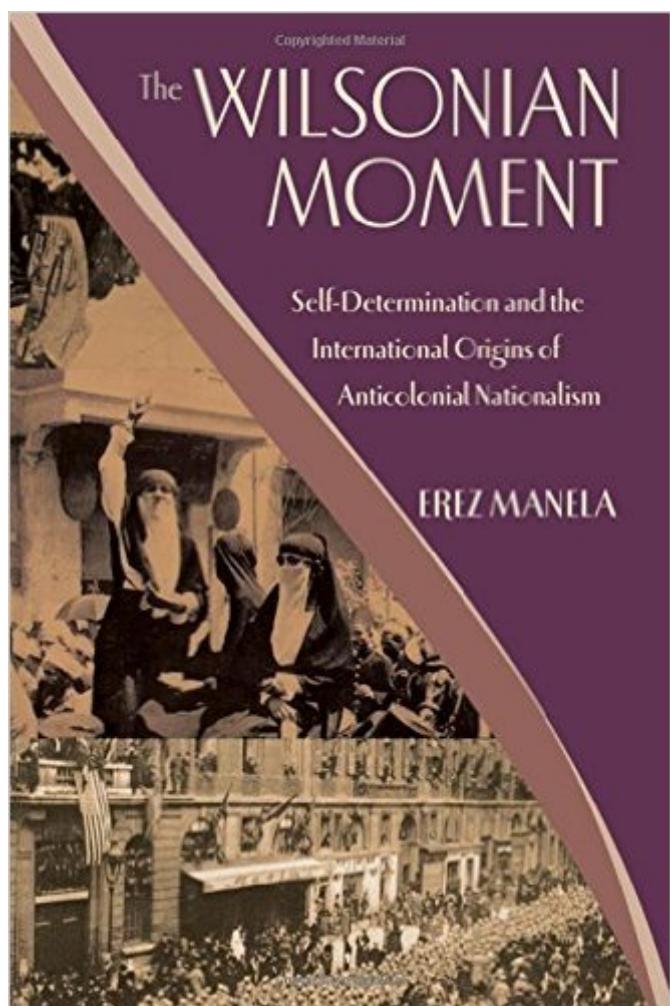


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The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination And The International Origins Of Anticolonial Nationalism (Oxford Studies In International History)



Synopsis

During the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, while key decisions were debated by the victorious Allied powers, a multitude of smaller nations and colonies held their breath, waiting to see how their fates would be decided. President Woodrow Wilson, in his Fourteen Points, had called for "a free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims," giving equal weight would be given to the opinions of the colonized peoples and the colonial powers. Among those nations now paying close attention to Wilson's words and actions were the budding nationalist leaders of four disparate non-Western societies--Egypt, India, China, and Korea. That spring, Wilson's words would help ignite political upheavals in all four of these countries. This book is the first to place the 1919 Revolution in Egypt, the Rowlatt Satyagraha in India, the May Fourth movement in China, and the March First uprising in Korea in the context of a broader "Wilsonian moment" that challenged the existing international order. Using primary source material from America, Europe, and Asia, historian Erez Manela tells the story of how emerging nationalist movements appropriated Wilsonian language and adapted it to their own local culture and politics as they launched into action on the international stage. The rapid disintegration of the Wilsonian promise left a legacy of disillusionment and facilitated the spread of revisionist ideologies and movements in these societies; future leaders of Third World liberation movements--Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, and Jawaharlal Nehru, among others--were profoundly shaped by their experiences at the time. The importance of the Paris Peace Conference and Wilson's influence on international affairs far from the battlefields of Europe cannot be underestimated. Now, for the first time, we can clearly see just how the events played out at Versailles sparked a wave of nationalism that is still resonating globally today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Erez Manela's The Wilsonian Moment argues that nationalistic movements of Egypt, India, China, and Korea, seized upon the rhetoric of President Woodrow Wilson to legitimize their claims to self-determination. Though Wilson only intended his rhetoric to apply to European powers, colonized societies adopted the language to internationalize their anti-colonial claims and rally public support. Widespread violent uprisings occurred in the aforementioned colonies after the Paris Peace Conference failed to address the concerns brought forth by anti-colonial nationalists. Despite the failure of the uprisings, the ideals expounded by Wilson formed the backbone of future nationalistic efforts toward independence. President Wilson delivered a series of speeches beginning with the April 1917 declaration of war against Germany and continuing through his 1919 attendance at the Paris Peace Conference. In his addresses he declared, "that every people has a right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live" and that, "no peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed." Nationalistic movements in the colonized world were galvanized by this new language of self-determination. In their view, the imperial system contributed to the genesis of the world war and that the bloody aftermath undermined European claims of superiority. Therefore, American exceptionalism, embodied in Wilson's democratic rhetoric, was widely published and repeated by transnational groups. The vernacular of self-determination became the common language when expressing the core beliefs and desires of anti-colonial nationalists amongst themselves and audiences worldwide. (p.

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