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Rita Chin, *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe: A History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017. xiv + 363 pp. \$35.00 (hb). ISBN 978-0-691-16426-7.

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Rita Chin's *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe* is an ambitious overview of a complex subject. In 300 pages of clearly written text, the author traces the evolution of multicultural societies in western Europe--primarily Britain, France, Germany, and the Netherlands--and the shifts in discourse and policy that have accompanied this development. Chin's starting point is provided by a concatenation of quotations uttered in 2010 by European leaders--Angela Merkel, David Cameron, and Nicolas Sarkozy--to the effect that multiculturalism--the acceptance of ethnic and religious diversity--had "failed" in their respective countries. Observing that "the multicultural populations that exist in Europe are not going away" (p. 297), Chin asks how it can be that these democratic societies have found themselves seemingly incapable of articulating policies that correspond to the "demographic realities" of their present and, even more, their future. For scholars primarily interested in France, the value of her book is that it places the French experience in comparative perspective, demonstrating both the benefits and some of the limitations of such an approach.

As Chin shows, western European countries approached the issue of integrating non-European populations from different initial assumptions, but their policies have increasingly converged over the years. After the end of World War II, all of Western Europe experienced a period of rapid economic growth that generated a seemingly insatiable demand for labor, a demand that was met by encouraging the arrival of "guest workers," overwhelmingly single men, from poorer countries. The prevailing assumption was that these guest workers' presence was temporary and that they would return to their countries of origin once they had earned enough to establish families. In Britain, workers came primarily from the Caribbean and South Asia; in Germany, immigrants originally arrived from the poorer countries of southern Europe and later from Turkey. The French case differed somewhat from those of its neighbors because arrivals from Algeria, which was officially part of France until 1962, were ostensibly French subjects and faced no legal restrictions to entry. Nevertheless, especially after the outbreak of the Algerian war, these workers were increasingly singled out as an alien and potentially dangerous group and put under special surveillance. On the whole, however, Chin argues that, during the years of growth in the 1950s and 1960s, there was little concern about immigrant populations and, above all, hardly any discussion of the fact that many of them were Muslims.

By the end of the 1960s, Europeans were increasingly aware of the debates about multiculturalism in the United States, where the term originated, but the American example served primarily as a *repoussoir*, a demonstration of what to avoid. In all the countries in Chin's study, the sharp change in the economic climate that occurred in the early 1970s brought a radical swing in public policy toward immigration. As growth stalled and unemployment rose, governments, regardless of their political coloration, sought to stop any further new arrivals and to encourage "guest workers" to leave. It soon became clear, however, that many of these "guests" were now solidly implanted in their host countries; many had succeeded in establishing families and having children. By this time, governments had also begun to recognize that, even if further immigration was stopped, communities of non-European origin were not going to disappear. The British Race Relations Act of 1965 acknowledged the need for policies meant to help them adapt to British life and to protect them against racist attacks. The French rejected any official recognition of multiculturalism as an "Anglo-Saxon" mistake (p. 113) and insisted that it was up to immigrants to adopt the country's cultural norms and political values, but in practice, France, too, adopted pragmatic policies that recognized the special problems facing these communities, such as the SONACOTRA housing program. Like their counterparts in Britain and Germany, however, French leaders took these measures with a minimum of publicity, hoping to avoid potentially explosive public debates about them.

French historians are well aware that this low-profile policy fell apart in the first years of Mitterrand's presidency, with the outbreak of riots in immigrant *banlieue* neighborhoods around Lyon, the rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen's overtly anti-immigrant Front National, and the SOS-Racisme movement led by Harlem Désir. The Mitterrand government was ostensibly more sympathetic to multiculturalism than Margaret Thatcher, who warned that Britain was being "swamped" with foreigners, or Helmut Kohl, who opposed extending citizenship to Turkish "guest workers" and their descendants, even those born in Germany. When Jacques Chirac became prime minister in 1986, however, he emulated his conservative counterparts abroad by proposing a reform to the nationality code that would have required members of immigrant communities to explicitly apply for French citizenship, even if they had been born in the country. His proposal failed, but it launched a major public debate and the formation of a *Commission de la Nationalité* whose chairman, Marceau Long, called for measures to ensure a citizenry "speaking the same language, sharing the same culture and patriotic values, participating in the national life like the others, even if they retain in the private order their religious and cultural loyalties" (p.174). As Chin concludes, this meant that "immigrants' refusal to give up their cultural differences...became grounds for exclusion from the national imaginary (if not the nation itself). Above all, this understanding of French belonging now targeted most non-European, non-Christian residents as particular problems for the nation" (p. 177).

The most striking feature of Chin's account is the emphasis she puts on the events of the year 1989. Usually remembered as the moment when the Cold War that had dominated European life since 1945 abruptly came to an end, it was also, she argues, the point at which the religion of Islam was suddenly projected into the center of public debates all across Europe. In France, this was the result of the decision of a school principal in the Paris suburb of Creil to expel three female students who wanted to wear their headscarves in class, but, as Chin reminds us, this was also the year of Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa calling for the killing of Salman Rushdie, whose novel *The Satanic Verses* had offended many Muslims in Britain. In response, British leaders insisted that there could be no compromise with the principle of freedom of the press, just as French politicians contended that there could be no compromise with the principle of *laïcité*. "This was

the pivotal juncture when Islam itself came to be seen as a central threat to 'liberal values,' not just in Britain, but across all the major Western European powers," Chin writes (p.190). Denunciation of Islam as a fundamentally illiberal culture became a way of stigmatizing an out-group without resorting to overtly racist language, but with many of the same effects. Among those who embraced this critique of Islam were leftists and feminists, including some Muslim women, such as Fadela Amara, the founder of the French organization "Ni Putes ni Soumises," and the Dutch author Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Chin acknowledges the impact of the September 11, 2001 attack in the United States in spurring negative perceptions of Muslims, but insists that the reaction against multiculturalism was "never a simple effect of acts of terrorism" (p. 239).

