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Reem Abou-El-Fadl. *Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War.* The Global Middle East Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. 384 pp. $100.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-108-47504-4.

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The 1950s remain something of a black box in the historiography of the modern Middle East. In the case of Turkey, for instance, this period of political liberalization—indeed, the first gasp of multiparty democracy in the country—has typically fallen through the cracks, as most Western scholarship on the Turkish republican era (1923 to the present) has tended to focus either on the dramatic three decades of nation-building ushered in by the willful and imperious modernizer Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (and his protégé, İsmet İnönü) or else on the more recent challenge to the Kemalist legacy waged by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Islamist Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, or AKP). Meanwhile, in the case of Egypt, while there is no shortage of interest in Gamal 'Abdel Nasser and the broad social and political transformations that he and his fellow Free Officers spearheaded—not just in Egypt but across the Arab world—historical scholarship has been stymied by a marked lack of access to original archival material on the post-World War II period, which has remained closely guarded by the military-security apparatus that oversees the Egyptian National Archives (Dār al-Wathā'iq al-Qawmiyya).

Reem Abou-El-Fadl's new monograph, ***Foreign Policy as Nation Making: Turkey and Egypt in the Cold War***, thus comes as a welcome intervention, offering an empirically rich comparative analysis of the divergent political and diplomatic trajectories of both Turkey and Egypt in this pivotal first full decade of the Cold War. Although Abou-El-Fadl is trained as a political scientist, working within the traditions of both comparative politics and international relations theory, her argument is anchored by outstanding archival research. Beyond her excavation of a great deal of rare primary source material in both the Egyptian National Archives and the Turkish Republican Archives (to say nothing of her thorough research in diplomatic archives in France, the United Kingdom, and the United States), what is particularly noteworthy is her

use of Nasser's newly released personal papers—which she rightly sees as "arguably the most important new source on 1950s Egyptian policy"—as well as a range of extremely difficult-to-access materials, such as recordings from the Egyptian Radio Archives and the "clandestine pamphlets" of Nasser's Free Officers movement (p. 37). Such meticulous source-work greatly enriches Abou-El-Fadl's study, particularly throughout the latter two-thirds of the book, where she begins her more straightforward chronological narrative of foreign policy decision-making across the 1950s.

Abou-El-Fadl's detailed behind-the-scenes approach fills in several gaps in the historical record and sheds new light on a number of key issues and events, ultimately culminating in a sweeping explanation of why Turkey turned so decisively toward the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United States in this period, whereas Egypt gravitated instead toward pan-Arabism, Third Worldism, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Perhaps the book's most novel contribution in this regard is Abou-El-Fadl's nuanced retelling of the 1957 "Syrian crisis," which she narrates from both the Turkish and Egyptian perspectives. In her view, this episode always amounted to much more than a realist security gambit on the part of Turkey's ruling Democrat Party (DP). Rather, "The Democrats' behavior during 1957 continued to reflect their pledges to turn Turkey into a 'little America,' and the Syrian Crisis had no small role to play in sustaining US attention through the last years of this process" (p. 258). Meanwhile, as Abou-El-Fadl argues in the following chapter, Egypt also capitalized on the Syrian crisis as a means to fortify its dual foreign policy of active neutrality and pan-Arabism and hence to "remain independent of such Western alliances, despite military attacks from Israel that rendered such foreign assistance necessary" (pp. 259-60). Another striking example of this multifaceted archival approach is Abou-El-Fadl's fresh account of the 1956 Suez crisis, particularly her inclusion of an analysis of Turkey's calculated diplomatic response from the sidelines—a viewpoint that has typically been eclipsed in conventional historiography.

