

French and British Anti-Racists Since the 1960s: A *rendez-vous* *manqué*?

Daniel A. Gordon

Edge Hill University, UK

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Abstract

While immigration situations in France and Britain are often contrasted to each other, they are not mutually closed systems. This article asks to what extent anti-racist movements in the two countries interacted with each other between the 1960s and 1990s. Although one could be forgiven for thinking that the two operate in parallel and mutually incomprehensible universes, it suggests that there has been more exchange than meets the eye, by examining case studies ranging from the *Mouvement Contre le Racisme et Pour l’Amitié entre les Peuples* to the magazine *Race Today*, and the trajectories of individuals from Mogniss Abdallah to John La Rose. Though less immediately apparent than those from across the Atlantic, influences occasionally, at times surreptitiously, crept across the Channel. Nevertheless it concludes that this specifically Anglo-French form of transnationalism became more developed after, rather than during, what is classically considered the heyday of transnational protest in the 1960s and 1970s. It also argues that despite the much-vaunted French resistance to the ‘Anglo-Saxons’, influences in anti-racism in fact flowed more readily southwards than northwards across the Channel. From ‘Rock Against Police’ to the International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books, there seems to have been an increasing willingness among some elements in anti-racism in France to allow a seepage of British ideas. By contrast, attempts to transplant French ideas, such as *SOS Racisme*, in the UK appear contrived, and only succeeded when the French influence was not made explicit.

Keywords

Anglo-French relations, anti-racism, immigration

Corresponding author:

Daniel A. Gordon, Department of English and History, Edge Hill University, St Helens Road, Ormskirk, Lancashire L39 4QP, UK.

Email: gordond@edgehill.ac.uk

On Christmas Eve 1980, a Communist municipality in the Paris suburb of Vitry-sur-Seine sent bulldozers to demolish a hostel being built for Malian workers. The so-called ‘bulldozer affair’ has often been taken to define the dramatically anti-immigrant turn taken across the French political scene at the beginning of the 1980s.¹ Entering Vitry today on foot from Ivry-sur-Seine at the Place Malik Oussekiné, named after a young man of Algerian origin killed by police during the French student protests of 1986, the visitor is welcomed by two municipal signs. One proclaims that Ivry is a town of peace, and the other that Vitry is twinned with Burnley, in Lancashire. Although this twinning arrangement goes back to 1959, the unfortunate resonance to the contemporary British visitor is the fact that Burnley, like Vitry, became a byword for racism in domestic political debates. Disturbances in 2001, swiftly followed by the election of some of the British National Party’s first councillors, had threatened to parallel the rise of the Front National (FN) circa 1983. Yet a further irony, seeing the twinning sign in August 2011, was that French TV news had just been broadcasting images of England’s *banlieues* aflame – while France’s appeared calm and peaceful, most of the tree-lined streets quite empty. Two months later, I gave a paper arguing that the French Communist Party was not as uniformly hostile to immigrants as has been assumed from the ‘bulldozer affair’. Since the audience was largely composed of former members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, at the Socialist History Society, successor to the Communist Party Historians’ Group, I had assumed I might be telling the audience roughly what they wanted to hear. But it turned out that the British ex-Communists’ preconceptions about the Parti Communiste Français (PCF) were in fact very negative. What they knew was that in the late 1970s the PCF were ‘national protectionists’, and though they had vaguely heard that the party had become more anti-racist since, the main thing they knew from subsequent developments was that the French Left in general had a poor record on what anglophones would call ‘race’. If even communists in Britain had an overwhelmingly negative view of their French counterparts’ approach to ethnicity and migration, this points to a real mutual incomprehension.²

The point of these cross-Channel ironies is to introduce a case study of the limits of transnationalism. This article seeks to open up a doubly transnational way of considering social movements that are inherently transnational yet also policed by the boundaries of the nation state, both overt and implicit. Activism over what in Britain is called multiculturalism, race or ethnicity, and in France *immigration* or *intégration* is by definition transnational within each case (because it is affected by

1 E. Balibar, ‘De Charonne à Vitry’, in E. Balibar, *Les frontières de la démocratie* (Paris 1992), 19–34; N. MacMaster, ‘The seuil de tolérance: the uses of a “scientific” racist concept’, in M. Silverman (ed.), *Race, Discourse and Power in France* (Aldershot 1991), 20.

2 It also turned out that one of the ex-CPGBers present was from Burnley. Subsequent research by S. Hartley, ‘The Impact of Anti-Racist Activity on British Society: the Example of Burnley and Blackburn’, BA History extended essay, Edge Hill University (2012), concludes that there was quite a hidden history of local anti-racist mobilization. In a further irony, in 2012 members of Burnley’s Twinning Association planned a visit to Vitry to learn about, of all things, ‘community cohesion’: *Lancashire Telegraph* (13 March 2012).

relationships between the country of immigration and the countries of emigration), yet becomes doubly transnational if we also consider the relationship between Britain and France. This is a subject on which much comparative ink has been spilt, though often in predictably caricatured ways that can border on *Schadenfreude*. As *communautarisme* is the British straw man to be put up and knocked down in France, so a ‘Jacobin centralist’ refusal to acknowledge diversity is the French straw man to be put up and knocked down in Britain. These are stereotypes especially prone to reappear at times of crisis, such as when Jean-Marie Le Pen came second in the 2002 presidential election.³ Just as the French *banlieue* unrest of 2005 proved to many British observers the absolute failure of the French republican model, so the 2011 equivalent in England proved to many French observers the absolute failure of the Anglo-Saxon model. Even for those critical of the racism of one’s own society, it is somehow less shocking because we grow used to its manifestations. In contrast the racism of another society leaves a greater impression precisely because it appears in unfamiliar ways and is experienced with the freshness of first impressions. As Cathie Lloyd, one of the most active British participants in French anti-racism, recalls,

I wonder to what extent the difficulties in understanding between Britain and France may have arisen from a number of factors. Firstly, our massive lack of understanding of one another – e.g. of the different colonial histories, but also the mainstream political culture – and the different approaches to diversity. I think also the London/Paris effect may have played a part, there was a real sense of defensiveness on both sides. In France I used to be harangued about ‘les anglo-saxons’ and ghettoisation... In many ways the UK was sort of proxy for the US who were the ‘real’ villains, I suspect.⁴

Even among those who study the other society in depth, few come away thinking the other country’s system superior. Ralph Grillo, for example, after a long and perceptive observation of the treatment of immigrants in Lyons, concluded by suggesting that ‘It is to be hoped that no one will take the French institutional arrangements for handling immigrants as a model for imitation’.⁵ Though sometimes shrinking away from such explicit statements – what Max Silverman has called ‘indulging in an overhasty, self-congratulatory and thoroughly Anglocentric critique of the French scene’⁶ – often British scholars of migration

3 For example the *New Statesman* (29 April 2002), expressed the conventional wisdom on the British Left: ‘France has had less success than its European neighbours in solving the immigrant equation... Integration has not gone well, in part because French officialdom handles it badly. Instead of conferring French nationality on permanent Arab immigrants, it is stingy with the gift, as if afraid of corrupting a core Frenchness’.

4 C. Lloyd, email to author, 11 November 2012.

5 R. Grillo, *Ideologies and Institutions in Urban France: the Representation of Immigrants* (Cambridge 1985).

6 M. Silverman, ‘Rights and Differences: questions of citizenship in France’, in A. Hargreaves and J. Leaman (eds), *Racism, Ethnicity and Politics in Contemporary Europe* (Aldershot 1995), 260.

in France will measure the progress of French society against an implicitly defined ideal type of a multicultural society that values difference, or at least will, perhaps unavoidably, use terms like race, ethnicity, ethnic minorities and multiculturalism⁷ despite their hidden anglocentric and often US-centric biases, and roots in different models of colonial control.

It is important, therefore, that research is done beyond the stereotypes and false dichotomies. Some scholars, including Lloyd, Catherine Neveu, and Adrian Favell have made comparisons in a more sensitive and nuanced way.⁸ Comparative social science work has, however, still tended to assume two mutually closed systems that can be discretely compared against each other. Also *what* is compared tends more often to be either official state policies, or the status quo on the ground,⁹ than activism as such, with the notable exception of Lloyd. In this debate, while usually it is the contrasts which are emphasized and explained,¹⁰ the most daring thing that might be argued is to observe that in the early twenty-first century there has been some convergence between the two systems, as the British have discovered the virtues of 'community cohesion' (what the French would call '*intégration*')¹¹ and the French the virtues of *la diversité* and even *les postcolonial studies*.¹²

But is this convergence new? How, precisely, are such surprising similarities rooted in actual processes of interaction over time? Much less studied are concrete historical transfers between movements in the two countries. In the context of a growing historiography of other aspects of Franco-British

7 E.g. A. Hargreaves, *Multi-Ethnic France: Immigration, Politics, Culture and Society* (London 2007). For a critique of anglophone assumptions, see P. Bourdieu and L. Wacquant, 'On the Cunning of Imperial Reason', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16, 1 (February 1999), 41–58.

8 C. Neveu, *Ethnic Minorities, Citizenship and Nationality: A Case Study for a Comparative Approach Between France and Britain* (Coventry 1989); C. Lloyd, 'Concepts, Models and Anti-Racist Strategies in Britain and France', *New Community*, 1 (October 1991), 63–74; C. Lloyd, 'Universalism and Difference: The Crisis of Anti-Racism in the UK and France', in A. Rattansi and S. Westwood (eds), *Racism, Modernity and Identity: On the Western Front* (Cambridge 1994), 222–44; C. Lloyd, 'Citoyenneté et antiracisme en France et en Grande-Bretagne', *Hommes et Migrations*, 1193 (December 1995), 13–17; C. Lloyd, 'L'action anti-raciste en France et en Grande-Bretagne', in A. Rea (ed.), *Immigration et racisme en Europe* (Brussels 1998), 75–92; A. Favell, *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain* (Basingstoke 2001).

