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ATTITUDES AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE CONTEMPORARY IRANIAN INTELLECTUAL

By GAVIN HAMBLY

STUDENTS of Iranian history can hardly fail to notice the contrast between the large volume of literature in European languages on the Iranian past and the relatively short list of serious publications dealing with present-day Iran. Sociologists, for instance, have almost wholly neglected the emergence of a European-type middle class in Iran. No sociological studies have been made, so far as I am aware, either of the evolution of urban life in Iran during the twentieth century or of the appearance of new educational or professional élites.* The paper which follows makes no pretensions to filling these major omissions in our knowledge of contemporary Iran, since I am a historian and not a sociologist, but I shall stress some of the factors in the situation of the Iranian intellectual today which seem to me to be noteworthy, leaving it to those better qualified than I am to assess their significance.

When I speak of the Iranian intellectual† I am not using the word in the rather detrimental way it is sometimes used in England, but in the broad sense in which it is used in the underdeveloped states of Africa and Asia, to describe the members of a fairly distinct class in society, set apart from the rest by the possession of an education which is primarily foreign and European in origin and character; by the practice of professional, organizational and even commercial techniques and methods of similar alien origin; and by a fundamental concern with modernity. Such a class often feels itself to be more widely separated, by its education and intellectual attitudes, from the rest of society than would be the case in Europe. Its members, however, have a very wide range both of incomes and of occupations. The majority of these occupations would be designated typically "middle class" in most societies and therefore, in a general sense, the Iranian intellectual may be identified with a middle-class social environment, although he may also be found among members of the ruling élite. The Iranian intellectual cannot, of course, be identified

* Since this paper was read to the Society, an important new paper on urban life in Iran has been brought to the Lecturer's notice. This is John I. Clarke's *The Iranian City of Shiraz*, published by the Department of Geography of the University of Durham (Research Papers Series No. 7, 1963).

† In preparing this paper I have been greatly influenced by Professor Edward Shils's lucid monograph, *The Intellectual between Tradition and Modernity: The Indian Situation* (Comparative Studies in Society and History; Supplement 1, Mouton, The Hague, 1961).

with the Iranian middle class as such, which may comprise many people only slightly educated in a formal sense, but he will generally have his roots in such an environment and many of the influences and pressures at work on him and many of his hopes and fears, his quest for economic security, his desire for continuing stability and increased opportunity for his family, his aspirations and prejudices will be shared by most members of the Iranian middle class. Unlike the intellectual in some under-developed countries, the Iranian intellectual cannot simply be equated with the graduate. Nevertheless, the Iranian intellectual is usually, but not always, in possession of some degree or diploma, or has had some sort of training which would be termed Higher Education.

A list of occupations of the Iranian intellectual would be extremely heterogeneous: teaching, both in schools and universities; journalism; the arts; entertainment and the mass-media. It would include scientists and technologists; professional people (doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers); civil servants and politicians; businessmen and members of the armed forces. Proportionate to his wide range of occupations, the influence of the Iranian intellectual is very great: in education and the mass-media his influence over his less educated compatriots is incalculable; in administrative and managerial positions and in posts requiring a high degree of specialist technical skill he will determine whether a society which is becoming organized to an ever-increasing extent along European lines is to be efficient and effective, or otherwise. For many decades to come it will be this product of the invasion of Iran by European ideas and institutions, not the uneducated urban proletariat or the tradition-minded peasantry, who will determine the direction along which Iranian society, as a whole, will move.

An urban middle class, such as that from which the modern Iranian intellectual springs, is no new phenomenon in Iran. Throughout the Islamic period Iranian cities supported a middle class spaced between the governing class and the manual workers, a middle class composed of minor Court officials, subordinate administrators, exponents of law and religion, merchants, doctors, artists and scholars. The gradual introduction of European ideas into Iran during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries enlarged the outlook of this class while the momentous economic and social changes initiated during the reign of Reza Shah (1925-41) demanded the growth of an adaptable middle class possessing techniques and experience of a kind familiar to nineteenth-century Europe. Since 1945 the Iranian middle class has expanded in numbers, wealth and range of activities in proportion to the expanding life of the country. It has benefited from industrial and commercial expansion and the demand for a modern managerial class; from development schemes and foreign aid projects; from the expansion of the organs of government (the Civil Service, the Army, the Police, State Monopolies, etc.); and from the rapid rise in the value of urban land and property in Tehran and other major cities, especially since 1953.

The creation of an intellectual élite in Iran stemmed naturally from the penetration of European ideas into the country in the late Qajar period when a fashion began for the sons of wealthy fathers to be educated

abroad. But it was not until Reza Shah established the University of Tehran in 1935 that an institutionalized form was given to Iranian intellectual life. Since then the annual output of graduates from this university (supplemented by the large number of Iranians who have received some form of Higher Education abroad) has made a distinctive impact upon the size and composition of the intellectual élite which is now probably dominated by these graduates. The establishment in Tehran of Iran's first university has inevitably made the Iranian intellectual first and foremost a Tehrani, but today provincial cities contain a growing intellectual élite at the heart of an expanding local middle class. These provincial intellectuals may be indigenous to a provincial city (although possibly educated in Tehran or abroad) or they may be Tehrani teachers, government officials or professional people on temporary transfer from the capital. Probably the majority of Tehranis in the provinces plan to return to the capital, but some will marry locally and accept a provincial life permanently. Outside Tehran an intellectual élite flourishes most easily in Isfahan and Abadan but it is to be found, in varying degrees, in Mashhad, Tabriz, Shiraz, Kerman, Ahvaz, etc. Today the University of Tehran has no monopoly of Higher Education inside Iran, although at present its prestige is far higher than that of its rivals.* Since 1949 there have been universities at Isfahan, Mashhad, Tabriz and Shiraz and in 1955 a university was established at Ahvaz for medicine and agriculture. In the capital itself there are several institutions offering Higher Education in addition to Tehran University: there is the Teachers' Training College, the Tehran Polytechnic and the privately owned National University founded in 1961. Outside Tehran, intellectual life is institutionalized at Isfahan, Mashhad, Tabriz, Shiraz and Ahvaz.

