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William A. Hoisington, Jr. *The Assassination of Jacques Lemaigre Dubreuil: A Frenchman between France and North Africa.* London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005. xii + 184 pp. \$125.00US (hb). ISBN 0-415-35032-8.

Review by James McDougall, Princeton University.

Jacques Lemaigre Dubreuil (1894-1955), was an arch conservative, industrialist, newspaper owner, and imperial activist whose career spanned the most troubled years of the Third and Fourth republics and who intervened frequently, if not often successfully, in the turbulent political life of his times. His death at the hands of European colonialist *ultras* in Casablanca, on 12 June 1955, was a significant moment in the crisis that led to Moroccan independence. William Hoisington's book, based primarily on private papers solidly backed up with public archives, official publications and a well-chosen secondary literature, does not provide a sustained and comprehensive biography of this intriguing figure, but does present a series of sharp and detailed sketches of his activity at crucial moments in the life of French public affairs, domestic and imperial, from the late 1930s to the mid-1950s.

The five chapters begin with the history of the national Taxpayers' Federation, of which Lemaigre Dubreuil was President from 1935 to 1940, and its role in the anti-parliamentary protests of the late 1920s, leading up to the violently suppressed demonstration (or right-wing *coup manqué*) in Paris of 6 February 1934, and the latent "civil war" of the pre-World War II period. An excursus on Lemaigre Dubreuil's failed military-economic mission to Rumania in 1940 precedes an account of what Hoisington calls the "Vichy change" and the protagonist's move (along with his company, Lesieur oils of Dunkirk), to French Africa (chapter two), where Lemaigre Dubreuil was heavily involved in what is perhaps the most interesting part of the story (chapter three), the political and diplomatic antecedents to Operation Torch, the Allied landings in Morocco and Algeria in November, 1942. This episode is followed (also in chapter three) by an account of Lemaigre Dubreuil's (ultimately disappointing) political life as a principal supporter and counselor to one of the major players on the inchoate scene of the reconstruction of French independence in 1942-44, General Henri Giraud. The book closes with Lemaigre Dubreuil, who from 1949 until his death resided in Rabat, struggling against the impatience of nationalism, the intransigence of the colonial lobby, the violence of both, and the fragility and immobility of the Fourth Republic, to carve out a liberal and "fraternal" policy for achieving the (formal, political) decolonization of Morocco.

Each of these moments, well known as are most of the events described, is narrated here from a highly engaged personal standpoint, and with the warmth of a narrator sympathetic to his subject (though not averse to evaluation of his weaknesses), which makes for a frequently insightful and highly readable account of several critical issues in mid-twentieth century French history. The book has the feel more of a collection of vignettes than of a single, focused narrative, and the overall theme--the consistent patriotism of the central character, and his eventual "self-reinvention," from metropolitan bourgeois conservative to colonial liberal and "martyr to Franco-Moroccan solidarity"--perhaps overlooks the deeper themes at play in this story: the competing locations and meanings of French nationalism and "patriotism," on left and right, from the 1920s to the 1950s; the imbrication of the empire in the life of the Republic; the persistence of a conservative view of proper political authority from the taxpayer protests of the 1930s through to the concern for a "responsible" management of (neocolonial) Franco-Moroccan relations at the moment of formal decolonization.

Above all, the imperial side of the story remains tantalizingly under-explored; we are given a detailed account of attempts at moderate opinion-forming in the 1950s which are redolent of arguments more common (and less out of place) in Algeria twenty or thirty years earlier, but a more thoroughgoing (perhaps more ruthless) analysis of Lemaigre Dubreuil's positions--the persistence of his belief in the positive developmental achievements of the protectorate, in France's political "education" of a Moroccan elite, his fear of a restored *makhzen* as "reverting" from the putatively nascent democratic potential of imperial tutelage to a "pre-colonial" archaism of unaccountable, authoritarian power--might have enabled a more searching discussion of the limits and contradictions of the kind of "liberalism" and "solidarity" that all this represents, and of the ways in which they actively blinded even sympathetic characters like Lemaigre Dubreuil to the actively anti-democratic inheritance prepared for successor regimes by the colonial state itself (to the perpetuation of which Lemaigre Dubreuil's scheme of North African Cold War client-states to be re-garrisoned by French troops after nominal "independence" would have made more than a little contribution).

After all, a consistent theme of this individual life, from participation in the suppression of resistance to the French takeover of Syria (alluded to only in passing as furnishing evidence of his military valor), through the salvation of the occupied *métropole* from a safely sovereign empire, to *in camera* meetings of "notables" over the prospects for guaranteeing a smooth transition to neocolonial security of property and influence for Europeans in an "independent" Morocco, is very clearly the story of the workings of the French empire's "unofficial" mind. The political and economic interplay between the empire and the *métropole*--"between France and North Africa" (and indeed West Africa, whence came Lesieur et ses Fils' steady supply of peanut oil)--is nicely in evidence through most of the book, and tidily narrated through concentration on the individual life-story. But Lemaigre Dubreuil's murder by the irreducible partisans of the colonialism with which he himself was entirely bound up is more than the story of an enlightened "liberal" gunned down by fanatical reactionaries (and less, perhaps, than the "turning point" in Moroccan history that Hoisington suggests--without it, the "turn" would undoubtedly have come soon enough). It might be considered more as a moment (of which there would soon be many others across the border in Algeria) marking the final unraveling of one particular way of being "a Frenchman," one very much tied to "greater France" and a particular view of its place in the world, and signaling the onset of a crisis both of the *patrie*, and of defining what it would mean to be a "patriot."

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