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The Society

Iran

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SURVEY

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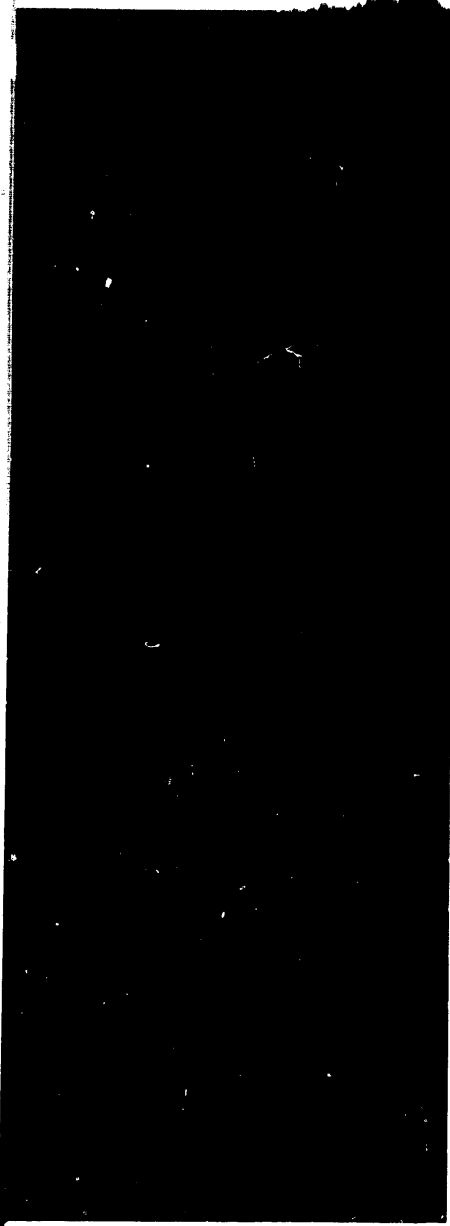
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Iran

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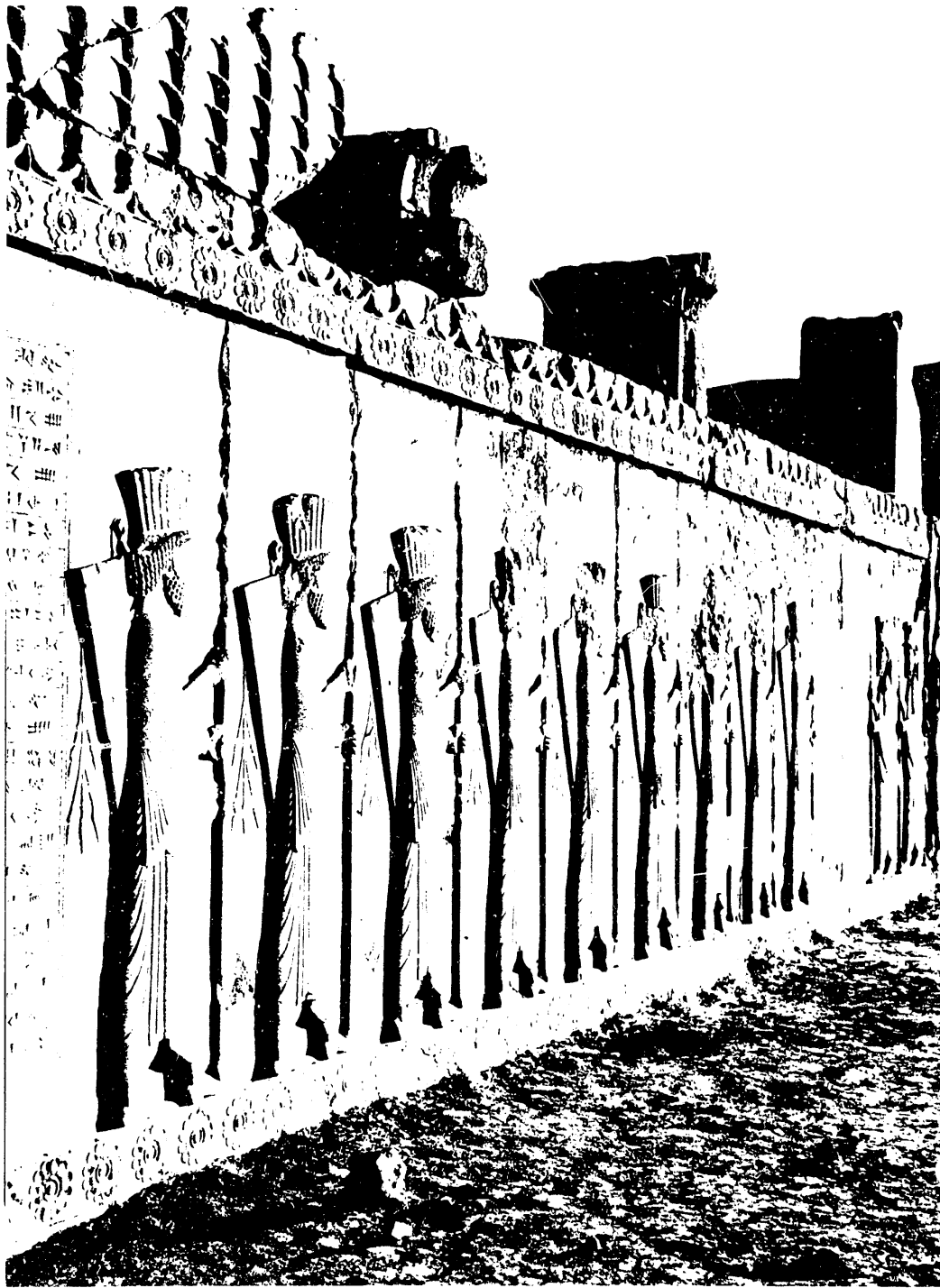
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The Society

