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Abstract—This article explores the rise and fall of the notion of intégration as a means of resisting pressure for decolonization in Algeria, focusing on the work of Jacques Soustelle, the eminent ethnologist and Gaullist politician who was Governor-General in Algeria from 1955 to 1956. Soustelle’s integration plan was a vision developed in Algeria, and its diffusion in France and adoption by a number of diverse groups in the metropole can be seen as an important case of Algerian influence on French political and intellectual life. The network of Algérie française sympathizers and movements which adopted integration as their watchword is examined, demonstrating how integration took on almost mythical qualities and appealed to figures from across the political spectrum. The article also suggests that integration can be seen as a contribution to our understanding of the role that a vision of a multiracial and multicultural greater France played in the policy and rhetoric of some advocates of Algérie française.

In May 1958 a revolt led by settlers and parts of the French army in Algiers brought an end to the Fourth Republic and returned General Charles de Gaulle to power. The watchword of this revolt was ‘integration’: a vision of a Franco-Algerian nation of French citizens and Algerian Muslims, which appealed to both colonialists and some liberal believers in a truly multiracial French Union. The following year, de Gaulle dismissed such ideas, objecting that ‘If we went ahead with integration, if all the Arabs and Berbers of Algeria were considered French, how could we stop them coming to live in France, since the standard of living is so much higher? My village wouldn’t be called Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises, but Colombey-les-Deux-Mosquées!’¹ On 16 September 1959 the President announced a referendum on the question of self-determination, in which the Algerians would be offered three options—independence, complete integration or a looser association—and indicated his preference for association, by which was meant self-determination for Algeria, with France retaining responsibility for economic policy, defence and foreign affairs. The rejection of integration marked a public break between de Gaulle and those who had engineered his return to power. From September 1959 it was clear that de Gaulle,

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while not necessarily supporting full independence for Algeria, was prepared to grant self-determination, and the ideal of Franco-Algerian integration was consigned to the discourse of anti-Gaulist resentment and nostalgia for the dream of a multicultural Algeria that had existed in the minds of many reformers, settlers and soldiers since 1955.²

This article addresses the contribution that the notion of integration made to debates about colonial reform among pro-Algérie française intellectuals and politicians, with particular focus on the views of Jacques Soustelle, the last Governor-General in Algeria between February 1955 and February 1956 and later a figurehead of the Algérie française campaign. It emphasizes the importance of the concept of Franco-Algerian or Franco-Muslim union dismissed by de Gaulle in the above quotation, and the process by which ideas developed in Algeria, by pieds-noirs and French officials like Soustelle, influenced debates in France and, in the case of ‘integration’, had a profound effect on the discourse of colonial reform and continues to shape debates about the Algerian war’s legacy. It seeks to demonstrate the transfer of ideas from Algeria to Paris and the effect that the debate over colonial reform, initiated by Soustelle in Algiers, had in metropolitan France. After a discussion of Soustelle and his integration project, it will examine the repercussions of these policies on his political colleagues and others in France, before looking at the project’s failure and the implications of this for historians’ understanding of the Algérie française campaign and its legacy.

I

The policy of integration, largely devised by Jacques Soustelle in 1955 in Algeria, has often been seen by historians as simply another variant of the familiar French colonial doctrine of assimilation, which dates from the late nineteenth century.³ Its significance as a factor which fuelled debates and inspired both

² It is not the purpose of this article to engage in detailed discussion of the significance of de Gaulle’s announcement on self-determination nor to discuss fully the question of whether de Gaulle had already, by 1959, decided to accept Algerian independence. Several recent studies have challenged the notion that de Gaulle proceeded with a carefully planned withdrawal from Algeria, whereas many others have asserted that the General did indeed intend to grant independence and may have even decided upon this policy before his return to power. For further discussion of this question, M. Connelly, A diplomatic revolution: Algeria’s fight for independence and the origins of the post Cold-War world (Oxford, 2002); I. Wall, France, the United States and the Algerian War (Berkeley, CA, 2001); M. Cointet, De Gaulle et l’Algérie française (1995). For a more general overview of Gaulism and colonial questions: G. Pervillé, ‘Le RPF et l’Union Française: Rapport de synthèse’, in Fondation Charles de Gaulle/Université Bordeaux III, De Gaulle et le RPF (1947–1955) (1998), pp. 521–30; F. Turpin/Fondation Charles de Gaulle, Le RPF et l’Outre-Mer (2004); F. Barthélémy, ‘Le Gaulisme et l’Algérie au temps du RPF, 1947–1955’, unpublished Mémoire de Maîtrise (Institut d’Études Politiques, Paris, 1997).

French and Algerians to take up positions during the Algerian war of independence has therefore been overlooked. Yet, during the war, its emotive power was considerable. Supporters of integration accused those who objected to the cost of the programme or described it as unrealistic of succumbing to ‘defeatism’ or condemning France to ‘decadence’. In 1957 Raymond Aron and Jacques Soustelle traded verbal blows over the issue, while a year earlier, Soustelle had already felt compelled to write an open letter to sceptical French intellectuals outlining the intellectual’s duty to embrace ambitious schemes, such as integration, that offered, in Soustelle’s view, a bold new solution which moved the Algerian problem beyond familiar dogma.4

After the failed military putsch of April 1961 and the emergence of the Organisation Armée Secrète (OAS), the Algérie française cause was discredited, and just as its staunchest defenders were brought to trial or went into exile, so its most coherent and fully developed attempt at defining a new form of Franco-Algerian relations—integration—also took on the appearance of a lost cause, little more than one final attempt to persuade both Paris and the Algerians that the dream of a greater France could at last become reality. Integration, however, represented more than simply a reformulation of the assimilation doctrine.5 It differed in many ways from previous attempts to define the relationship between France and its colonies.

