

Although some social and cultural structures endured through revolution and war, village attitudes towards the national polity were fundamentally transformed in the period. Retish argues that peasants wanted to participate in state-building, and that the young Soviet state gave them that opportunity. Throughout, Retish places Viatka's peasantry in an international context, and draws attention to ethnic and gender specificities of experience. Viatka's Udmurt and Mari populations are sensitively treated.

The book is clearly and lucidly written, and includes a number of illuminating illustrations and tables. A map showing Viatka's position within the Russian Empire would have helped less specialist readers contextualize the space discussed. Retish's book will be required reading for subject specialists and undergraduate reading lists, but will also be a valuable comparative point for scholars of peasant communities in other contexts.

Sarah Badcock

CRONIN, STEPHANIE. *Tribal Politics in Iran. Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921–1941*. [Royal Asiatic Society Books.] Routledge, London [etc.] 2007. xii, 258 pp. Maps. £75.00; doi:10.1017/S002085901000012X

Middle East history has been the history of tribal conflict and tribal state formation. Pastoral, nomadic, semi-settled, and settled tribal populations of the Middle East have played a significant political role that outweighs their marginal and "exotic" characteristics. Although the conventional engagements of these tribal groups in rule and rebellion have transformed in the last century, exploring a revival of tribal polity in the wake of the recent crises in the Middle East, especially in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, merits increased attention.

There is much debate about what constitutes a tribe. In today's Iran, however, the terms tribe, tribal, and tribalism have a far wider currency when associated with political culture. The study of contemporary Iran inevitably includes discussion of its ethnic groups. For many members of Iranian ethno-linguistic groups with a dominant tribal background, such as the Lurs, Baluchi, Kurds, Turkmen, Arabs, and Qashqai, tribal identities, albeit transformed and in most cases "detrIALIZED" (p. 235), continue to be relevant. These identities are intentionally or unintentionally reconstructed during social gatherings, claims of ethnic nationalism, pastoral nomadism, tribal rituals, economic activities, when narrating the past, handling and strategizing alliances and conflicts, and when challenging or supporting local-level political and institutional changes.

The concept of tribal politics in the Middle East has been the focus of several monographs and reports in recent years. Perhaps most significant to the study of tribal politics in contemporary Iran was the accession to power of Riza Shah Pahlavi, who immediately embarked upon a programme of authoritarian modernization that left the country a scene of struggle between the centre and the periphery. Riza Shah's state-building efforts and the resulting forced sedentarization, as the core of his tribal policy, gave rise to violent reactions in tribal areas and even to numerous socialist, nationalist, and separatist movements throughout Iran during the two decades of his reign. It is in this period that Stephanie Cronin plots the narrative of *Tribal Politics in Iran: Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921–1941*.

The present work by Cronin provides an engaging, innovative, and learner-centered approach to this phenomenon. In this respect, it fulfils a significant gap in the literature. The author, a specialist on the modern and contemporary Middle East with significant teaching and research experience on contemporary Iran, has successfully grasped in this volume many of the theoretical and practical issues concerning the "problem of tribes" in

Iran. Drawing on theoretical “approaches developed by social historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, George Rudé and E.P. Thompson, and from the Subaltern Studies School of South Asian history” (p. 2), Cronin makes a concerted effort to employ “history from below”, a type of historical narrative that has received disproportionate attention in previous studies on contemporary Iran.

This book is approachable but still theoretically challenging. It is written clearly and can be used as a reference book, a self-learning resource, or as a textbook on the social and political history of contemporary Iran. It also constructively reflects upon the knowledge acquired; for example, through suggested reading, by providing factual information on tribal affairs, maps showing locations of principal tribal populations, a concise glossary of Persian terms, and an appendix on major tribal campaigns during the period under review. As such, it is a useful text for various social science disciplines.

Cronin’s challenging thesis for the tribal problem in Iran is an extension of her previous scholarly inquiry into the subject. By placing this issue at the centre of Riza Shah’s state-building programme, the author effectively challenges the conventionally held views of the constitutionalists, the secular nationalist elite of early Pahlavi Iran, representing modernist ideology, and some Western scholarship which assumes Riza Shah’s tribal policy was merely “[a] regrettably brutal, but an unavoidable stage in Iran’s progress and ‘modernization’”, and “as one element in his broader appropriation of the agenda of Iranian reform” (p. 2).

