

questioned; after his arrest and trial he was imprisoned in South Africa and there was some indignation that, while in jail, he apologised for some of the distasteful things he had written about the South African prime minister, Vorster. After returning to the Netherlands, Schuitema was thrown out of the AABN; he never completely emerged from the shadow of the rumour that he had betrayed Okhela and Breytenbach. The Okhela initiative was later disavowed by the ANC leadership after pressure from the SACP. It was portrayed as a rogue group of irresponsible adventurers.

The early London recruits were active mainly in smuggling ANC leaflets into the country and distributing them, usually by means of a “basket bomb” – a small explosive device concealed at the bottom of a basket or bucket, covered with leaflets. By detonating the device at the side of a busy street, leaflets would be shot into the air and descend upon passers-by. After the Okhela debacle (but not necessarily related to that event) international volunteers were recruited to go underground in South Africa and the so-called frontline states (Zimbabwe, Botswana, Mozambique, Lesotho, and Swaziland). Their job was to establish safe houses and to help smuggle arms and other equipment and documents. *London Recruits* does not really cover these underground volunteers. Among those in this network of international volunteers were the Dutch/Belgian couple Klaas de Jonge and Helena Passtoors, operating from Mozambique, who were later arrested in South Africa.

The book picks up the story again in 1986, with the operation “Africa Hinterland”: basically the organization of a fake safari company offering tourists a seven-week journey from Nairobi to Cape Town. Apart from fifteen or so unsuspecting tourists, the safari truck, a 10-tonne 4 × 4 Bedford M-type, carried thirty-two wooden boxes, each containing AK-47 assault rifles, Makarov 9 mm pistols, ammunition, hand grenades, and tins filled with TNT.

The book ends with the story of Lucia Raadschelders, a Dutch former employee of the AABN. Raadschelders was recruited by Conny Braam, who herself was asked by Mac Maharaj, a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC and of the SACP, to help set up an underground ANC leadership structure in South Africa: Operation Vula.³ For the present reviewer, who is currently writing a history of the Dutch anti-apartheid movement, it is encouraging to see that the Dutch contribution to the fight against apartheid has not been forgotten. But it would have been interesting to read about the links between the London recruits and the Vula network. In the end, Vula was betrayed. But by then change was already under way in South Africa. And apartheid was defeated at the ballot box rather than by the AKs and Makarov pistols smuggled into the country by London recruits.

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3. Conny Braam, *Operation Vula* (Johannesburg, 2004).

Omar Guèye's *Sénégal: Histoire du Mouvement Syndical, la marche vers le Code du travail* offers what it promises: a detailed exploration of trade-union activity in Senegal, focusing on the period from the late 1930s through the adoption in 1952 of a Labor Code for the federation of French West African colonies (l'Afrique Occidentale Française, or the AOF). Based on the archives of the AOF in its former capital, Dakar, as well as on a number of interviews with former activists, Guèye's work represents a welcome addition to a small but distinguished literature on the labor movement and its relationship to the colonial state in Senegal. The book is drawn from the author's 2001 doctoral thesis for Dakar's Université Cheikh Anta Diop, and it represents over twenty years of research, dating back to a 1990 Master's thesis on the same topic. It is, in short, authoritative and richly documented. Divided into four parts and ten crisp chapters, *Sénégal: Histoire du Mouvement Syndical* is at least as much a history of how the colonial administration sought to engage with and channel the energies of that movement as it is a history of the movement itself.

Under French colonial rule, which ended in 1960, Senegal boasted more waged laborers than any other colony in the AOF excepting the Cote d'Ivoire, and it therefore offers a natural case with which to examine the history of the West African labor movement more broadly. As was the case in neighboring countries, Senegalese wage laborers represented a small minority of the territory's working age population; throughout the AOF, less than 9 per cent of the working population was engaged in formal, waged labor in the period under study. Moreover, in a rural, peasant society, workers were concentrated in urban areas. They worked at the port of Dakar, on the Dakar–Niger railroad, and in the civil service, as well as for French trading houses. However, they carried a disproportionate political weight, and their strike activity, notably in the transport sector, represented a direct threat to the colony's export-oriented economy.

On the railroad, strikes and work stoppages were older than the line itself; they began as early as 1919, while the rails only reached the Niger River in 1923. However, the first labor unions for African workers were only authorized in 1936, under France's Popular Front government. A small wave of work stoppages followed, led by day workers and temporary laborers still without unions, and culminating in a major strike on the railroad in September 1938. Still, after the fall of the Popular Front, trade-union activity was soon eclipsed by the imperatives of World War II. During the Vichy government period in French West Africa (1940–1943), such activity was proscribed. This history represents Part 1 of Guèye's text.

In Part 2, Guèye argues that the war represented a major turning point in trade-union activity, as the Free French allowed unions to re-form, and workers themselves were struck by what one man recalls as a "thirst for strikes" (p. 84). Thus, as soon as the war ended, a new wave of labor actions began among civil servants and commercial workers. A general strike paralyzed Dakar in January 1946, but teachers and railroad workers did not take part in it. The breach between the latter group and other unions set a pattern for the future. After an increase in the minimum wage essentially resolved the general strike, management attempted to avoid a replay of the same scenario by paying labor leaders to manage their unions full-time and to serve as interlocutors with an increasingly demanding category of urban laborers. Meanwhile, the colonial administration took steps of its own, notably by creating a new office, the Inspection du Travail, charged with mediating disputes between workers and employers.

Part 3 of Guèye's *Histoire du mouvement syndical* is essentially a study of the Inspection du Travail, drawn largely from the organization's archives, and favorable to it.