For Soustelle, integration’s chief asset was that it respected the ‘originality’ or ‘personnalité’ of Algeria.6 All Algerians and French citizens would be considered part of the same greater Franco-Algerian nation, with exactly the same rights and responsibilities.7 Algeria would be fully integrated into the national economy, while Algerians would elect members of the National Assembly in Paris, through a single electoral college which would remove the unfair segregated electoral system that ensured European superiority. Algerians would no longer have to recognize the primacy of the secular model over Islamic law or attain a certain level of education in French, which had previously held the key to becoming an évolué and acceding to full French civic status. According to Soustelle, compulsory Arabic teaching in schools, women’s suffrage and local government reform designed to eliminate the colon-dominated communes mixtes were the most important structural reforms needed to make integration

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4 For the debates between Soustelle and other French intellectuals over Algerian policy: J. Soustelle, Le drame algérien et la décadence française: Réponse à Raymond Aron (1957); R. Aron, La tragédie algérienne (1957); J. Soustelle, Lettre d’un intellectuel à quelques autres à propos de l’Algérie (1955); J. Le Sueur, Uncivil war: Intellectuals and identity politics during the decolonization of Algeria (Philadelphia, PA, 2001); P. Sorum, Intellectuals and decolonisation in France (Durham, NC, 1977).


possible. This was an agenda for modernization, notably in the financial commit-
ment it implied on the part of metropolitan France’s nationalized industries,
its emphasis on preparing the ground for Algerian participation in public affairs
through an intensive education programme and the measures aimed specifically
at Algerian women. It also sought to address a fundamental problem that lay
at the heart of thinking on colonial reform: the problem of how to categorize the
Arabs and come to think of them as equal members of a Franco-Algerian
community.

During the period under consideration, the term ‘Muslim’ was employed as
shorthand for ‘Algerian’. Far from being merely a lazy confusion of religious
and national terminology, this blurring of identities has important implications
for both our understanding of French policy in Algeria and historians’
approaches to the subject. Throughout the colonial period in Algeria, Algerians
were referred to most commonly simply as Muslims. Indeed, for much of the
colonial period, the term algérien denoted a settler and reflected the desire to
create a melting-pot society of supposedly Latin—European and Christian—
culture leading to the appropriation of an ‘Algerian’ identity.8 During the final
years of French rule, the legacy of this period continued to be apparent. Even
though Algerian nationalists and emigrants had reclaimed ownership of the epi-
thet ‘Algerian’, the colonial administration and the army continued to rely on
the old forms of categorization and describe the non-French population simply
as musulmans. Indeed, such categorization according to presumed religious
affiliation found its way into the post-war official mind in both Paris and
Algiers, with a number of rather clumsy and confusing categories of Algerians
emerging once the Algerians had been granted citizenship in 1947. According
to the new attempts at classifying Algerians, it now became possible to be a
Français musulman d’Algérie, later redefined as a Français de souche
nord-africaine, while later still, an Algerian immigrant in France could be
called a Français musulman d’origine algérienne.9

However, despite the many questions that this rather confusing categoriza-
tion of citizenship might be expected to raise, it seems that both French citi-
zens of the period and, more surprisingly, many who have since explored the
history of French Algeria accepted the use of the term ‘Muslim’ rather unques-
tioningly. Numerous are the historical works that, claiming to offer a study of
France and Islam or France and the Muslims or the Muslim world, actually
amount to little more than surveys of diplomatic relations between France and
the Arab world, without specifically considering the extent to which the fact
that the French state was engaged in relations with Islamic states, or groups of
Muslims, affected French colonial policies.10 Such approaches to the question

8 On the creation of identities in colonial Algeria: P. Lorcin, Imperial identities: Stereotyping,
prejudice and race in colonial Algeria (1995); J. Gosnell, The politics of Frenchness in colonial
9 On the history of nationality legislation in France and its colonies: P. Weil, Qu’est-ce qu’un
10 For example, P. Le Pautremat, La politique musulmane de la France au XXe siècle (2003).
have, therefore, left gaps, notably concerning Soustelle’s integration project which was devised ‘in the field’ in Algiers, whereas previous colonial policies had emanated from Paris or from the so-called colonial lobby.\textsuperscript{11} Furthermore, in addition to its intellectual origins, integration must be distinguished from earlier policies in that it advocated the incorporation of Algerians, as Muslims and as French citizens, into French civic society. It is thus of crucial importance not only in examining the transfer of ideas but also in discussing the constitutional and social implications of extending the secular republic’s remit to a religiously defined community. In this area, indeed, we can see the lasting relevance of the integration debate of the late 1950s and early 1960s to contemporary debates about the legacy of colonialism and the Republic’s capacity to adapt to multiculturalism.

If, in colonial Algeria, one could be either French or a Muslim, this raises a number of questions about what exactly was meant by the rallying-call Algérie française once the renunciation of Muslim civic status was no longer a prerequisite of French citizenship. More specifically, it raises the question of what exactly was to happen to these ‘Muslim Frenchmen of Algeria’ if the much-vaunted alternative to independence—integration—were to be implemented. The debate arising from Soustelle’s proposal of integration during the Algerian war provides a valuable case study of the practical and intellectual nature of the plan to pursue complete integration of French and Algerians, setting aside the division between French and Muslim that had persisted since the nineteenth century.

II

Jacques Soustelle has generally been overlooked by historians.\textsuperscript{12} This neglect can largely be explained by Soustelle’s alleged involvement with the OAS after 1961, as a result of which he spent the following seven years in exile.\textsuperscript{13} His works of ethnology focusing on pre-colonial Mexico remain in print, and their academic merit is acknowledged, but the same cannot be said for his political career and his writings on the Algerian question.\textsuperscript{14} Soustelle returned to France


\textsuperscript{13} Soustelle’s involvement with the OAS has been contested both legally and by historians. See Le Sueur, ‘Before the Jackal’.

\textsuperscript{14} In addition to works already cited, Soustelle’s published work on the Algerian question consists of \textit{Sur une route nouvelle} (1964), \textit{La page n’est pas tournée} (1965), \textit{Vingt-huit ans de Gaullisme} (1968) and \textit{Lettre ouverte aux victimes de la décolonisation} (1973).
in October 1968, was re-elected to the National Assembly in 1973 and became a member of the Académie Française in 1984. Yet, his staunch defence of Algérie française in the face of de Gaulle’s moves towards granting independence placed him in the company of renegade officers and settler militia groups. This caused his contributions to the debate about colonial policy in the 1950s to be overlooked amidst the attention paid to the split within Gaullism and the threat that the OAS posed to the Gaullist republic in its early years. The later stages of Soustelle’s involvement with Algeria often lead the historian into the murky waters of settler and extreme-right conspiracies. However, there is much in Soustelle’s earlier political and intellectual engagement with Algeria and with questions of relations between European colonial powers and native populations that marks him out as an important contributor to the debates on colonial policy that took place in France during the Algerian war of independence.