9 E.g. D. Lapreyronnie, M. Frybes, K. Couper and D. Joly, *L'intégration des minorités immigrés. Etude comparative: France – Grande-Bretagne* (Issy-les-Moulineaux 1990); R. Garbaye, 'Ethnic Minorities, Cities and Institutions: A Comparison of Modes of Management of Ethnic Diversity in a French and a British City', in R. Koopmans and P. Statham (eds), *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics* (Oxford 2000), 283–311; A. Favell, 'Integration Policy and Research in Europe: a Review and a Critique', in T.A. Aleinikoff and D. Klusmeyer (eds), *Citizenship Today: Global Perspectives and Practices* (Washington DC 2001), 349–99.

10 E.g. E. Bleich, *Race Politics in Britain and France: Ideas and Policymaking since the 1960s* (Cambridge 2003).

11 V. Latour, 'Converging At Last? France, Britain and Their Minorities', in G. Raymond and T. Modood (eds), *The Construction of Minority Identities in France and Britain* (Basingstoke 2007), 98–116. It is perhaps symptomatic of the underdeveloped state of comparative research on the topic that only four of the eight chapters in this comparative volume are comparative at all, the others referring to either Britain or France but not both.

12 'Qui a peur du postcolonial? Denis et controverses', special issue of *Mouvements*, 51 (September–October 2007).

relations,¹³ the entangled history of this aspect in particular demands attention from historians. Hence this article seeks to apply the methodology of transnational history to ask to what extent anti-racist movements in France and Britain have interacted with each other in the cold light of practice. While one could be forgiven for thinking that the two operate in parallel and mutually incomprehensible universes, it will suggest that in the field of anti-racism there has been more exchange than meets the eye. Though less immediately apparent than those from across the Atlantic, influences have occasionally, at times surreptitiously, crept across the Channel. Mutual discoveries ensued even if the volume of traffic in each direction was not equal, since it appears that British-based activists were more resistant to French influence than vice-versa. We shall see that transnational activism indeed existed, and grew over time with changes in the context in each country, but that it was sometimes hampered by Franco-British misunderstanding. Moreover, it will be suggested that such activism was typically more transnational precisely when the participants in such exchanges were more marginal in their domestic influence. Such links can be traced back to cooperation between anglophone and francophone anti-colonialists during the colonial period, about which it is to be hoped that future research will discover more.¹⁴ However the focus of this article is the first three decades of the post-colonial era, when permanent settlement by ex-colonial migrants became an inescapable reality in both countries. As this period also coincided with Britain's entry into the European Economic Community, it offers a good example of the extent to which European integration has brought about a real increase in mutual understanding between societies as opposed to states. Especially since we might expect anti-racist activists to be more internationally-minded than their fellow citizens, how far were they agents of what Renaud Morieux terms 'diplomacy from below'?¹⁵

The 20 year period immediately following the end of empire was characterized by sharp domestic controversies about the place or otherwise in metropolitan life of the ex-colonial migrants whose labour largely fuelled the long postwar boom – and, increasingly, about their descendants. The national political profile of such controversies peaked somewhat earlier in Britain, but they were also present in 1960s and 1970s France to a greater degree than is often acknowledged.¹⁶ Activists in both countries thus faced a sometimes urgent battle for survival and recognition within the host country, which did not always permit the time for reflecting on

13 For example, R. Tombs and I. Tombs, *That Sweet Enemy: The French and the British From the Sun King to the Present* (London 2006).

14 For example, the interrelated histories of Pan-Africanism in interwar London and interwar Paris, or campaigns during the Algerian war of independence by the British anti-colonialist circle centred around Fenner Brockway MP. See also the contribution by Rob Skinner to this special issue.

15 R. Morieux, 'Diplomacy From Below and Belonging: Fishermen and Cross-Channel Relations in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, 202 (February 2009), 83–125.

16 D.A. Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals: May '68 and the Rise of Anti-Racism in France* (Pontypool 2012).

similar struggles elsewhere: when international examples were used, we shall see that the Anglo-French one was not always the first to spring to mind.

For example, the history of national anti-racist movements, normally considered separately, can also be considered as entangled histories. One older form of transnational linking that continued through this period was the formal exchange of conference delegates between fraternally like-minded organizations. The Mouvement Contre le Racisme et Pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples (MRAP), for example – one of the 'big four' anti-racist groups in France, and the largest to have been founded in the postwar period – routinely welcomed international delegates to its congresses, typically two of whom were UK residents. In 1973 these were Bridget Harris of Teachers Against Racism and Chris De Broglio of the London-based South Africa Non-Racial Olympic Committee; and in 1975, Tony Huq of the Bangladesh Workers Association, and Maurice Ludmer, treasurer of the National Committee of Trade Unions Against Racism.¹⁷

Such links could lead to deeper ties being forged, but the deepest were more by individuals than organizations – perhaps reflecting a lesser degree of organizational continuity to the north of the Channel, where attempts to unite anti-racists have tended to collapse, as Paul Statham puts it, 'like a house of cards'.¹⁸ Thus at the MRAP's 1977 congress, alongside Marion Biber of the Minority Rights Group, Ludmer was again present, but now representing a different organization, *Searchlight* magazine. At the MRAP's 1982 congress, the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism was represented by Cathie Lloyd, who sent a message of sympathy to the MRAP's next congress in 1985, but in a different capacity. The 1985 congress also received a message of support from Tony Huq still of the Bangladesh Workers Association,¹⁹ but the absence of a physical presence by any UK-based delegates that year may suggest a limited enthusiasm for Franco-British ties.

In this context the anti-racist movements' press in both Britain and France showed some mutual interest, tempered by a tendency to look elsewhere for principal partners. The monthly magazine *Race Today*, for example, provided an important window on the period. Founded in London's West End by the liberal Institute of Race Relations, after an acrimonious internal struggle *Race Today* was taken over in 1974 by radical activists in Brixton, who reoriented it as the 'voice of

17 *Droit et Liberté* (February 1973 and December 1975–January 1976). The other three main groups are the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (founded 1898), the Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme (founded 1928) and SOS Racisme (founded 1985).

18 P. Statham, 'Political Opportunities for Altruism? The Role of State Policies in Influencing Claims-Making by British Anti-Racist and Pro-Migrant Movements' in M. Guigni and F. Passy (eds), *Political Altruism? Solidarity Movements in International Perspective* (Oxford 2000), 134; Lloyd, 'L'action anti-raciste', 86.

19 *Droit et Liberté* (December 1977–January 1978, May–June 1982 and June–July 1985), which wrongly named Lloyd as editor of *Searchlight*. Lloyd, who considers that the MRAP was 'very inclusive', went on to become 'a bit of a fixture' in it (email, cited in Note 4), while simultaneously pursuing academic participant-observation of it. Lloyd also wrote articles on precisely the issue of Franco-British comparison, rightly pointing out that 'there are often as many difficult divisions within, as between, countries': 'Anti-Racist Responses to European Integration', in Koopmans and Statham, *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics*, 404.

the black community in Britain', claiming a readership of as many as 30,000.²⁰ Before the split, it carried only relatively dry and academic, and not especially prominent, coverage of France, arguing that it deserved 'more than the occasional sideways glance across the Channel, which is all that it receives at present'.²¹ From 1972, reflecting Britain's impending entry into the European Economic Community, it even had a regular 'EEC' column, though with a rubric rather reminiscent of the old apocryphal headline 'Fog In Channel: Continent Cut Off', implying that European news could only be of interest if it had implications for Britain:

What's happening in Europe? What are the implications of Community policy and practice for Britain? This regular feature, contributed by the Runnymede Trust, brings you up to date with the latest developments.²²

Between 1972 and 1974, as the transition from old to new *Race Today* began in London, and events gathered pace in France, the magazine's interest increased, carrying more detailed reportage on 'Unrest Among Foreign Workers in France' and 'Fighting Racism in France' as well as 'The Racism in Marseilles' (a wave of racist violence in the autumn of 1973 during which at least 14 people of North African origin were killed).²³ Reflecting the evolution of the situation in France as well, there was now more emphasis on immigrant self-expression and resistance, and less on immigrants as an object of concern by others. However after 1974, this interest appears to have declined, and the 'EEC' column had already been abandoned after September 1973. This may partly be accounted for by the relative decline of the movement in France after the economic crisis of the mid-1970s,²⁴ but it also seems to coincide with a militant turn in *Race Today's* coverage of the UK. Edited from 1974 onwards by the prominent Black radical activist Darcus Howe, the magazine was understandably preoccupied with struggles in Britain, such as confrontations at the Notting Hill Carnival. What international coverage there was focused on the Caribbean, apart from the occasional letter from Canada or the US – reflecting the magazine's concern to move much closer to the immediate preoccupations of the Afro-Caribbean community in Britain than was the 'old' *Race Today*. The magazine revealingly appealed for readers by asking, 'Do you want to know what is happening in the Caribbean, Asia, Africa and Black America?',²⁵ with the implication that they would not be so interested in what was

20 *Race Today* (February–March 1982). Although such claims of representativeness may be questioned, since features and job advertisements suggest a disproportionate proportion of readers were in such occupations as teaching and social work, my analysis of this and other anti-racist publications focuses predominantly on transnationalism among activists rather than the wider communities they claimed to represent.

