

10

ANTI-RACISM, RACE AND THE REPUBLIC IN CONTEMPORARY FRANCE

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Few would disagree that political debate in contemporary France is subject to a so-called Republican consensus. That is to say that a prerequisite for mainstream credibility is the acceptance of a set of principles seen as resulting from the Enlightenment and the Revolution of 1789: *liberté*, *égalité* and *fraternité*, as promised by the Republican slogan; to which has increasingly been added *laïcité*, a strict form of state secularism. Particularly salient to the discussion in this chapter is the conception of citizenship which results from these principles: the Republican citizen is individual, abstract and universal, with no affiliation to organised ‘communities’ based, for example, on religion or ethnic origin. France’s national specificities have a significant impact on anti-racist discourse and strategy, and this chapter aims to examine the complex and contradictory relationship between the anti-racist movement and Republican ideology in contemporary France, focusing particularly on the effect that differing organisations’ relationships with the concept have on their utilisation of the idea of ‘race’ itself. As we will see, the central paradox behind the discussion in the chapter is this: on the one hand, mainstream anti-racist groups have had a tendency to conceive of France’s Republican political culture as inherently compatible with their aims, thus seeing themselves not as challenging the political system and its ideological basis, but as part of the same system and the same traditions. On the other hand however, coexistence of a consensus on the language of republicanism and a lack of consensus on its underlying meaning leads to a situation in which this language – with its basis in Enlightenment, the universalism and rejection of ‘difference’ and particularist identities – can be used as rhetorical cover for almost any political position, including ones which serve to stigmatise and exclude minority populations.

This chapter is made up of two sections. The first section focuses on defining and analysing the central concepts of anti-racism and republicanism, and the way in which these ideas are tightly interlinked in the French context. This section will go into further detail on the paradox introduced previously. Having discussed the theoretical issues, the second section considers how they play out in practice, via a case study of two French anti-racist organisations with highly contrasting views on republicanism: the mainstream, consensus-seeking SOS Racisme (SOS), founded in 1984, and the radically postcolonial Mouvement des Indigènes de la République (MIR), founded in 2005. This section will consider these organisations’ positions on the issue of ‘race,’ the effect it has on society, and whether the acknowledgement of ethnic difference has any part to play in the anti-racist movement. Let us begin, then, with the relationship between anti-racist activism and France’s Republican political culture.

Anti-racism and republicanism

Anti-racism can be a surprisingly difficult concept to pin down. Certainly, it is possible to establish a minimal definition, and certain points of convergence amongst the majority of anti-racist organisations. Alastair Bonnett, for example, defines the fundamental meaning of anti-racism as ‘those forms of thought and/or practice that seek to confront, eradicate and/or ameliorate racism’ (2000: 4), and argues that nearly all forms of anti-racism agree that ‘racism is an intellectual error’; that ‘racism distorts and erases people’s identities’ and that ‘racism is anti-egalitarian and socially unjust’ (2000: 6). Even within this minimal definition of anti-racist beliefs, however, it is possible to find contradictions, particularly relating to the status of ‘race’: as Bonnett notes, ‘If we accept that the notion of race is an intellectual error and a cause of both inequality and the destruction of identity, then it follows that enabling people to express their own racial identity and to be accorded equality, and rights, *as races* is problematic’ (2000: 7). The question of how French anti-racism deals with ‘race’ is a key issue in this chapter so will not be developed further at this point. It should however be noted in passing that the mainstream political cultures in different national contexts lead to widely varying responses on anti-racist strategy and the place of race and ethnicity – a point which complicates further any attempt to define the essence of anti-racism. Anglophones may well take it as read that the fight against racism and discrimination involves the recognition of ethnic or religious ‘communities’ and the keeping of ethnic statistics in order to target action taken and judge its effectiveness, but in the French context such practices are seen by most Republican analysts as highly dangerous to national cohesion and the ideal of a purely equal and neutral form of citizenship (see Favell (1998) for a nuanced comparative analysis of French republicanism and British multiculturalism). Having said this, the form taken by anti-racist discourse and action in a given society is not entirely determined by national political culture: while mainstream social movements may work within the political system and accept its consensual terms of reference, more radical anti-system movements may reject such ‘common sense’ entirely, and argue that discrimination and inequality are embedded within the supposedly liberal and egalitarian structures of society. As Alana Lentin puts it:

Just as racism could be differentially conceived as either fundamentally opposed to the ideologies of the state or undeniably grounded within them, so too anti-racism could be interpreted as either upholding the values of the West incorporated in the state or as a challenge to their usage in practice. These values – democracy, freedom, fraternity, human rights, equality – could at once be seen as the very principles upon which the modern state is built and, therefore, the ideals that an anti-racism that seeks widespread public support should uphold, or alternatively, as the hypocritical anchorings of the state in principles of equality and rights that belie the selective nature of their application.

