



Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mossadegh and a Very British Coup. Christopher de Bellaigue

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On 19 August 1953 the British and American intelligence agencies launched a desperate coup against a cussed, bedridden 72-year-old. His name was Muhammad Mossadegh and his crimes had been to flirt with Communism and nationalise his country's oil industry, for forty years in British hands. To Winston Churchill, the Iranian prime minister was a lunatic, determined to humiliate Britain. To President Dwight Eisenhower, he was delivering Iran to the Soviets. Mossadegh must go. And so he did, in one of the most dramatic episodes in modern Middle Eastern history. But the countries that overthrew him would, in time, deeply regret it. Mossadegh was one of the first liberals of the Middle East. He wanted friendship with the West - not slavish dependence. He would not compromise on Iran's right to control its own destiny. The West therefore sided against him and in favour of his great foe, Shah Muhammad-Reza Pahlavi. Here, for the first time, is the life of a remarkable patriot, written by our foremost observer of Iran. Drawing on sources in Tehran and the West, Christopher de Bellaigue reveals a man who not only embodied his nation's struggle for freedom but is also one of the great eccentrics of modern times - and he uncovers the coup that undid him. Above all, the life of Muhammad Mossadegh is a warning to today's occupants of Downing Street and the White House, as they commit us all to intervention in a volatile and unpredictable region.



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