The Iranian intellectual, holding a wide range of occupations of which, in its long-term implications, the teaching profession is probably the most important, is drawn (wherever his home may be) both physically and emotionally towards Tehran, where salaries, opportunities, entertainment and intellectual stimulus are greater than elsewhere. He will generally be young. It is worth remembering that a student of eighteen who entered Tehran University in 1935, its first year of existence, would still be only forty-six; a student of eighteen who entered Isfahan or Mashhad University in 1949, when the provincial universities were founded, would be thirty-two today.

The influences which determine the conduct and ideas of the Iranian intellectual are extremely varied and some of them are shared by all members of the middle class. First of all there is pre-eminently the influence of the family in a society where the ties of kinship are frequently the most decisive ones. The Iranian family is generally large; contacts with even quite distant relatives are frequently carefully maintained; married members of a family often live in the same neighbourhood. For most Iranians the family pervades almost every aspect of daily life; loyalty to the family transcends all other loyalties and frequently operates

* This situation may change with the establishment of the new Pahlavi University at Shiraz.

against other loyalties—to members of the same profession, to the local community, to the State or society in general. Life without the comfort of the family is almost unthinkable for an Iranian, accounting for the intense loneliness which some Iranians abroad suffer when they are separated from it. But it exacts a demanding loyalty: it leaves little privacy to its members and its very strength makes it an agent of social conformity. The Iranian intellectual *may* find life in his middle-class family complicated: life may consist of an odd amalgam of customs and attitudes, Iranian and foreign values may be confused and blurred; the older members of the family may be strict Muslims and rigid traditionalists while the younger members will probably be non-conformists, dedicated to the pursuit of rather undefined ideas of modernity. The intellectual will be named, married and buried in accordance with tradition; he will celebrate *Nuruz* and a few of the Muslim feasts and fasts, less out of conviction than by habit; he will take great pride in Iran's past civilization and feel that life outside Iran is hardly tolerable. He will have a traditional Iranian diet but will smoke foreign cigarettes and drink whisky when he can afford them. He will dress in European clothes, own European-style furniture and a car. His entertainments will be the cinema and television, night-clubs and restaurants if he can afford them, and holidays on the Caspian.

It is particularly in respect of marriage that the intellectual, man or woman, will be compelled to conform to the wishes of the family. Once the intellectual has left the university campus it is not always very easy to mix freely with members of the opposite sex who are outside the family or the circle of family friends and he, or she, will need to have a strong personality to contemplate, let alone achieve, a match to which the family is opposed. For a man, the fact that a prospective bridegroom must be able to offer his prospective bride a far greater degree of comfort and security at the very beginning of married life than would be expected in England compels men to marry late and to obtain the approval (and heavy financial assistance) of parents. Without such assistance an Iranian of middle-class status could hardly contemplate marriage with a social equal. In questions of marriage, therefore, the role of the family is a traditional one and one which often presses hard upon a personality moulded, in part at least, by European values. With regard to the intellectual's attitude to a career and to success in life the family is less likely to differ from him in assessing his requirements: a job which will eventually bring prestige, influence and opportunities, direct or indirect, for accumulating capital; an American-style car; a home in a smart street or district, furnished in an up-to-date manner; sufficient prospects to obtain an attractive wife of the right social class; and, later, a villa in Shemiran or on the Caspian, and opportunities for foreign travel and for educating children abroad. Very few intellectuals obtain all, or even part of this dream, but a few do and it provides a goal at which to aim. In fact, most settle for very much less. The wants of the Iranian intellectual today are probably identical with those of an Englishman of similar class and education, but for the Iranian they cost far more in terms of cash and the effort to get them is correspondingly harder. These wants are

new. Prestige, influence, power and wealth have always been goals in Iran, as elsewhere, but since the rapid development of Tehran as a modern European-style capital the aim has become specifically the acquisition of wealth to provide for a distinctly European (or, more accurately, American) style of life. Of course the demand for this new way of life is not limited to an intellectual élite, nor to those who have travelled abroad or whose work brings them into personal contact with foreigners. It is the aim of all who are influenced by mass-media and advertising techniques.

After the influence of the family, the next major influence at work upon the Iranian intellectual is the impact of his formal education. If that education has been in Iran it may have suffered, to a greater or lesser extent, from the inherent weaknesses of Higher Education in Iran: undue emphasis on passing examinations; concern for the retention of facts at the expense of developing a capacity for analysis; a purely formal and usually uninspiring pupil-teacher relationship. First-rate teachers and enthusiastic pupils *can* overcome these obstacles to effective education, but the obstacles are there nevertheless. They are perhaps less apparent in scientific subjects than in literature or history where there is little or no criticism taught. The study of Persian literature, to take an extreme example, is almost entirely appreciative. In studying Hafiz or Nizami there is no room for the critical inspection of a Dr. Leavis. The long-term effect of such a system is to destroy for all but a small minority any enthusiasm for or interest in learning for its own sake. Higher Education tends to be no more than a means of securing a better job.

