[10]See, for example, "Ha-Shavuʿa," *Hashkafa* 93 (30 August 1907), 2 (in Hebrew). For the enthusiastic coverage of the construction of the clock tower in Izmir, see Yetkin, *Kentsel*, 8–10.

[11]Ron Fuchs and Herbert Gilbert, "A Colonial Portrait of Jerusalem: British Architecture in Mandate Era Palestine," in *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment*, ed. Nezar Alsayyad (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001), 89–91.

COMMENT ON CYRUS SCHAYEGH, "'SEEING LIKE A STATE': AN ESSAY ON THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MODERN IRAN" (*IJMES* 42 [2010]: 37–61)

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Cyrus Schayegh's "'Seeing Like a State': An Essay on the Historiography of Modern Iran" tries to show how historians of the Pahlavi era "have been gripped by the image of an omnipotent, completely autonomous state and how, each one . . . turned this image into what I call methodological statism" (p. 38). He discusses critically several works by historians and political scientists while mentioning more favorably a few works by anthropologists and sociologists and then indicates what he considers a better approach to Pahlavi history. Although I agree with some of his criticisms and am glad to see a serious discussion of historiography, I think he overstates the sins of historians and fails to distinguish between historians and political scientists, whose discipline leads them to emphasize the state.

Schayegh's essay appeared as I was preparing for interviews to be transcribed into an oral history by the University of California, Los Angeles, library archives. This involves rereading some of my writings and thinking about Iranian historiography. I therefore have something to add and some points of critique to Schayegh's essay. I will not emphasize my many points of agreement or the essay's positive contribution to creating a critical bibliography of scholarly works on modern Iran nor will I repeat bibliographical information for all the books Schayegh cites. "Modern Iran" here covers the period from 1796 to 2009, but I continue his emphasis on the Pahlavi period. Briefly, I agree with his criticisms of modernization theory and of works that attribute all major developments in Pahlavi times to the shahs, but I believe few recent historians have followed these paths. I also agree that many more varieties of history should (and will) be written but note that only very recently have there been enough trained historians and available primary sources to pursue many of these new subjects. Research has also been hindered by limits on scholarly travel and contact between the United States and Iran.

An important new book, *Iran in the Twentieth Century: Historiography and Political Culture*, edited by Touraj Atabaki, includes several chapters relevant to Schayegh's concerns. Two chapters support one element of Schayegh's view, noting how Iranian historians under the Pahlavis glorified rulers and saw them as "the sole guarantors of the country's integrity and sovereignty."[1] Atabaki states that this view affected many Iranians. However, other chapters point to ideological trends more important among recent historians writing in the West: a more generalized nationalism, Marxism, anti-imperialism, and, for a few, Islamism and feminism. One could add the overlapping influence of Edward Said, Michel Foucault, postmodernism, and postcolonialism.

Today, when every catalog seems to offer a slew of books on modern Iran, or Iran from the beginnings of agriculture until today, it is hard to remember how recent the serious historical study of Iran is.[2] Among those trained in modern historical methods, I believe that Amin Banani and I were the only persons with books on modern Iranian history published in the 1960s, and only Banani's was on the Pahlavi period. The 1970s saw no important book on modern Iranian history. Even the 1980s and 1990s saw relatively few historical books in English covering the Pahlavis; only in the new century has there been a significant expansion of works on this period. It was to be expected that the earliest trained historians would concentrate on matters that involved the central state, especially as the 20th century was a period in which the Iranian state expanded its role in many fields that formerly had been largely under the control of other groups in society—law, education, social welfare, and even aspects of gender and family relations. This does not mean that such historians held the "statist" outlook attributed to them by Schayegh. Most of these works—including the general histories by Ervand Abrahamian, Homa Katouzian, and me—devote considerable attention to nonstate and antistate groups. Whether such books are fairly characterized as "statist" cannot be proven, but Schayegh offers more assertions than attempted proofs. In the future, as more solid information becomes available on nonstate actors and their influence, and more historians research them, general histories will no doubt change.

