

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF SHAH REZA PAHLAVI'S RAPPROCHEMENT WITH GERMANY? THE PARADIGM RESULTING FROM THE REACTION OF GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA

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Abstract

Iran's strategic location and its rich underground resources have historically made the country vulnerable to external pressures and internal conflicts. These factors have continuously influenced its religious, cultural, political and economic development. In the 20th century, the geopolitical importance of the region increased significantly due to the discovery of large oil reserves. These deposits altered the colonial states' perception of Iran, paving the way for significant political developments. Throughout history, Iran has been the focal point of economic conflicts. The collapse of the Qajar dynasty after the First World War led to the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. Under Reza Khan's leadership, a new state structure based on Persian nationalism was established, and the principle of neutrality was adopted in Iranian foreign policy. Reza Pahlavi exploited his relations with Germany to counterbalance Britain and Russia. This method therefore contributed to the development of Iran. He remained in power until 1941, during which time he established military and economic relations with Germany. During the Second World War, he maintained a neutral stance. However, he aligned Iranian policies with Germany's potential victory, resulting in the subsequent occupation of Iran by the Russians and the British. This risky policy ultimately led to Reza Pahlavi being deposed and exiled. After the war, his son, Mohammad Reza, ascended the Iranian throne and was forced to adopt a pro-Western foreign policy.

Keywords: Shah Reza Pahlavi, Germany, Russia, Great Britain, World War II.

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ŞAH RIZA PEHLEVİ'NİN ALMANYA İLE YAKINLAŞMASININ İKTİSADİ VE SİYASİ SONUÇLARI? İNGİLTERE VE RUSYA'NIN TEPKİSİ SONUCU OLUŞAN PARADİGMA

Öz

İran, stratejik konumu ve yeraltı kaynakları nedeniyle tarih boyunca dini, kültürel yayılmacılığa ve siyasi, iktisadi çıkar çatışmalarına maruz kalmıştır. 20. yüzyıla girerken petrol yataklarının keşfi, bölgenin jeopolitik değerini artırmış ve sömürgeci devletlerin İran'a bakış açısı, siyasi gelişmelere zemin hazırlamıştır. İran, tarih boyunca iktisadi çatışmaların merkezinde yer almış ve I. Dünya Savaşı sonrası Kaçar Hanedanlığı'nın yıkılmasıyla 1925'te Pehlevi Hanedanlığı'nın kuruluşuna geçmiştir. Rıza Han liderliğinde Fars milliyetçiliğine dayanan yeni bir devlet yapısı oluşturulmuş, İran dış politikasında tarafsızlık ilkesi benimsenmiştir. Rıza Pehlevi, Almanya ile ilişkilerini İngiltere ve Rusya'ya karşı bir denge unsuru olarak kullanmış ve bu yöntem İran'ın gelişimine katkı sağlamıştır. 1941 yılına kadar iktidarda kalan Rıza Pehlevi, Almanya ile askeri ve ekonomik ilişkiler geliştirmiştir. II. Dünya Savaşı'nda tarafsızlık ilan etmesine rağmen, İran politikalarını Almanların zaferine göre şekillendirmiştir. Ancak Almanya'nın yenilgisiyle bu riskli politika sona ermiş, İran Rusya ve İngiltere tarafından işgal edilmiştir. Rıza Pehlevi tahttan indirilmiş ve sürgüne gönderilmiştir. Savaş sonrası iktidara gelen oğlu Muhammed Rıza, Batı yanlısı bir dış politika benimsemek zorunda kalmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Şah Rıza Pehlevi, Almanya, Rusya, İngiltere, II. Dünya Savaşı.

Introduction

Throughout history, Iran has been a key region shaped by the economic and political interests of imperialist states, as well as religious and cultural expansionism. Historically a center of political upheavals and migration routes, Iran's geopolitical significance increased in the 20th century due to its rich oil resources. The southern coast, under Iranian sovereignty, was the subject of competition between colonialist states as the new route for a trade route from China to Europe via the Indian Peninsula, the Strait of Hormuz, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Peninsula, the Red Sea and the eastern Mediterranean. At the start of the 20th century, empires began to decline globally. With the industrialisation of Europe, the great power competition and the process of empires facing internal revolts affected the East, especially the Ottoman geography.

The movement for constitutional monarchy in Iran took place at about the same time and in a similar way as in the Ottoman Empire. As underground resources gained importance, Western companies exploited the situation in the East, serving their respective national interests. Britain's imperial policy was based on the geography of India and Iran. The importance of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) in the political history of Iran and the region is linked to both imperial strategy and

the experience of the tobacco issue during the Qajar dynasty. In 1905, after being defeated by Japan, Russia gave up trying to control the whole of Iran and made an agreement with Britain. As a result of the Anglo-Russian agreement signed in 1907, Iran was divided into three regions, with Russia controlling the northern part. This region began at the Russian border with Iran, continued along the Caspian Sea, and extended from Kasr-ı Shirin to Isfahan and then to Yazd, ending at the Iran-Afghanistan border. The British zone ran parallel to the Persian Gulf and continued eastwards to the Indian Empire. In the centre, although there was talk of a neutral zone, everyone agreed that it was linked to British interests (Ettahadiyyeh, 2010).

Iran, one of the world's most strategically important regions, continued to be the scene of intense conflicts of interest and rivalries between colonial powers in the 20th century. In the 20th century, the importance of oil as the main source of energy increased the geopolitical value of oil-rich regions like Iran. The imperialist countries' view of Iran from this perspective prepared the ground for the political developments in the region. Therefore, the political developments in Iran in the early 20th century had a direct impact on the state structure of Iran in the modern era. The political situation in Iran in the 20th century is a reflection of the political developments inherited from the past to the present. In this historical process, the perspective of the imperialist countries towards Iran had a direct impact on the events in the region. In this period, Iran, which experienced the First World War and the collapse of the Qajar dynasty, entered a new era with the establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in 1925. The new state structure, based on Persian nationalism under the leadership of Reza Khan, was designed as Iran's new point of resistance to colonialism. In this framework, the relations established with Western countries and the development programme of Iran continued until the occupation of Iran in the Second World War. Until 1941, Reza Pahlavi, who remained in power until 1941, developed relations with Germany in many fields, especially military and economic, in order to balance against Great Britain and Russia, the main actors of colonial activities in Iran (Mohdevi, 1381).

