CHARLES TRIPP, *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013). Pp. 385. $80.00 cloth, $27.99 paper.

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"Power contains within it the outlines of its own resistance," Charles Tripp argues in his survey of protest against occupation and dictatorship in the Middle East (p. 259). Tripp places the current Arab Spring in the historical context of activism over the past half century, with chapters on violent revolt, nonviolent protest, labor mobilization, women's battle for control of their bodies, wars about national history, and art as symbolic resistance.

Tripp explores many forms of protest, but puts little emphasis on discerning which methods work best. He assumes the leviathan modern state, armed to the teeth, will prevail. But he glories in the little victories, like Moroccan women's campaign to reform personal status law (decreed by the king in 2004, thanks to the horrific violence of their Islamist opponents) and the 2007 pay raise won by Egyptian employees of the Property Tax Administration, who used their success to organize a union. His primary goal is to "give the generic term 'resistance' a human face" and to recognize courageous souls who dare to voice dissent in the Middle East, a region where people have suffered long and bitterly under military rule (p. 309).

The spectacular uprisings of 2011 were built upon years of experimentation in everyday resistance, Tripp remarks in his introduction. Independence from colonial rule brought forth violent authoritarianism in the 1960s; these states then broke their social contracts by adopting neoliberal reforms in the 1980s and 1990s. Middle Eastern peoples responded resiliently by adapting forms of protest to "follow the contours of domination itself" (p. 9). They developed new vernaculars of protest and built organizations of collective action through persistent legal challenges, assertions of popular control over public space, and arts that subvert languages of power.

Tripp minimizes the jargon of social movement theory. He is more interested in applying generally accepted concepts to the Middle Eastern canvas than in devising a new theory of his own: among others, he invokes the work of Charles Tilly on repertoires of collective action, Antonio Gramsci on the war of position against hegemonic discourses, Frantz Fanon on violence, James C. Scott on the moral economy of protest, Asef Bayat on diffuse forms of everyday resistance, and Pierre Bourdieu on national myths. Out of these influences, Tripp focuses on three primary strategies of protest: to signal presence, to reclaim public space, and to create new collectivities. These strategies have been used by those excluded from power to make their voices heard, to shift the nature of public debate, to force changes in policy, and even to overturn governments. Tripp's canvas foregrounds activists in Egypt, Iran, Palestine, and Algeria, with briefer portraits from Morocco, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Israel, and Bahrain. The rest of the Gulf is absent, and Turkey is mentioned only in a few pages on Kurdish artists. Yet, these many stories of resistance will compel readers to abandon prior conceptions about Middle Eastern peoples as passive victims of dictatorship, or as prone to irrational violence.

Tripp is talented at crafting concise case studies, and readers will profit much from their juxtaposition. Chapter 1 on violent revolt demonstrates that state violence was a necessary, but not sufficient, cause of the turn to violent revolt in Algeria, Syria, Libya, and Palestine. In each case, additional factors triggered peaceful activists' resort to violence. Chapter 2 examines cases where activists have nonviolently contested public space. Exceptionally fine is Tripp's analysis of the decision making of Egyptians in Tahrir Square at the successive stages of their revolt against President Mubarak and the military regime that succeeded him. Activists' skills faltered, however, when the uprising shifted gears into election campaigns.

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Tripp juxtaposes the Egyptian case with analyses of how Iranians deposed their shah in 1979, how Palestinian children threw stones to assert control over their space, and how protesters in Bahrain failed to use their occupation of the Pearl Roundabout for reform. In all cases, however, new repertoires of resistance—like songs, poems, and plays—promoted new feelings of community that states could not control.

Tripp also views the 2011 Arab uprisings as a climax to thirty-five years of resistance to economic restructuring. Chapter 3 links the 1977 Egyptian bread riots against the state's rollback of subsidies to the self-immolation of a fruit vendor in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid in December 2010. It is a tale of small successes against the growing momentum of neoliberal privatization and its effects of unemployment and inequality. Workers groped for ways to protest, because the labor unions that had inspired revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt in the 1950s were now controlled by corporatist states. Labor resistance remained, by necessity, local and episodic. But the accumulated repertoire of protest made possible the larger uprisings of 2011. Drawing primarily on work by Joel Beinin and Marsha Pripstein Posusney, Tripp summarizes how Egypt's labor movement battled Mubarak's privatization drive of the 1990s. He gives a nod to another form of economic resistance, the building of Islamic alternatives to neoliberal capitalism, but oddly neglects the important work by Carrie Rosefsky Wickham on how Islamists built a parallel public and economic sphere in the 1980s and 1990s.

The book's final three chapters on women, historians, and artists, respectively, are linked by Tripp's interest in how these groups challenged the state's hegemonic imaginary of the nation. Women have had the most difficult task, because political power in Morocco, Iran, and Palestine is deeply invested in Islamic mores protected by religious and tribal elites. Despite their success in 2004 to gain legal reform, Moroccan women, he shows, have labored to diminish the cultural barriers that block its enforcement.