21 *Race Today* (October 1969, March 1970, July 1971 and December 1971).

22 *Race Today* (August 1972).

23 *Race Today* (May 1973, February 1974 and December 1973).

24 Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 164, 170–2, 191–204.

25 *Race Today* (February–March 1982).

happening in 'Black Europe'. This was typical of a pattern within the UK, where transatlantic as opposed to cross-Channel transnationalism came more spontaneously to mind. Between 1974 and 1982, there were only two apparent references to France. One of them was an interview with Sally N'Dongo, leader of the Union Générale des Travailleurs Sénégalais en France, in which the editors were at pains to add that 'The Race Today Collective does not subscribe to the solution posed by the UGTSF for blacks in Britain': no doubt because the UGTSF, in common with the majority of radical immigrant organizations in France prior to this time, advocated an eventual return home²⁶ – anathema for Black British activists who had devoted much energy to arguing that Black people were 'here to stay'.

Conversely, an examination of 1970s French anti-racist publications suggests that this limited, sporadic interest was mutual. In the debate that led to France's 1972 law against racism, sponsored by the MRAP, what might be supposed the obvious example of the British Race Relations Act was conspicuous by its absence. Reflecting the MRAP's political leanings as an arms-length satellite of the PCF, it preferred to cite anti-racist legislation in the Soviet Bloc.²⁷ The years that followed were no exception: the MRAP's monthly *Droit et Liberté* appears not to have mentioned such pivotal moments in the UK as the Mangrove Nine trial of 1970, the Notting Hill Carnival riot of 1976, the 'Battle of Lewisham' of 1977 or the killing of Blair Peach in Southall in 1979. Despite some coverage of Northern Ireland (condemnation of British imperialism being common currency on the French Left) and an article about Jamaican reggae which did mention its existence in the UK,²⁸ the magazine's international coverage beyond the francophone world paid little attention to the UK. *Droit et Liberté* featured South Africa much more prominently²⁹ (not surprisingly given the urgency of the situation there), plus those twin perennial favourite complaints of French leftists – racism in the USA³⁰ and (understandably given the MRAP's origins among Jewish members of the French Resistance) neo-Nazism in West Germany.³¹ It took something major, like the riots of the summer of 1981, described as 'almost a civil war', for Britain to get a mention, though even then it was not front page news.³² Similarly *Hommes et Libertés*, the magazine of the venerable Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, while

26 *Race Today*, February 1975 and March 1978; Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 49–54, 158–160.

27 Bleich, *Race Politics in Britain and France*, 174. The MRAP's ideological discourse is analysed in C. Lloyd, *Discourses of Anti-Racism in France* (Aldershot 1998), and in relation to the other three main anti-racist groups, including a discussion of the MRAP's relationship with the French Communist Party, D. A. Gordon, 'Is There A Split in the French Anti-Racist Movement? An Historical Analysis' in J. Renton and B. Gidley (eds), *Antisemitism and Islamophobia in Europe*, forthcoming. It seems likely that the MRAP's philo-Communism predisposed it to certain forms of transnational collaboration, including the exchange of conference delegates referred to above.

28 *Droit et Liberté* (April 1979).

29 E.g. *Droit et Liberté* (February 1973, September 1976, October 1976, November–December 1976, April 1979 and May 1979).

30 E.g. *Droit et Liberté* (February 1973, October 1976, April 1979, May 1979, June 1979).

31 E.g. *Droit et Liberté* (February 1973, September 1976, October 1976, November–December 1976, June 1979).

32 *Droit et Liberté* (September 1981).

much engaged in the situation of immigrants in France, appears to have carried little coverage of their counterparts across the Channel. Its UK coverage focused much more prominently on Northern Ireland: the July–August 1981 cover story was ‘Bobby Sands’ struggle goes on’, with no mention of the Brixton riots.³³ Of course, this order of priorities was logical given the much greater level of violence in Northern Ireland, but it does underline a pattern of minimal interest in UK race relations. When there was some, this was essentially as a negative foil, as in ‘Brixton in France?’ an open letter to candidates in the 1981 presidential election suggesting that if deportations of young people who had grown up in France did not stop, things could get even worse and there could be riots *à la britannique*.³⁴

Exceptions could be found. The French left intelligentsia’s awareness of the situation in Britain was mediated through the writings of a relatively small number of commentators. Often these were disproportionately reliant on British authors writing about Britain, perhaps owing to a relative paucity of French specialists on Britain, or to unreflective assumptions that foreign writers are necessarily specialists on their country of origin.³⁵ But two names that often appeared together in French writings on the topic were Kristin Couper and Ulysses Santamaria, both of whom personified the transnationalism existing within spaces created by 1968. Couper, from at least 1971 a regular French correspondent for *Race Today*, was a relatively unusual example of an anglophone working in the French university system – more precisely, at Paris-VIII, founded at Vincennes as a result of 1968 with an explicitly radical mission, often portrayed as a bait set by the authorities to attract leftists out of the centre of the capital, that continued even after its relocation to St Denis to be a key centre of dialogue between Algerian exiles and French Marxists who had worked during the 1960s at the University of Algiers.³⁶ Meanwhile Santamaria (1947–91) is hard to put into any simple national box, having been born in the Dominican Republic and lived in New York, before studying in first Britain and then France, and culturally regarding himself as Jewish, an African-American and a European – a combination that did not fit any conventional template for identity, even minority identity, in either Britain or France. Attracted to a notion that his grandfather may have been a rabbi and his African slave ancestors been of Jewish origin, Emilio Santamaria renamed himself Ulysses and became a freelance researcher specializing in the situation of Ethiopian Jews in Israel and Black minorities in Britain, penning for example an article on the riots of 1980–1 for *Les Temps Modernes*, that sacred text of the post-1945 French left

33 *Hommes et Libertés* (July–August 1981).

34 *Sans Frontière* (18 and 25 April 1981).

35 This remained the case even in later years: e.g. J. Crowley, ‘Le modèle britannique d’immigration’, *Migrations Société*, 24 (November–December 1992), 37–45; Lloyd, ‘Citoyenneté et antiracisme en France et en Grande-Bretagne’.

36 *Race Today* (July 1971 and December 1971); *Race Today Review 1984*; C. Dormoy-Rajramanan, ‘From Dream to Reality: the Birth of Vincennes’, in J. Jackson, A.-L. Milne and J.S. Williams (eds), *May ’68: Rethinking France’s Last Revolution* (London 2011), 254–62; P. Vermeren, *Misère de l’historiographie du ‘Maghreb’ postcolonial 1962–2012* (Paris 2012), 65, 96–7.

intelligentsia.³⁷ Santamaria's multiple outsider status had a certain exotic appeal for the self-consciously cosmopolitan³⁸ *Les Temps Modernes*: his transnationalism became in part a product made in France, and particularly its left intelligentsia, having studied as a postgraduate at Nanterre, the very cradle of May 1968, and also published on Marx, Lenin and the Frankfurt School. Yet he was also a beneficiary of a more institutional, state-sponsored transnationalism in the shape of a Jean Monnet Scholarship at the European University Institute in Florence.³⁹

But a key moment for forging closer links was the first half of the 1980s, when we start to get a more positive image of multicultural Britain conveyed in France. This was a time of transition, when the 'second generation' of people of North African origin born in France – the so-called Beurs – entered mainstream public debate as a result of the Marche pour l'Égalité of 1983.⁴⁰ Yet the March had a long prehistory in earlier youth mobilizations. For present purposes, the most significant was Rock Against Police (RAP), a twist on the British phenomenon Rock Against Racism (RAR). Interviewed in 1982, RAP's organizers showed a detailed awareness of the situation in British inner cities.⁴¹ But they also argued that the two situations could not be mechanically tacked together, stressing two differences. Firstly, they eschewed the big set piece concert characteristic of RAR:

Big concerts on neutral ground like Hyde Park or Pantin Race Course are useless. People come there to consume. We have always organized our concerts on the ground, where the cops beat up our friends.

37 R. Gallissot, 'Culture plurielle en hommage à Ulysses Santamaria', in R. Gallissot (ed.), *Pluralisme culturel en Europe: culture(s) européenne(s) et culture(s) des diasporas* (Paris 1993), 3–6; K. Voigt, 'Hommage à Ulysses Santamaria' in Gallissot, *Pluralisme culturel*, 261–264; U. Santamaria, 'La crise raciale en Grande-Bretagne: racisme ou désordres?', *Les Temps Modernes* (January 1982), reprinted in Gallissot, *Pluralisme culturel*, 247–59.

38 See J. Judaken, *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question* (Lincoln, NE 2006); J. Judaken (ed.), *Race After Sartre: Anti-Racism, Africana, Existentialism, Postcolonialism* (Albany, NY 2008); C. Lanzmann, *The Patagonian Hare: A Memoir* (London 2012).

