

Russians in Iran: Diplomacy and Power in the Qajar Era and Beyond, Rudi Matthee and Elena Andreeva (eds.), London: I. B. Tauris, 2018, ISBN 978-1-78453-899-6 (hbk), xv + 320 pp.

Although Iran has been closely associated with Russia since the early nineteenth century, sometimes in tense and overwhelming ways, the historiography of Iran's relationship with Russia is limited. While there have been significant scholarly works on the subject, from Firuz Kazemzadeh's *Russia and Britain in Persia* (1968), to more recent publications such as Elena Andreeva's *Russia and Iran in the Great Game: Travelogues and Orientalism* (2007) and Stephanie Cronin's *Iranian-Russian Encounters: Empires and Revolutions since 1800* (2013), the bulk of the literature on this relationship has so far concentrated on the Russo-British competition in Iran and Central Asia in the period prior to World War I, a prolonged shadow war commonly known as the Great Game. The emphasis has been on how Iran served as a buffer zone in the imperial rivalry and balance of power between British India and Russia, with the Qajar court trying to maintain a balance of power with the world's two superpowers. This rivalry spanned the nineteenth century, from the Russo-Iranian wars, under Fath-'Ali Shah Qajar (r. 1797-1834), to the Anglo-Russian Entente of 1907, and even well into World War I. Even within the context of the Great Game, it has been Britain, Russia's primary rival in Iran during the nineteenth century, which has received the bulk of critical analysis from Qajar historians. Thus, the deeper study and analysis of the influence of Russia in Iran during the nineteenth century is important to a better understanding of the Qajar period.

Russians in Iran: Diplomacy and Power in the Qajar Era and Beyond, edited by Rudi Matthee and Elena Andreeva, adds new dimensions to the literature on the Great Game, while also looking at the topic from different perspectives. Using an array of hitherto unexplored sources, among them Russian archival material, the various contributors show that Iran was not a passive onlooker or even just a victim and that its relationship with Russia was more complicated than can be understood through simplistic one-sided theories. In their interaction with Iranians, the Russians appear more realistic and reasonable than we thought them to be. We also learn that, in addition to Russian diplomats, a range of other participants played a pivotal role in promoting Russian colonial interests in the region. This book thus examines the role of political activists, military officers, intelligence agents, and Russian merchants. The essays emphasize the continuity of the Russo-Iranian relationship from the beginning of the Qajar era to the middle of the Pahlavi period, despite all the ups and downs in the domain of politics and trade. Mostly based on Russian archives containing a significant amount of as yet unexplored material, the material presented here invites further study on various aspects of the Russo-Iranian relationship.

The essays in this collection are chronologically organized, and the first part, titled "War and Diplomacy," is devoted to the nineteenth century. Muriel Atkin, in the first essay, offers a new analysis of the early stages of Russo-Iranian relations and the Russo-Iranian wars, arguing that a new type of relationship emerged between Russia and Iran. As a result, Russia implemented a new policy toward Iran and sought to consolidate its

hold over the country for nearly a century, despite its many other concerns. Russia, after all, in this period was engaged not only in a war with Iran, but also had to deal with Napoleonic France and later with the Ottoman Empire; and on top of that it was involved in the Polish question and the independence of Greece. Therefore, the Russians looked at Iran in the context of a larger picture and as one piece in its foreign policy puzzle. Soli Shahvar and Emil Abramoff next present a well-documented case study that deals with the efforts of local rulers in Talesh Khanate to gain independence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, in 1828, at the end of the second Russo-Iranian war, the Russian Empire annexed the Caucasus, dissolving the Khanate through the treaty of Turkmanchai. Firuza Melville follows with a chapter that presents a new image of Alexander Griboedov, the famous Russian poet-diplomat who was killed in Tehran in 1829. She explores how the Iranians, Russians and the West have tended to view him and, interestingly, looks at Griboedov's relationship with his British counterpart, John MacDonald, in Tehran. Elena Andreeva examines the conditions of Russian deserters in Iran and the reaction of the Russian government. The ultimatum of Tsar Nicholas I to the Qajars, during his visit to the Caucasus, shows how embarrassing the issue was for the Russian crown. However, Iran welcomed the Russian fugitives and employed them as military advisers and instructors of the Qajar army. The number of these fugitives who escaped from Caucasus was enough to form a military unit which fought under 'Abbas Mirza against the Ottomans in 1821 as well as in the Herat campaign of 1832.

