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HISTORIOGRAPHY IX. PAHLAVI PERIOD (1)

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GENERAL SURVEY

The historical studies of this period are primarily about documenting Iran's national identity. Histories of ancient, medieval, and modern Iran produced in the Pahlavi period, as well as a large volume of edited historical texts, contributed to a complex understanding of the past that aimed to demonstrate Iran's territorial integrity and its cultural and political continuity. They underscored a sense of endurance and adaptability in the face of aggression, religious conversion, material destruction, chaos, and in recent times the West's cultural and economic predominance.

Typical of comparable nationalist historiographies in the early part of the 20th century (e.g., Greek, Italian, Egyptian, and Turkish), the state-sponsored historical narrative under the Pahlavis decidedly favored highlighting the might and glory of the ancient Persian empires, as supported by new archeological and textual evidences. In contrast, it downgraded history of the recent past as an age of material and moral decay. Such nostalgic rendition of the remote past was employed by some historians of the period to celebrate the Pahlavi rule as an age of stability, material progress, and a renewed

grandeur. History thus played a crucial part in legitimizing the new dynasty and its program of secularizing reforms. Even nationalists of the period who opposed the autocratic Pahlavi rule shared this discourse, if not to celebrate the ancient past then to mourn last opportunities for greatness because of domestic tyranny and foreign intervention. Such idealized views on both extremes digressed to fascistic and conspiratorial interpretations of the past.

Pahlavi historiography, though more diverse and complex than historical writings of the Qajar and Constitutional eras, carried some of the endemic deficiencies of both periods. Though annalistic chronicling died out and court patronage largely disappeared, the writing of history did not fundamentally liberate itself from the yoke of the state. Nor did it nurture a new devotion to critical methodology. Historical writings moreover continued to suffer from a paucity of archival and other historical records. Following the prevailing historiographical trend in Europe before World War II, study of political history remained paramount. The dynastic format of Iran's history with a classical periodization was preserved and further streamlined in the school textbooks. Dull and dry in tone, they helped turning history into one of the most tedious in the school curriculum. Disinterest in study of history at academic and popular levels further compounded because of the utilitarian values the state arrogated to positive sciences at the expense of the humanities. Moreover, promotion of the ancient past as a wholesale propaganda tool in the service of the state engendered nationalistic pride that proved detrimental to dispassionate historical inquiry.

These weaknesses aside, in the early part of the Pahlavi period (1925-41) the Iranian cultural establishment, a mix of the remnants of the Qajar educated elite and the intelligentsia of the Constitutional and post-Constitutional periods, embarked on new textual studies and critical editing. Under the auspicious of the state's cultural institutions they intended to lay a solid ground for future his-torical research. In the post-World War II era this ground-work did result in earliest examples of modern research by academic historians, mostly in the Tehran University, who produced works of originality and influence. The non-academic historians who contributed to the study of the Qajar, Constitutional period and early Pahlavi era often negotiated, in an age of political upheavals, an uneasy path between journalism and serious scholarship.

General histories. The most visible change in the nationalist historiography under Reżā Shah was emphasis on the pre-Islamic, and particularly the

Achaemenid, past. Thanks to archeological discoveries and familiarity with Greek texts, a more accurate picture of ancient Iran gradually replaced the semi-legendary narrative based on the *Šāh-nāma* and Perso-Islamic universal histories. Most significant in this regard are the works of Ḥasan Pirniā, Mošir-al-Dawla. A prominent member of the Qajar educated elite (who had retired from a long political career after Reżā Shah's rise to power), Pirniā's works denotes a departure from the familiar hybrid of fact and legend that was characteristic of new experiments in the Qajar period from Jalāl-al-Din Mirzā to Āqā Khan Kermāni (see viii. above). His early endeavors, while anticipated in the modern scholarship of the early Pahlavi period, are still loyal to the *Šāh-nāma* narrative. *Irān-e bāstāni* (Tehran, 1927) surveyed pre-Islamic Iran up to the end of the Sasanian era on the bases of Greek and Roman sources, but his *Dāstānhā-ye Irān-e qadim* (Tehran, 1928) attempted to trace back the historical evidence of the Western sources in the *Šāh-nāma* and other traditional Persian accounts. The two works were encapsulated a year later in a single volume entitled *Irān-e qadim* (Tehran, 1929), which for many years remained the standard school text.

Pirniā's magnum opus, *Tāriḵ-e Irān-e bāstān* (3 vols., Tehran, 1931-33) was a logical outgrowth of his pioneering work. It aimed at an extensive and systematic treatment of Iran's pre-Islamic past based on all available sources—a project which remained incomplete upon his death in 1933. The published volumes started with a thorough discussion of Iran and its neighboring civilizations and continued to cover the Elamite, Median, and Achaemenid empires up to the 3rd century B.C.E. (books I and II), the Macedonian invasion and Alexander's successors (book III), and the Parthian period to the first quarter of the 3rd century C.E. (book IV). He relied on ancient Greek and Roman texts (in modern European translations) as well as on Persian and Arabic universal histories, Armenian, ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Latin, and Greek Byzantine sources. He also widely benefited from French, German, Russian, and English scholarship of his time as well as on deciphered inscriptions, papyri, clay tablets, and other textual, archeological, and numismatic evidence available at his time. His work stood out not only for its contextual coverage of ancient civilizations in contact with or subordinated to the Persian empire, but for acknowledging the complexity of Iran's cultural heritage. His descriptive narrative was framed on a linear, dynastic chronology and relied heavily on comparative source criticism in an effort to demonstrate factual inconsistencies—an approach that inevitably limited his analytical potential.

No doubt influenced by European philological scholarship of his time, Pirniā viewed the ancient period as the first phase of Iran's Aryan civilization stretching between the 8th century B.C.E. and the 7th century C.E. The second epoch in his grand periodization began with the rise of Islam and ended with the collapse of the Timurid empire in the 15th century (itself consisting of two sub-periods; pre and post Mongol). The third began with the rise of the Safavids and ended with the Constitutional Revolution. The fourth commenced with the Pahlavi era (9th edition, Tehran, 1999, I, p. 167), no doubt a reflection of the author's acknowledgement of the spirit of rejuvenation that was in vogue in Iran's cultural circles. Over time Pirniā's contribution surpassed the archaism of the Pahlavi era and came to document for its audience the origins of Persian historical identity.

