Tocqueville21 Book Forum

Black France, White Europe: Youth, Race, and Belonging in the Postwar Era

Emily Marker

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Introduction by Melanie Bavaria (New York University)

It is difficult to overstate the relevance of the topics that Emily Marker tackles in her new book, *Black France, White Europe: Youth, Race, and Belonging in the Postwar Era*. Marker's approach, which positions the history of European integration and decolonization in the same analytical framework, is deeply pertinent for understanding the issues that flood our front pages today. Our reviewers have highlighted only a few examples: the inclusion of Ukraine into the cultural and geographic European "community" as a consequence of Russian aggression, the debate over whether African students studying in Ukraine at the time of the invasion "count" as Ukrainian refugees, and France's recent rhetorical war on "*islamo-gauchisme*." We could certainly add to that list of recent geopolitical debates. For example, the contrast between the public display of welcome demonstrated in Europe for Ukrainian refugees and the so-called "migrant crisis" in 2015, which saw a wave of mostly non-white asylum seekers shake the belief in the value of further European integration and cooperation when it came to borders policy. Even the World Cup and the renewed arguments in France about the enduring legacy of colonialism sparked by a multiracial French national soccer team takes on a different significance after reading Marker's book.

Marker uses the French education system – its administrators, policies, programs, and most importantly, actual students – to "explore the shifting coordinates of postwar belonging" (13). During the postwar moment when France was constructing both its central place in the vision of an integrated Europe as well as the future of its former empire in the age of decolonization, youth within and across national, imperial, and continental structures became integral to the vision and implementation of these generational projects. Through her examination of youth, Marker explores the constructions of both a "European" identity that spanned the continent and a "French" one that connected metropolitan young people with their French African counterparts. While both originally developed in tandem, the success of the former based on a Europe that was constructed to be simultaneously "both white *and* raceless, Christian *and* secular" doomed the latter as the rhetoric of a colorblind French republic that came into conflict with the material consequences of structural racism for French African youth. Marker writes that "despite [its] efforts to strengthen ties with its African colonies in the 1940s and 1950s, France became both more French and more European during precisely those years" (219).

Our reviewers, historians of France, West Africa, and decolonization, had an immense amount of praise for *Black France, White Europe*. Liz Fink writes that the book is an important contribution to both the literature on France's postwar empire and the ways in which mid-20th century racial discourse was constructed in France, noting particularly how Marker traces "the interplay between the changing ways the French state rearticulated its ideas about race and the ways it was critiqued by Africans constitutes 'postwar common sense.'" Jessica Pearson argues that Marker's approach and framing is as groundbreaking as her findings. Pearson writes that *Black France, White Europe* is no less than a "call to do political history differently," an innovative "history of the everyday life of politics" that "center[s] the humans—including young people—whose experiences and identities are at the core of modern politics." Gregory Valdespino sees the book as not only "interest[ed] in the diverse futures imagined in the aftermath of World War II" but also one that explores how those futures were acted upon, and why "certain kinds of belonging became viable while others failed," showing "how efforts produced postwar unity in one domain fostered division in another." For Valdespino, one of Marker's most notable interventions is the way in

which she "pushes historians of postwar Europe to recognize how Africa, including Africans themselves, helped build the continents' borders." Similarly, Sarah Runcie argues that Marker's emphasis on "underscoring racialization as a relational process in the postwar period" that ties together the processes of both European integration and decolonization makes it a crucial contribution to the literature on African decolonization. The directional inverse of Valdespino's insight about the book's potential impact on historians of postwar Europe, Runcie contends that Marker's work urges "historians of Africa to engage much more closely with the politics of European integration while also effectively foregrounding concrete intellectual production, lived experiences, and political projects of African historical actors." Like Pearson, Runcie sees Marker's book as a model for other historians, especially those interested in writing "entangled" histories. It will be, she believes, "generative for historians in a variety of sub-fields."

Perhaps Valdespino expresses it best when he writes that "a work this rich cannot help but raise new questions." In that spirit our reviewers also brought up several questions and probed potential future lines of inquiry. Runcie asks about gender and how it "operated as either a spoken or unspoken parameter of these visions of postwar youth and education." Valdespino wonders about the influence (or lack thereof) of pan-Africanism, a simultaneous "pluralist political vision" that could perhaps have constituted a competing "alternative pole of attraction" for young Africans growing disillusioned with the prospect of "imperial reform." Or how might a discussion of the economics of education, European integration, and postwar pluralism be woven into Marker's analysis?

These four fascinating and thorough reviews, along with Marker's own thoughtful response make for a vibrant discussion that represents the best that this cutting-edge work on decolonization and European integration has to offer. We at Tocqueville 21 hope that this is the first of a series of forums on new work that represents all that this innovative sub-field has to offer. We offer our gratitude to all our reviewers and to Marker herself for this opportunity for such a generative conversation. We hope you enjoy it as much as we have.

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Review by Liz Fink (New York University)

The Colonial Roots of the Idea of a Colorblind France

Scholars of race in France are under siege. In 2021, Frédérique Vidal announced an investigation into "*Islamo-gauchisme*" that was a "*gangrène*" on French university life.* While a potential investigation may have amounted to little, and indeed Vidal's days as Minister of Higher Education were numbered, certainly the outcry against the study of race and postcolonialism reached a fever pitch. It isn't just critics from within government, though. Prominent figures from French academia and public life have tried to argue that, on the one hand, the study of race had little natural place in a supposedly colorblind republic, and on the other that scholars of race and France were drawing from methods imported from an American context (hence the charge of *wokisme*). Emily Marker's *Black France, White Europe: Youth, Race, and Belonging in the Postwar Era* offers a timely and important response to these critics. By providing a *longue durée* history of ideas of race in France, she argues that some of the most important terrains of struggle over thinking (or refusing to think) about race in France come from the colonial era, and that the process of making France simultaneously "white and raceless" come from France's history as an imperial and a European power.