But education abroad at a foreign university does not necessarily have a different effect. It is true that standards may be higher, but the Iranian student's attitudes may have been formed before leaving Iran and he will find it difficult to change them. It is also important to remember that the Iranian who is educated abroad is not necessarily more intelligent than his contemporaries in an Iranian university—but his father may have been richer! It is worth enlarging upon this by giving a concrete example. Medicine in Iran is an extremely lucrative career. Parents are eager to see their sons doctors, and competition to enter Tehran University Medical Faculty is fierce. It is those who fail to get accepted who apply for places in foreign universities, not those who succeed, since Iranian parents, unaccustomed to long separations from their children, would naturally prefer not to have their children educated away from them if they can possibly avoid it. The importance of being educated abroad lies less in the formal education received than in its prestige value and in the intellectual and psychological impact of a prolonged residence among foreigners of similar intellectual qualifications but of different and novel values and attitudes. The Iranian intellectual who has been educated abroad returns to his country with a set of values and attitudes often very different from those he possessed before he went abroad—values and attitudes which he may well pass on to other members of his family or to friends, especially of the younger generation.

His family and his education can have a great influence on the Iranian intellectual, but many of his tastes, attitudes and ambitions (as indeed of middle-class people in general) will have their origins in the various forms

of mass-media available to the Iranian public, all of which are of European origin. There is also the influence of the printed word.

At first sight, the stranger in Iran would not gain the impression that the Iranian middle class are extensive readers. Books are not normally in evidence in middle-class homes and the constant comings and goings of members of the large Iranian family would appear to make concentrated reading extremely difficult. On train journeys, too, it is rare to see one's fellow passengers reading a book or even a newspaper. This impression, however, would be dissipated to some extent by the sight of the very large number of bookshops (mostly small businesses with limited stocks) to be found in certain parts of Tehran. In 1956 there were 147 bookshops in the capital and this figure has probably grown in the last seven years.* There are also a surprising number of bookshops in such cities as Isfahan and Shiraz, sometimes holding quite varied stocks. Library facilities, however, are poor and the cost of most books is high—too high for many intellectuals to make frequent purchases. As a result of this only a small number of copies of each new book are printed, but one healthy sign in Iranian publishing is the coming of the paper-back, a development of the greatest advantage to intellectuals, particularly students.

In fact, Iran is one of the countries of the world which publishes a really small number of new books each year, presumably because of the high rate of illiteracy and because there is no market for books in Persian outside Iran. 684 titles were published in 1957-58; 660 in 1958-59; and 485 in 1959-60.† In recent years there has probably been an increase. Books dealing with religion or sex have the greatest circulation. Then come cheap novels. These are followed by classics of Persian literature and it is significant to note that within a period of ten years different publishers have thought it worth their while to bring out eleven editions of the *Divan-i-Hafiz* and in sixteen years fifteen editions of the *Divan-i-Saadi*. The *Masnavi* of Jalal-al-din Rumi and Khayyam's poems are also frequently re-printed. A number of valuable and often unusual literary and historical texts are also published in Tehran, indicating an abiding interest in the heritage of the past.

There is also a considerable sale of translations of foreign writers. These are mainly, although not exclusively, acquired by intellectuals. A random list would include the following authors: Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Stendhal, Flaubert, Dumas, Hugo, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Shaw, Ibsen, Chekhov, Gorki, Baudelaire, Thomas Mann, Somerset Maugham, André Gide, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, André Maurois, Jack London, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, Eugene O'Neil, Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell and Agatha Christie. Well-known European accounts of Iran have been translated into Persian such as Clavijo's mission to Timur's court and Tavernier's account of Safavi Iran. Translations of contemporary textbooks include examples of distinguished European writing on Iran such as E. G. Browne's *Persian Revolution*, Rabino's account of the Caspian provinces and Professor Lambton's *Landlord and*

* Quoted from the *Iran Almanac*, Tehran, 1962, p. 834. † *Ibid.*, pp. 328-9.

Peasant in Persia. Translations of twentieth-century classics such as Nehru's *Autobiography*, Churchill's *Second World War* and Bullock's *Hitler* have aroused great interest, while during the last few months the press has been publishing extracts from the Eden memoirs, Skrine's *World War in Iran* and an account of the Nuremberg trials.

Compared with the volume of translations available, the number of books read for profit or amusement in a foreign language is small. Few men are capable of such an undertaking, and those that are have generally had the advantage of an education abroad. In so far as the Iranian intellectual has a second language it is English, mainly owing to the immense growth of American contacts with Iran since 1945. Massive aid programmes, staunch American support for the Iranian Government since 1953, the presence in Iran of numerous American advisers, technicians and businessmen have resulted in making a knowledge of English an avenue to better jobs, increased responsibilities and higher salaries. There has also been the incentive to obtain Higher Education, often on Scholarships and Grants, at American universities (including Beirut) and, to a lesser extent, in the United Kingdom and Canada. Certainly there seems to be no limit to the enthusiasm of the Iranian middle class, of both sexes and of every conceivable occupation, for acquiring some knowledge of English. The greater part of this effort, however, results in little more than a smattering of the language: an ability to speak haltingly to a foreign client or to translate, somewhat inadequately, a business letter. Most Iranian intellectuals, therefore, acquire their knowledge of European civilization through translations.