After this initial focus in the 1920s and 30s, promo-tion of pre-Islamic history hardly went beyond a state legitimizing tool to result in extensive and original historical research. Even Pirniā's incomplete project was not picked up for decades perhaps because of the daunting linguistic task needed for the Sasanian period, for which Persian scholarship was not prepared. Yet Pirniā's periodization proved compatible with a textbook project conceived by a group of Persian scholars to produce a multi-volume history of Iran from ancient times to the present. While Pirniā's *Tārīḵ-e Irān-e bāstān* was to cover the pre-Islamic period, Ḥasan Taqizādeh committed himself to the period between the rise of Islam and the Mongol invasion, to be entitled *Az Parviz tā Čangiz*, of which he only produced an introductory fraction on Arabia, the rise of Islam, and the Arab invasion of Iran (Tehran, 1931 [32]). ʿAbbās Eqbāl-Āštiāni was to write the part from the Mongol invasion to the end of the Qajar period. Though this project was never fully realized, a lesser version of it appeared in a single textbook by ʿAbbās Eqbāl as *Tārīḵ-e mofaṣṣal-e Irān az ṣadr-e Eslām tā enqerāż-e Qājāriya* (Tehran, 1939) and later was published together with Pirniā's *Irān-e qadim* in one volume as *Dawra-ye tārīḵ-e Irān* (ed. Moḥammad Dabir-siāqi, Tehran, 1967). Eqbāl's *Tārīḵ-e mofaṣṣal* systematically and succinctly treated the whole of the Islamic period in a dynastic format. Though a tedious and unimaginative account of wars and dynastic upheavals, Eqbāl's remained a coherent and reliable reference for decades, only comparable to ʿAbd-Allāh Rāzi's *Tārīḵ-e Irān, az azmana-ye bāstāni tā sāl-e 1316 šamsi-e ḥejri* (Tehran, 1938). Rāzi's one-volume history devoted more space to recent epochs and, though laudatory in tone, is one of the earliest on changes under the Pahlavi rule. Generally dispassionate and balanced, he paid more attention than Eqbāl to intellectual and cultural trends, setting the tone for later literary

histories.

Critical editions and academic studies.An important accomplishment of the period was the publication of critical editions, a legacy of textual studies pioneered by European orientalists and taken up by Persian scholars, who were earlier trained mostly in the indigenous Perso-Islamic tradition of learning. Most influential in this group, Moḥammad Qazvini (q.v.), the celebrated literary and text scholar, was a protégé and later colleague of Edward Granville Browne (q.v.). Commissioned by the Gibb Memorial Series (q.v.) under Browne's aegis, Qazvini's editing of a number of important Persian classical texts served as a model for later generations. His meticulous edition of ʿAla-al-Din ʿAtā-malek Jovayni's *Tārīḵ-e jahāngošāy* (3 vols. Leyden and London, 1912-37) was received as a major contribution to Mongol and Il-Khanid studies and a brilliant example of systematic collation of manuscripts, paleographical scrutiny, and historical and literary erudition. Yet as a consummate literary scholar (*adib*) closely adhering to the text and absorbed by its dry lexicographic complexities, Qazvini remained virtually foreign to historical method and analysis all through his career, a characteristic he shared with many of his admirers. Yet it was not perhaps an accident that Qazvini's scholarship was devoted to classical authors such as Jovayni who were conscious of their Persian cultural identity under alien rule.Rediscovery of this Persian identity distinct but not divorced from Iran's Islamic loyalties may be seen as the prime agenda behind the whole text publications movement, with lasting effect on the emerging historiography of the Pahlavi period.

After his return to Iran in 1939 Qazvini collaborated with ʿAbbās Eqbāl-Āštiāni and Qāsem Ḡani (qq.v.); and they left behind important studies, even though the latter is primarily known for his literary contributions. Eqbāl's copious works both on classical and recent history are original and diverse. Among his many critical editions are Moḥammad Ḥosayni ʿAlawi's early heresiography, *Bayān al-adyān* (Tehran, 1933); Hendu-šāh Naḵjavāni's *Tajāreb al-salaf* (Tehran, 1934) on the Saljuq administration; Moḥammad b. Esfandiār's *Tārīḵ-e Ṭabarestān* (Tehran, 1941) on the early history of Māzandarān's endogenous principalities; Abu'l-Qāsem Jonayd Širāzi's *Šadd al-azār fi hatt al-awzār ʿan zawwār al-mazār* in collaboration with Qazvini (Tehran, 1949), and Moʿayyad al-Dawla Jovayni, *ʿAtabat al-kataba* (Tehran, 1950) in collaboration with Qazvini on the official correspondence of the Saljuqid period. Among his editions of the early modern period are Mirzā Moḥammad Kalāntar's

Ruznāma (Tehran, 1946), memoirs of a remarkable 18th century administrator in Fārs; Jahāngir Mirzā's *Tāriḵ-e now* (Tehran, 1948), a history of the middle decades of the 19th century; and Moḥammad Ḵalil Marʿaši's *Majmaʿ al-tawāriḵ* (Tehran, 1948) on the fall of the Safavids.

Critical editions aside, Eqbāl's first contribution to historical studies appeared as *Ḵāndān-e nowbaḵti* (Tehran, 1932), a thorough study of the Persian house of Nowbaḵt and the role of its successive generations of administrators/scholars in the formative age of Shiʿism, when the presumed Occultation (*ḡeyba*) of the Twelfth Shiʿi Imam in the 9th century was followed by the rise of the Shiʿi legal school. His *Az ḥamla-ye Čangiz tā taškil-e dawlat-e Timuri* (Tehran, 1933, 3rd ed. 1968 being vol. I of *Tāriḵ-e mofaṣṣal-e Irān az estilā-ye Moḡol tā eʿlān-e mašruṭiyat,* part of the above-mentioned incomplete, collaborative project) was the most systematic study of the subject published in Persian and is still valuable. Based almost entirely on Persian and Arabic original sources, it covers the geography of inner Asia, the rise of the Mongol nomadic empire, the conquest of Central Asia and Iran, the making of the Il-Khanid empire and its decline, the interregnum leading to the Timurid invasion, and finally an overview of the literary and artistic history of the period.

Eqbāl's other important contribution was the founding and editorship of the short-lived but influential periodical, *Yādgār* (5 vols., Tehran, 1944-48), primarily devoted to the study of history and including many of Eqbāl's articles, especially on the early modern and modern periods. In approach and style, *Yādgār* followed *Kāva* under the editorship of Ḥasan Taqizādeh (Berlin, 1916-22), though it was more scholarly in providing a forum for historical and biographical research and cultural and literary debates. Eqbāl's culturally liberal and academically rigorous stance influenced a generation of scholars who were trained or inspired by him.

