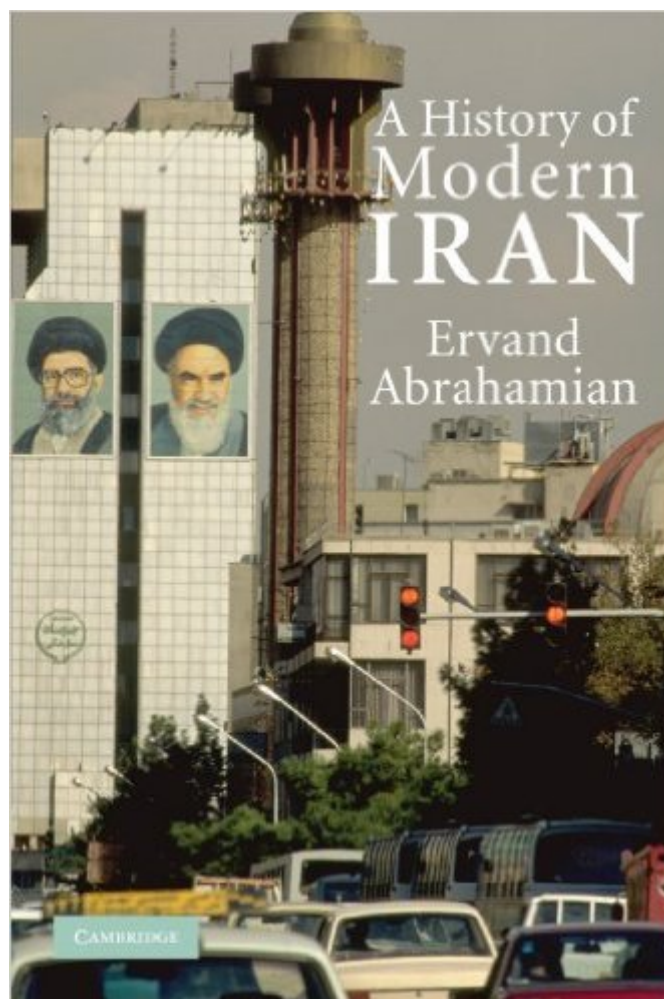


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A History Of Modern Iran



Synopsis

In a reappraisal of Iran's modern history, Ervand Abrahamian traces its traumatic journey across the twentieth century, through the discovery of oil, imperial interventions, the rule of the Pahlavis and, in 1979, revolution and the birth of the Islamic Republic. In the intervening years, the country has experienced a bitter war with Iraq, the transformation of society under the clergy and, more recently, the expansion of the state and the struggle for power between the old elites, the intelligentsia and the commercial middle class. The author is a compassionate expositor. While he adroitly negotiates the twists and turns of the country's regional and international politics, at the heart of his book are the people of Iran. It is to them and their resilience that this book is dedicated, as Iran emerges at the beginning of the twenty-first century as one of the most powerful states in the Middle East.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It might surprise many to know that Iran had a working parliament (majles) as early as 1906. As far as Iranian history goes, this has to be one of the best overviews of Iran's last 100 years. The book begins with the Qajar dynasty in its dying days. Iran's political borders are not what one might expect at the turn of the century. Protests that led to the 1906 revolution came from modern day Iraq, Karbala, Najaf as well as Iranian highlands around modern Tehran. When we think Iran, we think of the modern state and its boundaries, the supposed 'Persian' domination and Shi'a religiosity, Muslim extremism under Khomeini's ideas in Valayat e-Faqih (Jurist's Guardianship) an idea written about in the book called Hukumat Islami (Islamic government). Before today's Iran there was an ebb and flow of intellectualism either suppressed or in full force guiding the will of the Iranian people. Abrahamian as an author is not pointing fingers but doesn't leave out the coups of 1941 and

1953 and the obvious self-interests of the United States, the UK and Russia. At times Iran was a pawn in the 'great game', too often to the detriment of a working parliament. There has been a democratic flavor in Iran for over a century. The people have long-demanded it, regardless of whatever Shah or Ayatollah attempted to rule otherwise. The 1979 revolution sprang from intense oppression. Mohammad Shah, receiving large amounts of western aid, built up his country in the White Revolution. The reforms had the potential of enriching the entire nation yet sadly, the rich were heavily advantaged and the poor suppressed. Abrahamian attempts to describe also the tension and utility that Islam has played for different governments in power.

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