Although Iran had declared its neutrality in the Second World War, it continued to maintain good relations with Germany, and in this framework Iran formally adopted a neutral policy, but in reality a pro-German one. It should not be forgotten, however, that the success of this Iranian policy depended on the German victory in the Second World War. This risky policy of Shah Reza Pahlavi led to disappointment with the defeat of the Germans in the Second World War. In this context, Iran was occupied by the Allied powers and Reza Pahlavi was forced to abdicate on 16 September 1941 (Nihavendi, 2014).

Since the early 20th century, Iran's rich oil reserves have made it a coveted region for imperialist states such as Britain, Russia and Germany. This study examines the economic policies implemented by Shah Reza

Pahlavi when he came to power in Iran in 1925, and the consequences these policies had for the country's politics. The assumptions and consequences of the political and economic decisions made in Iran before and during the Second World War are therefore taken into consideration. For Iran, aligning itself with one of the imperialist and colonial powers presented both risks and opportunities. Ultimately, Shah Reza Pahlavi's decision to side with Germany over Russia and Britain led to his downfall.

1. PARADIGMS OF POWER IN IRAN DURING AND AFTER WORLD WAR I

The desire of European states to expand around the world and the colonial activities that began with the geographical discoveries gained momentum in the 19th century. The main reason for this was the Industrial Revolution, which increased the raw material and market needs of European states. Industrialising countries needed cheap and abundant raw materials for production and large markets to sell the goods they produced. Most of the colonial countries in the Americas, where the first colonial empires were established, had gained their independence in the first half of the 19th century. The European powers therefore turned their attention to Africa and Asia and began to acquire large colonial territories in these regions. After the Industrial Revolution, competition between colonial powers intensified in the search for raw materials and markets. The European colonial powers, led by England, turned their attention to geographies rich in underground resources and began to look for colonies. The search for colonies by these states led to fierce competition in geographies rich in raw materials and underground resources. Over time, competition between countries gave way to alliances based on common interests, and to conflict when interests clashed. The reason for the competition and conflict between states, centred in Europe, began to manifest itself as the symptoms of a war that would engulf the whole world (Türkey and Açıkşes, 2021).

Although the First World War began on 1 August 1914, the process of creating the conditions for war had been going on for a long time. This process began with the industrialisation of Europe and then accelerated with colonial competition. Iran was one of the countries that fell victim to this competition. The Iranian government showed its first reaction to the First World War by declaring its neutrality with the edict issued by Ahmad Shah on 1 November 1914. During the war, the Iranian government tried to keep its country out of the First World War by declaring its neutrality. However, the Treaty of 1907 divided Iran into British and Russian zones of influence, and the country was effectively occupied by Russia and Britain. Therefore, at the outbreak of the First World War, a large part of Iran was already occupied by Russia and Britain and there was no point for Iran to remain neutral. As the First World War continued with all its intensity, the Iranian government feared that the

country would be turned into a battlefield by the countries involved in the war. In line with these concerns, the Iranian government made some diplomatic attempts to maintain its neutrality and continued its diplomatic efforts before Russia and Britain. Iran believed that by declaring its neutrality, its territory would not be invaded and it would not be harmed by the war. It also believed that maintaining its neutrality would protect the country's interests and cancel the concessions it had previously made. Iran drew up a programme for maintaining its neutrality and sent it to all official institutions in the country and to foreign ambassadors. However, despite all these diplomatic efforts, the de facto occupation of a large part of Iranian territory by Russia and Britain was perceived as a great threat to the Ottoman Empire, which entered the war on the side of the Allied powers. For this reason, the Ottoman Empire's war with Russia through Azerbaijan and the Caucasus led to the transfer of World War I to Iran (Ettahadiyyeh, 2010).

Although the Iranian government took a neutral stance on the First World War, the country's domestic politics were not on the same level as the Iranian government. There was a strong public reaction against Britain and Russia, which had occupied Iranian territory for years. Prime Minister Mustawfi al-Mamelek planned to enter the war on the side of Germany because of the nationalist sympathies in the country. The warm reception given to the German ambassador, Prince Reuss, and the Austrian ambassador, Logoteti, in Tehran in April 1915 could be seen as an indicator of this intention. On the one hand, Prime Minister Mustawfi al-Mamelek negotiated the terms of Iran's entry into the war in favour of Germany; on the other, he pursued a policy of balance by continuing to negotiate with Britain for the withdrawal of the Russians from Iran. With this policy of balance, Iran undertook to enter the war on the side of Germany in return for Germany's guarantee to protect its territorial integrity as a result of secret negotiations. However, as a result of the Allied powers becoming aware of these secret negotiations between the Germans and the Iranian administration, the Russians moved towards Tehran on 7 November 1915 (Ettahadiyyeh, 2010).

The Russian army, which had occupied Iran from the north at the beginning of the First World War, went on the offensive in 1915 with troops under the command of General Chernozubov and captured Tabriz by moving towards Lake Urumiyeh. Britain, on the other hand, began to occupy Tehran and its surroundings, which had been considered a buffer zone in the 1907 partition agreement (Mohdevi, 1381). After the outbreak of World War I, Russia and Britain sought to preserve their existing gains over Iran. They even went further and sought to dominate the entire country beyond the spheres of influence they had established in the 1907 treaty. The Anglo-Russian Treaty (1907), which was seen as an attempt by Britain and Russia to reconcile their spheres of influence in Asia in accordance with their mutual interests, was the last link in the trilateral treaty bloc that emerged against Germany and its allies, including France. This treaty, which came to the fore especially with

the partition of Iran, was regarded by the Ottoman Foreign Ministry as a text on Asian affairs. The Ottoman administrators, who evaluated the scope of the treaty only in relation to Afghanistan, Tibet and Iran, failed to see that this treaty was an important part of the polarisation policy that led the world to a general war.

