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8 MODERN IRANIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

Intellectual and Literary Trends to 1960

Before coming to contemporary Shi'i thought it will be useful to discuss briefly literary and intellectual trends that formed part of the background for more recent writers and thinkers. (Premodern religious trends—majoritarian and dissident—were discussed in chapter 1 and will be given relatively minor attention here.)

The "two-cultures" phenomenon in Iran (that is, different cultures for the elite and the masses) is largely a phenomenon of the Pahlavi period, before which there was a gradation but no sharp break between elite and popular cultures. This can be seen in such elementary spheres as dress, homes, styles of furnishing, means of locomotion, and mosque attendance. It also appears in literary forms; "folk culture," which in the nineteenth century and before cut across classes, has increasingly been relegated to the popular classes. Such folk culture includes the folktale, a widespread genre now most important to the popular classes, especially in the countryside.

Better known to outsiders is the "passion play," or *ta'ziyeh,* in reality a series of plays centering around the martyrdom of the imams, especially of Imam Hosain, whose small forces were slaughtered in Iraq by the army of the Umayyad caliph Yazid. In the first ten days of the holy month of Moharram, a series of these plays are performed, today mostly in rural and popular class areas (though in the nineteenth century they were also patronized by Qajar shahs and notables). A variety of personal and political feelings are expressed by the audience—comprising men, women, and children—in the course of such plays. For example, spectators, especially women, who see inno-

cent children die in the play as they do in reality can find an outlet for their grief; while many, particularly during periods of political discontent, find in the ta'ziyeh stories of Imams Hosain and Ali a paradigm of just struggle against unrighteous tyrants, a theme often given explicit political resonance. The themes of the martyrdom of Ali, Hosain, and other imams are reiterated in less elaborate ways in other forms of popular religious culture, notably by the *rauzeh-khan* who tells these stories with the aid of a few pictures and props. This can be a woman molla at women's gatherings, and props may include puppet shows.[1] Sermons in mosques can also be political.

There is a gradual gradation between the "religious" ta'ziyeh and the "secular" humorous folk play. Some plays have both elements. The predominant form of secular folk theatre does, however, differ from most ta'ziyehs in its choice of secular subjects, and its comic, rather than reverent, view of its characters. Like the ta'ziyeh the folk theatre in the pre-Pahlavi period was a multiclass phenomenon, with middle-class urban families as well as peasant villages hiring theatre troupes for special occasions such as weddings. The folk theatre, like that in much of the world, is characterized by stock characters, notably the black- or white-face clown who can defy social convention with impunity. Like many folk theatres it is also openly or subtly obscene and in other ways too represents the "World turned upside down"; the respectably pompous merchant bested by his wife and/or a poor youth; the hypocritical molla unmasked, and so forth.[2] In this theatre as in ta'ziyeh women's parts are taken by men, but the audience includes men, women, and children. There is also a lesser known form of popular theatre found in women's theatre games, performed by groups of women in their homes. As in public folk theatre the world is turned upside down, and the follies and weaknesses of the dominant group (men) are revealed—whether it be hypocrisy, impotence, or whatever. The women in these plays, much like the poor in the others, often succeed in outwitting their husbands or other male oppressors.[3] Like the ta'ziyehs the popular theatre may have very different effects in different periods; in politically quiet periods they may just provide an outlet for feelings against sexual, political, and personal repression; as crises approach, however, people's attention turns increasingly to the evils of such injustices and the need to combat them, and the plays and

rauzeh-khanis increasingly become a political medium for expressing such ideas, and the character traits stressed in their heroes change accordingly.

Reza Shah banned ta'ziyeh performances, which were allowed a limited comeback under Mohammad Reza under whom, however, limits were put on folk theatre by demanding (nonexistent) licenses, scripts (for improvised comedy), and so forth. But the major assault on such theatre, as in much of the world, came from Western-style film, radio, and TV, which helped limit popular theatre increasingly to villages and small towns.

Beyond popular literature there were also other manifestations of the multiclass nature of pre-Pahlavi culture, even though some cultural forms were limited to the secular and religious elites respectively. Among the multiclass cultural forms that have declined visibly even in the past twenty years is knowledge and recital of the best classical poetry, including poets like Hafez and Sa'di, by unlettered men and women in both city and countryside. Western visitors knowing Persian frequently remarked on such long recitations with amazement. Related were coffeehouse poets who generally gave dramatic recitations from the *Shah-nameh* (*Book of Kings*), the Persian national epic composed by the poet Firdausi; these continued to exist, but in smaller numbers. (It should be noted that Persian has one of the world's outstanding poetic traditions, often of great difficulty and subtlety, so that the phenomenon described is the equivalent of English peasant men and women being able to recite very lengthy passages of Shakespeare, Milton, and John Donne.) This phenomenon, perhaps because of modern schools and distractions, has declined notably, and Iran's poets have become mainly the property of (one part of) the propertied. Folk poetry, rarely written, continues to exist, but it too has a reduced role.

Even "mystical" Sufi orders, which brought members together for special religious practices outside the usual ulama-mosque network, were both more important and more of a channel for interclass cultural communication in the past than they have been since the cultural and religious changes of the Pahlavi era.

In view of the changes that have occurred in Iran since 1978, it is well to remember that both folk and high literature had strong anticlerical features; in folktales and popular plays the molla or *akhund* (the

same as *molla* but more often pejorative) is most often showed negatively—as money-loving, hypocritical, and so forth—and hypocritical ulama are also found in written belles lettres more often than good ones.

As suggested in chapter 1, reformist thought did not begin in Iran after interaction with the West; rather Islamic Iran has always had important reformists and dissidents in such fields as philosophy, poetry, religion, and politics.[4] What is new about the nineteenth century is that Iran's weaknesses vis-à-vis the advanced West became clear to many, and that interaction with the West hastened and altered the nature of socioeconomic change, producing both new problems and new possibilities of development. The main concern of many Iranian leaders and thinkers came to be catching up with the West. Although they differed somewhat regarding which elements of Western civilization must be adopted in order to do this, nearly all believed that much must be borrowed.

The earliest reformers were practical political leaders, a breed that has continued. The main ones have been mentioned; Abbas Mirza, crown prince and governor of Azerbaijan in the early nineteenth century, brought in Western advisers, sent students abroad, and got local ulama to validate his acts. His minister Qa'em Maqam contributed to the process of early Westernization and to the reform of writing style. Under Naser ad-Din Shah (1848–96), not a consistent reformist, there were two reforming prime ministers: Mirza Taqi Khan *Amir Kabir* and Mirza Hosain Khan *Moshir ad-Dauleh* (whose reforms are discussed in chapter 3). After Naser ad-Din's death, another reformer, Amin ad-Dauleh, became prime minister and attempted tax and other reforms. All these man were hindered, pushed from office and sometimes to their death by vested interests at court and among the ulama. There were many who gained in wealth and power from the old decentralized governmental system, which encouraged local power and corruption, and Iran was not economically as ripe for centralization as were countries with a greater Western impact and trade like Egypt, Turkey, or Tunisia. Also, Great Britain and Russia preferred the weak Qajar government, from whom they had favorable treaties, to the strong one desired by reformers and nationalists.

There also developed in the later nineteenth century unofficial, or predominantly unofficial, reformers, known primarily for their writings. They built on Iranian reformist traditions, including philosophy, Shaikhism, and Babism, more than has usually been realized, so that it is wrong to see them as pure and uncritical Westernizers, as some recent Iranian critics have done. Naturally, in view of the poverty, corruption, mismanagement, and lethargy seen in many aspects of Iranian life, most of them sought Western-style solutions to many of Iran's problems. This they did in somewhat different ways, which can only be outlined very briefly.

The first important such intellectual was Mirza Malkom Khan, discussed in chapters 3 and 4. It seems clear that he was the most complete Westernizer of the reformers in this period, having spent most of his life in the West and having only a nominal commitment to Islam. Before his dismissal from government service in 1889, he kept his Westernism somewhat disguised, and in reformist essays distributed in manuscript generally limited himself to calling for a rationalization of government departments, spending, and so forth. In the newspaper he formed after being dismissed from the government, *Qanun* (London, 1890–96), however, he called for the rule of a rational codified law, and at one point called for a constitution. He also attacked the long-lived prime minister, Amin as-Soltan, and did not spare the shah. His newspaper was smuggled into Iran, and along with the earlier moderately oppositional paper *Akhtar* from Istanbul, and the later *Parvaresh* and *Sorayya* from Cairo and *Habl al-Matin* from Calcutta, formed one of the bases for a reformist, and eventually revolutionary and constitutional group in Iran.

The story of most late-nineteenth-century reformist and revolutionary writers suggests the importance of residence abroad and foreign influence on Iranian enlighteners of this period. Although it is true that those who spent their whole lives in Iran had little opportunity to circulate reformist writings, but might consign their views to later-published diaries (as in the case of the minister Amin ad-Dauleh), foreign travel and experience did change the views of many. This travel was not always in the West. There were Iranian merchant communities in Russian Transcaucasia, in Istanbul, and in India, all of which areas

were more modernized than Iran, and Iranian reformers were very often tied to merchants, both within and outside Iran. Sometimes they themselves were merchants, as in the case of the author of what may be called Iran's first novel, *The Travelbook of Ibrahim Beg* (vol. 1, ca. 1900).

Merchants were a particularly dissatisfied class in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; they felt increasing competition from Western merchants, whom they firmly believed were favored by Persian customs being under the control of a Belgian team from 1898–99. Although some profited from Western trade, they were subject to disabilities that Westerners were not, and capitulatory trade treaties helped make impossible the manufacturing ventures that some of them tried and others would have liked to. Thus numerous Iranian merchants at home and abroad supported reformers who called for an end to favors to the West, the rule of law, and the like.

A number of oppositionists with religious training and even functions can now be shown to have been secret secularists (or at least opponents of the leading ulama), who used a religious guise in order effectively to arouse large masses of people. A pioneer in this technique was Sayyed Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani," whose brief biography was given in chapter 4. Until the early 1880s Afghani had more of a reputation for heterodoxy than religiosity, but after then, sensing a new pro-Islamic mood in the Muslim world, he began to speak more and more of Islam and pan-Islam, the unity of all Muslim countries, preferably under the leadership of the sultan-caliph of the Ottoman Empire, against an encroaching West. Although the term "pan-Islam" and the basic idea of it as a mass movement seem to have been coined earlier by the Turkish Young Ottomans, particularly Namik Kemal, Jamal ad-Din was more responsible than anyone for spreading the idea. This pan-Islamic movement, which involved some Iranian ulama and others and continued into the 1920s, has some significant points of comparison with the recent "Islamic Revival." Both may be seen more as political than spiritual reactions against Western imperialism and control in Muslim lands: in the 1880s following Russian, British, and French conquests, and today following frustrations about internal weaknesses, Western strength, and Israel, seen as a Western colonial enclave. Both tend to idealize Islam by going "back to the sources," particularly the Quran, and reinterpreting them. With Jamal ad-Din

and his followers, who lived in largely traditional societies, this reinterpretation had a modernist and reformist bent: Western-style law and science, sometimes constitutions, and other reforms were found in the Quran. Today, however, the movement in Iran is only in part reformist; it is carried out more by ulama than by independent intellectuals and stresses the literal following of many Quranic rules. This greater conservatism after a century may most briefly be explained by saying that Jamal ad-Din and his Iranian followers were reacting against a traditional, scarcely reformed governmental and religious structure and naturally thought that Iran's problems might be solved by interpreting Islam in ways to bring it closer to the more successful, stronger, and better functioning West. Khomaini and his followers, however, reacted to a situation where Iran was felt to be a junior partner or puppet of the West, particularly of the United States, and in which cultural and economic Westernization of a certain type was occurring at breakneck speed with little regard for human consequences. When no traditional or Islamic government had existed for a long time and the formal power of the ulama had been curbed, it was easy to imagine that a return to an idealized Islam, so far past that no one remembered it, could solve Iran's problems: hence, in brief, the more "traditional" nature of thought and action in 1978–80 than in 1905–11.