A. Introduction (C)



In 1971 Iran,¹ once a great empire, entered its 26th century of existence as a nation of disparity—between the many poor and the few rich, the many illiterate and the few erudite, between traditional and modern, rural and urban, religious and secular, democratic and autocratic. The peasants, among whom vast holdings of land had already been distributed, needed the technology to till the land successfully; illiterates, who had come into the cities from the rural areas in increasing numbers, needed training to take their

¹The country was known as Persia until 1935 when "Iran" was adopted as the official name.

places in industry, heretofore largely run by foreigners; health and educational facilities had yet to be insured for all Iranians, and especially, the living standards of all but the few wealthy must be raised to an adequate level.

In 1963 the Shah began his White Revolution, designed to achieve these goals. By early 1973, despite the fact that Iran is making visible progress toward them, much remains to be done, and a rising birth rate threatens to absorb a part of the economic gain that has been achieved. Large numbers of Iranians are still illiterate. Opposition to change persists among many segments of the society, particularly the conservative Muslim religious leaders. And although linked by religion, by pride in Persian history, and by loyalty to the Shah, the population is still fragmented, composed of various ethnic groups speaking various dialects and languages. Persian is the official national language, and is taught to children in all schools, but statistics show that only a little over half of Iranian citizens speak the language as a native tongue. The agrarian reform program is facilitating the integration of the minorities and the tribes into society, but Iran remains a country of individualists, and the average member of the majority group, the Persians, appears to have little sense of "team," community, or nation.

B. Structure and characteristics of the society (C)



Iranian society is characterized by ethnic and linguistic diversity. Around a central core of Persians who speak the Persian language, Farsi, are a number of minority groups of diverse origin and differing languages. Some of these groups form virtually separate enclaves within Iranian society while others are in varying stages of absorption into the Persian majority. The basic cleavage in society, however, is between the rich and the poor. Wealth and power are concentrated in the hands of a few families, most of whom own large tracts of land or engage in commerce and industry. Poverty and illiteracy are pervasive and severe.

On the other hand, Islam is a strong unifying force, only about 2% of the population being non-Muslim. The vast majority of Iranians, moreover, belong to the heterodox Shia branch of Islam. Iran's rich cultural heritage and long historical tradition also serve to perpetuate a sense of national identity. In addition,

the institution of the monarchy is supported among all levels of the population, but the idea of allegiance to Iran as a modern political entity is less understood. A strong sense of individualism pervades the society, and primary loyalties are focused on the family.

Although Iran is a conservative, tradition-bound society based on agriculture, significant social change is taking place, primarily as a result of land reform, industrial development, urbanization, and increased educational opportunities. These changes have weakened the strength of the landlords, improved the lot of many peasant farmers, and expanded the size of the middle class. Accelerated rural to urban migration, however, has increased the numbers of an already large, rootless lower class of unskilled and illiterate workers. Land reform and the decentralization of industry are designed, in part, to stem the flow from country to city.

1. Ethnic and linguistic groups

Almost all of the Iranian people are descendants of invading Indo-Europeans, Turks, Mongols, and Arabs. The largest group, comprising 72% of the population (Figure 1), are the so-called ethnic Iranians whose Indo-European, or Aryan, progenitors are thought to have settled within the boundaries of present-day Iran in the second millennium B.C. The name of the country is derived from the word *arya* meaning noble. Predominant among the ethnic Iranians are the Persians, who make up about 50% of the population and are mostly concentrated in the country's large central plateau.

