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A STUDY OF RECENT PERSIAN PROSE FICTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

by

ABDOR-REZA NAVABPOUR

Thesis submitted to the University of Durham for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in June 1981

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ABSTRACT

TITLE OF THESIS: A Study of Recent Persian Prose Literature with special reference to the Social Background.

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The thesis examines the modern fictional literature of Iran, which is a new growth stemming from the national awakening of the late 19th century and the constitutional revolution of 1906. While retaining elements from the classical Persian heritage, this literature is directly or indirectly influenced by European forms and shows a general tendency towards social realism. It reflects the political and social upheavals which Iran underwent in the three quarters of a century between 1906 and 1979. In seccessive periods the literary output gives evidence of great changes in prevalent attitudes and social concerns.

Part I of the thesis outlines the historical and social background up to 1979. Part II discusses the social characteristics of Persian classical and folk literatures and examines certain works which appeared in the preparatory period before 1906. Part III is a study of the modern literature divided into three periods: (1) 1906-1941, when the predominant attitude was a secular nationalism combining pride in the Iranian past with desire for modernization; (2) 1941-1953, when hostility to dictatorship (after the experiences of Rezā Shāh's reign) was linked with a political attitude which was generally socialist rather than liberal and was sometimes also anti-clerical; (3) 1953-1979, when among several tendencies the most important were concern for the poor and concern for the nation's cultural identity. Since literary activity was affected by censorship in the reigns of both Pahlavi Shāhs, the nature and varying intensity of the censorship and the evasive devices of authors are also discussed in Part III. While the two main tendencies of this period generally overlap, because each represents a revulsion against hasty and imposed modernization, it is apparent that some authors were more concerned about the economic and social hardships falling on the masses, while others were more concerned about the effects on the traditional Islamic culture and life-style of the masses.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE I

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS IV

TRANSLITERATION V

ABBREVIATION OF TITLES OF JOURNALS VII

PART I 1-57

I-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND 1

PART II 58-106

II-I- TRADITIONAL FORMS AND CONTENTS 58

II-II- THE PREPARATORY PERIOD 86

PART III 107-297

III-I- THE FICTION OF THE YEARS 1906-1941 107

III-II- THE REFLECTION OF THE 1906-1941 PERIOD IN LATER FICTION 158

III-III- THE ADVENT OF SOCIAL AWARENESS, 1941-1953 182

III-IV- CENSORSHIP AND CONSTRAINT 221

III-V- SOCIAL REALISM AND ISLAMIC NATIONALISM, 1953-1979 247

CONCLUSION 298

BIBLIOGRAPHY 308

PREFACE

The study of literature not only brings understanding of the motives and art of authors and the evolution of forms and styles, but also throws light on the social environments which have influenced literary activity and are reflected in literary works.

Modern Persian literature has arisen in a period of social change which began in the later part of the 19th century and gathered speed after the second world war. The modern authors of Iran have grown up in an environment of contrast and contiguity between old and new, and have written for a numerically increasing and socially changing readership. They portray different aspects of the complex social life of modern Iran, and explicitly or implicitly comment on the change or the resistance to change which they observe. Modern Persian literature thus deserves study both for its artistic value and for its value as a source of information on Iranian social history.

In modern times the growing foreign awareness of Iran has not been confined to politics and economics. The Iranian visual arts have attracted widespread interest abroad, and the masterpieces of Persian classical literature have been studied and appreciated by foreign scholars. Modern Persian literature, however, has until recently received less attention than it deserves. The reason for this is probably that the local colour with which modern Persian authors imbue their work cannot be adequately conveyed in translation,

even with the aid of explanatory prefaces and footnotes. Most of the authors have known the Persian classics well and have written for readers possessing some acquaintance with the classics. Both the authors and the readers have, of course, been familiar with the national religion, Twelver Shi'ite Islam, and with traditional Iranian customs and manners. Some of the authors have also studied Iranian folklore and have used materials from it in their works. For full understanding of the attempts of these authors at realistic or symbolic portrayal of the Iranian social or political scene, a through knowledge of historical events and of social and cultural trends in 20th century Iran is required. The necessary background knowledge for appreciation of modern Persian literature is therefore very extensive and not easily accessible to foreigners.

The present study is concerned with the Persian fictional literature which appeared between the constitutional revolution of 1906 and the Islamic revolution of 1979. It excludes poetry, which is still cherished and composed much more widely in Iran than in Europe and America. It is not intended to be a complete history of modern Persian fiction, which would have to be very voluminous. The content and meaning of works which appear to have most value for the understanding of Iranian social development are examined and assessed, while other aspects such as form, style, and language are only considered incidentally. Works which appear to have less social significance are generally not discussed. For this reason, and not because of unawareness of their contributions to Persian literature, there is no mention of

well-known authors such as 'Abbās Khalili, Taqi Modarresi, Nāder Ebrāhimi, Bahrām Sādeqi, Eslām Kāzemiyeh, and others.

Periodization is difficult in all branches of history, and in none more than literary history. For example, the writer Jamālzādeh came into the world in or around 1890, published his best fictional writings in 1921 and others between 1942 and the 1960s, and wrote scholarly and critical articles up to the eve of the Islamic revolution. On the basis of a general analysis of the main social concerns expressed by writers at different times, the years between 1906 and 1979 have been divided into three periods: 1906-1941, 1941-1953, and 1953-1979. In the case of certain works and themes, some overlap between the sections dealing with these periods has been unavoidable.

The study of the fiction of the three periods is preceded by an outline of the historical background and a discussion of the classical and folkloric legacies, together with a brief section on writings of the preparatory period before the revolution of 1906. Another short section describes methods and effects of censorship and devices used by authors to evade it.

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been accomplished without the suggestions and help of my supervisor, Mr F.R.C. Bagley, and the assistance given in many ways by members of the School of Oriental Studies and the Oriental Section of the Library of the University of Durham, particularly Mrs J. Butterworth, the librarian in charge of the Persian, Arabic, and Turkish books. I am also grateful to Miss B. O'Connor and Mrs R. Hart for doing the typing and making helpful suggestions.

I would not have ventured to undertake this task and could not have persevered with it for so many years had it not been for the encouragement and patient support of my wife Farideh, to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude.

Transliteration

The system of transliteration of Persian names, titles, and words is intended to reproduce their modern pronunciation but not their spelling in the Perso-Arabic alphabet, which can only be done through the laborious use of diacritical points. For readers acquainted with Persian, diacritical points would be unnecessary, and for others meaningless.

Words which have become naturalized in English, such as Islam, Imam, vizier, bazaar, are spelt in accordance with the correct English usage; but compounds which include these words, such as Emāmzādeh, bāzāri, are transliterated in accordance with the same system as other Persian words.

In this system, the long vowels of Persian are represented by ā, u, i, the short vowels by a, e, o, and the diphthongs by ey, ow. The nominal and adjectival suffix represented in the Persian spelling by the 'unpronounced h', which in the modern pronunciation has the sound ' é ', is transliterated as eh because this is the usual Iranian practice; but it is transliterated e when it is followed by a suffix or an ezāfeh, as in khāne-ye kuchek (the small house).

No distinction is made between the identically pronounced consonants of the Perso-Arabic alphabet except that qāf is transliterated as q even though it is pronounced identically with gheyn, which is transliterated as gh; while Iranians usually write Ghāsem or Ghom, English speaking readers will probably find these names more recognisable as Qāsem or Qom.

Ch, gh, kh, and sh normally represent single consonants as in English church, French mari (guttural r), Scottish loch, English shine; but in a few instances gh may represent g followed by h, kh k followed by h, and sh s followed by h. Hamzeh and 'eyn are both transliterated by the apostrophe ' because in modern Persian both represent the same glottal stop.

Abbreviation of titles of journals

A.A.S. Asian and African Studies
Department of Oriental Studies of the Slovak Academy of Science, Bratislava.

B.B.A.O. Bulletin of the British Association of Orientalists.

E. and W. East and West
Quarterly. Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, Rome.

E.J.M.E.L. Edebiyāt, A Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures.
Middle East Centre, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

I.J.M.E.S. International Journal of Middle East Studies.
The Middle East Studies Association of North America. Cambridge University Press.

I.S. Iranian Studies.
Journal of the Society for Iranian Studies, Massachusetts.

J.C.H. Journal of Contemporary History.
London.

J.R.A.S. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. London.

L.R. The Literary Review.
New Jersey.

M.E.J. The Middle East Journal.
Quarterly. The Middle East Institute, Washington D.C.

M.E.S. Middle Eastern Studies.
Frank Cass, London.

M.W. The Muslim World.
Quarterly. The Duncan Black Macdonald Centre, New York.

R.I.P.E.H. Review of Iranian Political Economy and History.
Georgetown U., Washington D.C.

R.N.L. Review of National Literatures, New York.

S.I. Studia Islamica. G-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris.

U.T.Q. The University of Toronto Quarterly.

Z.D.M.G. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.
Franz Steiner GMBH, Wiesbaden.

I

Historical Background

Modern advances in science and technology began in Western Europe under the influence of rationalist movements in the 16th and 17th centuries and of agricultural and industrial revolutions in the 18th and 19th centuries. Social and institutional changes in the direction of greater rationality were to a large extent linked to scientific and technological advances and also began in Western Europe. All these phenomena have therefore appeared to Iranians as 'Western'.

Iranian society, in the course of its long history, has shown a capacity for cultural creativity and has been exposed to cultural impacts as well as to military invasions from outside. Like other peoples, the Iranians have shown two contrasting tendencies, one towards initiative and inquiry and another towards complacency and narrow-mindedness; but history gives evidence that Iranians have sooner or later been able to absorb new ideas and methods without losing their cultural identity.

Contemporaneously with the weakening and collapse of the Safavid dynasty and the internal disturbances of the 18th century, the pace of external changes affecting Iran began to accelerate. For example, the replacement of overland by maritime trade routes caused increasingly severe economic and cultural damage to Iranian society by depriving the bazaars of their former importance and reducing the functions of the cities, which tended to become mere markets for local

agricultural produce and centres for tax collection. Parallel with these changes, the Iranians generally speaking lost contact with other nations and became isolated. At the end of the 18th century their only European contacts were commercial relations on a small scale with the Russians in the north and with the British at Bushehr.[1] Contacts with neighbouring Muslim nations also were either severed or weakened by political factors.

Meanwhile Western Europe had made great advances, and Russia, under Tsar Peter I, had become a great power, while India after the collapse of the Moghul Empire was falling under British domination. In the Ottoman Empire some of the rulers and officials had perceived the need for modernization and had taken the first steps towards it with such innovations as the introduction of printing in 1727 and the attempted creation of a new military system (Nezām-e Jadid) under Selim III (1788-1807).[2] Few Iranians had any knowledge of these developments in the outside world. Āqā Mohammad Qājār challenged Russia without being aware that the Iranian army needed modernization.[3] In the wars which ensued under his successor, Fath 'Ali Shāh (1797-1834), most of Iran's northern Āzarbāyjāni territories and part of the province of Gilān were lost.

Iranian history in the 19th century and first half of the 20th century presents a complex picture in which relations with Europeans and North Americans form a great part. One component is the record of conflict, mainly with the Russians and the India-based British; another is the record of cooperation with European and North American governmental and private bodies and individuals; another

is the record of the reactions of different groups in Iranian society to the problems of modernization and of conservation of the nation's cultural and religious heritages.

The Qājār kings were concerned primarily with their own positions, which were not always secure. They were forced by events into an awareness of the need for modern methods, but they lacked sufficient military and financial strength to impose reforms, and shied away from policies which might have offended foreign powers - i.e. Russia or Britain - or powerful social groups such as the landowners and tribal khāns, or which might have incurred censure from the Shi'ite clergy. The defeats and territorial losses in the war of 1804-1812 with Russia prompted Fath 'Ali Shāh to seek Western military help, first from the French and later from the British. Under a treaty of 1812, a small number of British officers provided modern training at the Iranian army headquarters at Tabriz. The Commander-in-Chief and Governor-General at Tabriz was the Crown Prince 'Abbās Mirzā, who desired reforms and employed some enlightened officials. His attempt to create a new military system with advice from British officers did not progress quickly enough to save Iran from defeat by Russia in the war of 1826-28. Under the subsequent Treaty of Turkmānchāy, Iran lost more Āzarbāyjāni territory and gave Russia commercial privileges and judicial rights on Iranian soil ('capitulations'), which were later extended to other foreign states. After this war, in which the British were unwilling to help Iran, Anglo-Iranian relations ceased to be friendly and were further clouded by British insistence that Herāt,

one of the great centres of Iranian culture, should be under Afghan rule. In 1856 Great Britain declared war and forced Iran to renounce Herāt. Although British officers had been retained until 1836, the plan to modernize the army with British help could not be fulfilled, Subsequent military missions from other European countries received inadequate support and were also ineffective. Iran was thus left without any modern military force except the Russian-trained Cossack Regiment, later Brigade, which was founded as a royal bodyguard in 1879.

Suffering from the lack of a centralized governing power, the Qājār kings could hardly impose their authority upon the tribal khāns and the remote provinces. They did not even have full control of their own appointed governors, who, after paying their fixed contribution to the royal treasury, assumed semi-regal and virtually absolute power in their provinces. Large amounts of the tax revenues remained in the pockets of corrupt officials who fleeced the poor peasants and the lower classes. Neither the central nor the provincial administrations could collect sufficient funds for the performance of modern governmental functions. The secular authority of the state and the monarchy was thus in practice by no means absolute. It was not absolute in theory either, because it was either contradicted or complemented - depending on the circumstances - by the theocratic authority of the mosque.

The events of the 18th century had also produced consequences in the religious field. The resistance against the attempt of the Ghalzāy Afghans to found a Sunnite dynasty,

and against Nāder Shāh's attempt to combine Shi'ism and Sunnism by force, proved that Shi'ite Islam, which the Safavids had established as the state religion, had also become the popular religion of most Iranians. It was in the mid-18th century that the performance of passion plays (ta'ziyeh-khwāni)[4] in commemoration of the martyrdoms of the Imams 'Ali and Hoseyn first became customary, and a century later it was almost a nationwide national practice in which the people from all walks of life used to take part or attend. Poetic laments for the martyred Imams were now composed by folk poets as well as court poets, while prose recitation of the martyrdoms remained popular. At the same time the Shi'ite clergy acquired a new role as spokesmen for the people, or at least for the city dwellers. Under the Safavids, who had claimed descent from the Imams and had given Shi'ism its official status, the clergy had on the whole functioned as a part of the governmental machinery. Under the Zands and Qājārs, who maintained Shi'ism's official status but made no claim to sanctity, the clergy showed more concern for their function of representing the Imam (jāneshini-ye Emām). To a large extent they achieved real independence from the worldly state, and some of them took very seriously their duty of defending the rights of Muslims against unjust worldly authorities. According to the Osuli school of Shi'ite Islamic theology, which became dominant under the leadership of Āqā Mohammad Bāqer Behbehāni of Karbalā (1705-1790), all worldly political régimes are by definition 'usurping' in the absence of the twelfth and

last Imam, who disappeared in 872 A.D., and until his emergence as the Mahdi (Redeemer), the government ought to be exercised or at least controlled by leading 'olamā (mojtaheds), who are the Imam's representatives.[5]

Another force in Iranian society besides the government and the Islamic clergy was the bazaar. (Tribal khāns and landowners formed two more significant social forces but will not be considered here).[6] In the Qājār period the merchants became increasingly important both in Tehran and the provincial cities. Under the Safavids they had not enjoyed much freedom, because the government had used the merchants and the artisans' guilds as tax-collection agents and had kept them under tight control. The traditional close links between the bazaar and the clergy had not helped because the clergy had been virtually an arm of the Safavid government. In the 18th century, despite the ruinous upheavals, the merchants had gained from the disappearance of state monopolies and restrictions, and in the Qājār period both they and the clergy maintained the greatest possible independence from governmental control. In general they remained strictly religious and maintained political and family connections with the clergy and the small shop-keepers and artisans of the bazaar. At the same time, because of their business, they were open to new ideas. Thanks to their wealth and connections - rather than to any direct contact with the poor and illiterate masses - they acquired increasing political influence. Thus in the Qājār period successful merchants again became an important element in society, as in the early Islamic period.[7]

The masses, who formed the great majority of the population, consisted of peasants living in villages owned by more or less feudal and most frequently absentee landowners, of nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes, and of the urban craftsmen and unskilled labourers. These people worked hard and were responsible for the country's self-sufficiency in foodstuffs and hand-made manufactures.[8] They were mostly illiterate. The great majority were followers of Shi'ite Islam, and the urban craftsmen were organized in guilds which had strong religious traditions.[9] They were thus inclined to seek representation of their interests by the clergy. It was this factor which led radically minded 'olamā to join with merchants and members of the intelligentsia in opposition to the Qājār régime.

Until late in the 19th century, the potential conflict between the secular government and the clergy and its supporters in the bazaar remained latent. The religious leaders did not openly object to the apparent supremacy of the secular government, probably because the clergy were still in control of important fields such as education and law. The Islamic law and courts dealt with all matters except those such as crime, taxation, and rural land tenure which came under the jurisdiction of customary law ('orf) and of governmental courts. Both the legal profession (judges, advocates, and registrars) and the teaching profession were manned by 'olamā. The clergy also controlled large areas of land which had been donated as perpetual endowments (vaqf).

In the second half of the century, however, the Qājār

government under the impact of Western ideas and pressures began to adopt new methods. Modern secular colleges were established, and modern statutes or regulations were enacted by royal decree. Modern schools were also established by foreign institutions and later by Iranian individuals. The influence of the clergy was thus being weakened, and a complicated situation was beginning to arise.

The need for reform was first seen by the ruling élite and by the autocratic Qājār kings themselves, who were anxious to strengthen their actually rather weak authority. Mohammad Shāh (1834-1848), the son of 'Abbās Mirzā, who had died in 1833, chose one of his father's enlightened officials, Mirzā Abu'l-Qāsem Qā'em-maqām,[10] for the post of chief minister, and Nāser od-Din Shāh (1848-1896) appointed another of them, Mirzā Taqi Khān Amir-e Kabir.[11] In each case the high standing and independent influence of these viziers conflicted with the autocratic pretensions of the Qājār monarchy and with the intrigues of courtiers anxious to preserve their privileges. Mohammad Shāh dismissed Qā'em-maqām and put him to death in 1835, and Nāser od-Din Shāh similarly dismissed Amir-e Kabir in 1851 and put him to death in 1852. Amir-e Kabir left lasting achievements, however, with the foundation of the Dār ol-Fonun, Iran's first modern college, in 1851, and the establishment of a regularly appearing government gazette, which gave an impetus to printing. The Dār ol-Fonun employed Iranian and European professors and used Persian and French in its courses, which were designed to train high officials.

In 1858 the ministries were renamed, and thereafter they were to some extent reorganized, on Western lines. Small but growing numbers of men educated at the Dār ol-Fonun, or abroad, or at subsequently opened foreign missionary schools and Iranian private schools, entered the service of various ministries. To a limited but perceptible extent, they began to modernize the government's methods and to strengthen its grip on the country. This small class of intelligentsia, consisting initially of modern-minded officials, did not in any way represent the masses of the people, but was to play an important role in Iran's social evolution.

At the same time the contacts of the merchants with the outside world opened their minds to the need for modern knowledge, and their business experiences made them feel the need for adequate laws and better government. The first private school in Iran was founded by a merchant, Hājji Mirzā Hasan Roshdiyeh, at Tabriz in 1895, in the face of opposition from some of the clergy.[12] Many merchants and workshop owners left the country in order to free themselves from the discriminating capitulation laws and the arbitrary rule of the government and also from the inquisitional power of self-seeking clergymen. A number of reformists and intellectuals also emigrated because they were persecuted in Iran and because greater freedom of expression was allowed in foreign countries. At the end of the century they published abroad some impressive books and independent Persian newspapers, and either sent them by post or smuggled them into Iran.[13]

While the intellectuals called for reform, the clergy preached against foreign interference. The leading 'olamā gave proof of their influence over the nation in the agitation of 1891 against Nāser od-Din Shāh's contract with a British firm for the operation of a tobacco monopoly in Iran. One of Nāser od-Din Shāh's policies had been an attempt to raise new revenues through the grant of concessions to European companies. Some of the intellectuals, such as Malkom Khān and Hoseyn Khān Sepahsālār, supported this policy on the grounds that it would bring modern technology into Iran.[14] The introduction of the telegraph system in and after 1862 by a British company - primarily in the interests of Indo-European communications - helped the Iranian government to gain more control over the provinces and was useful to the merchants too. (At a later date it was also useful to the constitutionalists). The notorious Reuter Concession, arranged by Sepahsālār when he was Chief Vizier in 1872, would have given banking, railway, and mineral monopolies to British companies which Baron Julius de Reuter promised to establish; but Iranian national as well as Russian opposition compelled Nāser od-Din Shāh to cancel this scheme and to dismiss Sepahsālār. The Shāh at the same time cancelled Sepahsālār's plan for a council of state which might have curtailed the arbitrary royal powers. The banking concession finally given to de Reuter in 1889 was followed by the Tobacco concession which was granted to a British company by Nāser od-Din Shāh in 1890.[15] In 1898 his successor, Mozaffar od-Din Shāh (1896-1907),

engaged Belgian officials to reform the customs administration; in 1900 and 1902, he obtained two large Russian loans, and in 1901 he granted an oil concession to a British company.[16]

In the social history of Iran, the foreign concessions were to some extent responsible for the rise of modern industries and of technically trained managerial and machine-operating classes. However, along with other factors, they also helped to bring about a national uprising against both the foreign exploitation and the authoritarian régime. The importation of cheap machine-made goods from the West, which was encouraged by the political rivalry of the two influential powers, Russia and Britain, greatly damaged the traditional industries of Iran and deprived many handicraft workers of their livelihood.[17] Iranian workers migrated in great numbers to neighbouring countries, especially Russia, in search of employment.[18]

As a result of the growth in the numbers of Iranians visiting European countries and Europeans visiting Iran, there were increasing contacts with democratic ideas and new aspects of life which paved the way for the enlightenment of the nation and the rise of the demand for freedom. Contact was made in two significant ways. Firstly, it was made through the workers and merchants who went to Europe and other relatively progressive neighbouring countries, and through the foreigners who travelled to Iran for various purposes. As a result of this growing acquaintance with Europeans, Iranians began to realize how poor their own social conditions were. Secondly, contact was made through the members of the intelligentsia and their

literature, whether original or translated. This gave rise to a tendency towards rationality and social consciousness which began to spread through the nation. Newspapers, diaries, novels, and so on, written or translated by Iranians, as well as the presence of foreign teachers at the already mentioned Dār ol-Fonun and of other individuals, played an important role in this respect.[19]

The British Tobacco Concession of 1890, which was a scheme to raise revenue through a monopoly (as in Ottoman Turkey) rather than through taxation, met with an unprecedented national protest from people of all classes, especially in the cities. One complaint was that the financial terms were unfair to Iran, another that the factories to be built by the company would deprive the bazaar tobacconists of their livelihood. However, the people's basic feeling was an unwillingness to let a despotic government extort more money from them through a foreign agency. National feeling was also offended by the already mentioned banking concession of 1889 which had been granted to de Reuter, because the issue of currency notes and the custody of the government's accounts were entrusted to a foreign company. Although the intellectuals were becoming highly respected and their banned literature was being distributed among the literate and even semi-literate classes, the mosque was still the only significant autonomous institution in Iranian society. For this reason the intellectuals and nationalists rallied behind the clergy in the protest against the concession. As soon as a ban on smoking was ordered by the mosque authorities, the whole nation observed it.[20] The company was forced

to withdraw from Iran, and Nāser od-Din Shāh was discredited and assassinated a few years later in 1896.

Mozaffer od-Din Shāh failed to learn from his father's mistakes and at first showed little awareness of the social and economic problems of his subjects. After entrusting the customs administration to Belgian experts in 1898, he mortgaged the customs revenues against the loans which he obtained from Russia and spent in large part on a tour of Europe. The oil concession which he granted to a British company in 1901 brought no immediate benefit because oil exportation only began in 1914. The fairness of this concession granted by a despotic Shāh was also to be called into question in later times.

The Qājār government's financial difficulties were partly due to royal extravagance and expensive European journeys, payment of sinecures, etc. At the same time the costs of modernization were bound to be high. Above all, Iran needed internal and external security. The government's failure to introduce just and impartial laws or social and economic reforms was partly due to its autocratic nature and partly due to lack of means and fear of internal opposition. Meanwhile the foreign powers did not fail to interfere in the nation's affairs.

By the turn of the century conditions were ripe for a revolutionary change insofar as the influential classes of Iranian society were no longer prepared to tolerate the old order. Discontent with the prevalent insecurity and the lack of laws, and with the mishandling of affairs by the government and the maltreatment of the people by

its officials, were universal, but open complaints were only expressed sporadically and by individuals. The movement which led to the establishment of constitutional government arose as a specific protest when two merchants, each the founder of a mosque, were accused of profiteering and punished with the bastinado by order of the Governor of Tehran. They had not been tried under any law or allowed to contest the accusation. At first the protestors, who were from the bazaar and the mosques, only appealed for justice and did not demand anything as definite as a constitution. Even the most prominent leaders were not knowledgeable on the subject of constitutions.[21] It soon became apparent, however, that this mosque-led protest was the spark that would kindle a mass movement.[22]

The internal pressures for social change were supplemented by the pressures of external events, the most recent and important of which was the defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. The reform movement of the merchants, clergy, and intellectuals received support from one of the two rival powers with interest in Iran, namely the British, who later disappointed Iranian hopes when they agreed with Russia in 1907 on a division of Iranian territory into spheres of influence.

Constitutional government was finally conceded by Mozaffer od-Din Shāh on 30 December 1906. The first Majles (parliament) consisted mostly of bazaar merchants, members of guilds, and 'olamā.[23] Before long, however, the new régime encountered hostility from the old aristocratic classes, represented by Mohammad 'Ali Shāh (1907-1909)

and the court party, and from another section of the clergy. In opposition to the leaders of the constitutionalist 'olamā, Sayyed 'Abdollah Behbahāni and Sayyed Mohammed Tabātabā'i, another leading 'ālem, Sheykh Fazlollāh Nuri, came forth with the opinion that certain constitutional provisions and statutes which the parliament had approved were contrary to Islamic laws (shari'at). Although a compromise formula, agreed by Sayyed 'Abdollāh Behbahāni and Sheykh Fazlollāh Nuri, was added to the constitution in article 2 of the Supplementary Fundamental Law of October 2,1907, whereby five mojtaheds (learned 'olamā) were to have a veto over any legislation which they might consider un-Islamic, Sheykh Fazlollāh Nuri maintained his opposition and condoned Mohammad 'Ali Shāh's bombardment of the parliament house and repudiation of the constitution on June 23,1908. The deposition of Mohammad 'Ali Shāh by national groups in July 1909 was sanctioned by the senior mojtaheds of the important Shi'ite theological centre of Najaf in Iraq, and Sheykh Fazlollāh Nuri was subsequently tried and executed for his anti-constitutional activities. Nevertheless the old aristocratic and landowning elements were able to take advantage of the disunity and indecisiveness of the constitutionalists. In the second Majles, the members of the Democrat Party, which advocated relatively fundamental reforms, were outnumbered by aristocrats, courtiers, and conservative clergy. Eventually the constitution was suspended on December 24,1911, following a Russian ultimatum

demanding the dismissal of the government's foreign financial advisor, the American W. Morgan Shuster.[24]

The régime of Ahmad Shāh Qājār (1909-1925) was too weak to prevent violation of Iranian soil by Russian, British, German, and Turkish forces during the first world war. The Democrats and other patriots generally felt sympathy with the Turks and Germans and resentment of the Russians and the British. In November 1915 the short-lived third parliament was ended by an Anglo-Russian ultimatum, and in the following two years most of Iran fell under Russian or British control. This situation was changed by the Russian 'October' revolution of 1917, which had important consequences for the political and social condition of Iran. On the one hand it upset the former balance of power between Russia and Britain and left the latter temporarily without a rival in Iran. On the other hand the withdrawal of the Tsarist Russian forces from Iranian territory brightened the prospect for full national independence and encouraged social movements, especially that of the Jangalis, a basically Islamic movement for agrarian reform which had arisen in the Caspian provinces under the leadership of Mirzā Kuchek Khān.[25]

One of the British plans under the proposed treaty of 1919 was to unify the different Iranian military formations- Cossacks, Gendarmes, and others - into a single army which would be organized and trained by British military advisers. The Iranian opposition to the proposed treaty and the British decision to withdraw from Iran by the spring of 1921 rendered this plan impracticable. Meanwhile the

British insistence on the resignation of the Tsarist Russian officers opened the way for the rise of Rezā Khān, one of the Cossack Division's Iranian officers. On 21 February 1921 Rezā Khān carried out a coup d'état. He installed a journalist, Sayyed Ziyā od-Din Tabatābā'i, as Prime Minister, and obtained for himself the position of Commander-in-Chief. His initial purposes were to push through the unification of the armed forces, and to suppress the Jangali and other movements and tribal potentates who controlled large areas of Iran in defiance of the central government. After the dismissal of Sayyed Ziyā od-Din in May 1921, he became War Minister, and in October 1923 he became Prime Minister. The success of his efforts to create a national army, and of his campaigns against the resisting dissident opposition - especially his campaign in 1924 against Sheykh Khaz'al, the semi-independent and formerly British-backed local ruler of Mohammara (later renamed Khorramshahr) - won general acclaim amongst nationalist-minded intellectuals and the rising bourgeoisie.[26]

Opposition to Rezā Khān at that time was directed more against his methods than his policies. His military measures against tribal and other dissidents, and his insistence on the allocation of a great proportion of the state revenue to the armed forces, aroused fears of military domination. Some, though not all, of the liberal intellectuals were alarmed. Much more important was the potential opposition of the Shi'ite Islamic clergy, who enjoyed great influence in the bazaars and among the urban masses and to some extent represented the interests of

those classes.[27]

In the fourth Majles (1921-1923), the majority of the deputies frequently opposed the successive cabinets. Among this majority were deputies of the Democrat Party, which had played a leading role in the second and third parliaments and in the first world war. Most of the Democrat deputies were in favour of national unity and of modernization and were willing to support Rezā Khān's efforts as War Minister and Commander-in-Chief. This was the line taken by the leader of the Democrat deputies, Soleyman Mirzā (Eskandari), who was a Qājār prince with reformist and socialist views. (In 1941 he became the first head of the pro-Communist Tudeh Party).[28]

Among those who opposed Rezā Khān was the nationalist Mohammad Mosaddeq, a Swiss-trained lawyer and former Cabinet Minister. The most effective spokesman of opposition to Rezā Khān was Sayyed Hasan Modarres, an eminent and at the same time popular 'ālem who was one of the representatives from Isfahan and the leader of the small group of clerical deputies. He unequivocally declared that Rezā Khān was doing more harm than good.[29]

The deputies of the minority were moderates, for the most part landowners, who normally voted for the government. Among them were associates of the Qājār royal clan and friends of the feudal magnates, such as Sheykh Khaz'al of Mohammera, who were threatened by Rezā Khān's measures. In general, however, the landowning class and the quasi-bourgeoisie supported Rezā Khān because his enforcement of law and order and his attempts at modernization were

beneficial to their interests.

When elections for the fifth Majles began in 1923, Rezā Khān appears to have feared that a combination of Qājārs, feudal magnates, and popular 'olamā might return a parliamentary majority hostile to him and his policies. In October 1923 he forced Ahmad Shāh to appoint him Prime Minister, and in November 1923 Ahmad Shāh left Iran for medical treatment in Europe, whence he did not return. During the elections, which lasted four months, certain newspapers with Rezā Khān's veiled support started a campaign in favour of a republic. The elections returned a large majority of moderate deputies, but only 32 deputies favouring a republic, together with 29 supporters of Modarres and a few former Democrats more or less critical of Rezā Khān. After the elections, the pro-republican press campaign was intensified, and in reply to it many 'olamā began to preach sermons condemning a republic as 'godless' like the republic of Turkey, which had begun to secularize the laws and in March 1924 abolished the Sunnite Islamic caliphate, or like the Soviet republic of Āzarbāyjān. At this juncture Rezā Khān visited Qom and met the leading mojtaheds of the day, including Sayyed Abu'l-Hasan Esfahāni of Najaf in Iraq who later gained recognition as the highest authority (marja'-e taqlid) of Shi'ite Islam. A conciliatory statement and other gestures by Rezā Khān did not appease the clerical agitation, and on April 7, 1924 he resigned and left Tehran; but the deputies, to some extent under military pressure, passed a resolution calling for his return. He then resumed office, and condemned the idea of a republic

as un-Islamic.[30] Later in the year he subdued various tribes and personally led an expedition against the Sheykh Khaz'al, whom he forced to surrender in December 1924, thereby bringing the port of Khorramshahr and the oil refinery at Ābādān under direct rule. After this triumph, he travelled to Iraq to visit the tombs of the martyred Imams and pay respects to the mojtaheds before returning to Tehran. In October 1924 a constituent assembly was elected to amend the constitution, and on December 12, 1924 this assembly transferred the throne to Rezā Khān and his heirs. The fifth Majles before its dissolution had passed a law for the compulsory adoption of surnames, and Rezā chose the surname Pahlavi, which means either Parthian or middle Persian and also has a connotation of heroism. He thereby identified his dynasty with the glories of the ancient rather than the Islamic past of Iran, and proclaimed a nationalist ideology different from the ideology of an Islamic state, even if the two are not in logic necessarily incompatible.

Many writers have described Rezā Shāh as the founder of modern Iran, and this description cannot be wholly denied, even though many developments of his period would have most probably taken place whether or not he had risen to power. His most ambitious achievement, the Trans-Iranian Railway, was completed without the help of foreign or internal loans, mainly with funds from governmental tea and sugar monopolies which charged high prices.

A decline in the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's payments

after the world-wide slump of 1930-31 led to the first dispute between the Iranian government and the Company. This was settled in 1933 by an agreement which extended the duration of the Company's concession from 1961 to 1993.[31]

Attempts were also made to introduce modern industry. Most of the factories were state-owned, but some were built and managed by private enterprise with official encouragement. Many of the factories were too small, and some were badly managed. The factories, the railway, and the oil industry only employed relatively small numbers of people. Nevertheless these small beginnings of modern industry laid the foundation for later growth and for the emergence of an industrial working class.[32]

Rezā Shāh was certainly the founder of the modern armed forces of Iran. Most Iranian nationalists shared the Shāh's desire that the country should possess efficient modern armed forces, and approved the principle of compulsory military service as a patriotic duty. In the newspapers great emphasis was laid on the strength and modernity of the armed forces. Although Rezā Shāh founded the air force and a small nucleus of a modern navy, the great bulk of the armed forces were in fact equipped and deployed for action against potentially rebellious tribes and not for defence against foreign invasion. For the propaganda-fed public the inability of the armed forces to resist the Anglo-Russian invasion of 1941 was a bitter disillusionment.[33]

The second Majles in 1910 had passed a compulsory education law, but the establishment of state schools and colleges could not be started until after the end of the first world war. The modern state educational system, at

all levels from primary schools to Tehran University (opened in 1936), came into being in Rezā Shāh's reign. It was modelled partly on the contemporary French system and was rigidly centralized. The curricula, which were prepared by urban (Tehrāni) educationists, took no account of the needs of small towns and rural areas or of the existence of local languages, particularly Turkish in Āzarbāyjān and elsewhere, Kurdish, Arabic, and Baluchi. All instruction, from primary school upwards, was to be given through the medium of Persian. Similarly publication of newspapers and books in the local languages was not allowed. This policy was continued after the second world war by all governments except the brief autonomous régime of Ja'far Pishevari in Iranian Āzarbāyjān in 1946. The motive that underlay it was a desire to centralize the government and to promote a uniform nationalism characterized by pride in Iran's glorious past and in the language inherited from that past, namely Persian.

One of the effects of emphasis on Persian as the only medium has been to retard the educational development of children whose mother tongue is not Persian. Another defect of the school syllabuses was that they were too academic and made little or no provision for technical or agricultural training. One reason for this may have been lack of competent teachers of such subjects. The main reason, however, lay in the policy of the régime, for no serious attempt to reform the deficient educational system was made until 1967. Little criticism was heard either. The only influential writer who ventured to discuss the fundamental problems of the local languages and of the

unsuitability of the urban and 'bourgeois-type' school textbooks (particularly for village children) was the Āzarbāyjāni schoolteacher and storywriter Samad Behrangi (1939-1968), whose works are discussed later in this study. The schools were also used to inculcate Iranian nationalism of the type favoured by the Pahlavi régime. The history textbooks emphasized the achievements of the ancient Iranians and the struggle for national revival after the Arab conquest rather than the achievements of the Iranians as a Muslim nation. Lessons in Islam were compulsory, but their content was decided by the Education Ministry without consultation with the 'olamā. The education laws provided for recognition and subsidization of private schools if they satisfied the ministry's standards, but as in other Near Eastern Muslim countries, the traditional Islamic maktabs generally did not gain recognition and faded from the scene.[34] On the other hand, the Armenian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian schools adapted and survived.

Another important social change was the secularization of the laws, the law courts, and the legal profession.[35] Certain steps in this direction had already been initiated by the second, fourth, and fifth parliaments. In Rezā Shāh's reign the Commercial, Penal, and Civil Codes were enacted, civil registration of marriages, births, deaths, and divorces and of property titles was made compulsory, and judges and lawyers were required to possess state-approved qualifications. The Commercial and Penal Codes were modelled entirely on European laws. Parts of the Civil Code consisted of European-type laws, and parts, mainly

concerning marriage, divorce, and inheritance, consisted of slightly modified Shi'ite Islamic laws ranking as a parliamentary statute rather than a sacred canon. Thus the 'olamā were in principle deprived of one of their chief functions and sources of income.

For various reasons these legal reforms met with little openly or widely expressed opposition even though they were undoubtedly resented by the 'olama. One reason was that the legal reforms had long been desired not only by intellectuals but also by businessmen and merchants, who needed modern laws for banking, insurance, and company formation. The establishment of the state-owned National Bank in 1927 fulfilled a national aspiration originally voiced by the first Majles in 1907. Another reason was that, in practice, the inability to quickly train sufficient men for the new legal system forced the government to appoint mollās as judges and recognise them as lawyers, just as the shortage of trained teachers forced it to employ mollās as schoolteachers. The fact that the government did not allow open criticism of its basic policies was yet another reason for the lack of opposition.[36]

Rezā Shāh's régime did not allow registration of political parties or the pursuit of party political activity. Governmental pressure ensured that radical critics were not elected to parliamentary seats.[37] Nor were the parliamentary sittings attended by five high-ranking mojtaheds with power to veto legislation which they might deem un-Islamic, as required by Article 2 of the Supplementary Fundamental Law. After becoming Shāh, Rezā did not reward the 'olamā for the help they had given him when he dropped the idea of a republic. The régime assigned no place to the 'olamā and

never consulted them about its modernizing legislation, which they certainly would not have approved. The principal newspapers, though privately owned, always reflected official thinking. Intellectual publications likewise were strictly controlled.[38] For example, Taqi Arāni, a German-educated Marxist who had started a periodical Donyā in 1933, had to confine himself to theoretical articles, without any reference to the social and political situation in Iran. Nevertheless Donyā lasted only until 1937, when Arāni and 52 other Marxists (the 'Group of 53') were arrested. Arani died in prison, but some of the rest of the group founded the Tudeh ('masses') Party after the Anglo-Russian invasion in 1941, when they were released, and appointed the former Democrat leader, Soleymān Mirzā Eskandari, to be its head.[39] Already several prominent critics or opponents of the régime had been detained for varying periods and some had died while in prison or forced residence.[40] Some prominent ministers who had served Rezā Shāh were also arrested and died in prison (e.g. 'Abdol-Hoseyn Teymurtāsh [41] and Firuz Mirzā Nosrat od-Dowlah[42]), while another ('Ali Akbar Dāvar, the architect of the legal reforms) committed suicide.[43] Intellectuals who had at first supported Rezā Shāh's modernizing and reforming aims thus began to perceive and resent an oppressive atmosphere of tension and fear.[44]

The régime was the first in Iranian history to make propaganda. In general the themes were national unity, progress, and strength. The type of nationalism which prompted the régime to impose new and sometimes grotesque pure Persian words in the place of Arabic words often came

in for ridicule in intellectual circles. On the other hand, the régime's emphasis on ancient Iran as the source of national identity generally went down well in intellectual circles. The liberal poet Ebrāhim Pur-Dāvud turned to ancient Iranian studies and became the first professor of the subject at Tehran University; the poet Bahār, the historian Kasravi, and the writer Sādeq Hedāyat all learnt Pahlavi and translated Pahlavi works. Another well-received expression of the régime's nationalism was the celebration of the Ferdowsi millenary in 1934. In 1939 a propaganda department called the Anjoman-e Parvaresh-e Afkār was established "to direct and develop the 'collective mind' of Persian citizens. In this capacity, (the writer Mohammad) Hejāzi was charged with editing the journal Irān-e Emruz, which was the mouthpiece of this organization".[45] Hejāzi also became head of the radio broadcasting when it was started in 1940.

Most of Rezā Shāh's reign coincided with international crises: first the world-wide slump of 1931-2, and then the European and Far Eastern events which led to the second world war. The slump forced the government to abandon the silver currency (qerān) and adopt a paper currency (riyāl), backed after 1936 only by the security of the crown jewels.[46] This currency change caused inflation as well as great inconvenience to villagers and tribes. Other factors, such as the high prices charged for tea and sugar by the state monopolies whose revenues were used to finance the building of the railway, and the tariffs which were imposed to protect the new industries, also raised the cost of living. Officials and teachers as well as labourers suffered hardship

because their salaries or wages did nor rise correspondingly. The government did relatively little to help agriculture;[47] it built silos and sugar factories and encouraged sugar beet growing and tea growing, but tried to prevent rises in the prices of wheat and meat which might have caused discontent in the cities. Thus the position of most villagers grew worse. In 1939 a law was enacted for the purpose of increasing peasants' crop shares and making landowners contribute to the cost of improvements which would be executed by village councils; but this law was never enforced.[48]

The war made foreign goods expensive and difficult to obtain, and disrupted the existing and planned new industries. Thus by the end of Rezā Shāh's reign large sections of the people in both town and country were suffering severe economic hardship.

Nevertheless the régime appeared to be secure. Discontent was widespread but opposition was neither unified nor organized. The government announced neutrality and made no preparations for civil defence. Thus the whole nation was taken by surprise when Russian and British troops invaded Iran on August 25, 1941 and the Iranian forces surrendered after only token resistance, and when Rezā Shāh was forced to abdicate on September 16, 1941 in favour of his 21-year-old son, Mohammad Rezā.

The allied occupation of Iran 'brought with it a return of constitutional government', but was at the same time 'an obstacle to the development of Iranian constitutional institutions'.[49] Until 1945, not only were foreign troops present on Iranian soil but a Russian-British-Iranian censorship was also in operation.[50] Both the Allies and the Germans bombarded the Iranians with their propaganda. Allied purchasing, together with the difficulty of importation, caused a famine in 1942 (made worse by the lack of adequate health services) in which many lives were lost, and gave rise to a severe inflation. In 1946 prices were five times higher than they had been in 1940. This inflation enabled many individuals to make fortunes, but did great social and economic damage to the nation as a whole.

The Russian-British-Iranian censorship did not allow discussion of Russian, British, and American activities (which were vitally important for Iran), but generally allowed free discussion of internal political and social matters. The unstable cabinets which held office after September 1941 had little authoritarian power to restrict free political expression and activity; they sometimes banned newspapers and parties, but these were often able to resume under different names. Large numbers of political or satirical newspapers and magazines and several political parties appeared on the scene. Most of the newspapers and magazines were short-lived, and most of the parties were factional and transitory as they lacked social roots and political experience.[51] The Tudeh Party was the best

organized, and it had some success in extending its influence from left-wing intellectual circles into the still small industrial working class; but it became suspect of unpatriotism when it supported the Soviet Russian demands for an oil concession in the north of Iran and for an autonomous provincial régime in Iranian Āzarbāyjān. The declared programmes of most parties concealed basic differences of principle, and their socio-political aims were often completely unrealistic. Some of the spontaneously generated parties of the period preferred to busy themselves with idealistic theories rather than practical problems, while some of the politicians were mainly concerned to exploit the situations for their own interests. Moreover intimidation by means of mob demonstrations and political persecution sometimes inhibited free expression. On the other hand, the parties established clubs, some for beneficial social purposes, and held meetings which sometimes had an educative value. Others organized their clubs for political agitation purposes. The atmosphere of political controversy set the tone of the literature of these years.

The Shi'ite Islamic clergy, who during Rezā Shāh's reign had been excluded from the political arena, were able to regain considerable influence. There is some evidence that they received considerable encouragement from the highest political quarters.[52] Clearly it was expected that the clergy would strongly oppose communism and the Tudeh Party. The clergy were able to express the grievances of the urban masses in language which the masses could understand, and it was a time when the masses were suffering

great hardship from inflation and post-war unemployment or under-employment.

The clergy did not organize a political party of their own, but had connections with several of the parties which arose. They differed in their political attitudes, because some of them regarded atheistic communism and Soviet Russia as the worst threat to Islam and Iran, while others were hostile to all foreign cultural and economic influences, which in the circumstances meant primarily British and American influences. A clandestine group of extremist mollās and theology students, named Fedā'iyān-e Eslām, adopted the weapon of political assassination. One of their members assassinated the historian Kasravi on March 12 1946, in the courthouse where he was being prosecuted for blasphemy. On February 4, 1948, a shot narrowly missed Mohammad Rezā Shāh. The government stated that the culprit was a Tudeh member and afterwards banned the Tudeh Party; but it was believed by some that he was a Fedā'i. Members of the Fedā'iyān assassinated several prominent figures whom they regarded as subservient to the West: 'Abdol-Hoseyn Hazhir (a former Prime Minister) in November 1949, Ahmad Dehqān (a leading journalist with close ties with the royal court) in May 1950, 'Abdol-Hamid Zanganeh (a former Education Minister) in February 1951, and 'Ali Razmārā (then Prime Minister) on March 3, 1951.[53]

The political assassinations did not stop the influence of the West, but they did harm by giving an excuse to the security and censorship authorities for greater severity.

The chief mojtaheds (marja'-e taqlid) of the time, successively Sayyed Abu'l-Hasan Esfahāni of Najaf (d. 1946) and Sayyed Hoseyn Borujerdi of Qom (d. 1961), and likewise many other 'olamā, abstained from political pronouncement and involvement. The mass of the clergy, however, resented the spread of Western-type manners and the persistent decline of traditional values.

Foreign relations dominated Iranian political and social life during the war and the following decade. The support given by the Russian occupying forces to the autonomous administrations at Tabriz and Mahābād gave rise to a wide controversy. The Pishevari administration at Tabriz initiated school teaching and newspaper publishing in the local Āzari Turkish language and also took steps which led to the opening of Tabriz University, the first provincial university in Iran.[54] While the Persian-speaking nationalists were offended by these steps, the Āzarbāyjāni landowners were bitterly critical of the rapidity with which their lands were confiscated and distributed among the peasants. From the political point of view, while the Western powers and particularly the Americans and British and their supporters inside Iran were threatened by the growth of the influence of the communist Russians in Iran, many 'olamā considered the greatest threat to be that imposed by a 'godless' government upon a Muslim nation. The Tudeh Party was now discredited in the eyes of some Iranian nationalists by its approval of the Pishevari administration at Tabriz, and several writers and other intellectuals who had earlier worked or shown sympathy for

it changed their minds at this time.[55]

During the war years, Mohammad Rezā Shāh had been unable to play a prominent role, but had worked to restore the morale and efficiency of the armed forces with the support of the Western powers. Already in 1943, American officers had been engaged to advise on the training and equipment of the army and the gendarmerie. After giving diplomatic support in the Āzarbāyjān affair, the U.S.A. began to provide loans and soon afterwards technical and financial aid. The Shāh throughout his reign sought American support and generally accepted American advice. American financial aid continued until the 1960s and American military cooperation until the Shāh's fall in 1979. The presence of increasingly large numbers of American military and civilian advisers and businessmen having a different culture and outlook on life caused resentment in certain nationalist and religious circles.

The Anglo-Iranian oil dispute in the years of Mosaddeq's premiership (April 1951 - August 1953) left a bitter legacy.[56] He had strongly opposed the Russian demand for an oil concession in northern Iran, and as leader of a small and disparate group of deputies, the National Front (Jebhe-ye Melli), he led the opposition against the government's plan to renegotiate the terms of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's concession. His rise to office was accompanied by a wave of national feeling that Iran must have sole control of its economically and strategically vital oil industry. At the same time he insisted that the Shāh must reign and not rule. At first he enjoyed the support of almost all social

classes and many political groups, including the Iran Party, a component of the National Front representing the modern professional class, a large number of bāzāris and militant clerics led by Āyatollāh Abu'l-Qāsem Kāshāni, and later also the banned but again more or less active Tudeh Party.[57] At the same time the social and political atmosphere of the time forced many politicians to support Mosaddeq while they did not inwardly sympathize with his policy. Such persons wanted larger revenues from the oil industry rather than sole national control of it, and a revival of business through use of the oil revenues for implementation of development plans (the first of which had been drawn up by American consultants in 1949). Above all, they viewed Soviet Russia as a great threat, in contrast with the Americans who were then considered the defenders of weak nations and of peace. Probably the majority of army officers similarly saw Russia as the chief threat and wanted American aid and weapons. Mosaddeq himself consistently tried to win American goodwill and to avoid losing American aid and diplomatic support. He was also unwilling to condemn the Tudeh Party, because they supported him in his struggle against the British Oil Company and the Shāh.

The internal and external circumstances pushed Mosaddeq into political and economic isolation and forced him to demand emergency powers of an almost dictatorial nature; and this, together with alarm at the gloomy economic prospects, other factors including caused the desertion of some of his former supporters, notably Kāshāni.[58] In the final crisis, the American government of President Eisenhower played an

important part by refusing Mosaddeq's request for financial aid or a loan without a previous settlement of the oil dispute. Moreover the American Central Intelligence Agency contacted and helped the group of officers led by General Fazlollāh Zāhedi who reinstated the Shāh in 1953. Although this was of great importance, Mosaddeq's government was at that time vulnerable; Zāhedi's action would not have succeeded so easily if Mosaddeq had been decisive and enjoyed the same almost universal support as before. It seems clear that in the summer of 1953 a number of influential army officers and certain power groups in Iranian society were against Mosaddeq. He ignored these forces and underweighed the support given to them by the Western powers.[59]

Other important groups, however, particularly intellectuals and the 'olamā, continued to regard Mosaddeq as a truly democratic leader of the Iranian people. They also regarded the oil agreement of 1954 and the subsequent policy of diplomatic and economic ties with the U.S.A. as a surrender of national and economic independence - or in the view of some of the 'olamā, as a betrayal of Islam. In general, the main concern of the Islamic nationalists was the damage done to Iranian culture and the Islamic way of life by the increasing contact with the West. The dominant upper and upper middle classes adopted Western lifestyles and became consumers on a lavish scale, whereas the living standards of the peasants and the urban masses remained very poor. At the same time the disregard by the Westernized classes of the national cultural heritage and of Islamic traditions

offended the masses, the 'olamā, and the radical intellectuals.

In the repression which followed the Shāh's re-instatement, leftists suffered most. A number of army officers accused of Tudeh membership were arrested and some of them were executed. The National Front groups were excluded from open political life and not allowed to publish their views in the press.[60] In 1957 an Internal Security Organization (SAVAK) with wide powers of arrest and censorship was established. Persons accused by the SAVAK were to be summarily tried and sentenced by military courts. Earlier in the same year the Shāh had called for a two-party system on the Anglo-American model. The deputies then grouped themselves into the Melliyun (Nationalist) Party and the Mardom (People's) Party.[61] The former was supported by the landowning and commercial interests, while the latter paid lip service to concern for social welfare; but since both parties had been introduced from the top and both their leaders (Manuchehr Eqbāl and Asadollāh 'Alam) were from the aristocratic class and equally devoted to the Shāh, their existence made little impact.

With return to normality and the oil agreement of 1954, the government launched projects such as construction of roads, railways, airports, etc., and encouraged industrial enterprise. Laws passed in 1955 authorized the foundation of private banks, and allowed foreign participation of less than 50 per cent in Iranian banks and industrial companies. During the next two decades the private and

state-owned banks set up branches all over the country. At the same time the transport services began to reach small towns and many villages. In this way the rural and tribal areas were brought into the net of the urban cash economy. The growth of a consumer society was meanwhile being encouraged by the television, press, and other media.

