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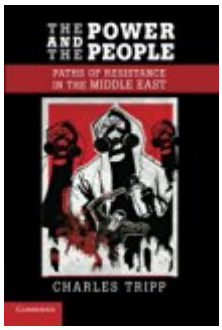

Charles Tripp. *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013. 416 pp. $27.99, paper, ISBN 978-0-521-00726-9.

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Recent events in Turkey led to protestors occupying several prominent and important public spaces in Istanbul, which in turn led to demonstrations of state power by Turkish authorities. Water cannons and tear gas were employed in attempts to quash the protests, yet as the state response intensified, so did the protests. In fact, patterns such as this are often found wherever open resistance occurs. The current conflict in Syria began with the March 2011 protests against the regime in Dar'a, and the violent response from state security forces failed in its intended objective of discouraging further resistance, and soon led to the spread of open resistance across the country. Why, how, and when do people resist authority and the power it attempts to wield over them? These are the central questions addressed in Charles Tripp's *The Power and the People.*

Completed during the tumultuous year of 2011, *The Power and the People* is as broad in scope as it is ambitious. The book takes us from Morocco to Iran, and discusses a variety of concepts, from violent resistance to visual arts. Though the Arab Spring plays an important part in this analysis, it is by no means the principal focus of the book. The obvious focus of the book, apparent from the title, is power. In this analysis, "power" most often refers to that which is wielded by state authorities, both domestic and foreign. More important than power itself, however, is its shadow. This shadow is commonly manifest in resistance movements, which are ways "of engaging with, indicting, and seeking to change whole systems of power and exclusion, demonstrating a capacity for independent action." Consequently, resistance requires a form of power against which it can oppose itself, but power "may also need resistance, or something it portrays as such, to justify itself" (p. 5). Echoing Michel Foucault, it is clear that the paths to resistance in the Middle East almost always involve numerous engagements with power, and these often take place on a multitude of levels.

Tripp focuses his analysis of power and resistance on three main ideas. First, he argues that there is a distinct "correlation between the forms

of power and the forms of resistance" that emerge in a given historical moment. Second, he argues that "it is when people realize not only that they suffer a common predicament but also that they can have an impact by acting together that a powerful moment of open collective resistance can be created" (p. 15). Finally, he reminds us that there are often multiple timescales at play, meaning that even if initial attempts failed to materialize into tangible results (he uses the first Palestinian *intifadah*, Tunisia and Algeria in the 1980s, and the strikes and demonstrations throughout Egypt in 2008 as examples), they often "set in motion processes that were to have major significance in the years that followed" (pp. 15-16). These early manifestations of resistance to power influenced and shaped the way people thought about power, and more important shaped how they believed they could challenge its seemingly absolute authority.

Throughout the recent history of the Middle East, those hoping to challenge the authority of power through acts of resistance have adopted a variety of means, and Tripp addresses these in separate, yet connected, chapters. Arguing against the popular idea that resistance in the Middle East is a sporadic, rather than systemic, occurrence, he eloquently pieces together historical events across both time and geographic space. For example, forms of economic resistance, typified by the development of alternative economies, attempt to assert a new form of power that challenges the existing order and often causes problems for nationalist regimes that depend on domestic capital. This is not a contemporary phenomenon; in the late nineteenth century, more tobacco was sold in Ottoman black markets than through official and legal channels. Resistance is often also gendered, as Tripp's analysis of the push for women's rights in Morocco shows. In many cases, the struggle for women's rights is often framed as part of a larger, national resistance movement, and this becomes evident as familiar characters emerge throughout the various chapters of the book. In fact, one of the more notable aspects of the book is that each chapter stands quite well on its own.

One of the more poignant chapters deals with battles over history and the proper representation of the past. Here, Tripp provides a brief yet sufficient analysis of some of the more pertinent historical debates in Algeria and Israel and elaborates on how debates over history are actually forms of resistance against a particular form of power. The emergence of critical sociology in Israel challenged the fundamental construction of certain forms of power in Israel, while in Algeria, the "Berber Spring" paved the way for more open contestations against the power of the Algerian regime. Tripp effectively argues that to write history is to wield a particular form of power, and processes such as inclusion and incorporation, despite certain connotations, are actually methods of control. Though art may not be as powerful as armed resistance or have the ability to perpetuate or create a particular history, it is nonetheless a power motivational tool in the hands of those contesting forms of power. The (liberated) Syrian city of Kafranbel (Kafir Nabil) is famous for its cartoon depictions of Bashar al-Assad and continues to produce them despite daily air force flybys and the constant threat of government retaliation. The final chapter on art as resistance could provide an interesting background for an analysis of this hotbed of resistance in northern Syria.

Tripp concludes that there are indeed multiple paths of resistance in the Middle East and these same paths have been utilized before. At times, the exact same slogans are repeated, similar works of art reproduced, and the same public spaces occupied. This is not to say that everything is connected, but rather to illuminate the role of history in the making of the world around us. Though it takes the Middle East as its focus, Tripp's work has perhaps something to say about resistance to power outside of the region. Those interested in international movements that challenge authoritarian systems of power, both con-

temporary and historical, should find the book intriguing for its combination of disciplinary and geographic approaches to the topic at hand. The book provides a basic glossary, and an incredibly useful bibliography broken down by chapter, which includes numerous suggestions for further reading. Though it may seem a bit repetitive for those familiar with the history of resistance movements in the Middle East, the book does provide a nuanced account of these contestations of power throughout the more recent history of the Middle East. Regional specialists might complain that their particular region is underrepresented (Turkey, for example, is discussed only briefly), but the merit of the work is the theoretical and historical background it provides, from which future studies of power and resistance will hopefully emerge. It would be incredibly useful as a core text for a course on resistance movements in the Middle East, and scholars already familiar with the topic and historical context should gain something from Tripp's ability to weave these seemingly diverse and unconnected events together in a single book.

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