39 'Se souvenir d'Ulysses', *Les Temps Modernes*, 540/541 (July–August 1991), 1–3. Couper and Santamaria's co-authored publications included 'An Elusive Concept: The Changing Definition of Illegal Immigrant in the Practice of Immigration Control in the United Kingdom', *International Migration Review*, 18, 3 (Autumn 1984), 437–52, which still features on Migration Studies reading lists (see University of Oxford, 'MPhil in Migration Studies: Year 2, 2010–2011', published at: [http://www.isca.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/ISCA/CURRENT_STUDENTS/Migration%20Studies%20\(2nd%20year\).pdf](http://www.isca.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/ISCA/CURRENT_STUDENTS/Migration%20Studies%20(2nd%20year).pdf) (accessed 31 August 2012); 'Quelques réflexions sur les notions de communauté et de minorité dans l'approche de l'immigration au Royaume-Uni et aux États-Unis', *L'Homme et la Société*, 77–8 (July–December 1985), 157–66, which emphasized the differences between UK and USA, against a tendency in France to lump both together under the 'Anglo-Saxon' label; 'Les minorités ethniques au Royaume-Uni', *Esprit*, 6 (June 1985), 249–54; and *Démocratie et minorités ethniques: le cas anglais*, special issue of *Les Temps Modernes*, 540–1 (July–August 1991).

40 This two-month-long march across France from Marseilles to Paris, to present the grievances of second-generation youth, arrived at the Elysée Palace in December 1983.

41 Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 201–18; 'Les lascars s'organisent: interview de Rock Against Police', *Questions Clefs*, 2 (March 1982), 57–9.

Secondly, the name's blunt indication that they were against not only racism but also the police, was designed to get away from 'tearjerk' anti-racism with its false assumption that the police were there to protect immigrants. Secondary works referring to this interview have thus tended to stress RAP's desire not to be simply a copy of RAR.⁴² Clearly there were differences between a movement founded by a group of mainly white Trotskyists and a self-organized movement of minority youth. Yet – especially given that Mogniss Abdallah, de facto leader of the somewhat male-dominated RAP, had never actually been to the UK and would not do so until 1984, due to difficulties obtaining a passport⁴³ – arguably RAP's polemic can be situated more within Franco-French debates. They were specifically reacting against a kind of *bien-pensant* solidarity with poor oppressed immigrant workers, the kneejerk reaction of French leftists since at least 1968, which second generation youth sometimes found patronizing and instrumentalizing.⁴⁴ There was an element of caricature in the accusation of seeking to use the police to protect immigrants, since these French leftist intellectuals were hardly known for their love of the police,⁴⁵ though a later speech by Abdallah made it clear the charge was mainly levelled at local councils:

The immigrants live in working-class areas, of course, with socialist or communist city halls; councils that actually had very nice anti-racist talk, but in reality, in people's daily life, these councils were the ones who were bringing in the police to deport people. So that's why we called this experience 'Rock Against the Police'.⁴⁶

We need to remember that the 'first generation' of immigrant workers were also still engaged in struggle, as a result of bitter industrial conflict in the car industry. In 1982, *Race Today* carried a feature on 'Migrants Under the Mitterrand Regime', that was reasonably optimistic about their prospects under the new left-wing government.⁴⁷ This began a revival of the magazine's interest in France, that might be seen in the context of a movement now confident enough of its place in British society to look outwards.⁴⁸ But as the threat of redundancies loomed over car manufacturers such as Talbot, and the FN made its first electoral breakthrough,

42 Ibid., 53; S. Bouamama, *Dix ans de Marche des Beurs* (Paris 1994), 36; P. Fysh and J. Wolfreys, *The Politics of Racism in France* (Basingstoke 1998), 154.

43 S. White, R. Harris and S. Beezmohun (eds), *A Meeting of the Continents: The International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books – Revisited* (London 2005), 27–30; C. Lloyd, 'Rendez-vous manqués: feminisms and anti-racisms in France', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 6, 1 (1998), 67.

44 Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 114–18, 204–7.

45 Nor for that matter were the British RAR: D. Renton, *When We Touched The Sky: The Anti-Nazi League 1977–1981* (Cheltenham 2006), 151.

46 M. Abdallah, speaking at 9th International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books, London, 23 March 1990, transcript in J. La Rose (ed.), *Racism Nazism Fascism and Racial Attacks: The European Response* (London 1991), 7.

47 *Race Today* (May–June 1982); Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 212–18.

48 As Howe was to put it in 1985: 'Our task is to record and recognise the struggle of those emerging forces (of black revolt) as manifestations of the revolutionary potential of the black population. Today, twelve years later, those forces are no longer emerging, they are here': White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 194.

the mood was beginning to sour in France. Violence broke out in January 1984 at a Talbot factory to the west of Paris, opposing white non-strikers to Maghrebi and African strikers. It was in this context that Darcus Howe went to see the Talbot strike for himself, resulting in an article in *Race Today* in May–June 1984. Significantly, the article also reported on the Marche pour l’Egalité, underlining that this was not simply a meeting between countries, but also between generations. This was in part a result of Couper inviting Abdallah to her house to meet Howe, who asked Abdallah ‘These stories of beurs, what are they about?’. While at first there was a misunderstanding, with Abdallah thinking Howe was referring to a slang term for cannabis, a discussion ensued about links between the Marchers for Equality and the Talbot strikers, and Abdallah rapidly found himself invited on a speaking tour of Britain about ‘the struggle of young Arabs in France’.⁴⁹ In an interview filmed in 2006, Abdallah recalled his and Ahmed Boubeker’s arrival at *Race Today*’s offices in a basement in Shakespeare Road, Brixton. Abdallah’s account conveys a sense of awe, after years of being influenced by the Black British experience, to finally be in Brixton’s legendary ‘Front Line’: ‘For us, it was really epic’. What impressed him was that Black people in Britain already felt a part of British society and therefore part of a movement to change it. The slogan ‘J’y suis, j’y reste’, which he later used for a book title, was taken from the Black British slogan ‘Come what may, we’re here to stay’ – according to him in use since 1958, in other words long before such sentiments were expressed in France.⁵⁰ But the admiration was mutual, for Howe was deeply impressed by what he had witnessed in France:

There was not a single national newspaper, not a single television station, not a single radio news station in all of Europe which was not informing its audiences that immigrant workers had brought a whole era of apparent docility to an end and had made some serious interventions in French society.⁵¹

Also present in the basement that day was John La Rose, founder of a host of significant initiatives: the Caribbean Writers’ Movement, New Beacon Books, Britain’s first Black publishing house, the Black Parents Movement, and London’s International Book Fair of Radical Black and Third World Books.⁵² The First Book Fair in 1982 already enjoyed the participation of four French-based writers and

49 *Race Today* (May–June 1984); White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 29–30.

50 George Padmore Institute, London (GPI), DVD 48/58, ‘1) Launch of Book Fair book 2) Discussions in Paris filmed by Mogniss Abdallah’, DVD, April 2006; M. Abdallah, *J’y suis, j’y reste! Les luttes de l’immigration en France depuis les années soixante* (Paris 2000).

51 GPI BFC/03/06/01/02/02, transcript of ‘Migrant Struggle in Britain and Europe’ meeting at 3rd Book Fair, 3 August 1984.

52 See B. Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race: Black Activism and Cultural Politics* (Oxford 2002) which notes (178) that these initiatives remain surprisingly marginal in much historiography of the British New Left; White, Harris and Beezmohun, *Meeting of the Continents*; L. James, ‘The Caribbean Artists Movement’ in B. Schwarz (ed.), *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain* (Manchester 2003), 209–27; the Book Fair’s archive at the George Padmore Institute.

stands from six French-based publishers, bookshops and journals, while by the Third Book Fair in 1984 this had increased to nine French-based exhibition stands. Thus before the emergence of the Beurs, links had been forged with the francophone intelligentsia. For example, Florence Alexis, a French-born singer, archivist, journalist and radio producer of Haitian origin, was a regular at the Book Fairs year after year. Such links were not new: La Rose, who had studied French literature while teaching in Venezuela, was a friend of such prominent francophone voices as the Martiniquan poet and politician Aimé Césaire and the Tunisian-born lawyer Gisèle Halimi, and in 1983 the Book Fair gave a special award to the journal and publishing house *Présence Africaine*.⁵³ But crucially, as a result of Howe's article in *Race Today*, La Rose was aware of the Marche pour l'Égalité and the Beurs. Abdallah recalled how on meeting La Rose: 'From that point, complicity was set up straight away'.⁵⁴ Abdallah was to return to the 4th Book Fair in 1985 with half a dozen comrades, quickly dubbed 'Little Algeria'. Political links were thus forged: it would appear that this was a relatively rare example of the strategies of anti-racist movements actually being affected by cross-Channel engagement. And since a key feature of the Book Fairs was 'modest accommodation in the home of a member of the black community',⁵⁵ political alliances were accompanied by informal friendships. One of the French-based participants, William Tanifeani, recalled that the most important meetings about the Book Fair took place in La Rose's kitchen. Indeed Tanifeani got to know Abdallah not in France, but 'in a van, during a seemingly never-ending journey between North and South London'. These genuinely were transnational links, for it was in London that the French activists also got to meet minority activists from West Germany.⁵⁶

Moreover, links were fostered by linguistic openness on both sides. For a French-based organization like Rock Against Police to use an English name at all was at this time unusual (the reverse would have been even more unlikely). Reflecting a newfound influence of Anglo-US pop culture on French youth, it contrasted sharply with both the traditional assumption of leftists across much of Europe that French was *the* international language of political activism⁵⁷ and to the practices of first-generation immigrant activists in France, whose bilingualism was typically in Arabic and French. Not only could the younger France-based activists understand English, but La Rose – coming from the multilingual Caribbean, and belonging to a generation of anglophone intellectuals who were more likely to consider competency in French a necessity than is the case today – spoke French far better than was typical of the UK population as a whole. As Sarah White, New Beacon co-founder and La Rose's partner, recalled,

53 White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 79–99, 135, 158–160, 177, 280; James, 'The Caribbean Artists Movement', 217; GPI GB 2904 BFC/02/03/01/01, La Rose and Jessica Huntley to Christiane Diop, 8 February 1983.

