

Unit 3

Racism

Today, we live in a multicultural society that means the nation consists of several religions and different cultures. But why does so much racism and xenophobia* exist between the peoples? What does the word "the strange" actually mean? Nevertheless, the most important question is: „What is racism really?“

Racism is an ideology which evaluates* differences between two ethnic groups. The people want to ascribe* all kinds of bad qualities to the victims, to stress primarily the negativity and prove at the same time the best of themselves. The racism is an absolute ideology, because it explains the evaluation of the differences for finally and in general. For example, **all** coloured people are put under the white population **for all time**.

You differentiate several kinds of the racism:

- The biological racism appeals*, as the name already lets assume, on biological differences (skin colour, cranial form* etc.) It abuses* biology to devaluate* its victims.
- Cultural racism uses in addition cultural differences. It is said that biological and psychological racism always appear in combined form.

Racism in history:

Since the beginning of the modern times, which began with the discovery of America, the strong European powers formed colonies. Particularly in Africa, a lot of countries were taken into possession*. The motherland always profited from the colony. It took valuable raw materials which they used to trade with other countries.

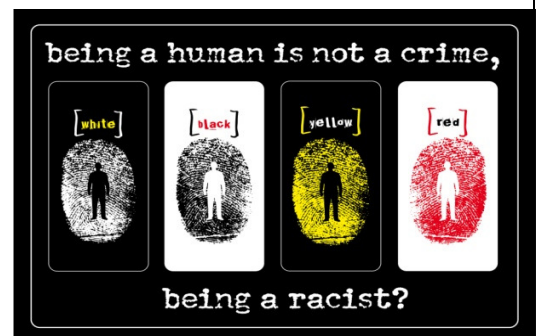
Moreover, trade with people boomed at this time, predominantly black people were sold as slaves. The trade between Europe, Africa and America was called the "trilateral trade"*.

In the 19th century, the motherlands had a high need of the raw materials which they took from the colonies. The coloured local population had to work as slaves on plantations and mines for the Whites.

The year 1948 is called the year of birth of the apartheid in South Africa. It was not possible simply to deport the Blacks who were still integrated into the whole population. It was found necessary to separate them from the white population. This separation expresses itself in different levels.

- At the political level: There are rights for the Blacks and for the Whites but the voting right was not included in the right of the Blacks.
- The 2nd level is the separation of the country in lots of ground for Whites and little for Blacks
- The educational area was also separated, the Blacks, in contrast to the Whites, had only access to bad institutions.
- As the 4th level, there is the public apartheid in all possible public areas (sports, churches, hotels, restaurants, on the beach, in parks etc.).
- The 5th level of the separation is the ban of the sexual contact between white and non-white.

Of course, the Blacks did not resign themselves to this discrimination without resistance. In the 50s, campaigns of civil disobedience* were organized according to the model of Gandhi. The system of apartheid was maintained*, actually, by suppression* of resistances. A law for this purpose* was the so-called "communism law" which was directed against everybody who represented or aided* a communist aim*. Hence*, all movements which were against the regime were called "communist". However, the system broke under the liberation movement, led by Nelson Mandela in 1994.



Martin Luther King

Examples of racism today

Martin Luther King belongs to the most important representatives of the fight against social suppression and racism worldwide public. In the United States, he was the best known speaker of the US-American the "Civil Rights Movement" between 1950 and 1960. In this movement, he propagated civil disobedience as remedy* for the political practice of "Racial Segregation" in the south of the USA, and even took part in suitable actions. Because of King's application* and active strength "Civil Rights Movement" had become a mass movement, and finally achieved



Der afroamerikanische Kommunist I In 1931, communist and trade unionist* Angelo Herndon was arrested as a leader of a demonstration by black and white unemployed people and was later condemned* to twenty years of hard labour.

In 1953 in Louisiana, where the white bus drivers did not accept the relaxation of the racial segregation in public means of transportation*, agreed by the town, T.J. Jemison refused to free his seat for a white. Thereupon, the driver heads for a police station, but the afro-American priest* got right. After that, the white bus drivers went on strike from the 15th to the 19th of June. From the 20th to the 25th of June the Afro-Americans boycotted the busses in Baton Rouge to demonstrate against the behaviour of the bus drivers.

Because he was supposed to have postwhistled* to the white wife of a storekeeper in Mississippi, the 14-years-old Afro-American Emmett Till, who was staying at his uncle's for a visit, was murdered brutally by white farmers in 1955.

Exercise:

1. Read the text about racism and make a mind map.
2. Interpret the cartoon. What does the picture state? Who could be the people in the cartoon?
3. Choose one of the "examples of racism". Imagine you were the aggrieved party*. What would you do in his/her situation?
4. Why didn't the Whites accept the Blacks as equal people?

<http://www.dieterwunderlich.de/rassendiskriminierung.htm>
<http://www.shortnews.de/start.cfm?id=663593>
<http://www.referate10.com/referate/Deutsch/10/Rassismus-reon.php>