Beyond the book's empirical contributions, Abou-El-Fadl also offers up a substantial theoretical intervention, primarily by rereading international relations theory in tandem with conceptual interdisciplinary scholarship on nationalism (particularly of the postcolonial variety). In what she helpfully explains as a subtle but important extension of the constructivist school of international relations theory, Abou-El-Fadl suggests that "foreign policy may ... be fruitfully recast as a site for the making and projecting of the meaning of the 'nation.' Foreign policy discourses and practices are continually transformed through successive leaderships' projects to build and maintain national belonging, sovereignty, and progress" (p. 17). In this regard, the book attempts to underline the mutually constitutive nature of developing nations' foreign policy behavior, on the one hand, and their sensitivity to internal discursive shifts and debates over the contours of national belonging, on the other. As Abou-El-Fadl succinctly puts it, a "central argument" of the book is that "foreign policy is a site for political leaders' discursive creativity and activism in realising their nationalist commitments and aspirations" (p. 4).

This argument is certainly convincing, albeit perhaps not as new or innovative as Abou-El-Fadl makes it seem. Within historical scholarship on Nasserism, at least, there is near consensus around the notion that Nasser's enormous popularity at home as a nationalist hero was inextricably bound up with his rising star on the international scene —which reached its zenith in the Arab world after Nasser claimed victory in the Suez crisis—and that Nasser's brand of Egyptian nationalism cannot be divorced from his bid for regional hegemony as the foremost champion of pan-Arabism.[1] Nor has this intrinsic bond between foreign policy and national discourse formation gone unnoticed in political science and international relations theory; one thinks, for example, of Fred Halliday's seminal work on the theory of revolutions (***Revolution and World Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Sixth Great Power*** [1999]), in which he maintained that a new regime's national legitimacy after any revolutionary moment is largely contingent on its success in garnering recognition in the international arena. Egyptian policy after the 1952 Free Officers revolution clearly fits this mold.

With its detailed, empirically robust reexamination of Turkey's and Egypt's divergence as foreign policy actors in the 1950s, ***Foreign Policy as Nation Making*** marks a valuable addition to the

scholarly literature on international relations and diplomatic history in the post-World War II Middle East. The book runs into some significant problems, however, when Abou-El-Fadl extends her argument back into the nineteenth century and then proceeds to stake much of her comparative framework on what amounts to a fairly idiosyncratic reading of this longer history. It is one thing to argue, as Abou-El-Fadl does effectively, that the foreign policies of Egypt and Turkey in the 1950s must be interpreted against the backdrop of the countries' respective internal debates about national identity formation in an era of global decolonization; to this end, the book constitutes a useful application of constructivist theory. But it is quite another thing to trace these dynamics back to a very different historical context—the mid-nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, when "Turkey" did not yet exist as a distinct political entity and Egypt was still under formal Ottoman suzerainty (which would remain the case until 1914).

Empires operate differently than nation-states in critical ways, seeking modes of rule and discourses of legitimation that are a far cry from the homogeneity within bounded sovereign territory that is the lifeblood of nation-states. Yet Abou-El-Fadl treats the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic as virtually one and the same, often slipping back and forth between the two labels in a single sentence or paragraph. This creates some real confusion throughout the text beyond its semantic inaccuracy—particularly in the book's introduction, where Abou-El-Fadl seeks to read the Turkish and Egyptian cases through the lens of postcolonial theory. For instance, it is difficult to know what to make of her assertion that "the comparison of Turkey and Egypt here was chosen," first and foremost, because "it highlights a trend in the political behaviour of states formerly subject to imperialism" (p. 34). But of course, the Ottoman state was itself an imperial state—albeit one that, under siege by European powers from around the time of the Crimean War, would consistently hemorrhage territory amid relentless interimperial competition—and the Turkish Republic has never formally been "subject to imperialism," even though it has certainly had its fair share of reckoning with European and then American modernization discourses. Moreover, Abou-El-Fadl's conception of the "contrasting engagements with European imperialism on the part of Turkish and Egyptian actors" is complicated by the fact that Egypt was still formally an Ottoman province throughout the period of British occupation (1882-1914), a historical gray area that Abou-El-Fadl mentions only in passing without examining it in any depth (p. 34).