Many of the government's projects took much longer than expected to complete and proved to be costlier too. To an excessive extent they were financed by loans from banks or from abroad. Military expenditure also was high. The government received American and Western European aid grants in addition to the oil revenues, but still had to seek large foreign loans. This large-scale borrowing on the one hand caused more and more dependence on the West and on the other hand served to accelerate the growth of inflation and the gap between rich and poor. Moreover the concentration of these projects in a few urban centres, while most rural areas were neglected, caused the migration of great numbers of villagers who poured into the semi-industrial cities and found unskilled work, for the most part in the building trade. The unexpected population growth in the cities brought about an alarming rise in rents and house prices which aggravated social problems.[62] An increase in corruption was also noted at this time.

These economic and social changes in the cities brought no benefit to the villagers, who still formed the majority of the population of Iran. The alarm caused by the Iraqi revolution of July 1958 seems to have convinced the régime that steps ought to be taken in order to avoid such an incident in Iran. The worsening economic position and the

rise of unemployment at this time and in the following years made such a need doubly important. Thus the régime, while still giving priority to arms purchase and strengthening of the military forces, was ready to heed American advice and introduce social reforms.[63]

In late 1959 the Prime Minister and leader of the Melliyun Party, Manuchehr Eqbāl, presented a hastily-drafted land reform bill to the 19th Majles. It was strongly criticized by some of the Melliyun deputies before it was approved in May 1960. Soon afterwards the highest authority (marja'e taqlid) of the Shi'ite clergy, Ayatollāh Sayyed Hoseyn Borujerdi, who had hitherto kept aloof from politics, condemned the law as un-Islamic.[64]

In the election of 1960, when independent as well as Melliyun and Mardom candidates were allowed to stand, a large Melliyun majority was returned, but after allegations of vote rigging, they were asked by the Shāh to resign. The subsequent election in 1961 was boycotted by the National Front groups which had resumed open activity; they consisted of a moderate group called 'Freedom Front', which was the successor to the Iran Party; a socialist group, called 'Third Force', led by Khalil Maleki; and a radical religious-nationalist group led by Mehdi Bāzargān. On May 9,1961, after renewed complaints of rigging and a strike of the low-paid schoolteachers, the Shāh dissolved the 20th Majles before the completion of the elections and announced his intention to rule without a parliament until necessary social and electoral reforms could be completed.[65]

Already the international bankers had begun to restrict their credits to Iran and the government had been forced to slow down its development projects. This put an end to the building boom and caused unemployment among the rural immigrant building workers, who had to survive as best they could by turning to occupations such as street vending. In National Front demonstrations demanding free elections and parliamentary government, the Freedom Front played the leading part. The cabinet which the Shāh had appointed was headed by 'Ali Amini, with an agrarian expert, Hasan Arsanjāni, as Minister of Agriculture and Land Reform. In January 1962 the government proclaimed a revised land reform law and began to put it into force successively in different provinces.[66] This step was strongly condemned by the National Front and the 'olamā on the grounds that the legislation contradicted the Islamic respect for private property and that without parliamentary approval it was unconstitutional. The 'olamā also objected to the inclusion of vaqf lands in the reform scheme. Some landowners objected to land reform, while others were willing to accept it in return for good compensation.

Amini's cabinet had to make unpopular expenditure cuts, and when the American President, John F. Kennedy, refused further loans, he was forced to resign in July 1962.[67] The next Prime Minister was Asadollāh 'Alam, who kept Arsanjāni as Minister of Agriculture. 'Alam attempted to mollify the opposition and to improve relations with Soviet Russia (which had by this time got involved in a clash with China). In January 1963, at a Farmers' Conference organized by Arsanjāni, the Shāh announced a six-point programme. The

most important points were Land Reform, Electoral Reform, and the creation of a Literacy Corps (in which educated conscripts could volunteer for service as teachers in villages and among tribes). Shortly afterwards the Land Reform Law was amended, partly in response to requests from the Farmers' Conference and partly in response to complaints from landowners and 'olamā. Vaqf lands, instead of being expropriated, were to be leased to the Land Reform Organization. The voters of Iran were then asked to approve the six-point programme, which was described as the 'White Revolution', implying a revolution without bloodshed. Later the term was used by the government as a contrast with 'Red (i.e. communist) Revolution', and 'Black (i.e. clerical) Reaction'.

The 'olamā had not been consulted about the Land Reform, and they began to condemn the government for imposing that and other measures by decree in the absence of an elected parliament. Moreover, at this juncture the U.S. embassy requested judicial privileges for the American military mission under the pretext that some of its members had been unable to do their work for long periods while awaiting the trial of road accident cases in which they had been involved. This ill-considered request wounded Iranian national feelings. The strongest condemnation of the government came from Āyatollāh Ruhollāh Khomeyni. On June 4, 1963, the anniversary of the Imam Hoseyn's martyrdom, Khomeyni in a sermon at Qom compared the Shāh with Yazid ebn-e Mo'āviyeh, the Omayyad caliph against whose illicit rule the Imam Hoseyn had fought.[68] This call to Shi'ites to rise against the Shāh was followed by riots at Qom, Shiraz, and Tehran,

in which 100 lives, according to the official sources, but without doubt in reality many more, were lost.[69] Āyatollāh Khomeyni was arrested and later was sent into exile, first in Turkey and later in Iraq.

The election for the 21st Majles was finally held on September 17, 1963. Only two parties, Irān-e Novin (New Iran) and Mardom (People), and some independents took part. The Melliyun Party had collapsed after the suspension of parliament in 1961. The Irān-e Novin Party had been organized in the summer of 1963 by a small group who called themselves the 'Progressive Centre'. The group's leaders, Hasan-'Ali Mansur and Amir 'Abbās Hoveydā, were relatively young and had not previously been politicians; they were economists or 'technocrats' with higher degrees from American and European universities. Although the Mardom Party was led by the Prime Minister, Asadollāh 'Alam, the Irān-e Novin Party was regarded as the government party. In the election, Irān-e Novin won a large majority of the seats. The 21st Majles retrospectively approved the laws which had been enacted by decree during the years 1961-63. Mansur became Prime Minister in March 1964, and after his assassination Hoveydā remained Prime Minister from January 1965 until August 1977.

For more than a decade after 1963, only the Irān-e Novin and Mardom Parties were tolerated (except for a short time when an ineffective party named Pan-Iranist appeared on the scene). In all the elections in this period, the number of votes cast was low. Many individuals abstained from voting, either because they were opponents of the régime

or because they could see no difference between Irān-e Novin and Mardom. Although the former spoke mainly of economic development while the latter spoke more of social welfare and sometimes called for heavier taxation of the rich, the only real difference between them was that the former held office while the latter did not. Consequently all those who hoped to advance their careers or business supported Irān-e Novin. The government was really a dictatorship headed by the Shāh and operated by technocrats. At first it was less severe than the dictatorship of Rezā Shāh. Parliamentary forms were maintained, and the ordinary civil and criminal laws were enforced by the police and the courts. The government directly employed a large part of the population in the civil service, armed forces, and schools, and owned the public utilities and heavy industries as well as shares or loans in many smaller businesses. Even so, the country had a capitalist economy which gave scope for the free enterprise of individuals. The censorship prevented any criticism of the Shāh and his government, or of the basic policies which were being pursued in home and foreign affairs, but allowed criticism of details. Although poets and fiction writers felt obliged to write cryptically or symbolically for fear of the censorship, they were able to print and publish some pieces of social criticism during these years.

The Shāh and his ministers declared that their goal was to make Iran catch up with Germany and become the Japan of the Middle East. The Shāh's book Towards the Great Civilization (Tehran 1977) depicts a future welfare state

run on capitalist lines like the German Federal Republic. Another of his ambitions was to make the armed forces strong and thoroughly up-to-date. He evidently thought that freedom of speech and dissent would hinder or prevent attainment of these goals and that the people would be satisfied with the benefits of economic development even though their freedom was restricted.[70]

At first the policy of concentration on economic development was successful to some extent. The government, however, showed most concern for industrial development, which had been the aspiration of the bourgeois class and the nationalists ever since the constitutional revolution. The new industries, which had relatively high cost and low efficiency levels, had to be protected by very high tariffs. They were also criticized in some nationalist circles on the grounds that they were mainly assembly processes dependent on importation of parts from abroad. The modernization of the equipment of the armed forces caused similar dependence to an even greater extent.[71]

Although the government provided some financial and technical aid for agriculture and also helped some villagers through the Literacy Corps, all in all its support for agriculture amounted to far less than the support it gave to industry.[72] Some of the large dams which it built proved useful, but the very costly Dez and Kārun river dams in Khuzestān and the schemes for mechanized cultivation and agro-industries on lands watered by these two dams turned out to be disastrous failures. In general the authorities showed more concern to keep down basic food prices in the cities by subsidizing imports from abroad than to help

the peasants and sheep breeding nomads by letting them get higher prices or by subsidizing their products. The Land Reform, which turned a proportion of the villagers into small proprietors, relieved them of their former economic and political dependence on landlords but did not help them to become more efficient. The rural cooperatives which were intended to do this were on the whole unsuccessful. In most cases they were not spontaneous but were set up at the bidding of government officials. The loans on favourable terms which were offered to the cooperatives also had the effect of subjecting farmers to supervision by officials, and so did the nationalization of water resources in 1967. Moreover the loans and other forms of aid were not systematic and prompt enough to meet the needs of the small farmers. For this and other reasons, in the course of 12 years (1963 to 1975) Iran not only lost its former self-sufficiency, but became one of the world's major importers of food and agricultural products.[73] The government claimed that the deficiency was due to population growth and to the rise in demand which accompanied the rise in urban living standards. While the importance of these factors cannot be denied, the situation was undoubtedly made worse by the government's relative neglect of agriculture. During these years the ratio of agricultural production growth to population growth steadily declined.[74]

Another effect of the Land Reform was to accelerate the migration of villagers to the cities, particularly Tehran. A large proportion of the migrants were khoshneshinān, i.e. those families not entitled to land under Land Reform.

This influx caused grave social problems such as unemployment, lowering of wage levels, housing shortage, and overcrowding of schools and hospitals.

From 1970/71 onwards, Iran again experienced inflation. At first this was mainly due to the effect of foreign inflation on the cost of imports. At the same time the government spent a large proportion of the annual budget on arms purchases so that Iranian forces could take over the role of the British who were pulling out of the Persian Gulf.[75] From the same time the SAVAK and the censorship became harsher, and the government's propaganda became more intense and more crude.

It was in 1971 that the Shāh decided to hold celebrations to mark the 2500th anniversary of the foundation of the Iranian monarchy by Cyrus (Kurosh). The Shāh's coronation in October 1967 had not been widely criticized, because coronation is a ceremony of both religious and constitutional significance; but the 2500th anniversary celebrations provoked resentment both on account of their extravagance and expense and because they paid no attention to the Islamic element in the national heritage. The introduction of the Shāhanshāhi or Kuroshi calendar from March 21, 1976 instead of the Solar Hejri calendar, which is based on the Prophet Mohammad's migration from Mecca to Medina, was also seen as an affront to Islam.

An attack on a gendarmerie post at Siyāhkal in Gilān in February 1971 was the first sign of activity by revolutionary guerillas (<u>cheriks</u>). In the following years,

further attacks took place, including the assassination of a military prosecutor and a senior American adviser. A number of young (mostly educated) Iranians with either Islamic nationalist or leftist orientations had set up the nucleus of two guerilla groups which gradually in the course of the following years achieved some popularity, particularly among young people. At the same time, the Iranian universities were the scene of student unrest, motivated partly by grievances about syllabuses, examinations, etc., but mainly by political feelings and the desire for free speech. In a number of factories the workers protested by holding strikes.[76]

The government enlarged the SAVAK and suppressed news of such matters or only allowed fabricated news. The official propaganda described the guerillas as 'Islamic Marxists' and emphasized the incompatibility of Islam and Marxism. The SAVAK began to arrest and question large numbers of people whom it suspected of active opposition to the régime. The arrested persons were not always tried in the military courts, where they had no real chance to present the cases for their defence, but were sometimes kept in prison for long periods without trial. Some prominent authors whose works are discussed in this thesis were either questioned in prison without trial or forced to go into exile. Some 'olamā, including a few mojtaheds, were imprisoned for putting out anti-government sermons or pamphlets. 'Ali Shari'ati, a university lecturer who had won a large following through his advocacy of Islamic social justice and condemnation of the materialistic

'consumer society', and who (together with other people) had collected funds for the building of an assembly hall (the Hoseyniye-ye Ershād) in a northern suburb of Tehran, was forced to go into exile in London where he died in 1976. Arrested guerillas and persons suspected of contact with guerillas were tortured by the SAVAK to make them give information, and some of them died after torture. Others were reported to have been shot while trying to escape. Human rights associations in Western Europe and America accused Iran of having one of the worst human rights records in the world.[77]

The censorship similarly became more severe. Literary works by popular authors which had not been considered objectionable in the 1960s were banned or 'collected', i.e. confiscated, or were only allowed to be reprinted after expurgation. The newspapers became more and more propagandistic and at the same time similar to each other in content. They generally mentioned only the government's aims and successes and never its difficulties and failures. At the same time they devoted more and more space to frivolities, such as the doings of the Iranian pop stars.

The quadrupling of world oil prices in 1973-4 was made possible by the Arab ban on oil exports following the Egyptian-Israeli war of October 1973, rather than by Iran's demand for better terms.[78] Nevertheless the huge increase in the oil revenues appeared to be a great success for the government. While the government's projects provided employment and in some cases brought real benefits,

the allocation of huge sums for the purchase of the most advanced weapons, combat aircraft, and warships raised doubts in the minds of people of all classes.[79] Many thought that Iran was assuming an excessive military burden primarily for the defence of Western interests in the oil-producing region of the Persian Gulf. Another argument was that the finite oil wealth ought either to be invested productively or to be left in the ground for the benefit of future generations instead of being spent on armaments. The purchase of modern armaments necessitated the presence of more foreign experts and advisers, whose numbers had already risen to many thousands. The Western powers and Japan competed in promoting greater sales of their goods to Iran to meet the higher cost of their oil purchases.

The oil price rise and the doubling of the 1973-78 Development Plan caused another wave of inflation. Port congestion also caused shortages and sharpened the price rises. The launching of so many more governmental and private projects all at once caused an acute shortage of skilled labour. Even so, not all the unskilled villagers who had flooded into the cities could find work.[80] The immediate problem which pressed heavily on the urban masses was the housing shortage and the rapid rise in rents and house prices. Many, particularly the rural migrants, lived in unhealthy slums which lacked almost all amenities. Not only khoshneshinān, but also many poor peasants who had acquired land under the Land Reform, abandoned it to seek work in the cities, where the wage levels were (or appeared to be) far higher than farmers' incomes. The

government, after embarking on such vast expenditure, lost control over the economic situation and over the behaviour of its own employees. Cases of large-scale bribery involving officers, officials, and other high-ranking persons, and also foreign companies, in matters such as contract awards and building permits, were reported in the foreign press and to some extent also in Iranian newspapers. The government's financial expectations were dashed by the devaluation of the American dollar and inflationary prices, with the result that some of the planned projects had to be cancelled while foreign loans had to be obtained again to pay for contracts which could not be annulled. It was clear that in the economic situation which had arisen great social dangers lay ahead.

In anticipation of the election of the 24th Majles due to be held on June 20, 1975, the Shāh announced on March 1, 1975 his wish that a single political party should be formed. The Irān-e Novin and Mardom parties then combined to form the Rastākhiz (Resurrection) Party. The reasons given for this move was that Iran could not afford political dissensions which would impede its development, and needed the participation of all capable persons in political and public work. It was pointed out that other Middle Eastern countries such as Egypt (at that time) had a single party system, and it was emphasized that members would be allowed to express different opinions and form different 'wings' within the framework of the single party. Such an arrangement, even if satisfactory to the former supporters of the Irān-e Novin and Mardom parties, could not be accepted by the radical opposition.

In the summer of 1975, the Rastākhiz Party organized a youth movement, and the government employed these youths to enforce its price control measures by inspecting shops and fining shopkeepers on the spot. This was one among several steps that the régime had taken to reduce the power of the bazaar.[81] Similar steps were also taken to control the newly emerged industrialist class.[82] Since the government's own inflationary policies had been a much more important factor than profiteering by shopkeepers in causing price rises, these harsh measures were considered unjust and gave the Rastākhiz Party a bad name in the bazaars, so much so that the party was forced into self-criticism and recantation. Thereafter the bāzāris, who still played an important part in Iranian commercial life and still kept close links with the Islamic clergy, began to turn against the Pahlavi régime.

It was true that political strife might damage and endanger the apparent stability and authority of the régime. At the same time it was clear that the country's problems could not be solved by the suppression of dissenting views and the creation of a single party. The diversity of the social classes, provincial interests and languages, educational backgrounds, and religious and cultural outlooks make Iranian society exceptionally complex, while the country's international position adds further complications. It is not the purpose of this study to analyze the Islamic revolution of 1978-9. Nonetheless it must be said that history has shown in this recent revolution, as it showed in 1891, 1906, and the early 1950s, that the 'olamā are a force

with which other elements in Iranian society have to reckon.

The complexity and the changing nature of Iranian society in the 1906-1979 period give great interest to the contemporary literature. The purpose of this introduction has been to sketch the historical and social environment which Persian authors, who lived and wrote in this period, reflect in their writings.

Footnotes (I)

1 The rise of the commercial bourgeoisie was a feature of Iranian social development in the Qājār period. Their importance culminated in the tobacco protest of 1891 and the constitutional movement of 1905-1911. The economic grounds of this social change are discussed in various papers in Charles Issawi (ed.), The Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914, University of Chicago, 1971.

2 On the rise of modern Turkey, see Niyazi Berkes, The Development of Secularism in Turkey, Montreal 1974; Stanford Shaw, History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Cambridge 1976; Bernard Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, London 1968.

3 On Āqā Mohammad Khān and the establishment of the Qājār dynasty, see H. Fasā'i, History of Persia under Qajar Rule, tr. by H. Busse, N.Y., 1972.

4 Ta'ziyeh-khwāni is a combination of processions called "dasteh-gardāni" and recitations called "rowzeh-khwāni". The ta'ziyeh is considered in more detail in Chapter II-I of this study.

5 See Abdul-Hadi Hairi, Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran, pp.66-67.

6 Although Iranian landowners have been described as a "feudal" class and were able to manipulate the great majority of the population in rural areas, Iranian society was very different from the feudal society of medieval Western Europe. The landowners generally lived in the cities, and in modern times were real estate owners with no military role. Many served the government as high officials. Successful merchants and leading 'olamā joined the landowning class through purchases of villages or through marriage. As for the tribal khāns, they were nomadic or semi-nomadic, and although in the past they sometimes seized power, in modern times they have had little influence on Iranian society.

7 For good accounts of the rise of foreign trade and the role of the Iranian merchants, see Gad G. Gilbar, "The Big Merchants (tujjār) and the Persian Constitutional Movement of 1906" in A.A.S., Vol.11, No.3 (1977), pp. 275-303; W.M. Floor, "The Merchants (tujjār) in Qājār Iran", in Z.D.M.G. Band 126, Heft 1 (1976), pp.101-135; Ahmad Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles to the Development of a Bourgeoisie in Iran", in M.A. Cook,(ed.), Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to the Present Day, pp.308-332; and various articles in Charles Issawi,(ed.), The Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914.

8 On the structure of various classes in Iranian society, see Reza Arasteh, Man and Society in Iran, pp.112-126.

9 On the guilds, see W.M. Floor, "The Guilds in Iran - an Overview from the Earliest Beginnings till 1972", in Z.D.M.G., Band 125, Heft 1 (1975), pp.99-116.

10 On Qā'em-maqām, see Jahāngir Qā'em-maqāmi, Qā'em-maqām dar Jahān-e Adab va Siyāsat, Tehran 1941.

11 On Amir-e Kabir and his attempts at modernization, see Feridun Ādamiyat, Amir-e Kabir va Irān, 3rd ed., Tehran 1969; Hoseyn Makki, Zendegāni-ye Mirzā Taqi Khān Amir-e Kabir, Tehran 1944; 'Abbās Eqbāl, Mirzā Taqi Khān Amir-e Kabir, Tehran 1961; Akbar Hāshemi Rafsanjāni, Amir-e Kabir yā Qahremān-e Mobārezeh bā Este'mār, Tehran 1967; John H. Lorentz, "Iran's Great Reformer of the Nineteenth Century: An Analysis of Amir Kabir's Reforms", in I.S., Vol.4 (1971), pp.85-103.

12 Amin od-Dowleh, Khāterāt-e Siyāsi-ye Mirzā 'Ali Khān Amin od-Dowleh, pp.253-254; Y. Dowlatābādi, Tārikh-e Mo'āser yā Hayāt-e Yahyā, Vol.1, pp.180-198; S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, pp.33-35.

13 Yahyā Dowlatābādi, op.cit., Vol.1, pp.124-125.

14 Cf. Homā Nāteq, "Mā va Mirzā Malkom Khān-hā-ye Mā", in Az Māst keh bar Māst, pp.165-199.

15 On the Tobacco Concession, see N. Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891-92, London 1966; H. Algar, Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1906: The Rule of the Ulama in the Qajar Period, Berkeley 1969; A. Lambton, "The Tobacco Régie: Prelude to Revolution", in S.I., Vol.22 (1965), pp.119-157 and Vol.23 (1965), pp.71-90; F. Kazemzadeh, Russia and Britain in Persia, 1864-1914, pp.241-301.

16 On the rivalry between Britain and Russia in Iranian affairs, see Firuz Kazemzadeh, op.cit. ; G. Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran.

17 Charles Issawi, op.cit., pp.258-261; Ahmad Ashraf, "Historical Obstacles to the Development of a Bourgeoisie in Iran", in M.A. Cook,(ed.), Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to the Present Day, p.325.

18 Z.Z. Abdullaev, "Promyshlennosti Zarozhdenie rabochego klassa Irana v kontse XXIX nachale XX vv" (Bourgeoisie and Working Class, 1900s),in The Economic History of Iran, pp.50-52. The size of the migration and the poor living conditions of the migrants are depicted by the contemporary Iranian writer Zayn ol-'Ābedin Marāghe'i (Siyāhatnāme-ye Ebrāhim Beg, pp.19-26).

19 On the activity of Iranian intellectuals in journalism, poetry, and translation, see E.G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia; Yahyā Āryanpur, Az Sabā tā Nimā.

20 E.G. Browne, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909, pp.52-55.

21 F. Ādamiyat, Fekr-e Demokrāsi-ye Ejtemā'i dar Nahzat-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran, p.4.

22 Detailed accounts of the Constitutional Movement have been written by E.G. Browne, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909; A. Kasravi, Tārikh-e Mashrute-ye Irān; M. Malekzadeh, Tārikh-e Enqelāb-e Mashrutiyat-e Irān; M. Nāzem ol-Eslām, Tārikh-e Bidāri-ye Iranian.

23 Reza Arasteh, Man and Society in Iran, p.102.

24 M. Bahār, Tārikh-e Mokhtasar-e Ahzāb-e Siyāsi, pp.8-11; M. Shuster, The Strangling of Persia, pp.157-168.

25 On Mirzā Kuchek Khān and the Jangali movement, see Sepehr Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp.13-45; Fred Halliday, "Revolution in Iran: was it possible in 1921", in Khamsin, No.7 (1980), pp.53-64; Ebrāhim Fakhrā'i, Mirzā Kuchek Khān: Sardār-e Jangal.

26 Donald Wilber, Riza Shah Pahlavi, pp.89-91; Amin Banani, The Modernization of Iran, 1921-1941, pp.23-25 and 47-51.

27 In spite of Rezā Shāh's moves, the 'olamā remained influential throughout his reign. This was shown in the riots at Mashhad in 1935 inspired by a preacher, Sheykh Bohlul, who denounced Rezā Shāh's Dress Uniformity Law requiring men to wear the peaked military-style cap called the "Pahlavi hat". See Donald Wilber, Riza Shah Pahlavi, pp.166-167; S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, pp.31 and 58-59.

28 G. Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948, pp.104-105. On the rise and role of the Democrat Party and on parties in general, see G.H. Razi, "Genesis of Party in Iran: A Case Study of the Political System and Political Parties", in I.S., Vol.3, No.1 (1970), pp.58-90; R.W. Cottam, "Political Party Development in Iran", in I.S., Vol.1, No.3 (1968), pp.82-95.

29 S. Akhavi, op.cit., p.31; A. Banani, op.cit., p.21.

30 S. Akhavi, op.cit., pp.28-32; A.H. Hairi, Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran, pp.138-147.

31 L.P. Elwell-Sutton, Persian Oil, pp.67-79; M. Fāteh, Panjāh Sāl Naft-e Irān, pp.305-307.

32 Ahmad Ashraf, op.cit., pp.328-331.

33 On the creation of a new army by Rezā Shāh, see Amin Banani, op.cit., pp.51-58.

34 S. Akhavi, op.cit., pp.32-55; A. Banani, op.cit., pp. 92-111. For detailed studies of modern education in Iran, see Reza Arasteh, Education and Social Awakening in Iran, 1850-1968, Brill, Leiden 1969; W.A. Copeland, American Influence on the Development of Higher Education in Iran, University of Pennsylvania, 1973.

35 On the new judiciary system, see A. Banani, op.cit.,pp.68-84.

36 Cf. A. Banani, op.cit., pp.47-51.

37 Donald Wilber, Riza Shah Pahlavi, p.128.

38 P. Nātel Khānlari, "Nasr-e Fārsi dar Dowre-ye Akhir", in Nakhostin Kongere-ye Nevisandegān-e Irān, p.141; E. Abrahamian, 'Factionalism in Iran: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament'(1944-1946),in M.E.S.,Vol.14,No.1 (1978), p.27.

39 On Arani's Marxist circle, see S. Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp.64-70.

40 M. Bahār, Tārikh-e Mokhtasar-e Ahzāb-e Siyāsi,introduction; D. Wilber, Riza Shah Pahlavi, pp.120, 131-133, 145, etc.

41 On the career and fall of Teymurtāsh, whose authority was considered to be second only to Rezā Shāh's, see Miron Rezun, "Rezā Shāh's Court Minister: Teymourtash", in I.J.M.E.S., Vol.12, No.2 (1980), pp.119-137.

42 The influential Minister of Finance, Firuz Mirzā Nosrat od-Dowleh, whom Donald Wilber describes as being, together with Dāvar and Teymurtāsh, a member of "the first triumvirate of the regime" (D. Wilber, Riza Shah Pahlavi, p.121), was arrested in 1930 on a charge of bribery and sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Later he was arrested again in connection with disorders in Fārs, and shortly after he died at Semnān where he was in exile.

43 D. Wilber, Riza Shah Pahlavi, p.177.

44 Cf. E. Abrahamian, "Factionalism in Iran: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-1946)", in M.E.S. Vol.14, No.1 (1978), pp.26-27.

45 H. Kamshad, Modern Persian Prose Literature, p.74.

46 L.P. Elwell-Sutton, Modern Iran, pp.113-115.

47 A. Banani, op.cit., pp.119-129.

48 Op.cit., pp.122-123.

49 L.P. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran, 1941-1948", in M.E.J., Vol.3 (1949), p.45.

50 G. Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948, p.175.

51 On the political parties of this period, see S. Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran; E. Abrahamian, Social Bases of Iranian Politics: The Tudeh Party 1941-53; L.P. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran 1941-1948", in M.E.J. Vol.3 (1949), pp.45-62; Jāmi, Gozashteh Cherāgh-e Rāh-e Āyandeh Ast.

52 A. Kasravi, Dādgāh, pp.60-64; William McElwee Miller, "The Religions Situation in Iran", in M.W., Vol.61 (1951), pp.81-82; G. Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, 1918-1948, pp.242-247.

53 On the Fedā'iyān-e Eslām, see E. Abrahamian, Social Bases of Iranian Politics: The Tudeh Party, 1941-53, pp.134-139.

54 On the autonomous administration in Āzarbāyjān, see S. Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp.98-122; E. Abrahamian, "Communism and Communalism in Iran: The Tudeh and the Firqah-i Dimukrat", in I.J.M.E.S., Vol.1 (1970), pp.291-316.

55 See S. Zabih, op.cit., pp.123-141.

56 Detailed accounts of the oil dispute may be found in L.P. Elwell-Sutton, Persian Oil, and Mostafā Fāteh, Panjāh Sāl Naft-e Irān.

57 The Tudeh Party operated under different names, such as Peace Partisans, Democratic Youth, National Society Against Colonialism, Democratic Women of Iran, Society Against Illiteracy, and Society to Defend the Rights of Villagers. See D. Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p.143.

58 Cf. James Alban Bill, The Politics of Iran, pp.138-139; on Kāshāni and his political role, see S. Akhavi, op. cit., pp.60-72.

59 Cf. James Alban Bill, op.cit., pp.138-139; Robert Graham, Iran: The Illusion of Power, pp.65-67; Richard Cottam, Nationalism in Iran, pp.223-230.

60 Cf. Marvin Zonis, The Political Elite of Iran, p.43.

61 Mohammad Rezā Pahlavi (Shāh), Mission for my Country, pp.171-174.

62 Cf. 'Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Struggle for Liberation: Socio-Historical Roots to the Islamic revolution", in R.I.P.E.H., Vol.4, No.1 (Spring 1980), pp.22-23.

63 Cf. D. Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p.192; Helmut Richards, "America's Shah, Shahanshah's Iran", in MERIP Reports No.40 (September 1975), pp.21-22.

64 S. Akhavi, op.cit., p.91.

65 On the political disturbances of this critical period, see S. Zabih, op.cit., pp.225-239; S. Akhavi, op.cit., pp.91-116; Hamid Algar, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama in Twentieth Century Iran", in Scholars, Saints and Sufis (ed. N.Keddie), pp.231-255.

66 On the Land Reform, see Ann Lambton, The Persian Land Reform 1962-1966; Nikki Keddie, "The Iranian Village Before and After Land Reform", in Henry Bernstein,ed., Underdevelopment and Development, pp.152-174.

67 D. Wilber, Contemporary Iran, p.172.

68 On the political role of Āyatollāh Khomeyni in this period, see Hamid Algar, "The Oppositional Role of the Ulama in Twentieth Century Iran", in Scholars, Saints and Sufis (ed. N.Keddie), pp.245-249.

69 According to unofficial sources, over 1,000 people were killed or seriously wounded. (See Robert Graham, op.cit., p.69). One writer alleges that thousands were killed. (See 'Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Struggle for Liberation: Socio-Historical Roots to the Islamic Revolution", in R.I.P.E.H., Vol.IV, No.1 (1980), p.10.

70 On the Shah's view concerning the political understanding of Iranians and the role of the political parties, see his Mission for my Country, pp.171-174.

71 Cf. Fred Halliday, Iran: Dictatorship and Development, pp.157-166.

72 Robert Graham, op.cit., p.50; Nikki Keddie, Iran: Religion, Politics and Society, pp.226-228.

73 Cf. Robert Graham, op.cit., pp.40-43; Nikki Keddie, op.cit., pp.228-229.

74 Nikki Keddie, op.cit., p.228.

75 S. Chubin and S. Zabih, The Foreign Relations of Iran, pp.103-129; 'Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Struggle for Liberation: Socio-Historical Roots to the Islamic evolution", in R.I.P.E.H., Vol.IV, No.1 (1980), p.8.

76 On the opposition groups, see Robert Graham, op.cit., pp.208-229; Fred Halliday, op.cit., pp.211-248.

77 Committee Against Repression in Iran, Iran: the Shah's Empire of Repression, p.23. On the SAVAK, see Robert Graham, op.cit., pp.144-151,and Fred Halliday, op.cit., pp.78-90.

78 Between 1965 and 1975, Iran's income from oil rose from $522m to $20,500m (i.e. by almost 40 times). After the great price rise in 1973, it reached $5,600m, twice as much as the previous year, and in the following year it was $22,000m. See Fred Halliday, op.cit., p.143.

79 In the course of seven years, 1970-77, Iran's defence budget escalated from $880m to $9,400m. While in 1970 just over $113m (about one-eighth) was spent on military purchases from the USA; in 1977 this expenditure rose to $4,213m (almost half the entire defence budget). See Fred Halliday, op.cit., pp.94-95.

80 F. Halliday, op.cit., pp.187-188.

81 Robert Graham, op.cit., pp.223-227.

82 Op.cit., pp.94-97.

PART II

Literary Background

II.I.

Traditional Forms and Contents

Before the advent of printing and mechanized paper-making, the slowness and high cost of copying manuscripts made books scarce and expensive. Nevertheless manuscripts were produced in substantial numbers in Iran. Some have survived but others perished through decay or during upheavals such as the Mongol invasion and the Afghan seizure of Isfahan.

The books which were produced in those days can be divided into two categories, functional and literary, though there was much overlap. Functional books were written and used by members of particular professions, e.g. theological and legal treatises by 'olamā and lawyers, medical and pharmacological treatises by doctors and druggists. Scientific books were confined to narrow circles unless they had literary merit or practical value, such as astronomy with its relevance to time-reckoning, navigation, and astrology

The literary output may be further divided into two sub-categories, namely works composed for powerful or wealthy patrons such as kings, governors, or influential landowners, and works composed for a wider readership. Both sub-categories show two characteristics: the predominance of poetry and the importance of the anecdote (qesseh or hekāyat), which may be considered as the national prototype of modern Iranian story writing. Highly placed patrons

employed or rewarded poets for various purposes. One was to write qasidehs (odes), which were usually panegyric but sometimes satirical or philosophical. Often the qasideh served as a vehicle for political propaganda or news reporting. Although the qasidehs of poets are recorded in their divāns (collected poems), they were not noticed outside narrow court circles or remembered for any length of time unless they possessed exceptional poetic or technical merits. Song lyrics were composed for high-ranking patrons, and were in general similarly ephemeral. Most ghazals (love and wine poems) and poems with refrains were probably written to be sung.[1] In this field, court poetry was far less removed from folk poetry, in which lyrics are still important. The imagery and verse forms of lyric poetry were also used by great Sufi poets, such as 'Attār (c.1142-1220) and Mowlavi Rumi (1207-1273). Both groups, Sufi poets and poets attached to the courts, generally employed anecdotes within frame-stories. This structure is found in the five widely read romantic and ethical-philosophical poems of Nezāmi (1140-1202). For these narrative works, Nezāmi used the masnavi (rhymed couplet) which Ferdowsi (934-1025) had earlier used for his great national epic, the Shāhnāmeh.[2]

The Sufi poets left an enduring legacy when they adopted the masnavi genre for religious and moral teachings. These works consist largely of anecdotes or parables which exemplify the teachings. The materials are drawn from many sources - from records of the words and deeds of the Prophet and the Imams and of Muslim saints and pious kings, from

philosophy, from old Iranian tradition, and from contemporary folklore. In one of the two best works of this kind, the Manteq ot-Teyr of 'Attar, the teachings and anecdotes are incorporated into an impressive, symbolic frame-story. In the other, the Masnavi-ye Ma'navi of Mowlavi Rumi, no frame is provided, but some of the anecdotes are told with a vividness and depth of feeling which has given them a place in the heritage of all who know the Persian language. The Bustān of Sa'di (d.1292) was dedicated to a king and is more concerned with statecraft and everyday morals and manners than with mystic devotion, but its best anecdotes and sayings embody the wit and wisdom of all classes of medieval Iranian society and have been read or memorized by all classes ever since.

Literary prose did not win the same popularity, perhaps because it cannot be as easily memorized as poetry. Even in quantity of output, prose was probably surpassed by verse, if purely functional prose is excluded. Historiography was partly functional and partly literary. Some authors, such as Rashid od-Din (1247-1318), the great historian of the Mongol period, and certain authors of histories of provinces and cities, recorded known facts in simple language. Others sought to glorify the achievements of the dynasties which they served and to draw morals from past events. In general they endeavoured to record events, but they often added anecdotal material and edifying verses. For eulogistic and moralistic historiography, an ornate, rhetorical style of writing was considered appropriate. Works of this type written by court historians

were probably seldom read outside court circles. Geographical writing also was partly functional, e.g. route books, surveys, etc., and partly literary, e.g. accounts of the 'marvels' (_'ajāyeb_) of countries. Another literary genre was the travel diary (_safarnāmeh_). The greatest classical masterpiece is the _safarnāmeh_ of Nāser Khosrow (1004-1077), which has no equal in vividness and informativeness. This genre was revived in the Qājār period when diaries of journeys to Europe, particularly those of Nāser od-Din Shāh, became very popular. Biography was pursued for scholarly, literary, and religious purposes, and lives of kings and dignitaries entered into historiography. A special literary genre, the _tazkereh_, consisting of anecdotal biographies of poets and anthologies of their poems, acquired a lasting vogue. Collections of biographies of eminent _'olamā_ were also compiled. The Sufis had biographies of saints, notably the _Asrār ot-Towhid_, a moving spiritual biography of Sheykh Abu Sa'id (967-1049) by Mohammad ebn-e Monavvar (12th century), and 'Attār's _Tazkerat ol-Owliyā_, a collection which is a masterpiece of anecdotal writing and colourful prose, even if it contains too many stories of miracles for modern taste. A collection of biographies of the martyred Imams entitled _Rowzat osh-Shohadā_, written by Kāshefi (d.1504), a preacher at the Teymurid court, became so popular that the customary Shi'ite recitation of the stories of the martyrdoms acquired the generic name _rowzeh-khwāni_.

Writing in all these genres continued up to the mid-19th century.[3] In the course of the centuries little change

was seen in Persian literature, apart from some variations of aesthetic standards and literary styles. Literature was on the whole dissociated from life and seldom reflected people's real feelings. Only the Sufi poets struck a more popular chord. Being concerned with moral and religious attitudes, they generally ignored social classification. In Mowlavi Rumi's Masnavi-ye Ma'navi, 'king' mostly stands for God, and worldly kings and influential viziers are often humiliated in Sufi literature. It should be added that the poets attached to royal courts or influential patrons, who were rewarded or even regularly paid to write panegyric poetry, also sometimes used their talents to mock rivals or satirize the meanness of officials and even their own patrons; but they did not take such liberties very often, and when they did, it was usually for personal ends rather than social reasons.[4]

Nevertheless there are a few surviving classical works which appear to have been influenced by popular feelings or to have been written for the masses, and which differ in this respect from the bulk of the classical literature of their time, in which aesthetic concepts were generally determined by the social environment and position of the poets or writers themselves. Literacy was of course rare among the urban poor and even rarer among the rural and tribal masses. Moreover the dispersal of the population over a vast area, often in remote villages or hamlets and in nomadic tribes without means of rapid communication, made it difficult for formal literature to have a consistent and conscious audience among the masses. The

panegyric poets, who were largely concerned with their own affairs, normally wrote only for the narrow but generally literate court circles. The Sufi poets, who had little concern for the material world, probably wrote or dictated most of their poetry to be sung or recited by their immediate disciples. The lives and sufferings of individuals and the social conditions of different classes rarely appear in classical literature, and if ever mentioned receive unsubstantial and unrealistic portrayals in sharp contrast with the detailed, vivid, and probably accurate descriptions of the joys of love and wine. In particular women are neglected.[5] Classical Persian literature has a 'manly' flavour, most probably owing to the social and economic position of women in a society profoundly influenced by Islamic cultural values. Even in lyrical poetry or romances, as far as women are concerned, the characters are engulfed in an abstract atmosphere. This abstraction accords with the symbolic and idealistic quality of such writings, but divorces them from reality.

There were therefore nothing surprising in the emergence of a more realistic type of literature among the masses. Most of this literature appears to have consisted of orally transmitted folk romances. Unfortunately only a few of those which were written down have survived, and they therefore form a very small part of medieval Persian literature. It is somewhat ironic that they generally consist of royal adventures derived from national legends - in other words, folk epics. Their themes of adventure and gallantry generally leave little or no scope for portrayal

of the contemporary social conditions of the masses, but the moral and social ideals which they express are mostly those of the common people.

An example is the early medieval (pre-Mongol) romance Samak-e 'Ayyār, which was forgotten for a long time.[6] Its hero, Samak, is a 'proletarian' bearing many characteristics of the urban masses who formed the greater part of the audiences of the professional narrators.[7] In this particular romance, a quite vivid view of the social conditions of the time can be discerned. Although the work is encumbered with a superfluity of characters, it is mainly concerned with the doings of Samak, who overshadows the kings and princely characters. Samak is able to do this through his social position as an 'ayyār, a member of a volunteer group of vigilantes who defended the people of a town in times of anarchy or tyranny, and generally took the Imam 'Ali as their model of courage and integrity. Although Samak's adventures are in the service of a prince, the prince himself is removed from his class privileges and is portrayed almost as Samak's social equal; indeed his personality is overshadowed by the mental and physical superiority of Samak. Thus Samak, through his intelligence, represents the ability of society to introduce right policies, and through his achievements, its ability to put them into practice. The prince is reduced to a mere social figurehead. Samak's high standing is due to the fact that he fights for social values rather than personal ends. He fights for 'virtue' against 'wickedness', for 'light' against 'darkness'. The prince for whom he fights is named Khorshid,

which means 'Sun'.

In style Samak-e 'Ayyār, though written in simple prose, resembles the other surviving folk romances in being highly rhetorical. This suggests that it may have been put into writing for a cultured man most probably of the upper class.[8] The cost of manuscripts also suggests that those folk romances which were written down are likely to have been offered to royal or high-ranking patrons.

There can be no doubt that formal literature and folk literature influenced each other. For example, metres and rhyme systems used in classical poetry are also found in folk poetry, but more fittingly for an illiterate audience, with measures based on stress rather than formal quantity and with rhymes based on pronunciation rather than spelling. To a large extent similar imagery is also found. While many classical stories and themes can be traced to older sources, it may be inferred that many others were taken from contemporary folklore, because literary men did not live in complete isolation from the illiterate masses.

The folkloric works which were written down may be assigned to the classical literary genre called adab (belles lettres). Adab was composed in prose, often interspersed with short verses, and was intended primarily to entertain. Its content is mainly anecdotal and often moralizing or humorous, and its style is usually ornamental. The moralistic and humorous anecdotes and proverbs used in adab were undoubtedly derived from local folklore as well as from Sāsānid traditions and Islamic sources. Although the Persian Hazār Afsāneh, which was the basis

Some of the classical writers of adab had scholarly or functional aims. 'Owfi (d. c.1232) wrote the oldest surviving tazkereh of poets and a collection of more than 2000 anecdotes of political and literary figures. Books of advice for kings and officials were written on the model of Sāsānid prototypes (of which a few survive) with a dual purpose of practical guidance and entertainment. The advice relates both to statecraft and professional conduct and to morals and manners, and is exemplified by anecdotes from Sāsānid, Islamic, and folkloric sources. The Siyāsatnāmeh of Nezām ol-Molk (1017-1092) is written in simple, practical language, while the Qābusnāmeh of the prince Keykāvus (1021-1098) is somewhat ornate; both vividly portray the nature of contemporary governments and are full of memorable maxims and anecdotes.

The best known of all the works of adab is the Golestān of Sa'di (d.1292). Although it was dedicated to the heir to a throne and is written in highly ornate arabicized prose interspersed with verses, it soon acquired great popularity. Proverbs and anecdotes from this book have long been known to Iranians of all classes. One reason for its success is the combination of colourfulness and brevity which makes all Sa'di's works memorable and quotable. He drew material from existing Persian and Arabic literature and folklore and from his own observations, often constructing an anecdote around a contemporary proverb which he has thereby immortalized. Another reason for Sa'di's popularity may be that many Iranians have always shared his outlook on life. His maxims range from sublime to cynical or immoral, but lay most emphasis on sincerity, tolerance,

and humaneness. Later works on the same model such as the Bahārestān of Jāmi (1414-1492), the best poet of the Teymurid period, and the Ketāb-e Parishān of Qā'āni (1808-1854), the best poet of the early Qājār period, achieved some vogue but never the same popularity as Sa'di's Golestān.[10]

Thus the classical heritage was rich and varied in form and content. Parts of it were well known among the literates of lower social standing and also among the illiterate classes through oral transmission. Poetry was more important than prose and was used more than prose for naqqāli (story-telling), of which the two main forms were the long adventure story or romance, and the short moralistic or humorous anecdote. Uneducated people could enjoy classical verse no less than folk verse, and stories from the Shāhnāmeh no less than orally transmitted stories of folk heroes such as Amir Hamzeh, Amir Arsalān, and Hoseyn-e Kord, or in Āzarbāyjāni Turkish the stories of Kuroghlu.[11] The great popularity of humorous folk tales centering on Mollā Nasr od-Din has already been mentioned.

The poets and the writers of formal or folkloric adab, however, are exposed to fundamental criticism for their remoteness from society and disregard of problems and feelings of their fellow citizens. No socially committed literature in forms such as the realistic novel or drama emerged before the modern national awakening. The authors of classical literary works were seldom concerned with the social grievances or sufferings of the common people,

while the narrators (naqqāls) of folk literature generally told adventure stories for the purpose of entertaining their listeners.[12] When the Mongols had devastated most of the country and perpetrated terrible massacres, Sa'di was enjoying life and praising his age.[13] The surviving folk literature is likewise devoid of any mention of the people's sufferings at the hands of the Mongols and Teymur. Admittedly historians reported the massacres, and Sa'di also wrote a well-known lament on the death of the last Caliph.[14] 'Obeyd Zākāni wittily castigated the cruelty and corruption of the contemporary rulers and ruling classes.[15] Expressions of sympathy for oppressed peasants and the poor appear in some of the verses of many poets, e.g. in works of Farid od-Din 'Attār (c.1142-1220), who was one of the greatest Sufi poets and thinkers, of Ebn-e Yamin (1286-1368), who was a supporter of the Shi'ite Sarbedār movement, and of Ne'matollāh Vali (d. 1431), the founder of the Shi'ite Ne'matollāhi order (tariqat), and in the works of some others. Nevertheless the general silence of the classical and folk literature about the people's sufferings is a remarkable phenomenon. It is probably attributable to the contemporary nature of the social structure and the people's social outlook. The slowness and high cost of manuscript production and the narrowness of the market for literature must also be taken into account. Most of the poets and writers attached themselves to the exploiting classes from whom they sought patronage rather than to the exploited poor, and their grievances were usually motivated by personal interest rather than social

injustice'.[18] The Safavid tariqat, which became definitely Shi'ite in the 15th century, was similarly militant; its membership at first included bazaar artisans as well as Turkish tribesmen, but later became limited to the tribal troops which brought Shāh Esmā'il to power in 1501.[19]

Social grievances were not clearly distinguishable from national grievances in times when the rulers and ruling classes were of foreign (Arab, or subsequently Turkish and Mongol) origin. The spread of Islam with its simple equalitarian creed and the use of Arabic (which, although foreign, could be read and written much more easily than Pahlavi Persian in the cumbersome huzvaresh system) promoted literacy but at the same time stimulated a desire to preserve and develop Iranian culture through the medium of literature. The decisive step in this direction was the compilation of the Shāhnāmeh by Ferdowsi (c.934-c.1025).[20] Into this great work Ferdowsi incorporated materials from sources based on Zoroastrian scriptures, Sāsānid royal records, provincial sagas, popular romances, and contemporary folklore. In structure the Shāhnāmeh consists of a framework, which is the history of Iran and its kings, and of episodes within it constituting separate adventures or anecdotes of varying length. The language, in comparison with that of other Persian works from the same period, is archaic and contains fewer borrowed Arabic words; certain modern scholars view this as a sign of anti-Arabism.[21] Ferdowsi certainly made sarcastic remarks about the Arabs, for example about their eating lizards and drinking camel's milk, which have been especially picked out by modern

nationalists. His enmity towards the Arabs is likely to have been motivated by their disdain for the culture of the Iranians, whom they called 'ajam (dumb), rather than by their conquest of Iran and introduction of the Islamic religion. In Ferdowsi's time the Arabs did not offer a military and political challenge to the Iranians as did the Turks. According to the Chahār Maqāleh of Nezami 'Aruzi, which was written c.1155 and is the oldest account, Ferdowsi was a devout Muslim and a Shi'ite.[22] The Shāhnāmeh shows how the Iranians, unlike other people who adopted Islam, maintained their identity by defending the fortress of their culture which was embodied in their literature. Although Ferdowsi was a squire (dehqān) and may have written for an audience of squires, and although he offered his great work to a contemporary Sultan of Turkish origin, the Shāhnāmeh has become an essential part of the heritage of Iranians of all classes. Passages from the Shāhnāmeh were until recent times known by heart to professional narrators who recited them in the same way that they recited folk poetry to illiterate audiences.

Admittedly visual and musical arts also entered into the Iranian cultural heritage and reached high degrees of perfection in certain fields, though in others tradition was lacking or religious restrictions impeded progress; but primacy was always given to literature and particularly poetry, which requires the mastery of exquisite language. This peculiarity evidently arose because Iranian national feeling had been offended. Persian literature constituted a sort of national bulwark against the danger that the

concern.

The Sufi literature, however, was not dependent on worldly patrons. Through its religious and moral teachings it could appeal to all the people and particularly to the lower classes. The hypothesis of the modern historian Kasravi (1890-1946) that the people were drugged into passivity by Sufi teachings of fatalism and world renunciation, and that Sufi literature thus became anti-social,[16] carries some weight but is not valid for all Sufi literature in all times. Although it is true that Sufism was the dominant spiritual tendency, it has also been noted that in the Sufism of post-Mongol Iran veneration for the martyred Imams played an important part.[17] Many Sufi orders (tariqats) regarded 'Ali as their principal patron saint, while the guilds of the bazaars regarded him as the perfect model of probity (fotuvvat or javānmardi). Even before the establishment of Twelver Shi'ism as the official form of the religion by the Safavid dynasty (1501-1722), the death of 'Ali's son Hoseyn in combat against the troops of the illegitimate and oppressive Omayyad caliphate at Karbalā in 680 appears to have been regarded in Iran as a symbol of the people's rejection of their conquerors and oppressors. This rejection was not solely spiritual and passive. The townsfolk and peasants of Sabzavār in western Khurāsān revolted against oppressive local rulers at the instigation of a Shi'ite Sufi preacher, Sheykh Hasan Juri, and founded the small independent 'Sarbedār' state, which lasted from 1337 to 1379 and was so called because one of its leaders had said; 'Rather our heads (sar) on the gallows (dār) than such

injustice'.[18] The Safavid tariqat, which became definitely Shi'ite in the 15th century, was similarly militant; its membership at first included bazaar artisans as well as Turkish tribesmen, but later became limited to the tribal troops which brought Shāh Esmā'il to power in 1501.[19]

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Iranians might be dissolved in the Arabic-speaking world and become part of the Arab nation. While Turks and Mongols imposed political domination, they did not present such a dangerous threat to the people's language and culture. On the contrary, some of the Turkish rulers vigorously promoted Persian literature and learning, e.g. the same Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi (999-1030) who refused Ferdowsi's offer of the Shāhnāmeh but maintained large numbers of Persian poets and scholars, including the great scientist Biruni, at his court.[23]

National feeling was evidently not confined to the educated classes, because it is also expressed in the folk romances. Although (as already mentioned) the written versions have almost certainly undergone literary polishing, the contents of the romances, recited by professional narrators to many generations of uneducated listeners, reflect the people's ideals and their love and concern for their country. The events take place either in Iran, or if supposedly beyond the borders, in Iranianized settings. The Iranian or Iranianized characters embody Iranian moral values and are always perfectly just and righteous - in sharp contrast to the non-Iranian characters, who are the wrongdoers. The romance of Samak-e 'Ayyār cannot be excluded from this generalization, even though most of its scenes are set in China and many of its characters are stated to be non-Iranian.

Another category of folk literature consisted of folk songs and short folk poems, which generally achieved only

local and not nationwide popularity. Thanks to the interest taken in poetry and to the tradition of tezkere-nevisi (compilation of biographies and anthologies of poets), a certain amount of folk poetry of this type was written down and has survived. Other forms of folk literature were passed from one generation to the next only by memorization - from father to son or from master to apprentice. They did not receive much backing from the educated classes, and probably for this reason remained less stylized and more socially representative than the folk romances. In harlequinades (maskhareh-bāzi), puppet shows (kheymeh-shab-bāzi), and shadow plays (fānus-e khiyāl), which were performed by clowns and puppeteers both for popular and for royal or aristocratic audiences, the central figure was often a comic, bald man called Kachal. The humorous character of Kachal makes a sharp contrast with the selfishness of kings and cunning of viziers. Although an idler and lazybones in his personal affairs, he is a nimble and clever character who frustrates the schemes of the aristocratic characters. At the same time he is honest, righteous, and conscientious. He never fails to keep his promises, and always miraculously escapes from the traps which are set for him. In short, he is a symbolic character who defends the poor, downtrodden masses against their oppressors.[24]

The last form of folk literature requiring comment is the passion play, a form of religious drama which has had

a great effect on Persian life and letters. It is generally called ta'ziyeh, a word which means mourning and may also designate other ceremonies such as processions in commemoration of the martyrdoms of the Imams. The word shabih-khwāni is also sometimes used for the specific designation of the religious drama.

