

poor. But her neglect of the state limits her analysis of “poverty knowledge” through most of the century. Writing about the 1990s and 2000s, Davie lapses into a well-worn critique of supposed “neoliberalism” with almost no dissection of what kind of poverty knowledge underlay these policy preferences. There is almost no discussion of how understandings of poverty informed (and continue to inform) the design of old-age pensions and other social assistance programs.

Sadly, the text is also marred by errors and typos. Margaret Ballinger was not a member of the Native Representative Council (145), but was an MP, one of the “native representatives” in Parliament until they were excluded in 1960–61. E. G. Jansen was not the United Party Secretary for Native Affairs (160–61), but was the National Party Minister of Native Affairs in 1948–50. Tomlinson was, at the time of his appointment, a professor at Stellenbosch, not Pretoria (161). Bargaining Councils were not the former Wage Boards (292). Numerous names are misspelled (Janisch, Rheinnalt Jones, “Jacob” Dlamini, Ingrid “Woolgard,” Neil “Colman”). My own 2005 book is miscited. Some items in the index are not listed in alphabetical order (and a number of individuals named in the text are not included in the index at all).

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Ruth Ginio. *The French Army and Its African Soldiers: The Years of Decolonization*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017. xxviii + 250 pp. Photographs. Maps. Bibliography. Index. Price not reported. ISBN: 978-0-832-5339-1.

In this concise and lively book, Ruth Ginio offers a compelling study of the last years of the corps once known as the *tirailleurs Sénégalais* during the final tumultuous years of the French empire in Southeast Asia, Algeria, and above all, in West Africa itself. While the campaigns in Indochina and Algeria resulted in humiliating defeat—the first one military, the second political—Ginio argues that the French colonial army played a major, if generally silent, role in the decolonization of West Africa. She sees its actions there as largely successful, but suggests that its silence should not be mistaken for a colonial version of *la Grande Muette*, the vocation of its metropolitan sibling. Instead, she asserts, the colonial army secured and maintained a presence in the formerly French territories, rendering independence largely fictive.

Ginio focuses on the *tirailleurs'* “non-military” work in asserting a positive image of the French Union (1946–1958) and the French Community (1958–ca. 1960) in French West Africa (Afrique occidentale française, or AOF). Given what was happening elsewhere in the empire, this work was not easy. Following the trauma of the World War II and the killing of returned

prisoners-of-war in Thiaroye (Senegal) in December 1944, the colonial army entered into a period of fundamental restructuring in which it attempted to train a new generation of African officers and skilled soldiers while offering better pay and conditions of service. Meanwhile, events in the empire would go from bad (Madagascar, Indochina) to worse (Algeria, Cameroun).

Ginio's research is drawn largely from the National Archives of Senegal, as well as from colonial and military archives in France. The nature of her sources means that she generally gives the officers' perspective on this newly inclusive, professional army, an ever-increasing number of whom were African. She writes with verve and occasional humor about West Africans' changing expectations of the conditions of military service and their officers' attempts to catch up. Although the army was not always eager to highlight the presence and the performance of African units in Asia, it was nonetheless solicitous of some of its Muslim soldiers, for whom it facilitated the *hajj*. While the chapters on the aftermath of World War II and the war in Indochina cover familiar terrain, Ginio's analysis of the political work of the army within West Africa is new and significant. Two chapters on the role of "psychological warfare" and propaganda campaigns in Algeria and West Africa are the books' important and original contribution to the literature on decolonization in AOF. When West African paratroopers jumped out over Senegalese villages, their commanders hoped the display would be both inspiring and sobering. They could only hope that, on closer inspection, the villagers would not notice their worn equipment.

Nonetheless, historians of West Africa might differ with some of Ginio's assertions. First and most significantly, while the army did eventually offer equal pay at equal rank to soldiers of diverse origins, it was not unique in adhering to such a principle. Won after a hard-fought political battle over "equal pay for equal work," the Code du Travail of 1952 assured the same for civilian workers in the formal sector, most significantly on the railroads; a law of 1950 had already done as much for the civil service. Second, the idea of a "blood debt" (155) uniting France and West Africa began to function in favor of the latter after World War I, not as late as the centenary of the creation of the corps in 1957. Finally, one might query the degree to which the French army was shaping rather than reacting to political events in the AOF and to what extent—or indeed whether—it and its African successors "continued to control the politics of the former French colonies" after independence (xxii).

In sum, Ginio's book ably sets up an important—arguably vital—line of inquiry, namely the history of Africa's own national armies and the degree to which their roots in their French counterpart affected the political role they would quickly come to play. As historians ponder such questions, they will turn to this skilled and valuable study as an essential work.

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