

DBQ—Examining Primary Sources

He has sold to the foes of our Faith the greater part of the Persian lands and the profits derived from them, for example...tobacco, with the chief centers of its cultivation, the lands on which it is grown and the warehouses, carriers, and sellers, wherever these are found....

In short, this criminal has offered the provinces of Persia to auction among the Powers, and is selling the realms of Islam and the abodes of Muhammad and his household to foreigners.

- Jamal-al-Din Afghani, excerpt from a letter to Hasan Shirazi (April, 1891)

1. Jamal-al-Din Afghani was protesting the grant of a tobacco monopoly to a British company by the shah (ruler) of Iran in 1891. Why were people such as Jamal-al-Din fearful of foreign commercial interests in Muslim areas?

2. Why might a Muslim ruler, like the shah, have granted economic contracts to foreign companies?

3. Imagine that you are a Persian (Iranian) of the late-19th century. How might you react to the shah's decision?
