

politically and personally. As such, it is highly recommended for those interested in the women's movement in Kurdistan, but also for those more interested in the way women's subjectivities are produced and embodied within revolutionary movements.

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METINSOY, MURAT. *The Power of the People. Everyday Resistance and Dissent in the Making of Modern Turkey, 1923–38*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2021. xi, 405 pp. Ill. Maps. £29.99. (E-book: \$32.00.)

Murat Metinsoy's *The Power of the People* presents a novel framework of Turkey's modernization by concentrating on ordinary people and their ordinary lives instead of delving into well-known high politics during the early years of modern Turkey. Metinsoy's approach touches upon a distinctive structure from the nationalist and critical narratives of the republic's modernization process, which consist of sharply circumscribed dichotomies, "strong state vs. weak society", "elites vs. grassroots", and "modernity vs. tradition" (p. 18). His alternative narrative focuses on reciprocal relations based on the daily practices and skills deployed by low-income and impoverished people in order to survive in the cities and countryside in the face of the projects pursued by the state elites. The author regards ordinary people living in poor conditions as historical actors who regulate the middle ground in the decision-making process of the elites.

The book comprises three parts and fourteen chapters; every part sheds light on the daily experiences of different groups, and on politics and resistance mechanisms before the worsening of socio-economic conditions. Metinsoy aims to write an "infra-history" of the early republic by scrutinizing the social and political fault lines that shaped the high politics and superstructure (p. 11). The first part of the book focuses on the experiences of the peasants and their everyday coping skills. Metinsoy emphasizes that taxation was the fundamental economic resource of the republican modernization process; hence, peasants in the countryside were faced with heavy and constantly increasing agricultural taxes. The commercialization of the rural economy and the trading of particular goods were mostly in the hands of private monopolies. Additionally, economic exploitation of peasants was derived not only from the government's policies and its agents, such as tax collectors, gendarmes, and debt enforcement officers. Traditional local figures, landowners, village headmen, and their dense networks within the newly established republic potentiated the economic burden on the peasants, especially during the Great Depression (pp. 24–35).

The legal coping mechanisms employed by the peasants were to petition local and central administrations and raise their voices, and to make demands through newspapers when their petitions remained unanswered. According to Metinsoy, peasants

strived to enhance supplementary types of resistance, such as concealing livestock, underreporting, avoiding being included in land registers, bribes, and violence against tax officers. In other words, peasants were not silent masses; moreover, their strategies to survive shaped the state's decision-making mechanism. Metinsoy explains that the concessions won by peasants as a result of their struggles engendered the longevity of the peasantry in the Turkish Republic until the 2000s, contrary to the modernization agenda of Turkey's elite (pp. 46–75).

Metinsoy puts forward the concept of “social smuggling”, which resembles Eric Hobsbawm's social banditry concept. Both notions overlap in the sense that they challenge the reorganization and distribution of property; hence, in the context of the early republic, smuggling emerged as a crime against property rights from the perspective of the state as well as monopoly establishments. Lacking food, land, and vital economic elements caused an escalation of tension among the villagers; therefore, banditry turned into a survival strategy in the face of poor conditions. The state's strategy to prevent this upheaval in the countryside was to allocate the lands to the landless peasants (pp. 77–107).

The second part of the book deals with wage labourers' daily struggles and their reactions to the state-led economic development plan. Scholars have tended to focus on the absence of leftist organizations due to the authoritarian regime of the early republic. However, Metinsoy argues that the working class was conscious of the deterioration of working conditions, low wages, absence of social security, and conflicts with employers (p. 138). Adopting national discourses for the petitions, or day-to-day resistance – from weakening work discipline to pilferage – show their inclination to play an active role in ameliorating their plight. Metinsoy does not consider the strategies of the working class as an evolution of leftist politics among the people; the resistance originated from their predicament (pp. 148–154).

Metinsoy takes into consideration the constant shift from working as wage labourers and returning to agriculture and vice versa due to the multidimensional structure of the working class. Peasant origin workers posed a crucial threat to the state-led economic development programme because of their high turnover (p. 157). Furthermore, the predisposition to establish a connection between the existence of the active leftist organizations and directly targeting the state might not be valid in every context. Even if workers prioritized nonconfrontational forms during the early years of the republic, Metinsoy's analysis demonstrates that workers were able to design actions similar to strikes, such as suddenly abandoning the workplace or street protests. Collective memory and continuity from the republic's early years to the augmentation of leftist awareness and organizations in the 1960s should be reconsidered from this perspective (pp. 178–194).

In the third part, the author discusses popular culture's impact on the state's decision-making process and reviews the roots of hostility to secular reforms from the bottom. Although intellectual and political opposition have been well-studied topics in various fields, Metinsoy underscores the reactions of ordinary people and the indirect criticism of secularism. According to the author, there is an inextricable relationship between their antagonistic attitude to the cultural reforms and their socio-economic situation (pp. 197–200). Conservatism as a reactionary demeanour

was closely related to the deteriorating circumstances of low-wage labourers and peasants.

The emergence of new spaces and gathering places such as the People's House and People's Room to propagate state reforms did not affect the mentality of ordinary people. On the contrary, traditional non-elite alternative congregational areas such as mosques, coffeehouses, as well as private homes became places where discontent and oppositional ideas rose to prominence (p. 198). Metinsoy identifies reactionary tools, such as Robert Darnton's term "informal media", consisting of rumours, anonymous placards, and folk culture elements ranging from songs to poems (p. 222).

The author argues that ordinary people played an influential role in modifying cultural reforms: their daily practices changed the anticipated implications. For instance, ordinary people would not wear the Western hat, since it did not meet their practical needs. On the other hand, religious affiliations could not be the primary reason for resistance to the campaigns that took place; instead, there were various psychosocial, socioeconomic, as well as gender issues at play. The author emphasizes that the republican elites could not rigorously apply their secularist agenda to reshape society. And resistance led the state to embrace the lowest common denominators (pp. 237–285).

Metinsoy's attempt to write an alternative history of Turkey's modernization draws on previously untouched primary and secondary sources, and a reinterpretation of the existing sources. His source analysis stems from Carlo Ginzburg's famous advice, "read between the lines" and "cross-check the sources" to give voice to ordinary as well as illiterate people (pp. 5–11). Metinsoy makes use of a wide range of sources to explore the voices of ordinary people. Police and gendarme records and politicians' accounts relating to their own election districts demonstrate the resistance practices of ordinary people evaluated by the state within the framework of crime. Petitions, letters, and demands of ordinary people published by newspapers point to their mentalities and struggles. Metinsoy appeals to contemporary memoirs and popular culture elements from folk songs to rumours to investigate popular opinion and how ordinary people reflected on state policy.

This book concentrates on ordinary people as active historical subjects; its historiographical grounding derives from the concept of history from below. Metinsoy embraces an approach from the microhistory perspective in order to find everyday experiences and authenticate the sources. In the last part of the book, his methodology to decipher symbolic elements of the conservative reaction overlaps the cultural turn in the historiography. In this sense, the book opens a new door to comprehending and posing further questions concerning Turkey's early republican era in terms of methodology and potential topics.

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