Smaller groups of ethnic Iranians include the Kurdish, Tur, Bakhtiari, and Baluchi tribes and the Gilani and Mazandaran peoples. Most Kurds inhabit the mountainous area of northwestern Iran, while the remainder reside in the north-central portion of Khuzestan Province. Formerly a nomadic people, the majority are now farmers; a few have migrated to the cities. Tur and Bakhtiari tribespeople live in the Zagros Mountain region, with the Bakhtiari inhabiting an area to the southeast of the Turs. The Bakhtiari are largely seminomadic, the Turs mainly farmers. One of the most backward and impoverished of the ethnic Iranian minorities are the nomadic Baluchi, who dwell in the eastern half of Baluchistan via Sistan Province in the southeast. The Gilani and Mazandaran peoples, residing in Gilan and Mazandaran provinces, respectively, on the coast of

1. Figure 1 omits proper names, are the list of names on the opposite side of the map. Major cities are indicated after the appropriate label on the text.

FIGURE 1. Principal ethnolinguistic groups (U/OU)

ETHNIC GROUP	ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION	DOMINANT RELIGION	LANGUAGE
Iranian			
Persian	50.2	Islam, Shia	Persian
Kurd	5.9	Islam, chiefly Sunni	Kurdish*
Golan	5.6	Islam, Shia	Gilaki
Mazandarani	4.8	<i>de</i>	Mazandarani
Lur and Bakhtiari	4.9	<i>de</i>	Luri and Persian
Baluchi	4.8	Islam, chiefly Sunni	Baluchi
Subtotal	72.2		
Turkic			
Azerbaijani	19.2	Islam, chiefly Shia	Turki
Turkeman	1.7	Islam, chiefly Sunni	<i>De</i>
Qashqai	1.9	Islam, chiefly Shia	<i>De</i>
Subtotal	21.9		
Arab	4.8	Islam, chiefly Sunni	Arabic
Other†	1.1		
Total	100.0		

*Largely Armenians, Assyrians, and Jews.

the Caspian Sea, have been settled farmers and fishermen for centuries. They do not differ markedly from the Persians. Reza Shah, in fact, was a Mazandarani. The Kurds and the Baluchis have retained a strong sense of ethnic identity. The former comprise about one-third of all Kurds in the Middle East, other concentrations inhabiting areas in Iraq, Turkey, and Syria, as well as the Soviet Union. The Baluchis are also part of a larger group, being closely related to the Pushtu-speakers of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The Turkic peoples, who invaded Persia between the 10th and the 13th centuries, are the second largest ethnic group, accounting for an estimated 22% of the population. Chief among them are the Azerbaijanis found in the northwestern provinces of East and West Azerbaijan, Azarbaijan-e-Sharqi, and Azarbaijan-e-Gharbi, respectively, and in Golan. Largely settled farmers or townspeople, they belong to the same ethnic group as do the Turks of Anatolia and those of the Azerbaijan Republic in the USSR. The most important Turkic tribal groups in Iran are the Turkomans and the Qashqai. The former, who include both pastoralists and farmers, reside in Khorasan Province and the eastern half of Mazandarani Province; others live in the Soviet Union and Afghanistan. The Qashqai are concentrated primarily in Fars Province in central Iran. Mostly nomads, they conduct the longest seasonal migrations of any

tribal group in Iran. Two smaller nomadic tribes are the Shalshayan and the Afshar, most of whom inhabit East Azerbaijan. In the 18th century the Qajar dynasty was founded by Turkic Qajar tribes from Mazandarani, but they are numerically insignificant today.

The third sizable ethnic group, the Semitic Arabs, entered the area during the rapid expansion of Islam in the seventh century—now estimated to make up about 5% of the population. They constitute the majority of the inhabitants of Khuzestan Province and also dwell in Fars and Khorasan provinces, in the cities of Yazd and Kerman, and along the coast of the Persian Gulf. Some of the tribal Arabs are nomadic, while others are sedentary farmers.

Numerous small ethnic groups of non-Muslims are scattered throughout the country, the most important being the Armenians, Assyrians, and Jews. Comprising less than 2% of the population, these minorities reside largely in the cities, particularly Tehran, although a few Armenian and Assyrian villages are found in rural parts of Azarbaijan. The minority groups have maintained their ethnic identity, speaking their own languages and dwelling in separate communities or enclaves. The Armenians, in particular, feel no sense of unity with the Iranian nation.

Physical characteristics among Iranians vary according to ethnic origin, although centuries of interbreeding have largely modified the most

pronounced differences (Figure 2). Ethnic Iranians are characterized by moderate to tall stature, strong features, dark hair and eyes, and olive skin coloration. Except occasionally among the Kurds and Lurs, there is little trace of the blondness and other Nordic characteristics of the original Aryan invaders. The Turki peoples are somewhat taller and heavier than the ethnic Iranians, their coloring often darker, and their features more coarse. Mongoloid characteristics are occasionally found among the Turkoman and other Turki tribal groups, notably the Hazaras on the Afghan border. The latter have broad faces, prominent cheekbones, the epicanthic eye fold, and yellowish to brown skin coloring. Many of the Arabs resemble their counterparts in neighboring Iraq, but some have physical characteristics so modified by intermarriage that they cannot be distinguished from ethnic Iranians. By and large, in rural areas the members of the various ethnic and tribal groups can best be differentiated by their traditional style of dress. Western clothing, however, is standard in the urban centers and is also appearing more frequently in the countryside.

