



**Directorate of
Intelligence**

~~Secret~~

25X1

France: The Immigrant Problem

25X1

A Research Paper

~~Secret~~

*EUR 86-10039
November 1986*

Copy 318

Page Denied



**Directorate of
Intelligence**

Secret






25X1

France: The Immigrant Problem



25X1

A Research Paper

This paper was prepared by 
Office of European Analysis. Comments and queries
are welcome and may be addressed to the Chief,
Issues and Applications Division, EURA, 


25X1

25X1
25X1

Reverse Blank

Secret

*EUR 86-10039
November 1986*

Secret

25X1

France:
The Immigrant Problem []

25X1

Summary

*Information available
as of 12 September 1986
was used in this report.*

One of the key issues in the recent election in France was the large immigrant—in particular, North African—communities in most French cities. The kidnaping of French journalists in Lebanon one week before the March legislative election increased popular hostility toward Arab immigrants and caused some last-minute swing from center-right parties toward Jean-Marie Le Pen and his extreme-right National Front. This has had an impact on subsequent events because it gave Prime Minister Jacques Chirac such a slim majority in the National Assembly that his government faces continual problems in passing legislation. []

25X1

The proportion of immigrants in the French population has increased only slightly since the 1930s, but today's immigrants come largely from the Third World, especially North Africa, and are far more visible. There are now about 3 million North African Arabs—or about 5 percent of the population—living in France. They occupy mostly low-paying, unskilled jobs, cluster at the lower edge of the social stratum, and remain largely apolitical. Even second-generation Arab immigrants resist integration into French society, perhaps out of ethnic pride, and maintain their own culture and religion in the midst of the culture-conscious and culture-proud French polity. []

25X1

Tougher policies toward Arab immigrants respond to the French public's perception that these foreigners contribute to the social problems of unemployment, housing, education, and crime—particularly violent crime and terrorism:

- Many Frenchmen believe that immigrant labor—which played an essential role in rebuilding the economy after World War II—now represents an economic drain on the country. They point out, correctly, that foreigners send much of their income back to their home countries and claim they draw a “disproportionate” share of benefits from a social welfare program that is in deepening financial difficulty. The public also focuses on the number of jobs held by foreigners in a time of high unemployment.
- Arab immigrants form highly visible enclaves in public housing projects on the fringes of most French industrial cities, especially around Paris and the south.

Secret

EUR 86-10039
November 1986

Secret
[redacted]

25X1

- The immigrant birthrate far exceeds the French, and Arab children crowd ghetto schools and special education programs.
- North African immigrants account for a much larger share of arrests and convictions for misdemeanors, homicides, and drug trafficking than their share of the population should warrant. About 16 percent of the inmates in French jails as of 1983 are from North Africa.
- Arabs are often involved in opposition activities directed against their home country governments—but they are also beginning to figure prominently in indigenous French terrorist groups such as Direct Action. We believe that the sheer number of North Africans in France has provided cover for Middle Eastern terrorists, many of whom carry North African passports. [redacted]

25X1

The government's response to these problems has been somewhat schizophrenic, alternately clumping immigrants together in specific neighborhoods on the outskirts of major population centers and then attempting to disperse them when their French neighbors complain about the foreign presence. Both policy approaches appear designed primarily to make Arab immigrants less visible:

- Some government officials might like simply to expel the foreigners—and, indeed, Chirac's government has proposed easing the expulsion procedures for those involved in criminal activity and for the illegal immigrants that make up perhaps 10 percent of the alien population. Although mainstream French political parties are likely to maintain this tough posture toward the Arab population, they become somewhat constrained when in power by traditional French desires for harmonious relations with former colonies in Africa and by pressures from French human rights organizations and leftwing parties.
- Over the longer term, we believe official policy will focus increasingly on assimilating Arab immigrants into France, especially through programs aimed at children within the school system, although this policy has met little success to date. [redacted]

25X1

Secret

Secret

25X1

Tensions stemming from the immigrant population are likely to be highest during times of high unemployment and crime and whenever Middle Eastern terrorism erupts against French targets or interests. If Arabs take a more activist stance outside the political system by engaging in organized protests, for example, or through increased terrorist activity, we think the state of uneasy coexistence could give way to a cyclical escalation of French repression and Arab violence.

25X1

Reverse Blank

v

Secret

Secret

25X1

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Summary	iii
Introduction	1
Demographics of the Immigrant Population	1
The Changing Face of Immigration	1
Immigration and the Economy	3
Political Behavior of Immigrants	4
Politics at Home . . .	5
. . . And in France	7
Immigrants and Terrorism	8
The French Response to Immigration	9
The Social Issues	9
Local Policies	10
National Politics and the Immigrant Issue	11
Current Policies	14
Outlook	16
Appendix	
Historical Background	19

Secret

25X1

France: The Immigrant Problem

25X1

Introduction

Immigrants have entered France throughout the 20th century, but the current immigrant "problem"—capitalized on by Jean-Marie Le Pen and his far-right National Front party—appeared only in the 1970s. The economic slowdown following the 1973-74 oil price hikes created severe unemployment problems for domestic workers as well as for immigrants who were recruited in the 1960s and who were becoming permanent residents. Government officials in the 1960s had assumed that these foreign recruits—particularly the large number of unskilled North Africans—would fill a temporary demand for labor in France and then return home. As the Arabs began to settle, bring in their families, and have children, French resentment—focusing on social problems associated with this culturally distinct, economically deprived foreign community—expressed itself first through a growing number of open attacks on Arabs in the street and later through support of Le Pen's racist platform in the election booth. The settlement of Third World immigrants and the growing racism prompted by it have contributed to the contradictory nature of French immigrant policy—which has attempted alternately to isolate and to assimilate the foreign population. The elevation of Middle Eastern terrorism in France in recent weeks has drawn new attention to the large North African immigrant community in that country. This paper examines the rise of the "immigrant problem" in France in recent years and the policy the French are developing to deal with this issue.

National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies pointed out that the difference was due to varying data collection methods. Illiteracy and a high degree of mobility meant that some foreigners were left uncounted by the census. The Ministry of Interior count, however, was based on the number of residency permits issued, a method that probably overcounted the immigrant population because it disregarded those that have left France. We estimate that the number of legally resident aliens in France probably fell somewhere between these two 1982 calculations—around 4 million people. Assuming a natural increase of about 3 percent over the period, today's foreign residents would number roughly 4.5 million.

25X1

Beyond these numbers, the labor ministry estimates 300,000 illegal immigrants reside in France. In addition, many French citizens culturally belong to the foreign population as well:

- The *harkis*, Algerians who collaborated with Paris during the Algerian war, fled to France after the war, and have maintained their French citizenship—they number around 400,000.
- The *beurs*, second-generation Arabs who were born in France, many of whom have French citizenship but who remain culturally apart—as many as 800,000 young people may fall into this category.
- Naturalized foreigners—although most are from Western Europe (more than a quarter of a million between 1970 and 1980), at least 55,000 North Africans were naturalized during these same years.

Taken altogether, the foreign presence in France is probably about 6 million people, or 11 percent of the total population.

25X1
25X1

Demographics of the Immigrant Population

Authorities disagree about the exact number of foreign residents in France. The March 1982 census put the total at 3,680,100—6.8 percent of the population. Only three months earlier, however, the Ministry of Interior figured the number of foreigners at 4,223,000, or 7.8 percent of the total. The French

The Changing Face of Immigration

The proportion of immigrants in the French population (see table 1) has increased only slightly since the 1930s, but today's immigrants are mainly non-European and thus far more visible. The number of

Secret

Secret

Table 1
Foreigners in France, 1911-75

	Total Population of France (millions)	Immigrants in Total Population ^a	
		From Europe	From Third World
1911	39.2	2.8	0.2
1921	38.8	3.6	0.3
1931	41.2	5.8	0.8
1936	41.2	4.7	0.6
1946	39.8	3.9	0.5
1954	42.8	3.3	0.9
1962	46.4	3.4	1.3
1968	49.8	3.9	1.5
1975	52.6	4.0	2.6

^a By percent.

