shift from 'male' manufacturing to a neutered service economy. Some men are 'lost', no longer clear in their identity, and now, with the banking crisis, worried about not having a job at all. Pension rights have been eroded, there's pressure on the welfare state and many of our young people can only find temporary work. In Barnsley, for instance, the Council is employing school leavers to keep the streets clean, and reduce the youth unemployment figures. Important yes, but work as a way to dignity and self respect? Hardly.

This is the reality of many peoples' lives, perhaps not fully understood but present as a cynicism towards solutions offered by 'them', 'the establishment'. They've had plenty of time to sort it out but have still got it wrong! Indeed they've made it worse! And why should we believe them? Why not look for the 'real' reasons for our discontent and vote for something different?

The scandal of MPs expenses, exposed just before the European and local elections of June 2009, added to this sense of disillusionment and alienation, contributing to low turnout and the election of two BNP members to the European parliament.

The forthcoming election of May 2010 will indicate how far such disillusionment and alienation have gone.

### **Where does 'race' fit in?**

Where to begin? Let's go back to the early 20th Century when race, immigration and controls came together for the first time. The story reads so much like that of the 21st century, not least because much of the anti-immigrant sentiment of those times was, as today, directed at Poles - albeit Russian Jewish Poles.

Jews in Tsarist Russia (which included part of Poland, and the Baltic states) lived in the Pale of Settlement in the west of the Empire. Inside the Pale they were allowed to work and practice their religion, in the towns and Jewish villages: the 'stetl'. Outside they were not allowed to work, except as prostitutes (hence "beyond the Pale"). It was 'separateness' as government policy: a form of apartheid.

They suffered poverty, anti-semitism and pogroms, forcing them to flee to neighbouring countries. They were both victims of anti-semitic mobs encouraged by the state and economic refugees searching for a better life.

Many Jews came to Britain, and many (not all) settled in the East End of London. They were destitute, dirty and dishevelled, a rural people unused to living in cities, and unused to the sweat shops in which they worked. They were tailors, shoemakers, furniture makers. Most of the small workshops were owned by fellow Jews who had come before them.

They were insular, with their Yiddish, their synagogues, clubs, newspapers and political organisations. They had links with other workers, but these were tenuous, as trade unionists feared the new arrivals would undercut wages. Even the socialist organisations were hostile. Tainted by endemic anti-semitism, their abstract internationalism was not able to cope with such difference.

But there were always exceptions. One such was William Morris, designer, craftsman and socialist of the Socialist League. He's remembered now for his wallpaper designs but in the 1880s was in the forefront of the fight against xenophobia. 'Commonweal', the League's journal, carried an article 'Blarsted Furriners' in 1888:

"Are we then to allow the issues at stake in the struggle between robbers and the robbed to be obscured by anti-foreigner agitation?"

His answer was clearly 'no'. The title 'Blarsted Furriners' echoes present-day Robert Winder's book "Bloody Foreigners", a mine of information about our 'mongrel nation.'

Another was Rudolf Rocker, anarchist atheist missionary to the Jews. In his book 'East End Jewish Radicals', Bill Fishman, himself an East End Jew, enthuses over Rocker, describing the talks and discussion held at the Workers' Friend meetings. Rocker was the quintessential agitator educator, a model for us all:

“I realised then that all the ideas of mutualism, collectivism or communism were subordinate to the great idea of educating people to be free and to think and work freely.....”.

This ferment of ideas and thirst for education ran right through the Jewish East End in the first years of the 20th Century (and beyond: the Workers’ Educational Association was founded in 1903).

There was real opposition to the new arrivals and, after 1880, popular feeling began to force the issue in Parliament. In 1902 a Royal Commission on immigration argued for restriction, and in 1905, Parliament passed the Aliens Act.

In the East End, chief among the restrictionists was the British Brothers League, founded in 1902. The Conservative MP for Stepney, Major W. Evans, worked closely with the League with its motto ‘England for the English’. Its principal honorary member was Colonel Sir Howard Vincent, MP for Central Sheffield.