(2004: 310)

In the French case, republicanism has historically been seen as inherently compatible with anti-racism. Mainstream anti-racist organisations such as LDH, MRAP, LICRA¹ and SOS Racisme have – broadly speaking, and allowing for certain differences in orientation beyond the scope of this chapter – presented racism as contrary to Republican values, and argued that it should be fought through a reassertion of such values, seen as naturally egalitarian. Contemporary republicanism is thus placed in a historical lineage which presents ‘Frenchness’ as progressive and emancipatory, drawing on touchstones such as the Enlightenment, the ‘universal’ Declaration of

the Rights of Man of 1789, the defence of Dreyfus² and the resistance to Nazi occupation during World War II. To quote Lentin again:

French conceptualisations of anti-racism are to a great extent tied to the republican ideologies that are central to the public political culture of that country. [. . .] The importance periodically placed on anti-racism in French post-war politics reflects the extent to which, rather than being the preserve of groups of the racially marginalised, it has been constructed as inherently French, and therefore hegemonic. The ideals of anti-racism have been construed as universally applicable though their connection with the republican principle of liberty, equality and fraternity.

(2004: 115)

A further impact of Republican ideology on the form taken by anti-racism in France relates to the conception of citizenship noted in the introduction: because the French citizen is purely individual, with no legally recognised community attachments, action taken by Republican movements against racism and discrimination is strictly colour-blind, in accordance with article 1 of the French constitution. The use of positive discrimination, quota systems or ethnic monitoring designed to gauge the effectiveness of anti-discrimination policies is therefore seen as inherently dangerous and anti-Republican, as we will see in the case study of SOS Racisme later in the chapter. In an essay arguing against any use of ethnic statistics in the fight against discrimination, for example, the public intellectual and Republican fundamentalist Elisabeth Badinter argues that this practice ‘facilitates the formation of ethnic, cultural, racial and religious communities,’ which leads to ‘the division of France’ (2009: 25); the ‘institutionalisation’ of difference – that is to say, a situation in which France’s ‘ethnic minority’ inhabitants cease to be seen as individuals, and as either current or potential citizens benefiting from equal rights, and begin to be seen solely as faceless representatives of their allotted ‘communities’ (2009: 11) – and the promotion of *communautarisme*.³

A French Republican form of anti-racism, then, has historically been one which takes the Republic’s proclaimed values – freedom, equality, secularism and so on – at face value, thus seeing racism as a contradiction to or perversion of such values. Furthermore, it draws on the Republic’s traditions of individual, ‘universal’ citizenship, being strongly ‘colour-blind’ and hostile to multiculturalism, in contrast to the US and UK where movements are frequently organised on an ethnic or religious basis. A worldview in which individuals are seen as equal, undifferentiated citizens rather than being judged by race or religion may, in theory, sound appealing. There are several major contradictions, however, between theory and practice. Firstly, the historical mythology used to support the idea of the Republic as progressive and emancipatory is decidedly rose tinted. Certainly, it is true that the Republic’s high-minded ideals of freedom, equality and universal human rights have provided inspiration for combats against oppression and injustice, during the Dreyfus Affair or the Occupation, for example. At the same time, however, Republican regimes were also responsible for the forced ‘civilisation’ of supposedly ‘inferior races’ – i.e. non-white ones – during the colonial period,⁴ a point forcefully made in the rhetoric of MIR, as we will see in the case studies shortly (it can also be noted in passing that the Republic has historically been far from progressive in its treatment of women, but that is another question).⁵ Secondly, the ‘Republican consensus’ in contemporary French politics has substantial implications for movements attempting to use the language of republicanism for progressive ends. Almost every political party and social movement aiming to participate in the mainstream attempts to lay claim to Republican values, a state of affairs made possible by the inherent flexibility of the concept: does equality, for example, just imply theoretical equality

