Maratha and the Nizam, demand for soldiers, at the same time, remained high. Vekhande shows in Chapter Five that soldiers' pay, moreover, varied with individual qualities such as the fitness or stoutness of the soldier. Nite observes in Chapter Seven that, over the 1860s, wage increases for unskilled workers working in railway construction implied increased demand for lower paid employees.

Second, how did the mode of payment differ across occupations, regions, and time, and what influenced this? The volume offers an array of evidence, but it is difficult to come to clear-cut conclusions. In Lucassen's case study on the Deccan in the 1820s (Chapter Six), it is noted that in-kind payments were more common when food is cheap, whereas in periods when grain was expensive employers switch to more cash payments. Carvalhal *et al.* (Chapter One), at the same time, show that, in the fifteenth century, workers paid by the Portuguese generally received in-kind payment in addition to a cash payment. Shirsat (Chapter Four), on the other hand, notes on the basis of Marathi materials from Pune that the combination of different types of payment (both in-kind and cash) was found only for those at the higher echelons of the occupational hierarchy, whereas common labourers received only cash payments, implying that payment type depended on the position of a worker on the wage ladder. Seshan shows in Chapter Two that grain prices crucially influenced maintenance payments in seventeenth-century Madras. Shirsat also investigates the frequency of payments and finds that those at the higher end of the wage ladder received their salaries only once per year, whereas lower ranked officials received monthly payments. At the bottom of the wage scale, ordinary workers were paid daily if they were hired by the day, or monthly if they had permanent contracts.

In sum, this volume is a major step forward in the study of wages across India in the pre-1900 period. Substantial additional evidence has been presented to suggest that, besides social hierarchies and the caste system, wages were crucially influenced by market dynamics. At the same time, the volume makes clear that there is still more work to do, as the bulk of the volume has been focused on relatively limited regions and periods, with in particular the pre-1700 period remaining relatively underexplored. Moreover, more evidence on modes of payment in different times and places will be needed for an overarching explanatory model of their determinants. It is hoped many scholars – especially those able to read Indian languages – will take up this volume's powerful call for research.

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KÄSER, ISABEL. The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement. Gender, Body Politics and Militant Femininities. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [etc.] 2021. xvi, 240 pp. Ill. Maps. £75.00. (E-book: $80.00.)

In the twenty-first century, the question of the political and the state has re-emerged as a key concern for a number of social movements. These include not only the

assembly movement in Argentina (2001), the Arab Spring (2010–2011), Occupy (2011), and the 15-M movement in Spain (2011), but also a range of Marxist and post-Marxist movements, such as the Zapatista in Mexico, the Chavista in Venezuela, and initiatives by demobilized guerrillas in Colombia. A common denominator among these movements has been the attempt to develop new institutional forms beyond and parallel to the state in which assemblies of locally organized bodies of people become the principal political agents. This organizational form is referred to in broad terms such as "municipalism" (with or without the addition "new") and "communalism". Essentially, it is an approach aiming to create a public sphere of decision-making and administration through the establishment of a network of assemblies.

One important background to the emergence of these movements has been the neoliberal restructuring of the state, which has precipitated growing inequality. Another background is the failure of revolutionary movements to enhance their programme of social justice by capturing the state – either because they were unable to capture it, as was the case with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*, FARC), or because state capture resulted in a bureaucratization of the political and the construction of new hierarchies and inequalities, as was the case with the state-centred socialist experiences in the Soviet Union.

The development of the Kurdistan Workers Party's (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, PKK) from a party aiming to establish an independent state to one working to develop new institutional forms was preceded by a critique on the failure of national liberation movements and socialism. This critique centred on the state, now understood less as a means to an end than as a political organization of society that created inequalities. The state, that is, is regarded as inherently iniquitous.

The PKK's new post-state political orientation is inspired by the thought of the radical utopian thinker Murray Bookchin, and his proposal for the political organization of society as a confederation of autonomous municipalities. Isabel Käser's *The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement: Gender, Body Politics and Militant Femininities* discusses these politics beyond the state as debated and enacted in the network of PKK-born movements and organizations, with a focus on the women's movement. The book covers a wide repertoire of action: from legal forms of urban activism to women guerrillas in the mountains and the mothers of martyrs in a cross-border refugee camp.

The centrality of women in the Kurdistan liberation movement has not gone unnoticed. Pushing back against Orientalist narratives and what is referred to as the usual tropes of women as victims or armed agents in masculine spaces, Käser's primary interest is in how women themselves perform political, activist, and military roles and identities in the Kurdistan freedom movement – an umbrella term for the multiplicity of parties, militia, and social organizations that emerged from and includes the PKK.

Käser's book is organized around the concept of *militant femininity*, defined as a set of norms and practices that shape women's performances and, at the same time, create new possibilities for challenging the intersecting system of domination comprising ethnicity, class, state, and gender. This results in an understanding of women in war that challenges structuralist approaches and introduces women as political agents. It opens the way to ask a series of significant questions not only about revolutionary movements

creating new subjectivities, which subjectivities, and how, but also about the ways in which women create their own spaces within and outside the PKK, and how they contest established norms and leadership practices and create new ones.