The League was the first attempt at paramilitary organisation in the UK, and certainly did not condemn its own street violence.

Anti-semitism merged with the jingoism of the popular press and the music hall. The League believed that all classes were affected by this alien invasion, but the class which suffered most were the English workers.

We can see echoes of all this today:

- at the end of the 19th Century there was slump and unemployment
- there was increased migration because of persecution and poverty
- the new arrivals were destitute and different
- they lived in overcrowded housing and forced up rents
- they forced down wages
- they kept to their own
- they were ‘aliens’

All common charges, and many of them made today, not against Jews but ‘Asians’ and ‘Muslems’.

It was easy for politicians to connect with anti-foreigner sentiment, often for cynical electoral advantage, for such sentiment was deep rooted in the English mind. In the late 1800s and early 20th Century it was not so much nostalgia for a mythologised past as it is today, but a celebration of a mythologised present.

This was the time when British imperialism was at its height. In 1898 Kitchener savagely defeated the Mahdi in the Sudan as revenge for the defeat of Gordan at Khartoum three years earlier; in May 1900 Baden Powell became a national hero with the relief of Mafeking. The Times wrote:

“The news was received with extraordinary enthusiasm in East London...The Whitechapel and Bow Roads were a mass of flags and bunting, while all the tramcars and omnibuses flew flags....A large body of working men with flags and banners perambulated the Bow Road, singing patriotic airs, while hundreds of cyclists wearing photographs of Colonel Baden Powell formed into procession and paraded the principal thoroughfares of Popular and Stepney. An interesting feature of the celebration was the number of Jewish boys dressed in

khaki wearing slouch hats....”

But maybe Hilaire Belloc was more accurate when he wrote:

“Whatever happens we have got  
the Gatling gun and they have not.”

### **But what is racism?**

I’ve used the words ‘racism’ and ‘anti-foreigner’ interchangeably and it depends on the context which is most appropriate. There is certainly a difference: they merged in the rhetoric of the British Brothers League but being anti-foreigner is not always being racist. The effects may be the same - from disapproval, to bigotry, perhaps to violence - so any distinction may not help the victims. But I’d be hard pressed to say today’s front page banner headline in the Express (8 Feb 2010) is overtly racist:

‘Immigrants handed 1.3m jobs’

The article avoids ‘race’ in its listing of migrant workers: they’re from the ‘EU, New EU, Other Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, the Americas, Australasia and Oceania and Unknown’. Ostensibly about numbers, it appears not to be an attack on foreign workers but the Labour Government’s ‘failure’ to manage borders.

Two further articles focus on immigration numbers, one about ‘the reckless student visa system’ and the other suggesting that Labour has deliberately encouraged ‘diversity’ for electoral advantage. The apparent student visa scam quotes Mohammed Aslam Farook, a language teacher, “who saw at first hand how a private language school was little more than a fast track route for immigrants wanting to get to Britain.”

So, in quoting a man from Bangladesh the paper can deny it is racist, or even anti-foreigner. It is simply anti-immigration. But its argument is couched in inflammatory language - ‘influx’, ‘British born’, ‘collapse’, ‘mass immigration’ - and its impact on the streets will hardly encourage ‘diversity’. What should be discussed in a reasonable manner - for instance the population prediction of 70m within 20 years - taps into deep feelings of racism. If all immigration was from the white commonwealth, would we feel so worried?

Racism then is something other than all this, but very closely related.

In his book “Faces of Racism” Josef Szwarc quotes a UNESCO statement on Race and Racial Prejudice of 1967:

“Racism falsely claims that there is scientific basis for arranging groups hierarchically in terms of psychological and cultural characteristics that are immutable and innate. In this way it seeks to make existing differences appear inviolable as a means of permanently maintaining the current relations between groups.”(Szwarc: p.19)

This ‘scientific’ basis of racism was one product of the 18th Century Enlightenment when even thoughtful philosophers such as Kant and Hume believed in a hierarchy of the world’s people. Often distinctions were made solely on colour: in 1794 Kant proclaimed that “This fellow was quite black.....a clear proof that what he said was stupid.”(Rattansi: p.27)

Later in the 19th Century the French anthropologist Joseph de Gobineau wrote that

“Human history is like an immense tapestry...The two most inferior varieties of the human species, the black and yellow races, are the crude foundation, the cotton and the wool, which the secondary families of the white race make supple by adding their silk; while the Aryan group, circling its finer threads through the noble generations, designs on its surface a dazzling masterpiece of arabesques in silk and gold.”(Szwarc: p.8)

The last person of world influence to believe this of was of course Hitler, whose political programme was premised on the superiority of the Aryan race.

