Thesis Eleven

Racism and Diasporas

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The online version of this article can be found at:

Published by:

$SAGE

>> Version of Record - Feb 1, 1998

What is This?

RACISM AND DIASPORAS

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ABSTRACT   This paper argues that contemporary diasporic identities provide a strong basis from which to oppose contemporary expressions of racism. Immigrant and mobile populations have been able to construct images of identity that are based neither on an assimilationist model, nor defensive strategies against assimilationism. Rather, the older, internal relation between racism and diasporization has been broken by the ability of groups to claim a diasporic status on the basis of a public and not private articulation of self-identity.

KEYWORDS   anti-Semitism • diaspora • immigration • public • racism

At any other historical moment, the idea of analysing the relationship between racism and diasporas would have appeared strange, because of a very simple fact – diaspora meant Jews, and only Jews. Moreover, racism towards Jews was not called racism, but anti-Semitism. The issue before us would have been 'anti-Semitism', and we would have had to consider the fact that Jews had no country, and were strangers everywhere, the phenomena so well analysed by Georg Simmel.

RACISM AND DIASPORAS

Leaving aside the present era, which we can briefly define as post-industrial and postcolonial, and turning our attention to the previous one, starting from the middle of the 19th century up to the middle of this one, and even a little later, an interesting question could be to decide whether anti-Semitism has just been a specific form of racism, or a different phenomenon that does not belong to the more general category of 'racism'.

Briefly, the answer depends on our perspective, and whether it is historical, or sociological. From a historical point of view, anti-Semitism is a very old, thick and dense phenomenon. Its history is plurimillenary, and it is

difficult to distinguish it from the history of the Jews since becoming a dia-
spora, or rather, *the* diaspora. Of course, one can discuss the notion of anti-
Semitism, recall that the word itself is recent, supposedly created by the
German Wilhelm Marr in the 1860s or 1870s, and that it is more accurate to
speak of anti-Judaism as far as Christianity is concerned up to that time, or
at least up to the end of the 15th century, when Spain was at the same time
finishing its *reconquista*, discovering America, and inventing the first ele-
ments of a modern anti-Semitism with the famous statutes on *limpiezza de
sangre*, blood purity. But even these arguments indicate that there is a long
and specific history of anti-Semitism. From a sociological point of view, one
can easily consider that it is no more than a particular form of racism, and
that like any other racism, it distorts and amalgamates various elements of
meanings. Let me illustrate this point. When attempting to define the unity
of racism in relationship with modernity, I could propose a general approach
which could easily be used in studying the case of anti-Semitism. Racism as
well as anti-Semitism could thus be analysed with the help of categories
which define modernity by crossing or synthesizing the two main logics of
action through which modern actors behave: a universalist logic on the one
hand, a particularist logic on the other (Wieviorka, 1993).

During the last 30 years, western societies have gone through huge
changes that deserve to be qualified as a new great transformation, to use
Karl Polanyi's famous expression. These changes in concrete life mean also
changes in our notions or concepts. This is true in various fields, where we
can easily observe the rise of new paradigms, or the deep renewal of older
ones, and this is valid, as we shall see, for both concepts of racism and dia-
spora.

The case of racism

Since the 1960s, there has been a strong renewal in the analysis of
racism. Starting once again in the United States, renewed analysis also devel-
oped in western Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom. The general
tendency has been to no longer define racism only, or mainly, in social and
political terms, and thus to no longer consider it only, or mainly, as a process
of social domination and inferiorization. Race is no longer perceived as being
fundamentally the discourse and the practice of those who want to exploit
or dominate individuals or groups in the name of their pretended racial, bio-
logical attributes, and here, it doesn't matter whether these attributes are real
or imagined. To put it differently, racism is not only, or at least, no longer
principally analysed from the universalist point of view of the dominant con-
sidering the other as inferior, as was particularly the case with colonialism.
Then racism was used, if not to destroy the other, then to subordinate him
or her to the colonizer's conception of progress and modernity. Racism now
is more and more analysed as a differentialist logic of action, in which
the racist considers the other as irreducibly different because of cultural

attributes that forbid him or her to find his or her way of integrating in the society where he or she lives. Scholars now speak of a 'new racism', of a 'cultural racism' or of 'differentialist racism' in order to describe the contemporary discourses and practices that try to keep the other at a distance, to segregate him or her, to get rid of him or her, and, in more extreme cases, to expel or to destroy him or her (Wieviorka, 1992).

