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Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mossadegh and a Tragic Anglo-American Coup

By Christopher de Bellaigue



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The Economist's Tehran correspondent Christopher de Bellaigue brings to light the never-before-told full story of one of the great anti-colonial heroes of the twentieth century: Muhammad Mossadegh, the great Iranian leader whose untimely demise resulted in the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and a man who has been demonized, ridiculed, and misunderstood in the West while remaining an icon and an inspiration across the Middle East. *Patriot of Persia*, the first biography exploring his life and impact, opens a crucial new window into Mossadegh—whose role in the evolution of Iran's political climate cannot be overemphasized—providing a resource that will prove equally invaluable to academics, newshounds, and activists as they struggle to understand Mideast politics, Iran, Ahmadinejad, and the future of the region—and the world.



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Editorial Review

From Bookforum

The first major treatment of Mossadegh's life to hit the mainstream US book market . . . is concise, smoothly written, and ultimately absorbing: The kind of portrait that serves as much as an introduction to a country as it does to a man. —Suzy Hansen

Review

“A compelling biography... Bellaigue...writes with economy and a lightly ironic touch...The result is a three-dimensional profile of Mossadegh that contrasts sharply with the heroic democrat mythologized by his supporters.” (Wall Street Journal)

“Economist Tehran correspondent de Bellaigue uses plenty of local insight to provide general readers with an intriguing combination of biography, history and strategic study.” (Kirkus Reviews)

“...superbly researched...” (Huffington Post)

“...a major strength of the book is that it does not seek to lionize the protagonist.” (Washington Independent Review of Books)

“Brilliant...A sweeping new biography...also a rich portrait of Iran amid the revolutionary upheaval of anti-colonial reform movements...-the antecedent, in many ways, of today’s Middle East uprisings.” (The Daily)

“...thanks to veteran journalist Christopher de Bellaigue’s brisk, engaging 300-page biography, Mossadegh’s strange personality and at times baffling motives come into clearer focus.” (The Daily Beast)

“A timely book...elegantly written...feels both fresh and relevant...highlights the dangers of a foreign policy that ignores the perceptions of those with memories longer than our own.” (The Guardian)

“Superbly timed...portrays some fascinating, and often farcical, stories of political life in Iran” (Independent)

“Compelling... the West has handled its relationship with Iran as badly as possible... we have little leverage with its people...de Bellaigue’s book goes far to explain why.” (Max Hastings, Sunday Times (London))

“De Bellaigue’s book is unsurpassed as a rounded portrait of Mossadegh.” (Times Literary Supplement (London))

“Authoritative...a politically astute biography” (Pankaj Mishra, London Review of Books)

“Portrayed by Bellaigue as a classic tragic hero...the book presents a nuanced portrait of an enigmatic man whose brilliance and fairmindedness fatally collided with his pride and rigidity.” (Tara Bahrapour, Washington Post)

“Brilliant...deft...De Bellaigue, fluent in Farsi, draws on previously unused Iranian sources to bring Mossadegh to vivid life...De Bellaigue’s powerful portrait is also a timely reminder that further Western

recklessness toward Iran...would only pile tragedy upon tragedy.” (Roger Cohen, New York Review of Books)

From the Back Cover

On August 19, 1953, the American and British intelligence agencies launched a desperate coup in Iran against Muhammad Mossadegh, a bedridden seventy-two-year-old man. His crimes had been to flirt with communism and to nationalize his country's oil industry, which for forty years had been in British hands. But the countries that overthrew Mossadegh would, in time, deeply regret siding with his great foe, Shah Muhammad-Reza Pahlavi. Mossadegh was one of the first liberals of the Middle East, a man who wanted friendship with the West—but not slavish dependence.

Who was this political guerrilla of noble blood, so adored in the Middle East and so reviled in the West? Schooled in Europe and pitted against dictatorship at home, Mossadegh had become the nation's conscience by the time of the Shah's ascension. Written by our foremost observer of Iran, *Patriot of Persia* reveals a man who embodied his nation's struggle for freedom and whose life serves as a warning to the White House and Downing Street as they commit to further intervention in a volatile and unpredictable region.

Users Review

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