The historians of the West whom Schayegh cites favorably were writing about countries for which the main outlines of political history were already well researched. It would have been surprising and not very enlightening if the first scholarly books on modern Iranian history downplayed such events as the 1906 revolution or the acts of Reza Shah to concentrate, say, on the example Schayegh emphasizes at the end of his essay, habits of mass consumption. Such studies have everywhere and understandably come later than studies of political history.

Schayegh's essay does not distinguish between those who were writing history and those who, at the time they wrote, were writing about events contemporary with them, often using different methods and approaches from those of historians and historical sociologists. Among those writing about contemporary rather than historical subjects, he mainly criticizes political scientists, among them Leonard Binder, James Bill, and Fred Halliday. Several political scientists at one time followed formerly fashionable "modernization" theories soon discredited both by the realities of the 1978–79 revolution and by critiques Schayegh cites. He gives only limited coverage to the important work with historical implications done before 1979 in other fields, such as geography, anthropology, economics, and the humanities. If the latter had been included, as they had as much right to be as did political scientists, there would emerge a picture not of a "statist" emphasis but of work on the lives of different classes of people of varying religions and ethnicities, sometimes in relation to the state, that is possibly unparalleled in its coverage by that of any other Middle Eastern country.

The scope of such studies is suggested by the 1981 collection Schayegh cites that I coedited with Michael Bonine, *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change*, which surveys some of the work then being done on Iranian society. In my introduction, which Schayegh sees as contradictory to my approach in *Roots of Revolution*, but I see rather as dealing with different phenomena, I wrote that the book's chapters

Represent a departure from the Tehran-centered political and elite emphases that have characterized most postwar scholarly works in [sic] Iran. . . . Although these papers rarely concentrate directly on government-level politics or international relations they shed new and important light on the dramatic crisis and revolution of 1978–9 that one cannot find in purely political studies. Many of them illuminate different aspects of a continuing phenomenon central to the understanding of the revolution: namely, the contradictory and dialectical nature of change which, added to the ways in which change was imposed from above, created major tensions in all areas of Iranian society. . . .[3]

The papers included a variety of fields, many by scholars who later published related books: anthropologists Lois Beck, William O. Beeman, Byron J. Good, Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, Laurence D. Loeb, and C. Tom Thompson; historians Paul Barker, Mangol Bayat, Willem M. Floor, Gene R. Garthwaite, and Roger T. Olson; scholars in the humanities Michael J. Hillmann, Hamid Naficy, and Samuel Peterson; geographer Michael E. Bonine; and political scientist Eric Hooglund. These essays, and the books by these and several other scholars, suggest the great range of groups and subjects studied, particularly in the 1970s, when Iran was more open to foreign scholars than were most Middle Eastern countries other than Morocco. (The emphasis on Iran and Morocco is, as a result of this relative openness, also reflected in the "nonstatist" content of two other collections I coedited or edited, *Women in the Muslim World* and *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis*.) Other social scientists not mentioned by Schayegh whose work is significant for nonstatist Pahlavi history include geographer Paul Ward English, who analyzes changing rural–urban relations in *City and Village in Iran: Settlement and Economy in the Kirman Basin* and economist Fatemeh E. Moghadam, whose *From Land Reform to Revolution: The Political Economy of Agricultural Development in Iran 1962–1979* was based on extensive fieldwork.

Scholars have also discussed the history of tribal and rural groups. Gene Garthwaite and Richard Tapper have written tribal histories; and three anthropologists, Erika Friedl, Lois Beck, and Mary Hegland, pioneered in rural and tribal history by returning in several pre- and post-1979 visits to a single area and interpreting the changes that occurred.

As for other nonstate groups, Schayegh notes that several historians have written books that deal with leftist groups in Pahlavi and post-Pahlavi times, citing works by Abrahamian, Maziar Behrooz, and Afshin Matin-asgari. Schayegh does not cite Leonard Helfgott's 1993 *Ties that Bind: A Social History of the Iranian Carpet*.

