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ISFAHAN VIII. QAJAR PERIOD

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The Qajar period (1794-1925) was marked by far-reaching political, social, and economic changes that were particularly evident in the major urban centers. The historical changes affecting the Isfahan of this period included the following: the loss of its status as the royal capital and its transformation into a major provincial city comparable to, and in competition with, Shiraz, Tabriz, or Mashad; the attempts by a succession of governors to gain control of its political and commercial affairs, culminating with Ẓell-al-Solṭān's three decades of authoritarian rule in the latter part of the 19th century; restoration of Isfahan's status as the country's authoritative center of Shiʿism, highlighted by the direct influence enjoyed by the ulema in urban politics (dominated, in the early and latter part of the century, respectively, by the likes of Ḥojjat-al-Eslām Sayyed Moḥammad-Bāqer Šafti [d. 1260/1844] and Ḥājj Shaikh Moḥammad-Bāqer Eṣfahāni [d. 1301/1883-84]; the loss of its position as Persia's preeminent center of industry during the 18th century and its resurgence as a major commercial center, with a crucial position in the growing international trade through the expansion of cash crops (particularly opium) and commercial control as the transit mart on the trade routes connecting Tehran with the Persian Gulf (Bušehr-Isfahan-Tehran and Moḥammara [present-day Ḵorramšahr]-Isfahan-Tehran). Isfahan played a key role in the boycott against the British Tobacco Regie, in contrast to its role during the Constitutional Revolution (q.v.), when the city, despite the 1909

Baḵtiāri occupation, followed an ambiguous, self-interested political agenda.

FROM THE ROYAL CAPITAL TO PROVINCIAL CITY

The civil wars of the 18th century had a destructive impact on the cities, yet also helped to transform them into strongholds against the political and economic chaos raging in the country. This contributed to the consolidation of an autonomous, self-determined urban nobility and the restoration of urban life, setting the stage for the active role major urban centers were to play in power brokerage with the central government in the 19th century.

The interim Afghan rule threw Isfahan into political and administrative chaos, but it remained the country's political capital until 1736, when Nāder Shah Afšār (r. 1736-47 q.v. at iranica.com) moved his headquarters to Mashad, the provincial capital of Khorasan. Although Isfahan retained its political influence until the end of the 18th century and continued to play a momentous role in the tribal civil war over political suzerainty, this event inaugurated the permanent loss of its status as the royal capital. Having won the civil war, Karim Khan Zand established his court in Shiraz, the traditional capital of Fars, in 1766-67, leaving the governorship over the old capital to Mirzā ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb Musawi as hākem and biglarbaygi. Under the rule of Karim Khan Zand as Wakil (deputy), Shiraz developed its position as a commercial, cultural, and political competitor of Isfahan in southern Persia, driving an ancient urban rivalry which outlasted the 19th century (Āṣaf, pp. 452-55; Waring, pp. 260-305; Ferrières-Sauveboeuf, pp. 288-291; Perry, p. 232).

Isfahan (like Shiraz and Tehran) played a strategic role in the Zands' chaotic struggle over succession and the tribal war between the Zands and Qajars. After Karim Khan's death in 1779, ʿAli-Morād Khan Zand (q.v.), who had been sent by Zaki Khan to Tehran in pursuit of Āqā Moḥammad Khan Qājār, rebelled and instead marched south to seize Isfahan. After the demise of the rival pretender, Zaki Khan Zand, who was killed by his own troops, ʿAli-Morād Khan took over Isfahan and appointed Bāqer Khan Ḵorāsāni as deputy governor (ʿAli-Reżā Širāzi, pp. 10-11; Moḥammad Kalāntar, pp. 71-72; Nāmi, pp. 223-28, 233-34; Ḡaffāri, pp. 473 ff., 487-89).

Ṣādeq Khan, who had ascended the Zand throne in Shiraz, appointed his son, Jaʿfar Khan Zand (half-brother of ʿAli-Morād Khan), as governor of Isfahan, and sent him there with an army. Receiving the news, ʿAli-Morād set out from Tehran to Isfahan. Jaʿfar Khan, unwilling to risk a battle, took Bāqer Khan

hostage and retreated to Shiraz. ʿAli-Morād conquered Shiraz (in Rabiʿ I 1196/March 1782), staying there for a few months and then returning to Isfahan, where he languished for over three years before resuming his campaign against Āqā Moḥammad Khan Qājār. He reappointed Bāqer Khan as deputy governor (nāʾeb-al-ḥokuma) of Isfahan before leaving for the conquest of Astarābād/Estrābād in June 1784. When in 1784 ʿAli-Morād's troops were crushed by the brother of Āqā Moḥammad Khan Qajar and fled to Isfahan, Bāqer Khan changed coats and betrayed the Zands. Finding ʿAli-Morād's position hopeless, he refused the desperate troops entry into the city, leaving them to face their fate in the harsh winter cold (ʿAli-Reżā Širāzi, pp. 20-25; Moḥammad Kalāntar, pp. 77-79, 82-83; Nāmi, pp. 239-40, 244, 248, 251, Ḡaffāri, pp. 678 ff.; Hedāyat, IX, pp. 182-88).

ʿAli-Morād Khan died (Rabiʿ II 1199/February 1785) of a chronic illness on his way back to Isfahan. When his corpse was brought to the city, Bāqer Khan promptly appropriated the dead Zand prince's royal insignia and money; backed by Isfahan's political status, he crowned himself shah in the Tālār-e Tawila, and had coins issued and the Friday sermon (ḵoṭba) read in his name. The urban populace called him (perhaps cynically) Shah Bāqer, but his enthronement lasted about four and a half days (Āṣaf, pp. 58-59 and 447-49, speaks of a month). Uneasy about the usurpation, his troops deserted to Jaʿfar Khan Zand. Bāqer Khan managed to escape the first attempt on his life with a few wounds, taking refuge in Behešt Āʾin; from there he fled to Rudašt. At this point Isfahan's aristocrats bid Jaʿfar Khan Zand into the city, where he was crowned. Bāqer Khan was caught two days later, extradited, and imprisoned (ʿAli-Reżā Širāzi, p. 24; Ḡaffāri, pp. 688-91).

Prompted by ʿAli-Morād Khan's death, Āqā Moḥammad Khan launched another campaign to assert his control in the south; he was refused entry into Tehran, but routed the Zand princes in Qom and Kāšān. Intimidated by this news, Jaʿfar Khan gathered the royal treasures and retreated to Shiraz. Āqā Moḥammad Khan entered Isfahan, liberated Bāqer Khan, reinstalled him as governor, and returned to Tehran, where he proclaimed himself king on 11 Jomādā I 1200/12 March 1786; his actual crowning took place there ten years later (Hedāyat, IX, pp. 194-95, 200, 273-74.).

Jaʿfar Khan returned to Isfahan, where he captured Bāqer Khan and put him to death, but he left for Shiraz rather than face Āqā Moḥammad Khan, who entered the city without a battle and left it under his own brother Jaʿfarqoli Khan with an army of 6,000 men. Two years later, in 1788, honoring Bāqer

Khan's treason for the Qajar cause, Āqā Moḥammad Khan awarded the governorship of Isfahan to Bāqer Khan's son, M oḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan, rather than his own brother Jaʿfarqoli Khan, who coveted the position and actually asked for it in 1790-91, the same year that the ever-suspicious Āqā Moḥammad Khan had him killed (Nāmi, pp. 292-93; Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, 1984-88, III, pp. 1401, 1407, 1412; Moḥammad Kalāntar, p. 100; Hedāyat, IX, pp. 201, 232; Eʿteżād-al-Salṭana, p. 37).

In 1796, in a strategic move closer to Qajar tribal territories, Āqā Moḥammad Khan moved his political headquarters to Tehran. The motivations and tactics of Isfahan's elite in this process, though sparsely documented, were evidently driven by the protagonists' strife for personal gain, but also by concern over the city's fate as a political and commercial entity. There is textual evidence which insinuates that at least some of the city notables may have hoped that Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah would relocate the royal residence to Isfahan; however, aware of the historical precedence and the elite's insubordination, he preferred Tehran and thus confirmed it as the permanent Qajar capital.

Traditions of writing on Qajar Isfahan contain the dimension of a chronological continuity, (i.e., the linear evolution of accounts since the 16th century and earlier) as well as the context of space, culture, and attitude of the 19th century. However, Isfahan experienced a difficult period of transition (which involved massive economic, demographic, and morphological changes) under the Qajars from a major center of power in the early 19th century to simply another provincial metropolis a century later. Like the other former Safavid capitals, it retained the royal title of Dār-al-Salṭana in the early part of the 19th century and continued to pride itself with the Saljuq (perhaps even older) epithet of neṣf-e jahān (half the world; also to be understood as midpoint of the world).

The city's pre-Qajar topoi outlived the drastic politico-economic changes from the late 18th to the early 20th century with an indelible impact on its politics and self-perception. Historical themes stressing Isfahan's special blessings—exceptionally fertile agricultural land, abundance' of water, and healthy climate as well as the absence of natural disasters and pests—drove the Qajar city's self-image (Ebn Rosta, pp. 151 ff.; Ebn Faqih, pp. 262-63, 266; Māfarruḵi, pp. 5-6; Moḥammad-Mahdi Eṣfahāni, pp. 82 ff.). In the tradition of narratives about the potency of the city's land and water, dating back at least to Buyid times, most 19th-century Persian writers still attributed almost mystical or miraculous qualities to its water and soil. This was partly rooted in

the enduring cosmological notion of Isfahan's exceptional astro-geographical position in the Ptolemaic fourth clime, making it the "Navel of Iraq;" in the 19th century these concepts still explained the fecundity, affluence, and quasi-paradisiacal qualities (ḵold-e barin or ḵold-paykar) as well as its late 19th-century political aspirations.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Establishment of governmental control over Isfahan required balancing the conflict between the claims of suzerainty by the central government, the autonomous self-assertion of the local elite, and a modus vivendi with the city's chief religious leader. The success that Ḥāji Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan Ṣadr Eṣfahāni and his son ʿAbd-Allāh Khan Amin-al-Dawla enjoyed in running the city government was partly due to their ability to marshal these elements of internal urban politics as well as the indispensable court diplomacy in Tehran. The combined legacy of Isfahan's status as capital and the re-strengthening of the clerical and merchant elite often left an uneasy gap between the Tehran court and Isfahan's local elite. Particularly during the early Qajar rule, Isfahan's elite showed a tendency towards insubordination, culminating in recurrent insurrections and riots. In 1810, during ʿAbd-Allāh's governorship, Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah granted Isfahan a 100,000 toman tax break, which was both an award and a bribe as a gesture of appeasement. On the pretext of a campaign against the Baḵtiāri tribe, Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah dispatched a large number of troops to Isfahan, which in reality was a move against the insubordinate religious leader Ḥojjat-al-Eslām Moḥammad-Bāqer Šafti. Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah's last journey to Isfahan in 1834, which led to his death, was undertaken in the context of this confrontation, of Isfahan's challenge against the suzerainty of Tehran, and in a wider sense the south's resistance against the power of the Qajar north. Isfahan's political and clerical leadership had not only refused to support Moḥammad Mirzā's succession, but also conspired in the attempt to secure the throne for their candidate, Ḥosayn-ʿAli Mirzā Farmānfarmā (q.v.), the governor of Fārs. The latter's rebellion in his bid for the throne was partly due to the inducement of the influential elites of Isfahan, including the prominent religious leader Moḥammad-Bāqer Šafti (for him, see Algar, pp. 60-63, 109-12) and the then deputy governor ʿAbd-Allāh Khan Amin-al-Dawla Eṣfahāni (Eʿteżād-al- Salṭana, pp. 191-92, 419, 432-34; Fasāʾi, ed. Rastgār, I, pp. 758-66; Hedāyat, X, pp. 89-95, 156-61; Anṣāri, pp. 44-45; Fowler, p. 201; Algar, pp. 108-10; ʿAżod-al-Dawla, editor's notes, pp. 219-20, 236; for Šafti, see Eqbāl; Algar, pp. 60-63, 109-12).