Besides *Yādgār*, in later yearsa number of literary and scholarly journals such as *Armaḡān, Soḵan,* and *Yaḡmā* regularly published on useful historical topics, though few of them were based on extensive research. The book review journal *Rāhnamā-ye ketāb* under the editorship of Iraj Afšār also provided a wide range of articles, reviews, and historical notes important for updating Persian scholars about domestic and international historical studies on Iran. The only specialist journal of historical studies, however, was *Barrasihā-ye tāriḵi,* which published by Iran's Office of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces between 1966 and 1979. Under the editorship of Jahāngir Qāʾem-maqāmi, a historian and editor of some distinction, the journal published solid

historical studies on all areas dealing with early modern and modern history of Iran. Qāʾem-maqāmi's own work, besides thorough articles in *Barrasihā,* included a paleographical and methodological survey of Persian historical sources entitled *Moqaddema-ye bar šenāḵt-e asnād-e tāriḵi* (Tehran, 1971). During thirteen years of its regular publication the journal published numerous articles on military history of the pre-modern era, including the Il-Khanid and Safavid periods, mostly restrained in their patriotic tone.

Interest in the Il-Khanid era, when Persian intellectual and literary life reached a new momentum, inspired Qā-sem Ḡani, who collaborated with Qazvini in an authoritative edition of Hafez's *Divān*, to attempt an intellectual biography of the great 14th century Persian poet. His *Baḥṯ dar āṯār o afkār o aḥwāl-e Ḥāfeẓ* (2 vol., Tehran, 1942-43) employed a vast array of histories and literary biographies, mostly in manuscript, as well as the internal evidence in Hafez's *ḡazals,* to render a complex picture of the political life under the quarreling local dynasties of Fārs in the late 13th century. In volume two Ḡani offered an original study of classical Sufism, tracing back mystical traits in Hafez's poetry beyond contemporary and near contemporary Sufi circles to Perso-Islamic schools of mystical thought. Even though Ḡani's premature death left his comprehensive study incomplete, his contextual panorama remained unrivaled to this day, as it rendered a convincing case for Hafez's poetry as apex of Persian cultural florescence, mirroring in its multilayered structure the political disarray of his age.

As part of the historical inquiry into the evolution of Persian literature, the Ghaznavid period also received attention from scholars of the same circle. Saʿid Nafisi's new critical edition of Abul-Faẓl Bayhaqi's masterpiece, *Tāriḵ-e Bayhaqi* (or *Masʿudi*; 3 vols., Tehran, 1940-53) stemmed from his earlier inquiry into the lost works of this great historian of the 11th century (*Āṯār-e gomšoda-ye Bayhaqi,* Tehran, 1936) later to appear as Bayhaqi's corpus (*Dar pirāmun-e tāriḵ-e Bayhaqi,* 2 vols. Tehran, 1973). Nafisi's other studies on the early Islamic period, mostly biographical, included an inquiry into the first ruler of Taherid dynasty (*Tāriḵ-e ḵāndān-e Ṭāheri,* vol. I only,Tehran, 1956), a study of life and works of the 10th century poet Rudaki (*Aḥwāl o āṯār-e Rudaki,* 3 vols., Tehran, 1930-40), a biography of Ebn Sinā (see AVICENNA) enlarged over several editions, and in the 1950s semi-popular biographies of two counter-Islamic prophets of the 8th and 9th centuries, Moqannaʿ and Bābak Ḵorramdin. His *Tāriḵ-e tamaddon-e Irān-e Sāsāni* (2 vols., Tehran, 1952), an overview of Sasanian culture, aimed to complement *Tāriḵ-e Irān-e bāstān.* Yet

it lacked the comprehensiveness of Pirniā's study (who apparently entrusted him with the completion of his work). Nafisi's impressive range and prolific output, which included a history of Sufism and a history of the early Qajar period, occasionally is compromised by hasty scholarship and lack of originality.

More sophisticated methodology and disciplined use of sources may be observed in Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Ṣadiqi's pioneering *Les mouvements religieux iraniens au IIe et IIIe siècle de l'hégire* (Paris, 1938). Ṣadiqi's exemplary study of the early Iranian counter-Islamic movements, being his Sorbonne doctoral thesis, incorporated all modern scholarly trappings of its time including thorough source evaluation, critical and measured analysis, and consistent referencing. In essence, however, Ṣadiqi was operating, like his counterparts who wrote in Persian, within a nationalist discourse, as the book tried to demonstrate the Persian religio-cultural resistance to the Islamic-Arabic hegemony. Ṣadiqi's method and critical approach, however, seldom fostered similar historical studies after his return to Iran, in part because he himself opted for other academic and political pursuits. Ironically, the Persian edition of his work only appeared posthumously as *Jonbešhā-ye dini-e Irāni dar qarnhā-ye dovvom wa sevvom-e hejri* (Tehran, 1993).

With few exceptions (Ṣadiqi among them), Persian historical scholarship received little international recognition. Despite grater familiarity with Western historical literature, Persian professional historians were slow in replacing literary scholars and text editors in introducing modern historical studies even at the school text level. Moḥammad-ʿAli Foruḡi's (q.v.) *Dawra-ye moḵtaṣar-e tāriḵ-e Irān* (Tehran, 1323/1905) continued to serve as a school text up to the 1920s before being replaced by Eqbāl's above-mentioned overview (for Foruḡi's pre-Pahlavi works see viii. above). For decades literary and historical studies remained interconnected, often to the detriment of sound historical method.

More central in this intermix of literary and historical studies is Moḥammad-Taqi Bahār, who, aside from his poetry and contribution to literary history, as in *Sabk-šenāsi: Tāriḵ-e taṭawwor-e naṯr-e fārsi* (3 vols. Tehran, 1942), edited three important early historical texts: *Tāriḵ-e Sistān* (Tehran, 1935), *Mojmal al-tawāriḵ wa'l-qeṣaṣ* (Tehran, 1939; first published in facsimile edition by Moḥammad Qazvini in Gibb Memorial Series), and part of *Tāriḵ-e Balʿami* (posthumously re-edited by Moḥammad Parvin Gonābādi, 2 vols., Tehran, 1962). These were among the earliest examples of Persian prose, revealing

valuable details, not only on the emerging Persian language of the 10th and 11th centuries and the earliest translations from Arabic, but also on the memories of the pre-Islamic past and their ties with an emerging Persian identity in an environment of sectarian resistance to the Ummayad and ʿAbbāsid caliphates.