Rather than "a history *of* young people and adjacent social groups," Marker's book "explores the shifting coordinates of postwar belonging *through* them" (13, emphasis Marker's) by bringing together the history of French empire and of European integration into the same framework. She shows how the category of youth became important to a project to maintain and strengthen French rule in Africa at the same time that proponents of European integration saw youth as central to depicting European integration as a generational project. Her framework of interweaving the history of postwar French empire with the history European integration provides new insights not just into the renovation of empire and the creation of a new sense of France as simultaneously raceless and white and European, but also understanding the end of empire: in the epilogue, she suggests that reading French administrators' "growing fatalism in the mid-1950s" about the fundamental differences between Africans and Europeans can help us understand how "despite France's efforts to strengthen tie with its African colonies in the 1940s and 1950s, France became both more French and more European during precisely those years" (219).

Marker's work adds to the important literature on the reconstruction of France after the Second World War. The "postwar" in the book's subtitle refers to the end of the war through the 1950s as "an extended postwar moment" (23). Marker examines the significant changes in French colonialism before the Second World War, but also the formative nature of the long and messy end of the war itself. She does considerable work with people like René Cassin. Cassin was the Free French national commissioner of justice and public instruction for de Gaulle's shadow government from December 1941 to June 1943. The only actual schools he had control over during his tenure were in French Equatorial Africa, and he ran in international circles of policy makers, including spending time with Czechoslovak president in exile Edvard Beneš. Cassin had a national education job that was, as Marker points out, more national, colonial, and transnational than would normally be expected.

As the example of Cassin shows, Marker's focus, while treating metropole and colony in the same analytic frame, allows her to also transcend the metropole/colony framework that can often hem in work in colonial studies. For instance, while she builds on work by J.P. Daughton, who argued that the huge conflicts of the fin de siècle between the Church and the republic in many ways found a grudging truce in the colonies, she intriguingly shows that the decisions by Free French and Fourth Republic youth and education officials to prioritize religious schooling and youth associations in France as well as the colonies also drew from transnational European developments like the occupation of Germany after World War II. French occupation officials, unlike British and American occupation authorities, prioritized the reconfessionalization of German schools, which had been nationalized and secularized under the Nazis in 1937 (191). Religion plays a key role for Marker in how French identity could become raceless while also European, white, and also, *laïc* identity of many French administrators notwithstanding, Christian, and That is the fuller context in which Islam emerged in opposition.

Her approach of bringing together the colonial and the European helps her make innovative arguments about race. She sees this new postwar discourse around French racelessness emerging out of new ways of talking about Europe. She builds on growing historical research into postwar empire. On the one hand, French Empire changed rapidly after the war, from establishing universal citizenship for Africans in 1946 to expanding suffrage. Even the terms by which empire referred to itself shifted; the Ministry of Colonies became the Ministry of Overseas France, and the establishment of the French Union in 1946 followed in that zeitgeist. Alongside changes to empire, Marker argues that France came to see itself as raceless in the context of a move away from using race to discuss difference among Europeans (114). In understanding race in the postwar, Marker argues that the interplay between the changing ways the French state rearticulated its ideas about race and the ways it was critiqued by Africans constitutes "a postwar racial common sense."

The concept of "common sense," though, perhaps doesn't do justice to the careful way she shows ideas about race were articulated and how they changed over time. In fact, Marker's close reading of French administrative bureaucracy is one of the great strengths of this fascinating book. Besides showing how administrative and colonial discourse changed over time, she makes a provocative and important argument for how discourses around race mattered. It was imperative for French officials, even when accepting that the state of education in postwar Africa was dire enough to justify the infusion of a new fund of billions of francs (a portion of which was earmarked for education), to refuse to accept that it was racist (109). Marker shows how by the 1950s, despite a very slow expansion of education in Africa, French officials tried to argue that the inadequacies of colonial education bolstered their claims of the incompatibility of African and European civilization. She shows how the surveillance the colonial state carried out on the relatively few African students who made it to the metropole to study was not just about security or monitoring political threats from a group that was increasingly radical and anticolonial, but was "more of an ethnographic enterprise…Their 'findings' produced new patterns of racialization that renaturalized structural inequality and race prejudice" (141). Indeed, her approach justifies careful reading of colonial administrators by showing how much French colonial administration determined the outcomes of empire. She concludes that "some potentialities were hamstrung, if not completely foreclosed, by this conservative *Euro-colonial* institutional framework from the start" (11).

The close work she does with French administrative discourse helps us better understand how colonial leaders could make what might seem like surprising conclusions about African student and political leaders who protested colonial racism. She carefully charts across a rightward lurch in the colonial administration after the end of *tripartisme* in 1947 a more rigid administrative insistence that while France was raceless, it was Africans who were defined and limited by their race, which shaped both how French administrators viewed African education but also how they fought against demands made by African students and youth leaders. Marker argued that "the ease with which those demands could be dispensed with by invoking 'anti-white racism' became another key component of postwar racial common sense" (130). Her epilogue shows the long legacies of these ways of framing race. Many decades after the end of France's African empire, the charges of antiwhite racism against not just people who seek to study race in France, but the powerful movements of people seeking to challenge French racism, point to the enduring importance of historicizing the limits of racelessness and representation in the *longue durée* of French history.

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Review by Jessica Pearson (Macalester College)

Imagining Europe from the Interstices

What ultimately draws scholars, students, and readers to political history is a desire to understand how humans—in the broadest sense—have steered the evolution of politics and how those politics, in turn, have shaped the course of lived experience. What is so often missing from political history, however, are the people themselves. As a historian of internationalism and decolonization in the twentieth century, I often find myself frustrated by our collective inability to look beyond the lofty memoirs of political giants or the minutes of seemingly interminable committee meetings. I have been guilty of this on more than one occasion. These sources can give us the impression of "politics" as a phenomenon that is hermetically sealed off from the goings on beyond the four walls of a legislative chamber or conference room. When we do get outside those rooms, historical explorations of politics as a lived experience tend to focus on moments of intense popular protest: the storming of the Bastille during the French Revolution, the battle for women's suffrage that unfolded in the streets of London and other urban centers of the British empire in the early twentieth century, or the protest against French rule that took place in Sétif, Algeria at the moment of France's liberation from Nazi occupation. While important, they also do not exhaust the intersections between lived experience and politics. In fact, they stretch far beyond these movements.

