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Allison Drew, *We Are No Longer in France: Communists in Colonial Algeria*. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2014. xv + 311 pp. Map, tables, notes, bibliography, and index. £75.00 U.K. (cl). ISBN 978-0-7190-9024-0; £19.99 U.K. (pb). ISBN: 978-1-5261-0675-9; £23.99 U.K. (eb). ISBN 978-1-8477-9920-3.

Review by Michelle Rose Mann, Washington State University.

During the Battle of Algiers in 1957, a French mathematician and communist supporter of Algerian independence named Maurice Audin was taken from his home, detained, and tortured to death by the French Army. He was one of many communists who disappeared without a trace during the brutal war of Algerian independence (1954-1962), as part of a legally-sanctioned “system of arrest-and-detention” used to target perceived enemies of the French cause.^[1] His fate, like the fate of many others, remained shrouded in official silence for decades until this past September, when President Emmanuel Macron became the first French head of state to admit publicly to the Army’s systematic use of detention and torture during the war in Algeria.^[2]

The final closure of Audin’s story and the timing of Macron’s historic statement have shed new light on longstanding questions about the history of the French communist movement in Algeria, and about the extent and nature of communists’ role in the Algerian independence struggle. Thankfully for the interested reader, Dr. Allison Drew’s absorbing new book provides an excellent introduction to this fraught and hitherto marginalized history.

Entitled *We Are No Longer in France: Communists in Colonial Algeria*, Drew’s study offers the first (!) English-language overview of the evolution of French communism in Algeria from its mid-nineteenth century origins until 1962. It is part of the well-established *Studies in Imperialism* series of Manchester University Press, edited by John M. MacKenzie and Andrew S. Thompson, which publishes a wide variety of works emphasizing the multifaceted, cross-disciplinary, comparative, and ever-expanding nature of imperialism studies, and which strives to present imperialism and colonialism as global phenomena that impacted both colonized and colonizing societies. Drew’s book offers a solid addition to this series through her careful case study of the intertwined and bi-directional history of the communist movements in France and Algeria.

The principle argument of the book is that communists in Algeria had conflicting imaginings of the Algerian nation: as a politically assimilated extension of a socialist revolutionary France, as a willing pawn in Moscow’s global strategy of anti-capitalist liberation, and as a pluralistic and democratic independent nation. These conflicting imaginings, along with structural limitations imposed by the repressive political climate of the colonial state and the emerging dynamics of the global cold war, resulted in a particularly acute case of conflict between nationalist and internationalist imperatives among communists in Algeria, which was further complicated by Algeria’s unique identity as a European settler colony with a majority Muslim population. Although the practical obstacles and ideological incongruities that resulted from this situation led to the movement’s fragmentation, the core needs, persistent demands, and active political aspirations of many local Algerians also served to shape

Algerian communism into a democratic and pluralistic movement that strove to maintain its autonomy from the Comintern, the PCF, and the FLN despite often brutal political oppression from multiple sides.

Central to the book's argument is the recurring notion of the opening and closing of "political space," which the author defines as the structural (environmental, legal, political, class-based, gendered) conditions for licit and illicit political activity. According to Drew, the French colonial state's persistent repression of political space and its exclusion of the Muslim majority from enfranchisement contrasted sharply with the democratic institutions of mainland France and forced an inescapable rift between the interests and ideologies of Algerian, European settler, and French communist sympathizers. Drew contends however, that both individual attitudes and the unpredictable playing out of major international events mattered as much as ethnic and national background in determining the course and outcome of communism in Algeria (pp. 2-3).

The book is based upon exhaustive archival research in France, England, Russia and South Africa, as well as over a dozen interviews. It contains 280 pages of text as well as a substantial bibliography and index. It is divided into nine concise but thoroughly-researched chapters, each of which focuses chronologically on a distinct period or phase of the French communist movement in Algeria, beginning with the colonial reformists of the late nineteenth century, and then focusing on the role of the communist movement in the World Wars, and in the Algerian Revolution. Thematically, each chapter explores an episode in the movement's history from multiple angles, considering its local political engagements, its programs of outreach and mobilization, its shifting ethnic and religious composition, and its ideological interactions with the national (PCF) and international (Comintern) branches of the communist movement.

