

popular choice to address minority grievances in the West can also triumph in Ethiopia.

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DISCOURSES OF ALGERIAN NATIONALISM

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History and the Culture of Nationalism in Algeria. By JAMES McDUGALL. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xiii + 266. No price given (ISBN 978-0-521-84373-7).

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This book has as its main theme the discourses of Algerian nationalism as constructs produced to lay claim to the past and present in order to fashion a new future. Thus, 'cultural authority' is seen to derive from certain historical narratives articulated in the context of national struggle and changing modes of social domination. McDougall deals competently with a plethora of historical discourses and their significance for the evolving entity of Algerian nationalism, seeing them as products born out of an encounter with modernity, particularly after the French invasion of Algeria in 1830. These discourses, probed in five thematic chapters, together with a prologue and an epilogue, include Islamic revivalism as opposed to reformism, colonial accounts and nationalist narratives. In this sense, the reader is alerted to the different regularities, rules and sites that govern the deployment of their themes and underlying assumptions.

Two of these discourses are singled out by McDougall for extensive treatment: reformism and the nationalist ideology of the FLN. Whereas the former took the existence of its nation for granted and accorded it a perennial and enduring essence, the latter based its precepts on a revolutionary will placed at the behest of the masses for their salvation. Hence, reformism sought to awaken the dormant spirit of the nation by diffusing a new reinterpretation of Islam. Consequently, schools, journals and mosques were employed to spread the message of a reformed and rationalist Islam shorn of superstitions and false Sufi beliefs. The FLN, on the other hand, adopted a militant ideology that posited armed struggle as the only method of true liberation and rebuilding nationhood. Moreover, the study disaggregates these discourses by showing that their contribution to the emergence of Algerian nationalism was not a linear progression whereby one phase fed into the other and reinforced or enriched its evolving structures. Revivalism, for example, denoted the presence of God and divine intervention as central concepts of its apocalyptic visions. With the arrival of reformism by the turn of the twentieth century, modern notions of civilization, nationhood, reason and cultural renewal were imparted into the religious realm and made an integral part of its internal structures. In other words, human agency was highlighted rather than miracles or natural retribution. Thus, reformism stands on its own as a fully developed discourse and as worthy of investigation in its own right, rather than being an adjunct of a richer nationalist project, or simply a precursor and a prelude of things to come.

By attempting to seize 'symbolic power in the cultural realm', as McDougall elucidates, these discourses represent earnest endeavours to recreate a new historical imagination capable of asserting the right of Algerians to join the modern

world as mature citizens. Such a creative power was represented by the career and writings of Tawfiq al-Madani (1899–1983). In fact, as the author indicates, the wider story of the book is told around the biography of al-Madani. In other words, al-Madani's activities and output are recurrently referred to in order to give a 'centre' to the rest of the enquiry (p. 22). This central figure was one of the first Algerians to offer a national account of his country, edited a number of newspapers and magazines, played a prominent role in the Association of Algerian Muslim 'Ulama, served as ambassador for Algeria in a number of Arab states, and was the first minister of culture and religious affairs after independence in 1962. Thus his life spanned both the reformist and revolutionary eras in Algeria. Nevertheless, McDougall places his intellectual pedigree within a reformist or Salafist framework. The historical figures al-Madani chose to treat extensively, such as Hannibal, or the values he attributed to them, were reinvented to awaken Algerians from their slumber or dissipate their ignorance. Being a work of creative imagination rather than 'recollected memory', al-Madani's discursive output invested ancient and medieval episodes of Algerian history with all the virtues of valour, love of liberty, scientific progress and patriotism.

In according al-Madani centre-stage, McDougall illuminates significant episodes of his career and throws new light on his intellectual contributions. Furthermore, his last chapter, entitled 'Arabs and Berbers?', is informative and offers new perspectives on the changing self-perceptions of the two communities, before and after independence. As an 'idiom of contest and competition' (p. 214), the identity of the Berbers is dealt with sympathetically and objectively as a political representation that is continually contested.

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