There are still pockets of believers in Europe and the United States, unreconstructed Nazis who proclaim the superiority of the white race and back their claim with ‘science’. This is the basis of their hatred of miscegenation, for inter-race sex pollutes the gene pool.

But race today is based on culture, religion, colour, and common histories, those stories which give a people an identity different from others. Sometimes such stories are not of their own making but forced upon them. In the 1930s, many German Jews for instance, felt themselves - and were - more German than the Germans, but nevertheless the Nazis forced a new identity upon them. The anti-semitic created the Jew it wished to destroy.

So ‘race’ is not a fixed biological category but is socially constructed.

Szwarc defines racism as:

- negative attitudes towards or beliefs about a group because they are of a different race
- discrimination against people because of their race

He includes prejudice and discrimination towards foreigners because they “are targeted by a circumstance of their birth, not on account of what they believe or what they have done.” (Szwarc: p.8)

These definitions are useful because they distinguish between personal prejudice against ‘others’ and pervasive discrimination, with one group assuming superiority over another. In its extreme form, discrimination becomes segregation, as in the southern states of the United States where laws denied black Americans the right to use facilities enjoyed by whites. They could not eat in the same restaurants, go to the swimming pools or send their children to whites-only schools.

Courageous individuals countered such racism, sometimes after civil rights training in adult education workshops. Rosa Parks, who refused to move to the back of the bus, sparked off the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955. She’d previously attended Myles Horton’s Highlander School working with others on ways of ending segregation.

In the 1960s the black power advocates Stokely Carmichael and Charles Hamilton popularised the notion of ‘institutional racism’, arguing that no matter what the personal attitudes and behaviours of individual whites were, they benefited from the systematic discrimination and disadvantage of blacks. Carmichael and Hamilton looked at employment, housing, health, education, life span, concluding that US society as a whole was ‘institutionally racist’ (Rattansi: p.132).

In the 1999 inquiry into the death of Steven Lawrence and the subsequent police investigation, Macpherson defined 'institutional racism' as:

"the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people" (Rattansi: p.134).

The idea of 'institutional racism' is important because it focuses on outputs of institutions: what actually happens on a day-to-day basis and what is achieved. An organisation might have the finest anti-racist policies yet in its structure and practice it is racist: an obvious example is in its staffing structure and what is permissible in the culture of the canteen.

Under this definition, racism may well be unintended and covert. The good will of individuals and fine words of an organisation are no longer the key to assessing whether or not the organisation is anti-racist. It's the outputs which count, the concrete indicators of what is done to deliver an 'appropriate and professional service.'

Of course it's not just white people in their white societies who are racist, although quite often white people have encouraged the development of a native racism. In the late 19th Century Belgian missionaries argued that the Rwandan Tutsis were both racially distinct from, and superior to, the Hutus. The Belgians could not understand how Africans by themselves could have created such a sophisticated civilisation and so argued that the Tutsis were not Africans at all but part of another race originating from the Nile valley: a 'Hamitic' people.

In the genocide of 1994, when the Tutsis were the 'cockroaches' of Rwanda, the Hutus took up such European theories and racialized the violence with taunts of "meet your parents in Abyssinia" as they threw the Tutsi corpses into the Nyabarongo River, a tributary of the Nile. Divisions based on ways of life and visual physical difference were made worse by such racialisation.

## **The Changing Face of Racism**

In Europe racism cannot be separated from migration, and patterns of migration have changed in the last thirty years. In the 1990s, wars broke out in what was Yugoslavia, with a re-emergence of ethnic difference manipulated by local leaders. People fled from the conflicts, seeking asylum in the peaceful and prosperous European Union.