Like most other serious texts published at the time, these histories were commissioned by the publication committee in the Ministry of Education under ʿAli-Aṣḡar Ḥekmat (q.v.) in consultation with Qazvini, Taqizādeh, and Foruḡi, who viewed text publication as the first step toward any serious literary and historical studies. The text editing movement that was promoted by the literary elite of the early Pahlavi period continued to flourish in the following decades as the chief preoccupation of most Persian scholars trained by this influential elite. It benefited from state patronage, at first through the Ministry of Education, Tehran University (q.v.), and the Anjoman-e Aṯār-e Melli (q.v.; Society for National Heritage), and from the 1960s and 1970s through government-funded institutions such as the *Bongāh-e tarjama wa našr-e ketāb* under Ehsan Yarshater and *Bonyād-e farhang-e Irān* under Parviz Nātel Ḵanlari as well as provincial universities in Tabriz and Mašhad. Private scholars and publishing houses also contributed.

A leading text editor in the next generation is the prolific Iraj Afšār (Iradj Afshar), who from the mid-1950s in addition to bibliographical and reference tools made available critical editions for a number of historical texts in all periods. Among them are ʿAbd-al-Raḥim Kalāntar Żarrābi's *Merʾāt al-qāsān yā tāriḵ-e Kāšān* (Tehran, 1958) on the local history of Kāšān commissioned in the 19th century, Jaʿfar Jaʿfari's *Tāriḵ-e Yazd* (Tehran, 1958),Moḥammad Mofid Bāfqi's *Jāmeʿ-e mofidi* (Tehran, 1961), and other local histories of Yazd. He also edited a number of shorter historical texts and documents in *Farhanq-e Irān-zamin,* a yearly periodical he regularly published from 1954.Together with Mojtabā Minovi he also published *Waqf-nāma-ye rabʿ-e rašidi* (Tehran, 1971), an exemplary edition of a unique document. (On his editions of Qajar texts, see below.)

Publication of primary sources, however, was not followed by a substantive corpus of historical research based on such sources. Critical synthesis informed by systematic reading of primary sources and new topical approaches to untouched aspects were rare. In the decades following the Second World War an even wider chasm appeared between historical studies as it was practiced in the West and what was produced in Iran. We may

attribute such discrepancy in part to predominance of textual scrutiny and preference for paleographical and literary studies. However, in greater part such a lacuna was due to reluctance for critical thinking within disciplines of the humanities, a byproduct no doubt of the Pahlavi educational outlook and the superficial positivism that was at its core.

Among a handful of academic historians who aimed beyond text editing was ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Zarrinkub, whose proficiency and wide range made him a popular writer. His pioneering study of early Islamic Iran, poignantly entitled *Do qarn-e sokut* (Two centuries of silence, Tehran, 1951; revised 1957) marked a new turning point in the nationalist discourse. For Zarrinkub, even more than Nafisi, Eqbāl, and Ṣadiqi, the Arab invasion of Iran deserved closer attention, for it was an alien force that brought about the collapse of the Sasanian empire and Iran's conversion to Islam. This was a historical problem of great magnitude and lasting consequence that could only be compared to the Mongol invasion of the 13th century, the other major preoccupation of Iranian scholars. Ruptures in Iran's sovereignty and cultural continuity appeared even more compelling to such historians as Zarrinkub and offered more intellectual incentive; because, in contrast to societies of the Middle East who succumbed to Arabicization, Iran had managed to preserve its language and literature, cherish its pre-Islamic memories, and universalize within the Muslim world its ancient cultural and socio-political institutions. In view of Iran's nationalist historians the Arab invasion and whatever it stood for thus appeared a calamity no less repugnant than the Mongol invasion. In his later works Zarrinkub returned to this crucial shift from pre-Islamic to Islamic Iran with greater scholarly insight and more extensive sources. His *Tāriḵ-e mardom-e Irān* (2 vols., Tehran, 1984) is a general history covering ancient Iran to the Buyid period and filling especially the gap in Persian scholarship on the transformation of the late Sasanian civilization to Islamic and the re-emergence of a new Persian political identity in the early Islamic era.

Early modern and modern periods. In the historical consciousness of the Pahlavi era, the Arab and Mongol invasions were closely linked to Iran's presumed moral stagnation and material decline. To parallel these calamities, the historians of Iran also sought and found disastrous episodes in the modern national narrative. Chief among these is Iran's political disempowerment in the face of European imperial advances in the 19th century. Perceptions of decline invariably called on historians, at least since the Constitutional Revolution, to recognize the roots of decline and articulate on its dimensions

as the key to national salvation. Availability of a greater body of sources, Persian and European, helped articulate these anti-colonial positions. Yet the history of the Qajar and Pahlavi periods received serious attention only in the second half of the 20th century and, with few exceptions, remained the domain of the non-specialists. History as an academic discipline viewed the recent past, especially the Qajar period, as too contemporary and hence less worthy of historical attention beyond occasional publication of manuscripts and documents.

Even the Safavid period, which is perceived as the beginning of Iran's political and cultural reassertion and raises such crucial issues for historians as the course of conversion to Shiʿism, remained understudied. The most well-known work in Persian is Naṣr-Allāh Falsafi's voluminous *Zendagāni-e Šāh ʿAbbās-e avval* (5 vols., Tehran, 1953), a pioneering biography of ʿAbbās I (q.v.) based on an array of printed and manuscript sources in Persian and in European languages. Though largely descriptive, and sometimes repetitive, it offers an impressive panorama of Safavid history that highlights the place of the great ruler in consolidating the Persian empire and laying the foundation of modern Iran. Falasfi's study however does not pursue a particular argument or try to directly address questions concerning success or failure of ʿAb-bās's reign. Yet here, as in his other works of diplomatic and political history, he does not shy away from depicting the darker side of ʿAbbās's career or the violence and repressive policies of the Safavid age. His portrayal of the Qezelbāš military elite as perpetrators of chaos and perpetual disarray vis-à-vis the stabilizing "Tajik" element may be taken as the author's subtle endorsement of Persian national identity and its endurance. Less evident is his possible motivation to portray the career of ʿAbbās I as a point of comparison with the contemporary nation-builder Reżā Shah Pahlavi and his mixed political record. Safavid studies, however, did not flourish beyond a number of critical editions including Iraj Afšār's edition of Eskandar-beg Monši Torkaman, *Tāriḵ-e ʿalam ārā-ye ʿAbbāsi* (Tehran, 1971) and ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Navāʾi's new edition of Ḥasan Rumlu's *Aḥsan al-tawāriḵ* (Tehran, 1970) and his editing of several volumes of Safavid correspondence taken from Ottoman and European sources. Moḥammad Ebrāhim Bāstāni-Pārizi's *Siāsat o eqteṣād-e ʿaṣr-e Ṣafavi* (Tehran, 1969, revised edition, Tehran, 2000) is a pioneering inquiry, based on mostly Persian primary sources, that introduces its reader to the unexplored fields of Safavid economy and social history. Bāstāni's characteristic lapse into storytelling and personal narrative do not reduce the value of his work. Besides V. Minorsky's edition of *Taḏkerat al-moluk* (*Tadh-kirat al-Mulūk*,

London, 1943), which appeared in a Persian edition as *Sāzmān-e edāri-e ḥokumat-e Ṣafavi* (Tehran, 1955), at least one other Safavid manual of government, *Dastur al-moluk* by Moḥammad Rafiʿ Anṣāri was first published by Moḥammad-Taqi Daneš-pažuh (*MDAT* 16, 1968-69).