Afghani's appeals to unity around Islam to fend off the West had a multiclass appeal, as do many nationalist and Third Worldist ideas, which see the Third World as uniformly exploited by an imperialist West, without drawing real class distinctions. Afghani was invited to Tehran in 1886 by the quite conservative minister of press, and stayed at the home of Iran's leading merchant, Amin az-Zarb, who was close to the prime minister and no radical. His son, like other unradical merchants, was very important in the constitutional revolution. Afghani scared the shah by his anti-British talk, and had to go to Russia, though he returned briefly later. Although Afghani is now known for fighting despotism, in fact his main target was the British, and his record on despots is ambiguous; he tried frequently to get into the counsels of rulers, succeeding with one in Afghanistan, but only tenuously in Egypt, Iran, and Turkey. He attacked the shah only after his expulsion from Iran in 1891. Although there is one recorded Egyptian talk in the 1870s where Afghani supports a constitution,

none of his major writings or talks thereafter supports this or any other clear institutional brake on despotism. He was rather an apostle of self-strengthening against the West, whether by kings or not, and most of the reforms he advocated had this goal. His use of religious language and of lines from the Quran as more effective than secular arguments was vindicated in the alliance of ulama, merchants, and intellectuals that led the successful tobacco protest in 1890–91, although it is wrong to see him as the sole architect of this natural alliance.

After 1890, even formerly anticlerical writers like Malkom Khan and some radicals at Istanbul began to emulate Afghani's tactics. There is not space here to document the fact that Afghani's own Islam, which appears to have come from Iranian deist-philosophical traditions with a heavy Shaikhi influence, was very different from orthodox Islam, but that has been done elsewhere.[5] Clearly he was successful in his tactic, which was traditional in Shi'ism and in Islamic philosophy, of appealing in different ways to an unorthodox "elite" and the orthodox "mass." His name is venerated among both religious and irreligious in Iran today, and republication of his writings in Iran with new introductions was one means used by the oppositional but still "orthodox" religious forces to promote their ideas in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Iranians abroad with whom Afghani was closest had little claim to Islam, much less orthodoxy; nonetheless after 1891 they went along with Afghani's pan-Islamic program. Afghani and Malkom worked together in London in 1891, with Afghani contributing to *Qanun*, which now began to adopt a pro-ulama line. In 1892 Afghani accepted an invitation from the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid to go to Istanbul, where he remained largely under a kind of glorified house arrest until his death in 1897 from cancer. There he worked with a group of Iranians and Shi'is to write to Shi'i ulama suggesting they follow the (Sunni) Ottoman sultan-caliph. This would of course weaken the shah, whom Afghani now hated. Among the group were men in no way Muslim, even though they wrote their appeals and other antishah works in the most orthodox terms; specifically the writers Shaikh Ahmad Ruhi and Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani, who had been Babis of the original, Azali line, but by now appear to have been atheists. (Ruhi is photographed in one book leaning on a tablet that says "There is

nothing but nature.") Kermani, a prolific writer, was also one of the first representatives of a trend that grew in importance among twentieth-century intellectuals: rejection of Islam and the Arabs for having ruined Iran, and a glorification of pre-Islamic Iran. This he began to do before meeting Afghani and adopting his pan-Islamic tactics.

Although Kermani now worked with Afghani, the nationalist trend rejecting Islam was quite a different line of thought: both trends have continued to today. Both can be said to represent kinds of nationalism (or, in the case of pan-Islam, a "proto-nationalism" that fed later individual nationalisms). Both had the typical nationalist feature of glorifying a period in the distant past when one's own people were stronger, more successful, occupied more territory, and had more scientific, artistic, and cultural achievements. Afghani (at least after circa 1881—before that he often spoke in Egyptian, Indian, etc., nationalist terms) and those in the Islamist line to the present identify this past with the early age of Islam, and blame decline on influences (usually foreign) corrupting or undermining true Islam, as it is interpreted by a given ideological school. This line of thought sometimes advocates unity among all Muslims, although even in Abdülhamid's time few imagined real political unity could be achieved. There are various ideas of federation and cooperation, and uncooperative Muslim leaders can be denounced as being not truly Islamic. This trend is strong in Iran today.

Kermani, influenced by the Iranian-born north Azerbaijani thinker, Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh, saw the ideal past very differently, in the period of the great pre-Islamic Persian Empires that appeared populous, prosperous, and strong. Islam and the "inferior" Arabs were seen as destroying this greatness. Kermani even denounced all the great Persian classical poetry, except for the warlike and pro-Persian *Shah-nameh*, for inculcating passivity and corruption. Both the *Shah-nameh* and popular literature and attitudes do reflect considerable past anti-Arab ("lizard-eater") and even antiorthodox feelings, sometimes also expressed in poetry, art, and so forth. The radical anti-Arab and anti-Islamic ideas of Kermani were expanded by a number of twentieth-century writers and intellectuals—notably two of the greatest, the writer Sadeq Hedayat and the wide-ranging intellectual

Ahmad Kasravi (see below). Both pan-Islam and its apparent opposite, anti-Islamic nationalism, are multiclass (some would say bourgeois) phenomena; both have been used by intellectuals and rulers with different emphases for their own ends. The Pahlavi shahs picked up pre-Islamic Iranian nationalism, cut off the radical elements that were central to its chief intellectual advocates (especially the communist religion and revolt of the fifth-century-A.D. heretic Mazdak), and made it a foundation of anticlerical monarchism. This use of it was possibly no more forced than the other, as the two great pre-Islamic empires were strong monarchies; on the other hand popular elements could be found in pre-Islamic religions like Mazdakism, Manichaeism, and Zoroastrianism, as could evidence that women and agriculturalists enjoyed higher respect in some pre-Islamic periods than in the nineteenth century. The main appeal of an idealized distant past, however, whether Islamic or pre-Islamic, was and is that a great variety of values may be read into it, while the evils of the present can be ascribed to deviation from the true Iranian or true Islamic essence. In a period when all society was at least formally Islamic, it was natural for many thinkers to blame Iran's problems on Islam and the Arabs, and to see in a nationalist interpretation of the distant Iranian past virtues that were often modern or Western ones. As Iran became more modern and Westernized, the evils of indiscriminate Westernization became more obvious, and Islamic ways for many receded into the background, it was natural for many after 1960 to blame evils on Western ways and to turn for salvation to an idealized Islamic past. Ironically, many in both trends, especially the Iranist one, were really Westernizers, understandably unwilling to admit wholesale borrowing from the West.

Before 1960, most recognized Iranian intellectuals with a following outside traditional religious circles were to a high degree Westernizers. The desire for rationalized law, rule, and economics was expressed both in the emigré newspapers published before the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11 and the great majority of papers published in Iran during that revolution, of which *Sur-e Esrafil* with its brilliant prose satire by the writer Dehkhoda and *Iran-e Nau* led by the outstanding socialist Caucasian Rasulzadeh may be singled out. In addition to news, these numerous newspapers were full of new poetry and satires that spoke out against corrupt and hypocritical officials and ulama, and also took as a main theme criticism of the veiling, seclusion, and enforced

ignorance of women. Before and during the revolution longer prose forms with themes similarly critical of Iranian mores and looking, at least implicitly, to Western models for improvement, played a role in enlightening Iranians. These, like the newspapers, were often read aloud and discussed to groups. The most famous such early twentieth-century work was Zain al-Abedin Maraghe'i's *Travelbook of Ibrahim Beg,* exposing a myriad of Iranian evils. There were also the improved translation of James Morier's *Hajji Baba of Esfahan* by Mirza Habib Esfahani, which was more savage and political about Iran's faults than the original, and the works by men of Iranian origin living in Russian Transcaucasia, notably Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzadeh and Talebzadeh.[6] The victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War aroused interest in Japan's secret of rapid self-strengthening, which many saw in the fact that Japan had a constitution and Russia did not; hence a spate of writings on Japan, some of which stressed for the first time the virtues of constitutions.

As to the ulama in the constitutional revolution, there were varying degrees of support for a constitution and of awareness of its implications. Among the popular preachers there were a number in the tradition of Afghani—men brought up with a religious education and filling, more than Afghani, religious functions, notably preaching, but who were not themselves believers in any usual sense. These included most notably two preacher friends from Isfahan—Malek al-Motakallemin and Sayyed Jamal ad-Din Esfahani, the former the father of the historian of the constitutional revolution, Mehdi Malekzadeh, and the latter the father of Iran's first great modern short-story writer, Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh (still alive as of 1980). Malek al-Motakallemin was long an Azali Babi, although by the time he became a preacher in the revolution he appears to have lost even this belief, while Sayyed Jamal ad-Din Esfahani was described by his son as a freethinker.[7] They both recognized the appeal of Islam to the masses and bazaaris, however. Before the Revolution they helped, with the participation of Isfahan businessmen, to set up and publicize an "Islamic company" that would boycott foreign cloth and goods and promote local products. In Tehran, the two became major preachers of the revolutionary and constitutional cause, explaining it in familiar Muslim terms emphasizing such Islamic concepts, particularly central in Shi'ism, as Justice and Oppression. Mohammad Ali Shah considered

them among the most dangerous of his enemies and had them both killed in 1908, as he did the editor of *Sur-e Esrafil,* Mirza Jahangir Khan, also of Babi background.[8]

Among the more powerful ulama there was a variety of views, but the most prominent ulama of Iraq and many prominent ones in Iran remained proconstitutional throughout the revolution, although there were defections as the social revolutionary and even "anti-Islamic" potential of the constitution became clearer. The two main ulama constitutional leaders within Iran were very different types: Sayyed Mohammad Tabataba'i, who appears to have had genuinely liberal proclivities and considerable contact with other liberals, believed that a constitution would be the best way to limit the power of uncontrolled autocrats who were selling Iran to the Western powers. The more wily and powerful Sayyed Abdollah Behbehani had a long record of pro-British activity; he had been almost alone in refusing to back the anti-British tobacco movement, had taken personal presents and money from the British to organize movements against the Russians, and had helped arrange the use of the British Legation for the bast of 1906. To a degree his early participation in the revolution may be seen as part of his pro-British policy with an aim of advancing himself as he weakened the Qajars. He also wished to keep the constitutional movement conservative, while not openly turning against it. The third main leader of the Tehran ulama, Shaikh Fazlollah Nuri, did turn against the movement once it became clear that the constitution was not going to reinstate the sharia, but bring in many Western-style institutions and laws. The constitution and its form reflected more the ideas of Westernizing secularists, backed financially especially by merchants, than the ulama, although, as noted, provisions were inserted to protect ulama power. However, in 1909, a defense of the constitution was written by a younger mujtahid, Na'ini, that was endorsed by leading Iraqi ulama.[9] It does not appear to have been very influential when it was written, however; its real fame and importance came with its republication with an introduction by Ayatollah Taleqani in 1955, as part of the struggle against Pahlavi despotism, a struggle that until almost the end based itself largely on the idea of true application of the 1906–07 constitution.