Soustelle’s career contains many elements typical of the trajectories of intellectuals engaging in politics in post-war France. His intellectual reputation preceded his political one; after undertaking ethnographic fieldwork in Mexico, he became assistant director of the revived Musée de l’Homme in Paris in 1937. Around this time, he became involved in the Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Antifascistes, established after the February 1934 riots in Paris. In Mexico, once again at the time of the Fall of France in 1940, he joined the Free French, and after initially serving as Free French representative in Central America, he ended the war as Director General of Intelligence in de Gaulle’s provisional government in Algiers. From this experience, Soustelle, like many Gaullists, retained a sense of Algeria’s vital importance to metropolitan France as the territory in which the liberation and rebuilding process had been planned. His post-war career was marked by a close connection between Gaullism and colonial affairs; he served as minister for the colonies in de Gaulle’s Provisional Government, before becoming Secretary-General of the Gaullist Rassemblement du Peuple Français (RPF)—showing particular interest in establishing a Gaullist presence in Algeria—between 1947 and 1951. In January 1955 Prime Minister Pierre Mendès-France appointed Soustelle Governor-General in Algeria, a decision greeted with hostility by most of the settler community. Soustelle was viewed with suspicion not only because of his association with Mendès-France, who had ended the war in Indochina the previous year and announced his intention to grant ‘autonomy’ to Morocco and Tunisia, but also because de Gaulle’s 1944 relaxation of the laws governing Algerians’ eligibility for French citizenship still rankled. That Soustelle’s academic career revealed an interest in and sympathy for the native populations of Mexico only added to pied-noir suspicions of the new Governor-General. In recent years, the role of French ethnology—particularly the Musée de l’Homme—in French colonialism has been the subject of renewed attention from historians. See, for example, A. Conklin, ‘Civil society, science, and empire in late Republican France: The foundation of Paris’s Museum of Man’, Osiris, 17 (2002), 255–90; E. Sibeud, Une science impériale pour l’Afrique: La construction des savoirs africanistes en France, 1878–1930 (2002).

appointing Soustelle to the Governor-General’s position—a post hitherto generally offered to seasoned colonial administrators or senior figures in the governing parties in France—Mendès-France signalled a willingness to put colonial reform on the political agenda.

In attempting to understand the attitudes that shaped Soustelle’s development of a new colonial policy during his period in Algiers, it is necessary to take into account both his training as an ethnologist and his Gaullism. During his fieldwork in Mexico, the young Soustelle had observed that his subjects—the native Otomi people—lived almost in isolation from the Mexican state. Yet, he returned from this fieldwork convinced that a true Hispano-Indian civilization was possible; the Mexican example, for the most part, showed that natives, imbued with liberal European ideas, were able to rise to the top of Mexican society. His first published work of ethnology developed this view, which informed his approach to colonial questions throughout his political career:

Consider the Indians as nationalities, recognize their cultural and linguistic rights, give them Spanish as a language of communication but guarantee the respect of their own languages (I would even say teach them to write their languages). In short, respect the substance of the indigenous societies so that they can enter into a united Mexico on an equal footing with their own characteristics and their pride, holding their heads high, fully aware of who they are.17

This vision informed Soustelle’s aims in Algeria; it looked forward to an integrated Franco-Algerian nation in which the ‘natives’ of Algeria would not only be able to enter fully into the French Republic without discrimination and without any of the obligations to renounce any aspects of indigenous culture, language and religion but also, by means of this integration, be able to play an equal and glorious role in the creation of a new, dynamic and inclusive nation. Thus, the integration of Algeria into France would furnish an essential element of dynamism and optimism, which would in turn contribute to modernization and a revival of French self-confidence.

Soustelle went to Algeria determined to apply the Statute of 1947, which had been undermined by settlers and the colonial administration, notably through electoral fraud.18 There is no indication, however, that Soustelle shared the view often expressed by metropolitan politicians and that this would be sufficient to resolve the problems in Algeria. Soustelle, at the very least, envisaged

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combining the political reforms of the Statute with economic and social reforms. However, many of Soustelle’s initial measures, such as public works programmes to reduce unemployment, had already been proposed by previous governments, while many of his projects remained unfinished when he left Algeria in 1956. Analysis of integration can therefore most usefully be conducted by looking at the principles that lay behind his policies and the messages that the measures he was able to put in place sent out regarding the essence of integration. The key themes that emerged from Soustelle’s governorship were an emphasis on social progress and modernity, attention to the native population, specifically its language and religion, and political equality.

The importance of modernization and social progress to Soustelle’s vision of an Algerian future was seen by his most ambitious project: the creation of *Centres Sociaux*. On the basis of a scheme for education of the native population that he had witnessed in Mexico, these centres were designed to provide instructions in agricultural techniques as well as in basic general education to combat the neglect that Soustelle saw as the fundamental cause of Algeria’s poverty.19 The aims behind the *Centres Sociaux* can be found in Soustelle’s Mexican experience, of which he remarked that:

[Mexican policy has become] …to improve living conditions at the same time as they respect the originality of the Indians, thanks to an accurate appraisal of their cultural characteristics. As a result, the doctrine of ‘incorporation’ has given way to the more flexible and rational notion of ‘integration’. The aim is no longer… to de-Indianize them – but, instead, to make sure that they actually enjoy the same rights and opportunities. The aim is to unite, not to standardize.20

The project’s objectives in Algeria were threefold. Most immediately, it aimed to arrest the spread of nationalism by promoting the idea that young Algerians could participate in modernity, thanks to French aid, while at the same time demonstrating that the neglect that had marked the colonial period was over. The *Centres Sociaux* also sought to change Algerian society and prepare it for participation in the new Franco-Algerian nation, first through material progress: ‘to give the population all the necessary means of progress to