The Post-Safavid era received even less attention. The life of Nāder Shah (with subtle parallels to Reżā Shah as savior of Iran) fell largely into the domain of fiction rather than serious scholarship. The case in point is the voluminous *Zendagāni-e por-mājerā-ye Nāder Šāh-e Afšār* (Tehran, 1956), the product of the active imagination of Moḥammad Ḥosayn Meymandi-nežād. He elevated Nāder to a hero of epic proportions. Yet despite glorification of Nāder in the Pahlavi era, little serious scholarship was done on the period beyond critical editions of chronicles and other accounts of the period. Jamil Quzānlu's brief studies of Nāder's military campaigns (e.g., *Tāriḵ-e neẓāmi-e jang-e Irān wa Hend,* Tehran, 1930) and Ḡolam-Ḥosyn Moqtader's *Nabardhā-ye bozorg-e Nāder Šāh* (Tehran, 1960) are two examples. In contrast, ʿAbbās Eqbāl's edition of the highly valuable post-Safavid memoirs, *Ruz-nāma-ye ḵāṭerāt-e Mirzā Moḥammad kalāntar* (Tehran, 1946) exhibited Nāder's violent nature and the devastating effects of his ceaseless campaigns on the cities and on the countryside. The Zand period too, despite being favored in Pahlavi era as an age of prosperity and good government, in contrast to the vilification of Qajar era, produced limited scholarship beyond text publication. Hādi Hedāyati's *Tāriḵ-e Zandiya* (vol. I: *Irān dar zamān-e Karim Ḵān,* Tehran, 1955) and Parviz Rajabi's *Karim Ḵān Zand wa zamāna-ye u* (Tehran, 1973) are based on original research and study of both Persian and European sources.

More attention was paid to the history of the Qajar period, albeit to portray it, with few exceptions, as an age of political subordination to Europe and failure to grasp Western modernity. Depiction of the Qajar ruling elite as indolent, covetous, and disloyal stood in contrast to the images of national rejuvenation and steadfastness promoted by the nationalist intelligentsia of the Pahlavi period. Examples of serious scholarship above all tended to depict Iran's early 19th century territorial losses to European expansionism or to concentrate on a few visionary statesmen, such as ʿAbbas Mirzā, Mirzā Taqi Khan Amir Kabir, and Mirzā Ḥosayn Khan Mošir-al-Dawla, who had fallen victim to conservatism, capriciousness, and foreign intervention. Likewise, the Constitutional Revolution drew the attention of some scholars as a popular movement with comprehensive sociopolitical reform objectives. Throughout the period, the often non-specialist writers, ranging from former statesmen,

diplomats, and politicians to dilettantes, journalists, and popular writers, detected conspiracies, behind-the-scene foreign meddling, corruption, and betrayal in every important development of the Qajar past from war with Russia to the Constitutional Revolution (q.v.) and beyond. For many populist writers and memoirists subscribing to a conspiratorial viewpoint, this attitude was triggered by reading into the Qajar past the bitter experiences of the National Movement in the early 1950s and, before that, the British overture in the post-Constitutional period leading to the 1915 Anglo-Russian agreement, the 1919 Anglo-Persian agreement (qq.v.; albeit an aborted one), and later the coup of 1921 that brought Reżā Khan to power. Adherence to conspiratorial theories and the search for hidden hands offered an easy and self-righteous explanation for complex historical processes. These lifted the responsibility for failure and placed it squarely at the doorstep of corrupt traitors, mostly from the Qajar elite, and their foreign masters as well as minorities and even clergy. History was seen as one long, dark, preconceived design driven solely by foreign interests to undermine Iran's sovereignty, progress, and authentic culture; a scheme in which innocent Iranians fell victims of repeated acts of betrayals, chicanery, and deception to rob them of their territory, natural resources, and national identity (see CONSPIRACY THEORIES).

An early example of such historical perspective, no doubt influenced by the European colonial penetration in the interwar period, appears in Maḥmud Maḥmud's *Tāriḵ-e rawābeṭ-e siāsi-ye Irān o Engelis dar qarn-e nuzdahom-e milādi* (8 vols., Tehran, 1949), a work of enduring effect on generations of readers. As a survey of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations within the wider context of the Qajar political history, Maḥmud began his project as early as 1921, coinciding with the rise of Reżā Khan to power (who expropriated the author's adopted last name, Pahlavi—hence the repetition of his first name). By 1941 he had covered the events up to 1891, and the publication of earliest volumes coincided with Iran's oil nationalization movement and the escalation of anti-British sentiments. A graduate of the Tehran American College, Maḥmud is one of the earliest to rely on English travel accounts, memoirs of diplomats and colonial officers, and other diplomatic and colonial material to document his coverage of the growth and development of British imperial interests in Iran with nearly all the trappings of modern scholarship but also with an unfortunate conspiratorial bent. Like others nationalist advocates of his generation, Maḥmud invariably saw the power and determination of colonialists as more compelling than Iranian resolve. Even the Constitutional Revolution, in which he participated as a youth, seemed to

him a blind popular revolt fostered by the British to implement the terms of the 1907 Anglo-Russian secret agreement.

Among works of other postwar subscribers to conspiratorial theory with a nationalistic agenda (but with a historiographical quality inferior to Maḥmud's) we may include Aḥmad Ḵān Malek Sāsāni's *Dast-e penhān-e siāsat-e Engelis dar Irān* (Britain's hidden hand in Iran, Tehran, 1952), Esmaʿil Rāʾin's highly popular *Ḥoquq-begirān-e Engelis dar Irān* (Britain's pensioners in Iran, Tehran, 1968), and his sensational *Farāmuš-ḵāna wa feramasoneri dar Irān* (3 vols., Tehran, 1968; see FREEMASONRY). Loyal to the rhetoric of populist nationalism, both authors invariably unveiled in their sensational works Britain's sinister plots at every historical turn to frustrate Iran's patriotic struggle for political independence and material progress. The thrust of this lopsided, accusatory style of history is often directed toward real or assumed collaborators, who were judged as agents of colonialism and traitors to their own country. The most virulent of such characterizations appeared in Rāʾin but also in Ḥosayn Makki's multivolume *Tāriḵ-e bist-sāla-ye Irān* (Tehran, 1944 and revised and expanded editions after 1979) that aimed chiefly to uncover, with support of some documents, the British design behind the rise of Reżā Khan to power. These interpretations of the recent past often helped reinforce popular xenophobic impressions of British omnipotence and Iranian disempowerment. They also helped build an inventory of domestic traitors, who were held responsible for all the real and imagined misfortunes of the nation.

