



IRĀN NEWSPAPERS

IRĀN, the title of five newspapers, of which four were published in Persia and one in Baghdad, Iraq.

1. *IRĀN*, the official organ of the Persian government, was published from 11 Moḥarram 1288 to 14 Du'l-qa'da 1326 (1 April 1871-8 December 1908), as a substitute when the publication of three governmental journals (*Ruz-nāma-ye dawlat-e 'aliya-ye Irān*, *Elmiya*, and *Mellati*) was suspended in late February 1871 by the order of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah (Ṣadr Hāšemi, I, pp. 305-6). The paper started with three issues a week, but later it became semi-weekly and remained so throughout, except for a short period in 1291/1874, when it appeared weekly in a large format with typeset printing, and from 1 Moḥarram 1321 to 9 Ša'bān 1323 (30 March 1903-8 October 1905), when it became a biweekly paper with the new title *Irān-e solṭāni*.

Irān was always under the direct supervision of the highest government officials in charge of the press and publication. The first of them was Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan Ṣani'-al-Dawla (later E'temād-al-Salṭana, q.v.), the director of the government bureaus of press (Edāra-ye ruz-nāmajāt-e dawlati) and of translation (Dār-al-tarjama-ye kāṣṣa-ye dawlati), who managed the paper for twenty-five years. After his death on 18 Šawwāl 1313/2 April 1896, both his title and ministerial position were inherited by his nephew, Moḥammad-Bāqer Khan Adib-al-Molk (Ṣadr Hāšemi, I, p. 310). In Moḥarram 1321/April 1903, the latter was replaced by Mollā Moḥammad Nadim-al-Solṭān (Nadim-bāši), and the paper became a biweekly journal with the new title *Irān-e solṭāni*, with Ġolām-Ḥosayn Khan Afzal-al-Molk as its chief editor. Later,



however, Nadim-al-Solṭān was dismissed, and, with the reappointment of E'temād-al-Salṭana to the ministry, the added adjective *solṭāni* was dropped from the paper's title.

A number of the leading intellectuals of the time who served at the Ministry of Press and Publications (Wezārat-e enṭebā'āt) collaborated in the production of the journal. The most noteworthy among them were Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Ḍokā'-al-Molk Foruḡi (q.v.), Mojir-al-Dawla 'Ali-Moḥammad Khan Šaybāni Kāšāni, and Afzal-al-Molk Ġolām-Ḥosayn Khan Adib, who was the chief editor of *Irān-e solṭāni* (E'temād-al-Salṭana, I, pp. 256, 262-63, 409-10; II, Maḥbubi Ardakāni's comm., pp. 663-64, 789-90; Brown, p. 88).

As the state's official organ, the paper mostly carried the news that concerned the government, including royal decrees, conferring of titles, assignments and dismissals, and especially such court news as the king's hunting expeditions, excursions, etc. It also contained pieces on modern sciences, news of significant domestic and international events, and the serialized translation of some Western works (e.g., Jules Verne's *Les Anglais au Poles Nord: adventures du Capitaine Hattteras*).

Until the end of 1321/March 1904, *Irān* was lithographed in the government printing office in 4 double-column pages of 34 by 22 cm, except for the short interval of 1874, when typesetting was tried. After 1904, it was typeset in a larger format in private printing houses. As the official organ of the state, it became the target of criticism by the papers published abroad, and, after the assassination of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, which precipitated a more diversified and less controlled era in the country, *Irān* lost the significance it had before.

Irān had the maximum print run of 2,000 copies. Subscription to it, at the annual rate of 3.6 toman, was obligatory for the upper class and high government officials during the reign of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah; after the appearance of *Eṭṭelā'* newspaper in Rabi' II 1298/March 1881, however, *Irān* was distributed free to subscribers. Incomplete sets are available in most major libraries in Persia; a recent reprint of the complete set, done by the National Library of Iran, is also available.



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Edward Browne, *Press and Poetry*, pp. 49-51, 88-91.

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Ṣadr Hāšemi, *Jarā'ed wa majallāt* I, pp. 305-12, 326-27.

Moḥammad Moḥiṭ Ṭabāṭabā'i, *Tāriḳ-e taḥlilī-e maṭbu'āt-e Irān*, Tehran, 1984, pp. 32-33.

