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International Day against Racism

#ReThinkingSolidarity and #ReDefiningSpaces

Each March 21 since 1960, we recall and celebrate the International Day against Racism.

This is a day of memory, struggle and resistance but especially of unity.

Through our work, we notice a lack of solidarity and violent behaviour towards each other within Communities. Mistrust, disregard, competition and oppression sometimes seem to win above what is our strength: solidarity.

This year again, LesMigraS would especially like to address lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, inter*, queer, Black and People Of Color and people with migration histories who face racism.

Racism has many shapes and forms. But it always comes with the violent function of separating societies. Structural racisms and violence as well as multiple discriminations affect us all. Oftentimes we reproduce them in the form of violent and discriminatory interactions in our own communities. But the struggle for liberating ways of living needs patience and compassion. Only if our own behaviours towards each other reflect a more respectful, accountable, open and engaging manner we can transform structural discrimination and mechanisms of violence and oppression. Which is the necessary groundwork to open up spaces for healing and empowerment.

In times where there is a strong political shift to the right, as can be seen in the current state of Germany, Europe, and Globally, solidarity within and beyond our marginalised communities is even more necessary. Economic crisis are being blamed on migration and displacement. More and more deportations are taking place, more borders are drawn and controlled in harsher manners. Across the globe human rights defenders are being criminalised and in some cases even assassinated. Europe and Germany have become fortresses. This for example comes with more people being racially profiled. Meanwhile the vast majority shows total indifference for and even silent complicity with these human rights violations. We are reminded that racially discriminative sentiments are not a thing of the past and have never truly been eradicated from many social and political agendas. Let us not shift the issue elsewhere and begin to address it on our very own doorsteps.

On this International Day against Racism we as members of various racialised communities and proactive allies raise our voices in a call for #ReThinkingSolidarity and #ReDefiningSpaces. Like current social movements we are also demanding more proactive solidarity.

Rethinking Solidarity means for us to question the discriminatory actions/practices of the state which legitimize violence but barely acknowledge the experiences made by marginalized communities (e.g. refugees, people who are disabled by society, ...)

What solidarity looks like for proactive allies, is informing oneself about the current issues that racialised people experience and the histories that brought them to this point. It's learning not to speak for or over people but to reflect on one's own privileges and engage. It also refers to a process of unlearning where feelings of discomfort are seen as a positive and productive way to move forward.

Solidarity is not charity but the basic principle for community and change.

Solidarity is not enough if it's not antiracist, anticapitalist and anti all forms of discriminations (e.g. Homophobia, Transphobia, Antisemitism, Islamophobia, Ableism, Sexism, Classism,...) and only works with an intersectional approach.

It's urgent and necessary for us to ReThink which kind of solidarity we want and to ReDefine which kind of spaces we need.

Let us strengthen solidarity and accountable communities. Each day, every day!

Use the Frame – Share the frame – Start acting, beyond the frame!