In 1834, the first year of Moḥammad Shah's reign, Isfahan was famine-ridden, which further intensified local popular resentment. Moḥammad Shah, once enthroned, moved to enforce his prerogatives of royal authority and undertook a campaign both retributive and pre-emptive against Isfahan. The confrontation led not only to drastic property confiscations, but also to the execution of members of the city's aristocracy, including relatives of the high-ranking ulema (Anṣāri, p. 45). This deepened the already existing rift between Isfahan and Tehran, which reverberated throughout later Qajar rule.

Manučehr Khan Gorji was one of the few governors of the 19th century who managed to impose his authority with effective control on city politics. His successor, Ḡolām-Ḥosayn Khan Sepahdār, sent his deputy Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan Ḵalaj in advance to Isfahan, and he soon became embroiled in a major revolt in 1848-49, sparked by a brawl between a relative of the Emām Jomʿa and a government soldier. The disturbance spread and was further exacerbated through the instigation of Nawwāb Ṣafawi, a Safavid descendant, eventually leading to the death of the deputy governor at the hands of the mob. Sepahdār regained control with the help of the military contingent sent from Tehran, but only after a large number of people and soldiers had lost their lives in the conflict (Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, 1984-88, III, p. 1701; Ḵurmuji, pp. 77-79; Algar, pp. 126-28). Although the incident is generally known as the Nawwābs' Revolt, its subtext and original cause was the ongoing conflict caused by the unwillingness of Isfahan's elite to accept Tehran's centralizing sovereignty.

Governors were nominated by the shah, who received a fee for the appointments; in 1869 the governor of Isfahan paid about 40,000 tomans as gratuity (piškeš) for his post and was entitled to collect 60,000 tomans as a special fee for the governorship in addition to the official revenue due to the central government. His principal responsibility (defined as such until the Constitutional Revolution, q.v.) was the preservation of political order and the remittance of provincial revenues. He was directly responsible for customs duties and the revenues of the telegraph, the post, and state properties (ḵāleṣa). The governor could choose his chief minister and financial administrator with government sanction. The important post of kārgozār, who was appointed by the foreign minister, required the payment of an annual lease for his office. The commander of Isfahan's troops and the supervisors of the telegraph and post were also appointed by the central government, while the governor was independent and controlled the nomination of all other

ministers and administrators. The implementation of the system allowed considerable latitude for personal political negotiation (see, e.g., Thomson Report, January-June 1869, FO 248/244).

Throughout the so-called “Qajar century,” the gubernatorial tenure in Isfahan was usually between one and four years. Yet, with the advantage of being natives of Isfahan, Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan Ṣadr and his son ʿAbd-Allāh Khan Amin-al-Dawla, managed to impose a dynastic element and governed Isfahan for about twenty-eight years; and the young Solṭān-Moḥammad Mirzā Sayf-al-Dawla, a prince from the favorite Isfahani wife of Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah, was installed as governor in 1841 at the age of thirteen and held office for about ten years before he was recalled by Moḥammad Shah. For outsiders, however, governing Isfahan was an almost insuperable challenge, which is why Manučehr Khan Moʿtamed-al-Dawla’s over eight-year rule, and particularly Masʿud Mirzā Ẓell-al-Solṭān’s thirty-three year rule, were so atypical.

Ẓell-al-Solṭān’s tenure in Isfahan was never considered just a governorship but a regime, and his mentality has been compared, albeit inappropriately, to that of Āqā Moḥammad Khan (see, e.g., Saʿādat Nuri, 1956). Considering the parameters of power, his governorship was a significant achievement. Although the governorships of Borujerd, Luristan, Khuzestan, or Yazd had been granted before to various governors of Isfahan, Ẓell-al-Solṭān managed to gain gubernatorial control over more than half of Iran. By the late 1880s he had created a state within a state and held the provincial command of a large, capable military force that was a central and effective crucible in his political rationale. Considered a potential threat and a British sympathizer, he was dismissed from all governorships save that of Isfahan in a tacit but relentless confrontation with the new prime minister ʿAli-Aṣḡar Khan Amin-al-Solṭān, and his troops dismantled in Jomādā II 1305/February 1888, shortly after he had been honored by the British government (Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, 1977, p. 544; ʿAbd-Allāh Mostawfi, I, pp. 375-77; Browne, 1950, pp. 114-15; idem, 1966, pp. 106, 331; Curzon, I, pp. 416-18; Eḥtešām-al-Salṭana, pp. 221-24). This unexpected and dramatic demotion had a profound and long-term impact on the balance of power within Isfahan; now he was obliged to enter into constant negotiations and arrangements with the chief ulema (especially the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi).

RELIGIOUS STATUS AND THE HIEROCRATIC ELITE

Isfahan reconsolidated itself on the basis of its commercial position, fertile

agricultural resources, and traditional status as a theological center. As such it asserted a position of almost semi-autonomous urban polity, dominated by strong merchant nobility and an extremely influential and independent-minded ulema. The extraordinary juridical and socio-political status of the mojtaheds (see EJTEHĀD) and the heavy domination of the religious establishment in the late 19th century gave Isfahan a reputation as one of the most Islamic cities of the time and as being filled with a population obsessed with religion and religiosity.

In response to the political insecurity and chaos during the Afghan occupation, Nāder Shah's extortionate regime, and the wars of the 18th century, many of the ulema, scientists, artists, and intellectuals left Isfahan and emigrated to India, the ʿAtabāt (q.v.) in Iraq and other Ottoman centers, causing a massive decline of the madrasas, pious endowments (waqf), and landed properties, as well as intellectual life. Yet the city never completely lost its role as a theological center and managed to resurrect its status as the mainstay of Shiʿite power and theology in Persia. With the stabilization of the political and commercial conditions, and a demonstrative system of religious patronage in the early years of Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah's reign (r. 1797-1834; see, e.g., Hedāyat, IX, pp. 345-46, X, pp. 105-6), the ulema began to return to Isfahan from the Iraqi shrine cities, striving to establish their own preeminence while maintaining strong scholarly and social ties to the Shiʿite hierocracy of the ʿAtabāt. Personal connections to the ʿAtabāt's ulema and the prestige of an ʿatabāt education lent weight to Isfahan's hierocracy in the pursuit of religio-legal eminence. The re-consolidation of Isfahan's tradition as the self-proclaimed center of Shiʿism in Persia was essential for the renown of its status and image against Shiraz and Tehran in the 19th century.

The highest officials in the city, next to the governor, were the Emām-e Jomʿa and the Šayḵ-al-Eslām, who also acted as guardians of the largest waqf properties (Mahdawi, 1992, passim; Algar, pp. 23-35). Both positions were life appointments authorized by the shah; the title and position were usually inherited by the eldest son or closest male relative, creating a conspicuous dynastic element which consolidated the immediate control and economic position of certain clerical clans and enforced the theological authority of the city's leading mojtaheds. This also accounted for the unabated power rivalry between the foremost ulema families, in particular the Emām(-e) Jomʿa and the Šayḵ-al-Eslām (the Āqāyān-e Masjid-e Šāhi), influencing clerical politics until the death of Emām Jomʿa Mirzā Hāšem b. Mir Sayyed Moḥammad

(1834-1903), when the office of Emām Jomʿa elapsed (Moʿallem Ḥabibābādi, V, pp. 1378-79). Concomitant to the ulema's reclaiming of the city was the expansion of pious endowments and madrasas.

In the early 19th century Isfahan was the residence of Persia's most sizeable hierocracy. With the death of Kāšef-al-Ḡeṭāʾ Shaikh Jaʿfar b. Ḵeżr (Rajab 1227/August 1812), successor of Sayyed Mahdi Ṭabāṭabāʾi Borujerdi Bahr-al-ʿOlum (d. 1797), as the leading Shiʿite and Oṣuli authority scholar of his time, Najaf lost some of its force of gravitation as the predominant center of Shiʿite theology. In the early 19th century, under the leadership of Mollā ʿAli b. Jamšid Nuri (d. 1830), Moḥammad-Ebrāhim Kalbāsi (or Karbāsi, d. 1845), and Moḥammad-Bāqer Šafti Rašti, the Šayḵ-al-Eslām (d. 1844), Isfahan reestablished its theological preeminence against the heavy authority of the ʿAtabāt. The reputation of Nuri, Kalbāsi, and Šafti, the most prominent Persian mojtaheds in the 1830s and 1840s, recognized also by followers in Iraq and India, was essential for the revival of the city's theological significance and its emergence as an Oṣuli stronghold (Moʿallem Ḥabibābādi, IV, pp. 1264-267, V, pp. 1643-646; Eqbāl; Algar, pp. 59-63).

The re-emergence of Isfahan's scholastic and educational renown in the early 19th century not only promoted the rise of the orthodox Oṣuli ulema, but also generated a milieu that fostered heterodox movements and less orthodox religious thought, philosophical schools, intellectual trends, mystic and proto-messianic circles, and early Šayḵi thought with roots in the Ḥekmat-e Elāhi Isfahan School of Philosophy (q.v.). Henceforth, at the fringes of Isfahan's Oṣuli hierocracy, Bābism (q.v.) found a receptive audience for its messianic prophetism, with strong Bābi and later Bahāʾi and Azali Bābi communities in Isfahan, Naja-fābād, Sedeh, and other satellite towns and villages. There seems to have been a pervasive religious strife, particularly between the Bābi and heterodox fringes, which, however, was discernible only as political subtext as the Bābi persecutions became a major theme of the late 1800s.

The mojtaheds' hegemony over local affairs of the city remained pervasive throughout Qajar rule, despite inter-mittent confrontations with the central government or Ẓell-al-Solṭān's successful manipulation of their politi-cal interference, often by concessions and mutual deals with regard to material wealth. After Ẓell-al-Solṭān's curtailment of power in 1888 (limiting his extended governorships to that of Isfahan and the dissolution of his military force), relations between Isfahan's mojta-heds and the central government grew more contentious, strengthening the position of the ulema and the local

urban nobility (Amanat, 1988, pp. 106-7; Arjomand, pp. 238-39).