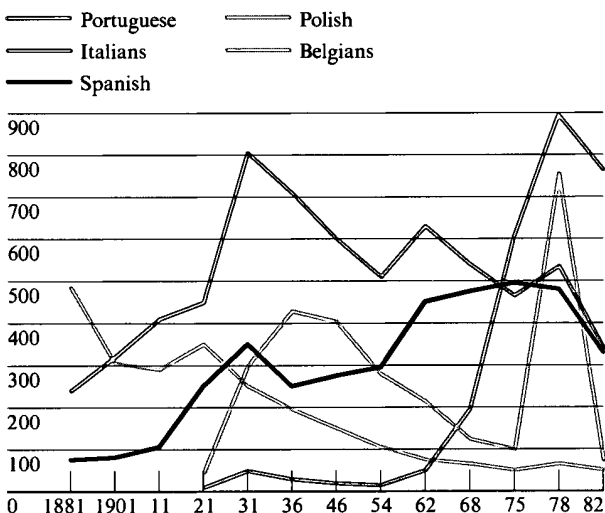
Source: *Donnes Sociales, 1981* (Paris: INSEE, 1982), pp. 46-47.

Europeans entering France since 1945 has increased moderately while the number of Third World immigrants has grown rapidly and substantially (see figure 1). In fact, from 1975 to 1980, the total European immigrant population residing in France dropped almost 350,000—partially because about 100,000 of them became French citizens during this time—while the number of Africans grew more than 400,000. From 1975 to 1982, according to census figures, the Moroccan population jumped 65 percent, the number of Tunisians rose 36 percent, and residents from black African nations almost doubled. Asians, still a small minority and mostly from Indo-china, nearly tripled during these years.

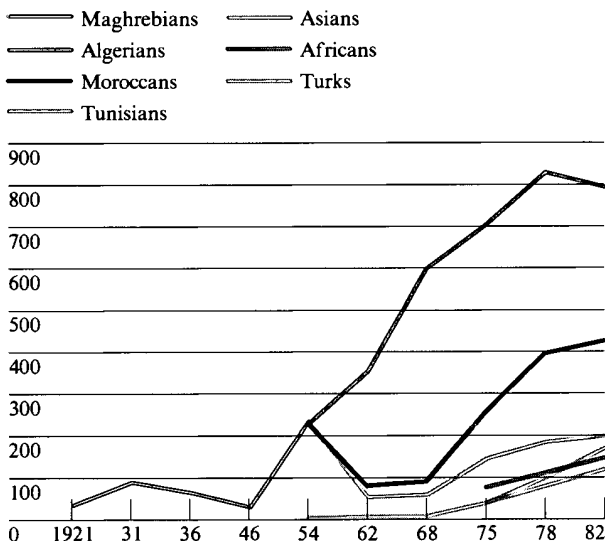
Some of the foreign population growth results from natural increase. Sensational press articles emphasize that a large number of women of childbearing age enter the country. The annual birthrate among French women is two births per 1,000, while that of non-European female immigrants, although declining, is still almost five births per 1,000. Alarmists insist that by the year 2000 France will no longer be culturally French.

Figure 1
Foreigners in France, 1881-1982 ^a
Thousand persons

European Immigrants



Third World Immigrants



^a Decline in various immigrant populations is due not only to their departure but also to acquisition of citizenship.

310669 10-86

25X1

25X1

25X1
25X1

Secret

Figure 2
Distribution of Gainfully Employed
Foreigners and French in 1982, by
Socioprofessional Category

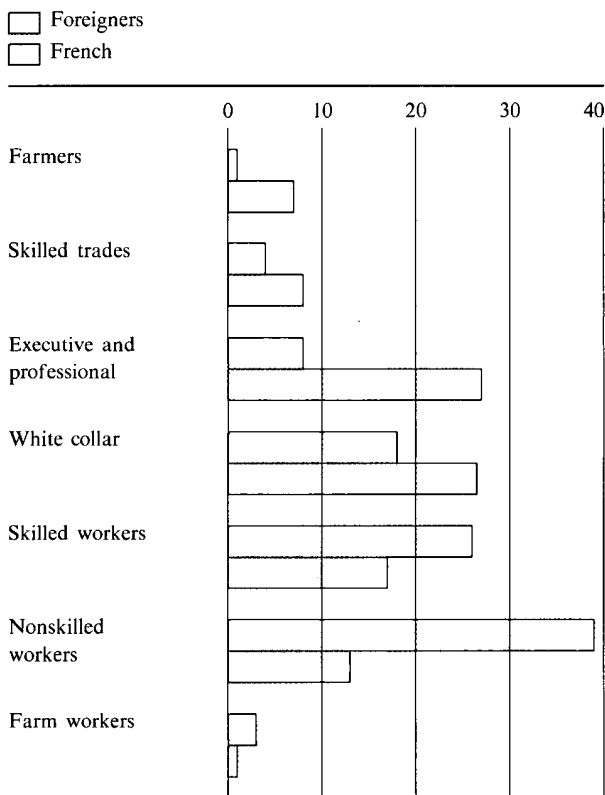
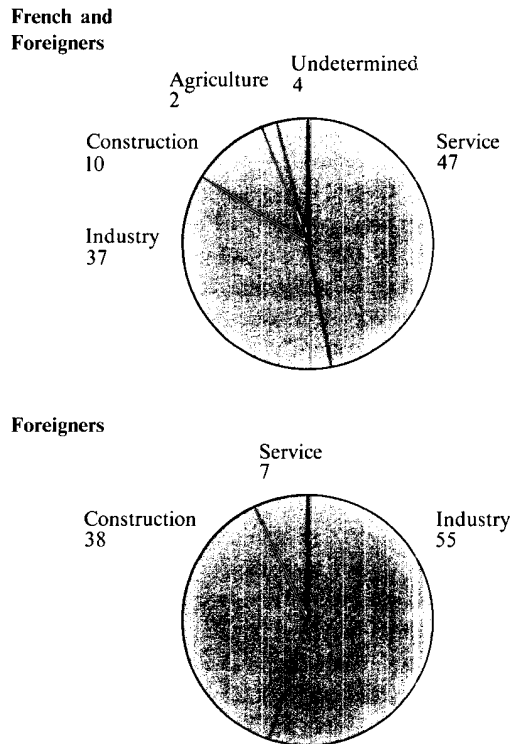


Figure 3
Distribution of Work Force,
by Economic Sector^a



^aBusinesses of at least ten workers.

STAT

310672 1086

310671 1086

STAT

The concentration of immigrants in only a few areas increases their visibility. North Africans tend to cluster in slums on the outskirts of industrial areas. Over half the foreigners reside in three regions: Ile-de-France (the Paris region), Rhone-Alpes (the area around Lyon), and Provence-Cote d'Azur (the Marseille region.) The Paris region alone contains 30 percent of all the foreigners in France.

