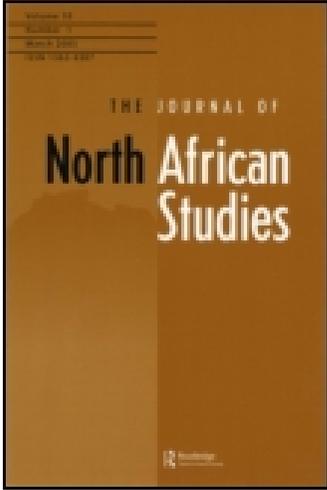


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The emergence of nationalist politics in Morocco: the rise of the Independence Party and the struggle against colonialism after World War II

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and it explains the dynamics of the revolution and reform attempts for North African countries in the Arab Spring. It is easy to read, and is recommended to academics, undergraduate, and graduate students and researchers who study North African politics.

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The emergence of nationalist politics in Morocco: the rise of the Independence Party and the struggle against colonialism after World War II, by Daniel Zisenwine, New York, Tauris Academic Studies, 2010, 256 pp., £59.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-1848853232

In this book on the emergence of the Istiqlal (Independence) Party, Daniel Zisenwine summarises the history of the Moroccan anti-colonial movement from its inauguration during the 1930s until the deposition of Sultan Mohamed ben Youssef by the French authorities in August 1953. Providing a good overview of the trajectory of the most prominent nationalist organisation inside the French Protectorate, he introduces the reader to the important events and individuals who characterised this pivotal period of Maghribi history. The author's main argument is quite simple: whereas the 'classic view of Moroccan nationalism' situated its beginning in the wake of the protest against the Berber *dahir* (edict) in 1930 and then drew a straight line past the Independence Manifesto in 1944 all the way to the country's independence in March 1956, Zisenwine rejects such a linear and teleological vision (5). Instead, he argues for the re-emergence of political agitation towards the end of the Second World War as a 'rupture' and 'milestone', which constituted a break with the Moroccans' previous gradualism and eventually led to the establishment of the Istiqlal in December 1943 (29). In order to do so, he focuses on the 'political and cultural processes that were initiated by political actors with the aim of strengthening the public's allegiance to the Moroccan nation' (6).

Given the dearth of scholarly literature on Moroccan nationalism in English, and with no authoritative analysis of the Istiqlal written in any language, a work focusing on both the inner workings of the party and its relationship with the colonial authorities is a welcome addition to the existing body of knowledge. Zisenwine's most important contribution to Moroccan studies, however, is his use of the US National Archives (USNA) in College Park, Maryland, a hitherto underutilised repository that can provide researchers with some interesting insights into Moroccan history. In combination with the well-known colonial archives in Nantes, Paris, and La Courneuve, the USNA hold great promise for scholars of the North African kingdom.

However, the book's most important strength, namely the utilisation of the records of the US Department of State, also constitutes a major problem. Despite the fact that the American documents contain numerous gems, they do not allow for a sophisticated examination of the Moroccan nationalist movement. Until almost 1950, the American diplomats stationed in the country had

only a handful of somewhat competent informants, and although their reports might provide interesting insights into the US ideological preferences of that time, they do not allow for a reliable analysis of local native society. Even the few Americans critical of French colonialism in general demonstrated little sympathy for, or understanding of, the political demands of the Moroccan people. Therefore, while providing researchers with interesting material concerning the overall attitude of US officials vis-à-vis the political situation inside the French Protectorate, the available primary sources do not provide any major insights into the inner workings of the Istiqlal itself, or any of the other native political parties for that matter. Of course, the French colonial archives, upon which Zisenwine draws just as extensively, supply much more information regarding the Moroccan nationalist movement, thanks to France's highly efficient surveillance apparatus inside its colonies. Nonetheless, these records also only offer an outsider's understanding of the history of the Istiqlal. In order to truly comprehend the convoluted inner dynamics of the movement, researchers must canvass the North African kingdom for records produced by the Moroccans themselves during the Protectorate era, which, although few in number and not readily available, can be found in the private homes of the families of the former nationalists.

Another problem is the fact that the narrative ends with the deportation of Sidi Mohamed in 1953, although the struggle for independence only truly began in the wake of this watershed moment. French repression, the exiling of the nationalist leadership, and the development of an armed resistance in both the countryside and urban centres made the period from the Sultan's deposition until his triumphant return in November 1955 the most important one for the (trans-)formation of the nationalist movement in specific, and Moroccan history in general. Any historian seeking to understand the transition from colonial rule to the authoritarian post-independence regime must focus on these two pivotal years, which have been largely absent from historiography due to the lack of reliable records concerning this episode.

Finally, although arguably much less important is the fact that many transliterations of Arab names and terms are incorrect, thus confusing the reader and rendering it difficult to locate the literature listed in the bibliography.

Overall, Zisenwine does provide insights into the establishment of the Istiqlal as the most important force of the domestic political stage as well as a summary of the political history of late colonial Morocco. Hopefully, other scholars will continue where this book ends in order to finally offer an in-depth analysis of the complicated dynamics of the last years of the anti-colonial struggle and their impact on post-colonial state formation.

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