The book is organized into seven chapters that feature an integrated topical and chronological approach. Through sustained examination of the existing evidence, Cronin identifies three distinct phases within which Riza Shah implemented his tribal policy.

In the first phase, in the first half of the 1920s, Riza Shah was concerned with the issue of security and pursued a systematic campaign of intimidation and coercion against the tribal khans and rural elites in the predominantly tribal areas. For a country in dire need of security, this phase was welcomed by rural and urban populations. In addition, the tribal leadership showed a willingness to adapt to the new order and endorsed the land registration of the 1920s. In the second phase, from 1927 to 1929, Riza Shah introduced drastic and sweeping political and socioeconomic reforms that affected the khans and the ordinary tribespeople with equal measure. This phase provoked a hostile reaction across the country, leading to the southern tribal uprisings of 1929. The events of this phase dealt a serious blow to the integrity of Riza Shah’s tribal policy. In the third phase, covering the entire 1930s, Riza Shah became determined to completely eradicate the already weakened power of the tribal leadership and the pastoral nomadic way of life itself. He sanctioned brutal measures of “political terror” against many khans and imposed mass nomadic sedentarization by ruthless military force. This phase inflicted irreparable damage on Riza Shah’s own image, undermined the legitimacy of his reforms, and demoralized the Pahlavi dynasty over the longer term.

In addition to investigating the role and experience of the principal tribal groupings, the author adopts the Bakhtiari confederation as a model and discusses, quite innovatively, how Riza Shah’s modernization programme exacerbated the growing rift between the tribal leadership and the junior khans and rising layers of *kalantars* and *kadkbudas*, but especially between the senior khans and the ordinary nomads and peasants. By discussing the discovery of oil on Bakhtiari land, and the resulting rapid proletarianization of the Bakhtiari as many of them became workers in the oilfields, and the prolonged disputes between the Bakhtiari and the national state and the Anglo-Persian/Iranian Oil Company over land ownership and reform, the author offers a creative way to feature an important series of changing relations between the national state and the tribespeople employed in the oil industry, between the oil company and the tribal labour force, and, more importantly, between the national state and the Anglo-Persian/Iranian Oil Company.

The book's fresh inquiry into the broad processes of socioeconomic change, including labour relations, labour migration, labour discipline, introduction to mass literacy, professional training, class consciousness, and urbanization, opens new avenues of investigation into how these issues affected social strata within the tribal populations in substantially diverse ways and at different levels. By exploring the rural subaltern's everyday life and its impact on his aspirations and struggles – both collectively and individually – the book also illustrates the very “generational fault lines that were typical of modern urban politics in Iran and in the wider Middle East generally in the interwar decades” (p. 6).

In “The End of Tribal Politics in Iran” (p. 191), the book's conclusion reassesses the impact of Riza Shah's modernization programme on Iran's tribes during his reign. It also examines the efforts by Britain to reactivate tribal politics immediately after Riza Shah's abdication in 1941 to offset the growing Russian influence in Iran in the context of the cold war. The processes of “detrribalization” (pp. 200 and 235), renewed adaptation and integration into the new social order during Riza Shah's reign, and the surprise rebirth of nomadism, although with strictly controlled political representation, in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 are also analysed in the conclusion.

The author rightly acknowledges the theoretical and ideological obstacles as well as the methodological difficulties associated with the study of tribal history and politics in Iran (pp. 10 and 12). Cronin's empirical interpretation of Iranian tribal politics is, however, compelling and adequately supported by primary and secondary sources and documentation, some of which seem to have previously been either underused or completely neglected.

The most serious shortcoming of Cronin's study, and it is one shared by similar studies, is the absence of archival-based research in Iran. Following the Islamic Revolution, some state archives became accessible, and thus a reassessment of “tribal politics” did become possible. But, for various reasons, little of that reassessment has been forthcoming. The complicated nature of events in the post-Riza Shah era and the lack of access to Western documents for Iranian writers might account for this shortcoming. Furthermore, while the emotional atmosphere of the post-Revolutionary era has tangibly undermined the integrity of scholarship, almost none of the Iranian writers who dipped into the official archives in search of previously unpublished material attempted a systematic investigation of the question of tribes in Iran. Most of the existing Persian literature on tribal politics offers a descriptive approach rather than an analytical application of the evidence.