However, this cultural racism, described with the help of the notion of differentialism, is not a new phenomenon. In most historical, concrete experiences of racism, this logic has been a constituent element. Racism has almost never been a pure universalist action, it has generally combined this orientation with the idea that the other, with his (more than her) own culture, is a danger, a threat to the culture of the majority group, that his difference makes him non-integrable. Here, the idea of a cultural difference functions as a more or less efficient mask which conceals the idea of a natural difference. For example, the Nazis, with a typical differentialist attitude wanted to destroy the Jews, but they also organized their plunder and exploitation, and they did so even on the very place of their extermination; South African Apartheid was a quite balanced combination of a logic of inferiorization, which meant over exploitation of the black labour force, and a logic of differentiation which did not detour through the idea of culture, but directly considered as natural the difference which kept the black people at a distance, in segregated areas.

Nevertheless, the contemporary growth of racism in many western societies, and for example, in most European countries, has much to do with this differentialist logic. A simple expression of this phenomenon is when a majority group has the feeling that its national or religious identity is threatened. Under such circumstances the national majority considers migrants to be the root of its difficulties, and draws on racial definitions that combine the idea of natural race and the idea of culture in order to make them scapegoats.

This growing importance of a differentialist logic is one aspect of a more general phenomenon of cultural fragmentation. This cultural fragmentation is due, as many scholars have shown, to the globalization of the economy, together with other correlated developments: the development of mass society and mass consumption, the internationalization of mass culture and mass communication; the destructuration or the weakening of national societies, where economic and social life, the state and the idea of the nation had been a more or less integrated set. This means that one must avoid reducing contemporary racism to a pure logic of cultural differentialism; it has also much to do with economic and social problems, fears or frustrations, as one easily realizes when looking at the behaviours of 'poor whites' in socially damaged neighbourhoods such as the French 'Banlieues'. Moreover, the refusal, or the rejection of a cultural difference, when it is naturalized, i.e. described in terms of race, is rarely socially undetermined or indiscriminate;

in many situations, even a cultural racism used to be more direct, brutal, violent and explicit when it referred to people without social means, poor or excluded persons, exploited or exploitable groups.

Furthermore, it is often an illusion to believe that racist behaviour is only or mainly due to cultural differentialism. Sometimes, a process of self-fulfilling prophecy is at stake: when a group or an individual is constantly rejected or inferiorized while only wanting to be included, either socially or culturally, or when this group or this individual is racially discriminated, and demonized under the argument of a supposed cultural difference, then the group or the person is stigmatized, which leads to a self-definition and behaviours based on this cultural and, eventually, racial distinction. The difference, in this case, is created from the outside in an exaggerated form through the accusation of difference.

Diaspora, diasporas

In the past, the Jews have appeared to be the only people that could consider themselves, or be considered by the world generally, as a diaspora. More recently, other people have started to be thought of, or to perceive themselves, as deserving the qualification of a diaspora. This multiplication of diasporas occurred initially once groups were obliged to leave a territory which they didn't want to leave through a traumatic and violent shock or process. Armenians, for example, have constituted a diaspora since the massacres of 1915. Let me add (and it is of no small significance) that the reality of these massacres should be seriously contested. In fact an important controversy has developed recently, over the historian Bernard Lewis, as to whether or not it is legitimate to qualify these slaughters as genocide, or even to raise the question. Let us note, here, that within Armenian consciousness, the parallel with Jews often includes the founding moment of a genocide. Palestinians, since the creation of the State of Israel, and, since the affirmation of a national Palestinian consciousness after the failure of Arab nationalism in the 1960s, may also be considered as a diaspora, and in part consider themselves as such.