In general, language is closely associated with ethnic origin. Most ethnic Iranians speak standard Persian, or Farsi, the official language of Iran and the second language of a majority of non-Persians. Promoted by the government to foster the unification of the country's diverse ethnic groups, it is the language of the government, the military, and the schools. Indeed, a person wishing to participate fully in Iranian national life must be literate in Persian. An Indo-European language, Persian is written in a variation of the Arabic alphabet and contains a large Arabic vocabulary, as well as some Turkish words, especially military terms. Spoken Persian has several dialects, ranging from the speech of Tehran and other urban centers to the rustic dialects of the peasants. Shirazi is especially admired for its purity. Persian is more like English in pronunciation and grammar than any other language of the Middle East, and hence is usually easier for English-speaking people to learn to speak. Literary Persian, on the other hand, is difficult to learn to read and write.

Other Indo-European languages spoken by ethnic Iranians include Kurdish, Gilaki, Mazandarani, Luri, and Baluchi, each of which has several dialects. Luri, Gilaki, and Mazandarani are sometimes described as dialects of Persian, although the latter two are virtually unintelligible to speakers of Farsi. Except for Kurdish, these non-Persian languages are rarely written because of the great prestige of literary Persian.

The Turki dialects of Iran, belonging to the Altaic family of languages, differ from standard Turkish but

are mutually intelligible to a considerable degree. Azerbaijani, or Azeri, the most important of the Turki dialects, is basically similar to the vernacular of Soviet Azerbaydzhan, except that the latter is written in the Cyrillic alphabet and contains a large infusion of Russian words, while the former is written in Arabic script and incorporates many words borrowed from Persian. The Qashqai dialect is closely related to Azerbaijani. In the northeast, however, the Turkoman speak a different Turki vernacular that is nearly identical with that spoken by their counterparts across the border in the Soviet Union. Originally completely different from the Indo-European languages in structure and vocabulary, the Turki dialects in Iran have borrowed extensively from Persian and are written in the Arabic alphabet.

Arabic dialects spoken in Iran are modern variants of the older Arabic that formed the base of the classical literary language and all dialects from Morocco to India. The dialect spoken in Khuzestan Province is similar to that of Iraq, but the vernaculars of the Persian Gulf coast have not been studied. Arabic is a member of the Semitic language family and has no linguistic relationship to any of the Indo-European languages. Most Iranian Muslims, however, have some familiarity with it as the language of the Koran. Further, as noted above, Persian contains a large vocabulary of Arabic words.

Armenian is spoken by the minority of the same name. Like Persian, it is an Indo-European language; however, it is unintelligible to Persian speakers. Members of the country's small Assyrian minority speak Syriac, a modern variant of Aramaic, the ancient Semitic language. Iran's Jews speak Hebrew and Persian, while the small Gypsy population speak Romany, originally a language of northern India.

Educated Iranians are often literate in one or more Western languages, primarily French, English, and German. For many years French was the principal European language, but English has been gradually replacing it in diplomacy and commerce, and is most often selected by secondary school students to meet their requirement for foreign language study. Russian is widely understood as a second language in Gilan and Mazandarani provinces (Figure 3).

2. Social classes

Iranian society is in transition. Social change began early in the century with the introduction of Western ideas and technology; it was accelerated by Reza Shah's modernization program; and is being further speeded up by the present Shah's policies, especially the agrarian reform program begun in 1961. Nevertheless, Iranian society remains basically



Farmer with tasseled turban, the distinctive headgear of the Kurds (U/OU)



Persian working man (U/OU)



A Mazandarani family (C)



Bakhtiari woman (U/OU)



Turkoman wearing typical headgear (C)



Qashqai women (U/OU)



Baluchi herdsman wearing turban and robe; like those of his counterparts on the Indian subcontinent; camels are shown in the background (U/OU)