Yet conspiratorial interpretations were not the only byproduct of 20th century nationalist historiography. Ebrāhim Teymuri's two studies on the Regie protest (*Taḥrim-e tanbāku yā avvalin moqāwemat-e manfi dar Irān,* Tehran, 1949) and the history of concessions in the Qajar period (*ʿAṣr-e biḵabari yā tāriḵ-emtiāzāt dar Irān,* Tehran, 1953) are backdrops to the ongoing oil nationalization struggle but relatively free of distortions. They are among the first to rely on Persian archival and manuscript material to produce a detailed and balanced historical overview of Iran's political economy and obstacles on the way of its growth. Later Aḥmad-ʿAli Sepehr's documentary history of Iran during the First World War (*Irān dar jang-e bozorg,* Tehran, 1957) offered extensive Persian documentary evidence, on Iranian counteraction, mostly based on archives of the German embassy in Tehran, with unmistakable German sympathies. Saʿid Nafisi's *Tāriḵ-e ejtemāʿi wa siāsi-e Irān dar dawra-ye maʿāṣer* (2 vols., Tehran, I, 1956, II, 1965) on the other hand is the first reconstruction of

Qajar history up to the end of the Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah era (1250/1834) that draws on Persian and European sources (including Russian) to depict military and diplomatic challenges to the Qajar state with emphasis on wars with Russia and loss of territory in the Caucasus. Nafisi's work is largely descriptive and filled with long citations, yet it offers a realistic picture of the Qajar dilemma of adapting to the emerging European colonial order while encountering pressures from the clerical and other conservative groups at home.

On a different plane, though entirely within the nationalist discourse of its time, works of Fereydun Ādamiyat in the 1960s and 1970s painted a complex historical landscape with greater methodological competence. His familiarity with Western historical literature, his concise and confident style, use of archival and unpublished sources in Persian and European languages, and his compelling force of analysis elevated his works beyond the descriptive historiography of his time. His study of the 19th century reformers and reformist thought started with a biography of Amir Kabir (*Amir Kabir wa Irān*, 3 vols., 1944-45; revised editions, 1955 and extensive revision, 1969) and continued with two studies on the intellectual roots of liberal constitutionalism: *Fekr-e āzādi wa moqaddema-ye nahżat-e mašruṭiyat* (Tehran, 1961) and *andiša-ye tarraqi wa ḥokumat-e qānun* (Tehran, 1973), the latter focusing on reforms of Mošir-al-Dawla era (1872-82). His intellectual biographies on Mirzā Āqā Khan Kermāni (*Andišahā-ye Mirzā Āqā Ḵān Kermāni,* Tehran, 1967) and two others major figures, Aḵundzāda and Ṭālebof, also complemented his systematic coverage of political modernity in Qajar Iran. Ādamiyat's greatest strength is his knowledge of the primary sources, which he painstakingly gathers and skillfully renders in support of his argument. He is concise and coherent and sharp in his praises and condemnations. In his works he has drawn attention to some of the least known or unknown aspects of Iran's experience of modernity and demonstrated obstacles to reforms, most evidently the conservative forces operating within and outside the Qajar state. Yet he hardly can be defined as impartial and dispassionate. In his Manichean worldview he often moralizes the past, idealizes his heroes, and vilifies his villains beyond proportion. Combined with an interrogative style and a righteous tone, it appears as though he is more interested in how things ought to be than in how they really were. In other words, he tends to pass judgement with rational precepts and moral yardsticks unfitting for the historical context of the time. In this regard he epitomizes much of the 20th century Persian historical writings as a form of secular hagiography to vindicate the Persian self-image as innocent victim

of unfortunate forces beyond control. His portrayal of Amir Kabir, for instance, tends to reinstate the great premier's place in Iran's national martyrology rather than depict rigorously and critically the causes of his failure and the difficult choices in his career. In contrast his hostile portrayal of the Bab and the Babi movement is in congruence with the deep-seated Perso-Shiʿite cultural biases against minorities. He is oblivious of the dynamics of the Babi movement as an indigenous social force that was obliterated by the collaboration of authoritarian reformism under Amir Kabir and conservatism of the *mojtahed* establishment.

Amir Kabir and his tragic end indeed have been central in defining Iran's modern nationalist narrative and are the subject of numerous biographies. Beside Ādamiyat, Ḥosayn Makki's *Amir Kabir* (Tehran, 1944) and Eqbāl-Āštiāni's incomplete but important *Mirzā Taqi Ḵān Amir Kabir* (posthumously ed. Iraj Afšār, Tehran, 1961) contain new official documents and private correspondence. Eqbāl in particular employs new material from the library of the Golestān palace and other less-known sources to offer a more balanced and human-like portrayal of Amir Kabir. In contrast ʿAli-Akbar Hāšemi-Rafsanjāni in his amateurish *Amir Kabir yā qahramān-e mobāreza ba esteʿmār* (Tehran, 1968)attempts to depict his hero in a new, radical Islamic light, complying otherwise with the conventional nationalist narrative. Yet the revised version of Ādamiyat's biography (Tehran, 1969) remains the most comprehensive in treatment of Amir Kabir's foreign policy and domestic initiatives based largely, but not always accurately, on the British Foreign Office correspondence.

