

Among the conspicuous lacunae in this work is a discussion of civic nationalism associated with the movement that culminated in the nationalization of the oil industry and the premiership of Mosaddeq. That nationalist movement sought to transcend ethno-religious ties, foster an inclusive solidarity, underline national self-determination as a primary right entwined with meaningful citizenship, and construct nationhood as centered on resistance to imperialism, control of national resources, and democratic self-rule.

An edited volume rarely furnishes a coherent position and it is often difficult to identify a common thread linking its segments. This volume does, however, offer suggestive vistas for further thinking on the components of nationalism in modern Iran; even chapters that are only tangentially linked to the core issues of nationalism can be read with benefit. Versatile in the range of ideas as well as sources employed, they reveal a solid grasp of the heuristic framework and the historiographical context within which the authors operate. This volume can be regarded as an opportune plea for a theoretically informed and self-consciously critical approach to the study of nationalism and modernity in Iran.

MARILYN BOOTH AND ANTHONY GORMAN, EDs., *The Long 1890s in Egypt: Colonial Quiescence, Subterranean Resistance* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014). Pp. 448. \$120.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780748670123

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The Long 1890s in Egypt is a collection of essays originally presented as papers at a conference convened by Marilyn Booth and Anthony Gorman at the University of Edinburgh in 2011. The pieces individually and together attend to “the long 1890s” as a pivotal moment in Egyptian history, marking a point between state expansion through indigenous design (1860s and 1870s) and the emergence of a robust, formal anticolonial nationalism (after 1906). In their introduction, the editors bookend this period with well-known events, starting with the ‘Urabi Revolt and the British occupation (1881–82) and ending with the Dinshwai incident and the establishment of nationalist political parties (1906–7). Although many works have touched on this period while treating themes such as British imperialism, the consolidation of colonial rule, capitalist exploitation, the rise of nationalist activism, labor and gender politics, and so on, the volume sets out to address the specificity of “the long 1890s,” which the editors argue has been lost and which in turn has obscured some salient features of Egyptian history or led others to be ignored altogether.

Unlike many volumes of collected essays, this one is, for the most part, tightly organized and coherent, due to a set of very clear guidelines or questions generated at the start. The five sets of questions are aimed at tackling the problem of periodization from various angles. These include jurisdiction, movement or crossings, social identities, media, and the nature of sources. The contributors were essentially charged with identifying how much or what kind of change occurred, if any, in each domain. In addition to the editors’ clear and concise introduction, there are thirteen chapters divided into three parts. The chapters represent some of the latest research on topics ranging from governance, policing, and anarchism to gender, sexuality, and minorities.

Although the volume features excellent pieces that work well together, overall it does not clearly demonstrate why the 1890s, short or long, should be regarded separately from the preceding or following periods. In fact, in doing so it runs the risk of reinstating the British occupation of 1882 as a determining event in a sequence of events beginning in 1798—a timeline of the old diffusionist

model of modernity that has been so roundly rejected in the post-Orientalist historiography of a number of contexts from Asia to the Americas. Alternatively, a robust defense of why diffusion in and of itself is not problematic, like Andrew Sartori has recently done in his book on liberalism in South Asia, would address some of the revisionist critiques. Instead, the danger of (re)turning to this periodization is apparent in certain chapters, while most steer clear of its rocky shores, thus rendering the significance of the volume's intervention unclear.

For example, Orit Bashkin's otherwise sensitive and deep reading of Farah Antun's treatment of "the Jew" and the context in which it occurred starts with what seems a throwaway reference to the 1890s as "mark[ing] a new era in which modernity was introduced to Egyptian society through the print media" (p. 315). Adopting a narrow "public spheres" approach to modernity wherein a variegated marketplace of ideas such as citizenship, democracy, and rights were exchanged and debated only begs the question of coeval and prior exchanges that took place in nonmarket environments. Were they non-, pre-, or antimodern? Similarly Aaron Jakes's careful unpacking of "instrumentality" as not simply a description of colonial rule's operations but also an effect of the kind of state it discursively instituted over and against the precolonial despotic state struggles to find the relevance of the 1890s. Tracing the history of a project—the construction of agricultural roads—that was implemented in the 1890s, Jakes reveals how the state's appearance as a "neutral instrument" for the sake of public utility (*al-manāfi' al-'umumiyya*) created a space in which differently positioned actors made claims, thereby creating the condition of possibility for a genuinely national(ist) politics. Unlike Bashkin's public of the print media and its associated network, the one that emerged through state-building practices, which Jakes interestingly dubs *isti'mār*, seem to allow for a greater diversity of social actors, from colonial officials to peasants. Nevertheless, the question raised in relation to Bashkin's public might also be put to this ostensibly more inclusive one. Jakes in fact attempts to address the question of prior formations of public in relation to petitions peasants sent to the colonial state and notes "the state's role was no longer to safeguard pre-ordained hierarchies, but rather to defend the public against them." Neither the language, which he concedes remained similar to Ottoman-era petitions, nor the object in the example he gives—wherein Bedouin protested large landowners and companies receiving unequal shares of water—seem to support the assertion of divergence. "'It is not right,' they insisted, 'that big fish should eat the small in the presence of English justice'" (p. 73). How this appeal to the colonial state was categorically different from appeals to the sultan for justice against those exploiting "pre-ordained hierarchies," in say, petitions from 16th-century Çorum studied by Suraiya Faroqhi, is not obvious.