Another nonstatist topic that has received extensive, some would say disproportionate, coverage is intellectual, including religious-intellectual, history, with emphasis on dissident intellectuals. General works covering several thinkers include those by Hamid Dabashi, Said Amir Arjomand, Ali Gheissari, Mehrzad Borujerdi, and Forough Jahanbakhsh; individual studies include those by Ali Rahnema on Shari'ati.[4] As noted in a controversial chapter in the Atabaki collection, intellectuals have inspired far more serious biographical research than have shahs and governmental figures.[5]

Women are another group whose Pahlavi history has attracted several historical works. Schayegh cites some of these but does not note that women constitute a significant nonstate area of research. I agree with him that Shireen Mahdavi greatly overstates the role of Reza Shah, but this is not significantly true of the work by Camron Amin, Jasamin Rostam-Kolayi, Parvin Paidar, or Afsaneh Najmabadi nor of the comprehensive new book by Janet Afary, *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*.[6]

Schayegh mysteriously omits studies centering on the period of royal weakness, 1941–53, including World War II and the Kurdish and Azerbaijani autonomy movements studied by William Eagleton, Touraj Atabaki, and others. This period culminated in the Musaddiq phenomenon, which involved many aspects of popular resistance to, and interaction with, the state. Several relevant works by Katouzian and the 1988 collection by James A. Bill and Roger Louis, *Musaddiq, Iranian Nationalism and Oil,* are among the relevant works, as are recent books on the 1953 coup.

Schayegh cites two books and two articles by Stephanie Cronin but does not highlight her important role in creating conferences and collective books that cover a wide variety of largely Pahlavi topics, many of them non-"statist." One only regrets that her books, like several others concerning modern Iran, are published by a press whose prices put them far beyond the reach of most scholars and students.

I am not saying that Schayegh should have mentioned every significant work about the Pahlavi period; but because he makes a generalized criticism of such works, it is not fair to omit important writings that do not fit into his generalizations. Although it is hardly surprising that the general books published soon after the 1979 revolution emphasized, and for some tastes overemphasized, politics and the state, this is not true of most of the more recent works by historians, several of which Schayegh cites approvingly.

As new sources on the Pahlavi period are unearthed and as more historians study modern Iranian history, these historians are dealing in new ways with a wider range of topics and telling us much about nonstate actors and their influence. There are no limits to what historians can usefully cover. Schayegh has already pioneered in treating new topics in novel ways in his highly original book, *Who Is Knowledgeable Is Strong*. (For some tastes this work says too little about the relation of his subjects to the state.) The historians who have worked the most on the Pahlavi period and are continuing to do so, including Houchang Chehabi, Cronin, Atabaki, Marashi, Matin-asgari, and Rostam-Kolayi, meet with Schayegh's approval. There is no need to see Pahlavi historiography as an ongoing struggle between "statists" and "antistatists."

NOTES

[1]Touraj Atabaki, "Agency and Subjectivity in Iranian National Historiography," in *Iran in the Twentieth Century: Historiography and Political Culture*, ed. Touraj Atabaki (London: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 72.

[2]Many of these books are by authors I know nothing about, but even respectable PhDs such as William R. Polk have contributed to the flood. His book, modestly titled *Understanding Iran: Everything You Need to Know, from Persia to the Islamic Republic, from Cyrus to Ahmadinejad* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), advocates sensible U.S. policies but has many errors, including in Persian terminology, for example, in claiming the term for modern intellectuals is *uqqal* (p. 109 and elsewhere).

[3]Nikki R. Keddie, "Introduction," in *Modern Iran: The Dialectics of Continuity and Change*, ed. Nikki R. Keddie and Michael Bonine (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1981), 1.

[4]General works include Ali Gheissari, *Iranian Intellectuals in the 20th Century* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 1997); Mehrzad Borujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1996); Negin Nabavi, ed., *Intellectual Trends in Twentieth-Century Iran* (Miami, Fla.: University of Florida Press, 2003); and Forough Jahanbakhsh, *Islam, Democracy and Religious Modernism in Iran (1953–2000): From Bazargan to Soroush* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2001), excluding works on individual thinkers.

[5]Olivier Bast, "Disintegrating the 'Discourse of Disintegration,'" in *Iran in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Touraj Atabaki, 55–68.

[6]Janet Afary, *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).