By the 1870s the city's lower rank mojtaheds were estimated at about 200, and the number of students (ṭollāb) were at about 2,500 (Mahdawi, p. 537; Jazi, 1969, p. 537; Balāḡi, passim). Among the most prominent and influential clerics of the Ẓell-al-Solṭān era were Shaikh Moḥammad-Bāqer Eṣfahāni Najafi and his sons (Shaikh Moḥammad-ʿAli, Shaikh Moḥammad-Taqi, better known as Āqā Najafi [q.v.], and Āqā Nur-Allāh), called the Āqāyān-e Masjid-e Šahi, as well as Mir Moḥammad-Hāšem Ḵᵛānsāri, known as Čahārsuʾi Širāzi, Moḥammad-Bāqer Fešārki, etc. (Moʿallem Ḥabibābādi, V, pp. 1662-66; Balāḡi ; Najafi, 1990; idem, 1992a).

By the latter part of the century, the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi, second only to Ẓell-al-Solṭān's family in wealth and status, were the second largest landowners in Isfahan. Inherited through the patrimonial distribution of offices, titles and prestige, the family controlled large estates and waqf properties, and had acquired enormous private lands, villages, livestock in the city and its hinterlands, as well as company shares and ownership in undertakings like Isfahan's salt mines. They thus controlled extensive resources and wealth, which provided considerable financial autonomy, independent of government sanctions and pensions.

Since the early 19th century land ownership and the growing personal wealth of the higher-ranking ulema impelled their vested interests in agro-business and commerce, which by the late century meant the methodical collaboration between the wealthiest clerics and merchants in politics and commerce. As landowners, the higher-ranking ulema benefited directly from the opium boom of the late Qajar period.

In the confrontation with the ever-growing European presence from the mid-1800s, the clerical circles contrived the urban epithet Qobbat-al-Eslām "Dome of Islam," which had been used before as a designation of other cities. By the late 19th century this assumed a distinct programmatic connotation and was intended as the deliberate expression of the self-perception of Isfahan's orthodox Shiʿite leadership, the leading ulema's reassertion of their own importance combined with their aspirations of reviving the religious and ideological authority of Islam against a European modernity. Meaning both cupola and tent, the Arabic term qobba also connotes the navel of the heavens, creating a religious-ideological equivalent to the medieval principle of the graphical and political notion of Isfahan as "Navel of Islam" a Saljuq concept,

which was an enduring presence in the 19th-century city's consciousness and self-image.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL FACTORS

Isfahan's geo-strategic position was crucial for its political-urban restoration in the 19th century. Situated at the center of the country's internal and, more importantly, long-distance trade routes, its commerce profited from the transit traffic of goods for the domestic as well as the international market. In the absence of a modern infrastructure, goods were transported by caravan along these longstanding trade routes well into the 20th century. In the 1860s the city had direct business links to Hamadān, Kermānšāh, and Baghdad in the west, Kāšān and Tehran in the north, Yazd in the east, and Bušehr in the south. The main trade routes from Isfahan to India, Java, Ottoman Arabia, and Egypt followed the road via Shiraz to Bušehr, which was the central link between the Persian Gulf and the country's interior, and lasting competitor of the British planned Kārun route (from the late 1890s known as the Lynch or Baḵtiāri road). These caravan or trade routes were firmly established networks with central economic relevance, organized and controlled with systemic routine. Isfahan's big merchants had direct and heavily vested interests in this network, which was absolutely crucial to the city's commercial influence and vitality (for a detailed description of routes and villages and towns in the early 19th century, see Ritter, pp. 13-73).

The topographical and geo-climatic factors were vital preconditions for the city's development, and the ecological factor of the Zāyandarud (meaning "life-giving" or "river of life") was central for Isfahan's geo-political and historical position. The supply of water resources was the source of life and prosperity sine qua non, facilitating one of Persia's most productive agronomies. The city's hinterlands were crucial for the wealth of the city's elite (by the turn of the century also occasional foreigners), who owned most of the villages and arable land. Water and control over its supply, distribution, and use was a sign of power and status, also reflected in the water allotments for properties of owners with different social standing.

Water allocation directly influenced the development and morphology of the city, driving 19th-century urban expansion upstream. Favored by the aristocracy, the urban and suburban westward districts marshaled better access to water than those downstream. Consequently, hamlets on the city's eastern fringe beyond the Qalʿa-ye Ṭabarak, despite fertile farmland, were

unable to secure sufficient water and by the 1880s had disintegrated (Höltzer, “Beschreibung,” p. 99).

Using its agro-economic advantages and its geo-commercial position on the nexus of the central trade routes from east to west and from the Persian Gulf to Tehran, Isfahan managed to compensate for the decline of traditional manufacturing (silk, arms, etc.) and rebuilt itself as one of the most important commercial centers, which in the 1900s still had the country’s largest bazaar. The resulting affluence of the local elite sustained the city’s enduring political role as well as its sense of self-importance.

During the tribal civil wars of the 18th century, Isfahan’s guilds and artisans produced to a large extent for a war industry. Insecurity, the volatile political situation, and the extortions by the tribal militia further impeded extensive agriculture, giving little incentive for the redevelopment of fallow garden and farmlands or any viable agricultural investments, leaving even large, previously prosperous villages abandoned and fertile land along the Zāyandarud uncultivated.

The political stability of the early reign of Fatḥ-ʿAli Shah generated a phase of economic revitalization. With the concomitant revival of Isfahan’s agronomy in the early 19th century, the economic premises changed. Ḥāji Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan Ṣadr Eṣfahāni, governor and grand vizier (ṣadr-e aʿẓam), and later his son ʿAbd-Allāh Khan Amin-al-Dawla, realized the potential and were among the first to reinvest heavily in land, amassing immense personal wealth at a time when the general zeitgeist was still troubled by the aftermath of civil war (Anṣāri, p. 44; Kinneir, p. 112). The redevelopment and change to a more intensive agriculture, especially during ʿAbd-Allāh Khan’s tenure as governor, brought renewed prosperity to the city and its hinterlands. In the two decades of his governorship, Isfahan was said to have more than doubled its inhabitants, and quadrupled its silk and brocade manufacture (Malcolm, p. 238-39).

This trend was halted and agricultural productivity suffered in the 1830s and 1840s under the strain of two wars with Russia, Moḥammad Shah’s attempts for the repossession of Herat, as well as recurrent frontier conflicts with the Ottomans and the concomitant impingement on peasants and land cultivation. By the accession of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, countless villages in the vicinity of Isfahan had again disintegrated, posing a major challenge for the new governement’s aim of a systematic redevelopment of villages and agriculture.

The most common agricultural crops cultivated in the vicinity of the Isfahan province were mostly for the city's own supply and for the local markets, and included such staples as wheat, barley, green soybeans, lentils, rice, chick peas, millet, maize, fava beans, and cottonseed for local consumption. Opium, tobacco, sisal, and cotton were produced for the domestic and international markets. Until the middle of the century the bazaars traded mostly in goods from among the local indigenous production: silk and cotton stuff, various woolen cloth, weaponry, gunpowder, and jewelry as well as raw materials from the surrounding countryside, including cotton, medicinal drugs, tobacco, rice, and skins. Sugar, indigo, shawls, cotton prints, tea, spices, and chinaware were imported from India, China, and Indochina (Moḥammad-Mahdi Arbāb, pp. 19-20, 112-26; Taḥwildār, pp. 49-59; Blau, p. 44; Great Britain, Parliamentary Papers; Polak; Issawi, passim; Kalbāsi, passim).

Glassware continued to be produced for local supply. Iron, brass, and copperware also outlasted industrial imports and continued to be appreciated by 19th-century European artifact collectors. Isfahan's famous qalamkār (cotton print), booming after techniques were introduced from India, remained in high demand. The latter, as well as chintz, brocade, and some silk were produced and traded mostly within Persia, but the pressure to keep prices competitive in comparison to European imports affected the quality. The loss of their reputation and change of fashion precipitated the decline of this domestic market, which gradually succumbed to foreign imports.

Cash crops, including opium, tobacco, cotton, and wheat, became progressively more important in the latter part of the century. The absolutely decisive and foremost change in Isfahan's economy, however, was launched by the expansive opium cultivation, following innovations of the refining process in the 1860s. The steady demand in China and a growing market in Europe turned opium into the economic mainstay of the province and the city. Opium had traditionally been grown for the domestic market. In 1856-57 Moḥammad Mahdi Arbāb, founder of the Kompāni-e Teryāk-e Eṣfahān in the opium trade, returned from Bombay to Isfahan and together with a business partner introduced modern refinery and cultivation techniques adopted from the Indian Parsis. Cultivators and merchants in Isfahan began to invest in large-scale opium production. The new techniques spread rapidly, propelling Yazd and Shiraz as Isfahan's most serious rivals in the opium business (Moḥammad-Mahdi Arbāb, p. 125; Höltzer, "Beschreibung," p. 54; Okazaki, pp. 187-78; Najm-al-Molk, p. 177; Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, 1984-89, pp. 143-44; Houtum-

Schindler, 1879, p. 53; see also AFYŪN).

In the 1850s the city exported about 23 chests annually, rising to 500 chests in 1865 and 1,000 chests two years later. Isfahan's opium exports increased steadily, and by the late 1870s, European estimates put the annual cultivation of opium at about 130,000 pounds, roughly half of the entire country's production, worth about 40,000 pounds sterling (equivalent to approximately 2.5 million pounds sterling in 2003). Opium production reached its height by the mid-1880s, when as much as 40,000 man-e šāh (1 man-e šāh = ca. 6 kg) were produced in years with no significant problems regarding pests or droughts, packed in boxes, each weighing about 140-155 pounds, of which about 4,000 boxes were annually sent to China (Moḥammad-Mahdi Arbāb, pp. 122, 124-25; Höltzer, "Beschreibung," p. 57; Ballantine, p. 160). Due to soil depletion, internal competition, labor costs, falling international markets and regulations, Isfahan's output declined from the 1890s (Accounts and Papers, Commercial Reports "Diplomatic and Consular Reports," 1894, vol. 87, No. 1376, p. 66; Seyf, p. 242).

Opium directly affected the mercantile climate, business practices, and competition with landowners, dealers, retailers, wholesalers, and brokers. By the 1880s most trades and crafts were directly or indirectly involved in the production and sale of opium, and in the city the livelihood of at least a quarter of the population depended directly on the opium business (Höltzer, "Beschreibung," p. 54; Gilbar, passim; Millspaugh, p. 190).