of opportunity and equality before the law, or does it imply active efforts to fight inequality and social injustice? Is secularism simply neutrality towards religion, or should the secular state forcibly emancipate its citizens from the supposed backwardness and ignorance of religion and deliver them into the light of progress and reason?⁶ It is this combination of consensus and flexibility which leads to a situation in which different political groupings use the language of republicanism for seemingly irreconcilable purposes: as Sarah Waters argues, at the same time as the left's debates around republicanism 'often involve a re-examination of political traditions, the legacy of the Revolution and the significance of republican values in order to devise responses to today's social problems' (2012: 43), the right is able to use the Republic 'to justify the most hardline and discriminatory laws against immigrants, implemented in the name of strictly defined republican ideals and in particular the principle of secularism' (2012: 42). This can be seen, for example, in the discourse of Nicolas Sarkozy, France's president from 2007 to 2012, who argued in a 2007 campaign speech in Caen that the opposite of the Republic is represented by:

Someone who does not respect our values of liberty, who rejects humanism and universalism, who rejects reason, who wants to abolish the heritage of the Enlightenment and the Revolution, who does not want to recognise that women are equal to men, who wants to shut his wife away indoors, and make his daughter wear the veil, or submit to female circumcision or forced marriage.

(in Noiriel 2007: 95)

In this kind of discourse then, the definition of the Republic is clear: it is the opposite of Islam, evoked as something medieval and barbaric through a mixture of exaggerations, stereotypes and innuendo. This of course poses substantial problems for the anti-racist movement: how is it possible to use the language of republicanism to fight racism when it is so frequently used, in mainstream political debate, to stigmatise minority populations?

Finally for this section, the tenability of Republican 'colour-blindness' as a basis for anti-racist action can perhaps be questioned. The official invisibility of 'ethnic universalist republican ideology' theoretically leads to them being treated as equals. Some analysts, however, argue that it may actually serve to harm these populations, by 'disarming them when faced with the effects of an ethnic and racial hierarchisation hidden behind formal equality' (Simon 2006: 162). According to this viewpoint, those who argue for a 'colour-blind' Republican response to racial discrimination are to some extent in denial of reality: just because ethnic categorisation and hierarchies *should* not exist, this does not mean they *do* not exist. As Koopmans et al. point out:

[T]he French approach has difficulty in dealing with the fact that cultural group differences, which are denied as legitimate policy categories, do form the basis of discrimination and racism from the side of the majority population. [. . .] Insisting on the equal treatment of all and loathing group-specific approaches, France to some extent ties its own hands when it comes to combating forms of social exclusion that are rooted in ethnic and cultural differences.

(2006: 14)

How, then, is it possible to fight discrimination based on race and ethnicity, using the tools provided by a political ideology which refuses to take race and ethnicity into account? This is a key question for SOS, as we will see in the following case study.

Case studies: SOS Racisme and the Mouvement des Indigènes de la République

Let us now move on, then, to the case studies, which consider how the issues of race and republicanism, and their place in anti-racism, play out in the discourse of two contrasting anti-racist movements in contemporary France: SOS Racisme (SOS) and the Mouvement des Indigènes de la République (MIR). I will begin by considering SOS, still perhaps France's best-known anti-racist association.

SOS Racisme was founded in 1984. Closely linked with François Mitterrand's Socialist Party in a political climate marked by the increasing influence of the far right Front National (FN), it quickly became associated in the public mind with its telegenic founding president Harlem Désir; its massive, highly mediated public events (a free music festival at the Place de la Concorde in 1985 attracted 300,000 people); and the promotion of a form of liberal multiculturalism known as 'the right to difference' (*le droit à la différence*). This discourse on the 'right to difference' did not, however, last long. By the early 1990s, the window on any putative rethinking of republicanism and its universalist conception of citizenship seemed to be firmly shut, the political class collectively deciding, over the course of several high-profile commissions on nationality, citizenship and the place of religion, that it was necessary to reinforce the 'Republican consensus' – and, thus, the official hostility to manifestations of 'difference' – in the face of the FN threat (Favell 1998). For its part, SOS – as a mainstream movement with links to one of France's major parties – went along with this consensus,⁷ thereafter articulating a discourse stressing equality of opportunity, *laïcité*, and 'colour-blindness' in relation to race (SOS Racisme 2006).