The revolution saw writings and activities reflecting a wide range of political tendencies that went on to have an important future in Iranian

politics. Quite early in the constitutional revolution, a Social Democratic party was founded in Tabriz. It was influenced by Iranian returnees and immigrants from the Russian Caucasus. In the second constitutional period, from 1909, this was mostly merged into the well-organized, nationwide Democratic party, whose program included land reform and other major social reforms. The Democrats dominated the World War I pro-German nationalist government that was forced from Iran in 1915, whence some of its members went to Istanbul and some to Berlin—both anti-Allied capitals. In Berlin the Democrat leader Sayyed Hasan Taqizadeh edited two series of the important newspaper *Kaveh* (named after a lengendary blacksmith who liberated Iran). The first series, published during the war, aimed largely at getting Iranians to support the Central Powers against Britain and Russia, while the second was the main organ of the new Iranian nationalist culture. In addition to supporting new young writers like Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh, it contained striking editorial features by Taqizadeh, in one of which he said that Iran must become wholly Western in every way if it were to progress; this is perhaps the high point of the Westernist view of nationalism, which Taqizadeh himself later modified.

The Constitutional Revolution also saw the beginnings of socialist writings by Caucasian immigrants like Rasulzadeh and Haidar Khan Amu Oghlu (the latter responsible for a few assassinations during the revolution and later a prominent Communist in the Gilan Jangalis). Iran was also involved in the Communist Congress of the Peoples of the East, 1920, and socialist and Communist writings and activities developed after World War I. These were, however, outlawed under Reza Shah and during most of his son's rule, so that this line of thought was far less expressed in writing especially within Iran than it would otherwise have been; like the Democrats the socialists and Communists were Westernizers. Already in the 1940s and 1950s there were socialist offshoots from the Tudeh, and in the 1960s and 1970s the number of socialist and Marxist movements, especially abroad, multiplied, and all expressed their positions in writing.

As was the case in Tsarist Russia and other autocratic countries, thinkers who wished to publish within Iran their criticisms of government and society usually had to do it indirectly, especially via poetry, fiction, and literary criticism, which involve ambiguity and are hard to

pin down, rather than through directly critical essays, whose publication in most periods of modern Iranian history was not permitted. Such essays can be found in the relatively freer periods, like 1906–11, 1918–21, and 1941–53, and to a degree 1978–80, but most of the time it is the poet and author, not the editorial writer, who is the chief social critic. (This did not prevent the poet Eshqi from being killed by Reza Shah or numerous writers from being jailed, and often tortured, under his son.)

Literature is particularly well suited to criticize social customs the author considers unjust or outworn, and such social criticism is rife in modern Iranian literature from the *Travelbook of Ibrahim Beg* to the present. Significantly, one of the strongest points of attack by both male and female authors, in both prose and poetry, is the position of women, although authors of different periods and views differ somewhat on proposed solutions. In the poetry of the Constitutional Revolution and after there are strong attacks on the veiling that cripples women's activity, on the lack of education that cuts down women's contribution to society and harms their children's education, on their mistreatment by ignorant husbands, and on other aspects of their subordination. In the same first decades of the twentieth century, a number of women from upper-class and upper-middle-class backgrounds worked with some success to set up girls' schools and orphanages. By writers and activists alike, Reza Shah's opening of schools and universities to girls and his unveiling of women were welcomed as in part an outcome of their struggles. In the Pahlavi period there were a number of excellent women writers and essayists, as well as important women in other fields. Among the poets the two most outstanding were, under Reza Shah, Parvin E'tesami, a brilliant poet in the classical style; and, under Mohammad Reza, Forugh Farrokhzad, who lived the kind of free and varied life usually reserved for men, and dared write about her sexual feelings and activities in her poetry, shocking some of her contemporaries. The life and writings of Forugh may properly be classified as "feminist" (without any hostile implication to men).[10] Unfortunately, both these highly talented poets died very young.

It should be noted that before Shariati no significant recent writers complained about the too rapid Westernization of Iranian women. Although miniskirts, tight jeans, and makeup may offend some,

attacks on them in recent decades turned out, predictably, to be a prelude to partly successful attempts since 1979 to return all women to restrictive clothing and to aspects of strict Muslim law.

Another area of literary attack going back to the first modern Iranian prose is the intellectuals' view of unpleasant aspects of Iranian mores as seen by Iranians themselves: hypocrisy, pretentiousness, unreliability, untruths, venality, and opportunism. These themes are stressed in the pre–1906 books discussed above and in revolutionary satires. They are also found in the groundbreaking collection of realistic short stories published by Jamalzadeh in 1921, *Yeki bud yeki nabud,* in which, among other things, the verbal pretensions of both the old-style ulama, with their incomprehensible Arabized talk, and the young European returnee, who fills his Persian with French, are mocked.

Sadeq Hedayat, generally considered the greatest modern Iranian prose writer, wrote in a variety of styles, optimistic and pessimistic, realistic and mystical-paranoid, which can be tied both to Iran's political state and his own fragile mental state. His more realistic and satirical works appeared between 1941 and 1947, when there seemed to be hope for democracy, and when he, like many other writers, was close to the Tudeh party. A number of short stories about rural and urban common people present with sympathy their hard life, their courage, and their subjection to irrational customs and superstitions. His masterpiece in the realistic-satirical genre is the novel *Hajji Agha,* an exposition of political, financial, personal, and religious hypocrisy in which Hedayat presents in the person of his title character many of the main faults that have kept Iran from progressing soundly.[11] Although Hedayat's surrealistic and drug-influenced *The Blind Owl* was translated much sooner into English and other languages, *Hajji Agha* is more important, or at least more comprehensible, as social criticism.

The two English-language Iran-centered novels of F. Esfandiari, *Day of Sacrifice* and *The Identity Card,* reflect this Iranian self-criticism. The former vividly portrays the father-son tensions characteristic of many Iranians, as well as an attempted political assassination; the latter shows the unending labyrinthine bureaucracy that keeps an Iranian from returning to America, where he lives, because he does not have an Iranian identity card. In all these prose works, the situations are socially

important because they are seen by the authors and readers as typical of the situation in Iran.

Although a large number of authors in the 1941–53 period, including such famous ones as Sadeq Hedayat and Jalal Al-e Ahmad, had close ties to the Tudeh party, the one great author firmly associated with the party and its predecessors is Bozorg Alavi, who for over twenty-five years now has lived and taught in East Berlin, having been educated in Germany at the time when many Iranian nationalists were there. Alavi was one of the circle of "53" whose Marxist discussion group was arrested by the Reza Shah regime and sent to jail until Reza Shah's forced abdication. He, like the others in the group, became one of the founders of the Tudeh. Close to Hedayat and some other leftist authors, he considerably influenced literature and literary criticism. One of his well-known Persian works tells the story of the "53" and other novels and stories deal with social themes, including women. From Germany he has written especially nonfiction about Iran and its modern literature. Unlike Jamalzadeh, who spent most of his life outside Iran but continued to write stories set there, he has preferred more analytical writing in recent years.[12]

Space does not permit extensive discussion of many writers of recent decades. Among the well known are the Azerbaijani Samad Behrangi, whose early death under mysterious circumstances was widely blamed on SAVAK, as were deaths of men discussed in the next section, Al-e Ahmad and Shariati (the heart attacks of the latter two are, however, attested by persons close to them). Behrangi was especially known for his adaptation of Azerbaijani folktales, most of which were censored, but one of which, *The Little Black Fish,* was widely read and published despite its symbolic progressive implications. Another progressive author persecuted by the shah's regime is the playwright Gholam Hosain Sa'edi, best known in the West for his story *The Cow* in its film version directed by the new wave film director, Daryush Mehrjui. Better known in the west for his English writings is Reza Baraheni, who in his essays reprinted in *The Crowned Cannibals* castigates not only the monarchical system but also male supremacy and other evils of Iranian culture. Like the majority of well-known Iranian writers since the late nineteenth century, these three and many of their contemporaries were *both* antiregime and *secularist.* Again like most writers,

they were leftists of different persuasions.[13] Only recently did religious publications come to outnumber secular ones and were there more than a few modern writers who stressed religion. On the other hand the authors mentioned above were read chiefly by a minority of the modernized elite, while religious preachings were heard by the popular classes.

Outside the belletristic category was the highly influential scholar, jurist, and essayist Ahmad Kasravi, who developed the trend of an anti-Shi'i Iranian nationalism. In his writings he coined numerous new terms from Persian roots, avoiding words of Arab origin, and openly criticized most Iranian religions. He developed a considerable following, became a natural target for the polemics of the religious, and was assassinated by a member of the Feda'iyan-e Islam in open court in 1946.[14]

The activities of the Feda'iyan-e Islam can serve as a reminder that there was also a continuous, albeit changing, tradition of Islamic thought and activity throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that has perhaps not received the attention it deserves. The great nineteenth century Muslim philosopher Sabzavari developed further the tradition of original Shi'i philosophic thought, teaching, and writing represented in the Safavid period by such major thinkers as Molla Sadra and Mir Damad. The developing tradition of Shi'i thought, influenced both by philosophy and by Sufism, was represented in the twentieth century by such thinkers as Jalal ad-Din Ashtiyani and Allameh Tabataba'i, and reflections of this tradition may be found in recent ulama activists, including Ayatollah Khomaini, himself well versed in Muslim philosophy.

More directly political thought among practicing Muslims was also important. The Islamic defense of constitutionalism written by Na'ini has been mentioned, and other mujtahids wrote briefer and less comprehensive statements along the same lines. Under the Pahlavis, however, many ulama and other religiously oriented thinkers became less concerned with the constitution, which proved to be a feeble defense against autocracy, and more worried about the diminution in ulama positions and prerogatives on the one hand and the complaints of the ulama and their constituents against Pahlavi autocracy on the other. There was also growing concern about increasing deviations from what

were seen as Islamic norms and about subservience to Western ways and Western powers. Such concerns could not be published under Reza Shah's censorship, but they were voiced in the early 1940s by Ruhollah Khomaini, who, as noted below, attacked Reza Shah's autocracy and the secularist influence of men like Kasravi. A less erudite attack in the 1940s and 1950s came from the Feda'iyan-e Islam, a group of young men of popular origin who published a fundamentalist program calling for a return to pure Islamic ways and laws and an end to Western influence, and who also assassinated their chief enemies. The most politically influential of the ulama in the early 1950s was Ayatollah Kashani, known especially for his anti-imperialist and particularly anti-British speeches and activities, and at times allied with the Feda'iyan-e Islam. At first cooperating with Mohammad Mosaddeq in the oil nationalization crisis, he later broke with him and backed his overthrow. The later 1950s were primarily a quietist period for the ulama, led by the conservative Ayatollah Borujerdi, but new trends began in the 1960s.