The ta'ziyeh (in the sense of passion play) spread among all Shi'ite communities, including those of India. It emerged in the late 18th and early 19th century and reached its peak in a very short time, by the mid-19th century, when a European observer thought that it was the most impressive drama in the Islamic world.[25]

In Iran the practice of the ta'ziyeh was encouraged by Fath 'Ali Shāh Qājār (1797-1834), who attended the annual performances with his courtiers, and by Nāser od-Din Shāh (1848-1896), who built a special open air theatre, the Takiye-ye Dowlat, for them.[26] This was one of the means whereby the Qājār kings, like other established secular rulers of Islamic countries, sought the support of national public opinion which was deeply influenced by the ideals of Islam and the politico-religious attitudes of the clergy. It was also a policy that enabled them to control the growth of socio-political opposition under the guise of religious piety.

In fact the despotic Qājār Shah's worries were not groundless. Although the ta'ziyeh may seem to have a purely religious background, its contemporary social relevance could not be ignored. The growth of this genre was not due to the contribution of a few individual playwrights,

producers, or actors. There are few ta'ziyehs which are fully written down. The producers usually had the basic plot written down and brought further episodes into it or otherwise expanded it while it was being performed. The audience, who surrounded the players, contributed greatly to the performance. This manner of performing the ta'ziyeh gave opportunities to the producer, the actors, and also the audience to express their own grievances through the symbolic language and actions of the play.

Ta'ziyeh acting had its origins in religious practices which had been customary in Iran since early times. Even before Twelver Shi'ism took root as the popular religion of the Iranians during the Safavid period, poetic laments (marsiyehs) for the Imams and stories of the martyrdoms were written by various authors, e.g. Shāh Ne'matollāh (d.1431) and Kāshefi (d.1504).[27] During and after the Safavid period, works of these types were produced in vast numbers by writers of all classes from court poets to popular preachers. The anniversary of Imam Hoseyn's martyrdom became the most important event in the religious calendar and was commemorated by mourning processions (dasteh-gardāni), a practice dating from the Buyid period[28] in the 10th century which was revived under the Safavids, and by the recitation of stories of the martyrdoms (rowzeh-khwāni). Another practice, called surat-khwani or ma'rekeh-giri, which became customary throughout the year, was the narration of battles and tragedies of the Imams by special dervish reciters who used colourful tableaux. These stories were enriched with themes from folklore, and all the themes

were used in the ta'ziyehs after suitable modification. Apart from those arranged by the Qājār kings, by members of the aristocracy, and even by foreign legations,[29] all of whom had special reasons for their patronage, ta'ziyehs were usually improvised by local people. Here again folklore enriched and gave variety to their content.

The ta'ziyeh is not only a religious ritual but also a literary genre which has a number of structural similarities to the folk romances and the national epic. Like the folk romances, ta'ziyeh scripts were generally composed by anonymous writers and polished up in the course of time to suit the tastes of successive generations.[30] Both genres share a similar formal structure. As regards performance, the ta'ziyeh has been influenced by the already mentioned male-dominated characteristics of Iranian life and resembles other types of indigenous stage shows in that women's roles are always acted by men. It is possible that the sharp confrontation of two mystically opposite powers has somehow been derived from the dualism of ancient Iranian religious belief.[31]

Generally speaking, the ta'ziyeh, while a religious ritual, is also a call for justice through the display of injustice. It is based on a traditional pattern of conflict rising to a climax of brutal action in which the unjust establishment strikes down the rightful leader whose place it has usurped. 'Wickedness' prevails over 'Virtue', 'Darkness' over 'Light', the 'Demon' over 'Divinity'. Although the ta'ziyeh may seem at first glance to be a

purely religious pageant of the sufferings of the Imams, particularly Imam Hoseyn, the significant elements of 'time' and 'space' are abolished in the performance,[32] and it thus acquires a symbolic tone. Therefore, by implication, established kings, governors, and their associates, or in general the dominant classes, particularly when they fail to practise social justice, are unjust usurpers and represent 'Wickedness', 'Darkness', and the 'Demon'. The emotional appeal and social message of the ta'ziyeh lie in the culminating martyrdom of Imam Hoseyn. The shedding of the Imam's blood conveys, probably even to the masses two interwoven messages. First is the significance of 'Virtue' and 'Justice', and second, compared with that, the insignificance of bloodshed. Other stories of Quranic, biblical, and mythical origin are brought into the performances, but only to serve as a means of comparison and to emphasize the greater suffering and self-sacrifice of Imam Hoseyn.

The enactment of the martyrdom of Imam Hoseyn acquired a special aura both for its dramatic and its social values. While other Imams also, according to Shi'ite writers, suffered injustice and torments and some were treacherously murdered,[33] the ten days of the Imam Hoseyn's combats with the Caliph Yazid's troops before his death in battle offer a particularly vivid theme for narration and dramatic representation. A more significant factor is that the sad end of Hoseyn's struggle (after he and his party were ambushed and deprived of access to water) has the inevitability which is essential to tragedy. The impressiveness of a ta'ziyeh performance lies in its

progress to the foreseen climax of Hoseyn's martyrdom. With regard to the social values of the ta'ziyeh, the setting of the event is of course Islamic, but the essential point is the confrontation of 'Justice' and 'Injustice'. The physical defeat of justice leads to its spiritual elevation.

Shi'ism in various forms began to take root in Iran in the 8th century AD, i.e. soon after the mass conversion to Islam, and its appeal to Iranians probably lay in its social values. Islam liberated the Iranians from the misgovernment of the disintegrating Sāsānid régime, from the stern authority of the Zoroastrian priesthood, and from the restrictions of a system of hereditary classes almost as rigid as castes. As Muslims and equals in the faith, individuals were theoretically free to seek and achieve social betterment. At the same time Iranians of all classes remained deeply attached to their language and culture and were unwilling to let themselves be dissolved in the Arab nation. Shi'ism appealed to them because of its emphasis on resistance to injustice (including the injustice of the contemporary Arab domination) and its emphasis on legitimate authority. It thus becomes easy to understand why Ferdowsi, the great admirer of Iranian culture, was a follower of Shi'ism, and to grasp the full significance of the ta'ziyeh and its relationship to the national epic. Hoseyn, as the legitimate leader of the faith and as the husband of an Iranian princess, is not a foreigner to ta'ziyeh audiences, but rather the Islamic successor to the old Iranian kings.[34] His nephew Qāsem, who marries Hoseyn's daughter on the battlefield, usually receives the Iranian title Shāhzādeh

(Prince), and other members of his camp are to some extent represented as Iranian rather than Arab. Certainly Hoseyn and his co-fighters symbolize the ideals of the Iranians as well as their hostility to the Arabs who ruled Iran in his lifetime.[35]

The ta'ziyeh has thus acquired the nature of a national folk epic in which the heroes are religious figures. They do not stand for personal or worldly ambitions, but for a social cause. They represent the spiritual as well as the national aspirations of the people.[36]

Apart from harlequinades and the like, which did not evolve into higher forms, the ta'ziyeh was the only spontaneous drama which arose in Iran or anywhere in the Muslim world before Western cultural influences were felt.[37] By its very nature, however, it could not serve as the basis for development of a modern secular drama.

As already mentioned, folk literature and popular religious literature were in general transmitted orally, though a few manuscript texts written for literate reciters have survived. From about the mid-19th century onward such works, as well as editions of the classics, began to be lithographed or printed. In the same period, however, the emergence of a quasi-bourgeoisie and the rise of bourgeois values began to weaken the vitality and social prestige of these popular genres. The adoption of printing, together with social changes influenced by the West, opened the way for the emergence of new forms of fictional literature (including translations) and of a new medium, the press.

Footnotes (II.I.)

1 cf. Nezāmi 'Aruzi, Chahār Maqāleh, p.33, and E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.1, p.456.

2 Many epics were written by Ferdowsi's contemporaries and later poets, but only the Shāhnāmeh made a lasting impact. Like Nezāmi's works, the Shāhnāmeh contains stories set within the framework of larger episodes. Although the Shāhnāmeh contains archaic words and although the language of Nezāmi's works (which he dedicated to local rulers) is often abstruse, the best stories and scenes of each became part of the common cultural heritage of all Iranians, as well as providing popular subjects for Iranian painters.

3 Classical Persian literature has been the subject of much study and research by modern scholars. The best studies covering the entire period of some 1000 years are: E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia; Jan Rypka, Iranische Literaturgeschichte (Tr. into English by P. van Popta-Hope, History of Iranian Literature); Zabihollāh Safā, Tārikh-e Adabiyāt dar Irān; Mohammad Taqi Bahār, Sabk Shenasi; and A. Bausani, Storia della Letteratura Persiana.

4 The best example is Ferdowsi, who after completing the Shāhnāmeh dedicated it to Sultan Mahmud and was offended when his expectations were not met by the Sultan's small gift. (Nezāmi 'Aruzi, Chahār Maqāleh, pp.47-51). Whether this story is true or whether there were other reasons, Ferdowsi later composed a satirical piece of poetry in which he depicted the Sultan as 'the son of a slave ... a man of hereditary low-mindedness and wretched stinginess'. (see Th.Nöldeké, The Iranian National Epic, p.46).

5 On the male-dominant characteristics of Iranian society, see Rezā Barāhani, Tārikh-e Mozakkar, 'Elal-e Tashattot-e Farhang der Irān (Masculine History, the Causes of the Fragmentation of Culture in Iran), no publisher or place of publication, date 1970?

6 The manuscript of Samak-e 'Ayyār, a long romance of knightly adventures, was written in simple prose in 1189(?) by Farāmarz Khodādād Arrajāni to whom it had been narrated by Sadaqeh Shirāzi (?). A manuscript of this work was discovered and published by Parviz Nātel Khānlari (beginning with Vol.1, Tehran, 1960), with a descriptive introduction by the editor.

7 cf. William Hanaway, 'Popular Literature in Iran', in Iran: Continuity and Variety, pp.62-63.

8 Parviz Nātel Khānlari, Samak-e 'Ayyār, Vol.1, p.5 (Introduction).

9 On folk literature, see Jiri Cejpek, 'Iranian Folk Literature', in Rypka's History of Iranian Literature, pp.609-709.

10 Qā'āni is considered to have been the first poet who was familiar with some European languages and seemingly under the influence of European literature made attempts to introduce matters of daily life into his highly ornate works. cf. Jan Rypka, History of Iranian Literature, p.330.

11 For a study of the Iranian folk romances, see William Hanaway, 'Formal Elements in the Persian Popular Romances', in R.N.L., Vol.2, No.2 (Spring 1971), pp. 139-160, and 'Popular Literature in Iran', in Iran: Continuity and Variety, pp.59-75.

12 The naqqāls played a part, not only in the popularization of folk tales, but also in the socialization of some of the classical literature, particularly the Shāhnāmeh, which although highly literary and probably written for the educated élite, speaks in favour of justice and has heroes who fight against injustice (often against foreign kings with evil intentions). Its popularity may be attributed to its content and to the efforts of all those naqqāls who for centuries recited stories from the Shahnāmeh, as well as folk tales, to people of all classes. Entertainment was a basic element, and thus naqqāls chose tea-houses. Nevertheless the social side of their function should not be overlooked. In fact at certain times the naqqāls and tea-houses played important socio-political roles. In the late 19th century, when discontent was growing amongst the people, the tea-houses in Tehran were closed by order of Nāser od-Din Shāh (see E.G. Browne, A Year Amongst the Persians, p.89).

13 After ravaging the whole of northern Iran, the Mongols conquered Baghdad in the Islamic year 656 (1258 A.D.). In that same year Sa'di wrote:

Dar ān moddat keh mā-rā vaqt khosh bud,
Ze hejrat seshsad-o panjāh-o shesh bud.
(In those days, when life was happy for us,
The year was 656 A.H.)

14 Sa'di's poem starts with the following verse:

Well it were if from the heavens tears of blood on earth should flow
For the ruler of the Faithful, al-Musta'sam, brought so low.

See E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.2, pp.29-30. For the poem see Kolliyāt-e Sa'di, Qasā'ed, pp.71-72.

15 Jan Rypka praises 'Obeyd Zākāni's works as 'unparalleled' in their 'sociological' and 'folkloristic' value, and also admires 'Obeyd's satirical skill. (See Jan Rypka, History of Iranian Literature, p.272). While many of 'Obeyd's satires are very witty, others are sordidly pornographic.

16 In Sufigari Ahmad Kasravi states: "One may suggest that in the course of 1300 years since the emergence of Islam, among the various factors Sufism has been the one which has damaged the life of Iranians and their neighbours the most". Kasravi, Sufigari, p.15.

17 cf. Jan Rypka, op.cit., p.261.

18 I.P. Petrushevsky, Islam dar Iran, p.376, and E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.3, pp.178-9.

19 On the Safavids, see most recently R. Savory, Iran under the Safavids (1980), which also contains an exhaustive bibliography.

20 On the epic in Iran, and Ferdowsi, see Zabihollāh Safā, Hamāseh-Sarā'i dar Irān (Tehran 1944), and Theodor Nöldeke, Das Iranische Nationalepos (Strasbourg 1896). The latter has been translated into English by L. Bogdanov (British India Press, Bombay 1925), and into Persian by Bozorg 'Alavi (Tehran University, Tehran 1948). Among many other studies on Ferdowsi and his Shāhnāmeh, mention should be made of the collection of papers given for his millenary celebrations in 1934 and later published in a volume entitled Hazāre-ye Ferdowsi (Tehran 1944).

21 See Zabihollāh Safā, Hamāseh Sarā'i dar Irān, pp. 267-9 (for the rare occurrence of Arabic words in Shāhnāmeh) and p.239 (for Ferdowsi's anti-Arabism).

22 Nezāmi 'Aruzi, op.cit., pp.49-51.

23 Scholars and men of letters were patronized by local kings and governors for two reasons: first it enhanced their prestige, and secondly it was a custom practised by the caliphs. (cf. Z.Safā, op.cit., p.370). In addition it was an entertainment and justification for their practice of absolute power. In the Chahār Maqāleh we are told by Nezāmi that Sultan Mahmud kept Abu-Reyhān Biruni in prison for six months because he had not gone against what his knowledge told him to do and had not bowed to the Sultan's wishes. After releasing him, the Sultan stated that if Biruni wanted his support, he must follow the Sultan's wish and not do what his knowledge commanded him to do. Nezāmi adds that when in the service of a king it is the rule to follow the king's wishes 'whether right or wrong'. (Nezāmi 'Aruzi, p,58).

24 cf. Samad Behrangi, 'Moshakhkhasāt-e Qahramān' (The Heroes' Characteristics), in Majmu'e-ye Maqāle-hā, pp.149-152.

25 Sir Lewis Pelly, The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain, Vol.1, p.3 (preface).

26 The foundation of the Takiye-ye Dowlat by Nāser od-Din Shāh was a move to gain the support of the Shi'ite 'olamā and their followers in the bazaar and among the masses. It also gave him an opportunity to control the expression of discontent through the ta'ziyeh.

27 See E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.3, pp.463-473 (for Shāh Ne'matollāh), Vol.3, pp.441-3, 503-4, and Vol.4, pp.181-2 (for Kāshefi).

28 Op.cit., pp.30-31.

29 See Peter Chelkowski, 'Dramatic and Literary Aspects of Ta'zieh-Khani - Iranian Passion Play', in R.N.L., Vol.2, No.1 (Spring 1971), pp.124-5.

30 Reuben Levy writes: "Few of the plays have been written down, and not many of their authors are known. For the most part only the main plot is given to the actors, who themselves fill it in by skilful improvisation. Often actors and audience are indistinguishable during representation of the plays, which both in the participants and spectators are capable of rousing the most violent religious emotion". Persian Literature: An Introduction, pp.100-101.

31 e.g.Peter Chelkowski finds similarities between the character of Imam Hoseyn in the ta'ziyeh and that of Siyāvash, the prince in Ferdowsi's Shāhnāmeh who restores Iran to life through his death. Thus he detects patriotic elements in the ta'ziyeh.(Op.cit., pp.121-138). A similar interpretation is also made by Shāhrokh Meskub in his Sug-e Siyāvash, pp.82-100.

32 cf. Sir Lewis Pelly, op.cit., Vol.1, p.5 (preface).

33 cf. Ilya Pavlovich Petrushevsky, Eslām dar Irān (Islam in Iran, translated into Persian by Karim Keshāvarz), pp.274-5.

34 Imam Hoseyn's marriage to a daughter of the last Sāsānid king Yazdgerd III is mentioned by some early historians. In Shi'ite and Iranian folklore she is known by the name Shahrbānu. The accuracy of the report is very doubtful, but this is irrelevant. The important point is the significance of the belief that this marriage took place. A verse by Khāqāni reads as follows: "My complaint is about my fate. Shahrbānu's complaint is about 'Omar". It was 'Omar who sent the Arab armies to conquer Iran and who in the Shi'ite view usurped the caliphate from 'Ali. A similar point is that of the 18 sons of Imam Musā Kāzem from several wives, 'Ali (later called Rezā by the 'Abbasid caliph Ma'mun), who after his father became the 8th Imam, had an Iranian mother. He is the only Imam buried in Iran (at Mashhad), and is one of those most loved and respected by Iranian Shi'ites.

35 cf. Sir Lewis Pelly, The Miracle Play of Hasan and Husain, pp.16-17.

36 cf. Reuben Levy, Persian Literature: An Introduction, p.100

37 P. Chelkowski points out that the acting techniques of the ta'ziyeh, and above all the part taken by the audience in its performance, give the genre an extremely realistic tone. In his opinion, "a theatre historian might conclude that the Stanislavski Method was based on ta'ziyeh-khāni". Chelkowski, op.cit., pp.131-132.

II.II

The Preparatory Period

The foundations of modern fiction were laid in the Qājār period by travel diarists, translators, Westernized thinkers, and radical writers, including journalists.[1] While knowing the classics well, they all for various reasons moved from the traditional ornateness of classical adab to simpler styles. In both form and content, the literary output of the period differed greatly from the classics. The new prose fiction and drama were intended, as some of the authors explicitly stated, to meet contemporary demands.[2] Although classical literature does not lack either social elements in its content or versatility in its forms, no attempts were made to adapt classical prose models for expression of the new themes. Nor did the folkloric sources of literature, particularly folk romances and ta'ziyes, provide either models or subject matter. The gap between the form and language of national legends and the new Western ideas which were flooding into the Persian literary world was too wide.

Translations of European fiction such as Alexandre Dumas's exciting historical novels Les Trois Mousquetaires and Le Comte de Monte Cristo by Mohammad Tāher Mirzā (d.1897), who was a Qājār prince, of the works of Bernardin de St Pierre, Chateaubriand, Jules Verne, and George Reynolds by Mohammad Hasan Forughi,[3] and/of many other novels gained popularity among the intelligentsia and in wider circles. They used natural language fairly close to the educated colloquial

of the time, and were taken as models of simple prose style.[4] At the same time they brought with them the cultural values of the contemporary Western European bourgeoisie. The impact of these translations was so strong that not only the members of the royal court, but even the despotic Nāser od-Din Shāh himself, who is said to have censored his own Minister of Publication and Censorship,[5] chose to write his travel diaries in a similar fluent and natural, almost conversational prose. These diaries, with their superficial admiration of Western institutions and ways of life, and their probably authentic royal authorship, were long regarded as a model of good style.

Also important were academic and scientific translations. For the Dār ol-Fonun, the first polytechnic college at Tehran, inaugurated in 1851, and for a subsequently established printing and translation office (Dār ot-Tabā'e-ye Dowlati va Dār ot-Tarjome-ye Homāyuni), various scientific, medical, historical, and literary works were translated. Translations of George Rawlinson's books on the Archaemenid, Parthian, and Sāsānid empires aroused great interest and stimulated a tendency to associate Iranian nationalism with pride in the glories of ancient Iran. There is clear evidence that some of the translations of European literary works were made for purposes of political or social criticism.[6] Not infrequently the translated texts were altered or amplified to include descriptions and satires of existing conditions in Iran.[7] In the field of social satire, a unique popularity fell to the amplified Persian

translations of Sir James Morier's The Adventures of Hājji Bābā of Ispahan (London 1824) by Mirzā Habib Esfahāni[8] (d.1897) (formerly attributed to Sheykh Ahmad Ruhi), which was published in 1905 at Calcutta although it had been finished as early as 1892.[9] This work, through the forcefulness of its social satire and the vividness of its language and humour, greatly influenced the style and content of future Persian fiction.

There has never been any question of the popularity (as reading matter) won by the Persian translations of the plays of Fath 'Ali Ākhundzādeh or Ākhundof (1812-1878).[10] As a dramatist on the European model, he was the pioneer in the whole of Asia.[11] He also wrote social and political pamphlets[12] and was one of the first Muslim writers to call for improvements in the social position of women.[13] The plays that Ākhundzādeh wrote in Āzarbāyjāni Turkish between 1850 and 1857, first published in the Tiflis newspaper Qafqāz and later in a collection of six plays and a historical narrative,[14] are comedies in the style of Molière with dramatic plots and witty satires on social conditions and popular beliefs in Northern Āzarbāyjān. Five of these plays were later translated into admirably fluent and almost colloquial Persian by Mirzā Mohammad Ja'far Qarājadāghi, and first published in Tehran in 1874.[15] The translations of Ākhundzādeh's plays were an important factor in the development of Persian prose fiction, as they showed that an essentially Iranian social content could be presented acceptably in a European literary form. There is no evidence that the Persian versions were ever staged,

though both the language and the dramatic qualities would have made them excellent for acting. Three less good plays with the same type of social content and style, formerly attributed to Malkom Khān[16] but now shown to have been written by an interpreter at the French Legation known as Mirzā Āqā Tabrizi,[17] first appeared in a newspaper before being published as a collection.[18] Whether these three plays were ever acted is also not known.

The strongest influence of all was probably that of the Persian newspapers which were published abroad in this period. In addition to thousands of workmen from Āzarbāyjān and Gilān who found employment at Baku, then the centre of the Russian oil industry,[19] large numbers of Iranian merchants and shopkeepers settled in cities and towns in the Russian empire and at Istanbul, Cairo, Calcutta, and Bombay, since economic prospects, laws, and security were better abroad than at home. Moreover the governments of Russia, Turkey, and India allowed significantly greater freedom of expression and publication. The Persian newspapers were produced partly for sale to local Iranian residents and partly for overt or covert dispatch to Iran. The most influential were Akhtar (Istanbul 1875-9, published by Mohammad Tāher Tabrizi), Habl ol-Matin (Calcutta, 1893-1930, published by Seyyed Jalāl od-Din Kāshāni Mo'ayyed ol-Eslām up to his death), Qānun (London 1890-1898, published by Malkom Khān in 41 issues only), and Sorayyā (Cairo 1898-1900) which was replaced for a short time by Parvaresh.[20] Financially supported and often partly written by local Iranian merchants, they generally

reflected the views of the rising bourgeois merchant class. The goals for which they strove were national independence and socio-economic reform on essentially Western European lines. Not only newspapers but also books and pamphlets were printed in the centres of Iranian emigration. These writings could be described as 'bourgeois', with the reservation that this term, in its European meaning, is scarcely applicable to the Iranian society of the time; it was not until the third quarter of the 20th century that an industrial bourgeoisie began to appear in Iran. Before then the only group corresponding to a European bourgeois class consisted of wealthier merchants and tradesmen in the bazaars. They did not invest their wealth in industry but used it either to expand their commercial business or to acquire urban or rural real estate. Through land ownership they established links with the semi-feudal aristocracy and the higher officialdom. At the same time they maintained links with the poorer bāzāris, such as craftsmen or artisans and small shopkeepers, who had some of the characteristics of a working class. The bāzāris in general and the poorer bāzāris in particular remained profoundly conservative in their religious views and were strongly influenced by the Shi'ite clergy. While remaining loyal to Islam, the merchants were open to liberal and reformist ideas in both religious and commercial fields.[21] The newspapers and the publications which they sponsored show a tendency to identify Iranian nationalism with the glories of ancient Iran and to put the blame for Iranian backwardness onto Arab influences, while showing respect

for Islam. Western influences, which most 'olamā deeply resented, are also reflected in these 'bourgeois' writings, but often with reservations expressed towards Western dominance.

The writer Zayn ol-'Ābedin Marāghe'i (1837-1910) first published his outspoken and widely read Siyāhatnāme-ye Ebrāhim Beg in Cairo. He was himself an Iranian émigré merchant in Russia and later in Istanbul, where he contributed to Akhtar. In the book he combines a call for patriotism with complaints about the lack of progress of the Iranians in trade, industry, and institutional development.[22] Disguised as the narrator of the book, he finds no commercial progress, no agreement on the importance of beneficial enterprises, and no patriotism among the humble or the noble, the strong or the weak, but only utter ignorance of progress and civilization. He wonders whether the clergy have caused this decay, neglect, ignorance, and lawlessness by preventing the government from carrying out reforms. He is told that the clergy would like the country to be prosperous and calm, but would not like it to have modern law (qānun) because in that case there would no longer be fifty law courts in each town. He is amazed at the weakness of the government, whose officials can be excommunicated and bastinadoed at the request of the 'olamā for such offences as enjoying illicit pleasures in the privacy of their own homes.[23]

Sayyed Jalāl od-Din Mo'ayyed ol-Eslām, the author of Mokālame-ye Sayyāh-e Irāni bā Shakhs-e Hendi[24] (A Persian Tourist's Dialogue with an Indian), puts the blame on the

lack of trade regulations and of a written code of law due to the encroachment of the Shar'i jurisdiction, which he bitterly condemns. Abuse of the government's autocratic powers by self-seeking high officials and abuse of the sacred authority of the shari'at by self-seeking 'olamā come in for equally strong censure. The author makes sharp and satirical remarks about the application of both shari'at by 'olamā and 'orfi (secular) law by officials, and draws attention to the conflicts between the two jurisdictions. Mokālame-ye Sayyāh-e Irāni bā Shakhs-e Hendi must have been written in the years between 1896 to 1905, since Nāser od-Din Shāh, who was assassinated in 1896, is mentioned as 'the martyr Shāh' while no references are made to the constitutional movement which began in 1905. Although the book's style and language are not the best or even of a high standard for the time, it is significant for its description of the problems and obstacles for the growth of trade, and its comparison of the highly restricted bourgeois merchant class of Iran with that of India.

Despite their fear of foreign domination, bourgeois nationalists looked towards the West in the search for solutions to Iran's problems. Zayn ol-'Ābedin Marāghe'i, like many other merchant-writers, emigrated from his native city, Marāgheh in Iranian Āzarbāyjān, to Russian-ruled territory, where he prospered as a merchant and acquired knowledge of modern civilization through the medium of Russian, but remained loyal to Iran and to Shi'ite Islam. After giving up a shop at Yalta in the Crimea where, according to Bozorg 'Alavi, the Russian Empress had been

his customer,[25] Marāghe'i moved to Istanbul where he contributed to Akhtar. The first volume of his Siyāhatname-ye Ebrāhim Beg was published at Istanbul some time before 1903, when a German translation by W. Schulz appeared at Leipzig.[26] It soon gained great popularity in Iran. It is in the form of an imaginary travel diary and is considered to be the first Persian novel ever published. The language is simple and clear apart from occasional turkicisms. Ebrāhim Beg, the son of an Iranian merchant of Cairo, has been brought up to revere the land of his ancestors, but when he visits it is shocked by the backwardness, oppression, and moral decay which he finds. He makes an analogy between the poor state of the time and the past when Iran prospered under good rulers, and he proposes modern reforms. The second and third volumes, published after the constitutional movement, are less impressive. The third volume, however, contains an interesting account of the rise of Japan as an example which Iran might follow.

Mirzā Malkom Khān (1834-1908), who was a prominent political figure in the reign of Nāser od-Din Shāh, and one of the pioneer Westernizing secular intellectuals, exercised considerable influence through his numerous pamphlets, beginning with Ketābche-ye Gheybi (1859/1860), and his articles in his newspaper Qānun, all of which mainly influenced the thinking of the well-educated upper class.[27] His writings played an important part in the development of modern Persian journalistic style and an economic and socio-political terminology. He became best known for his advocacy of the adoption of modern industrial technology

and of European-type social values and political institutions

'Abd or-Rahim Tālebof (1835-1909), a successful merchant at Tiflis, wrote with the aim of popularizing among his Iranian compatriots the knowledge of science, technology, and modern institutions which he had acquired after his emigration from Tabriz to Russian-ruled territory. He translated (from a Russian translation) a French work on astronomy by Ernest Flammarion which enjoyed world-wide popularity at that time. On science in general he wrote a semi-fictional book, Ketāb-e Ahmad (1894), in the form of lessons for an imaginary son, which he followed up with books on technology and on freedom and democracy. Tālebof's most important book is a fictional travel diary entitled Masālek ol-Mohsenin (The Ways of the Beneficent). Two engineers, a medical doctor, and a chemist, are commissioned by a geographical institute to climb Mount Damavand and report their observations. On the way they observe the manners and morals of the people, and on the mountain they meet figures from the past, including Cambyses and Zoroaster, and discuss life's problems. After showing the inevitable connection between science and progress, the author concludes that since God is one, all religions are essentially one and must tolerate each other and allow freedom of thought, without which science is impossible. Although some of the 'olamā of Tabriz excommunicated Tālebof and banned his books, the people of the city nevertheless elected him in absentia to be one of their representatives in the first parliament. However, in the event he could not move from Tiflis to Tehran.[29] Nonetheless

his election shows the popularity of the bourgeois nationalist ideology at the time of the constitutional movement and the strength of the demand for Western-type reforms, which most of the clergy rejected in the belief that such reforms and all Western ideas and influences are un-Islamic. At the same time the bourgeois nationalists were threatened by Russian and British political interference and economic dominance. They particularly resented the privileges which had been conferred on foreigners through the capitulations in legal matters and grants of concessions. To this extent they shared the anti-Western feelings of the majority of the Islamic clergy. In Qānun, Malkom Khān not only denounced the autocracy of Nāser od-Din Shāh and his vizier Amin os-Soltān, but also supported the campaign of the 'olamā against the Tobacco Concession. The bourgeois nationalists, while still wanting Iran to have modern institutions and industries, similarly opposed the Qājār government's grant of further concessions to foreigners and acceptance of foreign loans.

These and many other similar indications show that the views of merchants, intellectuals, Pan-Islamists and even liberal 'olamā gradually converged in a common demand for justice.

The ability of reformist intellectuals and religious circles to cooperate may be attributed to the fact that the dangers of royal autocracy and foreign domination, which they both rejected, were seen to be immediate, whereas the questions of future institutions and social policies were less pressing. At the same time the

reformists, being well aware of the deep roots of religion in Iranian society, were anxious to conciliate the 'olamā for the sake of national unity.[30] Malkom Khān, for instance, "conceived a plan which should incorporate the political wisdom of Europe with the religious wisdom of Asia ... (He) knew that it was useless to attempt a remodelling of Persia in European forms, and ... (he) was determined to clothe ... (his) material reformation in a garb which ... (the) people would understand, the garb of religion."[31]

The efforts of the intellectuals to bridge this gap, however, made much less impact than those of the reformist preacher Sayyed Jamāl od-Din Asadābādi known as Afghāni (1838-1897) and his followers, the Pan-Islamists.[32] He was above all concerned to prove the compatibility of science with Islam and to bring about the united resistance of the Muslim peoples to European domination. Sayyed Jamāl od-Din is one of the most ambiguous figures of the Muslim world in the later part of the 19th century. His doctrine of Islamic unity concurred with the Pan-Islamist policy of the Sultān 'Abd ol-Hamid, who looked for help from the entire Muslim world in the struggle to preserve the weak Ottoman Turkish Empire from further dismemberment by Christian powers.[33] After Sayyed Jamāl od-Din's move to Istanbul in 1892, that city became more than ever the centre of the Pan-Islamists, and the local Persian newspaper Akhtar began to publish contributions by Iranian Pan-Islamists.

As a generalization about the writers of this period, it may be said that they have a common goal of bourgeois-type reform, but two different approaches, namely that of

secular nationalism and that of Pan-Islamism. The distinction, however, is not clear-cut, and the writers of the time were not ranged in two separate and irreconcilable camps. The secular nationalists were never willing or able to discard religion, which they knew to be the strongest bond holding Iranian society together, while the Pan-Islamists never tried to hide their attachment to their Iranian national identity, even though they sympathized with the ideal of unity of the Islamic peoples against European domination.

The basic doctrines of Sayyed Jamāl od-Din were that the Muslim peoples should adopt modern science which is compatible with Islam and that they should unite to repel Western domination. Like Sayyed Jamāl od-Din, the Iranian Pan-Islamists were concerned with the political and social reformation of Muslim societies rather than with the strict doctrines of Shi'ite or Sunnite Islam. At the same time they expressed an ardent Iranian nationalism without regard to the potential contradiction between the two ways of thinking. Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni (1853-1897),[34] who was one of the contributors to Akhtar in Istanbul, expressed the hope that the Muslims might 'with one accord gird up their loins in unity (and) form a political unity under the auspices of (Sultan 'Abd ol-)Hamid'.[35] Yet he also blamed the Arabs for all the misfortunes that the Iranian nation had experienced in the centuries following the Arab conquests.[36] He held the Arab conquerors responsible for corrupting the morals of the Iranians,[37] and the reactionary Islamic clergy for deflecting their attention

from the pursuit of education, industry, and new ideas by their insistence on trivial details.[38] Mirzā Āqā Khān's admiration for pre-Islamic Iran is an example of the growth of nationalist feeling in Iran at that time. It also shows how this feeling could be associated with political radicalism, which appears to have been especially strong at that time among the rising bourgeois merchant class, who still had close ties with the Shi'ite clergy.

Both the secular nationalists and the Pan-Islamists were well aware of the great social influence of the clergy and particularly of the leading 'olamā of the Shi'ite theological colleges at Najaf in Iraq. Apart from the letters which the Pan-Islamists frequently sent to Najaf, both the Pan-Islamists and the secular nationalists used indirect means of persuasion in pursuit of the support of influential 'olamā. For instance an Iranian merchant of Baku sent to Calcutta a sum sufficient to cover the cost of the annual despatch of approximately 500 copies of Habl ol-Matin to Shi'ite 'olamā in Iraq.[39] E.G. Browne noted that Habl ol-Matin was one of the most influential political journals printed abroad, enjoying equal favour in both nationalist and clerical centres.[40] The historian A. Kasravi was amazed at the contradictory nature of the articles which he found in this paper. 'In a certain issue of Habl ol-Matin', he wrote, 'there were two articles written by one and the same writer, a certain Yusofzādeh Hamadāni. In one of them he extolled Pan-Islamism and called upon people to follow it. In the other one, he praised socialism and enumerated its benefits'.[41] Kasravi

thought that neither the writer nor the editor of the paper realized the contradiction of the two articles, which was only one example among many. Perhaps it was such inconsistency which enabled Habl ol-Matin to acquire 'an important position among men of learning', that is secular nationalists, and at the same time to be regarded as a 'champion of Pan-Islamism'.[42] This paradox appears to have been deliberately concealed by the rising bourgeois class because their main immediate target was unity. No wonder, then, that the editor of this same paper, Sayyed Jalāl od-Din Mo'ayyed ol-Eslām, anonymously published his Mokālame-ye Sayyāh-e Irāni bā Shakhs-e Hendi, in which he directs his sharp criticism against the restrictions of both 'orfi and shar'i laws and calls for better economic conditions and a more relevant jurisdiction with bourgeois mercantile values.

The seemingly contradictory nature of most of the literary output of this period may be attributed in part to the fact that the bourgeois merchant class had not acquired a distinct identity, and in part to the duality of the 'olamā. On the one hand the 'olamā were the custodians of the shari'at, and on the other hand they claimed to be the defenders of the rights of the whole community. The rising bourgeoisie and their literary spokesmen did not share the views generally held by the 'olamā, but could not hope to obtain legal reform and codification without clerical support. While the bourgeoisie welcomed Western ideas which were repugnant to most 'olamā, both classes were equally resentful of Russian and British power in Iran. The bourgeois writers therefore sought both to

retain the favour of the 'olamā and to stir members of their own class into action for reform. They did not refrain from criticizing the majority of the bāzāris (including the merchants) for their backwardness. Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni condemned them as 'traitors, cheats, and hypocrites' and 'heedless of learning and art', and urged them to catch up with foreigners in the field of international trade.[43] A letter of 'Complaints of Persian Merchants, 1906', discusses Iran's trade position and makes similar criticisms. Part of the letter, which was published in Habl ol-Matin, runs as follows:

> To-day the world of commerce is linked together like a chain and is like a single factory. If even one part of this factory is damaged, the supervisor will have to replace it. If you do not carry on your trade according to contemporary practices and if you continue with the habits and customs of the tent dwellers of a thousand years ago, the supervisor of the trading machine - whose esteemed name is 'Science' - will replace you. ... To-day the world is rotating on the pivot of science. In Europe there are schools for every position, high and low. Let us leave aside commerce - even for coachmen and cart-drivers - there are schools. ... How much more regrettable, then, that you merchants do not yet have a school of commerce! To this day to you trade means drudgery for foreigners. ... You have not as yet established a Chamber of Commerce in Tehran and are not aware of its benefits. It is owing to the lack of a Chamber of Commerce that you are steadily regressing and have become a broken part in the apparatus of commerce, and the supervisor is busy replacing you. Look, in Tehran, Tabriz, Isfahan, and other cities, European businessmen are constantly setting up shops, obtaining concessions, and opening bank branches - and trade is slipping from your hands. ... There is no one to ask you gentlemen, who in the question of the Tobacco Régie took refuge in the mosque and regarded monopoly as detrimental, why

> is it that now, ignoring the state of the poor ... you committed a crime of such enormity against yourselves and your nation.[44]

The writers of this period thus composed their works in accordance with this social outlook, and as E.G. Browne observed in the case of Marāghe'i's Siyāhatnāme-ye Ebrāhim Beg, 'with the definite object of arousing discontent in order to bring about reform'.[45] In one passage Marāghe'i writes:

> The motherland, which we are supposed to love, is the piece of soil on which we are born. It is our definite duty to protect its space, ... which is the home of our wives and children and of our honour, and which is the grave of our ancestors. ... As far as it is known, in Iran ... there is no sign of progress of trade or of any agreement on the execution of projects which could be useful to the country and to the whole nation; nor is there any trace of patriotism and love for fellow citizens ... High and low, rich and poor, are all ignorant of every kind of progress and civilization.[46]

The contrast between the social conditions and attitudes existing in Qājār Iran and the conditions and theories which the authors saw and heard or read about during their stays abroad provided both the motive and subject matter for most of the literary works of this period. In other words, the comparative method was dominant in social analysis. In general, writers took different societies as ready-made models with which they compared the society of their own country. The fact that these models are mostly European societies and that the writers were deeply influenced by European literature, whether through original texts or translations, and thus by Western culture marks the start of a new phase in the

evolution of Persian literature. Hence the growth of a new form of intellectualism in Iran, with new values obtained from the West, and the growth of a class which was to be labelled in recent times as West infected (Gharbzadeh). In the modern history of Iran, the intellectuals played a very significant role, and the growth of their number made possible the expansion of the bureaucracy and the Westernization of the administration in the post-Constitutional period and particularly under the Pahlavi dynasty (1925-1979). It is this class or group of Iranian society which was responsible for the modern fiction of Iran and it is for this class that this fiction was written.

Footnotes (II.II)

1 Bozorg 'Alavi, Geschichte und Entwicklung der modernen Persischen Literatur, pp.24-31.

2 Feridun Ādamiyat, Andishe-hā-ye Mirzā Fath 'Ali Ākhundzāhdeh, pp.54-55.

3 George Reynolds, The Virgin Kiss (Persian title, Buse-ye 'Azrā), was translated by M.H. Forughi and Seyyed Hasan Khān Shirāzi. See F. Ādamiyat, Ide'olozhi-ye Nahzat-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran, p.77.

4 For a list of some Persian translations of European novels in this period, see E.G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, pp.157-166.

5 Mohammad Hasan Khān E'temād os-Saltaneh, Ruznāme-ye Khāterāt-e E'temād os-Saltaneh, pp.1189-1192.

6 F. Ādamiyat, Ide'olozhi-ye Nahzat-e Mashrutiyat, p.52.

7 cf. F. Ādamiyat, Ide'olozhi-ye Nahzat-e Mashrutiyat, pp. 56, 65-66, 70-77.

8 Mirzā Habib Esfahāni was also the translator of a Persian version of Moliere's Le Misanthrope, which appeared at Istanbul in 1869-1870 (H. Kāmshād, Modern Persian Prose Literature, p.24), but seemingly failed to achieve any popularity (E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.4, p.459).

9 H. Kāmshad, op.cit., pp.21-27.

10 For a detailed account of the life, political and literary career of Ākhundzādeh, see F. Ādamiyat, Andishe-hā-ye Mirzā Fath-'Ali Ākhundzādeh, Khwārazmi, Tehran, 1970.

11 F. Ādamiyat, Andishe-hā-ye Mirzā Fath-'Ali Ākhundzādeh, pp.32-33.

12 Op.cit., pp.109-171.

13 Op.cit., pp.221-225.

14 Op.cit., pp.40-41.

15 W.H.D. Haggard and G. Le Strange, The Vazir of Lankurān, p.8 (introduction); see also H. Kāmshād, pp.27-28.

16 For the plays attributed to Malkom Khān - though he never claimed to be their author - see Hamid Algar, Mirzā Malkum Khān, pp.264-277, and Yahyā Āryanpur, Az Sabā tā Nimā, Vol.1, pp.358-359.

17 These three plays (out of four attributed to

Malkom Khān), like those of Ākhundzādeh, are humorous, with references to the social and political consequences of the despotic and paternal rule of the Qājārs. The long and sarcastic titles of these plays are good enough to reveal the playwright's humour and indicate his purpose:

1. Sargozasht-e Ashraf Khān Hākem-e 'Arabestān dar Ayyām-e Tavaqqof-e u dar Tehrān (What befell Ashraf Khān, the Governor of 'Arabestān, during the days of his residence in Tehran).
2. Tariqe-ye Hokumat-e Zamān Khān-e Borujerdi (The Method of Government of Zamān Khān of Borujerd).
3. Hekāyat-e Karbalā Raftan-e Shāhqoli Mirzā va Sargozasht-e Ayyām-e Tavaqqof-e Chand-ruze-ye dar Kermānshāhān Nazd-e Shāhmorād Mirzā Hākem-e Ānjā (The Tale of Shāhqoli Mirza's Journey to Kermānshāhān and What Befell Him During His Brief Residence There as a Guest of the Governor Shāhmorād Mirzā).

18 E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.4, p.463, and Hamid Algar, Mirza Malkum Khan, pp.266-7.

19 cf. Z.Z. Abdullaev, 'Promyshlennosti Zarozhdenie rabochego klassa Irana v kontse XIX-nachale XXvv', in Charles Issawi (ed.), The Economic History of Iran, pp.50-51.

20 For an account of the Iranian press, see E.G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, and Mohammad Sadr-e Hāshemi, Tārikh-e Jarāyed va Majallāt-e Irān, (A History of Journals and Periodicals in Iran), 4 volumes, Nejāt, Isfahan, 1948-1953.

21 On the merchants and their position as a rising bourgeoisie and on the general economic situation of Iran in this period, the following works are of particular interest: Charles Issawi (ed.), The Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914; W.M. Floor, 'The Merchants (tujjār) in Qajar Iran', in ZDMG 126 (1976), pp.101-135, and 'The Bankers (sarrāf) in Qajar Iran' in ZDMG 129 (1979), pp.263-281; Feridun Ādamiyat and Homā Nāteq, Afkār-e Ejtemā'i va Siyāsi va Eqtesādi dar Āsār-e Montasher Nashode-ye Dowrān-e Qājār, Āgāh, Tehran 1977; M.L. Entner, Russo-Persian Commercial Relations 1828-1914, Gainsville, Florida, 1965.

22 Zayn ol-'Ābedin Marāghe'i, op.cit., p.135. The identity of this writer's first name with that of Zayn ol-'Ābedin Motamen (b.1914), the author of Āshyāne-ye 'Oqāb (1938), must have confused Alessandro Bausani, who states that Marāghe'i is the author of this unelaborated and experimental historical novel (see A. Bausani, 'Europe and Iran in Contemporary Persian Literature', E. and W. New Series, Vol.2, No.1 (March 1960), p.4.

23 Zayn ol-'Ābedin Marāghe'i, op.cit., pp.80-82.

24 According to the author's introduction to the first volume of Mokālame-ye Sayyāh-e Irāni bā Shakhs-e Hendi, it was to be followed by four more volumes, the fifth of which was supposed to carry the author's name - which is not mentioned in the first volume. However, these other volumes apparently never appeared. F. Ādamiyat has attributed the book to Mo'ayyed ol-Eslām, the editor of Habl ol-Matin of Calcutta, (Ide'olozhi-ye Nahzat-e Mashrutiyat, p.316), but he has not mentioned his source of information.

25 Bozorg 'Alavi, Geschichte und Entwicklung der modernen Persischen Literatur, p.78.

26 Siyāhatnāme-ye Ebrāhim Beg was apparently written between 1894 and 1896, since the narrator mentions having read Tālebof's Ketāb-e Ahmad, which was published in 1894 (p.14) and describes Mozaffar od-Din, who became Shāh in 1896, as the heir 'to whom people attach their hopes' (p.79).

27 Mirzā Malkom Khān's ambiguous career has been studied by several authors amongst whom are the following: Hamid Algar (Mirza Malkum Khan); Fereshteh Nurā'i (Tahqiq dar Afkār-e Mirzā Malkom Khān Nāzem od-Dowleh); F. Adamiyat (Fekr-e Āzādi va Moqaddame-ye Nahzat-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran); Esmā'il Ra'in (Mirzā Malkom Khān, Zendegi va Kushesh-hā-ye Siyāsi-ye U). A collection of his works was edited and published by Mohit Tabātabā'i entitled Majmu'e-ye Āsār-e Mirzā Malkom Khān, Tehran, 1948.

28 Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt, pp.82-87.

29 Ahmad Kasravi, Tārikh-e Mashrute-ye Irān, Vol.1, pp.188-191.

30 cf. Hamid Algar, Religion and State in Iran, p.124.

31 Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, op.cit., p.83.

32 On the career and ideas of Sayyed Jamāl od-Din, see Nikki R. Keddie, An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din Afghani, Berkeley, Calif., 1968, and Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, a Political Biography, Berkeley, Calif., 1972; Elie Kedourie, Afghani and 'Abduh: an essay on religious unbelief and political activism in modern Islam, London 1966: Homa Pakdaman, Djamal-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghāni, Paris 1969; Mortazā Modarres Chahārdehi, Ārā va Mo'taqadāt-e Sayyed Jamāl od-Din Afghāni, Tehran 1958; Iraj Afshar and A. Mahdavi, Madārek-e Chap-nashodeh dar Bāre-ye Sayyed Jamāl od-Din Afghāni, Univ. of Tehran 1963. A bibliography has been provided by A. Albert Kudsizādeh, Sayyid Jamal al-Din al-Afghāni: an annotated bibliography, Leiden, 1970.

33 See Sheykh Ahmad Ruhi's letter (22 Ramadan 1312/1895) in Feridun Ādamiyat's Andishe-hā-ye Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni, pp.280-1. Also cf. Nikki Keddie, Religion and Rebellion in Iran, p.72.

34 Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni, a native of Kermān, married the daughter of the Bābi leader Sobh-e Azal. However, after his emigration from Iran to Istanbul in 1886 (as a result of persecution for his radical attitudes), he became a Muslim rationalist and joined the pan-Islamists. After the assassination of Nāser od-Din Shāh, he was extradited together with Sheykh Ahmad Ruhi and the Consul-General at Istanbul, Khabir ol-Molk, and the three were shot in 1897 without trial at Tabriz by order of the Governor General Mohammad 'Ali Mirzā (later Shāh). Mirzā Āqā Khān was the author of several works with a socio-political content. His life and thoughts are the subject of Feridun Ādamiyat's Andishe-hā-ye Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni, Tehran, 1967.

35 E.G. Browne, The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909, p.412.

36 Feridun Ādamiyat, Andishe-hā-ye Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni, pp.265-6.

37 Op.cit., p.180.

38 Op.cit., p.191.

39 E.G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, p.25.

40 Op.cit., p.73.

41 Ahmad Kasravi, Tārikh-e Mashrute-ye Irān, p.43.

42 E.G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, p.73.

43 Feridun Ādamiyat, Andishe-hā-ye Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni, pp.266-7.

44 Charles Issawi, The Economic History of Iran 1800-1914, pp.67-69.

45 E.G. Browne, A Literary History of Persia, Vol.4, p.467.

46 Zayn ol-'Ābedin Marāghe'i, Siyāhatnāme-ye Ebrāhim Beg, p.135.

Part III

Modern Fiction

III.I.

The Fiction of the Years 1906-1941

The enactment of the constitution on 30 December 1906 was a turning point in Iranian history. Although it can hardly be described as a revolution, in the sense that it did not transform the existing social structure, and because the new régime could neither introduce fundamental reforms nor resist foreign interference, it was nevertheless a great change. It initiated a period of vigorous political activity, and created opportunities for the emergence of new and dynamic social forces. It opened the way for the introduction of modern legal and educational systems, which eventually took concrete shape during the reign of Rezā Shāh (1925-1941). It also gave greater freedom for private initiative in commerce and in spheres such as education and publication. From 1906 onward new ideas about government, politics, and social relationships came to be accepted in many, if not all, sections of Iranian society. The resultant changes of outlook and behaviour are reflected in both the form and the content of contemporary literature.

The urban middle class, which had already begun to emerge, grew in size and gained more than any other in social and political influence. Members of this class pressed above all for improvements in urban conditions and in education. The new system of education, which had at first encountered strong opposition, henceforth won ever

increasing popularity[1] and, in spite of its imperfections, met at least some of the needs of the increasing number of city dwellers. Its recipients were to become the audience of modern journalistic and literary output - if not yet a mass audience, at least a large and rapidly growing one. The relative freedoms which had been gained gave unprecedented opportunities for social and political expression. Particularly important after 1906 were the freedom to form political and educational societies (anjomans)[2] and the freedom to publish newspapers. While the anjomans were short-lived and played mainly political roles, the newspapers not only had political influence but also rendered lasting services to modern Persian literature. Numerous newspapers appeared in Tehran and the bigger provincial cities[3] and achieved great popularity. The principal beneficiaries were, of course, literate members of various classes who had hitherto only been able with great difficulty, if at all, to obtain radical newspapers and pamphlets mostly published abroad; but wider circles were also reached. It is known that certain newspapers were taken to villages and read aloud to illiterate peasant listeners.[4] In the years 1909-1911, when poverty was widespread and few individuals could afford the price of a newspaper, it was observed (by Mirzā Mohammad 'Ali Tarbiyat[5]) that several readers pooled together to buy and share one copy.[6]

In this new social situation, Persian poetry and prose writing ceased once and for all to be a luxury of the royal court and aristocratic households. Poets formerly in the service of the court or provincial governors - notably

Mohammad Taqi Bahār (1880-1951) who had been made Poet Laureate (Malek osh-Sho'arā) - joined the constitutional movement and wrote many poems in its favour. There were few poets and writers of note who did not publish their own newspapers or periodicals during the years after 1906, which were indeed a springtime of journalistic ventures.[7] Although many were short-lived, they nevertheless left a profound and lasting imprint. The radical writers, who were then often also poets and scholars, naturally wished to convey their ideals of enlightenment, social reform, and patriotism to the widest possible audience. They therefore used relatively simple rather than ornate language; they also adopted new and stirring forms to express their new concepts. Thus they provided the public with a wider socio-political outlook in a language which was not devoid of literary merits. 'Ali Akbar Dehkodā (1880-1956) for the first time used phonetically spelt colloquial language in his column of comments and anecdotes in the newspaper Sur-e Esrāfil (1907-1908). In this column, called Charand Parand, Dehkhodā made very effective use of popular proverbs and folklore themes for political and social satire.