Guèye argues that, while awaiting the establishment of a fully fledged labor code, the Inspection served as a necessary sticking plaster, holding together a precarious situation in which neither unions nor management could prevail, and resolving conflicts through arbitration that might otherwise have sparked labor action. The plaster held from 1948 until the months before the labor code was finally enacted in 1952. It followed in the wake of the best-known strike in the history of the AOF, the railroad strike that ran from October 1947 through March 1948, which silenced the rails across the AOF.

That five-month railroad strike became an epic struggle, immortalized by Ousmane Sembene's novel, *Les Bouts de bois de Dieu* (Paris, 1960). It is indeed remarkable that in the wake of the repression of a 1938 strike in which perhaps as many as thirteen workers were killed and a 1944 mutiny – in fact, a soldiers' strike – in which at least thirty-four men were shot dead, Senegalese workers had the courage to go out on strike again. No less remarkable is the fact that most of the African political leadership, as well as Senegal's influential Muslim religious leaders, opposed the railroad strike. The strikers were not joined in their action by other unions, and the outcome was essentially a draw. In the end, rather than demonstrating the power of the union, in Guèye's account the strike demonstrated the need for a new Labor Code and, failing that, the Inspection du Travail. Guèye attributes the fact that no further strikes occurred until the adoption of the Labor Code to the efficacy of the Inspection, but of course this is difficult to demonstrate, particularly when relying on the organization's own archives. Senegal's new political leadership, personified by Leopold Sédar Senghor, also played a role in dampening further labor conflicts by channeling the energies of labor activists into other forms of political activity, while the bitter lessons of the strike itself were surely not lost on those who had endured so much for so little gain.

Be that as it may, for the next several years after the strike, a long political struggle over the Labor Code largely took the place of union activity. As Part 4 demonstrates, by the late 1940s the action had shifted from picket lines and protests to the Parliament of the French Union. Political changes in the French imperial structure, as much as the actions of individual labor activists, signaled a new era. In the wake of World War II, African politicians working with a universal French political system had helped to secure a novel citizenship in the French Union for West Africans who had previously held the status of "Native" (*indigène*). The process of making subjects citizens – even citizens of a polity as imprecise as the French Union – also entailed extending political rights to them, including the right to family allowances and the like. In other words, the rights of workers were slowly being brought into line with the rights of imperial citizens. Consequently, the history of the labor movement and its rapid post-war evolution – what Guèye terms "*la marche vers le Code du travail*" – follows from the political history of the period.

Here Guèye's book might profitably be read alongside the important work of Frederick Cooper, whom Guèye cites extensively and who provides an "Afterword" to this *Histoire du mouvement syndical* (the doyen of Senegal's labor historians, Iba Der Thiam, offers a preface). In *Decolonization and African Society: the Labor Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge, 1996), Cooper examines similar questions to those posed by Guèye, but addresses them in a much broader imperial frame, as his title suggests. What Guèye brings in turn is a depth of inquiry into the Senegalese case in particular, as well as the perspectives of labor activists and their allies, including women who "manned" barriers and threw stones at policemen in some of the movement's most tense moments.

In sum, Guèye's history of the Senegalese labor movement is what its title suggests, a tightly focused and thoroughly researched inquiry as attuned to institutions and

organizations as it is to the social history of the workers themselves. As such, it leaves two questions for other historians to ponder. First, how did Senegal's labor movement relate to those active in other territories, notably Soudan (Mali), with which Senegal shared both a boundary and a railroad? And in the wake of its victory in the struggle for the Code du travail, how did a transterritorial movement become national? Second, what happened to such a strong labor movement after independence in 1960? Although – as Guèye demonstrates – Senghor owed his political ascent in the 1950s at least in part to the labor unions and to his close relationships with their leaders, after independence in 1960 Senghor's government seems to have quickly set aside his former allies. That other, later history of the Senegalese labor movement from the Code de travail through independence and beyond awaits its historian, who will surely stand on Guèye's broad shoulders.

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LAIR, MEREDITH H. *Armed with Abundance. Consumerism and Soldiering in the Vietnam War.* The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill 2011. xviii, 295 pp. Ill. \$34.95. (E-book: \$34.95.) doi:10.1017/S0020859013000436

Americans, notes Meredith Lair, have long thought of their soldiers as “plucky underdogs just barely making it through” (p. 22). And yet in both Vietnam and Iraq, the United States Forces “rain[ed]” so much devastation “down on their enemies” that they wrought unprecedented horrors (p. 21). In Vietnam between 1961 and 1972, 2 million Vietnamese were killed, compared to 58,000 Americans; and in Iraq during March and April of 2003, between “10,000 and 45,000” Iraqis were killed, compared to 139 Americans (p. 22). Given America's status as a military superpower, why do Americans insist on viewing their soldiers as outmatched?

In this excellent book, Lair explores the distance between myth and fact in US war-making. Of special interest is the consumerist plenty that accompanied American troops to Vietnam and Iraq. Whereas most popular American accounts of US military activity focus on suffering and bravery, America's operations in Vietnam and Iraq had high levels of recreation and prosperity. American soldiers, of course, experienced very real traumas, including death, in Vietnam and Iraq. And yet, the majority of soldiers in these operations served not in combat but in support. In Vietnam, only 25 per cent of troops saw combat, and in Iraq, even smaller numbers did. Most troops, in fact, were rearguard personnel, derisively referred to by combat soldiers in Vietnam as REMFs (Rear Echelon Motherfuckers) and in Iraq as Fobbits (“Hobbits” in Forward Operating Bases). Support personnel had relatively high living standards, a privilege much resented by combat troops.

By 1971, according to Lair, the US military was operating “one of the largest department stores in the world”, most of whose profits came from sales to US soldiers in Vietnam (p. 165). Vietnamese civilians and American personnel alike staffed bases' postal exchange stores, or “PXs”; these were supplied by the Pacific Exchange, an American