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Yann Scioldo-Zürcher, *Devenir métropolitain. Politique d'intégration et parcours de rapatriés d'Algérie en métropole (1954-2005)*. Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2010. 462 pp. Maps, tables, figures, photographs, bibliography and list of sources. 34.40€ (pb). ISBN 10: 2713222303.

Review by Jim House, University of Leeds.

Yann Scioldo-Zürcher's important and original contribution to our understanding of the decolonization of Algeria describes a situation that can only be considered as paradoxical. Whereas the French state introduced wide-ranging and costly policies over several decades to ensure that the Europeans of Algeria (*rapatriés*, henceforth returnees) were helped to resettle in Metropolitan France, the public awareness of such policies is so poor that campaigning *pied-noir* associations can today claim the opposite, without much fear of contradiction. This desire to escape from often empathetic approaches uncritical of the memorial discourses of *pied-noir* associations is one of the book's main strengths. This detailed and objective study thereby provides significant new lines of enquiry for historians seeking to understand how and why certain groups from former colonial societies received differential treatment well beyond the end of colonial rule.

To tell this story of state-driven integration into Metropolitan France, an impressively wide range of sources is mobilised. State archives understandably constitute the book's main focus, since this is principally an evaluation of the reasons behind and efficacy of official policy. However, these fifteen ministerial archives often contain letters written by Europeans from Algeria to ministers, providing valuable insight into the viewpoints of the former. Army and police archives are also used, as are archives of the Seine and Puy-de-Dôme prefectures, since many integrationist policies were overseen at that semi-devolved level. The Banque de France and Régie autonome des transports parisiens (RATP) archives provide specific case studies for the professional re-insertion of European returnees, just as over ten thousand individual migratory trajectories have been painstakingly re-constituted using official sources. In addition, private archives, and those of religious and humanitarian organisations, audiovisual sources (Institut national de l'audiovisuel) and parliamentary debates, combined with some input from oral history interviews, allow a variety of perspectives and approaches.

For the French state to consider the Europeans of Algeria as a group of citizens necessitating protection under an official policy of "national solidarity," a considerable evolution in governmental thinking was needed. As is well known, desperate to cling on to their colonial privileges, many Europeans sided with the Organisation armée secrète (OAS) against de Gaulle's Republic. However, these Europeans increasingly needed the protection of the French state. Scioldo-Zürcher therefore starts his study with a useful analysis of how and why many Europeans adopted such pro-OAS positions, and the fear and confusion of the process of departure from Algeria that was already well established in 1961. State solidarity only really become possible during 1962, as Europeans of Algeria started to be viewed less as a political threat to republican institutions and more as victims of exactions and persecution by Algerian society, the new Algerian state-in-formation being viewed as unable or unwilling to intervene to protect the Europeans, representations supported in the French media. Europeans from Algeria were henceforth symbolically re-integrated into the national fold and regained favour with at least some sections of Metropolitan opinion. This brought the systematization of the hitherto piecemeal, responsive measures designed to help Europeans 'returning' from Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Indochina in the 1950s. Policy did therefore not start entirely from scratch.

Of course, state policy is never disinterested, and political, as much as economic, social or humanitarian reasons informed measures taken to facilitate the arrival, re-housing, re-settlement and professional and political integration of the returnees into Metropolitan French society. The hope was that their anti-Gaullist sentiment, especially in its more extremist guises, would soon subside. Indeed, a law voted 26 December 1961 had already anticipated one such eventuality, as the institutional mindset shifted to managing the colonial pull-out. A Secretariat and then Ministry for Returnees (September 1962) oversaw a process that Scioldo-Zürcher describes as “la première politique d’intégration immédiate faite à l’intention de migrants, certes nationaux, mais connaissant au demeurant un processus de rupture similaire à celui connu par les migrants étrangers” (p. 16). Indeed, the treatment in France of these returnees differed substantially from that of immigrants (i.e., non-nationals) and of Algerian Arab-Berber economic migrants, just as it would from the treatment of Arab-Berber former civilian and military personnel (*harkis*) and of the foreigners—especially Spanish—living in Algeria who migrated to France in 1962 upon decolonization. However, the considerable potential for a comparative dimension is only really developed for the *harkis*, and this only since the 1970s once they became, somewhat belatedly, if not a priority, at least visible on governmental agendas.

The book usefully divides the state-driven policy of integration towards returnees into particular stages or themes, each with their own chapter: *rapatrier*, *recevoir*, *loger*, *promouvoir l’emploi*, and *pacifier*. In each case, due attention is given to gender, generation and social class. The accelerated arrivals from Algeria placed considerable strain on the public authorities. There were over 300,000 arrivals in June 1962 alone. However, after a slow start, considerable initiatives were forthcoming. The State was exceptionally clement towards those European returnees who arrived without the requisite identity papers. These people were nonetheless able to benefit from a raft of emergency financial benefits specific to them from the moment they arrived in Metropolitan France, along with temporary accommodation and measures to defer payments on debts contracted in Algeria. However, the considerable potential for a comparative dimension is limited to the *harkis* who, from the 1970s onwards became, somewhat belatedly, if not a priority, at least visible on governmental agendas.