Although Britain and Russia were allies, the British were actually uncomfortable with the Russians' activities in the region. After all, if the Russians violated Iran's neutrality, it could have a bad effect on the whole of the east and jeopardise Britain's gains in the east. Russia's domination of the Persian Gulf and its surroundings, which was within the Neutral Zone, was seen by Britain as a dangerous situation. This region would threaten Britain's waterways to India. The continuing conflict of interest between Britain and Russia over Iranian geography was actually an indication that the alliance between them was not strong. Germany, which continued its efforts to defeat Britain and Russia in their colonial geographies, began its activities in this neutral region to gain the support of the people (Gezkuh and Vekili, 1393).

2. IRAN'S ROADMAP AFTER WORLD WAR I AND THE END OF THE QAJARS

After the end of the First World War, Iran began to face major problems such as epidemics, famine and economic crisis. Between 1917 and 1921, around two million people in Iran died as a result of epidemics, war and famine. Even in this difficult situation, Britain was anxious to acquire the lands abandoned by Russia, which withdrew from Iran as a result of the Bolshevik Revolution (Abrahamian, 2014). To this end, Britain, through Foreign Secretary Curzon, initiated treaty negotiations with Iran, demanding that Iran's finances be placed under British control, that the army be administered by the British, and that Iran be granted loans in return. As a result of the negotiations, a treaty was signed in 1919. In return for British recognition of Iran's independence and loans for Iranian railways, British experts would be allowed to work in the Iranian state. In addition, customs tariffs were to be arranged in favour of the British, and Britain was to receive war reparations from Iran on the grounds that Iran had maintained its neutrality in the First World War (Karadeniz, 2008). The Anglo-Iranian Treaty of 1919, which imposed harsh conditions on Iran after the First World War, was signed by Iranian Prime Minister Mirza Hasan Khan Wuq al-Dawla. In 1919, when the Iranian Majlis was not in session, the Shah appointed Mirza Hassan Khan Wuquq'd-Dawla as Prime Minister and the British government began paying him a monthly allowance of £6000 indefinitely for his services. After the Iran-Britain Treaty of 1919, Prime Minister Mirza Hasan Khan Wuq al-Dawla even asked the British government for asylum in case things did not go well. During this period, when the administration of the country was completely handed over to the British, the anger of the Iranian people against

the British increased exponentially. The followers of the Jengel movement, who launched an armed struggle, established the Socialist Republic of Gilan on 4 June 1920. Shia scholars in Karbala began to issue fatwas condemning the British and calling the Bolsheviks friends of Islam (Abrahamian, 2014).

In the period after the First World War, internal unrest in Iran continued to grow. Ahmad Kavam's government sought to borrow money to overcome the financial crisis the state was facing. As a result, a law was passed in parliament to borrow \$10,000,000 from the US in exchange for granting the northern oil concession and limiting the oil basin to Gilan, Mazenderan and Gorgan. After the Bolshevik Revolution, there was a possibility that the northern oil fields, which were located in the Iranian territory vacated by the Russians after the Bolshevik Revolution, would come under the control of the USA. In order to eliminate this possibility, Prime Minister Ahmad Kavam passed a law in the Majlis stating that the northern oil fields of Iran should not be given to the USA. In addition, Kavam's government sought to stabilise Iran by distancing itself from Russia and Britain and reaching agreements with Afghanistan and China. In line with these efforts, Kavam's rise was opposed by socialist groups and Reza Pahlavi. After growing opposition to the Kavam government in parliament, Ahmad Kavam was forced to resign. As a result of the growing internal turmoil in the country, Ahmad Shah travelled to Europe in 1921 on the pretext of seeking medical treatment. Opposition from members of parliament and politicians to the Shah's trip to Europe led to further political turmoil in the country. War Minister Reza Khan, who tried to control the chaos by interfering in government affairs, suppressed anti-government uprisings in Khuzestan and Gorgan. Then, in order to prevent the Shah from interfering in state affairs, he passed a law in the National Assembly and took over all the powers of the Sultanate. On 31 October 1925, the Qajar dynasty came to an end with the law passed by the National Assembly of Iran. As a result, the Iranian Constituent Assembly met on 12 December 1925 and established the new regime of Iran as a *constitutional kingdom*, the administration of the country was entrusted to Reza Khan, who had been the Minister of War during the Qajar period, on behalf of the nation. The Iranian Constituent Assembly also recognised the right of Reza Shah's sons to inherit the Iranian dynasty. On 25 April 1926, Reza Shah appointed his eldest son, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, as heir apparent in a magnificent coronation ceremony, and the dynasty name was changed to *Pahlavi*, ushering in a new post-Qajar era in Iran (Sanghvi, 1971).

3. THE REIGN OF SHAH REZA PAHLAVI

During his reign, Shah Reza Pahlavi gave priority to Persian nationalism in all his activities in the country. Influenced by nationalist ideas, Shah Reza Pahlavi wanted to establish a modern Iranian society based on ancient times, leaving aside the feudal structure based on various ethnic structures and tribes that make up Iranian society. Therefore, Iran's new state

organisation, the nation-state concept, had to be adopted by all segments of the country and developed socially, economically, politically and culturally. Shah Reza Pahlavi declared that a strong and modern Iran would only rise in the civilised world if it had national values. In order to achieve this goal, an intensive movement of change and transformation was initiated in Iran (Alizade, 1384).

3.1. Shah Reza Pahlavi's Economic Policies

The colonialist policies of Britain and Russia in Iran and the excessive palace spending of the Qajar regime caused a serious decline in the economy. Shah Reza Pahlavi's economic policies enabled Iran to become more independent in its relations with Western countries. Shah Reza Pahlavi set economic development policies in Iran to create an independent and modern state in all aspects during his reign. The economic and development programme of Shah Reza Pahlavi's era was an attempt to make Iran's foreign policy independent. Shah Reza Pahlavi tried to make the nomadic Iranian people, whose livelihood was based on animal husbandry, sedentary through industrial investment (Hüseyni, 1391).

