

# Comintern Eastern Policy and Iran

With the fall of the Soviet Union and the accessibility of former Soviet archives, rewriting the history of the Soviet Union continues to be of scholarly interest. Of the different political institutions facilitating Soviet expansionism, as well as enlarging its domain of political influence in the international arena, the Communist International (Comintern) was undoubtedly the most influential. Originally set up as a 'universal world revolutionary party' in 1919, both its strategy and its tactics were guided by the principle of 'world socialist revolution'. However, not long following its formation the Comintern metamorphosed into an institution defending the Stalinist policy of socialism in one country, only protecting the interests of the Soviet Union.

Review >

Central Asia

By Touraj Atabaki

In *Comintern Eastern Policy and Iran (1919-1943)* Solmaz Rustamova-Tohidi successfully endeavours to shed light on the more general issue of the organization's Eastern policy, by focusing on its policy towards Iran during 1920s and 1930s. During the twenty-four years of its life, the Comintern went through different political phases, adopting some zigzag type policies. From a radical stance promoting a proletarian socialist revolution, even for

agrarian, nomadic societies in Asia, it developed into a more retained policy of cooperation and collaboration with other social classes and groups within these same societies. Rustamova-Tohidi not only examines these phases and changing policies in detail, but also considers their political implications for Soviet internal and external affairs.

The *Comintern Eastern Policy and Iran (1919-1943)* is a well-written and thoroughly researched work. It is based on original materials obtained from archives in Russia, Georgia, and Azer-

baijan. Moreover, the author's acquaintance with a variety of languages enables her to utilize the pertinent sources in Persian, Turkish, and Russian as well as those in some Western European languages. This book can be highly recommended for students of Soviet history and those seeking a broader understanding of the complexities that burdened the Bolsheviks in sustaining the first socialist state in history.

Solmaz Rustamova-Tohidi is a historian specializing in Iranian modern

history at the Institute of Oriental Studies at the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences. Her interests include the comparative analysis of twentieth-century political and social movements in Turkey and Iran as well the former Soviet republics of Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. <

- Rustamova-Tohidi, Solmaz, *Comintern Eastern Policy and Iran (1919-1943)*, Baku: Khazar University Press (2002), pp. 507, ISBN 9952-20-010-2

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