In terms of employment, considerable efforts were made to help those in the private sector find jobs through incentives given both to job-seekers and their potential employers. In some sectors, priority was given to returnees, or at least quotas were reserved in their favour: this applied to such varied professions as pharmacists, taxi drivers and tobacconists. Civil servants were simply considered as changing jobs, and came under the responsibility of their existing ministries, being guaranteed a post in Metropolitan France. Publicly-owned enterprises such as the RATP and the Banque de France, while adopting different policies, attempted as best they could to provide the equivalent status for returnees in France as they had enjoyed in Algeria, an important objective that constituted the basis for state policy. However, Scioldo-Zürcher shows that this objective proved short-term and difficult, if not self-defeating, when it came to encouraging the self-employed to continue in sectors already in fatal decline in a French economy undergoing modernisation in a way that had bypassed colonial Algeria in the 1950s. Similarly, farmers and agricultural workers were not always able to re-start in favourable circumstances. The socio-economic inequalities and hence power relations of European society in colonial Algeria were often largely transplanted into Metropolitan France. Once again, the narrative of the *Trente glorieuses* emerges as multi-faceted.

The returnees at least arrived during a period of economic growth, yet the demand for social housing was notoriously difficult to fulfil even for the existing Metropolitan population. Here again, state initiatives could only partially alleviate the returnees’ problems. The authorities preferred to keep the returnees waiting for suitable re-housing in supposedly short-stay accommodation subject to the whims of the *préfets*, rather than risk a further increase in France’s shanty-town population. In 1962, decrees introduced quotas reserving between 10 and 30 percent of existing and projected social housing for returnees, alongside a dedicated housing programme for them, along with incentives for construction companies. Returnees were automatically placed on waiting lists for social housing despite their obvious non-compliance with the residency criterion that all other

candidates had to meet. Yet notwithstanding this preferential treatment, many applicants for social housing experienced serious delays in being re-housed and had to resort to having their applications supported by local or national politicians to stand any chance of success. As with employment, the record on housing was therefore mixed, similar to that of the financial incentives to keep the returnees from congregating in the Paris region or southern France, a political as much as an economic or social objective.

The success of the political integration of the returnees back into the Republican fold during the 1960s can be seen in their ability to lobby parliament. Scioldo-Zürcher rejects the myth of any specific “*pied-noir* vote” in ideological terms. After 1965, this vote was increasingly spread across the political spectrum. However, the returnees’ continuing and evolving demands were not only listened to attentively, but acted upon, as Pompidou, Giscard d’Estaing, Mitterrand and then Chirac, each in their own ways, courted them prior to their (re-)election. Here, the analysis usefully complements the work of Stéphane Gacon on the amnesties after the Algerian War of Independence. [1]

Yann Scioldo-Zürcher shows how a shift in policy occurred, symbolised by the law passed on 15 July 1970 that started a process by which returnees were to be financially compensated for the material consequences of their repatriation. Policy had therefore moved from targeting integration within a logic of “national solidarity” to ensuring compensation, and the narrative then analyzes in considerable detail the lengthy and numerous legislative measures taken over the subsequent decades regarding this compensation. Once these financial questions had largely been settled, symbolic reparation was then forthcoming. The assumption underlining such policy developments was that the European returnees were victims who had played a key role in France’s civilising mission in Algeria. Here, Scioldo-Zürcher convincingly establishes a *filiation manifeste* (p. 354) between the legislation of the 1970s and 1980s and the highly controversial law of 23 February 2005 that expressed France’s “recognition” of the role played by its colonial settlers. He thereby provides a new reading of the origins of the 2005 law (since withdrawn), showing how this 2005 legislation had been facilitated by earlier parliamentary debates that had sought to justify the French colonial project, and that formed part of a “la reproduction en métropole des cadres de la pensée coloniale algérienne” (p. 27). Interestingly, he argues that there is a “*mémoire parlementaire particulière de la guerre d’Algérie*” (p. 376), an idea that, while certainly needing further critical reflection, appears suggestive. This reminds us that the supposed silence on the Algerian War of Independence in France in the period before the 1990s certainly never applied to parliamentary debates.

A final chapter adds another layer of richness to the analysis by examining the impact of the move to France on the cultural and religious dynamics within the heterogeneous *pied-noir* communities, a diversity belied by the consensual public stereotype of the nostalgic *pied-noir* that emerged within the mass media. Here, the analysis of the Algerian Jewish communities moving to France is particularly insightful, showing how the existing religious and social networks of French Judaism sought to make a place for the dispersed Algerian Jewish communities who often lived in the suburbs of cities with well-established Jewish communities in their centre, and also in areas of France where there were relatively few Jewish people. The cultural and religious geography of French Judaism would be irrevocably changed.

This is an incisive and extremely well-researched book that uses an impressive array of empirical evidence. It offers accessible pathways through some rather complex institutional, financial and legislative detail, some of which could arguably have been edited out, as could the numerous summaries of the argument. This reviewer would have liked further discussion on the conclusions that might be drawn from this exposure of state interventionism with regard to migration, the role of the nation-state (the book draws on Gérard Noiriel’s work without elaborating on it), and on the concluding comments regarding the need for a comparative European research agenda on returnees. [2]

This is an important work aimed at specialists, and questions many existing assumptions. It slowly dismantles the idea that the European returnees were neglected by the French state. Indeed, it shows the immense political and institutional energy expended in their favour. At the same time, it

does not discard the problems some returnees faced on (re-)discovering Metropolitan France. A more complex image of the returnees therefore emerges as they moved to Metropolitan France, a place at once similar and different to colonial Algeria, but one still within the French nation-state.

## NOTES

[1] Stéphane Gacon, *L'Amnistie: de la Commune à la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris: Seuil, 2002).

[2] See Andrea L. Smith, ed., *Europe's invisible migrants* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003).

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