The history of the Constitutional Revolution also began to receive serious attention in the Pahlavi period mostly from veterans of that movement or those who witnessed it or were close enough to the period to record original accounts. These accounts came after a lacuna of nearly thirty years that kept a necessary scholarly distance from such contemporaries as Nā ẓem-al-Eslām's *Tāriḵ-e bidāri-e Irāniān* (see viii. above). Chief among them is Aḥmad Kasravi's popular two-volume work *Tāriḵ-e hejdahsāla-ye Azarbāyjān* (Tehran, 1937) and *Tāriḵ-e mašruṭa-ye Irān* (Tehran, 1940). Kasravi, a nationalist with modernizing prophetic impulses but also an instinctive gift for historical research, produced his work in reverse chronological order. In *Tāriḵ–ehejdahsāla* (later to be identified as volume 2 of the set on the history of the Constitution) he first covered the events roughly from the 1908 royalist coup to the end of Ḵiābāni's insurgency in 1922, mostly in Kasravi's home

province of Azarbaijan. In *Tārik̲-e mašruṭa* he then returned to the genesis of the Constitutional Revolution and its early development up to 1908. His extensive account, as Kasravi acknowledged, was in part his own recollection and in part relied on *Tārik̲-e bidāri*, contemporary newspapers, telegrams, and oral accounts, as well as communications from the public when the early versions of his history appeared as a serial in his newspaper *Paymān.* As a historian Kasravi already demonstrated nationalist sympathies and historical ingenuity in his pioneering *Šahriārān-e gomnām* (Tehran, 1928), a study of the Persian dynasties of the early Islamic period that held out against the Arab conquest, and his *Tārik̲-e pānṣad-sāla-ye K̲uzestān* (Tehran, 1934, 1954, 1960), that recorded the history of the Mošaʿ-šaʿīān gnostic community based on original sources.

Given the spontaneity and gradual compilation of Kasravi's history of the Constitutional Revolution, his organization and control of the material is skillful. Moreover, he aims to view the Constitutional Revolution as aspirations and actions of the disempowered against the privileged and the powerful. He also sets out to demonstrate the fallacy of cynics who dismiss the Revolution as a mere conspiracy by foreign powers or those who consider it an abject failure while benefiting its fruits. At the time such an insight was rare, especially as it was grounded on hard evidence, including letters and telegrams, proclamations, revolutionary pamphlets, and contemporary accounts. Kasravi's daring assertions and his "pure Persian" style purged of Arabic words make his tone more poignant. Yet despite his populist convictions, he disproportionately credited the clerical leadership of the Revolution, hailing Sayyed ʿAbd-Allāh Behbahāni and Sayyed Mo-ḥammad Ṭabāṭabāʾi as prime movers of the popular movement. At times his reverence goes even against careful reading of his own sources that portray the two mojtaheds as open to whims and wishes of their constituencies, their radical student and clerical lower ranks. Kasravi also underestimates support among the ulema for Shaikh Fażl-Allāh Nuri's opposition to secular constitutionalism as sporadic and insubstantial.

Reluctance to openly credit the contribution to the Revolution of the freethinkers, secular millenarians, and other marginalized radicals, most significantly the Šayk̲is and the Babis, is more striking in Mehdi Malekzādeh's *Tārik̲-e enqelāb-e mašruṭiyat-e Irān* (7 vols., Tehran, 1949-53). Based on an earlier biography of Naṣr-Allāh Behešti, Malek-al-Motekallemin (Tehran, 1946), one of the popular leaders of the Revolution and the author's father,

Malekzādeh's extensive coverage is valuable as an insider narrative of the Revolution correcting some of misrepresentations in earlier accounts such as Nāẓem-al-Eslām Kermāni's. Yet his history, much of which is based on Browne and other known accounts, suffers from imprecision, contemporizing of concepts and offices, and at times long-windedness. Malekzādeh is also careful to conceal, to the point of practicing "dissimulation" (*taqiya*), the Azali-Babi affiliation of his own father and a whole host of other Babi-sympathizers among early advocates of constitutionalism. Like Yaḥyā Dawlatābādi and before him Mehdi Šarif Kāšāni, Malekzādeh too complied with the unwritten code of the Revolution's master narrative that called for a Shiʿi-based nationalist homogeneity. To a lesser extent such a tendency is also evident in a number of valuable regional accounts by veterans of the Constitutional Revolution or those with access to sources or oral accounts. Among them the most extensive are Karim Ṭāherzādeh-Behzād *Qiām-e Azarbāyjān dar enqelāb-e mašruṭiyat-e Irān* (Tehran, 1954) illuminating the role of the proto-socialist *Markaz-e ḡaybi* in the early phase of revolution in Azarbaijan, and Esmāʿil Amiḵizi's *Qiām-e Azarbāyjān wa Sattār Ḵān* (Tehran, 1960) on the role of the Šayḵi city quarters during the Tabriz resistance against the royalists.

In the nationalist discourse of the period, political history and, by extension, the development of reformist thought remained paramount. The historians as part of the Pahlavi intelligentsia primarily sought the causes of Iran's "backwardness" compared with Western advances, the obstacles to its political modernization that were caused by European colonial powers, and Iran's political "decline" in contrast to the presumed glories of the past. In comparison, little dispassionate attention was paid to aspects of Iran's social and economic history including village and urban life and especially the general disadvantages and sufferings of the ordinary people, aspects of non-elite culture and its religious and popular manifestations, history of women and family, violence, discrimination and persecution, as well as cultural stereotypes and religious biases toward the internal and external "other." Nor was any serious research done on the development of the religious establishment in the face of the modernity and forced secularism of the post-Constitutional period and early Pahlavi era. The history of Shiʿi law in recent centuries and its impact on the society in relation to the common law and the areas of conflict with the state judicial authority are neglected even by the traditional jurists or the new-wave clerical activists.

The little work that was done on aspects of social structure and economic

development was often by writers of Marxist persuasion who mostly lacked historical training and insight or were unfamiliar with the sources. Instead, rampant superimposition of "dialectical" method and rigid Marxist dogma turned their treatments into political pamphleteering. Despite the popularity of socialist ideologies among Iranian intellectuals even before the 1940s (and despite the prevailing rhetoric of the Tudeh party), there was a general disinterest in the Iranian past. There were a few exceptions, however, chief among them Ehsān Ṭabari, the theoretician of the Tudeh Party, whose Marxist philosophical training is evident in his broad survey of Iran's cultural history entitled *Barḵi barrasihā dar bāra-ye jahān-binihā wa jonbešhā-ye ejte-māʿi dar Irān* (Some studies about the worldview and social movements in Iran, 2d enlarged ed., Tehran, 1979). Ṭabari's analysis, albeit loyal to the official party line in tracing "progressive" traits in Persian culture, is not alien to intricacies of Iran's literature and philosophy, a rarity among his comrades. Another exception is Karim Kešāvarz's biography of the Ismaʿili Nezāri leader entitled *ḤasanṢabbāḥ* (Tehran, 1965) and his valuable translations of Russian historical scholarship of pre-Islamic and Islamic eras including Petroshevskiĭ's study of the Il-Khanid agrarian history as *Kešāvarzi wa monāsebāt-e arżi dar Irān-e ʿaḥd-e Moḡol* (Tehran, 1965) and Vladimir Barthold's famous study on Central Asian history as *Torkestān-nāma: Torkestān dar ʿahd-e hojum-e Moḡol* (2 vols., Tehran, 1968). Kešāvarz's precision in choice of equivalents and retrieval of original Persian, Arabic, and Turkish terminology as well as his updates and useful corrections and additions to original Russian works make him the most prolific and imaginative interpreter of Russian historical scholarship in Persian. By contrast, the pioneering work of Mortażā Rāvandi on the social history of Iran, *Tāriḵ-e ejtemāʿi-e Irān az āḡāz tā aṣr-e ḥāżer* (10 vols. Tehran and San Jose, California, 1962-94), offers a pedestrian analysis of the development of Iranian social institutions over a very long time-span based on classical Marxist theory of modes of production. Though popular with young readers with leftist leanings, Rāvandi's work essentially lacked scholarly scrutiny and mastery of sources, in addition to being dispersed in its coverage and brimming with unproven assertions.

