

RACE & CLASS

A JOURNAL
FOR BLACK AND
THIRD WORLD
LIBERATION

VOLUME XXI
SUMMER 1979
NUMBER 1 £1.25/\$3

Special Issue

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Guest Editor: Egbal Ahmad

Samuel Rubin 1901-1978

Samuel Rubin, our friend and colleague, died in December 1978. He had four beliefs which we should take to heart. The first was that humankind does not have to remain in a wretched condition and the responsibility of those who dare call themselves revolutionary is to end this wretched condition; that education, scientific and artistic endeavours are a central means to help the mass of humanity and an end to which all of humanity can share; that great plans fall because little details go unattended or unnoticed, thereby damaging the entire project; and finally, that no vision is too out of reach that collective energy cannot bring it into reality. For Sam Rubin, the only question was to be sure the vision was indeed the right one. This restless, imaginative and gifted man did not fear being generous. He sought to lead those who came into his orbit to a new level of heightened consciousness and personal potentiality. We are thankful to him and to the spirit of his life. We will remember him through our work, the institution we will continue to build, and through the way we apply reason and analysis to political action.

Marcus Raskin
Co-founder IPS/TNI

Race & Class is published quarterly (in July, October, January and April) and subscriptions are payable in advance to any bookseller or to the Institute of Race Relations, 247-9 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NG. Subscriptions can be entered at any point in the volume. Current subscription rate £7.00/US \$20.00/DM 50 to institutions, £5.50/ US \$12.00/DM 20 to individuals. Subscribers from West Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands please pay in DM or the equivalent in local currency. Single issues £2.50/ \$6.00/DM 13 to institutions, £1.50/\$ 3.00/DM 5 to individuals. Special rates for booksellers on request. Back copies of Volumes 1-19 can be obtained from Wm Dawson and Sons Limited, Cannon House, Folkestone, Kent. Volumes 1-4 available in reprint at £2.50 per issue. Volumes 5-19 available in the original at current subscription and single copy prices (Volume 20 available at the IRR).

US Mailing Agent, Expeditors of the Printed Word Ltd.,
527 Madison Avenue, Suite 1217, New York, NY10022, USA
2nd Class Postage Paid at New York, NY.

RACE & CLASS

THE JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS
AND THE TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTE

Volume XXI

Summer 1979

Number 1

THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Guest editor: Eqbal Ahmad

- The Iranian revolution:
a landmark for the future
EQBAL AHMAD 3
- Oil, economic policy and social conflict
in Iran
NIKKI R. KEDDIE 13
- Resisting the Pharaohs:
Ali Shariati on oppression
MANSOUR FARHANG 31
- Iran and American geopolitics
in the Gulf
RICHARD FALK 41
- Iranian people v. US news media:
a case of libel
WILLIAM A. DORMAN 57
- Orientalism at the service of imperialism
STUART SCHAAR 67
- Theses on the Iranian revolution
FRED HALLIDAY 81

Notes and documents	91
US military involvement	91
Book review	97
<i>Iran: Dictatorship and Development</i> by Fred Halliday (John Maynard)	97
Bibliography	
FRED HALLIDAY	103
Books received	107

© Institute of Race Relations 1979
ISSN 0306 3965

Cover design by M
Cover photo: Popperfoto
Typeset by Red Lion Setters, 22 Brownlow Mews, London WC1N 2LA
Printed by The Russell Press Ltd, Gamble Street, Nottingham



Area: 636 sq. miles (slightly larger than Alaska).

Cities: Tehran (population: 4.2 million, 1976 estimate); Isfahan (575,000); Meshed (562,000); Tabriz (493,000); Shiraz (356,000); Abadan (306,000).

Population: 34.4 million (1976 estimate), of which some 60 per cent speak Farsi (Persian) or other Iranian languages, and 30 per cent speak Turkic languages.

Religions: Shi'a sect of Islam, 93 per cent of the population; Sunni sect of Islam, 5 per cent; also some Jews, Christians, Bahais, Armenians, Assyrians and Zoroastrians.

THE SHAH WAS ONLY ONE.

Institute
for
Policy Studies

Supplying Repression: U.S. Support for Authoritarian Regimes Abroad

Last year the U.S. exported \$71 billion in arms. 37% of these sales went to ten governments considered the worst violators of human rights in the world. The Shah was the biggest buyer—but he was only one.

**SUPPLYING REPRESSION:
US SUPPORT FOR AUTHORITARIAN
REGIMES ABROAD** by Michael T. Klare documents it all.

"Very important, fully documented indictment of U.S. role in supplying rightists Third World governments with weaponry and know-how of repression." The Nation

\$2.50 plus .75 postage/handling per order

Also available from the Institute:

THE COUNTERFORCE SYNDROME: A Guide to U.S. Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Doctrine—Robert C. Aldridge, \$2.50

DUBIOUS SPECTER: A Second Look at the 'Soviet Threat'—Fred Kaplan, \$2.50

CONVENTIONAL ARMS RESTRAINT: An Unfulfilled Promise—Michael T. Klare and Max Holland, \$1.00

TOWARD WORLD SECURITY: A Program for Disarmament—Earl C. Ravenal, \$2.00

RESURGENT MILITARISM—Michael T. Klare and the Bay Area Chapter of the Inter-University Committee, \$1.50

AFTER THE SHAH—Fred Halliday, \$1.50

Please send me the following titles:

- Payment Enclosed
 Charge this order to my
 Visa
 Master Charge

Signature Required for Charge

Name

Account No.

Street

Bank No.

City

State

Zip

Expiration Date

A-002

Send to Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Q Street, N.W.,
Dept. BD, Washington, D.C. 20009

The Iranian revolution: a landmark for the future

In Tehran's Niavaran Palace the 1978 New Year's Eve party was unusually sumptuous — one of those million dollar affairs which had made the Shah of Iran and the Empress Farah the world's legendary hosts to the global elite of the powerful and the wealthy. The special guest was the President of the United States, whose toast for the occasion would become memorable for its lack of prescience:

Iran under the great leadership of the Shah is an island of stability in one of the most troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, your Majesty, and to your leadership and to the respect, admiration and love which your people give to you.

In the splendour of the white marble palace, Jimmy Carter's words may have sounded appropriate. Yet a popular uprising had already begun in Iran. Two months before Carter toasted the Shah, Iran's security forces had brutalised a dissenting poet's defiant reading to an unexpectedly large audience in Tehran. Ten days after the palace celebration, the Shah's forces killed ten protesters and wounded 300 in the city of Qum. From there the uprising spread like prairie fire throughout Iran, neither newly-appointed prime ministers, nor royal promises and concessions, nor martial law and military repression succeeded in quelling it. A year later, on 16 January 1979, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, the self-styled 'King of Kings', 'Shadow of God' and the 'Light of the Aryans' fled Iran. Less than a month later, on 11th February 1979, the government of Shahpour Bakhtiar, the last

EQBAL AHMAD is a fellow of the Transnational Institute, Washington and Amsterdam, and a member of the editorial board of *Afrique-Asie*, and *Race & Class*.

Race & Class, XXI, 1 (1979)

in a succession of prime ministers appointed by the Shah in 1978, fell. On 13 February the United States government, the main benefactor and the primary beneficiary of the Pahlavi monarchy, joined the world in recognising the Provisional Islamic Republic of Iran; the new government was headed by Dr Mehdi Bazargan, named prime minister by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the popularly-acclaimed leader of the revolution.

Whatever one's sympathies and stakes in this extraordinary development, one cannot deny that a political revolution of lasting significance has occurred in Iran. It will take time to fully understand its causes, assess its historic importance, and measure its impact not only for Iran but for South-west Asia especially and for the world as a whole. The fall of the Pahlavi dynasty has opened the door to social and economic revolution. A moral explosion of the masses has occurred; it is a time of hopes, expectations, disappointments and affirmations. In the coming months, perhaps years, differing interests and ideologies will contend for influence and power, some seeking to preserve old privileges, others trying to gain suppressed rights and yet others sensing opportunities for self-aggrandisement. The minority nationalities whose political autonomy and cultural identity were suppressed under the Pahlavis will assert their rights. Women, being oppressed in Muslim societies as in others, will demand true equality and the respect of men. Workers will seek control through self-management over the means of production; landless and dispossessed peasants will demand their right to cultivable land. This environment of hope and affirmation will undoubtedly be complicated by the fact that old interests will be asserted in new guises; new forms may seek legitimacy by reference to tradition, and Islam will be invoked to serve revolution as well as reaction; imperialism will undoubtedly sow divisions and promote the religious Iranians' fear of 'communism' in order to divide, distort and cancel the actual and potential gains of the revolution. These are questions concerning the future of democracy and justice in Iran, of the rights of women and of nationalities, of educational and social planning which we have not fully addressed in this issue of *Race & Class*; to these we hope to return in subsequent issues.

Iran is widely recognised as an important country. Since the focus on Iran's contemporary realities — its oil, its 'strategic' importance, the excessive, inverted ambitions of the Shah — has obscured Iran's place in history, one should note that historically Persia has exercised a cultural influence in West Asia which is at least analogous to its geopolitical importance. Two great powers (the later-Roman or Byzantine and the Persian) had contended over centuries for mastery over Western and Central Asia. Between 632 and 666 AD Islamic domains extended over these two empires, exhausted by centuries of war with each other. In the civilisation which spread from the Bay of

Bengal to the lands bounded by the Atlantic, Mediterranean and Indian oceans, Persian and Arabic constituted the core of the dualism associated with Islam's greater tradition. Persian culture and language influenced and defined the cultures of Indian, Afghani and Central Asian Islam. Hence, from the rise of Islamic civilisation in the late seventh century to its decline in the late eighteenth, the Persian language and culture dominated Trans-Oxiana and consistently furnished nearly half of the most distinguished scholars, scientists, artists and poets of the Muslim world. Among those whose names are familiar in the West, Avicenna, the philosopher, Rumi, the poet and mystic, and the popular lyricist Omar Khayyam came from Persia. In Western and Central Asia, Iran has historically enjoyed a position comparable to that of France and Italy in Western and Central Europe. It is a reflection of the Shah's warped view of Iran that he assigned it the ambition of becoming the Germany of the Middle East.

Similarly, over the centuries Persia stood as the second pole in the political developments and the great dynastic struggles of Islam. It played the polar role in the first major schism of Islam between the Sunni and Shi'i, in the first great dynastic shift from the Umayyads to the Abbasids, and in the rise and sustenance of subsequent dynasties such as the Safavids and, culturally, of the Mughals. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the decline of Muslim power and the encounter with western colonialism localised Muslim energies into defence and adaptation. Contrasting patterns of resistance and collaboration, of rejection of the West and the imitation of it, of the continued thirst for independence and the habit of dependence often divided the people and created fissures in Muslim communities. Yet even during these centuries of decline and dispersion, Persia had a consequential intellectual and ideological impact in the region. Thus in the nineteenth century the influence of Jamalad-Din Asadabadi (popularly known as Afghani) went far beyond the confines of his native land, and the impact of Iran's constitutional movement, at the start of this century, was felt in countries as diverse as Egypt and India, Turkey and Iraq. It was only in recent years, due primarily to the efforts of the Pahlavis to break Persia away from its Islamic heritage and invest Iran with pre-Islamic, allegedly pure 'aryan' symbols, that the country appeared to have lost its cultural eminence and ideological influence in the region.

In a region and among a people whose contemporary culture and political reflexes are continually shaped by their consciousness of history, these facts are at least as significant as Iran's strategic location and its possession of oil. Developments in Iran will undoubtedly affect the peoples in the neighbouring countries (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Soviet Central Asia, Turkey, Iraq and the countries of the Gulf) in profound, sometimes imperceptible, ways.



In viewing the revolutionary upheavals of history, historians will regard the Iranian revolution as unique. Fred Halliday in his article discusses the Iranian revolution in its immediate context. Here I am concerned to show that it may also prove a landmark in relation to future revolutions in the Third World, for several reasons.

The uprising which started in January 1978 and ended on 11 February 1979 was by far the most massive, broad-based and sustained popular agitation in history. An estimated 20,000 demonstrators died in the year of protest, while the economic institutions and public services were virtually shut down. The movement was unparalleled for its non-violent but militant character, and for its discipline in the face of government violence. As such, it will long be studied for its lessons in agitational politics and mass organisation.

The Iranian uprising points towards a shift in the focus of revolutionary struggle from the rural to the urban sector. Until now all Third World revolutions (in Mexico and China, Algeria and Cuba, Vietnam and Angola) have been peasant revolutions, centred in rural areas, involving protracted armed struggle. Iran represents the first major break from this pattern.

The Iranian revolution was urban in composition. Its cadres came from the urban-based middle and working classes — the bazaaris, Muslim clerics, workers, intellectuals and students. It was swelled by rural migrants driven to the cities by the Shah's 'modernisation' of agriculture. As Nikki R. Keddie shows in her article in this issue, the capital intensive, corporation-oriented strategy of economic development which Iran followed led to rapid urbanisation, unemployment, cultural dislocation, gross inequalities, and increased visibility of foreign domination. These factors, which created an enormous mass base for the uprising, increasingly characterise other non-socialist Third World countries.

The general strike, which lasted for some six months in Iran, was one of the longest and by far the most effective in history. The turning point in the struggle against the Shah came during September and October 1978 when the oil workers of Abadan and Ahwaz proved the weapon of the general strike to be powerful beyond the dreams of the nineteenth-century Europeans who had viewed it as the linchpin of revolutionary strategy. The reverberations of this example will undoubtedly be felt from Brazil to South Africa, Korea to Mexico.

Since the Cuban revolution, it was the first successful popular revolution in a neo-colonial state and, unlike Cuba under Batista, Iran under the Shah had become a proto-typical developmental fascist state.* Like the other 'regional influentials' of Henry Kissinger's

*This statement assumes the Vietnamese revolution (the second Indo-China war) to be a continuation of the anti-colonial, national struggle for liberation.

and Zbigniew Brzezinski's global order, Iran was a highly centralised, abominably repressive and increasingly militarised state. Like Brazil and Indonesia, Chile and Argentina, South Korea and the Philippines, it was burdened by an expanding and corrupt bureaucracy and sought rapid 'modernisation' based on a 'development' model whose characteristics and consequences are discussed by Professor Keddie.

The Iranian revolution exposed the contradictions and vulnerability of the repressive and militarist neo-colonial state. As Professor Keddie's essay shows, in its contemporary centralised and militarised form, the Iranian state developed in the twentieth century; it grew from an interlinking of oil (the capital resource of Iran), imperialism (first British, then American) and the vested interests of its indigenous ally (the Pahlavi dynasty and the palace elite associated with it). Before imperialism and oil had made their full impact, Iran was, by and large, a decentralised state with a pluralistic distribution of power, and built-in constraints on the king's authority. Income from oil and the Iranian court's special relations with the oil-consuming West helped create the centralised, praetorian tyranny.

As in many other Third World countries, 'oriental despotism' came to Iran in the guise of 'westernisation' and 'modernisation'. Reza Shah, the father who inaugurated the transformation of the Iranian state in 1923 and who continued until 1940, was the 'westerniser' patronised by the British until the Second World War when they thought his fascist leanings inimical to allied interests, and forced him to abdicate. Under his son, the second and last Pahlavi ruler, the Iranian state went through two stages of 'modernisation', both under American tutelage. The first, from 1949 to 1968, with the brief interregnum of Mossadegh's government, witnessed the modernisation of the Iranian police forces, gendarmerie, bureaucracy and the armed forces, and the creation of SAVAK. The second phase, beginning in 1970, witnessed the transformation of Iran into a 'regional power', and its becoming the largest buyer of US arms. To imperial interests it appeared an ideal state, a good customer, a strong pro-western autocracy, an 'island of stability'. Yet, its seeming strength was its primary weakness. The superstructure of the Pahlavi state had little logical, much less organic, relationship to the infrastructure of Iranian society. Hence, it had no capacity to serve the society's needs, accommodate its demands, or even keep pace with the changes within it. It was too heavy and dry a burden for any people to carry; hence the call for overturning it obtained a national consensus quite unparalleled in history.

The Shah's fall revealed, more dramatically than before, that in the Third World the deployment of advanced weapons augments class and other contradictions in the army, augments official corruption and creates a consciousness of dependence on foreign suppliers. When confronted by a popular revolt, Iran's 450,000 member

super-equipped military apparatus disintegrated. The dramatic collapse of the muscle-flexing imperial forces has become the subject of lengthy analysis in Washington. Yet the reasons for it were relatively simple. It is not without significance that the open defection in the armed forces began in December 1978 when Air Force ground personnel sabotaged several F-5 fighter planes; the non-commissioned officers and technicians, whose ranks had swelled since 1972 as a result of large purchases of sophisticated weapons, played a crucial role in the defection of the military. Their position proved analogous to that of the 'middle peasants' in previous Third World revolutions.

Official corruption played an important role in augmenting the Iranian people's hatred of the Pahlavi regime; and arms deals put a premium on bribes beyond belief. In order to sell its \$2 billion of F-14s, Grumman Aircraft is reported to have paid some \$28 million to Iranian officials and members of the royal family; Northrup obliged with a reported \$10 million to clinch the deal on its F-5E fighter telecommunications equipment. And so it went for Rockwell International or McDonnell Douglas. The people's 'wireless service' — word-of-mouth — would pass the news to the unemployed millions for whom the rumours were ever confirmed by the life-style of the elite. Adding to the injury, inflation climbed to 30 per cent by 1977, due in no small degree to the extravagant expenditure on arms. Furthermore, sophisticated weaponry created an ever-expanding need for foreign 'advisers'. Along with the civilian foreign technicians they made up some 170,000 highly-paid, privileged foreigners arousing resentments and nationalist feelings among the poor and middle-class Iranians.[1]

The falsity of the Nixon Doctrine and Henry Kissinger's strategic design for the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean regions was again exposed. In his article in this issue, Richard Falk points out that the unreality of Kissinger's policy had showed up in 1973-4 when the US-supported regimes in Portugal, Ethiopia and Greece fell, and when the Arab-Israeli war of October 1973 proved that Israel was too isolated to be an effective 'regional influential'. Yet the Carter administration continued the policy of arming pro-US regimes without regard to their political character or security needs. The supplying of \$380 million worth of arms to North Yemen, the offer of five squadrons of F-15 jet fighters so far wisely spurned by Saudi Arabia, the \$5 billion worth of weapons as part of the Israeli-Egyptian 'peace package', and the plans to introduce a US Fifth Fleet in the Indian Ocean indicate that the premises of American policy remain unchanged. Professor Falk justly warns that neither the American corporations' material interests in Iran, nor the perceived strategic interests of the United States government in the Middle East, nor the recent policy decisions of the Carter administration allow one to

conclude that the US has ended its 30-year war on nationalism and sovereign governments in the Middle East.



The revolution in Iran has changed the calculus of international and regional politics in South Asia and the Middle East; the following may be among its direct impacts. First, assuming a Pahlavi restoration to be unlikely, one may predict that irrespective of its ideological preferences the future Iranian government will be nationalist and non-aligned. The end of Iran's role as imperialism's regional gendarme will induce an enlargement of the direct American military presence in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea area. Along with the proposed Fifth Fleet and an upgrading of interventionist US military capabilities ('the new action' forces) this may entail the development of a fully-fledged naval base in Diego Garcia, and the establishment of supplementary military installations in Pakistan, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and possibly Israel.

Secondly, the revolution in Iran has increased American interest in making a success of the Egyptian-Israeli accord. No one in Washington believes that the US government has the will and capacity to force a compromise on Israel in relation to the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Hence, the hope is to stabilise the separate Egyptian-Israeli entente, and eventually induce Saudi Arabia to accept it. For this, rapid improvements in the Egyptian economy and living standards are viewed as the primary condition. But the Carter administration has neither the resources nor the congressional support to finance Egyptian development. Both Washington and Cairo may be tempted to resolve this dilemma by coveting control over oil resources beyond Egyptian borders. There is, therefore, a likelihood of an Egyptian adventure, covertly supported by the US and Israel, against the government of Muammar Al-Qaddafi in Libya.

Thirdly, in South Asia the Iranian revolution may involve a certain elevation of Pakistan's importance in US policy. One may recall that Pakistan's position in the 'northern tier' had declined in the 1960s as a result of the increasing importance of Iran, and the weakening of Mohammed Ayub Khan's military regime. At the same time, India is likely to push vigorously to fill the power 'vacuum' left by the Shah, and finally to become the 'paramount power' in West Asia. An expansion of the growing Indian 'military-industrial complex' may be a consequence of the Iranian revolution.

On the positive side it should be noted that in the 30-year war between nationalism and pro-western forces in the Arab world, the progressive nationalist cause would have suffered greatly from the defection of President Anwar Sadaat had it not been for the Iranian revolution. Ayatollah Khomeini's openly expressed support for the

rights of the Palestinian people and for the liberation of occupied Arab lands and Iran's breaking of relations with Egypt has markedly strengthened the forces against capitulation, and redressed the balance in favour of the nationalists. This fact has contributed, at least in part, to Saudi Arabia's cautious response to the Camp David accords, and to the US Defense Secretary's proposals for expanded US-Saudi military relations.



A remarkable aspect of the outbreak in Iran was that, apart from a few observers with a special and sympathetic interest in Iranian nationalism and Islam, no one had predicted the uprising, much less its ideology and power.* Yet it was the culmination of a 100-years war between the foreign-supported palace elite and its challenger — Iran's radical, nationalist coalition. This coalition began in 1872 against the Reuter concession, which gave to Baron Julius de Reuter the banking and mining monopoly in Persia; it reappeared in 1892 against the tobacco concessions granted to a Major Talbot; in 1905-11 as the Constitutional Movement; in 1919 against the Anglo-Persian Treaty, which would have turned Persia into a British possession, and in 1950-3 against the western oil monopoly.[2] The 1978 events demonstrated the importance of understanding the historical roots of dissent in a society and the force of religion in the Third World, especially in the Muslim world — witness, for example, the writings of Dr Ali Shariati, one of whose essays Mansour Farhang introduces below. Western, particularly American, scholars failed not only to discern the discontents and contradictions in Iranian society, but had actually engaged in decades of justifying the Shah's policies and the United States government and corporate interests in Iran. In his review of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, Stuart Schaar examines the prejudicial assumptions and distorted views of western scholarship on Islam. Professor Schaar also exposes, in some detail, contemporary academic analysis of Iran.

Equally remarkable was the treatment which the US media gave the largely non-violent movement in Iran. It almost completely ignored its appearance in 1977, when the Shah's security forces brutalised the aforementioned poetry-reading audience in Tehran. Then it underplayed the news of subsequent demonstrations and killings. Until the summer of 1978, such prestigious organs as the *New York Times* told Americans that the Shah had 'a broad base of popular support'. The media consistently portrayed the opposition as being led by

*A notable exception is Hamid Algar's 'The oppositional role of ulama in twentieth century Iran', in Nikki R. Keddie (ed.), *Scholars, Saints and Sufis* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1972), pp. 231-56.

reactionary Muslim mollahs motivated by their hostility to modernisation and reforms, and joined by disgruntled merchants and leftists. This image of an embattled modernising, reformist king confronted by a conservative, fundamentalist, religious opposition might have been satisfying to those who, for 25 years, had backed American support for the Shah. But it distorted reality. In recent years, few political events have bared the western media's biased self-censorship as its coverage of Iran.

William A. Dorman's essay offers undeniable illustrations of the hegemony of corporate and class interests in the media — a hegemony that alone can explain the status it bestows on such propagandists as William Safire of the *New York Times*, syndicated columnist Joseph Kraft and *Newsweek* editor Arnaud de Borchgrave. This elite who set the tone for, and example of, journalism in the West enjoy social proximity to power in Washington and other capitals, and personal relations with America's clients throughout the world. They had every reason to sympathise with Iran's dictator, and not understand the sorrows of its people. In a recent column, William Safire tells a revealing story. As a Nixon staffer in 1972, Safire was a guest of the Shah, who asked if Safire was enjoying his overnight stay. Safire recalls, 'I expressed my dismay at not having the time to go shopping. He nodded to his Grand Vizier, or whatever, and said, "Have the shops stay open all night." And so they did; at every place accommodating the travelling President and press corps, the groggy shop keepers pushing their wares at 3 a.m. were testimony to the Shah's absolute graciousness, or gracious absolutism.' Typically, it was not until 4 January 1979 that Mr Safire, a *New York Times* columnist for more than five years, thought of reporting his experience of the Shah's 'graciousness'. Nor did any other journalist in the elite presidential press corps. Had this and hundreds of other not-so-benign stories of imperial Iran been told by the 'free' press, at least the world which this western media dominates would have had a better sense of the Shah's regime and the West's relationship to it.

REFERENCES

- 1 For an excellent semi-official resumé of the economic and social forces which undermined the Shah's regime, see Abdul Kasim Mansur, 'The crisis in Iran: why the US ignored a quarter century of warning', in *Armed Forces Journal* (US) (January 1979), pp.26-33. Abdul Kasim Mansur is the pseudonym of a 'former State Department official with intimate experience in Iranian affairs'.
- 2 See Nikki R. Keddie, *Religion and rebellion in Iran: the tobacco protest movement of 1891-92* (London, 1966); Hamid Algar, *Religion and state in Iran 1785-1906* (Berkeley, 1969); N. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal Ad-Din Al-Afgheni: political biography* (Berkeley, 1972); W. Morgan Shuster, *The strangling of Persia* (New York, 1912), and E. Abrahamian, 'The crowd in Iranian politics', in *Past and Present* (no.41, December 1968).

ASA ROSE MONOGRAPH SERIES

Class, Race, and Worker Insurgency

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers

JAMES A. GESCHWENDER

An analytical history of a Marxist-Leninist social movement which developed among black automobile workers in Detroit in the late 1960s, and spread into other industries and cities before outside pressures and internal divisions hastened its demise. The author examines the League in the context of race relations, racial discrimination in the industry, and contemporary national developments.

Hard covers £8.50 net

Paperback £3.95 net

Paperback edition

Red, Black, and Green

Black Nationalism in the United States

ALPHONSO PINKNEY

An analysis of the history of black nationalism in the United States which concentrates on the ascendancy of the phenomenon during the peak years of the 1960s and early 1970s.

'This is one of the best of a number of publications on black nationalism . . . It is scholarly, yet is written in a language that can be easily understood, and appreciated by the lay public'.

Sociology

Paperback £3.95 net

AFRICAN STUDIES SERIES 24

Afrikaners of the Kalahari

White Minority in a Black State

MARGO and MARTIN RUSSELL

This book describes the complex and mundane reality of ethnic relations in the Kalahari, not only under the present relentless pressures to enter the cash economy of modernisation, but also in the past. The authors examine the 'Africanisation' of these poor white pastoralists of the interior, cut off from those influences which gave contemporary Afrikanerdom its particular cast.

£9.50 net

**CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS**

Oil, economic policy, and social conflict in Iran

Oil has had a longer and more far-reaching impact on Iran than on any other populous Third World country. Before oil was discovered in 1908, and for a short period thereafter, Iran was a relatively decentralised state in which several groups had considerable power and autonomy. Oil income and Iran's relations with the oil-consuming West reinforced the trend towards centralisation which grew under the Pahlavi rulers (1921-78). Centralisation required governmental income to build up the armed forces, the bureaucracy, police forces and government control over the economy. The income for these and other programmes came increasingly from oil, with dramatic growth after 1954 and especially since 1974. Oil, along with Iran's strategic location, has also been a major factor in external relations. Many dramatic events in twentieth-century Iranian politics, including foreign interventions, were influenced by Iran's possession of oil.

Oil income also permitted the government to control, until 1978, most aspects of Iranian society and to follow a particular economic strategy centring in recent years on super-rapid growth and high military expenditure. The Pahlavi's economic strategy favoured the rich over the poor, big over small enterprises in both industry and

Professor NIKKI R. KEDDIE is Professor of History at the University of California, Los Angeles. She is the author of *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani: a political biography*, and *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: the tobacco protest movement 1891-92* and editor of *Scholars, Saints and Sufis: Muslim religious institutions since 1500*.

Race & Class, XXI, 1 (1979)

agriculture, the urban over the rural and nomadic populations. It produced excessive inflation, profits, corruption, rapid urban migration and overcrowding, and the concentration of enterprises and wealth in government and a few private hands, as well as an influx of western fashions, fads and films. It encouraged a large infusion of foreign capital, technicians and military advisers. The way oil income was handled in Iran (and in several other oil-exporting countries) has intensified the economic and cultural split between 'two cultures' — the rich and the technocratic western-educated bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the 'traditional' poor and the bazaar classes (traditional merchants, moneylenders and artisans) on the other.

Iran's oil history briefly told, suggests that the impact of oil in Iran is more varied than in societies where it was discovered more recently. Discovered in 1908 by a British company that held a 1901 concession, Iranian oil became of central strategic concern to the British after the navy switched from coal to oil. The British government purchased shares in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1914 and made it essentially a British enterprise, retaining control until the nationalisation by Mossadegh of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) in 1951. Theoretically, oil remained nationalised after Mossadegh's overthrow in 1953, but real control passed in a 1954 accord to an AIOC consortium consisting of British Petroleum, five American majors (Exxon, Gulf, Mobil, Standard Oil of California and Texaco), Royal-Dutch Shell and the *Compagnie Française des Pétroles*. The 40 per cent share given to American companies, including US 'independents' who later joined the consortium, reflected the post-Second World War power of the US and its role in overthrowing the Mossadegh government. The National Iranian Oil Company took over drilling and exploration in the area outside the consortium agreement, and soon entered into more favourable agreements with Italian, Japanese and other foreign companies. The 1954 agreement raised Iran's oil income, as Iran got 50 per cent of profits and production rose steadily, thus indicating a benefit from the 1951 nationalisation. By 1973 virtually full Iranian government control was established over oil policies. The consortium profited lavishly as a marketing organisation, but no longer directly set prices or production policies.