Immigration and the Economy

Approximately 1.5 million of the regularly resident foreigners in France—about 6 percent of the total work force—are employed. The vast majority of all

foreign workers—and roughly 90 percent of North African workers—are unskilled or semiskilled laborers, often occupying the lowest paid, least desirable jobs (see figures 2 and 3). According to census figures, most immigrants are employed in industry—particularly in the automobile, metalworking, and textile industries. Many foreigners also work in day labor construction jobs. The third-largest concentration of immigrant employees—many of whom are women—is in the service sector, primarily in sales, food

25X1

Secret

services, and hotel jobs. A large number of Portuguese women also work in private domestic service. Most immigrants earn minimum wage and, like their French counterparts, receive transfer payments (social security benefits, housing subsidies, unemployment compensation) that constitute one-third of their total disposable income. [redacted]

Many Frenchmen believe that immigrant labor—which played an essential role in rebuilding the economy after World War II—now represents an economic drain in several ways. A large portion of the incomes of foreign workers leaves France in the form of remittances to their countries of origin; for example, France's balance of payments for 1983 had an outflow of \$570 million in foreign worker transfers destined for the Maghreb. These same foreigners—who by and large occupy the lowest economic class—draw disproportionately large benefits from a social welfare program in deepening financial difficulty. The public also focuses on the number of jobs occupied by foreigners in a time of high domestic unemployment. In addition, North African workers played a large part in the strikes that disrupted the country's automobile industry from mid-1982 until March 1983. The concentration of North Africans in the automobile industry around Paris made them highly visible and much of the press coverage of the events featured striking Maghrebian assembly line workers preventing Asian production workers and native French supervisory and white-collar employees from performing their jobs. [redacted]

Despite popular resentment of foreign workers, they do play a positive role in the French economy. Foreign employment in the lowest paying jobs keeps production costs low. In addition—contrary to extremist rhetoric that blames immigrants for unemployment—foreigners can be seen as a cushion for the French unemployment rate. They tend to be the first to be laid off in times of economic hardship, and they are the first to be replaced by new technology. From 1975 to 1982 the number of unemployed Frenchmen nearly doubled, but the number of unemployed foreigners tripled. Unemployment now stands at 10 percent among the French, but at almost 14 percent among

foreigners. The latter figure varies markedly by nationality; immigrant Portuguese are unemployed at about the same rate as the French, while about 22 percent of Algerians are without work. [redacted]

Political Behavior of Immigrants

The degree of immigrant integration into France—and therefore into French political life—varies by nationality. Southern Europeans and Asians are well suited for life in France. Most of the people naturalized each year in France are from other European nations. Asians also integrate well. The Asian community is small enough to remain inoffensive to the general French population, and its history and culture serve to its advantage in France. Many of the recent Asian immigrants perceive France to be a haven from the political strife they knew in French Indochina. Moreover, their colonial contact and their own culture equip them with at least nominal Catholicism, some knowledge of the French language, a willingness to work hard for monetary security, and a high regard for education—particularly French education. [redacted]

The Arabs in France do not fit in as well as the Europeans and Asians—nor do most of them try to fit in (see inset). French involvement in North Africa—which included large-scale settlement of whites, particularly in Algeria—was heavy and direct. Nevertheless, most North Africans steadfastly clung to their Islamic faith and culture throughout the French occupation, shunning French institutions—especially the educational system—as not only foreign but sacrilegious. Many North Africans still reject French language, education, and culture as symbols of a foreign and unholy invader and view participation in French society as a form of national and religious betrayal. [redacted]

Most immigrants who do not become naturalized French citizens remain inactive in politics, both in France and at home. Those who do become active usually are involved in home country politics—often

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

4

Secret

The Arab's Life in France

Islam forms the foundation on which the Arab community in France bases many of its social and cultural institutions. Neighborhood mosques serve as gathering places for the community. Muslim brotherhoods act as Islamic support groups. Arab radio stations broadcast not only popular Arabic music and Middle Eastern news, but they also feature sermons and call-in talk shows with well-known Islamic religious figures. In essence, maintaining cultural purity has become nearly a form of jihad or holy war for many Arab immigrants. Thus, the divide between Frenchmen and Arab immigrants is partly the product of a Muslim separatism that eschews any integration as sinful, all the more so now, when Muslim religious fervor takes on violently anti-Western tones.

This cultural distinctiveness is less evident among the harkis from Algeria, who collaborated with the French during the Algerian struggle for independence and came to France after the war as refugees. They have maintained their French citizenship and do not harbor the same bitterness toward France as do other North Africans. In fact, the harkis are often politically conservative and—like the European pieds noirs who fled Algeria—are probably more disturbed by the growing number of North African immigrants

than are other Frenchmen. Nonetheless, since they are physically indistinguishable from other Arabs, the general public often subjects them to the same treatment as other Arab immigrants.

Second-generation North African immigrants—the beurs in French slang—also maintain a distinct culture. Many of these young people have a right to French citizenship but choose to retain their Algerian, Moroccan, or Tunisian nationality out of defiance, ethnic pride, or respect for parental wishes. Nevertheless, they cannot truly lay claim to a North African homeland that most of them have never seen. They are coping by developing a subculture of their own. Beur rock groups, artists, writers, dance troupes, radio stations, and filmmakers seek to carve a place for these young people that acknowledges both their French and North African roots. Mounsi, a North African immigrant singer, recently produced an album showing him on the cover with a small French flag in his mouth and an Algerian flag in his hand. The 30-year-old singer explains the picture this way: "I have the flag in my mouth because the words it emits are in French. The Algerian flag says I know what history I am the product of and I don't forget it."

as expatriate dissidents. A few children of immigrants have attempted in recent years to mobilize second-generation immigrants, but with little success.

Politics at Home . . .

Home governments often promote participation in home country politics as a means of controlling their emigrants. Moroccans living abroad were even granted five seats in Morocco's parliament in 1984—two of which are reserved for Moroccans in France. Most homeland governments maintain ties to their emigre communities in France through their embassies and consuls and by founding and supporting fraternal organizations. These associations serve to support the home country regime and to keep track of opposition activities in the emigre community. The Association

of Algerians in Europe (AAE) is the largest such organization in France. The Association offers cultural activities and language classes—often with the financial and logistic assistance of the French Government. In addition, the AAE supports religious leaders within France to watch over the immigrants' spiritual welfare.

The French Government generally looks with favor on these organizations, believing that if foreign workers remain involved in their home countries they will be less interested in French politics and more interested in eventually going home (see inset). Further, in the case of former colonies where the French retain some

Secret

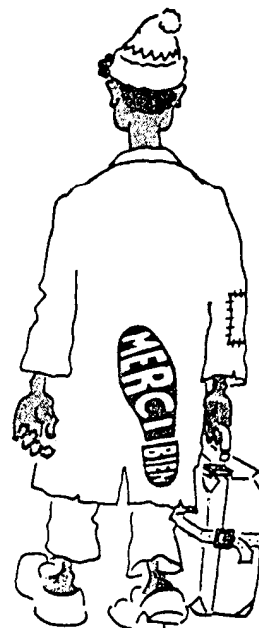
Secret

Repatriation: Immigrants Go Home

The French instituted a system of repatriation assistance in 1977 that was designed to encourage immigrants to go home. The plan was abandoned in 1981 and reinstated in 1985. Under the new system, the state pays the immigrant the equivalent of more than \$2,000 plus a moving allowance ranging from about \$275 to more than \$1,000, depending on the composition of the worker's family. In addition, the unemployment insurance system (UNEDIC) pays in a lump sum all the compensation the worker would be entitled to if he remained in France and did not find a job—an amount that could be \$5,000 or more. The employer signs an agreement with the National Immigration Office (ONI) to pay the departing immigrant over \$1,500 plus indemnities for dismissal. Employers have also been known to offer additional funds or easy terms for the purchase of equipment or a car. Thus, workers may receive from \$11,000 to \$17,000 in return for repatriating to their homelands.

Some attempt is made to integrate the plans of the returnees with the needs of their home countries, so as not to disrupt the economies of these countries. The capital the workers bring with them is beneficial for home country economies, and the skills and equipment these workers obtain in France aid development in their native lands. But returning workers may exacerbate the usually delicate employment situation in their home countries that prompted them to seek employment abroad in the first place. It is doubtful that a one-time increase in capital brought home by returning workers outweighs a continuing flow of remittances had the workers remained abroad. For example, official Moroccan estimates indicate that remittances from foreign workers are that country's number-one source of foreign currency, and the World Bank estimates that 20 to 25 percent of all the bank deposits in Morocco originate in the foreign worker community.