Reza Pahlavi began his economic development programme by collecting Iran's national revenues in one hand. In this context, he established a bank called Bank-ı Pahlavi in 1926 in order to collect the national revenues in one hand and to finance military expenditures by organising the budget of the Ministry of War. However, Bank-ı Pahlavi, which only supervised military expenditure, had no direct impact on economic life. Therefore, another bank was needed to support the country's development programmes. As a result, a bank called Bank-ı Milli was established in 1929. In this context, the British Imperial Bank (Bank-ı Shahanshahi), which had been established in 1889, was deprived of the privilege of printing Iranian banknotes and it was given to Bank-ı Milli in 1933 (Jazani, 2009). After the privilege of printing banknotes was given to Bank-ı Milliya, the country's currency was defined as the Iranian rial and the value of the currency was fixed in gold and put into circulation (Musiki, 1385).

Oil is the main source of income for the Iranian economy. In 1901, the British entrepreneur William Knox D'Arcy was granted a concession to explore for oil throughout the country, except for the northern provinces of Iran (Garhwaite, 1972). After coming to power, Shah Reza Pahlavi revised this concession and reduced the share of oil revenues from 50 per cent to 25 per cent for Angelo Persian Oil, a British company owned by William Knox D'Arcy. Shah Reza Pahlavi nationalised the majority of Iran's oil fields in 1933, especially with the oil contracts he signed with the British, and increased the share of revenues received and raised the country's economy to an important level. Thus, while the money Iran received from oil revenues was 469,000 British pounds sterling in 1920-1921, it increased to 4,271,000

British pounds sterling in 1940-1941. In this context, the reorganisation of the concession granted to the British company Anglo Persian Oil made a significant contribution to the Iranian economy. Shah Reza Pahlavi, who followed a more stable investment and development programme in the reconstruction and construction of Iran, infrastructure and other expenditures, was successful in the economic development of the country with the economic policies he implemented (Katuzyan, 1372).

Foreign trade in Iran had been completely under the control of foreigners since the 19th century. Russia and England, in particular, obtained various concessions from Iran. A telegraph line was to be built by the Russians in the northern regions of Iran and the management of the line was to be in the hands of the Russians. A Russian fishing company called Liyanazof was given a fishing concession in the Caspian Sea. A well-capitalised Russian tycoon called Palakof entered the Iranian market to help finance Iranian imports. Palakof, who offered loans at interest or as a pledge on Iranian assets, acted as a credit institution in Iran's domestic and foreign trade. In 1900, Russian and British goods began to enter Iran duty-free as a result of the Customs Exemption Treaty signed between Britain, Russia and Iran (Cezani, 2009). Following the nationalisation of Iran's banking sector and the establishment of a national currency, efforts were made to channel customs revenues and income from exports into the Iranian economy. To this end, the Customs Revenue Administration was established to collect customs revenues and transfer the revenues to the national treasury (Shikhelislami, 1366).

During the reign of Shah Reza Pahlavi, all kinds of trade and transport activities in Iran's domestic and foreign trade were brought under state control. In order to ensure that communication networks could be managed and directed from a single centre, efforts were also made to bring post, telephone and telegraph under the state monopoly. In this way, all communication networks in Iran were managed and controlled from a single centre. Shah Reza Pahlavi attached great importance to Iran's transport infrastructure. In this context, he took part in the construction of railways and endeavoured to provide Iran with railway networks from north to south and from east to west. The railway network, which had been 2300 km in 1927, had reached 23000 km by 1942; the number of railway wagons, which had been around 1000, had increased to 31,000 by 1942 (Sevadger, 1357).

Private sector investment, which had come to a standstill during the Qajar dynasty, accelerated during the reign of Rızah Shah, and investment in the opening of modern manufactories and factories increased by 250%. A significant proportion of the factories opened in Iran, which was trying to get rid of the colonial order, were opened with public capital, and private sector investment was also supported by the state. In this context, the number of modern factories increased significantly. The number of factories in Iran rose from 20 in 1927 to 346 in 1942. In 1927, the number of workers employed in all factories in the country was around 1,000, while by 1942 it had reached

50,000. There was a significant increase in employment and the number of workers employed in areas such as the oil industry, railway sector, building and port construction reached 180,000 in 1942 (Abrahamian, 2014). Special care was taken to ensure that the factories opened were in sectors that produced imported goods such as cement, sugar, weaving, cloth, glass and yarn. In this context, the economy tried to balance imports and exports (Karşinas, 1382).

3.2. Shah Reza Pahlavi's Administrative Policies

The Russians had set their sights on the Iranian geography with the aim of landing in the warm seas and tried to implement their expansionist policy in this context. In line with these objectives, Russia had formed its Iranian policy by planning to block the colonial routes of Britain in India through the Iranian geography. Russia's policy of descending to the warm seas included all of Azerbaijan, the Caucasus, the southern shores of the Caspian Sea held by Iran, and the entire southern coast of Iran, which was the intersection of Britain's colonial routes to the Indian region through Iranian territory (Türkey and Açıkses, 2021). Since 1804, Iran and Russia had been confronting each other with the aim of establishing dominance in the South Caucasus. With the signing of the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813 and the Treaty of Turkmenchay in 1828, much of Iran's territory came under Russian control. The treaties of Gulistan and Turkmenchay, signed as a result of Russia's wars with Iran, had serious negative consequences for Iran. Iran lost its most fertile lands in the South Caucasus, Georgia and Armenia, and its control over the Caspian Sea ports, which were of great economic and commercial importance, to Russia. In line with these developments, Russia was on its way to gradually realise its goals of reaching the warm seas by expanding its sphere of influence over Iran (Karadeniz, 2006).

Russia's rapid advances in Iranian geography alarmed Britain, which saw Iran as an important gateway to its colonies in India. By the 19th century, political and economic rivalry between Russia and Iran had given way to cooperation as a result of Russia's gains in Iran. In this context, developments such as Russia's advance into Iran's eastern border regions in 1880-1890, the circulation of Russian military and commercial ships in the port of Bandar Abbas, and the opening of the Russian consulate in Basra worried Britain (Kaydari, 1396).

