

8 Immigrants and Social Justice in Western Europe since the 1960s

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Democracy in Western Europe, even after 1945, was not a regime of equality. As recent work has strongly emphasised, lineages of inequality were inherent to the post-war regimes of Western Europe. The cautiously conservative, conformist, and hierarchical instigators of democracy in prosperous post-war societies chose to marginalise or exclude many from the apparently inclusive democratic process.¹ This chapter seeks to explain one element of this inequality by focusing on the treatment of the immigrant communities who moved across borders in Western Europe, or indeed arrived from beyond the frontiers of Europe.

In doing so, it will focus on how attitudes towards immigrants – and the conception of them within a broader framework of social justice – evolved in the years following 1968. One of the many significant ways that the ‘long 1968’ challenged the complacency of post-war Western Europe was to present the cause of immigrants as a cause of social justice: immigrants were an oppressed and exploited group of workers whose rights any movement committed to social justice should seek to enhance. By contrast, in Europe today, immigrants are often depicted as antithetical to social justice. What some have dubbed ‘Schrödinger’s immigrant’² simultaneously steals your job *and* is too lazy to work. In the popular imagination, immigrants are, at best, a privileged yet alien group, whose hard work and consequent relative economic success is itself proof of unfair competition for the beleaguered native worker, and, at worst, a drain on the generosity of the native taxpayer. Consequently, many commentators have attempted to argue that a fundamental tension exists between ethnic diversity and social equality, and depict mass migration as undermining social justice. But where did such ‘welfare chauvinism’ originate

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¹ M. Conway, *Europe’s Democratic Age 1945–1968* (Princeton, NJ, 2020).

² R. Rowthorn and D. Růžička, ‘Schrödinger’s Immigrant’, *Social Europe*, 14 Sept. 2017, www.socialeurope.eu/schrodingers-immigrant.

from, and how did these ideas manage to entrench themselves within public discourse? In other words, how did we get from social justice for immigrants to immigrants as the antithesis of social justice?

A conventional answer to this question might focus on the loss of confidence of left-wing political projects towards the end of the twentieth century, and the concomitant rise of the radical right and its hostility to mass immigration. This chapter, however, interrogates tensions *within* social-justice discourses of the left and centre-left, and, in doing so, complicates the story of 1968 and its legacy, paying attention to emancipatory *and* exclusionary aspects. In particular, it explores the origins of a strand of thinking that could be termed ‘Goodhartism’, after its leading contemporary exponent David Goodhart, but which has deeper and broader roots transcending Goodhart’s British context and his twenty-first-century prominence. This is, therefore, both a history of national exclusions and a transnational history of a Western European convergence of discourses on immigrants and social justice across the last three decades of the twentieth century.

Goodhart’s controversial article ‘Too Diverse?’, published in 2004 in *Prospect*, the magazine he then edited, set him up as one of the most influential public intellectuals in UK migration debates. The welfare state, Goodhart suggested, will no longer be sustainable the more that its beneficiaries cease to be culturally or ethnically similar to those whose taxes fund it.³ Goodhart’s ‘progressive dilemma’, in which solidarity and diversity are antithetical values, is a form of welfare chauvinism, in many ways presaging the post-liberal or even anti-liberal turn that the United Kingdom later appeared to take with the Brexit referendum in 2016.⁴ Yet Goodhart was no putative spokesman for the populist right. Goodhart framed his argument as a family disagreement within what he terms his ‘tribe’ of North London liberals.⁵ *Prospect* was close to the New Labour project of Tony Blair, and Goodhart’s measured technocratic prose pre-emptively attempts to disarm charges of racism, whilst advocating policy solutions that indeed amounted to exclusion, and envisaged fewer rights for fewer people.⁶

However, while ‘Goodhartism’ seeks to celebrate Britishness, his ideas were no British exception. Most obviously, they could be regarded as an import from the United States, where the theme of much diversity but little solidarity

³ D. Goodhart, ‘Too Diverse?’, *Prospect*, Feb. 2004.

⁴ D. Goodhart and C. Kjelstrup, ‘Questioning Diversity’, *Eurozine*, 6 July 2018, www.eurozine.com/questioning-diversity.

⁵ D. Goodhart, ‘Why I Left My London Liberal Tribe’, *Financial Times*, 17 Mar. 2017.

⁶ D. Goodhart, ‘Immigration after Brexit: What Should Post-Brexit Immigration Policy Look Like?’, Policy Exchange pamphlet, Jan. 2018, policyexchange.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Immigration-after-Brexit.pdf. On this context, see M. Goodfellow, *Hostile Environment: How Immigrants Became Scapegoats* (London, 2020), pp. 92–128.

has become a staple of political debate. Goodhart's source for the 'progressive dilemma' was a 1998 speech by the British Conservative politician David Willetts, in turn influenced by the American political scientist Robert Putnam.⁷ In addition, however, it also formed part of a broader Western European context. The rhetoric of the 'progressive dilemma' is in some respects very similar to the themes of the 'neo-republicanism' that emerged on the centre-left in France in the late 1980s, most prominently associated with thinkers such as Alain Finkielkraut and Pierre-André Taguieff.⁸ One leading analyst of anti-racism, Alana Lentin, has pointed out that the argument now often heard in the anglophone world, that the excesses of identity politics on the cosmopolitan left are responsible for the rise of the 'alt-right', is not particularly original, for theorists such as Taguieff were making very similar arguments in 1991, identifying the cultural relativism of the anti-racist left as responsible for the rise of the Front National in France.⁹

The parallel can be pursued further. Like the French neo-republicans, Goodhart takes issue with what became termed in France as *le droit à la différence*: if only 'immigrants' – a selective construct applied to many people born in France, yet not to some actual immigrants – would rally around the Republic and abandon their demands for 'the right to be different', then social solidarity would be restored. From the late 1980s onwards, there was much talk in Parisian circles of a so-called national-republicanism, of which Taguieff – alongside other former 68ers, notably Régis Debray – was one of the most distinguished exponents. Like Goodhart, these thinkers advocated a reassertion of the nation state as the means for bringing about a revival of social solidarity.¹⁰

Neo-republicanism has often been viewed as a particularly French phenomenon. The extent to which French discourses of social solidarity both resisted the apparent triumph of neoliberalism elsewhere and were sometimes combined with an equally strident rejection of 'Anglo-Saxon' multiculturalism indeed appeared distinctive at the time.¹¹ Taguieff was strongly critical of free-market economics, presenting what one exposition of his work describes

⁷ Goodhart, 'Too Diverse?'

⁸ D. Goodhart, *The British Dream: Successes and Failures of Post-war Immigration* (London, 2013); D. Gordon, 'Integration, Again: The Frenchness of a British Nationalist', *Political Quarterly*, 84 (2013), 551–3.

⁹ A. Lentin, 'Fault on Both Sides? Racism, Anti-Racism and the Persistence of White Supremacy', Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 27 Feb. 2018, www.abc.net.au/religion/fault-on-both-sides-racism-anti-racism-and-the-persistence-of-wh/10094946.

¹⁰ C. Flood, 'National Republican Politics, Intellectuals and the Case of Pierre-André Taguieff', *Modern and Contemporary France*, 12 (2004), 364–5.