Since the 1980s, much more than in the past, it appears that the notion of a diaspora may be adapted to the case of other peoples, defined at least partially by one of the three following main logics:

i. The first, as in the case of Armenians and Palestinians, is related to a historic trauma such as civil war, genocide, massacres connected with the plan of ethnic purification, or a strong and continuous repression of national identity. What characterizes a diaspora, from this first point of view, is the clear will to maintain a more or less mythical relationship with the point of departure, to be closely associated with a history of national or ethnical conflicts, and to maintain or create networks that may be cultural (religious, communitarian), or economic, or both. It also includes a political project, connected with the often utopian idea or dream, of coming back to one's

country, to one's territory in order to master one's own political destiny by recreating a correspondence between the people and the territory where one lives.

ii. A second logic proceeds from a much less brutal or violent initial point of departure, and is much more connected with a softer process of emigration. This softer process occurs when migrants don't cut themselves off from their country of origin, and maintain strong ties with it and within the countries where they live. Such ties are cultural as well as economic, and are embodied in local communities, where traditions can be respected. Some people from various Asian origins, living in western countries, although not exclusively so, closely match this pattern. This phenomenon of soft emigration is not necessarily recent; what is recent is the discovery and recognition of its importance, which has been amplified during the 1980s and 1990s.

iii. The third logic is distinct from the first two. In this case, diaspora is a self-production in which a group creates its cultural identity from almost nothing and gives to this production a trans-frontier dimension. In such a case, the actors don't refer, or only do so secondarily, to a lost territory, to a past where they collectively had their own political system. They are not defining themselves so much as a nation deprived of its historical roots, even if it is one possible dimension among them. The more important aspect is not the point of departure, but the creativity of the group; it is not its ascription, but its achievement, it is not traditions and reproduction, but inclusion in modernity and self-production. In this context, the starting point is the weakest moment in the history of the group, a moment when the consciousness of belonging to a cultural whole is very limited, and when the reality of the forthcoming diaspora is a diversity, the only common point of reference for which is difficult social conditions. The founding moment, in this case, is not the expulsion or destruction of a solid community from its basis. The unity of the group comes from a process of a creation, and this creation has much to do with the social and racial conditions of the people who are concerned: diaspora is the answer to these conditions, and not one of their founding elements. The notion of a diaspora is, thus, built by the group itself as a growing resource. The best expression of this logic is to be found in what Paul Gilroy calls the *Black Atlantic*. The 'diaspora', here, unifies black people from the United States, the Caribbean and the United Kingdom around the idea that, while Blacks used to be socially excluded, treated as an underclass, exploited, victims of racism, within a 'diaspora', they are able to build a cultural identity, and produce an affirmative definition of themselves. Within a diaspora, they are supposed to be able to articulate their social and racial inclusion in various societies, and their transnational cultural existence. This logic of diaspora is visible not so much through communities, but more so in various forms of cultural activities and innovations such as music, literature, dance, or more generally, in artistic expressions, and in new and dense activities related to the body, for example in sport.

A paradox: the opposite sides of the same coin

Today, the very notion of diaspora has started to explode, and although one should not exaggerate, it now corresponds to various and diversified historical experiences. Diaspora is now a plural and no longer univocal notion. This nascent phenomenon has much to do with general and worldwide changes, which have contributed to the rise of contemporary racism. The globalization of economy weakens states, makes frontiers less important than in the past and facilitates the internationalization of culture and some conflicts. In many western countries the state and the nation are no longer the territorial, political and symbolic privileged framework for economic, social and cultural life, and, as already mentioned, this evolution leads to cultural fragmentation. It opens the way to identities among which new or renewed diasporas have their place.

If diasporic networks, communities and identities are in a position to multiply, it is because, in a certain number of societies where minorities are living, there is a crisis in the previous correspondences between economic and social life, political and institutional life, and culture, viewed mainly in terms of the nation. The crisis of the nation-state, or of national societies, inspires some groups to reproduce, extend or produce themselves as a diaspora. In this context, cultural identity may be related to economic activities, for example, to ethnic business if the diaspora continues to be connected to its traditional community, or to the huge transnational economic networks connected, for example, with musical expression or sport – but also with illegal business (drugs for instance).