As was suggested above, most modern Iranian literature, especially until about 1960, has been anticlerical insofar as it touches the subject. Even Al-e Ahmad's attempts to rediscover religion in the 1960s resulted mainly in his anticlerical attack on hypocrisy witnessed during his pilgrimage. Shariati was also far more opposed to the average cleric than is often admitted.[15] The poems and writings mentioned above that defend the rights of women often attack ignorant mollas; so too do many satires from preconstitutional times on down, and many realistic writings. Further, the great majority of Iranian writing to which any significant attention has been given by lay readers (only a small sample of which could be noted here) has been explicitly Westernist and modernist, again at least until 1960, and in many cases much later. The evils depicted are, explicitly or implicitly, seen more as owing to Iranian customs and traditions than to Western imperialism and encroachments, and the solutions, if they are suggested at all, are seen as coming from Iranians finding ways to change their customs and traditions. It may be surmised that had literary publication been uncensored, more would have been said about the responsibility of the government in bringing or perpetuating certain evils, and along with this would have gone recognition of the government's considerable dependence on Western states, especially the United States.

It is almost impossible to imagine, however, that an honest writer would devote himself to showing how Iranian internal conditions must be changed, and how these changes were held back by powerful and hypocritical lay and clerical leaders if what the writer *really* meant was almost the opposite; namely, give more power to clerical leaders and put the entire blame for all evils on the court and foreigners, and then problems will be solved. If that had been the intended message, there would have been prudent ways in which it could be implied, just as Al-e Ahmad and Shariati found ways to put forth not exactly that message but still one that put much or most of the blame for Iran's problems on blind imitation of the West.

Twentieth-century Iran has also seen a number of directly political thinkers and writers, whose works have been read mainly by their own followers, and who have rarely been the subject of scholarly analysis. Like the writers discussed so far, political writers have been primarily secularist until quite recently. Socialist and Communist writings go back as far as the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11 and in their main line of the post–World War I Communist party and the post–World War II Tudeh party they tend to follow closely the Soviet line, although with variations and internal struggles as to how it should be interpreted. Leftist guerillas from the late 1960s on rejected the Tudeh line of sharing power peacefully in favor of armed struggle to overturn the system, although there were and are numerous tactical differences within and between guerilla groups.

Mosaddeq-style nationalism, directed mainly at freeing Iran from great-power control, has continued to inspire Iranians of varied political tendencies, including the bourgeois National Front, socialists of various shades (like those in 1979's National Democratic Front led by Mosaddeq's grandson, Hedayatollah Matin-Daftari), and some of the more secularist members of the current regime. This varied following suggests both the broad appeal of Mosaddeq's nationalism and anti-imperialism and the fact that the rest of his program was not specific or detailed enough to disqualify Mosaddeq as a source of inspiration for any of the above groups. A leader of one of the groups in Mosaddeq's coalition, Khalil Maleki, is regarded by some as Iran's most original and astute socialist thinker, who successfully adapted his ideas to the special conditions of Iran, although those belonging to other parties might contest this view.[16]

We thus arrive at the perhaps startling conclusion that the main lines of Iran's literature and political thought in the past century have been radically different from the culture most visible in 1981, and even quite different from the complex, and *not* proclerical emphasis of the "anti-Westernists" Al-e Ahmad and Shariati. To understand the rapid changes in culture after 1961 we must remember the concurrent intensification of a Westernizing despotism, closely tied to dependence on the West, and especially the United States. We must also remember the overrapid rural-urban migrations, increased income disparities, socioeconomic problems, and *anomie* that lead people to go back to familiar traditional moorings and to associate Westernization with suffering and dictatorship. The religious and secular popular culture discussed at the beginning of this chapter persisted, in modified form, for the majority. For the mass of people traditional and religious cultural forms were supplemented by Western films and TV, not by Sadeq Hedayat. Hence the ta'ziyeh, the rauzeh-khani, the mosque sermon, and the religious club, plus the folktale and folk theatre formed the words and literature that expressed most closely the world view of the popular classes. It was to the educated strata of the urban (or newly urban) bazaar classes and youth that Shariati first appealed. It was he, more than all the poets and writers who made such brave attempts to employ the simple language of the masses in order to change their consciousness, who most touched their sensitive nerve. Once dependence on theWest was associated with Western culture, and Western culture with moral decay, it was natural to seek Iran's salvation not in the Westernization pushed by the shah's regime but in a return to an idealized indigenous Islam.

Contemporary Shi'i Thought

After the 1960s, new trends of thought questioned the governmental image of progress and Western rationalism. Jalal Al-e Ahmad inspired a theory of alienation among new intellectuals, and the question of identity was later raised by a variety of writers. Some themes found among Iranian thinkers are similar to those in contemporary Arab thought.[17] Muslim ideologists prefer arguments taken from the Quran or Islamic Traditions—a preference found both among popular

preachers and sophisticated intellectuals. When something is demonstrated with Islamic arguments it is more easily accepted. When Abolhasan Bani Sadr demonstrates with Quranic citations that property belongs only to God, and hence that Iran should nationalize enterprises that could enslave people, his demonstration is more effective for Muslims than are arguments taken from *Das Kapital*. The weakness of Shi'i ideologies is that of all apologists—namely, they try to show that their religion has provided in advance the key to all difficulties. A theme held in common with many Arab ideologists (for example, Anouar 'Abd al-Malek)[18] is Islam as the basis of anti-imperialist action. From a knowledge of the profound popular influence of Islamic slogans, and from a belief that Islam has a revolutionary aspect, Muslim ideologists associate Islam with struggles against colonialism and great-power domination. Here it is possible to present only a few trends, all with Shi'i overtones, but it should not be forgotten that various secular trends also continued to exist in Iran.

Iranian Identity in the Face of Westernization

The increasing cultural Westernization of the Pahlavis was resented by the popular classes, especially the bazaaris, and by the ulama, whose prestige and positions were attacked. Westernized habits were associated with Western politico-economic domination, and anti-Westernism and antiregime ideas turned increasingly to the masses' Shi'i outlook. In the 1960s thinkers began to discuss defense against westernization and returning to Iran's cultural identity. For this they denounced "Westoxication" (*Gharbzadegi*).[19] This reaction can be understood in the context of the anti-imperialist struggle of Mosaddeq, and of rapid Westernization after the 1953 coup d'état.

Jalal Al-e Ahmad was, in the 1960s, the intellectual leader of a new generation of Iranian thinkers. Born in 1923 into a clerical family in the Taleqan Valley near Qazvin, he witnessed his father's ruin after the laicizing reforms of Reza Shah. The father did not accept state control over his work as a notary, a post formerly reserved for ulama. Al-e Ahmad had to quit his family and work to pay for his studies. At twenty he became a Communist, in the years when occupied Iran was undergoing great social crises. Ahmad Kasravi's influence on him was very strong.[20] He quit the Tudeh party after the Azerbaijan events in

reaction against Stalinism, and joined nationalist and socialist movements while teaching, translating, and writing stories with social themes. He was also an essayist, ethnologist, and critic. In the 1960s he became the conscience of many intellectuals, and wrote a classic essay against Iran's "Westoxication."

When the ulama became leaders of the opposition he returned to an interest in Islam and went on pilgrimage to Mecca in 1964. Until his death in September 1969 he defended Islam against the policy of Westernization at any price championed by the regime, although his conversion was more political than religious.[21] Al-e Ahmad found cultural roots and ties to the Iranian people in Islam. This feeling is found in a new way in Ali Shariati. After Al-e Ahmad died, Shariati took up the part of his work that was devoted to giving an Islamic response to the modern world.[22]

Two books by Al-e Ahmad will be discussed: *On the Loyalty and Betrayal of the Intellectuals,* a work of historical sociology where the author judges the attitude of educated Iranians by their services to the Iranian nation; and *Westoxication,*[23] a violent pamphlet directed against this terrible malady that alienates Iranians from their identity and bewitches them with the West.

Al-e Ahmad's viewpoint on Shi'ism was both critical and positive. The Shi'ism imposed by the Safavids crushed the independent spirit of the ulama and encouraged the religiosity of martyrs (the vanquished). The popularity of the Twelfth Imam arises from his being the hope and refuge of believers against the insurmountable inequities of this world. Islam, weakened by divisions between Sunnis and Shi'is, by mystical groups, and by Babism-Bahaism, was vulnerable to imperialism. Iranians succumbed to the image of "progress" and played the game of the West. Al-e Ahmad attacks nineteenth-century Westernizers like Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani, Malkom Khan, and Talebzadeh, and defends the anticonstitutional Shaikh Fazlollah Nuri for upholding the integrity of Iran and Islam in the face of the invading West.[24]

This does not mean that Al-e Ahmad was reactionary. His struggle was for the identity of the Shi'i Iranian. What he asked of Islam, at the moment (ca. 1963) when it again became the symbol of a national struggle against monarchy, was to raise politics to its just position. The ulama should cease their interminable ratiocinations over details and

externals and consider real problems. Then Islam might again be a liberator as it was for the seventh-century Iranians.

Al-e Ahmad's revolt, in part by its exaggerated tone, aroused the conscience of many Iranians. The Pahlavi regime had confronted differently the problems posed by the social and cultural transformation of Iran, spreading an official nationalist ideology. To soften cultural resistance, institutions patronized by the queen and honoring Iranian traditions were created. Some intellectuals found in them an aseptic place to express themselves and to write reports that were put aside. In these institutions no one could discuss religion or politics.

The paradoxical evolution of Al-e Ahmad from socialism to a political Islam was reflected in splits among intellectuals. Some, like the sociologist Ehsan Naraghi, remained secular while allowing Islam a role in national identity.[25] Others sought an alternative to Westoxication in a deeper study of Islamic philosophy. Those closest to Al-e Ahmad's path chose political opposition.

Ulama in the Political Struggle

While some ulama intellectuals avoided politics and produced philosophical and theological works, others increasingly took public political positions. The most important among the politicized ulama, Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomaini, became a political figure of the first rank after the events of 1963, which put him in prison and then in exile, and especially in the revolution of 1978–79. Only his tenacious character and his critical thought could have led one to believe before the 1960s that this theologian would become anything but a high-ranking ayatollah.

He was born in September 1902 in Khomain (between Isfahan and Arak) into a religious family; his grandfather had traded in Kashmir (whence the accusation by Mohammad Reza Shah that he was an Indian paid by the British). His father was killed by a landlord before he was five months old, and he was raised by his mother. From his elder brother (Ayatollah Pasandideh, now living in Qom) he acquired a basic education. In 1919 he went to Soltanabad (Arak), where he became the disciple of Ayatollah Abdol Karim Ha'eri Yazdi, and two years later followed him to Qom. In 1927, after finishing the lower degrees of the theological course, he continued studying under Ha'eri, and on

Ha'eri's death in 1936, Khomaini became a respected mujtahid. In 1930 he married the daughter of a rich Tehran ayatollah, Mirza Mohammad Saqafi, who saw a bright future for this "village molla." Khomaini had two sons, both of whom became ayatollahs—Mostafa, killed perhaps by SAVAK in 1977 at Najaf, and Ahmad, who always accompanies his father—and three daughters.