54 GPI DVD 48/58.

55 GPI GB 2904 BFC/02/03/01/01, La Rose and Huntley to Diop, 8 February 1983; White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 30.

56 White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 31; GPI DVD 48/58.

57 T. Judd, *Postwar* (London 2005), 760.

John was pretty fluent in French so he spoke to Mogniss in both French and English, depended a bit where he was at the time and who he was with. My French is not so good so we normally spoke in English. At the Book Fairs the general language was English but people communicated in various languages. At a few panels we had translators for the French speakers. John's French was good enough for him to address a number of meetings in Paris in French.⁵⁸

Since conversations thus took place in more than one language, arguably the extent to which they were shaped by the particular political-linguistic understandings inherent in a monolingual conversation was minimised, and deeper exchange facilitated.

Yet the match between the British-based activists and the particular group from France they encountered was in some senses counter-intuitive. Superficially, the obvious difference was that the London activists were largely Afro-Caribbean, whereas the Beur activists were typically of Algerian origin, though Abdallah himself was half-Egyptian and half-Danish. In the context of Black identity politics in early 1980s Britain,⁵⁹ this was not necessarily a problem, since the concept of 'Blackness' had evolved so as to incorporate all minorities oppressed by racism, including the UK's large population of South Asian origin. For the activists involved, not least La Rose, a universalist who rejected narrowly nationalist or essentialist versions of blackness, this diversity was a positive strength, summed up in the title of a 2005 book retrospectively celebrating the Book Fairs, *A Meeting Of The Continents*. There are echoes in this title of the earlier Tricontinental third-worldism of the 1960s, where anti-imperialist solidarity between Asia, Africa and Latin America was strongly assumed to be the norm.⁶⁰ Rock Against Police's 1982 interview had discussed Jamaicans much more than any other minority in the UK, emphasizing that 'Jamaicans have experience of more than twenty years of "fightback" [in English in the original]⁶¹ – reflecting a then dominant representation of Afro-Caribbeans stressing their propensity for confrontation with the police, in contrast to the supposed passivity of South Asians. One suspects that this confrontational aspect appealed in part because Abdallah had been active in a French autonomist milieu which tended to idealise precisely those urban rebellions such as Brixton that otherwise appeared negatively in France. Looking back, Abdallah noted that whereas international conferences usually led to links being

58 S. White, email to author, 16 September 2013.

59 By contrast to the prominence of both the Beurs in France, and of Afro-Caribbeans in Britain in the 1980s, radical Black anti-racist activism in France took a somewhat lower profile before the public appearance of a latter-day French version of Black identity politics in the mid-2000s. This might be explained by the earlier origins of North African mass migration to France compared to that from sub-Saharan Africa, and consequent prior emergence of 'second generation' activism among people of North African heritage, as well as by the extreme political sensitivity of the legacy of the Algerian war of independence compared to that of other episodes of decolonization in the French empire.

60 Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race*, 133. In White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 32, Abdallah expressed nostalgia for this thirdworldist internationalism, perceiving its disappearance since the 1980s in both Algeria and immigrant areas of France.

61 'Les lascars s'organisent: interview de Rock Against Police', 58.

forged in predictable postcolonial fashion between Caribbean people in France and Caribbean people in Britain, in Brixton in 1984 he and his associates felt that La Rose immediately connected with their story about being 'young Arabs' in France. Even for Tanifeani, who is black, it was important that this was not just a Black Book Fair but also a Radical Book Fair.⁶²

Nevertheless, fitting the Beurs into an Anglo-US concept of Blackness remained problematic. Howe's article on the Talbot strike was entitled 'Black Workers Break the French Mould'. Similarly, an article by Shan Nicholas and Stephanie d'Orey in the annual *Race Today Review* described the Marche pour l'Égalité as 'black people are fighting back'.⁶³ Such use of the term 'Black' in the British radical sense, to describe people who would mostly not have seen themselves as 'Black', raises questions about imposing British categories onto a French situation. As Neveu put it, 'Is 'Black' an Exportable Category to Mainland Europe?'⁶⁴ Indeed, as Abdallah was unable to come to the 3rd Book Fair in 1984, he was replaced as a representative of 'young children of immigrants' by Pablo Morera, the son of Portuguese immigrants,⁶⁵ one of the largest migrant groups in France, but this was even more of a stretch for the British idea of blackness. In theory this was dealt with in the *Race Today* analysis by putting migrant workers into a separate category from the settled black population, on the basis that *Race Today's* founders no longer considered themselves immigrants. But what about the second generation offspring of European migrants? There seems to have been little discussion of this point. Abdallah was more attracted than most in France to the inclusive British definition of 'Black', but recognized that 'unity between beurs and blacks is not a given. It has to be built and consolidated'.⁶⁶ He was also critical of the way that British broadcasting's apparent acceptance of the need for multicultural programming resulted in a narrow definition of 'Black' with some communities excluded: 'From this sectarian viewpoint, Africa starts south of the Sahara, and Arab and Berber Africa disappear into the mists of Babylon'.⁶⁷ And it can be questioned how universally accepted was the political meaning of 'Black' even in Britain. Neveu

62 GPI DVD 48/58, '(1) Launch of Book Fair book 2) Discussions in Paris filmed by Mogniss Abdallah', DVD (April 2006). The Brixton riots are also mentioned in, for example, an interview with the autonomist Yann Moulier, of Franco-French origin, but who had close links to Italian *operaismo*: 'Entretien avec Yann Moulier-Boutang', available at: <http://sebastien.schifres.free.fr/moulier.htm> (May 2004). (Accessed 19 November 2014).

63 *Race Today* (April–May 1984); *Race Today Review* 1984.

64 C. Neveu, 'Is 'Black' an Exportable Category to Mainland Europe? Race and Citizenship in a European Context' in J. Rex and B. Drury (eds), *Ethnic Mobilisation in a Multi-Cultural Europe* (Aldershot 1994), 69–77.

65 GPI BFC/03/06/01/02/02, transcript of 'Migrant Struggle in Britain and Europe' meeting at 3rd Book Fair, 3 August 1984. Chaired by Darcus Howe, the meeting was translated by Kristin Couper, underlining the essential but often overlooked role of translators in transnationalism. Couper went on to translate, for example, M. Wieviorka, *The Lure of Anti-Semitism: Hatred of Jews in Present-Day France* (Leiden 2007).

66 White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 31.

67 M. Abdallah, 'Networking for Migrant Perspectives on Television in France and Europe: the IM'média Agency's Experience', in C. Frachon and M. Vargaftig (eds), *European Television: Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities* (London 1995), 59.

found that, among Bangladeshis in Spitalfields, only a few radical activists used the term 'Black', with most people preferring 'Asian'. Tariq Modood considers that by the late 1980s the presumption that all non-white Britons were united by economic oppression had become outdated. Similarly in France, the term 'Arab', whilst at times a powerful mobilizing identity, also turned out to be problematic,⁶⁸ owing to the numerous presence of immigrants from southern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as the Berber identity espoused by many Algerians and Moroccans.

Yet perhaps the most significant difference in that Brixton basement in 1984 was generation. Activists such as Abdallah who had grown up in France frequently expressed suspicious of the so-called *bledards* – older activists whose values were formed in North Africa and so did not share the experiences of the new generation born in France.⁶⁹ But rather than seeking what might have been more obvious solidarities with their second-generation peers in Britain, the group around Abdallah crossed the Channel to find precisely the kind of quasi-paternal figures rejected when closer to home. For who were the circle around New Beacon Books, if not Caribbean equivalents of the *bledards*? John La Rose, born in 1927, was already relatively old, was influenced by some elements of 'Old Left' Communist thinking, and has been described as respectably 'old school' in his personal style. He thus represented something of a father figure for the young activists from France: 'He could be our father, our teacher, but he talked to us as equals, erasing any generation gap'.⁷⁰ And arguably the Book Fair and *Race Today* circles bear striking similarities to a generation of North African activists 10–15 years older than the early Beur activists: people like Saïd Bouziri and Driss El Yazami, who progressed from May 1968 via the Comités Palestine and the Mouvement des Travailleurs Arabes (MTA) to the magazine *Sans Frontière*.⁷¹ But between these first-generation groups on the two sides of the Channel there does seem to have been a *rendez-vous manqué*. Asked about older activists in France from the 1960s,

68 C. Neveu, 'De l'autre côté du miroir. Nationalité et citoyenneté. Un exemple britannique pour des questions françaises', doctoral thesis, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales (1990), 466; T. Modood, 'Race in Britain and the Politics of Difference', in D. Archad (ed.), *Philosophy and Pluralism* (Cambridge 1996), 180; C. Lloyd, 'Anti-racism, social movements and civil society', in F. Anthias and C. Lloyd (eds), *Rethinking Antiracisms: From Theory to Practice* (London 2002), 65. The 'Beur' identity was also politically constructed in a particular context. Abdallah made a critique of the term 'Beur' as, because sounding softer than 'Arabe' and like the French word for 'butter', designed to make French society less afraid: La Rose, *Racism Nazism Fascism*, 9.

69 White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 28; T. Kawtari, 'Du Comité national contre la double peine au Mouvement de l'immigration et des banlieues', in A. Boubeker and A. Hajjat (eds), *Histoire politique des immigrations (post)coloniales: France 1920–2008*, Paris 2008, 208; Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 204.