Within this overall framework, the distinct contributions of each chapter merit consideration. The book begins with a tightly written overview of the social and economic impact of the French conquest of Algerian land, which is neatly placed in the longer history of the region. The second chapter explains how the influence of the Comintern, as well as the European intellectual orientation of the French and Algerian communist sections, tended to fragment and limit the movement's effectiveness through the 1920s. Chapter three shows how peasant struggles against land dispossession in the Mitidja intersected and conflicted with efforts to mobilize urban workers in the 1930s, and chapter four provides an excellent analysis of how nationalism, anti-fascism, and anti-imperialism during the Popular Front led to further transformations in Algerian communism, and to the creation of an autonomous Algerian Communist Party. Chapter five takes readers through the repression of French communists during the Second World War, explaining how the USSR's shifting relationship with Nazi Germany led to a weakening of communism's appeal and a rise in nationalist sentiment for many Algerians.

The final three chapters deal with the Algerian Communist Party's political evolution in relation to the rise of Algerian nationalism and the events of the French-Algerian War from 1945 to 1962. Chapter six explains that although the remapping of world politics served to "indigenize" participation in the Algerian Communist Party at the close of the Second World War, the party's continued uncertainty regarding the question of national independence and its tardiness in condemning the Sétif massacre both undermined the unity of the movement. Chapters seven and eight describe the PCA's struggle to maintain autonomy and advocate for peaceful and pluralistic solutions before and during the French-Algerian war, despite periodic and severe repression from both the French state, which feared Soviet expansion, and the FLN, which saw the PCA as a threat to its monopoly on political legitimacy. The book's final chapter and conclusion explain the fate of the PCA, whose members succeeded in maintaining autonomy and participating in public discussions about the future of Algeria in 1962, before being banned by the FLN's declaration of a one-party state, and then rounded up and tortured in the wake of a coup d'état that heralded the era of Algerian independence.

We Are No Longer in France is a concisely written, empirically dense, and thought-provoking case study which illuminates the profound impact of the conflict between nationalism and internationalism on

global anti-colonial communism in the twentieth century. It does an excellent job of connecting the institutional history of the Algerian Communist Party both to political events in France and Russia, and to ongoing forms of colonial oppression in Algeria, expertly weaving French, European settler, and Algerian politics together in order to highlight the complexity of communism's role in the struggle for Algerian national independence. For Algerian specialists, the book offers the added gem of going beyond the archive to offer fresh information on the role of individual Algerian political activists in the movement. Its language is precise, its citations are meticulous, and its bibliography is extensive, ensuring its place as a key reference work that will be useful to a wide range of scholars, as well as to advanced undergraduate and graduate students of colonial, imperial, and European political history.

NOTES

[1] Cédric Pietralunga, "Torture en Algérie: le geste historique d'Emmanuel Macron" *Le Monde*, Sept. 13, 2018. https://www.lemonde.fr/emmanuel-macron/article/2018/09/13/guerre-d-algerie-emmanuel-macron-reconnait-le-role-de-l-etat-dans-la-mort-de-maurice-audin_5354271_5008430.htmlMaurice Audin et la torture en Algérie (Accessed Oct. 7, 2018).

[2] Editorial Team, "Macron reconnaît 'un système légalement institué' par l'État français" *Huffington Post*, Sept. 13, 2018. https://www.huffingtonpost.fr/2018/09/13/torture-pendant-la-guerre-dalgerie-macron-va-reconnaitre-le-role-de-la-france-dans-la-mort-de-maurice-audin_a_23525712/ (Accessed Oct. 7, 2018).

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