In 1944 Khomaini first published criticisms of the Pahlavi regime: in an open letter to the ulama he asked them to unite against the immorality of public life, and especially to react against "a certain adventurer from Tabriz who is unjustly attacking your creed." He was certainly referring to the anticlerical intellectual, Ahmad Kasravi.[26] In a 1944 book, *Secrets Exposed,* Khomaini attacks *Secrets of a Thousand Years* by Kasravi's disciple A. A. Hakamizadeh. Khomaini explains that he is answering a writer (unnamed) who has betrayed his country by attacking the ulama. "We must realize that writings that attack religious leaders help to destroy the country and its independence."[27] *Secrets Exposed* consists of six parts: (1) Divine Unity (*tauhid*); (2) The Imamate; (3) The Role of the Ulama; (4) Government; (5) Law; and (6) Traditions (*hadith*). Each time, Khomaini cites a passage of the refuted writer, answers it, and gives his own doctrine.

When appropriate, he unsparingly attacks Reza Shah, seen as the enemy of religion. The idea of an Islamic government, dominated by mujtahids, is developed. He criticizes both the constituent assembly of 1925, which was forced at bayonet-point to install the new Reza Shah and the majles, which is used only to impose European laws and is unsuited to Iran. Only a sovereign elected by pious mujtahids, knowing divine commands and exercising justice without being prisoner to the pressures and ambitions of this world, can govern Iran with equity. The monarchy (*saltanat*) may even be suppressed, as "apart from the royalty of God, all royalty is against the interests of the people and oppressive; apart from the law of God, all laws are nul and absurd. A government of Islamic law, controlled by religious jurists (*faqih*) will be superior to all the iniquitous governments of the world."[28] On the other hand, other passages seem to accept limited monarchy.

One scholar says that Khomaini in the 1950s had a "quietist period" in which he gave lessons and became a leading disciple and confidant of the chief (and conservative) ayatollah, Borujerdi (d. 1961).[29] Around

1960 the course in ethics given by Khomaini in the Faiziyeh Madraseh in Qom attracted more and more students. The teacher abandoned the traditional *minbar* of the mosque and spoke seated on the ground in a corner of the room, fascinating his audience by his criticism of the government's policies. He eventually became one of the successors of Borujerdi to the function of marja'-e taqlid (source of imitation), although some other ayatollahs were, in 1961–63, considered more important than he.

In 1962 Khomaini began direct combat against the Pahlavi regime. His exile from 1964 through 1978 after his 1963–64 battles with the regime did not stop Khomaini from continuing his struggles against the shah, imperialism, and Zionism via declarations and tape cassettes diffused, after he went to Najaf in 1965, by Iranian pilgrims to the holy cities in Iraq. In 1971, at the time of the royalist celebrations in Persepolis, he called upon the ulama to denounce political terror and the waste of Iran's resources. His refusal of all compromise with the regime constituted a revolution by contrast with many in the religious opposition who called only for constitutional reforms.

At this time was published from student notes the book *Islamic Government*, which puts forth three main ideas:

1. Monarchy is radically condemned. The Prophet, he says, asked the Byzantine emperor and the Sasanid Shah to abandon their illegitimate power. By means of war Islam was able to achieve a reign of justice. In Hosain's battle to keep Islam from degenerating into monarchy, he died a martyr. "Islam knows neither monarchy nor dynastic succession."[30]

2. Islam gives, in the Quran and Tradition (*sunna*), "all the laws and principles needed by man for his happiness and perfection."[31] These laws are just; they protect the oppressed and hungry against iniquitous rule. "The legislative power in Islam is limited to God alone."[32] That is why, in Islamic government, instead of having a "legislative assembly" one should have an assembly to apply Islamic law. In order to apply the law and preserve it from deformations, society needed the Prophet and the Imams. They are the only ones to know the law perfectly and to possess in full the virtue of justice ('adalat). After them it is the Muslim jurists (*faqih*, pl. *foqaha*) who should govern. "Authority must come officially from the jurists."[33]

3. Islam is in danger, corrupted by perverse doctrines —materialism, Christianity, Zionism—encouraged in Iran by the imperialist powers. The ulama must purify Islam, and publicize the political and economic aspects of the Quranic message. Islam must be made known, especially among those with university educations.[34] Among the ulama, there are many SAVAK agents and court mollas. Their turbans must be torn off and the religious milieu purified; only those who are soldiers of God should keep their religious dress, serving Islamic government. We must cut all ties to the administration of the demonic (*taghuti*) regime of the shah.

In another text, *The Great Holy War,* Khomaini addresses the ulama of the *hauzeh* (theological colleges) and exhorts them to correct their conduct in order to be examples to society. They are an avant-garde of the "Party of God."[35]

Ayatollah Khomaini is not the sole marja'-e taqlid, and the uncontested leadership he achieved in the revolution did not eclipse the political thought of others. Among the best known ayatollahs playing different roles in the revolution and its ideology were Ayatollah Shariatmadari in Qom, who was very influential in his home province of Azerbaijan and in Khorasan, and Ayatollah Taleqani of Tehran, especially influential in liberal and progressive circles.

A moderate constitutionalist before and after the revolution, Shariatmadari became a leader of many who could not follow Khomaini. Born in 1905 in Tabriz, he studied first there and at nineteen went to Qom, where Shaikh Abdol Karim Ha'eri Yazdi had revived Qom's theological studies. He was a co-disciple with Khomaini, and became a mujtahid. About 1935 he reached Najaf and continued higher studies there . He then taught for about fifteen years in Tabriz and experienced Pishevari's pro-Soviet autonomist Azerbaijan in 1946. Invited by Ayatollah Borujerdi to teach in Qom, he has stayed there ever since, while keeping his ties with Azerbaijan. During the 1962–63 risings Shariatmadari played a major role, and it is generally agreed that he, supported by other ulama, saved the life of Khomaini when he was threatened by the regime.

The Islamic revolution brought out the traditionalism of Shariatmadari's positions: without breaking with Khomaini, he kept his distance. At the beginning of the revolution he supported popular

protests against the brutal oppression of the shah and at first demanded, as did most others, the strict application of the 1906–07 constitution, which foresaw a veto power on legislation by a committee of five mujtahids. He thus indicated that, unlike Khomaini, he was not against a constitutional monarchy with mujtahids participating in power. After the revolution, renouncing official posts, he gathered around him various currents—liberal, moderate, and conservative: bazaar traders unhappy with the recession, and Azerbaijani regionalists. The mainly Azerbaijani Muslim Republican People's party used his name, but he was too prudent to voice support, and even acquiesced in its self-dissolution after the December 1979 struggles in Tabriz. In this he was faithful to his principle that the ulama must abstain from direct intervention in politics.

Although he never published a book systematically presenting his religious and political thought, Shariatmadari expressed his ideas through interviews. He said that an Islamic government does not a priori exclude monarchy, though the injustices of the Pahlavi regime and its subservience to the West removed its legitimacy. Shariatmadari reproaches most Muslim revolutionaries with taking the means (constitution, revolution) for the end. Speaking of some "Islamic revolutionaries," he asks if it is right to admire Che Guevera more than Imam Hasan. He defends himself against the accusation of reformism: the criterion of political action is not Marxism or socialism, it is Islam, and we can say that if on certain questions the Prophet was revolutionary, on others (the fight against slavery, against usury, etc.) he was "reformist."

With his subtle, seductive personality and the patience with which he agrees to answer all questions, Shariatmadari contrasts with Khomaini. We will not detail the power struggles of these two leaders, whose positions are often divergent. Where Khomaini, an innovator, crystallizes all religion around political positions, Shariatmadari, a very learned theologian, concentrates on maintaining traditional Shi'i positions. Some have said that their quarrels are superficial, masking a corporate solidarity, with divergences allowing all Iranians to follow a leading theologian. But perhaps Shariatmadari's rallying of conservatives and moderates represents the schism between a high clergy for whom the revolution, while allowing them to gain prestige and power,

can be a social threat, and a lower clergy with populist tendencies around Khomaini. The former group has recourse to the integrity of theological dogma as an arm to defend its shaky power. Reportedly, several top ayatollahs are in disagreement with Khomaini and closer to Shariatmadari, who was pressured into silence in 1980, and was reported in early 1981 to be under house arrest.

Another prominent ayatollah in the Islamic political movement, Mahmud Taleqani (d. September 1979), was very popular, while remaining less powerful than Khomaini. He had been, since the 1950s, one of the leading ideologists of the religious opposition to the Shah. He entered personally into political combat, and was jailed or kept in internal exile for many years. Born in 1910 in the valley of Taleqan, Mahmud Taleqani pursued theological studies at Qom. He began to teach in 1938 at the Sepahsalar theological school in Tehran, and was jailed for six months in 1939 for his opposition to the religious policies of Reza Shah. He struggled for Mosaddeq together with Mehdi Bazargan and Yadollah Sahabi. After the coup d'état of 1953 he was arrested for having hidden at his home Navvab Safavi, the leader of the Feda'iyan-e Islam. He was imprisoned several times in the 1960s, notably for having demanded the application of the constitution and for having struggled along with Bazargan and Sahabi in the Freedom Movement of Iran. In 1971 he was exiled to the Southeast. In mid–1977 he was arrested for having supported the leftist Muslim guerillas, the Mojahedin, and was only freed by popular pressure at the beginning of November 1978.

Taleqani played a prominent role in the 1978–79 Revolution, serving as a link between lay groups like the National Front and religious ones. He served similarly in several crises of the new regime, and led, by designation of Ayatollah Khomaini, the Friday prayers on the campus of Tehran University that began in Ramazan, 1979. Quite isolated among the ulama, he was nonetheless the most popular of them, winning by far the highest number of votes in the 1979 elections to the constituent assembly. Years of strain contributed to his ill health and he died of a heart attack on September 10, 1979.

Ayatollah Taleqani appeared as one of the most liberal and progressive among the Iranian ulama; Sunni minorities approached him with their requests, as did also leftist groups, as they knew that Taleqani would welcome them and remember their common struggles against

the shah and SAVAK. Possibly his long stays in jail with the nonreligious opposition helped him understand them. In the last months of his life, until one final statement, he ceased his former public statements differing from Khomaini's policies.[36]

Among the works of Taleqani were commentaries on the Quran and the *Nahj al-Balagha* (a collection of sayings, sermons, and letters of Ali). Taleqani presents his doctrine in a plain style, within the limits of traditional doctrines.[37] His more original work treats socioeconomic problems. In 1955 he edited, with introduction and notes, a 1909 political treatise by Ayatollah Na'ini. In his introduction, taking up Na'ini's arguments, Taleqani says religion has always been a threat to dictators who, concentrating all power, make idols of themselves. Divine unity, *tauhid,* in struggling against this idolatry, liberates men from slavery and submits them only to God, who is absolute truth, justice, and wisdom. Government of men belongs (1) to god; (2) to divine law; (3) to the Prophets and Imans, whose thought and spiritual force are entirely at the service of divine law and who claim no monarchical title; and (4) to the just ulama and believers. Men's efforts to govern themselves like the Constitutional Revolution, democracy, and socialism, can be steps toward tauhid if people see that the aim is beyond them. People must continue the effort to better the regime and fight against dictatorship, in the sense of Na'ini's book.[38]

In his *Islam and Property, in Comparison to the Economic Systems of the West,* Taleqani developed his capacity for analysis. This is a response to contemporary problems presented in an historical context.[39] Taleqani discusses successively:

1. The evolution of property since the origins of humanity; the division of labor, exchange, money, laws, and the ideal community; the first economic theories, and the industrial revolution.