In its twenty-first-century incarnation, then, SOS is representative of the kind of mainstream, Republican anti-racist movement whose strengths and weaknesses were considered in the first section. As such, it takes at face value the idea that Republican values are naturally progressive, seeing its role as promoting and protecting such values, and ensuring they are properly applied throughout society by the political authorities. As the association's 2007 'mission statement' puts it, 'To defend the Republic is to make it be seen as a source of emancipation; it is to make it credible by ensuring that its values are lived by everyone, everywhere in day-to-day life.' And one of the values it sees itself defending is the egalitarian colour-blindness proclaimed by the constitution. As the same document states: 'Anti-racism, for us, has always been the desire to see everybody live with equal dignity in society, whatever their origin, their religion or their cultural practices' (SOS Racisme 2007).

This positioning on the part of SOS can be illustrated by examining the association's reaction to the possibility of using ethnic classifications and statistics in the fight against racial discrimination, and the measures it proposes to take against such discrimination itself. For SOS, the idea of distinguishing between France's inhabitants on the basis of ethnicity is seen as inherently incompatible with Republican ideals; and as France does not officially recognise or monitor ethnic groups, neither should the anti-racist movement. Indeed, SOS presents such classifications as contrary to French identity. As the current SOS president Dominique Sopo argues, France is a 'terre de métissage'⁸ (SOS Racisme 2006: 96). And if this is the case, then taking into account ethnic difference is automatically contrary to the underlying ideological essence of French society. As Sopo's argument continues, classifying populations in this way 'would push populations into referring to particularist categories, and no longer to the category of citizenship. But one of the great strengths of France [. . .] resides precisely in the fact that, in our country, ethnic, cultural and religious barriers are highly porous' (SOS Racisme 2006). For SOS, therefore, there must be no deviation from what could be called the 'universal citizen' proclaimed theoretically

by the French constitution. That is to say, race, ethnicity and religion should all be subordinate to the greater ideal of French citizenship, and no forms of community organisation based on these categories should intervene between the citizen and the 'universalist' state. As Sopo argues elsewhere:

To invite people to live as if they belonged to this or that 'ethnic category' or 'community' (which would be defined over the heads of those involved) is of course to take the risk of creating barriers and therefore, under the cover of fighting against discrimination, to fall into a 'communitarianised'⁹ society which in no way corresponds to our ideals.

(Manifeste pour l'égalité 2007: 43)

It is the view of the movement, then, that ethnic classification – even if brought in with the aim of fighting discrimination – is highly dangerous, as it leads to 'visible minorities' being seen not as true citizens but as undifferentiated members of 'communities.' It is seen as leading to a situation in which the identities of minority populations become racialised, which leads in turn to such populations racialising their *own* identities, making them inflexible and unchangeable.

This being the case, much of the action proposed by SOS against discrimination focuses on anonymisation: that is, making ethnic origin invisible to gatekeepers of social opportunity. A recurrent demand of SOS, for example, is for anonymous CVs: the logic being that because CVs under this proposal would contain no name, address or photograph, potential candidates could not be stereotyped by employers and thus rejected without an interview.¹⁰ Similarly, the organisation has argued (for example in its 'Manifesto for equality' published ahead of the 2007 presidential election) for the anonymisation of applications for social housing, in the hope of promoting 'social mixing' and fighting the 'ghettoisation' of poor minority populations (2007: 140). The movement's strategy can therefore perhaps be seen as a literal enforcement of the Republic's proclaimed 'colour-blindness,' leading it to conceive of the fight against discrimination in territorial and socio-economic, rather than ethnic, terms.

So far in this chapter we have mainly been considering the Republican, colour-blind form of French anti-racism, as represented by a movement like SOS. As noted in the first section however, social movements can of course choose to act outside the system and challenge the mainstream political culture of the country in which they operate. This is the position taken by the Mouvement des Indigènes de la République (MIR).

MIR was founded in 2005 by a group of anti-racist, anti-colonial and radical left activists, many of North African origin, who published an appeal which denounced the widespread racism and discrimination faced by postcolonial immigrant-origin populations. This discrimination, it was argued, was the result of logics, processes and stereotypes which had their origins in the colonial era, hence the use of the term *indigène* in the name of the movement: the term can be taken to refer to a non-white inhabitant of the French colonies who is denied full citizen status, denied equality in a supposed hierarchy of civilisations, and denied equality before the law through subjection to the *code de l'indigénat*.¹¹ As Sadri Khiari, one of the founders of the movement, puts it:

'We are the Natives of the Republic' signifies this: the Republic claims to be universal and egalitarian; and the *indigène* no longer exists as a juridical status. However, in renewed and often unprecedented ways, the regime of the *indigénat* continues to haunt institutions, practices and ideologies.

