

Book Reviews

An earlier Iran

by Roger M. Savory

The Soviet Union and Iran: Soviet Policy in Iran From the Beginnings of the Pahlavi Dynasty Until the Soviet Invasion in 1941 by Miron Rezun. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988, 425 pages, US\$45.00.

The book under review is the first US edition of a work originally published in Leiden in 1981 and subsequently by Böhlau Verlag in 1982. The importance of the book lies in part in the fact that, as the author (a Professor of Political Science at the University of New Brunswick) states in his Introduction, there was previously "no single study devoted exclusively to Soviet-Iranian relations during the reign of Reza Shah," and in part to the fact that Miron Rezun has been able to make use of Soviet archival material covering the period of the reign of Reza Shah (1926-41). This material, comprising "carefully selected papers" from the archives of the Soviet People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs (NARKOMINDEL), began to appear in 1957 and, at the time when Professor Rezun was writing his book, the published volumes of this material covered the period down to 1938. In addition, the author made use of the published "speeches, articles, declarations and notes" of such Soviet Foreign Commissars as Chicherin and Litvinov. British, German and US documentary material was also consulted.

The most valuable parts of the book are Chapters 4, 5 and 6, on the "Dynamics of Soviet Policy" between 1926 and 1935; Chapter 7, on the history of the Persian Communist Party and its connections with the Comintern; and Chapter 8, on German involvement in Iran. A dominant feature of the book is the most detailed study yet available of Reza Shah's powerful minister Teymourash, a member of both the First Triumvirate (1927-29) and the Second Triumvirate (1931-33). These chapters all contain new and important material, but are not free from factual errors. For example, on page 131 Professor Rezun appears to

accept at face value the statement, apparently taken from a Persian source, that "throughout history, the islands (Bahrain) had formed part of the territory of Iran. In fact, of course, the Bahrain islands were not under the jurisdiction of Iran during the six centuries of the historical Caliphate (632-1258 AD); for most of the 16th century they were in the possession of the Portuguese, and from 1783 onwards they were in the hands of the Arab Al Khalifa family.

The first two chapters — "The Historical Framework" and "The Domestic Framework" — are less happy. Space does not permit me to list all the errors of fact or to qualify some of the more contentious statements, but, for example, the neutral zone established by the 1907 partition of Iran between Great Britain and the Soviet Union cannot accurately be described as "a strip of territory along the Persian Gulf." The majority of the reforms of Reza Shah cannot be characterized as "always of an economic and military nature." Reza Shah's reforms in the areas of education, public health, the legal system, and emancipation of women, to name but a few, had far-reaching social implications.

It is to be regretted that, when an edition of this work was being prepared for North American readers, the opportunity was missed to correct, not only the unusually large number of typographical errors which mar the original version, but also the misspelled names of people and places. For example, the name of the head of the German Fifth Column in Iran during World War II was Mayr, not Mayer, and Lake Gochka, which appears twice on page 5, is in fact Lake Gökcha. Particularly jarring to the Iranologist are the numerous distorted versions of Persian and Islamic names and titles of books; considerable ingenuity is required to unscramble some of them. The author's tendency to shorten Muslim names is not acceptable practice. Just because Sultanzade's name is rather long, for instance, one is not entitled to refer to him as "Zade!" It is also to be regretted that Professor Rezun could not have restrained himself from making *ad hominem* remarks about other scholars in the field. For example, his remarks on page 101 about Professor Lenczowski, a distinguished Emeritus

Professor of Political Science at Berkeley, do not enhance the quality of academic debate. Despite these blemishes, however, Professor Rezun's book is of great value to students of Soviet-Iranian relations.

Roger M. Savory is Professor Emeritus of Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of Toronto.

Revolutionary Iran

by William Millward

The Making of Iran's Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic by Mohsen M. Milani. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988, 361 pages, US\$29.50.

Post-Revolutionary Iran edited by Hooshang Amirahmadi and Manoucher Parvin. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1988, 262 pages, US\$39.50.

The Islamic republican regime which emerged from the long revolutionary ferment of 1978-79 in Iran is now ten years old. We now have a record of performance from the Islamic Republic upon which to base an assessment of what was essentially, at the beginning of its existence, an unknown and unpredictable quantity. The Islamic Republic is better known today, even if it is not significantly more predictable. And yet there are problems in assessing a theocratically structured and religiously sanctioned government. What criteria do we use to measure its performance as the source of authority, order and social control? Which accounting procedures are appropriate to permit an interim balance sheet that corresponds with reality?

Definitions of reality differ. The criteria applied by analysts outside the new system, who are not prepared to take the value structure of Shi'a Islam into their calculations, will incline generally to a negative and critical estimate of the regime's overall performance. The criteria of those who sup-