



Book Reviews

Satgar, Vishwas, ed. *Racism after Apartheid: Challenges for Marxism and Anti-Racism*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Wits University Press, 2019, 254 pages.

Reviewer: Takudzwa Musekiwa
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Racism after Apartheid, a volume put together by Vishwas Satgar, examines the racism that endured in Post-Apartheid South Africa and the role of Marxism in fighting such racism in Africa, and beyond. Marxism, in Africa, has long faced its fair share of critique, especially from African nativist initiatives including the Black Consciousness Movement. Members of this movement regarded Marxism as a foreign idea, which, as the product of white thought, was not native to Africa. *Racism after Apartheid* highlights the role of Marxism in the emancipation of oppressed people from racist oppression in different countries and regions around the world. This edited volume consists of 11 chapters, by diverse authors, covering different geographic locals and topics, from what Anti-Racists Marxism is, to the very meaning of African, to Indigenous movements in Guatemala, to the European refugee crisis, to Post-Apartheid South Africa, to anti-racist Marxist thought in India, to potential alternatives within Marxism.

In the Introduction, Vishwas Satgar, political scientist and Marxist scholar, turns to the historical record to outline an account of Marxist thinking and its intersection with anti-racist struggles and liberation movements in Africa (particularly in South Africa), dwelling in particular on the shifting categories and constantly changing historical conditions of people affected by racism.

After tracing historical challenges to the Marxist tradition, the book presents challenges that Marxism has faced since the end of Apartheid in South Africa. Here, Satgar outlines the many Marxisms of today, from ecological to cultural, feminist to anti-racist Marxisms. The book seeks to challenge these contemporary Marxisms which do not have an adequate understanding of systemic racism and contemporary forms of oppression. In mounting this challenge, Satgar underlines the relationship between anti-racism and Marx's thought, drawing on the historical record in the fight against racism and oppression across the Americas, Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Firoze Manji, critical scholar and journalist, unpacks, in Chapter 3, the term African to argue that racism is a fundamental feature of "nascent capitalism and the emergence of capitalism and the subsequent period of colonization" (54). Racism is fundamental precisely because of the need for an increasing rate of accumulation of capital. Manji goes on to argue that one cannot talk of capitalism and imperialism as something independent of racism, a perspective that puts Marxism front and centre in the fight against racism.

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, historian and activist, examines in Chapter 2 the role of Marxism in fighting for the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala. She outlines the historical ties between this fight of Indigenous Peoples for rights and the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), which fought for Native American's rights across the Americas. Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz also points out the role of Marxist movements in the fight against racism and colonialism across Africa.

Fabian Georgi, ethnologist, discusses in Chapter 5 the current dynamics of racism in Europe, with an examination of the European refugee and migration crisis of 2015 and 2016. The argument is not just that racism remains a potent, dynamic factor in Europe, but that the migration crisis is a transnational social conflict of which racism and racist forces are central. To understand racism in Europe today requires understanding the "migration crisis." The reason why racism persists and is currently surging in Europe, according to George, is that white Europeans enjoy real material privileges which accrue from their superior position on a racist hierarchy. It is from this position that people tend to defend their privilege and resist political measures that would undermine their position.

Aditya Nigam, political scientist, turns in Chapter 6 to the Marxists and their historical understanding of caste and social structure in India, alongside their lack of reference to the caste system in such debates. Even though Aditya Nigam's chapter does not directly discuss race, it challenges a Marxist discourse in India which has not adequately and directly challenged the caste system and the assumptions that underlie it.

Peter Hudson, political scientist and activist, argues in Chapter 8 that colonialism in post-Apartheid South Africa did not disappear but is rather repressed and unconscious. Colonialism has been inserted into democracy via capitalism, with the result that capital and its correlative powers are unconsciously in the service of the reproduction of colonialism. Hudson argues, "capitalist practice in South Africa has not changed, it is as colonial as ever" (166).

Khwezi Mabasa, political scientist, suggests in Chapter 9 that little has changed in post-Apartheid South Africa, except that its colonial character is now unconscious and obstructed from view by a combination of capitalism and liberal democracy. Racism in South Africa is inherently linked to the evolution of a racialised capitalist social order and power relations it produces. Hence it is therefore

impossible to understand racism outside evolving class-power relations in the political economy of South Africa.

Vishwas Satgar endorses, in Chapter 10, Democratic Marxism as a potential solution to the challenge facing Marxism and the anti-racism movement today. Even though there is no precise or strict definition of Democratic Marxism, Satgar argues that Democratic Marxism seeks to understand various forms of revolutionary political agency that coexist with the reconfiguration of global capitalism over different historical epochs and to develop a nuanced dialectical relationship between class and race relations. Democratic Marxism shows how both colonial and apartheid capitalism are inherently linked to both white supremacy and black super exploitation. Democratic Marxism, Satgar suggests, seeks to provide a conception of racialised capitalist development that appreciates historic and contextual specificity.

In its Conclusion, *Racism after Apartheid*, offers three anti-racist strategies to target contemporary national forms of social and neoliberal racism. First, challenge racist discourses, ideologies, and the exponents of racism in the political centre. Second, attack nationalism and encourage the internationalist tradition. Third, from a Marxist perspective, overcome the social and economic conditions which lead to racism.

Where this wide ranging and well-articulated volume excels is in showing racism to be a historical phenomenon in tension with anti-racist and Marxist movements, in the past and the present. Where this volume stumbles is in failing to challenge the Marxist "liberation movements" and Marxist influenced "liberation movements" in Africa itself. These movements, for example the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU–PF), have now become part of the State. The book is silent on the ways that once these parties controlled the state, these Marxists inspired parties maintained colonial structures for their own and their

regime's benefit, while at the same time neglecting the needs and rights of their populations.

The book will benefit academics and students, who seek to understand the historical role of Marxism in the struggle against racism. Students particularly those who seek to understand the current fragmentation of South African politics and ideologies should definitely read the book.

Eze James. *Dispossessed: A Poetry of Innocence, Transgression and Atonement.* Daraja Press, 2019, 138 pages.

Reviewer: Ifesinachi Nwadike

Dispossessed reads like a bildungsroman, a sequence of growth and becoming captured through poetic essence. It reads like a station of the crosses with itinerant stoppages at various stages of the poet's self awareness and development. Symbolically speaking, the various stages in this collection are akin to man's stages of growth; infant, youth and adult, that pilgrim-like movement from the early days of a kite's birth, when its wings are still shaky and unsure, to its pubescent attempts to fly, to understand its environment and accommodate its kind and to its eventual mastery of the art of flying and the eventual possession of the skies.

Stratified into three; "innocence" "transgression," and "atonement," *dispossessed* is James Eze debut offering, chronicling his early intimations with the art of writing, his attempts to make meaning, his doubts about his genius, his young days and what time made of them, his love for man, woman, children, his heartbreaks, failures, sorrows and disappointments in his sincere attempt to understand what it means to love, his fulfillments and the joy that is his in knowing that in all these there are still people he can call his own, in true love and finally, his religious standing, his affiliation with the