For the UK this was different from the post-war Windrush generation, or the long settled migrants from India and Pakistan. 'Asylum seekers' became a new category, initially from these new wars in Europe, and later from Iraq, Afghanistan and Africa.

As the numbers grew, the fact that most of these migrants were fleeing persecution and wars was forgotten by much of the media. Tagged as 'bogus', they were cast as scroungers abusing the benefit system and getting priority housing. Even our swans were not safe, with the Sun running a headline "Asylum seekers eat our swans" in the early 2000s.

In 2004, the enlargement of the European Union allowed citizens from the new states to work and settle in the UK. This was at a time of UK labour shortages, an apparently successful de-regulated economy fuelled by personal debt and institutional 'easy money'. These new arrivals had an uneven impact on class in the United Kingdom. The downward pressure on wages reduced inflation, and kept interest rates low. As a result, mortgages were cheap and there was a housing boom which benefited the middle classes.

They benefited too from cheap labour, with 'Polish plumbers' replacing local labour, and in many instances being seen as more reliable.

As consumers, everybody benefited from cheap labour in the food chain. In a world of stiff competition, the supermarkets forced companies in the food production and packing industries to provide milk, vegetables, fruit and poultry at ever lower prices. The easiest way to cut costs was to pay low wages and have an increasingly flexible labour force. Agency work became the norm, with workers having zero hour contracts, being taken on and taken off as a result of a phone call.

Many British workers would not work under these conditions. But migrants would. However bad wages and conditions were, they were often better than back home. Some were asylum seekers working illegally (for asylum seekers, the right to work was abolished in 2002), some were undocumented economic migrants with false papers, but most were legitimate EU workers who settled in the small rural towns, often in overcrowded accommodation provided by agency-linked landlords.

This was a new migration, no longer simply impacting on the cities but stretching out to rural communities. Towns such as Thetford in Norfolk, with its poultry packing plants, became towns of tension, often triggered by national football rivalries: Poles and the English clashed during the World Cup.

Thetford was the birthplace of Thomas Paine, a supporter of the American War of Independence in the 1770s, of the French Revolution of 1789 with its slogan of 'liberty, equality, fraternity', and author of the 'Rights of Man'. There's a museum there.

The media focussed on the rise in migrant numbers, the 'easy' access to benefits, and the pressure on services and infrastructure. We were no longer a 'sceptered isle' but a beleaguered and overcrowded one.

The turning point of the new racism in the 1990s was a fusing of this popular concern about numbers (not at that time of particular concern to the state) with a joint concern of 'the people' and state with the growth of 'militant Islam'. The rumblings began in 1989, with the fatwa against Rushdie. TV coverage showed enraged Bradford Muslims burning the 'Satanic Verses', an image reminiscent of Nazi book-burning in the 1930s. There had been riots in the 1980s, and government reports highlighting our 'parallel lives' but for many these images seemed to go much further, proving that 'we' no longer had a shared sense of 'Britishness'. A man had written a book and here were people shouting for his death! Where was the British sense of tolerance and free speech?

This was 'Islamofascism'.

'Multiculturalism' was now on the defensive. Its opponents argued that cultural and religious practices apparently sanctified by Islam and certainly manifest in many Muslim countries were not compatible with 'British values'. 'Multiculturalism' had failed to create a cohesive society: instead it had given space to extremists whose allegiance was not to the 'British way of life' but to a reactionary and intolerant faith at odds with that of Christians and Christendom.

After 9/11 and the London bombings of July 2005 it was hard to discuss Islam calmly. The rhetoric of the 'War on Terror' shifted the criminal investigation of terrorist crime to a blanket suspicion and harassment of the Moslem community, with increased stop and search, new anti-terrorist legislation and extension of the period held without charge. Such state reaction further alienated many young British Muslims.

Some British Muslims felt besieged by the 'infidel'. They believed they were routinely assumed guilty and always had to prove their innocence. In their everyday lives they encountered suspicion and harassment simply because of their dress; they were surrounded by a promiscuous culture; their religion was constantly denigrated.