70 White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 30; Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race*, 134.

71 The MTA, probably the most significant immigrant-leftist group in 1970s France, had emerged in 1972 from a reorientation of its activists from pro-Palestinian activism in the earlier Comités Palestine towards the problems faced by immigrant workers in France. After the MTA disbanded in 1976, its leaders went on in 1979 to found *Sans Frontière*, advertised as France's first widely circulated magazine by immigrants for immigrants. See R. Aissaoui, *Immigration and National Identity: North African Political Movements in Colonial and Postcolonial France* (London 2009), 153–217; Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, 120–49, 158–62, 168–71, 198–204.

White recalled mainly contacts with Caribbean activists including Césaire. Asked about North Africans, White mentioned La Rose's friendship with Halimi, but did not recall the MTA group.⁷²

By contrast, La Rose's correspondence at the George Padmore Institute shows that links became relatively fruitful with younger activists. One way they proved useful was using the international status of the other side in order to raise the stakes in domestic campaigning. Thus La Rose asked Halimi to join an International Commission of Inquiry into the New Cross Fire. Conversely La Rose was asked to obtain a prominent British barrister as an international observer in the case of Wahid Hachichi, victim of a racist murder in Lyons, where campaigners accused the court authorities of intimidating the families of victims.⁷³ Moreover Abdallah and his associates were not alone in their visits to London. Calls for contributions to the 5th Book Fair in 1986 were dispatched to 22 people in France – more than to eastern, central and southern Africa put together, or the whole of west Africa, or the Caribbean, or Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Germany combined, and almost as many as to the USA. Florence Alexis described the Book Fairs as 'amongst the significant historical, political and cultural events for the spiritual communion of the black populations of Europe', comparing them to the First Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Paris in 1956 and the First Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar in 1966. The 6th Book Fair in 1987 featured a combined screening of *The Battle of Algiers* and discussion with the Algerian historian and former Front de Libération Nationale activist Mohamed Harbi, known for his critical revisionist account of the FLN.⁷⁴ In sum, then, the durable establishment of links between the groups around La Rose and Abdallah suggests that there was a deep level of transnationalism among some elements of the radical Left in both countries, although in neither case did these groups represent dominant currents on their respective national far Lefts.

From this relatively successful example of contacts between activists lesser known to a majority public, we can pass to a failure by a much more highly publicized organization at a similar period, one closely linked to the dominant force on the French Centre-Left. Much has been written about SOS Racisme, especially concerning the extent to which it was an artificial Machiavellian creation of François Mitterrand's Elysée designed to control and defuse the Beur movement.⁷⁵ Yet less

72 Sarah White, conversation with author, London, 8 June 2012. Specifically on the two magazines, see D.A. Gordon, 'Sans Frontière et Race Today, des vecteurs parallèles de l'héritage de l'immigration?', in L. Zanoun (ed.), *Le patrimoine de l'immigration en France et en Europe*, special issue of *Migrance* (2013), 43–56.

73 GPI NCM 2/4/1/5, Halimi to La Rose, 2 September 1982 and La Rose to Halimi 24 September 1982; GPI GB 2904 LRA/01/0002, Abdallah to La Rose, 27 December 1985.

74 GPI BFC 5/2/1/2, 'Call for 5th Book Fair despatched', 14 November 1985; White, Harris and Beezmohun, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 152; J. Weydert, 'Immigrés du Commonwealth au Royaume-Uni', *Projet*, 199 (May–June 1985), 91–4; *Race Today Review 1987*; M. Harbi, *Le FLN, mirage et réalité* (Paris 1980).

75 E.g. Bouamama, *Marche des Beurs*, 131. The most thorough account is P. Juhem, 'SOS-Racisme, histoire d'une mobilisation "apolitique"'. Contribution à une analyse des transformations des

noticed in these Franco-French debates is that SOS's ambitions also extended to an international arena. Its penchant for big pop concerts was quite 'Anglo-Saxon' in style, owing something to RAR via RAP,⁷⁶ to the Parti Socialiste's newfound image as 'modern', indicative of a decline in the traditional 'French exception' of hostility to 'Anglo-Saxon'-style politics,⁷⁷ and to the growing influence in France of globalized Anglo-American and Afro-American youth cultures. But this time there was an attempt to work influence in the other direction. Buoyed up by its initial success in France, SOS tried to turn its hand to 'import-export', selling anti-racism not just to France but to the world. Its two best known founders, Dray and Désir, were to describe SOS as the best French export of 1985. Before the year was out they appeared to have succeeded in establishing links in, among others, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Canada and the USA⁷⁸ – culminating in a series of concerts in Paris, Atlanta and Dakar. SOS's newsletter, named after their slogan *Touche pas à mon pote*, underlines the extent of their international ambition. In October 1985, it reported on a bus trip of 40 SOS activists to Belgium, the Netherlands, West Germany, Norway, Sweden and Denmark (but not the UK), claiming that they experienced 'sometimes small linguistic problems, but never problems from the heart. Like Pink Floyd, we too made walls fall down.'⁷⁹ Indeed they could be said to have gone one better: while Roger Waters brought his 'Wall' to Berlin only after the real thing had been torn down, SOS managed to penetrate the Eastern Bloc four years before. A French youth group doing a language course in East Germany's Karl-Marx-Stadt found enthusiastic support from East German youth for their badges: 'So on the other side of the Iron Curtain people are also starting to say "touche pas à mon pote"'.⁸⁰ In the next issue readers learnt, in an article entitled 'Harlem greets Harlem', how 'After France and Europe, our little hands have left to conquer America', where the famous slogan acquired an English translation, 'Hands off my buddy' – apparently finding favour with gay activists, who adapted it into 'Hands off my body'. Similarly in Sweden, the tourists were enthusiastically received by prime minister Olof Palme, who thereafter sported his yellow badge at every opportunity. Reports were even made of a request for the yellow badges to be carried on the next Ariane

représentations politiques après 1981', doctoral thesis, Université de Paris X – Nanterre (1998), available at <http://juhem.free.fr> (accessed 19 November 2014) from which it is clear that, while SOS did indeed receive funding from the Elysée, this was a necessary but not sufficient condition of its birth. Any explanation must go beyond top-down conspiracy to consider the active agency of SOS's twentysomething founders Julien Dray, Harlem Désir and Didier François, not simply pawns of Mitterrand, but themselves wily political strategists. They joined the Parti Socialiste from the Trotskyist Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire with surprisingly few illusions in the new president, launching SOS as an attempt to reverse recent declines in student militancy, make a small leftwing current within the PS punch above its weight, and, not least, build their own political careers as their studies came to an end.

76 Juhem, 'SOS-Racisme, histoire d'une mobilisation "apolitique"', who, however, wrongly names the British group as Rock Against Police.

77 On this debate, see N. Hewlett, *Modern French Politics* (Cambridge 1998); E. Godin and T. Chafer (eds), *The French Exception* (New York, NY 2005).

78 S. Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme* (Paris 1990), 115.

79 *Touche pas à mon pote* (October 1985).

80 *Touche pas à mon pote* (October 1985).

space mission, although such success stories were probably exaggerated by SOS' talent for self-promotion.⁸¹ The general impression then, is of a SOS whose international appeal was wide, if shallow, imbued with a kind of Enlightenment universalism-lite for the 1980s. This superficial version of transnationalism, by then more easily transmitted via international television, was similar in style to such contemporaneous anglophone phenomena such as Live Aid or elements of the latter stages of anti-apartheid.

But if SOS could make it across the Atlantic, behind the Iron Curtain, and even into outer space, could they manage to get to the other side of the Channel? Despite recounting SOS's international activities in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Scandinavia,⁸² Désir and Dray's upbeat accounts omit a curious failed attempt by SOS to implant itself in the UK, in contrast stressed in the critical *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*, by another of the organizations' founders, Serge Malik. For it was precisely in London that SOS discovered, as Malik put it, that 'each one of these countries had its own references, its laws',⁸³ a point that would appear rather obvious in retrospect, suggesting a certain francocentric naïveté on the part of the then relatively young activists. Malik's disillusioned account underlines the haphazard nature of their delegations to the British capital: the first visit consisted of Malik plus 'Julien's turn',⁸⁴ who he had never met before, taking the opportunity to visit a friend in London. Initially encouraged by promising contacts with the National Union of Students (presumably selected because the political background of the SOS crowd was also essentially in student politics), Malik started out hopeful enough: 'I was optimistic and it seemed probable to me that we would succeed in working well with Perfidious Albion'.⁸⁵ But problems quickly arose. Upon realizing that the bureaucratic NUS was isolated from immigrant associations, they instead approached the Greater London Council: but this was also an institutional approach. Malik described the GLC as 'a sort of consultative committee created before Margaret Thatcher came to power, and mostly composed of representatives of ethnic minorities'.⁸⁶ While the GLC under Ken Livingstone was indeed a laboratory for then innovative anti-racist policies – notably the subsidy of minority community associations – which subsequently became the norm in the UK, Malik appears to have slightly misunderstood the GLC's role as an elected local authority, and mistaken the GLC's Ethnic Minorities Unit for the GLC as a whole.

Yet to Malik's surprise, the SOS envoys met with deep suspicion. In part this was because SOS's high profile could not conceal the fact that they had failed to stop the far Right: the recent rise of the FN made France scarcely appear a

81 *Touche pas à mon pote* (November–December 1985); *Le Monde* (23 August, 19 November and 10 December 1985); Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*.

