

# IRAN

*From Religious Dispute to Revolution*

Michael M. J. Fischer

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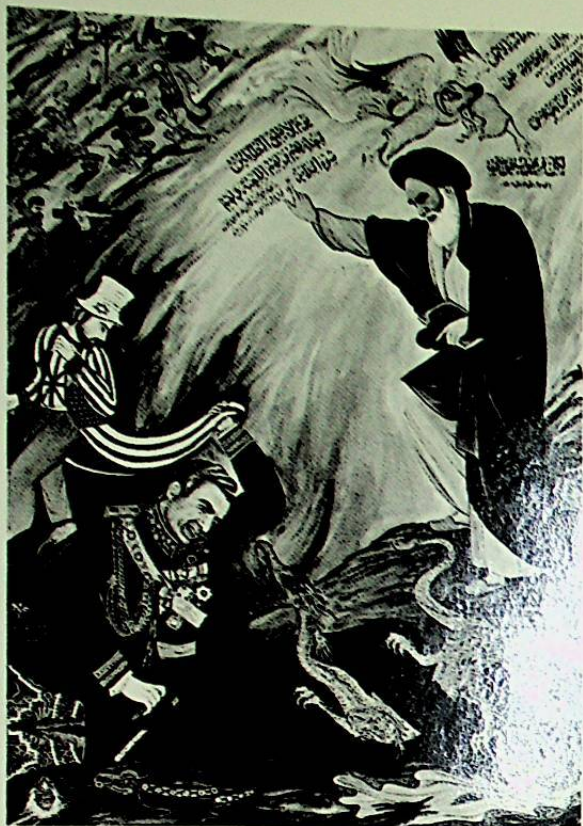
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# *Chronology of Significant Dynasties*

	Muslim Dates (A.H.)	Christian Dates (A.D.)
<b>Pre-Islamic</b>		
Achaemenians (Cyrus to Alexander)		558 B.C.-331 B.C.
Sassanians (Ardashir to Yazdigird III)		224-651
<b>Early Islamic</b>		
Rashidun (first four Sunni caliphs)	11-40	632-661
Umayyads	41-132	661-750
Abbasids	132-656	750-1258
Twelve Imams (Shi'ite)	11-260	632-872
Buyids (Shi'ite)	320-447	932-1055
Seljuks and Il-Khanids (Sunni)	429-754	1037-1353
<b>Iran since establishment of Shi'ism as the state religion</b>		
Safavids	907-1135	1501-1722
Afshars and Zands	1148-1210	1736-1795
Qajars	1200-1342	1785-1925
Pahlavis	1342-1399	1925-1979
Reza Shah (1925-1941)		
Mohammad Reza Shah (1941-1979)		



FEW EPISODES in the history of the Near East have been more difficult to comprehend than the recent revolution in Iran. The opacity of these events stems less from political complications than from the sense that the social aspirations and political ideals of the movement which felled the shah are deeply embedded in a cultural and religious logic that defies Western understanding.

*Iran* is the first book to appear since the revolution which makes a serious attempt to decode Shi'ite culture and belief in a way that reveals its explosive political implications. Unlike much of the instant analysis appearing at the time of the crisis, Michael Fischer's book is based upon extensive fieldwork carried out in Iran before the revolution. Anthropologist Fischer's rich experience with the mullahs and their students in the holy city of Qum permits him to compose a picture of Iran-



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