FIGURE 2. REPRESENTATIVE IRANIANS

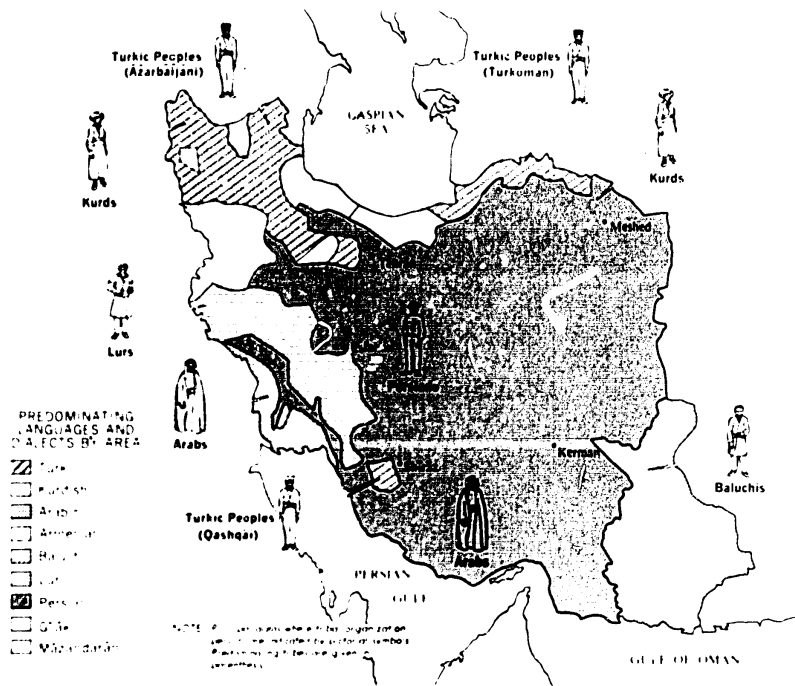


FIGURE 3. Principal languages and tribal peoples (U/OU)

hierarchical. Despite increasing opportunities for social mobility resulting from economic development and an expanding educational program, the gap between the large lower class, comprising over 80% of the population, and the elite group along with the growing middle class appears greater than ever before.

At the apex of the social pyramid are the Shah, his family, and his court. At almost the same level are the elite families, largely Persian, who are united in a complex web of relationships. Although they may number only about 200, these families are often referred to as the "thousand families of Iran." They include landlords and former landlords who still maintain their social position but not always their power, wealthy tribal leaders, important Shia clergy, high-ranking military officers and civil government officials, leading scholars and professional men, and a few representatives of the business world. Membership in the elite is based on kinship, wealth, political influence, advanced education, and high distinction

in the arts. Many members belonged to or are descended from the former ruling Qajar dynasty. High-ranking army officers became powerful after the rise of Reza Shah in the 1920's. Prominent families who once provided key military officers are now represented in the armed forces to a lesser degree, however, and many officers rising to influential positions have a plebeian origin. Turks and Kurds who qualify because of their wealth, education, family connections, or political contacts are fully assimilated into the elite and are indistinguishable from other members.

Land has always been the traditional base of wealth. Since the turn of the century, however, new sources of wealth in trade, manufacturing, finance, and real estate speculation have created a newly wealthy commercial and industrial group—a new upper middle class—located in the urban centers. This group, which includes many individuals of middle or lower middle class origin, has increased substantially

as a result of the extensive economic development that accompanied the expansion of the oil industry after World War II. The group includes Westernized importers, industrialists, bankers, merchants, high government officials, and professional men, many of whom are among the wealthiest people in Iran. But wealth alone does not open the door to political power. Few have easy access to the Shah, and most are separated from the elite by social and educational differences. No stigma, however, attaches to the recent acquisition of wealth, and favorable marriages or the right connections enable some of the newly rich to enter elite groups with access to the throne. Non-Muslims, whose representation among the newly rich is disproportionately high, seldom become members of the elite. In fact, men belonging to religious minorities are restricted in political activities, discriminated against in promotion to command positions in the armed forces, and prevented from acquiring policymaking positions in the government. They may be accepted, however, by educated Westernized Muslims, usually in business or the professions, on the basis of their education, wealth, profession, or business connections.

The urban middle class, based on the bazaar economy of the cities and market towns, once consisted solely of petty merchants, craftsmen, lower level Muslim clergy, and teachers. Since the early 1950's, however, as a result of economic development and increased educational opportunities, the middle class has expanded substantially. Urban middle-income groups now include industrial managers, engineers, technicians, and skilled workers, as well as government employees and intellectuals. In general, the power of the middle class is growing; influential members of the middle group in Parliament and in fairly high positions in the government ministries play an important role in the formation of public opinion. Demands for revolutionary change in the existing social order have been voiced mainly by middle class intellectuals.

At the bottom of the urban class structure are the street vendors, service workers, day laborers, and an increasing number of industrial workers. A clear distinction in social status is made between a casual day laborer and, for example, a comparatively affluent semiskilled worker in the Abadan oil refinery. The urban lower class, moreover, is constantly growing as large numbers of peasants migrate to the cities in search of industrial employment. The incidence of unemployment, however, is high, and their economic plight is often desperate. Because of their poverty, illiteracy, lack of political sophistication, and sense of

alienation, urban workers are highly vulnerable to demagoguery. They are, however, receiving an increasingly larger share of the government's attention.

