

CAUCASIAN BATTLEFIELDS

A HISTORY OF THE WARS ON THE
TURCO-CAUCASIAN BORDER

1828-1921

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CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1953

ambitions and traditions, remained an interest in the Near or Orthodox East in the Balkans, but her most vital political and economic interests were centred also in Asia Minor.

During the Russo-Japanese War the relations of Britain and Russia had passed through a period of strain, and at that time (1904) Colonel Trenchard's expedition to Tibet had caused some irritation in its proceedings. Further the monopoly of British and Russian political interest in Persia had given rise to numerous friction. There was, in fact, a purely practical and economic basis to the Russian interest in Persia, since, with the great industrial expansion of Russia in the twenties, trade with Persia grew naturally and rapidly. During the twenties the Russian railway from Astrakhan to Jeddah had been continued to Tehran, and the Russians had built modern roads connecting Tehran with the port of Bush (Bander) on the Caspian, with Baku and with Iran. There was also a constant interplay of psychological and cultural influences, due to the community of sympathies of Turkish, Persian and Armenian words and works of the East. The revolutionary troubles of 1905, so freely and widespread in Constantinople and in particular at Salonica, were reflected in Persia in the revolutionary events of 1905-6.

This period saw the development of active German interest in Persia, running parallel with much Pan-Turkist activity in both Russia and Persian Azerbaijan.

The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 therefore became the expression of several new trends: it was first a sequel to the admission of Britain into the Franco-Russian alignment following the establishment of the Entente Cordiale; it was the definite expression of the *détente* in Anglo-Russian relations throughout the Middle East; and it was a defensive reaction to the growing German control over Turkish life and to the German penetration into Persia. In the Anglo-Russian Agreement, Persia was divided into zones in which each power assumed responsibilities for the maintenance of order. At Teheran, the Russians had organized, on behalf of the shah, a brigade of Persian Cossacks as early as the middle eighties; in 1906 this brigade was strengthened by Russian elements. In 1905, the

order in Azerbaijan and troubles among the Kurds led to the establishment of a Russian force in that area: eight battalions of infantry, and a division of Cossacks, with twenty-four guns, were stationed in detachments at Tabriz, Urmia, Khoy and Ullum, with posts at Mahi, Maragha and Baykirk.

All these factors—the Anglo-Russian Agreement, the distribution