Hassan Moutahir, currently Moroccan Ambassador to Sweden and former Secretary General of the



KONK.

Le Monde ©

Ministry of Interior, pointed out to US Embassy officials in Rabat the political implications of these returning emigrants who have been exposed to French and other "strains of European socialism, union activism, and other Western ideas." Moutahir thought it likely that returning workers could contaminate Morocco with these foreign, leftist concepts. He compared the situation to the mid-1970s, when 40,000 workers expelled from Algeria were confined to sparsely populated regions in northeastern Morocco until the government was sure they posed no threat. Furthermore, the social mores learned in France conflict with those of Islamic North Africa, posing difficulties particularly for returning women and children accustomed to the liberal environment in Europe. As a result of these problems, North African countries continually request that France work with them to repatriate foreign workers slowly.

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

interest in the internal political situation, Paris views the immigrant organizations as a stabilizing factor. Thus, representatives from the AAE and other such associations have almost diplomatic status in France.

[redacted]

Not all immigrant groups are associated with home country governments. Leftwing emigre organizations, independent of either French or home country sponsorship, include the Movement of Popular Unity, the Association of Moroccans in France (AMF), the Union of Mauritanian Workers, the Committee of Algerian Workers (CTA), and the Party of the Socialist Revolution. These groups foment opposition to home country regimes by conducting marches, organizing rallies, holding lectures and meetings, and publishing antigovernment literature. Paris is tolerant of their presence as long as their activities remain nonviolent.

. . . And in France

France—like most nations—does not permit resident aliens to vote and enjoins them from disrupting public order; French law stipulates further that they must remain “politically neutral.” The latter provision generally has been interpreted liberally, and France rarely deports anyone for political activism unless violence has been involved. No more than a handful of foreign political activists or trade unionists is expelled each year, partly because most cases become popular causes and get overturned through judicial appeal.

[redacted]

Despite the restrictions, foreigners possess certain rights that form a legal basis for involvement in French political life. They enjoy freedom of speech, of association, and of the press within the limits of security considerations. They have the right to belong to trade unions and to strike. Except in instances when illegal aliens are undergoing deportation hearings, foreigners have full procedural rights under the law, including the right of appeal. They have tenant rights and can vote in and be elected to tenant committees. Although they do not have the right to belong to political parties in France, such membership is tolerated.

Immigrants have influenced French internal politics since the 1960s. They have engaged in housing pro-

tests, foreign worker strikes, antiracism protests, and protests against immigration policies. Foreign residents often consult with local panels that handle matters affecting immigrant communities. Furthermore, various institutional allies—including religious, humanitarian, and civil rights associations—support foreign workers by informing the public about them and organizing protests against their condition. However, recent attempts to organize a voting block of second-generation immigrants who are eligible for citizenship has attracted little interest among these young people, perhaps because no other ethnically based lobbying group exists within France to serve as a model.

25X1

Membership in labor unions allows foreign workers an acceptable way to participate in French politics while sidestepping the law requiring their political neutrality. Most foreign unionists belong to the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) or the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT). Both unions have reported rapid growth in foreign membership in recent years, although no exact numbers are available as nationality is not recorded on union cards. The numbers are further obscured by the practice of many foreign workers to share one voting membership—holding a union card as a bloc rather than as individuals. This method of joining the union may represent a financial savings to individual members, but it seems yet another indication that many immigrants are unwilling to incorporate traditional Western political notions of group voting power.

25X1

25X1

25X1

The foreigners are generally organized into nationality or language subunits within both the CGT and the CFDT, although they participate as full members. The CGT closely controls these subgroups for fear they will become an organization within an organization, dividing foreign from indigenous workers. The CFDT, on the other hand, allows its local and departmental organizations with large numbers of immigrants to undertake autonomous actions on behalf of foreign workers even without the concurrence of the national leadership.

25X1

25X1

Secret

Second-generation foreigners possess the greatest potential for political power because they can easily become French citizens and exercise full civil rights. So far, most second-generation Arabs have chosen to remain aloof from French society, although there are some indications that this trend is changing. In September 1983, for example, a number of second-generation North Africans walked from Marseille to Paris to protest racism. The marchers more or less maintained cohesion as a group until after the 1984 municipal election in which the racist National Front (FN) captured over 10 percent of the vote. At that point, the group broke into two camps: one wanted to organize a lobbying strategy representing Arab interests based on the American-Jewish model; the rest argued that a separate *beur* campaign could only lead to further ghettoization of the Arab community.

[redacted]

The less politically oriented group has become part of the SOS-Racism youth movement. SOS-Racism—whose slogan is “Hands off my buddy”—rejects the lobbying model but is nevertheless involved in civil rights activism. Based in Paris, the group’s founders range in age from 20 to 30 and come from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. Local chapters, so-called Stop Racism groups, are springing up throughout France to monitor incidents involving immigrants. They are unwilling, however, to define their interests as unique to second-generation immigrants.

Camel Adjina, a 28-year-old Marseille socialist militant of Algerian descent, broke with SOS-Racism, preferring to organize the *beurs* into a voting bloc. According to diplomatic reporting, Adjina formed his Sahra Party in the fall of 1985 along the lines of recent movements in the American black community. He hoped to gain the backing of immigrant North African community leaders and to mobilize the young, who are most likely to be eligible to vote. Muslim businessmen and individual contributors have supplied his limited finances. He told US officials that similar movements were forming throughout France but that there has been no coordination among them.

[redacted]

A Sahra Party rally on 14 February in Marseille indicated not only that the party has some organizational problems but also that immigrants may not yet be ready for political mobilization. Poor publicity, a hefty admission fee, and a steady rain discouraged all but about 300 persons. This number dwindled to a few dozen after the drawing card—a well-known North African rock group—finished its performance. Adjina spoke for about a minute and four days later dropped out of the regional election race.

25X1

Immigrants and Terrorism

Foreigners in France—either individually or through exiled opposition movements—sometimes become involved in terrorist activity. French authorities tolerated these acts as long as they targeted home country interests, labeling them “political activities.” Recently, immigrant terrorism seems to focus more on Israeli, US, and even French interests than on property and individuals identified with the terrorists’ home countries. Arabs, in particular, are beginning to figure prominently among those arrested as members of French indigenous terrorist groups such as Direct Action, which sometimes strikes at Israeli sympathizers. Police reports also indicate that some immigrant organizations have links to terrorists in France. One such group is the Marxist-Leninist Movement of Arab Workers, which often organizes rallies against French racism.

25X1

25X1

In addition, the sheer number of North Africans in France has no doubt provided cover for Middle Eastern terrorists. Open discussion of a connection between immigrants and terrorism was rare before the arrest of a young terrorist in Nancy in early May.

25X1

[redacted]

25X1

Press reports state that police were distressed by this young man’s assertion that he became involved

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret

in terrorist activity not for ideological reasons but for the money—apparently in part to pay for a drug habit. [redacted]

Perhaps in response to the shift in terrorists' targets or to an awakening awareness that the large Arab community may increase French susceptibility to terrorism, official rhetoric on terrorism seems to indicate that a reevaluation of former "blind-eye" policies may be under way. At the end of May, the Chirac government proposed several counterterrorism measures, including increased scrutiny of identity papers of foreigners, placing all terrorist cases under the jurisdiction of Paris, lengthening the period of detention for suspected terrorists, and increasing the prison term for terrorism. The government has also discussed offering monetary rewards and reduced prison sentences for those willing to turn informant, allowing the deportation of "menacing" foreigners without a court action, and increasing French participation in international counterterrorist efforts. [redacted]

The French Response to Immigration

Angry and frustrated by high unemployment, depletion of social service resources, and rising crime, all of which they blame on the increasingly visible North African presence in their towns and cities, the French have begun to respond, sometimes violently, to the "immigrant problem." The French Government dealt with the immigrants originally at the local level, where contradictory policies developed that both isolated immigrants—in the hope they would eventually go home—and tried to cope with their apparent permanence by encouraging assimilation. More recently, the immigrant issue has entered national-level politics. [redacted]

The Social Issues

The French most often associate Third World immigrants with the social problems of housing, education, and crime, focusing especially on the ghettoization of the Arab community. Press reports indicate that the French link the deterioration of public housing to the large size of many immigrant families; they associate

Table 2 *Percent*
Children Born in France to Married
Couples, by Parents' Citizenship

	1948	1958	1968	1978	1982
Both parents French	95.8	94.8	90.9	87.1	86.2
One parent foreign	1.9	2.1	2.4	2.8	3.0
Both parents foreign	2.3	3.1	6.7	10.1	10.8

Source: National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE).