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19 Although Soustelle is acknowledged as the instigator of the *Centres Sociaux* scheme, the implementation of the project was entrusted to his ethnologist colleague from the *Musée de l’Homme*, Germaine Tillion, who had already been sent to Algeria by Mendès-France in December 1954 to report on social conditions after the outbreak of the FLN rebellion. Tillion’s views of the Algerian problem as essentially one of demography and under-development contributed to the development of Soustelle’s view that France could maintain its position in Algeria by making sufficient investment in social and economic progress. On the *Centres Sociaux*: Le Sueur, *Uncivil war*, pp. 55–8; N. Forget, ‘Le service des *Centres Sociaux* en Algérie’, *Matériaux pour l’Histoire de Notre Temps*, 26 (1992), 37–47; G. Tillion, *L’Afrique bascule vers l’avenir: L’Algérie en 1957 et autres textes* (1960).

achieve a higher economic standard’, and in the longer term, ‘at one and the 
same time to create elites and allow the masses to develop’.21

In addition to social reform, integration called for a change in mentalities. 
Soustelle attempted to distance himself from prevailing colonialist ideas about 
the Algerian question. In April 1955 he instructed the generally conservative 
staff of the administration in Algiers to abandon their old colonial mindset. 
This amounted to making serious efforts to treat the Muslims with respect and 
avoid adopting racist or dismissive attitudes. Later, in the same year, he issued 
a new set of directives regarding the correct attitude to be adopted towards 
the Algerians:

Local customs and sensitivities are to be respected as far as possible. 
Insult to human dignity, abuse, ill treatment are all strictly forbidden. 
Children, women, the elderly, war veterans and religious leaders are 
to be treated with special care. Failure to obey these rules will be 
punished severely…Our mission is to re-establish order and 
peace, not against the Muslim population but with it and for it.22

However, as will be seen, these more idealistic aspects of integration often 
foundered on the realities of the increasing extent of police powers being 
devolved to the military in Algeria and the ability of settlers and officers to 
undermine or simply ignore Soustelle’s directives.

The respect for native populations was intended to prepare the ground for a 
vigorous programme of reforms. Soustelle argued that Algeria needed ‘material 
and cultural progress’, to be achieved in partnership with France.23 Public 
works projects such as road building, education and irrigation were part of 
this, but Soustelle’s chief interest was in creating a sense of community 
between the French and the Muslims and providing a clear display of French 
commitment. In March 1955 Soustelle declared his intention of making Algeria 
‘a province; a novel kind of province admittedly, but a totally French one’.24 It 
was this conception of integration that contributed greatly to its appeal as sym-
bolic of the development of a large and inclusive Franco-Algerian nation, which 
was prominent in the demonstrations of 1958.

A concrete demonstration of Soustelle’s commitment to creating a renewed 
Franco-Algerian national community can be seen in his attempts to tackle 
the question of Algerian emigration to France. In 1955 pressure from Soustelle’s 
Government-General in Algiers brought about the creation of a Comité de 
Coordination composed of the ministers of the interior, labour and health 
intended to encourage French employers to recruit Algerians. Building on the

21 Germaine Tillion, cited in Forget, ‘Le service des Centres Sociaux’, p. 40; Tillion, L’Afrique 
22 Soustelle, ‘Consignes sur l’attitude à observer à l’égard des populations musulmanes dans la 
lutte contre le terrorisme’, 22 November 1955, Gouvernement Général de l’Algérie, Documents 
sur les attentats commis en Algérie par les terroristes (31 January 1956) [italics in original].
24 Ibid., 23 March 1955.
existing legislative and institutional framework—and with little reason to doubt that the policy of the French ‘official mind’ remained integrationist—Soustelle thus set about not only creating a ‘totally French province’ in Algiers but also ensuring that through easier migration the links between France and Algeria would continue to develop. If Algerian labour—Soustelle admitted more willingly than previous governors that colon-run agriculture could not employ enough Algerians—was to flow into France, so French expertise and capital were to flood south in unprecedented quantities to facilitate an economic miracle in Algeria like that in Fourth-Republic France. Soustelle insisted that, because the administration in Algeria had always been characterized by ‘neglect’ and favoured the interests of colon-dominated agriculture, this was a matter in which metropolitan politics would have to work in tandem with initiatives in Algeria:

Colon agriculture prefers to have a large excess of labour (which is the case at the moment). The Government-General, reflecting the opinion and the outlook of the European population in Algeria, inevitably shares this agricultural outlook…However, several industries are prepared to set up in Algeria…Algeria must help them. But not only does Algeria not help them, we don’t make things easy for them at all…For this reason, we need an Algerian organization, but one situated in Paris (at the Algeria Office), responsible for setting in motion the industrial development of Algeria, away from the agricultural outlook of the Government-General, in permanent contact with metropolitan employers’ and professionals’ associations in Paris and with the relevant technical ministries: this organisation, alongside the Algeria Office, could be the agency for industrialization, investment and economic expansion.

Thus, if the prospects of economic and social progress offered by the Centres Sociaux and seen as the antidote to nationalism were to be realized, metropolitan politicians would need to recognize the crucial and central role that modernization of Algeria would play in making integration possible and contributing to national renewal. Such a plan would allow Algeria to make its own industrial and agricultural contribution to the nation, in contrast to its economic importance being perceived in France chiefly in terms of its ability to provide immigrant industrial labour and agricultural commodities.

Soustelle was more aware than previous Governors-General of the religious dimension of Algerian policy; he was attacked almost from the beginning of his governorship by sceptical colonial officials warning that Islam made integration

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25 On the economic and demographic effects of developments in Algerian policy for metropolitan France, see also D. Lefeuvre, Chère Algérie: Comptes et mécomptes de la tutelle coloniale 1930–1962 (Saint-Denis, 1997).
impossible. Shortly after Soustelle’s arrival in Algeria, the Gaullist Gabriel Puaux, Senator representing the French settlers in Tunisia, wrote to Soustelle that ‘I think you were right to speak out in favour of integration, but it will be difficult to make a programme like this work in practice, because of the hold that Islam has on the whole population’. Despite this warning that Islam might render integration impossible, Soustelle nonetheless insisted that the Islamic nature of the Algerian population need not be a barrier to integration as long as French reformers understood that integration meant accepting the Algerians as Muslims and Frenchmen at the same time. Indeed, Soustelle argued that ‘the Algerian question…is dominated by the “Muslim factor”’, insisting that on condition that a serious attempt be made to recognize this fundamental difference and overcome it, the outcome of the Algerian problem could be ‘the construction, by France, of a new Algeria within a solid and lasting Franco-Muslim union’.

