



ISFAHAN IX. THE PAHLAVI PERIOD AND THE POST-REVOLUTION ERA

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The Pahlavi period saw the development of a modern nation-state, rapid urbanization and population growth, establishment of a modern system of national education, and a stronger state-directed economic policy. These all had some repercussions in the province of Isfahan, but most of all in the city itself.

The Reza Shah period, 1925-41. This period, as pertains to Isfahan, consists of two distinct phases: the consolidation of central authority in the 1920s, and social and economic development in the 1930s. In the process of consolidating his power in Isfahan, Reza Shah managed to constrain two powerful social groups: the Shi'ite clergy and the Bakhtiari tribesmen; in both cases he adopted the same tactics: an initial stage of compromise and then, when the central authority had established its control, the adoption of much harsher measures.

It was hardly surprising that the local clergy, who had played a leading role in the socio-political life of Isfahan in the decades prior to the establishment of



the Pahlavi dynasty (Najafi, *passim*; Owrang; Anṣārī, pp. 41-51), were vociferously opposed to the social reforms introduced by Reza Shah in the early part of his reign. The conscription law of 1925 resulted in a general strike in the bazaar of Isfahan, and dozens of mullahs led by Ḥājji Āqā Nur-Allāh Fešāraki, Āqā Najafi, and Sayyed-al-ʿErāqayn set out for Qom to express their protest (December 1927). The dispute was finally settled by the government's concession of a short-term draft relief for the mullahs (Najafi, p. 233; M. Hedāyat, p. 479; Makki, 1980, p. 767; Sayfpur, pp. 640-45). Likewise, the implementation of the uniform dress code from 1928 meant deculturation in a city where not only the clergy but also the members of some guilds wore the turban and the gown, thus giving Isfahan a more palpable aura of religiosity than other Persian urban centers. Another vexatious measure, the 1936 law that prohibited women from wearing the veil, meant that many women avoided appearing in public until they were at liberty to use the veil again after the end of Reza Shah's reign. In the latter years of Reza Shah the reform-minded residents of Isfahan would even dare organize annual carnivals to compensate for the excessive mourning rites of Moḥarram that had been banned nationwide (Sayfpur, pp. 995-97). The chief advocates for the reform policies of the central government were local newspapers such as *Ṣedā-ye Eṣfahān*, *Akḡar*, *Mokrem*, and *Ġorreš* (Sayfpur, p. 651). The secularization of the judiciary system and the legal and registry offices (*maḥẓars*), which documented transactions, contracts, marriages, and divorces (see [DAFTAR-E ASNĀD-E RASMI](#)), deprived the clergy of part of its financial revenue. The traditional *madrassa* students lost their income from established religious endowments when the revenue from these began to be officially earmarked by the state for restoring historical monuments (Sayfpur, pp. 631-52). To undermine further the influential role of the leading *madrassas* such as Nimāvard and Kāsagarān, in 1927 a new high school of religious sciences (*Madrassa-ye ʿolum-e maʿqul o manqul*) was established in the Safavid *madrassa* of Mādar-e Šāh (the Queen Mother; Nuršādeqi, p. 144). Notwithstanding these policies, Maurice Pernot, in his vivid evocation of the town not long after Reza Shah's accession, recalls the high degree of appreciation among the townspeople towards Reza Shah's policies, particularly in regards to the establishment of security, while the residents of the capital held a more critical view of the new regime (Pernot, 1927a, pp. 109-11; *idem*, 1927b).

Another major challenge was the Baḡtiāri tribe (q.v.), whose summer pastures were not far from the city to the west and south, and whose chieftains had ruled Isfahan and adjoining provinces since the Constitutional Revolution



(Gehrke, 1961). Reza Shah began to end their supremacy by appointing his own officials and officers to run the administration of the city and the province. The tribe reacted in the spring of 1929, when the Baḳtiāri khans launched an assault on Isfahan by bringing 30,000 armed tribesmen to Najafābād, 30 miles west of the city, causing many frightened residents to leave Isfahan. Peace was restored only when two senior khans, Şamşām-al-Salṭana and Sardār As'ad, were sent from Tehran to mediate. They invited all the khans to the city and granted them an amnesty from the shah. A week later Major General Moḥammad Şāhbakṭi arrived in Isfahan to crush those warlords who had not surrendered. His troops repelled the Baḳtiāris from the city hinterland and took control of their strongholds in Tang-e Bidegān and Qal'a Safid by mid-July (Sayfpur, pp. 660-67; Anşāri, p. 76; Gehrke).