Probably Iranian intellectuals are as much influenced by what they read in the press as by what they read in books. This influence is exercised in matters of taste and fashion, in spreading knowledge of the world outside Iran and in airing ideas of modernity; I doubt whether it moulds political attitudes to any considerable extent. Circulation figures may be of some interest. Last year's *Iran Almanac* estimated the circulation of the Tehran dailies at 200,000, of which *Ettela'at* and *Kayhan* held 150,000 between them. The circulation of the rest varied between 2,000 and 12,000. The weekly satirical paper, *Towfiq*, sells up to 20,000 copies. Sales of the weekly sports magazine, *Kayhan Varzeshi*, are around 50,000 and women's magazines such as *Ettela'at Banovan* and the recent *Mode-i-Ruz* are extremely popular.* There are also a number of specialist journals dealing with technical and academic subjects, and these are sometimes published by universities and professional associations. Naturally these have a limited circulation and so have literary journals like *Yaghma*, *Sokhan* and *Rahnema-ye-Ketab* which cater for intellectual readers.

Inevitably, the impact of mass-media upon Iranian society is far greater than that of the printed word, for these reach far beyond the literate down to levels of society not otherwise affected by foreign influences. Nevertheless, they also make a direct impact upon the intellectual, in the same way that advertising stimulates his demand for consumer goods (often imported luxuries) for which hitherto he has felt no need.

* *Iran Almanac*, p. 107.

By 1961 there were estimated to be over one million radio sets in Iran, and the advent of the transistor has certainly boosted sales. The possession of a radio, therefore, is no longer a status-symbol, at least so far as the middle class are concerned, and its real importance is the impact which it makes upon the illiterate and in the villages. For middle-class people the radio provides mainly background music in the home, while news bulletins, which are not listened to with much regularity, increase the general awareness of the outside world. For the intellectual who possesses sufficient knowledge of a foreign language, programmes such as the B.B.C.'s overseas service help to break down the emotional as well as the physical remoteness which European-educated Iranians may feel from time to time.

There are commercial television stations in Tehran and Abadan, and in 1962 it was estimated that there were 67,000 television sets in use, reaching a potential audience of 670,000, including foreign residents—an audience far exceeding the total number of readers of newspapers and magazines.* The Tehran service operates for a far shorter period of the day than television services do in England. Programmes consist of news bulletins, religious talks, plays, quiz games, singing and dancing. In contrast to the cinema, television programmes have a distinctly Iranian flavour, local entertainers and local music predominating. There is also an American television service available which exists primarily for American personnel and which seems to consist almost entirely of "Westerns". These arouse little interest among viewers other than teenage males, some of whom supplement their rudimentary knowledge of English with accents and expressions emanating from Dodge City and the Santa Fé trail of a century ago!

Personally, I suspect that television in Iran has none of that hypnotic effect upon viewers which it has in England, and its influence on intellectuals must be negligible. The reasons for this are fairly obvious: the quality of the programmes fails to win enthusiastic allegiance, while the gregariousness of family life in Iran and the tradition of casual visiting by friends and relations prevent the sort of screen-concentration which is to be found here or in the United States. Television sets have the value of a status-symbol, and as status-symbols they are purchased. But after the initial novelty has worn off they are frequently forgotten, or else turned on and then ignored. I have known Iranian friends turn on their television set and then deliberately sit with their backs to it, continuing their conversation!

In complete contrast, the influence of the cinema, a relatively cheap form of entertainment enjoyed by most urban classes, is immense. For the middle class it constitutes the principal form of entertainment (other than the traditional picnic in the country) not only in Tehran but in most other urban centres. In 1961 there were an estimated 139 cinemas in Iran of which 74 were located in Tehran. There were 8 in Abadan; 7 in Mashhad; 6 in Tabriz; 5 in Shiraz; 5 in Kirmanshah; 4 in Ahvaz; 4 in Rizaiyeh; 3 in Babul; 3 in Khurramshahr and 3 in Kerman.† These

* *Iran Almanac*, p. 113.

† *Ibid.*, p. 859.

figures vary from year to year. Over-expansion leads to sudden closures but cinema audiences and cinema halls are expanding together.

The Iranian film industry is a highly speculative affair and its products are aimed mainly at the poorer and less educated audiences. The educated classes show a marked preference for foreign films. These are now almost invariably dubbed into Persian to attract the widest audience. In 1955-56, 298 films were shown; by 1960-61 this figure had increased to 974. Of films licensed in 1961-62, 506 were American; 401 Italian; 39 Indian; 23 British; 21 Iranian; 19 French; 8 Arabic; 7 Mexican; 6 Japanese; 4 German; 4 Russian; and 3 Turkish.* As the figures clearly show, American and Italian films are the most popular. Spectacular historical films from both countries are greatly enjoyed. American films are popular because of the dream-world of glamour and luxury, excitement and romance they offer. Italian films are popular because of a widespread feeling that the Italian temperament, as shown on the screen, is akin to the Iranian temperament; characters and situations in Italian films arouse a degree of sympathy and understanding on the part of the audience which American films would arouse less often. The careers and romances of film stars are followed with zest in the press and in women's magazines, and picture-postcard photographs of film stars compete in shop windows with the portraits of the latest American "pop" singers!