Also of significance with regard to the politics of agro-business was the fact that the production, trade, and export of opium generated profits, but for a few exceptions (such as the Anglo-Dutch Hotz and Co.), largely for the Persian merchants. British attempts to seize this market provoked protectionist reactions by the ulema and the merchants. Only in the 20th century did the Europeans manage to gain a greater market share. The greatest share of profits went to an exclusive number of large, generally absentee landowners and merchants, who acquired the entire harvest and processed it in wholesale quantities. Some of them even invested in the shipping companies, and a number of them also owned the ships (or shares of those) by which the opium was exported (Lewis Pelly to Mirzā Moḥammad Khan, no. 255, 24 November 1870; and response, 23 November 1870, FO 60/333).

In the long term, all opium-producing areas also emerged as large opium-consuming districts, and the traditional ways of opium consumption by taking

pills and tonics was progressively replaced by smoking, the most addictive and debilitating form of consumption at that time. Statistical information is generally imprecise, but it is estimated that, by the 1900s, 40 percent of the annual production of opium was consumed domestically, with severe and pervasive social consequences (Gilbar, p. 330; Polak, II, pp. 241-55; Anṣāri, p. 49; Millspaugh, pp. 190-92; MacCallum, p. 12; League of Nations, doc. no. A.7. 1927. XI [C. 580.M.219.1926.XI], p. 41).

Isfahan's soil and climate were also extremely suitable for the cultivation of tobacco, which until the early 1860s was an important cash crop, exported in large quantities chiefly to Baghdad and Istanbul. With the significant loss of the Ottoman tobacco market due to the imposition of import duties in 1866 and the expansion of opium poppy cultivation, growers and traders in the Isfahan area withdrew from major investments in tobacco. By the mid-1880s, when the Ottoman Porte revoked the heavy import taxes, Isfahan's tobacco cultivation began anew (Moḥammad-Mahdi Arbāb, p. 125). Although a time-honored crop in the province and the catalyst for one of the most consequential political movements of 19th century Persia, culminating in the 1891-92 revolts against the British Tobacco Regie, Isfahan's tobacco production never rivaled the economic and agricultural importance of opium.

Partly inspired by a large-scale monopoly like the British Regie, the cultivators, landowners, and merchants, many of whom were responsible for the termination of the British monopoly, re-intensified and expanded Isfahan's tobacco production. This resulted in constant trade wars by the Isfahan ulema and merchants against the Societé du Tumbac, a French consortium, which received the curtailed export rights of the annulled 1892 British Regie.

The drop in world cotton supply due to the American civil war (1861-65) shifted attention to cotton as a potential cash crop, (Aqanoor to Dickson 24 December 1866 and 14 June 1867, FO 248/242) but problems of transportation, drastic price fluctuations in the international markets, and climatic factors hindered the long-term development of Isfahan's cotton into a key primary cash crop that could equal opium. Although Isfahan's economy was heavily invested in the opium business, there were limited incentives for large-scale investments in raw cotton. Determined by agro-commercial realities, production remained chiefly for the domestic market and the city's tent manufacture, which at the time counted as the largest in Persia.

Entrepreneurial voices argued that the difficulties of cotton cultivation could

be overcome with government support, turning it into another vital large-scale export product (Moḥammad-Mahdi Arbāb, pp. 122-23, 12). Facing lower yields of opium from the 1890s, landowners and merchants, in deliberate competition against British and Russian cotton imports, launched new campaigns to revive Isfahan's cotton production and textile industry. In 1899 some of the city's high-ranking ulema, merchants, and court elite founded the Šerkat-e Eslāmiya, which evolved as the precursor to the rise of Isfahan's 20th-century textile industry. This was firstly a major large-scale business venture undertaken by a large group of financiers attempting to restore Isfahan's traditional silk industry in deliberate competition against European industrial imports. Focusing on the restitution of Isfahan's traditional textile manufacturing, it also reflected the city's innate conflict between modernizing innovation and conservative restoration.

With the expansion of trade undertaken in the 1870s, commercial and economic factors dominated Isfahan's political orientation even further. Despite the conventional silence of the chroniclers and biographers, the merchant elite was the second most influential group in the city's socio-political hierarchy. In the 1880s supposedly about 400-500 merchants were known by name, headed by the tājer-bāši (chief merchant); and by the turn of the century the majority of Isfahan's population was engaged in trade (Foreign Office, Report, FO 248/1029). About eighty merchants, representing renowned wholesale trading firms chiefly engaged in the wholesale business, held a name and reputation that spanned beyond Isfahan. Men like Moḥammad-Ebrāhim Malek-al-Tojjār, Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Kāzeruni, Ḥāji Moḥammad-Taqi Šāhrudi, the Qazvinihā brothers, and many others had accumulated enormous wealth and, prompted by the growing presence of British and Russian business in Isfahan beginning in the 1880s, became directly involved in city politics.

The late 19th century political and commercial changes and the victory against the British Tobacco monopoly engendered a new confidence. Driven by the idea of reviving the city's traditional textile sector and the ulema's endeavor of pushing Isfahan as the leading Shiʿite city, the mercantile clerical leaders emphasized Isfahan's commercial, religious, and industrial weight, promoting the image of the dār al-sÂanāyeʿ (lit. "house of industries"), a publicist endeavor to proliferate the new industrial self-assertion against European competition.

SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The socio-religious and demographic matrix of 19th-century Isfahan was the outcome of its political power structure and had a direct bearing on political events, particularly in the late Qajar period. In the course of the century, the heterogenous religious and ethnic groups, consisting of important Jewish and Armenian communities, a growing underground Bābi following, a starkly diminished Zoroastrian population, a rising number of Hindu Indians, and different European Christian denominations submitted to the authoritative Shiʿite establishment. By the late 19th century the Zoroastrians, Turks, and Armenians who used to live in the city proper, pressured by a rising, politicized Shiʿite orthodoxy, moved largely to Julfa (q.v.), nearby villages, Tehran, the Ottoman empire, and India. Most Zoroastrians had left the city, contrary to the Jews, who, as the most important indigenous non-Shiʿite community, endured as the prominent minority within the city's boundaries (see, e.g., Darāmad-i bar Tāriḵča, foll. 128-63; see also Saʿdvandiān, passim; Anṣāri, passim). The acceptance of the Jews' longstanding presence in Isfahan since pre-Islamic times provided a sense of legitimacy to their enduring existence in the city. They were mainly concentrated in the quarters of Jubāra, Dardašt, Bāb-al-Dašt, Gowd-e Maqṣud Beyg, and the Meydān-e Qadim. This is in stark contrast to the Zoroastrians, who, pressured by the policies of some ulema, had moved to the city's southern quarters and gradually emigrated to Yazd or India.

The shift in political control following the 1888 reduction in Ẓell-al-Solṭān's power and domain caused several waves of persecutions against the Jews and pogroms against the Bābis, driven by inter-clerical rivalries and the personal motives of a few mojtaheds (especially the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāh). Discrimination against the Jews usually arose in the context of trade wars against British firms or crusades against the Church Missionary Society of London (C.M.S.), such as the very short-lived campaigns of 1889 against the Jews or in 1897 against Jewish hawkers (Walcher, 2007).

Toward the end of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah's reign (r. 1848-96), the attention of organizations like the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Alliance Israélite Universelle, as well as missionary societies like the Society for the Promotion of Christianity Amongst the Jews and the Church Missionary Society of London, accounted for an international aspect and publicity in cases of political oppression and persecution. This enabled the Jews to muster a much greater religious immunity and protection than the tenacious community of Bābis, for whom it was virtually impossible to raise direct foreign protection

or intervention, whilst they played a crucial part in the religio-political tug-of-war.

The division of Julfa was critical for late 19th century political history. The morphology, civic structure, and social hierarchy of the city were separate, though not independent, from Isfahan, and it functioned as a satellite rather than suburb. Julfa's spatial separation facilitated the segregationist policy pursued by Isfahan's conservative ulema until the early 1900s, enabling the elite to keep Europeans largely outside Isfahan proper. Until the late 1800s, Europeans took up residence in Julfa. It was only in the 1890s and in the face of major resistance that the Russian and British envoys, an Imperial Bank representative, and an Anglican missionary managed to take up residence in the city. As satellite and traditional domain for all Christian denominations, Julfa both conveyed and reinforced a corporeal as well as social dichotomy of the Muslim and Christian populations.

During Ẓell-al-Solṭān's tenure as governor the Catholics maintained a low-key Jesuit mission, overseen by the French Pére Pascale, who frequently intervened as broker or intermediary in conflicts between the hierocracy and the Europeans. The Anglican C.M.S. officially established in 1871-72 played a more prominent and conflicting role in urban and international politics. Its educational and medical work afforded the necessary legitimacy, but its activities and proselytism caused unremitting conflicts with the Armenian, Jewish, and Shiʿite elite. Until the 1890s confrontations were largely religio-theological altercations, but with changes in the C.M.S.'s missionary tactics and Britain's foreign policy, they acquired an imperialist dimension. Serious campaigns against the Anglicans, usually headed by Shaikh Moḥammad-Bāqer, or later by Āqā Najafi, took place against the Reverend Robert Bruce (director of the C.M.S.) from the 1870s and again in 1893, against the medical dispensary of Mary Bird (known as Maryam Ḵānom to Persians) in 1894, concerning the Sakina conversion case in 1895, and also against the Alliance Israélite in 1901. These confrontations became an innate part of foreign politics in Isfahan (British Foreign Office documents and documents of the Church Missionary Society archives; Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record, 1876-1890; Seeley et al., London; Waterfield, pp. 148-53, 155-57; Wright, pp. 118-22).

THE BAḴTIĀRI TRIBAL FORCE

The Baḵtiāri tribe was an essential part of Isfahan's wider socio-political

matrix, playing a critical role in the relationship of the city and its hinterlands, with both a symbiotic as well as confrontational and competitive element in the tribal-urban interdependence. Controlling extensive territory between Isfahan and Khuzestan, the tribe had commercial and military functions, which could both support and threaten the safety and the trade of the city. Based on their military capabilities, the Baḵtiāri chiefs of the late 18th century, such as Abu'l-Fatḥ Khan Baḵtiāri, the city's beglerbegi in the 1760s, had phases of direct influence in Isfahan. The tribe could also muster a geo-strategic role and ally with both the governors of Khuzestan and Isfahan. The governor of Khuzestan, for example, employed Ḥosaynqoli Khan Ilḵāni in punitive expeditions to enforce tax payments in 1280/1862 and 1281/1863 as well as in other campaigns (Walcher, 2007).

Phases of strong autocratic government in Isfahan generally tended to a policy of conflict between the city's government and the Baḵtiāris, conspicuously so during the governorships of Manučehr Khan Gorji Moʿtamed-al-Dawla (1254-63/1838-847) and Ẓell-al-Solṭān (1291-1325/1874-907). In the early 19th century Moḥammad-Taqi Khan Ilḵāni endeavored to fuse the various factions of the tribe, which caused unease in Isfahan and Tehran. He delayed a 10,000-toman tax payment to Isfahan and was accused by Manučehr Khan of conspiring with the exiled princes in Baghdad, dishonoring royal drafts, and tax evasion. In 1841, Manučehr Khan first visited, then attacked and arrested the fleeing khan, who was exiled to Tehran, where he died ten years later (Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, 1984-88, III, pp. 1657-60; Eʿteżād-al-Salṭana, pp. 518, 523; Hedāyat, X, pp. 513 ff.; Garthwaite, pp. 66-71).