Having suppressed the rebellion, the state continued its policy of detribalization, as the tribal system and way of life were considered incompatible with modernization and progress. The enforced sedentarization was pursued through the posting of troops in the migration routes to prevent access. Moreover, the shah launched another series of attacks on the Baḳtiāris, beginning with imprisonment in 1933 of his war minister Sardār As'ad, resulting in his death. Many other Baḳtiāri khans were detained, exiled, and executed in the remaining years of Reza Shah's reign (Sayfpur, pp. 784-94). Their significance in the affairs of Isfahan was further curtailed when the shah bartered the numerous villages owned by the tribal chiefs with those in Kāşān, K̄vār, Varāmin, and Azarbaijan, far from the Baḳtiāri territory. In addition, the shah himself bought, for a fraction of its real value, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (q.v.) shares that the Baḳtiāri khans had been awarded as compensation for the conversion of their pastureland to oil fields as well as for their undertaking to maintain the security of the petroleum installations. The abolition of the titles *ilḳāni* and *ilbegi* in 1933, the partition of the Baḳtiāri territory between the provinces of Isfahan and Kuzestān in 1936, and the refusal to give the tribe a voice in the parliament from the eighth session of the Majles onwards, were further measures taken by the government to destabilize the tribe. These policies led to the devastation of the tribal confederacy, as indicated by the loss of their livestock, the main source of meat and dairy products of Isfahan during the rule of Reza Shah. However, the sedentarization project was never fully realized, as the migrating Baḳtiāri clans would bribe the gendarmes in return for crossing to their seasonal quarters (Sayfpur, pp. 656, 873). The nomadic way of life returned after the shah's abdication.



The 1930s witnessed major progress in bureaucratic reforms and urban development in Isfahan. As the former municipal order established by the Qajar prince-governor Zell-al-Solṭān had virtually vanished by the time of Reza Shah, new provincial and municipal administration, law enforcement, and financial, judicial, and educational systems were created (Anṣārī, pp. 37-39, 389-92; Sayfpur, pp. 958-63). The successive governors appointed by the shah, namely Noṣrat-al-Molk, Solaymān Meykada, Amir Eqtedār, Mošār-al-Dawla Dabir A'zam, Faṭan-al-Molk Jalāli, Reẓā Afšār, Şur-Esrāfil, Amir-Noṣrat Eskandari, and 'Ezz-al-Mamālek Ardalān, were on the whole men of resolution and accomplishment and were instrumental in encouraging the merchants to invest in textile industries and fund philanthropic institutions such as the branch of the league of the Red Lion and Sun (the Persian equivalent of the Red Cross) which supported an orphanage housing 500 children (ibid, pp. 801, 841-45, 962; Nurṣā-deqi, p. 139). As the two existing hospitals (founded by the British Missionary Society and by Amin-al-Tojjār, a leading merchant) proved inadequate given the rising demand, the public hospital K̄voršid was established (Sayfpur, p. 960). Moreover, the artistic and literary communities of the town, as well as the religious minorities, hitherto isolated and alienated, were welcomed to participate in the social and cultural affairs of the city (ibid, p. 705).