I *PRE-OIL IRAN: SOCIETY AND CHANGE, 1796-1911*

The socio-economic structure of pre-oil Iran can be discussed in terms of the Qajar period (1796-1925). In general, Iran may be seen as one of several Middle Eastern states where aridity, difficult terrain, low population density and a large nomadic population made control

by the centre difficult, and encouraged the devolution of power onto local governors, landlords and nomadic chiefs. Provisional land grants in return for military or other service, which partly reflected the government's inability to pay local salaries, somewhat resembled western feudalism, but western features like serfdom, manorialism, free cities and a hereditary aristocracy were largely lacking. In addition to the relative autonomy of tribal chiefs, landlords and governors, Iran's religious classes (*ulama*) enjoyed a considerable political, ideological and financial independence which increased in the nineteenth century.[1]

In addition to tribal leaders, land and office holders and the *ulama* (who often owned land), there were other groups with some power. One was the large royal household out of which the sons of servants could and sometimes did become prime minister, while the queen mother or favourite wife often played crucial political roles. Other important semi-autonomous groups were merchants and craftspeople. Long-distance merchants were often wealthy, respected, powerful and close to the *ulama*; and guildsmen, through their craft organisations and ties to the *ulama*, also played political roles. The economic and political strength of Muslim merchants was greater in Qajar Iran than elsewhere in the Middle East.[2]

A striking feature of the Qajar period, particularly if Iran is contrasted with more 'central' Islamic lands near the Mediterranean, is the lack of effective ruler-initiated reform or centralisation. Whereas Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and Tunisia saw several government-sponsored reforms in the nineteenth century that laid the basis for more modern armies, bureaucracies, educational systems and economic structures, Iran experienced minimal reform from above. Iran's location and ecology encouraged decentralisation. The power of tribes, *ulama* and other groups who balked at centralising reforms; difficult communications (no roads, only one short navigable river); distance from Mediterranean trade, and Iran's small and widely scattered population — all made centralisation difficult. In this Iran partly resembled such non-central areas of the Middle East as Central Asia, Afghanistan, Arabia and Morocco.

Also hindering reform were relations with Britain and Russia. Once Britain and Russia had extracted favourable commercial and extra-territorial rights from the early Qajars, both supported the unpopular dynasty. While encouraging certain exports — cotton, dried fruits and nuts, opium and carpets in particular — British and Russian policy in Iran, as elsewhere, was to promote through enforced low tariffs, etc., the import of their own manufactures, thus undermining Iranian handicrafts and competing with Iranian merchants. Largely because of British and Russian mutual fears, little was done to build a communications network (which could have been used for military purposes). Numerous railroad projects were shelved

for such reasons. The British Imperial Bank of Persia had exclusive rights to issue paper money; the Russian Bank was scarcely less powerful; and British and Russian nationals controlled other major economic institutions.[3] The British and Russians also entered into independent relations with tribal and *ulama* leaders, landlords and governors. For example, after the discovery of oil in 1908, the British sought good relations with the local tribes by entering into separate treaties with Sheikh Khaz'al, Khuzistan's Arab tribal chief, and with the Bakhtiari tribes. During the early years of oil production, the combination of payment and protection to these tribal groups had more impact than the royalties and payments that went to the centre. Hence, the earliest effect of oil revenues was to strengthen existing trends, decentralisation, tribal power, and further to weaken the centre. Finally, the ineffectualness of the Qajar shahs themselves impeded any centralisation during the nineteenth century. Such a common measure as basic army reform was never seriously attempted, and only one small unit, the Russian-officered and influenced Cossack Brigade, was formed in 1879.

Qajar oppression and complaisance to foreigners, and the dislocation caused by western incursions in the Iranian economy, gave rise to various movements of discontent and revolt. The two most important protests were the successful movement against a private British concession for all dealings in tobacco in 1891-2, and the constitutional revolution of 1905-11. Both movements had features of classic western European revolutions, such as prolonged popular fighting rather than military coups. In Iran's case these long, popular struggles were successful in attaining their immediate goals, in part because Iran lacked a standing regular army that might either suppress popular movements or join them to stage a coup.[4]

II OIL AND SOCIETY, THE EARLY PHASES

Reza Shah was the first ruler to increase oil income and to make planned governmental use of it, chiefly for arms purchases. However, oil income was a moderate percentage of his budgets and cannot be said to have been a crucial determinant either of his policies or of social change in Iran. In the 1920s Reza Shah successfully suppressed the autonomy of the large tribes and tribal confederations, often using military force. Sheikh Khaz'al in Khuzistan resisted and expected British backing, but did not get it and was brought to heel. Bakhtiari autonomy was crushed and British payments to the tribes brought to an end, with all oil payments going to the centre.

After Reza Shah's suppression of the tribes oil income went exclusively to the Iranian government, thus enabling it to monopolise this revenue and decide its use. This has been a feature of Pahlavi

rule from 1921 to 1977. Since the rise of Reza Shah the major trends have been the opposite to those of the Qajar period: towards greater government control, with an ever stronger army, police and secret police and an expanding bureaucracy, and towards the suppression of the independent power of the *ulama*, landlords, tribal leaders, urban classes and other social groups. Increasingly rapid economic modernisation has undermined pre-industrial modes of organisation and operation. Under Reza Shah, roads, telephones, automobiles, a railroad and state-owned factories were introduced, as well as modern schools, a university, some education for girls, unveiling and new legal codes. Foreigners' power was reduced through the ending of capitulations, the regaining of tariff autonomy and the use of protective tariffs. Reza Shah was able to appeal both to non-radical middle-class and landlord elements in Iran and to the British and later the Germans as a non-threatening nationalist to whom some economic and legal concessions could be made (as they were to Chiang K'ai-shek and Atatürk), but who could be relied upon to suppress radicals. Under Reza Shah movements labelled communist were outlawed, as were trade unions, and there were numerous jailings. The death penalty was largely reserved for those formerly close to the seat of power (as it was in Qajar times), and for radicals. Under Reza Shah, as since, it was accepted that Iran's oil income depended on sales to the West, and that any fundamental break with the West, whether based on oil or other issues, could sharply cut into the government's income.

III THE COLD WAR AND MOSSADEGH

Iran was an early terrain of the cold war, and the US increasingly supplanted the British as backers of an anti-Soviet policy by Iran. For Iranian nationalists, however, the crucial issue became less the Russo-American cold war than Iranian control over its oil. Nationalist concentration on oil was stimulated by the AIOC's payment of more in British taxes than in royalties; by Iran's lack of control over the AIOC's accounting procedures; by royalty terms hit by inflation, and by the better terms offered by US companies in Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. In early negotiations with the British Iran received some encouragement from the US Ambassador, creating illusory hopes of later US support. As negotiations led to no agreement, the demand for nationalisation of Iran's oil came to the fore. The demand was put forth especially by the National Front, a coalition of parties ranging from socialists to religious fundamentalists, headed by the liberal nationalist Mossadegh; with varying support from the Tudeh party, which started as a leftist front but became increasingly a communist party — the party which at one time had the largest mass base in Iran.

The movement culminating in oil nationalisation represented, in part, the same classes found in late Qajar revolutionary movements — the bazaar classes of merchants and guildspeople, along with an anti-imperialist *ulama*, and a liberal part of the landed classes, like Mossadegh. They were joined by members of the new middle and working classes, and by the majority of Iranian intellectuals (all groups that were later involved in the 1978-9 movement).

The oil issue brought about a high level of mass political activity and culminated in the choice of Mossadegh as premier in 1951, and the nationalisation of AIOC. In the West an atmosphere of crisis and panic was created after this act — approached only by the reaction to Egypt's nationalisation of the Suez Canal. The impression given in the US was that Mossadegh was either unstable, or a Bolshevik, or both; that Iran was about to 'fall' to the Russians, that Iran could not possibly produce oil without AIOC help, etc. When Iran was unable to sell oil after nationalisation, western media indicated that this was because Iran could not produce oil without western help. In fact, Iran produced some oil despite the British withdrawal of their personnel, but an effective boycott by the world's major oil companies, backed by their governments, prevented the sale of this oil. Attempts by Italians, Japanese and others to buy Iranian oil were blocked by US and British pressures.[5]

An objective history of the Mossadegh years has still to be written, but it seems that, for all the difficulties caused by the loss of a major source of revenue and employment, several Iranian industries developed in 1951-3, although limited by difficulties in paying for capital goods imports. As Iran could no longer afford the imports supported by oil exports, she had in part to substitute her own manufactures, and some industrial successes were scored in the face of major difficulties. Although some of Mossadegh's partisans claim that he had a comprehensive programme for agrarian reform, this seems open to question. He reduced rents by 20 per cent, half of which was to go to village councils, but even this palliative had no time to have a real impact. Nationalism and nationalisation, rather than economic reform, were Mossadegh's major legacies.

IV OIL, PLANNING, AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

From the first of the post-Second World War plans to 1977 there was an intimate link between oil income and planning, with from 55 to 90 per cent of Plan Organisation funds coming from oil (the low figure is for the second plan and the high figure for the fifth plan, 1973-7). By 1974, 88 per cent of the government's receipts came from oil, and the percentage for plan funds was even higher.

Iran's first plan (1949-56) was to be financed chiefly by oil revenues. It was heavily influenced by the American engineering consultant firm, Morrison-Knudson Co., and by Max Thornburg, an American oil man. It emphasised agriculture, private enterprise and the infrastructure and, like later plans, foresaw no major socio-economic transformations. It was largely vitiated by bureaucratic and private interests even before the loss of oil revenues, its main source of income, effectively killed it in 1951.

In the late 1950s a Plan Organisation Economic Bureau was set up, aided by a group of foreign advisers under the auspices of Harvard University. The only general evaluation of planning in Iran from this Bureau was almost totally negative. It noted that the *main economic* advances experienced by Iran in the past half century occurred not through planning but because of nationalism, such as the increasing control over oil, tariffs, relations with foreigners, etc.[6] It is thus best to be wary when talking of 'planning' in Iran. The government has, indeed, followed a general economic strategy and this strategy has been much influenced by the augmentation of oil revenues, but little of this is due to planning.

Effective economic development and planning are generally dated from the early 1960s. The main government strategy since then and especially since the oil price rise of 1973 has been to develop large enterprises rapidly, using as much modern and labour-saving technology as possible. This has involved the encouragement of foreign investment and the heavy use of foreign advisers, technicians and consumer goods industries with a large foreign component. Despite a few showy 'crack-downs', very large profits have been encouraged for both domestic and foreign companies, while relatively little has been done for those on the bottom rungs of the economic scale. This policy was justified on the theory that in the early stages of development income distribution must worsen, and that those at the top should be favoured since they save and invest more than those at the bottom. The rival theory that, at least at the stage that Iran has reached, much greater equality of incomes is needed for self-sustaining development if a mass consumer market, where people can buy back what they produce, is to be achieved, was not followed.

The mechanisms of the above strategy are fairly simple. First, oil income has been a factor in Iran's generally regressive tax structure, encouraging the government neither to enforce even its mild income tax nor to institute other progressive taxes. The government can almost do without tax income, and does not try seriously to use taxation either as a means for fairer income distribution or to prepare Iranian tax-collectors and citizens for the day, not long hence, when oil will start to run out. Indirect taxes, largely on items of mass consumption, bought by the poor, totalled 103.2 billion rials in

1974/75 and direct taxes 67.8 billion, so direct taxes equal under \$1 billion (71 rials = \$1).

Secondly, the impetus given by oil to the economic boom experienced by Iran after 1963, with per capita gross national product rising from about \$200 to over \$1,000 in real terms and with one of the highest growth rates in recent history, has not led to a narrowing of the already wide income gap that separated Iran's rich from the poor. Gains have been concentrated at the upper levels, and this has been in large part the result of government policies. (The only statistics indicate that 10 per cent of the population account for 40 per cent of household expenditure; there are no income statistics, but concentration of income is much greater, as the top levels do not spend in Iran, but save or send abroad much of their income. The bottom 10 per cent of the population accounts for less than 2 per cent of expenditure.)

In industry, government policies have favoured the production, or often just the assembly, of relatively expensive consumer durables that have a large foreign parts and/or investment component and a market in Tehran, and have led to the concentration of economic enterprises in or near Tehran. Among products assembled are a wide variety of passenger cars, refrigerators, television sets, stoves, and other consumer goods. Official policies have helped both Iranian and foreign investors, who are free to repatriate their profits. Government policies included preferential high tariffs to reduce competition, low interest loans to large industries, tax holidays, licensing of only a few industries in each field, and preferential treatment for foreign capital. High tariffs and prohibitions may have been needed in some cases in order to launch an industry, but tariffs are seldom lowered, so that there is little incentive to operate efficiently, or to direct capital towards those branches of production using local inputs. A bewildering variety of unneeded automobiles are assembled and partially produced, profiting both large foreign car companies and their Iranian partners, while many goods that could be made for popular use are either imported or handmade in insufficient quantities. Low-cost urban housing, for example, is in radically short supply, and is far more worthy of investment than are so many cars, televisions and refrigerators, not to mention the arms and armies whose housing ties up construction, goods and labour. Domestic capital goods production, which often requires small plants, is discouraged by tariffs on capital goods, instituted to favour the big factories.

Similarly, credit policies favour large firms and the rich who own and run them. Before the 1978 crisis interest rates of 4-9 per cent, considerably below market rates, were available only to large enterprises, while small shopowners and craftsmen were starved for bank credit, since their plants rarely provided sufficient collateral for

a loan. They were generally not even eligible for normal bank rates of about 12 per cent, and had to borrow in the bazaar for 25-100 per cent.

Tax holidays are given to encourage foreign investors, and local investors in certain regions. This policy was publicised as a way of decentralising industry out of the Tehran region by offering tax inducements to factories built at least 120 km from Tehran. Instead, it encouraged a kind of industrial ring 120 km from Tehran.

Although legally a company does not need a licence, any sizeable company does need one to import, export, deal with the government, etc. Government licences are given only to a few companies in each field; their theoretical rationale is to keep the field from overcrowding and overproduction. In practice the licensing system has augmented corruption in government. Since the cost of corruption is reflected in the pricing of goods, it constricts the domestic and the needed foreign market, and since it enriches mostly high officials, corruption further skews income distribution.

Foreign investors are subject to few restrictions and may repatriate profits freely. Brochures for foreign investors proclaim that profits on capital of 30 per cent are normal in Iran. Before 1978 economists who know the country often spoke of 50 per cent, and profits in trade and industry of 100-200 per cent are not unknown. Given this situation, an industrial boom was not surprising, but it was a boom aimed largely at a restricted, relatively wealthy market, and which carried major problems with it. Foreign capital encouraged the trend towards big industry and agricultural units using foreign components and specialists.

It is in the context of these industrial policies that the highly-publicised campaigns against profiteers, or in favour of shareholding by factory workers, must be evaluated. Such measures were at best palliatives taken in the face of rising profits and income inequalities, the high inflation (25-50 per cent annually) of the last few years and the failure to meet government promises of greater economic and social equity. Attacked 'profiteers' were often middle-level retailers or members of minorities, and the thousands of arrests, fines and jailings of bazaar merchants since 1975 greatly added to bazaar unrest. Workers' shares and bonuses are designed to tie them to one job and to allay their discontent which, even before 1978, evinced itself through fairly frequent, illegal and unreported strikes. Partly through such devices as shareholding and partly through wage increases for qualified workers, workers in some industries and trades have become a relatively favoured group in the past few years. One cannot, however, take reports regarding categories of workers whose wages have, say, tripled in a few years, as typical. For non-factory workers, average incomes have risen scarcely more than inflation, and less than some crucial items like housing.

These remarks do not mean that industrial growth since 1961 has produced only negative results. The industrial growth rate has been one of the highest in the world, especially with the impact of huge oil revenues in 1974-7. One may argue that, given a non-socialist framework and a country without a history of large-scale private industrial investment, a policy of favouring such investment through a virtual governmental guarantee of large profits was one means to promote the first stage of industrial development. But even this argument did not justify the continuation of preferential policies once industries were established; the clear disfavouring of small crafts and industries, which contribute to production, employment and to greater income equality; the favouring of foreign investments, and of industries which require heavy foreign participation; the underwriting of consumer durables that contribute to the over-centralisation of the national market in Tehran, and to the development of a kind of consumer demand which has meant that 'import substitution' has led to a rapid rise in total imports of food, capital and intermediate goods, and even many consumer goods. The problems frequently noted by Iran's own governmental planners — such as over-centralisation, too many cars and luxury imports, and the constantly growing gap in income distribution, are largely the result of the government's industrial policies.[7]

V THE AGRARIAN SCENE

Since 1962, Iran's agrarian policies have been discussed mainly in terms of land reform, but this reform was only one part of a more general agrarian policy, which should be discussed as a whole. Since land reform was the first phase of this policy, it will be dealt with first.

Only since the Second World War has there been serious official consideration of land reform; Mossadegh's reforms and Mohammad Reza Shah's sale of most of his father's (disputed) crown lands to their peasants may be regarded as preliminary, small-scale, reform measures.

Although the 1960 Land Reform bill failed to pass the *majlis*, a new government under premier Ali Amini and agriculture minister Hasan Arsanjani promulgated *de facto* land reform laws. The unit of land holding in Iran was the village. The lack of cadastral surveys makes it difficult to assess their size, but they varied from 25 to 5,000 persons and also varied widely in acreage. Before land reform an estimated 55 per cent of all villages were owned by large owners, but far fewer, perhaps 18 per cent, were covered by the first phase of land reform. In this initial phase landlords could legally retain only one village each, except — and this provided major loopholes — if they used their land

for orchards, plantations, certain pastures or mechanised farms. The government purchased land at prices based on low tax assessments and sold the land to peasants at the purchase price; peasants were allowed to pay the government in 15 annual instalments. Purchase prices were usually below the land's market value and the annual payments were somewhat below the value of crops that former sharecroppers had given to their landlords each year. Only those peasants with cultivation rights, such as sharecroppers, received any land; agrarian labourers who worked for wages did not benefit from the law.

The second and third phases of reform, beginning in 1965 and 1969 respectively, covered the land of landlords possessing one village or less. Most peasants with cultivating rights got some land, but not nearly as much as they had formerly cultivated as sharecroppers. By 1972 an estimated 65 per cent of Iran's peasants owned about 12 acres or less. In arid Iran this is rarely a subsistence holding. About 40 per cent of the rural population without cultivation rights received no land at all.

The reform laws contained many loopholes. In all phases choice land was exempted; many landlords succeeded in transferring land to family or friends; a few had enough influence to escape reform entirely, and much land was wrongly declared 'mechanised', allowing landlords to retain ownership. Hence, only a small segment of Iranian land belonging to large owners was bought up by the government for redistribution. By the end of the reform period, non-cultivating owners had held on to almost half of Iran's cultivable land. If the spirit of the first phase of reform, promoted by agriculture minister Arsanjani, who favoured 'land to the tiller' and effective rural cooperative societies, had been carried through its later phases, Iran's reform might have been successful. Instead, it brought villagers few economic benefits, it did not improve farm production and it allowed bureaucrats to replace landlords as local authorities.[8]

In the past decade Iranian agricultural policies followed closely the industrial strategy of aiding large owners. The vast majority of government economic and technical aid went into very large agricultural units, while the small and middle peasants, to say nothing of the impoverished agricultural labourer, have been starved of government help and discouraged from managing their land and producing on a comprehensive cooperative basis.

Government bias towards big units was shown within a few years of agrarian reform in two policies, one of which was a law for the creation of farm corporations. In these large units one or, usually, more villages were combined into a corporation; most peasants were 'persuaded' to turn over their recently received lands to a corporation. In return they received one or more corporation shares. Their wages have been based on a combination of contributed land

and labour. But, since corporations used modern machinery, not all shareholders could be employed, and the farm labourers could hardly ever be employed. These two groups added to the massive migration to overcrowded cities. Since 1973 an estimated 8 per cent of the rural population migrated to towns each year, due partly to an urban-rural per capita income gap estimated at 5:1.[9]

Farm corporations are run by government specialists sent out from Tehran, and require large expenditure on machinery, salaries, housing and other facilities for non-farmers, etc. Farm corporation directors often claim that their enterprises are profitable, but their calculation omits most of the government expenses and their claims of profitability are not credible. It appears that peasants generally dislike joining farm corporations. A recent study shows all measures of productivity to be higher on peasant farms than in farm corporations or agribusinesses, even though per capita investment in corporations is 400 times greater than in peasant farms.[10] The number of farm corporations is about 100, and they are scheduled to continue to increase, although the pre-1978 government, aware of their bad record, planned some new, but almost equally manipulative 'cooperative' or 'consolidated farm' structures for large government-controlled farms.

The other form of large production that has been favoured, until recently, has been huge agribusinesses, usually owned and operated by multinational corporations. There were about fourteen of them ranging in size from 5,000 to 25,000 hectares. They have generally been built below new dams, especially in Khuzistan. Despite their supposed concentration on 'new' land, they too displaced many small peasants, and those who did not become underpaid agricultural labourers joined the rural exodus. Yet, agribusinesses have farmed only a small part of the land they hold, and their relative contribution to the Iranian economy has been very small — well below that of the middle peasants. Recently, some of the largest agribusinesses with both local and foreign ownership have been taken over by the government because of poor performance, but it is unclear what policies will be adopted towards their lands.[11]

Government policy also favoured private mechanised farming. To the reformed villages, however, the government has offered little economic or technical aid, or help in forming multi-purpose cooperatives. Few technical benefits of the 'green revolution' have been diffused; there has been scarcely any effort to pool resources for machinery, and extension services and technical teaching are extremely inadequate. Instead of giving the aid in farming, marketing and other economic needs, most cooperatives remain purely credit societies.

The cooperatives' loan policies favour the wealthier farmers, some of whom re-lend at high rates. Most cooperatives require loans to go

only to landholding peasants for agricultural purposes, so that the large number of village carpet weavers (mostly women and girls) and other craftspeople, among others, are denied access to low-interest loans despite their credit-worthiness. Also, cooperative loans cover only a small share of peasant credit needs, the rest of which must be met at the old usurious rates. Cooperative loan policy thus favours a growing income gap within the village. So does the much-touted digging of deep wells. By drawing off the water that once fed the more equally divided underground channels the well-owner can monopolise and sell a vital resource, not to mention the problem of a constantly lowered water table and increased aridity, already found in some regions.

In favouring a policy of mechanised extensive farming and disfavouring the small and medium peasant, despite the latter's proven higher productivity, the Shah's government adopted a policy that might be rational in a country with much cultivable land and a labour shortage. In Iran, however, intensive techniques with high per-acre production are needed, since the cultivable surface is small. It is counter-productive to encourage large mechanised farms instead of improving techniques operated by peasants with personal stakes in their own lands. The production record of agribusinesses has been bad, and farm corporations have contributed much less than would that amount of capital and effort spread over reformed villages. Increases in agricultural production have been low. Although official statistics claim increases of about 4 per cent a year, this figure is unreliable and masks the shocking reality that agricultural production has risen more slowly than the population. A more reasonable estimate is a production increase of 2-2.5 per cent a year (population 3 per cent). The agrarian situation plus a growth in food consumption has meant a rapid rise in agricultural imports (reaching \$1.4 billion in 1975-6), which will create a major problem when oil income begins to run out. As with industry, foreign interests and advice are involved in agribusiness, farm mechanisation, the promotion of export-oriented crops, and the sale of expensive breeding animals and food in Iran.

If the government has favoured the big over the small in both city and countryside, it has also favoured the cities — already wealthier and more powerful — over the countryside. This is shown particularly in price controls on basic food products, which for a time helped keep down the vocal discontent of the more volatile urban masses. Although to some degree supported by direct government subsidies, these controls are based on fixed low prices paid to producers for certain agricultural products — prices which further depress agricultural incomes relative to urban ones.

VI INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Income gaps widened in the 1960s and 1970s. Although no income surveys exist, there are family expenditure surveys. On the basis of these Iranian and foreign economists have come to similar conclusions. Briefly, in the past decade or so income inequalities in Iran, which were already very great on a world scale, have increased, and this increase has been particularly dramatic in the past few years, when oil income rose sharply. The size and increase in Iran's distribution gap is notable whether the top decile or two are compared with the bottom decile or two, or whether one takes the Gini coefficient, which measures deviation from the norm all along a normal distribution scale. In addition, a recent Iranian study shows increases in income inequality in all different major dimensions: between the top and the bottom, between the cities and the countryside, within the cities and within the countryside.[12] The consumption patterns encouraged by the current distribution along with the dizzy growth of recent years (based on oil income) has created numerous national problems: constantly increasing spending on imports, galloping inflation, a host of urban problems and shortages, the skyrocketing of housing prices, partly caused by the growing presence of foreigners encouraged by arms expenditures and the consumer economy, etc.

VII ECONOMIC BACKGROUND TO THE 1978-9 OPPOSITION

Western newspapers have often attributed the 1978 opposition movement to rapid modernisation. While rapid modernisation often causes disruption, it is *how* rapid modernisation has been carried out that is most important. Urban migrants, artisans, small business people and merchants were in fact disfavoured and experienced serious economic difficulties, while they saw the rich and the bureaucrats prospering in alliance with foreign investors and advisers. They had heard extravagant predictions of rapid prosperity from the highest official sources, but continued to experience a life in which rises in money income hardly compensated for disruptions in home life, galloping inflation, shortages of housing, food, power and so on. While western-educated elites were often provisionally bought off by well-paying government jobs, this was scarcely tried for the urban migrants, the bazaar classes, most of the *ulama* or students. Only factory workers were favoured, partly because of their frequent strikes and obvious potential for united action.

Ideologically, the tradition of Shi'i independence and of following the words of Shi'i leaders before those of rulers, had never been broken for the mass of the population. Moreover, while growing

numbers of urban-educated Iranians were westernised and secularised, their place was in a sense taken by religious rural migrants into the towns and by the students, who increasingly came from petty-bourgeois religious classes — hence the total number of religious believers in the towns must have grown, even apart from the modernists who turned to the radicalised religion of men like Dr Ali Shariati. Over the years the government had largely suppressed secular opposition movements like the Tudeh party and the National Front, thus leaving the ground free for the religious opposition to grow. This opposition was almost impossible to suppress, as it encompassed, to one degree or another, the most respected religious leaders of Iran, and could express itself metaphorically in sermons, processions and ceremonies. The old *ulama*-bazaar alliance that had reappeared periodically from 1891 through to the riots of 1963 once more sparked off a national mass movement. Interestingly, although the social ideas of many *ulama* are conservative, their economic critique of the government is often similar to that of the National Front, of the left, and in many ways to the above analysis.[13]

VIII A POLICY FOR THE FUTURE

A few words may be added regarding the desirability of policies leading to more equitable income distribution, policies that may end the high subsidies to the rich and augment productive activities by the poor. In addition, Iran faces the real problem that if wages are raised rapidly Iran's products will become even less competitive on international markets. It would therefore seem reasonable to concentrate not so much on wages as on other desperate needs: first, education, which includes scarcely decent teacher training and vocational schools. Secondly, housing, shortage of which has reached emergency proportions. Thirdly, health care, which is still concentrated almost entirely on Tehran and a few cities. Fourthly, supplementary occupations for villages, where underemployed men and women abound, and where crafts and small industries could be promoted. Fifthly, loans and technical support for productive activities by the poor and middle-income groups should be greatly expanded and those to the rich decreased.

Far more decentralisation, local control, self-governing multi-purpose cooperatives and fewer favours to foreigners and the rich will be desirable in any new government, whether it be called an 'Islamic republic', a 'socialist state' or whatever. A gradual build-up of larger industries stressing productive goods should replace the race for super-modern arms, nuclear power plants and luxury consumer goods. Past policies plus the natural disruptions brought by a year's revolt have created major problems, but the new policies may begin to solve them.