Rural society has always been less stratified than urban. Nevertheless, a wide gap has existed between the wealthy landlords and the lower class tenant farmers and day laborers at the bottom of the village social scale. Traditionally the landowners frequently owned whole or parts of villages; many were absentee landlords residing in the cities. They exercised quasi-feudal authority over their tenants through agents who were normally vested with the office of village headman by the provincial government. Today, in addition to the headman, the mullah and the schoolteacher or member of the literate corps constitute a village leadership of sorts. Some communities have a locally elected village court called a house of justice, and a few have village councils. Both groups are composed of five members. There is also a small middle group of landowners with medium-sized holdings who lease their land to tenant farmers in return for cash rents. Some have become absentee landowners, migrating to the cities and entering government service, business, or the professions.

Since the enactment of land reform in 1962, the rural class structure has been significantly altered in those areas where the legislation has been fully implemented. As of 1972, according to government sources, 1.8 million peasant farmers had acquired, or were in the process of acquiring, small plots of land, but it remains to be seen whether the program will be successful in creating a new rural middle class based on private land ownership. Owners of medium-sized landholdings with no resources other than farm income have suffered heavy losses as a result of land reform.

Meanwhile, because of concern over the uneconomic fragmentation of the land in some areas, the government has sponsored two types of large-scale farming with consolidated management. By early 1972, 20 so-called farm corporations had been established encompassing 5,400 shareholders and 8,900 acres. Supposedly initiated by a majority of the smallholders in a village or group of villages, the corporation allots shares to the participants based on the value of their land and implements. Another form of corporate farming is the agribusiness, launched in 1968. In this type of enterprise the villagers in a specified area are compelled to sell their land to the government which then leases it to domestic companies or to foreign concerns (British or American)

for large-scale mechanized farming. Subsequently, the villagers are employed as day laborers. It is too early to assess the economic effectiveness of these two forms of corporate farming and their impact on the rural class structure, but the agribusiness would appear to nullify to some extent the advantages to the peasant of land reform. Early in 1972, Arab smallholders in northern Khuzestan expressed considerable discontent over the confiscation of their land for agribusiness operations, which was followed by a shortage of employment opportunities.

The nomadic and seminomadic elements of the tribal minorities have largely retained the traditional tribal class structure, which in many respects mirrors that of rural village society (Figure 4). On the one hand are the wealthy tribal chiefs, or khans, and on the other the mass of impoverished tribespeople. The long-range transhumants, the most prosperous of the nomads, can perhaps be considered a middle group. The position of the tribal chief, however, is hereditary, and the social status of the tribesman is ranked according to his kinship to the tribal leader. Most chiefs reside in urban centers, although some return to their people to lead the annual migration to the summer grazing grounds. Among the settled farming groups, the typical khan has become a large landowner, collecting from tenants in the same manner as other landlords. In fact, the major khans are well represented within the elite in the capital. Many tribespeople have been assimilated and are virtually indistinguishable from their counterparts in the villages and towns, although they may retain certain tribal customs and attitudes.

3. Family and kinship groupings

In Iranian society, the family is the basic social unit, the reciprocal obligations and privileges that define relations between kinsmen superseding all others.



FIGURE 4. Qashqai shepherdess prods her goats and fat-tailed sheep. The Qashqai are one of several seminomadic tribes. (U/OU)

Economic, political, and other social activities are largely family affairs, and family honor is zealously protected, particularly among tribespeople. Whatever its ethnic, linguistic, or tribal affiliation, moreover, the traditional family, with few exceptions, is extended, patriarchal, patrilineal, endogamous, and occasionally polygynous. Within the family and society at large, women occupy a subordinate position to men. The structure and cohesiveness of the traditional family, however, are being altered by urbanization, industrialization, and the reforms of the White Revolution. Family enterprises are giving way to impersonal corporate organizations, peasant boys are migrating to the cities, leaving behind the security of the family circle, strains between tradition-oriented fathers and Western-educated sons are disrupting the solidarity of family life, and women are being accorded an increasing degree of legal equality with men. Nonetheless, the family remains the most stable and fundamental unit of society, especially among the lower class and the tribespeople.

The typical extended family consists of the husband, his wife or wives, his married sons and their families, and his unmarried children. When a daughter marries, she is absorbed into the family of her husband. The family, which may comprise a dozen or more members, generally resides in one house or tent or in a number of adjacent dwellings. Functioning as an economic unit, family members are expected to support each other in all endeavors. Among some urban groups the extended family household is being replaced with the nuclear unit. Young peasant migrants and university graduates, for example, frequently live in separate domiciles, and filial obligation, while still strong, shows signs of weakening.

