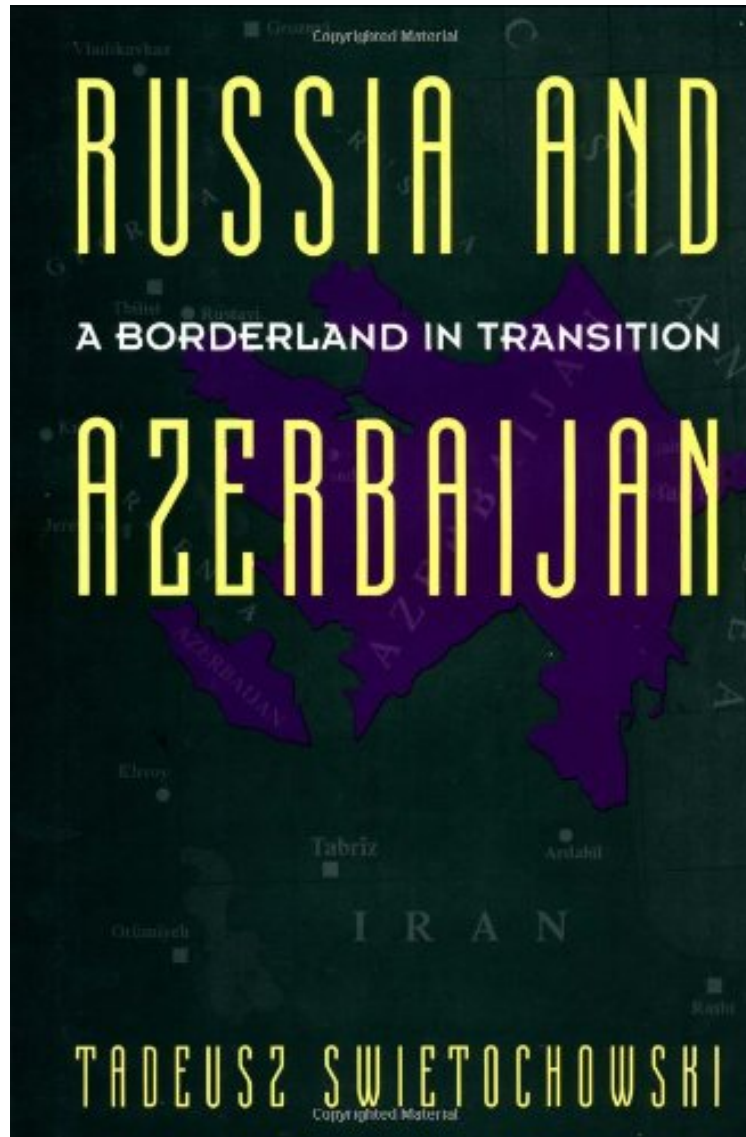


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Russia and A Borderland In Transition Azerbaijan (Engineering Process Improvement)

Tadeusz Swietochowski

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Tadeusz Swietochowski : Russia and A Borderland In Transition Azerbaijan (Engineering Process Improvement) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Russia and A Borderland In Transition Azerbaijan (Engineering Process Improvement):

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Substantial addition to understanding of Azerbaijani problem By A Customer Reviewed by VICTOR KIRILLOV in International Relations, Volume XIII, No 1, - April 1996 - The