The modern urban planning carried out in this period changed the old layout of the city. The introduction of mechanized transport required wide and straight thoroughfares, the construction of which seems unthinkable, in retrospect, without the uncontested authority of Reza Shah, for these modern arteries invaded the organic texture of the old town by uncompromisingly cutting through the mud structures, markets, and narrow, twisting alleys. The Safavid avenue of Čahārbāg (q.v.) was further extended northward and remodeled to become the principal thoroughfare of the town, causing a profound shift of economic activity from the main and local bazaars (cf. Sayfpur, pp. 840, 958). New administrative buildings introduced a metropolitan look to the city: the architecture of the Isfahan branch of the National Bank stands out to this day in sharp contrast to the poorer styles of later periods. Equally impressive in its architecture was the new industrial suburb built with German assistance south of the Zāyandarud. Then, due attention was paid to rehabilitation of historical monuments, notably those of the Meydān-e Naqš-e Jahān (Royal Square) that had suffered from decades of neglect (Sykes; Honarfar, pp. 722, 849).



The crowning achievement of this period was industrialization, and most notably the expansion of the textile industry, which grew so successfully that Isfahan became known as the Manchester of Persia. By 1941 there were at least ten large textile mills employing some 11,000 workers, a sizeable proportion in a city of 210,000 inhabitants. Many wage earners worked in modern factories making paper, matches, cigarettes, and boots, a hosiery, an electric plant, and a grain silo (Floor, p. 59). To this new blue-collar class one may add an equally sizeable white-collar group (about 10,000, according to 'Abedi, p. 49) of administrators, educators, and healthcare employees, as well as law enforcement agents and armed forces. Thus, within the span of one generation, a whole new working and middle class emerged, financially secure with fixed wages, and new economic needs and social preferences. The large-scale units replacing small workshops and their impersonal bureaucracy brought to an end the erstwhile face-to-face relationship, the patriarchal foundation of the family was undermined, and old norms such as polygamy were rendered socially unacceptable (Anṣārī, pp. 184-87). The streets of Isfahan began to witness rush hours filled with bicycles thrice a day, shortly before and after the simultaneous sound of a dozen factory sirens announcing the change of shift—the fixed rhythm Isfahan followed for most of the twentieth century.

The 1941-53 period. Following the occupation of Persia by the Allied forces in September 1941 and the forced abdication of Reza Shah, Isfahan became an arena of struggle between different local powers. Nomadic and clerical influence resurfaced and the Qajar Prince Akbar Mirzā Mas'ūd Ṣārem-al-Dawla, heir to Z̤ell-al-Solṭān, reappeared as the city's elder statesman. While Isfahan was in the sphere of influence of the British who controlled the southern half of the country, the pro-Soviet Tudeh (Tuda) party entrenched itself in the city, leading the labor movement of 1941-47, which became a political tradition of the city in the subsequent decades.

Outside the city, it did not take long for the Baḳtiāris to reassert their power in their tribal stronghold. Mortaḳāqoli Khan, the only surviving major chieftain, proclaimed himself patriarch of his Hajji Ilḳāni branch (*bastagān*) and forced the rival Ilḳāni branch to accept his authority. By 1943 he had reclaimed his expropriated estates and persuaded the military and the gendarmerie to withdraw from the Baḳtiāri territories, extending from Dezful in the west to Čahārmaḳāl in the east, and from Rāmhormoz in the south to Faridan (Fereydan) in the north. Eventually, the governorate of Čahārmaḳāl and



Bakhtiāri separated from Isfahan province. Another conciliatory measure towards the khans was the restitution of their properties in 1945. Moreover, Mohammad-Reza Shah's marriage in February 1951 to Soraya Esfandiāri, daughter of an Ilkāni chief residing in Isfahan, was considered a sign of favor to the Bakhtiāris (Abrahamian, p. 196; Sayfpur, pp. 658, 873-76).