In Israel, revisionist historians ignited controversy that spilled over academic walls to challenge Labor Zionism's myths about the 1948 war and the justness of the founding of the state. While their histories briefly gained a place in school textbooks in the late 1990s, Likud launched a counterassault on revisionism after the Second Intifada in 2000. Meanwhile, critical sociologists have punctured Labor Zionists' pretense that all Jews are essentially alike and that they enjoy equality in Israel. In exposing the subjugation of Mizrahi Jews, they have blurred the line between Jew and Arab, to the discomfort of those who base Israel's existence on the exclusion of others. Similarly in Algeria, Berber scholars punctured the state's insistence that the nation is Arab, while Islamists called out the ruling party's neglect of its own contention that Algeria is a Muslim nation. As in Israel, dissidents in Algeria were able to insert multiple voices in a public sphere that had once been monopolized by the state. But in both countries activists were ultimately unable to demolish founding myths.

Key to advancing alternate voices have been artists who produced the posters, graffiti, songs, and poems that gave voice to those silenced by dictators and occupying powers. Artists practice a kind of civil disobedience, Tripp argues, that asserts the right to access the public sphere. They have taken museums to the streets, much as Russian and Spanish revolutionaries have done. In so doing, they have fostered new vernaculars of collective identity that reflect and subvert official discourses.

This book will be enjoyed most by readers with a basic knowledge of the Middle East and of social movement theory. Newcomers to the field will likely find the level of detail and assumed knowledge to be difficult terrain to travel. The persistent reader is well rewarded: the book's cumulative detail and comparisons bear fruit in a new, birds-eye perspective on the region's politics. It will force scholars to rethink their area of specialty. *The Power and the People* links the discrete works of a generation of scholars of various disciplines—and so pays homage to them. It will find a place on scholars' shelves alongside classic works on Middle Eastern resistance like that of Hanna Batatu on Iraqi communists, Julia

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Clancy-Smith on Sufis in Algeria, Joel Beinin and Zachary Lockman on workers in Egypt, Philip Khoury and Lisa Wedeen on Syria, and Richard P. Mitchell and Carrie Rosefsky Wickham on Islamists in Egypt.

NICOLE F. WATTS, *Activists in Office: Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey* (Seattle, Wash.: Washington University Press, 2010). Pp. 214. $70.00 cloth, $25.00 paper.

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The persistence of the Kurdish nationalist insurgency in Turkey, a country that holds regular competitive elections, may appear to some as a paradox. Why does the Kurdish nationalist movement pursue armed struggle when less risky avenues for political participation are available? In her original book, *Activists in Office*, Nicole Watts offers the first systematic study of Kurdish nationalist electoral participation in Turkey, and demonstrates that, in fact, there is no such paradox at all. She skillfully documents how Kurdish politicians and activists who have chosen the electoral path have faced a wide array of repressive measures ranging from judicial harassment to extrajudicial killings (Chapter 4). Moreover, the actions of those who gained office have been highly restricted because of Turkey's exceedingly centralized governance. Electoral politics has therefore never emerged as an effective alternative to armed struggle as pursued by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). More broadly, Watts argues that a challenger movement's participation in semidemocratic institutional politics does not necessarily result in the moderation of its discourse and tactics. Turkish state coercion, while not always coordinated and consistent, contributed to the PKK's efforts to control the Kurdish movement and helped to generate a dynamic of radicalization (p. 103). As Kurdish politicians and activists were victimized at the hands of the state, arguments in favor of armed struggle continued to have wide currency among the Kurdish population. An important implication of *Activists in Office* is that, given current political conditions, it is unrealistic to expect elected Kurdish politicians to emerge as legitimate and powerful alternatives to militants.

Yet Watts approaches the question of Kurdish nationalist participation in elections from a different direction, asking: "[g]iven these decidedly difficult circumstances and the less-than-obvious rewards of working within the system, why did Kurdish activists use formal politics to promote their cause?" (p. 4). She provides a compelling answer to this question based on extensive empirical research. When elected to offices, Kurdish politicians and activists produced discourses, symbols, and rituals that effectively ended the Turkish state's hegemony over representing the Kurdish question. As popularly elected politicians, they gradually gained access to resources and audiences—at both the domestic and international levels—not available to militants (Chapter 5). Furthermore, they constructed a new mode of governance in municipalities under their control that significantly limited the Turkish state's ability to rule over its Kurdish subjects (Chapter 6). Finally, and more implicitly, electoral participation provided avenues of mobilization at lower risk and cost, which enabled the Kurdish movement to reach broader segments of society. After all, only a small segment of society could participate actively in armed struggle given its life-threatening risks and huge demands.

The capture of the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan and the revitalization of Turkey's EU admission process made 1999 a critical year for the Kurdish movement. The post-1999 period was characterized by a significant decline in the intensity and scope of political violence, limited democratic reforms, and greater Kurdish nationalist success at the ballot box. Kurdish

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