REFERENCES

- 1 On the *ulama* and other social groups under the Qajars, see H. Algar, *Religion and state in Iran 1785-1906* (Berkeley, 1969); N. Keddie, 'The origins of the religious-radical alliance in Iran', *Past and Present* (34, July 1966); 'The roots of the Ulama's power in modern Iran', in *Scholars, Saints, and Sufis*, N.R. Keddie (ed.) (Berkeley, 1972, paperback 1978); *Religion and rebellion in Iran: the tobacco protest of 1891-92* (London, 1966); 'The economic history of Iran, 1800-1914, and its political impact: an overview', *Iranian Studies* (V, Spring-Summer 1972); Charles Issawi (ed.), *The economic history of Iran 1800-1914* (Chicago, 1971); A. Ashraf and H. Hekmat, 'The state of the traditional bourgeoisie in nineteenth century Iran', volume on Middle Eastern economic history, A. Udovitch (ed.) (Princeton, Darwin Press, forthcoming).
- 2 This point was made well by Gad Gilbar in his paper and discussion at the Conference on nineteenth century Iran and Turkey, Babolsar, Iran, 1978.
- 3 See F. Kazemzadeh, *Russia and Britain in Persia 1864-1914* (New Haven, 1968); N. Keddie, 'British policy and the Iranian opposition: 1901-1907', *Journal of Modern History* (39, 3 September 1967); N. Keddie, 'Iranian politics 1900-1905: background to revolution', three parts, *Middle Eastern Studies* (V, 1969); M. Entner, *Russo-Persian commercial relations 1828-1914* (Gainesville, Fla., 1965).
- 4 On the period of revolts see Algar, op. cit., and the relevant books and articles by Keddie cited in note 1. See also N. Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din 'al-Afghani': a political biography* (Berkeley, 1972); *An Islamic response to imperialism* (Berkeley, 1968); 'Symbol and sincerity in Islam', *Studia Islamica* (XIX, 1963); 'Religion and irreligion in early Iranian nationalism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (IV, 3 April 1962); Homa Pakdaman, *Djamil-ed-Din Assad Abadi dit Afghani* (Paris, 1969); and the Persian sources cited in all the above. See also the books of the revolution by E. G. Browne, Morgan Shuster and R. McDaniel, and the articles and forthcoming book that discuss aspects of it by E. Abrahamian.
- 5 The activities of the US Ambassador to Italy, Clare Booth Luce, in enforcing an oil boycott, became public years later when the US Senate discussed her nomination as ambassador to Brazil; it was clarified to me earlier, as were other aspects of US policy, when the late Max Thornburg kindly allowed me to use a series of his private papers, including correspondence with Luce and a record of a conversation with Dean Acheson in which Thornburg proposed US aid in the overthrow of Mossadegh. A few of these documents are quoted in my dissertation, 'The Impact of the West on modern Iranian social history', (Berkeley). The oil boycott against Iran is discussed, among other places, in Anthony Sampson's brilliant and readable *The seven sisters: the great oil companies and the world they shaped* (Bantam paperback, 1976).
- 6 G. B. Baldwin, *Planning and development in Iran* (Baltimore, 1967) and Charles Issawi, 'The Iranian economy 1925-1975', *Iran under the Pahlavis*, G. Lenczowski (ed.) (Stanford, Hoover Institution, 1978), citing the official Statistical Yearbook, in Persian.
- 7 Much of this analysis is based on private conversations or on semi-confidential reports by Iranian and international organisations. Among the most useful published works are R. Looney, *The economic development of Iran* (New York, 1973); International Labour Organisation, *Employment and income policies for Iran* (Geneva, 1973); and David Housego, 'Quiet thee now and rest', *The Economist* (28 August 1976). Most recently two good and relevant books have appeared: Fred Halliday, *Iran: dictatorship and development* (Harmondsworth, 1977) and R. Graham, *Iran: the illusion of power* (London, 1978). Halliday says there has been too little growth of big industry, but his own figures do not support this view; nor do the above works.
- 8 Eric J. Hooglund, 'The effects of the land reform program on rural Iran,

- 1962-1972' (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1975). This excellent study is unfortunately unavailable through University Microfilms and it is to be hoped that the author will both make it so available and publish an updated version of it. Some more recent data is in D.R. Denman, 'Land reforms of Shah and people', in G. Lenczowski (ed.), op. cit.
- 9 M.G. Weinbaum, 'Agricultural policy and development politics in Iran', *MEI* (31, 4, Autumn, 1977).
- 10 This is in the forthcoming Oxford dissertation, based on extensive fieldwork, by Fateeh Etemad Moghadam, cited in M.A. Katouzian, 'Oil versus agriculture: a case of dual resource depletion in Iran', *The Journal of Peasant Studies* (V, 3 April, 1978).
- 11 On agriculture see the works cited in notes 9 and 10; N. Keddie, 'Capitalism, stratification, and social control in Iranian agriculture, before and after land reform', in R. Antoun and I. Harik (eds.), *Rural politics and social change in the Middle East* (Bloomington, 1972), and the sources cited therein, including the works of A. Lambton. See also Paul Vieille, *La féodalité et l'état en Iran* (Paris, 1975); T. Brun and R. Dumont, 'Imperial pretensions and agricultural dependence', *MERIP Reports* (71, 1978); and Weinbaum, op. cit. An unpublished study by Vahid Noshirvani on farm mechanisation shows, among other important points how government economic policies favoured large, imported farm machines over small, domestic ones.
- 12 M.H. Pesaran and F. Gahvary, 'Growth and income distribution in Iran' (in press). Pesaran has done a series of outstanding studies on income distribution, as has F. Mehran; most of the latter are distributed in mimeo by the I.L.O. On income distribution see also Looney, op. cit. and his *Income distribution policies and economic growth in semi-industrialized countries* (New York, 1975), and I.L.O., op. cit.
- 16 Numerous interviews with Khomeini and other religious leaders, in *Le Monde* and elsewhere, and with National Front leaders, criticise the ruin of agriculture, the growth of dependence on the West and on consumer durables and arms, as well as waste and corruption. Naturally, neither the economic nor especially the social analysis made by religious leaders is identical to the one given here.

© Nikki R. Keddie, January 1979

Militarism and Development in the Third World

Proposals for papers from *Race & Class* readers are invited by the American Science Association in Washington DC for the September meeting of the Association.

Write to Miles D. Wolpin, the organiser of this panel, at Department of Political Science, The State University College at Potsdam, New York 13676, USA.



IRAN IN REVOLUTION

Iran's popular upheaval has stunned the world. From Washington and Wall Street to Palestine and Southern Africa its consequences are enormous. Exclusive eyewitness accounts of the last days of the Shah, interviews with oil workers and leading participants in the struggle, documents from the political movements, and a special survey of the opposition forces—*MERIP Reports* new double issue (75/76) tells you what you need to know. Available now for only \$2.25.

Other issues of *MERIP Reports* have analyzed Iran's strategic role in the Middle East, the economic failures and political repression of the Pahlavi regime, and the emerging opposition. Regularly \$1.35 each, you can now order any three for \$3.75, or all five for \$6.00.

- 71 Crisis Update/Trade Unions/Agricultural Dependence
- 69 Political Challenge & Economic Contradictions
- 43 Land Reform and Agribusiness in Iran
- 40 America's Shah, Shahanshah's Iran
- 37 Iranian Nationalism and the Great Powers

Please send me right away:

New double issue 75/76 at

\$2.25 a copy _____

All five back issues _____

for \$6.00 _____

Three back issues _____

circled above _____

for \$3.75 _____

Postage & Handling .60

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

**Send to: *MERIP Reports*,
PO Box 3122,
Washington, D.C. 20010**

Resisting the Pharaohs: Ali Shariati on oppression

Since the beginning of open revolutionary struggle against the Shah's regime in early 1978, Dr Ali Shariati's portrait has come to symbolise the ideological dimension of the Iranian revolution. The portraits appear on the walls in the streets, in the places of public gatherings, in the living rooms of Iranian homes, in the shops and in the make-shift stores at Behesht Zahra Cemetery, where the revolutionary martyrs are buried.

More than 80 per cent of the books on display on the pavements of Iranian cities are the writings of Ali Shariati. Many illiterate Iranians have come to learn about Shariati's ideas by listening to the tapes of his lectures, which are as widely available as his books. During the repressive years of the Shah's regime, thousands of Iranians were imprisoned and tortured for possessing Shariati's books or the cassette tapes of his lectures. Xerxes the Great Hospital has been renamed Dr Ali Shariati's Hospital. Shariati has become the Voltaire of the Iranian revolution.

Shariati started his remarkable intellectual career as a high school teacher at the age of 18. While teaching he attended teachers' training college. In 1958, soon after his graduation from college, he went to France and began his studies in the sociology of religion at the Sorbonne. Upon his return to Iran in 1964 Shariati was arrested for his political activities in Europe and imprisoned for 10 months without trial. Two years later he secured a teaching position at the University of Mashhad. but the popularity of his radical interpretation of the

MANSOUR FARHANG is Associate Professor of Government at the California State University, Sacramento.

Race & Class, XXI, 1 (1979)

Shi'i school of thought led to his dismissal from the university faculty. In Tehran in 1968 he gave a series of lectures on the regression of the Shi'i tradition from the revolutionary religion of the oppressed to its corruption in the hands of the Safavid Dynasty (1500-1722), whose founder adopted Shi'i as the official state religion.

Shariati called upon the Shi'ites to revive and update the original revolutionary content of their religion. His analysis was so new and creative, so abstract and apolitical on the face of it, that it took the SAVAK six months to realise what he was doing. And even then, it was more the massive turnout of the university students at the Hussainieh Ershad, where the lectures were delivered, than a coherent understanding of Shariati's message that alarmed the SAVAK agents.

In his public lectures and writings Shariati did not directly mention the names of authorities or attack the present regime. He condemned the existing socio-political structure only by implication. He used metaphors and historical analogies to communicate his contemporary concerns. As a revolutionary Shi'ite scholar with an impressive knowledge of western philosophy and history, Shariati was uniquely equipped to synthesise western radical thought with Shi'ite tradition and doctrines. He contended that a truly Islamic society requires as a precondition the existence of an equitable system of production and distribution. However, his conception of equity was not limited to the material realm. He repeatedly argued that a society without a moral dimension, which is separate from and beyond the material structure, inevitably degenerates into dictatorial and fraudulent practices.

Shariati interpreted the Shi'i thought as a historic ideology of the oppressed. He perceived the Shi'ite symbols as revolutionary images and viewed the Shi'ite martyrs as revolutionary heroes and models for contemporary political activists. Above all, he regarded radical socio-political action as the ultimate proof of one's faith. One must understand the emotional significance of the Shi'ite symbols and heroes for the Iranian people to fully appreciate Shariati's creative appeal for personal and social change. Shariati effectively articulated the growing conviction among the Iranian intelligentsia that the ideology of any progressive and lasting change in the degenerate socio-political structure of the country has to be rooted in the native history and values of the society.

The SAVAK authorities were so baffled by Shariati's popularity that they asked a number of conventional Islamic scholars to study his writings in order to understand the reasons for their widespread appeal. In August 1973 Shariati was once again arrested and spent 18 months in prison without formal charges or trial. International pressure and the fact that Shariati's confinement augmented public interest in his writings led to his release from prison. In late May 1977

Shariati managed to leave the country with the intention of going to the United States. But he died of an apparent heart attack only days after his arrival in England. The unusual circumstances of his death gave rise to speculation of foul play by SAVAK agents.

For millions of Iranians, Ali Shariati has become a towering hero, a revolutionary martyr and philosopher. Shariati's writings are vast and diverse. His published works consist of about 20 books and more than 50 articles. His writings have been printed and reprinted openly and underground both inside and outside the country. The widespread and rapid distribution of his works is unprecedented in Iranian history. The general impact of his writings in such a short period of time is equally astonishing.

'Reflections of a concerned Muslim on the plight of oppressed peoples', translated by Mohammad Balal and originally published by Free Islamic Literature Incorporated (Houston, Texas) in 1977, is a uniquely appropriate essay to acquaint the readers of *Race & Class* with the nature of Shariati's thought and his contribution to the success of the Iranian revolution.

Reflections of a concerned Muslim: On the plight of oppressed peoples

If I confide in you personally, it is because I want to share a personal experience with you. It concerns me because it relates to my class, community, country and history.

I am familiar with the thoughts of educated people. My predecessors, of the remote past where they disappeared in the flow of history, were poverty-stricken people. I, personally, am related to the nobles but not to those whose nobility is the product of silver and gold.

I am deeply interested in human heritage and civilisation. My primary interest has always been to reflect on the works of people who inhabited the earth before us.

In Greece, I saw the temple of Delphi which thrilled me because of its artistic beauty and skill. In Rome, I visited the museum of arts and architecture of temples and great palaces. In the Far East, in China and Vietnam, there are mountains which were shaped by human hands and brains into temples for the gods and their representatives on earth (the religious clergymen). These human legacies are precious to me!

Last summer during my visit to Africa, I decided to see the three Pyramids in Egypt. Because of its vast surroundings, this great

monument of civilisation occupied my thoughts. I hastened to see one of the seven wonders of the past — the Pyramids.

Wholeheartedly, I began to listen to the guide's explanations about the structure. We learned that slaves had to bring 800 million blocks of stones from Aswan to Cairo in order to construct six large and three small Pyramids. Eight-hundred million blocks of stones were brought to Cairo from a place which was 980 miles away to construct a building wherein the mummified bodies of the Pharaohs were to be preserved. Inside, the graves are made of five blocks of marble. Four of the blocks are used for the walls and one is used for the ceiling. To imagine the diameter of the weight of the marble blocks used for the ceiling of the grave, it is sufficient to visualise that on this block, millions of blocks of stones were piled on top of each other until the top of the Pyramid was completed. For the last five thousand years, the ceiling has been supporting this load.

I was amazed by this wonderful work. At a distance of three to four hundred years, I saw some scattered blocks of stones. 'What are they?' I asked the guide. He said, 'Nothing. Only a few blocks of stones'. Of the 30,000 slaves who brought the heavy blocks of stones from hundreds of miles away, on a daily basis, hundreds of them were crushed under the heavy loads. The place I inquired about is where they were buried. So unimportant were they in the system of slavery, that hundreds of them were buried collectively in one ditch. Those who survived had to carry the heavy loads. I told the guide that I would like to see the slaves who were crushed into dust. The guide exclaimed, 'There is nothing to see!' He pointed to the graves of the slaves who were buried near the Pyramids by order of the Pharaohs; this was done so their souls could be employed as slaves just as their bodies were.

I requested that the guide leave me alone. I then went to those graves and sat down feeling very close to the people buried in those ditches. It was as if we were of the same race. It is true that each of us came from different geographical areas but these differences are inconsequential when viewed as a basis for dividing mankind. For out of this phenomenon arose the concepts of strangers and relatives. I was not involved in this system of classification and racial division; therefore, I had nothing but warm feelings and sympathy toward these oppressed souls. I looked back to the Pyramids and realised that despite their magnificence, they were so strange to and distant from me! In other words, I felt so much hatred towards the great monuments of civilisation which throughout history were raised upon the bones of my predecessors! My predecessors also built the great walls of China. Those who could not carry the loads were crushed under the heavy stones and put into the walls with the stones. This was how all the great monuments of civilisation were constructed — at the expense of the flesh and blood of my predecessors!

I viewed civilisation as a curse. I felt a burning hatred for the thousands of years of oppression against my predecessors. I realised that the feelings of all those people buried together in the ditches were once the same as mine. I returned from my visit and wrote one of them a letter describing what had transpired in the past 5,000 years. He was not living in those thousands of years, but slavery existed in one form or another!

I sat down and wrote him:

My friend, you have left this world, but we are carrying the loads for the great civilisation, clear victories, and heroic works. They came to our homes at the farms and forced us, as beasts, to build their graves. If we could not carry the stones or complete the task, we were also put into the walls with the stones! Others took the pride and credit for the work that we did. No mention had ever been made of our contributions.

They pushed us forward to fight people whom we did not even know nor did they know us. We were compelled to kill people whom we did not despise. Some were of our own class, race and destiny. For a long time, our old and helpless parents kept looking for a way to contact us, but their searching eyes never got an answer. According to one thinker, these fights were like wars between two parties who did not know each other but were fighting on behalf of those who knew each other well! They forced us to fight, to massacre, and to be massacred. Our fathers and mothers as well as their ruined farms suffered the loss. If victory was achieved, it was others who enjoyed its bounties, not us.

My friend, after you died a great change occurred. The Pharaohs and big powers of history altered their views. This made us happy. Previously, they believed that their souls were eternal; therefore, they believed that if the body was preserved, the soul could maintain a relationship with the body. This was why they made us construct those great yet cruel buildings. However, now they have become wiser. They no longer think about death. We have great news! They have given up those old beliefs. We are spared from transporting 800 million blocks of stones from hundreds of miles away to build graves.

My friend, unfortunately this 'good news' proved to be short-lived! After you passed away, they again stepped into our countries to capture us as labourers. Once again, we have to carry loads but not for their graves; they no longer care about them. This time, it is for their palaces — great palaces, besides which our generation is buried!

We lived in despair, but once again a flash of hope for survival appeared. Great prophets came forth. There was Zoroaster, Buddha the great and Confucius the philosopher. A gate toward salvation was

opened. The 'gods' sent their messengers to save us from disgrace of slavery, worship replaced cruelty. Unfortunately, we had bad luck. The prophets, who left their prophetic homes behind and disregarded us, proceeded to the palaces.

We had strong faith in Confucius, the philosopher, because he addressed himself to the question of man and the community. However, he also became a friend of the princes. Buddha, who was a prince, also deserted us. He turned within himself to reach the state of 'Nirvana', but we do not know where this state is. Buddha developed many great and ascetic rules. As for Zoroaster, he began his mission from Azerbaijan, Iran.

Disregarding our mourning and scars from the lashes inflicted on our bodies by the masters, he continued to Balkh and then to the court of Kashtasib, who was king at that time.

My friend, you were sacrificed for the graves while we were sacrificed for the palaces! Suddenly, besides the Pharaohs and others who employed us as their slaves, there appeared those who claimed to be successors of the prophets and professional spiritual teachers.

From Palestine to Iran, from Egypt to China and throughout all parts of the earth where there was civilisation, we had to carry the loads of stones to construct temples, palaces, and graves. Again in the name of charity, the representatives of the 'gods' and the successors of the prophets began to loot us. Again, in the name of holy war, we were pushed into the battlefields. We had to sacrifice our innocent children for the 'gods', temples, and idols!

My friend, for thousands of years, our destiny became worse than yours. Three-fifths of the wealth in Iran went to the *Mobedans* [old Persian clergymen] in the name of the gods. We became their servants and slaves. Four-fifths of the wealth in France was taken from us by the clergymen of God. The Pharaoh clergymen and spiritual teachers of religions have always been successful.

My friend, I am living thousands of years after you. Witnessing all the suffering of my friends, I began to feel that the 'gods' hated the slaves. Religion seemed to reinforce the slavery system. Even people more intelligent than us, like Aristotle, theorised that, by nature, some people were born to be slaves and others to be rulers. I began to believe that I was born and destined to slavery.

Amidst all of this hopelessness, I learned that a man had descended down from the mountains saying, 'I have been commissioned by God.' I trembled thinking that it possibly involved a new deception or new method of cruelty. He stated, 'I have been commissioned by God who has promised to have mercy on slaves and those who are weak on earth.' Surprise! I still could not believe it. How could it be true? God was speaking with slaves, giving them good news of being saved, and prosperous, and being heirs of the earth.

I had doubts, thinking that he was also one of those prophets of China, India, etc. His name was Mohammed, I was told that he was an orphan who was a shepherd behind those mountains. I was so surprised. Why did God choose His prophet from among shepherds? I was also informed that his predecessors were prophets; all were chosen from among shepherds. He was the last in that series. With joy and astonishment, I became speechless and trembled. Has God chosen His prophet from among our class?

I began to follow him because I saw my friends around him. Some of those who became leaders of his followers were: Bilal, a slave and son of a slave whose parents were from Abyssinia, Salman, a homeless person from Persia owned as a slave, Abu-Zar the poverty stricken and anonymous fellow from the desert, and lastly, Salim, the slave of the wife of Khudhaifa and an unimportant black alien.

I believed in the prophet Mohammed since his palace was no more than a few rooms constructed of clay. He was among the workers who carried the loads and built the rooms. His court was made of wood and palm-tree leaves. This was everything he had. This was his palace.

I fled from Persia and the ruling system of the *Mobedans* who pushed us as slaves into war to protect their power and rule from their enemies. I escaped and came to the Prophet's country to live with the slaves, the homeless, the helpless, and with him. But when he died, 'his eyelids under the heaviness of death, curtained our shining sun.' Once more, the situation began to deteriorate.

My friend, again in his name, magnificent temples rose toward the sky. Swords engraved with the Quranic verses on holy war were pointed toward us. His representatives stepped into our homes and took our youth as slaves for the chieftains of their tribes, sold our mothers in distant markets, killed our men in the name of struggle in the way of God, and looted our belongings in the name of charity.

In despair, I could do nothing! A power came into being which, with an appearance of monotheism, really hid idols in the worship-palaces of God! Tricky fires (a fire was holy in pre-Islamic Persia) were glowing. In the name of God's vice regency and successorship of the prophets, the faces of the Pharaohs and those of the false saints joined hands. They began to strike at us in the name of law. Again, it was the yoke of slavery around our necks which promoted the construction of the Great Mosque of Damascus. The great contests to build splendid mosques, magnificent palaces, beautiful houses for the Caliphs in Damascus and the enactment of a thousand and one nights in Baghdad were all done at the expense of our blood and lives; but, this time it was pursued in the name of God! We thought there was no way to safety. Slavery and sacrifice were our unchangeable destinies!

Who was that man called Mohammed? Was his mission deceitful?

Or are he (the prophet) and we being sacrificed in the system — a system in which we are decaying in prisons; witnessing the looting and destruction of our possessions and families, and being massacred?

I do not know where to go! Where should I go? Should I go to the *Mobedans*? How could I return to those temples which were built to enslave me? Should I join those who claim to be examples of our national freedom but in essence are attempting to gain their inhuman privileges of the past? The mosques are no better than those temples!

I saw the swords which were engraved with verses on holy war. I saw the places for worship. I saw those who prayed. I saw the saintly faces who spoke in the name of spiritual leadership, the Caliphs, and the preservation of the Prophet's traditions. Nevertheless, collectively, they took us into SLAVERY! They, long before my time, put someone to the sword in a mosque. He was Ali, the son-in-law of that man of God (the prophet Mohammed). He was killed in a place where God was worshipped. He before me, and his family long before mine, were, like the suffering slaves of history, all destroyed. In the name of 'charity', his house was looted before ours. The Quran long before it was used as an instrument to rob and exploit us, was raised on the swords to defeat Ali!

How strange! Five thousand years later, I found a man who spoke of God, not for the masters but for the slaves. He prayed but not to reach 'Nirvana' nor to deceive people nor to unite with God (like the Persians). He prayed for the welfare and prosperity of mankind. I found a man for the whole world. He was a man of justice, one who was strong and disciplined enough to make his older brother the first subject. He was a man whose wife, the daughter of the prophet Mohammed, worked and suffered deprivation and starvation, during her lifetime as we did. I found a man whose children were the heirs of the red flag which throughout history belonged to our class.

My friend, I have sought refuge in this house which is built of clay due to my fears of the temples, pompous palaces that you know and were sacrificed for by formidable powers. The companions of the prophet are busy. The house is alone. His wife is dying while he is in the garden of Bani Najjar, working and telling God all about our misery. Fearing the terrifying temples, palaces and treasuries that have accumulated through our labour and blood, I have taken refuge in this house to mourn the sacrifices which were made!

My friend, all those who remained loyal to Ali belonged to our suffering class. He did not adopt his beautiful sermons (recorded in *Nahjul-Balagha*) in order to make excuses for our deprivation nor the excesses of those who seek power. They were adopted to educate and save us. He did not draw his sword to defend himself, his family, his race, nor to defend big powers. It was done to rescue us at all stages. He thinks better than Socrates, not for the sake of demonstrating moral virtues of the noble classes in which slaves have no share, but

for the sake of values which we possess. He was not an heir of the Pharaohs or those of similar class. He symbolised thoughts and considerations, not in closed libraries, schools, and academic centres like those who acquire knowledge, as an end in itself, living in the world of theories while remaining indifferent to the starving and suffering classes. His thoughts fly high and far. Simultaneously, his abstract thoughts and heart are transferred into sympathy at the sadness of an orphan's face. Concurrently, because he realises God's greatness, while praying he does not pay attention to any suffering inflicted on his body by a dagger. However, because of oppression of a Jewish woman, he cries loud saying, 'if a person dies because of this disgrace he should not be blamed!' He has excellent abilities to express himself, but never in the manner of one like *Shahnama* (a poet who praised kings) who makes no mention of our class except once in all of his 60,000 couplets.

My friend, at this time and in this community, we desperately need him. He is unlike the thinkers, philosophers and others who are either men of thoughts without action and struggle, or men of action without thoughts, wisdom, and piety. If we imagine someone beside him having all these qualities, perhaps he might not possess the tenderness of feeling, love and pure spirit. Perchance he might lack strong faith in God. He is a man whose essence is extended through all humanitarian dimensions. Like you and I, he works as a labourer. The same hands that recorded the glorious lines of divine guidance merge deep into the soil, tilling and fertilising salty lands. He works for no one! While he makes water gush forth from the ground, his family looks at his work with joy. Before he and his wife rest, he declares, 'good news for my heirs who will not have even one drop from this water as their share.' My friend, he has made it a charity for you and me.

We need him. We need leadership like him. The civilisations, educational systems, and religions have made human beings into animals interested only in financial security or selfish and heartless worshippers or men of thought and reason who lack feeling, love and inspiration as well as knowledge, wisdom, and logic. But he is a man who combines all these dimensions in his person. He is a leader of the working class and those who suffer. He is the expressing power who struggles for the well-being of the community. Sincerity, loyalty, patience, steadfastness, and the concepts of revolution and justice were the main features of his daily messages to the masses.

My friend, I live in a society where I face a system which controls half of the universe, maybe all of it. Mankind is being driven into a new stronghold of slavery. Although we are not in physical slavery, we are truly destined with a fate worse than yours! Our thoughts, hearts, and will powers are enslaved. In the name of sociology, education, art, sexual freedom, financial freedom, love of exploitation,

and love of individuals, faith in goals, faith in humanitarian responsibilities and belief in one's own school of thought are entirely taken away from within our hearts! The system has converted us into empty pots which accommodate whatever is poured inside them!

Now, we in the name of party, blood, land, and system against system, undergo divisions so that each of us can be easily taken into service. His followers, that is the followers of his school of thought, are pushed to fight against one another. Why, under a global influence should they consider each other as enemies? One leaves his hands open in prayer while the other folds them together. One prostrates on a piece of clay while the other on a carpet. Fortunately less differentiation is made now! Our thinkers are driven into exile; they have become guardians.

My friend, knowing that you were a slave, you could identify your master. You could endure the whip-lash on your body. Why, how, and who made you slaves? We are facing the same destiny as you, but unable to know why it exists. Who is making us slaves of this century? From where are we being invaded? Why are we submissive to misleading thoughts? Why are we engaged in worldly worships? Like animals, we have become victims of exploitation — even more so than your era and race!

We work for the systems, powers, machines and palaces which are maintained through our efforts. Riches are accumulated through our hard labour but our share is such a small portion; therefore, we are obliged to work the following day. We are more deprived than you! Cruelty and discrimination are more severe than that of your time!

My friend, Ali sacrificed his life for these considerations: School of Thought, Unity and Justice. It was evident in his twenty-three years of struggles and sacrifices to establish faith in the hearts of barbaric parties. It was evident in his twenty-five years of silence and endurance in order to preserve Islamic unity and save it from the dangers of the Roman and Persian empires. It was evident in his five years of work and suffering to achieve justice, using his sword to destroy hatred and liberate man. Though he was not able to achieve this, he managed to impart to us the meaning of the leadership of mankind and religion. He placed his life and the life of his family on these three slogans: School of Thought, Unity and Justice!

Iran and American geopolitics in the Gulf

By now it is firmly established that the United States government intervened in Iran to overthrow the government of Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh and restore Reza Shah Pahlavi to absolute power in 1953. Allen Dulles, then CIA Director, personally escorted the Shah back to Tehran in a special plane. Hans Tofte, head of all American covert operations at the time, recently boasted of the CIA's success in Iran and defended its contribution to American well-being in the world.

Mossadegh was a Soviet stooge who had ousted the Shah in order to open the door for a Soviet takeover of Iran and its oil, which is now keeping European industries going — and, incidentally, also keeping a vast number of American motor cars rolling on our highways from coast to coast.[1]

Even twenty-five years after the event, it remains necessary for US apologists to distort Mossadegh's undeniably nationalist (and, incidentally, anti-Soviet) outlook to lend the CIA an acceptable ideological cover. More to the point, Tofte correctly associates the strategic importance of Iran with oil, but misleadingly claims the US consumer as beneficiary. A domestic sales pitch for imperial adventures abroad is especially necessary for Americans who still insist upon deference to an anti-imperialist image of their country. In fact, the United States would have had no reason to doubt that Prime Minister Mossadegh or, for that matter, any government in Iran, would sell its oil on the world market, and hence maintain European and the still

RICHARD FALK teaches International Law and Politics at Princeton University.

Race & Class, XXI, 1 [1979]

negligible American supplies. But what is also clear is that if Mossadegh had survived, foreign corporate interests would have been weakened, if not displaced, by indigenous national control, with a far bigger share of oil revenues going to the Iranian government and its national bourgeoisie. On the level of ideology the American leadership now takes pride in overthrowing a foreign government (Mossadegh's) for the sake of great power rivalry (keeping out the USSR) and oil, but it is not yet prepared to concede that Euro-American multinational corporate power was the most immediate beneficiary. The yet unacknowledged (and unacknowledgeable) motivation, firmly documented by now, is how far US foreign policy over the Persian Gulf reflected corporate interests. A symbiotic relationship existed between the corporations and the US government in the Middle East, in which each served as the guardian of the other's vital interests.[2] The overt rationale for imperial intervention in the region is thus quite misleading.