2. The appearance of workers' power: here he examines Marxism, class struggle, extreme forms of capitalism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and classless society. He criticizes Marxism as naive, for thinking inequalities can be suppressed by giving special privileges to workers' rule and by suppressing metaphysics. He explains such excesses in the context of struggles against capitalism.

3. The economy in the light of faith: Eschatology gives Islamic doctrine a transhistoric view of the economy; the legislator must both take account of spiritual aims and detach himself from his class condi-

tioning. Human laws ('urf) are fragmentary, limited by history, and subject to change. They are easily diverted by a tyrannic power; are influenced by passions; and must be applied by coercion. Only Islam is the perfect legislator—it encourages reason to follow the path of God instead of misleading it; frees man from the slavery of human customs; teaches all to distinguish good from evil; and makes of a man controlled by passions a controller of himself. Because of these qualities, Islamic law (*fiqh*) is not accessible to all; only mujtahids can decide its application.

4. The economic bases of Islam and the roots of its precepts: God is the absolute owner of the goods confided to us; this is opposed to capitalism, for which property is absolutely free; and to socialism, which suppresses individual property. These two excesses permit the enslavement of man. The author applies this principle to analyzing the system of landownership and vaqf; in Islam, before Westerners came, feudalism (*tuyuldari*) never implanted itself durably. In Islam landownership is never absolute, and land reverts to the one who puts it under cultivation.

5. Money and the economic problems tied to it: Interest (*riba*) has created capitalism. Islam forbids hoarding but encourages commerce, which brings the distribution of riches. Utilizing a socialist slogan, Taleqani declares: One should take from everyone according to his abilities, and give to him according to his needs.

6. The specific features of the Islamic economy: Taleqani insists on the freedom of economic activity, of the production and distribution of goods. Natural resources belong to those who render them productive. But there are limits, whose control is assured by the state (especially mineral resources).

7. Class differences, privileges, and their origin: Class privileges are not necessarily tied to money: for example, in the military classes. Islam, while recognizing differences among men, refuses the privileges engendered by monarchical regimes. Taleqani gives a history and criticism of the French Declaration of the Rights of Man, which is hypocritically advocated by the very people who constantly violate it. Inviolability of the principle of property opens the door to all the abuses of capitalism.

Notable is the passage where Taleqani, aware of the harm a priestly class can do in some societies, affirms that no such thing exists in Islam,

where the ulama have no privileges and must, as in the early days, sit at the same level as others in assemblies. However, as noted, only mujtahids can interpret Muslim law correctly. A mujtahid is recognized by his justice and his faculty of interpreting, but he, even more than others, is subject to the same law.[40] Taleqani was one of several thinkers who had written in favor of decentralizing the function of marja'-e taqlid and proposed the creation of a doctrinal council that would convene the most esteemed ulama of the different regions.[41]

Taleqani remained limited by his theological formation; his contact with the West and modern ideological systems was indirect, and he does not deal with certain important questions concerning the economy: taxes, nationalizations, the banking system, and so forth. However, his appeal to Islamic morality has progressive aspects and includes an appreciation of social problems. This helps explain his popularity among leftist Muslim groups, like the Mojahedin-e Khalq.

Other ayatollahs have expressed, in books and in the press, diverse positions on democracy and political problems, and there is a large and powerful conservative group whose writings repel any progressive or reformist tendencies and combat both communism and laicism.

Lay Shi'i Politico-Religious Thinkers

The most original Islamic thinkers are those who, not having had the training of traditional ulama, have had educational contact with the West, which allows them to voice clearly, and with a new vocabulary, a critique of what they oppose, and to define a new Islamic ideology. Here are discussed three of them: Mehdi Bazargan, Ali Shariati, and Abolhasan Bani Sadr.

Bazargan addresses chiefly middle classes, merchants, and lower civil servants, while Shariati and Bani Sadr became the ideologues of young revolutionary intellectuals. All three say Islam is not against progress and that it has an answer to materialist ideologies in its positive approach to modern science and technology—points that traditional theologians cannot demonstrate.

Mehdi Bazargan was one of the most important politico-religious leaders of the revolution. From the 1950s to the revolution he presented a modern image of Islam. He criticized traditionalists immersed in a theoretical theology focused on minor points of faith. He also utilized his reputation as an engineer and professor to show that Islam was in

accord with scientific and technical progress. Islam, he said, is a pragmatic doctrine, adapted to the modern world. Bazargan tried to answer secular ideologies on their own ground.[42]

Born in 1905 into a family of Tabriz bazaar merchants, Bazargan completed his education at the Ecole Centrale in Paris.[43] Returning to Iran in 1936, he worked at the National Bank, and then taught thermodynamics at Tehran University. After World War II he became a close collaborator of Mosaddeq, who named him in 1951 to head the oil-nationalization committee. After the fall of Mosaddeq, Bazargan joined the secret resistance movement. In 1961 with Taleqani and Yadollah Sahabi he founded the Freedom Movement of Iran, which was later proscribed and brought all three prison terms. Prison did not silence Bazargan. An indefatigable speaker, he also wrote treatises presenting Islam in modern form, with a new vocabulary and examples taken from contemporary culture and technology.

A frequent theme in Bazargan's writings is a refusal to separate the spiritual and the temporal. This separation, a feature of Western Christian culture, is found in decadent Muslim society, whose theologians and philosophers turn aside from this world, which they leave to base men, while they deal only in words.[44] For Bazargan there is no frontier between religion and politics. Religion must control and inspire politics, and not the contrary. He critizes the shah's trinity of "God-Shah-Country," in which "Shah" occupied the central place.[45] Religion must set the aims and principles of politics; the means are a human problem.

Bazargan's attitude toward the West is mixed admiration and disgust. He sees the West as the example of technical and scientific civilization, and also of social and political principles in which faith does not enter, such as democracy, the rights of man, and humanism. Europeans do not despise religion, unlike the Westernized Iranian bourgeoisie. But Bazargan severely criticizes Christianity as unable to give believers directives for practical, social, and political life. Westerners have to turn for guidance to philosophic-political doctrines made into idols, like socialism, Marxism, and so on, which Islam does not need, as it is a complete religion.[46]

In politics, Bazargan is more concerned by the problem of justice than by concrete social struggles. In a small book on labor, one looks

in vain for references to workers' problems or social legislation.[47] Bazargan's influence and his popularity among the Muslim petty bourgeoisie are due to his courageous political activity with Mosaddeq and his opposition to the shah. A prudent reformer, he sees Islam as in accord with democracy, reason, and science.[48] If he criticizes Islam's fossilized and often compromised theologians, he does not question Shi'ism. To meet injustices and tyranny while avoiding social conflict and communism, he asked the Shi'i ulama to take more interest in temporal affairs, and found welfare, cultural, economic, and political institutions to lessen social inequalities. If this had been done, he said in 1962, a truly egalitarian Islamic government could exist "without recourse to revolution or bloodshed."[49] Thus, the man who became the Islamic Republic's first prime minister in February 1979 is a modern and liberal Muslim, but seems to underestimate the immense social problems which agitate Iran.

Ali Shariati did the most to prepare Iranian youth for revolutionary upheaval. Events made this Muslim sociologist, shortly after his 1977 death, the ideologist of the revolt. In the opposition demonstrations, his portrait was carried beside that of Ayatollah Khomaini.

Ali Shariati was born in 1933 in Mazinan, a village near the desert, in Khorasan in northeast Iran. His father, Mohammad Taqi Shariati, is a well-known preacher. Shortly after Ali's birth, his family moved to Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan and center of Iranian Shi'i pilgrimage; there he received his secondary education. At seventeen he entered normal school and two years later became a teacher. He began to write and translate works on Shi'ism and became involved in the pro-Mosaddeq opposition.

At twenty-three he entered the Faculty of Letters at Mashhad. He wrote articles published by local journals. He also married a student companion and served his first prison term. In 1959, he received a bachelor's degree, and, as one of the top students, had the right to a scholarship abroad. He was not allowed to leave for a year, and then went to Paris, where he was a sympathizer of the Algerian liberation movement. He studied religious history and sociology, although his thesis, contrary to what is often said, was not in these fields but in Persian philology. Among those whose influence he notes were Louis Massignon, for whom he had a deep admiration and with whom he

studied Fatima, daughter of Mohammad and wife of Ali; Frantz Fanon, whose *Wretched of the Earth* he translated; and Jean-Paul Sartre. In 1964 he returned to Iran with a doctorate. At the frontier he was arrested and held for several months.[50]

In 1965 he first taught in a large Khorasan village, then in a Mashhad high school. He soon became assistant at the University of Mashhad, where the content and success of his courses led to his dismissal. He then went to Tehran where his reputation as a lecturer spread quickly. He was frequently invited to talk, especially at the Hosainiyeh Ershad, a progressive Muslim institution created in 1969. His lectures were recorded and diffused by mimeograph. Late in 1973 the Hosainiyeh Ershad was closed by the regime. Shariati hid, but his father was imprisoned as a hostage. After a few months, Shariati gave himself up and was held for eighteen more months in solitary confinement. Upon release he returned to Mazinan under virtual house arrest. In the spring of 1977 he decided to leave Iran, which was made possible by the relative liberalization of the regime. However, the authorities at the last minute refused his wife authorization to join him, and when he came to the airport in London he found only two of his three daughters. He died shortly afterward on June 19, 1977.

There is as yet no complete bibliography of Shariati, and as many of his works were short mimeographed lectures, or transcriptions from cassettes, while others appeared under pseudonyms or in obscure reviews, it is hard to establish one. Since 1977 these short texts have been reproduced, sometimes brought together and sold openly.[51] Shariati often added notes to his texts, but the oral style remains evident except in a few rare works like the autobiography *Desert* (*Kavir*), composed in lovely poetic language. The titles of his lectures suggest his major themes: "Ali, the Superman of History," "Man, Islam, and the Doctrines of the West," "Eqbal, Architect of the Renewal of Islamic Thought," "Community (*umma*) and Imamate," "The Sura *Rum*: A Message to Responsible Intellectuals," "Shi'ism, the Perfect Party," and so on. His works are being reedited and regrouped by the revived Hosainiyeh Ershad.

The style and the context of Shariati's lectures did not encourage literary or scientifically argued works. He was above all a great orator who profited from the short time he knew he had to hammer into the

conscience of his audience certain key ideas. Their arrangement was less important than the need to say as much as possible without losing his audience's attention.

Shariati wished to be a politico-religious thinker in the context of the Third World liberation struggles. He felt acutely the problems of colonialism and neocolonialism and attacked especially cultural colonization, which alienates people from their roots. Iran is especially exposed to this danger: Al-e Ahmad had denounced fifteen years before this Iranian malady in his *Westoxication*, long forbidden by the censor. Shariati believed that the undermining of national culture had politico-economic consequences. Western ideologies paralyzed the indigenous reactions of Muslim peoples. Neither capitalist liberalism, which causes and profits from this illness, nor Marxist or socialist doctrines, which have lost their dynamism and envisage an antihumanist and antireligious levelling, can provide a way out. Shariati saw in Islamic humanism the sole ideology that could save Iran and all oppressed peoples. Islam should be followed, not in the degraded form found in contemporary Muslim societies, but in the form of Mohammad's ideal society, which the Umayyads had plunged into decadence and tyranny.