2. *IRĀN*, a semi-official paper, published in Tehran with several significant changes from 9 Ābān 1295 to 29 Esfand 1301 Š. (1 November 1916-20 March 1923). It began with three issues per week, but appeared five times a week in the second and third years before it became tri-weekly again.

Managers were appointed by the council of ministers, and each time a new one was assigned, a new license was issued in his name. The first director of the paper was the career journalist, Sayyed Ḥasan Ardabili (b. Ardabil 1294/1877; d. Tehran 20 Ramažān 1336/29 June 1918), who, after his death, was succeeded by Zayn-al-Ābedin Šayḳ-al-'Erāqaynzāda, better known by his later surname Rahnemā (Bayāt and Kuhestāni, eds., I, pp.185-88).

During the premiership of Mirzā Ḥasan Woṭuq-al-Dawla, Moḥammad-Taḳi Bahār (q.v.) was selected for the job, but on his request, the name mentioned on the paper was that of his brother, Moḥammad Malekzāda (Bayāt and Kuhestāni, eds., I, pp. 191-93). Starting with number 337 (9 Āḍar 1297 Š./29



November 1918), however, Bahār began signing the major articles with his initials (M. B.) as the political director (*modir-e siāsi*), and only from number 632 (23 Esfand 1298 Š./13 March 1920), following the departure of Malekzāda to Mashad as director of the department of education in Khorasan, did Bahār fully identify himself on the paper. Bahār’s tenure, however, did not last very long. After the collapse of Woṭuq-al-Dawla’s government, Bahār declared his resignation in an article titled “Pāyān-e kaṣtagi” (The end of exhaustion), published in number 705, dated 24 Tir 1299 Š./14 July 1920 (see also Bahār, 1978, pp. 91-92). From then up to the coup d’etat of Esfand 1299 (q.v.), the paper was successively managed by Mirzā ‘Ali-Akbar Ḳorāsāni, a former editor-in-chief, and Esmā‘il Yagāni, a member of the paper’s editorial board. From number 919 (29 Jawzā’ 1300 Š./18 June 1921) to the end of 1301 Š./20 March 1923, the former manager, Šayḳ-al-‘Erāqaynzāda, was put in charge.

Irān was run by a team of qualified staff and efficient managers who took full advantage of its double status as a semi-official paper. Thus, on the one hand, the paper benefited from the support of the government, both financially and otherwise, especially due to the closure of its official paper, *Āftāb* (1290-94 Š./1911-15), for which it functioned as a partial substitute; and, as such, it was no wonder that in August 1921 it acquired a wireless telegraph for news reception and became the first news medium in the country to get such equipment. On the other hand, given the vast connections and official support available to it, it enjoyed the collaboration of many well-known writers and scholars.

In addition to news, its primary concern, *Irān* contained articles dealing with political and economic issues, serialized stories, and numerous advertisements. The editorials, written mostly by the manager and sometimes by the editors-in chief, constituted the most important part of the paper. Bahār was an outstanding poet and a renowned scholar, as well as a political activist. Thus, the editorials published during his tenure as manager, most of them from his own pen, are of particular significance not only from the viewpoint of their style and content, but also in the context of the political sensitivities of those days. The serialized pieces, in the first two years of *Irān*’s publication, were relatively short political and historical stories without mention of the names of their authors or translators. The first of these, written by Bahār himself, was titled *Nirang-e siāh yā kaniz-e safīd* (Black trick or white slave girl), which started with issue 334 (19 Ordibehešt 1298 Š./8 May 1919).

Notwithstanding the official pledge of the paper’s managers, as a rule, to gear



everything published in the paper to the government's official policy and interests, and not to do anything to the contrary (Bayāt and Kuhestāni, eds., p. 186), Bahār and his successors tried to make the paper appear completely independent and neutral. Nevertheless, the views and statements critical of the government's policies rarely appeared in the paper. In comparison with supporting or favorable articles, signed or otherwise, those critical of Woṭuq-al-Dawla's government and his Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919 (q.v.) were watered down and much milder in tone (Dawlatābādi, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* IV, pp. 129-31). In the same vein, the paper in this period was full of anti-Bolshevik news and commentaries, in which, beneath their exposing the danger of communism, lay an implicit and indirect justification of Woṭuq-al-Dawla's pro-British policies and the Anglo-Iranian Agreement. In most part of its history, *Irān* did not have any significant rivals. In the first year of its publication, Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alawi (p. 20) described it as "the best newspaper of the capital," and in the words of Ṣadr Hāšemi (I, p. 314) "it ranked first in terms of circulation, diversity of content, and number of readers."

