



IRĀN-E NOW

IRĀN-E NOW, the title of two political newspapers published in Tehran during the second and third decades of the 20th century.

1. *Irān-e now*, the daily organ of the Demokrāt political party (Ferqa-ye Demokrāt-e Irān, also referred to as Hezb-e Demokrāt; see Ādamiyat, 1976b, p. 136; *Āyanda* 17, 1991, p. 566). It has been described as “the greatest, most important and best known of the Persian newspapers, and the first to appear in the large size usual in Europe” (Browne, *Press and Poetry*, p. 52). *Irān-e now* was published in Tehran, with a few interruptions, from 7 Ša’bān 1327 to 28 Du’l-ḥejja 1329 (23 August 1909-19 December 1911), when it was banned. As a substitute there appeared on 29 Du-l-ḥejja 1329 (20 December) the single issue of *Irān-e novin*, and on 1 and 2 Moḥarram 1330 (22-23 December 1911) *Rahbar-e Irān-e now* (erroneously *Rāhbar-e Irān-e now* in Kasravi, p. 491, and following him Kohan, II, pp. 560, 618). Hyacinth Rabino and many others following him have mistakenly recorded 7 Rajab 1327 (25 July 1909) as the starting date of the paper’s publication. The cause of the error seems to have been the fact that, starting with issue thirty-two, the paper’s title area bore the phrase “Rajab 1327,” which marked the beginning of Aḥmad Shah’s reign (r. 1909-25) as the final victory for the constitutional movement.

The licensee and editor of the paper, Abu’l-Ziā’ Sayyed Moḥammad Šabestari, was the former publisher of the papers *al-Ḥadid* and *Mojāhed* and an active supporter of the Constitutional Movement (q.v.). Edward Browne and those after him have considered Abu’l-Ziā’’s role in the paper as “nominal.” The paper was reportedly financed by Basil, an Armenian of Tehran, who also



functioned as its actual editor. The manager of the paper and its principle contributor, however, was Moḥammad-Amin Rasulzāda of Baku (b. Bāku, 1884; d. Ankara, 1954) from the very beginning (Browne, *Press and Poetry*, p. 52; Kasravi, p. 128; Āryanpur, II, pp. 109, 335). Starting with the twin issues 103 and 104 (13 Šaʿbān 1329/8 August 1911), Sayyed Mahdi Afjaʿi was named as chief director. Rasulzāda was officially announced in the first issue of the second year as editor-in-chief, and he continued so until 26 Jomādā I 1329/25 May 1911, when he was banished out of the country (Rasulzāda; Brown, *Press and Poetry*, p. 52; Kasravi, p. 128; Ādamiyat, p. 97; Āryanpur, II, p. 109, and n. 2; see below).

In Tehran, Rasulzāda joined the political party of *Ferqa-ye demokrāt-e Irān* and became a member of its Central Committee (Ādamiyat, 1976, p. 97). He was an experienced and well-informed journalist, and the paper flourished brilliantly with his leadership. The very success of the paper, however, instigated the envious hostility of the factions opposed to the platform of the Democrats. Rasulzāda was accused by the opposition of being a spy, and the government, pressured by Russia, expelled him from Persia on the grounds of being a foreign citizen (*Majles* 4, no. 26, 3 Duʿl-ḥejja 1328/5 December 1910; Taqizāda, pp. 169-70; Āryanpur, II, pp. 109-10). He was succeeded in the paper by Sayed Mahdi Afjaʿi in Šaʿbān 1329/August 1911. Besides Rasulzāda, who wrote light articles with the pen name Niš (Sting), the paper benefited from the contributions of a number of well-known poets and authors of the time, including Abuʿl-Qāsem Lāhuti, Moḥammad-Taqi Bahār (q.v.), the Georgian Ğolām-Rezā Amirḥājebi, and Hosayn Šabā.

Irān-e now began publication in the interval between the collapse of the traditional absolute monarchy and the inauguration of the Majles (parliament), which was the climax of the Constitutional Revolution. It appeared with several many innovative features (size, pagination, literary style, and informative content) that quickly attracted attention and made it quite popular. From its very inception, the paper had close ties with a number of radical constitutionalists, who, under the influence and leadership of Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizāda, had prepared the ground for establishment of the Demokrāt Party. It pursued a liberal orientation from the start, and, despite its avowed pledge in the very first issue that it “is not affiliated with any faction,” it officially became the organ of the Demokrāt Party after the inauguration of the Second Majles at the end of 1909, with Rasulzāda as its chief editor.