Faith gives the individual his determination to struggle and the group its cement. For Shariati atheistic societies are sad and unattractive, as material satisfactions are deceptive. A religious and somewhat mystic spirit, Shariati refers constantly to the early Shi'i heroes, to whom he devoted many lectures: Ali, Hosain, Abu Zarr Ghefari, Horr, and others. He sees two Shi'i principles as the motors of liberation: (1) The imamate, a systematization of "leadership," the spiritual and political domination of a leader over a people who accept him willingly. The community (*umma*; from the same Arabic root as "imam") is not, as in Christianity, united by the mystic presence (of Christ) but is united by its movement, around its leader. (2) Justice, which has been elevated by Shi'ism to the rank of a theological principle: God must be just, and the human community cannot accept a tyrannical law that killed the imams and plunged Islam into decadence.

In a group of lectures gathered in one volume, Shariati presented a strong distinction between "Alid Shi'ism" (from Ali, the first Imam) and "Safavid Shi'ism." Alid Shi'ism represents original Islam and is a

movement of progress and revolution, with no division between intellectuals and the people—Islam in its progressive and dynamic phase. The Safavids, in making Shi'ism the state religion, degraded it into an institution, making it a means of political enslavement and turning it from its original aim—the search for justice and sacred duties. "Safavid Shi'ism" opposed Iranians to Ottomans; it mixed ethnocentrism and supernationalism with Shi'ism. Aberrant forms of worship were, says Shariati, borrowed from Christianity in Safavid times, like the theatrical plays on the martyrdom of Hosain (ta'ziyeh), which he says are copied from Christian "mysteries."

Shariati's Safavid Shi'ism is also Pahlavi Shi'ism, and today's "Safavid" ulama are those who play games of power. They renounce their role as awakeners, content themselves with futile debates, and make of Shi'ism a religion of the vanquished (the Moharram mournings), turning believers toward exterior forms and not toward a movement. They claim that in the absence of the Twelfth Imam any government is acceptable, thus becoming accomplices of Islam's atrophy and the separation of religion and power.

At the end of the book Shariati gives a table between the two Shi'isms, based on their main concepts, which we summarize:[52]

Alid Shi'ism	Safavid Shi'ism
vesayat	
The Prophet's recommendation, by divine order, to designate his family the most capable and meritorious on the basis of knowledge and purity.	The principle of a government, at first designated, then hereditary, perpetuated on the basis of race and kinship.
imamate	
Pure, honest, revolutionary conduct of the people and the correct foundation of society in terms of conscience, the expansion and independence of people's judgment. The coming of "superior men" incarnating	Belief in twelve pure, saintly, extraordinary names; supermen like angels; little gods next to the great God; the only recourse for intercession and obtaining grace.

the religious ideal to be taken as models.

'esmat

Belief in the purity of those spiritually and socially responsible. Negation of government by traitors, and dishonest clerics attached to the caliphate.

An exceptional quality of hidden beings not of the earthly human species, who cannot be in error; only the "Sinless Fourteen" (Mohammad, Fatima, and the twelve imams) had it. This belief makes infamous government natural, accepts dishonest theologians as they are not among the Sinless Fourteen.

velayat

Offering one's friendship to Ali and following his path, in his manner, under his guidance.

Love of Ali alone; feeling oneself totally irresponsible.

taqlid

A logical, scientific, natural, and necessary relationship between nonspecialists and specialist theologians, for practical and juridical problems that demand specialization.

Blind obedience to the ulama, from whom one accepts absolutely, without reserve or logic, belief and orders. Quasi-adoration of the ulama.

'adl

God is just; the world is based on justice and consequently society must also be based on it.

A problem concerning the attributes of God and the afterlife (Last Judgment). In this world justice is to be left to Shah Abbas (to monarchies) according to the principle "render to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's."

ghaibat

Responsibility of men to decide their destiny, faith, and spiritual and social life, taking guidance from conscientious, responsible, pure men representing the leadership of the Imam.	Total irresponsibility; the uselessness of all action under the pretext of the Imam's absence—he is the only model to whom one is responsible.

entezar

Spiritual, moral, and doctrinal preparation for reform, revolution, and change. Firm belief in the fall of tyranny, the victory of justice, and the advent of the exploited classes to world revolution.	Spiritual, moral, and doctrinal submission to the present situation; justification of corruption, and seeing the divine decree in everything. Negation of responsibility, fear of reforms, and condemnation in advance of all movements.

By systematizing the concept of Alid Shi'ism, Shariati attained a double result; he detached himself from the petrified official Islam rejected by idealistic youth, and he brought a new and combative meaning to Shi'i concepts. Even prayer in this renovated Islam took on a political meaning, tied to action. This insurrectional meaning of common prayer was particularly developed in the 1978–79 Revolution. Refusing the fanaticism of Safavid Shi'ism, Shariati advocated an accord between Shi'is and Sunnis, as before the Umayyad schism.

Shariati also devoted several lectures to the role of women, published as *Fatima is Fatima*. He criticized the Western model, seen as fabricating women-objects and utilizing sexuality without marital ties for commercial ends. The West, in claiming to "liberate" women in its colonies, is really only trying to affirm its power by breaking up the unity of the Muslim family. Shariati favors women's participation in public life and severely attacks traditional principles of women's seclusion. But, he says, liberation and egalitarianism are words that risk going against nature. Westernization, which made these words a

slogan, offers only an individualism in which women must choose between sacrificing their femininity in the hard professional struggle, or overdeveloping femininity in useless roles. The decadence of Muslim society and its contempt for women demand a reevaluation of woman's role, a search for a new model. Shariati uses the example of Fatima, daughter of Mohammad and wife of Ali, who shared her father's trials, and also those of Ali and of her sons, Imams Hasan and Hosain. She was the center of a family of fighters. She took on responsibilities and became socially engaged, equally to men but in a different way.[53] The "separate but equal" doctrine of Shariati regarding women has become popular with many Muslims.

The really political thought of Shariati is not very developed in published texts, even though everything leads to it. His stress on the community following the imamate suggests that Shariati, while making implacable criticisms of totalitarianism, dreamed of an Islamic totalitarianism, the only one he saw as respecting completely the individual, not enslaving him to anyone but God, and not reducing his autonomy to that of an economic producer. Islam is, besides, he says, the only basis for an ideology of permanent progress and revolution —halting any attempt at a return to tyrannical powers and any degradation of political relationships.

Shariati sees Western democracy as rotten, because the power of money and not electors dominates politics. It is also rotten in principle, as universal suffrage, while claiming to create equality, in fact ensures the crushing of the progressive minority by the conservative majority. In "The Community and the Imamate" he defines the "directed" democracy he advocates:

> It is the government of a group which, on the basis of a revolutionary progressive program that aims at changing individuals —their view of the world, their language, their social relations, and their level of living—and also at changing social forms in order to perfect them, has, with the above aims, an ideology, a well-defined doctrine, and a precise plan. Its aim is not that everyone by his vote or his acquiescence should be its partisan, but it is to make a society reach the level where, on the basis of this

> doctrine, it begins to move toward this most elevated goal and to realize its revolutionary objectives. If there are people who do not believe in this path, and whose conduct leads to a stagnation or corruption of society, and if there are some who abuse with their own power, with their own money, this liberty, and if there are social formations and traditions, which keep men in this stagnation, we must suppress these traditions, condemn these ways of thinking, and save society from its own fossilized molds, by any means possible.[54]

The immense appeal that Shariati had for students and young Muslims is partly to be explained by the originality of his position. Coming from a modest religious background he acquired, through his studies in France, knowledge of modern ideologies, including liberalism, capitalism, Marxism, and existentialism, without ceasing to be a believer. Speaking a language accessible to Iranians who had only recently come to modern studies and who wished to understand, in order to refute, the ideologies of Western aggressors, he became celebrated by meeting their needs. He became famous at the time when Iran experienced a great expansion in higher education and when new social groups, without ideological preparation, were confronted by new cultural problems—accelerated urbanization, Westernization, industrialization, spectacular speculation and corruption, and many other phenomena tied to Iran's dependence on the West. Demographic growth affected most the less Westernized, poorer classes, who were the most religious. His ties to Islam made Shariati, who was well equipped to respond to other ideologies, the rampart against the undermining of traditional values. Islam, the religion of the Algerian National Liberation Front, of the Palestinians, was the religion of anti-imperialist combat. Feeling stifled by the West, Iranians rediscovered an identity.

Iran's new intellectuals had earlier seen Islam as something disconnected from the modern world's needs. Islam had even a negative role, turning attention to the hereafter, underpinning the regime by its silence, and presenting the defeatist side of religious combat, as it encouraged Muslims to cry for poor Hosain, who died miserably. Young Iranian Muslim intellectuals found in Shariati a revolutionary

Iranian Shi'i response. No more the crying Hosain of the ta'ziyeh, but Hosain fighting and dying for a just cause.

Although Shariati's books were forbidden they circulated secretly, especially among Iranian students abroad. Among religious traditionalists a strong opposition to Shariati and the Hosainiyeh Ershad developed. The theologians' prestige was being defied by someone who had not studied theology who accused those who had of distorting religion for their own profit and contested the good faith of religious authorities' resistance to the monarchy. Their struggles were backward looking and defended their corporate interests and former privileges, whereas Shariati's struggle was radically revolutionary. Of the ulama's critiques of Shariati none, to our knowledge, was more than a polemic, usually with unfounded accusations (being an agent of Sunnism, of Wahhabism, or of Communism), with nothing constructive. Among the accusations of the great mujtahids against Shariati was that he wished to have an Islam without ulama and hence, by dividing Muslims on this point, to play the game of the anti-Muslim regime. Ayatollah Khomaini has attacked the Mojahedin-e Khalq, heavily inspired by Shariati, on similar grounds, saying that one cannot be a Muslim if one does not recognize the power of the ulama.[55]

From the summer of 1977 on, however, Shariati's books were sold everywhere, by the hundreds of thousands. In front of Tehran University, bookstores are full of them, and sidewalk vendors have made a living by selling practically nothing else. The same is true in quarters near the Tehran bazaar, of provincial towns (even those without bookstores), and in the religious towns of Qom and Mashhad. Shortly after his death Shariati became a mythical figure of militant Islam. In the third volume of posthumous homages published in 1978 are found the names of many celebrated oppositionist intellectuals.[56]

It is too soon to predict what will be Shariati's lasting influence. Here we will not try to judge his still incomplete publications, nor to evaluate a person whose courage and spiritual qualities demand respect. We will limit ourselves to a few remarks: Despite the importance Shariati gave in his lectures to a critique of Western society and his insistence on saving a humanism threatened by decadent Christianity and materialism (both capitalist and Communist), his knowledge of the West was schematic. Understandably, he did not expand before his

audience his portrait of the Christian mystic Massignon, or expatiate on the democratic ideals of many Western countries, but some of his polemics indicate that Shariati was not interested enough in the systems he combatted to study them closely.