In the newly liberated press during the years 1906-1908 and 1909-1911, prose writing gained momentum as a medium of social and political expression; but poetry in new forms and styles did not lag behind. Poetry was still considered to be a suitable medium for political expression, and was supplemented rather than displaced by prose in contemporary journalism; in certain newspapers it filled much of the space. While fictional prose had a somewhat

European colour, poetry with its distinctively Persian national flavour and glorious history remained 'the backbone of Persian literature'.[8]

Persian poetry did not, however, remain uninfluenced by European literary values; nor was prose a wholly new phenomenon, prepacked and imported from the West. European literary influences on the rhymed and metrical poetry of the early constitutional period can be clearly discerned. For example, E.G. Browne found 'strong traces of European influence' in the rhyme arrangement of the poem Ey Morgh-e Sahar (O Dawn Bird!), written by Dehkhodā in memory of the martyrdom of his friend and co-editor of Sur-e Esrāfil, Mirzā Jahāngir Khān Shirāzi.[9] At the same time, many formal and thematic elements from Persian classical literature and folklore were used in the journalistic and later fictional prose of the period.[10]

With regard to form, it is generally held that Iranians did not produce any prose fiction in a fully European form until 1921, when Sayyed Mohammad 'Ali Jamālzādeh (b.1890) published his first collection of short stories Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud (Once Upon a Time) in Berlin. Although since the mid-nineteenth century some attempts had been made, and even during the hard years of the constitutional struggle and the first world war several historical novels had been published, all these works suffer from disharmony of language, content, and structure, even though the authors may have had justifiable reasons for their choices of each of these elements. Furthermore, most forms of modern prose fiction were regarded as out

of tune with Persian literary tradition and therefore potentially unacceptable.[11] Only one form could bridge the gap, namely the short story, which was probably the oldest form of narrative in Persian; and it only needed a man like Jamālzādeh to make the first step and introduce the techniques of its European counterpart.[12]

Even so, the first seeds of literary innovation had been sown earlier by men whose writings had appeared, mainly in newspapers, before and after the start of the constitutional government. The journalistic essay offered opportunities for the development of both literary art and socio-political content. Its language, while still generally unsuitable for modern fiction, was enriched and began to acquire more flexibility. The content, regardless of the form, was characterized by moral commitment. Almost everything that was then written expressed concern for social and political reform.

The constitutional régime did not, in the event, fulfil the expectations of the intelligentsia and educated youth.[13] "People lost millions of their fortunes in those two years of revolution, thousands were killed before the constitutional law, a treaty between the people and the king, was signed, yet it was broken before its ink had dried".[14] Internal dissensions and disorders weakened the country at a time when external threats were endangering its integrity and independence. The old system of censorship was not lifted completely, indeed there were times when it was vigorously enforced;[15] and in the confused course of events, a number of journalists and

men of letters were imprisoned, tortured, executed, or murdered. Nevertheless the constitutional régime for the first time granted, and when possible maintained, some freedom of expression and publication which enabled writers to criticize the deficiencies and backwardness of Iranian society and to voice new concepts of nationalism.[16]

The nationalistic tendency of post-constitutional literature cannot be attributed solely to the lofty idealism of a handful of writers. In one way or another it reflects the ambivalent outlook of the constitutionalists of different social strata. It expresses their resentment of Russian and British political interference and economic domination, and their admiration for Western European countries as the birthplace of modern science, parliamentary government, and liberal ideals. It is thus essentially an emulation of Western patriotism. The intellectuals hoped that a constitutional government would enable Iran to advance on the same lines as Western Europe. The dilemma presented by the simultaneous resentment and imitation of the West has been a persistent factor in modern Iranian life and has strongly influenced the development of modern Persian literature.

The nationalism of intellectuals differed from the nationalism of most of the Shi'ite clergy and their followers, who not only resented foreign interference but also fundamentally disapproved of Western models and methods. Moreover, the growth of 'intellectual nationalism' threatened to damage the ideological authority of the

clergy. In the Iranian social context, however, the two concepts of nationalism could not be clearly distinguished. Shi'ism, which had acquired a highly nationalist tone under the Safavids, separates the Iranians from neighbouring Muslim nations who are mostly Sunnite. Several generations after the fall of the Safavids, many Iranians still saw the religion in a nationalist light. Together with the Persian language, which has always been an ingredient of Iranian nationalism, Shi'ism was still regarded as vital for the nation's unity and an essential factor in its political life.[17] With regard to the new social ideals, however, the religious and intellectual concepts of nationalism began to clash. This paradox, seen in the works of Iranian pan-Islamists such as Mirzā Āqā Khān Kermāni, has been briefly discussed in the previous chapter.

With the decline of Pan-Islamism following the death of Sayyed Jamāl od-Din in 1897 and the deposition of Sultan 'Abd ol-Hamid on 5 July 1908, and with the second victory of the constitutionalists and the execution of their most powerful clerical adversary, Sheykh Fazlollāh Nuri in 1909, the secular nationalism of the intellectuals prevailed in Iranian politics and literature. The clergy, who had been the spearheads of the opposition against British and Russian imperialism, became very suspicious of this type of nationalism,[18] which they saw as Western-inspired and potentially threatening to their long-established position in Iranian society.

"The 120 years from the rise of the Qājār dynasty in 1785 to the constitutional revolution in 1905" had

been "years in which the 'olamā played a leading role in Iranian affairs".[19] They achieved such a strong position that the Qājār kings, as James Morier observed, followed a policy of good relations with the 'olamā, being well aware of their great influence over the minds of the people.[20] The 'olamā, for their part, did not raise questions about the legitimacy of Qājār rule, because the Qājārs remained faithful to Islam and did not take steps for reducing the authority of the 'olamā. Nevertheless the 'olamā did not approve of certain Qājār policies, particularly in respect of modernization. After remaining silent until they had the opportunity, they led the protest against the foreign tobacco monopoly in 1892. In the first phase of the constitutional struggle, the 'olamā again took the lead as champions of the people against governmental injustice and foreign domination; but in the later phases, when the Qājār régime was tottering, most of the 'olamā again began to support the institution of the monarchy. They feared that its collapse might endanger the Islamic character of the Iranian state and their own position in Iranian society.[21] Their fears about their own position were well founded. Hitherto they had enjoyed economic independence through their control of vaqfs (religious endowments). They had been in charge of the Islamic (shar'i) law courts, which carried more weight than the governmental ('orfi) courts. They had also operated the Islamic educational system of maktabs and madrasehs.[22] Already in the early Qājār period the need for educational modernization had forced the government to take steps such

as the dispatch of Iranian students to Europe by 'Abbās Mirzā and the opening of the Dār ol-Fonun.[23] Many 'olamā had shown their hostility to the resultant spread of modern education and modernization by casting doubt (takfir) on the religious belief of its recipients.[24]

In the view of the rising bourgeoisie, the need for political reform and socio-economic modernization was self-evident; social change which was already taking place made it desirable and inevitable. Accordingly all opponents of constitutional government (hokumat-e mashruteh), whether aristocrats defending the old system of autocracy (estebdād) or 'olamā calling for a system of government based wholly on the shari'at (hokumat-e mashru'eh),were judged to be equally reactionary, irrespective of the question whether the latter were sincere or were prompted by the former.[25] At the same time, Mohammad 'Ali Shāh's perfidious behaviour with Russian backing ensured the continuing support of many nationalist 'olamā for the constitutional cause. In these circumstances, the struggle ended with the victory of the bourgeoisie, who were able to lay the foundations of a relatively secular system of government. The bourgeoisie, however, failed to clear away the influential feudalists and their aristocratic concepts of government. The actual construction of a new system began after the first world war and took place mainly in the reign of Rezā Shāh (1925-1941).

From the start official policies were devoted to modernization in varying degrees, often in the face of clerical opposition. Probably for this reason, any mention of the idea of secularism was avoided, but

modernizing policies were always justified on secular nationalist grounds, almost as if nationalism had become a substitute for religion. Under Rezā Shāh, secular codes of law replaced the Islamic shari'at, and the constitutional provision requiring approval of bills by the 'olamā before enactment was tacitly dropped. The social position of the 'olamā was impaired when the vaqfs were placed under state control and some of their revenues were diverted to governmental uses, when judicial and notarial functions were taken over by the civil courts and registration offices, and when the maktabs gave way to state schools in which religious instruction through official textbooks was minimal while secular nationalism was strongly emphasized. The number of religious holidays was reduced, and the holding of certain religious ceremonies, notably passion plays and processions (ta'ziyehs), was banned or restricted. The most sharply felt blow was the compulsory europeanization of clothing decreed by Rezā Shāh.

The secular nationalist ideology had an anti-Arab and anti-clerical flavour which its opponents regarded as anti-Islamic. It idealized purely Iranian historical and cultural legacies, and such themes inspired much of the literature of the period.

Almost all the post-constitutional writers exhibit nationalist feelings in varying degrees and forms. Some of the most prominent in the early years were members or sympathizers of the nationalist Democrat Party (Hezb-e Demukrāt), which took shape among deputies in the second parliament (1909-1911) and won a large following throughout

the country. During the first world war, a group of Democrats in exile, led by Sayyed Hasan Taqizādeh (1878-1970), established a temporary headquarters at Berlin and remained active in both the political and the literary fields. Along with other nationalists they called for an end to foreign interference and for a reconstruction of society through radical reforms.

Although nationalist feeling had begun to stir in the mid-nineteenth century and to figure in Persian literature from then onwards, it only became an important literary force during the constitutional struggle and the following decades, when it found expression in an abundant literary output. In general, the content and social attitudes of these writings are in line with those found in nationalist writings of the pre-constitutional period.

During and especially after the first world war, a new wave of nationalism swept over Iranian politics and provided topics for journalism and fiction. In the political and economic fields it assailed European interference, while in the cultural field it struck at Arab and Turkish influences. Two of its characteristics were pride in the Persian language and pride in the ancient history of Iran. These themes became so fashionable that they even appeared in popular songs.[26] The Hebrew and Arabic mythology associated with Islam and found in most classical Persian literature was replaced by ancient Iranian mythology,[27] derived not only from Ferdowsi's Shāh-nāmeh but also from ancient Greek and Roman sources, and from the discoveries of European, American, and Iranian

archaeologists and scholars.

Nationalism inspired the rise of the historical novel, which was the first genre of prose fiction in a European mould to appear in Iran. A striking feature of the early historical novels is their admiration of Iranians as opposed to non-Iranians. In this they echo the nationalist sentiment of the post-constitutional years which sharpened in the atmosphere created by the first world war. Writers of historical novels such as Sheykh Musā Nasri, Mohammad Bāqer Khosravi, Hasan Badi', San'atizādeh, and others projected the present into the past in order to capture the minds of the people who favoured nationalist themes. Their novels, by imparting a nationalist appeal as well as an entertaining, romantic atmosphere, enjoyed relatively large circulations, even though they had neither 'charming language' nor 'engaging and pleasant style' - two qualities which were considered to be essential.[28] Other defects such as weak portrayal of the characters, unconvincing dénouements, artificial dialogues, and structural or logical imperfections, are also not infrequent. In a novel about Cyrus published in 1919, entitled 'Eshq va Saltanat (Love and Kingship), the writer, Sheykh Musā Nasri Hamadāni, being unaware of the Persian forms of the ancient Persian proper names, employs French pronunciations of the ancient Greek forms taken from French translations of Herodotus.[29] Nevertheless, in this period of nationalist enthusiasm, the new genre of the historical novel responded to the demands of a society in transition and was widely welcomed. It

stimulated national pride by describing important events and portraying impressive historical characters. Although large portions of the historical novel were given over to love affairs, these were seldom the main theme; love was generally subordinated to national duty. Sometimes,however,as in Hoseyn Mas Dah Nafar Qezelbash(1957),the only apparent motive is adventure and enterta

In spite of the combination of nationalist motives and traditional values which the historical novel incorporated and the considerable popularity which it achieved, this genre did not become firmly established in modern Persian literature. None of the writers who made their names as authors of historical novels could produce a forceful work of enduring value and attain a literary position equal to the position to be attained by writers of the short story. The failure of the historical novel may be attributed partly to its form and partly to its content. With regard to form, it was an innovation based on a Western model which had no connection with Persian literary traditions. In content, it suffered from the shortcomings which have already been outlined and above all from the fact that it was not a suitable medium for animated description and discussion of contemporary social, political, and economic problems. In their search for the forgotten beauty of the past, the writers failed to illuminate the face of the present. Their reminders of Iran's past glory (which, incidentally, they could write about without fear of censorship) echoed and stimulated current nationalist feelings, but had nothing to do with matters about which even stronger feelings were held, such as the poverty and ignorance of the masses, the state of education and public

health, and the shortcomings of the laws, especially those concerning the status of women. Readers wanted literature concerned with present reality rather than with a vague romantic past.[30]

For this reason it is not surprising that the nationalistic historical novel was soon eclipsed by the socio-critical novel, with its characters drawn from contemporary social life. The pioneering work in this genre, Moshfeq Kāzemi's Tehrān-e Makhuf (Horrible Tehran), first published in 1922 and frequently reprinted, is said to have been extraordinarily popular,[31] in spite of its naive, unskilful style and weak language.[32]

Tehrān-e Makhuf is the story of two unfortunate young lovers who are the victims of the imperfections of Iranian urban society in the unsettled years following the first world war. Although the story is romantic, its basic theme is the oppression of women, particularly those of upper class families.[33] At that time, the movement for the liberation of women had gained the sympathy of almost all intellectuals and artists, whether fiction writers, poets, or others. Writers such as 'Abbās Khalili, Rabi' Ansāri, and Jahāngir Jalili wrote strongly feminist novels in sympathy with fallen women, attributing their fate not to any fault of their own but to their inferior social status. The socio-critical novels of Mohammad Mas'ud (Dehāti), which enjoyed great popularity, are also very largely, though not solely, concerned with the social position of women, and like the works of most of the novelists of

this period, particularly with the misfortunes of prostitutes. However, since Mas'ud is a cynical writer, his female characters, like his men, are of a vicious and spiteful nature, only concerned with their selfish interests and preoccupied with intrigues which always lead to ruin.

Women were spotlighted in the novels of this period for both fictional and social reasons. From the fictional point of view, the presence of female characters gave the novels a sensational quality and thus served to promote their sale and popularize them. From the social point of view, Iranian women, formerly submissive and subject to traditional concepts of a semi-feudal society with Islamic values, were now making their way into social life outside the home and beginning to acquire a new place in a society which was absorbing bourgeois concepts. First steps were taken by the intellectual women of the new bourgeoisie, and even some members of the old aristocracy, in the face of an Iranian society which was still, as a whole, reluctant to discard traditional values. The period was thus a time of social transition and tension. Many women resented the discrimination which they had to endure in the traditional system, but only a few were able to break away. This social situation is reflected in the contemporary fiction. The demand of the feminists for more freedom and rights was an unprecedented innovation which conflicted with both traditional Islamic and feudal values and appeared to put them in the position of being law breakers. Their freedom-seeking and apparent law-breaking is symbolized in the fiction as prostitution. Hence the popularity of

the prostitute characters, who are mostly of good family background and are in no way sinful, but only victims of their social condition. Often they are portrayed in very positive tones intended to attract the sympathy of the reading public. The bourgeois writers criticize both feudal and Islamic values and make the cunning aristocrats and ākhunds responsible for the misfortunes of the heroines. In Tehrān-e Makhuf, Farrokh, a well-meaning character who becomes a fervant nationalist later in the novel, cannot marry his cousin Mahin because her ambitious father intends to marry her to Siyāvash, a Qājār prince, to help his own political career. Siyāvash is depicted as a negative character, a profligate young man who is only willing to marry Mahin for the sake of her father's fortune so that he can enjoy himself more freely in gambling and woman-chasing. One night, on his way home, Farrokh passes a street where there is a brothel and as a result of a superficial incident saves the life of Siyāvash who has become involved in a fight in the brothel. The writer uses this incident as an opportunity to bring the stories of several prostitutes into his novel.

The titles of many novels of this period are the names of their heroines who are fallen women. In Mohammad Hejazi's third novel Zibā (1930/1) - preceded by Homā (1927) and Parichehr (1929), all girls' names - the author portrays an extremely attractive young girl. Zibā's ambition is to marry and live happily. But she ignores traditional submissive values; she is an innovator. In other words, she sets herself against traditional morals

and becomes an outcast, symbolized as a prostitute. The novel depicts and censures the traditional class concepts and paternalistic values. Its principal male character, Hoseyn, personifies male domination, which, in spite of the rise of the bourgeoisie, is still prevalent.[34]

Meanwhile, in the early years of this period, play acting with women in the female parts was being pioneered by members of the intelligentsia in private houses, for instance by Ahmad Mahmudi Kamāl ol-Vezāreh, who began to organize such performances before the first world war.[35] The performances were mostly of Persian versions of foreign plays, but also of unpublished Iranian plays. In spite of obstacles, it was not long before play acting spread among the urban intellectual middle classes, especially in Tehran. One of the earliest published Iranian plays was Ja'far Khān az Farang Āmadeh (Ja'far Khān comes from Europe, 1922) by Hasan Moqaddam ('Ali Nowruz), a comedy of old and new in which the chief characters are a half-baked intellectual just back from Europe and his old-fashioned mother and fiancée. This one-act play was first published and performed by an association named Irān-e Javān (Young Iran) and became very popular. Its theme is twofold. It satirizes both the backwardness of Iranian society and the behaviour of the Western-educated young men who had blindly adopted the superficial manners of Western societies without acquiring any deep knowledge of either Western culture or Western science and technology. The same theme appears in the short story Fārsi Shekar Ast by Mohammad 'Ali Jamālzādeh.

This deep-rooted problem continued to be felt and discussed for long afterwards, and since 1962 has been termed gharbzadegi (literally West-infection), a word coined by Ahmad Fardid and popularized by Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad.[36]

The socio-critical and historical novels of the period are mutually complementary; their themes do not clash but go hand in hand. A little known writer, 'Ali 'Asghar Sharif, in Maktab-e 'Eshq (1928) states that on observing the enthusiasm of his fellow-countrymen he has decided to furnish the community with a new book every year - a socio-literary novel one year to be followed by a historical novel the year after.[37]

The credit for writing the first forceful work of prose fiction in a European genre and in harmony with Persian literary tradition goes to Sayyed Mohammad 'Ali Jamālzādeh for his authorship of Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud, a collection of six short stories first published in Berlin by the Kāviāni Press in 1921. Jamālzādeh prefaced the collection with a persuasive appeal for the development of prose fiction in Persian literature and for the use of realistic, colloquial language in such work. Similar appeals had been made by earlier writers such as Mirzā Ja'far Qarājedāghi in the preface to his translations of Ākhundzādeh's plays published in 1874,[38] and Zayn ol-'Ābedin Marāghe'i in his Siyāhatnāme-ye Ebrāhim Beg;[39] but Jamālzādeh was the first to respond through his creation of these short stories. He was convinced that both language and national identity would thereby be strengthened.[40]

Jamālzādeh and his two younger contemporaries Sādeq Hedāyat (1903-1951) and Bozorg 'Alavi (b. 1907) are the great pioneering literary figures of Rezā Shāh's reign. Their contributions, which were not fully appreciated until later, have had unique importance in the development of Persian prose fiction for two reasons. First, they introduced hitherto unknown forms and techniques which have proved acceptable and durable. Such literary concepts and modes of expression as Jamālzādeh's realism, Hedāyat's surrealism, and 'Alavi's psychoanalysis had never previously been used. Secondly, they portrayed the realities of a society undergoing great change which could not escape being exposed to a multifarious stream of new social and political ideas. For example, the concept of nationalism passed through a cycle ranging from idolization to discredit, while socialist ideas gained audiences. The various new and old ways of thought and behaviour then existing in Iranian society are portrayed with impressive realism and with the aid of Western techniques in the works of these authors.

In Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud, Jamālzādeh expresses the social and political ideals of the bourgeois constitutionalists and secular nationalists. This may seem surprising because his father, Sayyed Jamāl od-Din Vā'ez, was a Shi'ite 'ālem. However, the father was one of the so-called 'enlightened' 'olamā, who favoured modern education and played a major role as a preacher and political leader in the struggle for constitutional government until he was put to death by

order of Mohammad 'Ali Shāh Qājār in 1908. Jamālzādeh's thinking was clearly influenced by his father's ideals, by his education in Lebanon and Switzerland, and by his experiences and contacts in the first world war. In his later writings and his scholarly works on the Persian classics, he shows a deep sympathy for Islamic mysticism (Sufism). During the war he spent almost one and a half years in the Kermānshāh region working for the nationalist cause on behalf of the Iranian Democrat party, and when Russian and British troops drove out the Ottoman and German troops who had been helping the Democrats, he returned to Berlin and rejoined a group of nationalists headed by the constitutionalist and Democrat leader Sayyed Hasan Taqizādeh.[41] At Berlin in 1916, Taqizādeh founded a Persian publishing firm, the Kāviani Press, and a periodical, Kāveh. Jamālzādeh's Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud was first published by the Kāviani Press.

The stories of this book show that he shared the social outlook of the contemporary intellectual middle class. They are satires (tanz) which for the most part gently, but always effectively, ridicule the clergy, the Westernized sham intellectuals, the incompetent Iranian government, and the interfering foreign powers. In the first story, Fārsi Shekar Ast (Persian is a Sweet Language), the narrator, returning from Europe after some years and dressed in European garb, disembarks in Enzeli to face the customs authorities. His papers look suspicious to the obtuse officials, who put him into a dark, windowless

detention room where he finds that he has two companions, an ākhund and a Westernized sham intellectual (fokoli). The fourth to arrive is a simple uneducated youth who in great dismay seeks an explanation of his arrest, first from the ākhund and next from the intellectual. The ākhund terrifies him by replying in absurdly pompous Arabicized Persian, not a word of which can he understand, and the fokoli speaks in equally incomprehensible, inaccurately Frenchified Persian. The poor lad thinks he has been locked up with two madmen and a European (the narrator). He goes to the locked door and shouts for help, only to meet with a volley of foul abuse from the guards. He remains in utter bewilderment until, to his great surprise, the narrator speaks to him in his own sweet Persian tongue.

The story suggests that the bourgeoisie, despite its desire for social and political changes on European lines, is the only class that cares for the masses and their feelings and would respond to their social demands. For Jamālzādeh, national prosperity and progress could not be achieved without national cohesion cemented by a common language, which neither the conservative Qājār government and its ruffianly officials, nor the obscurantist 'olamā, nor the servants of European interests could or would provide. His satire is directed against the selfish complacency and lack of any sense of social responsibility which he observed amongst these classes.

In another story, Dard-e Del-e Mollā Qorbān 'Ali (Mollā Qorbān 'Ali's Confession), Jamālzādeh again pokes

fun at the clergy, whose sanctimoniousness cannot conceal their proneness to the sins of avarice and concupiscence. Bilehdig, Bilehchoghondar (That Sized Pot, That Sized Beetroot), in which he satirizes unqualified foreign advisers, is also a criticism of the Iranians and particularly the Iranian government. The narrator, hearing the story of a European masseur who accidently became an adviser and cunningly managed to hold an important post in Iran for some time, thinks that such an incompetent government deserves to get such incompetent advisers.

Jamālzādeh's witty indictments of the clergy and the West are not prompted by personal enmity towards either. He is a graduate of a European university and he shows a deep understanding and respect for Islam. His complaints about them, like his complaints about the Iranian government, spring from his social position and his sincere patriotism. The depth of his national feeling is most vividly revealed in Dusti-ye Khālehkherseh (Aunt Bear's Hug). This story describes the tragic fate of a well-meaning young Iranian tea-shop attendant at the hands of the Russian occupation troops in Kermānshāh province. The young man, Habibollāh, is depicted as a very virile and amiable personality with traditionally Iranian virtues of manliness and generosity. This idealized portrait stands in complete contrast to the description of the Russians, who are mean, drunken, and ungrateful. Habibollāh's kindness to an injured Cossack soldier whose life he saves is repaid by betrayal, and he is whipped, shot, and finally robbed. The narrator tries in vain to stop the shooting by seeking the help of

a fellow passenger, Ja'far Khān, an official of low rank who represents both the government and the masses; but this supposedly strong man is a weakling, an opium addict, who only advises caution and resignation. The narrator then takes refuge in solitude on the roof of the post office stable in the small town of Kangāvar, near Bisotun, where the incident has occurred. He sees the snow covering the neglected, foreign-occupied land of Iran like a shroud, and hears the wind, which has blown from the historic remains of Iran's glorious past at Ctesiphon, Qasr-i Shirin, and Bisotun, lamenting in the gardens of Kangāvar where the chivalrous Habibollāh is being treacherously put to death by his country's enemies and abandoned by his fellow-countrymen. In Habibollāh's death Jamālzādeh symbolizes the death of the whole nation.

It is not accidental that the unfortunate, well-meaning Habibollāh is a shopkeeper. In Jamālzādeh's works, tradesmen, artisans, and shopkeepers are often shown to be honest, humble, and well-meaning in their deeds and words. His own family, like many clerical families, had links of kinship and association with the petty bourgeoisie of the bazaar, and he understood and liked these people. The decline of the handicraft industries and of the petty bourgeoisie, especially during the first world war when he was in Iran, must have been a bitter experience for him.[42] This is exemplified by the tragic fates of Hājj Sheykh-e Saqat-forush, a wholesale grocery dealer, in Jamālzādeh's Qoltashan Divān, and of the draper in his Dard-e Del-e Mollā Qorbān 'Ali, and by the nostalgic portrayals of poor shopkeepers verging on bankruptcy and of declining handicrafts and

guilds at Isfahan in Sar o Tah-e Yek Karbās. Thus Jamālzādeh, like so many other writers of the inter-war period, looks back to Iran's great ancient past and draws hope for the future from it.

Jamālzādeh's outstanding successor in the field of socio-critical fiction, Sādeq Hedāyat, devoted much time to the study of ancient, particularly Sāsānid, Iran, and wrote both fictional and academic works which extol its greatness and at the same time reveal his love of his country. The fictional pieces are not historical novels but short stories and dramatic plays, and in spite of the difficulty of such writing they vividly convey an atmosphere of the past together with an Iranian spirit. Ātesh-parast (in Zendeh-be-gur, 1930) and Ākharin Labkhand (in Sāyeh-rowshan, 1933), set in the Sāsānid period, are strongly nationalistic; so too is Sāye-ye Moghol, a story of Iranian resistance against the Mongols, which was Hedāyat's contribution to Anirān (1931), a collection of three pieces by Shin (Shirāzpur) Partow, Bozorg 'Alavi, and himself. Hedāyat also wrote two historical plays, Parvin dokhtar-e Sāsān (1930), and Māziyār (1933) which is about an Iranian revolt against 'Abbāsid rule. In Hedāyat's non-historical works also, expressions of nationalistic feeling frequently occur.

In Hedāyat's nationalism, pride in ancient Iran and affection for the purely Iranian elements in the nation's culture were combined with resentment of the Arab conquest and dislike of the Islamic elements. Hedāyat not only lost religious faith, but also blamed the Arabs and Islam for

Iran's decline and backwardness. In his preface to Tarāne-hā-ye Khayyām (1934), a selection of 'Omar Khayyām's quatrains which he considered authentic, he interprets the scientist Khayyām's scepticism as the protest of a free Iranian mind against the dominance of forcibly imposed alien beliefs. Talab-e Āmorzesh (in Seh Qatreh Khun, Tehran 1932), a satire of polygamy and religious formalism, contains a scene of the arrival of pilgrims at Karbalā in which the Arabs are described as crafty and dirty, probably with more than a local implication. In general, however, Hedāyat's nationalism is not xenophobic. Like Jamālzādeh in Dusti-ye Khāleh Kherseh, Hedāyat shows above all a longing for revival of Iran's past greatness. This is implicitly or explicitly stated in many of his works, and particularly at the end of his travel book Esfahān Nesf-e Jahān (1932) when he leaves Isfahan and its āteshgāh, the ancient Zoroastrian fire-temple. This nationalistic feeling was probably one of the motives for his journey to India in 1936-37, where he studied the pre-Islamic Pahlavi language from which he translated some texts into Persian.

It might therefore have been expected that Hedāyat would be well-disposed towards Rezā Shāh's régime, which laid great emphasis on ancient Iranian glories. In fact, like most contemporary authors and intellectuals, he regarded the régime's nationalism as valueless and its propaganda as hypocritical. In the later years of Rezā Shāh's reign, many Iranian intellectuals moved from nationalism either to a pessimistic nihilism or to an extreme radicalism. Three main factors contributed to this

trend. First, there was an obvious gap between the régime's pretentious nationalism and its actual achievements for the good of the people. Secondly, the régime's policies and projects were imposed without any real consultation and by force, while criticism was prohibited or restricted. Thirdly there was an inflow of new and conflicting European ideologies and theories.

As regards the first factor, whilst the modernization policy of Rezā Shāh brought some benefits to certain social groups, particularly merchants and the increasingly numerous bureaucrats and army officers, the rural and urban masses did not become perceptibly better off. They were still hardly touched by the new state schools and health services, and they had to shoulder the economic burden of Rezā Shāh's ambitious projects which were financed mainly by indirect taxation, notably the construction of the very costly Trans-Iranian railway, the northern part of which, at least, proved uneconomic. The projects and reforms were undertaken in the name of secular nationalism, and in some cases probably intended more to impress public opinion in Western countries than to meet immediate internal needs. The modernization policy consequently ran into growing opposition from sectors of the Shi'ite clergy, while the régime's methods disturbed both leftists and intellectuals. In the face of this, the government imposed strict censorship from 1931 onward under the pretext of the discovery of a Soviet spy network, and for the first time in Iranian history began to engage in psychological

propaganda, particularly after the establishment of the Anjoman-e Parvaresh-e Afkār (Thought Training Association) headed by the writer Mohammad Hejāzi in January 1939.[43]

The propaganda about national unity and strength was of course not acceptable to intellectuals who thought that more basic reforms were needed and saw the armed forces as the protectors of an unjust social order. Such propaganda was bound to seem fraudulent if social conditions in Iran were compared with those in Europe, or if the reality of the present was compared with the glory of the ancient past. In his story Mihanparast (in Sag-e Velgard, 1942), Hedāyat has wittily satirized the language of this propaganda and the ignorant comprehension of a man selected to be a propagandist. In addition to the promotion of interest in ancient Iran, an attempt was made to purge the Persian language of Arabic words and to enrich it with pure Persian terms and roots from Ferdowsi's Shāhnāmeh and ancient Iranian languages. For this purpose the Farhangestān-e Irān (Iranian Academy) was set up in 1935. Not all the coinages of the Farhangestān were genuinely pure Persian or in accord with the semantic structure of Persian. Hedāyat attacks this government-sponsored nationalism and satirizes the Farhangestān and the propaganda officials on various occasions. In Farhang-e Farhangestān (in Velengāri, 1946), he satirizes the academicians and the coinages of the Farhangestān, even though he was probably not averse to a voluntary purification of the language - indeed he himself used some of the new words. In Mihanparast a certain Sayyed Nasrollāh is sent

with a load of books of these revived and fabricated words to India to publicize Iran's impressive contemporary cultural advance. The personal character of Sayyed Nasrollāh, who is an extremely traditionalist and superstitious man, contrasts with the high-flown nature of his mission, for which he believes himself to be admirably qualified. In Hedayat's symbolism, Sayyed Nasrollāh typifies the government's spokesmen, sounding very important but lacking any credibility, and his death due to his own ignorance before he reaches his destination represents the likely fate of the government's ambitions.

The same contrast between pretension and reality is also the theme of works of other writers. In 'Ammu Hoseyn 'Ali (1942), Jamālzādeh gives his view of the outcome of Rezā Shāh's measures. The only changes that have resulted are of minor importance. Clothes are somewhat shorter, buildings somewhat taller, and Islamic proper names are replaced by pre-Islamic Iranian ones, but Iranian society remains the same as before.

The second factor contributing to the unrest of the intellectuals was the censorship, which together with the propaganda severely impeded the normal process of literary activity. Every published script had first to pass through the funnel of censorship. Even lyric poems were not exempt; poets were not allowed to publish sad poems or to portray the lover as melancholic and complaining of his beloved. Authors of literary works found the censorship and the frequent police inquisitions very irksome. Hence numerous literary periodicals which had been established in the

years following the enactment of the constitution were forced to close down, and from 1938 onward none were published at all except a state-controlled organ, Irān-e Emruz.[44]

The third factor of unrest was the rise of new European ideologies and theories, which were observed by Iranian intellectuals and echoed in the contemporary Persian literary output. The rise of political ideologies, particularly fascism and anti-fascism in a time of great tension, coincided with the rise of theories such as Freudian psychology and economic determinism and with the spread of pessimistic scepticism. The social instability in the European countries after the first world war, and the international tension which led to a second ruinous war, diminished confidence in reason and science as well as in formal religion. In politics the tension was also obvious. "The conflict between fascism and anti-fascism was more dynamic and more immediate. It determined the social and political pattern of a large part of mankind during that decisive phase."[45] Confidence in reason was further diminished by Freud's theories about the subconscious determinants of human behaviour. The intellectual confusion of the period is reflected in the contemporary literature of the West. In different ways, leading writers such as Marcel Proust, Andre Gide, Franz Kafka, T.S. Eliot, and others expressed pessimism and irrationalism. Works by such writers were read in Iran (generally speaking not until after Rezā Shāh's fall) and were much discussed in intellectual and literary circles. The works of Franz

Kafka (1883-1924) exercised a particularly strong influence on Sādeq Hedāyat. He later wrote an essay on Kafka - Payām-e Kāfkā (Kafka's Message) 1948 - and translated some of his stories, including Metamorphosis. Kafka was a leading exponent of the surrealist technique of depicting personality through the expression of subconscious memories, and Hedāyat used this technique in some of his stories, and particularly in his novel Buf-e Kur (The Blind Owl), first published at Bombay in 1937. In it the expression of the narrator's subconscious memories depicts the isolation and alienation of himself and other intellectuals from the society of the time. The sordidness of the narrator's real life and the illusion of his subconscious mind are intermingled.

Bozorg 'Alavi, the other pioneering writer of this period, also reflects the contemporary intellectual confusion. He became interested in Freudian psycho-analysis while he was studying in Germany, and his first collection of short stories, Chamadān (Portmanteau, 1934), shows strong Freudian influence. While in Germany, 'Alavi also became influenced by Marxist economic and political theories, and subsequently joined Dr Taqi Arāni's Marxist group which published a journal, Donyā, until its members, including 'Alavi, were imprisoned in 1937. He was a founding member of the leftist Tudeh Party in 1941. In his literary works he could never free himself from Freudian images,[46] and leftist critics have strongly censured his novel Chashmhāyash (Her Eyes, 1952) for its lack of total revolutionary commitment.[47] More surprisingly, his earliest fictional

publication Div Div, which was his contribution to the already mentioned Anirān (1931), is extremely nationalistic. This shows that 'Alavi, although a determinist by conviction, is still influenced by the atmosphere of nationalism and indeed by his middle class background.

Chamadān, in which 'Alavi shows so much concern for subconscious passions, instincts,and dreams, portrays contemporary moods in Europe rather than Iran. The setting of the first story, Chamadān, from which the title of the collection was taken, is not in Iran, and the heroine Kātushkā is a middle class self-exiled Russian. Nonetheless 'Alavi has the power to create an Iranian atmosphere in this case as in all his stories. "Even when he writes of foreign scenes and people", 'Alavi is "unmistakably Persian ... with a sense of his own national tradition."[48] The fusion of subconscious memories and Iranian attitudes makes Chamadān a forceful and revealing piece of fiction. This is due partly to 'Alavi's skill in handling words and partly to the fact that the two elements have much in common. Freudianism is an offshoot of materialism, which rejects the idea of free will and holds that the human being is a slave of powers working either from within (subconscious instincts) or from outside (natural and socio-economic environments) and in both cases often against him and beyond his control. While the subconscious mind is a new concept in Persian literature, the super-natural power of fate (qesmat), as a substitute for environment, offers no novelty to Iranians. Fate is certainly 'a frequent theme in Persian literature and daily conversation. Persians commonly use the expression

Enshallāh (if God wills) when speaking of a future event'.[49] The individual must struggle for his living, but the efficacy of his struggle is limited by his fate. In the traditional Iranian way of thinking, man is to a great extent the slave of a force beyond his control and not necessarily on his side. This probably helps to explain why the stories in Chamadān, and likewise Hedāyat's psycho-fictional writings such as Buf-e Kur, Seh Qatreh Khun, and Mardi keh Nafsash-rā Kosht, were so well received by the reading public. "In these stories", in the words of Homayoun Katouzian, "the main characters ask questions which know no cultural boundaries, and seek solutions to problems which are not specific to any given socio-historical framework; they look for a raison d'être or at least an excuse for living which simply cannot be achieved by the removal of specific socio-economic constraints or a change in social atmosphere." In other words, "the basic question or theme is ontological rather than sociological."[50]

Mental confusion was an inevitable result of the breakdown of the apparently stable old society under the impact of the government's policies and the influx of new values and theories from Europe. Intellectuals now sought new answers to Iran's social problems. Jamālzādeh, who formerly had poked fun at the clergy who 'wrapped their heads in turbans to keep the fresh air out',[51] now changed his tone, and in his later writings his view of the role of the 'olamā and the intellectuals differs from that in Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud. For example, in 'Ammu Hoseyn 'Ali

the narrator, a Westernized intellectual, happens to meet a man of that name who had once been an eminent member of the clergy but has become a farmer. 'Ammu Hoseyn 'Ali, who now speaks the common language of the mass of the people, explains that as a result of spiritual meditation he realized that he must abandon his lofty and dignified but vain and socially useless clerical position and help his fellowmen through productive work (a view held by many sincere Sufis). This brings the narrator down from his high horse and persuades him that he likewise must abandon his useless writing and join 'Ammu Hoseyn 'Ali in useful work. Like many other intellectuals and authors of the later years of Rezā Shāh's reign, Jamālzādeh disapproves of unconstructive or merely superficial changes. He calls for a new recognition that Iran is in a historical phase which requires constructive efforts by all social classes rather than polemical preaching or theorizing.

The history of the constitutional struggle and of Rezā Shāh's reign, and the subsequent events, show that the intellectuals and the 'olamā have been able to cooperate in opposition to oppressive governments and social evils but have afterwards been unable to agree on positive reforms. The 'secular' versus 'religious' controversy has remained a source of conflict in Iran, not only in politics but also among members of families and in individual consciences. Awareness of the negativism of most 'olamā may explain why Jamālzādeh in his novel Sahrā-ye Mahshar (1947), an imaginary picture of the day of judgement, again made the 'olamā the main target of his satire. The worst penalty befalls the sheykh from Khayyām's quatrain

to whom the harlot replied 'I am all that you say I am, but are you all that you make yourself out to be?'. Eventually, however, both Khayyām and the harlot, whom Jamālzādeh calls Ma'sumeh (literally 'Innocent'), go to heaven.

Jamālzādeh's warm-hearted nationalism and his advocacy of agreed and constructive rather than imposed or doctrinal reforms has been influenced by his inclination towards Sufism.

Unlike Jamālzādeh, 'Alavi does not categorize social groups merely by their appearance or language or the type and amount of education that they have received. To him Rezā Shāh was no more than the chief agent of the dominant minority who carried out its dictates and protected its interests at the expense of the majority. He put the blame for the Iranian people's misfortunes onto the whole ruling class, especially the members of parliament who represented this minority while claiming to represent the majority, rather than onto one man, the Shāh. In his account of his imprisonment, Panjāh-o-seh Nafar (1942), he condemns Rezā Shāh's swollen bureaucracy as corrupt and oppressive, but shows sympathy for those in the lower ranks because, as he sees it, they are the innocent victims of a social system which forces them to serve a ruling group lacking compassion for their class or for their person. Above all, 'Alavi blames Rezā Shāh's régime for the creation of an atmosphere of despair. "The heaviest blow inflicted on the people of Iran by this government," he writes, "was the lack of faith ... Those young Iranians who had spent the prime years of

their life studying abroad lived in utter despair and considered return to Iran a mistake. ... The freedom-seekers lived in isolation, smoked opium, and thought that there was nothing they could do."[52] In 'Alavi's judgement, no groups or individuals, even in key positions in government departments, were faithful to their task, and this was a bad sign for the future of the nation. Morals had disappeared and the country was almost ruined. Although 'Alavi did not give up the optimistic view that the future must inevitably be better, he thought that a long time and much hard labour and struggle would be necessary.

Hedāyat could not accept either the class struggle theory of the Marxists or the hopes which nationalists like Jamālzādeh placed in 'constructive effort and reform'. The social instability and the confused diversity of views on politics, nationalism,and religion within the country, together with the tension and the spread of pessimistic schools of thought abroad, fostered a sense of disillusion which led some of the Iranian intellectuals to take refuge in individualism. Hedāyat was one of them. This individualism is apparent in his opposition to the ruling establishment and its particular kind of nationalism. In the first part of Buf-e Kur the narrator, who is the 'I' and the central character, lives in isolation in a dream-like world. Finding the ethereal girl of his dream after a long search, he offers her some old wine which he has inherited. The wine is poisonous and kills the girl. Then the narrator, whose occupation is painting conventional pictures on

old-style pencases, paints a picture of the girl. When he is about to add the finishing touches, the girl opens her eyes to enable him to capture their beauty in his picture. He is able to do so, and he thereby transfers the girl's spirit into his picture to which no one else will have access. In this way Hedāyat expresses the absolute individualism of his outlook. The girl's body is no longer of any use, but he does not want anyone else's glances to touch it; so he chops it up and after putting it into a suitcase sets out to find somewhere to get rid of it. Surprisingly, as if he and his lifeless companion are expected, a hearse stands waiting with a driver of peculiar countenance who appears in different disguises on several occasions in the process of the novel. They then travel on in a world of hallucination and illusion until the hearse-driver, after spotting a suitably remote and unfrequented corner, obligingly digs a grave and discovers in it an ancient flower vase from the ruins of Rhagae which carries a picture identical to the narrator's drawings on the pencases. The picture shows the ethereal girl bending over a small stream to offer a morning glory flower to an old man sitting by a fir tree. On their way back, the narrator is forced by the cramping narrowness of the hearse to lie down and hold the flower vase on his chest, where it weighs as heavily as a corpse.

In the second part of Buf-e Kur, which is written in a more realistic language, the narrator loves his wife even though she does not let him into her bed but opens her arms to vulgar men (rajjāle-hā). He is confined to

his room, the window of which overlooks a butcher's shop and a street frequented by drunken gazmes (an archaic term for 'soldiers') who sing a popular song inviting others to join them in drinking wine, a symbol for social neglect. Finally he kills his wife with an ancient dagger which he has inherited. He then examines something that he has got in his hand and realizes that he has plucked her eyes out of their sockets. Now his wife no longer has a warm and mobile body to offer to rajjāle-hā or eyes with which to be fascinated by them. Now her body and her eyes are his (with the same meaning as the case of the ethereal girl in the first part). He is back in his room, in his isolation on an island in the middle of society, symbolized by the gazmes who continue to sing their song: 'Let's go and have a drink of wine, wine of the kingdom of Rhagae. If not now, when is the right time to drink?'.

Studies on Buf-e Kur have been written by several critics in Iran and abroad, and from different viewpoints too. The appearance of a collection of essays in English entitled Hedāyat's "The Blind Owl", Forty Years After (edited by Michael Hillmann, Austin, Texas 1978), shows that this novel can still fascinate Iranian and foreign readers. However, although the social and political aspects of Buf-e Kur have not been ignored in most studies, they have received much less attention than other aspects.

Both parts of Buf-e Kur have a timeless and placeless atmosphere.[53] In the first part Hedāyat takes his reader back into a dreamlike Indo-Iranian environment. The morning glory plant, the fir tree and the old man sitting

by it, the city of Rhagae, and the river Suren are all images taken from ancient Indo-Iranian mythology.[54] Traditionally, they all are good, but in this novel they all turn out to be bad. The old wine is poisonous, the old man by the fir tree has a mocking smile, the ancient flower vase weighs as heavily as a corpse, and there is an abyss between the narrator's abode and the rest of the city. (In the second part it is an abyss between him and the world of rajjāle-hā, i.e. between intellect and ignorance). From all these symbols, Hedayāt's revulsion against Rezā Shāh's type of nationalism and vulgar materialism may be discerned. Hedāyat's picture suggests that the values of the past have been abused, deformed, and turned into poison or into a heavy, crippling incubus. The transformation of the ethereal girl of the first part into a lakkāteh (unfaithful shrew) is the transformation of purity into impurity and a symbolic image of the social transformation and the degradation of the Iranian nation by foreign elements.[55] In spite of his admiration for Western culture and literature, Hedāyat had a feeling of alienation and bitterly disliked the signs of Western influence which he saw in Iran. In Afsāne-ye Āfarinesh (1946), where the characters are of various nationalities, the only Western European character is Monsieur Satan. In Qaziye-ye Khar-e Dajjāl, the West is characterized as a fox.[55] In Vaq-vaq-sāhāb (1933), the Oriental nations are criticized for their blind adoption of Western technology.

The social scene and the atmosphere of intimidation in Rezā Shāh's reign are represented by drunken gazmes,

aggressive rajjāle-hā, and by the hearse in which the rider has no choice, i.e. no freedom, but to submit to a harsh and imposed restraint. It is this that forces him to lie down at the bottom of the hearse and carry the flower vase on his chest. The ancient flower vase is precious because it used to represent a cultured society, but has become as heavy as a lifeless corpse because it now represents a society of rajjāle-hā in which there is no room for culture. Hedāyat could not approve of the Westernization of Iranian life at a time when rationality in the West itself was on the verge of breakdown, nor could he tolerate its imposition through intimidation. All that he saw around him perturbed him. In Buf-e Kur the cushion-feathers, the crumbs of bread, the light and even the bed in the room threaten and terrify the narrator, but his circumstances force him to stay in it; he is a prisoner of social conditions.[56] In other writings Hedāyat takes a similar attitude. Gojasteh Dezh (in Seh Qatreh Khun, 1932) describes Man as solitary and human life as a prison. In many of Hedāyat's stories, particularly in those that end in suicide (such as Ābji Khānom or Mardi keh Nafsash ra Kosht), the characters are lonely and their lives are futile. In Buf-e Kur the isolation of Man, personified by the narrator, is especially marked. He has no connection with society, which favours only the rajjāle-hā, the butcher, the odds and ends man, and the gazmes, and exposes whatever the individual loves and possesses (such as the narrator's wife) to the mercy of rapacious rajjāle-hā.

The negativism and pessimism of Buf-e Kur and of many of Hedāyat's short stories were in tune with the mood of disillusionment and despair into which many Iranian intellectuals sank during the last years of Rezā Shāh's reign. Hedāyat and Bozorg 'Alavi were only two of the writers who ceased to praise nationalism. From the mid-1930s onward, the official type of nationalism began to be criticized by members of the intelligentsia. 'Ali Dashti wrote that the country's problems would only be worsened by what he called exaggerated patriotism or nationalistic infatuation.[57] The historical novels with nationalistic themes lost their popularity to writings on social subjects such as educated youth and its frivolity, bureaucratic inefficiency and intrigue, discrimination against women and prostitution, most of which struck a pessimistic note. The doll-like, hesitant, and nervous characters accord with an atmosphere of uncertainty, insecurity, and intimidation. Such an atmosphere is described in exaggerated language in Mohammad Mas'ud's novel Tafrihāt-e Shab (1934). The society of the time is shown as polluted, and education as useless and ruinous. Educated youth is timid, irresolute, dull, and absurd. Fear and obedience are dominant. The problem is worse when the graduates come to learn that their endeavours have been in vain. After studying for as long as twenty years, they are infuriated when their first experience of social life teaches them that a street vendor is better off and more useful to his community and his family than they themselves or even their teachers.

Rezā Shāh 'favoured rapid Westernization without regard for the social consequences'.[58] The juxtaposition of old and new in a traditional Islamic society produced deep social and ideological divisions, which still persist today. Deepest of all is the gap between the masses and the educated intellectuals. These divisions have continued to determine fictional themes and forms. Although the writers of Rezā Shāh's reign favoured modernization and social reform, they also seem to have been aware of the disruption which Western-type modernization was causing in the strongly traditional society of Iran. The hasty enactment of reforms and their imposition by force provoked resentment in different sectors of society. Certain writers who shared this feeling found leftist theories to justify opposition. One example is Bozorg 'Alavi, another is Mohammad Mas'ud who brings the Marxist theory of surplus value into Tafrihāt-e Shab.[59] In general, however, theories did not leave significant imprints on contemporary fiction. More often poverty and misery were treated in a sentimental way, rather than in terms of class struggle.

The secular nationalists wanted their ideology to take the place of religion in political and social life, if not in private spiritual life; but it was not strong enough to do this. The great majority of the people, and especially the lower and lower-middle classes, clung not only to belief in God but also to traditional Islamic social concepts. Although nationalist ideals and teaching in the modern schools emphasized social cohesion and uplift,

religion was the only social cement at a time when political parties were not allowed and free association was only possible in the mosques. Frustrated clergymen could only fold their wings and wait. Religiously minded members of the higher and upper middle classes, and intellectuals who sought a less traditional and more subjective faith, generally found it in Sufism. The government saw no danger in the revival of such a subjective form of religion and placed no restrictions on Sufi gatherings and rituals. Sufism attracted both opponents and supporters of the régime. Among the latter were influential figures such as Mohammad 'Ali Forughi (d. 1942), who was an eminent scholar besides being a member of several cabinets and prime minister at the time of Rezā Shāh's accession in 1925 and abdication in 1941. Sufi hospices (khānqāhs) were frequented by both intellectuals and officials who paid tribute to the darvishes and their teachings, and in the school books a great deal of space was given to the classical Persian Sufi literature.[60]

Persian literature since 1906 presents widely varying pictures of religion. On the whole it is not easy to discern the attitudes of authors to religious faith, in particular to Islam. They have written mainly about the outward forms of religion, the behaviour of mollās, pilgrims, and the like, and mainly in a critical tone. These themes are not new in Persian literature. Religious formalism and clerical bigotry or tyranny were all criticized in the classical poetry of Sa'di, Mowlavi Jalāl od-Din Rumi, and Hāfez, and the Sufi movement in Islam had arisen to a

large extent as a reaction to such evils. In modern literature, however, the critical tone is sharper. Despite his clerical background, Jamālzādeh exhibits this anti-clerical tendency. He never misses an opportunity to poke fun at the clergy. In Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud he portrays the mollās as ignorant and reactionary. The witty contrasts which he often draws show their pompous appearance and manners to be out of keeping with the little they know. This does not mean that Jamālzādeh is irreligious. He does not portray the clergy as wicked or malicious, but only satirizes them because they are ignorant of modern realities and do not understand bourgeois liberal ideals. In his later writings he makes his personal faith more manifest and shows rather more sympathy for the clergy, but continues to criticize their remoteness from real social life and its problems. In his already mentioned story 'Ammu Hoseyn 'Ali and in his memoirs Sar o Ṭah-e Yek Karbās (1955), he casts doubt on the value of the erudition of leading 'olamā and the deservedness of the high standing which they hold in society. His conclusion that both 'olamā and intellectuals ought to acquire agricultural tools and learn farming, because farmers as the providers of the nation's food are its real benefactors, means that both the clergy and the intelligentsia will have useful roles to play if they study and work in constructive ways for the nation's good. Jamālzādeh's devotion to Sufism is apparent in his learned articles on the Persian classics and in his Bāng-e Nāy (1958), a selection of stories from Mowlavi Jalāl od-Din Rumi's Masnavi with an explanatory introduction. It is

also apparent in the atmosphere and dialogues of some of his later short stories. Khāneh-be-dush (in Kohneh va Now, 1959), contrasts the hardships of tribal life with the frustrations of city life and paints a sympathetic picture of the naive and indeed superstitious but warm and sincere religious faith of the brave tribespeople. For Jamālzādeh the old and the new are essentially one and can be reconciled by sincerity of heart.

Hedāyat's attitude to religion is different. He satirizes religious formalism and hypocrisy as other writers have done, but he also criticizes religion itself for failing to provide a refuge for the people. He regards Islam as an alien religion imposed on Iranian society by Arabs, and portrays his characters as victims of misfortune caused by their own ignorance and their social circumstances, both of which have been generated in the course of history by non-Iranian forces, particularly the Arabs and the religion which they brought to Iran. Islam never provides comfort for his characters, and in several stories it is identified with hypocrisy and corruption. In his historical short story Māziyār (1933), the Arabs are responsible for wrecking the country and wiping out Iranian virtues, and the characters ask what the Arabs had brought from their burning deserts to compensate the Iranians for all this damage. The answer is simple and straightforward: "Only a lot of fantasy and false blah blah which they imposed on Iranians by the sword."[61] There is an air of humiliation in Hedāyat's avoidance of the name Islam and in his use of disparaging words to designate it instead. To him even

Sufism is only another field for impostors.[62] In Mardi keh Nafshash-ra Kosht (in Seh Qatreh Khun, 1932), Sufism is debased and represented as being incapable of giving solace as a substitute for formal religion. In this story Mirzā Hoseyn 'Ali, a middle class intellectual, decides to lead an ascetic life following the example of a Sufi teacher. He denies himself all ordinary pleasures and discards all material values in the hope that this will win him salvation. He becomes disillusioned when he finds his guide to be a hypocrite. Finally Hoseyn 'Ali, who meant to kill his instinct, kills himself.[63] This suicide is clearly meant to express Hedāyat's view that Sufism is dead and that both religion and materialism are equally inhuman. The specifically anti-Islamic touch in this story is the designation of the hypocritical Sufi guide, Sheykh Abu'l-Fazl, as a teacher of Arabic, since the Arabs and the Arabic language were often associated with Islam and counterposed to Iranian nationalism in the literature of this period. Hedāyat's doubt of the value of religion is made clear in the bitter satire of the short story 'Ābji Khānom (in Zendeh-be-gur, 1930). Ābji Khānom, an ugly girl who has nothing to live for in this life, takes to praying and devotes herself to religion in the hope that she may at least win something for herself in the next life. After her younger sister, Māhrokh, is married, she commits suicide to prove that in spite of what she pretended she was always conscious of the value of worldly life. After her death, she is satirically described as having a radiant face, as if she had gone to a place where there is neither ugliness or

beauty, no weddings or marriages, no laughter and no sorrow - that is to say, heaven. Ābji Khānom is a tragic story which presents religion in general as offering nothing in this life. As regards the next life, Hedāyat wrote in the preface to Tarāne-hā-ye Khayyām: "Whence do we come and whither do we go? No one knows. Those who pretend to know and speak about these matters only talk nonsense, deceiving themselves and others. No one has ever achieved knowledge of the mysteries of eternity, and no one ever will. Either there is no mystery, or if there is, it has no effect on our lives."[64]

Generally speaking, the years 1906-1941 were a period of decline of religion and loosening of its grip on social and political life. This coincided with the rise of nationalism, the motto of the bourgeoisie. Although in the later years doubt was cast on its validity, nationalism remained the dominant flavour in fiction, as well as in other branches of literature, throughout the period. The main ingredients of this nationalism were the Persian language and the past glories of the Iranians.