The paradox, however, is that contemporary racism, on the one hand, and the multiplication of experiences that deserve more or less the qualifying name of diasporas, on the other hand, are two distinct expressions of the same crisis of modernity, a crisis, as Alain Touraine (1995) has shown, where the order of reason, the economy, and the order of culture and identities tend to separate. In such a crisis, racism – among other meanings – expresses fears, frustrations and the resentments that many people have that they are the ones who pay the price for historical and economic changes. They thus feel that their social and cultural being is under threat. Quite differently though, diasporic consciousness brings resources that dominated, segregated and minority groups do not find in the patterns of total integration in the society where they live. In many western countries, as the notions of assimilation and integration become more and more inadequate, and as it is more and more difficult, and less and less necessary for various minorities to slip into them, it is increasingly easier, and should the occasion arrive, more rewarding, to behave as members of a diaspora. In belonging to a diaspora, one possesses a memory, and a chance to transform this memory into a history. One profits from possessing cultural markers, and sometimes from specific economic means. And under some conditions, which will be discussed below when analysing the evolution of the Jewish experience, a

diaspora offers the individuals who constitute it a chance simultaneously to belong to a specific group, with its own identity, and to participate in the general life of the country where they live.

The sources of the multiplication and diversification of diasporas, and the sources of the contemporary extension of a more and more differentialist racism overlap to a large extent. However, let me immediately add that these two phenomena, in reality, mean exactly the reverse. Racism finds its more natural space of extension within a country, and must be thought and analysed in this framework. This is why it has been observed that there are significant differences in the growth of racism from one western country to another, even if its contemporary origins are the same everywhere (decline of the working class movement, crisis of the welfare state, destructuration of the national society etc.). In contrast, any diaspora must be considered as a phenomenon that exists in various national frameworks, and which, by definition, overflows each of them.

The rise of contemporary racism has much to do with the obsession of racist people to preserve or recreate a correspondence – as close as possible – between social, political and economic life and the framework constituted by the state and the nation. Racism is a mythical and violent reintegration of elements that are disintegrating or disintegrated – the social relationships related to the industrial era, the representative political system and the welfare state that usually extended them, and a national identity that often brought a cultural unity to the socially and politically divided whole. Very differently, the birth or the renewal of diasporas reinforces this disintegration. But they are not reacting negatively to it. To those who participate in it, the diaspora offers a chance to belong to several frameworks that are not all enclosed in the envelope of the national society, i.e. a chance, for example, to behave as citizens in a country and as active members of a wider cultural community.

From this perspective, racism is a modern reactive strategy in the historical situation of the crisis of modernity, while diasporization is an acceptance of this crisis, which perhaps contributes towards its deepening and movement towards postmodernity. These remarks suggest also that a dialectical tension may simultaneously oppose and tie racism (insofar as it expresses fear and the refusal of cultural pluralism) and diasporas, which, in order to exist, require pluralism and, at least, democratic toleration of their difference.

ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE JEWISH DIASPORA

In order to consider the contemporary relationship between racism and diasporas, it may be useful to consider the founding paradigm, i.e. the paradigm established by the classical relationship between anti-Semitism and the Jewish diaspora. This relationship has changed much since the Second World

War and the discovery of Nazi barbarism, and starting from this point, I will focus on the idea that the strength of anti-Semitism changes when the diaspora itself is transformed.