¹¹ C. Laborde, *Critical Republicanism: The Hijab Controversy and Political Theory* (Oxford, 2008); E. Chabal, *A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France* (Cambridge, 2015).

as ‘a nightmarish picture of the destructive effects of global hypercapitalism in every sphere of social existence’.¹² This in turn reflected the way that France experienced no moment equivalent to Thatcherism of assault on the post-war consensus. National-republicanism found political expression in the 2002 presidential campaign of former Defence and Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement, an ultra-Jacobin renegade from the François Mitterrand-era Socialists. Chevènement’s attempt to transcend the left/right divide was not especially successful at the ballot box, but it set the ideological terms of reference for the future, with echoes of his themes evident in the rhetoric of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Marine Le Pen, and many others. A similar and unmistakably French tone dominates the editorial line of the left-of-centre weekly *Marianne*, founded in 1997 by the campaigning journalist Jean-François Kahn with a classically neo-republican combination of strident critiques of multiculturalism with opposition to neoliberalism and American imperialism, a successful formula that by the mid-2000s was claiming a readership as high as 1.3 million.¹³

In retrospect, however, this looks less a French exception and more reflective of a broader European trend. In West Berlin in 1985, some four years before the more internationally notorious French *affaire du foulard* concerning the banning of Islamic headscarves in French schools, a male SPD city-council member objected to a teaching assistant wearing a headscarf, while the same year the Netherlands too witnessed an early ‘headscarf affair’.¹⁴ In the decades since 1989, some variant of this ‘headscarf affair’ has emerged almost everywhere in Europe, but this rejection of diversity on cultural grounds – often focusing on Muslim women – has served as a vehicle for a much wider rejection of diversity that resonates on parts of both right and left. Placed in this context, Goodhartism seems less a distinctive product of British political culture than one manifestation of ideas that surfaced across Europe.¹⁵ Perhaps the most striking example of an apparently sudden backlash against multiculturalism took place in the early 2000s in the hitherto supposedly ultra-tolerant Netherlands, with the rapid succession of the Pim Fortuyn, Theo Van Gogh,

¹² Flood, ‘National Republican Politics’, 362.

¹³ Open Source Center, ‘France – Media Guide 2008’, 16 July 2008, irp.fas.org/dni/osc/france-media.pdf.

¹⁴ R. Chin, ‘Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race’, in R. Chin, H. Fehrenbach, G. Eley, and A. Grossmann, *After the Nazi Racial State: Difference and Democracy in Germany and Europe* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2009), pp. 97–8; D. Lettinga and S. Saharso, ‘Outsiders Within: Framing and Regulation of Headscarves in France, Germany and the Netherlands’, *Social Inclusion*, 2 (2014), 33.

¹⁵ I will refer most extensively to France and the United Kingdom, but we shall see that what Davide Però calls the ‘neo-assimilationist turn’ finds parallel expression elsewhere: D. Però, *Inclusionary Rhetoric/Exclusionary Practices: Left-Wing Politics and Migration in Italy* (New York, 2007), pp. 142–3.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and Geert Wilders affairs. In part, the Dutch backlash came from conservative neo-nationalists such as Wilders, no friends of the welfare state.¹⁶ Yet, as Leo and Jan Lucassen suggest, it also had roots on the left, pointing to the pivotal role of leading immigration critic and Labour Party member Paul Scheffer, who had a background in extreme-left activism in the 1970s – as did Fortuyn, for whom Muslim immigrants had to be rejected in the name of defending Dutch liberalism and gay rights.¹⁷

Thus individual national cases form part of a wider convergence in Western European discourses on multiculturalism.¹⁸ As Steven Vertovec and Susanne Wessendorf have observed, ‘beginning around the turn of the millennium, sporadic critical voices seemingly became harmonized into a chorus’.¹⁹ Throughout Europe, a wide range of political voices asserted the virtues of ‘integration’ and ‘community cohesion’.²⁰ From Tony Blair’s 2006 speech on the ‘duty to integrate’ via David Cameron’s 2011 claim that ‘we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and much more active, muscular liberalism’²¹ to the 2021 Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities’ critique of ‘well organised single-issue identity lobby groups’,²² British leaders have queued up to bury, rather than praise, the doctrine of multiculturalism that had found an early expression in the 1966 speech on ‘equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity’ by Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins. This was part of a continent-wide turn against the perceived relativism of multiculturalism, which intensified in the wake of 9/11 and the 2003 Iraq War, exemplified by the rapid rise and fall of multiculturalism in German political discourse, cemented by Angela Merkel’s stark claim in 2010 that multiculturalism has ‘utterly failed’.²³

¹⁶ B. Prins and S. Saharso, ‘From Tolerance to Repression: The Dutch Backlash against Multiculturalism’, in S. Vertovec and S. Wessendorf (eds.), *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European Policies, Discourses and Practices* (London, 2010), pp. 72–91.

¹⁷ L. Lucassen and J. Lucassen, ‘The Strange Death of Dutch Tolerance: The Timing and Nature of the Pessimist Turn in the Dutch Migration Debate’, *Journal of Modern History*, 87 (2015), 72–101; R. Chin, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe: A History* (Princeton, NJ, 2017), pp. 274–5.

¹⁸ On this larger theme, see Chin, *Crisis of Multiculturalism*.

¹⁹ S. Vertovec and S. Wessendorf, ‘Introduction: Assessing the Backlash against Multiculturalism in Europe’, in Vertovec and Wessendorf (eds.), *The Multiculturalism Backlash*, p. 4; see also S. Sharma, *Postcolonial Minorities in Britain and France: In the Hyphen of the Nation-State* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 104–46.

²⁰ 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.

²¹ V. Latour, ‘“Muscular Liberalism”: Surviving Multiculturalism? A Historical and Political Contextualisation of David Cameron’s Munich Speech’, *Observatoire de la société britannique*, 12 (2012), 199–216.

²² *The Guardian*, 1 Apr. 2021. ²³ Chin, *Crisis of Multiculturalism*, pp. 237–8.

As reflected in the ‘war on woke’ waged by Boris Johnson’s government in post-Brexit Britain and the efforts of certain of Emmanuel Macron’s ministers to denounce the spectres of *islamogauchisme* and *les thèses intersectionnelles*,²⁴ from the vantage point of the 2020s multiculturalism looks less a distinctive national model than a window in time, swept aside by yet another of the national-protectionist backlashes that periodically haunt modern Europe. If visions of a tolerant and open society also have a profound resonance for many citizens, shared transnationally within and beyond the constituent parts of ‘Old Europe’, it was the exclusionary side of the argument – what Robert Gildea terms ‘the retreat to monocultural nationalism’²⁵ or, to put it more bluntly, in the words of the late Ambalavaner Sivanandan, ‘xenoracism’²⁶ – that came to the fore in much political rhetoric across Europe in the 2010s.

This draws strength from a blurring of ideological dividing lines, reflected in a workerist turn on the populist right and extreme right. Most notably, this has been the case in France, where the phenomenon has been dubbed *gaucholépenisme*, reflecting the electoral success of the Front National amongst working-class communities.²⁷ It has also been a main feature of politics in Italy, where one of the mainsprings of the success of the Lega Nord/Lega has been to present itself as neither right nor left, but defending the territory of the Italian working class.²⁸ This was also evident in the Northern European former heartlands of social democracy: as the extreme right Norwegian Progress Party put it in 1997, ‘We are the caretakers of the working class... Labour has deserted the welfare state.’²⁹ This phenomenon has also been present in the United Kingdom, which as recently as the turn of the millennium saw itself as somehow immune to extremism. Particularly in England, the right and far right have attempted, relatively successfully, to speak the plebeian-democratic language long associated with the left, while some left thinkers and activists have proffered their own *main tendue* to variants of xenophobic nationalism.³⁰ National-protectionist modes of thinking influenced the Euroscepticism of

²⁴ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 26 Oct. 2020.

²⁵ R. Gildea, *Empires of the Mind: The Colonial Past and the Politics of the Present* (Cambridge, 2019), p. 158.