The paper raged against foreign intervention, especially that of Russia, in



Persia, and took an uncompromising attitude towards traditional power factions in the country, such as big landowners and some leaders of the religious establishment. The journal's liberal orientation involved it in exchanging polemics with the papers that opposed it, and inevitably became an active player in the quarrels of the political parties that had emerged following the inauguration of the Second Majles. The quarrel reached its climax after the paper announced its affiliation with the Demokrāt Party and voiced its opposition to the parties E'tedāl and Etefāq wa Taraqqi. This led to a heated debate and exchange of vehement polemics between *Irān-e now* and the organs of those parties, namely, *Esteqlāl-e Irān*, *ʿAṣr*, and *Majles*. It had also a number of unfriendly exchange with *Šarq* (*q.v.), an independent paper published by Sayyed Żiā'-al-Din ṬabātaĀbā'i. This squabble soon died out, however, due to the common features that both papers shared, namely opposition to Russia and conflicts with the governments of both Moḥammad-Wali Khan Sepahdār Tonokāboni and Najafqoli Khan Şamşām al-Salṭana Baḳtiāri (Parvin, pp. 370-71).

Iran-e now survived many venomous attacks, including two by religious fanatics in February and March 1910 and two legal battles over specific issues (Bayāt and Kuhestāni, eds., I, pp. 252-56; Parvin, pp. 371-73). The paper was banned on 16 Jomādā I 1328/26 May 1910, following its criticism of the severe conditions imposed by Russia and England for the loan requested by Sepahdār's government. The government, facing the protests of the Majles deputies and also noticing the great popular support the paper received, had to retract the ban, and the paper continued publication (Parvin, pp. 373-75). Two weeks later, however, it closed down for financial and administrative reasons; and when it resumed publication after three months, it met with a concerted campaign of the opponents of the Demokrāt Party against its chief editor, Rasulzāda, which, together with the pressure exerted by the Russian embassy, forced Rasulzāda to resign and leave the country. With the exile of Rasulzāda, the paper was deprived of its ablest and most well-informed contributor, who could not be easily replaced in the Persia of the day by another person of comparable talent. The departure of Rasulzāda, however, did not end the hostile attitude toward the Demokrāt Party and its organ, *Irān-e now* (Parvin, pp. 615-17).

On 29 Rajab 1329/26 July 1911, Najafqoli Khan Baḳtiāri (ŞamsĀm al-Salṭana) was appointed prime minister; and, following the policy of his predecessor, Sepahdār, two days after taking office, he issued an illegal order for the



suspension of the paper (Parvin, p. 617). The alleged cause was the paper's attack on the former prime minister, but in reality it was a pro-Russian move and in the context of the latter's long preparation for a wide intervention in Persia. This ban lasted for two weeks, but was soon followed by another one. The last issue of the paper (vols. 3, no. 121) bearing the original title *Irān-e now* appeared on 28 Dū'l-ḥejja 1329/19 December 1911, eleven days after its latest suspension before it was banned permanently. Following this, one issue in the name of *Irān-e novin* and two issues titled *Rahbar-e Irān-e now* appeared, but they were also banned, because they had exposed and denounced the Russian aggressions in Azarbaijan (Kasravi, p. 491; Parvin, pp. 618-19).

Irān-e now was a paper primarily concerned with the news, both domestic and foreign, and carried articles with clear political overtones, as well as advertisements. Its editorials reflected the views and the political agenda of the Demokrāt Party, and given the critical conditions of the day, it is an invaluable source material for the history of the period. Its serialized sections clearly dealt with the political and economic issues of the time. For instance, the translation of Ivan A. Kriloff's allegorical story, *Konsert-e jānvarān* (The concert of animals), was an insinuation about the ineffective government of Sepahdār (Browne, *Press and Poetry*, pp. 52-53; Āryanpur, II, p. 109). Lucien Bouvat (1909), a French observer, with regard to the diversity and the informational values of its content, called *Irān-e now* the preeminent Persian paper, and William Morgan Shuster (p. 20) described it as "the best and most fearlessly edited journal in Persia." It was an ardent advocate of democratic principles (Āryanpur, II, p. 109) and of resistance to foreign intervention in the country. Social views expressed in the paper are not as consistent and uniform as its steadfast xenophobia. Its criticism of the influence of foreign powers is at times mild and simplistic, while at other times it takes the sharp tone of leftist European papers. Given the historical period in which it was published, the allegation that it was a leftist or a Marxist paper (Āgāhi, p. 23) seems to be unfounded (Ravāsāni, pp. 78 and 84).