(2006: 17)

Tom Martin

As we have seen, the assumption underlying mainstream political discourse in France is that republicanism is, by definition, universal: there should be no differentiation between France's inhabitants based on ethnicity or origin. MIR, however, reverses this assumption by referring to 'white universalism' and the 'white Republic.' As the movement's leader Houria Bouteldja puts it:

In France, the *Indigènes* have taken up the weapon of race in order to fight the stubborn rhetoric of universalism: a white universalism which masks and denies the structural hierarchies which constitute the French Republic.

(*indigenes-republique.fr* 2011)

In other words, for MIR the 'universalist' principles inherited from the Enlightenment, which went on to form the basis of Republican ideology, were only ever truly applicable to white populations of European origin, as shown by the Republic's history of colonial racism and exploitation, dressed up in the paternalistic language of a 'civilising mission.' What is more, Bouteldja argues, the widespread belief in the universalist nature of Republican values has served to cover up the systemic nature of race and discrimination in French society.

The movement's view, then, is that the Republic is not a safeguard against racial inequalities; it is fundamentally based on racial inequalities – as is the modern nation state in a wider sense. As Florence Bernault writes of the movement:

For the *Indigènes*, race is not prior to, or distinct from, the project of modern nation-building, but has historically emerged as a state-sponsored tool of distancing and othering, while the French republican order, under the pretence of imposing universal civil rights over cultural and racial loyalties, has essentialised racial and cultural differences.

(in *Tshimanga, Gondola and Bloom* 2009: 129)

And this situation has led to the existence of ingrained racial hierarchies, which the movement has frequently proclaimed the need to end. This is perhaps easier said than done, as such hierarchies are rarely, if ever, explicitly stated: rather, they are made up of generations of stereotypes embedded in the subconscious mind of the population, and/or disguised as something else, such as a discussion of the incompatibility of various 'immigrant' cultures with that of France. Nevertheless, it is clear that the *Indigènes* see movements like SOS, which refuse – on the grounds of fidelity to Republican values and fear of endorsing *communautarisme* – to differentiate between races as fundamentally in denial of social reality.

As such, the focus of MIR is not specifically on the 'social question' – that is, fighting inequality on socio-economic grounds, with racial issues addressed only as a by-product. Rather, for MIR the 'racial question' is paramount, with class, wealth and social opportunity seen as subsets of this central issue. As Bouteldja states in a 2011 interview with the author:

It is necessary to understand systems of domination and the divides in society. For us the central divides are racial, and colonial. That is to say, class divides – left/right, rich/poor – are not sufficiently pertinent to understand the situation of *indigènes* in France. [. . .] And we say that, if you want to fight against discrimination, and for more justice between whites and non-whites, you must the racial divide; the racial fracture. That race, as a socio-historical phenomenon, exists.

(*Interview August 2011a*)

A major difference between the positions of MIR and SOS can be summed up by the reference here to 'systems of domination.' Broadly speaking, for SOS, racism is something that takes place between an individual and an individual, or an individual and an institution (employers, housing associations, schools, etc.), and can be fought against via legal action, and state action in favour of equality. For MIR on the other hand, racism is systemic, or even intrinsic to the formation of the modern nation state. It is the movement's argument consequently that 'universalist' or 'consensual' conceptions of anti-racism are by definition inadequate: this form of anti-racism is seen as choosing deliberately to decontextualise the acts of discrimination it targets, by focusing on the acts themselves rather than the racial power relations which underpin them. A colour-blind form of anti-racism, therefore, is clearly insufficient when society is not 'colour-blind' in reality.

Linked to MIR's analysis of racial power relations in French society, and to their connected analysis of the dominant/dominated relationship within racism – according to which white people are 'dominant' and hold the vast majority of power in every field; while non-whites, particularly 'postcolonised' blacks and Arabs, are 'dominated,' holding very little power – is the idea that all white people, regardless of social class, benefit from social privileges due to their race. As Khiari puts it, 'Certainly, not all white French people are racist. At the same time, though, they all benefit indirectly and involuntarily from the postcolonial regime' (2006: 90). Similarly, the MIR-affiliated sociologist Pierre Tévanian (2008: 74) argues that like 'black' or 'Arab,' 'white is not a racial category, but a social category' – but unlike the privileges that arise from being part of the visible majority, non-white populations suffer from disadvantages in society based on their skin colour. In this type of argument, MIR shifts the argument about racism away from individual agency, and posits it instead as something entirely systemic: white populations benefit from the postcolonial, whether they like it or not, and conversely, non-white populations suffer from it. If MIR's argument is correct therefore, movements like SOS are missing the point by seeing racism as something that can be isolated and legislated against: rather, mainstream politics must admit the continuing influence of race on society, in order to begin 'deracialising' and 'decolonising.' Hidebound by Republican ideology, however, it is collectively unwilling or unable to do so.

