

and labour coercion. Price presents Smith's government in British Kaffraria as an early example of indirect rule, yet Smith proclaimed the abolition of all Xhosa laws relating to witchcraft, bride-wealth, and land, leading even so inacute an observer as A.E. du Toit to remark, way back in 1954, that Smith's policies were "subversive of the whole framework of Kaffir society". Either Price does not understand Smith, or else he does not understand indirect rule.

A second major shortcoming of *Making Empire* is its casual dismissal of the Mfengu as "British mercenaries". Despite his acknowledging that "there is some historical controversy around their real identity" (p. 228n), Price unreservedly espouses an extreme view, which precludes him from appreciating the intellectual challenge which the Mfengu presence posed to imperial and colonial thinking. Whereas the Xhosa never offered themselves as candidates for membership of colonial society, the Mfengu swore a great oath in 1835 to accept Christianity, educate their children and obey the Government. They willingly gave of their labour, and willingly occupied land which the colonists did not want. The very same Governor D'Urban who condemned the Xhosa as "irreclaimable savages", praised the Mfengu as "industrious, gentle and well-disposed". When and how did imperial and colonial minds reduce all black people to the same racial stereotype? And why, with an affirmative model in full view, did they select the negative?

Making Empire is beautifully produced, as one would expect of Cambridge University Press, and priced accordingly. It is sad to report therefore that the quota of minor errors far exceeds what is reasonable. Charles Henry was a circumcised Xhosa not a Khoi convert; it is Burnshill not Burnside, Gcaleka not Gceleka, Kama not Khama, James Weir not John Weir, and James Read Junior or Joseph Read not John Reid. The indexer alone should have noticed Thymie alternating with Tyhumie, and Kie with Kei. The photograph in Figure 7 is Dilima not Xhoxho, and the chief sitting next to Xhoxho in Figure 16 is Siyolo not Mhala. Worst of all, we have a Note on Sources but no Bibliography. One might be inspired to check the unpublished diary of the Revd Cummings, but we are not told where it is.

Be all of that as it may, Richard Price has something to say and he says it well. Now read the book.

Jeff Peires

RETISH, AARON B. *Russia's Peasants in Revolution and Civil War. Citizenship, Identity, and the Creation of the Soviet State, 1914–1922*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge [etc.] 2008. xiv, 294 pp. Ill. £55.00; \$110.00; doi:10.1017/S0020859010000118

This ambitious book provides a new lynchpin for studies of the revolutionary period and of Russia's rural population. Its key contributions to the field are firstly, a re-conceptualization of the problem of peasant national identity and the peasantry's relationship to the state; secondly, a reassessment of the revolutionary transformation to include the whole period 1914–1922; thirdly, expanding the geographic scope of study of revolutionary processes; and finally, an integration of the history of peasant revolution in Russian into the contexts of peasant studies elsewhere.

Retish's work draws on an impressive source base, drawing on Kirov's regional archives alongside central archives in Russia and the States, newspapers and periodicals, and the most recent literature in Russian and English. His enthusiasm to engage with interdisciplinary and comparative approaches is notable, and sets him apart from the often myopic approach of other specialists in the field. His close reading of local sources enables him to personalize, complicate, and explain day-to-day peasant relationships and politics.

The province of Viatka provides the geographic focus for this study. Retish's introduction does a great job of giving the reader a sense of the particularities of Viatka and its people. A number of factors distinguished Viatka from the more commonly studied Black Earth region. Ninety per cent of the peasants in Viatka had been emancipated as state peasants in 1866, which meant that they had never laboured for a landlord, fulfilling their obligations in cash or with goods. Their neighbours in the Black Earth regions, most of whom had been the property of private landowners before emancipation, suffered from land hunger, and deep resentments festered because the private landlords tended to retain the best land for themselves after emancipation. Viatka's peasants did not as a whole suffer from the land hunger that characterized the Black Earth regions, and did not have the landlord figure on which to concentrate resentment. Viatka's peasants were outward bound and outward looking even before World War I, as more than 90 per cent of households in the province relied on non-land based peasant handicrafts and out-migrant labour to supplement their incomes. These regional specificities are a starting point for Retish's key argument, that Viatka's peasants experienced the revolutionary period of 1914–1922 as a development and intensification of their interaction with the national polity and their willingness to utilize the state as arbitrators of their daily lives. This is an important departure from the drift of earlier historiography on Russia's peasants.