Irān-e now was the first Persian paper that, like its European counterparts, appeared consistently in a large format (Browne, *Press and Poetry*, p. 52), and it set a precedent for the papers that followed, although a few other papers (e.g., *Irān*, q.v., no. 1) had already appeared for a short period of time in a large format with typeset printing (Āryanpur, II, 109; Bouvat, 1909).

Irān-e now was printed at the printing houses of Fārus, Irān-e Now, Majles, and the government publishing house in four pages of five and later four



columns, measuring 41 x 55.5 cm, and occasionally carried pictures. Single issues were sold for four *šāhis* in Tehran and five *šāhis* elsewhere in the country. The annual subscription rate was 50, 55, and 75 krans for Tehran, elsewhere in Persia, and abroad, respectively. It is generally believed that it was the paper with the largest circulation of its time, but estimates as to its actual print run vary from 2,500 (Browne, *Press and Poetry*, Introd., p. 25) to 8,000 (‘Ayn-al-Salṭana, p. 1931), while, in a letter to the Ministry of Education, dated only five days after the first issue, its print run is given as 5,000 (Bayāt and Kuhestāni, eds., p. 252).

Incomplete sets are available at the major libraries in Persia (Central Library of the University of Tehran, the Public Library in Tehran, etc.), Cambridge University Library, the Library of Congress, and the Bibliothèque d’étude iraniennes at Université Sorbonne nouvelle, Paris.

Bibliography:

Ḥosayn Ābādiān, *Rasulzāda, ferqa-ye demokrāt wa taḥawwolāt-e mo‘āšer-e Irān*, Tehran, 1997, passim.

Faridun Ādamiyat, *Fekr-e demokrāsy-e ejtemā’i dar nahzat-e Mašruṭiyat-e Irān*, Tehran, 1976, pp. 96-97, 129 ff.

Iraj Afšār, ed., *Awraq-e tāzayāb-e Mašruṭiyat marbuṭ ba sālḥā-ye 1325-1330*, Tehran, 1980, pp. 128-29.

‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Āgāhi, “Dawrān-e awwaliya-ye nofuḍ-e andiśahā-ye mārksisti dar Iran,” *Donyā*, N.S. 3/4, Winter 1962, p. 23.

Yaḥyā Āryanpur, *Az Šabā tā Nimā*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1972, II, pp. 158-59.

Touraj Atabaki and Solmaz Rustamova-Towhidi, *Baku Documents: Union Catalogue of Persian, Azarbaijani, Ottoman Turkish and Arabic Serials and Newspapers in the Libraries of Republic of Azarbaijan*, London and New York, 1995, p. 127.

Qahramān Mirzā Sālur ‘Ayn-al-Salṭana, *Ruz-nāma-ye kāṭerāt-e ‘Ayn-al-Salṭana*, ed. Mas‘ud Sālur, Tehran, 1989, p. 2789.

Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La presse et le mouvement national chez les musulmans de Russie avant 1920*, Paris, pp. 104,



107-10, 115, 119-20, 123, 138.

Lucien Bouvat, "En Perse," *RMM* 9, 1909, pp. 343-44.

Idem, "La presse persane," *RMM* 11, 1910, p. 335; 12, pp. 697-98.

Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1906-1909*, London, 1966, pp. 243, 334.

Aḥmad Kasravi, *Tāriḳ-eò hijdah sāla-ye Āḍarbāyjān*, Tehran, 1976, pp. 128, 491.

Gu'el Kohan, *Tāriḳ-e sānsur dar maṭbu'āt-e Irān*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1984, II, p. 560, 618.

Moḥammad Ḥosayn Manḏur-al-Ajdād, *Asnād-e qatl-e Ṣani'-al-Dawla 2/1-2*, 1992, p. 153.

Ḳalil Moḡaddam, *Fehrest-e ruz-nāmahā-ye mawjud dar Ketāb-ḳāna-ye markazi-e Fārs*, Shiraz, 1998, no. 58.

Ṣādeḡ Khan Mostašār-al-Dawla, *Ḳāṭerāt wa asnād-e Mostašār-al-Dawla*, ed. Iraj Afšār, 5 vols., Tehran, 1983, II, pp. 306-7.

Foruḡ-al-Zamān Nuri Eṣfahāni, *Rāhnamā-ye maṭbu'āt: fehrest-e našriyāt-e mawjud dar ketāb-ḳāna-ye 'omumi-e Ebn Meskuya-ye Eṣfahān*, Isfahan, 2001, p. 56.