²⁶ In Sivanandan’s usage, the term ‘xeno-racism’ designates ‘racism that is meted out to impoverished strangers even if they are white’: L. Fekete, ‘The Emergence of Xeno-racism’, *Institute of Race Relations*, 28 Sept. 2001, www.irr.org.uk/news/the-emergence-of-xeno-racism.

²⁷ J. Evans, ‘Le vote gaucholépeniste: Le masque extrême d’une dynamique normale’, *Revue française de science politique*, 50 (2000), 21–52.

²⁸ See M. Avanza, ‘The Northern League and Its “Innocuous” Xenophobia’, in A. Mammone and G. Vettori (eds.), *Italy Today: The Sick Man of Europe* (London, 2010), pp. 131–42.

²⁹ L. Fekete, *A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe* (London, 2009), p. 3.

³⁰ BobFromBrockley, ‘Left Nationalism and Brexit Bolshevism’, 6 Apr. 2019, brockley.blogspot.com/2019/04/left-nationalism-and-brexit-bolshevism.html; SDP, ‘New Declaration’, Nov. 2018, sdp.org.uk/new-declaration.

the radical left Labour leadership of Jeremy Corbyn, in ways that resembled Mélenchon's erratic veering in France between internationalism and nationalism.³¹

In Germany, the SPD's former Berlin finance minister Thilo Sarrazin has espoused open Islamophobia in provocative books such as *Feindliche Übernahme* (Hostile Takeover) and *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Germany Abolishes Itself), accusing Turkish and Arab Germans of an unwillingness to integrate and reliance on welfare.³² Sahra Wagenknecht, former chair of Die Linke's group in the Bundestag and founder in 2018 of the left-wing cross-party movement Aufstehen, considers immigrants responsible for the decline of unions. Wagenknecht is severely critical of refugee rights and the 'left-liberal cosmopolitanism' of the 'self-righteous' university-educated classes who 'see a brother in every human being' and advocate 'a society without membership' – in spite of her background in Marxist philosophy and economics obtained in part from student mobility to a Dutch university, and her origins as the daughter of an Iranian student and an East German state employee.³³

Critics have rightly pointed out that arguments of this kind underestimate the degree of diversity to be found in nation states prior to post-1945 mass immigration – including earlier periods of migration perceived as threatening at the time.³⁴ And while anti-migrant attitudes have become a prominent feature of contemporary political discourse in Europe, there is nothing new

³¹ M. Bolton and F. H. Pitts, *Corbynism: A Critical Approach* (Brighton, 2018); J. Salingue, 'On Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Europe, and Especially Migrants', *International Viewpoint*, 27 Sept. 2018, internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article5722; 'In Conversation with Jean-Luc Mélenchon', talk at the World Transformed, Liverpool, 24 Sept. 2018.

³² M. Meng, 'Silences about Sarrazin's Racism in Contemporary Germany', *Journal of Modern History*, 87 (2015), 102–35.

³³ D. Adler, 'Meet Europe's Left Nationalists', *The Nation*, 28 Jan. 2019; University of Groningen, 'Alumna in Germany: Sahra Wagenknecht', www.rug.nl/about-ug/latest-news/news/newsletters/international/2019/alumna-in-germany-sahra-wagenknecht?lang=en; P. Schwarz, 'The Nationalist Diatribe of a Left Party Leader – A Review of the New Book by Sahra Wagenknecht', World Socialist Website, 13 July 2021, www.wsws.org/en/articles/2021/07/14/wag1-j14.html.

³⁴ Cf. L. Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat: The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850* (Urbana, IL, 2006). Initial criticisms of Goodhart were published in 'Too Diverse?', *Prospect*, Mar. 2004. For social-science critiques, see P. Pathak, *The Future of Multicultural Britain: Confronting the Progressive Dilemma* (Edinburgh, 2008), pp. 33–61; W. Kymlicka, 'Solidarity in Diverse Societies: Beyond Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Welfare Chauvinism', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 17 (2015), 1–19; B. Rogaly, 'Brexit Writings and the War of Position over Migration, "Race" and Class', *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 37 (2019), 28–40; J. Bloomfield, 'Progressive Politics in a Changing World: Challenging the Fallacies of Blue Labour', *Political Quarterly*, 91 (2020), 89–97; on Sweden, C. Schall, *The Rise and Fall of the Miraculous Welfare Machine: Immigration and Social Democracy in Twentieth Century Sweden* (Ithaca, NY, 2016); and on France, 'Le maintien de l'état providence est-il compatible avec l'accueil des migrants?', *De Facto* 4 (2019), www.icmigrations.cnrs.fr/defacto/defacto-004.

about anti-migration leftism in its various guises. Visions of social justice from which minorities are excluded have a long history;³⁵ and there has always been a certain nationalist logic to social democracy's practical implementation that can be traced back as early as the Gotha Programme of 1875.³⁶ To present social justice through the prism of a state-centred nostalgia for what retrospectively became known as *les trente glorieuses* from 1945 to its perceived end in 1973 therefore risks presenting too simple a vision. Instead, tracing an alternative history of social justice in its entanglement with migration requires transcending such conventional periodisation breaks, or indeed 1989.³⁷ To that end, the remainder of this chapter seeks to explore the ways in which today's anti-migration leftism had antecedents in the world of post-war Europe, and how they were until recently eclipsed by other, more generous, conceptions of the relationship between social justice and migration. As it seeks to demonstrate, the history of social justice in Europe is not simply a progressive story of ever-expanding equality and rights.³⁸ Instead, it was marked by fundamental ruptures and bifurcations that call into question linear accounts of twentieth-century European history.

Welfare chauvinism has a distinctive history. Arguably, it is as old as welfare itself, predating both the welfare state and the centralised modern nation state of which the former is an outgrowth. In the case of the United Kingdom, David Feldman has suggested structural continuities between the local chauvinism of the pre-1834 Poor Law's exclusion of the poor from other parishes and later attempts to deny welfare to Jewish or Caribbean migrants: fear of the 'stranger' often operated on a local rather than strictly national level. Feldman's findings bear considerable similarity to those of Mary Lewis on France. At times and places of controversy over migration, from early 1930s Lyon to the West Midlands of the 1960s, local authorities, with one eye on their local tax base, were often distinctly more mean-spirited towards immigrants than national government.³⁹ Welfare chauvinism was thus, as Lewis puts it, 'an intensely local affair', where 'belt-tightening at the expense of foreigners' was often motivated less by ideology than parsimony.⁴⁰ Authorities approached migrant welfare, though, with marked assumptions about

³⁵ See, for example, Chapter 5 in this volume.

³⁶ K. Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, 1875, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_Critique_of_the_Gotha_Programme.pdf.

³⁷ See Chapter 1 in this volume.

³⁸ See, for example, G. Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850–2000* (Oxford, 2002).

³⁹ D. Feldman, 'Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare from the Old Poor Law to the Welfare State', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 13 (2003), 79–104; M. Lewis, *The Boundaries of the Republic: Migrant Rights and the Limits of Universalism in France, 1918–1940* (Stanford, CA, 2006), pp. 69–72.