THE UNITED STATES AGAINST NATIONALISM

It is noteworthy that during the recent struggle in Iran the United States government refused to recognise how far the religious and political leadership of the emergent Islamic Republic was anti-Soviet and its leadership, under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was avowedly anti-marxist as well. The selection of Mehdi Bazargan as Prime Minister and the composition of his cabinet further suggested the relatively conservative socio-economic outlook of the Khomeini movement. Nevertheless, what made the prospect of post-Shah leadership particularly grim in Washington was the degree to which Third World nationalism triumphant in Tehran could weaken imperial management of the politics and economics of oil by transferring control from corporate technocrats to national politicians and business interests. As such, the misrepresentation of Khomeini's movement as one of 'religious fanaticism', 'theocratic fascism' and the like was to be expected.

The United States has, over the past three decades, consistently opposed radical nationalism in the Third World, usually on the pretext of containing Soviet influence. American policymakers have treated as inimical every Third World political movement that sought to sever the dependency between the governing elite and the international (political, economic and cultural) system of dominance established by United States guns and dollars in the aftermath of the Second World War. That is, if nationalism went beyond formal boundaries it could routinely expect to encounter some kind of counter-revolutionary response aided and abetted by Washington. Some of the more prominent illustrations of this pattern are Indochina

(1953-75), Guatemala (1954), Indonesia (1958 onwards), Cuba after Castro, Dominican Republic (1965), Chile (1970-73) and Angola (1970s).

The logic of intervention has to do with the managerial impulse to exert control within whatever is perceived as the imperial domain. Nationalism is so threatening because it rejects such control. It substitutes the priorities and aspirations of wider segments of dependent peoples for the interests of the imperial system and its resident ally, an outward-looking domestic elite. The puzzle for Washington has been to reconcile its supposed respect for national self-determination and anti-colonialism with its imperial imperatives. The mixed threat of Soviet rivalry and communist ideology provided a convenient rationale acceptable to American public opinion. The Vietnam War, costing millions of lives, exemplified this pattern of self-justification. The Khomeini movement in Iran presented a special challenge because it could not be cast in the standard role of a left movement whose success would strengthen the position of communism. Yet this massive movement was radical, nationalist and directed at unseating the most favoured of American clients in the Third World, a king prepared to do the imperial bidding with a royal flourish, whether in supplying oil for Israel and South Africa or playing a regional role as counter-revolutionary gendarme against radical challenges throughout the Gulf.

Not only American but West European and Japanese interests are seriously at stake in Iran — a country integral to the global oil markets. These interests are wide-ranging and expressive of a large-scale colonial relationship. According to the Pentagon, Iran has bought \$19 billion worth of arms from the US over the past six years. In 1978 Iran was delivered \$2.6 billion of the US total world arms sales of \$13.5 billion, and undelivered orders to Iran as of early 1979 total an astronomical \$12.1 billion, or 27.4 per cent of all US orders pending worldwide. According to US government figures 300-500 US companies have permanent plants of some kind in Iran. US foreign investment in Iran is probably undervalued at the current \$700 million figure. Until the recent exodus some 44,000 Americans (including dependants) were servicing this military and business complex. Iran has received \$2.2 billion in bank loans from the United States, of which \$1 billion is due within a year. In addition, Iran has purchased about \$3.8 billion worth of US exports in recent years, contributing both to the American capacity to pay the increased cost of oil imports and a favourable bilateral trading relationship to help offset large deficits elsewhere. Iran's total foreign debt exceeds \$5 billion.

A post-Shah government recalls the prospect of Iranian nationalist self-assertion during Mossadegh's brief rule. At minimum, the capacity of the oil consortium to serve the global cause of trilateralism will be weakened and the politics of oil shifted from western to

Third World priorities. The abolition of the marketing consortium was one of the first acts of the Bazargan government. The oil policy of an Islamic Republic is almost certain to involve a reduction of production-for-export by about 30 per cent, thereby driving world prices still higher. Furthermore, during the Shah's reign Iranian policy was so alienated from the Third World context that Iran was the sole member of the Gulf region willing to supply South Africa and Israel with oil. Iran even defied the oil embargo on Israel observed by all other OPEC members in the 1973 war, and continued to supply Israel with somewhere between 60 and 80 per cent of its oil, the latter figure being the more accurate one if Sinai oil is not considered. South Africa, unofficially boycotted for years by all other oil exporters, found itself dependent on Iran for more than 90 per cent of its oil — a degree of dependence that it has struggled in vain to avoid. Ian Smith's Rhodesian regime obtained virtually all its oil from Iran via South Africa. The pattern was part of an illicit triangle of cooperation on oil, internal security and nuclear technology between Iran, Israel and South Africa that had been forged over the last two decades. In jeopardy now is a tacit pentagonal alliance which includes West Germany and the United States who had facilitated and strengthened these relationships behind the scenes.

THE SHAH AND THE NIXON DOCTRINE

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Washington had viewed Iran as a strategically and economically important country where the US was committed to maintaining a pro-western regime. Since the anti-constitutionalist coup d'état of 1953 the Shah, who ruthlessly consolidated power with American help, had been the United States' favoured but second-ranking client. The defection of Iraq from the Baghdad Pact (CENTO) in 1958, then the weakening of Pakistan after its war with India in 1965, and finally the gradual augmentation of Iran's oil revenues had contributed to some upgrading of Iran as America's ally in South-west Asia, but these increments in Iran's importance did not represent a substantive change in US-Iranian relations. In the 1970s, however, the Shah's status was transformed from that of a protected client to that of a regional partner of the United States. This dramatic elevation of Iran in Washington's geopolitical design was related to the Nixon Doctrine and to Kissinger's attempt at creating a new constellation of pro-American powers in the Middle East and Southern Africa.

Unlike other critical struggles for hegemony in the Third World there has been no disagreement since the Nixon administration in Washington that political control over the Persian Gulf was critical for America's conception of world order, nor that Iran was a linchpin

of American policy in the region. Richard Helms, former CIA Director and later Ambassador to Iran, asserted the accepted wisdom when he pointed to a map on his office wall in Tehran a few years ago and said 'Iran is, in political terms, the real center of the world'. [3] In an important 1977 staff report Senator Jackson's influential senate committee on energy and natural resources drew as one of its central conclusions that 'A US commitment to the defense of oil resources of the Gulf and to political stability in the region must constitute one of the most vital and enduring interests of the United States'. [4] And in the body of the report the view was endorsed that 'these interests' in Iran 'are at least as essential to the United States as the interests engaged in Western Europe, and therefore must be accorded treatment equivalent to that accorded Western Europe'. [5] Given the historically low salience of the Persian Gulf region compared to the NATO area, this was an extraordinary but accurate statement.

The Nixon Doctrine, first enunciated at Guam in 1969, shifted the American counter-insurgency role from fighting on behalf of an embattled regime, as in Vietnam, to providing local clients with massive military aid and training, to be supplemented, if necessary, by American air and naval power. The image of future American relations with Third World allies was embodied in the 'Vietnamisation' phase of American involvement in Indo-China. In this context, Kissinger sought 'special relationships' with key governments in the Third World, who would then become junior partners in the heavy work of imperial management. Thus was the idea of the 'regional super-power' born, and Iran, along with Brazil and Indonesia, Israel and Portugal, became a prime, perhaps the prime, candidate.

Iran began to enjoy a special place in US policy as the focus of the US struggle to stay the world's 'number one' power shifted to the territories bounded by the Mediterranean and Indian Oceans. There were three principal reasons for this shift. First, Soviet influence was perceived to be expanding in the area which contains the world's largest and most accessible mineral and oil resources. Secondly, the national liberation movements, whose success was presumed to be inimical to western interests, were seen as gaining momentum — in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, Palestine and Oman. Thirdly, revitalisation of American power in this region was needed to neutralise the growing American economic failure to maintain its competitive position in the world system vis-à-vis either Japan or Western Europe. The American economy is less dynamic today and its capital formation processes have slowed down; as a result it is less capable of increasing its productivity in key sectors than are its leading capitalist competitors. To disguise this decline and to increase bargaining power to gain trade and monetary subsidies, the United States has relied increasingly on the levers associated with its military and diplomatic preponderance. Creating a cohesive,

though informal, network of allies in the Middle East and Southern Africa, to be backed by an efficient and mobile US military presence, thus became fundamental to Kissinger's global design. Iran, like Israel and to a lesser extent Portugal, was assigned a primary role. By 1972, the Shah's drive to become a major military 'power' had Washington's full backing. In a famous memorandum following on Nixon's visit to Tehran, Kissinger instructed the defence establishment to give the Shah whatever weaponry in whatever quantity he desired.

In many respects Iran was the ideal candidate for the Nixon Doctrine. For almost two decades the Shah had been a stable and exemplary ally. Motivated by a sense of 'regional responsibility' he had developed excellent relations with South Africa and Israel, while maintaining meaningful links with Saudi Arabia and the Sheikhs in the Gulf. Since Britain's military withdrawal from the Gulf, he had been eager to fill the 'security gap'. He was infatuated with modern weaponry, and had the foreign exchange to pay for the most elaborate new weapons systems. Additionally, his purchases contributed to the reduction of the rising US trade deficit. The quadrupling of oil prices made available more capital to finance the Shah's dreams. And the rising import requirements of western Europe, Japan and the United States made it critical that the leading oil producers maintained a sufficient production level. The volume and trend of US foreign military sales to Iran over the years is revealing: \$10 million in 1950, over \$100 million in 1970, \$524 million in 1973, \$3.91 billion in 1974, \$2.6 billion in 1975, \$1.3 billion in 1976; and there were \$12.1 billion of weapons in the pipeline when the Shah fell. The relative scale of these purchases is suggested by the fact that in 1975 Iran had bypassed West Germany as the biggest buyer of US arms. It had bought more arms abroad than Iraq, Pakistan, India, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Bahrein and Kuwait combined.[6] The Nixon Doctrine, as applied to Iran, gave a certain naturalness to this extraordinary military build-up, and inevitably reinforced Iran's importance as the trilateral world's second largest source of oil.

The essence of the Shah's regional role was to weight the military balance against radical nationalist pressures, especially in the Gulf area. His will and capacity were demonstrated, especially, by the Iranian success between 1973-5 in suppressing the Dhofar uprising in Oman, by participation in Pakistan's military operations against dissidents in Baluchistan, and later by his help to Somalia in its war with Ethiopia. Since Saudi Arabia did not have the manpower or temperament to play such a regional role, the Shah was an indispensable complement on the eastern flank of the Middle East to Israel on the western flank. The fantasy, shared by Washington and Jerusalem, was to build a Middle East alliance of reactionary forces in the region

to contain radical challenges and to undergird the security of Israel. The Egyptian-Israeli accord must be understood as the latest episode in that strategic quest.

The approach had some built-in contradictions; several of these had already become clear before Carter became president. The Arab-Israeli War of October 1973 had revealed a primary weakness of Kissinger's design, namely that America's Arab allies, including Saudi Arabia, were insufficiently involved in the regional grouping. Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy, which started the process of Egyptian-Israeli entente, was an attempt to overcome this weakness. Yet by mid-1974, as US-supported regimes in Portugal, Ethiopia and Greece fell, the centre-piece of the Nixon Doctrine had, for all practical purposes, fallen apart. Following these events, in an interview with James Reston of the *New York Times* (13 October 1974), Henry Kissinger had admitted that 'pragmatism unrelated to a purpose becomes totally self-destructive'. He elaborated:

One of the troubles of the Western societies is that they are basically satisfied with the status quo, so that when you have governments like the previous government in Portugal, or the previous government in Greece, the tendency is not to change it. I think that's a mistaken conception. But what comes after is so uncertain — and we really lack a philosophy for how to shape a new political evolution — that one tends to leave well enough alone. In the process, the political base erodes invisibly, and then, when the changes occur suddenly, there is no real base for a democratic liberal, humane evolution ...

So in Portugal, after 50 years of authoritarian rule, the Communist Party was the best organized, most purposeful opposition and therefore has a very large influence on Portugal's contemporary orientation.

Kissinger's reference to the 'invisibly' eroding political base of client regimes testifies to the myopia of academic functionaries and crisis managers. His statement that we 'really lack a new political evolution' is a striking admission of the emptiness of cold war liberalism. What Kissinger did not recognise then, and what Carter proved four years later by adhering to this bankrupt policy in Iran, was that, given an imperialist foreign policy, the long-lasting 'satisfaction' with the status quo is not an aberration — a mere 'trouble', as Kissinger put it — but an objective, structural requirement.

THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND IRAN

It is against such a background that we must understand Carter's willingness to swallow hard and, early in his human rights presidency,

welcome the Shah to the White House as a 'stable, strong and progressive' leader. And on New Year's Eve, 1978, President Carter offered the Shah a toast in Tehran that seemed horrifying at the time, but only ludicrous in retrospect:

Iran under the great leadership of the Shah is an island of stability in one of the more troubled areas of the world. This is a great tribute to you, Your Majesty, and to your leadership, and to the respect, admiration and love which your people give to you.

Imperial ignorance about genuine popular feelings creates complacency and vulnerability. The continuing military build-up and foreign economic penetration of Iran only hastened the end of the Shah. As the weapons systems became more sophisticated, so did their support requirements become more Americanised. Thousands of white-collar mercenaries were eventually dispatched to Iran to train and advise, as well as to keep the equipment operational. This enlarged American presence only increased the credibility of opposition claims that the Shah had relinquished Iranian sovereignty to a foreign imperial power. Similarly, it is a little-noticed irony that the CIA's poor intelligence estimates of anti-Shah sentiment were, in part, a product of the CIA's reliance on its Iranian stepchild, the SAVAK. The erroneous, optimistic picture was sustained thereafter Vietnam-style by presidential advisers, especially Brzezinski, and bureaucrats eager not to confuse Carter with the facts; the clarity of the policy was more important than its viability.

Despite past lessons the Carter administration failed to perceive the internal threat to the Shah's rule. It was assumed that torture, intimidation, modernisation western style, high rates of annual GNP growth and the build-up of a modern military machine guaranteed internal stability. Only the threat, known to be remote, of a Soviet attack, seemed capable of shaking the Shah's hold. Given these expectations it seemed natural to continue building up Iran, in Brzezinski's managerial language, as a 'regional influential', capable of projecting its military power throughout the Gulf region, and possibly beyond. The Jackson report on 'the special relationship' of the US with Iran acknowledged that

if Iran is called upon to intervene in the internal affairs of any Gulf state, it must be recognized in advance by the United States that this is the role for which Iran is being primed and blame cannot be assigned for Iran's carrying out an implied assignment.[7]

The Shah ventured beyond the Gulf to provide aid to Somalia in its war with Ethiopia. In the background was the notion that with sufficient military prowess the Shah, or his dynastic successor, might even engage in regional aggression to secure additional oil reserves; after all, if the Shah's policies had persisted, Iran's level of oil production

would have started to decline in the 1980s and have been exhausted shortly after the turn of the century. Again, the Jackson report spells out the dimension of American regional policy: 'as Iran's oil reserves peak and decline, across the Gulf will be Saudi Arabia with plentiful oil reserves, enormous wealth and little to spend it on in terms of native population as seen from Iran'. [8] Such a development could be calmly envisaged so long as the Gulf reserves were in strong, western-oriented hands and the international corporations assured their 'fair share' of the profits. This imperial cynicism as to the outcome of regional conflict is analogous to the earlier colonial willingness to draw and redraw national boundaries to satisfy the exigencies of great power geopolitics and thereby maintain the so-called 'central balance' without regard to the national and cultural integrity and traditions of the Third World peoples.

The Shah rested his own security prospects upon a parallel interpretation of imperial geopolitics. He told Oriana Fallaci back in October 1973 that any Soviet move against Iran would lead to 'the Third World War', and added, 'the noncommunist world couldn't accept the *disappearance* of Iran, because it knows that to lose Iran would mean to lose everything'. [9] That the Shah made the slippage of Iran from western control synonymous with its 'disappearance' suggested how far he had internalised the imperialist mentality. The Shah associated the future of Iran with the continuity of American involvement, an unsentimental assurance that he was confident about because of the interest structure involved:

the United States understands us better [than other foreign countries] for the simple reason that it has so many interests here. Economic and therefore direct interests, political and therefore indirect interests ... I've just said that Iran is the key, or one of the keys, to the world. I need only add that the United States cannot shut itself up within the borders of its country, it cannot go back to the Monroe Doctrine. [10]

This remarkable passage illustrates how the Shah inverted the concept of a free state and made the security of Iran under him a function of its dependence. Amusingly, he scorned the notion of Monroe Doctrine diplomacy as a kind of provincial imperialism inappropriate for this historical period when the US role had to be conceived in global terms.

There is now a stark appreciation in Washington of the geopolitical challenge in the region. Zbigniew Brzezinski speaks ominously of

an arc of instability, which can be drawn on a map from Chittagong in Bangladesh, through Islamabad, all the way to Aden. Their internal fragility, social and political, could interact with the projection of Soviet power, and that together could create a problem as

acute as the one we faced even in the 50s or 60s, especially because of oil.[11]

This 'instability' requires a managerial response from the United States: 'Today, in the ultimate sense, national security means an active and positive engagement by the United States in shaping a rapidly changing world in ways that would be congenial to our interests and responsive to our values.' [12] There is no evidence that America's imperial role will be abandoned, or even reconsidered. Events in Iran call merely for tactical readjustments, offsetting the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty with a more overt military role elsewhere in the region.

THE FUTURE: BETWEEN INTERVENTION AND REVOLUTION

At the present time, one senses the same pre-interventionary mood in Washington as prevailed during the years of Mossadegh's government in Iran and Allende's in Chile. The principal US inhibition against intervention in Iran is one of political and military sustainability — how could it be done so as to assure its rapid success? In mid-January 1979 Ambassador Sullivan told Richard Falk in Tehran that 'a military coup wouldn't accomplish much ... Iran today was not like it was in 1953'. At that point Washington, taken by surprise, and confronted by a mass movement that embraced all social classes in Iran, seemed temporarily stymied. It even reversed its widely-publicised plan in late December 1978 to send an aircraft carrier task force to the Persian Gulf because it believed that such a move might have had an adverse effect on the political dynamic within Iran. On the level of tactics such an adjustment of policy reveals an imperialist learning process, although only in the direction of avoiding some self-defeating gestures.

On the level of strategy, there is evidence not of change in policy but of rearrangement and regrouping. In February 1979, Harold Brown, Defense Secretary of the United States, visited the critical pro-western countries in the Middle East. Everywhere he spoke of American willingness to fill 'the security gap' produced by the Shah's fall from power, of US readiness to use force to protect vital interests in the region against further erosion. More tangibly, he promised additional arms to governments already spending heavily on defence, committed \$400 million of US arms to North Yemen and proposed an expanded American military presence by increasing naval deployments in the western Indian Ocean, and even by establishing a military base in Saudi Arabia, an offer so far rebuffed by the Saudi government. Senator Jackson has proposed that the United States take the lead in establishing a joint Israeli-Egyptian strike force to

protect Gulf oil from further 'radical' threats. The Egyptian-Israeli peace package includes the US commitment of an additional \$5 billion worth of military equipment, the bulk of it to Israel. Meanwhile, Israeli diplomats have been asking Washington 'about American contingency plans in the event of a revolution in Saudi Arabia'. [13]

Looking ahead it seems evident that the United States government remains locked in opposition to Third World nationalism. This opposition faces its most dangerous tests in the Middle East, partly because of a range of objectives that cannot, even under the best of circumstances, be easily reconciled. Ten objectives of US foreign policy and their most severe tensions can be briefly identified.

First and foremost, the US needs access to Gulf oil on as favourable and reliable terms as possible, assuring a maximum cut for the multinational corporations and allowing the trilateral countries the financial means (that is, export markets) to pay for their oil imports. Gulf oil is indispensable for the viability of international capitalism, at least for the remainder of the century, and its threatened loss or disruption would certainly occasion military intervention, even at the risk of provoking a third world war.

Second, to control the dynamics of intra-imperial conflict, it is critical that the United States remain the dominant trilateral presence in the region and that American-based capital should play as large a role as possible over marketing Gulf oil and over the internal development of countries which are earning huge amounts of foreign exchange. Without such a role the dollar-based financial order would assuredly weaken, if not collapse. This would produce a more pronounced, and quite possibly traumatic, shift in relative economic power to West Germany, Japan and the main oil suppliers. Already, the emergence of an integrated European currency threatens to erode the place of the dollar in the world system, and to plunge the American segment of the capitalist sector into a condition of chronic weakness.

Third, and critical for the domestic stability of an American presidency, support for the security of Israel must be maintained more or less as defined by Israeli leadership. This requires continuing American opposition to Palestinian claims for self-determination and apparently even some covert backing for the Israeli acquisition of an independent nuclear capability.

Fourth, the temporary 1973-4 linkage between the Arab-Israeli conflict and world oil supplies must be resisted as far as possible, as it confronts American policymakers with an unacceptable choice between their dependence on the flow of Gulf oil and support for Israel. Preventing such a linkage largely depends on keeping a western-oriented leadership in OPEC which will treat oil in apolitical terms as a commodity to be marketed at maximum advantage in the world economy.

Fifth, to avoid repoliticising OPEC, the forces of radical nationalism in the Middle East must be contained to the extent possible — a task vastly more complicated by the outcome of the Iranian revolution. At the least Saudi Arabia and Iran must be kept firmly in the western camp.

Sixth, it is more essential than ever to push towards a generally acceptable framework for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, or at least to consolidate an Israeli-Egyptian settlement.

Seventh, to ensure the capacity to pursue these goals it is desirable to limit Soviet penetration of the region, as well as to pretend that Soviet expansionism must be countered by a strong American presence. This would take the form of militarising the internal political fabric of the countries in the region via arms sales, advisers, greater naval forces, and bases.

Eighth, to avoid the appearance of direct American or western support for the *status quo* in South Africa it is desirable that South Africa's oil needs be indirectly satisfied, preferably by one or more major Third World oil suppliers.

Ninth, to increase the prospect for defusing the Arab-Israeli conflict and to keep OPEC from becoming repoliticised to western disadvantage it is essential that Israel have its own convenient, reliable sources of oil.

Tenth, the tensions among these goals must be managed by American policymakers so as to minimise the possibility of either a nuclear intra-regional conflict or of the sort of Soviet-American confrontations that could culminate in a third world war. As suggested above, the strategic stakes here are high enough for the United States to risk a nuclear confrontation to safeguard its access to Gulf oil, although the managerial quest is to find ways to secure Gulf oil without running such awesome risks. In this regard, the possibility of a global bargain with either the Soviet Union or China, or conceivably with both, becomes more plausible than ever before.

One would expect that the new Iranian government's oil policy would be linked with political goals. Both Ayatollah Khomeini and the Bazargan government have indicated that support for Palestinian self-determination should shape official actions taken by Iran. Yasir Arafat's visit to Iran has confirmed this commitment. This new outlook suggests a more political approach to OPEC pricing and delivery policy than existed in the past.

In this altered political environment, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and eventually even Egypt will feel some pressure to de-westernise their policies, especially in relation to the PLO and the overall dynamic of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Israel will feel more beleaguered in a hostile environment and rely even more heavily than it now does on a military approach to security including a willingness to threaten nuclear weapons if a major confrontation opens up. This prospect

might, in turn, lead governments in the region to seek Soviet support, at least to obtain a nuclear shield so as to neutralise Israeli nuclear diplomacy.

The cumulative effect of these developments may be direct United States military involvement in the region. Earlier, we noted the recent moves in this direction. US military bases and troops on Israeli territory and a permanent posture of nuclear flag-showing in the region are also conceivable options.

It seems evident that the United States will not easily accept a decisive weakening of its geopolitical position, as would be implied by the sort of basic reorientation of policy that the Iranian opposition has in mind. This American refusal is reinforced by the rightist drift of politics in the United States and by the belief that other regional events, especially the radicalisation and de-westernisation of Afghanistan and the Horn, had created a trend adverse to US interests even before the disintegration of the Iranian linchpin. Hence, it is important for the guardians of the Iranian struggle to be extremely vigilant in this period after they have toppled the Pahlavis from power. Already the point has been passed in Iran where Brecht's line in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* seems prophetic: 'the Shah wouldn't know he were Shah if it weren't written down'. But, in the altered imagery of official Washington, the fact that the Shah has been written off does not at all mean that the United States has given up its imperial design for the region. On the basis of past practice and present perceptions what seems clear is that United States policy-makers will do everything in their power to restore the status quo ante in Iran.

In the months and years ahead I would anticipate a tactical debate behind the scenes in Washington between those who argue on behalf of a temporary accommodation to the Iranian revolution and those who insist on inciting counter-revolution. Bureaucratic games being what they are, it is quite likely that both options will be simultaneously pursued, especially while it is still unclear what the future in Iran holds for American interests. At minimum, accommodating the revolution implies some slippage of both symbolic and actual western control (e.g., reduced oil production for the world market, no oil sales to South Africa or Israel, the loss of precious revenues for sales of fancy weaponry, and the elimination of US monitoring stations), but possibly no damaging change in political, economic or cultural structure. US support for Bakhtiar's brief government gives some hint of one type of semi-Shah solution that failed. So far, the apparent effort by Washington is to normalise relations with the Bazargan leadership, which has tried to reassure American leaders as to its intentions. Yet it is not evident whether the Iranian people will be content with such 'moderation'. Given the nature of the Iranian struggle, the political strength of the movement and its determination

not to have sacrificed so many lives in vain, radical domestic demands may soon produce a more radical governing process.

It is quite possible, in other words, that Iranian nationalism will assume a direction that is perceived as far more anti-western and anti-American than in these days of formal leadership by Prime Minister Bazargan. In that event, a destabilisation scenario of some kind, perhaps by aiding and abetting the secessionist potential among the minority peoples in Iran, will become almost irresistible for Washington policymakers. The intent will be to appear to accommodate, but in reality to work to weaken and discredit an anti-western regime, thereby setting the stage for its replacement by a military coup that can act 'decisively' to restore order and a pro-western foreign policy. Despite claims to the contrary, there is currently present in the Carter Administration 'a Mayaguez mood' — an inclination to demonstrate a willingness to uphold imperial claims by military means. This is clearly indicated in Washington's response to the recent strife in Yemen. Also the Democratic administration in Washington feels vulnerable to attacks from the Republican Party. Kissinger has already implied that Carter's administration lost Iran by its equivocal support for the Shah and its foolish call for human rights and liberalisation. As with other political debates, the American controversy on Iran is carried on within a centre right frame involving tactics and responsibility rather than goals.

Everything points, then, to a critical, unresolved struggle in the coming years for control over the Gulf area, centring on competing efforts to limit or reverse the victory of the Iranian people. Years ago Dean Acheson, himself an imperial architect, wrote revealingly:

In the long history of this region, once thought to be the cradle of the human race, perhaps the most prolific causes of conflict, controversy, and unrest were the discovery and development in the Persian Gulf area of immense oil deposits and the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, to use the historic words of the Balfour Declaration.[14]

Despite the gradual shift in imperial responsibilities from London to Washington, oil and the Palestinian issue more than ever underlie the main international sources and stakes of the various conflicts in the region, and guarantee that the indigenous peoples will not be left alone to work out their national destinies. As they struggle to achieve their national revolutions, they must vigilantly expect to fight on two fronts — against local reactionary forces and against various forms of imperialist intervention.

REFERENCES

I would like to thank Eqbal Ahmad and John Cavanaugh for helpful editorial and substantive suggestions.

- 1 Letter to Editor, *New York Times* (20 December, 1978), p. A26.
- 2 See Robert Engler, *The brotherhood of oil* (University of Chicago Press, 1977); see also John M. Blair, *The control of oil* (New York, Pantheon, 1976).
- 3 Quoted *Christian Science Monitor* (13 September, 1978), p. 12.
- 4 'Access to oil — the United States relationship with Saudi Arabia and Iran', Staff Study, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (December 1977), p. 111.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- 6 Leslie M. Pryor, 'Arms and the Shah', *Foreign Policy* (31: 56-71).
- 7 Senate Report, op. cit., p. 84.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 84.
- 9 Oriana Fallaci, *Interview with history* (New York, Liveright, 1976), p. 279; emphasis added.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 280.
- 11 'The world according to Brzezinski'. Interview by James Reston, *New York Times Magazine* (31 December, 1978), pp. 9-11, 26-7.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 14 For above discussion see: Richard Halloran, 'US aides say US will defend oil interests', *New York Times* (26 February, 1979), p. A12; 'How far will US go to protect Mideast oil?', *US News and World Report* (12 March, 1979), p. 24; Daniel Southerland, "'Strike force" for Mideast oil', *Christian Science Monitor* (23 February, 1979), p. 7; Drew Middleton, 'The Mideast power balance and Brown's tour of area', *New York Times* (13 February, 1979), p. A10.
- 14 Dean Acheson, *Present at the creation* (New York, Norton, 1969), p. 645.