Emily Marker's *Black France, White Europe* is a call to do political history differently. Her innovations are two-fold. First, while a number of groundbreaking histories in recent decades have illuminated the politics of everyday life, what Marker has offered us here is a history of the everyday life of politics. *Black France, White Europe* is an invitation to other scholars to center the humans—including young people—whose experiences and identities are at the core of modern politics. People engage, contest, and develop affinities with new kinds of polities not only as members of organized political movements, but also as students, sightseers, cinema-goers, educators, scouts, exchange program participants, and members of families and faith-based communities. A thorough exploration of encounters between young people, the state, and a web of social and cultural institutions can help us render more visible the contours of one of the most contested political relationships of the twentieth century: Europe and Africa. Second, this book invites us to shift the orientation of our historical inquiries. In the past several years, a number of new scholarly works have encouraged us to turn our focus from the center to the periphery. Marker's book takes this work one step further, challenging the notion of peripherality itself. *Black France, White Europe* is a testament to the value of writing the history of Europe from the interstices of a globalized world—from the spaces between rather than simply from the inside out or the outside in, from the top down or the bottom up.

The book's opening vignette sets up this intellectual work in a way that is both clear and captivating. Marker describes a group of Western European high school students who traveled to Paris and then Brest in the spring of 1953 as part of a ten-day exploration of "the future of Europe." Participants met important politicians who tried to impart enthusiasm for the early stages of European integration. The students toured local sights and mingled together in various social settings. Near the end of the program, participants viewed a series of short films that explored

different parts of Europe, including a documentary about daily life in Cameroon. Whether or not Marker's historical actors accepted the idea that Cameroon was, or could be, a part of Europe—as she notes, many did not—this UN Trust Territory still found itself at the heart of a discussion about the geographic boundaries of European identity at moment when the very notion of "Europe" hung in the balance. "By including the film on Cameroon in the program in Brest," Marker contends, "its French organizers were inviting a rising generation of Europeans to envision French Africa not only as an integral part of France but also as a part of Europe" (2).

Marker makes a compelling case that the histories of European integration and decolonization in Africa cannot be treated as separate stories. Instead, by bringing these "entangled histories" together in the same interpretive framework, we can begin to resolve the ostensible paradox of a French nation pulling its overseas empire into a broader union that claimed to be founded on an "apparent embrace of racial and religious pluralism" while simultaneously nurturing ties to a new Europe that was, at once, "both white *and* raceless, Christian *and* secular." While both the French Union and integrating Europe embraced diversity—at least in theory—Marker argues that this ideal "assumed radically different forms within Europe and between Europe and the wider world." In the space between these divergent forms, Marker identifies "new patterns of racial and religious exclusion" that are at the heart of the history that she recounts in this book.

Following in the footsteps of innovative scholars like Richard Ivan Jobs, Marker shows how young people were central to the process of creating "new kinds of composite polities" such as the French Union or what would ultimately become the European Union. While never losing sight of the high-level deliberations taking place at the Brazzaville Conference, in the gatherings of a number of governmental and intergovernmental assemblies, or at meetings of the United Nations, Marker tracks the intertwined histories of integration and decolonization through the creation of new schools, the establishment of exchange programs, and the development of scouting movements. She is clear that this is not a story a*bout* young people, but rather is a new kind of political history told through their lives and the educational infrastructure that was created to teach, inspire, liberate, and—simultaneously—to circumscribe their lives.

Any scholar of modern France would be hard-pressed to read this book and not find some element that casts a new light on their own historical investigations. Since my own work focuses on the intersections between internationalism and empire, I was particularly drawn to Chapter 5, "Forging Global Connections." Indeed, the threads of this book linked to internationalism raise some potential questions that could engender fruitful further discussion. While the intersecting frameworks of European integration and decolonization are at the crux of the book's argument, and thus are theorized in an explicit and nuanced way, global organizations like the United Nations and its specialized agencies lurk more stealthily in the background. I believe, however, this story can tell us as much about the spaces opened or foreclosed by global institutions as it does about those created or closed off by French and European ones. I would be curious to know, for example, if Marker agrees with a recent statement by UN Secretary-General António Guterres that "[t]oday's multilateralism lacks scale, ambition, and teeth"? Projecting this question backward: when it comes to the UN's ability to shape colonial rule in the decades that followed the Second World War, what meaningful interstitial political spaces might have been opened up, for example,

by the UN's oversight of colonial education in non-self-governing territories? Are the United Nations and its specialized agencies indeed a manifestation of multilateralism without teeth? Or, alternatively, does the UN simply shape politics in individual states and empires in ways that differ from our expectations? More broadly, how do global institutions fit into the imbricated frameworks of decolonization and integration that are theorized in the book? What role did the UN play—if any—in the process of decolonizing belonging? And what does the answer to this question tell us about internationalism in the second half of the twentieth century?

As a teacher-scholar at a small liberal arts college, I often find myself reading new scholarship with an eye towards how it might illuminate the history of Europe for my students in innovative ways. In particular, I am interested in work that humanizes the most critical global processes of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: internationalization, integration, and decolonization. At the beginning of each European history course that I offer, I pose three questions to my students: What is Europe? Where is Europe? And who is European? They debate these vigorously in pairs or small groups. It often proves to be the most impassioned discussion of the semester. Where we ultimately land is a shared understanding that our objective is not, in fact, to posit our own answers to any of these questions, but rather to understand how the questions themselves are the heart of events, processes, artifacts, and experiences that made, unmade, and remade Europe in the postwar era.

Genocide and ballot boxes, burkini bans and backpacking adventures, family medals and national liberation movements are woven into the same historical quilt of twentieth-century Europe. Yet what is often missing from both scholarship and teaching on the history of modern Europe is a deep exploration of the connective tissue that bridges the histories unfolding in the halls of the Assemblée nationale—or the conference rooms at the United Nations headquarters—and the experiences of ordinary humans, of people like the African exchange students who visited the French Alps in 1960 and who figure in Marker's introduction. Questions of who belongs, and, perhaps more critically, who is allowed to create or challenge a shared understanding of "Europe" are at the core of historical scholarship about this imagined community. I can't think of a better book to help my students to start unraveling these threads, and, I hope, to begin weaving them back together in a way that centers the lived experience of both decolonization and European integration. I look forward, wholeheartedly, to sharing Emily Marker's exceptional book with them.