It seems to me to be almost impossible to exaggerate the role of the cinema in introducing ideas of change into middle-class Iranian life, ideas to which the intellectual is as susceptible as the rest of his family. Iranian cinemas are well attended all the year round and they are usually open all day every day. Many educated Iranians go to the cinema regularly two or three times a week. A visit to one of the larger, more luxurious cinemas, where there are often facilities for refreshment, provides a certain glamour for lives which may be otherwise drab and uneventful: an occasion to meet friends and acquaintances; a rendezvous where young people can mix, free from the restraining influences of the family; a temporary escape from the monotony and strain of daily life; and a source of conversation in home or office afterwards. Most films seen in Iran show standards of living, patterns of behaviour, ideals of conduct, and—above all—relationships between the sexes which call into question many of the Iranian audience's previous attitudes and beliefs. In the course of a film which we would consider purely as entertainment the Iranian intellectual may hear views expressed on controversial subjects such as capital punishment, racialism, divorce, etc., such as he might not otherwise hear expressed in the normal course of his life. Questions of justice, social obligation or political right may be expressed on the screen in the course of a melodrama, although they may not necessarily find a place in the lecture hall or on the radio.

The life and personality of the Iranian intellectual today is moulded and conditioned by factors over which he has little or no control: the traditional assumptions of Iranian family life; the virtues and vices of the educational system which has trained him; the impact of ideas,

* *Iran Almanac*, p. 860.

ambitions and desires derived from mass-media stemming from Europe or America. Consciously or unconsciously, he finds himself exposed to pressures and tensions of a kind unavoidable in a society where the intellectual, by reason of the modernity of his outlook in contrast to the traditionalism of the rest of society, finds himself isolated by an education and by cultural values alien to Iranian tradition. Some of these pressures are of a social and psychological kind, springing from a situation in which the conflict between traditional Iranian values and alien twentieth-century European values is still unresolved. This conflict is at its most obvious in the relationships between the Iranian intellectual and his family: can he find a formula in which he can express his loyalty to traditional kinship values and, simultaneously, retain the individuality and intellectual independence which his European-type education has given him? It is highly significant of the direction which this conflict has hitherto taken that so few unmarried men in Tehran (even if they have the means) live away from their families in flats or flatlets on their own, as is the case in England. Such behaviour would seem incredible in an Iranian family and it happens very rarely. Probably questions relating to marriage most strikingly reveal the tensions to which the Iranian intellectual is exposed. There is, for example, the case of the young man of predominantly European tastes and culture whose family require him to marry a girl of perhaps only the slightest formal education, because the fathers have long planned the match and both families approve of it. Or the case of the girl who is a highly educated graduate, perhaps qualified for some specialist career, whose family intend that she shall, for similar reasons, be married to a man who is neither able to appreciate her education nor willing to allow her to continue her career. In Iran today the family still generally triumphs over the individual.

Equally striking and quite as important as these pressures are those which spring from purely economic considerations. The intellectual, in common with other members of the class from which he comes, usually wants to obtain that more comfortable and luxurious life which is dangled before him by the mass-media and which he knows success can bring. In choosing a career there is rarely any question of finding a vocation; usually it is a search to find a place on the inside of the track in the "rat-race". I think it is worth stressing how incredibly competitive life in Tehran can be for the young graduate returning from a foreign university or emerging with his degree from Tehran University campus. It is not merely a question of "keeping up with the Jones's" (although this will be of increasing importance throughout his life); it is a question of survival. Neither a first-class foreign degree nor a record of industry and application, nor even the recommendation of his Iranian teachers will *necessarily* procure him the work which he wants in the profession for which he is trained. He will also need to enlist the services of influence, powerful friends, a family with connexions. Although Iran needs highly qualified men, particularly in the fields of science, technology and public administration, I have personally known of foreign-trained engineers and scientists who have waited months after their return to Iran to find suitable employment and who have been compelled to occupy clerical and even

menial positions in despair at finding no employment in their specialist fields. A very great deal of the frustration, tension and instability which one finds among young graduates, and which communicates itself to Iranian students as a whole, arises from the knowledge that talent, ability and hard work will not be rewarded when competing with family influence. In my view, the Iranian Government should consider setting up a really efficient Joint Universities Appointments Board which could act as an employment agency for graduates both from inside and outside Iran.

The high cost of living imposes a heavy strain upon middle-class people, and especially upon those intellectuals who have chosen an academic life. As a result, middle-class people must hold two or more jobs at a time if they are to maintain and increase their standard of living: a man may work in a state bank in the morning and be an accountant in a private company in the evening; he may be an army doctor until noon and run his private clinic for the rest of the day; he may have a post in a Ministry during the morning and become a school-teacher or university don after lunch. This system is unsatisfactory from almost every point of view but especially so in the case of the teaching profession. A school-teacher whose mornings are spent doing clerical work will probably have few reserves of energy left for his pupils in the afternoon, and no part-time university lecturer or professor can hope to do research, keep his reading and his lecture-notes up to date and establish a proper relationship with his pupils. His profession tends to become tarnished in the eyes of pupils who, rightly or wrongly, see his university career as a means of acquiring social status while his other activities provide him with his bread and butter! Hence the ideal of Higher Education becomes distorted, sowing the seed in the student's mind that the sole object of Higher Education is to enhance prestige and further a career. Research degrees and doctorates are means to an end—but an end which is rarely academic. The Iranian academic, if he is successful, can probably move far higher (in a material sense) than he could expect to in England: into high-level politics and senior administrative posts in the Government. The rewards are considerable, but the spiritual price which must be paid is very high.