The rise of the Tudeh party. Having become a major industrial city, Isfahan proved a fertile ground for the Tudeh party, which emerged in the town immediately after Reza Shah's downfall and quickly recruited members from a wide cross-section of the urban society: factory workers, bazaar wage earners, intellectuals, modern middle class, and the religious minorities (Abrahamian, pp. 330-31). Very soon the Tudeh party was able to organize mass demonstrations and street parades on May Day, in which tens of thousands took part. Among its many newspapers in Isfahan was *Āhangar*, edited by Mortazā Rāvandi (idem, p. 304). The most notable success of the Tudeh party was in the labor movement, a detailed study of which, based on the British Foreign Office documents, is provided by Ervand Abrahamian (pp. 354 ff.). Assisted by the survivors of the early labor movement, the Tudeh party began to unionize some 10,500 workers of nine large textile factories of the town; it proved successful largely because of the hardship experienced by the workers as a result of the economic impact of high inflation in the early 1940s. The Union of Isfahan Workers (Etteḥādiya-ye kārgarān-e Eṣfahān), formed in August 1942, conducted two strikes that won an unprecedented settlement: not only were the wage demands met but it also gave factory workers an 8-hour workday, monthly medical checkups, food subsidies, two suits per year, and one month's bonus taken from company profits, as well as a ban on child labor. Another major strike was won in July 1943, reconfirming the previous achievements (cf. Sykes, pp. 311-14).

The presence of the Tudeh party and the tribes brought together the rest of the competing forces which were loosely organized under the banner of the royalist National Union party (Ḥezb-e waḥdat-e melli) and Sayyed Žiā's Fatherland party (Ḥezb-e erāda-ye melli). The power distribution was reflected in the electorate's choice of the three Majles members from Isfahan: Taqi Fadākār, the only one of the eight Tudeh members of the 14th parliamentary session who was not from the Soviet-backed north; Sayyed Ḥāšem-al-Din Dawlatābādi, son of a prominent religious leader, supported by the elders of the guilds and bazaar merchants (especially those who had acquired part of the land confiscated from the Bakhtiāri khans during Reza



Shah's reign) and the National Union party; and Ḥaydar-ʿAli Emāmi, a wealthy merchant and industrialist, backed by prince Akbar Masʿud and the Fatherland party. Additionally, Faraj-Allāh Meṣbāḥ Sayfpur Fāṭemi, with his family newspaper *Bāktar*, won the Najafābād seat with the help of the Baḳtiāris; and the elections of Šahr-e kord and Dezful were won, respectively, by Aḥmadqoli Khan, the son of Mortazāqoli Khan Baḳtiāri, and his cousin Moḥammad-Taqi Khan Asʿad, who had spent a decade in prison (Abrahamian, p. 195; Anṣāri, pp. 324-28).

The power struggle in Isfahan reached its zenith in 1944-46, mostly in reaction to the Tudeh party, which not only kept radicalizing the labor movement but also made a concerted drive into the countryside by organizing the peasants against their landlords. The latter and the mill-owners, who had been retreating in the face of demands, initiated a counter offensive by helping the Fatherland party to create the Union of Peasants and Workers. They also sparked off a major crisis in April 1944 by abruptly locking out workers from factories and mill granaries, thereby depriving them of their source of income; this was followed by a week-long battle in the city, characterized as a “worker’s revolt” by the national media. It had major consequences in local and national politics. Qašqāʾis sent contingents to help put down the revolt and formed an alliance with the Baḳtiāri and Kamsa tribal chiefs and the government against the Tudeh party (Abrahamian, p. 206). After a short period of suppression, however, the Tudeh party recovered when Aḥmad Qawām (Qawām-al-Saltāna) became prime minister in 1946. In the same year the Union of Isfahan Workers reached its peak, claiming to have 40,000 members (ibid, p. 352). It led a general strike in April and brought out as many as 40,000 supporters into the streets on May Day. By August, according to the report of the British consul, the party controlled much of the local administration and was “ready to seize power in Isfahan as completely as the Democrats had done in Tabriz” (apud Abrahamian, p. 359). Nevertheless, the reoccupation of the northern provinces, the tribal revolts in the south, and Qawām’s apparent swing to the right, began a period of intermittent repression for the Tudeh party. In Isfahan, armed tribesmen looted party headquarters and the unionists were drafted into the army (Abrahamian, pp. 305, 366).