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Review by Gregory Valdespino (Princeton University)

Youth and the Contradictory Construction of Europe and Africa

Where does Europe begin and end? This question has exploded in the past year. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led observers near and far (including Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky) to declare this former Soviet Republic the defender of Europe. While many of these debates focus on Ukraine's future borders or the state's potential relationship to the European Union, one story from the early days of Russia's brutal invasion resonated with another debate about Europe's borders. As millions of people fled Ukraine, reports documented Polish border guards denying passage to African students who had been studying in Ukraine. Furious calls from embassies and journalists across the world condemned this brutal treatment as a tragic reminder of the racial metrics that continue to dictate where people belong in modern Europe. Observers contrasted the laudable generosity shown to Ukrainian refugees with the cruel rejection meted out to non-white migrants during the recent so-called "migrant crisis." These rejected asylum-seekers presence in Ukraine emerged in part out of Cold War-era exchanges between the Soviet Union and the so-called "Global South." Their struggles today echo conflicts about whose knowledge, aspirations, and bodies belong in universities. Over the past few years, educational institutions have seen furious protests against the Macron government's decision to massively raise university fees for "non-EU" students, the "Fees Must Fall" movement at universities across South Africa, and the seemingly endless debates about Muslim women's choice to wear hijabs in European classrooms. Students have launched or inspired widespread debates about the racial, geographic and religious boundaries of knowledge and schooling in Europe and its former colonies. In this context, Emily Marker's *Black France White Europe* explains the postwar histories that have made students so central to dictating Europe's borders.

In this empirically and theoretically rich study, Marker traces the mutual and ultimately contradictory construction of Europe and Africa in the first decade and a half of the postwar era. Marker builds on a growing scholarly interest in the diverse futures imagined in the aftermath of World War II. Yet rather than simply explain these visions, Marker demonstrates why certain kinds of belonging became viable while others failed. This interest in actual efforts to make imagined futures real leads Marker to focus on youth and the "generational projects" they inspired across France, ex-French Africa, and Western Europe. Instead of providing a history *of* young people, Marker uses youth to examine "the shifting coordinates of postwar belonging" (13). By moving through wartime London and Brazzaville, desegregated high schools in 1946 Dakar, and youth conferences in 1950s Prague, Marker argues that efforts to create "European" youth took over and precluded simultaneous efforts to forge a new Franco-African or Eurafrican generation. Marker argues that constructing European and Franco-African youth informed one another, building the racial and religious criteria that allowed the former project to rise as the latter collapsed with unexpected speed. In particular, Marker argues that a new "postwar racial common sense" and a culturalized Christianity made a European future seem inevitable, or at least desirable, and an alternative or complementary Franco-African one appear impossible.

Marker begins her analysis by explaining how wartime debates about education and youth reforms set the stage for a postwar focus on youth. She does this by focusing on two of the administrative centers of the Free French Forces: London and Brazzaville. Like many other members of

governments in exile, leaders of the Free French like René Cassin believed that a totally new geopolitical and social order needed to be built after the war. As French leaders pinned the fall of the Third Republic in part on the regime's elitist and militantly anti-clerical education, they took inspiration from dialogues with European leaders across London and colonial leaders across Brazzaville about using education to promote political unity. In London, interwar internationalism gained new life in calls for European integration through intellectual and cultural exchanges. Ideas of a Christian basis for European unity began to emerge in these circles, a view that melded well with the eclectic mix of France's exile society as anti-clerical Republicans and fervent Catholics came together to reimagine their fallen nation. This rapprochement with Christianity had corollaries in the temporary epicenter of the Free French Forces, the Equatorial African Federation (AEF). During the war, AEF Governor Félix Éboué broke with the regime's anticlerical precedent and began providing support for mission schools, seeing Christian education as effectively a French education. However, these reforms did not extend to Islamic schools nor did they imagine bringing all of the new educational programs imagined for postwar Europe directly to African pupils. In these wartime capitals, new configurations around race and religion influenced ideas about "what it might mean to be French, African, and European in an unsettled and unsettling postwar world." (44)

When the war ended, intense debates arose about how youth education could create new generations that would socially anchor the pluralist polities imagined across Europe and the newly formed French Union. Marker argues that these discussions ultimately produced two concepts as the bedrocks of postwar Europe's boundaries: culturalized Christianity and racelessness. Marker argues that new ideas about Christianity's place in France's past and future stemmed from Republicans wartime rapprochement with Catholic education, the rise of European Christian Democratic parties after 1945, and educational reformers' desire to find a unifying narrative of European history. As a result, secularism and its apparent capacity to promote religious pluralism became part not only of Europe's historical tradition, but also Christianity's. To be European meant to be Christian on some deep cultural level, even for Jews or atheists. This echoed similar support for mission education in France's Africa colonies, seeing these schools as agents spreading European civilization. This approach justified continued hostility to the Islamic education so often demanded by Muslims across France's African colonies, but which authorities saw as antithetical to assimilating Africans into the new French Union. If the culturalization of Christianity produced a new vision of what Europe was, a new "postwar racial common sense" defined what Europe was not. As racial ideology became increasingly delegitimized after the Holocaust, leaders in France and across Europe suppressed race talk in favor of discussions of "civilization." Invoking a unifying "European civilization" downplayed older discussions of racial differences between Europeans while reinscribing racial differences between Europeans and Africans. This ideology "effectively produced a new boundary between Europeans and non-Europeans: race itself." (117) Ideas about racelessness and culturalized Christianity informed how French authorities constructed and interpreted the generational projects of Europe and Franco-Africa alike.