The book's curious elision of the fundamental differences between the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic in terms of their sovereign practices and political identities might not have been so fateful had Abou-El-Fadl not based so much of her argument about Turkey's foreign policy in the 1950s on a particularly tendentious reading of the Ottoman past. This dimension of the analysis comes across most clearly in her frequent invocation of the notion of "Ottoman Orientalism," developed most famously by Ottoman historians Selim Deringil and Ussama Makdisi. In her view, Ottoman statesmen during the Tanzimat era (1839-76) responded to the challenges of European encroachment and Orientalist discourse by, in turn, fatefully demonizing all "non-Turkish subjects" (including Arabs) in the empire as backward subalterns: "Arab Muslims were cast as premodern, in need of civilisation, and situated outside the age of modernity that the Tanzimat had proclaimed. The displacement of the Turk into modernity and the installation of the Arab in his place [vis-à-vis European Orientalism] were almost mathematical" (pp. 44-45).

Abou-El-Fadl then proceeds to argue that this dynamic would be fundamental to the construction of "Turkish" national narratives in each subsequent regime—from the era of Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid II (r. 1876-1909), all the way through Atatürk's republic to the DP era in the 1950s. Ulti-

mately, Ottoman Orientalism becomes, in Abou-El-Fadl's view, the central meta-discourse of Turkish nationalism, which is then marshaled as perhaps the most significant explanation for Turkey's turn toward NATO and the West after World War II. As she puts it in the book's conclusion, "the representation of Arabs was foundational in the narratives that aimed to articulate Turkey into a Western ontological unity. This is clear both through an understanding of Turkey's liminal status as an empire colonised, and by study of the Democrat Party's Middle East engagements. Instead of starting with the Baghdad Pact [formed in 1955] as a self-contained episode ... a study of Turkish nationalist history shows elite conduct vis-à-vis Arab populations in a relatively consistent continuum" (pp. 296-97).

Abou-El-Fadl is certainly correct to emphasize the DP's investment in cultivating a conception of Turkish national belonging that was predicated on its "firm differentiation from the Arab Middle East," which would be reflected increasingly in its foreign policy (p. 139). Yet it does not seem quite right to argue, in turn, that this stance represents the culmination of a much older Ottoman imperial discourse. Sometimes it would appear that Abou-El-Fadl insists much too hard on this seamless connection—for instance, in her interpretation of DP prime minister Adnan Menderes's comment that "when it comes to the Arab countries, they are divided into many states without ... unity between them. Even if all these states were able to come together, the force they would generate would not be more than two or three regiments" (pp. 139-40). While this quote appears, at least in my view, to be a fairly matter-of-fact assessment of Arab geopolitical and military realities—bereft of any racist condescension—Abou-El-Fadl reads it as a stark example of how "persistent Ottoman Orientalist tropes were operationalised within an ostensibly novel context, that of Cold War security calculations," as "Menderes indulged in such Orientalism when contrasting Turkey with its Arab neighbors" (p. 139).

Abou-El-Fadl's emphasis on Ottoman Orientalism as a recurring trope in Turkish foreign policy is misleading in other ways. First, it is built on a rather serious mischaracterization of late Ottoman history. What Abou-El-Fadl leaves out in her account is that Ottoman Orientalism—to the extent that it was ever a cohesive top-down, empire-wide discourse, which is still hotly debated among historians—was aimed principally at the nomadic or Bedouin populations dwelling in the empire's Arab or Kurdish peripheries, and thus by no means at ***all*** Arabs or non-Turks.[2] What is more, by exaggerating the scope and impact of Ottoman Orientalism in this way, Abou-El-Fadl obscures the actual history of the Ottomans' relatively successful incorporation of the Arab periphery in the four decades prior to World War I. Indeed, whereas Abou-El-Fadl sees the reign of Abdülhamid II as one that only further vilified and marginalized the empire's Arabs, this was actually a period in which a great many Arab notables achieved new heights of power within the imperial government and grew ever closer and more loyal to the ruling regime. Even the Arab tribal population was invited more concertedly into the Ottoman fold during this period; in 1892, for example, the sultan launched a new "school for tribes" in Istanbul to offer a thoroughly "Ottoman education" to the sons of leading tribal notables.[3] While Abou-El-Fadl does acknowledge the Hamidian state's instrumentalization of Islam as a supranational legitimating discourse in this period, she neglects to mention that it was the ***Arabs*** who were the main targets and recipients of this ideological projection and that this strategy was strikingly successful in fostering Ottomanist sentiment among the Arab population.[4] Indeed, even in the turbulent last years of the Ottoman Empire under the rule of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), as much recent revisionist scholarship has shown, its Arab subjects overwhelmingly supported Ottomanism and entered World War I fully intent on preserving their status and imagining a political future within an Ottoman imperial framework.[5]