Irān was printed at various printing houses (Bāqerzāda Brothers, Bosfor, Tamaddon, and Irān) in Tehran and had a print run of about 1,500 copies, mostly in 4 five-column pages; sometimes it appeared in 8, 6, or 2 (when a daily) pages. It measured 59 x 42.5 cm, and after 1921, while it increased the number of pages, its size was reduced to 55 x 40 cm. It carried no illustrations during its first three years. Annual subscription rate was mostly 60 krans, which rose to 80 krans when it became a daily. Incomplete sets of it are held in most important libraries in Persia as well as in the national libraries of Berlin, Paris, St. Petersburg, and the libraries of the University of Chicago and Princeton University.

Iraj Afšār, "Zayn-al-'Ābedin Rahnemā," *Āyanda* 15/6-9, 1989, pp. 614-15.

Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alawi, *Rejāl-e 'aṣr-e mašruṭiyat*, ed. Ḥabib Yaḡmā'i and Iraj Afšār, Tehran, 1984, p. 20.

Āryanpur, *Az Ṣabā tā Nimā* II, p. 336.

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Idem, *Tāriḳ-e moḳtašar-e aḥzāb-e siāsi-e Irān: enqerāz-e Qājāriya* I, Tehran, 1978, I, p. 40.

Kāva Bayāt and Mas‘ud Kuhestāni-nažād, eds., *Asnād-e maṭbu‘āt, 1286-1320 H. Š.*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1993, I, pp. 184-97.

Ali NoRouze [Ḥasan Moḳaddam], “Registre analytyque annoté de la presse persane (deputis la Guerre),” *RMM* 60, 1925, pp. 35-62.

Zayn-al-‘Ābedin Rahnemā, “Kāṭerāt-i az ruz-nāma-negāri Iran,” *Taḥqi-qāt-e ruz-nāma-negāri* 5, no. 18-19, Winter 1969-Spring 1970, pp. 17-18.

Şadr Hāšemi, *Jarā‘ed o majallāt* I, pp. 312-16.

Moḥamad Moḥiṭ Ṭbātabā‘I, *Tāriḳ-e taḥlili-e maṭbu‘āt-e Irān*, Tehran, 1984, pp. 169, 387.

3. *IRĀN*, an independent paper published as the continuation of the semi-official *Irān* 2. On 1 Farvardin 1302/22 March 1923, the paper *Irān* was turned over with all its assets and facilities to Zayn-al-‘Ābedin Rahnemā, who rejected government’s subsidy and published it independently, first three times a week and, starting with the second year, as a daily morning paper until 18 Tir 1332 Š./9 July 1953. On the eve of the 1307 new year Š./March 1928 the issue number 2632 appeared as a year-book, and from 1 Ābān to 18 Āḍar 1318 Š. (22 October-8 December 1929), it published a general weekly magazine, which did not receive much public support.

In Farvardin 1314 Š./March 1935 (not 1316/1937 as stated by Şadr Hāšemi, I, p. 314), the papers *Irān* and *Şafaq* were confiscated by the order of Reza Shah. *Şafaq* shut down permanently, but *Irān*, with all its equipment, facilities, and offices, was granted to the merchant Majid Mowaqqar (b. Bušehr, 1277; d. Tehran, Ābān 1346 Š./1898-1967; see “Laḡw-e emtiāz”). Rahnemā emigrated to Beirut and through an attorney tried in vain to retrieve some of his property (Bayāt and Kuhestāni, eds., pp. 212-16). He returned to Persia after the fall of Reza Shah in 1941 and, with the help of Fowḡi’s government, repossessed the paper from Mowaqqar. The first issue under Rahnemā’s renewed management appeared on 26 Āḍār 1320 Š./17 December 1942.