Marker's final two chapters examine how these postwar racial and religious ideologies influenced African students' experiences and French authorities' perspectives of those experiences in ways that ultimately doomed the French Union's pluralistic promise. In a richly documented chapter on African students' experience in European France, Marker argues that French bureaucrats and

African students fundamentally disagreed on what education looked like in a non-racist society. French officials touted *brassage* or "mixing" of African students in French universities as proof of the Empire's reform. However, African students saw access as a first step that was only necessary because of criminally low investments in schools across French Africa. Instead, daily acts of racism and inequities in housing and education convinced many African students that postwar reforms had not addressed the social inequities at the base of imperial racism. However, the sprawling French surveillance apparatus focusing on these students read these critiques through the new lens of European racelessness, presenting these students and their increasingly militant critiques as the real producers of racial antagonism, a so-called "anti-white racism." This misunderstanding only entrenched the distance between African students' desires and French officials' plans. Marker's final chapter shows how these frames took on a global scope as African students participated in youth exchanges across Cold War borders during the 1950s. While French and European officials touted this kind of movement as key to creating pluralist polities, French authorities came to see African travelers as dangerous agitators. French observers increasingly worried about the anti-imperial rhetoric at youth summits supported by the USSR, the US or the Non-Aligned Movement. Similar paranoia informed French official attitudes towards transnational Islamic education. Officials scrutinized African Muslim students who travelled to Al-Azhar University in Cairo or those who tried to make new Franco-Islamic schools in African France. Presenting anti-imperial critiques as the product of outside agitators made it easier to ignore critiques from African teachers, and students and their pleas for greater educational investments. These transnational educational experiences increasingly led African students and leaders to lose faith in the pluralistic promise of the French Union, facilitating its startlingly fast collapse. By 1960, Marker argues these misunderstandings helped explain why the "incompatibility of a Franco-African polity and united Europe became so naturalized—at the very moment when there was an apparent global renunciation of racism and religious discrimination." (218)

As this review makes clear, Marker covers a great deal in her sweeping study of the promise and pitfalls of the postwar moment. By weaving together archives from across Europe and Africa, Marker shows how a new discursive construction of Europe provided the means by which "decolonization without independence" became impossible in French Africa. Far from being the inevitable product of insurmountable contradictions within French colonial ideology or the purely contingent product of political negotiations, Marker shows how efforts to produce postwar unity in one domain fostered division in another. Marker thus pushes historians of postwar Europe to recognize how Africa, including Africans themselves, helped build the continents' borders.

Black France White Europe also pushes scholars of postwar history to recognize the central relationship the idea of "civilization" has to youth and education. Marker's emphasis on the postwar "generational" project provides an extremely useful framework to understand why the postwar moment was so unique as well as the means by which leaders at the time tried to *make* it unique. As Marker explains, conceptual divisions between Europe and Africa that invoked "civilization" were not novel postwar creations. However, education and youth did play a particular role in creating new notions of raceless and cultural Christianity that came to define "civilization." This builds on Paul Betts' argument that new ideas about the concept of "civilization" played a distinct role in structuring intra-European dynamics and Europeans' relationship with the rest of the world after 1945. Marker shows how youth and the projects aimed at them became key to

trying to turn this abstract concept into a social reality. By teasing out relationship between youth, race and religion as policy and as lived experiences, and as postwar concepts of "civilization," Marker helps us understand how debates over schools created boundaries that Europeans and Africans continue to navigate.

A work this rich cannot help but raise new questions. I want to bring up two points less as critiques than provocations to think about complementary forces that may have informed the rise and fall of the pluralist projects Marker analyzes. First off, what role does the economic nature of education and postwar pluralism play in the fate of the federal projects Marker examines? Marker points out that youth policy in Europe and the French Union sought to create "unity in diversity" by reworking affective bonds and social connections. However, European unification and imperial reform were also largely motivated by desires to create new kinds of economic integration across borders. Many of the notable changes produced by European unification in the 1950s was the sharing of resources and removal of trade barriers, just as imperial reform in Africa often took the form of rapid industrialization to bolster European metropoles battered by war and allay critiques of economic inequality across African colonies. As Frederick Cooper argues, the extractive logics of imperial capitalism in Africa were at direct odds with the redistributive logics of postwar European welfare programs. Did these tensions ever play out in the kinds of education imagined for Africans in a united yet plural Europe or French Union? On a deeper level, how might economic interests and ambitions complement or complicate Marker's argument about why imperial reform failed when compared to European integration? Marker does acknowledge the centrality of professional training to colonial education, thus pointing to the economic limitation to the kind of integration many African students and reformers demanded in the postwar era. Furthermore, I do not ask this question to propose that economics trumped all other considerations. Rather, I wonder if teasing out the tension between colonial and European economic integration would help explain the success or failures of certain postwar youth projects and the pluralist dreams those projects anchored.

Second, I want to ask about a pluralist political vision that seemed to haunt Marker's book: pan-Africanism. Could the attraction of pan-Africanism provide an explanation for young Africans' increasing disengagement with imperial reform? I do not ask this question to demand Marker integrate yet another pluralistic project into an already grandiose study. Rather, I do it to point to the global dimensions of the pluralist and federalist moment Marker analyzes. As Adom Getachew argues, many African and Afro-Caribbean leaders in the postwar era saw federalism as key to new forms of worldmaking after empire. Furthermore, as Jean Allman shows in the case of Nkrumah's Ghana, many postwar pan-African leaders tried to reconceptualize how African students learned as well as the knowledge African scholars produced. Marker periodically points to the alternative pole of attraction provided by these kind of pan-Africanist movements, in particular with African students' rejection of Eurafrica. However, pan-Africanism seems to play a far less powerful role in causing African students' disengagement with the French Union than their disappointments with educational failures in France and Africa. Does the absence of pan-Africanism reflect its absence in the archive, its lack of causal power in the story, or a choice by Marker to limit the number of postwar pluralist projects she would focus on in this already rich study? I do not necessarily think that including pan-Africanism as an alternative pluralist pole would have changed Marker's story. However, placing scholarship on pan-Africanism in dialogue with *Black France*

White Europe can help reveal just how many pluralist projects competed for the attention of young people in the decades after World War II.

