

(p. 81) by crafting a malleable masculinity to navigate between his spouse and his parents.

Crafting Masculine Selves demonstrates how ethnographic method can be expanded to include interdisciplinary expertise, while remaining critical of the knowledge production processes that undergird this expertise. Chiovena writes:

The analysis of non-Western milieus, where cultural idioms of interrelatedness and connectivity may call for different expectations as to how one should behave (and feel) toward oneself and the family members, I believe might be important in order to radically revise the crucial place that in Western psychological thought has been given to concepts like “individual psychic autonomy.” (p. 187)

In paragraphs like these, the author demonstrates the usefulness of writing ethnography by combining his anthropological and psychoanalytical training. Rather than taking for granted western psychoanalytic principles, the author problematizes overarching theoretical frameworks through his ethnographic data. This in itself is a significant contribution to the critical processes of how we develop analytical frameworks and expertise practices in academic disciplines.

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Parcham – Journal of Ahmad Kasravi and His Followers: A Snapshot from the History of Press in Iran, Stanisław Adam Jaśkowski, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Dialog, 2017, ISBN 978-838-0027-36-7, 228 pp.

As the author of the work under review explains, the bi-weekly *Parcham*, published by the celebrated Iranian social and religious critic and historian Ahmad Kasravi (1890–1946), was significant because (1) it marked the culmination of Kasravi’s idiosyncratic religious thought and (2) it was the religious attacks on Shi‘ism written by Ali-Akbar Hakamizadeh published in that journal which led the young cleric Ruhollah Khomeini to call for the execution of Kasravi, culminating in his savage murder on the steps of the courthouse in which he was being tried for heresy. I would add (3) it was these challenges Kasravi launched against Shiism which inspired many young Iranians to break with the beliefs of their forefathers; as Ervand Abrahamian states, many of the members of the Tudeh Party, which was one of the biggest communist parties in the Middle East and had a huge influence on the post-war 2017 generation, recalled Kasravi’s fiery attacks on Shiism as the turning point in their ideological development.

The author steeped himself in many of the relevant archives (pertaining to journalism and its laws in Iran and to Kasravi himself), which gives depth and breadth to his work. He has clearly studied Kasravi's writings and much of the secondary literature.

The author starts by examining in meticulous detail Iran's press laws from the Constitutional period through the 1940s. He presents the legal hurdles someone who wanted to start a newspaper faced as well as the chaotic state of executing journalistic law. Thus, in one case, some draconian laws of the Reza Shah years were never enforced at least in part because no one had been appointed to the clerical court taxed to do the job! (p. 22).

The laws in the post-Reza Shah era could also be severe. There was a fine of up to 50,000 rials for libel (p. 27). Even launching a journal required a deposit of up to 50,000 rials (p. 29). Other articles stipulated a punishment of up to ten years for publishing something against national security and three years in jail for insulting or weakening one of the three branches of government (p. 31) or a fine of up to 20,000 rials for preaching class strife (p. 32).

The author then moves on to his discussion of *Parcham*. He begins with a helpful biography of Kasravi. I would only take exception to the claims on his linguistic ability. *Pace* the author's claims, in his biography he is quite modest about his Arabic; and indeed his written Arabic was faulty, though he seems to have had a good reading knowledge of it. He tried to learn Armenian or, more precisely, classical Armenian, according to his biography, but he never used it, so it is doubtful that he actually got very far with it. The author then discusses Kasravi's *Peyman*, his first attempt at a journal.

Kasravi dated his new religion, Pakdini, to the day *Peyman* was founded (e.g. p. 37), although it is left unclear if the faith had any followers at the time or if it was only an idea in Kasravi's mind or, more likely, that this was declared retrospectively nearly ten years later when he openly proclaimed it. He then mentions Pakdini's major scripture, *Ayine*, of which he says, "Kasravi's journalistic works would all follow some broad ideas presented in the *Ayine*" (p. 36). This discussion is the book's biggest disappointment. The two paragraphs he devotes to it are inadequate to explore its ideas. He does not even mention its date of publication (the first volume around 1942, the second in early 1944).

On the other hand, his handling of *Varjavand-e Bonyad*, the distillation of Kasravi's philosophy, which he dates to just before the founding of *Parcham* (pp. 100–5) is excellent, original, and detailed. Particularly interesting was the discussion on the centrality of *kherad* (wisdom) in Kasravi's ideas (p. 102) and the discussion of the idea of change and progress in his thought (pp. 102–3).

The author is brutally honest about Kasravi's ultimate goal; it was a world in which everyone accepted his beliefs and those who attacked it would be destroyed (e.g. p. 51). He is also clear on the party's cult-like qualities (p. 107), for example severing its members from the outside world, particularly by creating its own language (p. 58).

The twice-weekly *Parcham* became the organ of the party of followers of Kasravi's idea, the *Bahamad-e Azadegan* (pp. 46 ff.). Kasravi had started ramping up its attacks on Shiism in *Parcham*'s predecessor, *Peyman*, which led to an exodus of followers, leaving behind a hard core of believers. And so *Parcham* became a propaganda organ guided

by its leader (p. 44). The author examines the relationship between the party and the religious movement, noting that there seems to have been a distinction between them. At its peak, the party had chapters in forty-four cities (p. 47). It had a military squad, *Razmandegan*, which was supposed to defend itself against its enemies and, ultimately, annihilate those who would attack Kasravi's beliefs (pp. 51–2).