But the 'extremists' did not help. The rhetoric from some imams (indeed their incitement to violence); the reaction to the cartoons of the Prophet published in a Danish newspaper; the anti-semitism of some Muslim commentators when discussing Israel; their silence on the human rights violations in their own communities, made it easy to paint a picture of 'Islamofascism' and harder for the liberal left to continue to support 'multiculturalism'. The differences within the Muslim community – the countries of origin, politics, histories and interpretations of the Koran - were forgotten. The strident and bigoted were given platform by the media and many of us assumed that that was what Islam was.

So "I'm not racist but..." was often completed by .... "I'm just against Islam."

This new racism both at state and personal level is shaped by 'globalisation' in a different way from earlier racism. The rise of a global Islamic consciousness fuelled by wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East feeds back into long settled Muslim communities. Opinion polls show strong Muslim allegiance to the British state, but disaffection is growing, especially amongst young Muslim males. Just as the white working class might wonder who they are and where they belong, so many Muslim young people are questioning their own sense of belonging. They see and respect the hard lives of their parents and grandparents, they recognise the benefits of living in Britain, but are part too of a global world, fed by alternative media and the internet. The satellite dish brings images and opinions from a world which is both part and not part of their own.

## So what do we do?

The 'we' here refers to those of us who want to see a society based on 'Hope not Hate'. This wayside pulpit message must be made real not only by speaking out against racism but by acting against it, giving our time and resources to anti-racist activities:

- **On a personal level** it means reducing our own levels of prejudice: by checking our reactions to media stories, by meeting people different from ourselves, by passing on any skills we have to those who need them.
- **On an institutional level** it means checking our outputs: making sure they don't indicate consistent discrimination against groups likely to be subjected to racism. It means asking questions of our institutions, and seeking ways of moving towards the right answers.
- **On a political level** it means working with others to combat racism. We can support refugee and asylum seeker organisations; help get out the vote to combat right wing parties; contact MPs, alerting them to specific campaigns. It means acting in solidarity, working with others rather than for them.

As tutors it means:

- **being clear** about simple distinctions in the race debate: asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants
- **being aware** of today's migration headlines
- **knowing a little** about migration, race and British history
- **having some understanding** of where the racists are coming from.

In his book 'Faces of Racism' Josef Szwarc writes at the end of his introduction that:

"This book mentions a small number of people who have confronted racism at great personal risk, but it is not only life and death situations that demand such strength. It takes courage to tell a relative, a friend or work colleague that their conduct is wrong. It takes courage to stand by the stranger who is being insulted. It takes courage for politicians to forego the votes they might obtain by pandering to the electors' fear and prejudices. It takes courage to examine one's own attitudes and actions."

Taking courage applies to us all: we're working together on this.

**CHALLENGING RACISM**



# CHALLENGING RACISM

WEA SCHEME OF WORK		Race and Racism Workshop			
Course title: Race and Racism					
Tutor:					
Course Learning Outcomes:					
At the end of the two sessions we will have:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● assessed recent changes in British society</li> <li>● defined 'race' and 'racism'</li> <li>● made a checklist of what draws people to racist 'solutions'</li> <li>● understood the impact of racism</li> <li>● agreed the next steps: what we can do to fight racism</li> </ul>					
Session Number/Date	Learning Objectives	Learning Methods	Resources	Assessment Methods	Progress Reviews
1 2.5 hours	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish the group.</li> <li>Assess recent changes in British Society.</li> <li>Define 'race' and 'racism'</li> </ul>	<p>Small groups</p> <p>Prioritising slips</p> <p>Photos as a stimulus to discussion.</p>	<p>Envelopes with prepared slips of changes</p> <p>Photos of 'racism'</p> <p>Handouts on facts of discrimination etc.</p>	<p>Flipchart displays of slips</p> <p>Flipcharts of results.</p>	
2 2.5 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make a checklist of what draws people to racist solutions'.</li> <li>Understand the impact of racism.</li> <li>Agree the next steps to joining groups and organisations.</li> </ul>	<p>Discussion of results of 'research' between sessions.</p> <p>Outside speaker - discussion</p> <p>Discussion after paired agreements on what should be done next.</p>	<p>Outside speaker.</p>	<p>Agreement on next steps</p> <p>Exchange of emails.</p>	