*For Monthly Review on its
30th Birthday*

*Congratulations! You have
blazed a trail for others to
follow. Thanks.*

Race & Class

RACE & CLASS

A JOURNAL
FOR BLACK AND
THIRD WORLD
LIBERATION

Race & Class is an anti-racist, anti-imperialist quarterly covering black struggles in metropolitan countries, migrant workers' struggles in Europe and liberation struggles in the Third World. Recent issues included: *Orlando Letelier* on Chile, *John Berger* on peasant experience, *Malcolm Caldwell* on South east Asian conflict, *Basil Davidson* on Angola, *Eqbal Ahmad* on Tunisia, *Noam Chomsky* on Vietnam, *Michael Klare* on US naval strategy, *Fred Halliday* on mercenaries and counter-insurgency, *E.P. Thompson* on state secrecy, *John Saul* on class and tribe in Africa, *A. Sivanandan* on racism and the state, *Gail Omvedt* on the politics of starvation, *David Edgar* on fascism in Britain, *Amrit Wilson* on Asian women. Recent articles have examined science and imperialism, socio-biology, class struggles in Ethiopia, Sudan and the Gulf states, women in China and Cuba, state formations in Latin America, racism in popular fiction.

QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE INSTITUTE OF RACE
RELATIONS AND THE TRANSNATIONAL INSTITUTE

Race & Class is available to individuals on subscription at £5.50/\$12 per annum (£8/\$20 to institutions). Subscriptions can be entered at any point in the volume. Send cash with order, cheques made payable to 'The Institute of Race Relations', 247 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9NG, UK.

Name

Address

..... Zip Code

Iranian people v. US news media: a case of libel

Racism is like libel. Both involve untruths that cause injury and both are difficult to prove. To bring a successful libel action, the plaintiff must prove that a libel has been done, that it has caused injury and, most important, that the motive for the libel was malice. The first two requirements usually can be met. It is on the shoals of the third condition, that of proving what is hidden in the heart that most libel actions flounder. So it is with charges of racism. And when racism is inherent in the libel in question, the problem of proving malicious intent becomes almost insurmountable for, unlike typical malice, racism may and often does involve the subconscious.

Be that as it may, if justice ever is to be served, there should appear some day on some court docket the case title: 'Iranian people v. US news media: a libel action'. It is clear that the American press has done a great harm to a people locked in a revolutionary struggle that has cost upwards of 20,000 lives and which has presented to the world a model of non-violent mass resistance to tyranny. In its coverage of the revolt in Iran, the US news media at best have been guilty of ethnocentrism and, at worst, have been guilty of racism. But this harsh verdict jumps ahead of the case to be made; first, the evidence.

Before the revolution began in early 1978, few Americans would have been able to pass even the simplest quiz about Iran. Many vaguely knew, certainly, that the country was important because of its oil, and that it was located somewhere in the Middle East (although at the same time many mistook it for an Arab nation).

WILLIAM A. DORMAN is Head of the Journalism Department, California State University at Sacramento.

Race & Class, XXI, 1(1979)

Many Americans also knew of the Shah, but probably more for his lavish life style than for his tyranny. Some Americans even knew that he ruled with an 'iron hand', to use a favourite media phrase, because of the tireless publicity efforts of groups such as Amnesty International. But beyond a rudimentary and decidedly inaccurate sense of the place, Iran remained more mystery than anything else. Many blanks were left to be filled in about the country, and as the revolution gained momentum, the media set about the task.

Public ignorance and indifference, of course, prepare an astonishingly fertile field for the planting of myths, and so it was in the case of Iran. In the early stages of the revolution Americans were urgently and persistently informed that Iranian unrest was wholly the result of religious fanaticism and leftist trouble-making. These themes were hammered home in wire service coverage, dispatches appearing in the major dailies, and on television screens. Indeed, in a year-long study of hundreds of press clippings, we could find no mainstream news medium that viewed events in Iran from even a slightly different perspective.*

This analysis from the *Los Angeles Times* (12 September 1978) captures the tone and content of press coverage of the crisis:

The turbulence sweeping Iran dates back to 1963 when Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi began an ambitious program of reforms. These were designed to put *social developments* of the oil-rich country on an equal footing with industrial production. The cornerstone of the program, which was described as a 'white revolution', was land reform, but it also promoted women's suffrage, a revolutionary step in a predominantly Moslem country [emphasis added].

Echoing and enlarging on these themes, a dispatch by Jay Ross of the *Washington Post* (12 November 1978) informed its readers that the protests were aimed at overthrowing 'the shah — the man who had provided land, much of it his own, to his people, unshackled women and was portrayed by many, including himself, as the great modernizer of a backward land'. And in practically every Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI) wire dispatch on the crisis a reader could find a variation of this standard paragraph: 'Moslems of the dominant Shiite sect are opposed to the Shah's efforts to modernize this traditional Islamic society by granting more freedom to women and redistributing church lands' (AP, 30 October 1978). Monthly news magazines, as might be expected, merely offered more of the same.

Readers were bludgeoned daily by headlines such as these: 'Iranian

*Dorman, William A. and Eshan Omeed (Mansour Farhang), 'Reporting Iran the Shah's Way', *Columbia Journalism Review* (January-February 1979).

mobs riot', 'Anti-Shah rampage: Iran ablaze with riots', 'Chanting mob packs streets of Tehran', and '14 die in Iranian riots opposing modernization plan'. It is little wonder that not a few Americans came to believe that the bloody wogs, as it were, had run amok. The conflict came to be seen as having no legitimate *political* basis. Rather, it was portrayed as a struggle between a hard-nosed ruler and his stubborn and backward people who were unreasonably resisting his attempts to pull them, kicking and salaaming, into the modern world. In almost a wistful fashion, the *Christian Science Monitor* saw the crisis this way:

The Shah of Iran is learning a bitter but self-evident lesson. In his impatient rush to lift the nation out of age-old feudal backwardness he has failed to bring the people of Iran along with him. His goals are commendable but difficult of achievement without the support of a substantial portion of the population (editorial, 7 November 1978).

The *Monitor's* editorial writer thus sounds the recurring theme repeated by editors throughout the country: the Shah's goals have merit but his methods could stand improvement. It was not the substance of the man that was lacking, the pundits seemed to say, but the man's style. The *Monitor* editorial continued in but a slightly different vein:

Even while liberalization would address the demands of some of his critics, however, it would not deal with the largest segment of his opposition. These are the Islamic fundamentalists who so strongly resist the social change which such swift modernization of the country is forcing.

Even in criticising the Shah's methods, though, American journalists could not bring themselves to engage in more than wrist-slapping. The Shah was variously described as 'autocratic', 'stern willed', 'iron fisted' and 'determined'. Absent were adjectives such as 'tyrannical', 'brutal', or 'despotic', and in our year-long study of the mainstream media we could not find a single use of the term 'dictator'. On balance, therefore, the Shah was presented as a reasonable man who, at times, had used unreasonable methods. By contrast, opposition forces were portrayed as totally unreasonable. They were pictured as being anti-women, anti-democratic, anti-modernisation and, generally speaking, in a state of future shock.

The lead paragraph of a front page article in the *Christian Science Monitor* (29 November 1978) is a case in point:

The recent horror of Jonestown, Guyana, the upheaval in Iran using Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini as its symbol, and the crowds milling before the latest wall posters in Peking can be better

understood if they are seen against a common background — or within the common framework of this stage in the ongoing history of mankind on this planet.

In the next sentence, the writer implies that the revolution in Iran resulted from Iranian inability to cope with 'breathtaking change'. How the writer could compare the Rev. Jim Jones to Khomeini and suggest that resistance to 30 years or more of political and economic brutality can be seen as an inability to cope with the modern world says more about him than it does about the Iranian people.

The press's clear implication that opposition forces were religious reactionaries did not stop at the question of a difference in values. An even narrower motive was claimed by the repeated charge that religious leaders opposed the white revolution because its land reform aspects had resulted in the confiscation of mosque lands. A UPI dispatch (30 December 1978) is typical:

Chief among his [the shah's] foes is Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, 78, leader of the Moslem Shiite sect which violently opposes his reforms, and particularly his efforts to liberate the women of his country. Almost as much it resents his program of taking land from wealthy religious leaders and handing it over to the peasants [emphasis added].

As if a concerted attack on the religious nature of the opposition were not enough, the American news media readily accepted the Shah's contention that while Islam may be the body of the revolt, marxism was its head. *Newsweek* reported (22 May 1978) that: 'The Shah's troops advanced steadily and the demonstrators — an unlikely coalition of "Muslim" fundamentalists and leftist activists — scattered in panic.' The Shah's phrase, 'Islamic-marxists', was used throughout much of the coverage of the first nine months of the uprising, rarely with a qualifying comment to the effect that the claim probably was nonsense. *Newsweek* (1 December 1978), in its insider-type *Periscope* column, breathlessly announced that French intelligence sources had identified the closest person to Khomeini as a Syrian national with 'Communist links and a background of intrigue.' The mysterious Syrian', *Newsweek* advised its readers, 'is Sadegh Ghotzbadeh, alias Asfahani...intelligence sources say that Ghotzbadeh has direct connections with the heads of the Communist Party in France and Italy, and that he also works with the Libyan Secret Service.' Despite a number of protests to the magazine's editor that Ghotzbadeh is neither a Syrian (he is Iranian) nor a communist (he is a 'Muslim'), *Newsweek* refused to retract its 'scoop'.

The Iranian resistance movement, as a result of all this, has found itself denied legitimacy in the American press on two fronts. Those Americans sophisticated enough to recognise that the revolution was

not marxist were left to worry about what religious fanaticism might do to the country. Those not alarmed by the religious dimension, in turn, could find plenty to fret over in the communist menace.

The historical facts of the Iranian revolution are dealt with elsewhere in this issue of *Race & Class*. Suffice it to say here that these facts did not appear in the American news media. What can be advanced in this particular essay are some tentative conclusions about causes and effects of the media's performance until the Shah departed in January 1979.

One factor that has not received much attention, however, is the effect that virulent ethnocentrism (which in its advanced form becomes racism) combined with cold war ideology can have on coverage of the Third World. This ethnocentrism has led American journalists, in my view, to accept the Shah's characterisation of his foes more readily than one might expect, particularly on the heels of the Vietnam war. In turn, the media in their coverage have appealed to and triggered the ethnocentrism and racism of the American public. The near hysterical reaction to the minimal property damage and maximum street theatre of the January Beverley Hills demonstrations by Iranian students is only one example that this might be the case.

The ethnocentrism of the press can most clearly be seen in its treatment of the religious nature of the opposition. 'The black-robed mullahs want to roll back reforms that have permitted women to attend universities and even to give up the veil', proclaimed *Newsweek* (22 May 1978). Apart from the fact that women's rights have not been at issue in the Iranian revolution, the question arises of whether American reporters would describe Catholic priests in their everyday vestments as 'black robed'. The detail, however seemingly insignificant, that reporters choose to include in their news stories has a cumulative effect on readers. The use of nuance to 'shade' a story, in fact, may have a greater impact on the minds of readers than openly declarative phrasing. Novelists know and use indirection in their work to achieve mood and develop character; journalists, on the other hand, seem to believe that their professionalism and commitment to objectivity keep 'shading' to a minimum. Why then do reporters persist in describing the Ayatollah Khomeini as 'bearded' or 'turbanned' or 'sitting cross-legged', as if these details had great bearing on what the man thinks or on what his goals may be?

Another instance of 'Life among the natives' reporting is the press's preoccupation with the *chador*. Readers have been advised repeatedly that a major revolutionary motive in Iran is a mandatory dress code for women. The fact that many Iranian women who are non-practising 'Muslims' took to wearing the veil as a symbol of political protest did not occur to western reporters until December 1978, or eleven months after the revolt had begun. There also is considerable irony in the American reporters' paternalistic concern

for the rights of Iranian women. Sigma Delta Chi, the national professional society of American journalists, did not admit women to membership until the early 1970s, after a long and bitter struggle.

Repeated reference to black robes, beards, veils, turbans and the supposedly exotic religious etiquette of Islam may, on the surface, appear to be harmless enough. But when these words are linked to code phrases such as 'religious fanatic' or 'clerical fascists', the results are considerably more serious. An editorial in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (10 November 1978), for example, concluded that:

It would be hard to convince us that any modern state as large and economically advanced as Iran could conceivably be ruled successfully or for long by the kind of fanatic priesthood that Khomeini symbolizes.

The writer based his conclusion on the fact that Flora Lewis, foreign correspondent for the *New York Times*, was asked to remove her shoes, to cover her head and to sit on the floor with Khomeini while interviewing him. One can only wonder whether the editorial writer would be similarly incensed at the sight of someone kissing the Papal ring.

In our study of the mainstream press, we could find only three attempts at examining Islam in depth, and only one of these dealt at any length with Shi'a Islam, to which an overwhelming majority of Iranians belong. The general tone of these articles is summed up by this headline in the *Wall Street Journal* (15 August 1978):

Islamic conservatives, increasingly militant, stir worries in West — reaction to modern ways, push for more moralism lead to wave of violence: is Shah too liberal?

Aside from occasional derogatory and brief references, the US press did not discover Khomeini and his importance to the movement until November of 1978, eleven months after the revolution had begun. The first interview with him was published in *Newsweek* on 6 November. It consisted of six questions together with brief responses from the religious figure. Once discovered, however, Khomeini became a target. Political cartoonists, for example, took aim with a vengeance. A two-panel drawing by MacNelly of the *Richmond News Leader* and syndicated by the *Chicago Tribune* (20 January 1979) showed an Iranian, with bottle in one hand and glass in the other, toasting Khomeini as he passed in the street, followed by two menacing bodyguards. The toast:

To Khomeini! Returned from exile to deliver us from the wretched repression of the hateful SHAH!

The second panel shows the imbibing celebrant with a dismayed look, as Khomeini says to his henchmen: 'Lop off his hand and sew

his lips together — it is written.’

The press’s preconceptions about non-Christian religions in general and Islam in particular made journalists an easy mark for the Shah’s propagandists. For example, the news media almost without question accepted the regime’s contentions about the Abadan theatre fire in which 377 Iranians died. Always ready to suspect the worst of the Shi’ites, an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* (3 November 1978) stated unequivocally:

The nation has been wracked by months of escalating demonstrations and riots, *with religious fanatics burning a theatre with its audience locked inside ...* [emphasis added]

This charge was repeated throughout the US media, despite evidence to the contrary, and the firm belief of most Iranians that the fire was set by the SAVAK.

The damage done to American perceptions by eleven months of shallow, often vicious, ethnocentrism is in itself a serious matter; it becomes even more so when a racist dimension is added. Where ethnocentrism leaves off and racism begins is a matter for debate, but in the context of this essay the dividing line is drawn on the distinction between accomplishment and capacity to accomplish. Ethnocentrism fosters the belief that one culture has achieved more than another, and, therefore, is superior. This attitude does not necessarily deny the possibility of the second culture ‘catching up’. Racism, on the other hand, depends on a view that another people do not have the *capacity* for sophisticated or ‘civilised’ or, in this essay’s context, modern political accomplishment. Therefore, the culture in question is considered *inherently* inferior. In the United States most people have come to associate racism with the colour hierarchy, in itself an ethnocentric view. Using this standard, they would be hard pressed to understand how their attitudes towards the Iranian revolution could be considered racist, in so far as the Iranian people come close to meeting the Anglo standard of ‘whiteness’. Of course, racism can be based on any perceived ‘otherness’, if the perception of ‘differentness’ is pronounced enough, and if a judgement of capacity is involved.

It is the idea of the capacity of the Iranian people that has been most severely damaged by the press. The American public has been encouraged to doubt whether the Iranian people are authentically interested in freedom or whether they are capable of achieving political stability in the absence of a dictator and/or foreign influence. To the extent that this has been the case, the media are guilty of racism.

By portraying the Iranian people as backward and shackled by religious superstition, the news media have erected a racist barrier between the revolutionary aspirations of Iranians and the sympathies

of Americans. A striking example of how this has been accomplished is the way news media treated the Iranian holy month of Muharram, ignoring its profound political and moral significance and portraying it as the month of collective 'Muslim' indulgence in masochism. In the choice of words and emphasis, the coverage can be compared to the prose style of Rudyard Kipling. This excerpt from *Time* (18 December 1978) sets the tone:

These days marked the climax of the holy month of Muharram, on which Iran's devout Shi'ite Muslims traditionally take to the streets in a *frenzy of reproach and self-flagellation* to mourn the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Husain ...

The story went on to describe Khomeini as a 'fanatic fundamentalist'. A picture of *chador*-clad women accompanied the article and had as its caption: 'Women in Tehran *wail* for youths slain in anti-shah clashes.' On 25 December, *Time* followed up with this account: 'By tradition, the faithful demonstrate their sorrow over the slaying of Husain ... by flagellating themselves with chains.'

A UPI dispatch of 2 December matches *Time's* fascination with supposed Shi'ite ritual, referring to self-flagellation no fewer than three times in the relatively short story. Not to be outdone, *Newsweek* (18 December 1978) ran a colour picture of a small group of young men engaged in self-flagellation; the caption read:

Frenzy: flagellation ceremony last year.

In fact, self-flagellation in Iran is practised by a microscopic minority of the population; the practice is discouraged by many religious leaders, and some have argued that it is not rooted in Islam, but was imported to Iran from the West. None of this background found its way into the news stories. It is as if French reporters were to observe a Pentecostal snake-handling ceremony in the American south and then to conclude that such behaviour characterised typical American Christianity. More importantly, there was scarcely a mention of the fact that for the Muslim people throughout the world the month of Muharram symbolises Islam's injunction against and the believers' obligation to resist tyranny and illegitimate government. It commemorates the martyrdom which the grandsons of Prophet Mohammed — the Imams Husain and Hasan and their entire families — suffered for their refusal to give the oath of allegiance to Yazid, an illegitimate tyrant. Nor was there any suggestion in the media that to most Iranians the Shah has come to personify Yazid — the Muslim world's most hated symbol of political and social evil.

The use of phrases such as 'savage rioting', 'frenzied mobs', 'anti-shah diatribes', and 'fanatical opponents', cannot help but construct a racist vision in American minds that robs the Iranian revolutionaries of the dignity that courage against tyranny usually

earns. It is always difficult to prove empirically the effects of mass media. Nevertheless, one can test the waters vis-à-vis Iran simply by advancing in polite company the notion that Khomeini is a revolutionary leader to be admired, or that Iran's revolution represents a progressive step for the country. A working-class neighbour and friend of mine, who I believe is a decent sort of a human being, voiced this question in an exchange we had recently: 'What the hell is the matter with those rag-heads, anyway?' In only a slightly more sophisticated vein, another friend, who is university educated, wondered how I could be interested in Iran, given the fact that 'those religious fanatics are only interested in suppressing women'. The Letters Pages of most newspapers I have seen echo these sentiments. Most of my friends, I might add, are not Persian studies scholars; their information on Iran comes from the news media.

In many ways, of course, the US press has performed no differently towards the Iranian revolution than it had during most of the cold war. The press enthusiastically followed the lead of the foreign policy establishment in reporting Cuba, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam and Chile, to name but a few American adventures since the Second World War. However, Iran differs from these examples in that opposition to the Shah has been discredited more on cultural and racial grounds than on those of ideology. Obviously, the narrow interests of the US corporate-state were served by the Shah, while his opposition does not promise an equally profitable arrangement. But even more important, the opposition's ideology grew from the native values of Iran, thereby adding cultural insult to material injury. Judging from an intensive study of coverage of the uprising, this combination proved too much for the sensibilities of journalists and their publishers.

In retrospect, it seems reasonable to assume that either the Pahlavi regime's strategists or the Shah's American advisers, very early in the game, realised that the rationale of 'fighting communism' would not completely fool the nominally liberal, nominally anti-imperialist element of US society which was created in large part by the long and costly American involvement in Vietnam. Something more was needed. The 'something more' has proved to be a campaign to convince Americans that the Shah's foes did not deserve their support. The media, blinded by its own ethnocentrism and inextricably locked to the national interest, has gone along with the strategy.

As a result reporters did not bother to investigate the regime's claims about the success of the white revolution. They uncritically repeated the Shah's claims about land reform, the emancipation of women and the anti-democratic nature of his opposition. It is as if reporters covering civil rights in the American south, circa 1960, had gone to Sheriff Bull Connor or Governor George Wallace and asked the pair to characterise the motives of Martin Luther King, accepting

what they had to say without question. Given the foundation of distortion and stereotypes laid by the news columns, it was not surprising to see editorial writers across the country viewing the Shah's January departure 'with great alarm'. Repeatedly, editorials and opinion columns from New York to Los Angeles echoed the sentiments contained in this Gary Wills' column:

By contrast, the shah is a bad bargain in a lot with few (if any) better who can succeed, and with many worse who are likely to prevail. Perhaps we can not save him; but it would do no one — us or the Iranians — any good to sink him now (28 November 1978).

In its least damaging form, press coverage of Iran's revolt has created doubt and confusion among liberal elements in the US, those elements that usually can be counted on to speak out and organise. In its most damaging form, coverage has effectively denied the Iranian people any sympathy or support at all.

NOW AVAILABLE!

Essays on The Social Relations of

Work & Labor

A Special Double Issue of The Insurgent Sociologist

Contributors include:

ARONOWITZ
EDWARDS
FONER
MOBERG
NYDEN
PECK
STRASSER

Topics include:

*Labor, Technology
and Social Relations*
Black Labor in the 1970's
Quality of Work
Rank and File Movements
Women: Home Economics and
The Labor Movement

SUBSCRIPTION BONUS

With each new sustaining subscription you can receive a free copy of G. William Domhoff's *New Directions in Power Structure Research* (Vol. V No. III, Spring 1975) while the supply lasts.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

Work & Labor issue _____
(\$5.00 plus .50 postage & handling)
Sustaining Subscription _____
(\$10.00)

Send me a copy of the Domhoff reader with my sustaining subscription _____

The Insurgent Sociologist
Department of Sociology
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon 97403

\$6.00 low income
\$10.00 sustaining
\$14.00 institutional
\$3.00 back issues

Orientalism at the service of imperialism

A review article of Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, and New York, Pantheon Books, 1978)

In this brilliant and bold book, Edward Said criticises cultural imperialism and contributes in a major way to the process of decolonisation. Its appearance provides an appropriate occasion to discuss the nature of western scholarship on the Orient, especially the Muslim East, since the eighteenth century, and to analyse the interaction between American hegemony and western scholarship on the Third World. Finally, it offers a timely chance to survey, however briefly, contributions of western liberal scholarship to our understanding of contemporary Iran.

Adopting, and refining, Antonio Gramsci's idea of hegemonic culture* and Michel Foucault's notion of discourse†, Said argues that Orientalism is more than a field of study in the western world. In his view it is a 'corporate institution' (p. 13) encompassing a set of generalisations, structures, relationships, texts, the whole forming a

STUART SCHAAR is Associate Professor of History at the Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. He will contribute a second review article in a forthcoming issue of *Race & Class* entitled 'Orientalism and the tradition of insurrection in the contemporary Muslim world'.

*The ideas received by the ruling classes and transmitted through control of the media, education, religious institutions etc.

†A tradition, produced by an accumulation of texts backed up by expertise, authority, institutions, etc., which carries sufficient weight to define the substance of new texts so that individual creativity may contribute to the formation of the texts, but is not responsible for them.

Race & Class, XXI, 1 (1979)

'discourse', which defines the Orient and Orientals for the West. The function of Orientalism is '...to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even incorporate, what is a manifestly different world'. (p. 12)

THE ORIENTALIST DISCOURSE

By the nineteenth century, Orientalist discourse had become set, and its stereotypes disseminated throughout western culture: Orientalists had developed a consensus. Since this consensus was congruent with the interests of those in power, Orientalist ideas freely permeated aesthetic, economic, historical and political texts. Orientalism became an integral part of western culture.

Already, by the eighteenth century, certain Orientalists like Abraham-Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron and Sir William Jones had captured contemporary imagination by introducing an exotic new world — the Orient — to the West. The eccentric Anquetil translated into French *Avesta* texts (the sacred books of Persian Zoroastrianism) and the *Upanishads* (Hindu Vedic treatises on the nature of man and the universe). His translations jolted old beliefs and revealed to Europe the existence of ancient cosmogonical traditions beyond the Mediterranean basin. Their existence forced the questioning of the Bible's uniqueness and set in motion modern biblical criticism culminating in secular interpretations of religious texts. Jones, on the other hand, was a legal scholar. He founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784, and also worked as an official of the British East India Company; he felt absolutely no conflict of interest in serving imperialism and set the pattern which later Orientalists and area studies experts emulated. 'Whereas Anquetil opened large vistas,' Said writes, 'Jones closed them down, codifying, tabulating, comparing.' (p. 77)

The British in India and Napoleon in Egypt, recognising the potential in employing Orientalists like Jones for their empire-building, linked the Orientalist intellectual tradition with outright political domination. Napoleon, after gaining his knowledge of the Orient from careful reading of Orientalist texts, set out to conquer the East in 1798. He took with him a score of scholars whose product, 23 fat volumes of Egyptology, was meant to

... restore a region from its present barbarism to its former classical greatness; to instruct (for its own benefit) the Orient in the ways of the modern West; to subordinate or underplay military power in order to aggrandize the project of glorious knowledge acquired in the process of political domination of the Orient; to formulate the Orient, to give it shape, identity, definition with full recognition of

its place in memory, its importance to imperial strategy, and its 'natural' role as an appendage to Europe; to dignify all the knowledge collected during colonial occupation with the title 'contribution to modern learning' when the natives had neither been consulted nor treated as anything except as pretexts for a text whose usefulness was not to the natives; to feel oneself as a European in command, almost at will, of Oriental history, time, and geography; to institute new areas of specialization; to establish new disciplines; to divide, deploy, schematize, tabulate, index, and record everything in sight (and out of sight); to make out of every observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom, or type; and, above all, to transmute living reality into the stuff of texts, to possess (or think one possesses) actuality mainly because nothing in the Orient seems to resist one's powers ... (p.86)

Following the model set by Jones and Napoleon's academicians, nineteenth-century Orientalists translated and anthologised texts; compiled dictionaries and encyclopaedias, and developed the field of philology. They compartmentalised knowledge in order to dominate it. They also modernised their fields by secularising their studies, revising their methodology in keeping with new scientific rigour, and restructuring their thought on a new rational basis (p. 122). Silvestre de Sacy and Ernest Renan from France and Edward William Lane of Britain were the most influential of the nineteenth-century Orientalists. Said reviews and assesses their contributions.

Their work made Orientalism effective and congruent with the interests and political concerns of imperialist-oriented rulers. Old stereotypes were retained, but the updating and systematisation of data and analysis enhanced the authority of Orientalist analysis which posited eastern inferiority, western superiority, eastern decadence, western vibrance, etc. In such ways, Orientalism revived, restructured and made more timely, helped prepare the way for further imperial control of the East. Simultaneously Orientalist discourse permeated western culture, providing themes, stereotypes and even texts for figures such as Flaubert, de Nerval, Lamartine, T.E. Lawrence, Burton and Chateaubriand.

US IMPERIALISM AND THE NEW SCHOOLS OF ORIENTALISM

By 1918 cracks had begun to appear in the structures which supported Orientalism: after the war the victorious English and French faced major crises at home and abroad. The legacy of war, the Bolshevik revolution and the rise of fascism, began to shake confidence in capitalism and bourgeois democracy. Cultural and

economic crises further reduced European smugness concerning their received traditions, institutions, values and mores. Orientalism, as part of the hegemonic culture, was on trial. Widespread colonial revolts, from Tunisia to India, added significantly to the indictment. And though England and France took control of the 'fertile crescent', their new mandates provoked immediate resistance. North of the crescent, the Turks ejected their would-be conquerors. Mass demonstrations in Persia in favour of constitutionalism had prevented the British from establishing a protectorate there, so they turned instead to Reza Khan and helped him consolidate his power and do their bidding. But even the pawn could not be controlled, since British power looked weak from the Persian plateau. Consequently Reza Khan tried to ally Persia with fascist Germany whose ideology closely resembled his own. By 1941 the British sent him packing, but it was already clear that nationalism could threaten imperialism.

These triple strains (expansion of the imperial system, widespread colonial revolts and internal crisis) deeply marked Orientalism in the inter-war period. In the 1920s England and France needed added trained Orientalists to serve in their new Middle East mandates: two of the best of such scholars were the Frenchman Louis Massignon (d. 1962) and the Englishman Sir Hamilton A.R. Gibb (d. 1971) whose careers were rooted in ambivalence and doubts about their own culture. This produced a degree of humility in them which their predecessors lacked, and made it possible for them to approach the 'Islamicate' humanely, with openness. Yet the inherited weight of Orientalism, which shaped them fundamentally, twisted their perceptions. Although the inter-war years produced startling cultural transformations in other fields of knowledge, Orientalism, feeling the simultaneous strains of expansion and decline, remained wedded to its stodginess and insularity.

Said chose well in singling out Massignon and Gibb to illustrate transformations in Orientalism before and after the Second World War. Their lives reflected two major poles of change — decolonisation and the rise of the American empire[1] — that marked the period. After 1945 European Orientalism declined since, without formal empire, the Orientalist had little except the scholarly function. The shift was therefore to the new US imperium. Massignon and Gibb responded differently to colonialism and decolonisation, but both contributed to shaping the new directions of change. Gibb moved to the United States and helped organise the institutional basis of US cultural imperialism, while Massignon, the maverick, joined the struggle for decolonisation and set the stage for the development of revisionism* in French Islamic studies.