⁴⁰ Lewis, *Boundaries of the Republic*, pp. 70–1.

difference and hierarchy. In the case of Algerians in France, welfare and housing services developed in the colonial era, with all the attitudes of paternalism and fear that shaped them, continued after independence in 1962, with an emphasis on adaption to 'European norms'. However, in some cases, such as in Marseilles, these even extended to certain families of French origin who were deemed to be 'asocial'. This implied that the boundary between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', in the context of a deeply clientelist system run by the city's Socialist mayor, Gaston Defferre, was based not only on national origin but also on the ways in which local governance encouraged forms of inclusion and exclusion as a way of distributing material resources and enforcing visions of normality.⁴¹ Likewise in West Germany, it was the regional governments of the *Länder* and local authorities who tended to be harsher than the federal government.⁴² Yet at the national level, even in the United Kingdom, universalist conceptions of entitlement usually prevailed within the structures of the national state until the 1980s, generally constituting an improvement on earlier, more coercive and discriminatory local schemes.⁴³ As the Department of Health and Social Security stated in 1970, 'health and welfare services and social security benefits are available to all people in this country regardless of race, colour or origin'.⁴⁴

Popular understandings of entitlement to a share in the social justice dispensed by the welfare state did not, however, always concur with such theoretical universalism, shaped as they were by the long history of colonialism from which Europe was only just emerging. In relation to Britain, Anna Marie Smith has argued that 'On the question of race . . . the "middle ground" consensus was actually right-wing, rather than centrist.'⁴⁵ Much the same could be said for other countries in Western Europe. Immigrants from British Commonwealth states (notwithstanding their theoretically greater political rights), *Gastarbeiter*, and *travailleurs immigrés* alike were conceived of primarily as a labour force, living alongside but for most practical purposes treated as external to the host society. Their presence was justified in strictly economic terms and conceived of, not least by most migrants themselves, as a temporary arrangement based on the so-called myth of return.

⁴¹ F. de Barros, 'Des "français musulmans d'Algérie" aux "immigrés": L'importations des classifications coloniales dans les politiques de logement en France (1950–1970)', *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 159 (2005), 26–53; E. Naylor, 'Un âne dans l'ascenseur: Late Colonial Welfare Services and Social Housing in Marseille', *French History*, 27 (2013), 422–47.

⁴² B. Marshall, *The New Germany and Migration in Europe* (Manchester, 2000), p. 17.

⁴³ D. Renton, *The New Authoritarians: Convergence on the Right* (London, 2019), p. 87.

⁴⁴ Feldman, 'Migrants, Immigrants and Welfare', 97.

⁴⁵ A. M. Smith, *New Right Discourse on Race and Sexuality: Britain 1968–1990* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 137.

It followed, therefore, that the great questions of distribution of wealth within the post-war consensus were not typically understood as something in which migrant workers had any great stake. Guest workers were not usually banned outright from accessing welfare systems – in West Germany, for example, they had the right to up to 312 days of unemployment benefits.⁴⁶ In a context of near-full employment, however, they were not typically expected to be large claimants on them. Migrant workers had been invited in the long boom preceding the 1973 oil crisis precisely because they were seen as predominantly young, male, hard-working, and frugal, making minimal claims on the host country. When, say, French trade unions talked about pensions, young migrant workers wondered what relevance it had to them, as they would be long gone from France by the time any such pension arrived, but still agreed altruistically to strike for the benefit of their French colleagues.⁴⁷ It still took a long process of rethinking before most migrant workers reached the stage of seeing themselves, in the words of the Tunisian migrant-rights activist Saïd Bouziri, ‘as belonging here, and that they shouldn’t put up with things’.⁴⁸

Migrants’ assumptions around their future were shaped in important ways by the economic boom and the optimistic set of political compromises that created the conditions of their arrival in Western Europe yet circumscribed their second-class status within it. Once the post-war consensus started its long unravelling, initially under the impact of the upheavals of the late 1960s, immigrants were, however, not the beneficiaries. The most obvious example was Powellism in the United Kingdom, where there was a significant class dimension to popular support for Enoch Powell’s moment of articulation of nativist identity.⁴⁹ This was also the case with the Schwarzenbach Initiative in Switzerland, much debated between 1968 and 1970, which would have limited the foreign population to a maximum of 10 per cent and thereby forced many existing guest workers to leave. It was therefore symptomatic of these attitudes that a trade-union pamphlet against this proposal could be entitled *Are Foreigners Superfluous?*, but still be denounced for being too pro-foreigner.⁵⁰

Of course, solidarity between native and migrant workers did occur. The French events of May–June 1968 provided a time-limited example of a set of

⁴⁶ Craig Whitney, ‘Foreign Workers Quitting West Germany’, *New York Times*, 25 Oct. 1975.

⁴⁷ D. Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals: May ’68 and the Rise of Anti-Racism in France* (Pontypool, 2012), p. 65.

⁴⁸ S. Bouziri, interview with Daniel Gordon, Paris, 6 Nov. 2004.

⁴⁹ A. Whipple, ‘Revisiting the “Rivers of Blood” Controversy: Letters to Enoch Powell’, *Journal of British Studies*, 48 (2009), 717–35.

⁵⁰ B. Schmitter Heisler, ‘Trapped in the Consociational Cage: Trade Unions and Immigration in Switzerland’, in R. Penninx and J. Roosblad (eds.), *Trade Unions, Immigration and Immigrants in Europe 1960–1993* (New York, 2000), p. 30; D. Landwehr, ‘The Schwarzenbach Initiative’, June 2020, blog.nationalmuseum.ch/en/2020/06/schwarzenbach-initiative.

movements characterised by solidarity between immigrants and citizens. Many young intellectuals came to see immigrants as a particularly heavily exploited fraction of the working class, victims of cruel capitalist dispossession. For the young intellectuals, anti-racism was not only a matter of solidarity, but was also a kind of identity performance, involving as it did a crossing of class boundaries and a meeting of worlds that did not in the normal course of things interact with one another. Visions of mutual solidarity between immigrant and French workers were most pronounced at exceptional moments such as the great general strike of 1968, when the catchphrase was 'Travailleurs, Français, Immigrés, Unis'. It is also true that the solidarities of the post-'68 era were more developed in workplaces than in residential areas, and that the phenomenon was stronger in some places, notably, in France, than others. Nevertheless, left solidarity with migrants was real enough, at crucial moments such as the hunger strikes of 1972–3, which effectively invented the tradition of political mobilisations for the regularisation of the migration status of so-called *sans-papiers* in contemporary France.⁵¹ Significant currents of opinion within European society, notably left Catholicism, were strongly committed to solidarity with migrants, in part as a legacy of anti-colonial struggles.⁵² New social rights were not just demanded but achieved, such as the right for foreign nationals to be elected union delegates in France.

This history of left-migrant solidarity, and the post-'68 era more generally, is a necessary context for understanding the origins of the subsequent reassertion of ideas of solidarity based on national integration. For example, Alain Finkielkraut, one of the most prominent public intellectuals in contemporary France, has sometimes developed his thought in critical dialogue with his younger self, when as a student in 1968 he was startled to find his non-Jewish comrades chanting 'We Are All German Jews!' Finkielkraut's later neo-republican ideas thus involve a certain reckoning with what he described as 'the gaudy garb of revolution'.⁵³ It is also significant that Pierre-André Taguieff studied at Nanterre University, cradle of May '68, rubbing shoulders with Daniel Cohn-Bendit and auditioning for membership of the Situationist International. In the early 1980s, Taguieff was active in mainstream anti-racist organisations such as the Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l'amitié entre les peuples, and the Ligue internationale contre le racisme et l'antisémitisme. This appears a far cry from the Taguieff of the 2000s, a leading critic of

⁵¹ Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*.

⁵² See Chapter 3 in this volume; G. Panvini, 'The Christian Worker Movement in the Face of the Immigration Phenomenon of the Fifties and Sixties: The Case of Mediterranean Europe', seminar paper, Sciences Po Paris, Dec. 2018.