Footnotes (III.I)

1 The most informative account concerning the establishment of secular schools and the opposition of the clergy is given by Yahyā Dowlatābādi in the first volume of his Tārikh-e Mo'āser yā Hayāt-e Yahyā.

2 A memorandum by George P. Churchill enclosed with Sir C. Spring Rice's dispatch to Sir Edward Grey dated 23 May, 1907, reads as follows: "A feature of the present agitation is the growth of secret societies. There are bands of 'devotees' in Baku and Northern Persia sworn to devote their lives to the good of their country and the destruction of its enemies. Tehran is full of societies, some of which hold public meetings; others are bound by common rules, although the members are, in general, unknown to each other. It is said that, in certain events, joint action, in the form of violence or passive resistance, will immediately be taken on the orders of small central committees. Much of this may be talk, but the talk is earnest." See F.O. Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of Persia, Dec.1906-Nov.1908, No.1, 1909, pp.27-28.

3 Concerning the press, the already mentioned G.P. Churchill's memorandum reads as follows: "The tone of the local press is getting more and more democratic, and new papers are constantly appearing. There are at present nearly thirty papers published in Tehran alone, including several dailies. Papers are also published in nearly all the provinces." Op.cit., p.28.

4 Edward G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, p.24.

5 Mohammad 'Ali Tarbiyat was the author of a history of the Persian press, the English translation of which by Edward G. Browne appeared as the first chapter of The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia.

6 Edward G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, p.25.

7 Věra Kubíčková, "Persian Literature of the 20th Century", in Jan Rypka, History of Iranian Literature, p.366.

8 Cf. Mohammad 'Ali Jazayeri, "Recent Persian Literature: Themes and Tendencies", in R.N.L., Vol.2, No.1, (Spring 1971), p.13.

9 See E.G. Browne, The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia, p.201. For this same example and others, see Monibur Rahman, Post-Revolution Persian Verse, pp.165-188.

10 Cf. William Hanaway, "Popular Literature in Iran", in Iran, Continuity and Variety, pp.59-74.

11 G.M. Wickens, "Persian Literature as an Affirmation of National Identity", in R.N.L.,Vol.2,No.1, (Spring 1971), pp.29-60.

12 H. Kamshad, Modern Persian Prose Literature, pp.90-91.

13 Reza Arasteh, Man and Society in Iran, p.120.

14 'Ali Akbar Dehkhodā, Charand Parand, p.74.

15 Op.cit., pp.54-55.

16 Ahmad Kasravi, Mashruteh va Āzādegān, p.15.

17 L. Binder, Iran, p.59.

18 On the role of the intellectuals and the clergy in the constitutional movement and the rise of nationalism, see Abdul-Hadi Hairi, Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran, pp.11-108.

19 Hamid Algar, Religion and State in Iran, 1785-1905, p.26.

20 James Morier, Hajji Baba of Ispahan, p.250.

21 S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, pp.28-32.

22 On the role of the madraseh, see Michael Fischer, Iran, From Religious Dispute to Revolution, pp.12-60.

23 See R. Arasteh, Education and Social Awakening in Iran, p.2.

24 Cf. Abdul-Hadi Hairi, Shi'ism and Constitutionalism in Iran, p.14.

25 Cf. A. Kasravi, Tārikh-e Mashrute-ye Irān, pp.319, 321, 361, 378-79.

26 Cf. M. Ishaque, Modern Persian Poetry, pp.150-160,189.

27 Cf. Mehdi Akhavān Sāles (M. Omid), Az In Avestā, pp.214-216.

28 'Charming language' and 'engaging and pleasant style', are two qualities which were considered basic elements of modern fiction. They were mentioned by Mohammad 'Ali Jamālzādeh in his preface to the collection Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud. Since its appearance, this preface has been regarded as the manifesto of the modern novel by many and can be classified as the manifesto of the bourgeois novelists. An English translation of this preface by Hāideh Daragāhi appeared in The Literary Review (18, No.1, Fall 1974, pp.18-37) with an introductio and some notes.

29 Yahyā Āryanpur, Az Sabā tā Nimā, Vol.2, p.253.

30 On the historical novels, see H. Kāmshād, Modern Persian Prose Literature, pp.41-53.

31 Věra Kubičková, op.cit., p.391.

32 Cf. H. Kāmshād, op.cit., pp.59-60.

33 For a critical study of Tehrān-e Makhuf, see Kamil Banak, "Mushfiq Kazimi's Novel, The Horrible Tehran, Romantic Fiction or Social Criticism?", in A.A.S., Vol.13 (1977), pp.147-152.

34 For a socio-critical study of Zibā, see Jamshid M. Irāniān, Vāqe'iyat-e Ejtemā'i va Jahān-e Dāstān, pp.60-90.

35 Badr ol-Moluk Bāmdād, From Darkness into Light, p.87.

36 Gharbzadegi has been picked out on several occasions and studied particularly in the last chapter of the present work because it has been the subject of most controversy in modern Persian literature.

37 'Ali Ashgar Sharif, Maktab-e 'Eshq (Introduction).

38 H. Kāmshād, op.cit., p.28.

39 Zayn ol-'Ābedin Marāghe'i, Siyāhatnāme-ye Ebrāhim Beg, pp.11-113.

40 S.M.'A. Jamālzādeh, Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud, pp.8-16.

41 For the biography of Jamālzādeh, his father, and some othe Iranian nationalists during the first world war, see the author's autobiography in Rāhnamā-ye Ketāb, Vol. 19 (1976), pp.146-186.

42 On the decline of the bourgeoisie in this period, see Z.Z. Abdullaev "Promyshlennost i Zarozhdenie rabochego klassa Irana v kontse XIX-nachale XX vv.", in The Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914 (ed. Charles Issawi), pp.42-52.

43 George Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran, p.108; Donald Wilber, Rizā Shāh Pahlavi, pp.136-7.

44 Parviz Nātel Khānlari, "Nasr-e Farsi dar Dowre-ye Akhir", in Nakhostin Kongere-ye Nevisandegān-e Irān, p.141.

45 George Lukacs, The Meaning of Contemporary Realism, p.14.

46 Cf. H. Kamshad, op.cit., p.114.

47 Op.cit., pp.122-3.

48 G.M. Wickens, "Bozorg 'Alavi's Portmanteau", in U.T.Q., Vol.28 (1958), p.119.

49 A. Reza Arasteh, Man and Society in Iran, p.42.

50 Homayun Katuzian, "Sadeq Hedayat's 'The Man Who Killed His Passionate Self', A Critical Exposition", in I.S., Vol.10, No.3 (Summer 1977), p.197.

51 S.M.'A. Jamālzādeh, "Bileh Dig Bileh Choghondar", in Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud, p.95.

52 Bozorg 'Alavi, Panjāh-o-seh Nafar, p.221.

53 It has been suggested that probably a part of Buf-e Kur takes place about 700 years ago. (See Leonard Bogle, "The Khayyamic Influence in the Blind Owl", in Hedayat's 'The Blind Owl' Forty Years After"). Nevertheless Buf-e Kur cannot be classified as a historical novel, as the element of time is of little importance.

54 For the symbolic meaning of some of the old objects and elements in Buf-e Kur, see Zhāleh Mottahedin, "Nilufar", in Majalle-ye Dāneshkade-ye Adabiyāt va 'Olum-e Ensāni Dāneshgāh-e Ferdowsi, Vol.12, No.3 (1976), pp.519-551.

55 Comparing Buf-e Kur with William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury (1929), Bahrām Meqdādi suggests that while Faulkner depicts a social transformation, Hedāyat's work is a portrayal of the author's resentment towards the Western influence or rather gharbzadegi. In other words the implication is that Buf-e Kur is a nationalistic novel in which Hedāyat laments the beauty of the past and condemns the West for the present degradation of his country. See B. Meqdādi's "Buf-e Kur va Khashm va Hayāhu" in Sokhan 26 (1978), pp.557-571.

56 In a later period, when restrictions had become somewhat less, in a letter to Professor Joliot-Curie, who had invited him to take part in the First World Peace Congress Hedāyat wrote that his country had been turned into a great prison by the imperialists and it was considered a crime to express one's opinion or think rightly. (H. Kamshad, op.cit., pp.197-198).

57 'Ali Dashti, Ayyām-e Mahbas, p.270.

58 L.P. Elwell-Sutton, Persian Oil, p.197.

59 Mohammad Mas'ud, Tafrihāt-e Shab, pp.66-68.

60 Cf. Ehsān Tabari, Jāme'e-ye Irān dar Dowrān-e Rezā Shāh, pp.105-115.

61 S. Hedāyat, Māziyār, p.118.

62 Ahmad Fardid suggests that Hedāyat was a Sufi in temperament but a European Sufi. ("Andishe-hā-ye Hedāyat" in Ketāb-e Sādeq Hedāyat, pp.386-7). In the preface to Tarāne-hā-ye Khayyām, however, Hedāyat gives an impression

of disapproval of Sufism when he rejects the idea that Khayyām had Sufi tendencies (Tarāne-hā-ye Khayyām, p.39).

63 Cf. Homayun Katouzian, op.cit., pp.196-206.

64 Sādeq Hedāyat, Tarāne-hā-ye Khayyām, p.31.

III.II

The Reflection of the 1906-1941 Period in Later Fiction

In the previous section an attempt was made to identify the main social tendencies visible in the Persian fiction which was written and published in the period between the constitutional revolution in 1906 and the Anglo-Russian occupation of Iran in September 1941. Fictional works with settings in this period which were published after September 1941 receive separate consideration in the present chapter because they view the social problems of the period from different angles and with less inhibition.

The first twenty years of the period 1906-1941 were a time of political and social upheaval. The struggle for constitutional government, the Russian and British interventions, the effects of the first world war and the Russian Revolution on Iranian politics and on the daily life of the Iranians, the post-war provincial uprisings, the restoration of order by the new Iranian army, and the change of dynasty were matters deeply imprinted on the minds of literate Iranians but seldom mentioned in the published fiction of the period. One reason for this may have been the immaturity of Iranian fiction-writing. With the exception of Yeki Bud, Yeki Nabud, little progress in this field was made until 1930. It may be that the contemporary authors lacked the ability to relate their stories to the events or changes that they had witnessed or were witnessing. Much more skill was shown by the younger writers of Rezā Shāh's reign, which was also a time

when rapid and far-reaching social changes took place. These changes, however, likewise remained more or less untouched in the contemporary fiction. The reason is clearly that the authors were inhibited by fear of censorship or awareness of the régime's dislike of criticism.

After the abolition of the former censorship in 1941, a flow of new fictional works appeared in which condemnation of despotism and intimidation overshadows all other social themes. Many of these works had been written but left unpublished in Rezā Shāh's reign. Hedāyat's Buf-e Kur had only been lithographed at Bombay in a small edition which was intended for his close friends and prudently furnished with a note that it was not to be sold in Iran. Bozorg 'Alavi's Panjāh-o-seh Nafar and Varaq-pāre-hā-ye Zendān had been secretly written in prison and could not have been published had not the censorship been lifted. Nor could 'Ali Dashti's Ayyām-e Mahbas, memoirs and comments on his various imprisonments and experiences, be published while Rezā Shāh was on the throne, even though Dashti was a supporter of the régime.

Censorship, however, was not completely abolished after Rezā Shāh's abdication. Under a wartime censorship imposed by the occupying powers, Iranian writers were not free to comment on international affairs or on the actions of those powers in Iran. This censorship not only forbade praise of Germany, Italy, or Japan, and of Nazism or Fascism, which in any case were discredited except among a few extremist nationalists, but also prevented any mention of famine and mental anguish suffered by the

Iranian people under the occupation. On matters of no concern to the occupying powers, however, complete freedom of expression was allowed. Writers of both the older and the younger generations joined without inhibition in bitter criticism of the régime of Rezā Shāh, whom they held responsible for all the nation's misfortunes.[1] Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad, in his short story Tajhiz-e Mellat (in the collection Did-o-bāzid, 1946), blames the régime for the foreign occupation. Neither the armed forces nor the masses had been told what to do in the event of an invasion. In this story, expressed in the strong language of hatred and denunciation, the author deflates the high-sounding pretensions of the régime concerning the country's progress and the proudly proclaimed build-up of its armed forces. At the time of the first allied air raid in August 1941, no defending aircraft appear, the officers flee and the other ranks are left stranded, the shops are closed down and the people watch the bombing in silent bewilderment. Their ignorance leads to fear and submission. Nothing has been done for civil defence except the issue of a pamphlet which the illiterate masses cannot read. The bitter closing remark, 'this is how the people of Iran have been prepared for a war of life and death', is unnecessary and spoils the effect of this vividly written story; but it shows the exasperation of the author and similar intellectuals with the régime's exaggerated claims to have built up military strength.

Rezā Shāh, in the view of these intellectuals, had spent money and made propaganda for an army which was used only to crush tribal insubordination and to suppress or

intimidate internal opposition but not to defend the country against foreign attack. After his abdication he was criticized not only by former opponents, but also by men who had admired him and supported his policies when he held power.[2] This change of attitude by politicians and holders of key government positions was considered by intellectuals such as Sādeq Hedāyat to be hypocritical and merely a cover for pursuit of the same selfish goals as before in the guise of democracy. They were only doing what they were required to do as puppets of the established ruling class and the foreign powers. In Hedāyat's story Qaziye-ye Khar-e Dajjāl (in Velengari, 1944), Rezā Shāh himself is portrayed as a puppet whose showman gets rid of him as soon as he fails to carry out his instructions, and then brings a new one onto the scene.

Using the traditional language of the morality tale in classical adab literature, Sādeq Chubak portrays a megalomaniac Shāh-e Shāhān (King of Kings) in his Esā'e-ye Adab (in Kheymeh-shab-bāzi, 1945). This short story begins with an introductory sketch of Shāh-e Shāhān, who after seizing power has replaced the wise statesmen with opportunists, and is intimidating and exploiting the people through his agents.[3] The archaic language echoes medieval Iranian traditions of despotism and popular dissent. Shāh-e Shāhān cannot stand any opposition to his will. In witty contrast with this cruel character comes a description of a physical weakness (hemorrhoids) from which he suffers. With similar irony, the obsequiousness of his trembling war minister is contrasted with the impudence of a passing

crow, which is not in the least intimidated, even though this species of bird is traditionally supposed to be weak and timid. Both contrasts, which are extremely humorous, help the development of the story. The climax comes when the crow drops excrement onto the head and moustaches of a statue of Shāh-e Shāhān just when this formidable ruler happens to be watching the people around the statue through binoculars from his palace. The point is obvious, because in addition to the atmosphere and the other implicit points in the story, the practice of erecting royal statues had begun in Rezā Shāh's reign. The story, which is a masterpiece of language and satire, was dedicated to S.H. (Sādeq Hedāyat ?) and did not appear in the editions of Keymeh-shab-bāzi published after 1968.

Chubak is even more successful in depicting the social effects of Rezā Shāh's despotism in his one-act play Tup-e Lāstiki (The Rubber Ball). This was first published in 1949 in the second edition of the collection Antari keh Luti-sh Mordeh Bud, and was similarly removed from later editions. The characters and the language show that the play is set in Rezā Shāh's reign. Much of the content is about intrigue and corruption and the shallowness of official life; but the main theme is the prevalent atmosphere of intimidation. Dālaki, the protagonist, is an unprincipled little man who through his shrewdness as a go-between in shady transactions has risen to be minister of the interior in a supposedly reforming government. In this play Chubak satirically depicts a stiff and immobile

society in which the only flexible mobile object to be found is a little rubber ball. The political situation is such that a loyal minister, and ironically the minister of the interior who supposedly has control over the police, is terrified when a simple police constable appears in the street. In the end it turns out that the policeman only wanted to look for his young son's ball which had fallen into the minister's garden. In such a social situation everyone was suspect and nobody could act or speak without fear of making a mistake. Dālaki is afraid to open his mouth even in front of his wife because there are spies everywhere.[4] Therefore intimidation and suspicion are dominant; one must always be glancing over one's shoulder in order to make sure that there can be no recriminations for one's actions or words. Tup-e Lāstiki is a psychological study of human reactions to an unpredictable despotism. 'Unpredictability', as K.A. Wittfogel has remarked, 'is an essential weapon of absolute terror'.[5] Obedience is the one and only answer,[6] but not necessarily a fully safe one, because it has become a sort of rule for the absolute ruler not to trust anyone, no matter how faithful an official or how close a friend he may be.[7]

While terror and unpredictability form the main theme of Tup-e Lāstiki, the bad effects of modernization such as the adoption of shallow materialistic values and undesirable Western fashions are also satirized in this play, particularly in the character of Dālaki's young wife, Mahtāb. She is a shallow character who dresses smartly and pretends to be educated, but behaves naively. Her love for her husband,

like the rest of her nature, is only skin deep; from the beginning she is ready to believe that the police constable has come because of some grave offence. The other characters, too, despite their seeming importance as officers or landowners, are afraid and show that underneath they are cowards. Only their assumed respectability and traditional courtesy (ta'ārof) veil their fear. The general picture is of a society in which fear keeps the government in power but keeps the people apart: a society of individuals in which the only cement is money.

The picture of social life at the top presented in Tup-e Lāstiki has been shown by 'Ali Dashti to be not just a figment of Chubak's imagination. Dashti, in his memoirs Ayyām-e Mahbas, gives examples of Rezā Shāh's suspicious despotism and of the resultant spread of an atmosphere of obsequiousness, intrigue, and corruption. One case mentioned by Dashti is that of 'Ali Akbar Dāvar, who had been thought to be one of Rezā Shāh's most trusted ministers. As Minister of Justice (1923-1933), Dāvar was the main architect of the important legal reforms of Rezā Shāh's reign. In 1935, when he was Minister of Finance, he suffered a severe illness. When Dashti visited him after his recovery, he told Dashti that he would rather have died in dignity than have recovered to live an unpredictable life of terror.[8] Dāvar's fears proved to be correct. Eventually, early in 1937, he fell from favour and committed suicide. The officials who went to his funeral left the procession before it reached the grave on hearing about the Shāh's anger with Dāvar and suspicion

of his loyalty.[9]

The picture of official corruption is also depicted by other writers. In Bozorg 'Alavi's Panjāh-o-seh Nafar, a prison guard's neglect of his duty in return for a small bribe is made to typify the bureaucratic corruption which in 'Alavi's view permeated the pretentious Pahlavi régime. Other characteristics which the author attributes to this individual, such as impecuniousness, irresponsibility, uncertainty, hyprocrisy, lack of understanding,and lack of a sense of humour, are also meant to be generalized descriptions of government officials. Not surprisingly the prison governor is also shown to be corrupt.

'Alavi had been one of the followers of Dr Taqi Arāni, a professor of engineering at Tehrān University, when both were students in Berlin whence 'Alavi returned to Iran in 1935. Arāni had adopted the materialist theories of Karl Marx and had been able to expound them in a periodical Donyā (The World) which he published in Tehrān. He had engaged in controversy with the nationalist and anti-clerical historian Sayyed Ahmad Kasravi, who edited the periodical Parcham (The Flag), and he had won a following in academic circles. Arāni and fifty two men alleged to be members of his group were arrested in April 1937 and were convicted of violating an anti-subversion law which had been enacted in 1931.[10] Bozorg 'Alavi was one of them, and his Panjāh-o-seh Nafar is his memoir of his four and a half years in prison. In this work he sharply attacks both the Majles (parliament) and the judiciary for their submissive cooperation with the executive power in what he considers

to have been the oppression and exploitation of the majority of the people in favour of a privileged minority:

> "The cause of all the misfortunes that have pushed the Iranians to the present dangerous abyss has not been one man alone. Rezā Khān and the police and the cabinet were supported by a reactionary class who occupied the seats in the Majles and looked after the interests of the bullies (i.e. exploiters) and the violators of the law."[11]

The worst harm to the nation from such a government, according to 'Alavi, was the spread of pessimism and irresponsibility. In Panjāh-o-seh Nafar and in another work Varaq-pāre-hā-ye Zendān (Gaol Jottings, 1941), both written in prison,[12] 'Alavi draws a contrast between the poverty of the oppressed masses and the wealth of the uncaring establishment. The contents of Varaq-pāre-hā-ye Zendān are mostly based on the particular experiences of the author's fellow-prisoners, but are meant to be a generalized representation of inequality and injustice in Iranian society.[1]

'Alavi's political concern is also the motive of his novel Chashm-hā-yash (Her Eyes, 1952). Its plot is based on the underground activities of a politically active group which is closely watched by the police. The narrator, an admirer of a revolutionary artist who lost his life for his cause, is trying to uncover the meaning of a mysterious painting by him. After long and laborious effort he at last finds the model, a distinguished and charming lady of the upper class whose eyes give the painting its motif of query. This lady, Farangis, had once been a beautiful girl in love with the artist. She tries to convince the narrator that in spite of her being lukewarm about the

artist's cause, she was faithful to him to the extent that she married the police chief only to save his life. The artist thus has not been fair and realistic in painting her eyes with a look of mystery. Nevertheless she gives a different impression by showing a measure of guilt and retreating to a defensive position. She talks and talks in a very emotional way, but more about herself than about the artist and the mysterious picture's artistic motif, which was bound up with his political cause. The hopeful political tone with which the novel begins gradually fades into melancholy with a feminine tinge. Farangis is not the sort of girl who might believe in the artist's political cause, because her relations with him are egocentric. Thus 'Alavi, as a leftist writer, in his attempt to produce a socialist realist novel, fails to be in the end wholly convincing. Indeed 'Alavi has been blamed by some critics for becoming disillusioned and failing to achieve a realistic outlook in this novel.[14] Its plot, however, shows that 'Alavi's basic purpose is to denounce Rezā Shāh's dictatorship. Passages contrasting the easy life of the rich with the hard life of the poor imply condemnation of the government for its unconcern with social justice and its failure to bring about a fairer distribution of wealth. The atmosphere of intimidation permeates the whole novel and is the subject of the opening passage:

> "Tehran was overcome by suffocation. No one dared to breathe. People were frightened away from each other, families from their relatives, pupils from their teachers, teachers from janitors, and janitors from barbers and bath masseurs. All were afraid of themselves, of their shadows. ...

> Sadness, lethargy, suspicion, and despair prevailed in society. People feared to look anywhere except in front of their feet in case they might be exposed to suspicion."[15]

The Iranian social structure of the 1930s, when Rezā Shāh's attempts at a Western-type modernization and bureaucratization caused clashes between various social forces, is the theme chosen by Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad for the first three short stories of his collection Panj Dāstān. In these stories, Āl-e Ahmad, through accounts of probably real incidents in his childhood, portrays and criticizes the changes which were then imposed on the Iranian people. The most notable change is the rise of a secular semi-bourgeois society dominated by the bureaucracy with the accompanying decline of the traditional institutions controlled by the clergy. This is vividly portrayed in the first story, Goldaste-hā va Falak, where the decline in the power of the 'olamā is symbolized by half-finished minarets. The establishment of a state school has transferred education from the hands of the 'olamā to those of the secular government, and religion is giving way to modernization. The story is told by a boy named 'Abbās whose father is a prominent local clergyman, being the prayer leader of a quarter in Tehrān. His family has to move house to make way for a new road, and their next home in a new quarter is smaller and less traditional. The names of the old and new quarters, Sayyed Nasr od-Din and Malekābād, symbolize the change from clerical to monarchical dominance. The boy's feelings about this obviously reflect the author's attitude. In contrast to the small new home,

which is far from the bazaar, stands the new state school, which is near the bazaar. Its presence symbolizes the replacement of clerical influence in the bazaar by secular governmental influence; but the replacement is by no means complete. The school adjoins a mosque whose minarets are unfinished but are tall enough to cast their shadow over the school from morning to evening. Even in their incomplete state they dominate the scene.

> "None of us took any interest in the minarets, yet they were always before our eyes. While we were practising in the classroom or playing in the yard, when the headmaster interfered in our play and shouted to us to keep on that side if we wanted to be in the sun and on this side if we wanted to be in the shade, when we ran out of the sun into the shade or out of the shade into the sun, the minarets were always in sight."[16]

Even though on the tops of the half-finished minarets there is no room for the mo'azzen to call the people to prayer, or in other words, even though the clergy now has no voice in society, still religion is a force so strong that the secular government cannot escape from its grip. The secular authorities therefore try to keep in contact with the clergy. This is one of the themes of the second story, Jashn-e Farkhondeh, where a high-ranking police officer comes to help the boy's father out of various troubles. The contact is arranged through the bazaar, which often plays a mediatory role in these stories. It is Sadiq-e Tojjār, a bazaar merchant, who gets 'Abbās into school, and it is 'Abbās's uncle, also a bazaar merchant, who obtains the issue of his father's turban licence and travel passes. At the same time, the secular establishment asserts its voice and exploits its means of attraction. The school's

mathematics teacher, who has previously been a clergyman, abuses the 'olamā. 'Abbās himself, though from a traditional religious family, would rather face the difficulties and go to a state school than go to a maktab (Qor'ān school).

Secularization was popular for certain social reasons, and above all because it opened the door to modern knowledge and new economic opportunities which were needed by the rising bourgeoisie. On the other hand, some of Rezā Shāh's secularizing policies and some of the actions of his officials interfered with what the people regarded as their private affairs and thus caused offence.

The clothing uniformity law of 1928 required all men except 'olamā to wear European-style dress. This included the peaked Pahlavi cap until it was abolished after riots at Mashhad in 1936. To wear the turban and cloak, a clergyman had to apply for a permit. Women were compulsorily unveiled by a decree of January 7,1936, and this step was applauded by poets and intellectuals at the time. After Rezā Shāh's abdication, however, the clothing reforms were condemned by many intellectuals on the grounds that they represented merely superficial modernization and that they deprived the individual of freedom of choice. They are depicted in Panj Dāstān, particularly in the second story, Jashn-e Farkhondeh, in which Āl-e Ahmad criticizes the unveiling of women and other changes in dress because of their effects on the common people's lives. The whole story revolves around an invitation sent to 'Abbās's father, Hājj Āqā, for him, and his wife also, to attend a reception in commemoration of the unveiling of women. For Hājj Āqā,

taking his wife unveiled would be like taking her naked. So it is arranged instead that he shall take the daughter of a police officer as a sigheh (temporary wife). Later in the story, however, he avoids attendance by going on a visit to the shrine at Qom. The compulsory unveiling causes problems for 'Abbās's sister too. Being unwilling to go out unveiled, she slips down the side streets when the policemen's backs are turned. A bathroom has to be installed in their house so that the womenfolk shall not have to walk unveiled to the public bath, which in traditional Iranian society was the place where women could meet and gossip.

The men had been similarly affected. 'Abbās's father experiences great difficulty in obtaining a turban licence, and his uncle disapproves of the uniform clothing which ordinary people have been forced to wear. 'Abbās's school requires the boys to wear shorts, and he is told by the caretaker (nāzem)[17] to get shorts or go to a maktab instead. He does not wish either to go to a maktab or to walk around in shorts in the quarter or at home. So his mother fixes snap-fasteners onto his trousers so that they can be hitched up at school to become shorts. This arrangement works, but causes him embarrassment. He always has to be early at school to do the hitching-up before the crowd arrives. On one occasion when he is late, a woman who is passing by sees him hitching up his trousers outside school and swears at the government in disgust. Ironically the woman has covered her hair with a scarf (which was illegal) and put on a black wide-brimmed European hat to cover the

scarf. Āl-e Ahmad's description of this woman is remarkably similar to that of the woman, also wearing a scarf under a black straw hat, in a painting called Jashn-e Kashf-e Hejāb (The Unveiling Anniversary), which is mentioned in Bozorg 'Alavi's Chasm-hā-yash.[18] In spite of the title of the painting, the woman looks humble and submissive, and she is overshadowed by a smart and confident gentleman who occupies most of the space and leaves only a small corner to her. 'Alavi's point is that the unveiling really made no difference to the mass of Iranian women and did not solve any of their basic problems.

The change of clothing is also the theme of Shalvār-hā-ye Vasle-dār (Patched Trousers), a vividly written short story by Rasul Parvizi in a collection of the same name first published in 1957. In this story the pupils of a school in Shirāz have ignored the repeated orders of the caretaker that they should come to school in the new European clothes, which their families cannot afford. One afternoon when they enter the school, he cuts the backs of their traditional gowns to make them look like European jackets. This leaves their not very elegant undergarments showing. The children, after recovering from the blow, find the situation very funny, and the author finds an opportunity to satirize the state school system very wittily. The history teacher, who is an opium addict, conducts a lesson on the exaggerated glories of Iran's past, which make an ironic contrast with the poverty and abasement of the present. The boys are expected to be submissively

content and uncensorious of what they are taught, and they get into trouble when they use their logic and ask penetrating questions. Parvizi's criticism of the modern education in Rezā Shāh's time is based on his personal experience and is impressive because he was an advocate of real modernization and was not an opponent of the régime; for several years before his death in 1977 he represented Bushehr in the Iranian parliament. It is interesting to note that in Āl-e Ahmad's Goldaste-hā va Falak, the boy 'Abbās likewise has a teacher who is an addict and likewise has to be submissively obedient and refrain from asking questions. Both stories depict a combination of intimidation and incompetent teaching in the new school system, which in this respect was not any better than the old system. The irrelevance of the subjects to the needs of society has also been the subject of bitter censures by these and other writers, such as Mohammad Mas'ud in his sceptical novels, particularly Tafrihāt-e Shab.

The changing social pattern has provided a theme for several other writers of fiction. Shāzdeh Ehtejāb (1968), a novel by Hushang Golshiri, depicts the shift of power from one social group to another by means of the flashback technique first used in the cinema and later adopted for the novel by certain European writers. It represents simultaneously social tension and individual alienation. The conflict is shown through the character and memories of the protagonist, a Qājār prince (shāhzādeh), who was once an aggressive and rapacious autocrat but has been isolated from his contemporaries by the forces of social change and by the workings of his subconscious mind. The development of the

prince' character in the contradictory situation created by the parallel influences of the present and the past is carefully balanced and elaborately worked out. In spite of his doomed life and his tragic end, he is portrayed as a chained demon. The author's lack of sympathy for his unfortunate creature is communicated to the readers by way of the memories and feelings which he puts into the prince's mouth. By implication this also means that the author holds radical views and is opposed to any sort of autocracy in his own time. The discontinuity of the plot and the sudden flow of thoughts, a technique often used by some European writers such as Joyce, Proust,and Virginia Woolf, enhance the impression of social estrangement and abnormality. The protagonist is meant to typify the old aristocracy which has given way to a new social order, and his anxiety, loneliness,and loss of confidence are meant to be generalizations valid for all aristocrats who have lost social status, political influence,and economic security.

Also set in Rezā Shāh's reign is a long novel which impressed literary circles and achieved considerable popularity after its appearance in 1961, namely Showhar-e Āhu Khānom, the first published work of 'Ali Mohammad Afghāni. Its plot is mainly concerned with the social position of women (a burning question in the 1930s), and it presents a strong condemnation of polygamy. The plot is familiar and somewhat naive. A happily married and prosperous bakery proprietor, Sayyed Mirān, who is in his fifties and the father of four children, marries a second wife, Homā, a stunningly attractive young widow, whose

arrival has a dual effect on the family. While it brings fresh air and excitement into Sayyed Mirān's formerly staid and placid home, it ruins the old man's happy marriage and his prosperous business. In spite of the familiarity of the plot, this novel is interesting because it gives a very vivid picture of Iranian society in the mid-1930s. The plot is at least convincing, and the characters are well developed. Moreover the style is moving and the language is beautiful. On the other hand, the length of the book is excessive; Āl-e Ahmad thought that over half of it was rubbish and should have been cut out.[19] Its sudden appearance from a hitherto unknown pen took the literary circles by surprise. It was seen as a masterpiece, reminiscent of great works of Balzac, Dickens, Zola, and Tolstoy in its various qualities.[20] Although the initial enthusiasm seems to have waned, the book has a lasting value because its content and characters present a real picture of Iranian society of the time, though the language of the characters is somewhat pompous and their general knowledge seems to be much beyond their social status. For example, the conversation of these almost illiterate characters about the European theatre may seem out of place. On the other hand it could be only the symbol of the arrival of new things formerly unknown to this traditional family. The arrival of these new elements into the life of Sayyed Mirān's family is associated with Homā, whose beauty and youth and new values contrast with the traditional, old-fashioned, and middle aged first wife, Āhu Khānom. This can be interpreted as the swift

introduction of Westernization into Iranian society. The failure of Rezā Shāh's policies is represented by Homā's departure after she realizes that she cannot fit into the pattern. Perhaps, if she is to be interpreted as a foreign element moving in to ruin the traditional bazaar represented by Sayyed Mirān, she never meant to fit into the pattern. Afghāni was able to catch the rhythms and tones of the society which he described. His book came out at a time when many people could recognise the atmosphere it created and found that they had shared the experiences of its characters. Moreover in the years 1961-1963 the questions of women's liberation and right to vote and hold office were again burning issues. These factors may have helped to make the book so popular.

In the category of backward-looking literature, historical fiction about the recent past must also be included. In many of the works, however, the past elements are used as vehicles for expression of current concern. For instance, Gholām-Hoseyn Sā'edi shows a special interest in events which took place during the struggle for constitutional government, because the subject enables him to describe the yearning of the masses for justice. The evocation of past endeavour gives hope of future success and encourages present exertions. In his five short plays, Panj Namāyesh-nāmeh az Enqelāb-e Mashrutiyat (Five Plays about the Constitutional Movement, 1967), and in his novel Tup (The Cannon, 1969), Sā'edi writes about the people's desire for just and constitutional rule, about their cooperation in their common cause, and about their resistance, often

with bare hands, against the armed forces of the autocracy and the Russian Cossacks. He obviously hopes that the people of his own time will likewise exert themselves in the cause of social justice.

Similarly Simin Dāneshvar's admiration for those Iranians who showed patriotism in their attitude to the foreign (specifically British) occupation troops in the second world war provides the theme of her novel Suvashun (1969), but is probably not her primary motive. This novel is written on two planes. On the narrative plane, time is important because the circumstances and events belong exclusively to the war period. On the conceptual plane, time is unimportant because the examples of patriotism are meant to be valid for all periods including the present.

Two novels by Chubak, Tangsir (1963) and Sang-e Sabur (The Patient Stone, 1966), are also based on real events in the past, but are intended to carry a timeless message. Tangsir is based on a series of murders which took place on one day in 1922 at Bushehr. The victims were a bāzāri, a religious dignitary, a shar'i lawyer, and a middleman. The murderer, Zār Mohammad, was a man of rustic origin whom they had defrauded and humiliated; he got away and was never seen again. The incident has also been described by Rasul Parvizi, who states that many Bushehris felt sympathy for Zār Mohammad.[21] Chubak exalts him as a man of action and a champion of the people. In Sang-e Sabur on the other hand, the central character is an intellectual named Ahmad Āqā who spends his time in useless idealistic musing in the midst of the prevailing social injustice and the degradation stemming from the Shi'ite institution of

temporary marriage (mot'eh). Chubak's message is clear. In the words of Sa'di of Shirāz, the foot of action (qadam) is needed, not the breath of words (dam).[22]

Dokhtar-e Ra'iyat (Peasant Girl, 1952), by Mahmud E'temādzādeh (Behāzin), is a novel in which a social theme is synchronized with a historical event. In this novel, however, the historical sub-plot, which relates to the rebel Jangali republic of Gilān (June 1920 - October 1921),[23] is overshadowed by the main plot, which depicts peasant-landlord relations. Soghrā, the young daughter of a peasant, is taken from him against his will by the landlord to work as a maidservant in the mansion of the latter's brother at Rasht. Although she is still a child, she is required to work hard, but she is allowed to play with the children of the family who are of the same age. After several years, when she has grown into a beautiful girl, her master's son Mehdi seduces her. The master's wife arranges for Soghrā's baby to be delivered in secret, and with the help of another maid clandestinely kills the baby and disposes of the body. Soghrā is then sacked and sent away in disgrace without any pay. The sympathetic passages about the Jangalis which are brought into the novel provide an accompanying political commentary.

From the study of these writings, the following conclusions may be drawn. One is that Rezā Shāh's censorship had inhibited the rise of social fiction in the previous period. This was proved by the appearance of a large

quantity of such fiction after the relaxation of the censorship in 1941. Social and political concerns then became dominant, so much so that some authors even used past events as vehicles for expression of views on current affairs, and not as themes for entertaining historical novels. The social and political emphasis pleased a small group of radical intellectuals, but often led to neglect of structural aspects and humour. The fiction of this period consequently lost strength,[24] and in spite of the spread of literacy, failed to impress the public and satisfy the growing interest in reading books.

Footnotes (III.II)

1 Cf. H. Kāmshād, Modern Persian Prose Literature, pp.85-86.

2 Cf. A. Kasravi, Mashruteh, Behtarin Shekl-e Hokumat, pp.33-34; E. Abrahamian, "Factionalism: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-46)", in M.E.S. Vol.14, No.1 (1978), p.27.

3 Cf. Bozorg 'Alavi's Panjāh-o-seh Nafar, p.210, for a similar portrayal of Rezā Shāh and his regime.

4 Chubak brings into the play a Persian saying that "walls have mice and mice have ears". This is a good example which reveals the suspiciousness of the Iranian mentality as well as the prevailing social intimidation.

5 Karl Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism, p.141.

6 Op.cit., p.149.

7 Op.cit., p.155.

8 'Ali Dashti, Ayyām-e Mahbas, pp.198-199.

9 Ahmad Kasravi, Dādgāh, pp.49-50.

10 Sepehr Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, p.67. While Zabih describes the fifty-two fellow prisoners of Arāni as "the most prominent members of this group" (p.67), Bozorg 'Alavi states that there were some among them who had no relations with Arāni and his group whatsoever. (Panjāh-o-seh Nafar, pp.71-72, 164 and 184).

11 Bozorg 'Alavi, Panjāh-o-seh Nafar, p.161.

12 While in prison, 'Alavi also wrote a third book, Jārjoyl (taken from a trademark of lubricating oil), which he failed to smuggle out. See Panjāh-o-seh Nafar, pp.143-147.

13 Op.cit., p.141.

14 Hasan Kamshad, Modern Persian Prose Literature, pp.122-123.

15 Bozorg 'Alavi, Chashm-hā-yash, p.5.

16 Āl-e Ahmad, Panj Dāstan, p.9.

17 In Iranian schools the maintenance of order and discipline is a responsibility of the caretaker (nāzem). He punishes truants and late-comers, and prevents disorder in the playground during breaks when the teachers are meeting together.

18 Bozorg 'Alavi, Chashm-hā-yash, pp.53-54.

19 Āl-e Ahmad, "Yek Goftegu-ye Derāz", in Arzyābi-ye Shetābzadeh, p.72.

20 Ehsān Yārshāter, "The Modern Literary Idiom", in Iran Faces the Seventies, p.309.

21 "On the following day, the police and gendarmes were looking for Zār Mohammad ... But Zār Mohammad had disappeared and with him his name had disappeared too. He was no longer remembered as Zār Mohammad, but was mentioned as Shir Mohammad (Mohammad the Lion)." R. Parvizi, "Shir Mohammad" in Shalvār-hā-ye Vasledār, p.54.

22 Mosleh od-Din Sa'di, "Bustān-e Sa'di" in Kolliyāt-e Sa'di, p.35. For a full translation of this work, see G.M. Wickens, The Bustan of Sa'di, p.34.

23 For the Jangali movement, see Sepehr Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp.13-45; Fred Halliday, "Revolution in Iran: was it possible in 1921?", in Khamsin, No.7 (1980), pp.53-64; Ebrāhim Fakhrā'i, Mirzā Kuchek Khān: Sardār-e Jangal (Tehran, 1965).

24 Cf. Āl-e Ahmad, "Hedāyat-e Buf-e Kur", in Haft Maqāleh, p.17.

III.III

The Advent of Social Awareness -1941-1953

The abdication of Rezā Shāh on 16 September 1941 after the entry of Russian and British troops into Iran marked the beginning of a new political era. The cessation of censorship (except where Allied activities and interests were concerned) released a pent-up flood of political, journalistic, and literary energy. Newspapers and periodicals mushroomed, and all sorts of persons tried their hand at journalism. Some journalists pursued specific social and political goals, while others filled their newspapers with violent articles and abusive language. Some earned an income by blackmail, while some were in all probability aided by foreign embassies or agents.[1]

Nevertheless this journalistic flood had certain positive effects. The fierceness of the language equalled the bitterness of the contemporary mood, as well as attracting wider readership.[2] There is certainly some truth in the view expressed by Āl-e Ahmad that inferior journalism had a bad influence on the style and content of much contemporary fiction;[3] but this was only one aspect of the picture. Both the new journalism and the new fiction were the products of similar historical factors. The sudden release from Rezā Shāh's dictatorship, and the tense international atmosphere, threw the people in general, and journalists and writers in particular, into a state of bewilderment. The new journalism had not been built up through a gradual creative process, but had appeared overnight after a long period of hibernation at a time when

literary and aesthetic concerns were bound to receive less attention than more pressing matters. It is therefore not surprising that, in contrast with the press in the period of the constitutional struggle,the press in this period published little material of literary merit.

Some of the new papers and periodicals, however, opened their columns to writers of fiction and gave opportunities for the publication of new experimental works. Readers' interests in political and social matters were so great that even editors without any literary concern were willing to include short stories or serials with political or social themes. These were produced by authors with varying abilities and tastes. Readers of all classes thus had opportunities which would not otherwise have been available to make comparisons and judgments, while authors found opportunities to publish works which would probably not have appeared in print if they themselves had had to pay the costs of printing.

Literary journals, on the other hand, made a more valuable contribution. During Rezā Shāh's reign, Armaghān, the most eminent of these,had made important contributions to classical scholarship. Yaghmā, founded in 1948, did likewise and also paid some attention to modern history and literature. Sokhan, which first appeared in 1943, played the leading role in the development of modern fictional literature. Its editor from then until 1978 was Dr Parviz Nātel Khānlari, who encouraged experimentation and innovation. He was convinced that readers required a

literature of their own time which would be free from the artificialities of court literature and would tell them about their own society in a down-to-earth form and in natural language.[4] Sokhan owed much to the contributions of Sādeq Hedāyat, who shared and defended Khānlari's standpoint. Hedāyat's articles on folklore (Folklor yā Farhang-e Tudeh) in the early issues of Sokhan (Vol.1, No.3-6), in which he appealed for a genuine study of popular culture, appear to have marked the point at which Sokhan took a somewhat nationalist course in preference to the socialist line pursued by two other contemporary periodicals, Payām-e Now (later Payām-e Novin) and the Tudeh Party's literary-aesthetic journal Mardom. The main contributors to both of these were poets and authors known for their more or less leftist political views, namely Nimā Yushij, Hushang Ebtehāj (Sāyeh), Mahmud E'temādzādeh (Behāzin), Bozorg 'Alavi, and Ehsān Tabari.[5] Hedāyat also occasionally contributed to these two journals and to other leftist periodicals.

Folklore is, of course, a subject of great intrinsic interest, and Iranian folklore is more than ordinarily abundant. In the years of war and foreign occupation, when concern for popular culture was in vogue in literary circles, folklore was considered as the national heritage from which material could be drawn for use in the writing of fiction above the level of mere entertainment. The importance of folkloric elements in subsequent literature cannot fail to strike the reader, although Jamālzādeh and

Hedāyat had already studied and made use of folklore. Jamālzādeh had compiled the first dictionary of colloquial words, idioms, and sayings, which began as an appendix to his collection of short stories Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud and ultimately grew into a large compilation, Farhang-e Loghāt-e 'Āmiyāneh, published at Tehrān in 1961. Hedāyat had already written two studies of folklore, Owsāneh (1931) and Neyrangestān (1933), and had contributed some articles to Majelle-ye Musiqi.[6] Both Jamālzādeh and Hedāyat had been preceded by 'Ali Akbar Dehkhodā, whose valuable two volume compilation of Persian proverbs (Amsāl-o-Hekam) had appeared in 1929 and 1931. As a national heritage, folklore has continued to receive much attention and has been collected and studied by specialist scholars, notably Ahmad Bahmanyār (d. 1950), Sobhi Mohtadi (d. 1962), Amir-Qoli Amini (d. 1978), Abu'l-Qāsem Enjavi, Sādeq Homāyuni, and Ebrāhim Shakurzādeh. The traditional Iranian folk-tale has always been a valuable source of inspiration to modern authors, particularly short story writers, and forms and subjects taken from folklore have had a fertilizing effect on Persian fiction.[7]

The political attention to the masses strengthened the socializing tendency in literature, that is the tendency to write about ordinary people in ordinary language. Parallel with the subjects and forms taken from folklore, the language of the masses in phonetic spelling also found its way into much of the fiction that was written. Innovation of any kind, insofar as it was concerned with the masses, was welcomed by political radicals and young literary reformers in the face of resolute opposition from established literary circles. The reformist wave,

however, gained strength and stimulated wide-ranging translation from modern European literatures and bold experimentation, especially by writers of social fiction. The interest of young intellectuals in the passion play (ta'ziyeh) and other popular traditional forms of acting greatly assisted the progress of modern Persian drama. Support given by the Tudeh Party also drew attention to drama. The party aided a theatre in Tehran (the Teyātr-e Ferdowsi, later Sa'di), and one of its leading members, 'Abdol-Hoseyn Nushin (c.1900-1971), who took charge, showed great talent as an actor and producer. He encouraged Iranian authors and scholars to try their hands at writing plays and translating good European plays, and he produced them at this theatre where they were seen by large audiences. He also wrote a book on dramatic art (Honar-e Teyātr, 1952), and translated plays by Shakespeare, Ben Johnson, Gorki, and Sartre.[8] In Rezā Shāh's reign he had been the editor of a music and art journal, Majalle-ye Musiqi, in which articles by Hedāyat and other intellectuals appeared. After the attempt on the Shāh's life on 4 February 1949, he was arrested and the Sa'di theatre was closed. A play and a novel which he wrote were not published. Eventually he went to Moscow, where he spent the rest of his life and compiled a useful scholarly vocabulary of Ferdowsi's Shāhnāmeh. The Tudeh Party's encouragement of drama was part of their policy of encouraging 'socialist realism' in literature and all forms of art. The basic purposes of

'socialist realism' were political; it would stimulate desire for revolutionary change through depiction of the real sufferings of the masses, and it would draw intellectuals and lower class people to the party. During the war years many writers were either members of the Tudeh Party or sympathizers.

In the summer of 1946, when the war had ended but a grave national crisis had arisen over the Soviet Russian support of Iranian Āzarbāyjāni autonomy and demand for an oil concession in the north, a First Congress of Iranian Authors was held in Tehrān under the sponsorship of the Iran-Soviet Friendship Society. It was an occasion which was favoured by many authors who were glad to have the opportunity to meet and discuss their problems; the great poet and constitutionalist, Mohammad Taqi Bahār (1880-1951), who was then Minister of Education, accepted the chairmanship. This Congress, through its orientation, significantly influenced the course of future literary effort. Bahār, in his short speech at the opening on 4 Tir/25 June, said that the time had come when literature, which had formerly been supported by the state or the religion, should have the support of the masses; people must realize that the social, political, and economic life of the masses is bound up with their language and is reflected in their literature.[9] The general attitude of the Congress, as expressed by the participants, was in support of social realism in the sense that the major function of literature should be to

mirror society and its needs.[10] Innovation, within the borders of social realism, was also emphasized, so much so that one speaker wanted to see imitators of formal classical literature being caned.[11] It was noted that fiction lagged behind poetry, which still had the lead,[12] and the reason for this was attributed to the social structure of Iran. Bourgeois democracy, which had given the impetus to development of European fiction since the 18th century, had not begun to take shape in Iranian society until the 20th century. In the two centuries when European fiction had moved ahead, Persian literature had declined and fiction had not had any chance to appear in Iran; and now at last, when the social conditions allowed such initiative, European literature had become a 'big brother' to be copied.[13] While favouring European forms, the speakers strongly emphasized the need for realistic Iranian contents.

The modern fiction of Iran was the subject of the talk given by Khānlari at this Congress. Although he spoke mainly about the chronological development of modern Persian fiction, he also emphasized that it was the duty of writers to seek to serve the masses. This point was not contradicted at any time in the proceedings. The discussions indicated general acceptance of the idea that society is the basic reality and that individuality is only meaningful in a social context. Since social relations engulf individuals and impose patterns of mutual interest or conflict on them, individuality, if it is to be described at all, must be seen in its social setting. Any work of art must be in tune with society. Khānlari concluded by saying that writers,

as social pioneers, have a great historical responsibility and must work hard, support freedom, and avoid pessimism.[14]

The appeal of the Congress was not, of course, altogether new. Jamālzādeh had first appealed for realism in the preface to his Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud a quarter of a century before, and Hedāyat had published realistic short stories in Rezā Shāh's reign. After Rezā Shāh's abdication, many writers of both the older and younger generations had already begun to turn out fiction in more or less realistic language with contemporary social and political contents and settings. Plenty of examples can be found in the newspapers and the magazines of the period, which only wanted material bearing on current events. Most of these writings were ephemeral and inferior, but a few of the works which appeared in the years immediately preceding the Congress have lasting interest and literary merit, notably Parākandeh (1944), a collection of short stories by Mahmud E'temādzādeh (Behāzin); Velengāri (1944), a collection of satirical essays, Āb-e Zendegi (1944) a legendary tale, and Hājji Āqā (1945), a novelette centred on a single character, all by Sādeq Hedāyat; Kheymeh-shab-bāzi (1945), a collection of short stories by Sādeq Chubak, and Did-o-bāzdid (1945), a collection of short stories by Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad. The Congress was important for three reasons. First, it confirmed an already existing literary trend of social realism. Secondly, it voiced the desire of writers for civil rights and in particular freedom of publication. Irrespective of their ideas about Iran's social and cultural problems, the writers unanimously abhorred the

paralyzing isolation into which they had earlier been forced. Thirdly, most of the writers took the view that the sole purpose of Rezā Shāh's dictatorship had been to preserve the interests of the ruling clique and the other small privileged groups. In their opposition to the privileged minority, the writers wished to align their own intellectual class with the deprived masses and to act as defenders of constitutional government and of the interests of the majority. In Behāzin's story Posht-e Bām-e Sarā-ye Hājj Hasan (in the collection Be-su-ye Mardom, 1948), the narrator, who is an intellectual, shares the sufferings of poverty with a self-employed tailor. Ustā Ahmad, the tailor, toils hard but earns too little, while the narrator can only make ends meet by getting a second job. He works as a translator for a certain Marzāni, a prosperous merchant whose office is in the same passage of the bazaar where the tailor works. By implication the narrator, like Ustā Ahmad, is a poor worker even though he is a 'white collar' man; and this gives him a sincerity which enables him to win the tailor's trust after a short conversation.

The traditionally religious bāzāris, and profiteering shopkeepers formerly assumed to be 'friends of God' (kāseb habib-e khodā ast), appear as hypocritical bourgeois exploiters; they are no longer characterized as patriots, as in the works of the constitutionalist Jamālzādeh,[15] but are accused of siding with the oppressors. For example, Hedāyat, under the impulse of his dislike of materialism, went to the extreme in his damning portrayals of his few characters from this class. In his works, big merchants

and small shopkeepers are equally disliked. The tradesman and politician Hājji Āqā in his novelette of that name, the odds and ends man and the butcher in Buf-e Kur, and the petty grocer in his short story Mohallel are examples. The virulence of Hedāyat's disgust is obvious when he makes a cunning small shopkeeper remove the valuable leash of the lost dog in the story Sag-e Velgard.

