
Modernisation and entering the era of nation-states have forced Iran and its neighbours to face a number of new challenges, one of which is discussed by Kaveh Bayat in detail. This is a story of the emergence of Turkish nationalism and Pan-Turkism in the perishing Ottoman Empire, and the wave of resistance and rebuttal from the Iranian side. The rise of the issue of minorities under the Ottoman control and the consequent rebellions, establishment of new independent states contributed to the birth of Turkish nationalism, which could be viewed at times as a belated nationalism, an attempt to deal with the challenges and retain whatever possible within the shrinking borders of the Empire. That is a commonly expressed view and interpretation of the events that embrace the period from the last decades of the 19th century to the end of the first quarter of the 20th century. The “defensive” response, however, even if it was at some point, soon turned into an offensive ideology aimed against Iran among others, and planning to expand eastwards, “reunite all the Turks” or at least gain more influence in regions populated by Turkic-speakers. It is at this time that Yusuf Akçura published his well-known work titled *Three Policies (Üç tarz-ı siyaset)* in 1904. Akçura points at the inefficiency and failure of both the notion of the Ottomaness and Islamic unity, and finds that it is the strong assertion of the Turkish identity and Turkishness in general that should be applied as the new state policy. Followed by Akçura, Zia Gökalp and others laid the foundations of the fresh ideology aimed at the creation of Greater Turan, which would embrace a huge territory up to the mountains of Tian Shan. Three steps are emphasised in this case: strengthening the power of the Ottoman Turks within the lands under the imperial control and assimilation of the minorities; absorbing the Turkic-speaking Azaris of Iran and the Muslims of the Caucasus within a Turkic state; and unification of all the Turks and Turkic-speaking peoples and tribes.

Most of the space in the book is dedicated to the issue of Azerbaijan (Aturpātākān, the northern province(s) of Iran) and the emergence of the new homonymous republic of Azerbaijan in the Caucasus—by the author’s definition, as a direct result of Pan-Turkic aspirations. Until the late 19th and early 20th century it would be unthinkable to refer to the Muslim inhabitants of the Caucasus as Azaris (Azeris) or Azerbaijani, since the people and the geographical region that bore these names were located to the south of the Araxes River. Therefore, the Iranian in-
telligentsia raised eyebrows once the independent Republic of Azerbaijan was declared in 1918 just across the Iranian border. Interestingly enough, the Azari (Iranian) Turkic-speaking democrats led by Khiabani (often represented by Azerbaijani authors as “a fighter for national independence”), were the first to quickly react against this event. They tried even to change the name of their self-proclaimed autonomous region of Azerbaijan into Āzadestān (Land of Freedom) in order to underline their protest regarding the uncommon use of the ancient Iranian toponym as the name of the newly-formed Turkic republic in the north and to differentiate themselves from the Caucasian Muslims. Moreover, a proposal and decision was soon made to make Persian the sole language of communication (p. 30), which would once again clearly articulate their loyalty and sense of belonging to Iran rather than to an independent Turkic state.

Kaveh Bayat goes on with an interesting and detailed description of the developing polemics between Iranian and Turkish intellectuals. Here again the Azari Iranian turkophones played a particularly significant role in repulsing the attacks of Pan-Turkism. The mother tongue of many of those authors was Azari Turkish, but yet, they were quite active and even aggressive in their rebuttals and arguments against those, who were attempting to promote the idea of “Turkic unity” and to introduce the Turkic-speaking Iranians as Turks (p. 31). Incidentally, even in our days, the overwhelming majority of the Iranian nationalist hardliners are natives of the northern provinces of Iran, in other words Turkic speakers—beginning from Āḥmad Kasravī-Ṭabrīzī to Yahyā Zokā’, ‘Abdol-‘Alī Kārang, Zaryāb Xūyī, and others.

About half of the book consists of reprinted original texts or translations of the articles that were written during the period under discussion, therefore almost every significant reference or quote provided by the author can be verified with the respective source in the second part of the book. This notably adds to the value of the current publication providing enough room for the reader to make his own judgments and conclusions. This original system enables the author to interfere as little as possible into the debate that makes this book an excellent analytic work with an impartial approach. The research is devoid of unnecessary emotionality and patriotic zeal, which can often be traced in works with similar subjects by the local authors—either in Iran, Turkey, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Armenia, or Georgia. Moreover, Bayat also finds it necessary to point out the shortcomings or weak academic basis of some of the publications on the same topic both by Pan-Turkic and, most importantly, Iranian or Pan-Iranist authors. He particularly notes