82 H. Désir, *Touche pas à mon pote* (Paris 1985), 124–33; J. Dray, *SOS génération* (Paris 1987), 211–12.

83 Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*, 115.

84 Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*, 116.

85 Malik, 116. Note the, albeit semi-ironic, use of the hoariest of nationalist stereotypes – and this from a half-Muslim, half-Jewish outsider.

86 Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*, 117.

model to be followed. This can be understood in terms of an obvious contrast to the then very weak position of the far Right in Britain, having essentially been defeated in the late 1970s (whether driven off the streets by the Anti-Nazi League, or outmanoeuvred by Margaret Thatcher's anti-migrant populism), giving rise to a certain self-satisfaction within the British Left, including currents dominant within its far Left, who have often since thrown back this charge to France.⁸⁷ There was also suspicion of SOS's opportunism: on this point the GLC was not alone, for similar accusations were made both by the youth wing of the Italian Communist Party, and in France itself. But another reason for the failure of the mission related to differences in media practice. SOS advocated using the media to influence public opinion, to which their GLC interlocutors bluntly replied: 'Only in your country are journalists stupid enough to walk into such a wheeze',⁸⁸ presumably because the famously cynical UK press would be hardly likely to give favourable publicity to municipal anti-racism, at this time represented as the 'loony left'. Finally, there was the immediate context of a defensive GLC, in its last year of existence, with its back to the wall faced with a hostile central government: SOS were accused of being part of a plot in league with Thatcher to abolish the GLC. But because they still needed at least a symbolic implantation in what Malik described as 'the country in Europe most seriously affected by unemployment and despair among youth',⁸⁹ they tried a second time, sending their figurehead Désir. This also ended in fiasco, with a long diatribe at a neighbourhood association against the idea of setting up a branch of SOS in Britain, and most of the audience walking out before Désir had even spoken. Finally in desperation, Dray himself went to London for two days: 'Once again, it was a total write-off'.⁹⁰ Malik's conclusion was that the whole international enterprise had been a side-show, set up to fail: unsurprisingly his account supports the thesis that SOS was a creation of the Elysée, referring to a secret top level of functioning involving two of Mitterrand's highest-ranking officials, Jean-Louis Bianco and Jacques Attali, who laid down a framework for SOS's real international relations which were then implemented by French diplomats and PS activists: top-down transnationalism, in other words, trumping those with fewer resources. More surprisingly, Attali's own diary entry for the day SOS was launched also candidly admits that 'Jean-Louis Bianco organised everything on the initiative of Jean-Loup Salzmann and

87 E.g. Renton, *When We Touched The Sky*, 177–8, which reduces French anti-racism to SOS Racisme alone, referring to imitations of the British RAR in the USA and Germany but not to the French RAP. Yet ironically one of Renton's interviewees suggests (115) that RAR's Carnivals were themselves an imitation of the PCF's annual Fête de l'Humanité. Visits by Jean-Marie Le Pen himself to the UK often proved an easy target for anti-fascists to mobilize against, forging a broad anti-Le Pen consensus in a majority of British opinion, caricatural as his political style is of what is considered in the UK as typically continental extremism: see e.g. *Guardian* (3, 6, 7 December 1991); *Observer* (8 December 1991); *Daily Express* (26 April 2004).

88 Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*, 117–18.

89 Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*, 118. The GLC was abolished in March 1986.

90 Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*, 119.

Julien Dray⁹¹ although the published diary has no further entries on SOS and does not reveal details of its international contacts. Between these myriad accusations and conspiracy theories the truth remains somewhat elusive, but it would be hard to conclude that the attempt to implant SOS in the UK was anything other than a failure in the short term. This suggests that genuine transnationalism was less easily achieved for larger-scale enterprises conceived on the moderate Left than it had been for smaller and more marginal initiatives from the radical Left.

Yet the fact that SOS did have some success in other countries suggests there was something peculiarly incompatible about the Franco–British encounter, bearing the imprint of post-imperial rivalries. It would not be too fanciful to suggest that both sides behaved according to the classic stereotypes. The French envoys, convinced of the universal applicability of their model for liberation, and confident of their aspiration to intellectual and moral leadership,⁹² tried to *rayonner* their message with little thought for local peculiarities. And their British hosts reacted with extreme suspicion towards influence from continental Europe. But in an irony of history, it was to be SOS that had the last laugh. At a march in London in 1999 in support of the rights of asylum seekers against a vociferous xenophobic press campaign, the Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers handed out placards in the style of SOS's yellow hand symbol, accompanied by their famous slogan, rendered into British vernacular as 'Hands off my mate'. The slogan so brusquely dismissed in 1985 had acquired a new relevance, as children at East London schools found their classmates facing deportation because their parents' asylum applications had been rejected. Because one of the organizers, Lee Jasper, had been in contact with Désir, thousands of British anti-racists found themselves – though probably few of them knew it – chanting a French slogan. So French iconography could cross the Channel, but on condition it concealed its Frenchness.

This reflected the fact that by the 1990s there were attempts to Europeanize activism, with greater multilateral cooperation between anti-racist groups in different countries, largely as a reaction against the Europeanization of immigration and asylum policy (that is, concerted efforts between governments to agree on increasingly restrictive policies against non-EU migrants, labelled by campaigners in Britain and France alike as 'Fortress Europe').⁹³ This drew on bilateral links already established in the 1980s. In 1990, for example, John La Rose and Suresh Grover, who were attempting to set up a European Action for Racial Equality and Social Justice, spoke at a conference organized by Abdallah's Agence Im'media. Speakers at the 1991 Fair included Djida Tazdaït, founder of the Jeunes Arabes de Lyon et Banlieue association, elected in 1989 on the Green list as France's first MEP of North African origin. In 1992, a friend of Abdallah sent material about a hunger strike against the *double*

91 J. Attali, *Verbatim I*, vol. 2 (Paris 1993), entry for 1 April 1985; Malik, *Histoire secrète de SOS Racisme*, 135.

92 Lloyd, 'L'action anti-raciste', 85.

93 Lloyd, 'L'action anti-raciste', 90; Lloyd, 'Anti-Racist Responses', 402; see also C. Rodier, 'L'Europe et les exclus de la libre circulation', in D. Fassin, A. Morice and C. Quimnal (eds), *Les lois de l'inhospitalité: les politiques de l'immigration à l'épreuve des sans-papiers* (Paris 1997), 219–33.

peine to Linton Kwesi Johnson. The 11th Book Fair in 1993 included the sociologist Saïd Bouamama and a screening of Mogniss Abdallah's documentary *Sweet France*. La Rose and Abdallah continued to correspond on diverse subjects, including the impoverishment of Egyptian peasants under IMF structural adjustment.⁹⁴ One of La Rose's greatest later political enthusiasms – for a reduction in the working week so as to allow more creativity – was something that ironically had much less resonance in the contemporary British context, dominated by Thatcherite and Blairite cults of 'enterprise' and 'hard-working families', than in French politics, with its strong intellectual and labour movement traditions of 'the right to be lazy', from Paul Lafargue via Leo Lagrange to André Gorz. Not unconnected with this was the detail that, like many intellectuals, La Rose worked in Britain but holidayed in France. For years he and Sarah White would often meet with Abdallah in Paris en route to holidays in the south of France. On one 1997 holiday during the debate which led to the introduction of the 35 hour week in France, La Rose collected newspaper cuttings about it, enthusing that 'this is the most pressing economic and social issue right now, and it is going to define the future of Europe'.⁹⁵ The European Parliament itself became something of a forum for cooperation, with Désir becoming an MEP and working together on anti-racism with the British Labour MEP Glyn Ford.

Yet there were clearly limits to cooperation. In 1991 an attempt to set up an Anti-Racist Network for Equality in Europe foundered precisely on the classic Anglo-French faultline. In France, Abdallah's relative anglophilia was often contested. At one meeting, an older Trotskyist activist asked him: 'But then, why don't you live in Britain?'⁹⁶ And in Britain, real engagement with France remained a minority, niche pursuit. At a meeting at the 1984 Book Fair with three France-based speakers, despite Howe's enthusiasm, questions specifically about France were asked only by French-speaking audience members; English speakers asked only questions of an organizational or general nature, with Howe attempting in vain to press them for a specific political response. At a meeting in July 1992, La Rose admitted that 'the links with Asia and Europe are weak' compared to those with Nigeria, Ghana, Trinidad and the USA.⁹⁷ Moreover there is evidence to

94 GPI GB 2904 LRA/01/0035/01, 'Rencontre européenne du 6 et 7 octobre 1990 a Paris' and La Rose to Abdallah, 22 February 1991; D. Tazdaït, 'Votre candidate: son parcours, dessin de ses convictions', available at: <http://djidatadait.fr> (June 2012); GPI EAC 5/3/2/2, Linton Kwesi Johnson to John La Rose, received 24 January 1992, enclosing fax, 8 January 1992; GPI BFC 11/06/01/01/01, Disc 3 – Disc 4, recording of meeting on 'Bigotry, Racism, Nazism and Fascism in Europe: Strategies for Change' (21 March 1993); GPI BFC 11/2/3/1, Festival Programme for 21 March 1993; GPI GB 2904 LRA/01/0035/01, Abdallah to La Rose, 5 November 1997. The *double peine* refers to the practice of punishing foreign nationals twice for the same offence through deportation in addition to a prison sentence.