The wartime and immediate post-war years were a period of upheaval when conventional respectability was discredited. Aristocrats were no longer respected for their dignity or rich men for their wealth; with the spread of socialist attitudes, they came to be regarded as pompous, rapacious, miserly, or dishonest. In Suvashun, the novel about the war years by Simin Dāneshvar (the wife-now widow of the writer Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad), one of the characters, a young boy named Khosrow, wants to be sure that his mother is not an aristocrat but is from a working class family. When she asks the reason for his question, he answers that his comrades would not approve of an upper class background; they would even disapprove of ironed trousers. He confesses that he has deliberately torn off his respectable trousers and boasted to his friends that his grandmother had been so poor that she had had nothing to eat but stale bread. Chubak in his short story Mardi dar Qafas (in Kheymeh-shab-bāzi, 1945) illustrates the decline of the aristocracy with a symbolic example of its social isolation. Sayyed Hasan Khān, the last and only survivor of a once great family, is left without any friend in the world except Rāsu, a pet dog, who would like to leave him in order to

pursue an ordinary canine love affair. When Rāsu escapes, Sayyed Hasan Khān is finally locked in the cage of his loneliness. A similar picture of alienation from a new social order is presented in a more recent novel, the already (P.173) by Hushang Golshiri, in which the formerly powerful Qājār prince's isolation and quasi-insanity are the results of the transformation of social values. These characters give indications of the social change to which they cannot adapt their thinking and behaviour.

Another aspect of social life in the war years, when Iran, though not a battle zone, suffered political and economic instability, was the scope for time-serving and trimming. Hājji Āqā's acceptance of democracy in Hedāyat's novelette is opportunistic and hypocritical; in the circumstances which had arisen, it provided a cover under which he might continue exploiting the people and achieve his ambition of a seat in the parliament. Likewise Mahmud Negārang, a character in Behāzin's story 'Ali Gābi (in the collection Parākandeh), hypocritically paves his way to parliament by hiring mob support. This respected merchant of Tehran, who pays the living expenses of a group of parasitic ruffians, turns out to be a former notorious pimp of Ābādān who had taken advantage of the wartime presence of British and Indian troops to make a fortune. In Simin Dāneshvar's Suvashun, Abu'l-Qāsem Khān, a landlord of Fārs, whose ambition is likewise to get into parliament, achieves his goal with British support by depriving his peasants of their crop share and selling it to the British occupation authorities. By implication all members of parliament are

accused of having won their seats dishonestly and are therefore discredited in their claim to be truly representative.

Thus the main focus of the fiction of this period is on the clash between poor and rich and between the old political clique and the masses. For example, in Behāzin's Posht-e Bām-e Sarā-ye Hājj Hasan the intellectual and the worker (represented by the narrator and the tailor) are sharply contrasted with a tax-collector (representing the government), a parasitic Sayyed (representing those clergymen who used religion as a tool for their own ends), and some merchants (representing the bourgeoisie) who were profiting from the wartime difficulties and scarcities. Behāzin, through his characterization of the tax-collector and the Sayyed, criticizes the government and the clergy for conniving with the bourgeoisie to fleece the masses. He shocks the reader with a dialogue between merchants and brokers at the broker Marzāni's office in which, far from rejoicing like ordinary people at the prospect of peace, they pray for the war's continuance because peace would mean the end of their profitable business. These merchants, like Hājji Āqā and Negārang, are also worried about democracy because their position might be endangered if the people woke up. The masses can only be milked if they can be kept naive and docile, and although the situation no longer permitted use of the heavy hand, other means could be employed. The revival of religion which took place in these years, and the approval of it expressed by high officials and prominent politicians, appeared to some contemporary writers to be a hypocritical bid by the 'old political clique' for mass support.[16] In Hedāyat's Hājji Āqā, the crafty Hājji tells

a clergyman that the masses would become unruly if they were allowed to ask questions. The establishment of radical parties and societies working to increase education and promote the interests of the masses could be very dangerous, if not fatal, for both of them. The clergyman accepts a payment from the Hājji, who instructs him to go to the people and blunt their social consciousness by urging them to turn their minds from concern with their life in this lower world to hope of salvation from torment in the world to come. The most penetrating criticisms of the clergy appeared in works of Sādeq Chubak. While Chubak does not share Hedāyat's pessimism, he has always painted unfavourable pictures of the clergy's domination (as he sees it) over the popular mind. His story Ba'd-az-zohr-e Ākhar-e Pā'iz (in the collection Kheymeh-shab-bāzi) portrays the religious lessons in the state schools as too lofty and other-worldly to have any meaning; they have nothing to do with the real life of a poor pupil, but consist of fine phrases about an unknown future life, many of which are in any case unintelligible because they are in Arabic. Behāzin too found religion incapable of solving Iran's problems. In Josteju (in the collection Parākandeh), an official who has become disgusted with his environment appeals to a mollā for help, but the mollā first takes him to be a beggar and tries to avoid him. The mollā's lack of sympathy is equalled by his lack of understanding; he has no answer for the hopeless man, and whatever guidance he offers is irrelevant. Moreover he is a feeble creature, and his feebleness is the reason why he had abandoned real life

for the unknown promised land. In Mive-ye Badbakhti, the next story in the same collection, the clergy neither practise what they preach nor inwardly believe in it. Āqā Sayyed Ghazanfar, a young mollā who earns his living by sermons, is himself a willing breaker of God's laws.

Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad, who was himself the son of a prayer-leader, never completely cast off the religious influences of his upbringing even when he was a Tudeh Party member (1944-1948), and remained subject to them in varying degrees throughout his life.[17] This was first noted by Khānlari at the Writers' Congress in 1946.[18] Many of Āl-e Ahmad's stories are set against a religious background or describe the integral role of religion in Iranian life. In his broadsheet Gharbzadegi (1962), he advocates religion as a weapon of defence against economic and cultural invasion by the West. In some of his early stories, however, he criticizes certain religious attitudes, though not with the ruthless satire found in the writings of some other authors. In Āftab-e Lab-e Bām (in the collection Seh-tār, 1948), he describes the damage that religious formalism can do to family life. A bigoted father insists that his immature daughters shall observe the Ramazān fast in mid-summer as strictly as he does himself. Neither the latitude permitted by Islam nor considerations of his children's health and welfare move him in the least. By the time that the signal to break the fast is about to be heard, the father has lost his temper, the children are listless and resentful, and even the quiet, obedient mother cannot contain her fury. Far from leading the family to greater

holiness, the fast wears out its members and causes its disintegration, at a time when the cooperation of all individuals in the building of a better society is needed. In Seh-tār, the title story of the same collection, religious bigotry and formalism (in the matter of musical instruments) are again objectively described and thereby effectively criticized.

Another social phenomenon of the time was the remarkable staying power of the old politicians. Men who had risen under Rezā Shāh, or even during the constitutional revolution, still found their way after 1941 into high offices and parliamentary seats. To contemporary fiction writers, the survival of these politicians proved that the same old ruling clique still misgoverned Iran. The basic theme of Hedāyat's Hājji Āqā is that all the changes after 1941 were mere illusion. The minor surgical operation which Hājji Āqā undergoes is a symbol of the outward change of régime, and his recovery represents the revival of the old political clique. While lying unconscious under the anaesthetic, Hājji Āqā dreams of a next world which has not undergone any political and social change at all. In that world he is the doorkeeper of his ill-treated former wife's house, while in this world he keeps a strict eye on his family and pulls the strings of his political and commercial deals from a modest office by his main doorway. In Qaziye-ye Khar-e Dajjāl, in the collection Velengāri, Hedāyat again satirically expresses his view that the abdication of Rezā Shāh made no difference. In the first act of a puppet show, a puppet forgets its lines and the annoyed showman

removes it, but in the second act, when a new puppet is put on, just the same performance is given; the foreigners who are the string-pullers have changed the puppets, but not the régime and its basic policy.

It was indeed true that the ministers and officials after 1941 were puppets insofar as they had to bow to the wishes of the occupying powers. A vivid picture of the popular resentment of this situation is presented in the Suvashun, Simin Daneshvar's novel about the wartime life of a family in Fārs. The province suffered a famine, which was certainly made worse by the war. The novel starts with a lavish wedding party for the governor's daughter at which Iranian notables and high officials, and even the governor himself, are humiliatingly overshadowed by arrogant British and Indian officers in full dress uniforms. Next comes a reception for Iranian notables and British officers at the British camp, where the Iranians again look small. Zari, the principal character in the novel, and her husband Yusof, an extremely chivalrous and well-meaning landlord, are amongst the guests. Zari and Yusof avoid being belittled, and the patriotic Yusof refuses to sell his harvest to the British and is eventually murdered. The novel's lyrical and somewhat feminine tone adds to the pathos of the story and the social setting. The agony which befalls the family is meant to symbolize the misfortune of the whole nation. Suvashun, the novel's title, refers to the traditional ceremony of lamentation for the treacherous killing of Siyāvash, the young and heroic prince who is the rightful

heir to the Iranian throne, by Iran's enemies the Turanians - an event recorded in Ferdowsi's Shāhnāmeh and still remembered in oral folklore. Zari is at first overcome with sorrow for the loss of her martyred husband Yusof, but later she assumes her husband's patriotic responsibility and changes her grief into hope. Yusof was a martyr for a national cause, and the blood of such a martyr would not be shed in vain. A tree would grow in the courtyard of Zari's house, and more trees would grow in her town and all over the country.[19] By this, Simin Dāneshvar implies a continuing need to struggle for the freedom of the country.

In Āl-e Ahmad's Darre-ye Khazān-zadeh (in the collection Az Ranji keh Mibarim, 1947), a politically activist miner named Vesāli becomes a martyr whose execution brings a new light of hope into the lives of the other miners. Like Yusof in Suvashun, Vesāli is meant to be a new Siyāvash. Asad, the main character in the following story Zirābihā, is inspired by Vesāli's martyrdom with an ideal of social justice which outweighs all his other feelings, even his grief for the death of his mother and the murder of his brother. He has become a revolutionary, not just with an angry young man's defiant spite but with a clear aim to serve the living. As a bricklayer, he is in a position to destroy the unfinished prison of Kermān, where he is in exile, and get away, but he sees that the mosque can be equally well used as a prison. Asad, obviously representing Āl-e Ahmad himself, sees no difference between the prison and the mosque if the latter is in the service of the former. As already mentioned, Āl-e Ahmad remained

inwardly religious even though he joined a secular Party. His anti-clericalism at this stage of his career was connected with his hostility to the political establishment. The contemporary religious revival was being encouraged by establishment politicians who saw it as a defence against communism and more generally as a means of preventing dissension. Adoption of this policy was based on the assumption that governmental authority would be less likely to be challenged since 'rebellion in any form could be interpreted ... as religious sin'.[20]

In Bozorg 'Alavi's Gileh-mard (in Nāme-hā, 1947), religion is one of the pretexts used by the authorities in the suppression of a peasants' revolt. When the captive hero Gileh-mard is being taken to a gendarmerie post, a gendarme tells him that he and his rebel friends are infidel enemies of God and the Prophet, and that it is a Muslim's religious duty to kill such people. Fear of communism and Russia was uppermost in the minds of the politicians of the 1940s. According to an American observer, "all those opposed to communism became concerned over the spread of these doctrines in Iran, and it was thought by many that the best way to meet this propaganda was by promoting a revival of religion. So the influence of government was used to incite the people to religious observances."[21] Nevertheless the politicians of the old establishment had lost credit, and the great majority of the people were suffering undeniable socio-economic distress. In these circumstances the religious revival did not prevent dissension or inculcate docility, but instead contributed

to the growth of a new political mood which found expression in the struggle for the nationalization of the oil industry. As Norman Jacobs observed, "historically the bazaar and the mosque often have been contiguous. The traditional merchants, craftsmen, and labourers who live and work in the bazaar are organized into individual guilds, in which members of the clergy play significant roles as moral, intellectual, and especially political leaders."[22] The religiously motivated bāzāris then joined other social groups, whose social and economic objectives they did not necessarily share, in an anti-British and anti-Western movement which was strongly flavoured with religion. Mosaddeq's failure to achieve his nationalistic aims and his subsequent defeat were acknowledged to be due to internal as well as external opposition. Various writers and other intellectuals attributed Mosaddeq's failure to the lack of cohesion in Iranian society, and laid special blame both on the Tudeh Party, which at first had not given full support to Mosaddeq, and on the Islamic clergy, whose leading political spokesman, Āyatollāh Abu'l-Qāsem Kāshāni, had defected from Mosaddeq to the rival camp in 1953.[23]

In a symbolic short story Khwāharam va 'Ankabut (in the collection Panj Dāstān), Āl-e Ahmad portrays this situation and accuses the religious authorities of abandoning the people and the Tudeh Party of contenting itself with shedding crocodile tears. The sister of a schoolboy named 'Abbās is bed-ridden and afflicted with cancer, though this is unknown to 'Abbās who takes much of the responsibility for her care. She finally dies after treatment with a remedy from medical folklore, namely the placing of heated lead filings on the afflicted part of her body. 'Abbās's

father, who is a mollā and is apparently meant to represent Āyatollāh Kāshāni, leaves the house early in the morning of the day of her death under the pretext of a pilgrimage to Qom, while her husband (who personifies the Tudeh Party) is busy with his own affairs and does nothing to help. 'Abbās has been told to get the lead filings from a foundryman in the bazaar but has not been told why they are wanted. To his surprise the foundryman asks no questions about the amount and purpose of the filings and appears to have already been informed, most likely by the father of whom he is a disciple, a relationship typifying the connection between the clergy and the bazaar. 'Abbās finds the bucket in which he carries the lead filings very heavy and wonders what use they will serve. On arriving home he guesses their intended use from the talk of the women, rushes to the room where his sister is suffering, and shouts that he will not allow them to do it; but the sister herself is ready for it, and 'Abbās is taken away by their mother and is sent to school so that they can apply the remedy. This is the second time that 'Abbās has been prevented from helping his sister. The first time is at the beginning of the story when he is prevented from removing a big spider and its web, a symbol of the sister's cancer and also of the old political clique. In the evening, when he comes back from the school's afternoon session, he finds his sister in a critical condition and his brother-in-law weeping. He is worried, and when he objects to what they have done, his cousin sends him on a false mission to her house where he is kept for the night by her son. On his return to the house on the

following day, 'Abbās finds no sign of his sister or even her bed, but the spider and its web are in the same place, at the top of the window, as before. In addition to the Tudeh party, mosque, and bazaar, the common people are also blamed for their ignorance, represented by 'Abbās, and their connivance, represented by the women of the household. The woman who actually applies the remedy is a stranger, probably meant to represent the Americans.

The movement for the nationalization of the oil industry is the subject of Āl-e Ahmad's Sargozasht-e Kandu-hā (Story of the Beehives, 1955). In this allegory, the 'Persian Oil ... is beneficial only to Western factories, while the producing country, like the bees, is deprived of her own product'.[24] A beekeeper removes all the honey which the bees produce and gives them only a weak solution or sherbet of sugar and water to live on. This sherbet does not taste right to them and at the same time does them harm because its smell attracts dangerous red ants (i.e. Soviet Russians) into the beehives. The wise elders who are the leaders of the bees gather together, and after a long debate about their former pleasant life in their ancestral home on a remote mountain and the dangers which they are likely to face, they decide to recommend a homeward migration and to put the question to the whole community: would they rather submit to their cruel fate and stay where they are, or would they rather save themselves by risking migration? They vote unanimously for migration. The closing scene of the fable is the migration of the bees which takes place in the second month of spring, i.e. Ordibehesht (April-May). Āl-e Ahmad's mention of this month probably refers

to the appointment of Mosaddeq, the leader of the National Front and chief advocate of oil nationalization, to be Prime Minister for the first time on 29 April 1951. The bees fly over a village whose inhabitants, being potential rivals of the beekeeper and glad to see his ruin, look up at them with mischievous smiles while busily whispering among themselves. With this scene the fable is closed; the fate of the bees and the adventures they are likely to face in the migration remain untold and are left to the imagination of the reader. After all, these things are not very important. What is important is the migration, a symbol for a nationalist movement which the writer implies has a Twelver Shi'ite nature, since the bees fly in twelve separate groups.

Āl-e Ahmad's social outlook was basically determined by cultural and religious concerns. In his campaign against foreign influence and foreign interference, he sought isolation. We are told of the bees' migration to their ancestral home, but we are not told what it would achieve for them except isolation. In Gharbzadegi he divides the world into two camps: the exploiting nations or 'the West', and the exploited ones. By 'the West' he meant the industrialized countries, regardless of their political systems.[25] The words 'modern civilization' meant for him only the consumption made possible by the exchange of Western manufactured goods for raw materials from Eastern or poor consumer countries. In his view, this exchange was beneficial only to the West (i.e. the manufacturing countries), and it could and should be stopped. It had

been stopped in India by Gandhi who encouraged the use of the spinning-wheel, and in Iran by Mosaddeq who turned off the oil tap.[26] Āl-e Ahmad states that he has no sympathy for the West and would feel no concern if Western industry came to a halt. He does not even care for the Western working class, since it is a part of the Western system:

> "I would feel happier if all the factories in Manchester were closed rather than that I, as an Iranian, should go naked and starving while the factory pays the pensioners (workers) in their old age to enjoy strolling in Hyde Park."[27]

Thus to Āl-e Ahmad the whole society is either exploited or exploiting, and the whole society, as a single body, either suffers defeat from outside or succeeds. He compared Mosaddeq with Jamal 'Abd al-Nasir of Egypt, saying that unlike the latter, Mosaddeq was defeated because oil was at stake.[28] What mattered to Āl-e Ahmad in the oil dispute was not so much Iran's economic and social welfare as the sort of relationship between Iran and the West brought about by the presence of the oil industry. This relationship, which is portrayed in Sargozasht-e Kandu-hā as one between exploiter and victim, is also the basic theme of his Gharbzadegi, which is an appeal against Western economic and especially cultural domination.[29] He attaches supreme importance to the relationship between Iranian culture (which is an Islamic culture) and Western culture, and in his concern that Iranians should save their culture from destruction or corruption by Western influences he ignores other problems and conflicts in Iranian society. In Sargozasht-e Kandu-hā, the characters of both the

beekeeper and the bees are described and developed in relation to each other; they are linked by the beehives, and when the relationship comes to an end with the departure of the bees, the author has no more interest in pursuing the story. Although Sargozasht-e Kandu-hā, as Āl-e Ahmad himself admitted, is an unskilful fictional composition,[30] his choice of a traditional style and language, when most of the contemporary literary output - including his own works - had a modern and somewhat Westernized character, was significant.[31] The form, in parallel with the content, proclaimed his aversion to the inflow of Western values.

Āl-e Ahmad employed the same traditional form and language in his Nun va'l Qalam (1961), a piece directed against the Tudeh Party, of which he had been a member in the 1940s before leaving with Maleki in early 1948. His meaning is that Russian communism is as dangerous as Western imperialism to Iranian culture. Both Sargozasht-e Kandu-hā and Nun va'l-Qalam express the author's disappointment over the failure of the oil nationalization movement and the anti-Western struggle. The failure of this movement after it had enjoyed very wide popular support gave rise to bewilderment and bitterness, which were sharpened by the pressure of the post-Mosaddeq governments on the opposition groups.

Disappointment and bewilderment were of course not new phenomena caused solely by Mosaddeq's fall. The failure of the hopes for a better future after Rezā Shāh's abdication and the end of the war had already caused bitter disillusionment.

Monādi ol-Haqq, the young poet in Hedāyat's Hājji Āqā (1945), and Asad, the young worker in Āl-e Ahmad's story Zirābihā (in Az Ranji keh Mibarim, 1947), are portrayed as spokesmen of these hopes. In the event, the young had failed to dislodge the old. In Zirābihā, we are not told whether Asad achieves anything, while in Hājji Āqā, Monādi ol-Haqq does not appear to have made much impact (though nothing specific is said); but the survival of the old political clique represented by Hājji Āqā obviously implies that the hopes of the intellectuals had been in vain. In their view the sole aim of the ruling establishment was to maintain the social status quo. For example, in Bozorg 'Alavi's short story Gileh-Mard, a gendarmerie sergeant represents the government's struggle to restore the old order. The date of the incident is deliberately left obscure. The hero, Gileh-Mard, is a revolutionary peasant. He and his fellow-villagers are no longer prepared to endure exploitation by both government and landowner, but cannot achieve much under the constraints of their inferior social status. A stray bullet fired by the sergeant kills Gileh-Mard's wife, and after some guerilla activity in the mountains, he himself is captured by the same sergeant and an ordinary gendarme. All three set out for the gendarmerie post, making their way through the jungle in pouring rain on a black, stormy night. The story proceeds with dialogues in which Gileh-Mard holds his ground against the sergeant, and reaches its climax in a short dialogue between Gileh-Mard and the ordinary gendarme in the sergeant's absence. This gendarme turns out to be a peasant of Gileh-Mard's own

class, a Baluch who was forced by hunger and feudal tyranny to become a bandit and then enlisted in the gendarmerie to escape a fate like that of Gileh-Mard. He gives back Gileh-Mard's pistol to him for a price, but when Gileh-Mard tries to escape does not hesitate to kill him. 'Alavi's implication is that class consciousness and class struggle are diverted and weakened by dissension within the exploited class and by the placing of personal before social interests.

A similar point is made in Bā Shobeyru (1972) by Mahmud Dowlatābādi. In this novel, which is likewise about the political life of the 1940s, the mutually contending characters stem not only from the same social class, but from the same parents. 'Obeyd, the elder brother, after failing to make money illegally, namely through smuggling, joins the navy, and therewith the ruling class, in order to make money legally. This brings him into conflict with Jāsem, his younger brother, who is a poor and conscientious student, and with Holleh his sister, whom he has caused to be married against her will to another smuggler. In defiance of 'Obeyd, Holleh obtains a divorce, becomes a schoolmistress, and marries Khodu, a teacher of the same school who is a radical political activist. 'Obeyd, fearing that Jāsem's doings may endanger his own position, tries unsuccessfully to get Jāsem killed. Prior to this, Khodu has been arrested and sent to Tehran, where he is detained in prison without trial. Holleh suddenly finds herself alone, because 'Obeyd rejects the traditional responsibility of a Muslim elder brother to support and protect an unattached sister, and will have nothing to do with her.[32]

As a solitary woman in a male-dominated society, Holleh is considered to be not respectable; and as a devoted wife and an intellectual, she suffers agonies of worry about the fate of her husband in particular and of her compatriots in general. She is able to keep her employment in the same school, but the headmaster tries to take advantage of her solitary, unprotected position, and when she spurns his immoral advances, gives her the sack. She is thus left utterly alone, and with acute material anxieties because teaching was the only career open to an educated Iranian woman. She seeks refuge in the privacy of her bleak abode, but even her privacy is taken from her. In the darkness of night, a man whom she cannot identify rapes her and makes her pregnant. Having thus been robbed of her last remaining possession, namely her self-respect, and/of her jailed husband's trust, she can endure life no longer and kills herself. In Dowlatābādi's symbolism, Holleh's fate is meant to represent not only the subjection of Iranian women but also the suffering of the Iranian lower classes as a whole. She is a helpless victim of the prevailing social conditions; so too is her second husband, Khodu. He is jailed without being charged. The irony is that after he has devoted his life and gone to prison for a social cause, his devoted wife is rejected like a leper by the very people he and she had sought to help. Even their colleague, the head-master, shows no sympathy for her, but instead tries to take advantage of her loneliness and (it is hinted) ultimately destroys her.

A similar dialectic of class interest, ideological outlook, and family feeling appears in Hamsāye-hā (Neighbours, 1974), a novel by Ahmad Mahmud, set in Ābādān around the year 1950. The main character, Khāled, is a student who works earnestly for social betterment from within the walls of his own home. His cousin is a naive but pretentious soldier. Popular anti-régime demonstrations in which Khāled joins take place and are dispersed by troops. When Khāled escapes into the safety of a side-street, for a while he can hear the footsteps of soldiers who are chasing the fleeing crowd. We are not told whether the cousin is among them, but we know that he is nonetheless a soldier. Khāled's love for his father confronts him with another dilemma. The father's abject poverty typifies the state of the lower class, but his ignorance and stubborn religiosity sets him against the attitudes of his son. He disapproves of the efforts of the radical activists for the social uplift of their class. Conditions are very bad, foreign imports have ruined the local handicrafts (even spade handles being imported), and foreign capital is dominant; workers are made redundant and poverty is widespread. The father is out of work and eventually has to leave the country in search of employment in a neighbouring (Gulf) state. Yet he objects to any opposition against the régime or any action for a better life for the workers. He dislikes their neighbour Mohammad, who is a radical young worker, for the sole reason that this neighbour does not say the daily prayers. The father is portrayed as a naive religious fatalist who believes in the supernatural

power of a book called Ketāb-e Asrār-e Qāsemi (Book of Mohammadan Mysteries), and who gives food to a preacher, Hājj Sheykh 'Ali, when he himself is too poor to feed his own family. As for the mother, she gives away her small savings to make her soldier nephew happy while her own children are almost starving. The author suggests that neither religion, represented by Hājj Sheykh 'Ali, nor the state, represented by the soldier cousin, are concerned with the problems of the people. The soldier makes high-sounding utterances and gestures, but does not hesitate to accept his poor aunt's money. The uniform which he wears separates him from the people, and the power and awe which he possesses spring neither from himself nor from the people; he is only a puppet. The head of the government, who is not mentioned by name but is obviously meant to be Hājj 'Ali Razmārā (Prime Minister, June 1950 - March 1951), is similarly remote from the people in his stubborn opposition to oil nationalization. On the radio, a talk which he gives on this subject is allegorically followed by a talk on puppet-shows. He does not represent the people any more than the soldier does; he is a mere puppet of the Western powers.[33] Religion too is portrayed as lacking concern for the welfare of the people, and as being reactionary and opposed to the aspirations of the workers and intellectuals. It is even hinted that the Islamic clergy are associated with the old political clique and with the West[34] rather than with the poor. When the neighbour Mohammad censures the father's naive religious attitudes, he suggests that such attitudes are the basic cause of the people's poverty and misfortune. The same

view of religion appears in another work by Ahmad Mahmud, Pesarak-e Bumi (The Native Boy, 1974),a short story also set in Ābādān shortly before the premiership of Mosaddeq. Here religion is represented by an old man who works as a gardener for a foreign employee of the oil company. The contrast between the attitudes and character of the old man and those of the young protagonist suggests that religious institutions are too out-dated to be militant or relevant to new social aspirations. Moreover the old man's care for the foreigner's garden suggests that the non-militant mosque supports the interests of the West. For this support the mosque gets a reward. While the inhabitants of the town have to light their hovels with dim lanterns, the mosque, like the European staff houses, is brightly lit with electricity supplied by the oil company.

While generally showing aversion to clerical influence, some intellectuals also became disillusioned with the Tudeh party. Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad, who had been a Tudeh Party member, resigned in 1948 together with Khalil Maleki and joined the latter's group called Niru-ye Sevvom (The Third Force).[35] In his Nun va'l Qalam (1961) which, as already mentioned, is written in the style of old Persian folk tales, Āl-e Ahmad likens the Tudeh leaders to a group of darvishes and implies that they were more interested in putting on a show of martyrdom (shahid-namāyi) than in organizing practical resistance (i.e. against Western domination); the darvishes finally run away from the battlefield (to India, so he says), making a vain excuse that they will bring peace from abroad.[36] In Khodādād Khān (written in

1948, published in Zan-e Ziyādi, 1952), the protagonist of that name, who is an influential member of a political party (i.e. the Tudeh), is depicted as a self-seeker more concerned with personal ambition than with the party's programme. In Khwāharam va 'Ankabut (in Panj Dāstān), the eight Tudeh deputies in the 14th Majles (parliament)[37] are symbolized by eight flies who are caught in a spider's web, and both the Tudeh party and the 'olamā are condemned for not, in the end, supporting Mosaddeq. Although the passivity of the common people and the tergiversation of the bāzāris are also brought into the picture, the main censure is directed against the Tudeh party and the 'olamā. The common people, symbolized by the women folk, are ignorant and unaware through no fault of their own, while the bāzāris, typified by the shopkeeper Ustā Asghar, follow the instructions of the clergy. It is Ustā Asghar, who as a disciple of the father, supplied on the latter's orders the lead for the treatment which caused the sister's death, and which ironically she herself had requested.

Later Āl-e Ahmad moved to a position of hostility towards all political parties. In Gharbzadegi he wrote:

> "Western democracy is based on political parties, and political parties spring from advanced economies. Otherwise they change into political cliques, which we have in plenty here. Our parties, if they are not imposed from above or are not mere cliques for private advancement, certainly will not be more than political factions. A faction lacking access to (establishment) policies and freedom of expression and association will content itself with playing underground politics and making a show of martyrdom (shahid-namā'i). Such factions, whether of a religious or political colour, have no significance except as potential nuclei

> of resistance which may perhaps be useful some day. Since they are remote from the people and not involved in the people's sufferings, they cannot communicate and make their voices heard by the people. The only thing that such a faction can do is to start a movement on behalf of some foreign power which needs to give a local and national appearance to its activities. Most of the coups d'état and rapid changes of government in this corner of the East are carried out in the name, if not by the hand, of such factions, but really for the benefit of the policy of one or another foreign power. What is certain is that in these circumstances we cannot take Western democracy as a model."[38]

Sādeq Hedāyat, who in the years immediately following Rezā Shāh's abdication had moved towards optimism about a better future for mankind after the war, reverted to his most despairing pessimism when he wrote Tup-e Morvāri (1947) and Payām-e Kāfkā (1948). Tup-e Morvāri,[39] in the words of H. Kāmshād, "is an indiscreet narrative, probably his (Hedāyat's) shrug of the shoulders at what was happening in his country".[40] In it, the imperialism of the Western powers, the despotism of Iranian governments, and the obscurantism of the Iranian clergy are all sharply satirized. Payām-e Kāfkā contains a bitter criticism of power politics. It "is both a brilliant introduction to (H. Qā'emiān's) Persian translation of Kafka's The Penal Colony, and a description of Hedāyat's own pessimism. A mature work both in thought and style, it is the complete expression of a philosophy of despair."[41] With a foreboding remarkably like that of the English writer George Orwell in his novels 1984 (first published in 1949) and Animal Farm (first published in 1945), Hedāyat fears that the ultimate

consequence of the war may be a world dictatorship in which the individual mind is enslaved to the ignorant stupidity of the power seekers. In such a world, religion would be championed either by those who were deceived or by those who sought to deceive the others.[42] There would be no justice and no hope for mankind. Contradiction is rooted in man himself, because his limited physical abilities are not commensurate with his unlimited capacity for free thought. To escape from the limitations of his physical life, he conceives the idea of martyrdom after the example of Christ, and thus aligns himself with his enemy against himself.[43] Hedāyat can see no hope for the human individual, either through politics or through religion.

An equally deep pessimism is discernible in the second collection of Sādeq Chubak's writings entitled Antarikeh Luti-sh Mordeh Bud, which was first published in 1949. The purpose of Qafas (The Cage), a short story in this collection, at first appears to be no more than to condemn cruelty in the sale and slaughter of chickens, but a broader meaning soon becomes apparent. The chickens packed in too small a cage symbolize the people. They all strive eagerly to escape, but can do nothing for themselves except await their cruel fate.[44] Although the chickens, who are meant to portray human beings, do not wish to perish, they can see no escape and jostle one another aimlessly until the turn of each to be removed and beheaded comes. Chubak's picture of human submissiveness differs from that of Hedāyat, whose characters often avoid submission

by committing suicide. In Tup-e Lāstiki, the play in the same collection, the characters are rendered similarly aimless by social intimidation. In the title story 'Antari keh Luti-sh Mordeh Bud, a performing monkey is set free by the death of his itinerant showman. The monkey's freedom, however, is an illusion; the chain is around his neck as before, even though there is no longer a man to hold it. The monkey would like to perform the showman's duties towards himself, but cannot. With no showman to give him instructions, he is left aimless and terrified. The implication of this story seems to be that after the departure of Rezā Shāh, the people's fear of their former ruler was replaced by the fear which springs from bewilderment and aimlessness.

In general it may be said that the main concerns of the intellectuals were the poverty and ignorance of the masses and the dependence of the country on the West. Their aspirations were for social justice and for national independence and cultural integrity. Most of them had supported Mosaddeq in the hope that he might do something towards achievement of these aspirations. His failure plunged them into political disillusion and mental despair. They distrusted the ruling group as being upper class and bound to the West, and had no confidence in its promises; they were disillusioned with the Tudeh Party for not being able to put its ideals into practice, and they were disappointed with many of the 'olamā who had busied themselves with issues such as the reveiling of women [45] instead of using their influence for the good of the masses. Many of

them suspected the leading clergy of being in league with the old political clique and of not necessarily being anti-Western, and were confirmed in this view by Kāshānī's already mentioned desertion of Mosaddeq. The emergence of dissension among the clergy[46] and within the banned Tudeh Party after Mosaddeq's fall shows that political disillusion was also upsetting these two opposition camps. Themes such as the suffering of the lower classes, the corruption of the ruling class, the intervention of foreign powers, and the reactionary nature of some of the clergy and certain Islamic traditions were constantly being voiced by intellectuals of every hue. The fact that they were loudly voiced by the Tudeh Party does not justify any generalization that the social-critical literature of this period was solely communist-inspired or that the authors were necessarily Tudeh members. Nevertheless many intellectuals shared some of the Tudeh Party's ideas.

After the eruption of the oil dispute, the intellectuals had combined with the 'olamā and most of the nation in supporting Mosaddeq. In the subsequent period, after the fall of Mosaddeq, they continued to view the régime as not truly representative. The most important single causes of their distrust were the restriction of political activity and the censorship. Later they began to fear that the government's modernization policy, which they considered to be of benefit only to the already well off 'Westernized' class in the cities, would endanger the people's Persian culture and Islamic values.

Footnotes (III.111)

1 On the rise of the press and the political push behind it, see Ervand Abrahamian, "Factionalism in Iran: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-1946)", in M.E.S., Vol.14, No.1 (Jan 1978), pp.22-55, and L.P. Elwell-Sutton, "Political Parties in Iran", in M.E.J., Vol.3 (1949), pp.45-62.

2 Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad, "Hedāyat-e Buf-e Kur" in Haft Maqāleh, p.17.

3 Āl-e Ahmad, op.cit., p.17.

4 Parviz Nātel Khānlari, "Nasr-e Fārsi dar Dowre-ye Akhir", in Nakhostin Kongere-ye Nevisandegān-e Irān, (hereafter N.K.N.I.), pp.128-175. See also pp.44-50 and pp.185-187.

5 The literary periodicals of this period are briefly discussed by Věra Kubìčková in Jan Rypka's History of Iranian Literature, pp.401-404.

6 For a list of Hedāyat's articles, see H. Kamshād's appendix to his Modern Persian Prose Literature, pp.205-208.

7 Cf. L.P. Elwell-Sutton, "The Influence of Folk-Tale and Legend on Modern Persian Literature", in Iran and Islam, pp.247-254; Jiri Cejpek, "Iranian Folk Literature" in Jan Rypka's History of Iranian Literature, pp.609-709; William Hanaway, "Popular Literature in Iran", in Iran, Continuity and Variety, pp.59-75, and "Formal Elements in the Persian Popular Romances", in R.N.L., Vol.2, No.1 (Spring 1971), pp.139-160.

8 Bozorg 'Alavi, Geschichte der modernen persischen literatur, pp.216-218.

9 Mohammad Taqi Bahār, N.K.N.I., p.7.

10 Cf. Bozorg 'Alavi, N.K.N.I., pp.183-185.

11 'Abdul-Hoseyn Nushin, N.K.N.I., pp.51-52.

12 Bozorg 'Alavi, N.K.N.I., p.184.

13 Fātemeh Sayyāh, N.K.N.I., pp.181-182.

14 Parviz Nātel Khānlari, N.K.N.I., pp.174-175.

15 Cf. Jamalzādeh's Qoltashan Divān, in which he makes a sharp contrast between his merchant character, who is extremely well-meaning, and Qoltashan Divān, a crooked and cunning character who represents the dominance of a corrupt bureaucracy.

16 On the revival of religion in this period, see S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, pp.60-72.

17 Later in his life (in 1964), Āl-e Ahmad went on a pilgrimage to Mecca where he wrote a diary Khasi dar Miqāt. In this book he says that he wishes he could practise Islam as Moslems did at the time of the Prophet. (Khasi dar Miqāt, p.100).

18 Parviz Nātel Khānlari, N.K.N.I., p.166.

19 Simin Dāneshvar, Suvashun, p.303.

20 Norman Jacobs, The Sociology of Development: Iran as an Asian Case Study, pp.214-215.

21 William McElwee Miller, "The Religious Situation in Iran", in M.W., Vol.41 (1951), pp.81-82.

22 Norman Jacobs, op.cit., p.220.

23 For the Tudeh Party's avoidance of giving full support to Mosaddeq, see F.M. Javānshir, Tajrebe-ye Bist-o-hasht-e Mordād, pp.145-146. For Āyatollāh Kāshāni's breaking away from Mosaddeq, see L.P.Elwell-Sutton, Persian Oil, p.312; S. Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, p.197, and S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, p.69.

24 Gholām-Rezā Sabri Tabrizi, "Human Values in the Works of Two Persian Writers", in Actes du Ve.Congrès International d'Arabisants et d'Islamisants, p.414.

25 In Āl-e Ahmad's Islamic-nationalist view, both capitalism and communism are equally alien to Iranian society and both intend to exploit Iran. While the former is condemned in Sargozasht-e Kandu-hā, the latter is criticized in Nun va'l-Qalam.

26 Āl-e Ahmad, Khasi dar Miqāt, pp.143-144.

27 Āl-e Ahmad, "Yek Goftegu-ye Derāz", in Arzyābi-ye Shetābzadeh, p.79.

28 Āl-e Ahmad, Khasi dar Miqāt, p.107.

29 The main theme of Gharbzadegi is reflected in almost all the later and some previous works of Āl-e Ahmad. In his works of fiction, this concern is particularly obvious in Modir-e Madreseh and Nefrin-e Zamin. These three works have been analysed by Jamshid M. Irānian in his Vāqe'iyat-e Ejtemā'i va Jahān-e Dāstān, pp.148-231.

30 Āl-e Ahmad, "Yek Goftegu-ye Derāz" in Arzyābi-ye Shetābzadeh, p.78.

31 Cf. Elwell-Sutton, "The Influence of Folk-Tale and Legend on Modern Persian Literature", in Iran and Islam, p.252.

32 Thus R. Arasteh states that "the male members of the family acquire a protective attitude towards the women of the household ... A young man considers it his duty to vigorously defend the honour of his sister ... If his sister does not marry or if she is widowed and he is the head of the family, he unquestionably takes the responsibility for her and any children she may have". R. Arasteh, Man and Society in Iran, p.48.

33 In answer to the Senate's questionnaire concerning the nationalization of oil on March 3,1950, Razmārā issued a report to the effect that Iran was not in a position to undertake such a venture. (See L.P. Elwell-Sutton, Persian Oil, pp.206-207). His remarks, particularly the point concerning the incapacity of Iranians to run the oil industry,were considered to be extremely offensive and to have been dictated by the British. (See F.M. Javānshir, Tajrebe-ye Bist-o hasht-e Mordād, p.107).

34 The most influential religious figure of this period, Āyatollāh Kāshāni, had been arrested by the British during the war under suspicion of having contacts with Nazi Germany. During the nationalization movement he was at first one of Mosaddeq's leading supporters. In March 1953, however, he did not approve of Mosaddeq's attempts at acquiring extra authority and broke away from him. Kāshāni's split from Mosaddeq and his subsequent political attitude were seen by many as being in favour, if not in the service, of the Shāh and eventually of the West. For the political role of Kāshāni and some other 'olamā in this period, see S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, pp.60-72.

35 Āl-e Ahmad, "Masalan Sharh-e Ahvālāt", in Jahān-e Now, Vol.24, No.3 (1969), p.5. For the crisis in the Tudeh party which led to the split, see S. Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, pp.123-148.

36 Āl-e Ahmad, "Yek Goftegu-ye Derāz", in Arzyābi-ye Shetābzadeh, pp.79-80.

37 For the names of the Tudeh deputies, see S. Zabih, The Communist Movement in Iran, p.86. For the 14th Majles election, see Ervand Abrahamian, "Factionalism in Iran: Political Groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-46)", in M.E.S., Vol.14, No.1 (1978), pp.22-55.

38 Āl-e Ahmad, Gharbzadegi, p.91.

39 The Tup-e Morvāri(d), literally Pearl Cannon, was made on the order of Fath 'Ali Shāh in 1817-18 and later was placed in the Maydān-e Naqāreh-Khāneh in the centre of Tehran. Just as simple villagers tied cloths or papers bearing wish-vows onto sacred trees, the simpler women of Tehran used to tie wish-vows to this old cannon until it was transferred to the Army Officers' Club in the reign of Rezā Shāh.

40 Hasan Kamshad, Modern Persian Prose Literature, p.200.

41 Op.cit., p.200.

42 Sādeq Hedāyat, "Payām-e Kāfka", in Goruh-e Mahkumin, p.36.

43 Op.cit., pp.38-39.

44 Cf. 'A. Dastgheyb, "Honar-e Tanz dar Neveshte-hā-ye Chubak", in Payām-e Novin, Vol.4, No.7 (1962), pp.5-6.

45 See S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, p.63.

46 For the factions among the 'olamā, see S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, pp.62-69.

III.IV

Censorship and Constraint

After the fall of Mosaddeq, a state of emergency was declared and censorship was imposed. The premiership of Fazlollāh Zāhedi (August 1953-April 1955) was marked by 'wholesale arrests and periodical executions ...; newspapers were suppressed and political demonstrations banned and forcibly broken up.'[1] For nationalist intellectuals, the turn of events was a heavy blow. In fact almost all the death penalties and long prison sentences were inflicted on persons (mainly army officers) found guilty of communist activity. Mosaddeq and some other National Front leaders got relatively short prison sentences, though Hoseyn Fātemi, who had been Mosaddeq's last Foreign Minister and had been caught in hiding, was executed after a long trial.

In 1957, when Manuchehr Eqbāl was Prime Minister, the 19th Majles approved a law for the establishment of the Internal Security and Intelligence Organization (SAVAK - Sāzmān-e Amniyat va Ettelā'āt-e Keshvar) and for the trial of security cases by military courts at all times instead of only at times when a state of emergency had been declared. In the same year the Shāh announced his desire that the country's politicians should group themselves into two parties, of which the one winning the majority of votes would form the government and the other would form a 'loyal opposition'. This idea was unacceptable to radicals and unintelligible to the masses. In the prolonged political crisis of 1961-63, the government allowed the revived National Front and the Freedom Movement (Nahzat-e Āzādi),

an Islamic group with nationalist tendencies led by Mehdi Bāzargān,[2] to work openly and publish more or less freely. Expression of nostalgia for the nationalism of the Mosaddeq period thus became admissible and is reflected in some of the literary writings of these years.[3]

After the Shāh's White Revolution of 15 February 1963, the censorship was tightened. No criticism of the régime or of its basic internal, foreign, and defence policies could be published, but mild criticism of details or of application was allowed, and veiled critical allusions were either tolerated or overlooked.

From about 1970 until 1977, the SAVAK was strengthened and the censorship was made much more severe, while the press and the radio and television became more and more propagandistic and monotonous. The SAVAK acted as a law unto itself. Supporters of human rights in Iran and in Western Europe and North America condemned the SAVAK's use of torture in interrogations and the refusal of the martial law courts to let accused persons employ lawyers (instead of army officers) as defence counsel.

In an article published on 12 February 1976, the Times described Iran as "a country where political prisoners abound. The Shahanshah and his regime refuse to release information about the total number, and estimates range from 25,000 to 100,000. ... The death penalty is not uncommon, and torture and summary executions have been alleged and in some cases proved ... The military tribunal and appeal would have been held in secret. The local press, which is heavily censored, would only have been able to

print the information provided by the régime."

In August 1977 the Prime Minister, Amir 'Abbās Hoveydā, resigned after twelve years in office. In his place the Shāh appointed Jamshid Āmuzgār, whose declared intentions were to curb inflation, deal with the housing problem, and enlarge civil rights. Āmuzgār did not abolish censorship or the SAVAK, but granted much greater freedom of publication and speech. He also allowed civilian lawyers to defend accused persons before the military courts, and released many prisoners held by the SAVAK. His anti-inflationary steps and measures to reduce the country's balance of payments deficit - caused by the devaluation of the U.S. dollar with which oil prices were paid, and by a fall in Western and Japanese oil purchases - resulted in unemployment and damaged the business of bazaar merchants and shopkeepers amongst others. The partial liberalization did not satisfy the régime's opponents but instead encouraged them to further demands. His resignation in September 1978 marked the start of the revolution which was to topple the Pahlavi dynasty.

With regard to modern Persian literature, the period from the appointment of Āmuzgār to the resignation of Bāzargān (the first revolutionary Prime Minister, February-November 1979) is of some importance because several previously censored or restricted books were published during these two years.

As a broad generalization, it may be said that in the quarter century 1953-1978 censorship was always a source of anxiety to fiction writers, but did not always deter them from social and political criticism. Such writing was

often prudently veiled, but sometimes the veil was transparently thin. For example, plays by the leading dramatist Gholām-Hoseyn Sā'edi (Gowhar-e Morād), including some with fairly obvious political implications, were first produced in the state-owned 25 Shahrivar Theatre in Tehran or filmed by National Iranian Television(N.I.T.V.).[4] Social studies of poor rural communities by Āl-e Ahmad and Sā'edi containing implied censure of the government for its neglect of rural areas were published by the Tehran University Social Studies Institute. In the face of the régime's sensitivity towards the position of minority language groups, the school teacher and story writer Samad Behrangi failed to persuade the educational authorities to reform their methods,[5] but could at least publish his important essays on the educational problems of Āzarbāyjān, Kand-o-kāv dar Masā'el-e Tarbiyati-ye Iran, in 1965, in which he discussed the meaninglessness of the bourgeois-style official textbooks to poor village schoolchildren and the difficulties resulting from the policy of teaching Āzarbāyjāni Turkish-speaking village children through the sole medium of Persian.

On the other hand, many literary works were either prevented from appearing or confiscated after publication and not allowed to be republished. For example, Sādeq Hedāyat's anti-governmental and anti-clerical Tup-e Morvāri (1947) could not be printed at all until sometime in the late 1970s, when it was slipped onto the market by an unknown publisher calling himself '333 Publications' in a plain black cover bearing only the title and the author's name garbled as Hādi Sedāqat. In editions of Sādeq Chubak's

collections Kheymeh-shab-bāzi and 'Antari keh Luti -sh Mordeh Bud, which were reprinted in the early 1970s, the allegorical story Esā'e-ye Adab and the play Tup-e Lāstiki were removed because they are satires of Rezā Shāh. In the words of S. Akhavi, "after the coronation of the Shāh in 1967 and the celebration of the 2500th anniversary of the monarchy in 1971, the room for criticism of existing lines of policy became so limited that any public complaints was known to produce military trials, quick convictions, and long prison terms."[6]

In April 1968 an Iranian Writers' Centre (Kānun-e Nevisandegān-e Irān) was established by a large number of authors and poets, who issued the following declaration of intent:

1. Defence of freedom of expression in reliance on the Iranian Constitution (articles 20 of the Fundamental Law and 21 of the Supplementary Fundamental Law) and on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (articles 18 and 19).

   Freedom of all kinds of expression, including written, oral, and representational, i.e. in print, in speech, and in film, radio, and television. Every person shall have the right to compose, print, and publish his own writings and thoughts.

   The authorities who will be requested to respect this right are the three powers (i.e. judicial, legislative, and executive) of this country. All writers who strive to obtain and secure this

right and who accept this declaration may enrol and participate in the Iranian Writers' Centre.

2. Defence of the professional interests of writers on the basis of the Constitution and of laws which at present or in future do or shall equitably define and regulate the relations between writers, publishers, and governmental organizations.

The Iranian Writers' Centre invites all writers who believe in these two principles and are willing to strive to devote their lives to these causes to rally around the Centre and combine their scattered efforts to reach the goal.

The government, however, did not recognise the Writers' Centre and imposed restrictions on its activities.[7] The unexpected death of Āl-e Ahmad, an active member of the Centre, from a heart attack in September 1969 was a blow to its existence and, like the death of Samad Behrangi by drowning in the previous year, aroused suspicion against the SAVAK. The last action of the Writers' Centre took place in 1970, when it issued a petition of protest against censorship and demanded the release of one of its members, Feridun Tonokāboni, who had been arrested by the SAVAK after the publication of his collection Yāddāsht-hā-ye Shahr-e Sholugh (Memories of the City in Turmoil), even though this book had been previously approved by the Directorate General of Publication (Edāre-ye Negāresh) of the Ministry of Culture and Art.[8] After the protest, which had been signed by 54 authors and poets, some of the active members of the Writers' Centre, including Behāzin,

were arrested, and the Centre consequently became inactive until 1977, when it resumed activity during the premiership of Āmuzgār.

The government's distrust of the Writers' Centre and particularly of Tonokāboni may have been motivated by both external and internal considerations. The British had announced their intention of quitting the Persian Gulf before 1971, and the Americans had ended their military aid to Iran in 1969. The government was anxious to replace the British and take control of the Gulf by building up Iranian military strength through arms purchases, and to establish new industries through importation of Western capital, technology, and expertise. In the government's view, the execution of this policy, and particularly the attraction of foreign capital and technology into Iran, had got to be secured. While this policy was considered by all radical and nationalist groups to be a 'sell-out', the government was anxious to keep the country as quiet as possible and make it appear as an 'island of peace'. Although several foreign firms had already invested in Iran, from 1970 onwards there was a rapid growth in the number of American, European, and Japanese firms and the amount of their investment.[9] Any form of criticism or opposition was interpreted by the régime as 'trouble-making' and 'against the nation's interests', and was therefore ruthlessly suppressed.

The discontent of radical intellectuals was first practically manifested in 1969 when students of Tehran University joined workers in successful demonstrations against a sharp rise in the fares charged by the state-

owned Tehran bus company, whose services were widely used by both students and workers.

Feridun Tonokāboni, who used the pen-name F.T. Āmuzgār, wrote short stories of a topical or journalistic interest, some with literary merit and sociological depth. In Bāmdād dar Meydān (Morning in the Square), a short story in Yāddāsht-hā-ye Shahr-e Sholugh, he depicts a group of people who queue every morning for the bus, and the street vendors who persist in offering goods to them. They are poor, sick, sad people, and they are pressed into a corner of the square by the bus authorities and police officers who call them names or slap their faces. Finally an old man says to the man next to him in the queue: "You know, sir, there ought to be a wall built around this territory with four signs erected on its four corners, one marked 'Poorhouse', another 'Lunatic Asylum', another 'Home for Invalids', and another 'Prison Camp'."[10] This story is dated 1969. In another piece, Tonokāboni contrasts the hard life of the poor with the lavishness of official pomp when he makes a bus-driver speak about the paralysis of his neighbour's son while the bus is passing through 'channels of light and triumphal arches'.[11] This story is dated 1967, the year of the Shāh's coronation which was celebrated with illuminations and triumphal arches. In the same book Tonokāboni refers to the White Revolution in a piece consisting only of these words: "Revolution without bloodshed is but a joke (az ān harf-hā ast!), just as if you were to say that you have swept the house without making any dust."[12]

Intellectuals fell under more suspicion and pressure

after the start of the revolutionary guerilla activity inside Iran. In February 1971 an armed group of educated young men launched an attack on a gendarmerie post at Siyāhkal in Gilān. Although fifteen guerillas were killed or captured within a few days, the rest of the group joined another educated guerilla group which had already tried to attack a police station in Qolhak, a northern suburb of Tehrān. Together they formed the nucleus of the Marxist-influenced Iranian People's Fedā'i Guerilla Organization (Sāzman-e Cherik-hā-ye Fedā'i-ye Khalq). In the same year, 1971, a separate group called the People's Combatants Organization (Sāzman-e Mojāhedin-e Khalq) first embarked on armed action; its members were also educated young men, but its emphasis was on Islam.

In the following years, several bombings of banks and cinemas, and assassinations and attempted assassinations of Iranian officers and American military advisers occurred. There was also much student unrest in the university campuses all over the country. It was a fact that there had been some friendships between certain writers and individual guerillas.[13] Moreover, in the course of several months in 1973-1974, the SAVAK arrested twelve intellectuals, including the poet Khosrow Golsorkhi, who was executed in February 1974 on a charge of plotting to kidnap members of the royal family in 1973. Such events sharpened the official suspicion of intellectuals and their writings. To the security authorities any critical writing seemed

to be an incitement to armed rebellion.[14] Among the authors whom the SAVAK imprisoned during the years 1970-1976 were Sā'edi,[16] Behāzin,[16] Rezā Barāhani,[17] Sa'id Soltānpur,[18] Tonokāboni, M. Āzarm,[19] Hushang Golshiri,[20] and the reformist Islamic preacher and writer 'Ali Shari'ati.[21] It is possible that resentment of the censorship stimulated such writers to greater activitythan they might otherwise have shown.