⁵³ A. Finkielkraut, *The Imaginary Jew* (Lincoln, 1994), p. 18.

anti-racism. Yet, as early as 1968, Taguieff was already becoming critical of the ideological assumptions and modes of operation of the radical left.⁵⁴

In some ways this might seem a familiar story of the revolutionary youth on a journey of disillusionment to becoming a contrarian reactionary late in life. But it also expresses a fundamental tension in Western European democracies that was coming to the fore by the 1960s. Gradually, the reality was exposed that others' post-war prosperity was built on the backs of the scarred bodies of migrant workers. This realisation was the result of both the struggles of migrant workers themselves for recognition, and exposés by European progressives: two of the best-known examples were Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1973 film *Fear Eats the Soul* and John Berger and Jean Mohr's 1975 book *A Seventh Man*.⁵⁵ Yet it is striking how anti-racist representations of immigrant experience were dominated by a kind of one-dimensional miserabilism. The diversity of immigrant experiences was reduced to the exploitation of a single male construction or car worker whose worldly goods could be fitted into one suitcase. The battered suitcase motif became a widely recognisable metaphor for migration in a variety of national contexts.⁵⁶ It could also apply in some circumstances to internal migrants: Italian *operaismo* romanticised the Southern Italian migrant to the factories of the Genoa-Turin-Milan triangle as the 'wretched of the earth', embodying suffering and resistance, every bit as much as French *tiersmondisme* idealised ex-colonial migrants.⁵⁷

One of the inherent problems in many Marxists' views of migration in the 1970s was a failure to see that the aspirations of migrant workers were often rather capitalistic, and that their attitudes were not necessarily ones of class struggle. Many migrants, rather than trying to effect sociopolitical change, concentrated on saving money to build a home or start a small business back home. As the Canadian anthropologist Caroline Brettell put it in 1979, 'The emigrant is a *travailleur* in France to be *petit-bourgeois* in Portugal.'⁵⁸ And not only did victim-centred and stereotypical representations reduce the possibility for agency of guest workers, such as Fassbinder's Moroccan 'Ali', but this reading made other migrant experiences all but invisible. Women migrant workers from Spain, Portugal, or Yugoslavia; female pieceworkers in the

⁵⁴ 'Le pianiste furtif de l'IS: Entretien avec Pierre-André Taguieff', *Archives et documents situationnistes*, 1 (2001), 79–117; J.-F. Savang, 'Sur Pierre-André Taguieff', 24 Jan. 2008, polartnet.free.fr/textes/dossiers_polart/Taguieff-JFS.doc.

⁵⁵ J. Berger and J. Mohr, *A Seventh Man: A Book of Images and Words about the Experiences of Migrant Workers in Europe* (Harmondsworth, 1975).

⁵⁶ S. Fischer and M. McGowan, 'From *Pappkoffer* to Pluralism: On the Development of Migrant Writing in the Federal Republic of Germany', in D. Horrocks and E. Kolinsky (eds.), *Turkish Culture in German Society Today* (Providence, RI, 1996), pp. 1–23.

⁵⁷ R. Lumley, *States of Emergency* (London, 1990), pp. 209–20.

⁵⁸ C. Brettell, 'Emigration and Its Implications for the Revolution in Northern Portugal', in L. Graham and H. Makler (eds.), *Contemporary Portugal* (Austin, TX, 1979), p. 294.

Paris fashion industry organised by Turkish revolutionaries; Algerian mothers in France's shantytowns; their children who grew up into the margins of urban existence and international youth culture – by the end of the 1970s all of them would make social justice-based claims on the public political or cultural sphere in ways that did not fit easily within the paradigm of men with battered suitcases.⁵⁹

Behind such representations lay certain theoretical assumptions. One of the most influential analyses of migrant labour in Western Europe was the Marxist work of Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack. Writing in the *New Left Review* in 1972 and drawing on such orthodox foundations as Marx and Engels' theory of the industrial reserve army and Lenin's analysis of the labour aristocracy, Castles and Kosack argued that 'the presence of immigrant workers is one of the principal factors contributing to the lack of class consciousness among large sections of the working class'.⁶⁰ In other words, for businesses the whole point of employing foreign labour was to divide the workers so as to exploit them more severely.⁶¹ This was irrespective of the fact that guest workers 'make contributions to health, unemployment and pension insurance far in excess of their demands on such schemes': given their age at the time and intention to return home, guest workers would not see any benefits from their pension contributions.⁶² The point that Turkish workers were subsidising West Germans' pensions was also not lost on pro-business economists of the time such as Heinz Salowsky, source of some of the statistics cited by Castles and Kosack.⁶³ This was, then, another variant of 'Schrödinger's immigrant': even when migrants were very clearly net contributors to the welfare state, they were still accused, even by Marxists, of dividing the working class. If Castles and Kosack's analysis seems to foreshadow present-day attitudes towards migrants, their political prescription certainly did not: they called on socialists to bring immigrant workers into the labour movement to fight for equality on all fronts.

Thus when some left populists today present free movement of labour as a conspiracy by capitalists, eliding the 'real human action or desire' of workers

⁵⁹ L. Zanoun (ed.), 'Les femmes de l'immigration, XIX–XXe siècles', Special Issue of *Migrations*, 42 (2014); C. Fauroux and F. Çingi Kodacost, 'Alliances politiques et mobilisations des travailleurs immigrés: La grève des ouvriers turcs du Sentier (Paris 1980)', paper for online seminar, Sciences Po Paris, 1 Apr. 2021; B. Le Normand, *Citizens without Borders: Yugoslavia and Its Migrant Workers in Western Europe* (Toronto, 2021).

⁶⁰ S. Castles and G. Kosack, 'The Function of Labour Immigration in Western European Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 73 (1972), 3–21.

⁶¹ See also S. Castles and G. Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (London, 1973); M. Miller, *Foreign Workers in Western Europe* (New York, 1981), pp. 1–7.

⁶² Castles and Kosack, 'Function of Labour Immigration'.

⁶³ Castles and Kosack, 'Function of Labour Immigration', n. 29; H. Salowsky, 'Economic Impact of Foreign Labour', *Intereconomics*, 8 (1973), 59–62.

to seek a better existence by moving,⁶⁴ they are returning to arguments held on the left during the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s. Left discourses on migration were not without their own exclusionary tendencies, and orthodox Communists were among the most vociferous in expressing these views. To be sure, the broader world of Western Communism also contained activists strongly committed to the practice of migrant solidarity,⁶⁵ and in some cases they succeeded in recruiting significant numbers of immigrant workers.⁶⁶ There were, however, paradoxical tendencies at work. Even when Communists advocated solidarity between indigenous and migrant workers, this was often on the basis of a rather simplistic economic miserabilism that equated migration with poverty and illiteracy.⁶⁷ The bourgeoisie, claimed Benoit Frâchon, Secretary-General of the French Communists' CGT union confederation in 1964, were hypocrites in using migration to bring down wages and create a more easily exploitable workforce, but then create xenophobic propaganda against them on the basis of the misery they had created⁶⁸ – which rather implied that the xenophobic propaganda had a certain basis in truth.

At best, the Communists of the 1970s remained wedded to an outdated vision of migrant solidarity framed by the 'myth of return': bilingual teaching was to be supported and solidarity emphasised with home country movements. The heroes of this discourse were thus Communist migrant militants of the past such as Ho Chi Minh or Zhou Enlai, who had returned to continue the struggle back home.⁶⁹ At worst, not only did the Communist Party condemn those on the extreme left who favoured the abolition of immigration controls, but they sometimes even demanded more immigration controls. As *L'Immigré d'Afrique du Nord*, the French Communist Party's official organ for North African immigrants promised in 1972, a Communist government would ensure that the immigrant workforce would be used not against French workers, but for the benefit of the French economy,⁷⁰ and called for what it presented as France's policy of mass uncontrolled immigration to be replaced by planned quotas whereby only an official government agency would be allowed to recruit immigrants. Though the French Communists' pill was to some extent sugared by promises of equal economic, social, and political rights for immigrants, there were clear resemblances to the British Labour-Conservative

⁶⁴ Bolton and Pitts, *Corbynism*, p. 67.