The author presents what little we know about the *Azadegan's* rituals. The most controversial of these rituals was the burning of books which Pakdini considered evil (works of fiction, mystical poetry, etc.) (pp. 68 ff.).

He squeezed out whatever information he could get on the membership of the *Azadegan*, filling an appendix of several pages with information about its known members (pp. 160 ff.). He examined letters to *Peyman* to open a window on the inner life of *Azadegan*; of particular interest are the letters from women members (pp. 52–4). The fact is that Pakdini dogma was relentlessly patriarchal, relegating women to traditional roles (not discussed in this work), and yet women Pakdinis found a place in the party's intellectual and political life.

The author gives a sophisticated analysis of Kasravi's purified Persian, *zaban-e pak* (p. 59 ff.). For instance, he points to the Turkish roots of some of his reformist ideas (p. 60), its sources in Iranic dialects and ancient Iranian, including a famous hoax, and its general methodology. There was a sort of high dialect reserved for religious writings and a more popular dialect, difficult enough, for his histories and other sources. He has studied the letters to *Parcham* of people offering advice (often graciously accepted) and criticism (not so graciously received) (p. 63).

Like any leader of a political movement struggling out of obscurity, Kasravi had to struggle with rival political movements.

First, of course, was Shia Islam itself (pp. 78 ff.). As the political atmosphere opened up under the Allied occupation, both the reactionaries (like Minister of Justice Musa Sadr) and radicals were able to raise their heads, leading to an explosive situation. Kasravi's attacks on Shiism sharpened, leading first to him to being tried for apostasy and then to assassination. The author notes, however, that the "criticism of Shi'ism and mullahs found in *Parcham* is not the most sophisticated" (p. 84).

Next in line were the Babis and Bahais. The author notes that he rejects the conspiracy theory implicating these sects in an imperialist plot; rather, he relentlessly questions their faith's foundational narratives (pp. 85 ff.).

Finally, there were the Communists. As the author states (unlike his religious rivals), the founders of Communism, Marx and Lenin, were well-meaning but misguided, since only religion could save humanity (p. 95). And even there, at least the Russian Communists were workers who put their lives on the line for their own liberation, while the Iranian Communists were aristocratic poseurs (p. 94).

A few additional comments: The author separates Kasravi's more positivistic work (especially on history) from his religious work (p. 37). However, the connection here is significant and deserves a more in-depth approach. Also it should be noted that the news section of *Peyman*, edited by Kasravi's close comrade Reza Soltanzadeh, was not neutral, but markedly pro-Axis (p. 38). Moreover, I do not believe that Kasravi's "vision" about taking on the slogan "God is with us" (p. 102) can be separated from

the Nazis' use of this slogan. Along the same lines, one unsympathetic Iranian observer drew that connection between his militia, *Razmandegan*, and the Hitler youth.¹ I also do not believe there is a generally clear connection between his beliefs and Nazism. For instance, Kasravi was clearly uninterested in racism. The copy-editing is very weak, and the book is full of minor typos.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, on the whole this book is a significant contribution to the study of Kasravi's thought and a welcome addition to the existing studies on Kasravi in Polish.²

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Le shaykhisme à la période qajare: Histoire sociale et doctrinale d'une École chiite, Denis Hermann, Turnhout (Belgium), Brepols, 2017 ("Miroir de l'Orient Musulman," 3), glossary, bibliography, index. ISBN 9 782503 531519, paperback, 402 pp.¹

The Sheykhi school, a branch of Twelver Shi'ism, seems to have been rather well studied since the publications of Comte de Gobineau, A. L. M. Nicolas and E. G. Browne; more recently H. Corbin or D. M. MacEoin have stressed both the theosophical dimension of their doctrine and the filiation generally attested between them and the Babi and Baha'i faiths. Hermann's book challenges this impression and systematically goes back to the sources, the main ones being the writings of Sheykhi masters. He studies them in their historical settings, in their relations

¹Mahdi Mojtahedi, *Taqizadeh: Rowshangari-ha dar Mashurtiyyat-e Iran*, Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1357 (1978), p. 318, footnote 3.

²For earlier studies on Kasravi in Polish see: S. Jaśkowski, "Farhang ast ja nejrang (Czy to kultura, czy to oszustwo) Ahmada Kasrawiego—pismo w obronie rozumu, krytyka mistycyzmu" ["Farhang Ast Yā Neyrang" of Ahmad Kasravi—the defense of reason, criticism of mysticism], *Ruch Filozoficzny* 67 (2010): 405–8; S. Jaśkowski, "Ahmad Kasrawi, pierwsza ofiara rewolucji" [Ahmad Kasravi, the first victim of the revolution], *Przegląd Orientalistyczny*, no. 1–2 (236–237) (2011): 77–85; R. Rusek-Kowalska (trans.), "Co mówi Hāfez" [What does Hāfez say?], in A. Krasnowolska, R. Rusek-Kowalska, and M. Rzepka (eds.), *Irańskie drogi do nowoczesności* [Iranian paths towards modernity], Kraków, 2014, pp. 85–91; R. Kanarkowski (trans.), "Apel do uczonych europejskich i amerykańskich" [A message to the scholars of Europe and America], in *ibid.*, pp. 93–106; K. Lubowiecka, "Pamiętnik Ahmada Kasrawiego jako źródło informacji o życiu Irańczyków na początku XX wieku" [The memoir of Ahmad Kasravi as the source of information about the life of the Iranians in the early 20th century], unpublished MA thesis, Warszawa, 2000.

¹The present review follows a simplified transliteration style closer to Persian pronunciation.