*The word revisionism is here used in the sense to which it is applied to the revisionist historians of the cold war, such as Kolko and Alperovitz, who sought to redress traditional right-wing bias in American historiography.

Said is one of the rare critics to appreciate fully Massignon's genius and great literary talents. He also admits Massignon's crucial role in Orientalism and acknowledges his seminal connection to the 'French Islamology' revisionist schools represented in the work of Jacques Berque, Maxime Rodinson, Yves Lacoste and Roger Arnaldez (pp. 265-66). But Said stops there, without assessing the long-term significance of Massignon's impact on revisionism.

Massignon, as a convert from atheism to mystical Catholicism, and as a talented poet, brought to his studies and activism the zeal of a convert and the romantic idealism of a poetical mystic. They totally coloured his perceptions of the Islamicate and especially his views of his hero, Mansur al-Hallaj (d. A.D.922), the sufi (mystic) martyr on whom he reflected all of his life.

There was also another side to Massignon which Said recognises, but does not fully explore. In his later years, Massignon became an outspoken critic of French colonialism. His gradual political awakening began when he established close contacts with Algerian migrant workers whom he taught in special courses, beginning in the late 1920s and 1930s. These contacts and his intense asceticism raised his social consciousness. Increasingly, he supported anti-colonial causes (such as the rights of Palestinian, Madagascan and North African nationalism, etc.) and militated for social justice. Christian non-violence led him to stage recurrent fasts in order to protest French colonial policy and violence. He wrote polemics in the popular press; on a few occasions, when he spoke in favour of Algerian independence or participated in demonstrations, the police or *pieds noirs* pummelled him.

Said questions his motives (p. 270): they were deeply religious, archaic, pro-Semitic, anti-Aryan and moral, rather than political. Therefore his understanding of events rarely coincided with the analysis of those on whose behalf he militated. But, unquestionably, he hated injustice, could not be corrupted and disdained politicians, imperial administrators and scholars who treated people as objects and pawns.[2]

In a negative sense, he perpetuated Orientalism and its prejudices through the quality of his scholarship. He was so good at what he did that, even if one disagreed with his premises, the arguments and the discourse were original. His insights and the wide range of his concerns and knowledge, combined with his personal example of activism in a society where professors were supposed to stay ensconced in their ivory towers or else serve the state, contributed to revisionism in French scholarship about the Orient. And, by standing outside of the Orientalist institutional structures and condemning official apologists who ran them, Massignon demonstrated that they and their institutions could be bypassed or rendered irrelevant by those wishing to gain knowledge of the Orient.

Jacques Berque, one of the leaders of the French cultural decolonisation movement, whom Said praises, acknowledged his debt to Massignon in the 'Foreword' to his ground-breaking book, *The Arabs* (New York, 1964) in the following way

I could never have achieved this interpretation had I not enjoyed the benefit of that of the late Louis Massignon. That admirable *sheikh* would have recognised where I have followed him, or contradicted him, or both at once. In all these cases, I am completely in his debt. (p. 18)[3]

Said has not recognised the full significance of this revisionism. If he had drawn out of Gramsci's notion of hegemonic culture the rich consequences inherent in the concept, he might have left us with some hope for change. For Gramsci there was a dynamic relationship between culture, politics and mass organisation, and he believed that to overcome bourgeois cultural hegemony, the left had to create mass political institutions which would generate their own ideas and analysis.[4]

In the French school of revisionism, people like Berque, Vincent Monteil, Samir Amin and Abdallah Laroui, a combination of non-marxists, marxists, and *marxisants*, have developed their analysis within the framework of French and Third World educational and research institutions which have legitimised and encouraged their scholarship. As Gramsci might have predicted, the transformation in French educational institutions since at least May 1968, and the development of new research centres in Africa and the Middle East, coupled with the marked increase in the left's influence and base of support in France and some ex-French colonies has provided a fertile environment in which new schools of thought concerning the Middle East and North Africa have been able to develop and converge with innovating scholarship in sub-Saharan African, Latin American and Asian studies. The French government's quest for bilateral alliances with radical Muslim oil-producing states and their desire to demonstrate their independence of US analysis and policies, has probably made the French ruling classes amenable to the new trends. In such a setting, new ideas and analysis are emerging as alternatives to classical Orientalism.

Decolonisation and the growth of the left in western Europe is changing the nature of discourse about the Third World. Anglo-Saxon research and writing on the Middle East and North Africa has begun to reflect this new shift.[5] In the US some Middle East scholars have recently formed regional study groups organised as the American Middle East Studies Seminar (AMESS). They are concerned with (1) the involvement of professors in policy 'formulation and implementation'; (2) the sources of funding for Middle East Studies; (3) 'the structure, membership and ideological orientations of' the mainstream

professional organisation, the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA); and (4) the narrow ideological and methodological limits of the field.[6] In addition, *MERIP Reports*, *Review of Iranian political economy and history*, *Review of Middle East Studies* and the British journal *Khamsin* present alternative analysis of the culture and political economy of the Middle East and North Africa. Nevertheless, the mainstream of the American scholarly establishment has largely remained untouched by these developments.

MIDDLE EAST SOCIAL STUDIES

As the major post-war imperial power and the major source of neo-colonial control, the US had embarked on a crash programme to train area experts. These were supposed to service and rationalise the new empire and enable the US to compete favourably with the Soviet Union in the cold war. Funds for establishing area studies came from government agencies, foundations, universities, corporations and neo-colonial rulers who benefited from their connections with the US. America's needs were immediate, and the tradition was almost non-existent. But by importing European Orientalists, US Middle East social studies was stamped with the dogmas of Orientalism which Said has summarised as follows

- 1 [There is an] ... absolute and systematic difference between the the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, underdeveloped, inferior ...
- 2 abstractions about the Orient ... are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities ...
- 3 the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself; therefore it is assumed that a highly generalised and systematic vocabulary for describing the Orient from a Western standpoint is inevitable and even scientifically 'objective.'
- 4 ... the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared ... or to be controlled ... (pp. 300-301)

The 'old world' scholars moved to the new centre of Orientalism. Gibb came to Harvard to head the Center for Middle East Studies. Gustave Von Grunebaum helped establish the equivalent in Los Angeles. More recently, Bernard Lewis joined Princeton's Oriental Studies Program. Much of the US empire was informal, neo-colonial, in flux and therefore did not provide a stable base on which to build programmes; the new scholars were trained to deny the existence of the very empire that they served. Training proved to be superficial and most of the experts turned out to be only reflections of the shadows of the great Orientalists of the past. US Middle East area studies has had all the faults of classical Orientalism without any of

its strengths, i.e. depth, stability and language ability. Lacking the long traditions which developed under the French and British imperial systems, the methods, opinions and sources of funding of the new area specialists are unstable. As arrivistes, they lack consistency and clarity of purpose. Their lack of competency, which Binder, a past-president of MESA,* himself underlines[8] adds to their personal insecurity, which in turn reinforces their opportunism.

Many of them are rationalisers and justifiers of US government policies in the Middle East;[9] others cater to the neo-colonial clients of the US in Middle Eastern and North African states; in both cases they reap material rewards, and compete to sell themselves to the highest bidders.

US POLITICAL ANALYSIS ON IRAN

Iranian studies illustrates my point. Two of the best known experts who have written the basic works on contemporary Iran, Marvin Zonis of the University of Chicago and James A. Bill of the University of Texas, typify post-war Iranian studies in the US. Their work also reflects the broader trends in US Middle East Social studies. Despite their recognising, as trained students of Iranian politics, the regime's corruption and tyranny, they can still write of royalty in glowing terms. Zonis (1971):

... none of these interviews would have been carried out in the absence of official cooperation and royal assent. His Imperial Majesty, Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, Shahنشah, made that available with speed and kingly grace. His willingness to welcome foreign scholars is both courageous and laudable.[10]

Bill (1975):

... Empress Farah ... is a woman of deep intelligence and is genuinely concerned for her people. After a decade of championing humanitarian causes, the empress now addresses herself to the social and political problems of Iran. In 1970 she headed 26 different groups and organizations designed to solve social problems and to alleviate human suffering ... Unlike many members of the elite who are motivated solely by political opportunism and personal ambition, Empress Farah struggles to organize programs and policies that will benefit the Iranian people as a whole.[11]

*Of the search for new sources of funding — which raises important questions of control and influence over Middle East studies — Binder wrote bluntly '... temptations will be great for this is the way we make our living, build our empires, and serve our ego needs'. [7]

Both Bill and Zonis have also stressed the good state of the Iranian polity, economy and society under the Shah's regime. They have mostly hedged these statements with the general reminder that, of course, Iran faced major problems, but the assessment has nevertheless left a positive image about Iranian conditions under the Shah. Both displayed confidence in the Shah's commitment to 'meaningful change and reform', and sought to discredit or dismiss his critics. Bill, for example, wrote the following in 1974:

It would be a serious mistake to underestimate the importance and effect of the Shah-sponsored reforms. It is also a mistake to question the king's commitment and dedication to these programs. His own statements and activities clearly reveal that he is well aware of the challenges of modernization, and that he has decided to make a serious effort to confront that challenge.[12]

Likewise, Zonis reached similar conclusions a year later:

... the monarch's control over the internal situation is at its zenith. It is undoubtedly true that no Iranian ruler however exercised as much power or commanded as responsive a political system as does Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in 1974, 'urban guerillas' and censorious foreign critics notwithstanding... the genius of the shah and his political elite plus oil revenues and good fortune are responsible for the enviable present situation of the regime.[13]

The context in which these statements were written is important. Iranian opposition groups in the US had been organising for years against the Shah's regime to expose the Pahlavi's tyranny and corruption, influence western public opinion and weaken US support for the Shah's regime. They asked people to boycott the galas staged by the Shah to impress a gullible world; they opposed people lending their names and reputations on his behalf. Simple statements like the ones quoted above from Bill and Zonis undermined such campaigns, and contributed to the attempt in the US to discredit the Iranian opposition.

Both authors have condemned terrorism and external critics of the old regime without explaining that the armed struggle began in response to mass killings, arrests and torture. At best, they refer to the repression of 'terrorism', in tones that give their readers the impression that the Shah's police were doing a good job.[14] Nowhere in their work have they attempted to catalogue or document the systematic use of torture, or the role of SAVAK (the secret police) in kidnappings, torturing and killing. Likewise, though Bill goes as far as labelling Iran a client state of the US,[15] in line with realpolitik analysis, neither he nor Zonis systematically analyses the nature of Iranian dependency on the US and attempts to draw inferences. Sometime in late 1978, however, as the revolution appeared on the

verge of victory, Zonis became overtly critical of the Shah's regime, began praising the opposition and advocated the termination of US support for the Shah.

Zonis and Bill are worthy successors to an earlier generation of cold war US scholarship. Thus the same Professor Leonard Binder (see p. 74), in his 1964 book *Iran*,^[16] dealt with the monarchy critically and recognised some of its shortcomings. He nevertheless concluded his book with the following plea:

... one would like to look forward simply to the establishment of a government with which Iranians might identify themselves ... but I believe that there is more chance of achieving such a highly desirable end through the patient working of the present system than by violently overthrowing it ... It may not be encouraging for those who seek reform to hear that they ought to continue as they have, nor would I suggest that the present transitional system is the best for Iran or that corrupt government policies are the best.^[17]

Professor Binder was telling the Iranian people to be patient in the face of tyranny. Fifteen years passed under that so-called 'transitional regime'. By 1979 untold thousands had died, many had disappeared, were tortured and maimed, not as a result of revolution, but because of the Shah's police state policies.

Underlying Binder's analysis are a set of suppositions that distort history. He writes (pp. 61-2):

Here is a nation Iran that has not ruled itself in historical times, that has had an alien religion imposed upon it, that has twisted that religion in order to cheat its Arab tormenters, that can boast no military hero, that is beset by the superstitions of its dervishes, that has been deprived by its poets and mystics of all will to change its fate, a nation where no patriot is untainted by self-seeking, where every public figure is identified by the foreign power he is said to serve, and where no one speaks the truth.

His reference to Islam as an 'alien religion imposed upon' the Iranians may be in harmony with the Pahlavi dynasty's studied subversion of Islam, but in dismissing the Iranian people's most cherished heritage, it constitutes an assault on their culture. Likewise, Binder implies that Iranians have always been acted on and never have shaped their own destiny; this ahistorical statement thereby dismisses as unreal the Iranian opposition's constitutional movement which has developed since 1905. Similarly, Prime Minister Mossadegh's two-year regime (1951-3) holds no significance for Binder. As troublesome is his anti-Arab bias when he argues that the early Arab conquerors were 'tormentors' of the Persians. We know that in the complex relations between Persians and Arabs after the Muslim conquest of Iran (Khurasan), their interests often coincided and produced harmony.

Binder, however, has injected this anti-Arab bias into the distant past.

Another scholar of Iran is R. M. Savory, Professor at the University of Toronto. In recent years he has authored an *Encyclopaedia of Islam* article on Iranian history (1973)[18] as well as a 1972 assessment of Iran in the 1960s for MESA's *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES).[19] A critical examination of his scholarship will show, however, how he has misled readers by omitting crucial data. For example, the CIA's involvement in the events surrounding Mohammed Mossadegh's ousting as Prime Minister of Iran in 1953 is well known — witness the assessment made by E. A. Bayne, a former US official in Iran:

The Central Intelligence, well equipped with funds, entered the picture in earnest and a plot began to form with General Zahedi as its executive focus ... By mid-summer ... the Shah issued a *firman* dismissing Mossadegh, and appointed Zahedi as Premier. Mossadegh refused to accept the order, and Iran was momentarily without effective government authority. As much to dramatize the constitutional issue as to preserve the person of the monarch — there being no heir — the Shah was advised to leave the country, which he did.[20]

Yet, unbelievably, Savory has completely omitted any mention in his encyclopaedia article of the CIA's by then well-publicised and authenticated involvement in the planning for Mossadegh's overthrow and instead blamed the Tudeh (Iranian Communist) Party for provoking a general's coup. He wrote:

On 13 August the shah issued a *farman* dismissing Musaddik and appointing General Zahidi Prime Minister. Musaddik refused to take cognisance of the *farman*, and the shah temporarily left the country. On ... 19 August 1953 Zahidi suppressed the Tudeh mobs over which Musaddik no longer had any control, and succeeded in establishing himself in Tehran.[21]

And the editors of this, the leading Orientalist encyclopaedia (Van Donzal, Lewis, Pellat) are, in approving this article, implicated in such a major omission — if only by default.

In his 1972 IJMES article, after condemning Mossadegh for being a 'dictator' and a tool of the Tudeh Party, Savory wrote:

The Persian monarchy ... in 1953 successfully resisted a far more dangerous threat — subversion by totalitarian forces. The warmth and spontaneity of the Shah's welcome by the people when he returned to Iran on 22 August 1953 seems to have astonished many foreign observers and commentators, but should not have occasioned any surprise to the student of Persian history.[22]

And the editor of IJMES, Stanford Shaw, Professor of Ottoman history at the University of California (Los Angeles), not only published Savory's article, but also repeated its biases and claims. Shaw wrote:

Dr Savory describes how the opposition to the Shah today, led by a segment of the Persian intelligentsia, particularly Persian students outside the country, is based largely on the same romantic views of contemporary Iran which led Mohammed Mossadiq and others in the Iranian national movement to disrupt reform and so join the opposition led by the great landowners, the *ulama*, and others who successfully frustrated reform until the Shah himself took the lead in the famous 'white revolution'. Dr Savory points out how the Shah has gained the support of the mass of the people benefiting from his reforms, particularly the peasants, and also the army and the younger civil servants.[23]

Neither of them admitted to the heroic struggle of the *ulama* against the Shah's tyranny; instead they denigrated religious figures in the same way that Binder did in the quotation above. They also failed to mention the participation of the *bazaaris* in the long struggle that preceded the revolution. Neither did they mention in a positive way the abnegation of the Iranian left in leading an armed struggle against one of the world's most repressive regimes. Rather, Savory viewed their struggle as treason against the 'best of all possible rulers', the Shah of Iran.

OLD ORIENTALISM AND NEW DIRECTIONS

This necessarily brief review of American political analysis on Iran typifies the state of Middle Eastern area studies. In comparison to the old Orientalists like Massignon and Gibb, today's area experts have little substance and vision. There are exceptions, but they only prove the general rule. The old timers were products of a clearly-defined imperial age, replete with carefully-drawn structures, lines of authority and institutions. The new products of Third World area studies in North America live in an equally intense imperial age, but one with informal structures and insecure foundations, facing challenges and revolutionary pressures. Their insecurity, opportunism and shallowness reflects the condition of contemporary imperialism.

Edward Said has clarified how Orientalists and Middle East area experts have served the empire. It now remains for others working in Middle East studies who agree with his analysis and are distressed by the condition of the field, the 'discourse', the 'hegemonic culture', to pick up the challenge and do something about it. Said tells us that we need new ways of looking at the Middle East and he calls for the application of class analysis, comparative research and global

perspectives to all people living in differentiated states of change. He condemns the tendency to compartmentalise the Middle East as a world apart, in need of different categories of analysis than any other part of the world. One can only agree. There are buried treasures there for the progressive scholar, both north and south. For example, in one of his passing remarks (p. 279) Said suggests 'that the history of Islam might be more intelligible for its resistance, political and non-political, to colonialism'. Using that as an organising theme one would like to see in future issues of *Race & Class* some discussion on the insurrectionary tradition in modern Islam. The aim would be to examine dynamics *within* the Islamicate that once gave it strength, and may act as the basis for transformation in the future. Historical studies become increasingly important because progressive transformations, if they are to succeed, need to be congruent with inherited traditions. The progressive forces within Islam have always been there. The problem is to flush them out from behind the veil of Orientalist obscurity.

REFERENCES

- 1 See John Campbell, 'The Middle East: the burdens of empire', *Foreign Affairs* (vol. 57, no. 3, 1979), 613-32, for a rare admission by the former director of studies at the New York Council on Foreign Relations, of the existence and importance of the American empire.
- 2 See Vincent Monteil, 'Introduction', in Louis Massignon, *Parole donnée* (Paris, 1962), pp. 7-47.
- 3 Jacques Berque, *Dépossession du monde* (Paris, 1964).
- 4 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the prison notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York 1971), and Perry Anderson, *Considerations on western marxism* (London, 1976), pp. 30-32 and 45.
- 5 As indicators see Roger Owen, 'Studying Islamic history', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (IV, 2, Autumn, 1973), 287-90; Edmund Burke, III, 'Towards a history of the maghreb', *Middle East Studies* (vol. II, no. 3, October 1975), pp. 315-17; and Brian Turner, *Marx and the end of Orientalism* (London, 1979). Books by Talal Asad, Peter Gran, Mahmoud Hussein and Samir Radwan represent major revisionist contributions.
- 6 See AMESS, *New directions in Middle East studies newsletter* (vol. I, no. 1, Winter, 1978), p. 1.
- 7 Leonard Binder, 'Area studies: a critical reassessment', in *The Study of the Middle East: research and scholarship in the humanities and social sciences* (New York, 1976), p. 4.
- 8 *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.
- 9 *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.
- 10 Marvin Zonis, *The Political elite of Iran* (Princeton, 1971), p. ix.
- 11 James A. Bill, 'The patterns of elite politics in Iran', in George Lenczowski (ed.), *Political elites in the Middle East* (Washington, D.C., 1975), p. 24.
- 12 James A. Bill and Carl Leiden, *The Middle East: politics and power* (Boston, 1974), p. 143.

- 13 Marvin Zonis, 'The Political elite of Iran: a second stratum?' in Frank Tachau (ed.), *Political elites and political development in the Middle East* (New York, 1975), pp. 212-13.
- 14 Bill and Leiden, op. cit., p. 139 and Zonis in Tachau, p. 208.
- 15 Bill and Leiden, op. cit., p. 202.
- 16 Leonard Binder, *Iran: political development in a changing society* (Berkeley, 1962), pp. 61-2.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 349.
- 18 R. M. Savory, 'Iran: history', in E. Van Donzal, B. Lewis and Ch. Pellat (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New Edition, vol. IV, fasc. 61-62 (Leiden, 1973), pp. 33-43.
- 19 'The principle of homeostasis considered in relation to political events in Iran in the 1960s', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (IJMES) (vol. 3, 1972), 282-302.
- 20 E. A. Bayne, *Persian kingship in transition: conversations with a monarch whose office is traditional and whose goal is modernization* (N.Y., 1968), p. 161.
- 21 Savory, *Encyclopaedia*, p. 41.
- 22 Savory, *IJMES*, p. 286.
- 23 Stanford Shaw, *IJMES* (vol. 3, 1972), pp. 241-42.

Iran: Monarchy, Bureaucracy & Reform under the Qajars: 1858-1896

by Shaul Bakhash £8.50

Party politics in Egypt: the Wafd & its rivals 1919-38

by Marius Deeb £9.50

Tawfiq al Hakim - playwright of Egypt

by Richard Long £9.50

Mahkama! - studies in the Egyptian legal system

by Enid Hill £9.50

Gazelle Review of Literature on the Middle East

edited by Roger Hardy

No 6 - *a Special Issue on Iran & the Gulf with articles by Fred Halliday Nikki Keddie Maxime Rodinson etc plus a section on the French & North Africa* £1.80

Ithaca Press

13 Southwark Street

London SE1

Theses on the Iranian revolution*

Events in Iran have accelerated at a pace few could have expected since the imposition of martial law in September 1978. The Shah and his associates have been driven from power through a mass mobilisation that must rank amongst the most epic chapters of the international revolutionary movement in this century. At the same time, the fate of this Iranian revolution is by no means decided: with the decomposition of the coalition that defeated the Shah new contradictions, political, social and ethnic, are emerging in Iran. Indeed it is only now, once the Pahlavi dynasty has been removed, that the real questions concerning the future character of Iranian society are being openly posed.

First, a brief resumé of the events leading to the Shah's downfall. The martial law imposed in September 1978 proved unable to stem the popular opposition. Following the massacres in Tehran, especially Jaleh Square on 8 September, clashes between troops and the opposition continued, and on 5 November, under pressure from the military, the Shah dismissed the Sharif-Emami government. Instead he appointed a military government, headed by the chief-of-staff, General Azhari. This too, aware of the strength of the mass movement, failed to crush or to conciliate the opposition. Strikes paralysed the urban economy and in December a major political contest opened up between the regime and its opponents.

FRED HALLIDAY is a fellow of the Transnational Institute, and author of *Arabia without Sultans* (Penguin, 1974).

*This article forms part of the revised edition of *Iran: Dictatorship and Development*, to be published by Penguin later this year.

Race & Class, XXI, 1 (1979)

Ayatollah Khomeini was by now installed in Paris, a position which gave him far greater access to the world media and thereby to Iran than he had had in his geographically nearer place of residence in Iraq. The movement accepted him as the symbolic head of the opposition, and he worked through a group of associates in Paris, some of them exiled activists of veteran politician Mehdi Bazargan's Iran Liberation Movement, such as Ibrahim Yazdi, Sadegh Ghotebzadeh and Abol-Hassan Banisadr. A new crisis point came on 11 December, this being the period in the sacred month of Moharram when Shi'a Muslims mourn the death of the Imam Hussein, and, in the Muslim calendar, the fifteenth anniversary of the time when Khomeini was sent into exile by the Shah. The military authorities were forced to allow the demonstrations to occur, despite martial law still being in force. Up to two million people demonstrated in Tehran, and many millions more in other demonstrations throughout Iran, against the regime. By the end of the month the military government itself was in disarray, and the Shah had to abandon it.

The new prime minister chosen by the Shah was a leader of the Iran Party, one of the constituents of the National Front, Shahpour Bakhtiar. Several times imprisoned by the Shah, the French-educated Bakhtiar promised to set up a government free of all those associated with the past 25 years of Pahlavi rule. He introduced a bill into the Majlis dissolving SAVAK and promised to hand over power to an elected government once proper constitutional procedures had been followed. With the support of the USA, which realised that the Shah was doomed, Bakhtiar persuaded the monarch to leave Iran and on 16 January 1979 the Shah left Iran for Egypt, and later Morocco, pretending, for reasons of face, to be taking a 'holiday'.

Bakhtiar's strategy of managing a peaceful transition to a democratic regime was doomed to failure. By accepting nomination from the Shah, he discredited himself with the rest of the opposition and both Khomeini and his own colleagues in the National Front denounced him. Strikes and mass demonstrations continued, and Khomeini in particular refused to reach an accommodation with envoys whom Bakhtiar sent to Paris to discuss with him. As the days went by, Bakhtiar was increasingly a prisoner of the armed forces and of the Americans who supported him. He was unable to influence events. He was seen as the Shah's nominee, while much of the imperial apparatus, particularly the armed forces, remained intact. Although he succeeded in getting the Shah to leave and, with American cooperation, in holding the army's desire for a coup in check, he was in the end defeated.

The pace of events quickened at the end of January, as demonstrations minimised Bakhtiar's capacity to influence events, and on 1 February Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Tehran from his Parisian exile. Although cautious not to provoke an army coup, Khomeini

played his hand with determination and nominated Mehdi Bazargan as the head of the new provisional government. A situation of dual power then existed in Iran with neither side apparently willing to attack the other, until on Friday 9 February the explosion came. It began in the Dosh Tappeh air base near Tehran where junior officers and technicians (*homafars*) clashed with senior officers over the right of the former to watch an address by Khomeini on television. As the conflict continued, the base was attacked by units of the Javidan, the 'Immortals' section of the Imperial Guard, and this led to a general uprising in Tehran. Although this began as a split in the army, the key to the outcome was the fact that thousands of civilians actively intervened on the side of the rebel sections of the armed forces and in this way defeated the remaining pro-Shah sections of the military. Two days of fighting in Tehran on 10 and 11 February destroyed the military apparatus, forced the Bakhtiar government to resign and enabled tens of thousands of militants to acquire rifles from the military bases they looted. Similar events took place in the following days in provincial towns.

Khomeini's calculations had therefore proved correct: the armed forces had divided and the opposition movement had come to power in a spectacular mass victory. However, no sooner had the victory come than the broad coalition that had made the movement possible began to decompose, along at least three separate axes. First, although Bazargan proceeded to establish a government, much of the real power in the new Iran lay with the secret Islamic Revolutionary Committee set up by Khomeini and with other local committees of mollahs and their associates in provincial towns. Secondly, the manner in which the revolution had occurred in Tehran on 10-11 February gave arms and power to the guerrilla groups, the Mojahidin and the Fedayin, who were transformed in a short space of time into substantial mass organisations. In many of the factories new workers' committees had also sprung up, as they had in parts of the state apparatus (soldiers' committees, for example) and in the press and television. Although not legalised by Bazargan, the Tudeh Party was also able to operate to some extent, and benefited from the fact that the sectarian difference between it and the guerrillas were, at least temporarily, attenuated by the new situation — the guerrillas were supported by some religious leaders such as Taleghani. The emergence of these left forces was extremely unwelcome to the Khomeini-Bazargan right, yet the latter was unable immediately to reincorporate this left into its Islamic organisations. Thirdly, the fall of the Pahlavi regime released a new wave of protest activities amongst the non-Persian nationalities. This was most noticeable in Kurdistan where the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) was quick to organise its activities around the slogan 'Democracy for Iran, Autonomy for Kurdistan'. On a smaller scale, similar demands were

voiced in Baluchistan and the Turcoman areas and it was only a matter of time before comparable movements were active in Azerbaijan and the Arab regions.

Neither space nor the available information make it possible to assess the real balance of forces in Iran after the events of January-February 1979, and it is evident that the struggle between different political forces will continue in a sharp form for a long time. What follows are a few schematic judgements on what appear, at the time of writing in early March, to be central facets of the situation.

1 The events of January-February 1979 can legitimately be termed a revolution. It was not a *socialist* revolution, since neither the class character, nor the ideology, nor the achievements of the revolution merit such a characterisation. Nor, in any real sense, can it be termed a *social* revolution. Khomeini's programme and the policies of the government did not immediately presage any radical alteration in the ownership of the means of production in Iran, and the social origin, indeed the family connections, of many of those in the new government were similar to those in the Pahlavi regime. Khomeini and Bazargan were, for example, strongly opposed to the demands for workers' control being made in the factories and they tried quickly to rebuild the armed forces. In so far as the organisation and funding of the religious part of the movement came from the merchants of the bazaar, the new regime could be said to have stronger petit-bourgeois support than that of the Pahlavis, but this involved more an incorporation of the petit-bourgeoisie into the state rather than a shift of power from the bourgeoisie as such to the petit-bourgeoisie. What occurred in Iran in early 1979 was, however, definitely a *political* revolution, that is a violent removal of political power from one section of the ruling class and its transfer to another. This transfer was made possible by wide-ranging mass mobilisations, and these prevented the leadership of the opposition from simply consolidating their power. The fate of the Iranian revolution, in particular how far the political revolution will lead to a social revolution, depends on the future relations between the different class forces involved in this coalition overthrowing the Shah's regime.