For the Algerian nationalists, however, integration was just another French colonial policy, another ploy to avoid independence and just as likely as the mission civilisatrice to amount to no more than empty promises. By around June 1955 Soustelle had concluded that the small nationalist forces had managed to instil such fear in the population that they would have to be defeated rather than appeased if his ambitious social reform programme was to have any chance of success. Yet he remained determined to pursue integration, despite the encouragement it offered the pieds-noirs and the greater nationalist opposition it inspired, which in turn obliged the Governor-General to order more vigorous military operations.

III

In France, publication in 1956 of Soustelle’s Aimée et souffrante Algérie—a kind of manifesto for integration—made integration seem a ready-made policy to fill the void in government thinking regarding the Algerian problem. Its popularity with the army and the pieds-noirs, both of whom realized that its apparent liberalism could allow them to win hearts and minds in Paris, led Gaullists like future Prime Minister Michel Debré to let it become the watchword of the Gaullist return to power in May 1958. However, the longer term consequences are more significant and help to explain the final Gaullist decision to disengage from Algeria. It is true that much of what Gaullists said about Algeria and about Muslims in the early 1950s sounded like what became known as ‘integration’, but it was not until Soustelle’s rise to prominence that the concepts had to be translated into policy. In power after 1958 and trying to distance himself from the army and pied-noir revolt in Algiers, de Gaulle sidelined Soustelle, refusing to appoint him minister for Algeria and then relegating him to information...
minister, obliged to defend de Gaulle’s alternative policies publicly until he left the government in 1960.29

While Soustelle was making his mark on Algeria, he also sought to exert as much influence as possible on his Gaullist colleagues and the government in Paris, stressing the absolute priority that should be given to the Algerian situation. Once Soustelle’s initiatives were in place in Algeria, metropolitan governments were obliged to support him in the absence of any alternative policy. Soustelle’s influence on government became stronger throughout 1955. He repeatedly complained to Prime Minister Edgar Faure about insufficient military means and the excessive toleration of criticism of Algerian policy in the metropolitan press, becoming a strong voice of opposition in the months preceding the 1956 elections.30 After the elections, Soustelle’s influence on domestic policy-making was seen in a leaked memo to Prime Minister Guy Mollet, which revealed a full integration project, involving total political, legal and economic integration, to be realized within six months.31 This ensured that integration remained on the domestic political agenda throughout the Mollet government even after Soustelle’s departure from office. Mollet praised Soustelle’s work in Algeria and seized upon his statements of intent and his reading of the situation in Algeria. Speaking to Latin American ambassadors, for example, Mollet pointed out that:

The situation in Algeria is of an exceptional, really unique nature. I hear the words ‘colonialism’ and ‘anti-colonialism’ used about this matter. That is a total misunderstanding of the real question. A few weeks ago Jacques Soustelle brilliantly analysed the ethnic complexity of Algeria for you. Following his argument, I want to remind you that two large and distinct communities live in Algeria, one of European origin and the other Muslim…So we need to find conditions for co-existence and active collaboration between the two communities, within a fraternal Franco-Muslim union.32

Mollet’s words echo a number of Soustelle’s key concerns, notably his determination to refute claims that the Algerian problem was a colonial one which ought to be seen as part of the global trend towards decolonization. For Soustelle, the language of decolonization was no more than Marxist dogma:

An excellent method of propaganda and subversion in that its vocabulary, on the one hand, made the people of the empire think they were ‘colonized’, that is to say exploited, and on the other

31 Adams, Call of Conscience, p. 48.
hand made the metropoles think they were still ‘colonial’ powers, that is to say ‘exploiters’…33

Mollet went further in demonstrating his intellectual debt to Soustelle, comparing the problem of relations between different ethnic groups in Algeria with similar problems faced by governments in Latin America. The influence of Soustelle’s work clearly reached beyond Gaullist and intellectual circles, with integration filling a vacuum in the rhetoric of both government and opposition politicians.

It was, however, among Gaullists that the idea of integration took hold most firmly in the final years of the Fourth Republic, thanks to the high regard in which Soustelle was held. Its adoption by this group of politicians, who had already established their credentials as defenders of French Algeria and fierce opponents of any government which suggested loosening the ties between France and Algeria, meant that integration remained on the political agenda between Soustelle’s return to France in February 1956 and the collapse of the Fourth Republic in 1958. In turn, the importance that it assumed as a means to the achievement of a Gaullist government meant that the move away from integration after 1958 alienated Gaullists such as Soustelle and many in Algeria who had come to believe that the return of de Gaulle meant the enactment of integration as French government policy. However, closer study of the importance of Soustelle’s integration plan for Gaullists suggests a more nuanced picture than this summary might suggest; many who proclaimed their attachment to integration also revealed some hesitation about accepting the complete equality of rights and responsibilities that it implied. Thus, we can see integration taking on a rhetorical and perhaps mythical value that exceeded the genuine commitment of Soustelle’s supporters in France to implementing his plan.

Like much of the French political class, de Gaulle and the Gaullist movement did not accord a high priority to Algerian policy before the start of the Algerian war. Nonetheless, the extension of French citizenship to 60,000 Algerians in 1944 by de Gaulle’s Provisional Government can be seen as a starting point for the issues at stake in the debate over integration. For Gaullists, this measure paved the way for the 1947 extension of citizenship to all Algerians. It created a powerful legacy for Gaullists through the next two decades: that of Gaullism as friend and protector of the native Algerians against the colons; a claim which perhaps better suited Gaullists in their aim of undermining the power and prestige of the pro-Vichy settlers than it did to those who sought a genuine commitment to an inclusive policy towards the Algerians.

In 1948 the RPF’s first Algerian Congress adopted a motion on ‘Muslim affairs’ calling for ‘a constructive and equitable undertaking, inspired by the national interest alone, in which no political, confessional or radical divisions have a place’, and stating that ‘from now on we need to lead these populations

towards a western conception of public life with an absolute respect for the
religion of every man.\textsuperscript{34} In 1952 RPF deputy Christian Fouchet argued that
unless the Algerian Muslims were rallied to French values through an intensive
effort to pursue a mission in North Africa, they would become the natural prey
of Arab nationalists seeking to exploit Islam to create an anti-French move-
ment.\textsuperscript{35} Thus, a constant feature of Gaullist discourse on Algeria was an empha-
sis on the need to fulfil France’s obligation to include the Muslims in civic
society on equal basis.