The influences and pressures at work upon the Iranian intellectual are complex: they lead to social change; new aspirations; a more exciting vision of material existence. Yet the fact remains that the world of the Iranian intellectual is not a very stimulating or exciting place. European techniques, institutions and ideas are adopted, but the dynamic spirit of the European mind generally gets lost somewhere on the way. As a result, the opinions of the Iranian intellectual are generally unoriginal and stereotyped. He is invariably a nationalist and is passionately aware of being Iranian. This generally makes him uninterested in what happens outside Iran except at a purely superficial level and he may possess a mild form of xenophobia. Sense of nationality goes deep, but it rarely goes deep enough to smother loyalty to other ideals—particularly the ideal of the family. When he calls himself an Iranian he means a Shia Muslim. He does not talk about Iranian Muslims and Iranian Christians but about Iranians as opposed to Armenians, Assyrians, or Jews. Nationality is therefore identified with religion. Almost invariably, the intellectual

takes great pride in early Iranian civilization—although he may not know very much about it. It is enough for him to remember the conquests of Cyrus the Great or Darius I, and the glories of Persepolis; detailed knowledge of Achæmenid Iran would be deemed unnecessary. In looking back at the past he tends to see his history as a series of great epochs cut short by a cruel whim of destiny: the Achæmenid Empire overthrown by Alexander; the Sassanid Empire swept aside by the Arabs; the Persianized Caliphate destroyed by Central Asian invaders of whom the Mongols were the dreadful climax; the Safavi State reduced to impotence by obscurantism and lethargy; and finally, the last tableau, nineteenth-century Iran as pawn and buffer between the Russian and British Empires. Incidentally, in discussing with Iranians the effects of Great Power rivalry in the nineteenth century I generally find less resentment expressed towards Russia, who filched some of Iran's finest provinces, than to England who did not. It is felt that Russia obtained those provinces through her military prowess while England obtained her concessions by diplomacy!

Generally speaking, the Iranian intellectual's understanding of world events and international politics is hampered by an inadequate foundation of historical and geographical knowledge, and it is particularly in this sphere that his views are most stereotyped. Outside Iran it is to Europe and America that his eyes immediately travel, and the rest of the world has little significance. America, of course, is the country which dominates his vision—the home of technical assistance, aid, scholarships, large limousines, glossy magazines, designs for living, music and entertainment. The Iranian returning from residence in the United States is often stamped by the possession of distinct American attitudes which do not have their parallel among students returning from Europe. The United States is an ideal to be emulated, although in saying this I am well aware that some Iranians in America have not been able to assimilate themselves to the American way of life; nor does admiration for America necessarily imply affection for Americans resident in Iran. The news from the Deep South also raises real doubts in Iranian minds as to what Americans mean when they speak of democracy.

Attitudes to Europe are more ambiguous and subtle, arising out of past historical experience and an antipathy to *recognizable* forms of colonialism. In thinking about the United Kingdom, for instance, the Iranian intellectual is torn between two visions: of England as the home of Parliamentary government and personal freedom, and the birthplace of two of his idols, Shakespeare and Dickens; and England the Great Power in Asia who so long presided with Russia over Iranian destinies. The younger generation which has grown up since 1953 are, however, less concerned with past Anglo-Iranian relations than their predecessors were. The United Kingdom plays a far smaller part in their thinking, because most of them are now orientated towards America. Few of the younger intellectuals believe, as their fathers believed, that every event which took place in the world had its origins at the heart of a spider's web in Whitehall or in Simla! In the present age of Russo-American rivalry for the conquest of Space, Britain is seen as a second-class Power, still greatly respected for her competence at managing her own affairs and

for her skill and cunning in international diplomacy. To make a historical analogy, the younger intellectual tends to look at Britain in the way sixteenth-century Europe regarded the Venetian Republic after the War of the League of Cambrai, or as seventeenth-century Europe regarded the Spanish Monarchy after the battle of Rocroi. France remains the idealized home of European civilization; Italy is, of course, associated with films, fashion, the arts and gay living. German contacts with Iran are, as before the war, very extensive, and large numbers of Iranians are educated in Germany and Austria. Significantly, Germany (like America) is applauded as a country where the less opulent Iranian students can "pay their way" by part-time employment, a practice which, I believe, is forbidden to foreigners in the United Kingdom and which I frequently hear cited as a complaint against us. Neither Italy nor Germany are remembered as being former Colonial Powers, and this wins them unearned respect. In general, Soviet Russia makes little impact upon the mind of the Iranian intellectual of the younger generation. He is aware of great material achievements (such as the Soviet exploration of Space) and of totalitarian restrictions, but contacts with Russians are rare and his knowledge is limited. No African or Asian countries arouse much interest among Iranians, except perhaps Japan, on account of her industrial performance, and India, on account of interest aroused by the careers and writings of Gandhi and Nehru. Speaking generally, the Iranian intellectual retains his traditional contempt for his Turkish, Arab and Afghan neighbours, and he is frankly incredulous at the creation of an "Islamic State" in Pakistan. Personally, I have never met an Iranian intellectual who felt himself to be consciously "Asian", and I would suspect that most Iranians are more attracted by the vision of increased material prosperity which might result from closer association with the Common Market countries than by the slogans and gimmicks which emerge from such occasions as the Bandung Conference.

I have left myself no time to discuss the attitude of the Iranian intellectual to the political situation in Iran. This is, in any case, a subject of such importance that it should have detailed treatment. I can only say now that one of the major problems which has faced Iranian Governments since 1953, and which continues to face them, is how to win the allegiance of the middle class and especially the intellectuals, who are usually suspicious of the Government's motives and protestations. Truth to tell, the Iranian middle class are far less concerned with land reform, illiteracy campaigns, CENTO, female emancipation, etc., than with the rising cost of living and daily expenditure upon basic commodities and consumer goods. They are also, of course, concerned to see Iran develop in such a way as to offer increased opportunities of employment for themselves and their children; in general, they wish to see Iran develop along European lines. These may be selfish objectives, but I don't think that we expect the British suburban voter in the coming election to be very interested in promises to increase the National Assistance benefits for agricultural labourers! The picture I have painted of the Iranian intellectual may not be a very romantic one. Its emphasis on material desires may be considered distasteful, and a very far cry from E. G. Browne

conversing with the *kalandars* of Kerman. But I think we should be quite clear that the Iranian middle class, with the intellectual at their head, are demanding for themselves a European way of life and the eventual goal of an Affluent Society. We can hardly condemn Iranians for this, since we ourselves have chosen the same goal.