2 The thesis that what Iran has undergone is an 'Islamic revolution' requires some clarification. Islam as an ideology played a major role in the opposition, both because of the ideological-political vacuum prevailing under the royal dictatorship and because of the key organisational role played by the mollahs and their associates. The defeat of the Pahlavis has certainly been accompanied by the reimposition of certain publicly-enforced religious observances, such as the ban on alcohol, and by an increased social role for the mollahs. But it is not possible to talk in any adequate sense of an 'Islamic revolution'. The term 'Islamic' serves as an ideological mask,

to conceal the multi-class character of the opposition movement and in particular to legitimate the substantial role of the petit-bourgeoisie within it, since their social power is expressed in the first instance via their influence over the mollahs. The claim made by Bazargan that Islamic theory provides the solution to Iran's problems is also quite inadequate, given the complex social and economic problems that Iran faces. But this ideal is also not without social meaning, since the promise of a ban on interest, and of an end to corruption and gross inequality, serves to articulate the aspirations of a petit-bourgeoisie that was denied access to power and wealth under the Pahlavi regime. Like populist ideologies in other countries, developed and developing, the Islamic republic ideology serves to deny class aspirations at both ends of the social scale — to limit the power of big capital, whether private or state-owned, as being corrupt and 'anti-popular', and to restrain the specific demands of a working class. It appeals to some broader common interest and to the aspiration for a just society without specifying the nature of its social composition. The term 'Islamic revolution' does not therefore indicate what kind of change has occurred in Iran: it serves to occlude it and, in particular, by obscuring the limits of what has been achieved so far, to deny the legitimacy of any further changes which oppressed groups — workers, but also the nationalities and, very significantly, women — are demanding.

3 The most striking feature of the Iranian revolution so far has been the speed with which the state apparatus collapsed, and in particular the collapse of the armed forces in early February. This fact is extremely important, for, in retrospect, analysing the nature of the Pahlavi regime and, in a prospective sense, for evaluating the nature of the new republican state. Historically, the Pahlavi regime had come to power and maintained its position by coups, thereby crushing the democratic opposition and violating the constitution. In the decade prior to 1978 the Shah had continued to crush his opponents and deny them any form of legal expression. It was therefore easy for his opponents to claim that the Pahlavi regime was illegal, and Khomeini and his supporters were also able to give this charge of illegitimacy a potent expression in religious terms by casting the Shah as the violator of the Koran and as an enemy of Islam. Yet this lack of legitimacy did not just affect the political opponents of the regime, the mollahs and those deprived of the benefits of Iran's wealth: it reached into the heart of the state and of the bourgeoisie, creating a deep fissure with, on the one side, the small group of families surrounding the court and, on the other, the other members of the bourgeoisie who benefited from economic wealth but were denied access to the riches and the political power of the privileged few. Corruption and nepotism played a major role

here, in dividing the state and the ruling class themselves, and in making it easier for the Shah's opponents to rally a wide coalition against him once the regime had begun to crumble. It was above all the fragility of the regime — the lack of political alternatives, plus the weakness of the armed forces — that in the end isolated the Shah and brought the Pahlavi monarch so quickly to an end. Yet, by the same token, much of the state apparatus remained intact and many members of the Iranian bourgeoisie remained in control of their wealth and property after the revolution.

4 Why did the army collapse so quickly in early February 1979, especially as so many people had been expecting a coup? The main reason is obviously the strength of the opposition: the army leadership knew, from September onwards, that it would be extremely difficult to crush the opposition by mere force. They tried to begin doing so — in the September massacres, and again in early November, when the Azhari government came to power. Yet the scale of the opposition prevented any all out attempt, and this weakness inevitably found a reflection inside the armed forces who were increasingly affected by the masses on the street. Most of the armed forces are conscripts and many come from rural backgrounds with a religious orientation. By January, when the hot-head generals were talking of a coup, the situation was already too far gone, and the US, through General Huizer, the NATO military envoy in Tehran, discouraged a coup attempt. The final denouement in February brought into the open the erosion of the military system that had been covertly in progress over a number of months: the political disaffection of the lower ranks, the split between junior and senior officers and the lack of any firm leadership. There are, however, deeper reasons for the collapse of the military in this situation. Unlike the Chilean army, for example, that of Iran had no supporting civilian activists to encourage and sustain it. It was isolated, the one pillar of the Shah's regime, and this isolation was bound to discourage those contemplating a coup. Secondly, despite its enormous arms procurement, this was an army which had never fought a serious war and it was therefore untested in any major encounter. Thirdly, as the history of the Pahlavis makes clear, the army had shallow roots in Iranian society: it had not existed prior to the 1920s and was very much an artificial creation, underpinning the monarchy, yet without deep roots in Iranian society and history. Under pressure for months, and unable to act in a cohesive manner, the armed forces finally began fighting each other on 9 February, and it was this, rather than a straight civilian-military conflict, which detonated the final explosion.

5 The coalition of forces that came to power in February was therefore a very wide one, including urban workers, intellectuals, professional middle-class people, students and the traditional petty

bourgeoisie. It must be emphasised that the exclusively Islamic character of the movement, and in particular Khomeini's leadership, were relatively late in establishing themselves. As late as September 1978 the main demand was for a return to the 1906 constitution, and Khomeini, although influential, was only one of the Ayatollahs influencing the people. The call for an 'Islamic Republic' has no long tradition in Iranian political life and Khomeini only began to advance it in 1978 in answer to the request that he have some positive programme, beyond the mere demand for an end to the Shah's rule. Khomeini and his ideology were able to come to dominate the movement after September because of the new polarisation in Iran following the imposition of martial law, and because, by being forced to go to Paris from Iraq, Khomeini acquired an international significance that he had not previously had.

Yet the role of other forces in making the revolution should not be obscured by the emphasis placed upon Khomeini by foreign observers — and by the supporters of the Ayatollah. First of all, it was the professional middle class and the students who set the movement going in 1977, and only in January 1978 did the mollahs come onto the streets. Secondly, in the months from September 1978 to February 1979 what really broke the back of the regime was not the level of mass demonstrations, but above all the actions of the working class, the strikes in the factories and in the oil fields, first over economic and then over more directly political issues. Whilst the bazaar (i.e., the traditional petty bourgeoisie) provided the backbone of organisation for the street demonstrations, it was the working class, lacking any national organisation, who crippled the Sharif-Emani, Azhari and Bakhtiar governments. And whilst the armed forces might have been able to defeat the demonstrations by brute force, they knew they were incapable of forcing the proletariat back to work. This realisation certainly stayed their hand.

Finally, the role of the students in the latter months, especially in Tehran, should not be underestimated. They were a major component of the more violent clashes with the army after September, and they played a leading role in weakening the armed forces in the latter part of January. When the clash within the armed forces broke into the open on 9 February, it was, in the first instance, the students and other young people who intervened, providing many of the militants who formed the mass membership of the guerrilla groups.

6 Beyond the specifically class character of the movement, this revolution was also a nationalist and thereby anti-imperialist one. It was a revolt against the manner in which the advanced capitalist countries, and in particular the USA, were continuing to impose certain policies upon Iran. This was most evident in the military field where a new dependence had been created by the Shah's purchases;

hostility to foreigners on a day-to-day basis was especially strong in Isfahan, where several thousand American military personnel were training the Iranian air force. It also found expression in the oil fields, where several hundred foreign technicians were still employed. But beyond these identifiable instances, there was a more general sense of ideological rejection of the manner in which western influence was felt: in the West's support for the Shah's repression, and in the manner in which the upper section of the Iranian bourgeoisie was imitating western consumption habits. This does not mean, as so many commentators have argued, that the opposition was historically regressive or that the Shah 'was going too fast for his people'. There are certainly regressive elements in the religious opposition.

But the major causes of the revolution were (a) the denial of the basic political rights of the population and (b) the socially unequal and increasingly inefficient manner in which the state was managing the economy. The ideological response — of a return to some religious utopia — only gained support on the basis of this underlying situation, and any future Iranian government will have to confront the serious social and economic problems that the Shah failed to resolve with a more adequate programme for change. The nationalist character of the revolution is therefore a rejection of the particular path of development pursued by the Shah since the early 1960s: it is not a rejection of material development as such.

7 The collapse of the Pahlavi regime has already had enormous international implications, and will continue to do so for years. It demonstrated, in the first instance, the relative incapacity of the western powers to control events, even in a country where they had been so influential for decades. As in other apparently secure western allies — Portugal, Ethiopia — the events in Iran revealed the continuing primacy of the internal class struggle over the influence of imperialism once the opposition movement began to act. Without intervening in the debate within the USA over 'who lost Iran', one can observe that it was probably impossible for the US to save the Shah, whatever Carter and the Pentagon did. They could not send in troops to Iran: neither US public opinion nor the USSR would have permitted this. Even had they done so it is unlikely such an action would have been successful, for the very same reason that the Iranian army could not act in a similar manner, namely the strength of the opposition.

For the West, the loss of Iran involves many problems. First, the loss of control over 18 per cent of OPEC's oil. Secondly, the loss of a major market, especially for British and US arms firms. Thirdly, the loss of a strategic ally in the region which could defend capitalist interests along the lines of the Nixon Doctrine. Although causing much panic, the first two are not so serious for the West: Iran will in

the future continue to export some oil and will continue to import western goods, even if at a reduced rate. The advanced capitalist countries can, one way or the other, adjust to these changes. The major blow is the strategic one, for not only has the USA lost a base area from which to spy on the Soviet Union, but it has left the Gulf without a counter-revolutionary intervention force, whilst the Iranian revolution itself has given new impetus to the democratic and revolutionary movement in the whole Middle East. It is too early to say, but it will probably appear in retrospect, that the Iranian revolution of 1979 will have effects on the Middle East as great as those of the Egyptian revolution of 1952.

8 Iran faces several options in this new situation. It would now appear almost certain that the Shah cannot return to Iran and that the Pahlavi monarchy, indeed any monarchy, is finished. However, the form of republican regime can encompass a variety of political regimes. So far, Iran remains a capitalist country, committed not only to the continued existence of an Iranian bourgeoisie but also to a strong working relationship, albeit renegotiated, with the western capitalist countries. The rhetoric about an '*Islamic revolution*' conceals this underlying class continuity. If this orientation remains, then, in a matter of months, the capitalist state machine will be reconstructed, involving many of the same personnel and interests found in the old regime, minus those directly associated with the Pahlavis. Such a reconstruction will certainly involve the army and, although factionalised by the events of February, it remains institutionally in existence and could be rebuilt. The possibility certainly exists of a new form of military dictatorship of a more or less nationalist kind, and the failure of a stable civilian regime to emerge will make such an eventuality more likely.

On the other hand, a civilian capitalist regime could emerge as it has done in other post-dictatorial countries such as Spain, Greece and Portugal, provided that a generally accepted new constitutional system is created. If the armed forces do not accept it, or if the left does not, then there will be no agreed form of resolving political differences. The aim of the Iranian bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie, now that the Shah has been removed, must therefore be to create a new stable system of capitalist regime in Iran, democratically if possible, and by dictatorship if not. But just as the left is encumbered by its alliance with the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie in the anti-Pahlavi coalition, so on the other hand, the capitalist forces in Iran are now threatened by the forces necessarily released in the movement against the old regime: the working class and the militant left in the guerrilla groups. The forces that organised the strikes from September onwards, and the militants who toppled the Bakhtiari government in early February, will not easily accept a reimposition of

capitalist control, whether clothed as an 'Islamic' one or not. In this perspective, the possibility of a new phase of the Iranian revolution, one leading to a social or even socialist revolution, remains open. The social forces and the political organisations favouring such a development have emerged much stronger from the events of the past two years and have allied with those sections of the middle class who oppose Khomeini's policy of enforcing Islamic social practices on society. In the weeks following Bakhtiar's fall, a new conflict has therefore emerged with, on the one side, much of the petit-bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie rallied under Khomeini and Bazargan's policies and, on the other, a more radical current, including the new political forces released by the revolution itself. Both of these are themselves coalitions — the radical sector includes religious leaders such as Ayatollah Taleghani and representatives of precisely that professional middle class who began the protest movement in 1977, the more conservative bloc is certainly divided about what an 'Islamic Republic' might mean and lacks the personnel or the policies to make a determined attempt to resolve Iran's problems.

9 The outcome of this still unfolding situation must await the events of the coming months, but whatever occurs no one should underestimate the momentous historical events of the revolution that Iran has now undergone. A hated system of political dictatorship, armed and supported by the West, has been destroyed by a heroic and protracted popular movement. For the first time in their history the Iranian people now have the possibility of deciding their political destiny. In any comparative perspective, this revolution must rank as one of the major upheavals of world history, evident in three particular details: first, it has produced on several occasions mass demonstrations of two million people or more, the largest unofficial demonstrations in human history; secondly, for the first time ever in the history of revolutions, a repressive army that has not been weakened in a foreign war has been overthrown by a mass political opposition; thirdly, this revolution has occurred in a country that is, despite its problems, a relatively developed one, with half of the population in the towns and a working class of over three million. Iran is a far more developed country than was Russia in 1917, China in 1949, Vietnam in 1975, or even Cuba in 1959. The Iranian people have won a great and astounding victory: let us hope that they are now able to reap the fruits of that victory and to fulfil the further potential for social transformation that has been revealed by their victory over the Pahlavi monarchy.

10 March 1979

Notes and documents

US military involvement*

The United States has been deeply involved in Iranian affairs since the early 1940s, especially after Mohammed Reza Shah assumed the throne in 1941. Seeking to counter Russian and British influence in Iran during World War II, Washington sent a small military mission to Iran in 1943. After the War, the United States aided the Shah in his efforts to build a substantial base of support in the armed forces, by providing arms, equipment and training to the Iranian Army. The US also helped establish the Imperial Iranian Gendarmerie, a special internal security force under direct palace command, which played a decisive role in the Shah's efforts to consolidate his control over the entire country.

America's 1953 intervention in Iran to topple Premier Mohammed Mossadegh was one of the US's first successful attempts to subvert a radical nationalist government. Mossadegh came to power in 1951 as leader of the National Front, and was appointed by the Shah under heavy pressure from the Iranian parliament (the Majlis). Mossadegh's nationalisation of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company earned at first the enmity of the British, and then the United States, culminating in the new Eisenhower Administration's decision to undertake covert action in support of a military coup. CIA Chief Allen Dulles and top Mideast operative Kermit Roosevelt engineered the fall of Mossadegh's government in August, 1953.[1]

After the coup, the United States helped the Shah consolidate his power, and the CIA and Defense Department were deeply involved in Iranian political affairs. The CIA assisted in the creation of SAVAK (the National Security and Intelligence Organisation, Iran's secret police) in 1957, and two recent US ambassadors to Iran, Richard Helms and William Sullivan, are noted for their organisational and

*Taken from *Background information on the crisis in Iran* (Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, 1979).

operational links to the CIA. During the current crisis, Ambassador Sullivan repeatedly met with the Shah and with Iran's military ruler, General Azhari, to discuss the government's strategy for suppressing the opposition.

Military aid

In the twelve years following the 1953 military coup, the United States poured over \$1.2 billion in aid into Iran, almost half of which went to the Iranian Army, the Shah's evolving power base. Between Fiscal Year (FY) 1950 and FY 1977, the United States supplied Iran with over \$20 billion worth of arms, ammunition, training, and technical assistance under the Military Assistance Program (MAP) and the Foreign Military Sales Program (FMS). This figure includes \$67.4 million provided through the International Military Education and Training Program, to subsidise the training of 11,025 military personnel. Iran also received \$767 million in direct MAP grants, \$496 million in FMS credits and \$1.7 million under the Agency for International Development's Public Safety Program for the training of Iranian police. Iran ceased receiving MAP grant aid in 1970, and has since spent a full \$18 billion on US arms under the FMS cash sales program. Since Iranian orders for new hardware were placed faster than the weapons could be produced and delivered, at the end of 1978 there was an outstanding balance of \$12 billion worth of yet undelivered arms destined for Iran.[2]

US military personnel had been stationed in Iran since 1947, as part of the Military Assistance Advisory Group and a special mission to the Army (the two functions were combined in 1962). Until 1976, the United States also had a special mission to the Imperial Iranian Gendarmerie. The military mission in Iran was the largest America had in any Third World country, employing (in 1978) 185 military, twenty-three civilian, and forty local personnel.

Police aid and training

In addition to the vast quantities of advanced weapons systems sold to Iran, the United States sold millions of dollars worth of arms and equipment for 'internal security'. In recent years this included 4,000 revolvers and 300,000 rounds of ammunition to the National Police, over 50,000 hand grenades to the Imperial Iranian Gendarmerie, and 356,293 gas masks and 11,994 tear gas canisters to the Iranian Army.

On 7 November 1978, the *Washington Post* reported that the Carter Administration had been prepared to send US Army specialists to train the Shah's troops in riot control techniques. The offer, which was not implemented, followed delivery of a wide variety of crowd control equipment, including tear gas, riot sticks, helmets and

shields, to the Shah's internal security forces.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, the United States trained 179 Iranian Police officers at the International Police Academy in Washington, DC, under the auspices of AID's Public Safety Program. The former head of SAVAK was a recipient of this training. In addition, General Gholam Reza Azhari, who headed Iran's military government, was trained in military police operations in the US.

Arms sales

Iran under the Shah was America's number one arms customer, accounting for \$18.1 billion or 25 per cent of the \$71 billion in military orders placed by foreign governments under the Foreign Military Sales program between FY 1950 and FY 1977. Recent sales included 141 Northrop F-5E jet fighters, 160 Hughes TOW missiles. During a May 1972 visit to Iran by the then President Nixon, the Shah was given a virtual *carte blanche* to purchase anything in the US arsenal except nuclear weapons. Subsequent Iranian purchases reflected the Shah's ambition to recreate 'the Great Persian Empire of the Past', as well as the Nixon-Kissinger policy of relying on 'friendly' Third World powers to maintain regional stability in strategic areas. Iranian military purchases rose from \$519 million in FY 1972 to a record high for any country of \$5.8 billion in FY 1977.

Since his 1972 meeting with Nixon, the Shah consistently sought America's most advanced and sophisticated weapons. Among his recent purchases are seven Boeing E-3A AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) radar patrol planes, a system so sophisticated that CIA director Admiral Stansfield Turner originally testified against its sale on the grounds that US security would be gravely threatened if it fell into the wrong hands. Other advanced arms sold to the Iranians include the Grumman F-14 *Tomcat* swing-wing jet fighter, the McDonnell-Douglas *Harpoon* anti-ship missile, the Lockheed P-3C *Orion* ocean surveillance plane, and the *Spruance*-class heavy destroyer. Besides these potent arms, the United States also endowed Iran with the capacity to conduct warfare far from its borders. Recent deliveries have included, for instance, twelve Lockheed C-130 *Hercules* troop-transport planes, thirteen Boeing 707-320L tanker aircraft, 142 McDonnell-Douglas F-4E *Phantom* deep-strike fighter-bombers and three *Tang*-class submarines (which cannot even operate in the shallow Persian Gulf). These deliveries have provided Iran with a formidable military arsenal, capable of sustaining conflict at very high levels of violence and at sites far distant from Iranian territory.[3]

On 3 February 1979 the interim government of Shahpour Bakhtiar informed the US Embassy in Tehran that it would cancel \$8-10 billion worth of arms contracts with the US. The cancellations, which have

been reaffirmed by the government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan, affect arms ordered by the Shah in the 1970s and scheduled for delivery in the early 1980s. The cancellations include: 160 General Dynamics F-16 fighter planes worth \$3.5 billion; seven Boeing AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) radar patrol planes worth \$1.3 billion; two *Spruance*-class destroyers worth \$1.4 billion; and a host of other aircraft, missiles and munitions.

Given the enormous figures involved, the Iranian cancellations will have a major impact on the US arms sales programme. With Iran no longer serving as the major market for US weapons, American arms firms will have to search for alternatives to the lucrative Iranian market.

The economic effects of the cancellations are not likely to be as devastating as expected. First, the various projects are in different stages of production, and Iran has made 'progress payments' pending actual delivery of the weapons. Iran stands to lose this money, which is held in a Department of Defense 'trust fund', because it cancelled the contracts. Secondly, the US government, which under the Foreign Military Sales Program signed the actual contracts with the Iranian government, and thus is liable to US contractors, is committed to finding alternative uses for the weapons. A supplemental Defense Appropriations request for Fiscal Year 1979 includes US Navy procurement of one destroyer and fifty-five F-16's from the pool of Iranian cancellations. The Pentagon is also reportedly seeking alternate purchasing nations for the Iranian orders.

One major exception to this pattern of deferred responsibility involves Bell Helicopter's \$500 million contract to build a helicopter factory in Iran. Because Bell (a subsidiary to Textron, Inc.) bypassed the US government in its transaction, it must bear the full burden of any losses. Having received progress payments on work already performed, however, Bell's immediate loss will be relatively small, even though the company will fire several hundred employees hired specifically for the Iran project.

Both the US government and US firms will incur indirect costs as a result of the Iranian cancellations. Previously, foreign sales allowed a contractor to pass on some research and development (R & D) costs, administrative costs, and personnel salaries to the purchasing government. The Iranian cancellations will thus cause the 'unit cost' of an item procured by the Pentagon for its own use to rise. In the case of the AWACS cancellation, this increase could be substantial, and could jeopardise plans for the plane's use by NATO forces.

Aside from long-range setbacks, some of the biggest losers in the Iranian situation will be thousands of US 'white-collar mercenaries' who perform technical services under contract to US arms firms. Since these people were hired specifically for the Iranian programmes, they will constitute a large pool of unemployed para-military

technicians looking for other customers for their specialised services. Conceivably, many of them will seek work in places like South Africa, Taiwan and South Korea, where such skills are in high demand.

Technical military support

The Shah's arms purchases, emphasising extremely advanced weapons, generated a requirement for many thousands of skilled technicians to maintain, repair, support and operate such high-technology gear. Some fifteen skilled technicians are needed, for instance, to keep one F-14 aircraft in combat-ready condition — and Iran had ordered eighty of these costly planes. Other specialists were needed to perform critical logistics, communications, and intelligence functions. Since Iran lacked sufficient numbers of skilled personnel to perform all of these tasks, the government had to recruit foreign technicians to perform the required functions. Normally, this involved contracting with US arms firms to perform backup services on the equipment they sold to Iranian forces. Thus Grumman deployed some 1,000 US technicians in Iran to maintain the eighty F-14s it sold the Shah in 1974, while Bell provided such support for the hundreds of AH-1J and Model-214 helicopters it has delivered and Northrop is responsible for upkeep on its F-5E aircraft.[4]

According to US government documents, there were, before the Shah fell, some 6,452 US civilian 'contract personnel' and 1,122 US government personnel stationed in Iran in connection with US arms programmes. (The latter figure includes several hundred military personnel associated with the Pentagon's Technical Assistance Field Teams, or TAFT's, which provide spot training and technical services on specific projects.) As noted by a 1976 Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report, 'There is general agreement among US personnel involved with the Iranian programs that it is unlikely that Iran could go to war in the next five to ten years with its current and prospective inventory [of] sophisticated weapons ... without US support on a day to day basis.' The Senate study further noted that US arms programmes had evolved into a *de facto* military commitment to the Shah's regime: 'The United States, having sold sophisticated arms in large quantities to Iran, has assumed a growing and significant "commitment" in terms of supporting that equipment — an unstated but nevertheless real obligation to train Iranians and to provide logistical support for the lifetime of the equipment.' The result was that the United States was viewed by both the Shah and the opposition forces as being directly involved in Iranian military operations — with all the political consequences such a role entailed. In the words of the 1976 Senate study, 'Anti-Americanism could become a serious problem in Iran ... if there were to be a change in government in Iran.'

Building Iran's military-industrial complex

Not only did the Shah order vast quantities of America's most advanced weapons, he was also acquiring the capability to produce them in Iran. Under a multibillion-dollar industrialisation programme, the Shah commissioned US arms firms to build entire weapons factories from scratch in Iran. Thus Bell Helicopter (a division of Textron, Inc.) was building a factory to produce Model-214 helicopters in Isfahan, and Hughes was building a missile plant in Shiraz. Northrop was also a joint partner in Iran Aircraft Industries, inc., which maintained many of the US military aircraft sold to Iran and was expected to produce aircraft components and eventually complete planes. These efforts represented a large share of US industrial involvement in Iran, and were a centrepiece of the Shah's efforts to develop modern, high-technology industries.

These efforts came under attack from opposition elements, who argued that such plans distorted the Iranian economy at a time when basic industries and agriculture were suffering, and would do little to solve Iran's unemployment problems (especially since so many of the workers in these plants would be foreigners). This criticism was often described as an attack on the Shah's 'modernisation' plans, but the criticisms were directed specifically at these military-oriented, high-technology programmes rather than at industrialisation in general. Opposition leaders insisted in fact, that they favoured development of basic industries more suited to Iran's long-term economic needs.

REFERENCES

- 1 R. Barnett, *Intervention and Revolution* (1968), pp. 265-8.
- 2 US Department of Defense, *Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Facts* (1978).
- 3 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 1977*; International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 1978-79*.
- 4 M. Klare, 'America White Collar Mercenaries', *Inquiry* (16 October 1978).

East Timor Special Report

Noam Chomsky's statement delivered to the 4th Committee of the UN General Assembly, November 1978. Available for 30p (plus postage) from British Campaign for an Independent East Timor, 40 Concanon Road, London SW2.

Book review

Iran: Dictatorship and Development

By FRED HALLIDAY (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1979). 348pp. £1.50

In this timely book Halliday provides us both with a framework for understanding current events in Iran, and an acute insight into the social forces presently in struggle. His array of sources is impressive, including not only secondary works but a wide and significant range of first-hand interviews and accounts. Writing as a clear opponent of the Shah, and as a committed socialist, his analysis differs sharply from non-marxist discussions of contemporary Iran in that it takes as its centrepiece the character of the state and the question of political power.

For Halliday, the fundamental point about the Iranian state under the Shah is that it was capitalist; it promoted capitalist development and, despite its peculiarity as a royal dictatorship, defended the interest of a dominant capitalist class. Summarising the historical formation of this state, he points to the significance of the alliance with the United States, both to consolidate successfully the Shah's dictatorship, and to defeat the postwar challenges to his despotism (first, from the Tudeh Party and then, in 1953, from Mossadegh's National Front). The growth of the powerful Armed Forces and the ubiquitous SAVAK are outlined in detail, revealing in the process how the character and capabilities of these institutions were shaped by the relationship with the United States (and, to a lesser extent, with Britain).

In considering Iran's economic development, Halliday analyses, in turn, agriculture, the oil industry (motor of the country's development) and industrialisation. The land reform programme, symbol of

the Shah's 'White Revolution' was the chief means of encouraging the capitalist transformation of the countryside. A capitalist agriculture consonant with the needs of the rest of the economy had to be developed to increase productivity substantially, to guarantee conditions for changes in rural class relations and to ensure, in the guise of political stability, the strengthening of the Shah's rule. Whatever success the reform might have had in removing landlord power in the villages, it was nevertheless an economic failure, as is demonstrated by the chronically low productivity of Iranian agriculture during the 1970s, and the need to use the country's oil revenues to finance an ever-increasing flow of food imports.

Iran's oil industry was technically state-owned, but effective control over price and output lay with the consortium of mainly British and American oil companies. However, the flow of oil revenues, spectacularly increased after 1973, provided the state with the means to finance the country's industrial development. This dirigisme, Halliday argues, was due to the need to compensate for the lack of a strong indigenous industrial bourgeoisie. Despite the steps taken to construct an efficient economic infrastructure and establish manufacturing industries, Iranian industry is uncompetitive vis-à-vis foreign products, lacks skilled labour and management and relies heavily on imported technology and components. Oil revenues have been used to finance mammoth arms purchases and to exaggerate the already gross consumption of Iran's upper classes. It was this enormous waste of resources which fuelled the vast corruption that lay at the heart of the Shah's regime.

Like many studies of Iran, Halliday's book, despite meticulous research, suffers from a lack of reliable data which imposes limitations on his analysis (for example, of agriculture). Yet his treatment of some topics cannot escape a rather more fundamental criticism.

Halliday's definition of the dominant class appears confused. At one point it is defined as consisting of 'three main sections', viz. 'the upper stratum of the Armed Forces and civil service, the richer capitalist landowners, and the financiers and entrepreneurs benefiting from the oil boom'. (Indeed it would be difficult to isolate those financiers and entrepreneurs that have not, in some way, benefited from the oil boom). Elsewhere, however, the dominant class is given a broader definition, having 'three main components; the upper stratum of state employees, capitalist landowners and those engaged in finance, trade and industry'. This latter definition might be construed as covering smaller Iranian capitalists, craft and manufacturing industries — probably not what the author intends. Similarly, 'those engaged in finance, trade and industry' could be construed as including representatives of the bazaar, later identified by Halliday as a centre of traditional opposition to the Shah.

More importantly, it is not clear whether the contours of the

dominant class and those of the bourgeoisie coincide. Thus, at one point the bourgeoisie's existence is seemingly defined through its reflected existence in the state. Elsewhere, however, Halliday points to the bourgeoisie's ambiguous attitude towards the state; on the one hand, this class 'has expanded its interests defended by the Pahlavi state' and, on the other, Halliday cites instances of hostility on the part of Iranian entrepreneurs towards the Shah. Hence it is not clear whose interests are actually threatened by the destruction of the Pahlavi state, and which sections of the bourgeoisie, landowners and state personnel would be likely to make common cause with the Ayatollah Khomeini.