A similar pattern of tribal-government strife occurred four decades later. Ḥosaynqoli Khan (see BAḴTĪĀRĪ), who had been appointed ilḵāni by the shah in 1846 for his services to Manučehr Khan's campaign against his own uncle Moḥammad-Taqi Khan, pursued a policy of tribal and military consolidation. Suspicious about military prowess, his dealings with the British, and a possible collusion between Ẓell-al-Solṭān and Ḥosaynqoli Khan, Naṣer-al-Din Shah in 1882 ordered Ẓell-al-Solṭān to kill the ilḵāni. Ẓell-al-Solṭān had him seized and killed in 1882, when the latter was in Isfahan to pay Baḵiāri taxes (Eʿtemād-al-Salṭana, 1977, pp. 179, 210; Garthwaite, pp. 92-93) and held his sons ʿAliqoli Khan (later Sardār Asʿad II, q.v.) and Esfandiār Khan (later Sardār Asʿad I) hostage in Isfahan. They were only freed after Ẓell-al-Solṭān's demotion in 1888, when Esfandiār Khan was summoned to Tehran and reinstated as ilḵāni, demoting his uncle Ḥāji Emāmqoli Khan. Aiming to pit the tribe against Ẓell-al-

Solṭān, Amin-al-Solṭān now also strove to split the Baḵtiāri leadership by investing them with competitive appointments. Baḵtiāri vengeance against Ẓell-al-Solṭān led to serious conflicts in the early 1890s, as they followed a relentless policy of containment. The khans' direct presence or involvement in Isfahan during this time, reduced to the bare necessities, became rather intangible (Walcher, 2007).

By the advent of the 20th century, the leading Baḵtiāri khans, like the non-tribal elite, had emerged as landlords with vast landed property and estates, acquiring considerable fiscal control and living a rather sedentary lifestyle. During Ẓell-al-Solṭān's rule, however, their presence and personal investments in Isfahan remained cautious. The khans may have owned properties and estates in or near Isfahan, but until their 1909 takeover of the city's rule they seem to have favored their residences in places like Dawlatābād, Solṭānābād, Farādunba, Borujen, and others. Fatḥ-Allāh Khan Zayḡam-al-Salṭana, spent most of his time in Isfahan, but based his home estates in Sarisjān.

With Britain's systematic policy since the 1880s of expanding her hegemonic position and influence in the south through alliances with the tribe, the Baḵtiāri khans' political influence became progressively more consequential. The building of the Baḵtiāri (or Lynch) road in 1897 (a road built by Lynch Brothers, a British firm, linking Isfahan to Ahvāz; Garthwaite, pp. 104-7; Wright, pp. 85-86, 101-2) and the oil concession of William Knox D'Arcy (q.v.) in 1901 brought massive wealth and status to the tribe's upper ranks. This had a long-term impact on the tribe's social and cultural structure, and profoundly strengthened its political bargaining power, which was vital for the khans' political rise in 20th-century politics (Eskandar Khan ʿAkkāša, passim; Awžan Baḵtiāri, passim; Sardār Asʿad and Sepehr, passim; "Notes on the Baḵtiari Tribes and their Chiefs," Lieutenant Ranking, 1911, WO 106/5954; Garthwaite, pp. 103 ff.).

THE 1891-92 TOBACCO REGIE

Isfahan played a critical part in the cancellation of the 1891-92 British Tobacco Regie. Because of the city's heavy clerical power, agronomic-cultural weight, and role as a commercial center, the Regie's frictionless establishment there was the government's foremost concern (Shah to Ẓell-al-Solṭān, Rajab 1308, in Kennedy to Salisbury, no. 69, 17 March 1891, FO 60/553; Townley to Grey, No. 196, 6 July 1914, FO 371/2059).

Under the simplistic premise of the antagonistic dichotomy between the ulema and the state, Ẓell-al-Solṭān has been portrayed as a categorical pro-British supporter of the Regie (for the concession, see Hurewitz, I, pp. 461-63). It has been argued that the Regie was particularly strong in Isfahan because of the Persian Gulf Trading Company and Ẓell-al-Solṭān's staunch British partisanship intent on "shattering" the anti-Regie movement. At the inception of the protests he attempted at length to demonstrate loyalty and reliability (Ādamiat, pp. 51-52; Teymuri, 1981, pp. 79, 223; Ẓell-al-Solṭān to Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, Šawwāl 1308, communicated to the British Legation, 29 May 1891, FO 60/553). Following the first complaints in Tabriz, Isfahan's tobacco merchants, supported by the Emām Jomʿa, presented a petition to Ẓell-al-Solṭān, who reacted with a demonstratively ruthless reply against the merchant's "impertinence," and forced them to send a collective letter to the shah, pledging order and submission (Isfahan merchants to Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, Šawwāl 1308, 29 May 1891, FO 60/553; Ẓell-al-Solṭān to Emām Jomʿa and merchants, in Kennedy to Salisbury, no. 210, 19 September 1891, FO 69/553; Keddie, pp. 90-91; Aqanoor to Kennedy, 12 September 1891, FO 248/535; Ẓell-al-Solṭān to Amin-al-Solṭān, tels. 21 and 17, September 1891, FO 60/553; Retranslation, Ādamiyat, p. 50).

Yet, the pro-Regie statements by Ẓell-al-Solṭān were mere, though effective, rhetoric. Driven by revenge for his 1888 dismissal against Amin-al-Solṭān and the shah, as well as pressure by the politicized mojtaheds, he in public avowed a pro-Regie stand, while colluding with the opposition. Without his endorsement of the boycott against smoking initiated by Aqa Najafi and Shaikh Moḥammad ʿAli, the Regie's later collapse might never have happened. For months the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi, Āqā Najafi, and the Malek-al-Tojjār of Isfahan worked on a quiet, but organized, campaign against the Regie, corresponding with the ulema in Tabriz, Shiraz, Mashad, and the ʿAtabāt for the coordination of the protests. With Ẓell-al-Solṭān's tacit approval, Shaikh Moḥammad-ʿAli and his brother Āqā Najafi launched the decisive attack against the Regie by the prohibition of smoking in Isfahan (Preece to Lascalles, no. 7, 13 February 1892; FO 248/548).

Demands went beyond the abrogation of the Regie concession, with the removal of the Imperial Bank of Persia as central objective. The concomitant goals of the city's clerical-merchant elite were the summary expulsion of all foreign firms, the banishment of the Church Missionary Society from Isfahan and Julfa, and a ban launched by Āqā Najafi against foreign goods (Walcher,

forthcoming, passim; Najafi, 1992, p. 52). By November 1891, they pronounced smoking water pipes forbidden (ḥarām), sowing and cultivating of tobacco doubly forbidden (ḥarām andar ḥarām), assistants of foreigners infidel and deserving death (kāfer wa wājeb-al-qatl), and foreigners' servants and their relatives utterly impure (najes-al-ʿayn; Ẓell-al-Solṭān's telegraph to Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, 19 Rabiʿ II 1309, in Ṣafāʾi, 1973c, pp. 20-23; Keddie, pp. 94-95; see also Preece to Kennedy, 20 November 1891, enclosure no. 1, in Kennedy to Salisbury, no. 241, 23 November 1891, FO 248/521, also in FO 60/553 and IO L/P and S/3/314).

A fatwa with Āqā Najafi's signature calling for the boycott of the Tobacco Company was posted everywhere in the city. The tobacco trade essentially closed down, making Isfahan the first city to stage an open boycott and heralding the countrywide boycott a week and a half later (see Preece to Lascalles, No. 8, 22 November 1891, FO 248/535; FO 60/553; Ṣafāʾi, 1973c, pp. 40-41; Ādamiyat, p. 49; Lambton, p. 145).

Only the Emām Jomʿa, the major rival of Āqā Najafi, was on the side of the Regie in both his public position as well as his private sympathies. His brother Ḥāji Moḥammad-Hāšem Čahārsuʾi also followed a conservative position against the agitations of the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi. Moḥammad-Bāqer Fešāraki, one of the oldest and most respected mojtaheds, who maintained good relations with the British consul, swaying between identifying with the interest of the ulema at large, personal competition with other leading mojtaheds, and pro-government tendencies, seems to have been switching sides. While he later claimed pro-Regie sympathies, he was also reported as acting against the Regie (Ādamiyat, p. 55; Preece to Lascalles, no. 15, 11 February 1893, FO 248/572).

In the face of Āqā Najafi's anti-Regie activities, demands by the British consulate and others for his banishment became more vociferous, and the shah responded with irate telegraphs threatening house arrest in Tehran or exile (Ṣafāʾi, 1983; Preece to Lascalles, no. 10, 28 November 1891, FO 248/535; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, pp. 19 ff.).

Striving to expand the tobacco embargo, Āqā Najafi and his allies enlisted the support of the Ḥojjat-al-Eslām Mirzā Ḥasan Širāzi for a countrywide boycott of smoking (Najafi, 1992, pp. 48-50, 52; Teymuri, 1982, pp. 78-79; Karbalāʾi, pp. 51-60). As disciple of Āqā Najafi's father, Shaikh Moḥammad Bāqer, Širāzi had very close ties to the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi and their circles in Isfahan and

Najaf, and as Ḥojjat-al-Eslām and leading Shiʿite authority (marjaʿ) residing in the ʿAtabāt, he was outside the Persian government's jurisdiction. The fatwa against smoking, issued under the name of Ḥāji Mirzā Ḥasan Širāzi, first appeared in Isfahan in December. Confronted by the massive countrywide resistance, the shah withdrew the concession on 16 Jomādā I 1309 (18 December 1891). A few days later the Āqāyān-e Masjed-e Šāhi met with Ẓell-al-Solṭān, who congratulated them on the stupendous victory against the Regie, "which, although rock-solid, was dislodged by their power, which could now probably even overturn the Kuh-e Soffa" (Preece to Lascalles, no. 7, 13 February 1892, FO 248/548; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, pp. 19 ff.; Brown, 1966, pp. 31-58; Ṣafāʾi, 1973c, pp. 8 ff.).

The British were astounded as they slowly comprehended Ẓell-al-Solṭān's shrewd multi-partisan tactics. Discovering his anti-Regie dealings with the Russians during the Regie protests, the British consul bemoaned his "defection" as a major blow to British interests in the south (Trade report, Preece to Salisbury, 24 July 1892, 248/541; Legation to Rosebery, no. 136, 1 September 1892, in: Confidential Print, Russian Affairs in Asia, Diary for August 1892, FO 248/543).

