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Letter: `Guests' in Britain

[Independent, The \(London\), Dec 12, 2001](#) by [Veronique Raingeval](#)

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Sir: From my French perspective, David Blunkett's position is self- evident. How can migrants and ethnic minorities integrate in a culture where they lack the language and other social skills to negotiate their position in?

In France, we go further. We ask our migrants to sign up to what France decided were its core beliefs in 1789: Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite, the first "mission statement" ever recorded. Without unity of purpose, how can any group of people function properly, whether company or country

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The problem for England is that it has no obvious abstract values such as ours, which can be claimed equally by all faiths and all ethnicities. The Queen is not a symbol free of negative associations: she also stands for years of abuses by colonial troops, for racial discrimination and exploitation of other countries' resources. It is difficult to manipulate the royalty symbol to fit all.

Although the French Republic perpetrated the same colonial abuses, it is possible to argue against the abuse, by using the Republic's own principles. Perhaps it is time to reclaim royal mottos like "Honi soit qui mal y pense" and as a multi-cultural society, give them a new meaning.

VERONIQUE RAINGEVAL

Bradford

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