⁶⁵ See, for example, M. Apostolo, *Traces de luttes 1924–2007* (Paris, 2008).

⁶⁶ Archives départementales de la Seine Saint-Denis, Bobigny, 4 AV/2235, 'Enregistrement sonore des séances du comité central', 31 Mar.–1 Apr. 1977.

⁶⁷ For example, B. Frâchon, 'Prolétaires de tous le pays', *L'Humanité*, 15 Apr. 1964; G. Séguy, 'Un travailleur immigré sur deux ne sait pas lire', *L'Humanité*, 9 Sept. 1969.

⁶⁸ Frâchon, 'Prolétaires de tous le pays'.

⁶⁹ R. Pronier, *Les municipalités communistes* (Paris, 1983), pp. 264–5.

⁷⁰ *L'Immigré d'Afrique du Nord*, Jan. 1972.

consensus that good race relations would be achieved through strict controls on immigration, a consensus only partially challenged by the much smaller Communist Party of Great Britain.⁷¹ Such Communist equivocations provided rich pickings for polemics by rivals on the left of European politics, such as in the ‘bulldozer affair’ of Vitry-sur-Seine in 1980–1 when, in the presence of the local mayor, Communist activists drove a bulldozer into a hostel being built for Malian workers in the suburbs of Paris.⁷²

At the same time, Communists’ social democratic foes were far from universally welcoming of immigration, especially when in power at national level, with the possible exception of the first three years of the Mitterrand government in France. Until 1979, for example, the British Labour government of James Callaghan carried out abusive ‘virginity-testing’ examinations on women from India and Pakistan seeking to move to the United Kingdom for marriage.⁷³ As Lauren Stokes has revealed, in West Germany in 1974 an SPD-led coalition introduced a two-tier system of child benefit to ensure that workers in Germany with children living abroad received lower rates of benefit, thereby creating the misleading impression that if guest workers were to bring their children to Germany, they were ‘welfare migrants’.⁷⁴ As late as 1982, Helmut Schmidt’s government declared that ‘There is unity [in the government] that the Federal Republic is not a country of immigration and that it should not become one.’⁷⁵ To some extent this reflected the views of significant portions of social democrats’ electoral base, evident in many trade unions. Racial prejudices among British trade unionists, if increasingly challenged during the 1970s, died hard.⁷⁶ In West Germany the DGB union confederation advocated priority for Germans in job vacancies, and often disowned strikes by migrant workers, such as at the Ford factory in Cologne in 1973.⁷⁷ Indeed, as Rita Chin has shown, after 1982 West German social

⁷¹ Marx Memorial Library, London, ‘Statement of the Executive Committee of the CPGB on the Commonwealth Immigration White Paper’, 12 Sept. 1965; V. Sharma, *No Racist Immigration Laws*, Communist Party pamphlet, 1979; E. Smith, *British Communism and the Politics of Race* (Leiden, 2018).

⁷² R. Bernard, ‘“L’affaire de bulldozer de Vitry (1980-1981)”: La banlieue rouge face au phénomène migratoire’, unpublished master’s thesis, Université de Paris (2020).

⁷³ E. Smith and M. Marmo, ‘Uncovering the “Virginity Testing” Controversy in the National Archives: The Intersectionality of Discrimination in British Immigration History’, *Gender and History*, 23 (2011), 147–65.

⁷⁴ Lauren Stokes, ‘“An Invasion of Guest Worker Children”: Welfare Reform and the Stigmatisation of Family Migration in West Germany’, *Contemporary European History*, 28 (2019), 372–89.

⁷⁵ Marshall, *New Germany*, p. 13.

⁷⁶ S. Virdee, *Racism, Class and the Racialized Outsider* (Basingstoke, 2014).

⁷⁷ P. Kühne, ‘The Federal Republic of Germany: Ambivalent Promotion of Immigrants’ Interests’, in Penninx and Roosblad (eds.), *Trade Unions*, p. 46; J. Miller, *Turkish Guest Workers in Germany: Hidden Lives and Contested Borders, 1960s–1980* (Toronto, 2018).

democrats and feminists shifted away from relatively progressive positions on the country's 'guest worker' minorities towards a more negative discourse fixated on the alleged backwardness of Turkish women.⁷⁸ The shift in focus towards representations of women and girls illustrated how migration debates were moving away from the classic image of first-generation male manual workers. Ethnic minority women were now to be condemned for not participating in the labour market sufficiently, whereas ethnic minority men were traditionally condemned for participating in it rather too much.

A characteristic element of migration discourses in France, however, was the extent to which immigration was presented by a powerful Communist Party as a conspiracy by nefarious capitalists and right-wingers. Already in 1969, some sixty-nine Communist mayors from across the Paris region jointly blamed 'Les responsabilités du pouvoir et du grand patronat' (those in power and the major employers) for dumping immigrants in working-class areas, calling for a more equitable dispersal across the region.⁷⁹ Such fears led Communist-run authorities to embrace a pseudo-scientific theory known as the *seuil de tolérance* (threshold of tolerance). Drawing on both American sociology⁸⁰ and aspects of nineteenth-century colonialist knowledge and practice, the *seuil de tolérance* theory held that coexistence was possible only 'as long as one ethnicity doesn't overwhelm the other'.⁸¹ The tipping point beyond which racism would be an inevitable response was variously estimated at 10–15 per cent for housing, 20 per cent for primary schools, and 30 per cent for hospitals. Tolerance thus became, as the sociologist Véronique de Rudder put it, a favour granted to the dominated by the dominant, while intolerance was normalised.⁸² The consequences of this theory could be acute, as when the Communist mayor of Vénissieux, a riot-prone suburb of Lyon, admitted in 1982 that he would rather leave apartments empty than let them to foreign families, so as not to create a 'vast ghetto'.⁸³ Significantly, the *seuil de tolérance* was not applied to workplaces: Neil MacMaster has thus suggested that its adoption represented the state beginning to realise that the social costs of migration could no longer be avoided. But it was Communist-run councils who made most widespread use of the principle, in part because they had the

⁷⁸ R. Chin, 'Guest Worker Migration and the Unexpected Return of Race', in Chin, Fehrenbach, Eley, and Grossmann, *After the Nazi Racial State*, pp. 94–9.

⁷⁹ M.-C. Blanc-Chaléard, *En finir avec les bidonvilles: Immigration et politique du logement dans la France des Trente Glorieuses*, (Paris, 2016), pp. 283–6, 382–3.

⁸⁰ V. de Rudder, "'Seuil de tolérance' et cohabitation pluriethnique", in P.-A. Taguieff (ed.), *Face au racisme*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1991), pp. 155–7.

⁸¹ A. Hajjat, 'Colonial Legacies: Housing Policy and Riot Prevention Strategies in the Minguettes District of Vénissieux', in E. Naylor (ed.), *France's Modernising Mission: Citizenship, Welfare and the Ends of Empire* (London, 2018), p. 233.