In Isfahan the victory against the Regie in effect inaugurated ongoing trade wars against British companies. Immediately after its annulment the circle around Āqā Najafi began to campaign against the Imperial Bank of Persia (Bānk-e šāhanšāhi-e Irān,1893-94; see BANKING IN IRAN), aiming to contrive a boycott as massive as that against the Regie (Preece to Lascalles, no. 7, 13 February 1892, FO 248/548). This was followed by inveterate price wars and embargos against foreign goods, including revolts, for instance, against the British consulate (1893), the Anglo-Dutch firm A. Hotz and Company (provoked by an incident of suffocation, 1896), the Russian consulate (1897), the Jewish peddlers (1897), and the Belgian customs reforms (1903).

With the cancellation of the Regie, its export monopoly rights were transferred to the French Societé de Tumbac, which became a major target of the Isfahan clergy's enduring trade wars. Ignoring the latter's monopoly, they founded the Šerkat-e Eṯnā-ʿašari (Company of Twelver Shiʿism), also called Kompāni-e tanbāku-ye Irān, incorporated in the period 1311-18 (1893/4-1900/1). Chief shareholders were Āqā Najafi, Ẓell-al-Solṭān, Ḥājj Mo-ḥammad-Ḥasan Amin-al-Żarb (q.v.), Ḥāji Āqā Moḥammad Ṣadr (head of Isfahan's merchant community), Amin-al-Dawla, and others. Realizing the goal of the scheme and some of the shareholders' involvement in the Regie boycott, Nāṣer-al-Din Shah

reacted with outright but ineffectual rage (the shah's letter to Ẓell-al-Soltān, September 1894; see Teymuri, 1982, pp. 227, 223-31).

Endeavors of the elite to establish trade consortia, following the European models of shareholding corporations, was another reaction to the Imperial Bank and Regie concessions. In competition to the Bank, a local banking corporation was established in Shiraz in 1892 (General Gordon, in Confidential Print, Russian Affairs, Diary for November 1892, FO 248/543). Other corporations in Isfahan were the Šerkat-e Etteḥādiya, the Šerkat-e Eslāmiya, the Kompāni-e teryāk-e Eṣfahān, and the Šerkat-e Masʿudi (or Masʿudiya). Like similar firms in other cities (the Qāʾemiya Company in Yazd, Šerkat-e tejārat-e Fārs in Shiraz, and Šerkat-e tejārat-e Bušehr), these four all issued their own banknotes in deliberate subversion of the Imperial Bank's monopoly rights, which resulted in endless commercial-diplomatic disputes with the British (Newell to Under-Secretary of State, 13 October 1899).

THE 1906-11 CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION

Given the city's active role against the Regie, the Isfahani origin of prominent constitutionalists (e.g., Sayyed Jamāl-al-Din Wāʿeẓ, Ḥājj Mirzā Naṣr-Allāh Malek-al-Motakallemin, and the Dawlatābādi brothers), Ẓell-al-Solṭān's dethronement from his thirty-three-year governorship, the Baḵtiāris' occupation of Isfahan's government, and their later march to Tehran in August 1909, Isfahan has been reckoned as one of the leading revolutionary centers with profound impact on both the internal situation of the city and the course of the revolution in Tehran. The city's role, however, was by no means monolithic, and the leadership, particularly in the early phase, was less constitutionally minded and more concerned with internal urban affairs.

Isfahan's political leaders and the principal ulema reacted with haphazard interest to the demonstrations, which forced M oẓaffar-al-Din Shah into granting the 1906 Constitution. As a commercial center, the city was preoccupied with the question of the Russian loans, the Belgian customs reform, and internal business. The disintegration of the absolutist royal government was firstly seen as chance to reassert greater political independence from Tehran.

In 1901, several eminent clerics of Isfahan died, including Shaikh Moḥammad-ʿAli, the political mind of the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi (allegedly by mistaken medication but possibly intentional poisoning; Aqanoor to Spring-Rice, no. 2, 1

February 1900; no. 1, 5 January 1901, FO 248/742). This facilitated the rise of his younger brother Ḥājj Āqā Nur-Allāh Ṭeqat-al-Eslām as the self-declared leader of the later, more revolutionary movement. Āqā Nur-Allāh's political ambitions also provoked serious conflicts over leadership with his older brother Āqā Najafi.

Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah, fearing the proliferation of the Russian revolution of 1905 in Persia, requested a policy of appeasement to keep Isfahan's clerics quiet, which was heeded by Ẓell-al-Solṭān. Unsure of political developments in Tehran, the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi deferred direct involvement and instead rallied against the Belgians and the Bābis (Preece to Hardinge, no. 7, 26 January 1905; No. 11, 15 January 1905; Aqanoor to Grant Duff, no. 58, 4 November 1905, FO 248/845).

In October 1905, Ẓell-al-Solṭān left for his first four-month journey to Europe, and Āqā Nur-Allāh, for the same length of time, went to Mashad, apparently acting on an accord. During the Tehran protests of 1323/1905-06, Isfahan's political leadership (including the British and Russian consuls) was essentially absent. Relations between Āqā Najafi and Great Britain were unusually friendly, after he was offered a stipend from the Oudh Bequest (Preece to Hardinge, no. 7, 26 January 1905; no. 11, 15 January 1905; Aqanoor to Grant Duff, No. 58, 4 November 1905, FO 248/845).

The events of the Russian revolution and the protests in Tehran were keenly observed, and constitutional activists subscribed funds for propaganda and political education among Isfahan's peasants (Aqanoor to Hardinge, no. 16, conf., 15 March 1905, FO 248/845; Aqanoor to Grant Duff, no. 13, 20 March 1906, FO 248/877). Yet, the bast (q.v.; see also CONSTITUTIONAL REVOLUTION) at the shrine of Shah ʿAbd-al-Aẓim (called hejrat-e ṣoqrā) did not cause riots or demonstrations of solidarity in Isfahan. In March 1906, Shaikh Mortażā Rizi threatened the impending expulsion of all Europeans from Isfahan, and the political insecurity fuelled grain speculations. This provoked death threats against both Ẓell-al-Solṭān and Āqā Najafi, customarily the chief speculators. People's frustration and the sudden revolutionary drift of stating dissent, even against men of absolute authority, surfaced in acts of open confrontation. Following a coffeehouse murder, Āqā Najafi was attacked by a group of women, because he refused to exact blood money from the escapee murderer. Disapproval even led to an assassination attempt against him, which he only narrowly escaped (Barnham to Grant Duff, no. 41, 10 September 1906, FO 248/877; Monthly Summary, Isfahan, 11 October 1906, FO 247/868).

The politicized ulema, inspired by Tabriz, pushed for the creation of a local assembly in Isfahan. Ẓell-al-Solṭān, although recognizing the threat to his own power, compelled by the political landslide, found it expedient to profess to a constitutional monarchy and consented to the establishment of a local consultative assembly (Janāb, no. 3, 12 and 19 Ḏu'l-Qaʿda, 1324; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, pp. 34-35; Ṣafāʿi, 1984, I, p. 225; Baširi, I, p. 24). It was inaugurated as the Anjoman-e Moqaddas-e Melli-e Eṣ-fahān (Holy National Council of Isfahan), on 8 Ḏu'l-qaʿda 1323/3 January 1906. Different from the numerous semi-private anjomans (councils), Isfahan's central anjoman assumed direct political function with consultative as well as executive power. Its membership consisted of the leading ulema, merchants, and government aristocracy, under the presidency of Āqā Nur-Allāh. There seems to have been no representative of either the Armenians or the Jews (list of the first members in Janāb, year 1, no. 3). It met twice a week in the Čehel Sotun, assuming administrative functions previously under the governor's jurisdiction.

Constitutionalists in Tehran campaigned for the creation of an ʿedālat-ḵāna (house of justice), while the ulema and merchants in Isfahan began a campaign for local textiles by the Šerkat-e Eslāmiya and agitated against the Church Missionary Society. During the bast of July 1906 (Ḥejrat-e kobrā) in Qom, Isfahan's leadership remained reserved, and no official delegation from Isfahan was dispatched. On the night of 25 Jomādā II/16 August 1906, however, only two days after the two basts at Qom and the British Legation in Tehran dissolved, Isfahan was illuminated as tribute to the accomplishment (Henry D. Barnham to Grant Duff, no. 32, 15 July 1906, FO 248/877; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, I, pp. 260-69 and 276; Dawla-tābādi, II, pp. 71-76; Browne, 1966, pp. 120-22; see also Martin, pp. 87-112; Barnham to Grant Duff, no. 38, 18 August 1906, FO 248/877).

Once Moẓaffar-al-Din Shah granted the constitution and a parliament, (19 Jomādā II 1324/10 August 1906), about a thousand of Isfahan's ulema and merchants assembled to discuss the neẓām-nāma (statute of procedure) with the regulations for the election of the first delegates to the national parliament. Wary about the course that events might take in the capital, the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi were not eager to elect representatives. This summit was, rather, about the determination of political emplacement, steered by the interests of the clerical and merchant elite. At this point Isfahan's hierocratic-mercantile oligarchy saw the constitutional monarchy and a parliamentary

system as a foremost opportunity for the re-negotiation of their own bases of power.

Āqā Nur-Allāh rallied for their cause in the city's burgeoning anjomans and encouraged the propagating ulema to support mašruṭiyat (constitutionalism). He now declared the creation of a national parliament as a "special favor from the Twelfth Imam" (extract of Shaikh Nur-Allāh's address, in Barnahm to Spring-Rice, no. 63, 31 October 1906, FO 248/877). Yet, uncertain about events after the shah's impending death, Isfahan adjourned the election of its delegates, and decided to comply only after the Majles was actually inaugurated (details in Barnham to Spring-Rice, no. 63, 31 October 1906, no. 78, 5 December 1906, and no. 81, 28 December 1906, FO 248/877; no. 15, 30 January 1907, FO 248/905; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, pp. 45, 71, 72).

Wary about the dissolution of his political alliances and the modus vivendi with the Āqāyān-e Masjed Šāhi, and hoping for a last chance to get the throne, Ẓell-al-Solṭān secretly left for Tehran on 17 Ḏu'l-ḥejja 1324/1 February 1907. Competing against Āqā Najafi and preempting Ẓell-al-Solṭān's possible retaliation against him, Āqā Nur-Allāh immediately launched a campaign against Ẓell-al-Solṭān. A telegraph was sent to the shah demanding Ẓell-al-Solṭān's dismissal from Isfahan's governorship (Barnham to Spring-Rice, no. 29, 7 March 1907, FO 248/905; see also Barnham to Spring-Rice, no. 41, 13 April 1907, FO 248/905; Nāẓem-al-Eslām, II, pp. 103, 109-111). To enforce a reply to the telegraphic demand, he rallied over a thousand of his followers to take bast at the British consulate, while he himself and Āqā Najafi left the city (21 Moḥarram 1325/6 March 1907). Occasional gunfire by Ẓell-al-Solṭān's partisans stirred excitement but posed no real threat. Ẓell-al-Solṭān's overthrow was supported by the prince's sister, Bānu-ye ʿOẓmā, as well as the Russian consul Dabija. Despite the shah's and the Majles' support for Ẓell-al-Solṭān's governorship, leaders of the bast in Isfahan refused to lift the consulate's siege until the official confirmation of his conclusive removal, and Ẓell-al-Solṭān preferred to step down on 16 March 1907. He did so upon an agreement with Āqā Najafi for his eventual later return, but following Akbar Mirzā's murder of his mother (one of Ẓell-al-Solṭān's wives) and the failed coup against the shah, he was forced by the British and Russians to leave for Europe in September 1908.