A significant factor influencing Gaullist attempts to appeal to the Algerian
Muslim vote in the early Fourth Republic was electoral competition between
the Gaullist RPF and the newly formed Mouvement Républicain Populaire
(MRP). Believing that the MRP’s overtly Christian-Democrat position would
prevent it from making significant gains among the newly enfranchized Algeri-
ans, Soustelle, chief RPF electoral strategist between 1947 and 1951, decreed
that the Gaullist electoral platform in Algeria ought to promise ‘a true union . . .
of French and Muslims’\textsuperscript{36} and that the party should produce a common mani-
fest with prominent pro-French Algerian figures for the 1951 general election.
After the election, the few Algerians elected on RPF lists were presented as
symbols of what the Gaullists were beginning to call ‘Muslim policy’ in both
France and Algeria. In practical terms, the Gaullists’ attempts to cope with the
creation of new Muslim Algerian citizens tended to focus on targeted initiatives
designed to bring French and Algerians together. War veterans’ associations in
particular were used as a means to bring together the French and Muslim com-
munities both to perpetuate the spirit of Free France and to demonstrate that
Franco-Muslim unity in the name of a common purpose—the return to power
of de Gaulle and the undoing of the Fourth Republic party ‘system’—was
indeed possible.\textsuperscript{37}

However, despite the RPF’s ambition and the fact that a small number of
Algerians were genuinely attracted to the Gaullist initiatives, in practice, the
RPF’s tentative steps towards presenting itself as the party of Franco-Muslim
unity were often undermined by the need to win \textit{pied-noir} votes. By the 1950s,
Gaullism had seemingly abandoned any remnants of liberalism, and the RPF in
Algeria had become a settler party; Algerian attendance at meetings dwindled
from a healthy percentage in the late 1940s to around 5–10 per cent by the
1950s.\textsuperscript{38} Optimistic party officials continued to report that the Muslims still

\textsuperscript{34} CAOM Alg/GGA/9CAB: Fonds Algérie: Gouvernement-Général: Cabinet Civil Naegelen.
\textsuperscript{35} Fouchet, \textit{Assemblée Nationale}, 5 June 1952, \textit{Journal Officiel de la République Française}
(henceforth JO).
\textsuperscript{36} Archives du Rassemblement du Peuple Français, Fondation Charles de Gaulle, Paris (hence-
forth RPF) BR42: Algérie, 16 October 1950, Soustelle to Yaffi.
\textsuperscript{37} RPF 647: Dossiers ‘anciens combattants’.
\textsuperscript{38} CAOM Alg/GGA/8CAB: Fonds Algérie: Gouvernement Général: Cabinet Civil Chataigneau.
Dossiers 89–90: Police des Renseignements Généraux, May–December 1947; Alg/GGA/10CAB:
Fonds Algérie: Gouvernement Général: Cabinet Civil Léonard. Dossier 3: Police des Renseigne-
ments Généraux, May–September 1951.
held General de Gaulle in high esteem and saw his movement as the bearer of the principle of Franco-Muslim union, but the presence of so many pillars of pied-noir society in the ranks of the local RPF federations outweighed the General’s personal appeal in their electoral considerations.\(^{39}\)

Along with this unsuccessful attempt to enlist Algerian Muslims in the service of a united national cause in Algeria, Gaullists launched a number of projects aimed at promoting a sense of integration between Algerian immigrants and the wider community in France. In 1953, for example, Gaullist deputy Raymond Dronne pointed out ‘the size and the urgency of the social and political problem caused by the presence of very many North Africans in France’.\(^{40}\) France, it was argued, had failed to provide a sufficiently welcoming environment for North African students and workers, with the result that ‘often we make of them pseudo-intellectuals and proletarians, that’s to say all that it takes to deliver them body and soul to totalitarian doctrines’.\(^{41}\) Welcoming the government’s decision, in June 1955, to create a Comité d’Action to deal with the Algerian problem, RPF General-Secretary Jacques Foccart stressed that this committee must be able to address problems not only in Algeria but also in France, where unrest among North Africans was a growing problem. This unrest, the Gaullists argued, was a sign that France had failed to fulfil its mission of development in Algeria and an evidence that inclusive policies and a serious commitment to Algeria were needed.\(^{42}\)

On a more general rhetorical level, Gaullists also claimed that France was a ‘Muslim power’ or had an ‘Islamic vocation’. In this respect, too, the 1950s witnessed a concerted Gaullist effort to adopt a position that suggested some kind of Franco-Algerian or Franco-Muslim unity. Michel Debré, for example, expressed reticence about European integration on the grounds that French influence should extend beyond Europe because France was ‘a Muslim power’; indeed, in 1951 he asserted that this was what made France different from other major powers: ‘There is a difference between France and the United States: France is a Muslim power and the United States are not’.\(^{43}\) Debré repeated the theme of a necessary restarting and reinforcement of a sense of mission among the Algerians throughout debates on European integration and colonial reform, complaining, for example, that ‘Our presence in North Africa seems routine to us; we only think our presence necessary for the protection of the French who live there and the French interests that exist there.’\(^{44}\) A lack of French vision and ambition was thus blamed for the failure to create the Franco-Algerian community that the post-war reforms seemed to call for and the Gaullists seemed to have promised. By 1955 Jacques Foccart could claim


\(^{40}\) Dronne, \textit{Assemblée Nationale}, 16 July 1953, JO.

\(^{41}\) Fouchet, \textit{Assemblée Nationale}, 5 June 1952, JO.

\(^{42}\) RPF: \textit{Lettre à l’Union Française}, no. 286, 2 July 1955.

\(^{43}\) Michel Debré, \textit{Conseil de la République}, 20 December 1951, JO.