⁸² De Rudder, *Seuil de tolérance*, pp. 161–2. ⁸³ Hajjat, 'Colonial Legacies', p. 231.

largest stocks of public housing.⁸⁴ They had a point in complaining that right-wing authorities in richer areas were happy to use the migrants' labour while not building social housing to accommodate them: the Communist Party argued that the 'Vitry affair' in the Paris suburbs should really be called the 'St Maur affair', after the neighbouring right-wing authority who had sought to transfer the Malians to Vitry.⁸⁵

Arguments providing an apparently objective and technical basis for discrimination, thereby protecting the user from charges of racism,⁸⁶ thus became more prominent among left-wing circles in the 1970s and early 1980s. It is no coincidence that Christophe Guilluy, the influential geographer who has taken very similar positions in recent French debates to those of Goodhart in Britain, born in 1964 in the classic 'red belt' working-class suburb of Montreuil, has stated that 'his real education was in the French Communist Party, which he joined when he was 20', contrasting such 'men and women who were hard nuts and believed in class warfare' to 'the cringing leftism of nowadays'.⁸⁷ In 2018 Guilluy wrote approvingly of the position of Georges Marchais, the Communist candidate in the 1981 presidential election, who called for a halt to immigration.⁸⁸ Despite latter-day nostalgia for such figures, at the time this electoral strategy was not noticeably crowned with success: Marchais won only a disappointing 15 per cent of the vote. While some red-belt mayors, such as Robert Hue in Montigny-les-Cormeilles in 1981, sought to appeal to working-class social conservatism by playing on fears of immigrants, crime, and drugs, this did not necessarily pay off, because the section of the working class that voted Communist generally held more socially liberal views than the average voter.⁸⁹ Though by no means uncontested within the Communist Party, immigrant-blaming was nevertheless an appealing strategy for leading party elites in France following the breakdown of the Socialist-Communist Union de Gauche in 1977, as it enabled the Communists to differentiate themselves from the social liberalism associated with the Socialist party.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ 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), pp. 14–28.

⁸⁵ *Morning Star*, 15 Jan. 1981. ⁸⁶ MacMaster, 'Seuil de tolérance', p. 15.

⁸⁷ C. Guilluy and D. Goodhart, 'Peut-on reconcilier monde d'en haut et monde d'en bas?', *Le Figaro*, 9 Nov. 2018; A. Hussey, 'The French Elites against the Working Class', *New Statesman*, 24 July 2019.

⁸⁸ À Gauche.org, 'Christophe Guilluy à propos de la gauche et de l'immigration', 4 Nov. 2018, agauche.org/2018/11/04/christophe-guilluy-a-propos-de-la-gauche-et-de-limmigration/.

⁸⁹ Pronier, *Municipalités communistes*, p. 398; R. Martelli, 'La gauche dans la piège de Guilluy', *Regards*, 21 Nov. 2014; C. Luxembourg, 'Une lecture critique de *La France périphérique* de Christophe Guilluy', *La Revue du projet*, 49 (2015).

⁹⁰ On the broader politics of the PCF at this time, see R. W. Johnson, *The Long March of the French Left* (London, 1981); J. Jensen and G. Ross, *The View from Inside: A French Communist Cell in Crisis* (Berkeley, 1984).

The early 1980s were thus a time when differing visions of the relationship between social justice and migration were coming into conflict. It would be wrong, however, to take the subjective perception amongst elites of a tension between the two as conclusive evidence for the realities of the time. Whereas the heyday of the welfare-state consensus from around 1945 to 1970 was precisely at the height of the post-war immigrant worker boom, the onset of the crisis of the welfare state coincided with a period of low immigration, notably in the United Kingdom, a country of net emigration during the 1980s. This suggests that rather than ‘too much diversity’, other factors, such as the end of Fordism, are more convincing as explanations for the corrosion of mutual trust that fuelled a sharp decline in social solidarity.⁹¹ Far from favouring separation from fellow citizens, ethnic minorities were often very prominent in collective attempts to resist the tide of individualism, persisting with ‘an implicit larger message about social justice’.⁹² Anti-racist activists within Britain’s emergent ethnic minorities, from the Race Today Collective to the Organisation of Women of Asian and African Descent to Southall Black Sisters to the New Cross Massacre Action Committee, typically saw themselves as part of, or at least in dialogue with, a wider radical left struggle against capitalism and/or other post-1968 social movements, not least second-wave feminism.⁹³ As Chin suggests, many activists on the left produced critiques of state multiculturalism that were far more sophisticated than the sweeping claims of its failure pronounced by politicians.⁹⁴

For the activists of the 1970s and 1980s, immigrants were not just immigrants; they were workers, as was clear from the titles and practices of groups that flourished in the immigrant-left galaxy of the period, from France’s *Mouvement des travailleurs arabes* to Britain’s Indian Workers’ Association. As Don Flynn recalls, ‘the rather loud voices of tens of thousands of African Caribbean and Asian car-plant workers, postal workers, NHS staff, as well as those from the iconic sweatshop struggles at Grunwicks and other places, were amongst the most prominent features of those times’.⁹⁵ The way that the

⁹¹ D. Flynn, ‘Values, Trust, Loss: The Dubious Case of Migration and the ‘Progressive Dilemma’, 9 Mar. 2017, migrantsrights.org.uk/blog/2017/03/09/values-trust-loss-the-dubious-case-of-migration-and-the-progressive-dilemma.

⁹² See Chapter 1 in this volume.

⁹³ Z. Cooper, J. White, and K. Pimblott, contributions to *Antiracism in Britain: Histories and Trajectories*, online conference, University College London/University of Warwick/Durham University, 20 Feb. 2021; H. Carby, A. Elliot-Cooper, L. Palmer, S. Scott, and P. Gilroy, contributions to *The Black People’s Day of Action 40 Years On*, online panel discussion, University College London, 2 Mar. 2021.

⁹⁴ Chin, *Crisis of Multiculturalism*, pp. 265–70; Pragna Patel, interview with Daniel Gordon for *Lived Experiences of Anti-Racist Activism in Europe* seminar series, Edge Hill University, 3 May 2017.

⁹⁵ Flynn, ‘Values, Trust, Loss’.

1976–8 dispute at the Grunwicks photo-processing plant in suburban London is remembered points to how one of the most important heroines of working-class mobilisation in immediately pre-Thatcherite Britain was an Asian woman, Jayaben Desai. Her life odyssey from Gujarat to Tanzania, back again to India and thence to North-West London illustrates the centrality of migration to understanding late modern global social and labour history, notwithstanding the place of Grunwicks in the pantheon of the British labour movement's history of heroic defeats. While one important background to the strike was racist bullying and pay discrimination experienced by the largely Asian and female workforce, more crucial was the assault on workers' dignity by the ever more rapid intensification of production. The strikers' key demands for union recognition, the right to organise, and respect and dignity for workers still spoke, even at the twilight of Fordism, a broadly applicable and universalist language of social justice.⁹⁶ Ironically, the picketers at Grunwicks included a young David Goodhart, then a Marxist.⁹⁷ This biographical detail is rather typical for intellectuals who cut their teeth at a time when the immigrant-left crossover was still fertile, helping forge within popular urban society what Hassan Mahamdallie calls 'multiculturalism from below'.⁹⁸

It is thus clear that tensions within ideas of social justice for migrants predated the rise of the extreme right in Europe over the last three decades, and cannot be seen simply as consequences of it. Anti-racism was one side of the coin; the other was a considerable amount of scapegoating of migration.⁹⁹ The advent of the so-called second generation of the European-raised daughters and sons of the migrant workers of the post-war boom, whose emergence we might date to somewhere between the Notting Hill Carnival riot of 1976 and France's March for Equality in 1983, raised questions not only about cultural diversity but also about social welfare. As Marxists of the 1970s had noted, the guest-worker paradigm was implicitly dependent on the costs of reproducing labour – the schooling and upbringing of the next generation – being borne not by Western European states but by the exporting countries on the periphery of global capitalism: to European eyes the migrant worker came cheap, because they arrived apparently fully formed as young adults.

