

resented, in both symbolic and also financial terms, one of the most controversial ways that nabobs overturned (and also penetrated) the established order of Britain's landed aristocracy.

By highlighting the multifaceted cultural conflicts between Britain's two opposing models of itself, as a progressive and moral nation identified with liberty or as a global imperial power, Nechtman thus especially contributes to the "new imperial history" approach (pp. 4–5). His work, however, differs from that of many of the other scholars using that approach who have seen empire as domesticated within British society during this period. Rather, Nechtman stresses the dynamic tension and contestation between the two models. In his conclusion, however, Nechtman says that this changed during the early nineteenth century, as empire became more widely accepted as part of Britain's identity and as the connotative power of nabobs as central to this debate faded.

Scholars of world history, as well as specialists in British national and British imperial history, will learn from this book much about how Britons debated national and imperial identities during this vital, transitional period of global imperialism. Written in a clear and engaging manner, this book will be accessible and informative for lay readers.

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Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858–1954. By PIERRE BROCHEUX and DANIEL HÉMERY. Translated by LY LAN DILL-KLEIN, with ERIC JENNINGS, NORA TAYLOR, and NOÉMI TOUSIGNANT. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. 508 pp. \$60.00 (cloth); \$29.95 (paper).

Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858–1954 is the English translation of *Indochine: La colonisation ambiguë 1858–1954*, which came out in 1994 and had gone through a second expanded edition in 2001. The current English version under review could be considered a third edition of the book since it has also been further updated with the inclusion of a large number of recent publications in the field. As suggested by its title, one of the ostensible purposes of the book is to foreground the "ambiguous" character of the colonial situation in Indochina. This objective has to a large extent been achieved as the authors of the book, Pierre Brocheux and Daniel Hémerly, have done a superb job of teasing out the highly complex and often convoluted strands of

the century-long history of colonization of the Indochinese peninsula, and weaving the various discordant voices and contesting perspectives of a politically and ideologically diverse spectrum of players from both sides of the colonial divide into the fabric of their narrative. The result is a multilayered interpretative synthesis of a voluminous literature of primary and secondary materials that is interspersed with the authors' own unique insights.

The book is structured around a chronological and thematic order. The study starts with a reconstruction of the key stages of the French conquest of the peninsula from the mid nineteenth century all the way to its final pacification in the late 1890s and ends with an analysis of the demise of the French domination in the Far East on the heels of World War II. The intervening six chapters focus each on a specific aspect of French colonization of the region. Chapter 2 delineates the many challenges the colonial administration had to face in their efforts to create a new political and administrative entity, which came to be known as the Indochinese Union. One of the core debates within the colonizing camp was the choice between direct rule and protectorate as the most appropriate form of colonial control, a dilemma that was further compounded by the financial constraints imposed by the *métropole* for whom "colonization must not cost France a thing" (p. 70), as well as the existing political realities of the region. Chapter 3 discusses the financial and economic transformations of the peninsula brought about by the *mise en valeur* (or economic exploitation) of local natural resources, the modernization of the colony's infrastructure, and the implementation of the structures of modern capitalism. These developments made Indochina, "after Algeria, the principal outlet of the French economy" (p. 179) and "an essential part of France's equilibrium" (p. 180).

The following two chapters focus on the social and cultural impacts of colonization on the various categories of stakeholders living in the colony. One major consequence of the colonial conquest was the creation of a colonial society constructed along racial lines with the Europeans occupying the summit of the social pyramid and the Indochinese relegated to the lower rungs. However, the colonizer and colonized divide alone could not account adequately for the new colonial social formation as there were within each of the two camps further interne-cine divisions informed by social, cultural, ethnic, regional, and class differences, some of which had existed prior to the arrival of the French while others were brought on by the reforms introduced by the colonizers such as colonial education and language policies. Chapters 6 and 7 trace the gradual unraveling of the colonial regime, which proved

incapable of managing the economic, cultural, social, and political upheavals that resulted from the very changes it had imposed on the colonized societies. In the face of the mounting discontent of its colonial subjects and the rapid acceleration of the contestations of various national and revolutionary movements in the 1930s, the colonial administration could only come up with the program of a conservative colonial reformism aiming at restoring the largely discredited monarchy and mandarinat.

The great merit of the authors' undertaking lies not only in their coverage of such a vast array of highly complicated issues of the history of the colonization of Indochina but also in their ability to represent the problems from the perspectives of the wide spectrum of stakeholders on both sides of the colonial divide. An example, among many, of such inclusiveness is to be found in chapter 6, which discusses the cultural transformations of indigenous societies brought on by French colonization. Besides the reforms introduced by the colonizers, the chapter also examines the initiatives taken by different groups from within the colonized communities to respond to changes imposed from the outside and manage their own transformations in creating a new literature, modifying their own customs and ideas, instituting new religious movements as well as proposing a "return" to traditional values. By thus tracing the process of change from such diverse perspectives, the chapter brings out vividly the many ambiguities and tensions of the colonial relationship.

This book, which covers such an impressive breadth of issues, has, interestingly enough, very little to say about the roles and experiences of women during the century-long colonial era other than a few passing references to the debates surrounding the changing status of Vietnamese women and the work of the Orientalist Suzanne Karpelès.¹ Surely readers would have been curious to know how Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian women reacted to the momentous events that revolutionized their respective communities. What impacts did the different economic policies implemented by the colonial government in their countries, which have been so thoroughly discussed

¹ On the situation of women in Vietnam during the colonial era, see David Marr, *Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), chap. 5; and Nguyen Van Ky, *La société vietnamienne face à la modernité. Le Tonkin de la fin du XIXe siècle à la seconde guerre mondiale* (Paris: l'Harmattan, 1995), in particular chaps. 5, 6, and 7. On the work of Suzanne Karpelès in Cambodia, see Penny Edwards, *Cambodge: The Cultivation of a Nation 1860–1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007).

in the book, have on women's lives? Could we assume that these changes affected them in the same way as their male counterparts were affected?²

The other deficiency of this otherwise valuable work is the lack of good copyediting, resulting in a large number of errors and omissions in the endnotes and references. Here are a few examples to illustrate the problems: a sentence at the bottom of page 306 refers to a study by Bui Tran Phuong, but the reference given in the accompanying note is an article by S. Quinn-Judge.³ In endnote 42 of chapter 7, the title of David Marr's book is given as "*Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1900–1945*" instead of "*Vietnamese Tradition on Trial, 1920–1945*." The title of an article by Hémerly was likewise incorrectly cited as "Décoloniser la France le syndrome indochinois en métropole, 1944–1954," whereas the version that appears in the published volume reads "Décoloniser la France: Le 'syndrome indochinois.'" There is definitely a need for a thorough re-editing of the existing bibliography, which has left out a great many of the references cited in the body of the text. The entries under the same author are often listed without following the chronological order in which they were published, and the paginations of the articles cited are not always available. These errors and omissions are all the more regrettable given the fact that the book would make an excellent choice for those engaged in the study and teaching of the colonial history of Indochina.

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The Eastern Mediterranean and the Making of Global Radicalism, 1860–1914. By ILHAM KHURI-MAKDISI. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010. 296 pp. \$45.00 (cloth).

Over the past decades only a handful of works discussing the role of socialism and anarchism in the Middle East at the turn of the twentieth century have been produced. Scholars have mainly focused on

² On the economic impacts of the French colonization on Vietnamese women, see Paul Grace, ed., *Vietnamese Women in Society and Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Vietnam Resource Center, 1974).

³ Both studies address the roles and experiences of Vietnamese women during the colonial period.

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