England, which was uncomfortable with Russia's control over its interests in the Persian Gulf and the Iranian coasts, offered to divide Iran's geography according to the interests of the two countries in order to allay its concerns and prevent the Russians from descending into the southern regions of Iran (Mazenderani, 1328). As a result of the negotiations between Russia and Britain, a treaty was reached and Iran was divided into population areas between Russia and Britain. As a result of the treaty, the northern regions of

Iran were to remain under the influence of Russia, while the southern parts of the country and the region bordering Afghanistan were to remain under the influence of Britain. The central parts of Iran were also designated as a neutral zone (Erkan, 2010).

Shah Reza Pahlavi, who became Shah of Iran in 1925, witnessed the power struggles and conflicts of interest of the colonialist states in Iranian geography at a time when colonialism was gaining momentum and interstate rivalry was turning into conflict with World War I. Shah Reza Pahlavi, who sought to develop Iran, which he inherited from the Qajars as an extremely worn out country, could not escape the popular reaction with his harsh and authoritarian practices. Shah Reza Pahlavi, whose harsh and authoritarian practices significantly reduced internal unrest in Iran, began to define a foreign policy model in accordance with his country's strategic position (Garthwaite, 2011). Shah Reza Pahlavi aimed to establish a balance of power that would stop the colonial activities of Britain and Russia in Iran. The increasing colonial activities of Russia and Britain in Iran during the last periods of the Qajar dynasty were effective in the development of Iran's relations with Germany during Shah Reza Pahlavi's rule. Germany was included in Iran's foreign policy as a balancing power against the colonial activities of Russia and Britain in Iran.

Having been defeated in the First World War, Germany embarked on an intensive post-war development programme. In this context, it sought cooperation with societies and states in regions that had been oppressed under British colonisation in order to overcome its raw materials deficit. Iran could therefore be a good option for Germany. Shah Reza Pahlavi planned to use German technology to develop and industrialise Iran. This would balance the ongoing Anglo-Russian pressure on Iran and German technology would be used in the development and industrialisation of the country (Zevki, 1368). Iran-Germany relations, which developed for these purposes, can be divided into two periods during Shah Reza Pahlavi's rule. The first period is the period of the Weimar Republic in Germany between 1925 and 1933, and the second period is the period of Nazi rule between 1934 and 1941 (Refi and Abbaszade, 1397). Iran-Germany relations, which continued especially during the Nazi period, are seen as a risky foreign policy choice by Shah Reza Pahlavi regarding the future of Iran after World War II.

3.2.1. Iran-Germany Relations During The Weimar Republic

From the early years of his reign, Shah Reza Pahlavi implemented a policy of economic development between Iran and Germany. During this period, Iran-Germany relations were promoted in the economic, social and cultural fields. In fact, the political structure of the Weimar Republic, which was based on social democratic principles, was at odds with the administrative understanding of Shah Reza Pahlavi's government in Iran. However, Iran was a good supplier of raw materials to Germany's developing industry and a good

market for its manufactured goods. In this context, Iranian-German relations developed rapidly (Rahmani, 1384). Junkers, the German airline company operating in the region at the time when Germany's trade with Iran was developing, had obtained the privilege of using Iranian airspace for 5 years through an agreement with Iran in 1926. Britain, disturbed by this situation, put pressure on Iran not to allow Germany to use its airspace and even to close it. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, took steps to establish an air link between Tehran and Moscow. In this context, an air agreement was signed between Iran and Russia for the years 1927-1932, although in practice it was not as effective as the German Junkers airline (Beygedli, 1386). After the expiry of Junkers' 5-year agreement with Iran, another German airline, Lufthansa, signed an agreement with Iran. With this agreement, Germany became Iran's air gateway to Europe (Zevki, 1368).

Shah Reza Pahlavi attached great importance to relations with Germany in his foreign policy. Iran, which for years had been Britain's open market, turned its attention to Germany and began to make important concessions. In this context, a trade agreement was signed with Germany in 1926. The agreement included the free entry of German goods into Iran by rail. After the trade agreement between Germany and Iran in 1926, a loan agreement was signed in 1928, which provided for a loan of 40 million German marks from Germany for the construction of new railways in Iran in return for the transport of German goods to Iran and their marketing there. The loan agreement signed between Iran and Germany in 1928 was aimed at renewing and developing Iran's railway infrastructure (Beset, 1388). In February 1929, Iran signed a new agreement with Germany. This agreement included the participation of German technical experts, who played an important role in German industry, trade and technology, in Iran's development programme (Nakibzade, 1383). Thus, the Iranian-German rapprochement had now turned into cooperation. Iran's main exports to Germany were agricultural products, unprocessed mineral ores and handmade carpets and rugs. Germany, on the other hand, exported its manufactured goods to Iran in many sectors, especially the automotive industry. Iran's sale of raw materials to Germany and its purchase of high value-added manufactured goods in return led to a deterioration in Iran's foreign trade balance. In addition, during this period Iran had begun to suffer significant losses in the face of the world economic depression that began around 1929. Iran was not an industrialised country like Germany. For all these reasons, Iran began to impose import restrictions. The Iranian government, which also passed a law to this effect in the Iranian National Assembly, thus strained its relations with Germany (Beset, 1388). In general, however, despite some negative developments, the relations maintained during the Weimar Republic provided Iran with important developments in industry and development. Germany contributed to Iran and in this context it provided Iran with factories and workshops in many fields such as cement, glass, paper, textile and mineral processing factories (Emini, 1388).

The relations between Iran and Germany during the Weimar Republic were not only based on industry and economy. There was also cooperation in the fields of education and culture. In this context, the Germans began to open technical schools in Tehran in 1925 in order to meet the demand for trained workers in Iran. In addition to technical knowledge, German language and culture were also taught in these schools. In this context, German schools in Iran, on the one hand, trained skilled workers for German-owned industrial enterprises and, on the other hand, began to unite the trained workforce around German culture. Thus, a mass of pro-German educated people began to emerge in Iran in a planned manner (Mumen, 1380).