Classical anti-Semitism (1860–1960)

The arena of anti-Semitism can be outlined from a set of representations of the Jews that refer to imagined, rather than real, attributes, and which appear as totally contradictory but without causing any trouble to those who share an anti-Semitic point of view. The classical structure of anti-Semitism emerged in western and central Europe and on the basis of an old anti-Judaism that it transcended, and with specific elements that are typical of modernity. Very briefly and schematically, from the anti-Semitic perspective Jews are the embodiment of two main features:

i. An incarnation of universalism: Jews are the people who guide economic development and master capitalism to their own profit. They possess money and, in many versions, control mass-media. When Jews are identified with triumphant or conquering capitalism, they appear not only as the paradigmatic figure of the ruling power, but also as its reversed and complementary structural opponent. Jews, then, are also the archetype of the revolution; they are 'red', the ultimate expression of the Enlightenment in its political forms – socialist, communist, Trotskyist.

ii. Jews are also an incarnation of cultural particularism. In this second representation, Jews are described as the reluctant opponent to triumphant modernity. They are defined by their traditions, perceived as an archaic, but dangerous, residue that constitutes an obstacle or resistance in the face of the progress of universalism. They are considered as a religious group, combining obscurantism and criminality towards the dominant Catholic or Protestant religion, a deicide people. Their language too is not acceptable. Yiddish is viewed as a degenerated German, and Ladino as a degenerated Spanish. Moreover, their alleged archaic cultural characteristics are often connected to their social poverty, which is visible when they are concentrated *en masse*, unable or unwilling to leave what is perceived as a combination of misery and obscurantism in order to join the dominant modern part of society. This was the case most notably in Poland between the two world wars.

Each of these two main anti-Semitic representations of the Jews includes two opposite dimensions, two different perceptions, depending on the self-identification of the anti-Semitic actor who may choose to identify himself or herself either to universalist values, or to a cultural particularism. When Jews are identified with universalism, anti-Semites may hate them in the name of a particularism, for example, a nation, a religion, and they may also reproach them for monopolizing access to universal values which obstructs their own entry or non-participation in modernity.

Alternatively, when Jews are hated as a specific cultural group, it may be either in the name of universal values, in the style of Voltaire, or in

reference to another and rival particularism, for example another religion or a nation. And, as is generally the case with practices and thoughts that negate the subject, anti-Semitism has never been worried by internal contradictions, and has always been able to amalgamate two, three or even the four general orientations that have been presented previously.

The classical structure of the relationship between anti-Semitism and the Jewish diaspora

As described in the general approach outlined earlier, 'classical' anti-Semitism was dominant in Europe at least until the Second World War, and even for 15 or 20 years after it. It corresponds to one of the most important expressions in the history of racist hatred and violence. Our analysis doesn't mean that the entire explanation of anti-Semitism can be reduced to the idea of a relationship between Jews and non Jews, and even less to only the form or nature of the Jews. Since John Dollard, Gunnar Myrdal or Theodor Adorno, at least, we know that racism has much to do with the personality, the culture and the social experience of the racist, and not necessarily with his or her real knowledge and experience of the Other; and in this sense, there can be anti-Semitism without Jews. However, it is also true that the form of existence, the behaviour of the Jews exerts a certain influence on anti-Semitism, at least on its capacity to become active. Within a limited approach a few remarks can be made.

Classical anti-Semitism, with its high level of hatred and violence, was directed to two main types of situations or towards two different modalities of the Jewish diaspora. On the one hand, its target was very visible Jews, who were culturally and socially distinct, for example, the poor masses living in the 'shtetl' in Poland. On the other hand, classical anti-Semitism's other target was the assimilated Jews, who could not even understand what was happening to them; that is, Jews who almost melted into the society and the nation in which they lived. This was, at least, partially the case in Germany up until Nazism, and in France at the end of the last century, at the moment of the Dreyfus affair. Put briefly, anti-Semitism has been articulated either as a refusal of assimilation of the diaspora, or as an easy and brutal hatred of a social and cultural difference who excluded themselves, and were excluded from mainstream society.