In the role of the Anjoman's president and political leader, the government of Isfahan was effectively in the hand of Āqā Nur-Allāh and his cohorts. Ḥosaynqoli Khan Neẓām-al-Salṭana Māfi was appointed governor of Isfahan in

March 1907. Facing the leadership of the Anjoman, he soon realized that it was impossible to gain any effective governmental control and resigned after only three months (Barnham to Spring-Rice, 19 April 1907, FO 248/905).

The Anjoman's leaders resisted any government attempt to interfere in its newly found prerogatives. The central government was unable to regain control, and until the Baḵtiāri occupation of the city in January 1909, Isfahan's governorship changed hands four different times. Solṭān-Ḥosayn Mirzā Nayyer-al-Dawla, replacing Neẓām-al-Salṭana, tendered his resignation after only a few months, which was rejected by Tehran (Barnham to Spring-Rice, no. 86, 10 August 1907, FO 248/905).

By the fall of 1907, Āqā Nur-Allāh went as far as propagating the creation of the Republic of Isfahan. Unequivocal about the importance of military power, the Anjoman began to draft a militia force with 500 recruits from the villages, which, together with the regular troops, constituted a contingent of about 2,000 men, called the Farrāš-e Melli-e Fedāʾi-e Majles (Barnham to Spring-Rice, no. 76, 3 July 1907; No. 80, 23 June 1907; no. 102, 29 September 1907; Lorimer to Spring-Rice, no. 83, 19 September 1907, no. 56, 18 May 1907, and No. 80, 23 June 1907, FO 248/905; Confidential print, no. 29491, FO 371/304, tr. in Baširi, I, pp. 54, 73).

At the same time there evolved a revolutionary movement beyond the politics of the clerical and mercantile chiefs who had seized political leadership. Activists constituted themselves in the thriving anjomans and the booming press. Mirzā Moḥammad Ṣadr, Mirzā Nur-al-Din Majlesi, Ḥāji Fatḥ-al-Molk, Mirzā Asad-Allāh Khan Wazir, Ḥāji Mirzā Bahāʾ, Mirzā Reżā Ḥakimi, Šayḵ-al-ʿErāqayn, Shaikh Ḥasan Neẓām-al-ʿOlamāʾ, Sayyed ʿAbd-al-Wahhāb Emāmi, and Ašraf-al-Wāʿeẓin were among the men who participated actively in the revolutionary discourse and action of Isfahan (for details, see Malekzāda, 1984, I, pp. 202-4).

The booming constitutional press was to some extent funded and controlled by the Anjoman and generally supportive of the local majles. Among the papers which were founded during the years of the Constitutional Revolution were firstly the official paper Anjoman-e moqaddas-e melli-e Eṣfahān (later also Anjoman-e moqaddas-e welāyati-e Eṣfahān and Anjoman-e Esfahan; q.v.); the short-lived al-Janāb (from 1324); Jehād-e akbar, (1325); Farj-e baʿd az šeddat, (1325), continued as Anjoman-e baladiya; Baladiya-ye Eṣfahān, (1324-26); Eṣfahān (1325) and Naqš-e jahān; Nāqur; Kaškul; Mofatteš-e Irān; Najāt-e

waṭan; and Zāyandarud (Malek-zāda, 1984, I,, pp. 202-4; for details and publishers, see Ṣadr Hāšemi, I, pp. 177-83, 288-96, II, pp. 178-80, IV, pp. 62-64, 138-40, 231-34, 252-53, 308-9; Nuri Eṣfahāni, pp. 348-78; for al-Janāb, see Saʿidi Sirjāni, in EIr. VI, p. 207).

Education was considered the hinge for progress and a new political and national consciousness. Individual constitutional reformers and activists thus founded schools for the modern and political education of the populace; among them Āqā Sayyed Abu'l-Qāsem Dehkordi, Āqā Āḵund Mollā Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Fešāraki, Āqā Shaikh Maḥmud-Reżā Najafi; Āqā Ḥāji Mirzā Moḥammad-Ṣādeq Nāyeb-al-Ṣadr, Āqā Ḥāji Mirzā ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Sayyed-al-ʿErāqayn, Āqā Ḥāji Mirzā ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn Najafi, Āqā Sayyed ʿAli Najafābādi, Āqā Sayyed Mahd, Āqā Ḥāji Shaikh Nur-Allāh Najafi (Janāb, p. 103).

In 1908 Mirzā Moḥammad Khan Eqbāl-al-Dawla was appointed governor, arriving intent to break up the Anjoman and re-establish central government authority. Determined to maintain political power and defy renewed control by the central government, Āqā Nur-Allāh organized the underground Komita-ye serri (Secret committee) and concluded a deal with the Baḵtiāri khans. Thus beckoned by the Anjoman's chiefs, Ḥāji Ebrāhim Khan Żarḡām-al-Salṭan entered the city in January 1909 with a small contingent of Baḵtiāri cavalry. The governor's ill-paid soldiers offered little resistance and dispersed, while the Eqbāl-al-Dawla took refuge in the British consulate (Dānešvar ʿAlawi, passim; Sayyāḥ, pp. 611-14). A few days later, on 12 Ḏu'l-ḥejja 1326/5 January 1909, Ebrāhim Khan's cousin, Najafqoli Khan Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana, supported by further Baḵtiāri troops, occupied the city and called for elections to the Anjoman-e welāyati. Out of tactical considerations, he did not declare himself governor and was endorsed as such only in July 1909 after the fall of Moḥammad-ʿAli Shah (Amir Ḥosayni, p. 211; Malekzāda, 1984, II, pp. 1088-89; Šarif Kāšāni, I, pp. 254-57; Sardār Asʿad and Lesān-al-Salṭana Sepehr, pp. 447-54; Garthwaite, p. 116).

Baḵtiāri rule: World War I to the coup d'état. The dissolution of an effective central power prompted the rise of the tribes' direct military-political involvement and a far-reaching change in the tribal-urban balance of power. The complexity of the political situation in Isfahan was compounded by the imperial powers' earlier manipulation of tribal politics, their attempt at maximum political gain in their zone of influence, as well as the effect of the Baḵtiāri (Lynch) road agreement and the oil concession on the wealth and

ambitions of the Baḵtiāri leadership. The Baḵtiāri takeover (also as district governors, e.g., in Solṭānābād, Qomeša, and Yazd) not only was significant in its direct impact on Isfahan and the drastic changes that this meant for the tribe's internal matrix, but also overturned the conventional relationship between the urban center and the nomadic tribe.

Baḵtiāri rule in Isfahan proved erratic and absolutist, rocked by the constant internal power struggle over inner-tribal leadership and the further polarization of power between Great Britain and Russia in progressively more formally defined zones of hegemony. Ironically the Baḵtiāris' military capability was a crucial factor in their maintenance and implementation of power. The 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement (q.v.; see also Hurewitz, I, pp. 538-41), leaving Isfahan in the Russian and Julfa in the neutral zone, in the long-term complicated politics further, especially once the Great Powers began to make full use of their hegemony after the outbreak of World War I.

The khans had little interest in collaborating with the Anjoman-e welāyati, and soon moved to monopolize political control in the re-establishment of an autocratic governorship. At the same time, they were not able to disregard the ulema's power and, if necessary, paid various clerics (Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana to the Šayḵ-al-Eslām; Haig to Legation, no. 90, 14 May 1917, FO 248/1189).

After their victory, the khans, forced by the tribe's lower rank, had concluded the "Malāmir agreement," stipulating that any madāḵel (incoming revenues) gained by the governor of Isfahan from the city had to be accounted and shared at 50 percent with the tribal leaders. This was particularly in the interest of the lesser chiefs, who were determined to enforce the agreement by all means, threatening Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana, who uncompromisingly refused to pay his share (see consular correspondence, February-March 1911 in FO 258/1026).

Ṣamṣām-al-Salṭana, supported in his initial office by both the Russians and British, showed limited interest in politics for the benefit of the city, his favorite subject being the oil company's financial details. One of his chief preoccupations was to get control of the city taxes, which were administered by foreigners employed by the central government (Haycock had been appointed the superintendent of finance department [piškār-e mālia] in Isfahan by Morgan Shuster). He demanded 6,000 tomans over the regular tax revenue, which ended in a major quarrel with the vizier Mirzā Asad-Allāh Khan, who refused on the justified plea about the empty treasury. Ṣamṣām-al-

Salṭana harbored a serious antipathy against the clergy, and his erratic and self-aggrandizing conduct impelled growing popular discontent (Confidential Diary, Ahwaz consulate, 1.-8. August 1909, FO 248/967).

With the stalemate between the Anjoman and the Baḵtiāri governor, political and social security progressively worsened, and for the next decade the city and villages were under the constant sway of robberies, lacking personal and material safety. Safeguarding their own interests, the merchants and clerics founded their own associations, like the Etteḥādiya-ye Tojjār or the Etteḥādiya-ye ʿOlamāʾ (headed by the Dawlatābādi brothers); and to cancel out the Anjoman a counter-council, called the Majles-e or Edāra-ye welāyati, was founded and headed by Mobāṣer-al-Molk (later deputy governor of Loṭf-ʿAli Khan Sardār Ašjaʿ), which created constant quarrels with the Anjoman-e welāyati headed by Āqā Nur-Allāh (Isfahan News no. 2, 8 January, no. 4, 22 January, no. 5, 29 January, no. 20, 14 May, no. 21, 21 May, no. 23, 4 June 1910, FO 248/996. Isfahan News, no. 3, 1912, FO 248/1049).

Sardār Ašjaʿ, who was installed upon Russian request, took over the governorship in 1910, imposed further extortionate taxation, and suppressed any sort of constitutional rights. Enticed by his large salary, he tried to secure the governorship for the following year, which was opposed by all the city's various factions. Sardār Qarib Khan (Rašid-al-Dawla from 1910, assassinated in 1915) went as far as offering the chief of police 1,000 tomans and a carriage to prevent his reappointment.