Chin's book is essentially devoted to debates about multiculturalism; she makes no effort to assess the lived experience of minority communities in the various countries she covers. Other comparative studies, such as Christian Joppke's *Veil: Mirror of Identity*, try to evaluate the success of differing national policies. He concludes, for example, that "British Muslims, though pampered by a uniquely accommodating government, rank among the most dissatisfied and alienated minorities of Europe," whereas "by contrast, France has seen nothing of this," a judgment admittedly reached prior to the terrorist attacks of 2015 and 2016 but one that seems to overlook the widespread banlieue riots of 2005.[1] On the whole, Chin's prognosis about the prospects for multiculturalism in Europe is pessimistic, a view that would presumably only be strengthened if her purview had been extended to the countries of Eastern Europe and to western states such as Italy and Denmark, where governments have adopted overtly intolerant policies.

By putting French developments in parallel with those in neighboring Western European countries, Chin reminds us that the conflict over multiculturalism is a transnational phenomenon; implicitly and sometimes explicitly, she suggests that specifically French traditions such as republican secularism and the distinctive sexual attitudes highlighted in Joan Scott's *The Politics of the Veil* have been less important than historians of the country may think.[2] In addition to Scott, Chin cites a number of other English-language studies devoted to France, including John Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves*, Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France*, and Cécile Laborde, *Critical Republicanism: The Hijab Controversy and Political Philosophy*, but only a few French primary sources and very little of the relevant secondary literature in that language.[3]

Among the particularities of the multiculturalism issue in France that get left aside in Chin's necessarily compressed treatment is the diversity of immigrant populations in France, highlighted in such works as Pap Ndaiye, *La Condition noire: Essai sur une minorité française*, David Beriss, *Black Skins, French Voices: Caribbean Ethnicity and Activism in Urban France*, and Dominic Thomas, *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism*. [4] Chin also says nothing about the role of foreign governments in shaping Muslim practice in the country, highlighted in Bowen's book and in Hakim El Karoui's *Un Islam français est possible*, [5] nor about the string of terrorist attacks linked to issues involving Islam in France, dating back to the bombing of Goldenbourg's delicatessen in 1982 and the bombings connected to Algerian politics in the 1990s. One particular issue that would seem to require attention in a discussion of multiculturalism in France and that Chin totally omits is the situation of the country's Jewish minority, the largest in Europe, a long-established community many of whose members now feel that their security in the country is endangered by antisemitic attitudes among Muslims. [6] (She also says nothing about the issue of the Roma, in France and elsewhere.)

Obviously, in a relatively short comparative survey, Chin could not touch on every feature of the French situation. The great virtues of *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe* are its demonstration of the similarities in developments in the major countries of Western Europe and its admirable clarity. Like all works of contemporary history, her book inevitably lags behind the latest events. It was clearly completed before the spectacular events of 2015 and 2016; the sudden surge of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan and the terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice that took place in those years are mentioned only in the epilogue, and the 2017 French elections, in which Marine Le Pen's anti-immigrant campaign was a major feature, occurred after her book went to press. (The impact of the influx of refugees in 2015 in urban neighborhoods where immigrants from a number of countries had established a kind of everyday multiculturalism is well treated in sociologist Isabelle Coutant's nuanced account, *Les Migrants en bas de chez soi*.)^[7] Nevertheless, Chin's narrative provides essential background for the understanding of the current situation. It will be useful reading for any instructor eager for a transnational perspective on these issues, and it would work well as reading in courses on Europe since World War II.

NOTES

[1] Christian Joppke, *Veil: Mirror of Identity* (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 124.

[2] Joan Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

[3] John R. Bowen, *Why the French Don't Like Headscarves: Islam, the State, and Public Space* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Paul A. Silverstein, *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004); Cécile Laborde, *Critical Republicanism: The Hijab Controversy and Political Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[4] Pap Ndaiye, *La Condition noire: Essai sur une minorité française* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 2008); David Beriss, *Black Skins, French Voices: Caribbean Ethnicity and Activism in Urban France* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2004); Dominic Thomas, *Black France: Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007).

[5] Hakim El Karoui, *Un Islam français est possible* (2016), a report compiled for the Institut Montaigne in 2016, accessible at institutmontaigne.org.

[6] Two important books on this subject are Ethan B. Katz, *The Burdens of Brotherhood: Jews and Muslims from North Africa to France* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), and Robert I. Weiner and Richard E. Sharpless, *An Uncertain Future: Voices of a French Jewish Community, 1940-2012* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012.)

[7] Isabelle Coutant, *Les Migrants en bas de chez soi* (Paris: Seuil, 2018).

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