Some scholars, of either Persian or Western origin, have briefly discussed the origins, process, and outcome of tribal politics in Iran (p. 209). In most cases, they have analysed the activities of the foreign powers, without whose encouragement and intervention certain events in Iran would probably never have taken place. Yet little emphasis has been placed on inter-tribal activities, nor on the central government's critical role in tackling the diverse threats posed by peripheral forces. The extent to which a weak central government was, on many occasions, able to explore its basic capabilities implied that the state did have a significant position, despite its lack of resources.

Utilizing chiefly Western archives, those scholars have attempted to explain the riddle of tribal politics, generating reasoned interpretations of events. In fact, some of the findings of those works correspond to those of Cronin's book. However, they have either not employed the essential Persian source materials or been denied access to them. As a result, no factual judgement of tribal events has yet been possible. While the official archives relating to some military and political affairs remain under embargo and are therefore inaccessible, collections of other sources and unpublished archival material have now opened the way for a reassessment of the tribal problem in Iran. The substantial primary sources available at the National Library and Archives Organization of Iran, the archives of the Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies in Tehran, the Islamic Revolution Archives Organization in Tehran, and the archives of the Presidential

Foundation, the last of which is not at present open to the public, can enrich our understanding of tribal affairs in Iran.

In short, Cronin's book offers a theoretical and practical guide for examining a relatively objective measure of the power of the state and the extent of its centrifugal forces. It also evidences the advantage of urban influence, including its political rhetoric, over rural concerns.

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ALMEIDA, PAUL. *Waves of Protest. Popular Struggle in El Salvador, 1925–2005*. [Social Movements, Protest, and Contention, Vol. 29.] University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis [etc.] 2008. xxii, 298 pp. \$25.00; doi:10.1017/S0020859010000131

In the past decade an increasing amount of interdisciplinary scholarly attention has been placed on El Salvador. United Nations brokered peace accords in 1992 officially ended a twelve-year civil war. With this opening, a new generation of social scientists from North America and Europe began to investigate the social, political, and economic changes taking place across El Salvador as the nation shifted from war to peace. Examining the legacies of insurgent mobilizations, the challenges to rebuilding from a polarized, politicized past, and the nation's transition to a neoliberal democracy have captured the attention of scholarly communities, policy analysts, and activists. In *Waves of Protest*, Paul D. Almeida speaks directly to the specificity of the Salvadoran case. In doing so, he builds from and contributes to a larger theoretical conversation on political environments and their relationship to particular modalities of political movements. This perspective pushes the temporality of his study beyond the period of the civil war. A key strength of the book is this breadth and scope as Almeida locates what he terms the waves of protest from the 1920s through the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Almeida's study of collective action illuminates the contextually defined and shifting modalities, networks, and strategies of contentious politics. The role of civil society becomes a key aspect of this analysis. The book begins with a theoretical framing which is then employed to analyze the Salvadoran case. Through a focus on political contexts over time, Almeida argues that there are three political environments that propel different mobilizations. The book then looks specifically at these waves of collective action: mobilization by liberalization, mobilization by intimidation, and mobilization by globalization. Subsequent chapters build upon Almeida's original archival research, interviews, and secondary sources to develop a detailed account of these different periods of collective action.

In all of these chapters, Almeida's gaze emphasizes the political opportunities that emerge for civil society groups even under authoritarian, military regimes. Significantly, he exposes what he defines as moments of regime liberalization within these environments. Almeida seeks to map out these openings for specific groups over time as he charts out the concrete outcomes, the networks developed through collective organizing and that are carried across time, when for example openings recede. This dialectic between regime liberalization and de-liberalization is a critical contribution to the literature.

Almeida taps new resources to develop this perspective. Included as an appendix, he provides a methodology statement that is quite a useful resource and that could have been integrated into the text itself to highlight the richness of the material and the expansive database upon which Almeida weaves his theorizing.

For example, Almeida discusses his access to one of El Salvador's oldest daily newspapers, *La Prensa Gráfica*, which was established in 1915. As he compares this newspaper with other national presses, he explores, collates, and creates an extraordinary data set of