This classical anti-Semitism developed by arguing on the basis of the existence of a diaspora which was associated with conspiracy and treason. A very famous expression of this reasoning was given by the 'Protocol of the Elders of Zion'. The history of this text, which includes its invention and manipulation by Tsarist agents, has been reconstituted by the historian Norman Cohn (1967). Jews, in this perspective, are necessarily traitors to the nation in which they live, they identify themselves with foreign or extrinsic material and symbolic interests which correspond to a visible or unreal centre of power. The less you can demonstrate this phantasm, the stronger it is: the

strength of the devil, as Leon Poliakov once wrote, is in the fact that you cannot prove his existence, and the less you succeed in any demonstration, the more you demonstrate its skilful superiority.

Furthermore, in Western European societies at least, the project of emancipation for the Jews, which also meant the end of anti-Semitism, had first been constituted through the strong distinction between the public and private spheres. In France, this is the fruit of a long intellectual and political tradition, starting with the Enlightenment, the Revolution and Napoleon the First; in Germany, it is related to the *Aufklärung*, and to Kantian philosophy, embodied, among the Jews, by Moses Mendelssohn. In this perspective, Jews are individuals or citizens, such as other individuals or citizens in the public sphere, who have their religious specificity in their private life. Zionism originated from the limits or failures of this way to emancipation.

These remarks, although specific to Europe, could also be adapted to other parts of the world, starting with the United States of America or Canada although with some restrictions. They are relevant until the Second World War, although less so until the 1960s, and today. Then, a new formula started to take shape in Europe, which is also visible in the United States of America, Australia, Canada and elsewhere.

The new conformation of the Jewish diaspora

In the classical formation of the diaspora, Jews are either very visible, but generally poor, concentrated in huge masses more or less ghettoized, and distinguished culturally by their language and religion. Or they are modern, and assimilated or almost assimilated. Due to the Shoah, but also to many other elements – the creation of the State of Israel and its wars with Arab countries, the end of colonialism and departure of most of the Jews from North Africa and other Arab or Islamic countries, etc. – huge changes have modified the diaspora. Nowadays and importantly, it is more and more in accordance with the notion of ethnicity. This means that Jews, whatever their social position, simultaneously are more and more visible, *and* integrated in the country where they live. They are more and more present in the public sphere, they break with assimilationist formulas, but also reject the complete social and cultural marginality of total exclusion. They try, with rather positive results, to articulate their specificity, their culture, religion, relationship with Israel, with a strong participation in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country where they live. They combine what was, in the past, dissociated; they associate participation *and* specificity, rather than split between the two opposite and distant logics of assimilation and communitarianism.

This development was easier and faster in countries that were built on recent migrations, and first of all in the US, where to a large extent Jews have long been in accordance with the notion of ethnicity. But even in the United States the pattern of ethnicity was really asserted and confirmed only after

the Second World War. As Michael Walzer (1994) recalls, in the 1930s and even the 1940s, any mark of affirmation from Jews in the public sphere, for instance the presence of 'too many' Jewish names among the democrats of the New Deal, or among socialist or communist intellectuals, was a source of fear among the Jewish community. The concern was that Jews should not draw attention to themselves, and not be too visible in the public sphere.

Here, it is possible to cautiously suggest a hypothesis connecting the intensity and effects of anti-Semitism on the one hand, and changes in the formation of the diaspora, on the other. The ethnization of the Jews breaks with the previous pattern in western countries and appears as a factor that reduces or limits anti-Semitism. Of course, if one compared anti-Semitism today and before the Second World War when it was blatant, the relative decline of the phenomenon must be related to many other, and maybe more important factors than this change in the diaspora. But it is clear, too, that when they are visible and self-affirmed, Jews cannot easily be suspected of hiding behind a false assimilation; and while being simultaneously integrated, and participating actively in public life, they cannot be easily accused of self-marginalization, or of an opposition towards the majority culture. In this double context, they are more able to defend themselves when they are attacked.

