



ĀYANDAGĀN

ĀYANDAGĀN, a daily morning newspaper that first appeared in Tehran on 16 December, 1967. Ḥosayn Aharī, Mas'ūd Behnūd, and Dāryūš Homāyūn were listed as the founder, the editor, and the general manager of the paper, respectively, but *Āyandagān* was in fact the brainchild of Homāyūn and a number of aspiring journalists who had for some time been entertaining the idea of publishing a morning paper. From the very outset, *Āyandagān* pursued a more serious journalistic approach in presenting news and commentary than that employed by other papers, offering a challenge to the dominating position held by the two long-established evening papers *Eṭṭelā'āt* and *Keyhān*. Enjoying a relative freedom of action—within a tightly controlled and mostly lethargic press—it introduced a new mode of reporting which subsequently found considerable following. News and articles in *Āyandagān* were less circumscribed, while commentary was more bold and thought-provoking.

Stylistic innovations, especially in editorial writing—mostly by Homāyūn—set it apart from other daily papers; these involved the introduction and extensive use of newly coined Persian equivalents of journalistic words and phrases prevalent in the Western press. *Āyandagān* tried serious visual art, opera, and music criticism, featured interesting cultural, economic, and sports sections, and presented a more spirited analytical news reporting.

Within the confines of the political control of the press exercised by the regime, *Āyandagān* professed a nationalistic and liberal leaning, aiming at liberalization of the Iranian political system and promoting political dialogue. Its staunch anti-communist and pro-establishment stance plus its real and



presumed links with high authorities, however, cast a suspicion over its motives and won *Āyandagān* the grudge and enmity of both leftist and anti-regime intellectuals. In terms of circulation, the paper was no match for the two big evening newspapers, but it carried considerable weight with the political elite of the right and the center in Iran, and the views expressed—especially in its editorials—were held to influence the policy decisions within the government.

Āyandagān produced also two weekly editions: a special rural edition, *Āyandagān-e rūstā*, intended for farmers, and a literary edition, *Āyandagān-e adabī*, featuring book reviews, literary works of Iranian writers, and translations of the works of non-Iranian writers.

With the departure of Homāyūn in 1977 to assume a ministerial post in the cabinet of Jamšīd Āmūzgar, *Āyandagān*'s management was entrusted to a five member board of editors and writers headed by Hūšang Wazīrī. This change of hand coincided with the rise of agitations against the government and the spread of revolutionary fervor which led in the fall of 1978 to the paper's take-over by a group of left-leaning and pro-revolutionary journalists headed by Fīrūz Gūrān. The victory of the revolution in Iran in February, 1979 brought *Āyandagān* unprecedented prominence.

Assuming an uncompromising anti-dictatorial stance right from the beginning of the revolution, however, *Āyandagān* set a course leading to an unavoidable head-on collision with the politically active clergy and their followers who were striving for nothing less than a total control of the press, and as it turned out, complete submission or destruction of the dissent within it. For the first six months after the revolution, a relentless and often violent tug of war ensued between *Āyandagān* and its supporters on the one side and the forces of the revolutionary government which loathed its anticlerical, leftist, and liberal positions on the other. Although run mostly by a group of leftist journalists, *Āyandagān* represented a much wider spectrum of approaches and ideas. Its attainment of national prominence during this phase may be explained by the fact that it gradually became the focal point and spokesman for all those who felt threatened with and feared a monopolistic takeover by Islamic radicals. With the notable exception of the Pro-Moscow Tūda (Communist) party, various groups from the extreme left, such as Fadā'īan-e Kālq, religious revolutionaries such as Mojāhedīn-e Kālq, progressive liberals such as the National Democratic Front, liberal centrists like the National Front, to a host of artists, writers, other groups and factions representing minorities,



women, etc., found a vehicle in *Āyandagān* to express their views and air their grievances. Proliferation and the relative freedom of opposition newspapers in the first few months after the revolution did not diminish the significance of *Āyandagān* which enjoyed a substantial national readership. It only reinforced the determination of anti-*Āyandagān* forces to bring the paper under control as soon as possible. The process took several months and passed through several stages. It started from verbal threats, harassment of the writers, the occasional vandalizing of its premises, and led to physical violence against its writers and supporters, destruction of its publications, and finally, burning and lootings of its offices. The leader of the revolution, Āyatallāh Komeynī, personally set the stage for the final assault against *Āyandagān* by declaring that “he would not read *Āyandagān*,” which amounted to an official banning of the paper. Finally following several pro- and anti-demonstrations in the spring and early summer of 1979, the offices of *Āyandagān* were taken over, some of its writers arrested and jailed, and its printing offices expropriated (16 Mordād 1358 Š./7 August 1979). The *Āyandagān* establishment was soon utilized to publish a pro-Islamic Republic newspaper called *Šobh-e āzādagān* (The dawn of the free) and *Āyandagān* ceased to exist.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For *Āyandagān* before the 1979 revolution see M. Barzīn, *Maṭbū‘āt-e Īrān*, 1354 Š./1976, Tehran, pp. 33, 250.

Ġ.-H. Šāleḥyār, *Čehra-ye maṭbū‘āt-e mo‘āser*, Tehran, 1973, pp. 6, 68, 140, 145, 231.

Idem. *Čašmandāz-e jahānī wa vīžagīhā-ye īrānī-e maṭbū‘āt*, Tehran, 1977, pp. 175-77, 193.

Search terms:

□□□□□□ ayandehgan aayandehgaan ayandegan