The book is organised chronologically, with chapters covering World War I, revolution, Soviet power, and the Civil War. Chapter 1, on World War I, presents a detailed evaluation of the sometimes conflicting responses of Viatka's peasants to the war effort. Like Joshua Sanborn and others, Retish argues that the war provided a forum for the development of nationalist identities and aspirations for inclusion in the state polity. He draws out the contradictory ways in which cultural elites depicted the region's non-Russian peoples (Udmurt, Mari, and Tatars), as within the national struggle but outside the parameters of national citizens. Chapters 2 and 3 tackle the tumultuous events of 1917. Retish argues that peasants sought to be active citizens within the provisional government's new regime, but increasingly clashed with rural elites over how their participation in the state was to be framed. Chapter 4 looks at peasants' response to the Bolsheviks' land decree of 1918, and argues that the peasantry sought to involve the state in conflict resolution. Chapter 5 explores the three-way conflict that developed between Bolsheviks, anti-Bolsheviks, and peasants in the early civil war period, crystallizing around the issues of military conscription and grain procurement. Chapter 6 describes the state's attempts to entrench itself in the countryside, through the development of rural institutions and alliances with the peasant population. Chapter 7 indicates a degree of success in these state efforts, showing how peasant language and identity became increasingly "Soviet" following state Cultural Enlightenment and propaganda campaigns. Chapter 8 underscores the devastation of the civil war period, with famine, open revolt, and mass migration, but argues that the state efforts to alleviate famine provided further foundations for an active relationship between Viatka's peasantry and the state.

An overarching theme of his work is peasant agency and rationality. Retish studies Russia's rural population as subjects in their own right, rather than the passive objects as portrayed in the more dated historiography. Retish draws out peasant conceptions of themselves as citizens, and skilfully brings together the periods of World War I, revolution, and civil war. Viatka's peasants differed from their fellow peasants in other, more studied regions of the Black Earth, central region, and Ukraine, and Retish argues convincingly that Viatka's peasants were not concerned primarily with "land and freedom" – that is, control of land and complete autonomy in their daily governance. Putting these old historiographical obsessions to one side enables Retish to show that Viatka's peasants were active participants in a (sometimes one-sided) dialogue with the state and its agents. Peasants were active and rational agents in their often difficult political and personal negotiations through the tumultuous years of war and revolution.

Although some social and cultural structures endured through revolution and war, village attitudes towards the national polity were fundamentally transformed in the period. Retish argues that peasants wanted to participate in state-building, and that the young Soviet state gave them that opportunity. Throughout, Retish places Viatka's peasantry in an international context, and draws attention to ethnic and gender specificities of experience. Viatka's Udmurt and Mari populations are sensitively treated.

The book is clearly and lucidly written, and includes a number of illuminating illustrations and tables. A map showing Viatka's position within the Russian Empire would have helped less specialist readers contextualize the space discussed. Retish's book will be required reading for subject specialists and undergraduate reading lists, but will also be a valuable comparative point for scholars of peasant communities in other contexts.

Sarah Badcock

CRONIN, STEPHANIE. *Tribal Politics in Iran. Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921–1941*. [Royal Asiatic Society Books.] Routledge, London [etc.] 2007. xii, 258 pp. Maps. £75.00; doi:10.1017/S002085901000012X

Middle East history has been the history of tribal conflict and tribal state formation. Pastoral, nomadic, semi-settled, and settled tribal populations of the Middle East have played a significant political role that outweighs their marginal and "exotic" characteristics. Although the conventional engagements of these tribal groups in rule and rebellion have transformed in the last century, exploring a revival of tribal polity in the wake of the recent crises in the Middle East, especially in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan, merits increased attention.

There is much debate about what constitutes a tribe. In today's Iran, however, the terms tribe, tribal, and tribalism have a far wider currency when associated with political culture. The study of contemporary Iran inevitably includes discussion of its ethnic groups. For many members of Iranian ethno-linguistic groups with a dominant tribal background, such as the Lurs, Baluchi, Kurds, Turkmen, Arabs, and Qashqai, tribal identities, albeit transformed and in most cases "detrIALIZED" (p. 235), continue to be relevant. These identities are intentionally or unintentionally reconstructed during social gatherings, claims of ethnic nationalism, pastoral nomadism, tribal rituals, economic activities, when narrating the past, handling and strategizing alliances and conflicts, and when challenging or supporting local-level political and institutional changes.

The concept of tribal politics in the Middle East has been the focus of several monographs and reports in recent years. Perhaps most significant to the study of tribal politics in contemporary Iran was the accession to power of Riza Shah Pahlavi, who immediately embarked upon a programme of authoritarian modernization that left the country a scene of struggle between the centre and the periphery. Riza Shah's state-building efforts and the resulting forced sedentarization, as the core of his tribal policy, gave rise to violent reactions in tribal areas and even to numerous socialist, nationalist, and separatist movements throughout Iran during the two decades of his reign. It is in this period that Stephanie Cronin plots the narrative of *Tribal Politics in Iran: Rural Conflict and the New State, 1921–1941*.

The present work by Cronin provides an engaging, innovative, and learner-centered approach to this phenomenon. In this respect, it fulfils a significant gap in the literature. The author, a specialist on the modern and contemporary Middle East with significant teaching and research experience on contemporary Iran, has successfully grasped in this volume many of the theoretical and practical issues concerning the "problem of tribes" in