In a later generation of the Iranian left, Bižan Jazani attempted to articulate a Marxist class analysis with reference to development of Iran's social structure and obstacles to growth of capitalism. Yet, in contrast to thriving historical studies in Europe, India, and Latin America, Marxism in Iran did not result in serious historiographical engagement. Only in the closing decade of the period under consideration Homā Nāṭeq's earliest works on the Qajar period

pioneered refreshing research and rigorous analysis that combined the standpoint of the French New Left of the 1960s and 1970s with nationalist historiography of the Ādamiyat school. Her two collections of articles, *Az māst ke bar māst* (Tehran, 1975) and *Moṣibat-e wabā wa balā-ye ḥokumat* (Tehran, 1979), covered a range of topics from orientalism and cultural encounters with the West to the history of epidemics and revenues and financing of the Qajar households. Her work co-edited with Fereydun Ādamiyat, *Afkār-e ejtemāʿi wa siāsi wa eqteṣādi dar aṭār-e montašer-našoda-ye dawran-e Qājār* (Tehran, 1977), is a useful but selective précis of a series of rare Qajar treaties and documents that are summarized according to the editors' perspectives and preferences.

Nāṭeq should be counted among very few women historians of the period in a male-dominated and power-orientated milieu with no serious interest in the history of women. Širin Bayāni's *Zan dar Irān-e ʿaṣr-e Moḡol* (Tehran, 1973) is a pioneering work. Among earlier works of this prolific historian we may mention her study of the Jalayerid periods, entitled *Tāriḵ-e Āl-e Jalāyer* (Tehran, 1967), exploring an important episode in post-Mongol history, to be followed by other studies of the Il-Khanid era. Early works of another woman historian, Maʿṣuma Etteḥādiya (Neẓām-Māfi) also promised a prolific career. In her collection of articles entitled *gušahāʾi az rawābeṭ-e ḵāreji-e Irān* (Tehran, 1976) she utilized British and Persian sources to illuminate an important episode in Anglo-Persian relations during the first and second Herat crisis. Her work after 1979 focused mostly on the Constitutional and post-Constitutional periods. The work of Ferešteh Nurāʾi, another Qajar historian, *Taḥqiq dar afkār-e Mirzā Malkom Ḵān-e Nāẓem al-Dawla* (Tehran, 1973), did not result in further scholarship. Badr-al-Moluk Bāmdād's *Zan-e Irāni az enqelāb-e mašruṭiyat tā enqelāb-e sefid* (2 vols. Tehran, 1968-69; English abridged tr., *From Darkness into Light: Women's Emancipation in Iran,* tr. F. R. C. Bagley, Hicksville, 1977) is unique in portraying women's participation in the modernity of the Constitutional and Pahlavi periods from the perspective of an early feminist.

Beyond issues of women the new themes in cultural history seldom received the attention of trained historians. Among the intellectuals of the left who barely dabbled in history, Jalāl Āl-e Aḥmad's "post-colonial" theory in his *Ḡarbzadagi* "Occidentosis" (Tehran, 1962) deserves a mention. Articulated after Aḥmad Fardid's Heideggerian "post-modernist" (and crypto-fascist) philosophical musings, Āl-e Aḥmad's *Ḡarbzadagi* renders a hasty analysis of aspects of Iran's encounter with the Western modernity. Though acute and

innovative in approach, *Ḡarb-zadegi* is marred by inaccuracies and prejudicial assumptions. Whatever the merits of Āl-e Aḥmad's alluring theory—that motivated generations of Iranian dissenters before it became the staple rhetoric of the Islamic Republic—Āl-e Aḥmad often succumbs to xenophobic, and at times conspiratorial, motives rampant in the Iranian nationalist narrative. His blanket condemnation of the Iranian experience of modernity (as elsewhere in the non-Western world) assumes a colonial plot of immeasurable proportions that was brought upon Iran by Western interests (and its native collaborators) so as to emasculate and hollow out some presumed authentic Perso-Islamic ideals and values at the heart of Iranian identity.

A comparable urge for wild historical assertions in a "sociological" garb is evident in the writings of ʿAli Šariʿati, the renowned revolutionary and social critic. Ša-riʿati's call for reversion to the "red ʿAlawi Shiʿism" of the early Islamic centuries and away from the "Safavid Shiʿism" of the later times is one of many distortions that littered his idealized portrayal of Shiʿi history. He is seemingly oblivious to the importance of quietist and legalistic trends in the shaping of Twelver Shiʿism. Ša-riʿati's abuse of history is particularly acute in his idealization of such proto-Shiʿi personalities as Abu-Ḏarr Ḡe-fāri or his hagiographical portrayal of ʿAli and the Shiʿi Imams with a gloss of revolutionary rhetoric. His class analysis of Islamic history, though it rejects Marxism in favor of a religio-mystical idealism, nevertheless reflects the Third World revolutionary socialism of his time. Though convincing to his young audience before and during the revolution, Šariʿati's rushed reading of the past swings between visionary and propagandistic.

By the end of the Pahlavi period and the dawning of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, a new spirit of inquiry for learning about the forbidden past led to publication of banned texts. Specially history of the National Movement of the 1940s and 50s was amply, though hastily, explored and roots, objectives of the Constitutional Revolution and causes for its political failure revisited. The publication of new historical texts and collections of correspondence, documents, and treaties was accelerated even with greater vigor. As in the Pahlavi era, writers often substituted for serious research and masked paucity of critical historiography. As before, obstacles to a rigorous practice of history lingered. As such the post-revolutionary period relied on and followed the few successes and many failures of the Pahlavi era in cultivating a sound school of historiography committed to critical thinking, close examination of the

sources, accurate reporting, and impartiality. Neither the defiant nationalist discourse that defined the historical ethos of this era nor the pedantic textual scholarship of the Pahlavi era were ready to observe and historically anchor a revolution that seemed to be entirely outside the pale of secular nationalism.

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