\(^{44}\) Ibid.
that a strengthening of French influence was the ideal solution to increasing tension in North Africa, speaking of France’s ‘Islamic vocation’ extending from Algeria to embrace all the Muslim parts of the French Union.\textsuperscript{45}

However, even at the height of Soustelle’s prominence in Algeria and when his ideas were circulating most widely, some of his colleagues were already sounding notes of caution about the prospects for true Franco-Algerian integration. From around 1955, the emergence of a recognizable bloc of former colonies on the international stage was seen by Michel Debré as a sign of a new Islamic onslaught against France, which would sound the death knell of any inclusive Franco-Muslim colonial projects. Debré called for French resistance to this new onslaught by invoking the precedent of the defeat of the Moors at Poitiers in the eighth century.\textsuperscript{46} Such hyperbole, warning of an imminent clash of civilizations, was increasingly taking the place of inclusiveness and ambitious plans for unity in Gaullist analyses of the changing international situation. Although some of Debré’s colleagues still felt that if a clash of civilizations was indeed imminent, France would be spared because of its inclusive colonial mission, a turning point can nevertheless be identified around 1955, with the Gaullist press warning that ‘we mustn’t have any illusions about the current attitudes of Islam towards us’.\textsuperscript{47} A shift was clearly taking place, from seeing Islam—and by extension Algerians—as presenting an opportunity for an inclusive project towards a perception of threat and danger. This shift can be explained by a number of factors, two of the most obvious being the escalation of the war in Algeria and the Suez crisis. Gaullist attitudes to the Algerian immigrant population also displayed a shift, around 1955–1956, from faith in integration or creation of a Franco-Muslim community to a conviction that Algerian Muslims were fundamentally different from—and potentially hostile to—France and should be treated accordingly.

This shift did not amount to a Gaullist rejection of Soustelle’s integration policy, which had arrived at just the right time to fill a vacuum in Gaullist policy after the demise of the RPF; the RPF’s last secretary-general, Jacques Foccart, could easily answer inquiries from colleagues on the subject of Algeria by saying ‘our position is Soustelle’s position’.\textsuperscript{48} We can, nonetheless, see a number of hesitations being expressed in Paris, at around the same time as Soustelle was developing his integration doctrine in Algiers, which are useful in explaining the ultimate failure of metropolitan opinion to accept the full logic, implications and commitment of integration. For his part, Soustelle grew increasingly frustrated with the failure of metropolitan politicians and intellectuals to make the leap of faith that integration implied, complaining that:

\begin{quote}
We could have dealt with the questions of representation, free elections, electoral colleges, the reforms needed to get Algeria out of
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{45} RPF: \textit{Lettre à L’Union Française}, no. 275, 17 March 1955.
\textsuperscript{46} RPF: Debré, ‘\textit{La Leçon de Bandoeng},’ in \textit{Courrier d’Information Politique}, no. 9, May 1955.
\textsuperscript{47} RPF: \textit{Lettre à l’Union Française}, no. 353, 31 October 1956.
the bloody rut in which the CRUA has left her. \[^{49}\] That would have been a useful task. I regret that we haven’t even tried. \[^{50}\]

However, the tone of his criticism revealed that ‘integration’ was already becoming more important as a symbol of French effort and commitment to remain in Algeria and implement reform than as a simple set of initiatives in the debate over colonial policy. Failing to convince metropolitan opinion, even among those who might be considered naturally most receptive to Soustelle’s ideas—Gaullists and intellectuals—Soustelle concluded that doubts about integration could be explained by a sense of defeatism and even ‘decadence’ pervading the nation. By 1957 the growing emotive power was demonstrated by Soustelle’s claim that:

To abandon Algeria is to condemn France to decadence; to save Algeria is to arrest the terrible process of degradation, it’s to give back to our country, its people, its young people, their chance and their future. \[^{51}\]

According to this view of the situation, the success of the ambitious integration plan now seemed to be as crucial for France itself as it was for the North African colony.

IV

This view of relations between Algeria and the metropole over questions of colonial reform should not, however, be interpreted as evidence that developments in Algeria had relatively little impact on France. Rather, the way in which ‘integration’, as championed by Soustelle, became a symbol of commitment and a criterion by which metropolitan politicians were to be judged emphasizes its importance as a powerful political myth. Like its predecessors, assimilation and association, integration might be said to be ‘less important in policy formulation than what the words themselves could be made to stand for in the public mind’. \[^{52}\] We now turn, therefore, to the means by which integration was promoted, developed and took on this powerful and almost mythical quality as the debate over Algérie française became more polarized.

As has already been suggested, the fact that integration aimed to strengthen the links between Algeria and France inevitably led Soustelle to be acclaimed by the pieds-noirs. The massive demonstrations of support upon his departure from Algiers in January 1956 are often seen as testimony to his new-found popularity among the settlers who, a week later, forced Guy Mollet to revoke the appointment of the liberal General Catroux as Soustelle’s replacement. Two years later, the revolt of May 1958 was viewed by many defenders of the

\[^{49}\] Comité Révolutionnaire d’Unité et d’Action—the FLN leadership.
\[^{50}\] Soustelle, Lettre d’un intellectuel.
\[^{51}\] Idem, Le drame algérien, p. 69.
\[^{52}\] Persell, The French colonial lobby, p. 149.
Algérie française cause as a show of faith in Soustelle rather than in de Gaulle.53 After the events of May 1958 appeared to have vindicated Soustelle’s policies and his ability to link the Algérie française and Gaullist causes, the success of integration was seen as a fait accompli and its symbolic importance fully acknowledged. The pied-noir deputies Marc Lauriol and Philippe Marçais, authors of a vast body of work on integration and federal Franco-Algerian union, asserted that as the argument for the principle of integration appeared to have been won in 1958, ‘we must provide realities for to nurture these symbols… the doctrine must be lived’.54 In similar manner, another key actor in the May 1958 revolt, Pierre Lagaillarde, made clear that integration was now a means of assessing metropolitan governments’ commitment to Algeria, promising during his successful November 1958 election campaign that he would resign if full integration had not been achieved by July 1959.55 Lauriol and Marçais, indeed, were elected in the largely pied-noir constituency of Algerbanlieue to represent a list entitled ‘action for Algérie française and Muslim advancement through integration’.56

In this identification of integration with the Algérie française cause, what was the balance between Soustelle’s original vision and the defence of settler interests? It would be inaccurate to conclude that integration retained only symbolic value after May 1958. Marçais continued to emphasize the ‘human and liberal aspect’ of the doctrine,57 while affirming the importance of education in creating a genuinely inclusive Franco-Muslim nation in Algeria:

The schoolteacher was there to teach Mohamed that, racially speaking, he wasn’t worth any more than Louis, and that Albert, a Christian or a Jew, shouldn’t consider himself superior to the Muslim, Kaddour. One might say that, as far as integration is concerned, education has been a precursor, not only as an institution but also as a human melting-pot…58

Furthermore, according to this presentation of ‘pure’ integration, its very purpose was to promote diversity: ‘integration and diversity, far from being contradictory, necessarily go together… it’s possible to be definitively French and completely Muslim’.59 However, at the same time as arguments such as these persisted in Algeria, the evolution of de Gaulle’s policy also caused

56 Lauriol and Marçais, Au service, p. 11.
integration to be invoked more generally as a ‘last chance’ to avoid the disaster that Algerian independence would bring. Thus Soustelle argued that ‘there is not, and there cannot be, any third solution between secession and integration’, echoing Lauriol’s insistence that independence and integration were the only two conceivable options for Algeria.