[redacted]

the deterioration of the education system with large numbers of foreign children in the schools (especially the primary schools); and they relate rising crime rates to growing numbers of alienated immigrant youth who engage in gang violence and petty crime. [redacted]

The number of immigrants in public housing has increased steadily since 1968. From 1968 to 1975 the percentage of immigrants among heads of families residing in public housing doubled—from 4.4 percent to 9.2 percent—and we believe it has continued to grow since then. The proportion of immigrants in public housing is even higher than this percentage indicates, since immigrant families, particularly those from the Third World, are usually larger than French families. This housing has become especially important for North African families. Compared with native Frenchmen, twice as many Algerians (29 percent) and almost three times as many Algerian women (49 percent) depend on public housing. [redacted]

The large percentage of foreign children in the population (see table 2) and their concentration in specific neighborhoods means some schools are flooded with immigrant children. A little more than 1 million students of foreign nationality—about half of them non-European—attended French schools in 1984, and almost all (95 percent) of them were in the public

Secret

Secret

educational system, where they accounted for 10 percent of the enrollment. In Paris nearly a quarter of the public school children are immigrants; again, almost half of them are non-European. In the Lyon region the percentage of immigrant children is lower than in Paris (17 percent), but nearly two-thirds have non-European backgrounds. Similarly, in Nice and Marseille, the percentage of immigrant children is only slightly higher than the national average, but almost two-thirds of them are non-European, mostly from North Africa. In all cases, the number of both immigrant and Third World children is growing. In some schools with a large population of non-European children, European parents (not exclusively French parents) have withdrawn their children, claiming their education is held back by the presence of so many non-European youngsters. [redacted]

Popular concern about rising crime rates and urban violence intertwines with the issues of immigrants in public housing and schools. Neighborhoods with large numbers of immigrants are considered "unsafe." Likewise, French parents, and on occasion French students, blame Third World immigrant children for petty violence in schools. Local authorities report withdrawals of European children from schools ostensibly because of this violence. Moreover, at least one student strike, held in a secondary school in St. Etienne, was directed against immigrant students and called for the "restoration of discipline." [redacted]

The immigrant population does seem to commit more than its share of crimes in France, in part because it contains disproportionate numbers of those most likely to commit crime: the young, the unemployed, and the poor. Although foreigners account for 11 percent of the population in France, police records for 1983 attribute 15 percent of all misdemeanors, 23 percent of all homicides, and 58 percent of drug trafficking incidents to foreigners. Nearly 16 percent of those in jail as of 31 October 1983 were North Africans. Whereas the number of native French juvenile delinquents decreased by 3 million from 1973 to 1980, the number of immigrant delinquents increased by 4

million during that same period. The following tabulation presents the total numbers of arrests in 1984 (the figures are taken from the Ministry of Justice):

Total Jailed	Total Foreigners	Foreigners Jailed for Illegal Residence
89,127	23,584	4,402
(74 percent French)	(77.8 percent Maghrebian)	(50.9 percent Maghrebian)

Local Policies

Local officials, in concert with national administrative representatives, have attempted to alleviate public concerns about the foreign population by developing policies that make immigrants less visible. Initially, they encouraged immigrant ghettoization by grouping foreigners in particular neighborhoods on the outskirts of major cities. Immigrants probably preferred to live in areas comfortably surrounded by their own people. As their numbers grew, however, local residents began to complain and policymakers reacted by shifting their focus to the dispersion and the assimilation of Third World immigrants. Both policy approaches aim at decreasing immigrant visibility either by isolating them in their own neighborhoods or by dispersing and absorbing them into the French population. [redacted]

In the Paris region, housing offices sent immigrants to the old, crowded developments on the periphery of the city. This pattern also occurred in the suburbs of Lyon. One of the largest public housing developments in France, Les Minguettes, is in the Lyon suburb of Venissieux. Half the population of Venissieux lives in the development; 62 percent of these residents are immigrants and two-thirds of these are non-European. As the number of Third World immigrants grew in certain areas of France, local officials began to use quotas to limit the number of immigrants in a given housing project. Indeed, authorities in Villeurbanne, another Lyon suburb, decided in the late 1970s to

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret

purchase Olivier de Serre—a privately owned lower-class housing project—with the express purpose of tearing it down and thus dispersing the North Africans clustered there. [redacted]

Officials often tilted educational policies as well to control the numbers of Third World immigrants attending any one school. For instance, in 1979, the prefect of the Rhone Department, under pressure from local authorities, issued a circular strongly urging that new immigrants be prevented from settling in neighborhoods where 45 percent or more of the elementary school children were from foreign families. Similarly, the municipal government of Villeurbanne, which is responsible for delineating local school districts, and the Ministry of National Education agreed to redraw the boundaries for three schools in order to eliminate the ghettoization of one of the schools, described by the press as “entirely Arab.” [redacted]

Several municipalities also have set quotas for school-related social services. In 1978 the government of the Paris suburb of Ivry abandoned a traditional distribution of used clothing to deprived children when it was found that 80 percent of the recipients were foreign children. In January 1981 the same municipality announced that the number of immigrant children attending the city’s summer camp would be limited to 15 percent of the total. The authorities argued that in some of the camps over half the children present were foreign, and the quota would serve to “limit and push back the weight of immigration.” [redacted]

One of the basic problems now confronting the French educational system is how to deal with the high failure rate among non-European immigrant children and how to help them assimilate into French society (see inset). The percentage of foreigners in special classes for those with educational difficulties is twice as great as that in general education classes, and the proportion of Maghrebians in these classes is greater than that of foreign students of other origins. French educators estimate that 80 percent of immigrant children emerge from the French school system with great difficulties in basic skills. [redacted]

A Ministry of Justice study conducted in a sector of Paris containing a large number of foreigners showed that the penal process also treats immigrants differently, contributing to their high rate of arrest and conviction. The police admitted to targeting immigrants for surveillance more often than they do native Frenchmen. Moreover, the report showed that, for the same infractions, the police sent on to the public prosecutor’s office 35 percent of the metropolitan French and 38 percent of the French from the overseas territories, but 47 percent of the African and 63 percent of the Maghrebian cases. Racism in the justice system may account in part for this phenomenon, but the transient lifestyle of many immigrants contributes as well. The police said that they preferred to proceed with cases in which they thought the offender might never be located again should he be released. [redacted]

National Politics and the Immigrant Issue

The issue of immigration exploded onto the national scene during the presidential election campaign of 1981. Ironically, anti-immigrant sentiment was first seized on by the left, when Communist candidate Georges Marchais expressed support for several anti-immigrant actions in Communist-governed towns. The most dramatic of these occurred in the Paris suburb of Vitry, where the mayor led an irate crowd—which included some of the municipal council members—in a march against a newly installed workers’ dormitory occupied by Malians. The city authorities attacked the dormitory with a bulldozer, cut off the water and electricity, and demanded that the occupants leave. The Socialists in Vitry supported what had been done, and a Socialist mayor in the region stated that such difficulties were inevitable in locations with a high concentration of immigrants. [redacted]