The censorship inhibited free and creative writing through its erratic mode of operation. A practice of advance censorship was introduced in 1966 which lasted with some amendments until the end of 1977. The slowness of the procedure, and the system under which a book had first to be printed and then submitted for approval before it could be put on sale, caused publishers to become cautious and authors to become their own self-censors because there was always a risk that their books might afterwards be banned or have to be expurgated. During this period many previously tolerated books were 'gathered' by the police from bookshops and were not allowed to be reprinted. In 1973, for example, all of the children's stories of Samad Behrangi were banned except his Māhi-ye Siyāh-e Kuchulu, probably because it had achieved prestige by winning awards at international literature festivals at Bologna and Bratislava in 1969.

Censorship and its effects on literature were the main subjects of the opening discussions at a poetry reading festival which was held by the Writers' Centre on ten successive evenings, 10-19 October 1977, after the relaxation under Āmuzgār had allowed it to resume activity. The readings took place in the premises of the Goethe Institute (the West German Cultural Institute) in

Tehran. Although the Centre and its members had been warned to keep off politics and not to mention the word 'censorship',[22] the demand for freedom of expression could not be silenced, and crowds of over 10,000 came to listen with obviously greater interest in the political than the purely literary topics. During the poetry readings, one poet, Feridun Moshiri, a distinguished writer of romantic and lyric verse, met with a chilly reception because he had not composed political poems.[23] On the third evening, Shams Āl-e Ahmad (the brother of the writer Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad) reported briefly on the formation and subsequent suspension of the Writers' Centre and spoke about the effects of censorship. Quoting the official statistics concerning the annual total of published books, he attributed the sharp drop from over 4,000 to approximately 700 in the previous eight years to the effects of censorship. He also stated that in 1971 alone over sixty publishers suffered arrest and confiscation of their stocks. Finally he said that three blacklists had been used by the censors, one of books, one of authors, and one of words. The list of banned books ran to more than one thousand, which he did not have time to specify. On the blacklist of authors were many names, including Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad, Sādeq Hedāyat, Bozorg 'Alavi, Mahmud E'temādzādeh (Behāzin), Feridun Tonokāboni, Mahmud Dowlatābādi, Gholām-Hoseyn Sā'edi, Ahmad Mahmud, Sa'id Soltānpur, and others. The blacklist of words included guerilla, forest, night, winter, rose, tulip, and peony.[24]

Not surprisingly in these circumstances, many politically or socially committed writers used allegorical

forms and symbolical language in their works of fiction, while others remained silent or busied themselves with non-controversial themes or with experimental forms. Their choice of language and form was in most cases imposed rather than voluntary. Symbolism in Persian literature has deep roots(which are discussed on PP. 248-249) and does not have the same roots as European symbolism, and the use of ambiguous form or language by Iranian authors was generally a means to avoid censorship.[25] They distort the form for the sake of the content rather than exalt the form for its own sake. The widespread adoption of this practice is evidence of the efficacy of the censorship.[26] In certain works, for instance in some of the short stories and plays of Sā'edi, the symbolic meaning was easily perceived by contemporary Iranian readers. In other works the symbolism was often beyond the grasp of even well-informed Iranians, let alone the barely literate masses. This obscurity created a gap between socially comitted writers and the people, which was widened by the expansion of non-controversial fictional output and the contraction of committed literary writing. Few works of fiction were published in more than 2,000 or 3,000 copies, and then only in second or third editions; in first editions many works were normally printed in only 1,000 or even a few hundred copies,[27] often at the author's own expense. The basic problems of modern Persian literature are still the wide (though rapidly diminishing) extent of illiteracy and the lack of a common language (bihamzabāni)[28] between most writers and the semi-educated classes. The use of phonetically spelt colloquial language has made recent fiction more realistic but not necessarily

more popular, because semi-educated persons generally find correctly written language less difficult to read.[29] Spoken colloquial is of course easily intelligible, and was used in popular television and radio programmes; its use in Sā'edi's plays was probably one of the reasons why they drew large audiences when they were allowed to be acted in the 1960s, the other reasons being their dramatic merit and their fairly obvious socio-political message. The strength of the demand for an easily intelligible literature of political and social criticism was shown by the remarkably wide circulation of Āl-e Ahmad's banned Gharbzadegi and of the writings of 'Ali Shari'ati and Samad Behrangi (which were also eventually banned). The popularity of Gharbzadegi, as well as Āl-e Ahmad's vividly descriptive novel Modir-e Madreseh (1958), drew attention to his other writings and helped to make him the most popular author of the period, even though his fictional works and his essays have literary and intellectual defects which exclude them from the first rank; they have merit as scenes from life and emotional outbursts, but lack plot and logic. The popularity of the politically orientated writings of Āl-e Ahmad, Behrangi, Sā'edi, and the like, and those of the essayist Shari'ati, in a time of severe censorship and restriction gives evidence of an increasing closeness and decreasing 'bihamzabāni' between intellectual writers and their readers of all classes. This can be attributed to the emphasis of these writers on themes with which ordinary people were concerned in their daily lives.

'Ali Shari'ati (1933-1977), for instance, was an intellectual who emphasized the Shi'ite Islamic call for social justice and strongly condemned the materialistic

consumer society which he saw arising in Iran. His books and pamphlets were published secretly and widely circulated, and the lectures on religious values which he gave from 1967 to 1973 at the Hoseyniyeh Ershād in north Tehran were attended by large and growing numbers of people. No doubt they were more interested in the social and political implications of his religious teachings, just as the crowds of all classes at the poetry reading festival in 1977 came, in the main, to hear politically orientated poetry.

The mutual understanding between committed authors and their readers advanced in parallel with the social discontent. Inflation, which had been minimal during the 1960s, began to hit Iran from the last years of that decade, and even more from 1970-71 onwards. Although labour shortages caused rapid rises in the wages of most constructional and some industrial workers, other low-paid classes suffered from the great increase in the cost of living. Iranian agriculture gained little or no benefit from higher prices, because the government encouraged and facilitated a wide range of food imports. The following passage from one of Tonokāboni's stories gives a view of this state of affairs:

> "The weatherman broadcasts the weather:
> a front of warm air from Saudi Arabia.
> ... Funny, isn't it? Nowadays whatever
> we have is imported from abroad, even
> the weather. Cold weather from Siberia,
> warm weather from Saudi Arabia. Disease
> is also imported: cholera from Pakistan,
> flu from Hong Kong and another sort of
> flu from Japan, just as venereal diseases
> happened to come from America. ..."[30]

> "Australian meat, Turkish beans and peas,
> Indian onions, Pakistani potatoes,
> American rice, Italian cooking oil,

> Bulgarian cheese, Dutch chicken, Danish butter, Jordanian oranges, African bananas, Lebanese apples, and Israeli eggs and chicken enable me to preserve my national identity and meditate upon the glories of the past, miraculous advances of the present, and bright prospects of the future, and to remember my national and patriotic duties."[31]

Later in the same story he symbolically refers to oil as being Iran's only product: "My hands smell of oil."[32]

The inflation together with the restraint on agricultural prices caused villagers to become relatively or perhaps absolutely poorer.[33] In spite of the Land Reform, they therefore flooded into the cities, particularly Tehrān, in search of better living standards.

The growth of anti-régime feeling was not solely the result of economic conditions, but was also strongly influenced by ideological and psychological factors. The 2,500th anniversary of the foundation of the Iranian monarchy by Cyrus was lavishly celebrated in October 1971. There was no obvious reason for holding this event so soon after the Shāh's coronation in 1967; indeed, experts even doubted the chronological validity of the chosen date. Moreover the lavish expenditure was distasteful when there was so much to be done for the uplift of the poor and when there happened to be a famine in the province of Baluchestān. The celebrations only gave pleasure to those secular nationalists who traced Iranian nationhood back to ancient times; the anniversary celebrations identified the nation with the monarchy and lauded the survival of both in spite of the Arab conquest. The same interpretation of history

was strongly emphasized in school textbooks. The total disregard for Islam made the celebrations offensive to the clergy and to religious nationalists, and the implication that obedience was due to the Shāh as the successor of Cyrus offended liberal and left-leaning nationalists too. Much wider antagonism was provoked by the decision to introduce the Shāhanshāhi or Kuroshi calendar on 21 March 1976 instead of the familiar Islamic solar hejri calendar. The Pahlavi type of nationalism, with its combined emphasis on the monarchy and on the revival of pre-Islamic glory, was incessantly stressed in the press and on the radio and television, and during the years that followed bombarded the ears and eyes of the whole nation. Many intellectuals resented the attempt to impose a single type of nationalism on the people, and the clergy totally rejected it.

As already remarked, one of the results of the growth of social and ideological discontent was a broadening of the hitherto narrow audience for fictional literature, particularly for works by opposition writers. This was also helped by the spread of literacy. Shared feelings brought the authors and their readers closer together. In spite of the repression, many copies of forbidden books remained in private possession, while the police did not manage to 'gather' all copies from all bookshops and could not wholly prevent illegal printing. Jalal Āl-e Ahmad's Gharbzadegi had been banned ever since the appearance of parts of it in the periodical Keyhān-e Māh in 1962, but illegally and clandestinely printed copies of the whole work could be obtained from many bookshops and street vendors.

Of the first four printings of this work known to have been made in a short period, the first was of 1,000 copies and the fourth of 10,000. The banned works of 'Ali Shari'ati and Samad Behrangi achieved similar circulations. Sā'edi's plays were also widely read and admired.

While socially committed literature was under tight control, there were attempts to popularize types of literature which ignored current events and conditions. Romantic and adventurous love stories together with advertisements filled the pages of the widely circulated cheap weeklies, to which Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad gave the name rangin-nāmeh (equivalent to 'yellow press'), and novels of this type were sold in larger numbers than any other fictional works. Most of the readers were semi-educated city dwellers, particularly women. The women's magazines with their huge circulations - by Iranian standards - played a great role in the popularization of inferior novels for their female readers. After the dismissal of a large number of journalists from their jobs by the Ministry of Information in 1974, several newspapers and magazines were closed. Among the few which kept running were the two magazines for women, Zan-e Ruz and Ettelā'āt-e Banuvān, published respectively by the Keyhān and Ettelā'āt companies whose proprietors, Ebrāhim Mesbahzādeh and 'Abbās Mas'udi, were the founders of the leading daily newspapers bearing those names and were also both Senators. The newspapers and journals were permitted to print literature which kept clear of matters and ideas officially regarded as dangerous. Love stories, being both safe and popular, were particularly acceptable.

Literature of this type was also widely circulated through other media. No doubt in any society writers and artists have different aims and represent different social outlooks. In a time of restriction and censorship, however, the shallow love story serves as a social tranquilizer. The most prolific and widely read novelist of this type was Hoseyn-Qoli Mosta'ān (b. 1904), who had first made himself known in Rezā Shāh's reign under the name H.M. Hamid. "At one time (he) published one short novel each month, all variations of the same general form and substance."[34] In the 1950s, following the fall of Mosaddeq, when only pro-régime newspapers and journals could be printed, the serial novels of Mosta'ān made him and the weekly Tehrān-e Mosavvar very popular. In some of the novels which he published in this period and which he meant to be historical,[35] there is an amusing character called 'Owsaj, a little man of great deeds who calls to mind legendary heroes such as Samak of Samak-e 'Ayyār; he reaches the heart of the enemy's camp in disguise and providentially slips out, he alone can take enemy forts and troops by surprise without being seen, and so forth. In most of Mosta'ān's novels, however, the content is limited to love affairs of an explicitly and solely sexual nature. So too are most of the works of Javād Fāzel (1914-1961), who had received a religious education and began by writing popular stories of the lives and martyrdoms of the Imams in simple language. His stories of love adventures are almost as numerous and repetitive as Mosta'ān's.[37] The elevation of sexual love to the dominant position in these novels puts the other components of human

life into the shade and removes the content from both social and psychological reality. The fact that the Persian novels of this type had only entertainment value and did not portray real social and political conditions was the reason why they escaped censorship, and the fact that many people wanted light entertainment was the reason why they were widely circulated and achieved popularity.

Imitations of Western avant-garde literature were likewise innocuous. Their absurd contents and their experimental formalism presented no danger to the political status quo. The censors did not bother about them, and the authorities positively encouraged them by providing facilities for their publication or performance.[38]

The following words of Bāqer Mo'meni express the views of a socially committed critic:

> "In every society there are certain groups with different attitudes towards their philosophy of art as well as other matters. Whatever the conditions may be, they will express their own attitudes. In a time of social reform and progress, the corrupt elements fade, but when original philosophy and art are suppressed, they enjoy plenty of outlets. In the last one hundred years there have been several periods of elevation and depression of art and knowledge. In the field of preaching there was a time when we had Malek ol-Motakallemin[39] and Sayyed Jamāl Esfahāni.[40] There were such artists as (the poets) 'Āref and 'Eshqi.[41] But later there was a time when Rāshed[42] took the place of Malek ol-Motakallemin and ... (low pop songs) were poured into society's (ears). During this time, although there were such writers as Bozorg 'Alavi and Sādeq Hedāyat, they were not known, whereas the stories of H.M. Hamid (Hoseyn-Qoli Mosta'ān) were popular amongst the youth and the nonsensical works of 'Abbās Khalili[43] enjoyed wide circulation. ... Today,

> after a period of elevation, it is the time of the dominance of Na'lbandiyān and Ovānesiān ... (and others, all uncommitted authors who used formalist and experimentalist forms). While they enjoy all (officially provided) facilities, the way for the progressive elements in art is blocked."[44]

A play by 'Abbās Na'lbandiyān (b. 1947) with the lengthy title Pazhuheshi Zharf va Sotorg va Novin dar Sangvāre-hā-ye Dowre-ye Bist-o Panjom-e Zaminshenāsi va yā Chahārdahom, Bistom va Ghayreh, Farqi Nemikonad (A Modern, Profound and Important Research in the Fossils of the 25th Geological Era, or 14th, 20th, etc., it makes no Difference), which was directed by Ovānesiān and performed at the officially sponsored 1968 Art Festival of Shiraz, certainly deserved sharp criticism. This play, like some other specimens of the 'Theatre of the Absurd', received wide publicity through the officially controlled media and, according to a pro-régime critic, 'suddenly and unexpectedly ... made the author the most promising figure in contemporary Persian drama.'[45] Since the author was then just over twenty and had apparently failed to complete his formal education, it is difficult to believe that the play was really an imitation of the European theatre of the absurd; yet it has many similarities, especially with Samuel Becket's Waiting for Godot. The dominant atmosphere in both plays is 'waiting for the unknown'. Na'lbandiyān even goes to the point of giving his characters names with the same five letters but in different arrangements, implying that any distinction between individuals is merely nominal. The characters are consequently faceless, and the

plot ignores human and social realities. Nevertheless this play was performed in several cities, and later was also filmed and shown on television at a time when realistic drama had ceased to enjoy official patronage and was being obstructed by the authorities in various ways.[46] A similar official attitude could be seen in all fields of art. Recent Western notions such as formalism,experimentalism, and absurdity were placed in the spotlight. One purpose, at least, was to place socially committed works in the shadow.

Footnotes (III.IV)

1 L.P. Elwell-Sutton, Persian Oil, p.315.

2 Bāzargān had earlier been head of the National Iranian Oil Company during Mosaddeq's premiership, and later became the first Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic in 1979.

3 Cf. Thomas Ricks, "Samad Behrangi and Contemporary Iran: the Artist in the Revolutionary Struggle", in Mary and Eric Hooglund's translation of Samad Behrangi's stories, The Little Black Fish, pp.106-110.

4 The play Chub-he-dast-hā-ye Varazil was performed in the autumn of 1965 and Ā-ye Bi-kolāh, Ā-ye Bā-kolāh in early 1967. In the same year, 1967, four short plays, Khāne-ye Rowshani, Da'vat, Dast Bālā-ye Dast and Khoshā-be-hāl-e Bordbārān were filmed on the N.I.T.V. Three more plays concerning the constitutional movement of 1905-1911, namely Az-pā-nayoftāde-hā, Naneh Ensi, and Bām-hā va Zir-e Bām-hā, were also filmed on the N.I.T.V.

5 G.H. Sā'edi, "Ru-dar-ru yā Dush-be-dush" in Ketāb-e Jom'eh, Vol.1, No.6, (1979), pp.22-23.

6 S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, p.159.

7 See Dah Shab, the volume published by the Kānun-e Nevisandegān-e Irān on the occasion of the poetry-reading festival in October 1977, particularly the paper by Rahmatollāh Moqaddam Marāghe'i, pp.9-10. There is also an account of the establishment of the Centre and the problems it faced, together with the text of the Centre's declaration, in Rezā Barāhani's introduction to his collection of poems, Zellollāh (God's Shadow), 1975 .

8 M.E. Behāzin, Mehmān-e In Āqāyān, pp.31-32.

9 'Ali-Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Struggle for Liberation: Socio-Historical Roots to the Islamic Revolution", in R.I.P.E.H., Vol.4, No.1 (Spring 1980), p.15.

10 F. Tonokāboni, Yāddasht-hā-ye Shahr-e Sholugh, pp.126-129.

11 Op.cit., pp.95-99.

12 Op.cit., p.160.

13 Parviz Puyān, a guerilla who was killed in an armed struggle with SAVAK agents and police, had earlier had an intellectual friendship with the writer Āl-e Ahmad. The writer Samad Behrangi was a close friend of Behruz Dehqāni with whom he jointly translated

a collection of Āzari Turkish folk-tales, Afsāne-hā-ye Āzarbāyjān, (2 vols., vol.1, Tabriz 1965, vol.2, Tehrān 1968,). Behruz and his sister Ashraf were members of the Fedā'iyān-e Khalq guerilla organization. Ashraf was caught and imprisoned, but she managed to escape from prison in 1973 and published her prison memoirs clandestinely in the same year under the title Hemāse-ye Moqāvemat (The Epic of Resistance).

14 See M.E. Behāzin, Mehmān-e In Āqāyān, p.149.

15 Sā'edi was arrested several times on charges connected with his writings. The last time was in May 1974 when he was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment. However, in early 1975 he was released, owing to internal and external pressure, and afterwards in an interview (allegedly cut and altered) he renounced his former opposition and stated that in future writings he would work for the success of the Shāh's White Revolution (Keyhān, 19 June 1975). In fact he did not fulfil any such promise. Later he left Iran for the United States where he gave lectures denouncing the Shāh's régime, and in the last months before the Shāh's fall he joined the leading poet Ahmad Shāmlu in London where they contributed to the short-lived weekly Irānshahr, an anti-Shāh publication intended for an intellectual audience.

16 Behāzin last served four months imprisonment in 1970 for protesting against the arrest of Tonokāboni. He later published his prison memoirs entitled Mehmān-e In Āqāyān (Guest of These Gentlemen, 1975), a sarcastic title meaning SAVAK agents.

17 Rezā Barhāni, a lecturer, poet, and critic, was arrested on 11 September 1973 for writing radical poems and articles. He was released in December of the same year (according to his statement, after being tortured), and was interviewed on television when he agreed to renounce his former beliefs. Later he went to the United States where he gave anti-Shāh talks and published a collection of his prison poems entitled Zellollāh (God's Shadow), 1975.

18 Sa'id Soltānpur, a producer, actor, and playwright, was imprisoned in 1975 together with other members of a touring theatrical group for writing and performing anti-government plays. They received sentences of 2-11 years.

19 M. Āzarm (the pen-name of the poet Ne'matollāh Mirzāzādeh) was arrested in 1970 for his speeches at Mashhad in memory of Āl-e Ahmad on the 40th day after his death and for a later speech at Tehrān University.

20 Hushang Golshiri, the novelist, served four months in prison for some radical writings. His works are mostly interesting for their new techniques. Although he does not attack the Shāh's régime directly or condemn the basics of its policy, he vividly depicts the atmosphere of intimidation of a police state with obviously implied reference to the ubiquitous presence of the SAVAK.

21 'Ali Shari'ati, the university lecturer and influential Islamic essayist, was arrested in 1973, and after his release in late 1975 was kept under house arrest until 1977 when he was able to leave the country in disguise. He then went to London where shortly after his arrival he was found dead in his bedroom.

22 Hushang Golshiri, in the Kānun-e Nevisandegān-e Irān's volume Dah Shab, p.354.

23 See Bāqer Mo'meni, Dard-e Ahl-e Qalam, pp.86-89.

24 Shams Āl-e Ahmad, in Dah Shab, pp.117-119. To a contemporary Iranian reader, 'forest' might mean struggle for freedom symbolized by the start of guerilla action at Siyāhkal in the forests of Gilān; 'night' (in Zoroastrian literature the symbol of the demon) might mean exclusion of light and symbolize censorship and suppression; and 'winter' might mean political hardship or suffering. The rose and the tulip are images much used in classical Persian poetry as lyrical symbols, but in modern writings, since both these flowers and the peony are red, they might be taken to mean blood (= revolution) or communism. In the period under discussion, 'red rose' (gol-e sorkh) could be taken to refer to the revolutionary poet Khosrow Golsorkhi both for his name and for his communist beliefs.

25 Cf. Behāzin, Mehmān-e In Āqāyān, pp.71-72.

26 Cf. Rezā Barāhani, Zellollāh: She'r-hā-ye Zendān, p.54.

27 For example, the first edition of Āl-e Ahmad's Sargozasht-e Kandu-hā, in which Mosaddeq's nationalization of the oil industry is symbolically fictionalized, was published in only 400 copies at the expense of his friends. This book did not get a second edition until the relaxation of the censorship in 1977.

28 The theme of bihamzabāni was first brought into Persian literature by S.M.'A. Jamālzādeh in the humorous short story Fārsi Shekar Ast in his collection Yeki Bud, Yeki Nabud (1921).

29 Cf. G.M. Wickens, "Persian Literature as an Affirmation of National Identity", in R.N.L., Vol.2, No.1, (Spring 1971), p.36.

30 F. Tonokāboni, Rāh-raftan Ru-ye Reyl, p.188.

31 Op.cit., p.187.

32 Op.cit., p.192.

33 On the condition of villagers after the Land Reform, see Nikki Keddie, "The Iranian Village Before and After Land Reform", in Underdevelopment and Development: The Third World Today, pp.152-174.

34 Mohammad 'Ali Jazāyeri, "Recent Persian Literature, Observations on Themes and Tendencies", in R.N.L., Vol.2, No.1 (Spring 1971), p.23.

35 Mosta'ān's most popular historical novel, Rābe'eh, is named after the main character, a Daylami princess. For Mosta'ān, however, the historical framework is only a vehicle for a mysterious atmosphere dominated by love and adventure.

36 See above (II.I) of the present study.

37 Although E.M. Forster's disparagement of love, as expressed in his remark that man in his daily life gives only 'two hours' to love in contrast with 'two hours' for food and 'eight hours' for sleep (Aspects of the Novel, p.59), totally conflicts with Sigmund Freud's assessment of its vital importance, this English novelist's view of its place in fiction nevertheless deserves consideration. He writes: "Love. You all know how enormously love bulks in novels, and will probably agree with me that it has done them harm and made them monotonous. Why has this particular experience, especially in its sex form, been transplanted in such generous quantities? If you think of a novel in the vague, you think of a love interest - of a man and a woman who want to be united and perhaps succeed. If you think of your own life in the vague, or of a group of lives, you are left with a very different and more complex impression." (Op.cit., p.62).

38 Dah Shab, articles by Mostafā Rahimi, pp.473-478, and Gholam-Hoseyn Sā'edi,pp.201-205.

39 Malek ol-Motakallemin was a constitutionalist leader and an outstanding orator who was put to death by order of Mohammad 'Ali Shāh in 1908.

40 Sayyed Jamāl(Vā'ez)Esfahāni was a constitutionalist leader and an enlightened religious preacher who was put to death by Mohammad 'Ali Shāh in 1908. He was the father of the pioneer of modern Persian fiction, Sayyed Mohammad 'Ali Jamālzādeh.

41 Abu'l-Qāsem 'Āref Qazvini (1882-1934) was a very popular poet and song writer who supported the revolt of Colonel Mohammad Taqi Pesiyān in 1921 and advocated a republic in 1923.
Mirzādeh Mohammad Rezā 'Eshqi (1894-1924) was a well-remembered nationalist poet and journalist. He wrote a famous poem against the veiling of women, called for a republic in 1923, and was assassinated in 1924 after he had lampooned Rezā Shāh.

42 Mohammad 'Ali Rāshed was a learned (and half-blind) Shi'ite Islamic clergyman who gave religious radio talks during most of Mohammad Rezā Shāh's reign and became a Theology Professor at Tehran University. His religious talks and books in the modern language of theeducated classes were greatly admired but were thought to reflect official views.

43 'Abbās Khalili wrote Ruzgār-e Siyāh (Black Days, 1925) and other novels modelled on French 19th century prototypes. He was the father of the schoolmistress-poetess Simin Behbahāni.

44 Bāqer Mo'meni, Ru-dar-ru, pp.89-90.

45 Ehsān Yār-Shāter, "The Modern Literary Idiom", in Iran Faces the Seventies, p.315.

46 Dah Shab, articles by Bahrām Bayzā'i, p.120-125, and Sa'id Soltānpur, pp.266-267.

III.V

Social Realism and Islamic Nationalism - 1953-1979

Writers concerned with new forms of expression may be categorized as 'modernists' or 'experimentalists', as opposed to 'realists',especially'social realists',[1] for whom the content has priority. While Iranian experimentalists were interested in new forms of Western literature and often fell under the influence of new Western literary concepts which bore no relation to social reality, the social realists were primarily concerned with presenting their views of Iranian social life and affairs and only secondarily with literary forms.[2] This does not mean that the fiction which they composed lacks an artistic side or that their social realism descends to the level of journalism. On the contrary, form is a decisive factor often matching the content and serving the writer's social outlook. The writers show awareness of the fact that descriptive and narrative art can be more forceful than critical comment in conveying a social message. For example, the force of Chubak's very telling short story Dozd-e Qālpāq (in Cherāgh-e Ākhar, 1966) depends entirely on the development of an incident which in itself is very simple. A street urchin steals a hub cap and is caught by the crowd and kicked to death. Reports of similar incidents quite often appeared in newspapers with accompanying humanitarian comments on the social conditions which provoked juvenile delinquency. Chubak, however, leaves the reader to do his own reflection on such matters. The pictures of the young

thief, of the parked car which is a Cadillac belonging to a hājji who is the head of the butchers' guild, and of the crowd's attitude speak for themselves. The society which they represent is obviously both modern and primitive. Probably the reader, on reaching the end of the story, will at first wish for the boy's death just to prove to the crowd how barbarous they are, and ironically this brings the reader automatically down to the crowd's level. Dozd-e Qālpāq is very short (just over 500 words), but very successful in conveying the author's meaning. The conciseness and vividness of the description and the fast movement of the action demonstrate the brilliance of Chubak's art.

Literary form, however, is important only as a vehicle and not as a goal. Authors of social realistic works choose forms considered suitable for the contents, and when they make innovations are not motivated by mere desire to experiment. At times when censorship is tolerant or in areas with which it is not concerned, socially committed authors normally use realistic forms and straightforward language, but when candour becomes imprudent or dangerous, they frequently abandon realism in favour of the ambiguity of allegory or symbolism. Such ambiguity is not just a figurative device employed for literary ornamentation. It is often textural rather than structural. Threatened or prudent authors try to express reality in twisted forms which will make it inoffensive or even unintelligible to the censors. Their concern for the form is a result of their concern for the content and

not merely a problem of technique. In symbolic forms, the additional levels of structure are meant to carry socio-political implications which cannot be admitted otherwise. The use of symbolic form by authors living in a suppressed society is thus an aspect of the literature of resistance. In this respect it differs from recent European symbolism which has been a move towards abstraction and art for art's sake.[3]

In modern Persian fiction, symbolism is primarily a disguise. It owes more to certain traditions of Persian classical literature than to European influences. After the realism of the earliest period, Sufism became the most important influence on literature from the 11th century onwards. "Since its doctrines may not be revealed to all and sundry, it is distinguished, as may readily be understood, by a multitude of symbols. Thus symbolism proceeds hand in hand with Sufism and naturalism."[4] For centuries literary symbolism has given Iranian intellectuals a refuge from both religious and political persecutions. In the words of Sir John Malcolm, "where liberty is unknown and where power in all its shapes is despotic, knowledge must be veiled to be useful."[5] Symbolism, allegory, and ambiguity, in various degrees and forms, have thus in the Iranian context become weapons of resistance. The importance of a modern Persian literary work, while stemming primarily from its content, may be increased by its presentation in a literary form which more or less clearly brings it to the level of social, political, or religious controversy.

It was on this level that, for example, Āl-e Ahmad's

novel Modir-e Madreseh (The School Principal, 1958) was judged for the most part favourably, although it was criticized for its literary defects,[6] among which its lack of structure is conspicuous. This particular defect, however, was seen by some as a sign of strength.[7] It was probably a practical device deliberately chosen to ensure that cuts or other changes made by the censorship would not spoil the book's integrity. When a work does not have an indivisible structure, damage to a part of it does not impair the whole. This defect of Modir-e Madreseh is outweighed by the merits of its other formal elements such as its language and touches of humour. As regards content, it gives a masterly portrayal of Iranian school life and problems, although its characterization of the headmaster and its ending have rightly been judged to be unconvincing.[8]

When literature is used as a social weapon against a despotic system, not surprisingly the purpose has to be disguised and the material has to be rearranged, fragmented, or distorted in ways which may often make it difficult or impossible for the reader to orientate himself. In general, however, the symbolic fiction was successful in drawing attention to important matters which were highly unpalatable to the authorities but of great concern to the opposition, particularly the intellectuals. The main thesis of this fiction, whether expressed directly in realistic language or indirectly through symbols or implications, is that life for the majority of Iranians is poor, harsh, and narrow . Another thesis is that the authorities are corrupt, oppressive, and imperceptive. Another is that the régime is associated with the foreign powers of the West

and that these powers influence the internal affairs of the country.

In the literature concerned with the sufferings of ordinary Iranians living in remote villages and city slums, Gholām-Hoseyn Sā'edi is a leading figure. Born in Tabriz in 1935, he qualified at Tehran University as a doctor of medicine, specializing in psychiatry, and gained experience in Āzarbāyjān and on the Gulf coast before setting up a practice in a poor quarter of south Tehran. He has written three sociological monographs (an activity pursued by other contemporary radical thinkers),[9] but has devoted most of his abundant energy to the writing of numerous short stories and plays. These reflect his knowledge of the common people's beliefs, traditions, and folklore, of their behaviour and speech, and of their very low living standards. From clinical observations he is aware that an individual's psychological state is mainly the product of his social environment. It was Sā'edi's professional experience which impelled him to use his pen for the promotion of understanding and sympathy for the masses. In 'Azādārān-e Bayal, a collection of short stories published in 1963, Sā'edi depicts a village named Bayal in a poor isolated district quite untouched by modernization and reform.[10] The district has no doctor or medical facilities, no road, electricity, water supply, or other modern amenities. In the second story, the village is stricken by a plague, but the villagers await God's decree with fortitude. A young man who ventures to take a sick cousin whom he loves to the town has to travel on a donkey. No better fate,

however, awaits the girl there because the hospital is already overflowing with patients and cannot offer her a bed or food, let alone proper treatment. The cubicles and corridors are packed with unattended patients, and there are many still waiting to get in. A kind-hearted nurse lays the girl under a tree in the hospital garden and feeds her with scraps until she loses hope and patience and leaves the hospital unnoticed to die soon after.[11]

The most widely known story in 'Azādārān-e Bayal is the fourth, because it was later made into a successful film, The Cow, which carried Sa'edi's social message to viewers in many countries. In this story, the livelihood of one of the villagers, Mashdi Hasan, depends wholly on his ownership of a cow,[12] and when his cow dies he goes mad and imagines himself to be the cow. He stays in its shed and chews hay and lows. The villagers do not scorn or deride him but feel sympathy. Finally they take him in the cart, with his hands and feet bound, to see a doctor in the town, but he breaks loose and falls off a cliff flanking the valley to his death. Sā'edi's meaning is that the minds and mental illnesses of human beings in general are conditioned by their circumstances, and that Iranian peasants live in conditions bad enough to make a man like an animal. Mashdi Hasan's mental metamorphosis bears a social implication: with the growth of materialistic values in Iranian society, human values are decreased.[13]

Sufferings of workers as well as peasants provided themes for socially conscious fiction-writers. Conditions in the carpet industry, which employs child labour and is

located mainly in villages and small towns, were notorious. In Mahmud Dowlatābādi's Band (Fetters, in Lāye-hā-ye Biyābāni, 1966), Asad, a young carpet weaver, is cruelly treated and meagrely paid by the loom-owner. Asad's parents migrate from the village in search of work elsewhere but are too poor to take him with them. He is left behind to toil and sleep in the loom room, which is a part of the owner's house. Even on Friday afternoon, when he should have had the day off, the owner does not let him go where he wishes because he is a good worker and there is a risk that he may seek other employment. He is under restraint like a prisoner, and does not even receive his meagre wage regularly. Once he escapes to his uncle, but the uncle, who can hardly feed his own family, insists that he must go back to his master. Soon the owner, who has been searching for Asad, appears and takes him back like a slave. He gets a beating and is kept locked in the loom-room until he escapes after setting the house on fire.

The exploitation of child labour in villages, and especially in the carpet industry, is also the theme of Pesarak-e Labu-forush (1967), a short story by the school-master and writer Samad Behrangi (1939-1968). Like his fellow-Tabrizi Sā'edi, Behrangi gained knowledge of the social and cultural life of the masses from his professional experience. He was primarily a writer of children's stories, and he also wrote essays on social and cultural problems, and was co-editor of a collection of Āzarbāyjāni folk-tales. Both the stories and the essays show the depth of his understanding. The children's stories, in simple language ~~fit~~

~~for children,~~ proved equally acceptable to intellectuals and other adult readers. They represented a new method of communicating ideas on some of the country's most basic problems. In a manifesto-type essay, Behrangi rules out the idea that children should be sheltered from harsh reality and crammed with socially meaningless hopes of happiness and maxims of conduct; children's literature, he says, must bridge the gap between their imaginary world and the harsh real world in which they live.[14]

In Pesarak-e Labu-forush (The Little Sugar-beet Vendor), Behrangi shows in simple language how far the life of poor village children is removed from the fantastic world of fairy tales; and some of his stories, such as Olduz va Kalāgh-hā (Olduz [a girl] and the Crows, 1966) and Olduz va 'Arusak-e Sokhangu (Olduz and the Talking Doll, 1967), also bring out this contrast. Tāriverdi and his sister, who ought to be at school or playing with children of the same age, have to work with many other children in a carpet-weaving establishment. The owner, Hājji Qoli Farshbāf, is interested only in making money. He has moved his looms from the town to the village because the labour is cheaper. He has taken as temporary wives four young girls who had worked for him in other villages, and now he intends to add another one, Tāriverdi's sister; but their mother rejects the old man's proposals. Tāriverdi, who like Asad in Dowlatābādi's Band is unwilling to be treated as a slave, tries to kill the old man before they leave his service. The only work which Tāriverdi can find afterwards is to become an itinerant vendor of hot beetroots.

Behrangi's imaginary characters are partly of his own creation and partly derived from the Āzarbāyjāni folk-tales, which he collected and translated from Āzari Turkish into Persian with the collaboration of his friend Behruz Dehqāni. In either case he enlivens the stories with an impressive force which was unprecedented in the children's literature of Iran. This springs mainly from his skill in combining the two elements of legend and reality. He is convinced that children must be taught how to live and cope with problems in the real society around them. Neglect of such teaching at home and at school has long been a feature of Iranian life. Maxims and advice given by parents are often contrary to what they practise. Many children have been further disillusioned by the irrelevance of their school education to their home environments and practical needs. The uniform and centrally controlled education system was mainly Western-inspired and irrelevant to the vocational and regional needs of the majority of Iranian children.

In Kand-o Kāv dar Masā'el-e Tarbiyati-ye Irān (Inquiry into the Educational Problems of Iran, 1965), Behrangi is concerned with the special educational problems of Āzarbāyjān, but also discusses the bureaucratic over-centralization and red tape, the low status and poor quality of rural primary schoolteachers, and the mentality of village communities. He sharply criticizes the educational establishment for adopting theories and policies of mainly American origin which may be appropriate for school children in advanced industrial societies but are meaningless

in the social context of poverty-stricken Iranian villages or even of Tehrān. For example, a passage from a textbook for teachers about the ratio between classroom size and pupil number is absurd when the typical Iranian village school consists of two overcrowded classrooms in a mud hut, and a passage about the preparation of school lunches is positively offensive when the pupils have nothing to eat but stale bread. As for the uniform school textbooks, they have been written by middle class theorists for middle class Tehrāni pupils. They describe children sitting on chairs to eat meals off tables with the aid of knives, forks, and spoons, none of which the village child has ever seen.[15] This leads Behragi into his thoughtful essay on the special educational problems of Āzarbāyjān, which is the only published discussion of this important subject. In almost all Āzarbāyjāni villages the spoken language is Āzari Turkish, but the textbooks are in Persian and the teachers are required to use Persian as the sole medium of instruction. Behrangi approves of the teaching of Persian as the national language, but draws attention to the difficulties arising for pupils and teachers from the method of instruction. Without explanation in their mother tongue, the pupils make slow progress in Persian; if they stay in the village they forget it, and if they move they are at a disadvantage.

Āl-e Ahmad had earlier found the school textbooks to be irrelevant and the education system to be excessively Westernized.[16] In his Modir-e Madreseh (1958), the setting of the school in a suburb of Tehrān allows him to contrast

its poor conditions with the superficial modernity of the capital. His portrayal of the social and educational problems of an urban area, which was also based on personal experience, does not basically differ from Behrangi's analysis of the rural problems. In Tehran and the villages alike, poverty affected both pupils and teachers and impaired the utility and quality of the education. The essays and fictional work of both writers show that the social and educational problems were countrywide and not limited to particular regions or groups, such as language minorities. The parallelism which has been observed between Āl-e Ahmad's and Behrangi's ways of thinking[17] may be attributed to the persistence and pervasiveness of these problems. Earlier and later writers also have reacted to these problems in similar ways.[18]

After the fall of Mosaddeq, clerical Islamic nationalist and leftist opposition remained strong in spite of repression. The régime was a target of widespread criticism for its reliance on American support. Economic factors added to its unpopularity when the urban boom of 1957-59 was followed by a severe slump in 1960-62. The White Revolution, however, which the Shāh proclaimed on 15 February 1963, and in particular the Land Reform which was its chief component, at first won widespread approval and enabled the government to condemn all opposing forces as reactionary. Opposition was silenced by censorship, and the next and subsequent parliaments were filled mostly with middle class bureaucrats and technocrats. Since the majority of the seats in all previous parliaments had been

held by the representatives of the land-owning class, the former political importance of this class was thought to have ended.

Chubak's story Ruz-e Avval-e Qabr (The First Day in the Grave, 1965) which provides the title of his third collection, is about the last days of an adventurer, Hājji Mo'tamed, who appears to have found his way into the aristocracy through his purchases of land. In actual fact, however, he has risen from nowhere and can still remember when he was a poor child begging in the streets. Chubak implies that the case is typical and that the land-owning class in general has exploited the masses. Hājji Mo'tamed's eventual death in a mausoleum which has been built on his own order represents the death of an aristocracy unable to cope with new ideas and situations. While dying, Hājji Mo'tamed has Khayyāmian doubts about his long-held religious and social beliefs, but cannot think of anything to replace them.

Chubak is an outspoken critic of the outward forms of Islam and particularly of the role of the Shi'ite clergy. He condemns the mollās for hypocrisy, dogmatism, encouragement of superstition, and abuse of popular religious feeling. In Cherāgh-e Ākhar, which provides the title of his fourth collection published in 1966, he portrays a professional ma'rakeh-gir (reciter of events in the lives of the Imams) on board a British ship carrying pilgrims from Bushehr to Basra on their way to the sacred shrines of Iraq. This man, who is a sayyed (descendant of 'Ali), is characterized by Chubak as a hypocrite who extracts money from the people without practising or even believing

in what he says. He preaches superstition and threatens like a bully. Chubak's opinions about the clergy are expressed through his description of the sayyed's outward actions and inward thoughts and of the repugnance which these arouse in the mind of Javād, a young student who is also a passenger on the ship. Javād sees the sayyed as a menace to society and yearns for a new philosophy which will eclipse all religions and set the people free. This seems to imply a hope on Chubak's part that the young generation may liberate Iranian minds by spreading knowledge of science and technology. The sayyed symbolizes the barriers to achievement of such a goal. At the end of the story Javād symbolically throws into the sea the pictorial canvases which the sayyed uses to illustrate his talks and needs as tools of his trade.

Āl-e Ahmad in his early works likewise condemns the clergy for condonation of superstition and persistence in medieval ways of thought. In his view, however, these shortcomings were symptoms of their submissiveness resulting from their failure in the political arena.[19]

During the 1960s political opposition was reduced not only by censorship but also by the relative success of the government's industrial and general modernization policies in most fields except agriculture. These policies enabled large numbers of people of all classes to find employment in new activities. In the 1970s, however, they ran into great difficulties such as inflation and skilled labour shortage, for which the government's own haste and unwillingness to consult and decentralize were largely

to blame. In both decades its attempts to improve agricultural productivity through mechanization and promotion of cooperatives achieved little success. Peasant poverty remained the country's gravest social problem in spite of the Land Reform, and the constantly increasing migration of poor peasants seeking urban employment made the overcrowding and slums in the cities, particularly Tehran, worse than ever.[20] These problems are beyond the scope of this study, but they must be mentioned as they are reflected in the contemporary literature of social and political discontent.

In Mahmud Dowlatābadi's novel Jā-ye Khāli-ye Soluch (1979), social consequences of the abandonment of traditional agricultural methods and reasons for the failure of mechanical methods are presented as experiences of the characters. Soluch, an artisan who once had plenty of work in the village, finds that his skills are ceasing to be in demand. He and his family suffer from ever increasing poverty and cannot see any way out of the problem. He finds himself isolated from the society of the village and a burden rather than a support for his family. Eventually he leaves the village and his family without telling anybody about his purpose or destination. The novel opens with the revelation of his disappearance. Soluch plays no part in the subsequent plot, but his empty place and the belief that he is still alive maintain an air of suspense throughout the novel. Dowlatābādi's description suggests that the Land Reform put an end to the paternal system of land ownership but not to the old paternalistic values. New social elements arise to replace the old ones, but

not without conflict. This is typified by Soluch's two sons, 'Abbās and Ebrāv. The unchanged submissiveness of women is similarly typified by Soluch's wife Margān and his daughter Hājar. The elder brother 'Abbās clings to the old pattern of village life and chooses to become a camel driver. While escaping from a furious camel, he falls into an abandoned well where there are snakes which terrify him. After being rescued from the well by his fellow villagers, he is no longer a virile young man, but becomes paralysed and prematurely old with white hair, even though he is still a teenager. This symbolizes the state of Iranian agriculture, which has an ancient tradition but in practice is primitive or prematurely aged. In contrast with the paralyzed 'Abbās is the energetic younger brother Ebrāv, who chooses to become an assistant to the tractor driver, representing the new methods in agriculture. This job, however, does not last long. The tractor driver, whose wages have not been paid, takes the engine to the city for repair which he says can only be done at a city workshop; but he does not return, and the tractor is left useless and Ebrāv is left without work. The village life in general is undergoing a parallel change. There is a conflict between the old and new systems which is interwoven with the supply of irrigation water that is the mainstay of Iranian agriculture. The installation of a mechanical pump provides an alternative to the old and laboriously maintained, but more reliable <u>qanāt</u> (irrigation tunnel). The water pump turns out to have been installed in an unsuitable place where it causes a scarcity

of qanāt water, and after complaints is closed down by officials from the Irrigation Department. By then the ganāt is also blocked, since a camel has fallen into the mother well at its source, apparently by accident but most probably through a conspiracy. This conflict represents the trial of strength between the former leading elements in the village, who are the shareholders of the qanāt, and the members of the new technocracy, who are the shareholders of the new mechanical pump.

Dowlatābādi clearly indicates that this great social change is not genuine and spontaneous but imposed from above, and that in the subsequent conflict neither side is eventually the winner.[21] The only result is that the village will cease to be productive and all will be losers. Those who can will depart in search of work in the city, and those who cannot will have to live unproductive and parasitic lives. The novel closes with the departure of Ebrāv and the immobility of 'Abbās, who hopes to earn his keep by starting a gambling, or more probably an opium-smoking, den in the village. Ebrāv and other migrants gather in the cemetery before departing. This is depicted as a gruesome spot in which lie the engineless (i.e. lifeless) tractor and a stream of blood-stained water which is hardly in motion at all. The camel in the qanāt well has had to be cut into pieces to unblock the qanāt, and water mixed with its blood has passed through the tunnel into the open ditch which runs in front of the cemetery. The metal frame of the tractor is covered with the red dust of the desert and already looks like a

rusty skeleton. The symbolic meaning is that an old system which at least worked has been sacrificed for a new system which cannot thrive in present Iranian conditions. Margān too migrates to the city in the hope of finding her husband. Although she does not really believe a report that Soluch is alive and working in a mine, she makes it an excuse for her leaving the poverty-stricken village and wonders whether she too can work in the mine. This is a hint at the country's economic dependence on its minerals, obviously meaning its oil. The peasants, once responsible for producing the nation's food, no longer play a vital economic role; so they migrate from their villages to the cities in search of employment in an economic system which is fuelled by oil.

In Sā'edi's Gāv, probably the death of the cow symbolizes not only the economic ruin of its owner but also the end of the productive economic life of the village community and is therefore analogous to the killing of the camel in Jā-ye Khāli-ye Soluch. In another fictional work by Dowlatābādi, 'Aqil 'Aqil (1974), the socio-economic decay of village life is symbolized in a different way. Here it is an earthquake which ruins the village and reduces the people to despair. 'Aqil, who survives, becomes a sort of suspended being in mid-air, as if he has lost gravity. Like Ebrāv and Margān in Jā-ye Khāli-ye Soluch, or like Mashdi Hasan in Gāv, he has nothing left in the village to keep him alive; so after burying his wife and other members of his family, he sets off for the city in the hope of finding his soldier son, Teymur. His journey

is a tedious ordeal during which his only surviving young daughter, who is shocked by the terrifying after-effects of the earthquake, dies. He is later robbed of his chickens and his goat before he reaches the city. He faces all these calamities in the hope of achieving his goal in the city, but to his great disappointment it appears that his son has been transferred from there to an unknown destination, and this for 'Aqil is the last straw. Like Mashdi Hasan in Gāv, he has lost his only source of security, and like him he goes mad.

When the question of Land Reform arose and became controversial, Āl-e Ahmad strongly criticized it in his Gharbzadegi. Later he again condemned the Land Reform and agricultural mechanization in his fictional work, Nefrin-e Zamin (The Curse of Land; 1967). In Gharbzadegi he writes:

> But nowadays the talk is of co-operatives. The land distribution as it is to be performed with the object of creating a petty, landowning system is already out-dated. This form of land distribution will be the greatest obstacle to mechanized agriculture. Agricultural technology cannot cope with the petty landowning system, nor can petty landowners afford agricultural technology. ... As long as the villages are inaccessible and without electricity, and as long as there is not even one central repair shop for agricultural machinery in every thirty or forty villages, we will not have mechanized agriculture. So long as there are petty landowners and so long as there are no training classes for mechanics in every village school, technology will be alien to the villagers and will cause nothing but destruction, disturbance, and disruption."[22]

Āl-e Ahmad implies that the new system will not work because technology is not being introduced into Iran in response to the people's demands and needs; in his opinion

it is only being bartered for oil on which the nation is much too dependent. On this point he writes in Gharbzadegi:

> "Oil goes and technology comes. Who benefits from this barter? First the companies (i.e. the Western companies) ... Then the intermediary brokers (i.e. the Iranian ruling establishment) ... When the economy of the country is controlled by the 'others' in this way, and when the 'others' are the manufacturers of the technology, it is clear that we must always be the buyers and remain dependent. Fortunately (meaning ironically 'for them') before the instalments on the machines and tractors and bulldozers are fully paid, the machines and tractors will be broken or rusted."[23]

This is what we are also told in Nefrin-e Zamin, a narrative which is meant to be the memoirs of an intellectual who becomes the teacher of a village named 'Hasanābād or perhaps Hoseynābād or Aliābād.'[24] With this ambiguity of place, Āl-e Ahmad suggests that every village in Iran has the same problems and that his narrative is true of them all. The action of Nefrin-e Zamin takes place in the years of the Land Reform. The landlords evade the land distribution and find loopholes through the complicated legal system. The introduction of machinery brings into being a new class of technocrats, whose presence is supposed to benefit agriculture but works to the contrary because of the conflict that arises between the old and new classes.Moreover, the machinery itself is not suitable for the backward condition of the villages. Another drawback is the fact that machinery, like oil, is under the control of the West. The landlord's son, who is a member of parliament, says in a conversation with the teacher-narrator

that landowning is not profitable; with the same amount of investment in the city a much more profitable business could be launched, but landowning has a social and traditional prestige which could never be gained in the city.

> "For the price of one tractor one can buy a lorry and deliver goods for 100 tumāns a ton from Khorramshahr to Tehran. Such a lorry will earn for its owner 1,000 tumāns in two days, Master! That is 15,000 tumāns a month. Do you know how much this village yields, Master! 25,000 tumāns a year. The money a grocery shop at any city street corner makes is more than that. I (the narrator) asked, 'Why did you keep the land, then? Why didn't you want it to be distributed (among the peasants)?' He replied, 'Come on, Master! Do you really believe that we (landlords) have exploited the villagers to death? The point is that my mother is an old woman now. To her this village is her youth, her memories. She cannot change what she has inherited. She believes she will die if she goes to the city. Besides, what would my mother's position be in a city, Master? A woman amongst a hundred thousand other women. But here she is called Bibi (= Lady). For her the land is her life and the memory of her husband who was shot dead in the constitutional movement. ... You know, Master, it was good to be a landlord only while the land was cultivated by animals who lived and ate from it. But now the tools of farming are changing and are bought from abroad and fuelled by oil and electricity, none of which is controlled by me or you or these people (i.e. the villagers). They are all under the control of the Western companies'."[25]

Thus for Āl-e Ahmad the problem is one and the same: the West. The picture of Bibi, a landlady, has little to do with the notorious landlord-peasant conflict. Bibi is a sort of figurehead. She even prevents conflict between the old and new classes, and as soon as she dies there

is a disastrous clash in the village. As a landowner, she is shown to have helped the village in one way or another, and to have preserved its integrity and life. Her role and character are somewhat similar to those of the landlord and his wife in the novel Suvashun by Āl-e Ahmad's widow Simin Dāneshvar. In this novel, which was published in 1969 two years after Nefrin-e Zamin and six years after the Land Reform when its failure was becoming apparent, the male central character, Yusof, is a landlord who becomes a hero because of his patriotic behaviour. Here too there is no question of peasant-landlord conflict. Yusof and his wife Zari, like Bibi, are benevolent characters who take it upon themselves to give back to the poor a small part of what they receive from them. Although the poor villagers themselves, by their toil, are responsible for the wealth of this landowning couple, Yusof and Zari earn respect and get self-satisfaction by using some of their wealth to feed the needy.

To Āl-e Ahmad the class struggle is an out-dated story. In Gharbzadegi he writes:

> "Our time is no longer a time of conflict between the poor and rich within the borders of a country or even a time of national revolution. It is also not a time of conflict between ideologies and 'isms' ... Now all those ideologies and 'isms' are only excuses for the development of industry and justifications for industrialization. ... It is true that, as Marx says, there are two worlds that are in conflict, but these two worlds are much wider now than the ones of his time, and the conflict has a much more complicated character than the struggle between labourer and employer. ... This is the time of two worlds where one of

> them manufactures and exports the machinery and the other imports and uses it until it wears out. One is the producer and the other the consumer."[26]

So both the peasants and the landlords of Iran are 'consumers' and victims of exploitation. In Nefrin-e Zamin the narrator, or rather Āl-e Ahmad, in his analysis of Western civilization suggests that it is nothing but a process of production and consumption. Then he asks himself: if there is a nation which fails to contribute to any part of this process, should it be considered as a primitive society or as a society with a different type of civilization? To him it seems that the answer is the latter. Then he comes to another question: if there are two types of civilization, what is their significance and what makes them different? He is not satisfied with the answer that the difference lies in their working tools, because he considers this to be an obsolete theory put forward a century ago by Marx[27] who neglected such important factors as language, history, religion, and social institutions. The working tool or machine made by man himself has become his fetish or, as Āl-e Ahmad puts it, his new goddess.[28] Culture is, therefore, Āl-e Ahmad's main concern, and it has priority over the economic aspect of people's lives.