By January 1911 the prices of foodstuffs rose 80 percent, causing popular unrest, disillusionment with the constitution, and serious hatred of the Baḵtiāri regime; this was an excuse for the reactionaries to gather at the Masjed-e Šāh, while the governor endeavored to uphold order with a new cannon sent from Tehran (Grahame to Legation, telegraph no. 61, 8 May 1911, FO 248/1028; also FO 248/1029, passim). The beginning of Sardār Ašjaʿ's re-appointment was challenged by a movement of "revivalism," following, as was believed, the appearance of the light of the Twelfth Imam and a blind woman's miracle-healing in the shrine of Hārun-e Welāyat. Masses of people flocked to the shrine, twice in large processions led by Āqā Najafi. It was understood by everybody that the attraction of these events was not naïve popular credulity, but carried a clear political message by Āqā Najafi, demonstrating his force and popular backing against the Baḵtiāri governor (which, however, did not foreclose tacit complicity in activities like grain speculations). Sardār Ašjaʿ closed all offices (edāra) and public councils; with his connivance, rice

cultivators in Lenjān detained water for the whole summer and, despite fear for his personal safety, he relentlessly squeezed bakers, butchers, and other shopkeepers for extra fees. He also disregarded the new electoral laws and suspended the Anjoman in May 1911, which, however, re-opened under massive pressure, headed by the Moḥāṣeb-al-Dawla, in December (FO 248/1029, passim; Report on Isfahan, no. 139, 26 November, ibid). When the Sardār Ašjaʿ left after his third appointment in 1912, crowds of women openly cursed him as he made his way out of the city. Following his fourth tenure, he evacuated the government house, taking not only his private belongings, but also every moveable piece, including various antique Safavid doors (Isfahan News, no. 45, 8. November, 1913, FO 248/1070; see also Sardār Ẓafar Baḵtiāri, passim; ʿAliqoli Khan Baḵtiāri, passim).

Āqā Nur-Allāh, who under the pressure of the Russian and British consulates, as well as the competition with Āqā Najafi, had emigrated to the ʿAtabāt in 1911, returned at the death of his brother in July 1914 and emerged as the city's paramount and most radical clerical leader. Post-constitutional politics brought a greater polarization of political groups along ideological lines and a sharper division between mellat (the populace) and dawlat (the government) or progressive nationalist and conservative reactionary factions. The parameters of the Anglo-Russian modus vivendi changed with the intensifying activities of the Germans, the outbreak of World War I, and the Russian Revolution. Isfahan's anti-British clergy and 'radical democratic' circles showed widespread pro-German sympathies. Their collaboration with the German agents and the radical ulema's attempt to mobilize a jihad against Britain as well as clerical pan-Islamic and pro-Turkish campaigns (decree [aḥkām] in Mofatteš-e Iran, no. 8, 27 Ṣafar 1333/14 January 1915) caused unmitigated tension, particularly in the British camp. In 1915 the widespread opposition against the Baḵtiāri regime required direct British interference to keep Isfahan's governorship in Baḵtiāri hands

The German threat and the political chaos in Isfahan (as well as Fars) escalated to the point that both Great Britain and Russia agreed to the return of Ẓell-al-Solṭān from exile in France, hoping his old authority would have a stabilizing and anti-German effect. The British now made contradictory promises to both Ẓell-al-Solṭān and the Baḵtiāris. After months of negotiations, Ẓell-al-Solṭān returned via London and St. Petersburg, being well received by the shah in July 1916. He accepted a brief appointment in Fars, but, weakened and disillusioned, he retreated to his Isfahan estates. Aiming to forestall

further German influences and the resumption of Baḵtiāri rule, both legations again supported the governorship of his son Akbar Mirzā Ṣārem-al-Dawla, provoking active opposition by the Baḵtiāris and Āqā Nur-Allāh, who stirred resistance by payments to the professional thugs (luṭi) and peasants. Despite support from the British, the Russians, and the populace, Akbar Mirzā eventually preferred to resign. In November 1917, the war caused widespread famine conditions and bread riots (Haig to Legation, no. 88, 11 May 1917; decypher 98, 21 May 1917, FO 248/1189; idem, decypher, no. 208, 1 November 1917, FO 248/1189)

The evolving revolution in Russia and the fear of a Bolshevik threat was a nightmare vision for Ẓell-al-Solṭān, while the belief that Russia's new revolutionary government would cease political interference in Persia was cause for renewed Baḵtiāri agitation to oust Ẓell-al-Solṭān and his kin (Haig to Legation, Decypher no. 208, 1 November 1917, 24 April 1917, FO 248/1189). German presence and Pan-Islamic, pro-Turkish propaganda since 1914 led to a growing British opportunism. The war and the revolution in Russia again shifted the parameters of Great Power politics in Isfahan, affording Britain an excuse for even greater imperial interference.

The coup d'état of 1921 and the new military regime's takeover was heavily resisted by the radical clerical circles around Āqā Nur-Allāh, who feared reprisals as well as the loss of their influence and relative local autonomy. For the next six years, the latter engaged in a tenacious resistance against Reżā Khan, the military leader of the coup and future Reżā Shah, while suspicions about unabated German influence prompted British pressure to strengthen Sardār Ašjaʿ's position (Decypher no. 152, 10 August 1921, FO248/1329; Wezārat-e farhang wa eršād-e eslāmi; Morsalvand, ed.; Scheikh-ol-Islami; Cronin, passim; Bayāt, passim).

In March 1921 a large group of clerics around Āqā Nur-Allāh, including Dawlatābādi, Ṣadr-al-Eslām, Ḥāji Sayyed Jawād, Shaikh Ḥabib-Allāh, Ḥāji Āqā Mo-ḥammad Kalbāsi, and Šokr-Allāh Khan Lombāni took bast at the shrine of Šāh Reżā in Qomeša, joined by Sardār Eqbāl and other Baḵtiāri chiefs, who, facing the new regime's rigid centralization and westernization, now found a common ground. Plans were made to cooperate with the opposition in Shiraz against Reza Shah's new regime (Isfahan News, no. 13, ending 27 March 1921, FO 248/1329).

The various Baḵtiāri groups and lesser khans, who for a decade had resented

the disregard and high-handed demeanor by the great khans, reacted more favorably towards the new regime. Most government offices such as the kārgozāri (filling diverse bureaucratic functions), the police, the treasury, and the gendarmerie showed loyalty to the Qajar king and reacted favorably to Reza Shah's takeover, while the democrats, radicals, republicans, and the circles headed by Āqā Nur-Allāh opposed the new government's scheme, deriding Sayyed Żiāʾ-al-Din's new program. While skeptical about assurances of reform, most merchants and the general population responded with reservations, waiting to see the results of the new ministers' promises (Isfahan News, no. 8, for the week ending 20 February 1921, no. 13, for the week ending 27 March 1921, FO 248/1329).

SOURCES

The historiographical traditions of writing on 19th-century Isfahan, profoundly intertwined with European texts and descriptions, have been crucial in their influence on the popular image as well as on scholarly approaches to Qajar Isfahan. The extensive travel literature of the 19th century was imbued with nostalgia for the old Safavid grandeur and commonly described the city with the premise of Qajar depravity and decline. This influenced 19th-century histories and chronicles of Europeans as well as Persians, and on it hinged the conception and understanding, and misconception, of 19th-century Isfahan.

Traditions of writing on Qajar Isfahan contain the dimension of a chronological continuity (i.e., the linear evolution of accounts since the 16th century and earlier) as well as the context of space, culture, and attitude of the 19th century, heavily influenced by European viewpoints. Both dimensions compound the indelible comparative element of Isfahan as Safavid capital, and most ignore the city's evolution in the 18th century.

The rising political interest in Persia of England, France, and Russia was paralleled by the intensive reprinting and republishing of early geographies, travel and country descriptions in the 19th century by previous generations of writers such as Kaempfer (in Isfahan in 1684-85), de la Valle (there in 1619), Herbert (there in 1628), Chardin (there in the 1660s-70s), Fryer (there in 1677), Olearius, Krusinski, and numerous others. Following the themes and constructing their descriptions of Isfahan on these works, 19th-century narratives perpetuated the perspectives and orientation of these earlier works.

Although almost every traveler to Qajar Iran makes some mention of Isfahan, 19th-century accounts are highly stereotypical, and information on the city's form as well as its contemporary internal urban and social structure remains elusive despite its prominence. Travel publications as well as unofficial diplomatic and political reports frequently summarized Isfahan in a few paragraphs with reference to the comprehensive descriptions of preceding writers, especially that of Chardin. Narratives as well as pictorial representations were often anachronistically nostalgic or inordinately negative, and most writers contentedly relied on the already published stereotypes. Approaching Isfahan with this kind of historicism, 19th-century travel books, magazines, etc. portrayed a sentimental picture of Safavid magnificence and empire, which reinforced the sense of cultural decay and political decline of Qajar Isfahan. This is significant, as the high popularity and wide distribution of travel books had a lasting influence on later European as well as Iranian perceptions and historiography on Isfahan.

The leading accounts of early Qajar Isfahan were produced by the French and British political missions, namely John Malcolm, J. MacDonald Kinneir, William Ouseley, Alfred Comte de Gardane, and Guillaume Antoine Olivier. These descriptions rely extensively on 17th and 18th-century accounts, and most contain positive comments on the governor, Mirzā Ḥosayn Khan, but also emphasize the contrast between the city's imagined Safavid grandeur and its contemporary reality. The singularly most influential publication of the late 19th century was George Curzon's two-volume description of 1892; it included one of the most comprehensive 19th-century accounts on Isfahan, albeit heavily subjective and with a distinct air of imperial condescension. Curzon harbored unconcealed disdain for the Qajars and a personal dislike of Ẓell-al-Solṭān. The wide distribution of his account lastingly reinforced the topos of Isfahan's 19th-century decay and profoundly influenced both European's and Persian's image of Qajar Isfahan (e.g., Moḥammad-Mahdi Eṣfahāni, pp. 135-36, 178-79).

The most important Persian account of Isfahan is Shaikh Jāberi Anṣāri's Tārik̲-e Eṣfahān, a chronology covering medieval times (based on the Arab geographies) to the 1940s, including topographic and architectural history as well as international news. This book is based on the author's earlier work, Āgahi-ye šahān az kār-e jahān, and 19th-century histories, including Neṣāf-e jahān fi taʿrif al-Eṣfahān, written by Moḥammad-Mahdi Arbāb Eṣfahāni, one of Isfahan's wealthy merchants, and it is strongly influenced by the format of

European accounts. Mir Sayyed ʿAli Janāb's al-Eṣfahān as well as Jāberi's two works, include translated excerpts of Chardin's account. The monograph of Mirzā Ḥosayn Taḥwildār was written in 1294/1877 upon the order of some state's dignitaries (ba-mawjeb-e ḥokm-e omanāye divān-e dawlat), with a heavy focus on market forces and geographical questions, while Afżal-al-Molk provides only a general travel account, and ʿAli Jawāher-Kalām gives descriptions of the canals branching off the Zāyandarud. Louis Ferrières-Sauveboeuf and John Perry provide some information, which is not of primary significance for Isfahan under the Qajars.

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