**CHALLENGING RACISM**

# CHALLENGING RACISM

WEA SESSION PLAN: Session 1		Race and Racism Workshop		
<b>Course Title: Race and Racism</b>				
<b>Session Aims</b> (Over 2 sessions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand race and racism in Britain today</li> <li>To understand why people are attracted to racist ideas</li> <li>To evaluate and engage in groups and organisations opposed to racism.</li> </ul>			
<b>Session Learning Outcomes</b> (Over 2 sessions)	At the end of the session we will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessed recent changes in British society</li> <li>Defined 'race' and 'racism'</li> <li>Made a checklist of what draws people to racist 'solutions'.</li> <li>Agreed the next steps: what we can do to oppose racism</li> </ul>			
<b>Resources</b>	Envelope with slips of changes, photographs of racism Handouts on facts of disadvantage, information on asylum/refugee/economic status			
Time	Activity Objectives	Tutor activity	Learner activity	Methods for checking learning
20 mins	Welcome Introductions, aims, ground rules.	Talk	Discuss self with neighbours: name job, community role etc. Report on neighbour to whole group.	Flipchart results.
50 mins	Changes in our society.	Distribute envelopes with changes; help with activity; discuss results.	In small groups, prioritise changes stick on large sheet of paper; compare results.	Display small group results on wall.
20 mins	Facts on migration.	Distribute sheets on recent history of migrations; outline the difference between asylum seekers, refugees, economic migrants.	Discussion.	A completed checklist for each participant.
30 mins	Race and racism: arriving at a definition.	Distribute photos illustrating aspects of racism. Help arrive at a group definition through discussion.	Discuss photos in small groups; report to full group.	Flipchart: main group conclusions.
20 mins	Plan work for the next session: researching racist ideas - why are they often seen as solutions? Is racism always with us?	Distribute handout listing possible research themes. Outline method of presentation for session 2.	In pairs agree work for next session.	

# CHALLENGING RACISM

WEA SESSION PLAN

Race and Racism Workshop

## Course Title: Race and Racism

Time	Activity Objectives	Tutor activity	Learner activity	Methods for checking learning
10 mins	Review and close.	Discussion	Discussion.	

Notes and comments:

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# CHALLENGING RACISM

WEA SESSION PLAN: Session 2		Race and Racism Workshop		
<b>Course Title: Race and Racism</b>				
<b>Session Aims</b> (Over 2 sessions)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand race and racism in Britain today</li> <li>To understand why people are attracted to racist ideas</li> <li>To evaluate and engage in groups and organisations opposed to racism</li> </ul>				
<b>Session Learning Outcomes</b> (Over 2 sessions)				
At the end of the session we will have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessed recent changes in British society</li> <li>Defined 'race' and 'racism'</li> <li>Made a checklist of what draws people to racism 'solutions'</li> <li>Agreed the next steps: what we can do to oppose racist</li> </ul>				
<b>Resources</b>				
Envelope with slips of changes, photographs of racism Handouts on facts of disadvantage, information on asylum/refugee/economic status				
Time	Activity Objectives	Tutor activity	Learner activity	Methods for checking learning
20 mins	Welcome and introduction.	Talk		
50 mins	Presenting our findings: racist ideas – why are they often seen as solutions?		Reporting back in pairs: preparing and presenting results on a flipchart.	Displaying results.
50 mins	The impact of racism: outside speaker.	Introduce outside speaker. Handout on facts of disadvantage.	Listening etc	Discussion
10 mins	Campaigning organisations against racism.	Distribute web addresses of campaigning organisations.	Choose organisation.	Agree to access web and help those who are unfamiliar with it. Set dates and times.
10 mins	Our next step: what we can do to fight racism.		In pairs: discussion of realistic hopes of involvement.	Flipchart: Suggestions for involvement. Flipchart: Ways of overcoming barriers.
10 mins	Review and close.	Distribute addresses etc of participants for future contact.		
<b>Notes and comments:</b>				

**CHALLENGING RACISM**

## Race and Racism: Tutor Notes

Before delivering 'Race and Racism' please read the Race and Racism pamphlet. It sets a framework for discussing the issue, in particular the factors which pull a minority of people towards racist 'solutions' to their real problems.