In 1983 thinly disguised racial rhetoric reappeared, this time in conservative campaigns. In local elections that year, the right linked high unemployment and

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret

Education Policies and Immigrant Children

French policies for educating immigrant children have swung from trying to assimilate them into regular classrooms to segregating and teaching them in their own languages. The most recent program combines both ideas: integration into French society and reaffirmation of Arab culture. [redacted]

The Ministry of National Education established orientation and remedial classes in the early 1970s to help children with learning difficulties integrate into the French system. These programs were ostensibly open to any child who needed them, but they were established in areas with large foreign populations. [redacted]

A second program began in 1975 and 1976 to educate foreign children in their own language and about their native culture. Immigrant children were to receive one-third of their instruction in their native language as part of the normal curriculum or to take special language and culture classes outside the normal curriculum. France cosponsored these programs with the countries of origin, which recruited the necessary teachers. Both the French and North African governments supported these programs in the hope that, by maintaining links to their home countries, these children might be encouraged to repatriate someday. [redacted]

The Socialist government, perhaps recognizing that large numbers of immigrants choose to remain in France, moved back toward assimilating the children into French culture, a step that brought it more in line with rightwing educational theory. The move was prompted by a government report that concluded that, although nearly 70 percent of the children of foreign origin entering primary school were born in France and speak French when they enter school, few

can hope to master written French under the present system. The remedial classes, rather than integrating them into normal courses, cut them off altogether and left many in special programs intended only for the handicapped. In addition, native language teachers recruited by the home countries often proved to be unqualified, and the programs themselves seemed to disrupt the children's normal educational routine. [redacted]

Remedial classes will now be reserved for the 20,000 non-French-speaking children entering school each year; native language and cultural programs will be incorporated into the normal curriculum and opened to French children as well as immigrant children.

The remedial courses will teach intensive French, seeking to move students into the regular program as quickly as possible. The schools around Lille, Versailles, Paris, and Lyon will conduct experimental programs aimed at helping immigrant children succeed in school on the same level with French children. [redacted]

Although the former Socialist government began this new program, the Conservatives are likely to continue with it. Officials claim that this new approach will no longer doom immigrant children to life in an ethnic ghetto, and the assimilationist goal also benefits the French. Foreign children, by being put through the same programs as other French children, will obtain some of the tools necessary to succeed in French society. Even the National Front agrees that, if these young foreigners are going to stay in France, it is important that they be incorporated into the culture. The French hope that eventually assimilation will move immigrants up the economic ladder, move them out of their ghettos, and reduce the potential for a militant Islamic movement on French soil. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

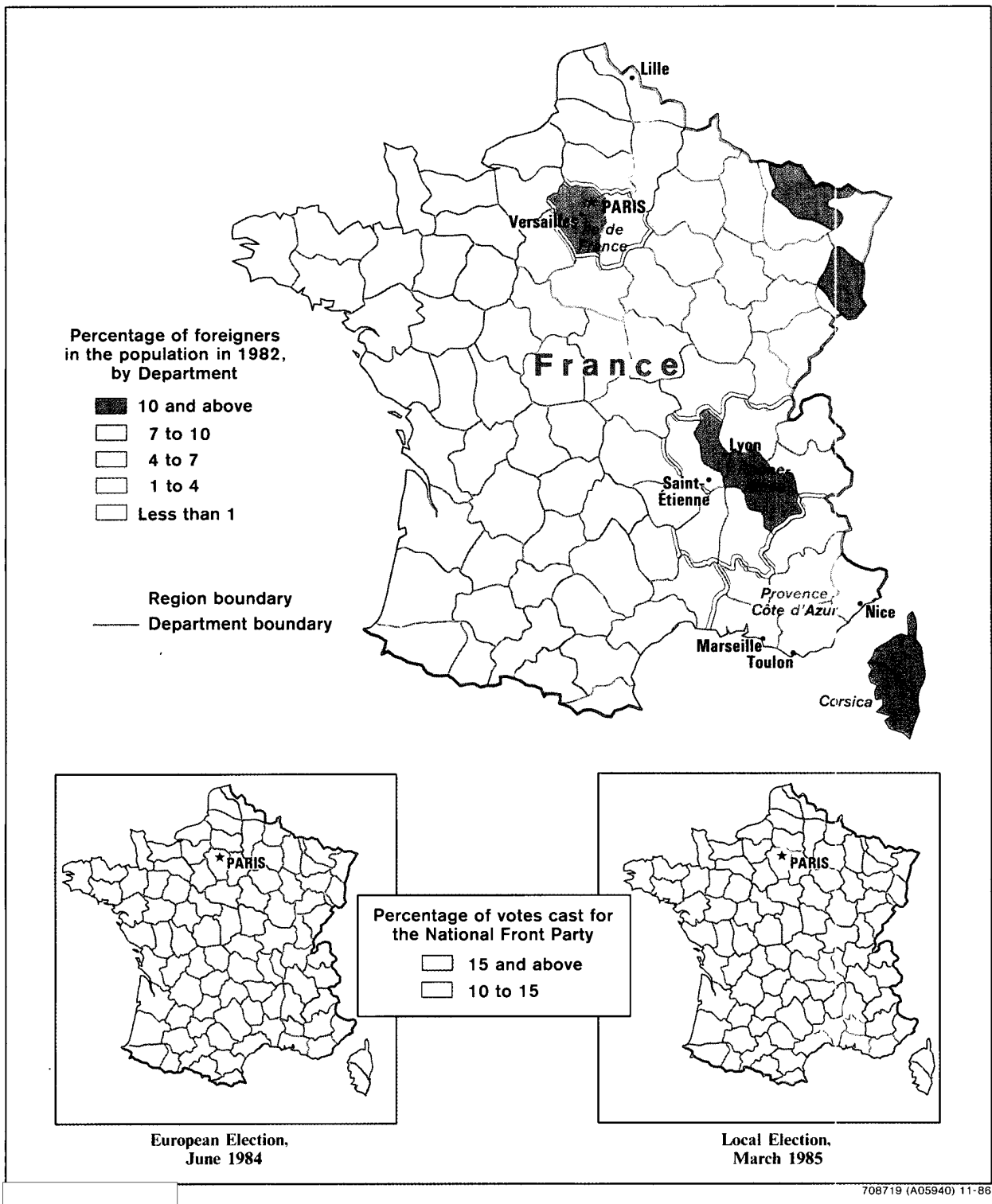
25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Figure 4
Comparison Between Foreign Population and National Front Vote Distributions



708719 (A05940) 11-86

25X1

Secret

crime to the presence of immigrants. Jean-Marie Le Pen and his extreme-right National Front party spearheaded this campaign and skillfully maneuvered alliances with moderate rightists in order to defeat leftwing candidates. The Front captured between 9 and 17 percent of that vote; in June 1984 it won a surprising 11 percent of the national vote in the European Parliamentary election. The FN dropped slightly in the 1985 local elections but still attracted 9 percent of the nationwide tally. [redacted]

Many mainline politicians were suprised at the level of support received by the FN—which, since its foundation in 1972, had been a haven for an extreme-right political fringe. Exit polls after the June balloting showed clearly that Le Pen succeeded best among voters concerned about unemployment and immigrants. A poll printed in the 29 April 1985 issue of *Le Point* also suggests a connection between the immigration issue and voting behavior. When asked their reaction to several different hypothetical situations with Jews, Asians, and Arabs, the respondents demonstrated a remarkable aversion to Arabs. Analysis of the poll data indicates that French living in the southeast, the Mediterranean districts, and the north—all regions with high concentrations of foreigners—are the least sympathetic to foreigners and minority groups. These same regions have been strongholds of support for the FN (see figure 4). [redacted]