A second problem concerns the role of the state in sponsoring industrialisation. The ubiquitous state intervened in all major areas of the economy, but it is admitted that there was no proper system of planning. Indeed, as Halliday points out, planning appeared to be 'what the Shah wants'. This failure to establish effective planning institutions for coordinating the country's development might explain the lack of constraints on firms, particularly foreign companies, more intent on spoliation than in the balanced development of the country's resources. It should come as no surprise that companies should have a predatory, 'get rich quick' attitude. But it should come as a surprise that governments (both Iranian and US), international agencies, big banks and multinationals, allegedly invested with the responsibility of taking a rational, long-term view of Iran's development potential, should have failed to impose restraints on the more obvious manifestations of economic irrationality, profiteering and waste. On the one hand, it appears that the Shah's regime was never able to make an institutional reconciliation between dirigisme and 'free' enterprise, while on the other hand, the existence of effective planning mechanisms appears to have presupposed a degree of pluralism, within the regime, that was incompatible with the Shah's personal despotism.

One of the most striking features of the Shah's regime and of paramount importance in his final overthrow was the divorce that existed between himself and Islam. Halliday points out that it is curious that the Shah was unable to incorporate Muslim values and culture into his regime, but he does not properly account for this. Nor can the explanation be that the Shah tried to impose secular, western-style capitalist development on an unwilling Muslim populace. In neighbouring Saudi Arabia, the Saudi dynasty has successfully combined its commitment to austere Wahhabi Muslim values with the promotion of modern capitalist development. Certainly the ability of the Saudi and Gulf monarchies to achieve this combination suggests that these ruling houses rest on firmer ideological foundations than did the Shah's. The crux of the problem it would seem is linked to the cultural philistinism of the Shah's regime — of which

Halliday gives an excellent and fascinating account — and its failure to attract any substantial intellectual support.

A further element of the Shah's overthrow was his regime's apparent inability to mobilise mass support in its defence, other, that is, than demonstrations organised by the army. The Shah himself promoted a single legal entity (the Rastakhiz Party (RP)) as a mobilising force for his 'White Revolution'. Throughout its existence, however, the RP remained little more than an empty shell. Halliday's explanation for this failure is unconvincing — he alleges historical reasons such as the 'uncertain base of the monarchy' and 'fragile implementation of the Iranian state 50 years after its foundation'. The true explanation, however, appears to be a more immediate political reason, viz. the Shah's insistence on having an exclusivity of power. The Shah followed a consistent policy of eliminating all political rivals, particularly from amongst his own supporters, of preferring to rule through agencies (e.g. SAVAK) responsible only to himself, and of refusing except under pressure, to move towards a less autocratic, more pluralistic system of government. Even the regime's own trade unions were organised by the SAVAK, and were permitted neither to exist as autonomous entities, nor as the 'popular core' of the official party. And, when ultimately faced with popular revolt, the Shah could only offer bloody repression, or concessions which, begrudged and wrung from him by force, appeared all the more temporary and revocable.

Finally, Halliday analyses the heterogeneous opposition to the Shah. Though his account has been overtaken by events, he supplies a comprehensive summary of the major groups and movements currently in the centre of the Iranian political stage. A notable omission, with hindsight, is any discussion of the ayatollahs' influence within the workers' movement (of crucial importance in explaining the success of the strike movement in the oilfields), though Halliday does bring out the role of the mosque and bazaar as traditional centres of opposition to the Shah. The author does not identify himself with any one section of the former opposition, and is highly critical of the Iranian left. Thus, in analysing the main marxist guerrilla group (the *Fedayin-i Khalq*) Halliday points to the group's own manifestos and texts to demonstrate their fetish for purely military actions, at least up to 1975, and the abstract and simplistic character of their analysis of Iranian society. His own method can be criticised, however, in that, by using terms like 'voluntarism' and 'moralism', he appears to invoke an (unseen) authority of which he is custodian. But it is his treatment of the Tudeh (Communist) Party, and its alleged past errors, that is open to most objection.

For Halliday, the explanation for the Tudeh Party's numerous errors is not, as claimed by many Iranian left-wing activists, that it is a treasonable organisation, but that its political practice is guided by

its 'servility to Moscow'. Thus he cites at least three examples where the apparent acceptance of Soviet guidance led to disaster: the Tudeh Party's equivocation vis-à-vis the Azerbaijani Republic in 1946, the failure to support the Mossadegh government, until too late, in 1953, and the caution and constitutionalism of the party's strategy, influenced by good Soviet-Iranian economic relations, in the 1960s. Since relations between the Soviet and Iranian parties have been excellent, it is probable that a coincidence of political outlook has existed between the respective party leaderships on many occasions (though not always, since the Tudeh Party historically has suffered several leadership crises and major splits on such issues as Titoism and Maoism). But it can be argued that the trajectory of the Tudeh Party's strategy in each of these specific conjunctures was in response to genuine political difficulties, and did not necessarily reflect the alleged wishes of the Soviet Party leadership.

The Tudeh Party's equivocation vis-à-vis the Azerbaijani Republic (Halliday's first example) is known. Less well known, perhaps, is the pragmatic and inadequate character of marxism itself with respect to nationalism and the right to national self-determination. The Horn of Africa is currently the most eloquent example of a situation where national self-determination appears conditional upon the political colouring of both the central government and the would-be separatists, and where marxism has appeared in the guise of the Ethiopian Dergue, Eritrean guerrillas and even the Somali army. Thus it should not surprise us that the Tudeh Party might have found a consistent stance on the Azerbaijani question elusive. Nor should it surprise us that the Tudeh Party might have found it expedient to avoid such a stance. At that time, it was attempting to project itself as a national party, and to counter hostile propaganda that it was a Soviet Trojan horse, aiming at the dismemberment of Iran.

Similarly, the Tudeh Party's failure to support Mossadegh, until too late, can be explained by factors other than the party's alleged 'servility to Moscow'. Certainly the equivocation of Communist Parties towards national popular movements during this era was not a specifically Iranian phenomenon. In 1946 the Argentine Communist Party characterised Peronism as 'fascism'. In neighbouring Brazil the Communist Party had denounced the populist leader Vargas as a 'fascist', and not without cause, since Vargas's 'Estado Novo' adopted the drapeau of Mussolini's Italy, and strongly suppressed the Brazilian left. But in 1946, in complete contrast to the Argentine Communist Party, the Brazilian Party launched the slogan 'For a Constituent Assembly with Vargas', i.e., a platform of support for the democratisation of the country's political life, but combined with support for Vargas's election as president. Nearer Iran, the Egyptian Communist Party regarded the Free Officers' Movement of 1952 with suspicion, and denounced Nasser as a 'fascist' when he imprisoned

the party's leaders. Certainly there was much in Mossadegh's action that the Tudeh Party could characterise, at worst as 'fascist', and at best as opportunist and demagogic. Mossadegh's own anti-communist credentials were unimpeachable while, among the many dubious acts of his government, were the suppression of strikes in the oilfields and the appointment of Dr. Schacht as economic adviser (a post that the Doctor had earlier held as adviser to Hitler). These actions alone would be enough to explain the Tudeh Party's suspicion of Mossadegh, irrespective of what the Soviet Party leaders might think.

Finally, the caution of Communist Parties in countries which, though ruled by right-wing authoritarian regimes, have close economic relations with the Soviet Union does not in the least imply that they have received 'instructions' from Moscow. Certainly, close Soviet-Iranian economic relations would, in effect, give the Tudeh Party some purchase and limited immunity from some of the worst forms of persecution. Given the precarious and very limited nature of this purchase, and contingent on factors not within their control, the Tudeh Party might well be cautious and mark out constitutional and legal forms of opposition as a significant area of struggle. Nor is the Tudeh Party alone in this respect. Communist Parties face a similar situation in such different countries as Argentina, Uruguay and Morocco.

Halliday's concluding remarks on the likely outcome of the present crisis are highly pertinent, even though they were written before the Shah's overthrow. At least two of his possibilities (continued monarchical rule or a right-wing military dictatorship) appear to have been eliminated by the Islamic Revolution. Halliday himself discusses the possibility of socialism in Iran, but does not hide the difficulties and obstacles that lie in the way of attaining such an objective. Nor does he suggest that socialism is an immediate realistic alternative. But he dismisses bourgeois democracy as an option in Iran a little too readily. It is true that the country lacks a bourgeois democratic tradition, and it would be unhistorical to expect the evolution of a parliamentary democracy after the example of India. Yet a 'bourgeois democracy' could follow the example of Mexico or Egypt, establishing a single political party, drawing on indigenous revolutionary, anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist traditions and led by a strong presidential figure. But whatever the regime that emerges in Iran, two elements of the present situation are limpidly clear. First, that the overthrow of the Shah was a historic and lasting victory for the people of Iran. And secondly, that the Iranian people have established an authentic and irrepressible tradition of revolution, heroism and popular power, that will surely bring about a more democratic and socially just Iran.

Bibliography

The following is a brief introductory guide to the available literature on contemporary Iran, based mainly on books in English, with a few in other European languages. The nature and import of the recent upsurge are, of course, still beyond the range of the published literature. What follows is only a selection of what might be helpful in analysing the background to the present situation.

General critical works

Four recently-published books are especially recommended for evaluating the current upheaval. While none provides all the information needed, they do assemble much of the data that has been available over the last few years. *Iran: the illusion of power* (London, Croom Helm, and New York, St. Martins, 1978) is by Robert Graham, former Tehran correspondent for the London-based *Financial Times*. He focuses on the mismanagement of the economy since 1973 and provides details of the system of royal corruption unavailable elsewhere. There is also interesting material on SAVAK and the military. My own book, *Iran: dictatorship and development* (London, Penguin, 1978; a US edition was published in April 1979 by Viking) provides a marxist analysis of the Iranian state and society over the past decade. There are separate chapters on the working class, the military, the opposition, land reform and industrialisation. It is designed to be a general introduction to the major areas of Iranian politics and economics in the 1970s. Reza Baraheni's *The Crowned Cannibals* (New York, Vintage, 1977) was reviewed in *MERIP Reports* no.70. It surveys the crisis of culture and the repression of the intellectuals under the Shah's regime. Although necessarily restricted in the area it covers, it gives an evocative account of life in the Pahlavi Gulag. Finally, *Iran: le maillon faible* by Behrang (Maspero, Paris, 1979) provides a lucid marxist account of the Iranian social formation on the basis of the 1976 census data.

Historical and political background

Among the older books, the following are worth consulting, despite certain ideological limitations inherent in them: Joseph Upton's *The History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge, Mass, 1960); Richard Cottam's *Nationalism in Iran* (Pittsburgh, 1964); Marvin Zonis' *The Political Elite of Iran* (Princeton, 1971); and James Bill's *The Politics of Iran* (Columbus, 1972). A critique of the works of Zonis and Bill is provided

by Joanna de Groot in 'Empty Elites, or the Perils of Political Science', *Review of Middle East Studies* (no. 3, 1978).

A great deal of background information on political parties, official and unofficial, is found in Mehdi Mozafari, *L'Iran* (Paris, 1978), volume 29 in the 'Comment Ils Sont Gouvernés' series.

There is no reliable and intelligent book on two aspects central to an interpretation of recent Iranian history: the Mossadegh period and the life of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. On the second, there are a large number of trashy and sycophantic volumes, usually subsidised by the imperial regime itself. Donald Wilbur's life of *Reza Shah* (the Shah's father) is somewhat complacent but is the basis for a more informed understanding. A more critical analysis can be found in Ahmad Mahrad's *Iran unter der Herrschaft Reza Schahs* (Frankfurt, Campus Verlag, 1977).

Sepehr Zabih's *The Communist Movement in Iran* (Berkeley, 1966) is essential for the history of the Tudeh Party. Two pioneering studies of the 1940s have been written by Ervand Abrahamian: 'Communism and communalism in Iran: The *Tudah* and *Firqah-i Dimurkat*', in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Vol. 1, 1970); and 'Factionalism in Iran: political groups in the 14th Parliament (1944-46)', *Middle East Studies* (Vol. 14, no. 1, Jan. 1978). An important background article by the same author, and of immense relevance to present Iranian politics, is 'The Crowd in Iranian Politics', *Past and Present* (December 1968).

Economy

The standard work on the modern Iranian economy is Julian Bharier's *Economic Development in Iran, 1900-1970* (New York, 1971). A comparatively sound overview is given by Keith McLachlan, 'The Iranian Economy, 1960-76' in Hossein Amirsadeghi and R.W. Ferrier (eds), *Twentieth Century Iran* (London, 1977). Avoid if possible Jahangir Amuzegar's *Iran: an economic profile* (Washington, Middle East Institute, 1977). It has some sound data, but is marred by its totally uncritical and naive stance. The Hudson Institute's report, *Iran, Oil Money and the Ambitions of a Nation* (Paris, 1974), is still extremely relevant, as are the writings of the somewhat maverick Robert Looney. His *Economic Development of Iran* (1973 and 1977) is good on the weaknesses of industry and income distribution. His *Iran at the End of the Century: a Hegelian forecast* is less so. Although it contains some unacceptably complacent elements, the Aspen Institute's symposium *Iran: past, present, future* (New York, 1976), edited by Jane Jacqz, does contain some valuable articles on income inequality and Iran's economic performance.

Fereidun Fesharaki's *The Development of the Iranian Oil Industry* (New York, 1976) is technical and generally uncritical. On the

agriculture the standard work is O. Aresvik, *The Agricultural Development of Iran* (New York, Praeger, 1976), but it too is uncritical. Important articles on the subject are: Nikki Keddie, 'The Iranian Village Before and After Land Reform', *Journal of Contemporary History* (July 1968); Helmut Richards, 'Land Reform and Agribusiness in Iran', *MERIP Reports* no. 43 (December 1975); and Eric Hooglund, 'The Khwushnishin Population of Iran', *Iranian Studies* (Vol. 6, no. 4, Autumn 1973).

The documentary readings assembled by Charles Issawi in *Economic History of Iran, 1800-1914* (Chicago, 1977) offer an invaluable documented survey of the early economic history. On the contemporary scene, the *Financial Times* publishes an annual supplement on Iran that usually contains up-to-date and relatively sober estimates of Iran's economic situation.

Society

No adequate analysis of Iranian society and its changing class structure has been possible under the Pahlavi regime. The work of Tehran-based social scientists has had a restricted circulation. Beyond basic demographic data and some on income inequality, available writings tend to be rather speculative. The best account so far is Behrang's book listed above. The articles on land reform already referred to give some idea of changes in the countryside. There are some good sections in Paul Vieille's *La féodalité et l'état en Iran* (Paris, 1975), although the book's empirical grasp far exceeds the adequacy of its theoretical apparatus. Nikki Keddie's 'The Iranian Power Structure and Social Change: 1800-1969' in the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Vol. 2, 1971) is an attempt to chart the main features. More recent developments are summarised in Michael Fisher's 'Persian Society: transformation and strain' in Amirsadeghi and Ferrier's *Twentieth Century Iran*. The role of the *mollah* in Iranian politics and society is analysed in Hamid Algar's 'The Oppositional Role of the Ulema in Twentieth Century Iran' and the article by Nikki Keddie in the book she edited, *Scholars, Saints and Sufis* (Princeton, 1972). An informed discussion of the position of women in Iranian society is available in Lois Beck and Nikkie Keddie (eds), *Women in the Muslim World* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978).

Some scattered material on urban conditions just prior to the oil boom can be found in John Connell, *Tehran: Urbanization and development* (Brighton, Institute of Development Studies, 1973). Analyses of the Iranian working class worth looking at include the Committee Against Repression in Iran, *The Iranian Working Class* (London, 1977) and T. Jalil, *Workers of Iran* (London, Committee for the Restoration of Trades Union Rights in Iran, 1976). For an analysis of the working class in the formative Mossadegh period, see the

International Labour Organisation report, *Labour in Iran* (Geneva, 1950).

Current information

In addition to *MERIP Reports*, articles and bibliographic information are available in the standard journals on the region: *Middle East Journal*, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Middle East Studies*, *Iranian Studies*, *Review of Iranian Political Economy and History* (*Ripeh*, PO Box 961, Georgetown University, Washington DC 20057) and *Mardomnameh* (in German, c/o Kurt Greussing, Berliner Institut für Vergleichende Sozialforschung, Pf. 1125, D-1000 Berlin 30, Germany). Among activist groups publishing material on Iran are: US People's Committee on Iran (PO Box 7782, Philadelphia PA 19101); Committee for Artistic and Intellectual Freedom in Iran (853 Broadway, Suite 414, New York, NY 10003); Committee Against Repression in Iran (Box 4, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N1), and Iranian Students Association in the US (PO Box 4002, Berkeley, CA 94704).

FRED HALLIDAY

The Malcolm Caldwell Memorial Trust Fund

Trustees:

Lyn Caldwell, Peggy Duff, Chris Farley, Stephan Feuchtwang, John Gittings, Jon Halliday, A. Sivanandan, Andrew Turton.

The Malcolm Caldwell Memorial Trust Fund was established shortly after Malcolm's murder in Phnom Penh on December 23 1978. Its purposes are to promote scholarship and research in Asian studies, and in a variety of additional fields in which Malcolm worked, including nationalism, development and underdevelopment, world trade, natural resources and their use, and problems of conflict resolution, violence and social change. The trustees invite donations to the Fund at its permanent address below.

Care of The Institute of Race Relations,
247-249 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NG, England

Books received

This listing does not preclude subsequent publication of reviews.

African labor history. Edited by Peter C.W. Gutkind, Robin Cohen and Jean Copans. London, Sage Publications, 1978. Paper

Afrikaners of the Kalahari: white minority in a black state. By Margo and Martin Russell. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979. Cloth £9.50

Algeria 1960: the disenchantment of the world. By Pierre Bourdieu. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979. Cloth £7.95

Art, an enemy of the people. By Roger L. Taylor. Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1978. Cloth £8.50

Asante before the British. By Thomas J. Lewin. Kansas, Regents Press of Kansas, 1978. Cloth \$15.50

Beast and Man: the roots of human nature. By Mary Midgley. Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1978. Cloth £7.50

The Belize issue. By J. Ann Zammit. The Latin American Bureau, 1978. Paper £1.50

China: the People's Republic, 1949-1976. By Jean Chesneaux. Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1979. Cloth £12.50. Paper £5.50

City, class and power. By Manuel Castells. London, Macmillan Press, 1978. Paper £3.95

Classes, strata and power. By W. Wesolowski. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. Cloth £6.95

Compensatory education: studies of disadvantaged groups. By Moses J. Ntuk-Idem. Farnborough, Saxon House, 1978. Cloth £7.50

Cuba: the second decade. Edited by John Griffiths and Peter Griffiths. London, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1979. Paper £3.95

Demystifying social statistics. Edited by John Irvine, Ian Miles and Jeff Evans. London, Pluto Press, 1979. Cloth £8.50. Paper £3.95

The difficult flowering of Surinam: ethnicity and politics in a plural society. By Edward Dew. The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1979. Paper

The Dred Scott Case: its significance in American law and politics. By Don E. Fehrenbacher. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1979. Cloth £13.25

W.E.B. Du Bois on sociology and the black community. Edited by Dan S. Green and Edwin D. Driver. London, University of Chicago Press, 1978. Cloth £14.70

The economic status of Australian Aborigines. By Jon C. Altman and John Nieuwenhuysen. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979. Cloth £10.50

Economy and class structure of German fascism. By Alfred Sohn-Rethel. London, CSE Books, 1978. Paper £2.50

- Edith Jackson*. By Rosa Guy. London, Victor Gollancz, 1979. Cloth £3.75
- Endless pressure*. By Ken Pryce. London, Penguin, 1979. Paper £1.95
- The ethnic imperative: examining the new white ethnic movement*. By Howard F. Stein and Robert F. Hill. London, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978. Cloth £10.15
- Fascism in the contemporary world: ideology, evolution, resurgence*. By Anthony James Joes. Colorado, Westview Press, 1978. Paper £6.60
- Fascists: a social psychological view of the National Front*. By Michael Billig. London, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich Limited, 1979. Paper £3.95
- Feeding the few: corporate control of food*. By Susan George. Washington, Institute for Policy Studies. Paper \$3.95
- For her own good: 150 years of the experts' advice to women*. By Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English. London, Pluto Press, 1979. Cloth £8.50. Paper £3.60
- The German dictatorship: the origins, structure and consequences of national socialism*. By Karl Dietrich Bracher. London, Penguin, 1978. Paper £3.75
- Grunwicks: the workers' story*. By Jack Dromey and Graham Taylor. London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1978. Paper £2.95
- Has history any meaning?: a critique of Popper's philosophy of history*. By Burleigh Taylor Wilkins. Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1978. Cloth £10.00
- I write what I like*. By Steve Biko. London, Bowerdean Press, 1978. Cloth £4.95
- Idéologie de couleur et classes sociales en Haïti*. By Micheline Labelle. Montreal, University of Montreal Press, 1978. Paper \$10.95
- Images of race*. Edited by Michael D. Biddiss. Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1979. Cloth £9.50. Paper £5.00
- Independent collier: the coal miner as archetypal proletarian reconsidered*. Edited by Royden Harrison. Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1978. Cloth £10.50
- IQ, heritability and racism*. By James M. Lawler. London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1979. Paper £2.95
- Jamaican farewell: Jamaican migrants in London*. By Nancy Foner. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. Cloth £6.95
- Kampuchea: a photo record of the first American visit to Cambodia since April 1975*. By David Kline and Robert Brown. Chicago, Liberator Press, 1979. Cloth \$4.95. Paper \$6.95
- Land, labour migration and politics in Southern Africa*. By D.K. Kowet. Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1978. Paper
- The Marxist theory of art*. By Dave Laing. Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1978. Cloth £8.50

- A moment of silence.* By Simon Louvish. London, Martin Brian & O'Keeffe, 1979. Cloth, £4.95
- Mother tongue to English: the young child in the multicultural school.* By Daphne M. Brown. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979. Paper £2.95
- Movement of Jah people: the growth of the Rastafarians.* By John Plummer. Nottingham, Spokesman Press, 1978. Paper £1.80
- Neocolonial identity and counter consciousness: essays on cultural decolonisation.* By Renato Constantino. London, Merlin Press, 1978. Paper
- Not all the King's men: inequality as a political instrument in Ankole, Uganda.* By Martin R. Doornbos. The Hague, Mouton Publishers 1978. Paper DM36.00
- Organising the farmers: cocoa politics and national development in Ghana.* By Bjorn Beckman. Uppsala, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1976. Paper
- Out of the ghetto: my youth in the East End, communism and fascism, 1913-1939.* By Joe Jacobs. London, Janet Simon, 29 Troutbeck St., Albany St., N.W.1., 1978. Paper £3.00
- Palestinians: from peasants to revolutionaries.* By Rosemary Sayigh. London, Zed Press, 1979. Cloth £8.95
- Participation and political equality.* By S. Verba et al. London, Cambridge University Press, 1979. Cloth £14.50
- Personality, self esteem and prejudice.* By Christopher Bagley, Gajendra K. Verma, Kanka Mallick, Loretta Young. Farnborough, Saxon House, 1979. Cloth £8.50
- Philosophy and its Past.* By Jonathan Ree and others. Hassocks, Harvester Press, 1978. Cloth £8.50
- Pig earth.* By John Berger. London, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1979. Cloth £4.95
- A place on the corner.* By Elijah Anderson. London, University of Chicago Press, 1979. Cloth £10.50
- The police in society.* By Ben Whitaker. London, Eyre Methuen, 1979. Cloth £9.95
- The politics of anthropology.* Edited by Gerrit Huizer and Bruce Mannheim. The Hague, Mouton Publishers, 1979. Cloth
- Positive image: towards a multiracial curriculum.* By Robert Jeffcoate. London, Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative and Chameleon, 1979. Paper £1.95
- The psychology of apartheid.* Edited by H. van der Spuy and D. Shamley, Washington, University of America Press, 1978. Paper
- Race, education and identity.* Edited by G.K. Verma and C. Bagley. London, Macmillan, 1979. Cloth £4.95
- Resurgent militarism.* By M. Klare. Washington, Institute for Policy Studies, 1978. Paper \$1.50

- Seven days a week: women and domestic service in industrialising America.* By D. Katzman. New York, Oxford University Press, 1978. Cloth \$14.95
- Socialism and nationalism.* Edited by Eric Cahm and Vladimir Fisera. Nottingham, Spokesman, 1978. Paper £2.50
- Sociology, race and ethnicity: a critique of American ideological intrusions upon sociological theory.* By Harry H. Bash. London, Gordon and Breach, 1979. Cloth £11.10
- Soul on Fire.* By Eldridge Cleaver. London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1979. Cloth £4.95
- South Africa: foreign investment and apartheid.* By L. Litvak and others. Washington, Institute for Policy Studies, 1978. Paper \$3.00
- Southern Africa stands up.* By Wilfred Burchett. New York, Urizen Books, 1978. Paper £2.95
- A stranger in the house.* By Robert Hamburger and Susan Fowler-Callagher. New York, Collier Books, 1978. Paper \$7.95
- The Struggle is My Life.* By Nelson Mandela. London, International Defence and Aid Fund, 1978. Paper £1.85
- Survival in Beirut.* By Lina Mikdadi Tabbara. London, Onyx Press, 1979. Cloth £5.95. Paper £1.95
- The testimony of Steve Biko.* Edited by Millard Arnold. London, Maurice Temple Smith, 1979. Cloth £7.50
- 'This gilded African': Toussaint L'Ouverture.* By Wenda Parkinson. London, Quartet, 1978. Cloth £5.95
- Toward a marxist theory of nationalism.* By Horace Davis. New York, Monthly Review, 1978. Cloth \$17.50
- Towards socialism in Tanzania.* Edited by Bismarck U. Mwansasu and Cranford Pratt. Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House, 1979. Paper
- Urbanization and Urban Growth in the Caribbean.* By Malcolm Cross. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979. Cloth £10.50. Paper £3.95
- The West Indian language issue in British Schools.* By V.K. Edwards. London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979. Cloth £6.95. Paper £3.50
- White Canada for ever: popular attitudes and public policy toward Orientals in British Columbia.* By W.P. Ward. Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978. Paper \$6.50
- Women in class society.* By H.B. Saffioti. New York, Monthly Review, 1978. Cloth \$16.50
- Women in the Muslim world.* Edited by Lois Beck and Nikki Keddie. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1979. Cloth £21.00
- The workers of Namibia.* By Gillian and Suzanne Cronjé. London, International Defence and Aid Fund, 1979. Paper £1.50

EDITORIAL WORKING COMMITTEE

Eqbal Ahmad	Hermione Harris
Lee Bridges	Thomas Hodgkin
Tony Bunyan	Ken Jordaan
Basil Davidson	Colin Prescod
Chris Farley	Basker Vashee

EDITOR

A. Sivanandan

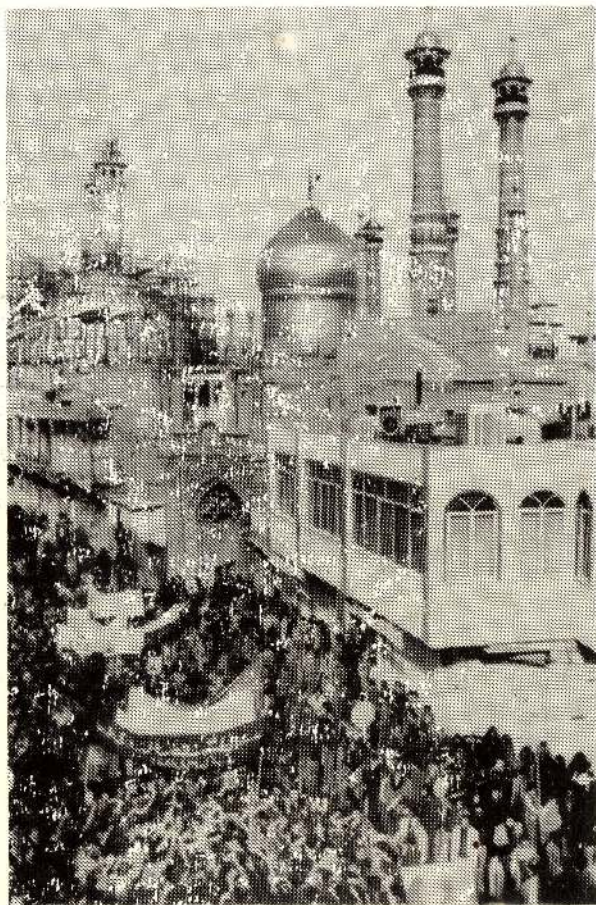
EDITORIAL STAFF

Hilary Arnott
Jenny Bourne
Hazel Waters

CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions, correspondence and books for review should be sent to the Editor at the Institute of Race Relations, 247-9 Pentonville Road, London N1, England. The Institute of Race Relations and the Transnational Institute are precluded from expressing a corporate view: the opinions expressed are therefore those of the contributors.

While welcoming contributions, particularly on Third World problems and realities, we would like to remind our contributors that manuscripts should be short (ideally, 5,000 words), clear (as opposed to obscure) and free of jargon. Typescripts should be double-spaced.



**Institute of Race Relations
Transnational Institute**

Digitized by Neelkanth Anand
neelkanth@vsnl.com, anand@nri.org