The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement comprises seven chapters, including the introduction and conclusion. Käser starts by introducing the topic of her research and some of the key concepts in the new political imaginary of the PKK, notably *democratic autonomy* and *democratic confederalism* as principles for building a democratic and egalitarian society, and *militant femininity* as the analytical lens through which she views the making of new gender roles in the context of this liberation struggle. Then, the first chapter proper gives a short history of the PKK. With its roots in the revolutionary left and student movement in Turkey in the 1970s, a process of group formation began in the early 1970s that resulted in the establishment of a party in 1978. The author argues both that women have been active participants in the PKK from the very beginning and that a remarkable development within the party saw a process of organizational differentiation and ideological orientation around gender, something that continues today.

A women-centred organizational differentiation, which commenced in 1987, was followed by the establishment of a separate party – the Women's Workers' Party of Kurdistan (Partiya Jinên Karkerên Kurdistanê, PJKK) – which, after several name changes and reorganizations, has since 2004 gone by the name of the Party of Free Women in Kurdistan (Partiya Azadiya Jin a Kurdistanê, PAJK). In parallel to this organizational differentiation, an ideological change was discussed in which party leader Abdullah Öcalan declared the emergence of male domination the foundation of inequalities and "the killing of the dominant male" a fundamental principle for socialism. Käser discusses the ruptures that occurred within the party after Öcalan's abduction and imprisonment in Turkey, when the male leadership in the mountains and a self-conscious women's movement clashed.

The second chapter is situated in the city of Diyarbakir, in the southeast of Turkey, around 2015–2016. Käser's research focuses mainly on the Free Women's Congress (Kongreya Jinên Azad, KJA) and the women's movement's tripartite analysis of the construction of male domination through patriarchy and the state, the commodification and sexualization of women's bodies in capitalism, and the ideal of creating an ethical society on the basis of a free association of people, which they referred to as "democratic confederalism".

Then, a brutal state force descended upon Diyarbakir in the form of blanket curfews and artillery fire on the inner city, where radicalized youths attempted to resist, accompanied by the closure of a range of civil society organizations, including the KJA, whose members were arrested, imprisoned, and killed. This period also marks the end of Käser's fieldwork; at this point she was detained and deported. Moving from Diyarbakir in southeast Turkey to Sulaymaniyah in northeast Iraq, in the third chapter the author takes the reader to the women guerrillas in the mountains. She discusses the making of a new body awareness. Through education, the women who joined the guerrilla were taught self-control of all desires, including hunger, thirst, tiredness.

The fourth chapter takes us initially to the early 1990s, when the Turkish Armed Forces burned and destroyed some 3,000 rural settlements in Kurdish southeast

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Turkey, and a group of 17,000 villagers from the Şırnak region crossed the border into Iraq. They eventually settled near Maxmur, a town south of Arbil, the capital of the Kurdistan region in Iraq. The camp is organized according to democratic confederalist principles – the basic communalist form of the non-state political programme of the Kurdistan Freedom Movement. The key subjects in this chapter are the mothers of martyrs to the cause and their control over emotions, as well as the immortalization of the dead through rituals of commemoration.

All chapters focus on the making of embodied subjectivities in the liberation struggle, but it is in the fifth chapter that the author finally turns to the question that lingers throughout: sexuality. While the women in the movement interviewed downplay the importance of sexuality in their daily lives, the author endorses the proposition that de-sexualization is at the heart of the party's control over its militants. She rejects the idea of women as political agents in favour of one that regards them as subject to a leadership.

The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement acknowledges that the gender ideology of the women's liberation movement and the way in which this was translated into political organization created a window of opportunity for women's empowerment. Käser explains how, through this ideology, women are constituted as political actors. However, the author argues that this gender ideology is at the same time a tool in the hands of the senior party leadership to discipline its militants, a disciplining in which control over sex and sexuality creates docile bodies. This idea about gender ideology as liberating and as control is one that emerges as the result of two distinct and contradictory analytical approaches to understanding ideology that are present in the book.

The first is ideology as a false representation or smokescreen. In this, the gender ideology becomes an "excellent branding" by a male leadership of an oppressive practice towards women. If one takes ideology thus, one indeed needs to look beyond the slogans to see the reality behind them. The distinction between a deceiving male leadership and deceived female followers becomes relevant, the latter being able to understand this only after they have left the movement. Yet, the women's movement within the PKK is separately organized, and led by women, and the gender ideology is produced from within the women's movement itself. The explanatory power of ideology as branding therefore falls short.

The second is ideology as discourse, referring to the thoughts and beliefs that systematically construct subjects and the worlds of which they speak. In this case, the challenge is not so much to go "beyond the slogans" but rather to understand how urban militants, the guerrillas, and mothers think of freedom, gender, sex, and sexuality in the new world and the relationships they try to construct. Such an understanding of ideology would have allowed the author to see how women in the movement self-define and act on the basis of this self-definition, but also how, as urban activists, guerrillas, and martyr mothers, these women make sense of it in their daily lives.

This aside, *The Kurdish Women's Freedom Movement* is to be recommend as a rich, multi-sited ethnography on an important and too little covered topic. It gives a thorough introduction to the politics of the women's movement in Kurdistan, and a discussion and reflection on its ideological and political orientation, the challenges faced by the women in the movement and their paths taken, both

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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