Growing concern about immigration—71 percent of the French polled in the fall of 1985 thought immigration would play an “essential” or “important” role in the legislative election in March 1986—led center-right parties to co-opt the issue. In fact, mainline parties on both sides of the political spectrum integrated some of Le Pen’s milder rhetoric into their platforms for the National Assembly election, leading to an apparent decline in the FN fortunes in the early stages of the campaign. However, the kidnaping of French journalists in Lebanon immediately before the election apparently created an anti-Arab backlash among voters, who supported the Front by as much as 25 percent in some regions of the country. In the end, Le Pen’s party received about 10 percent of the vote nationwide and captured 35 seats in the National

Assembly. Moreover, in the election of regional councils held the same day, conservative control became dependent on the FN in six of the 25 regions. [redacted]

Current Policies

The conservative coalition’s platform for the March legislative election emphasized the control of illegal immigration and a tightening of naturalization procedures. It called for stricter surveillance of immigrants at ports of entry and throughout France, deportation of illegal immigrants, and punishment of those who aid illegals. The platform also proposed altering the naturalization process, stating that citizenship should not be automatically granted to long-term residents or to children born in France of foreign parents (see figure 5). A controversial clause proposing that non-citizens receive lower social benefits than citizens was finally dropped, but the platform did state that legally resident foreigners should be asked to seek citizenship, to sign a guest worker contract specifying rights and duties different from those of citizenship, or to leave France. [redacted]

Since coming to power, the coalition government has taken important steps toward the implementation of much of this program. The Minister of the Interior, Charles Pasqua, and the Minister for Public Security, Robert Pandraud, have taken charge of much of the immigrant issue. Both have strong security enforcement credentials, reflecting in our judgment a shift in focus from immigration as a broad social issue to treating the specific problems associated with immigrants—in particular law-and-order concerns. The government has proposed a bill tightening the availability of entry visas, raising requirements for obtaining resident alien status, and empowering the police to make spot checks of identification cards and to deport illegal aliens. Although the Socialists contested the use of identification cards, this portion of the government’s proposals was approved by the Constitutional Council in late August 1986. We believe that once this bill—which will simplify the deportation process—becomes law, the government will proceed with

25X1

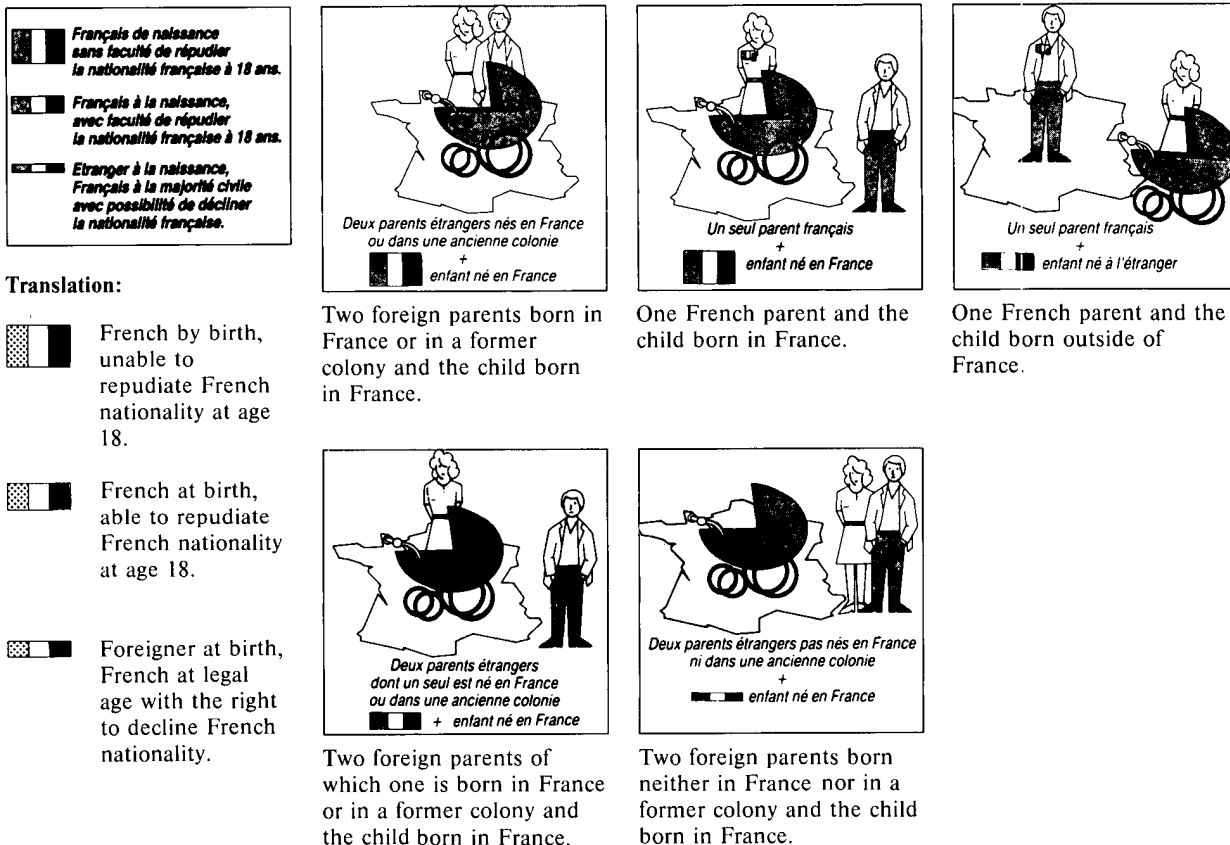
25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Figure 5
Acquiring French Citizenship



Secret

its announced intention to restructure the naturalization process. The ease with which young people may receive citizenship is especially important as their high rate of juvenile delinquency makes them prime targets under these new deportation regulations.

Outlook

North African immigrants will, in our judgment, continue to provoke considerable hostility, in particular because of high unemployment, Arab unwillingness to assimilate, and immigrant involvement in crimes (especially violent crimes). Although proposed new regulations crack down on individuals hoping to come to France on tourist visas, it will be difficult to prevent family migration. More important, the high birthrate of Third World immigrants means that the number of young people born in France yet culturally foreign will continue to increase, further straining school facilities and social services.

Some humanitarian groups will continue to support immigrant causes, but most French political parties are likely to respond to popular concern about immigration and crime by calling for increased controls on the North African community. Although the coalition government's approach to immigration is mild compared with FN proposals, the coalition holds only a two-vote majority in the National Assembly without the FN. This majority—which depends on the loyalty of several independent conservatives—is slim enough, and the immigrant issue is explosive enough that we believe the government may feel obliged to push vigorous legislation, regardless of any civil rights concerns the left might raise. Moreover, FN power in regional councils may well shape local housing, education, and law enforcement policy in ways that will affect immigrant lifestyles significantly. Given the current national mood, foreigners are likely to face greater legal constraints, tighter border controls, and more frequent police sweeps in search of illegal immigrants than at any time since the 1970s.

The French are unlikely to resort to mass expulsions or to increasing bonuses for departing guest workers. Paris probably shares the concern of North African

capitals that rapid repatriation of immigrants would have a destabilizing effect on the home countries. The French probably also would worry that such draconian tactics would tarnish their image among Third World countries, particularly former colonies that look to France as the leader of *la francophonie*. In addition, budgetary constraints argue against increasing repatriation bonuses. Instead, the French seem likely to try longer term solutions in the hope that expanded employment, educational reforms, and political participation will eventually help assimilate the Arab population.

Immigrant attitudes will be shaped in part by the nature of future French immigration policy. There seems to be little reason, however, to believe that foreigners—especially Arabs—will integrate into France socially or politically any time soon. Policies cracking down on the immigrant population are hardly designed to inspire cooperation among these groups. Arab young people face a bleak future: they have no real country, little chance for employment, and are growing up in an environment of violence, crime, and drug abuse. They may choose, as a result, not to become involved in the French system, becoming more radically separatist than their parents and clinging to Islamic fundamentalism. A small group of these young people are likely, in our opinion, to become involved in criminal activity and will be susceptible for recruitment by terrorist groups.