Shariati also neglects the history of Iran; he admits that in his studies he disliked history, perhaps because of the use made of it. He refers very little to it; what interests him is an ideal original Islam, not its historic compromises. Hence, his analysis of the relations of Shi'ism with the government since Safavid times lacks references to accessible texts and documents. The Iranian ulama's major role in the Constitutional Revolution of 1905–11 is not discussed, except to criticize the use of *mashrutiyat* for "constitution." We have found just one page on the role the ulama should have in politics:

> But at the time of the (Imam's) Occulation, as there was no prophet and the Imam was absent, the mission of the prophets and imams fell upon the people themselves, and it is the people themselves who should learn Islam, put in practice the fundamental ideas of Islam, form Islamic society, and guide the people. Muslims must defend Islam, its power and unity, against Jews, Christians, and other enemies, carry on holy war, make the effort of interpretation [ijtihad], and oblige one group among them to specialize in the theoretical knowledge of Islam, the deducing of Islamic laws, and the resolution of the problems of society and the events of the time. They should confide to this group social and ideological leadership as well as responsibility for people's destiny. This group can decide the best, most honorable, most conscientious, most enlightened, and purest person for their guidance. And they can elect from among themselves someone in place of the Imam—which is the place of the Prophet of Islam! And they would invest him. In the execution of his heavy responsibilities—which are those of the Imamate—the people feel a permanent and direct responsibility and build the government of wisdom, of engaged wisdom, as Plato wished. . . . That is to say that the one who was chosen by God in the period before the Occultation (i.e., the Prophet and the Imams), during the Occultation is chosen by the people.[57]

Shariati thus takes the traditional theory of ijtihad, mixing it with democratic principles, but makes no historical or theological analysis, so that it is hard to know his precise position. This lack of precision does not keep young Iranian intellectuals and others from rallying to Shariati. All find in his energetic thought an Iranian response to their problems as Iranian intellectuals. Shariati helps them to set off to conquer the modern world without renouncing their Muslim identity.

Abolhasan Bani Sadr is one of the more original political ideologists and theoreticians of the Iranian Islamic movement. After having been close to Ayatollah Khomaini at Neauphle-le-Château, he became a rising figure in the new regime, and in November 1979 became acting foreign minister. In January 1980 he was elected first president of the Islamic Republic. His works are less popular than those of Shariati; they are also clearer. He analyzes problems and uses economic arguments.

Born in 1933–34 into a family of Ayatollahs originating in Hamadan, Bani Sadr studied at the university first theology and then sociology. In this period he met the French Marxist sociologist Paul Vieille, whose collaborator he became. Bani Sadr was already a known opponent of the shah's regime and participated in meetings organized by the National Front and by political groups at Tehran University, when he was forced into exile to France, where he pursued studies in economics and sociology. Much influenced by the 1968 student movement, he became a leader of students abroad opposed to the shah's regime. From 1972 he was in direct contact with Ayatollah Khomaini in Najaf.

In Bani Sadr's works may be distinguished economic articles (some in French) from more doctrinal texts. Both are directed to struggle: they denounce economic policies seen as delivering Iran to the control of imperialism, and also construct an ideology to mobilize Iran's vital forces. Several texts are instruments of political struggle: *Iran's Situation and the Role of Modarres* begins a study of contemporary history stressing the role of religion in the struggle against the Pahlavis. *The Hypocrites from Our Viewpoint* unites texts about the Mojahedin-e Khalq and the strategy of revolutionary combat after the 1975 split between Marxists and Muslims in the Mojahedin. Bani Sadr affirmed his attachment to Ayatollah Khomaini and refuted attacks made against

Mehdi Bazargan based on truncated and misleading citations. *The Cult of Personality* is a treatise on ethics with a Quranic base, a critique of man's ambition and desire for power which, especially in economics and politics, are the main causes of oppression.[58]

Bani Sadr made himself a theorist of Islamic government in three other books: *The Economics of Unity (Tauhid)* is an attempt to construct a political theory dominated by the Quranic principle, "There is no god but God"; and hence there must not be economic domination of man by man. Islam returns to the principle that only God has the absolute right to property, a right delegated by the Prophet and the Imams to those in the community who deserve it, thanks to their labor. Before being a relationship between man and man, labor is a relationship of man to God.[59]

In a 1971–72 work, republished as *Manifesto of the Islamic Republic*, Bani Sadr sketches an Islamic political anthropology. The first part is a critique of the Pahlavi regime for putting Iran under the political, military, and economic domination of the West, and hence causing Iranians to lose identity and creativity and become consumers. The second part proposes solutions. In foreign policy one must ensure Iran's independence and reaffirm Mosaddeq's "principle of negative equilibrium." In domestic policy there must be true Islamic government, reviving the real structures of power, like mosques; suppressing harmful conflict between state and religion; and building a state without constraints. In economics Bani Sadr wishes to bring internal production and consumption back into balance. He thinks ending dependence on imperialists will bring a better distribution of wealth, greater justice, an end to the flight of intellectuals, and reduction in bureaucracy. Finally, the socioeconomic causes of alienation having ended, Iranians will no longer be in a passive dependent relation to world centers of decision. There will no longer be a schism between state and people, and a new Islamic society can be created. "Everyone is responsible for all; everyone is imam and guide of all"; such is the unity (tauhid) of society that religion has as its message.[60]

Finally, *The Fundamental Principles of Islamic Government* is a theoretical work concerning tomorrow's society, in the style of the great European nineteenth-century ideologues. The method used by the

author is to analyze his subject according to categories identical to the five principles of Shi'ism. The first, divine unity, is a dynamic unification and a negation of polytheist trends (no one can be God's representative, or claim any participation in God's unity). This fundamental principle is the foundation of the other four. Because of this unity, one may condemn all human formations that oppress and divide people. "The principle of unity involves the negation of every sort of economic, political, ideological, or other bastion in which power can be concentrated."[61] The believer must try to achieve unity everywhere so that society will be in the image of the community desired by God. Devotions are a training to fight for this ideal: common prayer, fasting, pilgrimage (a sort of annual congress), and holy war (against evil impulses within) prepare one to combat oppression by making the everyday a constant rejection of all that is not God.

Thus, one must not adore any leader, neither Stalin, nor Hitler, nor de Gaulle, nor Mosaddeq, nor Khomaini, as the cult of men leads to enslavement and totalitarianism. With Bani Sadr this principle goes very far, as all power coming from men is condemned, even if it tries to justify itself by religion. Bani Sadr reacts against the idea of God as an arbitrary and absolute will—an idea that theology developed in the decadent period of the caliphate, and which allowed the imposition of illegitimate and irreligious governmental authority. All false human authorities, who divide men, must be overthrown. Society must not be divided into classes, into dominant and dominated; and excessive property is a negation of God. Economic resources must be controlled so they do not lead to concentrations of power, depriving most people of their capacity to produce. Slavery, meaning massive workers' migrations from poor to rich countries, must be abolished. In Islamic government, only work justifies ownership of the product of labor, which excludes capitalism. The economy belongs to everyone, not to one class. Luxury must be eliminated, as it means poverty for the majority.

To Marxists, who say that religion obstructs class consciousness by transforming into prayer the revolt of the exploited, Bani Sadr says that differences between men come from God and should not be denied. They can be kept from engendering classes by putting special talents at

the service of society. Bani Sadr criticizes ideologies which, after having brought people to power, are used as instruments of domination. Any belief used for domination is an opiate of the people:

> But would not Islam become an opiate if one made of it an instrument of the system? Since Islam is a religion that rests on universal laws and one nature, and which envisages liberation from the traps of these perpetual realities, it is not possible for it to become the opiate of the masses, unless one makes of it a scourge, as the present regime (1975) has institutionalized it and made it a scourge.
>
> Hence, in an Islamic government, belief must not be an instrument of government, but the government must be an instrument of Islamic belief. And this necessitates guarantees that it be the belief that governs.[62]

Islam was established on the basis of universal laws and human nature. The end does not justify the means.

The goal of Islamic government, to Bani Sadr, is not only to stop a person or group from monopolizing power; it is to suppress centralized power and the state as a form of oppression. Nationalism is a pretext to divide and oppress peoples; offensive armies should be abolished. Only a defensive army should be created, and should be organically based in society. Holy war is in reality a permanent revolution, in which there is no "model for imitation" (marja'-e taqlid); everyone must discover himself the cause for which he is fighting.

Two tendencies seem to dominate the writings of Bani Sadr; on the one hand a certain anarchist tendency, which pushes him toward rejecting any domination of man by man under any pretext, and toward rendering possible the installation of what he calls "organized spontaneity;" on the other hand a tendency to make (in his Persian more than his French writings) all analyses, even in the social or economic domain, enter the traditional theological categories of Shi'ism. These two features give Bani Sadr's thought a contradictory quality, but it is also thanks to these tendencies that he attracts numerous partisans, who are trying to reconcile a desire for liberty with the rigors of Islamic law.

Conclusion

Critical analyses of recent Shi'i political thought have been made elsewhere, and here only a few general remarks will be offered.[63] First, the above survey of Iranian political thought since the late nineteenth century suggests the frequent reappearance of certain similar themes, often found in both religious and secular thinkers. One of the most important is anti-imperialism, accompanied by a determination to free Iran from Western economic and cultural dominance. This took a reformed Islamic form with Sayyed Jamal ad-Din, a more secular form with Mosadeq and his main followers, and again a religious form in recent years. The Islamic nature of recent reactions even by many nonclerical leaders may in part be explained by the association of Western dominance with Western "cultural colonization," and of Pahlavi rule with secularism. Islam appeared, to those who rejected both liberalism and Marxism, as the natural ideological base from which to fight the West and the Pahlavis, especially as Islam was believed by, and familiar to, the great mass of Iranians. As with modernist and political adaptations of religion elsewhere, this utilization of Islam has involved new interpretations of old texts and practices, interpretations sometimes attacked by the more traditional and orthodox. It has also involved indiscriminate attacks on the West as a monolithic evil.

A more serious difficulty is that most modern Shi'i political thinkers have assumed that solutions to Iran's problems are essentially simple. They have tended to think that freeing Iran from foreign control and influence and setting up new and fairly simple political and economic institutions, for which they find an Islamic base, will solve Iran's problems, but this has not turned out to be the case. In essence, the new Islamic thought became a potent weapon in making a revolution, but had far less success in building up new institutions. The various books and pamphlets on Islamic politics and economics written in the past twenty years do not, even had they been followed in detail, provide an adequate basis for setting up a polity that could meet the widely recognized needs for social justice, mass participation in political and economic life, rights for minorities and women, a truly functioning economy, and so forth.

Intolerance by some leaders of ideas labeled "un-Islamic" or "counterrevolutionary" has narrowed the range of permissible discourse, even though this, as of 1980, remains broader than it was under the Pahlavis. Voices of the secularist left, including the Tudeh and the Feda'iyan-e Khalq as well as smaller leftist groups, of the left-Islamic Mojahedin-e Khalq, and of liberal secularists may still be heard, and to a degree published, in Iran today, and there are signs of widespread hostility toward the mollas and their policies. It may be that the dominance of thought couched in Islamic terms is not as durable a phenomenon as it now appears, and that Iran's long traditions of religious dissidence and skepticism, rationalist philosophy, and even secularism and anticlericalism will once again come to the fore. Whichever tradition is dominant in the foreseeable future, it is to be hoped that Iranians have learned that the "two cultures" split, which separates the religious from the secular and the masses from the elite, does not benefit Iran, and that each of the two culture groups may strive to understand, learn from, and see the needs and contributions of the other.