Another politically eventful period for Isfahan occurred during the nationalization of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, reflected in the appearance in the city of 70 to 80 periodicals, mostly politically charged newspapers, from



1950 to 1953 (Ābedi, pp. 234-38; Anṣāri, pp. 341-45). The Tudeh party reemerged as a major political force under the guise of the Coalition of Worker's Syndicates, which organized a series of strikes in Isfahan in conjunction with the strike of refinery workers in Kūzestān (Abrahamian, pp. 368-69). The new development in this period was the emergence of the National Front that filled the gap between the traditional royalists in the far right and the Tudeh party in the far left. Formed around the charismatic personality of Moḥammad Moṣaddeq, the Front gained popularity among the modern middle-class, a segment of the intelligentsia and, more particularly, the middle layer *bāzāris* of Isfahan who not only foresaw economic interests therein but also a political voice they had previously lacked. The popularity of the National Front in Isfahan is reflected in the drastic repercussion the resignation of the prime minister Moṣaddeq in July 1952 had in the city. During 17-21 July the city witnessed the closure of the bazaar, widespread street demonstrations, and a general strike in the factories; according to a report by the chief of police, one thousand men crammed into the Telegraph Office in a show of support for Moṣaddeq (Torkamān, p. 199; Makki, 1987, pp. 254-59). In the course of the next year, as the stalemate in the power struggle dragged on and economic hardship caused by the country's inability to market its oil worsened, many of Moṣaddeq's former supporters lost their enthusiasm. Finally, on 19 August 1953, upon the departure of the shah, the National Front and the Tudeh party organized a large demonstration in Isfahan and the royal statue was brought down in the main square; the turmoil was brought to an end three days later, without any reported resistance.

The period 1953-78. The political arena remained largely calm in these years. Parliamentary elections were generally rigged and hence a mere formality, and the municipal and provincial administration were appointed by the central government, as in the rest of the country. Bakhtiāris retreated for good to their tribal territories and were gradually absorbed into the expanding industries. The major political event of the period was the Land Reform Program, one of the six reform measures of the White Revolution proposed by the shah and backed by a referendum conducted on 26 June 1963. It led to violent protests by a front composed of the ulema, bazaar merchants (*bāzāris*), and landowners at major urban centers. On 5 June urban riots broke out in Shiraz, Tehran, Qom, Mashad, Isfahan, and Kāšān to protest against the reforms; they were suppressed on the same day (Ruḥāni, pp. 492-94, 528, 567, 576).



This was the longest period of prosperity marked by social and economic progress. The national economic boom of 1953-59 resulted in the expansion of Isfahan's textile industry and other privately sponsored factories manufacturing consumer goods for local and national markets. But a profound transformation of production systems and social relationships came with the White Revolution and the two successful economic plans in the period 1963-73, when Isfahan emerged as a major industrial center of the country with a large steel mill, cement and sugar factories, an oil refinery and defense and petrochemical industries. The construction of the Shah Abbas dam on the Zāyandarud and the extension of the national railroad network into the province had a strong impact on its economy (see [ISFAHAN xiv.](#)). As these state-sponsored projects brought to Isfahan a large amount of development funds in addition to its usual budget, the city could absorb immigrant workers from all over the country. In the 1970s, Soviet and American employees also had a notable presence in the city, estimated at more than 10,000 families (Anṣārī, p. 102).

In this period Isfahan saw rapid population growth and urbanization, and the expansion of communication, transportation, and education induced radical changes in the social and economic conditions of the city. The urban infrastructure was bolstered by the construction of pipeline water supply and sewage systems in the 1960s, and the province was connected to the national gas network in the ensuing decade. New bridges spanned over the Zāyandarud and its branches and canals were retrofitted to modern needs. The city was outfitted with recreational clubs, theaters, and sport stadiums. Construction activities expanded to what formerly were gardens and farmland encompassing the city, and middle-class neighborhoods flourished on the banks of Zāyandarud; two-story modern houses became a norm, providing a contrast to the inward-oriented older residences (Gulik). Julfa, once a separate town, was now joined legally and physically to the town, as were several surrounding villages like the medieval Jey on the east. Satellite towns such as Šāhinšahr, Malekšahr, and Kāna-ye Eṣfahān, with planned geometric layouts, were constructed on the north, and the steel-makers' town of Āryāšahr was connected to the city via a broad freeway. Parallel with industrialization, slums also began to grow around the city, with little urban design or facilities.