author's expertise on the complicated issues of both Russian and Middle Eastern history, politics, economy, culture and languages is beyond doubt. Indeed, while reading the book one cannot escape the impression that Tadeusz Swietochowski knows a great deal more than he writes about. Out of respect for his readers he carefully and skilfully selects the most salient and convincing facts and events to enable a better understanding of his subject matter which is not widely known to Western, and not only to Western, audiences. Thus, he correctly points out that the Treaty of Turkmanchai signed on 10 February 1828 between Russia and Iran constituted a momentous event in the history of Transcaucasia, and, in particular, in the history of the Azeri people, that is of the natives of Azerbaijan. For the Azeris, the conquest of their earlier semi-independent Khanates by Russia and Iran, finally provided for in the 1828 Treaty, meant a partition of their land and people that has lasted to this day. 'The international aspect of Azerbaijan's division', the author remarks, 'created a delicate balance of power in one corner of the turbulent Middle East, a situation resembling that of nineteenth-century East Central Europe, where maintenance of a partitioned Poland ensured lasting peace among Russia, Austro-Hungary and Germany'. Internally, the two Azerbaijanians, the Iranian one to the south of the Araxes, and the Russian, later Soviet and now independent Azerbaijan to the north of it, were put on different tracks of historical development. The author's coverage of Russian and later of Soviet policy in Azerbaijan is a splendid piece of research into a subject which has only been lightly covered by Russian and Soviet authors themselves. Given all the dark and bright sides of Russian colonial rule, there is one feature, as Mr Swietochowski rightly assumes, which stands out: Russian and Soviet domination contributed to the Azeris' development into an independent nation with political, cultural and religious aspirations running contrary to the deep-rooted beliefs of their Southern relatives in Iran. The process of historical differentiation has gone so deep that even the most radical nationalists in the last days of the former Soviet Azerbaijan hesitated to advance the slogan of unification of the Azeri nation. The Programme of the People's Front of Azerbaijan, adopted in June 1989, merely provided for the restoration of economic, cultural and social ties between the divided nation and the creation of direct human contacts between relatives and friends. Pan-Turkic and Muslim sentiments in the former Soviet Azerbaijan certainly exist, and they are scrupulously analysed by the author. Extreme bitterness over the dramatic events in Azerbaijan's conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabagh especially contributed to the rise of anti-Western and anti-Russian feelings in Baku. Yet, even at the peak of the crisis these feelings did not become dominant in Azerbaijani society. This is one of the principal explanations of the seemingly paradoxical fact of the recent reappearance of former Soviet nomenclatura rulers on the political scene and the virtual collapse of the nationalistic People's Front. It also explains, at least partly, the reasons lying behind the relative international stability of the new independent Azerbaijan which has found itself at the very epicentre of Russian-Turkish-Iranian geopolitical rivalry. The author also gives other well-founded reasons for that. Until now neither Iran nor Turkey has expressed any desire to fill the power vacuum in Transcaucasia created by Russia's retreat. Iran is obviously reluctant to incorporate six million well-educated, Turkic-speaking people from the former Soviet Azerbaijan, fearing that this might dramatically change the character of the Iranian state itself. For its part, Turkey fears any distraction from its goal of integration with Europe. Meanwhile, both states as well as Russia restrict themselves to securing strategic and economic advantages in Azerbaijan without incurring undue burdens. Finally, as the author concludes, the people of Azerbaijan itself, 'are apt to take guidance from their ancient political heritage: moderation and compromise'. There, he believes, 'extremism locks a fertile ground, and its avoidance has been understood as the essence of the community's survival'. Based on original sources that include Azerbaijani, Russian, Polish, British and American archives, this elegantly written book by American scholar Tadeusz Swietochowski, who already enjoys a high reputation as a researcher of both Middle Eastern and Russian history and politics, substantially adds to our knowledge of the fascinating problems and developments in this region of the world.

VICTOR KIRILLOV 19 of 26 people found the following review helpful. Russian and a Divided Azerbaijan By Daniel Pipes, Middle East Forum, Philadelphia Azerbaijan, Swietochowski rightly notes, is "the quintessential borderland," being Turkish and Iranian, Sunni and Shi'i, Muslim and Christian, Russian and Middle Eastern, European and Asian. He also notes its other points of interest. Falling under Russian rule from 1804 on, Azerbaijan stands out as the first part of the Middle East brought under the rule of a modern European colonial power. Having been divided into two parts (Russian and Iranian) since 1828, it is the nation that has by far the longest endured the strains of split development. Writings in English on Azerbaijan are meager and not of the highest quality. Russia and Azerbaijan improves matters by helping to make sense of the country's history, but its account is limited to coverage of the northern (i.e., Russian) part and to a dry, top-down history (for the Russian imperial period the author relies inordinately on literary magazines). Current interest in Azerbaijan stems from its dramatic return to history as a vital pivot between Russia, Turkey, and Iran; as a newly important oil exporter; and as the Armenians' opponent in a vicious war since 1988. Contemplating the Turkish-Iranian rivalry for influence over independent Azerbaijan, the author foresees Turkey connecting Azeris to the larger world; but Iran, because of its Islamic emphasis and its inclusion of southern Azerbaijan, will have a greater impact on their evolving national identity.

Middle East Quarterly, December 1995 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. One of the best books on Azerbaijan By Aliya Tadeusz Swietochowski represents the region and relations between the countries in a very objective way, basing the statements on actual facts and deep understanding of the political situation in the region. I thought I knew a lot

about Azerbaijan, but after reading the book, I realized how many other things were happening in the history of this country and specifically in its relations with Russia.

A cultural history of a people split in two by the forces of imperialism, this study examines the long-standing Russian-Iranian division of the land west of the Caspian Sea. The author explores the diplomatic history of Azerbaijan and the strength of ethnic identity which remains.

"Addresses the long-standing Russian-Iranian partition of the land west of the Caspian sea and provides a thorough cultural history of a people split by the forces of imperialism." -- "History Today"