⁹⁶ R. Pearson, S. Anitha, and L. McDowell, 'Striking Issues: From Labour Process to Industrial Dispute at Grunwick and Gate Gourmet', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 41 (2010), 408–28; S. Anitha, R. Pearson, and L. McDowell, 'From Grunwick to Gate Gourmet: South Asian Women's Industrial Activism and the Role of Trade Unions', *Revue française de civilisation britannique*, 23 (2018), 1–23.

⁹⁷ Goodhart, *British Dream*, p. 184.

⁹⁸ H. Mahamdallie, 'Digging Up the Arts Garden', Learning Lab Editions, learninglabeditions.org/index.php/2013/09/08/edition-5-digging-up-the-arts-garden/; H. Mahamdallie, interview with Daniel Gordon for *Lived Experiences of Anti-Racist Activism in Europe* seminar series, Edge Hill University, 5 Apr. 2017.

⁹⁹ P. Fysh and J. Wolfreys, *The Politics of Racism in France* (New York, 2003).

Now, however, as communities originating in migration became ‘new’ ethnic minorities clearly forming part of the social dynamics of Western Europe, visible minorities became predictable targets.

In the French case, the breakdown of anti-racist worker solidarity was probably the first Front National electoral breakthrough of 1983–4. An examination of this turning point suggests that this was far from being a case of migrant workers somehow opting out of a struggle for social justice fought valiantly by native-born workers. What was noteworthy about industrial relations in the French car industry, one of the most crucial employers of migrant labour during the post-war boom, was that the bitter struggles of 1982–4 against redundancies and for workers’ dignity were overwhelmingly carried by what at the time were still often labelled ‘foreign workers’. This was the case at Renault’s factory at Flins, Citroën’s at Aulnay, and Talbot’s at Poissy, where fighting broke out between Maghrebi and African strikers on one side and white non-strikers on the other.¹⁰⁰ The pattern here was not dissimilar from earlier immigrant workers’ strikes in Britain, such as at Courtauld’s in Preston in 1965, where one of the key motivations was collaboration with management by white workers and unions, often colluding with discriminatory practices at the expense of their Asian colleagues.¹⁰¹ By 1982, both Indian and Afro-Caribbean workers came to have somewhat higher rates of unionisation than their white British fellow workers.¹⁰² Yet what was distinctive about the new world of the 1980s was that labour struggles were no longer fashionable, and were instead subjected to what Xavier Vigna has termed ‘*une lecture ethnicisée des relations sociales*’ (an ethnicised reading of social relations)¹⁰³ by the media and politicians. Significantly, this newly culturalised way of understanding, or misunderstanding, social conflict often came from the centre-left, such as the Socialist Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy and Gaston Defferre, by then Interior Minister, who at the time of the car strikes famously blamed ‘Shi’ite fundamentalists’. As Vincent Gay has suggested, although the provision of Islamic prayer rooms was one demand amongst others in the Citroën strike, the broader issues of dignity in the workplace that formed the principal grievances of the striking workers were obscured by this misleading dominant representation.¹⁰⁴ A move was thus underway in the language of public debate from ‘the social question’ to ‘the

¹⁰⁰ Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, p. 212.

¹⁰¹ J. Wrench, ‘British Unions and Racism: Organisational Dilemmas in an Unsympathetic Climate’, in Penninx and Roosblad (eds.), *Trade Unions, Immigration and Immigrants*, p. 136.

¹⁰² Wrench, ‘British Unions’, p. 137.

¹⁰³ X. Vigna, *Histoire des ouvriers en France au XXe siècle* (Paris, 2012), p. 285.

¹⁰⁴ V. Gay, *Pour la dignité: Ouvriers immigrés et conflits sociaux dans les années 1980* (Lyon, 2021).

racial question’,¹⁰⁵ with significant consequences for the future. People previously seen as workers were now subjected to one-dimensional labelling based on their ethnic, religious, or cultural background.

The second-generation anti-racist movements of the 1980s also expressed demands for rights-based inclusion in a spirit that was arguably more authentically republican than the arguments advanced by the neo-republicans. In a manifesto of which more than 100,000 copies were circulated, participants in one such anti-racist initiative, *Convergences 84*, counterposed the *repli* (retreat) that they observed as the dominant tendency in an age of political demobilisation to what they presented as its opposite, *égalité*. They went on to argue: ‘We are a category of citizens who have been placed in the basement of society, and of which people did not want to hear our voice or our soul. We therefore demand our rights: rights which will assure us the status of recognised citizens.’¹⁰⁶ In campaigning for these demands, they related how they had encountered other disadvantaged groups, and in that way had come to recognise that their struggle was part of a much wider struggle to achieve an equal society. The manifesto was republished in a pamphlet entitled *La ruée vers l’Égalité* (The surge towards equality), which also included interviews with participants – one of whom, a young man named Souliman, used the word *Egalité* with a capital E five times in his first paragraph, under a headline provocatively worded ‘L’égalité un idéal ringard’ (‘Equality – an outdated ideal’).¹⁰⁷ Here, perhaps, were the last egalitarians.

As time went on, and new patterns of migration started to emerge in fin-de-siècle Europe, so debates about migration and social justice moved on from the language considered in the bulk of this chapter. The world of neoliberal hypercapitalism today differs in important ways from the tail-end of the post-war compromise that shaped many of the debates we have considered. Yet elements of the old were present in the new. By the 1990s, it was the radical right rather than the radical left that was employing a miserabilist discourse about migration. In Italy in 1990, for example, the Lega Nord used a poster proclaiming that ‘To bring blacks here is slavery’¹⁰⁸ – a metaphor that had also been used by Caribbean migrant activists in Paris in May 1968.¹⁰⁹ Social-justice arguments in defence of migrants were easy to make at the height of the post-war guest-worker era precisely because immigrants were so clearly exploited. The dividing line between social-justice arguments for

¹⁰⁵ D. Fassin and E. Fassin (eds.), *De la question sociale à la question raciale?* (Paris, 2006).

¹⁰⁶ ‘Texte d’appel: L’étranger c’est celui qui n’habite pas en France’, in N. Rodrigues, J. Chapelle, O. Nageborn, and J. Viera, *La ruée vers l’égalité, supplement to Expression Français Immigrés*, 30 (1985), 7–12.

¹⁰⁷ ‘L’égalité un idéal ringard’, in Rodrigues, Chapelle, Nageborn, and Viera, *La ruée vers l’égalité*, 17–21.

¹⁰⁸ Avanza, ‘Northern League’, p. 134.

¹⁰⁹ Gordon, *Immigrants and Intellectuals*, p. 81.

and against migration is not, however, an absolute one, with certain tropes of discourse tending to repeat themselves or be reformulated according to circumstances.

The language of social justice was, therefore, a highly malleable one in Western Europe between the 1960s and 1990s. It could be deployed by those advocating the protection and fair treatment of migrants, while it was also used effectively by those who wanted to restrict migration. The common denominator was the way in which social justice as a higher ideal had become so entrenched in Western European discourses that political groups of different political persuasions felt the need to use a language suffused with references to it. Talk of social justice, then, had become a major legitimising device within political discourse. As the case of post-war migration suggests, its durability in twentieth-century Europe was at least in part due to its innate flexibility and the enduring popular appeal it exerted, functioning as a screen onto which different political projects could be projected. In a sense, we have come full circle since the end of the guest-worker system circa 1973. The danger today is that a combination of social-justice arguments against migration, national-protectionist backlashes, and the continuing realities of Western Europe's economic dependence on migration are used once more to reproduce guest-worker systems: disposable, revolving-door workers without rights, who are supposed to be neither seen nor heard. Recent history suggests this is an unsustainable proposition: if one treats people as mere economic units, at some point they will probably demand rights as workers, residents, or citizens – and their children certainly will.