The lesson plan and scheme of work are based on the assumption that there will be 2 x 2.5hr sessions, with preferably a week between them for research.

If the lesson has to be run as one session of five hours then the presentation slot scheduled for the second session will have to be modified, with small group work on 'racist ideas: why are they often seen as solutions?'

The advantage of a week between sessions is that participants will be able to access the web, read magazines etc, and talk about the issue with family and friends. If the gap is any longer, it is harder to re-establish group identity which is an important part of session one.

The lesson starts with welcome, introductions, aims and ground rules. As the theme is potentially divisive, stress that this is an opportunity to say what you feel but at the same time respect everyone in the group.

The usual adult education rules apply: only one person talking at a time etc.

Write the comments up on a flipchart.

**Changes in our society** is based on small group work using an envelope of one-line changes. I have selected mine from the Power Enquiry, which outlines political and social changes from roughly the Second World War. Select what you want: the decline in voting; the move from manufacturing to the service sector; the end of class tribalism; the rise of individualism etc. Stress the widening wealth gap as the 'mother of all evils' and the break down in trust.

You will have your own anecdotal evidence of changes: for instance the break up of community because of increased access to higher education (the younger generation moving away); the growth of a multicultural society; demographic changes etc.

Have about 15 slips per envelope of what you think are the most important changes. Ask participants to discuss them, add their own and prioritise. Stick them on flipchart paper, display and discuss.

**Facts on immigration** will pick up on the growth of a multicultural society. Use the web to get the figures, and point out the different waves of immigration: the Windrush generation in '48; the Pakistan/Kashmir settlements from the '50s; the Uganda Asians in the 60s; the new arrivals from the early 90s. Make connections with local evidence. The best resource on this is Robert Winder's, 'Bloody Foreigners'.

**Race and Racism:** arriving at a definition depends on stimulæ, photographs and other memorabilia. I use a copy of 'The Golly', a book produced by the Museum of Childhood, Bethnal Green (some amazing pictures in it), the music score of 'Ol' Man River', the photo of the young boy with raised arms as he is herded by the Nazis, photos of lynchings in the Southern States, of 'whites only' from apartheid South Africa, and mugshots of Muslims accused of terrorism.

If time allows, play Billie Holiday 'Strange Fruit' or Leadbelly's 'If you're Black get Back'.

After discussion and consensus, read the definitions from "Faces of Racism": Josef Szwarc (cited in the pamphlet).

**Researching Racist Ideas** should follow on from the definition. Participants should choose what they want: let them take it as far as they can in the short time available between sessions. So it could be using the web to find out about the BNP or the Klu Klux Klan; monitoring the local media; finding out about anti-semitism; assessing the lyrics of right extremist music. Have a list of possible topics.

Ask participants to think about the quote from Albert Memmi in Szwarc's book:

"Each time one finds oneself in contact with an individual or group that is different and only poorly understood, one can react in a way that would signify a racism...Are we then all racist for all times? No, not exactly. But we are tempted by racism, yes. There is in us a soil prepared to receive and germinate its seeds the minute we let down our guard. We risk behaving in a racist manner each time we believe ourselves threatened in our privileges, in our well being, or in our security." (p.9)

in preparation for talking about their reactions in the second session.

**Presenting our findings** is a chance for participants to outline to the rest of the group what they've done, how they did it and what they've learnt.

At the end of the presentations get the group as whole to discuss Albert Memmi's question "are we then all racist for all times?" Discuss the ebbs and flows of racism, linking back to the first session and 'changes in our society'.