Conclusions

These case studies illustrate the complex and contradictory relationship that French anti-racism has with republicanism, and consequently with the idea of race itself. Certainly, Republican values – *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, secularism, 'colour-blind' universalism and so on – may seem in theory to be favourable to anti-racism. In practice, however, they have frequently proved to be anything but favourable, being used historically as an alibi for the forced 'civilisation' of 'inferior races,' and still being used in contemporary France as a means of stigmatising immigration and Islam, presented as an inherent threat to Republican identity. As Max Silverman notes, the French state has for much of its history 'preached inclusion according to universalist criteria,' while simultaneously 'practising exclusion through racialising the French community and its other' (1992: 9). What, then, should be the goal of French anti-racism? Should it redouble its efforts to make the self-proclaimed principles of the Republic a genuine reality? Or should it question these principles, the uses they have been put to, and the social and racial power relations which lie behind them? In a political context where the 'Republican consensus' appears to be becoming stronger and stronger, and less and less tolerant of any manifestation of 'difference,' it perhaps seems unlikely that any group taking the second of these options will have much impact

in public debate – and indeed, MIR has always been very much a minority voice. This does not mean, however, that these are not important questions to ask.

Notes

- 1 Respectively: Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (Human Rights League), founded in 1898; Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples (Movement against Racism and for Friendship between Peoples), founded in 1949; and Ligue Internationale Contre le Racisme et l'Antisémitisme (International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism), founded in 1927.
- 2 Alfred Dreyfus (1859–1935) was a Jewish officer in the French Army who was falsely accused of treason in a highly anti-Semitic political climate. His cause was taken up by a number of prominent republicans, most notably Émile Zola. The LDH, touched upon earlier, was founded as a result of this case.
- 3 There is no single term in English which captures all the connotations of *communautarisme*: it refers to populations seeing their primary loyalty as being towards an ethnic or religious 'community' rather than to the Republic, and is frequently used as a polemic term to attack the supposed 'refusal to integrate' of France's Muslim population.
- 4 This is not an attitude which was euphemised by republicans of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, one of the most celebrated figures in the history of French republicanism, Jules Ferry (1832–1893), was at the same time a fervent secularist, the father of the modern French education system and a promoter of colonial expansion who argued that 'superior races [. . .] have the duty to civilise inferior races.'
- 5 See for example Gill Allwood's chapter in the present volume (Chapter 5).
- 6 This is a caricature of Republican attitudes towards religion, but only slightly: it was this kind of logic which underlay the anti-clericalism of the revolutionary period (post-1789) and the Third Republic (1870–1940), and which still frequently serves as a justification for Republican hostility towards Islam.
- 7 A decision also influenced by the fact that it had found itself on the wrong side of prevailing opinion in relation to the Gulf War – SOS had opposed it, while the majority had supported it – and perhaps most importantly, in relation to the first 'headscarf affair' in 1989: SOS had supported the right of three Muslim schoolgirls to wear the veil in class, while many prominent republicans, such as Alain Finkielkraut, opposed it with almost astonishing vehemence. By 2004, when the affair cropped up again, SOS was in line with the Republican logic that the veil should be outlawed in schools in order to defend secularism and equality.
- 8 Literally 'land of mixing.' What is meant here is that France is – or should be – a country where citizens of different ethnicities and religions freely mix, because they are unencumbered by particularist identities which confine them to fixed 'communities.'
- 9 The original French word used is 'communautarisée.' As noted earlier, *communautarisme* is not a term which translates smoothly into English, as the danger it is seen as representing, and the intensity of the debate it provokes, are so specific to the French context.
- 10 See for example *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 10 July 2014. <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/societe/social/20140710.OBS3414/cv-anonyme-ce-n-est-pas-la-solution-magique-mais.html> [Accessed: 20.10.2015].
- 11 This was a code of law used in the French colonies, which was notable for creating offences that could only be committed by 'natives,' and for the fact that colonial administrators could apply disciplinary sanctions without judicial procedure. Equality before the law, it should be noted, was proclaimed as a 'universal' human right by what is arguably the foundational text of modern France, the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789.

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Anti-racism, race and the Republic

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