My questions attest to the richness of *Black France White Europe*. Marker provides a compelling argument about the connections between Europe and Africa's postwar history and the centrality of youth to this period's historic transformations. By analyzing the expectations and disappointments put onto the shoulders of young people moving across and between continents, Marker shows how race and religion took on new roles dictating membership in French, African and European societies. These lessons will prove crucial not only for historians seeking to understand the production of social and political barriers in modern Europe and Africa, but also any observer trying to understand why certain young people have so often been denied the right to live, learn or pray in Europe's changing borders.

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Review by Sarah Runcie (Muhlenberg College)

Entangled Histories of African Decolonization

Emily Marker's *Black France, White Europe* represents the growth of important new scholarship on the entangled histories of African decolonization and postwar European integration. Marker asserts clearly that these histories "cannot be isolated from one another" (7) and uses the lens of French colonial and European youth initiatives to explore this entanglement. She makes a convincing case for the value of this lens, asserting that the destruction of World War II catalyzed a focus on youth and on creating a generational project of renewal in both the French African empire and in Europe. While youth initiatives in both realms drew inspiration from the idea of "Unity in Diversity", Marker argues that the intertwining of colonial and European reform "produced new patterns of racial and religious exclusion" (7). Postwar French colonial reform produced new discourses about African difference, coupled with material inequities in education for Africans. European-focused youth initiatives meanwhile shaped new ideas about unity through a European identity of being "both white *and* raceless, Christian *and* secular." Marker frames the limits and failures of France's reforms to create equitable conditions for African youth as part and parcel of a simultaneous investment of France in this racialized vision of European youth.

I read Marker's work from my perspective as a historian of decolonization in West Africa, having much greater engagement with scholarship on twentieth-century Africa and French Empire than on European integration. My discussion thus proceeds from that perspective, with a particular interest in how the foregrounding of European integration might offer fresh avenues for thinking about African decolonization.

In addition to representing an exciting new body of scholarship on the "entangled" histories of decolonization in transnational perspective, Marker's work builds on scholarship that has insisted upon the late colonial period as a time in which creating individual independent African nation states was far from the only political possibility on the table. Marker points to the different approaches of historians Frederick Cooper and Gary Wilder on the late colonial French empire as representative of "the tension between historical contingency and impersonal structural forces" in interpreting this period (12). While engaging with this scholarship, Marker moves past the realm of "formal politics" to focus on the "social and cultural policies that accompanied them" (12). She frames her intervention as methodological as well as thematic, approaching her sources with interest in the interplay of "contingent and structural forces" (12). Put differently, Marker emphasizes that individual policy choices *alone* did not, and indeed could not, produce the inequalities of the postwar period. Racist power structures reproduced themselves through the postwar period, but the idea of generational transformation gave new impetus, logic and form to these arrangements of power. Marker argues that we can only fully understand these transformations by looking at European integration alongside attempts at Franco-African reform. This methodological framing highlights the importance of her intervention in the scholarship on African decolonization. Attention to both structure and contingency thus requires analyzing but also moving beyond, for example, the musings of a French colonial official on education in Africa at a particular moment in time to a full consideration of the social and political operations of education infrastructure across the French empire and Europe.

While works by Cooper and Wilder have illuminated political negotiations and intellectual production grappling with questions of what kind of political formations or politics could shape the postwar Africa future, Marker reframes these questions of the geographical scale of the future through education and youth movements. Questions about educational resources and structures across geography, about elite-focused versus mass education, among others, were also questions about what kind of schooling would build the future and what that desired future might entail.

The backdrop for thinking about these questions was a new French reckoning with racism during and after World War II, which propelled efforts to lessen some abuses of colonial rule such as forced labor. At the Brazzaville conference of 1944, Free French leaders began to lay out a vision for postwar colonial reform while ruling out the possibility of African independence. In chapter 1, Marker charts how the thinking emerging from this conference shifted ideas about the relationship between religion and French schooling and, despite a purportedly reformist spirit, reconstituted colonial ideas that African and European educational structures could not be the same. Marker is artful in her attention to how these terms of identification are themselves reconfigured in the postwar moment. She argues that French officials in this period used the term "European" as newly coded term for "French" and "white" to erect exclusionary educational policies for Africans (62).

Indeed, one of Marker's key approaches is underscoring racialization as a relational process in the postwar period. This framing brings additional significance to her joint analysis of African decolonization and European integration. Thus, if postwar French officials and youth programs produced new ideas about the intertwining of Blackness, Africanness and Islam, then these ideas were always simultaneously producing new framings of whiteness, Europeaness, and Christianity. The anti-Black racism faced by African students in the postwar period grew out of a reconstruction of whiteness. If one of the ways that whiteness has historically operated as a system of power is to render itself as the invisible norm, we see in Marker's work how this "raceless" vision of whiteness is reconstructed in the wake of World War II. Marker calls this new configuration of European "racelessness" a kind of "postwar racial common sense" (103). One of the effects of a European—and also French—claim to a racelessness that was implicitly white was a labeling of demands by African calls for racial justice as divisive. Such demands, particularly in the realm of education, were considered "the central driver of ongoing racial tension" (103).

In this regard, I found Chapter 3 of the book to be particularly compelling and valuable for historians of West Africa. In Chapter 3, Marker highlights the emergence of an African postwar focus on education as central to decolonization, and on colonial education reform as a question of racial justice (111). In this section, Marker effectively weaves together commentary from prominent figures such as Léopold Senghor with memoirs by French-educated Africans such as Léopold Kaziendé and Abdourahmane Konaté to provide vivid detail about views of colonial schooling and hopes for reform in pursuit of education equality within the French Union. Using the debates leading up to and 1950 opening of the Institut des Hautes Études de Dakar (IHED), Marker shows how colonial "half measures failed to deliver" on postwar promises of equality (134). Most importantly, Marker uses this example of the IHED to underscore that while francophone Africans were pushing for equality through institutional reform and framing "race as a relation of power," European elites "approached race as if it were a primarily discursive and conceptual problem rather than a social and political one" (137). Essentially, as European elites

sought to erase discussions of race in the postwar period, they created new roadblocks for francophone Africans who were pushing for reform on the premise that material inequalities between metropole and colony were structures of racism.