In the traditional patriarchal and patrilineal family, the eldest male is the undisputed ruler of the entire group, acting at times in an arbitrary or tyrannical manner. He assumes responsibility for the welfare of all family members, thus fostering prolonged dependent relationships. Although civil law states that the foundation of the family is based upon the harmonious coexistence of husband and wife, religious law specifies that the wife's role is one of submission to her husband. Children are constantly admonished to obey and respect their elders, especially their fathers. Sons are permitted greater freedom than their sisters, who are expected to be docile. Among the upper class and the Westernized elements of the middle class, however, patriarchal authority is on the wane, as many young men refuse to seek parental permission for their activities.

Descent is patrilineal, based on the blood relationship of males. Indeed, the importance of agnatic kin is reflected in the deference shown the paternal grandfather and uncles and in the solidarity of brothers. Inheritance customs follow traditional Islamic directives which favor sons and paternal relatives. Shia Muslims, however, recognize primogeniture to a greater extent than Sunnis, especially when succession to a position of leadership and power is involved. In tribal society, the individual family forms the basic unit of a larger group that encompasses numerous lineages and clans. Blood feuds are reportedly still common between different families of the same tribe.

Parents generally arrange the marriage of both sons and daughters. Endogamy is strictly observed among the lower class and the tradition oriented elements of the middle class who favor cousin marriages, particularly between a son and the daughter of his father's brother. In such marriages, the bride price, paid by the groom to the family of the bride, is not as large; family ties are strengthened and, among the poor, dispersal of scanty family resources is avoided. In Westernized middle and upper class circles in Tehran, however, marriage customs are changing as young men and women are allowed to express their preference in the choice of future mates. Cousin marriages are less frequent, although marriage outside one's group is discouraged. Sometimes, the bride's family does not require payment of the bride price or allows the groom to pay it on the installment plan. Among all classes a marriage contract is signed before a notary or religious official (Figure 5). This contract, negotiated by the parents of the prospective bride and groom several weeks or months before the wedding festivities, stipulates the amount of the bride price and the *mahr*, a sum of money to be paid to the wife if her husband, through death or divorce, no longer supports her.

Under Koranic law a husband can divorce his wife at will. In 1967, however, the government enacted the Family Protection Law which stipulates that divorce proceedings may not be initiated without the consent of the wife and that the husband may not take a second wife without the permission of the court. In addition, the wife may institute divorce action and may use the taking of a second wife as grounds for divorce. Although formerly the father was automatically given custody of the children, the court now specifies the arrangements to be made for their care and support. Since the enactment of the Family Protection Law, the ratio of divorces to marriages has declined considerably. Economic considerations have

always limited the number and frequency of plural marriages. Today, even wealthy Iranians, following Western practice, generally restrict themselves to one wife at a time.

Women are also making limited progress toward legal equality with men in other spheres. A 1963 decree, for example, granted women suffrage (Figure 6). In practice, however, the right to vote has been exercised primarily by middle and upper class women in the large cities. Although legally eligible for employment in government and other fields, educated women find it difficult to realize their professional ambitions. Among the lower class, particularly in the countryside, women remain completely subordinate to men and are largely denied the privilege of voting.

4. Social institutions and customs

Various informal social groups and institutions serve for the exchange of news, rumor, and gossip or for recreation. Largely confined to urban society, few become centers for dissident action because the government maintains close surveillance over group activities that could conceivably develop into political opposition.

The *dowreh* (clique) is a social organization common to the urban middle and upper classes, particularly the intellectuals. Generally convening on a weekly or monthly basis, *dowrehs* normally have 12 to 16 members who discuss business, politics, and the arts over games of cards or chess. Since an Iranian who leads a well-rounded social life belongs to several *dowrehs*, matters discussed in one *dowreh* can be transmitted to a larger group rapidly and privately. Ideas and political views are usually aired freely, and while there is much gossiping and criticism of those in authority, there is also serious, constructive discussion. *Dowrehs* can serve as political interest groups, but most frequently their purpose is apolitical.

Another well-known type of social group is the traditional *zurkhaneh* (house of strength), found in practically every city and in many smaller towns. In 1970, Tehran had 45 such houses. A physical culture society mainly attracting the lower classes, the *zurkhaneh* is believed to have originated at the time of the Arab occupation in the seventh century. The exercises, performed to the accompaniment of a drum and chanted poetry, are ritualized representations of martial movements. The main objects used are stylized war clubs of great weight, shields of metal or heavy wood, and metal bows with strings made of chain. In some respects the ritual is mystic or semireligious in nature. Wrestling is also popular



FIGURE 5. Sayyid (descendant of the Prophet) drawing up a marriage contract during betrothal ceremony (U/OU)



FIGURE 6. An illiterate woman registering by fingerprint for her first vote (C)

Figure 7. The *zokhanch* may serve as a social club and, on occasion, as a center for political activities. Some are noted for charitable works. In fact, in Iranian folklore, the *zokhanch* champion is known as the defender of the weak against the oppressor.