The old neighborhoods, on the other hand, had to deal with a clash of the old and the new, where the new had not evolved from the old. The city's master plan attempted in its first five-year program to adapt the old city to the needs



of modern citizenry and to keep it alive by placing it inside the future expansion (Shirazi). But these measures could not prevent older quarters such as Jubāra, Dardašt, Šahšahān, Țowqči, and Bidābād, with tightly-packed mud-brick houses, to turn into overcrowded shantytowns (cf. Anšāri, p. 439, Schafaghi, 1979), although the main bazaar survived as a shopping center for cheaper commodities, many of whose items were made on the spot (Anšāri, p. 307). Moreover, the strictly enforced construction codes, such as those restricting building heights in central Isfahan to four stories, minimized interference with the architectural heritage landscape and skyline. Meanwhile, the extensive restoration of the city's historical monuments continued with the assistance of Maxime Siroux and André Godard (q.v.), and it led to the emergence of a new generation of tile makers, miniature painters, and calligraphers, among other artists (cf. Borjian et al.) As the city grew into a center of tourism, traditional handicrafts flourished once again. They made Isfahan one of the focal points of the Iranian tourist industry from the late 1960s until the Islamic Revolution of 1977-79.

On the whole, Isfahan seemed to have been well equipped with a modern urban infrastructure and the institutions of modern times. But the city was really a developed island surrounded by backward environs, and those who actually benefited from the socio-economic growth were limited to the privileged social groups who did not make up the majority of the residents.

THE POST-REVOLUTION ERA

The 1977-79 Revolution. Isfahan played an important role in the Islamic Revolution. It actively joined the Revolution on 4 August (14 Mordād) 1978, commemorating the fortieth day of mourning for the martyrs of Tabriz. Riots broke out, notably in the older quarters of the city and the rural periphery, where the inhabitants were known for their religious zeal. In the following days, such places as liquor stores, banks, hotels, and cinemas were targeted. As a result of the gravity of the threat, military rule was announced on 8 August, setting a precedence that was followed in other cities. The autumn of the same year saw widespread sabotage and terror. Endemic work stoppages culminated with a strike by thousands of personnel of the steel mill (8 October). The devoutly religious groups that usually organized Moḥarram processions now marshaled political demonstrations. In the winter of 1978-79 Isfahan and other major towns of the province followed the revolutionary course in the country by mobilizing sporadic urban riots, demonstrations, and strikes (Āqeli, I, p. 352, passim).



As the regime began to disintegrate in the course of the upheavals, power passed gradually into the hands of the local ad hoc “revolutionary committees,” the first of which was set up by Ayatollah Ḥosayn Kādemi, a longtime opponent of the shah who took a moderate position on social issues, and was approved of by the bāzāris and the traditional middle class (cf. Abrahamian, pp. 526 ff.). But he soon found a rival in another leading mullah, Jalāl-al-Din Ṭāheri, who showed his loyalty to the Islamic Revolution and his leadership skills in promoting mass mobilizations both during the Revolution, and later during the war with Iraq, drawing support of young men from the slums and the countryside (cf. Anṣāri, pp. 78, 317). Although he was eventually appointed to lead the Friday congregational prayers (*emām-e jom’a*; q.v.) in Isfahan, he could never subdue his rivals entirely, and, even after the death of Ayatollah Kādemi, polycentrism continued to be the norm in Isfahan. Commensurate with the liberal tendencies of the mainstream townspeople, reflected in successive parliamentary elections, Ṭāheri gradually shifted, over a span of two decades, from his position as a faithful revolutionary with leftist-fundamentalist tendencies to an advocate of liberalism and tolerance. His long tenure came to an end in 2002 with a passionate letter of resignation (published in the newspaper *Nowruz*, 8 July 2002).

