

Yuko Miki, *Frontiers of Citizenship: A Black and Indigenous History of Postcolonial Brazil*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Pp. 292. \$99.99 hardcover (ISBN 9781108417501). doi:10.1017/S0738248020000462

Yuko Miki's *Frontiers of Citizenship* rethinks the historiography of nineteenth-century Brazil by comparing one of its centerpieces—the history of slavery—with a sub-specialty—the history of indigenous communities, a subject that historians of modern Brazil have willingly abandoned to anthropologists. That this turn has been taken by a historian working in the United States is yet another proof of the inventiveness of Brazilianists in North American universities.

The diversity and range of topics touched on in the introduction (including slavery and citizenship, popular politics, race and nation, law and violence, geography, and labor and abolition) could perhaps leave readers incredulous. They might wonder whether it is possible in fewer than 300 pages to prove that it was on the frontiers of the new empire that the definition of Brazilian citizenship was first put to the test. Is it possible through a study of citizenship on the frontiers of the new empire to rethink the history of postcolonial Brazil by recovering the role played by slavery, and by policies related to indigenous peoples?

Miki examines the geography created by the end of the long economic hegemony of Minas Gerais and its gold mines (1697–1800), which obligated the colonial administration to explore its margins to find new lands for further colonization. There, she searches for the emergent vision of the institution of slavery and its contestation that other historians have discovered during the same period in the *gaucho* south and in Amazonia. However, as Miki explains in the epilogue, archival silences reveal another presence, however fleeting, that became as important as the enslaved population that she expected to find. These archival phantoms—figures that the bureaucratic precision of the Portuguese and later the Brazilians ignored—were indigenous populations, designated pejoratively as Botocudos, with whom or rather against whom the political and cultural identity of an independent Brazil would develop. From this perspective, Miki explains, we should understand the birth of this tropical empire, as well as its long compromise with slavery.

Why? Among the numerous and convincing arguments of the author, I will mention three that are most noteworthy.

The first is territory. The reconfiguration of Brazil's national territory at the beginning of the nineteenth century created new spaces in which a Brazilian nation under formation could be experimented with and negotiated. These spaces were neither in the cities of the coast, nor on the plantations. They were instead on the "frontiers." Contrary to what has often been written until now, these were not wild lands without administration or tribunals. On the contrary, these were the places where the contradictions of an emergent

Brazil were exacerbated, but also resolved. The region on which Miki focuses—between Minas Gerais and the Atlantic coast—had long been left alone, preventing it from becoming a transit zone for illegal commerce in gold. With the exhaustion of gold-producing sources, it could be opened to colonization. However, it was never unoccupied. Numerous indigenous communities had long sought refuge there. For Brazil's colonizers to use the land where native peoples hunted and foraged, it was necessary to displace them. To this end, the "just war" fought during the first days of the Portuguese occupation was reinvented: any community refusing to cede its territorial rights and to assimilate into the *aldeias* (villages overseen by civil or religious authorities) could be reduced to slavery or even massacred. This enabled the consolidation of the land but also of manual labor, a twofold benefit. Only a "frontier" allowed this type of resolution.

Next is constitutional law. After Brazil's independence of 1822, it was necessary to define politically what this new citizenship entailed. The constitution of 1824 provided a definition, grounding it in a birthright principle that placed indigenous populations in the same category with the descendants of colonists and enslaved Africans. In a parallel development, over the course of the nineteenth century, intellectuals attempted to found a cultural identity on this juridical basis. A number of them went as far as to propose that Brazilian identity should never be exclusively white and Portuguese: the creolization at work since the first days of the colony had involved all kinds of *métissages*. As the century progressed and Romanticism imposed new canons in literature as well as in the writing of the history of the new nation, Brazil explicitly became simultaneously Indian, African, and white. Nevertheless, the terms of this triple rootedness had to be specified. Enslaved people had to wait to acquire their liberty, whether through manumission or by the promise of a general emancipation that began to take shape as the slave trade became less and less feasible. As for Indians, they had to be "civilized" or else remain inassimilable; all the more so if they refused assimilation. From that point on, the violence of the owner, like that of the colonizer, was legitimate when it was charged that their privileges were being attacked by individuals who inhabited places outside of the national territory: runaway slaves (*quilombolos*) or natives refusing settlement (*índios bravos*). Miki's pages detailing the exercise of this violence are among the book's most captivating, and they convincingly locate the contradictions of the new empire in the very bodies of those who refused citizenship.

The third argument that I will mention is that by these means, Miki redefines exclusion in an entirely persuasive way. In a Brazil where the "frontiers" were more and more frequently occupied, cleared, and exploited, there was no longer any true exterior space where those who refused the laws could find refuge. The *quilombo* settled on the plantation neighboring that of his ex-master. The Indian moved constantly between the *aldeia* and the forest. Both groups understood

that by not accepting inclusion in the nation as “slaves” or as “savages,” which is to say, being without rights, they no longer had any “grounds” on which to exercise or claim their citizenship (or any similar right). In this way, ideas about native status became the central question. By avoiding giving land to emancipated slaves in 1888, the Brazilian state relegated them to the status of Indians dispossessed of their territories. They were made strangers in their own country.

Not the least of the merits of *Frontiers of Citizenship* is that it provides keys to understanding the Brazilian “frontiers” of the past and of today. These territories have previously too frequently been considered as being beyond the lawful life of the nation, as being places for a savage life, even a barbarous one. Miki shows us that they were, and that they are, in fact areas for economic, social, racial, and political violent experimentation, still in search of historians ready to consider seriously the avenues for investigation that she has opened up.

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Faiz Ahmed, *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and Statecraft between the Ottoman and British Empires*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017. Pp. 448. \$51.50 hardcover (ISBN 9780674971943).  
doi:10.1017/S0738248020000450

In the aftermath of World War I, the Middle East and South Asia, and indeed much of the rest of the world, underwent a radical political and legal transformation. However, none of the usual players was in the vanguard of this process. It was not any of the prominent Arab nations, such as Egypt and Syria, which sprang from the defeated Ottoman Empire, and which were subjected to new or continued colonial control. Nor was it Iran, which endured internal revolution and remained for decades to come under strong foreign sway. Nor was it even Turkey, which, although successfully resisting postwar occupation and reconstituting itself as a republic, could achieve this outcome only by eradicating many of its old Ottoman legal foundations. Rather, the forerunner of modern legal advancement in the post–World War I Islamicate world was a seemingly unlikely candidate: Afghanistan. This proposition lies at the heart of Faiz Ahmed’s *Afghanistan Rising: Islamic Law and Statecraft between the Ottoman and British Empires*.