The evolution of integration from a doctrine of colonial reform into a synonym for France’s last chance in Algeria owed much to Soustelle’s efforts to promote it, not only among Gaullists and settlers but also in metropolitan political circles via the creation of the Union Pour le Salut et le Renouveau de l’Algérie Française (USRAF) in April 1956. Intended to act as a focal point for the integration cause in metropolitan France, this organization’s early stages revealed the idea’s potential to appeal to liberal opinion and propose a social or even humanitarian view of Franco-Algerian relations. Among the founding members of the USRAF were the former Socialist deputy, ethnologist and Soustelle’s academic mentor, Paul Rivet, director of the Musée de l’Homme and the former director of the Ecole de la France d’Outre-Mer and colonial governor, Robert Delavignette. Its early initiatives aimed at promoting Franco-Algerian unity included schemes such as granting Algerian children orphaned by the war a privileged status as symbols of French commitment to Algerian welfare, and organizing twinning of French and Algerian towns to give integration a real meaning in metropolitan France. By 1960, however, the more liberal members had left the USRAF—Rivet, for example, resigned in February 1958—and Soustelle now emerged at the centre of a new Algérie française think-tank, the Comité de Vincennes, in which, along with military figures and pieds-noirs such as Lauriol and Marçais he was joined by the other metropolitan politicians who had established the USRAF, notably former prime ministers Georges Bidault and Maurice Bourgès-Manoury. While their focus remained the impact of integration on metropolitan France, the emphasis shifted to the negative consequences that a failure to modernize in Algeria would have not for Algeria but for France itself. Soustelle argued that the only way by which modernization could be achieved in Algeria was through ‘a modern economy, consequently closely integrated with that of metropolitan France’, while his colleague Malterre warned that without such integration in Algeria, France would be faced with the more serious problem of integrating up to two million Algerian immigrants.

60 Soustelle, in Voici Pourquoi, no. 59, 26 May 1960.
64 Comité de Vincennes, Colloque de Vincennes sur l’Algérie française, 20 February 1960; debate on ‘Le rôle de l’Algérie et du Sahara dans l’économie française’.
In this concern with Algerian immigration to France should integration not be achieved in Algeria, we can see both the reasons for the decline of the integrationist ideal and the lasting importance of the issue. After de Gaulle announced self-determination for Algeria in 1959, disillusion with the abandonment of integration set in. Massive economic investment in Algeria under de Gaulle’s Constantine Plan of 1958, along with more mundane developments such as the adoption of the same banknotes and stamps in Algeria as in France, and the responsibilities of the national utility companies being extended to cover Algeria had inspired hope that integration was about to be implemented. However, Soustelle continued to argue that government investment in and commitment to modernizing Algeria was insufficient, warning that if economic links were not strengthened by commitment to social and political integration, the consequence would be ‘renouncement of all economic and social renovation in Algeria’. Soustelle’s frustration that the Gaullist government which followed the May 1958 revolt had failed to pursue integration was shared by some officers, with General de Monsabert of the Comité de Vincennes claiming that ‘the army made integration happen’, thereby further enhancing the sense of missed opportunity among the supporters of Soustelle’s integration project.

In June 1960 Soustelle offered a somewhat resigned and despondent assessment of the failure of integration to bring about a new way of thinking about Algeria in metropolitan France:

The metropole would have had to play the game. It didn’t, largely because, based on a Jacobin concept of sovereignty, it feared that federal powers would naturally be created, which Europeans and Africans would have exercised equally…In the end, we prefer to remain among old Frenchmen [vieux Français]…and cultivate our ancestors’ little plots, rather than to seek adventure with Africans, Arabs, Kabyles, even with new Frenchmen [néo-Français] who, for all their patriotism, still have one fault, to be called Hernandez. Jacobinism? Without a doubt. There is also, for some, a no doubt unconscious racism which makes them prefer a small, pure France to a greater France with too great a mix of races and religions.

Should such comments lead historians to see the multicultural project that integration implied either as a utopia doomed to failure or as a political myth which quickly became shorthand for the defence of traditional colonialism, it is nonetheless important to consider whether the spread of the integration idea from Algeria to France might not also offer some insights into the intellectual contours of the Algérie française cause. Study of the rise and fall of integration, and its reception in France, reveals that despite the obvious advantages that its apparently liberal and progressive vision offered to defenders of French Algeria,

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65 Ibid.
66 Ibid.
67 *Voici Pourquoi*, no. 60, 9 June 1960.
many of those supporters struggled to come to terms with the eradication of difference between French and Algerian citizens that integration, at least in theory, proposed. Previous colonial reform proposals, emanating from Paris rather than the colonies, had relied on an implicit acceptance of fundamental difference between French and colonial populations. Once this distinction was challenged by Soustelle’s work in Algeria, the assumptions that underpinned metropolitan reflection on colonial policy were in many cases challenged. The failure of integration has had lasting repercussions, among which must be noted Soustelle’s own assertion, in 1990, that ‘Of course, it’s not at all impossible that assimilation might be possible in individual cases, but certainly not for massive groups under the influence of political-religious leaders…from that point, speaking of integration, that is to say assimilation, is a dangerous utopia. You can only assimilate that which is assimilable’. 68 The failure of integration thus not only contributes to a clearer understanding of the debate over colonial reform during the Algerian war of independence, but also points to new areas of investigation into the legacy of the Algérie française campaign for attitudes towards multiculturalism in France.