REPORT OF DISCUSSION

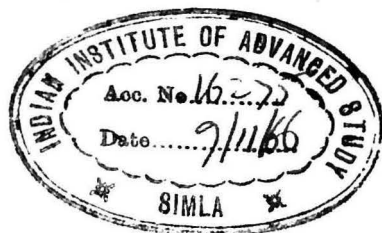
In the discussion which followed the lecturer was asked to explain, in view of the fact that there are some 4,000 Iranian students in England today, his inference that Britain was regarded as a second-class Power by Iranian intellectuals. He replied that many more Iranians appeared to be completing their education in the U.S.A. and in the German-speaking countries than in the United Kingdom. In using the term "second-rate Power" he meant that Iranians today equated Britain with France or West Germany. They did not consider her a "Super-Power" such as the United States or the Soviet Union, nor did they see her today as their nineteenth-century ancestors had seen Tsarist Russia and Victorian England as Great Powers.

Sir John le Rougetel remarked that in Iran in his day the dominating intellectual influence had been French, and asked if this influence had been superseded. The lecturer said that among some intellectuals, especially of the older generation, France was still thought of as the centre of European civilization; but the numbers of such people were decreasing. English was now the dominant language, and it was not unusual to meet French speakers who were being obliged to learn English quite late in life in order to extend their professional qualifications.

Another member enquired about the influence of Christian mission schools such as the C.M.S. school in Isfahan. In reply, the lecturer said that although such schools had exercised considerable influence in the past, education in present-day Iran had expanded out of all proportion to the conditions that had prevailed when these schools were founded.

Asked if there was much importation of Russian literature into Iran the lecturer said there was very little; what there was consisted either of books in Russian or Armenian for the latter community or of scientific books and nineteenth-century novels translated into English.

In reply to a question about the extent to which the changes described had affected older people the lecturer stressed that the changes were not restricted to the younger generation but were circulating throughout all age-groups. Middle-aged women, for example, who had not enjoyed the advantage of Higher Education were now, after their children had grown up, learning English as a means of broadening their own and their families' horizons and increasing their children's opportunities in the future, and often found themselves deriving great pleasure from the study of Shakespeare and other English authors.





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11/10/52

ARABIC FOLK VERSE

By MAJOR C. G. CAMPBELL

After this article had been passed for press, it was with deep regret that we heard the news of the death of Major Campbell on March 31, 1953. He had recently been stationed near Benghazi in Libya, where he had been interested in local Arabic folk-lore. His death is a great loss to the study of Arabic dialects.

AT a time when so much good work is being done on folk verse in other countries, a field folklorist operating in the Arab countries would be sadly neglecting his duty if he failed to record examples from the Arab lands, and to engage in the usual search for parallels and variants. That much is routine, but it is a regrettable fact that only a poet can translate poetry. In giving the following examples from different countries, then, I should like to say that only those conversant with Arabic will be able to appreciate their beauty. I cannot translate into anything more than English doggerel, and the problem of conveying meaning without clashing with poetic beauty is one which has puzzled even great translators.

Love is the strongest of all the themes in the racial memory and a love song should undoubtedly come first. One of my favourites is from Iraq, a catching, haunting song which does deserve a better translation.

Hidni lasih alek.
W'alzimni la tih.
Waragat shujara thuleit
Wa yehizni er rih.

Hatt kahil b'is sharhat
Wa aftan aleyyi.
Rawan qust el maut
Gabil el maneya.

Yesmar samarek zein
Sandal b'il haqug.
Kule leila nus mithkal
Min aqali tebug.

Yeshgar dalili insaab
wa 'l jism matruh.
Kul leila mithkalen
Min aqali yeruh

Release me or I'll call for help.
And catch me or I fall.
I am become a tree leaf
Caught by a squall.

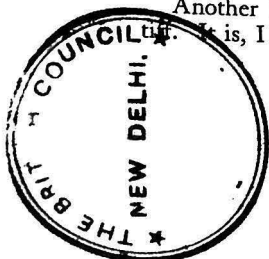
Kohl on the eyelash
And angry you glower.
Show me the measure of Death
Before Doom's hour.

Complex your complexion well,
Truly wood of Sandal.
Every night a half mithkal
Of my mind you steal.

Sweet Moon, my heart is pierced
And my pride is broken.
Every night two mithkals
You take of my reason.

Another love song, this time from Muscat, has as its motif a lovers' kiss, I think, extremely fine in the Arabic.

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Qustu el habbu* b'il meqias hatta
 Lan khaizeran ul habbi lana
 Fagalt: Taala ya habib el galb andi
 Wa nas fauga et thabana
 Fagala Mahommed: Abu Nawasu kitha
 Ashqun nisai f'arrijali ahiana!
 Fagalt: Walli ya khadiya el galbi anni
 w'aish kima kunt, rabana!
 Fagalt leha: Amma taarifi Miriam wa Khadija
 That wafa. Jiti enti, umm aqali khurfani!

