

BIANCA DEVOS AND CHRISTOPH WERNER, EDS., *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran*, Iranian Studies (London: Routledge, 2014). Pp. 341. \$145.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780415824194

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This interdisciplinary collection of essays explores how the early Pahlavi state and middle-class reformers shaped Iranian cultural modernization in the 1920s and 1930s. Bianca Devos, Christoph Werner, and the contributors argue that this process was not wholly imposed on society by the shah and his ministers but was instead worked out by multiple actors both inside and outside the government. As a result, modern cultural projects in Pahlavi Iran were many and varied, and initially lacked the kind of authoritarian uniformity frequently associated with the rule of Reza Shah. Nevertheless, by the late 1930s the Pahlavi state exerted greater oversight of the reform agenda by means of regulations (*nizam-namahs*) and bureaucratic institutions such as the Organization for Public Enlightenment (Sazman-i Parvarish-i Afkar).

These efforts, moreover, underscored Iran's complex relationship with the West. Reformers looked to Europe and the United States as models for modernization and feared that failure to adopt Western technology, values, and lifestyles would perpetuate Iranian backwardness. The process once begun had to be carried out to its fullest conclusion or risk total failure. At the same time, the reformers embraced Iranian nationalism as the key to self-strengthening and struggled to reconcile their admiration of foreign culture with their growing pride in Iran's uniqueness. Such dilemmas encouraged the eclectic pragmatism that the contributors argue came to characterize Iranian modernity between the wars.

The scope of this volume is impressive: Iranian literature, music, drama, architecture, archaeology, museums, the press and censorship, educational institutions, public health, urban planning, new technologies, changing modes of communication, and the Pahlavi state itself. Accordingly, the range of sources is noteworthy: various ministerial archives, newspapers, memoirs, postage stamps, physical artifacts and spaces, fiction, and nonfiction. This variety of topics and sources buttresses the authors' contention that Pahlavi modernization cannot be considered solely within the narrow confines of the state and that a discussion of Persian culture during this period without reference to the expanding role of the state vis-à-vis society lacks vital context.

The emerging Iranian middle class plays a central role in this book. Bourgeois intellectuals and reformers allied with the state to remake Iran in their own image. Talinn Grigor maintains that Tehran was rebuilt in historicist and avant-garde architectural styles to reflect the bourgeoisie's secular, modernist aspirations. Christl Catanzaro details the tense relationship between 'Isa Sadiq and 'Ali Asghar Hikmat that forged the University of Tehran in 1934. H. E. Chehabi describes Mir Mahdi Varzandah's campaign to introduce Swedish calisthenics to the country's schools. Elham Malekzadeh connects the development of modern midwifery with the state's efforts to nurture a healthy nation and educated women's ambitions to help their less fortunate sisters. Roxane Haag-Higuchi and Roja Dehdarian explore how literati such as Muhammad Taqi Bahar and Buzurg 'Alavi navigated the complex demands of Persian traditions, European styles, and Iranian nationalism. Keivan Aghamohseni similarly investigates 'Alinaqi Vaziri's and Ghulamhusayn Minbashiyan's introduction of Western music to Iran and the role of radio and gramophones in raising the significance of music in Pahlavi society. The Red Lion and Sun theater in Tabriz, Werner demonstrates, became a site of not only Iranian drama but also middle-class entertainment and sociability. Finally, Devos reveals that new technologies such as buses, automobiles, telephones, and cinemas became the means by which the bourgeoisie asserted its modernity and by which it measured the extent to which the lower orders remained behind the times.

While these essays undoubtedly enrich our understanding of the middle class's cultural significance, it is curious that the middle class is defined in this book in purely cultural terms. There is little discussion of its economic basis or what the relationship might have been between its cultural politics and its economic interests. This middle-class world, moreover, remains a fairly closed one, with little reference to the great majority of Iranians: workers, the unemployed, peasants, and pastoralists. These groups are occasionally mentioned as objects of middle-class nationalist reform but it would also be useful to consider how the bourgeoisie attempted to differentiate itself from the lower classes and how it policed those social, cultural, and economic boundaries. Furthermore, in socialism and communism, radical intellectuals and the nascent working classes eventually came to possess an alternative modernity, and a discussion of how bourgeois reformers and the Pahlavi state sought to contain this challenge would have been interesting. In this connection, although Katja Föllmer emphasizes the increasingly outmoded methods of 'ulama' communication, Shi'i Islam as a rival system of meaning and values merits more attention. Indeed, the book would benefit from a greater sense of cultural conflict during a period of rapid cultural transformation.

This study also enhances our appreciation of the Iranian state's role in cultural modernization. As Nader Nasiri-Moghaddam demonstrates, the Pahlavis inherited the idea of the Museum of Ancient Iran in Tehran from their Qajar and Constitutional predecessors, underscoring crucial continuities in Iranian state building that have recently received scholarly attention despite vociferous Pahlavi claims to the contrary. There are also tantalizing glimpses of the state's cultural role beyond Tehran in Roman Siebertz's analysis of Qajar and Pahlavi iconography through postage stamps, especially Reza Shah's commemorative 1935 issue, which proclaimed Pahlavi power, sovereignty, and modernity to the whole country. Karim Soleimani also examines Tehran's expanding control over the provinces in his account of the government's increasingly effective censorship of the local press. Many chapters, nevertheless, focus resolutely on Tehran. When the provinces are considered, they generally remain passive objects of a Pahlavi–bourgeoisie alliance centered in Tehran that sought to impose its cultural vision on the rest of Iran. It would be useful to know how provincial reformers advocated their own distinctive kinds of modernity and the degree to which the central state and Tehran's middle-class intellectuals were receptive to these ideas. In this context, Azerbaijan does make a strong showing in Chehabi's and Werner's chapters, which point toward considering Iranian cultural change within the dialectic of not only state and society but also center and periphery.

On the whole, this book provides a rich and varied account of early Pahlavi Iran. The new regime appears less monolithic and middle-class society more assertive in shaping Iranian culture in the 20th century than was once assumed.

SUZANNE GAUCH, *Maghrebs in Motion: North African Cinema in Nine Movements* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016). Pp. 256. \$29.95 paper. ISBN: 9780190262570

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Suzanne Gauch offers a cogent and comprehensive overview of cinema of the Maghrib (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) produced primarily in the 21st century. While concentrating her analyses on contemporary cinema, she maintains that Gillo Pontecorvo's iconic, neorealist film *La Bataille d'Alger* (*The Battle of Algiers*, 1966), continues to "exert a hold on popular imaginations worldwide" and, thus, thematically has reduced films from the region to certain stereotypical assumptions "limited by post-independence classifications" (pp. 2–3). Pontecorvo's film has also