**The impact of racism** is better led by an outside speaker from a community subjected to racism. How the speaker approaches it will depend on who they are: a young British Muslim will see the world differently from an African asylum seeker. Prepare facts and figures, from race attacks, to school achievement, housing, unemployment etc.

There is information about Britain's Muslim communities in the New Statesman 10 Feb 2010. The Refugee Council has fact sheets about refugees and asylum, as does the Information Centre for Asylum and Refugees (ICAR)

**Campaigning Organisation** simply alerts participants to the wide range of organisations and groups opposing racism. Some may be directly involved in political campaigns (eg 'Let them Work': the campaign for the right to work for asylum seekers; 'Hope not Hate': a campaign against the far right) and others may be helping with more face to face support in 'Conversation Clubs'. Judge the mood, time and abilities of your participants; discuss the barriers to getting involved.

**Our next steps** emphasises that this is not simply a discussion about racism but part of a process of ending it. People need support if they haven't joined such groups before: it's not easy. So encourage the newcomers, exchange phone numbers, exchange e-mail addresses.

End by distributing Reverend Niemoller's words:

*"First they came for the communists, but I was not a communist – so I said nothing. Then they came for the social democrats, but I was not a social democrat – so I did nothing. They came for the trade unionists, but I was not a trade unionist. And then they came for the Jews – so I did little. Then when they came for me , there was no one left who could stand up for me." (Szwarc: p.83.)*

**CHALLENGING RACISM**

## Useful resources

### Books mentioned :

- Faces of Racism: Josef Szwarc Amnesty International ISBN 1 873328
- Racism: a very short introduction Ali Rattansi ISBN 9788-0-19-280590-4
- Bloody Foreigners: Robert Winder ISBN 0 349 115666 4
- East End: Jewish Radicals William Fishman ISBN 0 7156 0885
- The Spirit Level: Richard Wilkinson and Kate Picket

### Books not mentioned but used:

- The Fascist Movement in Britain: Robert Benewick ISBN 0 7139 0341 4  
(on the British Brothers League)
- The Blood Never Dried: John Newsinger ISBN 1905 192126  
(on the British Empire and the Sudan)
- Exterminate the Brutes: Sven Lindquist  
(on the Boar War)
- The Social History of the Machine Gun: John Ellis ISBN 0 7126 5669 3  
(on the machine gun and British imperialism)
- The End of Tolerance: Arun Kundani ISBN 978 0 7453 2646 7  
(on the new racism)
- Eyes on the Prize: Juan Williams ISBN 0 14 00 9653 1  
(on Rosa Parks and Civil Rights )
- The Lords of Human Kind: V.G.Kiernan  
(on the British Empire)
- Welcome to Everytown: Julian Baggini ISBN 978 86207 998 4  
(on the English mind)

### Articles etc:

- The Anti – Semitism of English Socialism’s Formative Years: [www.engageonline.org.uk](http://www.engageonline.org.uk)  
(on William Morris and the Socialist League)
- The New Statesman: 10 Feb 2010.  
(on Islam and Britain)
- ‘They come over here’....Tim Dowling, Guardian 22 November 2007  
(on claims made about Britain’s new arrivals)
- ‘Making a meal of a myth:’ Nick Medic “Refugees, Asylum Seekers and the Media Project”  
(on the “ Swan Bake” Sun article of 4 July 2003)
- ‘The Muslim Scientists who changed the world’ Jim al Khalili Guardian 01 02 10  
(on Muslim science before the European Enlightenment.)
- ‘Where did all the babies go?’: Fred Pearce Guardian 01 02 10  
(on population trends)

Banner Theatre in conjunction with the WEA and the Academy for Community Leadership produced extensive material on migration and asylum in 2007, including a video 'Wild Geese'. Easily accessible under 'Banner Theatre' and 'Wild Geese.'

**Campaigning Organisations:**

The 'Hope Not Hate' campaign is linked to the anti-racist anti - fascist magazine 'Searchlight'. The Daily Mirror sponsors the campaign at election times with a 'Hope Not Hate' bus. Easily accessible under 'Hope not Hate.'