The second broad issue with Abou-El-Fadl's frequent resort to Ottoman Orientalism as a key explanatory variable is that it overdetermines her argument about the divergence of Egyptian and Turkish policy in the 1950s, locking the two countries into a rigid essentialist binary that does not hold up under scrutiny. Turkey thus comes across consistently in the book as unique among Middle Eastern nation-states for its fixation on a "continuously Eurocentric worldview which equated Europe and modernity," whereas in Egypt, by contrast, "there was little possibility of, or inclination towards, a merging of national identification with that of the European coloniser" (pp. 99, 121). But this overlooks the tremendous degree to which Egyptian society, even after nominal independence from Britain was gained in 1922, was in the grip of a decades-long modernist project in which the culturally ascendant ***effendi*** class led the way in an effort to reconcile, in print and other burgeoning mass media, modern European norms and sensibilities with strong notions of Egyptian authenticity.[6] Elements of this modernist agenda, in dialogue with Western social and political models, continued even under Nasser's government—for instance, in its implementation of a new family planning program that demonized a range of traditional family structures still prevalent in the Egyptian countryside.[7]

Throughout her narrative, Abou-El-Fadl consistently harnesses this dichotomous conception of Turkish and Egyptian nationalism, going back to the nineteenth century, to explain the DP's orientation to the West in contrast with Nasser's avowed dedication to pan-Arabist policy above all else. But this ultimately leaves her hard-pressed to explain key developments that would unfold just beyond the period covered in the book. Take, for instance, her treatment of the United Arab Republic (UAR)—a historic political merger between Egypt and Syria that lasted three short years, from 1958 to 1961. Abou-El-Fadl ends the Egyptian portion of her narrative in 1958, noting that the UAR "was celebrated with a degree of enthusiasm across the Arab world that was arguably matchless in its recent history.... Without this pan-Arabist mobilisation, Cairo's positive neutralism could not have generated such effective international leverage and consequent resources for national development" (p. 277). Perhaps so. But by leaving the story in 1958, Abou-El-Fadl avoids having to account for the UAR's swift collapse or to contend with the prevailing historiography that attributes its failure overwhelmingly to Nasser's unflinching Egypt-first mentality—his perpetual prioritization of his own personal political agenda and Egyptian domestic interests, at the expense of those of his Syrian partners.

The trajectory of the UAR—indeed, much of the region's history after 1958—raises serious questions about Nasser's unshakeable pan-Arab bona fides. As many scholars agree, 1958 was undoubtedly the high-water mark of pan-Arab nationalism in the Middle East. But the tide quickly turned—indeed, within a matter of months—in the direction of a new era of bitter intra-Arab tension and fierce regional competition that political scientist Malcolm Kerr notoriously dubbed the "Arab Cold War" (***The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970*** [1981]), which lasted until Nasser's death in 1970. And a few years after that, Anwar Sadat—one of Nasser's original co-conspirators in the Free Officers movement, which in Abou-El-Fadl's telling had always been vehemently opposed to pro-Western ideology—would declare a new opening for Egypt (***al-infitāḥ***), turning the country decisively away from Arabism and the Soviet Union and instead toward the United States and neoliberal capitalism. Such developments seem to suggest that Nasser and the Free Officers' pan-Arabist ideological orientation was not as airtight or historically determined as Abou-El-Fadl would have it.