As with other cities in Persia, Isfahan experienced a post-revolutionary decade of hardship and regression. As a part of the proscribed “cultural revolution” (*enqelāb-e farhangi*), universities were closed down for three years, many educators and public employees were dismissed, and professional associations came under attack. Intellectual and recreational life suffered and the number of cinemas, a dozen before the revolution, was halved. Many modern businesses were confiscated; department stores and supermarkets were turned into warehouses, and the traditional small market system emerged once again. The disappearance of foreign tourism resulted in the decline of indigenous arts and crafts.

During the Iran-Iraq War (see [IRAQ vii.](#)), Isfahan suffered from recurring bombardments; and a niche at the Friday Mosque dating from the Saljuq era was destroyed in one of the Iraqi bombardments. The war participation rate from Isfahan was exceptionally high, reflected in countless streets and alleys bearing the names of war martyrs. A whole class of family members of martyrs emerged, and they were granted special economic and educational privileges by the state. Isfahan also had its share of war refugees from Kuzestān, reported to be in the region of 160,000 in the province in 1982



(Anṣāri, p. 63). The influx of villagers into the town was quantitatively unprecedented, many replacing the middle-class and professional families who either moved to the capital or emigrated abroad (ibid, pp. 60, 75). All in all, an unsophisticated air of provincialism replaced the town's urbane charm.

The most remarkable trait in Isfahan during the last quarter century has been its physical expansion and overpopulation. New satellite towns have been added to the south and north, interconnected with a beltway and a Metro line (under construction) longitudinally traversing the city and its satellites. The widening and extension of older streets and alleys are not sufficient to meet with the ever-growing traffic volume, which is also responsible for considerable air pollution. A striking facet has been the extension of green zones and parks along the Zāyandarud and elsewhere, e.g. the park surrounding the Safavid pavilion-palace Hašt Behešt, the private estate of a Qajar prince before the revolution. Not only horizontal expansion but also vertical growth has been used as a measure to meet the growing demand for housing created by the sudden increase in childbirth immediately after the Revolution. The real estate and construction industry has become extremely profitable, benefiting from cheap construction labor from Afghanistan, and former family dwellings are being systematically replaced by multi-story apartment buildings (cf. *Gozāreš*, 2002, pp. 390-95).

In this regard, the municipal policies are characterized by preservationists as being excessively utilitarian and detrimental to the historical morphology of the city. A major concern is systematic violation of construction codes, such as building of a high-raised shopping center near the Royal Square (renamed Imam Square). Another recent dilemma was the sale of thousands of acres of gardens surrounding textile factories south of the river to real-estate developers; the battle was finally lost by those who tried to save not only an attractive part of the town but what was perceived as monuments of the glorious age of the industrialization of the country (for the arguments, see the local civil engineering quarterly *Dāneš-nemā*, nos. 83-85, 2000-01). Moreover, for the same social reasons, the implementation of development plans concerning the extension of the street network within the old quarters has proved more difficult than ever before; for instance, the age-old dispute over a Safavid bathhouse near the Royal Square was finally brought to an end in 1995 when the concerned archeologists found it razed to the ground overnight by the municipality. Even the hallowed old cemetery, Taḳt-e pulād, has seen itself intersected by streets. The social confrontation between preservationist



intellectuals and pragmatist planners and builders will likely recur in the city for decades to come.

The development of the countryside has been substantial. Soon after the revolution, men of the Construction Corps (Jehād-e sâzandagi) arrived in almost all villages of the province and began to build roads, bridges, schools, and houses, brought electricity and telephone lines to villages and set up a network of producer-and-consumer cooperatives. Thus, rural conditions have changed during the Islamic Republic period beyond recognition. Even the identity of many villages has been subject to change by coining many new Islamic toponyms, arbitrarily imposed on the older “pagan” names to a confusing degree (Mehr-yār, *passim*; Borjia, 2005).

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