Part Two, "Intelligence and Intrusion: The Turn of the Twentieth Century," deals with Russia's influence in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Iran, and opens with a chapter by Hourī Berberian about the importance of the Caucasus as a trading route and a place for the exchange of nationalist and revolutionary ideas between Iran, Russia, and the Ottoman Empire. Irina Pavlova looks at the activities of the Russian Loan Bank in Tehran and the concessions and privileges this institution gained in exchange for delivering substantial loans to the Qajar court. The final article in this part, the longest of the book, is about the Russian invasion and bombardment of the Shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad in 1912, an unfortunate incident that resulted in many innocent people dead and wounded and a great deal of damage sustained by the shrine. On the basis of Iranian as well as Russian and British sources and eyewitness accounts, Rudi Matthee offers a detailed analysis of what happened behind the scenes and gives a blow by blow account of the events that led up to the shelling of the shrine. He also considers the wider implications of the incident, putting it in the context of the expansion of Russian influence in Iran.

Part Three, "Officers and Orientalists," addresses the first half of the twentieth century and focuses on Russian officers and orientalist active in Iran, men who collected information, and advanced the study of Iranian society and culture in this period. Nugzar Ter-Oganov's chapter explores the seven-year stay of Konstantin Nikolaevich Smirnov in Iran whom Mohammad-'Ali Shah appointed as the tutor of his son, the future Ahmad Shah. Smirnov served at the court and remained Ahmad Mirza's teacher until the latter came to the throne. The author tells the story of his stay and the political events of his time in Iran through personal corre-

spondence as well as through his memoirs. This is followed by Denis Volkov's interesting study of Vladimir Minorsky, the prominent Russian orientalist who did much to promote Iranian studies in the West after he started lecturing in Paris in the 1920s. Volkov focuses on Minorsky's early stay in Iran, uncovering his political and exploratory activities on behalf of the tsarist regime during the Russian pre-revolutionary period. The third contribution, by Lana Ravandi-Fadai, is devoted to another prominent Russian figure, Nikolai Markov, and his influence on modern Iranian architecture. Markov, a Russian architect and a tsarist, played a critical and long-lasting role under Reza Shah, adopting elements of Iranian architecture and modern architectural styles and helping to transform Qajar architecture into a new style.

The book's final part, "Ideology and Occupation," covers the period between World War I and the end of the Soviet occupation of northern Iran in 1945. In the first chapter, Mary Yoshinari looks at Soviet diplomats residing in Iran in the 1930s. As Europe was edging closer to World War II, the Russians realized that the German presence in Iran could be a potential threat to their country, causing them to consolidate their relationship with their southern neighbor. Rowena Abdul Razak next examines the relationship between the Soviets and the Tudeh Party at the time of the Allied occupation of Iran, and how other factors, such as World War II, played a crucial role in forming this relationship. Nikolay Kozhanov's chapter, finally, complements that of Abdul Razak by revealing the reasons why the Soviets occupied parts of Iran in the summer of 1941.

This collection of papers is a welcome addition to the sparse body of literature on the relationship between Russia and Qajar Iran and invites scholars to examine many aspects of that relationship left unexplored. The book shows that attention to Russian documents for the study of this period has become increasingly important. In-depth studies of Russian archives and primary sources related to Iran could significantly clarify much of the ambiguity and vagueness of Qajar history. Such studies could provide a more complete picture of Qajar history, and shed light on a different European archive for the study of the period, in addition to well-known British records and accounts.

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Beyond Shariati: Modernity, Cosmopolitanism, and Islam in Iranian Political Thought, Siavash Saffari, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, ISBN 978-1-107-16416-1 (hbk), 213 pp.

Siavash Saffari has penned an important book about the intellectual legacy of well-known Iranian thinker Ali Shariati. While books, biographies, articles and essays on