One question I would be interested to hear more about is how centrally gender operated as either a spoken or unspoken parameter of these visions of postwar youth and education reform between France and Africa. In the introduction, Marker recognized youth as a "historically gendered, raced, and classed conceptual category" (7) and throughout the book there are significant glimpses of how gender shapes this category at different moments. In Chapter 3 for example, Marker highlights French concerns about educated Africans studying in France, with one official expressing particular alarm that an African male student had written home describing the seeming sexual availability of white French women, thus raising the "quintessential colonial nightmare" about relationships of Black men with white women. In Chapter 4, Marker again raises the "tenacity" of French stereotypes about the pursuit of French women by African men studying in France, even if such ideas had little grounding in reality (149). Additional points in the book offer snapshots of French-educated African women, such as Marie Louise Potin Gueye, one of the first Africans to attend the French high school, Lycée Van Vollenhoven, in Dakar (101). Thus, while Marker is certainly attentive to moments of intersecting conceptions of race and gender, and to the gendered experiences of African youth, it would be interesting to see how a more central place for gender in Marker's analysis might open up additional avenues for understanding how ideas about race, place, and religion were intertwining in this postwar moment.

Overall, *Black France, White Europe* offers an outstanding contribution to scholarship on African decolonization, particularly in its connections drawn to European integration and focus on racialization as a dynamic, historically situated process of immense social and political consequence. Both the methodological and thematic scope of the book are impressive, and Marker achieves her aims with archival research in nine collections across France, Italy, Belgium and Senegal. Marker has written a book that pushes historians of Africa to engage much more closely with the politics of European integration while also effectively foregrounding concrete intellectual production, lived experiences, and political projects of African historical actors. Among its many valuable contributions, this book serves as an excellent model of writing an "entangled" history and will be generative for historians in a variety of sub-fields.

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Response by Emily Marker (Rutgers University)

For more than seventy years—from 1946 to 2018—the French Constitution championed the equality of all French citizens "without distinction" on the specific basis of race. When the French National Assembly voted to remove the word "race" from this foundational declaration of French values in June 2018, the move was cast in the media and by many scholars as the latest manifestation of a deep-seated and distinctly French tradition of rejecting race as a legitimate category of political discourse and social analysis. This kneejerk, ahistorical interpretation uncritically reproduces the ideological claims of the measure's proponents. A mythic republican universalism, unchanging and unmoored in historical time, cannot possibly account for the urgency of excising the word "race" from the constitution *in 2018,* after more than seven decades of its anchoring the crucial passages that hail equality and non-discrimination as French constitutional principles across both the Fourth and Fifth Republics. On the contrary, the campaign to remove "race" from the constitution was historically contingent and contested, part of the dramatic sharpening of public debate about the crushing *salience* of race and racism in everyday life in twenty-first-century France. Indeed, this parliamentary maneuver is most intelligible as a direct response to the new conceptual repertoires of decoloniality and *racisme d'état,* along with new organizing tactics like *non-mixité,* that have been deployed to considerable effect by antiracist activists, teachers' unions, students, Afro-feminists, and others since the early 2010s.

Five years on, it's clear that the 2018 constitutional revision was the opening salvo in a protracted battle to protect the status quo by stifling grassroots mobilizations against racism and inequality in France today. French Minister of Higher Education Frédérique Vidal's crusade against so-called *Islamogauchisme* in 2021, which opened Liz Fink's essay in this forum, may not have amounted to much in practice, but it stoked ever more vitriolic responses—not just on the far right but also from within the republican mainstream—to the critiques and claims of minoritized students, activists, and educators. What's more, Vidal's clumsy assault on academic freedom has clearly demonstrated the state's willingness to mobilize its power and considerable resources against some of the most precarious and marginalized social groups in and beyond the French academy. It is precisely such deployments of power that (re)produce the racialized positions of those groups in French political, social, and cultural life.

It should not be surprising that recent attempts to stifle race talk in contemporary France set their twinned sights on formal politics *and* the education sector. These have long been deeply entangled, porous terrains where race is made, contested, and potentially unmade. Scholars, teachers, youth workers and students, as much as politicians, pundits, and state officials, are all profoundly implicated in processes of racial reproduction or disruption. All kinds of people, including young people themselves, take part in what Jess Pearson elegantly refers to as "the everyday life of politics" in her contribution to this forum. We would do well to take the quotidian aspects of political contestation more seriously, and, as Greg Valdespino notes, to recognize the targets of racism as important historical agents in their own right who help shape the contours of any given racial formation through their varied forms of resistance, protest, and activism.

Why doesn't the zombie lie of a seemingly timeless, and distinctly French, tradition of colorblindness and secularism rooted in republican universalism stay dead? Despite decades of historical research that has conclusively shown that republican ideology did not, in fact, constrain

patently discriminatory state practices and policy choices in any of the twentieth-century French republics, scholars and pundits alike return to this myth with ritualistic precision and continue to invest it with explanatory power. *Black France, White Europe* charts a path out of that interpretative cul-de-sac. Drawing on decolonial and transnational perspectives and methodologies, it decenters the republican-universalist myth by demonstrating the profound impact of both young Africans' activism and transnational processes of European integration on racial reconstruction in postwar France.

After the war, it was thoroughly *un*controversial for the drafters of the 1946 Constitution to loudly declare that belonging in France would not be based on race. It was in fact imperative that they do so, not only to distance the fledgling postwar republic from Vichy's lethal state racism against Jews, but also to signal a radical transformation in metropolitan France's relationship with its colonies. Grand pronouncements about the resurrected republic turning the page on France's racist and colonialist past in favor of some new kind of inclusive multiracial democracy were backed up by a raft of youth and education programs that sought to develop genuine bonds of solidarity between French and African young people. Indeed, I argue that it was precisely in the youth and education sector where the proverbial rubber hit the road of "decolonization without independence." In youth and student exchanges, curricular and pedagogical reforms, and the hasty construction of new schools and institutions of higher education across European and African France, we can see how late colonial visions of imperial democratization ultimately collapsed under the crushing weight of their practical limitations, internal contradictions, and contingent countervailing forces.

