

M. A. Persic. *Zastenčivaja intervencija : o sovetском vtorženii v Iran i Buxaru v 1920-1921 gg.* 2nd revised and enlarged edition, Moscow, Izdatel'skij dom "Muravej-Gajd", 1999, 197 p. [An Embarrassed Intervention : About the Soviet Invasion of Iran and Bukhara in 1920-1921]

Reinhard Eisener

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- 1 Based on evidences from Russian archival documents Persic, a longstanding Soviet specialist in 'Communist movements of the East', touches crucial points of the Eastern policy of early Soviet Russia: the change in world revolutionary expectations from West to East (1919-20) and practical consequences of this, the successful liquidation of the Emirate of Bukhara by military means (September 1920), and the two, in the end, unsuccessful interventions in Persia (Khurasan and Gilan, 1920-21). Though boosting his archival research, Persic's presentation of its results turns out rather superficial and Soviet-like incoherent. Untenable speculations too often have to substitute for lack of source criticism and analysis as well as obvious gaps in knowledge (e. g., mistaking propaganda statements for realpolitik (p. 16 ff.), or asserting that the diplomatic activities to appease Bukhara in summer 1920 (p. 73 ff.) were «for the sake of themselves» (p. 76), although he mentions the actual problem (p. 82 ff.) that the Politbureau hesitated to approve the already organized 'Bukharan operation' until mid

of August 1920). Unfortunately, Persic is ignorant of Western research and, moreover, does not know about the developments in the 'Anglo-Soviet relations' of that period, which certainly had an impact on the decision making of the Soviet political leadership with respect to their Eastern policy. The latter, by the way, can hardly be called 'embarrassed' (*zastenčivyyj*), rather than ruthless, but is confined by a broader set of various political interests. Beyond these shortcomings, deserving of some interest are the findings concerning the short-lived Soviet Republic of Gilan (p. 90 ff.), in particular, Raskol'nikov's operation against Anzalî and the Soviet relations with Kučuk Xân a field the author, virtually, is more familiar with. Nevertheless, also here the reader may wonder if it would not have been more useful simply to publish and annotate the core documents, rather than paraphrasing and explaining them in a way that raises suspicions.

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**Thèmes :** 4.6. Histoire de l'Asie centrale et Caucase (à partir de 1917)

## AUTEURS

**REINHARD EISENER**

Berlin (Allemagne)