During Reza Shah’s reign, the editorial board of the paper under Rahnemā’s management was headed successively by Shaikh Yaḥyā Kāšāni (b. Kāšān, 1252; d. Tehran, 18 Esfand 1308 Š./1873-9 March 1930) and Sayyed Kāzem



Etteḥād, and under Mowaqqar, by Ġolām-‘Ali Mosta‘ān and then Keykosrow Šāhroḳ. After the return of the paper to Rahnemā, Maḥmud Puršālči and ‘Ali-Ašḡar Farāsiun served successively as chief editor. In 1945, Rahnemā was appointed as the Persian ambassador in Paris, and his son, Ḥamid Rahnemā, overtook the operation of the paper.

This paper, like its predecessor, was a multifarious journal that enjoyed the collaboration of distinguished writers and intellectuals of the time. It took an interest in politics in its early phase, and its unmistakable support of Reza Khan Sardār-e Sepah continued after the latter’s ascension to the throne; as a result, it was among the few papers that were never subjected to government’s supervision (Wazārat-e Farhang wa Eršād-e Eslāmi, pp. 142-43) or censorship.

During the reign of Reza Shah (1925-41), *Irān* gradually reduced its coverage of political issues, and like other papers, moved more and more in the direction of content diversification and printing official reports. Serialized stories were among its distinct features, and sometimes it carried two such stories side by side. Under Reza Shah, with the increasing suppression of the freedom of expression, *Irān* remained the most important paper of the country with probably the highest circulation until 1935, when the daily *Eṭṭelā‘āt* (q.v.), with an all-out effort, succeeded in surpassing it. It eventually lost its significance altogether against the emerging new rivals after the fall of Reza Shah in 1941, which led to the relaxation of government’s control of the press and the appearance of papers with various orientations.

Irān used a number of printing houses in this period. They included Bāqerzāda Brothers, Tamaddon, and, from the end of 1310 Š./beginning of 1931, *Irān* (renamed in 1936 Šerkat-e saḥāmi-e čāp-e ḳodkār wa *Irān*), which was owned by the paper itself and had the same address.

Irān was published in 4 and sometimes 6 five-column pages of 55 x 40 cm. Its pages increased to 8 at the end of its 13th year, and, in its 14th year (Mehr 1309 Š./September 1930), it appeared in 4 seven-column pages of 74 x 52 cm; occasionally, it had two additional pages carrying official announcements. Starting in its 22nd year (1938), it was published in 8 five-column pages of 51 x 37 cm. Annual subscription rate was 8 krans (rials) up to 1938 and 120 krans afterwards. Complete sets and scattered issues are held at various libraries in Persia.



Iraj Afšār, “Zayn-al-‘Ābedin Rahnemā,” *Āyanda* 15/6-9, 1989, pp. 614-15.

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Ṣadr Hāšemi, *Jarā‘ed o majallāt* I, pp. 312-16.

Wazārat-e Farhang wa Eršād-e Eslāmi, *Asnād-i az maṭbu‘āt wa aḥzāb-e dawra-ye Rezā Šāh*, Tehran, 2001, pp. 142-43.

4. *IRĀN*, a current, multifarious daily that, since 4 Bahman 1373 Š/24 January 1995, has been published by the official news agency of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRNA) and managed by the agency’s director. Given its style, organization, and diversity of content, the paper is unique among the news agencies of the world, which usually deal only with short news bulletins. The paper was established during the presidency of ‘Ali-Akbar Hāšemi Rafsanjāni as his personal means of public relations; under Moḥammad Kātami, it reflected the government’s views and policies and, therefore, ran at odds with other ruling factions of the country.

5. *IRĀN*, a propaganda newspaper published in Baghdad from the summer of 1917 until 1919 by the British forces after their invasion Iraq in 1917. It was managed by the Kurdish man of letters, Šokri Fażli, and was renamed *Zafar* (victory) after a few issues. Scattered issues of *Zafar* are held at libraries outside Iraq; some issues of *Irān* are found only at the National Library of Iraq in Baghdad and most probably have the same characteristics as those of *Zafar* (Hasani, p. 63).



‘Abd-al-Razzāq Ḥasani, *Ta’rik al-ṣahāfat al-‘Iraqiya*, Baghdad, 1975, facs. 1, p. 63.

Ebrāhim Zāheda, *Dalil al-jarā’ed wa al-majallāt al-‘Erāqiya, 1869-1978*, Kuwait, 1986, p. 47.

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