One of the most strategic issues Reza Pahlavi pursued in his relations with Germany was the modernisation of the Iranian army by equipping it with German weapons. However, since Germany had signed the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War, it was subject to many restrictions in the military field. Despite all these negative aspects, Iran unofficially benefited from German weapons technology and ensured that German military experts took part in the modernisation of the Iranian army. In this context, Iran bought enough cartridges and machine guns from Germany to last for six months in case of war, and a cartridge and machine gun factory was established in Iran (Dilfani, 1378). Military training schools were opened in Iran, staffed by German experts who introduced Iranian officers to German weapons technology. In addition, Iranian officers were sent to Germany to receive more advanced and modern military training (Katuzyan, 1390).

Iran's rapprochement with Germany was part of Shah Reza Pahlavi's policy of balancing against expansionist Britain and the USSR. Economic, commercial, cultural and military cooperation between Iran and Germany had developed rapidly during the Weimar Republic in Germany. However, this cooperation was sabotaged in the early 1930s through the use of Iranian students sent to Germany. These students, instigated by members of the pro-USSR Iranian Communist Party, began to systematically publish propaganda against Reza Pahlavi in Germany in the magazine *Peykar*. In addition, the Central Communist Party of Iran began publishing propaganda against Reza Shah in Germany in a magazine called *Sitare-yi Sorh* (Pira, 1379). Again, on 26 October 1931, a newspaper called *Abend*, published in Germany, called Reza Pahlavi the *dictator of the Orient*. These developments led to strained relations between Germany and Iran during the Weimar Republic. The German press continued to publish articles and propaganda against Reza Shah. Reza Pahlavi, who was very disturbed by this situation, ordered the staff of the German Embassy in Iran to leave Iran and the German experts working in Iran to be deported immediately. As the events escalated, the German government closed down the publications that opposed Reza Pahlavi and expelled their employees from Germany (Katuzyan, 1390). However, despite the efforts of the German government, the communist groups operating against Reza Pahlavi in Germany could not be prevented. Therefore, the

subsequent tension between Iran and Germany could not be resolved during the Weimar Republic. This tension continued until the end of the Weimar Republic administration (Mumen, 1380). Despite the recent tension between the two states, Iran-Germany relations during the Weimar Republic period contributed to Iran's industrial, commercial, military, cultural and economic development. Iran's relations with a powerful European country like Germany were used by Iran as a counterbalance to Britain and Russia, which had colonized Iran for years.

3.2.2. Iran-Germany Relations Under The Nazis

After Hitler came to power in Germany, the tensions between Iran and Germany began to disappear. Hitler, who took control of the German press and turned it into a propaganda tool of the Nazis when he came to power, improved his relations with Iran by putting an end to the existence of communist groups that propagandized and published against Reza Pahlavi. This attitude of Germany in favor of Reza Pahlavi also broke the ice between Iran and Germany (Pira, 1379). Moreover, Hitler's and Reza Pahlavi's understanding of nationalism, which was fed by nationalism, led them to meet at a common point. Similar ideas increased Reza Pahlavi's sympathy for Hitler. Hitler's rapid rise in Europe led Reza Pahlavi to see Germany as a strong and effective ally. Reza Pahlavi thought that good relations with Germany in this period would reduce the influence of Britain and the USSR on Iran and in this context, Iran would be freed from colonial states (Beygedli, 1386). Hitler, on the other hand, wanted to make Germany, which had been squeezed into the European land by the Treaty of Versailles signed after the First World War, the superpower of Europe. In this context, Germany needed new relations, cooperation and spheres of influence outside the European continent. Therefore, the Iranian geography offered important opportunities for Germany (Türkyay and Açıkkses, 2021).

Germany took the first concrete step against Iran during Hitler's rule by signing a bilateral trade agreement in 1935. Under this agreement, Germany and Iran agreed on a trade volume of 40 million German marks per year for 3 years. Iran imported manufactured goods such as automobiles and industrial products from Germany, while exporting agricultural products and unprocessed minerals to Germany. With this agreement, German industry and Iranian agriculture began to develop. Despite the objections of Great Britain and the USSR, this treaty was renewed in 1939 in a more comprehensive manner (Emini, 1388). In 1935, during the period of Hitler's rule, when the economic relations between Iran and Germany took a concrete form, Dr. Shaht, the German Minister of Economy, made a trip to Iran to lay the foundation for economic relations. The trade relations, which were put on a legal basis by the protocols signed by the officials of the two states, resulted in agreements despite the opposition of Great Britain and the USSR. In this

regard, a coordination center was opened in Berlin in 1936 to regulate the trade relations of the two countries (Ezgandi, 1383).

Germany, which continued to develop its trade relations with Iran despite British and Russian obstructions, began to work on building the infrastructure for maritime trade in Iran. Germany built shipbuilding and repair factories to connect the port of Hamburg with the Iranian ports of Khorramshahr, Bandar Abbas and Bandar Shahpur in the Persian Gulf. These Iranian ports were also renovated. These ports, which were not only commercially but also politically important, constituted Germany's naval bases in India and the Far East against Great Britain (Beygedli, 1386). With the decision taken in 1937, the German airline company Lufthansa increased the number of flights to Iran and established air lines to both Iran and the important centers of the Middle East by providing transportation from Berlin to Tehran, Mashhad, Kabul, Baghdad and Damascus. In this context, Germany realized an economic and military opening to other Middle Eastern countries by using Iran (Beset, 1388). During the Hitler era, Iran tried to improve its relations with Germany not only economically and commercially but also militarily. In this context, Iran continued to purchase a large number of weapons and weapons systems from Germany.

