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TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH ARTICLES

An Overview of Agricultural Support Policies in Turkey: A Comparative Regional Analysis By Hakan Uslu

30 45

06

Digital Marketing of Political Parties in Turkey By Ramazan Aslan

The Cyberthreat in the Contemporary Era: Challenges for the security of Pakistan By Muhammad Rizwan

REVIEW ARTICLE

58

The Windows in Many Dimensions: Tongdong Bai, Against Political Equality: The Confucius Case By Dmitry Shlapentokh

BOOK REVIEWS

Sean R. Roberts

By Konstantinas Andrijauskas

Minority



Daniel A. Bell and Wang Pei Just Hierarchy, Why Social Hierarchies Matter in China and the Rest of the World By Müge Yüce

80

83

87

90

93

Adam Mestyan Arab Patriotism: The Ideology and Culture of Power in Late Ottoman Egypt By Halim Gencoglu

Adeeb Khalid Central Asia: A New History from the Imperial Conquests to the Present By Marat Iliyasov

The War on the Uyghurs: China's Internal Campaign against a Muslim

Michael Cotey Morgan The Final Act: The Helsinki Accords and the Transformation of the Cold War By Adrian Pogacian

Robert P. Inman and Daniel L. Rubinfeld Democratic Federalism: The Economics, Politics, and Law of Federal Governance By Aynur Ünal



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BOOK REVIEW

Adam Mestyan

Arab Patriotism: The Ideology and Culture of Power in Late Ottoman Egypt

(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020. ISNB:9780691172644, pp.368, \$45.00, paperback.)

The book, Arab Patriotism, written by Adam Mestyan reflects on what the Ottoman context of Egypt means for its nationalism. Throughout the nineteenth century the governance of the Egyptian province was in the hands of one Turkish-speaking family. They were neither local Egyptians nor people sent from the imperial elite. Mestvan noted that, Patriotism or national pride is the feeling of love, devotion, and sense of attachment to a homeland or the country and alliance with other citizens who share the same sentiment to create a feeling of oneness among the people. In this regards, Arab patriotism is a nationalist ideology that asserts the Arabs are a nation and promotes the unity of Arab people, celebrating the glories of Arab civilization, the language and literature of the Arabs, and calling for rejuvenation and political union in the Arab world. Its central premise is that the peoples of the Arab world. from the Atlantic Ocean to the Indian Ocean, constitute one nation together bound by common ethnicity, language, culture, history, identity, geography and politics. One of the primary goals of Arab nationalism is the end of Western influence in the Arab world, seen as a "nemesis" of Arab strength, and the governments Arab removal of those considered to be dependent upon Western It rose to prominence power. with the weakening and defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the early 20th century and declined after the defeat of the Arab armies in the Six-Day War. From this point of view, Mestyan's book provides significant analyses

for the beginning of Arab Patriotism in the Ottoman Egypt.

Mestyan emphasizes that the situation in Egypt under the Ottoman rule was different from direct European colonialism. When Mestyan mentions British occupation in the region he states that 'Egypt is not India', he reveals his view on British occupation in India. (2020: 10)

Mestyan notes that no Ottoman sultans had visited the province of Egypt in the three centuries since its conquest by Sultan Selim I in 1517. However, Sultan Abdulaziz travelled by train from Alexandria to Cairo, where he observed factories and visited the museum of Egyptology. (2020: 19)

When Mestyan emphasizes the Ottoman imperial patriotism in the middle of the nineteenth century, he mentions Osmanlılık, referring to Ottoman citizenship, however Osmanlilik was not necessarily about a citizenship. Ottoman patriotism was derived consciously being Ottoman from as Osmanlılık, however it was not really related to Ottoman citizenship, because attachment Ottoman Empire was more than to citisznship. Ottomanism was a concept which was developed prior to the 1876-1878 First Constitutional Era of the Ottoman Empire. Mestyan states that, its proponents believed that it could create the social cohesion needed to keep nationalism from tearing the empire apart. It is because the major precursors to Ottomanism were the Reformation Edict of 1856 promised full equality under the law regardless of religion, and the Ottoman Nationality Law of 1869, which created a common Ottoman citizenship irrespective of religious or ethnic affiliation.