Nāṣer-al-Din (Nassereddin) Parvin, "Ruz-nāma-ye Irān-e Now," *Irān-šenāsi /Iranshenasi* 13/2-3, 2001, pp. 346-77, 615-27.

Šāhroḡ Peymāni, *Fehrest-e ruz-nāmahā-ye mawjud dar ketāb-ḳāna-ye markazi-e Dānešgāh-e Eṣfahān*, Isfahan, 1983, p. 17.

Ibrahim Pourhadi, *Persian and Afghan Newspapers in the Library of Congress, 1871-1978*, Washington, D.C., 1979, no. 101.

Hyacinth Louis Rabino, *Ṣurat-e jarāyed-e Irān wa jarāyed-i ke dar ḳārej az Irān ba zabān-e fārsi ṭab' šoda ast*, Rašt, 1911, no. 41.

Raḥim Ra'isniā, the "Pišgoftār [Forword]," in Moḥammad-Amin Rasulz'āda, ed., *Gozārešhā-i az enḡelāb-e Mašruṭiyat-e Irān*, Tehran, 1998.

Šāpur Ravāsāni, *Nahzat-e Mirzā Kuček Ḳān Jangali*, Tehran, 1984, pp. 78, 84.



Revue du Monde Musulman 10, p. 129; 12, pp. 697-99; 13, pp. 394-97; 15, pp. 155-56, 161-62, 171, 334.

Şadr Hāşemi, *Jarā'ed o majallāt* I, pp. 345-48.

Biżan Sartipzāda and Kobrā Kōdāparast, *Fehrest-e ruz-nāmahā-ye mawjud dar Ketāb-kāna-ye melli-e Irān*, Tehran, 1976, no. 96.

Moḥammad-Mahdi Şarif Kāşāni, *Wāqe'āt-e ettefāqiya dar ruzgār*, ed. Manşura Etteḥādiya and Sirus Sa'dvandiān, 3 vols., Tehran, 1983, II, pp. 522-23.

William Morgan Shuster, *The Strangling of Persia*, New York, 1966. Ursula Sims-Williams, *Union Catalogue of Persian Serials and Newspapers in British Libraries*, London, 1985, no. 226.

Mortazā Solţāni, *Fehrest-e ruz-nāmahā-ye fārsi dar majmu'a-ye Ketāb-kāna-ye markazi wa markaz-e asnād-e Dāneşgāh-e Tehrān* 1267 qamari tā 1320 šamsi, Tehran, 1977, no. 64.

Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizāda, *Zendagi-ye tuḫfāni: Kāṭerāt-e Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizāda*, ed. by Iraj Afşār, Tehran, 1993, pp. 27, 169-70, 466.

2. *Irān-e now*, the organ of the *Ferqa-ye demokrāt-e mostaqel-e Irān* published in Tehran from 25 Ordibehešt to 1 Kōrdād 1302 Š. (16-22 May 1923), a total of seven issues. Because of the identical title, it was considered as the continuation of the organ of the Demokrāt faction that was published by Şabestari and Moḥammad-Amin Rasulzāda in Tehran some thirteen years earlier. It was, like many of its contemporaries, a multifarious publication with primary concern with news. Prior to the appearance of this *Iran-e now*, its licensee, Zayn-al-Ābedin Rahnemā, had already published a paper titled *Irān* (q.v., no. 3) which he had rendered independent of the government less than two months earlier. On the day following the appearance of *Iran-e now*, he declared his total responsibility for the paper and the fact that it was a separate paper, independent of the older one (Şadr Hāşemi). In any event, the paper did not meet any much popular support and was discontinued after one week of publication. It was printed in Tamaddon and Bosfor printing houses in four pages of four-column format of 41 x 54 cm and carried no illustrations. The annual subscription rate was set at ninety krans. Complete sets are kept at the Public Library in Tehran and scattered issues are available at the libraries



of ‘Allāma Ṭabāṭbā’i (Shiraz) and the University of Chicago.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Asnād-i az maṭbu‘āt wa aḥzāb-e dawra-ye Rezā Šāh, Tehran, 2001, pp. 298-99.

Şadr Hāšemi, *Jarā’ed o majallāt* I, pp. 348-49.

Biżan Sartipzāda and Kobrā Ḳodāparast, *Fehrest-e ruz-nāmahā-ye mawjud dar Ketāb-kāna-ye melli-e Irān*, Tehran, 1976, no. 97.