We believe that immigrants will continue to be unable to form their own political movements within the traditional French political system. Indeed, in our judgment, immigrants can participate in French politics and society only through public assimilation. Unsuccessful attempts to organize second-generation immigrants into a political party indicate that even the immigrant community does not support the formation of an Arab lobby. The weight of French history, which has worked to unify and centralize the country, further works against founding political groups based on specific interests or common ethnic backgrounds. Immigrant youth who find jobs are likely to continue to join labor unions, and they could

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

16

Secret

use this venue to participate in French politics. However, US Embassy reporting indicates that unions are no longer playing as vital a role in the domestic political scene as they once did. Like the Asians, Arabs will have to find a means of "fitting in" to French culture if they hope to better themselves economically. They will have to learn to succeed on French terms. School programs that aim at assimilating immigrant youth will help these young people cut a place for themselves in France, but the process will be slow.

25X1

This state of uneasy coexistence could rupture if Arab immigrants in France become more involved in activities outside the traditional political system. For example, immigrants could protest tougher French counterterrorism measures by stepping up terrorist activities in France, which may have been the case in the recent bombings protesting the continued imprisonment of Lebanese Armed Revolutionary Faction (LARF) leader Georges Ibrahim Abdallah. In the longer term, a change in the state of affairs in the Middle East—such as a rise in Islamic fundamentalism due to an Iranian victory over Iraq or a flareup in the Arab-Israeli conflict—could prompt a rise in Arab activism in France. The response of all French political parties to increased Arab protests and terrorist activity would no doubt be to increase controls on resident foreigners and to tighten immigration restrictions. In addition, we believe increased Arab activism might cause an impression among voters that mainline parties are unable to deal with the immigration problem and related security issues, thereby causing a resurgence of support for the FN. Some extremists might even engage in anti-Arab violence. In our judgment, this heightened French hostility might well lead young immigrants, in particular, to engage in even more active protests—perhaps even terrorism—thus causing a cyclical escalation of violence and oppression.

25X1

Secret

Appendix

Historical Background

France has received a large number of immigrants throughout the 20th century. Resident aliens, primarily Italians and East Europeans, increased from 3 percent of the population before World War I to 6 percent in the 1930s. Unemployment, expulsions, and naturalization reduced the proportion of resident aliens to about 3 percent during the 1930s, but immigration increased again after World War II. The character of immigration changed after 1945, however, and it has been the source of growing problems for France in recent years. [redacted]

Recruitment of Foreigners, 1945-70

After 1945 France lacked the manpower it needed to develop its growing economy. During the two world wars many of the young men had been killed or incapacitated, and an already low birthrate continued to decline. As a result, the age distribution of the French people was radically skewed toward the older brackets. Many social scientists argued at the time that the consequences of these demographic trends could prove militarily, politically, and economically catastrophic. [redacted]

As a remedy, the government initiated recruitment agreements with south European countries, specifying the number of workers to be admitted each year, the conditions of work guaranteed, and the requirements for entry. French employers were to request workers through the National Immigration Office (ONI) and to pay a processing fee; ONI organized recruitment and travel arrangements. ONI statistics indicate about 2 million European migrant workers arrived in France before 1970 and were joined by 690,000 dependents. [redacted]

This recruitment effort was not as organized as it sounds. The legal monopoly of the ONI quickly became a fiction, as employers circumvented its program to avoid the recruitment fee. In addition, as competition for labor with other West European industrial nations (including nations which had previously supplied labor) increased, ONI proved incapable

of coping. Spontaneous migration began to develop first from Spain, then from Portugal, and later from Yugoslavia and Turkey. The proportion of migrants coming into France clandestinely (on a tourist visa or without passports) increased, according to ONI estimates, from 26 percent in 1948 to 82 percent in 1968. The situation was further complicated by the free circulation of workers within the European Community and by the open-door policy maintained toward migrants from French colonies and former colonies. [redacted]

Attempts at Selectivity, 1970-81

By 1970 about 1 million of the 3 million foreigners in France were non-Europeans—a fact which prompted attempts to create a more limited and selective system for immigration. The government wanted to limit permanent residency to Europeans, while using Africans to provide labor on a temporary basis. The economic recession of the 1970s provided further impetus to these programs. Deportation of young unemployed migrants who were committing criminal offenses began, and the most minor offense was sufficient pretext for deportation. By 1973 several hundred persons were being deported each month, many of them young people who had been born and raised in France. In 1977 the French instituted a scheme of repatriation assistance whereby foreigners were offered 10,000 francs and a ticket home in exchange for relinquishing all claims on the French social security system. Additional measures introduced in the late 1970s and codified through the Bonnet Law of 1980 combined work and residence permits, linked migration to employment, and extended the reasons for deportation. [redacted]

The new policies, although not overtly racist, mostly affected North Africans and blacks, as most Europeans had protection through European Community citizenship (in the case of Italians) or impending EC

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret

affiliation (for Spaniards and Portuguese). Moreover, by publicly labeling migrants a social problem, the government fueled racism. North Africans—whose dark skin made them stand out as non-French—found themselves increasingly targeted by hooligans. Jean-Marie Le Pen tapped this anger against foreigners in founding the ultraright National Front party in 1972 with its platform of racism and security concerns.

[redacted]

All these events certainly made immigrants feel less secure, but they did not lead to a mass exodus as the government had expected. The number of foreigners in the labor force fell from its 1973 peak of 1.8 million to about 1.5 million in 1981 when the Socialist government was elected on a program promising a better deal for migrants. The number of foreign workers has remained fairly constant in the intervening years, but the total number of foreigners in France has grown considerably as these workers have sent for the dependents they originally left at home. [redacted]

Socialist Promises Gone Astray, 1981-86

Upon taking office, the Socialist government reaffirmed the ban on the entry of additional foreign workers; but it took some liberalizing measures with respect to foreigners already in France and proposed that immigrants with three years' residence in France be allowed to vote in municipal elections. Soon after coming to power, the government stopped deporting French-born foreign youths and declared an amnesty for illegal aliens. Under these new laws, foreigners born in France, aged under 18, married to a French person, or with a child of French nationality could no longer be deported except in circumstances concerning the security of the state. "Regularization"—or legal residence status—was offered to the estimated 300,000 illegal immigrants who could prove that they had a one-year work contract. In fact, only about half this number came forward; and of these, a large but unknown number reportedly lost their jobs because their employers were unwilling to offer them regular conditions of employment. [redacted]

The Socialist government realized after 1982—when it became apparent that the amnesty program had encouraged a flood of illegal immigrants to enter France in the hope of future amnesty periods—that

tightening immigration controls was necessary. The success of the National Front in the local elections of 1983 and the European Parliament election of 1984 affirmed that a tougher stand on immigration was also becoming politically expedient. By 1984 the government passed laws to limit to some degree immigrant family reunification, facilitate expulsions, restrict entry, screen asylum requests, and penalize employers of illegal aliens. Enforcement of these laws was left to the discretion of local officials, however, who often proved unwilling, uninterested, or unable to do much about the problem. Nevertheless, when President Mitterrand revived his call in April 1985 to allow immigrants to vote in municipal elections, the resulting public outcry spawned a debate in the National Assembly in June of that year. Although the debate itself achieved little in terms of policy, the Assembly reached a general consensus that some limitation on immigration and on naturalization procedures was needed. Furthermore, party lines were drawn for the national legislative election of 1986, with the right calling for "assimilationist" policies and the left maintaining that—although something must be done about the problems associated with immigrants—cultural diversity was desirable for the French Republic. [redacted]

25X1

25X1

25X1

25X1

Secret

Secret

Secret