I measured love with a measure, until
 Softened the bamboo of love, softened.
 She said: Come, Heart-lover, to me,
 And sleep on my breast.
 Mahommed said: Abu Nawas (thought) thus is
 The love which women hold for men, at times!
 She said: Fly, Trapper of Hearts, from me,
 And live as you lived before, a pilot!
 I said to her: Know you not Miriam and Khadija,
 Those mistresses of excellence? You came to me yourself, scatterbrains!

The Arabs excel in these bitter-sweet songs of love. I will give for a change something more primitive and in a broader dialect. The following is ascribed to Abadi, court poet to Sheikh Nasr el Ashgar es Saadun, but this, as with all folk ascriptions, is doubtful, as Abadi, like other known poets, tends to amass verse.

Akhhh! Qatalni hiya
 Hatarag galbi ishtal thiya
 Ammat aini—bi'esh ashuf
 Gumt rabbid weif aruh
 Gul li bia nawiya?
 Hanawiya shlon kalfa
 Hel amr wallah la kasfa
 Bad shasat maku harfa
 Gumt ma add el wasiya
 Rah tamautan min shufitha
 Tabqa kaghadh ya jisadha
 Naska wa halwa wa rafiya
 Dafaq damai ala Umm Adela
 Sar Shatt wa ghaddat lehja
 Biha sifun wa haut wa kullahun

To attempt to translate this, is, I feel, something like trying to put "On Ilkla Moor Baht 'At" into French. I will just give the approximate meaning line by line.

Akhhh! She's killed me
 My heart is aflame, a fire is lit.
 My eyes are blind—with what can I see?
 I am lost—where can I go?
 Tell me where I am?
 Where I am—how hard it is!

* Note how the nominative *habbu*, though the accusative would be grammatically correct here, carries on the sound of *qustu*. There are many instances, of course, of this licence.

By God! I didn't look for this!
 After this there's nothing else!
 Silent am I!
 Dying of her!
 Leaves of paper are her body
 Fit and sweet and slim.
 My tears have rushed on the Mother of Tresses.
 There's a river and a roaring,
 In it ships and fish and things!

So much, owing to shortage of space, for love. Nursery rhymes fascinate folklorists, as they provide so much material for research and comparison. The following I offer not for their poetic value—they have none—but for various interesting features. The first I heard being sung in Benghazi by children of four and five years of age. I thought, when I heard it in the distance, that it was a variant of the familiar *Cukukhti wein ukhtu b'il Hilla sha takal bajilla* of Iraq ("Dove, where's my sister? In Hilla. What does she eat? Beans."). Approaches to small Arab children by field folklorists complete with notebook being more likely to produce floods of tears than folk information, I had to wait until an assistant, with the aid of a small relation and a bag of sweets, could do the required recording.

The song goes thus:

Dalia ya dalia safara
 Wa finajil dahab
 yeruh bik li'and Italia

Sallam khai* jabha
 Hamra fi dolabha

Lilla ya Lilla
 Ahkouiya f'il Ballilla
 Wa hua saghayir ala'l Ballilla

I feel that to attempt a literal translation here would be most misleading, as this is an example of the common tendency in nursery rhymes to substitute words of similar sound. "Ballilla" was the Fascist youth organization, a surprising thing to find in a nursery rhyme and one which may give untold trouble to future folklorists. I don't think that this is a variant on the Hilla rhyme, but I think it may well indicate the presence of an older rhyme on the *bajilla* theme.

Another rhyme worth quoting is from the Muntafiq tribes in South Iraq. It goes:

Hadaya Badaya Naser daya
 Shid el kur ala zambur
 Banat Shlaishal limm el aish el
 Bab el Hilla wa bab es Sham
 Yek saibti tina subbi
 Ala jiddar
 Hadiha, badiha, taras el qaush b'nnafash.

* *khai* = friend (from brother).

Translations of these rhymes are misleading if we should start thinking in English, as there may well be word changes, but I would give the apparent meaning as :

Hadaya badaya run Naser, run!
Tie the thread to a bee.
Girls of Shlaishal, gather bread at
The Hilla and Damascus gates.
My stick for the pot
Hadiha badiha, fill the pot with bullrush cobs.

In connection with this rhyme, I gathered by separate inquiry that *aish* did mean bread not rice, as in the Gulf. This song is sung by boys sitting in a circle, and at the words "Yek saibti" (What will these Lebanese arabists make of that one?) they all point their forefingers towards the centre.

This song has clearly to do with eating; it may refer to a famine. It gives rise to many questions. What city had both a Hilla and a Damascus gate? Not Baghdad, certainly! Samarra? And how did Shlaishal's girls gather the bread? These rhymes are not meaningless. The fine research in England which has established the connection of "Ring a ring of roses" with the Great Plague has had no counterpart so far in Arabia. The field folklorists have not yet done enough to provide material for research students. It is with a view to stimulating some more activity along these lines that I quote the above few poor samples. The field is immensely rich, and sufficient work will provide us with thousands of examples of recordable verse, which, in their turn, will provide us with information about life in prosperous Arab Iraq before the Mongol cataclysm, and, in other areas, information which may go back to before the days of Islam.

Recently a *Times Literary Supplement* leader commented on the rare beauty of the few songs which have survived from Chaucer's England, and on the tragedy of the many which must have perished, or of which only fragments have survived. Arab songs will not live long in the present atmosphere of economic progress. I hope it will be sufficient excuse for this article if I plead that anyone living in the Arab lands with time to spare should record at least a few of the very beautiful love songs. Perhaps the society could arrange for the collation of this material. It does not matter if songs remain untranslated provided they are permanently recorded, but one of the tragedies of folklore, that research may start too late, might well be avoided.