95 Alleyne, *Radicals Against Race*, 130; Sarah White, conversation with author, London (8 June 2012); GPI BFC 11/2/3/2, Festival Programme, March 1993; P. Lafargue, *Le droit à la paresse* (Paris 1881, republished 1975 and 1994); A. Little, *Post-Industrial Socialism: Towards a New Politics of Welfare* (London 1998), 107; C. Fourel (ed.), *André Gorz, un penseur pour le XXI^e siècle* (Paris 2009); A. Gorz, *Critique of Economic Reason* (London 2011).

96 White, Harris and Beezmohum, *Meeting of the Continents*, 29; Lloyd, 'Anti-racism, social movements and civil society', 72–3; Neveu, 'Is Black an Exportable Category?'

97 GPI BFC/03/06/01/02/02, transcript of 'Migrant Struggle in Britain and Europe' meeting at 3rd Book Fair, 3 August 1984; GPI BFC 11/1/1/1, 'Notes for meeting held on July 12th 1992'.

suggest that the kneejerk suspicion in many parts of British society to the idea of receiving lessons from continentals was also found among anti-racists. Indeed it was quite the reverse to listening: having learnt a proselytizing style in domestic political campaigning, a kind of evangelism came naturally to dealings abroad. In 1991 Ann Dummett, founder of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants and active in European networks, perceptively commented on how the spectre of 'Europe' haunted anti-racists as much as any Tory Eurosceptic:

Britain has to have the mostest, whether in racism or anti-racism. And it is taken for granted that 'Europe' or 'the European Community' can be understood and discussed without anyone from any other European country being present . . . I am afraid these discussions remind me irresistibly of all-white discussions on racism.⁹⁸

The predominant view thus remained that of the Labour MP Bernie Grant, who in 1991 told *Les Temps Modernes* 'I think that the French are very racist'.⁹⁹ In short, as Adrian Favell and Damian Tambini put it in 1995, Britain remained wedded to 'multiculturalism in one country'.¹⁰⁰ A lack of historical distance precludes a detailed examination of the period since, but the signs are contradictory. Internationalization has become greater in some respects, not least through an increased presence in the UK of refugees from countries formerly colonised by France (or Belgium), and vice versa. In October 2002, to protest against the closure of the Sangatte camp (ironically, itself an example of intergovernmental Anglo-French cooperation against migrants), what organizers described as the 'first cross-Channel demo'¹⁰¹ took place. British activists led a demonstration against Dover Immigration Removal Centre, before catching a ferry to join a demonstration by their French counterparts. Yet when social scientists sought to investigate empirically the impact of EU-level institutional transnationalism on migration activism, they concluded it was rather thinner on the ground than 'postnationalism' theorists had predicted.¹⁰²

98 A. Dummett, 'Europe? Which Europe?', *New Community*, 18, 1 (October 1991), 170.

99 'Entretien avec BG, membre noir du parlement', *Les Temps Modernes*, 540-1 (July-August 1991), 290. Grant's evidence for this was that French people he spoke to assumed a black MP such as himself could only be elected by black voters, because the only black deputies in France were the members for Guadeloupe and Martinique.

100 A. Favell and D. Tambini, 'Great Britain: clear water between "us" and "Europe"?', in B. Baumgartl and A. Favell (eds), *New Xenophobia in Europe* (London 1995), 153.

101 No Border Network, 'Actions Against Migration Management in FR, UK & B', 20 October 2002, available at: http://www.noborder.org/archive_item.php%3Fid=165.html (accessed 19 November 2014); 'Protest against Closure of Sangatte Refugee Shelter', available at <http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2002/10/105573.html>, 21 October 2002 (accessed 19 November 2014). This drew however on earlier contacts: further research could be carried out on the role of transnational Catholic pro-refugee associations in such activism.

102 A. Favell and A. Geddes, 'Immigration and European Integration: New Opportunities for Transnational Mobilisation' in Koopmans and Statham, *Challenging Immigration and Ethnic Relations Politics*, 407-28; R. Koopmans, P. Statham, M. Giugni and F. Passy, *Contested Citizenship: Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe* (Minneapolis, MN 2005), 248; A. Favell,

This article has shown moments of transnationalism, but also times when transnationalism was clearly limited by the boundaries of the nation state. Examples of miscommunication abounded, for activists were products of the national spaces in which they operated. Two principal conclusions arise. First, that the specifically Anglo-French form of transnationalism considered here became more developed after, rather than during, what is classically considered the heyday of transnational protest in the 1960s and 1970s, despite that earlier flourishing of other forms of transnationalism within separate anglophone and francophone spaces. Second, despite the much-vaunted French resistance to the 'Anglo-Saxons', influences in anti-racism in fact flowed more readily southwards than northwards across the Channel. From Rock Against Police to the Book Fairs, there seems to have been an increasing willingness among some elements in anti-racism in France to allow a seepage of British ideas. In fact by 1995 the MRAP had a British vice-president, Cathie Lloyd.¹⁰³ By contrast attempts to transplant French ideas, such as SOS, appear contrived, and only succeeded when the French influence was not made explicit.

Why? Some possible explanations may be suggested. Because of a timelag of a decade or so between the peak years of postcolonial migration to Britain and France, there was a certain deference or even inferiority complex among some circles in France towards those 'twenty years of "fightback"'. It was often asserted by both anglophones and francophones that Britain was further advanced. In 1982 Clyde Alleyne, a French-based Trinidadian presenter of radio programmes about international development, invited La Rose to speak in Paris noting that: 'For us your visit is of tremendous importance as it will give a good start [to] what we hope to achieve in France and elsewhere'. In 1990 Neveu noted that in Britain 'immigrants' were already councillors, social workers and head teachers, so what was only a debate in France was already a reality in Britain: 'immigrants' as consumers, not objects, of politics.¹⁰⁴ While there was some truth to this, the idea of starting from a kind of year zero in France was much exaggerated, omitting the 1968-era phase of first generation immigrant mobilization, which became rather forgotten in the 1980s as younger activists asserted their novelty. In the absence of an adequate generational transmission of immigrant memories in France, then, the anglophone Black model served as a convenient substitute for rebel youth. Because the republican establishment was at such pains to portray the Anglo-Saxon model as anathema, it was not surprising that young people seeking a model for anti-racism occasionally broke republican taboos by taking sneaking looks at Britain. Denunciations by opinion formers of 'Anglo-Saxon communitarianism' became in inverse proportion to its popularity on the ground. Britain, or rather London,

'The Nation-Centred Perspective', in M. Giugni and F. Passy (eds), *Dialogues on Migration Policy* (Lanham, MD 2006), 45–56.

¹⁰³ Lloyd, email to the author (cited in Note 4).

¹⁰⁴ GPI GB 2904 LRA/01/0047, Clyde Alleyne to John La Rose, n.d., accompanied by plane ticket, 4–7 March 1982; White, Harris and Beezmohum, *A Meeting of the Continents*, 96; Neveu, 'L'autre côté du miroir' 109.

because of its youth culture and a reputation for tolerance, acquired the kind of broadly, though not unambiguously, positive image among ethnic minority youth in France that was conspicuously lacking among their counterparts in Britain. During the 1980s, the images London presented of assertive minorities fighting back, and progressive municipal anti-racism, intrigued sections of youth in France. The coincidence that, whereas national political leadership was then exercised by the Right in Britain but the Left in France, local political control in the respective capitals were exactly the other way round, aided this process. Thus the same issue of *Touche pas à mon pote* that celebrated Black British culture with a feature entitled 'The Blacks at Miss Maggie's', complained of surveillance of immigrants by the Paris town hall under Jacques Chirac. By the turn of the millennium, advertisements for trips to the Notting Hill Carnival¹⁰⁵ proliferated around *banlieues* such as St Denis, while Anglo-Jamaican ska music acquired a subcultural following among anti-fascists in France. By contrast, in the UK francophilia remained a largely white and bourgeois phenomenon. Non-white Britons were often put off from visiting France because of fear of racism: in the 1980s harassment of non-white British citizens travelling to France on the now defunct British Visitors Passports became somewhat notorious, encouraging on the British anti-racist Left what Adrian Favell described as 'a deep Europhobia, justified by the proud, almost whiggish belief in the progressive superiority of British anti-discrimination provisions and multicultural tolerance'.¹⁰⁶ Negative attitudes were only reinforced by the success of the FN, undermining any notion that Britain could learn from the French experience. This was unfortunate, for the much-vaunted British exception in lacking a successful far right came under threat in the new millennium – a potent reminder of how French and British destinies are more intertwined than either likes to admit.

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105 *Touche pas à mon pote* (February–March 1986); cf Mogniss Abdallah's potted history of the Carnival in the magazine *Origines Contrôlées*, Autumn 2007.

106 A. Favell, 'Multicultural Race Relations in Britain: Problems of Interpretation and Explanation', in C. Joppke (ed.), *Challenge to the Nation State: Immigration in Western Europe and the United States* (Oxford 1998), 329.

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Biographical Note

Daniel A. Gordon is Senior Lecturer in European History at Edge Hill University. His recent publications include 'From Militancy to History: Sans Frontière and Immigrant Memory at the Dawn of the 1980s', in E. Chabal (ed.), *France Since the 1970s: History, Politics and Memory in an Age of Uncertainty* (London 2014); 'Sans Frontière et Race Today, vecteurs parallèles de l'héritage de l'immigration', in a special issue of *Migrance* edited by Louisa Zanoun, entitled 'La patrimoine de l'immigration en France et en Europe', (2013); and *Immigrants and Intellectuals: May '68 and the Rise of Anti-Racism in France* (Pontypool 2012). He is currently working on a history from below of how public transport users have interacted with the state in postwar France.