While I have some real concerns about the argument's overarching historical framework (which does loom unduly large throughout the study), these should not eclipse the book's many

virtues. In the final analysis, ***Foreign Policy as Nation Making*** is a challenging and provocative comparative work that succeeds in casting new light on the foreign policy behavior of two key players in the 1950s Middle East that are not typically juxtaposed in much scholarship. This unusual choice of comparison alone makes the book an innovative and important addition to the field, but what makes the project truly stand out is the ambitious multivalent archival approach that Abou-El-Fadl mobilizes to undergird her comparative methodology. The book is deeply researched and exceedingly rich in its empirical contributions; as a result, Abou-El-Fadl is able to reconstruct a number of key events from the period, such as the Suez War and Syrian crisis, with a great deal of nuance and fresh insight. Many of Abou-El-Fadl's revisionist findings should have an enduring impact on scholarship on Middle Eastern international relations and comparative politics, and the book is therefore recommended for scholars and graduate students in these fields who wish to gain a much more granular understanding of how Turkish and Egyptian foreign policy in the 1950s took shape amid the tumultuous backdrop of decolonization and postcolonial state-building throughout the Global South.

Notes

[1]. Eugene Rogan, ***The Arabs: A History*** (New York: Basic Books, 2009); Malcolm Kerr, ***The Arab Cold War: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and His Rivals, 1958-1970*** (London: Oxford University Press, 1981); James Jankowski, ***Nasser's Egypt, Arab Nationalism, and the United Arab Republic*** (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002); James Jankowski, "Arab Nationalism in 'Nasserism' and Egyptian State Policy, 1952-1958," in ***Rethinking Nationalism in the Arab Middle East***, ed. Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 150-68; and Joel Gordon, "Nasser 56/Cairo 96: Reimaging Egypt's Lost Community," in ***Mass Mediations: New Approaches to Popular Culture in the Middle East and Beyond***, ed. Walter Armbrust (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 161-81.

[2]. Selim Deringil, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," ***Comparative Studies in Society and History*** 45, no. 2 (2003): 311-42; and Janet Klein, ***The Margins of Empire: Kurdish Militias in the Ottoman Tribal Zone*** (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

[3]. Eugene Rogan, "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907)," ***International Journal of Middle East Studies*** 28 (1996): 83-107.

[4]. Selim Deringil, ***The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*** (London: I. B. Tauris, 1998); Reşat Kasaba, ***A Moveable Empire: Ottoman Migrants, Nomads, and Refugees*** (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009); Rogan, ***Arabs***; and Rogan, "Aşiret Mektebi."

[5]. Hasan Kayalı, ***Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918*** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Michelle Campos, ***Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine*** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010); Michael Provence, ***The Last Ottoman Generation and the Making of the Modern Middle East*** (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Abigail Jacobson, ***From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule*** (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011); Louis Fishman, ***Jews and Palestinians in the Late Ottoman Era, 1908-1914: Claiming the Homeland*** (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2020); and Ussama Makdisi, ***Age of Coexistence: The Ecumenical Frame and the Making of the Modern Arab World*** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

[6]. See, for example, Lucie Ryzova, ***The Age of the Efendiyya*** (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); Wilson Chacko Jacob, ***Working Out Egypt: Effendi Masculinity and Subject Formation in Colo-***

nial Modernity, 1870-1940 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Walter Armbrust, *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Hanan Kholoussy, *For Better, For Worse: The Marriage Crisis That Made Modern Egypt* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); and Walter Armbrust, "Long Live Patriarchy: Love in the Time of 'Abd al-Wahhab," *History Compass* 7, no. 1 (2009): 251-81.

[7]. See Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood: Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011).

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