3.2.3. Iran's Attitude Towards Russia And Germany In World War II

World War II began on September 1, 1939, when Germany attacked Poland and Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. Realizing that it could not bear the consequences of this war that was beginning to spread to the European continent, Iran sent notes to all the countries involved in the war and declared that it would not be a party to the war and would stay out of it (Zevki, 1367). Iran did not want to enter the sphere of influence of a big war again, as it had been exposed to the power struggles and conflicts of interests of big countries for years. Iran, which had been a colony of Great Britain and Russia for many years, had fought hard to get out of this situation during the Shah Reza Pahlavi era and had partially succeeded. Therefore, dragging Iran back into the war could take the country back to the old days and lead to the loss of the progress achieved in many areas. For Iran, staying out of the war and maintaining its neutrality was the most sensible way out. Although Iran declared its neutrality with the outbreak of World War II, it harbored animosity toward Britain and Russia due to years of British and Russian occupation and exploitation. Therefore, it wanted Germany to win the war and developed its strategy accordingly. The friendship of Germany, which Iran hoped would emerge victorious from the Second World War, could provide Iran with important opportunities against Britain and Russia (Beset, 1388). In this period of accelerated polarization, Shah Reza Pahlavi tried to reduce the pressure of the Allied powers on Iran by explaining to the world public opinion that these relations were only within the framework of economic and commercial relations (Mohdevi, 1381). Germany, on the other hand, sought

to capitalize on Iran's strategic position to squeeze and defeat its rivals Britain and the USSR outside Europe. Shah Reza Pahlavi, who designed his policies based on Germany's victory in this process, in which relations of mutual interest were prioritized on the way to World War II, maintained close relations with Germany during the war (Dilfani, 1378).

Britain, which was very uncomfortable with the German-Iranian relations that continued even during World War II, made efforts to prevent German goods from reaching Iran by sea during World War II. In this regard, Britain expressed its discomfort to the Iranian government at every opportunity. Despite British pressure, however, Shah Reza Pahlavi was determined to improve his relations with Germany. Accordingly, a new trade agreement was signed between Iran and Germany in November 1940. This agreement provided for the transit of goods from Germany to Iran by sea through Russia, in accordance with the non-aggression pact signed between Germany and the USSR on August 23, 1939, to avoid the risk of interception by the British navy. However, when Germany launched Operation Barbarossa against the USSR on June 22, 1941, the agreement came to an end (Zevki, 1368). Immediately after Germany attacked the USSR, Iran, fearing that the war would spread to its territory, declared that Germany's attack on the USSR had nothing to do with Iran and that Iran would remain neutral throughout the war, as it had previously declared. While the Iranian government wanted to stay out of the war by remaining neutral, it also wanted to maintain its relations with Germany, which had contributed significantly to Iran's survival and development. However, Germany's attack on the USSR created some important problems for Iran. After Germany's attack on the USSR, Iran, which had maintained its trade relations with Germany by sea and land throughout the Second World War, lost this advantage. In fact, Germany's attack on the USSR made Iran, which continued its relations with Germany without slowing down, open to the invasion of the allied states (Abadyan, 1347).

After Germany launched Operation Barbarossa against the USSR on June 22, 1941, British Prime Minister Churchill announced in the House of Commons on the same day that Britain would help the USSR with all its means. US President Roosevelt also announced that they would support the USSR. The pledge of support to the USSR by Britain and the USA also shows that the ranks of the Allied Powers in World War II were shaped. The pledge of support to the USSR included the shipment of arms, ammunition, raw materials and foodstuffs. Therefore, Iranian territory was of strategic importance for the shipment to the USSR and for the military liaison between the Allied Powers and the USSR. Therefore, Iran was targeted by the Allied Powers and pretexts were sought for the invasion of Iran (Sanghvi, 1971).

The USSR was afraid that as a result of its cooperation with Iran, Germany would settle in the Caucasus and seize the oil resources under its control. Moreover, the USSR had a desire to reach the warm seas since Tsar

Peter I. One of the pillars of this policy was located in Iran. Therefore, the USSR could not allow the Iranian territory to be conquered by Germany. Considering all these policies, the USSR had to occupy the region before Iran was controlled by the Germans. Britain, on the other hand, could not accept the fact that the Germans were expanding their sphere of influence in Iran day by day and that the Iranian government was turning a blind eye to this situation under the guise of neutrality. Germany's presence in Iran was a threat to Britain's colonies in the Middle East, India and the Far East. For this reason, Britain supported the termination of the German presence in Iran and the occupation of the region. Waiting for favorable conditions to emerge, Britain had an important opportunity with Germany's attack on the USSR (Türkyay and Açıkses, 2021).

The USSR claimed that German citizens in Iran were acting as intelligence officers and demanded their expulsion from Iran. Reza Pahlavi, who had a pro-German policy, rejected this demand. The majority of German citizens in Iran were military and technical experts. These experts worked to modernize the Iranian army. In this context, they were involved in the establishment of factories and production sites in Iran. By such an action, the Iranian government showed the USSR and Great Britain that Iran was an independent country and would not make decisions based on foreign interference. In this context, Shah Reza Pahlavi, who linked Iran's military and economic progress to its close relations with Germany, did not want to interrupt this close cooperation at the request of Britain and Russia, under whose colonization he had been oppressed for years. Moreover, the German army, which was advancing rapidly on all fronts at the beginning of the Second World War, increased Shah Reza Pahlavi's courage. The benefits of Shah Reza Pahlavi's war policy for Iran depended on the success of the Axis powers, led by Germany, in the Second World War. Shah Reza Pahlavi's policy since the beginning of the war also carried the risk of an Allied invasion of Iran (Mohdevi, 1381).

3.2.4. Invasion Of Iran By The Allied Powers And The Alliance Treaty

Britain and the USSR began to put pressure on the Iranian government to arrest German experts in Iran and expel them from Iran. The USSR announced that it would not recognize Iran's neutrality on the grounds that Iran had not expelled German citizens and that Iran would not allow the Germans to be stationed in the south of its territory (Kazımzade, 1325). The plan prepared by Great Britain and the USSR to invade Iran was implemented on September 25, 1941 (Şemim, 1346). On September 25, 1941, the Red Army began to invade Iran in three columns. The Russian army, advancing in the first column, started from the vicinity of Maku and entered Lake Rezaiyeh and then Tabriz (Adilfer, 1396). The second column started from the shores of the Caspian Sea and continued with the occupation of the ports there. This was followed by the occupation of the cities of Gilan, Mazenderan, and

Qazvin. In the third branch, after the occupation of the Gergan and Khorasan regions was completed, the region up to the Semnan front was captured by the USSR. While the USSR continued its occupation in the northern regions of Iran, the British army began its occupation from the south of Iran. The British, who entered the southern regions of Iran in two columns, first crossed the Shatt al-Diap and bombarded Ahvaz, taking the Iranian navy under fire in Abadan. From the second branch, the British forces entered Iran from the Khosrawi border region, occupied the Shah's oil facilities here and advanced to Kermanshah. Thus, Iran was occupied by the USSR from the north and the British from the south (Medeni, 1378). Prime Minister Ali Mansour resigned in the face of the invasion of Iran. Reza Pahlavi appointed Mohammad Ali Foruigi as Prime Minister in place of Ali Mansour. Although the Allied Powers attributed the invasion of Iran to the fact that German technical experts were not deported, it is a known fact that their real aim was to remove Reza Shah from power. The representatives of Russia and Great Britain in Iran informed Prime Minister Forouigi that Reza Pahlavi should resign and leave Iran, otherwise the allied powers would enter Tehran and remove him by force. Faced with this situation, Shah Reza Pahlavi, who had no choice but to resign, announced his abdication in favor of Crown Prince Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (Şemim, 1346).