Āl-e Ahmad's outlook is open to severe criticism and has been considered to be one-dimensional.[29] His fear of the machine, however, is shared by other contemporary writers, for example by Gholām-Hoseyn Sā'edi in his 'Azādārān-e Bayal. In the sixth story of this collection, the villagers of Bayal come across a heavy box-shaped metal object which

must have fallen from a truck and rolled down the hillside from the distant main road. The puzzled villagers cannot think what the purpose of this object may be, but are greatly impressed by it and by the mysterious knobs on it. In their ignorance and credulity they attach a religious significance to the mysterious object. They conclude that it must be a gift from the unseen world, an Emāmzādeh (saint) inside his casket and zarih (grill).[30] So with great effort they haul it to the village, and build a holy shrine over it. Their rejoicing comes to an abrupt end when a motor vehicle enters the village and some soldiers, accompanied by an American expert, demolish the shrine and take the object away. We are not told (and it is not of any significance either) if even then they realize that the sacred object is only a piece of military equipment. Sā'edi's meaning seems to be that the Iranians, symbolized by the people of Bayal, are so ignorant of machinery that they become blind admirers and slaves of the machine and of its makers. Some of the nationalist thinkers of this period conceived a veritable taboo against modern technology, mainly because they thought that the Western contractors and experts who were paid to serve the Iranians by bringing technology into the country had become their masters and were destroying their culture.

The related problems of Western political, economic, and cultural influences have evoked different responses and have overshadowed other themes in recent literature. In all Iranian nationalist thinking there is a common strand of suspicion of Western political influence which is a

legacy of past Russian and British interventions. In popular Iranian usage the term 'West' - which geographically ought to include underdeveloped Arab and Latin American countries - means only Western Europe and North America. Often (and not merely in communist language) 'West' also connotes 'imperialist' or 'exploiting' and is contrasted with the 'exploited East'. Generally speaking Russia incurs as much suspicion as the West, while Japan enjoys sympathy because it is a part of the East. Science and technology are still seen as exclusively Western, regardless of Russian and Japanese scientific and technological achievements. Consequently there has always been a paradoxical mixture of respect or even servility and distrust or hostility in Iranian attitudes to the West. In intellectual circles hostility was strong after the American-supported overthrow of Mosaddeq and again in the economic slump of 1960-63, which caused widespread social discontent. It was at this time that Āl-e Ahmad chose '<u>gharbzadegi</u>' (literally infection by the West) for the theme and title of a popular short book.[31]

Āl-e Ahmad's denunciation of the West in <u>Gharbzadegi</u> is not limited to political imperialism and economic exploitation of recent times. He thinks that the West was always and still is inherently hostile to Islam. He even alleges that the Mongol invasion of Iran was instigated by the West. This and other allegations in the book do not stand up to objective historical criticism, but the fact that he made them and the fact that the book was well received give proof of the strength of anti-Western feeling in certain Iranian nationalist circles. His attacks on the

Western powers and multi-national companies pleased left-leaning nationalists and many bazāris, his praise of Islam pleased radical religious nationalists, and his scarcely veiled condemnation of the Shāh's régime and policies pleased most elements of the opposition.

Āl-e Ahmad's anti-imperialist thesis echoes the doctrine of what may be called Islamic socialism. Gharbzadegi's dominant note, however, is cultural and religious nationalism in opposition to Mohammad Rezā Shāh's reassertion of Pahlavi secular nationalism and establishment of close links with the West, especially the USA. Āl-e Ahmad bitterly condemns the thinking and behaviour of Westernized intellectuals, particularly their willingness to serve the Iranian governments since the granting of the constitution and thereby, in his opinion, indirectly to serve Western imperialism. His formal thesis is that the capitalist Western powers, in their search for markets for their factory-made goods in underdeveloped countries, seek to rule these countries through subordinate native governments and to 'infect' growing numbers of people in these countries with Western consumption tastes and ways of thought. In this way the West is wrecking the economic and cultural life of the people and depriving the country of any real independence. This thesis, however, is over-shadowed by his great emphasis on the cultural servility of the Westernized intellectuals. In a posthumous work entitled Dar Khedmat va Khiyānat-e Rowshanfekrān (About the Service and Treason of Intellectuals), which was not published until 1978, Āl-e Ahmad again, and more strongly,

denounced intellectuals who served the régime and thereby the Western imperialists and betrayed Iran.

Views more or less similar to those of Āl-e Ahmad concerning intellectuals and Western influence have been expressed repeatedly and since long ago both in fiction and in specific articles and books. Westernized intellectuals first became a target for criticism in the years following the victory of the constitutionalists. Those who wanted to 'catch up with the caravan' of scientific and technical progress, both as an end in itself and as a means to greater national strength, better public services, and wider employment opportunities, admired the West in spite of their political suspicions, because for them it seemed to be the source of science, technology, and enlightenment. Often such intellectuals abandoned the traditional and cultural values of their country, which they considered obsolete, and adopted Western tastes and manners. Many individuals with no claim to modern knowledge or intellectual status did the same merely from snobbery. In the eyes of other Iranians they appeared to be farangi-ma'āb (Westernized), fokoli (tie and collar wearer), horhori mazhab (religiously lax), etc. Jamālzādeh was one of the early writers who ridiculed this snobbery and lack of understanding of Iranian society. In his Fārsi Shekar Ast this is typified by their use of unintelligible Frenchified language. 'Ali Nowruz (Hasan Moqaddam) mocked the Westernized intellectuals and pseudo-intellectuals even more sharply in his play Ja'far Khān az Farang Āmadeh (Ja'far Khān Comes from Europe). This one-act play also depicts the generation gap found

in many Iranian families. The medieval attitudes of Ja'far Khān's mother are wittily contrasted with her Westernized son's strange and absurd behaviour and his unconcern for Persian cultural values.

Āl-e Ahmad's Gharbzadegi had been preceded by a specific study of the problems of Westernization and cultural integrity. This is Sayyed Fakhr od-Din Shādmān's Taskhir-e Tamaddon-e Farangi (How to Subdue European Civilization; 1947). Shādman thinks that the adoption of Western civilization, in the sense of science, technology, and industry, is essential for Iran's economic welfare and political survival, but he fears that the process may destroy its culture. In his view, the core of a nation's identity is its culture and the core of its culture is its language; if the Persian language cannot cope with science and industry and has to give way to some other language, Iran will cease to be a nation. Therefore the main tasks of patriotic Iranian intellectuals are to think scientifically, to develop the scientific and technical vocabulary of Persian, and to propagate scientific and technical knowledge by translating foreign books and writing books in Persian. This work was quite widely read and discussed, but Āl-e Ahmad's Gharbzadegi achieved a much greater popularity for its timely appearance and for its straightforward, bitter language.[32] The difference between the two works, however, is not merely one of tone. Shādmān, emphasising the importance of science and technology, wants cooperation with the West on equal terms. Āl-e Ahmad, supposing that cooperation on equal terms is impossible, wants isolation. Although Āl-e Ahmad says that the Iranians should create modern industries by themselves, the logical conclusion to be drawn from his preachings is that the Iranians should deliberately exclude themselves from the universe of science and technology.

Like Āl-e Ahmad, several authors of fictional works identify the régime with the West and anti-Westernism with opposition to the régime. Not every author was motivated by socialist ideology or anti-capitalist feelings. Nevertheless their resentment of the régime's autocracy, their sympathy for victims of overhasty modernization, and their dislike of the behaviour of the Westernized class gives a radical tone to their works.

The novel Suvashun by Simin Dāneshvar, although set in the past, is meant to carry a message for the present. The adverse picture of the British wartime occupation of Fārs signifies the authoress's disapproval of present Western influence. Sā'edi, in his Panj Namāyeshnāmeh az Enqelāb-e Mashrutiyat - five plays about the struggle for constitutional government (1967), and in Tup (The Cannon; 1969), similarly presents historical episodes of resistance against feudal tyranny and Imperial Russian pressure as examples for the present generation. In another of Sā'edi's plays, Chub-be-dast-hā-ye Varazil (1967), the crops of a village named Varazil are being ruined by an infestation of wild boars (a common occurrence in the mountains of Āzarbāyjān), and the poor villagers cannot drive away the boars with sticks which are the only weapons they possess. They summon a party of hunters who have guns and are headed by a leader named Monsieur. The hunters shoot the boars, and are well fed and deferentially treated by the villagers, but do not leave. The villagers summon a second party of hunters to help them get rid of the first party, and feed them and

treat them equally well; but they likewise eat up the villagers' meagre stock of food and persist in staying. When the two parties line up facing each other, the villagers expect a shoot-out between them, but they both turn around and point their guns at the villagers. The symbolism is obvious. The people of Varazil are the people of Iran. The two parties of hunters are the seemingly rival factions within the Westernized governmental establishment, both of which are led by foreign imperialism symbolized by Monsieur. (In later editions of the play, Monsieur was changed by the censorship to Mātāvus, an Armenian name). The deference of the villagers to the hunters represents the still widespread Iranian feeling of inferiority towards foreigners. The behaviour of the hunters, who eat far more of the villagers' food than the amount of the crops that they save, and who finally turn their guns on the people, represents Western profiteering and domination. A similar point concerning Western exploitation is intended in Sā'edi's play Ā-ye Bi-kolāh, Ā-ye Bā-kolāh, and in some other short stories and plays by him. In Dandil (1968) a young girl is brought to a brothel in Dandil, the red light district of Marāgheh, where there is a large military base. The pimps, in their search for a man who will pay a high fee for the 'honour' of being this virgin girl's first client, make inquiries from a policeman, who suggests an American sergeant of his acquaintance. On the policeman's advice, the pimps tidy up the brothel to make it fit for an American to enter. The American comes and enjoys the 'honour', but leaves without paying. The pimps ask the policeman to go and get

payment from the American, but he is afraid to do so. Both Chub-be-dast-hā-ye Varazil and Dandil show how bitter was Sā'edi's feeling that the Iranian masses were being exploited and humiliated by the West and suppressed and deceived by the Shāh's government (given the role of the West's hunters in the former and the West's policeman in the latter).[33]

The régime's centralization and bureaucratization measures had two paradoxical effects. Governmental control and power to bring pressure were widened and strengthened, and public contacts with governmental agencies were correspondingly increased. Confrontation remained latent when the régime enjoyed some prestige and its modernization and industrialization policies were working fairly well, as in the years immediately following the White Revolution. The later attempt to accelerate these policies caused the régime to become more closely linked with the West and gave rise to economic and social disruption which enhanced its isolation from the people. In the hope of bridging this gap, the authorities made increasing use of propaganda, with the result that the press and the radio and television became more and more monotonous. Sā'edi's short play Mā Nemishenavim (We Don't Hear; 1970) depicts the boredom and revulsion which the mass media provoked. The propaganda was ineffective because it did not prevent the régime from becoming so unpopular that any form of opposition, even law-breaking or breach of official duty, brought prestige. In this play the sole character is bombarded with the official propaganda which can be heard from a loud-speaker. The effect on him, however, is the contrary of

the régime's intention. The entire monologue play is about his obsessive desire to get rid of the loudspeaker which follows him wherever he goes and keeps on emitting the same sort of words in spite of his attempts to smash it.

The régime was not always monolithic, or at least made a show of allowing some disagreement within its ranks. Different factions existed and sometimes engaged in controversy. Before the establishment of the single Rastākhiz party in 1975, there were two officially recognized parties, Iran-e Novin and Mardom, but both advocated the same basic lines of policy and fully supported the Shāh's rule. Samad Behrangi's short story Do Gorbeh Ru-ye Divār (Two Cats on the Wall) in his collection Pesarak-e Labu-forush (1967), is meant to show that these factions did not represent the common people. Two cats on their nightly prowl meet and face each other in the middle of the top of a wall. Each intends to snatch a morsel for itself which can be done on either side of the wall; but both are stubborn, and neither is willing to give way. Finally someone down below throws water on them, and both turnaround and run away. By the cats, Behrangi evidently means the factions within the government. Their nightly prowls (like the nightly expeditions of the hunters in Sā'edi's Chub-be-dast-hā-ye Varazil and the thieves in his Ā-ye Bi-kolāh, Ā-ye Bā-kolāh) signify the illegitimacy of the government's actions. Their position on the wall and vulnerability from below suggest that the government is narrowly based and can be toppled by the common people. Their aims do not differ, and their fight is only for their personal advantage.

The real political opposition was represented by various groups with different ideologies.[34] The two main tendencies, as Nikki Keddi observed, were to 'forms of socialism and/or Marxism and to Islamic government.'[35] These major camps, one motivated primarily by leftist and the other primarily by religious feeling, overlapped to a certain extent. In the middle stood the liberals who often also had either leftist or religious inclinations.

In the intellectual and literary fields, however, this division is not so sharp. The expressed ideas or feelings are often vague and interwoven. Religiously inclined writers expressed sympathy for the socio-political goals of the left such as anti-imperialism and a classless society, while left-leaning writers showed appreciation of the social teachings of Islam and of the Islamic element in Persian literature and culture. In Sā'edi's 'Azādārān-e Bayal, Islam is the cement which holds the society together and enables it to function. The most respected person in the village of Bayal is a man named Mashdi Eslām, with whose departure to the town the book ends. His name reveals his character, and his departure symbolizes the decline of the social function of religion. He is religious and at the same time wise, practical, and acquainted with Iranian culture. It is to him above all that the villagers turn. He symbolizes the role of Islam in Iranian life. His actions and capabilities are in great contrast to those of the Kadkhodā (officially appointed village headman), who symbolizes the inefficiency of the ruling system. The fact that the village's only cart belongs to

Mashdi Eslām implies that religion performs the social function of mobilizing the people. The village's donkeys are sometimes of use, but not so much as the cart and its strong horse. In the story of the plague which comes to the village and strikes the sweetheart of a young man who is the son of the deceased Āqā (religious leader), the girl's mother agrees to send her on donkey-back to the government hospital in the town. It is significant that the girl's mother abandons traditional custom in choosing to send her daughter to the hospital instead of trying to cure her by recourse to folkloric medicine. The hospital, however, is no better than the house of a certain Gadā Khānom in a neighbouring village to which the people go for faith-healing. Both are overcrowded and unable to give proper attention. Yet there is a big difference between them. The people are kept out of the hospital by iron railings and humiliated like beggars, whereas the door of Gadā Khānom's house is opened to all under the welcoming banner of Islam.

Thus Sā'edi portrays a society which is strongly bound to religious values. Religion is a vast sea, and admittedly the people's knowledge of Islam hardly goes beyond externals and is tinged with superstitions. Naneh Khānom and Naneh Fātemeh, two pious old women of Bayal, go to the sacred tomb of Nabi Āqā for sacred soil to give as doses of medicine to the sick of the village. They hardly know a single verse of the Quran, so they constantly call on Mohammad, 'Ali, Hasan, and Hoseyn. What matters is the strength of their faith. Sā'edi's attitude is sympathetic.

As a professional psychiatrist, he knows that religion is a comfort to people who have nowhere else to turn. At the same time he is critical of the credulity and consequent ignorance of the masses. His play Ā-ye Bi-kolāh, Ā-ye Bā-kolāh is an amusing and dramatically effective satire of popular ignorance. His main point is that the various classes in Iran are too occupied with their petty troubles to listen to those who know what is going on. Indeed they are happy to remain ignorant. In the first act, the people of a shabby new suburb (obviously of Tehran) are disturbed in their sleep when an old man who claims to have seen a thief in an unoccupied house informs his daughter and a neighbour, and the three of them call for help at the top of their voices. At the end of this act, somebody in the house stirs and comes out. The people are surprised when they see that this person is a poor old woman of their acquaintance and that their fear had no foundation. The second act opens with the hushed entry of a gang of armed thieves into the unoccupied house. The old man and his neighbour, who is sitting on a balcony, see the thieves and inform the people, but now the people do not believe them. Their confidence that all is well springs from ignorance in the same way as their fear in the first act. They are so confident that they gratefully accept the local doctor's offer of sleeping pills. After swallowing them, they go to their beds and are sound asleep when the thieves, each armed with a knife and a bunch of keys, come out and burgle their homes. Sā'edi does not hint who the thieves

may be. Probably they symbolize the Westernized class or the Western powers, but this is only a secondary point. The main point is that the people's ignorance makes them easily exploitable. In Sā'edi's writings, attacks on Western exploitation of the people are often linked with observations of the people's unawareness and submissiveness.

In general the writers and intellectuals who have attacked the West do not condemn modern science and technology, though they associate them with the West and are concerned about their impact on the Iranian people. In regard to the Pahlavi régime's modernization and industrialization policies, the objections of the writers are usually not against the policies as such, but against the manner of their execution and their social effects. Some people think that these policies hurt the poor, widen the gap between the poor and the rich, and serve the interests of the régime, the ruling class, and the West. Others think that they endanger the nation's cultural heritage. Such authors generally cherish the Islamic element in this heritage as opposed to the pre-Islamic element emphasized in Pahlavi nationalism. It is therefore possible to classify the writers into those concerned about class conflict and those concerned about cultural values; but the position of each can only be ascertained through careful examination of his writings to see which concern preponderates. Some writers, such as Samad Behrangi and Behāzin, clearly care most about the poverty and the social and economic conditions. For them it makes no

difference whether the poverty is due to exploitation of the country's peasants and workers by rich Iranians or to exploitation of its resources and markets by foreigners. Other writers, such as Āl-e Ahmad and Sā'edi, see Iran as a nation whose cultural identity and social cohesion are threatened by foreign influence. All the people of Iran are being exploited because Iran is a 'consumer' society, i.e. a consumer of foreign manufactures, and all the 'producer' manufacturing countries, whether capitalist or from the Soviet block, are the exploiters. In Āl-e Ahmad's Gharbzadegi, the exploiting nations are called Gharb (the West) and defined as 'almost all Europe, Soviet Russia, and the whole of North America'.[36] These nations have only been able to exploit Iran after weakening the national integrity of the Iranians, which means their Islamic integrity. He writes:

> "I am in agreement with Dr. Tondar Kiyā, who wrote that the martyr Sheykh Fazlollāh Nuri was hanged not for his opposition to constitutional government (mashruteh) which he supported in the beginning, but because he supported Islamic Government (mashru'eh). I will add that (he was hanged) for his support for the integrity of Islamic Shi'ism ... and that to me the corpse of that great man hanging from the scaffold seems like a flag signalling the victory of gharbzadegi which has been hoisted on the roof of this house (i.e. Iran) ever since."[37]

In Khasi dar Miqāt, Āl-e Ahmad's account of his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1965, he affirms his resolve never to become a cosmopolitan. A man's individuality is formed and defined by his inherited language, culture, and religion, and a cosmopolitan who renounces this heritage loses all individuality.[38] Thus Āl-e Ahmad, once a member of the

secularist Tudeh Party, returned to his religious background and expressed support for Shi'ite Islamic nationalism. This change of heart has a more than personal significance because, as Nikki Keddie has noted, it 'can be seen as both reflecting and influencing the turn of some intellectuals away from pure Westernism and secularism.'[39]

As an essayist Āl-e Ahmad won great esteem and perhaps should be rated higher than as a writer of fiction, through which he also expressed his socio-political ideas. His later ideas can easily be traced in his later fictional works, which have enjoyed a much wider circulation than his earlier works, no doubt on account of the growth of the new type of nationalism that he represented. Among those on whose thinking Āl-e Ahmad's later ideas exercised a strong influence was the already mentioned progressive Islamic lecturer and writer, 'Ali Shari'ati. One of Shari'ati's themes was a call for 'Alavid Islam, i.e. for the original and progressive Islam of 'Ali and the other Imams, as opposed to Safavid Islam.[40] This distinction had earlier been made by Āl-e Ahmad in his Gharbzadegi, where he traces the start of Western influence and Iranian decline to the Safavid period. He points out that the Shi'ite 'olamā of that period, such as Mir-Dāmād and Majlesi, always supported the ultimately disastrous Safavid régime, and thinks that by their silence in the face of its misdeeds they neglected their socio-political duty of ensuring justice for the people. From then on, he says, the idea of martyrdom was forgotten and the people were content to revere martyrs instead of following their examples.[41]

In Nun va'l Qalam, Āl-e Ahmad similarly distinguishes between religion as a pillar of the state and religion as a cause for struggle and martyrdom against injustice. In this work a group of Qalandars (wandering darvishes), who are ascetics and idealists, take control of a city when the despotic governor is driven out, but fail to rule in accordance with their ideals. When the governor returns with a newly mustered army, they run away. The only character who remains behind to face martyrdom is Mirzā Asadollāh, a scribe who is not one of the Qalandars but joined them when they insisted on their need for his services. In the end he is spared through influence and allowed to go into exile.[42] The lesson is that a movement is bound to failif its leaders do not have sincere faith and are not ready for martyrdom. will depend on sincere faith and readiness for martyrdom.

Sā'edi, on the contrary, sees no such merit in martyrdom, though he believes that religion plays a significant part in Iranian society. In one of his plays about the constitutional movement he writes:

> "One must remain alive. (To the enemy) you will be important and frightening and you will be taken into account only when you are alive and free, but as soon as you are caught you will be hanged and no longer worth a penny. To be a martyr and sacrificed is absurd. You will then be soon forgotten ... If you are caught and you have no chance to escape, make sure you are not hanged for nothing. Try to kill at least two of them before you are killed. When they put the rope around your neck, spit into their faces, and when they pull you up, kick the executioner so hard that his brain will be smashed. Yes, you must remain alive by any possible means."[43]

Āl-e Ahmad's virtuous characters, such as Mirzā Asadollāh,

and his 'I' characters, such as the headmaster in Modir-e Madreseh, are innately perfect, and their absolute goodness is contrasted with the absolute evil of the surrounding society. Sā'edi, owing to his profession, has a much deeper knowledge of the people, and his characters are more human, whereas Āl-e Ahmad's characters are often bloodless and one-dimensional. They are mere symbols, mostly created to justify the author's idealistic utopia. Although it is not impossible to come across such saints in a corrupt society, Āl-e Ahmad's characterization of the schoolmaster and other heroes cannot be considered realistic. It is much less convincing than Behrangi's presentation of virtuous characters, who are human and sometimes do things which in Behrangi's admission are immoral but necessary - for instance, in fighting an enemy with the enemy's own weapons.[44] They are virtuous through their social faith and commitment, but not through complete moral perfection. Āl-e Ahmad's schoolmaster resigns when he can no longer tolerate the corrupt system, whereas Behrangi's heroes grow towards perfection by living within the system and combating its evils. They plot, lie, steal,and even commit murder when necessary in their struggles to help people. Their admittedly immoral deeds are insignificant in comparison with their unselfish motives.

In Olduz va Kalāgh-hā (Olduz and the Crows; 1966), the crow steals a bar of soap, not for pleasure but to feed her children. When she is accused of committing a sin by stealing, she replies that the starvation of her children is a greater sin than stealing:

> What is sin? It is a sin not to steal and to let my children and me die of starvation ... It is a sin to starve when there is so much soap all around."[45]

Later, however, the crow admits the wrongfulness of theft when she says that she does not approve of stealing and would not have stolen the soap if she had had enough to feed her children and herself.

In another Behrangi's children's stories, Kachal-e Kaftarbāz (The Bald Pigeon-Fancier; 1967), Kachal (Baldhead) steals some money from the house of Hājji 'Ali, a factory owner, after he has promised his mother never to touch forbidden things. In a soliloquy Kachal comes to the conclusion that Hājji 'Ali's money belongs to the workers and Hājji 'Ali has stolen it from them, so he takes the money and gives it back to its real owners.

> "Kachal kept talking to himself while he walked. Well, dear Kachal, figure it out and see whether it is lawful for you to take Hājji 'Ali's property! How does Hājji 'Ali earn his money? From his factories? Does he work himself? No, he does not soil his hands. He just takes the profits of the factories and enjoys himself. Now set your brain to work and tell me, dear Kachal: who works and creates profit? I will ask you something, and you will give me the right answer. Tell me, if the people do not work, what will happen to the factories? They will close down. Then will the factories still make a profit? Of course not. Well, dear Kachal, from these questions and answers we come to the conclusion that the workers work, but Hājji 'Ali gets the profit and gives them only a little. Since Hājji 'Ali's wealth does not belong to him, it is lawful for me."[46]

Behrangi's characters are not born perfect, but have to make themselves perfect through learning. In Olduz va Kalāgh-hā, Olduz, a small girl who lives a sad life with

her unkind stepmother, finds her way into the friendly world of the crows where she learns a lot about the bright as well as the dark sides of life and achieves social consciousness and self-confidence. In Behrangi's second story of the same girl, Olduz va 'Arusak-e Sokhangu (1967), she does this through conversation with her talking doll. In his Māhi-ye Siyāh-e Kuchulu (The Little Black Fish;1968), this process is achieved in the course of a journey. A little black fish who is very intelligent decides to leave the small stream which is its home in quest of wider experience. On its long and hazardous journey (symbolizing progress towards perfection), it learns and thinks a great deal about society, and by the time that it reaches the vast sea it has achieved awareness.

Mary and Eric Hooglund, in the introduction to their translations of some of Behrangi's stories, write: "Behrangi emphasized two themes in his stories: (1) the acquisition of knowledge and (2) the use of knowledge to help correct social problems."[47] In Bist-o-chahār Sā'at dar Khwāb va Bidāri (24 hours Asleep and Awake; 1969), a father who has had a hard life in a village migrates with his young son, Latif, to Tehrān in the hope that they will find work and be able to sustain his wife and the rest of his family at home. However, they find no better work than street vending. Latif helps his father and in his spare time plays games with the children of the same type. He often stops in front of a toy shop where he is fascinated by a big toy camel, a symbol of tireless and steady motion and progress. The story is about Latif's adventures in a

span of 24 hours, a symbol of a full cycle of growth and progress. In this cycle, Latif moves towards perfection, or rather social consciousness, which he achieves when the story reaches its climax. The camel with which Latif now has a personal relationship is sold to a beautifully dressed girl who has come with her father in an expensive sports car. While the shining car is taking away this camel of Latif's dreams, his eye falls on a new toy in the shop window - a toy machine-gun. This sight completes the process of Latif's achievement of awareness, and implies approval of violence for redress of social injustice.

Actual use of violence to that end is the theme of Mansur Yāquti's novel Cherāghi bar Farāz-e Mādiyān Kuh (A Light on top of Mādiyān Kuh, undated but probably 1976). The main character, Cherāgh, is a peasant who revolts against cruelty and exploitation by the landlord. When the landlord, who had beaten Cherāgh's father to death when Cherāgh was a boy, wants to evict him, he kills the landlord and escapes to Mādiyān Kuh, a mountain near the village, where he lives as an outlaw and a rebel. The poor exploited villagers feel sympathy for him and fix their hopes on him. The old men go to the mosque to pray for him and the young men give him practical help. Rashid, a boy in his teens, takes some bullets for him when he has run out, and two young villagers join him. They resist for a few weeks, but are at last outnumbered by the landlord's men and the gendarmes. Cherāgh and one of his friends are killed and the other escapes. The revolt is short and unsuccessful, but fruitful in awakening the villagers to consciousness of an enduring confrontation of two opposing social classes.

Cherāgh lives on gloriously in their minds as the first champion of their cause. The story ends several years later when Rashid has become a strong and valiant young man fit to be an epic hero. Rashid's growing up symbolizes the growing up of the villagers' consciousness. As in the case of Behrangi's characters, the progress of Yāquti's characters towards social consciousness is gradual and determined by events. What starts with Cherāgh continues with Rashid and in part with the others until the social mission of the characters is accomplished and their goal is achieved.

The success of a popular social movement is the theme of Behāzin's Kāveh (1977), a play based on old Iranian mythology. In the legend as told in verse by Ferdowsi in the Shāhnāmeh, a rebellion of the oppressed people led by a blacksmith named Kāveh ends in the deposition of the cruel usurper Zahhāk and the enthronement of the rightful king Feridun. In the play, Behāzin, while keeping as close as possible to the original framework, tries to depict the gradual process of a modern mass revolution. Before the opening, Kāveh stands in front of the curtain and addresses the audience. Part of this address is quoted below as an illustration of Behāzin's attitude:

> "... I am a blacksmith, a simple blacksmith ... I am the one that once found my way into the realm of legend ... You must have heard of me at least from the stirring words of Ferdowsi ... But the stories that poets create are rather like dreams ... They say that I attached a piece of leather to an arrow and called people to rebel, and so they did ... And you will believe it. Even if you don't believe it, you will say it

> is a legend ... Well, once upon a time this legend was reality, our reality, and it can be your life today ... Our problem was big, and we did a big job. Thousands like Kāveh and better than Kāveh worked themselves to death until they reached that tremendous moment told in the story. But you only hear of Kāveh. What was Kāveh? The arm of the people ..."[48]

In the profile of recent Persian fiction, a number of socially significant features stand out. Most of the writings are strongly moralistic and explicitly or implicitly critical of the Pahlavi régime's conduct. The régime is associated with the West, and the West and the Westernized Iranians are pictured as selfish exploiters of Iran's people and resources. Both the contents and the forms of the fictional output are greatly affected by the régime's harshly uncompromising response to socio-political criticism. The literature is certainly a literature of opposition, but it is not - as may seem at first glance - unanimous. The authors agree in their opposition to the dictatorial and pro-Western régime, but disagree on the type of government and society which they hope to see in its place. One group may be described as basically nationalist and the other as basically socialist. The word 'nationalist' presents difficulties, because the socialists, the defenders of Iranian and Shi'ite cultural integrity, and the advocates of Western-type modernization, all considered themselves to be nationalists. All saw the interests of the class which they represented or supported as the 'national interests'. The word 'class' also presents difficulties, but there may be some truth in the view that the Westernizers supported the interests of the upper class

and the wealthy bourgeoisie, the cultural nationalists those of the petty bourgeoisie and the small property-owning class, and the socialists those of the rural and urban lower classes.

In Simin Dāneshvar's Suvashun, the heroine, Zari, is the wife of a patriotic small landowner. Her own strong nationalistic feelings are reinforced when she meets a nationalist Irishman who tells her that the Iranians and the Irish are both Aryans. Yet as soon as she finds that her husband and eventually the family are in danger, her nationalism is reduced to mere sentimentality. She weeps and confesses that she does not mind what the occupying troops do to her city and country, but only cares about the safety of her family and possessions:

> "Let them do what they want, but not bring the war to my hearth ... My city, my country is this house ...".[49]

After her husband's death, however, she recovers her strength and her nationalism. This is because she can now see the reason for his patriotism: the family's house and land and social status cannot be saved unless the country is saved. So her struggle for her country's independence and integrity is only motivated by class interest.

Similarly, in Āl-e Ahmad's Nefrin-e Zamin, the landowner, Bibi, is depicted as the source of the village's unity and integrity. This condones the exploitation of the peasants which enables her to provide a comfortable, civilized life for her family, who apart from her son, who represents the district in parliament, never appear in

the village. The novel's tragic end serves to justify the author's social attitude. Bibi dies, and with her death the peace and unity of the village disappears.

The petty bourgeois writers thus supported the social status quo, except insofar as they wished to eliminate political restrictions and foreign influences. In contrast, the socialist writers were deeply concerned about the state of the poor in the existing conditions. They condemned the Shāh's régime not only for its dictatorial methods and Western ties, but also because it maintained an economic system unduly favourable to the interests of a small minority consisting of landowners (after the Land Reform urban landowners), industrialists, contractors, big merchants, bankers, high officials, leading professional men, etc. The socialist writers condemn both Iranian and Western representatives of this minority, but in the final analysis are not so worried about the West as the first group of writers. Often for them the West is only a symbol which can be criticized without fear of censorship. It is seen as the driving force behind the Shāh's régime, but the real target of criticism is the social structure which the régime supported.

One final point has yet to be made. The effects of the social and political tensions of this period on the fiction, as on other branches of literature, were not beneficial from an artistic point of view. The socially committed authors scarcely concerned themselves with structure, style, or humour, while the censorship restricted free choice of

themes and characters. Nor was the restriction solely political. For example, the Pahlavi régime, like the preceding governments since the granting of the constitution, viewed the languages and cultural traditions of the non-Persian speaking minorities with suspicion. Publication in these languages was prohibited, and writers were pressed to emphasise the Persian language and culture. All these factors tended to make the fiction of the period monotonous and, as Mas'ud Farzān has observed, 'inward-looking and depersonalized'.[50] Michael Hillmann, in his study of Āl-e Ahmad's Modir-e Madreseh, has remarked on 'the subordination of the art of narration to the goal of social commentary and criticism'.[51] Most of the fictional works are only meaningful in the context of the contemporary Iranian socio-political scene, and thus lack universal validity and appeal. They will be of great value, however, for future understanding of Iranian history.

Footnotes (III.V)

1 Cf. Mas'ud Zavārzādeh, "The Persian Short Story Since the Second World War", in M.W., 58 (1968), pp.308-316.

2 Cf. Michael Hillman's introduction to John Newton's English translation of Āl-e Ahmad's Modir-e Madreseh, entitled The School Principal, p.18.

3 For European symbolism and its abstraction from reality, see Edmund Wilson's Axel's Castle, pp.9-28.

4 Jan Rypka, History of Iranian Literature, p.114.

5 Quoted by W.A. Clouston in the introduction to Daqā'eqi's Bakhtyār Nāma: A Persian Romance (translated by Sir William Ouseley), p.13.

6 Cf. Michael Hillman, "Āl-e Ahmad's Fictional Legacy", in I.S., p.251.

7 Cf. Shamim Bahār, "Modir-e Madreseh va Nun va'l-Qalam va Jalāl-e Āl-e Ahmad", in Andisheh va Honar, Vol.5, No.4 (1964), pp.490-504.

8 See M.'A. Jamālzādeh, "Modir-e Madreseh", in Rāhnamā-ye Ketāb, Vol.1 (1958), pp.167-178.

9 Ilkhechi (1963) and Khiāv (1965) are about small communities in Āzarbayjān. Ahl-e Havā (1967) is about a Gulf fishing village. The other leading writer, Jalāl Āl-e Ahmad, had earlier written three similar social studies: Urāzān (1954), an isolated mountain village in the Alborz; Tātneshin-hā-ye Boluk-e Zahrā (1958), a rural district of Qazvin where most of the people speak Āzari Turkish but some speak Tāti, which is an old Iranian language; Jazire-ye Khārg: Dorr-e Yatim-e Khalij-e Fārs (1960), about Khārg Island before it became a great petroleum port.

10 Concerning the backwardness of villages, see Āl-e Ahmad's monograph on the village Urāzān, where (in 1954) not only were there no signs of a school, gendarmerie post, or medical centre, but the men would often light their pipes by using fire stones. See Urāzān, p.5.

11 Through his profession, Sā'edi has wide experience of Iranian hospitals, particularly in poor areas, and has described or referred to their bad conditions in several of his stories. A significant example is Āshghālduni, in which the lamentable conditions in hospitals are paralleled with an illegal market in blood. A third shocking aspect of this story is that while these defects are ignored and condoned by the government, the SAVAK has close control over the individuals responsible. This aspect of the story was dropped when it was filmed under the title Dāyere-ye Minā, which was called The Circle in English, and appeared with English subtitles.

12 On the importance of oxen in village life, Nikki Keddie remarks that "the crucial top-class share-cropping position went to a man with one or two oxen, who received extra income both for supplying one of the factors of production and for heading the work team; anyone owning oxen was assured of a position on the work team, and of a higher income than was received by the peasants without oxen. These latter ... had the lowest incomes and were in the most precarious position." See N. Keddie, "The Iranian Village Before and After Land Reform", in Underdevelopment and Development (ed. H. Bernstein), p.156.

13 This story has been analyzed for its psychological values, and Mashdi Hasan's madness has been interpreted as a sort of metamorphosis with a background in the classical adab of Iran which has influenced modern writers. See 'Abdul-'Ali Dastgheyb, Naqd-e Āsār-e Gholām-Hoseyn Sā'edi, pp.41-46.

14 Samad Behrangi, "Āvā-ye Nowgolān", in Rāhnamā-ye Ketāb, Vol.11 (1968), pp.48-53.

15 Samad Behrangi, Kand-o-kāv dar Masā'el-e Tarbiyati-ye Irān, pp.67-68.

16 Āl-e Ahmad, "Balbashu-ye Ketāb-hā-ye Darsi", in Seh Maqāle-ye Digar, pp.79-109.

17 Sabri Tabrizi finds a good number of similarities between Behrangi and Āl-e Ahmad, despite the basic differences in their social outlook, which he does not mention - probably for political reasons. See Sabri Tabrizi, "Human Values in the Works of Two Persian Writers", in Actes du Ve Congrès International d'Arabisants et d'Islamisants, pp.411-418.

18 Cf. for instance, Mohammad Mas'ud, Tafrihāt-e Shab, pp.139-173.

19 Āl-e Ahmad, Gharbzadegi, pp.107-108.

20 Cf. N. Keddie, Iran: Religion, Politics and Society, pp.228-229.

21 On the inefficacy of the pattern of change imposed from above in Iranian society, see A. Reza Arasteh, Man and Society in Iran, p.97.

22 Āl-e Ahmad, Gharbzadegi, p.162-163.

23 Op.cit., p.131.

24 Āl-e Ahmad, Nefrin-e Zamin, p.9.

25 Op.cit., pp.79-80.

26 Āl-e Ahmad, Gharbzadegi, pp.25-27.

27 In the original text Āl-e Ahmad avoids mentioning Marx by name, but sarcastically refers to him as "the old, bearded German who some one hundred years ago used to mimic Moses, and we (i.e. his blind enthusiasts) gargled (qarqareh mikardim) his commands. See Nefrin-e Zamin, p.81.

28 Āl-e Ahmad, Nefrin-e Zamin, pp.81-82. Āl-e Ahmad's strong emphasis on nationalistic and cultural aspects are very similar to those of the bourgeois-nationalist Jamālzādeh to whom he wrote a letter criticizing him, not for his attitudes but because in his later writings he was not as militant in expressing his views as in his Yeki Bud Yeki Nabud. See Āl-e Ahmad, Andisheh va Honar, Vol.5 (1964-5), pp.362-370.

29 Cf. Jamshid M. Irāniān, Vāqe'iyat-e Ejtemā'i va Jahān-e Dāstān, pp.151-163.

30 The tomb of an Imam (or Emāmzādeh) is surrounded by a heavy metal grille which pilgrims (zovvār) kiss and clasp at the climax of their pilgrimage. At this moment they say prayers for intercession (shafā'at) and also often tie pieces of cloth or paper bearing prayers and wishes.

31 The term "gharbzadegi" had already been coined by the intellectual thinker Ahmad Fardid to condemn the craze for Western tastes. (Āl-e Ahmad, Gharbzadegi, p.16). This word, however, only gained vogue after the publication of Āl-e Ahmad's Gharbzadegi in 1962.

32 Cf. Jamshid M. Irāniān, op.cit., p.152.

33 Cf. G.R. Sabri Tabrizi, "Social Values in Modern Persian Literature", in B.B.A.O., Vol.8 (new series, 1976), pp.9-16.

34 On opposition groups, see Fred Halliday, Iran, Dictatorship and Development, pp.211-248.

35 Nikki Keddie, "Iran: Change in Islam, Islam and Change", in I.J.M.E.S., Vol.11, No.4 (July 1980), p.530.

36 Āl-e Ahmad, Gharbzadegi, p.21.

37 Op.cit., p.78.

38 Āl-e Ahmad, Khasi dar Miqāt, pp.105-106.

39 Nikki Keddie, op.cit., p.535.

40 "Eslām-e Safavi", or rather "tashayyo'-e Safavi", implies those social, political, and economic values which were favoured and practised by the Safavids and subsequent

ruling establishments as opposed to those which were practised by the Imam 'Ali (= "tashayyo'-e 'Alavi"). This theme was the basic element of 'Ali Shari'ati's interpretation of Islam as a social factor, and he also chose it for the content and title of one of his books, Tashayyo'-e 'Alavi va Tashayyo'-e Safavi (Hoseyniyeh Ershād, Tehran 1971). A short analysis of this book is given by S. Akhavi, Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran, pp.231-233.

41 Āl-e Ahmad, Gharbzadegi, p.58.

42 Mirzā Asadollāh seems to represent Khalil Maleki, who left the Tudeh Party together with Āl-e Ahmad in early 1948, and later founded a socialist group called Niru-ye Sevvom (Third Force) which Āl-e Ahmad joined.

43 Gholām-Hoseyn Sā'edi, "Bām-hā va Zir-e Bām-hā", in the collection Panj Namāyesh-nāmeh az Enqelāb-e Mashrutiyat, pp.189-190.

44 S. Behrangi, "Āvā-ye Nowgolān", in Rāhnamā-ye Ketāb, Vol.11 (1968), pp.48-50.

45 S. Behrangi, "Olduz va Kalāgh-hā", in the collection Qesse-hā-ye Behrang, pp.14-15.

46 S. Behrangi, "Kachal-e Kaftarbāz", in the collection Qesse-hā-ye Behrang, p.151.

47 S. Behrangi, The Little Black Fish (translated by M. and E. Hooglund), p.17 (introduction).

48 M.E. Behāzin, Kāveh, pp.5-6.

49 Simin Dāneshvar, Suvashun, p.18.

50 M. Farzan, "Modern Persian Literature: How Good is It?", Dāneshgāh-e Pahlavi Lecture Series, Spring 1966, pp.24-25.

51 Al-e Ahmad, The School Principal (translated by John K. Newton), p.18.

CONCLUSION

Modern Persian literature is a new growth stemming from the national awakening at the end of the 19th century. Its most prominent feature is the rise of fiction-writing in prose. Poetry has not receded as it has in other modern literatures, but has yielded its former pre-eminence to prose in the course of the 20th century. In past centuries, when literacy was limited and manuscripts were expensive, written literature had only been accessible to a small minority, and authors had depended on the favour of kings or wealthy patrons, or in some cases on the support of Sufi religious movements. The pre-eminence of poetry in classical Persian literature was probably due to its memorability, which brought it within the reach of a wider audience. Poetry had not been used solely in panegyrics and lyrics, but had also been a vehicle for epic and romantic story-telling, for religious and ethical teaching, and for expression of social grievances about injustice and poverty. Orally transmitted folkloric literature had fulfilled somewhat similar functions. The classical and folkloric heritage could therefore still be a rich source of ideas and imagery; but it could no longer provide literary forms and subject matter suitable for the new social conditions.

The pioneers of modern Persian fiction were influenced by foreign models. They received no patronage and had to earn their keep in other occupations. Some engaged in journalism and also wrote literary pieces for newspapers. Journalism was an important influence on the development of Persian fiction. The basic purpose of most authors was to convey a

social, cultural, or political message in a fictional form which would be acceptable to a wide readership. If they wrote entertainingly, they would attract more readers; but many did not aim primarily at entertainment, or at art for art's sake. The literary form which proved most acceptable to Iranian readers was the short story. The long novel has never achieved great success in Iran and is still regarded as a somewhat alien form, while the short story has become completely naturalized. One reason may be that this genre of European origin bears some resemblance to the anecdote of Persian classical literature and folklore; another reason may be that it is a better vehicle than the novel for carrying a social message.

For the attraction of readers, subject matter is even more important than form. Jamālzādeh recognised and for the first time stated this fact in the preface to his collection of short stories, Yeki Bud, Yeki Nabud. He declared that Persian literature, if it is to survive, must be realistic, relevant, and truly national. The subjects and characters must represent the realities of Iranian society, and the language must be the modern Persian which Iranians use in everyday life. Jamālzādeh did not wholly fulfil his declared intentions, but at least paved the way. Hedāyat, whose works became well known after the second world war, achieved a much greater degree of social realism and has served as a model for many later writers. As regards realism in language, the practice of reproducing colloquial Persian in phonetic spelling has been adopted by some leading authors but has not become general, probably because many Iranians find it

difficult to read or do not like it.

The size and social composition of the reading public in different periods of the 20th century has varied with the spread of literacy and education. The first state schools were founded in 1919; Tehran University opened its doors in 1936; and the first provincial universities came into being after the second world war. At first, literacy was confined in the main to merchants, officials, landowners, and 'olamā; and among the component groups of the literate class, the merchants were probably the largest. With allowance for the structural differences between Iranian society and Western societies, it may perhaps be permissible to describe the relatively small Iranian literate class of the first decades of the 20th century as 'bourgeois'. In the movement for constitutional government, merchants played the chief part, though they owed much to the help of sympathizers among the clergy and the bureaucracy. Their struggle was eventually frustrated by foreign intervention before and during the first world war. The constitutionalists were strongly nationalist in their opposition to Russian and British political intervention and to foreign economic privileges under capitulation treaties which placed Iranian merchants and businessmen at an unfair disadvantage; but they were far from hostile to foreign intellectual and social influences. They were optimistically confident of the advantages of reason and science, and had no doubt of their compatibility with Iranian culture and with Islam. They admired the West as the modern home of reason and science, and believed that Iran could catch

up with the West by adopting Western-type parliamentary, legal, and educational institutions and modern technology. This goal was categorically rejected by religious nationalists who saw Western influence of any kind as a threat to the Islamic way of life of the Iranian people. The defeat of the anti-constitutionalist 'olamā led by Sheykh Fazlollāh Nuri threw religious nationalism into discredit for a long time. The conflict of ideas remained latent, or was suppressed, and in the meantime the bourgeois ideology of secular nationalism prevailed.

After the first world war, Rezā Khān, later Rezā Shāh Pahlavi, set up a military dictatorship with a parliamentary façade. Under this régime, the armed forces were modernized, roads and railways were built, modern industries were introduced, and Western-type legal, educational, and health systems were established. All these were achievements for which the pre-war constitutionalists had aspired. On the other hand, they were imposed without consultation and were accompanied by an increasingly severe censorship which prevented any discussion or criticism. Men were made to wear Western clothes and women were made to unveil by force. After some years of relative prosperity in the 1920s, economic factors of external and internal origin inflicted hardship on the poorer classes. Literacy spread rapidly among the young generation of city-dwellers, and the number of officials and intellectuals increased. For the first time the régime began to make propaganda, mostly of a boastful and over-optimistic kind.

Under Rezā Shāh's rule, the bourgeois nationalist ideology

remained dominant but underwent a change of emphasis. Writers still wanted Iran to catch up with the West, but no longer could express desire for free speech and genuine parliamentary democracy. Certain minor social aspects could be criticized, but not the régime's fundamental policies. Within limits, criticism of the clergy of Shi'ite Islamic customs seen as responsible for Iran's backwardness was allowed by the censorship. The social theme which many fiction writers preferred was the status of women. Another subject which received attention was past Iranian glory. Already before the first world war, the discoveries of archaeology had aroused the interest of Iranian intellectuals. Knowledge of the exploits of Cyrus and Darius created a confident feeling that if the ancient Iranians could lead the world of their time, their modern descendents could at least catch up with the advanced nations of the present time. Pride in the ancient, particularly the Achaemenid, past became part of the régime's ideology under both Pahlavi Shāhs and was emphasized in its propaganda and school text books. Emphasis was also laid on Iranian resistance to Arab rule and on the persistence and revival of the Iranian national identity after the Arab and Mongol conquests. These themes could be interpreted by religious nationalists as anti-Islamic. Several authors tried their hands at writing more or less Western-style historical novels set in ancient and medieval Iran, but they were unable to deal competently with this difficult genre and produced no work of lasting value.

In the period from the entry of Russian and British

troops into Iran in 1941 to the fall of Mosaddeq in 1953, Iranian writers found themselves in a greatly changed situation. After Rezā Shāh's abdication, censorship, though not abolished, was relaxed to an extent which allowed free comment on most internal and some external affairs. This enabled authors to publish works which they had written during Rezā Shāh's reign but had been forced to withhold. In such works, and in works composed during the period, there is a common note of revulsion against Rezā Shāh's dictatorship and of hostility to the established social order, which is seen as having been in league with the dictatorship. The confident optimism of the old secular nationalism is replaced by a negative, and on the whole pessimistic, outlook on the problems of Iranian society.

During the war, the Iranians, like other peoples, hoped for a better future after its end. They were also exposed to intense Russian propaganda of a socialistic nature and British propaganda of a liberal democratic nature. Many intellectuals sympathized with the socialistic and pro-Russian Tudeh party, but changed their minds when the Russians attempted to set up an autonomous administration in Iranian Āzarbāyjān. Later, Iran came into conflict with Britain, and to some extent with the West as a whole, over the oil nationalization problem. Wartime inflation hurt both the lower and the middle classes very painfully, but enabled profiteers to make fortunes, and the oil dispute caused further economic hardship. Thanks to the new educational institutions, literacy had spread and the social range of the reading public had become much broader.

In these circumstances, writers felt genuine concern for the sufferings of the poor, and also knew that this subject was of direct relevance to potential readers. Most of the contemporary fiction expresses a socialist rather than a liberal outlook. The indigenous governing and 'exploiting' classes are the main target of attack, but it is often alleged or implied that they owe their position to Western support. On the other hand, Western intellectual and social values are not questioned or criticized, though they are no longer confidently upheld. The sympathy of the writers for the poor, who form the mass of the Iranian people, was their expression of nationalism and was accompanied by interest in the traditional Iranian ways of life of the poor; but little or no trace of religious nationalism can be found in the literature of this period. Some of these writings depict the clergy as exploiters and ridicule religious customs more outspokenly than ever before.

The years from the fall of Mosaddeq to the eve of the Islamic revolution were a period of political stability and economic expansion, with a brief interruption in 1961-1963. The price of the stability was curtailment of political and electoral freedom, censorship of publications, and domination of the media by official propaganda. The censorship varied in its intensity, being somewhat relaxed in 1961-1963 and very severe in 1971-1977, but at all times hampered the work of writers; it also influenced the style of those who had recourse to evasive devices such as symbolism. The economic expansion in the period was financed by oil revenues, which depended on foreign technology and markets, and was concentrated

on public works, modern industries, and armaments. These developments not only required the presence of foreign experts but also greatly increased the size and power of the Westernized Iranian technocratic class. Most of the benefits of the economic expansion went to this class, though the urban lower middle and working classes began to enjoy relatively higher standards of living. Educational and health services were also rapidly expanded, but remained inadequate in quantity and quality to meet the people's needs and rising expectations. The Land Reform launched by Mohammad Rezā Shāh in 1962 brought fewer benefits to the rural population than had been hoped, and the government gave much less help to agriculture than it did to industry. The economic and cultural gap between the still impoverished villages and the increasingly affluent cities grew wider. Overambitious governmental planning and spending after the four-fold oil price increase of 1973-1974 led to inflation, mass migration of villagers (and Afghans) to the cities, and acute housing shortage, and also facilitated speculation and corruption. The resultant social discontent was one of the main causes of the Islamic revolution. Other important causes were resentment of the political repression and the censorship, and dislike of the Pahlavi régime's secular nationalist ideology and propaganda. The replacement of the Islamic solar hejri calendar by the Shāhanshāhi or Kuroshi calendar in 1976 caused particular offence. The government paid no heed to the clergy, who represented the national religion and were also the only unconstrained spokesmen of the popular grievances.

The fundamental problem was the great gap of wealth,

living style, language, and thought between the traditionally religious masses and the Westernized ruling and technocratic classes. This problem of mutual incomprehension (bi-hamzabāni) constantly recurs in modern Persian literature, and is differently treated by different authors and in different periods.

The writings of the 1953-1979 period are more diversified and harder to categorize than those of the earlier periods. In number and circulation, the largest category consisted of love romances and adventure stories written in simple language and lacking any relevance to real life and current social conditions. Being politically innocuous, they were not inhibited by the censorship. As magazine serials or cheap paperbacks, they provided light entertainment to a large readership probably consisting in the main of semi-educated women and young students. Also tolerated by the censorship and to some extent patronized by the Ministry of Culture were imitations of Western avant-garde writing, which had no relevance either to Iranian social conditions or to Iranian cultural traditions, and furthermore were often not very good imitations.

The most influential writings of the period were works by socially committed and politically oppositional authors. Their opposition was partly motivated by their resentment of the censorship, and partly by their sympathy for the poor combined with their feeling that the régime was trampling on the poor. All show sympathy for the Islamic culture, and even for the superstitious customs, of the masses, which they

regard as a valuable social cement in a time of disruption caused by capitalist economic forces; and all consider the Westernized ruling class, and by implication the Pahlavi régime, to be the protégé and agent of Western capitalism. This view is derived from their observation of the life of the masses under the pressure of social change. The authors differ, however, in their assessment of the situation. For one school, represented by Behāzin and Behrangi, poverty and exploitation of the masses are the basic problems. For the other school, represented by Āl-e Ahmad, who at an earlier stage of his career had been a member of the Tudeh party, defence of Islam and of the Islamic values of Iranian society is the basic problem. The former school may be described as socialist and the latter as Islamic nationalist.

The strongly national and sometimes tendentious quality of modern Persian fiction, which makes it valuable for study of Iranian social trends and concerns, inevitably restricts its potential appeal to foreigners having no special interest in Iran. Some of the authors, however, have written vividly and movingly and have shown considerable artistic skill. Their best works certainly deserve translation and explanation.

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