The danger here, as in Matthew Ellis's innovative rereading of how Egyptian sovereignty was negotiated at its frontiers or Shane Minkin's creative reanimation of death as a lens onto life's narrowing horizons in terms of identity, is that the periodization unwittingly resurrects the teleology of state. Obviously this is a danger historical writing in general encounters. However, "the long 1890s" acts as a straitjacket constraining in particular ways the interesting readings that many of the authors are making of significant yet understudied topics, such as the Greek diaspora, Coptic lay organizations, or the international anarchists' movement. All of these excellent contributions *should* undermine the colonial-national dialectic as the only game in town but instead end up reaffirming its hold on our historical imagination precisely because of the quest to fix the period's uniqueness. For example, in Minkin's case, surely the state was not the only agent remembering the dead and thus giving the life lived its primary meaning because death certificates were rationalized. Or, Ellis, despite demonstrating quite nicely that Egypt was a "work-in-progress" in the 1890s through an examination of the autonomous roles of legal, religious, and political actors in the West in the constitution of Egypt's modern sovereignty, confronts an inescapable linear trajectory when 1907 is posited as an endpoint. This was the point when nationalism ostensibly solved the contradiction of state and subject by claiming the absolute sovereignty of the people. These are not Ellis's exact words, and in fact he is more cautious, but it is the reading that is imposed

on the text by the periodization and use of language such as, “Contrary to long-standing myths concerning the continuity of Egypt as a political community since time immemorial, this chapter has sought to show how state and nation did not come fully formed to Egypt’s western domains, but rather emerged only gradually” (p. 187). One might reverse this formulation when regarding this work-in-progress today and suggest that a particular political community has existed in parts of the Nile Valley “since time immemorial,” but it has always been one enclave territory among others. If the period 1882–1907 was not framed as unique and determining, then the persistence of autonomous actors who continue to operate in terms of “enclave territories” or “anomalous legal spaces,” as ongoing events in the Sinai and elsewhere evince, would not seem so peculiar or aberrant.

Though the periodization is not compelling, the volume makes a strong case for more research on the fin de siècle, has many excellent pieces, and is a welcome addition to the historiography of modern Egypt.

DAVID DE VRIES, *Strike Action and Nation Building: Labor Unrest in Palestine/Israel, 1899–1951* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015). Pp. 170. \$90.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781782388098

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Strikes are fundamental to the history and sociology of any labor movement. Therefore, David De Vries’ most fundamental objective is to remind readers of the prominent place of strikes in Zionist nation building. To do so, he offers a quantitative survey and structuralist historical sociology of the 2,014 recorded strikes in Palestine/Israel from 1899 to 1951, covering the late Ottoman, British Mandate, and early Israeli statehood periods. *Strike Action and Nation Building* divides the history of strikes into several chronological subperiods. Within each, De Vries characterizes the principal groups of striking workers and the nature of their demands.

Labor Zionism was the hegemonic force in the Jewish community in Palestine (the Yishuv) and subsequently the State of Israel from the early 1930s until 1977. One aspect of that hegemony is the vast literature in Hebrew and English on Jewish workers, Labor Zionist political parties, collective and cooperative agricultural settlements (kibbutzim and moshavim), and the General Organization of Hebrew (i.e., Jewish) Workers in the Land of Israel (the Histadrut). De Vries identifies three schools in the history and industrial sociology of strikes in Palestine/Israel (pp. 7–8). The first, the dominant trend in the Zionist historiographical tradition, treats strikes as a “system of relations” and struggles internal to the Yishuv, primarily involving the Histadrut and its component political parties, the Revisionist Zionist movement (the forerunner of the Likud), and Jewish employers in the private sector. The second treats collective actions of both Jewish and Palestinian Arab workers in the framework of the Labor Zionist drive to split the labor market and exclude Arab workers from Jewish-owned sectors of the economy (in Zionist parlance, the “conquest of labor”). The third approach treats strikes narrowly as motivated by local workplace issues, narrow group interests, or struggles to establish and maintain organizational power or professional status, with no reference to the Arab–Zionist struggle.

De Vries argues that his book is distinct from these schools because it emphasizes that most Jewish strikes took place in the urban Jewish private sector. He demonstrates that strikes, while quite rare in the early 20th century, became routine over the course of the British Mandate. Counterintuitively, De Vries argues that this was not due to the strength of Jewish workers, but rather their weakness in relation to urban private sector employers. By 1930, the Histadrut claimed