After the invasion of Iran by Great Britain and the USSR and the dethronement of Shah Reza Pahlavi, the Allied Powers began to pressure the Iranian government to enter into an alliance agreement. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi felt that he had no choice but to make an alliance with the Allied Powers in order to immediately get rid of the economic and political problems of the Iran he had inherited. Shah Mohammad Reza, who had no choice but to compromise with the Allied powers, was forced to sign the Pact of Alliance on January 29, 1942 (Şemim, 1346). Therefore, Iran came under the control of the Allied Powers after the Treaty of Alliance. The Iranian government abandoned the independent policy it had pursued during the reign of Shah Reza Pahlavi and began to act in accordance with the orders of the Allied Powers. Iran not only severed its relations with Germany, but also declared war on Germany and then on Japan on September 9, 1943, under pressure from the Allied powers. Iran, which came under the control of the Allied Powers in the hope of maintaining its political existence after the war, took all German investments and activities in the country under its control and arrested German technical experts with their families. In addition, Iran opened all its communication facilities, railways, ports and highways and all its natural resources, especially oil, to the use of the Allied Powers (Erşadi, 1377). However, this difficult situation that Iran began to experience with the Second World War would drag Iran into new crises, especially in the post-Cold War period, which Iran would experience on the axis of the Allied States.

Conclusion

Subject to the economic and political interests, religious and cultural expansionism of imperialist states throughout history, Iran has been at the centre of political fluctuations and has become an important centre due to its location on migration routes. Especially since the beginning of the 20th century, Iran has gained a new geopolitical importance due to its rich oil resources. Although Iran declared its neutrality before the First World War, its territories were occupied by Britain and Russia. Britain invaded Iran from the south, which it had influenced financially, militarily and politically before the war, on the pretext of the 1907 agreement with Russia, which provided for the division of Iranian territories. Russia, on the other hand, continued its occupation in the north on the basis of the same agreement. During the war, Britain used all diplomatic manoeuvres to prevent Russia from approaching the oil regions and the Persian Gulf.

The inability of the Qajar rulers to protect Iran's resources and their financial dependence on them made it easier for Britain to manage the war process. The fact that Russia was thrown into internal turmoil by the Bolshevik Revolution during the war and the subsequent withdrawal of the socialist regime established in Russia from Iran left Britain as the only superpower in the region. The establishment of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran reshaped the political structure of Iran in the 20th century. Beginning in 1925 with the end of the Qajar dynasty, this process brought Persian nationalism, whose political existence dated back to ancient times, into the modern era. In the early 20th century, Iran, oppressed by the colonialist policies of Britain and Russia, began to restructure itself under the leadership of Shah Reza Shah. Shah Reza Pahlavi, who wanted to make Iranian society a much better place, placed Persian nationalism at the heart of all his policies. In this context, Shah Reza Pahlavi, who modernised the Iranian army, tried to use authoritarian methods to transform society through military power. With the modern army, state authority began to be established.

After establishing national unity and social order, Shah Reza Pahlavi rolled up his sleeves to find a solution to the economic concessions granted to foreign companies during the Qajar period, which were hindering Iran's political and economic development. In this context, Shah Reza Shah reduced the influence of foreign shares in these concessions through new contracts. This success of Shah Reza Shah led to the revival of the Iranian economy. Shah Reza Pahlavi, who translated the country's economic progress into the development of Iran, planned to transform Iranian society into a modern industrial society along the lines of European models by building factories to employ the peasant population living in the cities. To this end, he rebuilt the country's ports and linked the cities with railways. With the transport infrastructure in place, Iran's productive capacity began to translate into exports.

During the reign of Shah Reza Pahlavi, economic development was emphasised and Iran's foreign policy began to be organised in a new way. Iran, which had been oppressed for centuries by the colonialist policies of Britain and Russia, began to fight for political and economic independence under the leadership of Shah Reza Pahlavi. Iran's foreign policy, which was shaped in line with this aspiration, was balanced with Germany, a powerful European country that rivalled Russia and Britain. The Iranian-German relations of the Shah Reza Pahlavi period, which began with the Weimar Republic and continued with the rise of the Nazis, were directed against Russia and Britain and were aimed by the Iranian government at developing the country through German industry. Germany, on the other hand, wanted to use Iran's strategic position to open up the Middle and Far East to Britain and Russia. The Iranian-German relationship, based on these principles, allowed Iran to develop economically and strengthen militarily. Shah Reza Pahlavi, who increased his political power thanks to these relations, began to adopt a more independent policy towards Russia and Britain.

The rapid development of Iranian-German relations before World War II contributed to both Iran's economic growth and its political independence from Russia and Britain. Although Iran declared its neutrality immediately after the outbreak of the Second World War, it continued to develop its relations with Germany behind the scenes and came under intense pressure from Russia and Britain for this attitude. Iran, which had based its position at the end of the war and all the policies it would develop on the victory of the Germans, also took great risks with this pro-German policy. In this context, the occupation of Iran by the Allied Powers in the Second World War and the dethronement and exile of Shah Reza Pahlavi were the results of a risky and dangerous policy. Nevertheless, the Iranian government managed to resolve the crisis with the Allies in favour of the dynasty and to place Mohammad Reza, the heir to the Pahlavi dynasty, on the throne.

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