Moreover, the evolution of the Jewish diaspora cannot be dissociated from a more general phenomenon, which concerns groups other than the Jews. This more generalized phenomenon is the decline of universalist projects, even when they convey tolerant or humanist values and try to be open-minded towards cultural differences. These universalistic projects lie on a strong frontier between the private and the public sphere, a frontier which is undermined by the growing ascendancy of the market. In the past, private life was not pervaded by mass consumption, intimacy was not threatened or invaded by cultural industries. Today, the market shapes even the most private needs, and it is no longer possible, or at least easy, to distinguish between a public, political or social life, and real privacy for collective belongings. From this point of view, it becomes difficult to define Jews, or to define oneself as a Jew, in terms of the equation of Jewish and private. This is an obsolete assumption which obliged Jews to be more or less hidden or shameful if they wanted to participate in public life.

The reality of declining borders between private and public does not, in itself, include a specific evolution of anti-Semitism, which depends on the way Jews transform themselves when facing this change. The fact that they have been able to understand, and maybe to anticipate this transformation is, from my point of view, if not the best answer to anti-Semitism, at least the most adaptive one. The great mutation of the Jewish diaspora helps us, if not to admit, at least to think of a rather general idea, even if many people will find it shocking: isn't racism more virulent and active when its target is divided into two distinct and opposite tendencies, the first one being assimilationist, the other one, generally poorer, communitarian and

differentialist? Thus, isn't racism less efficient when the members of the target-group are able to articulate their cultural specificities, and the acceptance of universal values, such as they are defined in the country where they live, when they combine visibility and participation?

CONCLUSION: RACISM, DIASPORAS AND IMMIGRATION

We have seen that the notion of diaspora exploded and became pluralized. Simultaneously, contemporary racism has grown and is mainly directed towards immigrants in western countries. This is why the idea presented earlier deserves a reformulation: *isn't racism less active and virulent when its target is a minority more or less like a diaspora in conformity with the image of ethnicity?* In this image, the minority is culturally different, and socially and politically integrated. What happens when we observe the contrary, a minority that tries to be culturally integrated, but is socially and politically marginalized?

When a group of immigrants, and its children, suffer acutely from unemployment, marginality and poverty, its chances to constitute a diaspora are weak, especially if we consider that today, this kind of pattern is hardly open to an ethnic formation. The combination of social exclusion and racism, which often defines this situation, does not allow a strong self-production of cultural difference. When such migrant people are treated so badly, so much excluded and exposed to racism that some of them decide to interiorize the difference they are accused of conveying, when they decide to reverse the stigma, they do not articulate their difference and participate in the political and social life of the public sphere. Rather, they adopt radical attitudes, in which they absolutize a religion, a nation or even a race, far from a diasporic project and what I would call ethnicity.

The diasporic model, as far as it corresponds to the second ethnic formation of the Jewish diaspora, is an alternative to racism, but an alternative which is not possible for all immigrants or minorities. Moreover, this alternative is not a total protection. On the contrary, racism is always liable to spring up or develop with a diaspora as a target from groups that do not have the resources that enable them to adopt a diasporic formula. For example, one observes a growing anti-Semitism among the poorer blacks, as well as among radicalized black ideologists in the US. Similarly in France, anti-Semitism occurs among young people from North African immigrant communities who amalgamate it with anti-zionism for reasons which are easy to understand. Although Asian immigration does not seem to suffer too much from racism because of its diasporic formation in host countries, where it does occur one shouldn't minimize the risk of growing anti-Asian racism in specific tense conjunctures.

In the past, the diasporic Jews, because of anti-Semitic representations, have suffered a lot from racism. The transformation of the diaspora seems to

offer a greater efficiency in the face of anti-Semitism than the previous, classical configuration. At the same time, comparable phenomena are occurring which are more or less similar to the pattern of the renewed Jewish diaspora. This new 'diasporization' seems to offer the members of specific diasporas a certain capacity to resist racism, or to prevent its extension, and make it less insufferable. This new formation seems preferable to other models of life for immigrants or minorities, but we have seen that poor and socially marginalized immigrants or minorities cannot afford a diasporic ethnicization. Even if this hypothesis deserves to be shaded and discussed, one must be aware of the paradoxical historical reversal it brings about: after having given to racism (in this case, anti-Semitism) one of its main historical targets, the model of the diaspora – once renewed – appears today as a possible formula to resist evil.

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