A significant subset of those countervailing forces, I contend, were unleashed by early European integration. It is often overlooked that at the very same moment that French and African leaders were experimenting with new forms of racial and legal integration in France and French Africa, France and its European neighbors were weighing new forms of political and economic integration in Western Europe. Though we typically think about early European integration as a top-down, technocratic project, European integrationists shared colonial reformers' focus on youth as a vital sociocultural foundation for their wider political and economic aims. Already in the late 1940s, European unity activists were proposing a startlingly similar set of education reforms and youth programs to make young people in Western Europe *feel* more European. The dominant conceptions of Europe and Europeanness motivating those efforts, however, widened the distance between Europe and Africa precisely as French and African youth were being enlisted in turning the old empire into a new multiracial democracy.

I connect a vision of a more "pluralist" Europe that coalesced in postwar European education campaigns—which coded Europe as both white *and* raceless, Christian *and* secular—to decisions about what should be taught in African classrooms and how many scholarships should be provided for young Africans to come to France. That vision of Europe also informed French responses to African student activism for racial and religious equality, responses that turned most young francophone Africans away from France irrevocably. In this way, I offer a fundamentally new interpretation of the ostensible world-historical opening of the postwar conjuncture. As all the reviewers have noted, a robust literature insists that national sovereignty was not the only viable route out of empire, but we still do not have a clear sense of why alternative visions failed. *Black France, White Europe* shows that conflicting models of pluralism animating Franco-African and European integration projects are an essential piece of that enduring historical puzzle.

It has been tremendously gratifying to see the many ways that the arguments and method of *Black France, White Europe* have resonated across this forum. With regards to methodology, I was especially heartened by Liz Fink's discussion of how I read the colonial archive, Sarah Runcie's emphasis on how I make space for both historical contingency and structural analysis, and Jess Pearson's comments about how my work models a different kind of political history that hones in on the interplay between high politics and the everyday. All three approaches stem from my particular concern to better understand the mechanics of "race making" and how rac*ism* actually works—processes that transect various levels of historical analysis and draw on multiple reservoirs of meaning, from folk notions and elite discourse to concrete social relations and institutional arrangements. I was delighted by all the reviewers' enthusiastic responses to my specific claims about racelessness and whiteness, and *laïcité* and culturalized Christianity. Greg Valdespino and Sarah Runcie dramatically underscore the stakes of those arguments past and present, from a deeper understanding of race and decolonization in the Africanist historiography to an active historical framework for making sense of last spring's horrifying scenes of tens of thousands of Black and Brown university students from the ex-colonial world stranded in war-torn Ukraine.

The essays in this forum also raise important questions about gender, political economy, multilateralism, and Pan-Africanism. The gendered and economic dimensions of postwar youth and education initiatives were significant. As I suggest in Chapter 4, the technocratic and neoliberal undercurrents of the European project rose to the fore in the mid-1950s as supranational forms of political integration in Western Europe faltered. The subsequent establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC) and EURATOM in 1957 refocused both Europeanist and Eurafrican youth and education initiatives around technical and professional education in the run up to African independence. More research on that shift in the education space would certainly augment the growing literature on the colonial roots of the EEC and the entangled history of European integration and racial capitalism.

The productivist logics of postwar education and youth development programs were also highly gendered. In the immediate postwar years, political discourse about youth was generally focused on young males as the harbingers of Europe and Africa's political stability and economic prosperity; boys and young men made up more than two-thirds of organized youth movements in both the European and African contexts. And yet, the gender imbalance in the pro-Europe youth movements was seldom remarked on, let alone worried about (evidently it seemed quite natural to assume that Europe's future leaders would be mostly men), whereas unequal sex ratios in Franco-African youth programs and the situation of African women and girls in general was a constant obsession of French pundits, colonial reformers, and youth workers in the late 1940s and 1950s. Indeed, gendered discourse about African youth contributed to the (re)pathologization of African cultures and the (re)racialization of Africa and Africans in the late colonial era.

French African youth drew on an ambient Pan-Africanist ethos as they actively combatted racist stereotypes about themselves and then-dominant misrepresentations and distortions about African history and culture in their student newspapers, political treatises, speeches, and memoirs. But though these sources loudly championed African unity in the abstract, I saw little evidence that French African youth and student circles took Pan-Africanism seriously as a concrete political project or a viable alternative to either imperial federation or national independence. Young French Africans closely followed and admired Nkrumah's Ghana; Catholic and Muslim African youth

envisioned transnational communities with their co-religionists on the continent and beyond; and most fused their critiques of anti-Black racism and religious persecution in European and African France with a more capacious anticolonial, Third-Worldist politics, especially after Bandung (1955). But French African youth seemed somewhat removed from anglophone Pan-Africanist networks and were much more preoccupied with building solidarity within their transnational faith communities or regional francophone constellations.

That said, French politicians, colonial officials, and youth and education workers were in a perpetual panic over the potential threat of Pan-Africanism spreading among French African youth. Ultimately, that is also how I read the impact of the UN on French colonial youth and education reforms in this period. French colonial administrators were terrified by the prospect of the "internationalization" of all its remaining colonial holdings after the war under the auspices of the UN. That fear had tangible effects on colonial education policy—French officials did reluctantly initiate some reforms as a way of pre-empting international intervention—but international oversight itself seldom made much difference. Indeed, a growing body of work shows that France and the other imperial powers successfully thwarted UNESCO efforts to develop robust basic education and other programs in Africa until after formal independence. So, yes, I would say that the 1950s was a long decade of "multilateralism without teeth," in the education space at least. As we approach the close of the UN's "International Decade for People of African Descent" (2015-2024) – whose theme "recognition, justice, and development" may seem as aspirational and remote as ever – we must come to terms with that foundational toothlessness, to really look it in the face and not look away. *Black France, White Europe* is a history of failure and disappointed hopes, but by confronting those disappointments and dissecting the actual mechanics of failure we may learn useful lessons as we continue to work towards a true multiracial and decolonial democracy today and tomorrow.

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