

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).
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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*.

Such a claim depends, of course, on how one defines advancement and measures success. But if we look only at precedence in reaching symbolic milestones, Afghanistan stands out. In 1919, well before many of its peers, Afghanistan became the first fully sovereign and independent Muslim-majority nation in the postwar period, and in 1923, it was the first such nation to promulgate a constitution. The near erasure of these events from scholarly memory, to say nothing of popular memory, is but one of the remarkable takeaways from Ahmed's book. The subtitle hints at the oversight: in examining the rivalry between two imperial powers in the Middle East and South Asia, scholars have, often unwittingly, reduced Afghanistan to a passive and marginal role. In re-centering Afghanistan during this era, Ahmed restores the emerging country's historical agency and reclaims its administrative and legal accomplishments from scholarly silence—a silence that might well lead people to doubt whether modern Afghanistan even has a legal history worth telling.

Yet Ahmed pushes the argument further. What makes Afghanistan's modernizing project exceptional was not simply that it was early, but that it was autochthonous, mimicking neither the European nor even the Ottoman model of law and government. Ahmed thus finds both Eurocentric and Pan-Islamic approaches to Middle East historiography equally wanting where Afghanistan is concerned. By instead foregrounding Afghan actors and events, *Afghanistan Rising* reveals Afghanistan as an active hub of inter-Islamic intellectual and political exchange and as the site of a unique synthesis of Islamic law and modern statecraft.

The book primarily follows the Muhammadzai dynasty, focusing on the pivotal six decades from approximately 1870 to 1930. The Muhammadzai dynasty ruled Afghanistan from 1826 to 1973, first as the princely rulers, or amirs, and then as constitutional monarchs beginning in 1926. Until independence in 1919, Afghanistan was a British protectorate for most of Muhammadzai rule, a status that did not sit well with the country's growing regional and international ambitions.

The book's six chapters may be neatly split in half. Chapters 1–3 chart the emergence of modern Afghanistan through World War I. The seminal event in Ahmed's story is the 1877–78 Ottoman delegation to the Kabul court, which sought to secure Afghan military and diplomatic support against Russia. Shir 'Ali, the amir at the time, remained neutral, but from then on it was apparent to observers, perhaps most of all to the Afghan elite, that Afghanistan had become an important nexus of Islamic intellectual and political activity between the Ottoman Empire and British India. Under 'Abd al-Rahman (r. 1880–1901), followed by his son Habib Allah (r. 1901–19), Afghanistan leveraged its ties with both empires to rapidly construct the civil and military infrastructure of a centralized state, inviting a range of Ottoman and British Muslim technocrats to oversee much of this project. The war years crystallized the country's prominence as an international actor, in turn strengthening its bid for independence. But this new position also made the old policy of neutrality

untenable. Habib Allah's refusal to support the Ottomans during World War I, in the frustrated hope of being rewarded by the British with independence, was viewed as a deep betrayal of a fellow Muslim country, and resulted at length in his assassination.

Chapters 3–6 cover the eventful years of Habib Allah's son, Aman Allah (r. 1919–29), who secured power following a brief interregnum upon his father's death. Aman Allah emerges as the tragic hero of Ahmed's story. Nearly all prior scholarship has dwelled on the civil conflict that afflicted the second half of his reign, either ignoring the remarkable accomplishments of the first half or regarding them as a failure hardly worth mentioning. Yet as the Ottoman Empire came apart, Afghanistan continued to vigorously pursue its own state-building program. In addition to a successful war of independence against the British, Aman Allah's early years witnessed the promulgation of a codified and uniquely Islamic constitution (called the *Nizamnamihha-yi Amaniyyih*, or the Amaniyya Codes) and the development of a novel notion of modern Muslim kingship. This, Ahmed argues, was a form of Islamic legal modernism unlike that seen in either the Ottoman or the post-Ottoman Middle East.

The originality of the book's narrative and argument is facilitated and strengthened by the approach it takes to modern Islamic legal and political historiography. Because Afghanistan does not fit comfortably in either the Middle East or South Asia, events, sources, and connections that challenge conventional accounts simply pass without notice. Very few historians of modern Islam move beyond, as Ahmed does, the artificially constructed regions of area studies. In synthesizing sources not normally put together—Ottoman Turkish documents on Afghanistan alongside British ones, and Afghan treatises on Islamic law that receive little attention at all—*Afghanistan Rising* illustrates the fruitfulness of transregional historiography. The book is not without some minor shortcomings. Notably, when compared with the rich description of the many figures who made modern Afghanistan, Ahmed's analysis (in Chapter 5, "Legalizing Afghanistan") of the 1923 Amaniyya Codes, and in particular what made Islamic legal modernism unique in Afghanistan, feels truncated and underdeveloped. Yet, in even bringing the legal productions of the Aman Allah period to the notice of scholars, Ahmed points toward a promising area of further study. Above all, Ahmed urges historians to reconsider the "Manichean conflict between progressive modernity and stagnant tradition" (265) when evaluating Islamic law and statecraft in the modern world. In setting aside this reductive approach, Ahmed uncovers numerous details that compel us to revise the long-held association of Afghanistan with failure.

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