According to Mestyan, Abbas Hilmi in early distinguished between 1850s. Ottoman Imperial interests and Egyptian dynastic governor himself used ones. The to expression in Turkish "what comes first for an Egyptian is Egypt" can be explained through the notion of the Arab patriotism. (2020: 38) Indeed, the patriotic idea in Ottoman Turkish and in other Ottoman languages gained momentum in the late 1840s and it was during the Crimean War that it appeared as a forceful imperial territorial ideology. (2020:55)

Mestyan's use of some of the Ottoman-Turkish terms like zevat, ferik shows the writer's familiarity with Turkish literature. (2020: 55)

It is also important to note that he highlights the Italian Opera as Sultan Abdulmecid's choice in Istanbul in the 1850s. It also became popular in the Egyptian Khedivate. (2020:112) According to Mestyan the elite Ottomans adopted European public aesthetics in Khedivial Cairo and Khedive Ismail ordered the buildings from European architects and brought in Italian entertainment in order to modernize Egypt. (2020:112) He noted that it seemed to unite these intellectuals was an unspoken but shared believed that educated Arabic 'al arabiyya al Fusha' should become the language of Khedivate. (2020:126) Indeed, native speakers of Arabic generally do not distinguish between Modern Standard Arabic and Classical Arabic as separate languages. They refer to both as *al-'Arabīyah al-Fushā*, meaning "the eloquent Arabic". Today they consider the two forms to be two registers of one language in Egypt.

In 1876, new political figures appeared in Egypt. The anti-British Persian thinker Jamal al Din Al Afghani, living on a government pension in Cairo, found useful allies in Ottomans Syrians to fight European Imperialism. (2020:112) His plea for Islamic renewal through solidarity never lost its relevance as a powerful symbol linking the past with hopes for the future. The image of Afghani as the indefatigable fighter against Western imperialism who helped make the Muslim world aware of its distinct identity remains equally as suggestive in Northern Africa. According to Mestyan, Ahmed Mukhtar arrived in Cairo in 1885 as a remarkable Ottoman Imperial High Commissioner man who was a friend of Jamal al Din Al Afghani. A warrior and general of the Ottoman army, Ahmed Mukhtar fought the Russian army in 1877-1878. The presence of an Ottoman war hero aroused pro-Ottoman sentiments in Britishoccupied Cairo. Ahmed Mukhtar faithfully upheld the Ottoman colors in Cairo, despite having only symbolic means, secrets agents and his own bodily presence to express Ottoman sovereignty. (2020: 286)

The history of Egypt under the British started from 1882, when it was occupied by British forces during the Anglo-Egyptian War, until 1956 after the Suez Crisis, when the last British forces withdrew in accordance with the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1954. Undoubtedly, in 1882, Islamic and Arabic Nationalist opposition to European influence and settlement in the Middle East led to growing tension amongst notable natives, especially in Egypt which then as now was the most powerful, populous, and influential of countries. The most Arab dangerous opposition during this period came from the Egyptian army, which saw the reorientation of economic development away from their control as a threat to their privileges. During British occupation and later control, immigrants from less stable parts of the region including Greeks. Jews. and Armenians, began to flow into Egypt. In the aftermath of World War I, the large British Imperial Army in Egypt which was the centre of operations against the Ottoman Empire was quickly reduced with demobilization and restructuring of garrisons. Free of the large British military presence, the incipient German backed revolutionary movements were able to more effectively launch their operations. This part could be emphasized more in the book in terms of the British action against *Osmanlilik* in Egypt. However, despite that Metsyen's book provides remarkable analyses to understand late Ottoman Egypt in history.

Briefly, a wholly original exploration of Egypt in the context of the Ottoman Empire, Arab Patriotism sheds light on the evolving sense of political belonging in the Arab world. The book, Arab nationalism provides important analyses and historical data for sociologists, historians, and political scientists. It is a wellresearched study however could be more interesting with Ottoman archival sources.

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