If I deserve it, it should be paid to me: a social history of labour in the Iranian oil industry 1951-1973
Oil is mostly seen as a natural resource and not as a commodity, the production of which involves organisation of social relations of production. This study maps this tightly woven relations between the workers, the oil company(ies) and the state in the Iranian oil industry focusing on the period between 1951 and 1973, when the management of oil was completely transferred to the National Iranian Oil Company. Through an archival study, the 1951 nationalisation of oil, the organization of labour relations in the industry, the working and living conditions of the workers, and labour activism in the period is scrutinized. The various social class positions oil employees occupied and the specific relation the industry had with the state and thus embeddedness of the economy in social relations is discussed.

In 1951, a committee was appointed by the ministry of labor to translate various countries labor laws and the international ILO Conventions to Persian in order to do a comparative study and draft a labor law. This effort did not lead to proposal of labor law. It provided generous welfare and social improvements, such as profit sharing, employee stock ownership plans, company housing, minimum wage, and an improved Social Security Act. All were paid for with revenue from high oil prices. Nevertheless, many private sector owners opposed the new initiatives that infringed on their power. Maral Jefroudi studied the social history of oil in the Iranian oil industry in the two decades following the nationalisation, until the complete transfer of the management of the industry to the National Iranian Oil Company in 1973. She argues that the assertion of oil being a natural resource and not a...
produced commodity has mystified the social relations of production in the oil industry. Jefroudi studied the oil workers in Iran at the point of production, in the labour market, and in their living conditions through archival work in USA, Britain, Iran and the Netherlands. The making of t