In the cities and towns the bazaar itself has traditionally functioned as a social institution for the exchange of information, opinion, and gossip. Representing the old order and the old way of life to the merchants, artisans, and laborers who gather regularly in its teahouses, Figure 8, and restaurants, it generates a political force still to be reckoned with. In modern cities like Tehran and Abadan, however, the bazaar as an institution is being threatened by

contemporary business practices and competition, evidenced by commercial districts with rows of bowling alleys, espresso bars, discotheques, and even a few supermarkets.

Rural Iran has little to offer in the way of institutionalized social centers. In addition to the mosque, some of the larger villages contain a communal bathhouse, or *hammam*, and perhaps a teahouse. Along the principal highways there is an occasional hostel for travelers (Figure 9).

Many of the characteristic manners, customs, and modes of life have been fostered by the hierarchical structure of Iranian society, as well as centuries of individual insecurity and political instability. For example, the elaborate *taarof*—ceremonial politeness which embodies special gestures and forms of speech—not only establishes relative rank but also serves as a verbal buffer to avoid or soften criticism and in general to smooth the path of social intercourse. The mode of life also reflects a sense of self-protection. The walls surrounding even the poorest homes mark off a unique family area, taking in boarders or roomers



FIGURE 7. Wrestlers performing gymnastic exercises with clubs, each weighing 50 pounds (U/OU)

FIGURE 8. Men passing leisure time in a teahouse. Rather than chairs, benches covered with brightly colored rugs are customary. Tea is sipped from small glasses. (U/OU)



would be an impossible concept for tradition-minded Iranians. Any number of relatives, friends, or servants may be housed, but the idea of paying to live in a home would verge on the incomprehensible.

5. Values and attitudes

The values of the Iranian people as a whole are undoubtedly changing, but the rate of change varies among the diverse elements of the society. In general, traditional values continue to be important among the rural sector of the population, whether settled or nomadic, while contemporary Western values have gained considerable currency among urban people. The upper and middle classes, in particular, have been strongly influenced by Western thought.

Loyalty to family and devotion to Islam form the basis of the traditional value system. For most the first allegiance is to the immediate kinship group, then, in lessening degrees, to more distant relatives, to the community or tribe, and finally to the nation. The entire culture is so permeated with the concept of family loyalty that the term "familism" is often used

in describing it. The value attributed to family cohesion is reflected in the nepotism which continues to pervade government and commerce, although it is now being criticized by many educated persons.

Family relationships, along with most other aspects of life, are largely regulated by the precepts of Islam. Islamic values are puritanical, emphasizing good deeds in anticipation of a final judgment and stressing resignation to the will of God. While aspiring to a better life to come, the devout poor are convinced that the division of worldly goods is ordained by the Almighty—a belief which has helped the average impoverished Iranian to accept the gross economic inequalities that have long afflicted the society. Most members of the urban upper and middle classes adhere only nominally to Islamic beliefs and practices, finding them incompatible with the partially Westernized life styles and secularistic values which they are adopting. Many of the urban poor, on the other hand, remain devout to the point of fanaticism. Rural people in the traditional mold tend to accept the premises and proscriptions of Islam to the extent that

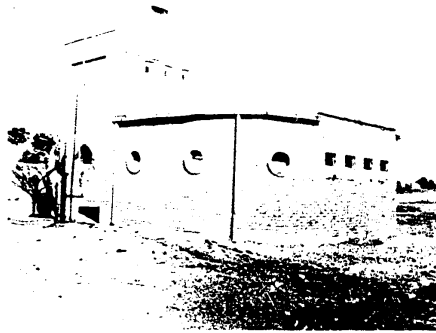


FIGURE 9. Rural Iran has little to offer in the way of institutionalized social centers. Above, reading from top to bottom: A bathhouse near Tehran; a village teahouse; travelers at a rest house along the Asian Highway near the Caspian Sea. (C)

they are familiar with them, but they are not rigid in their religious practice.

Iranians regard themselves as an individualistic people, and individualism is considered to foster a strong sense of personal worth and an extreme

sensitivity to insult or lack of respect. Skillful politicians and others have from time to time been able to arouse mobs to their own ends by exploiting an apparent readiness to respond to remarks or actions deemed to be insulting and thus invoking what is known as *ghayat*, or zeal in defense of honor. Iranian individualism has helped to foster a habitual distrust of "outsiders," a designation which is frequently construed to mean all except family members. This in turn has impeded the development of any deep sense of community or team spirit. Honesty is highly regarded as an ideal, and there is considerable respect for a man who voluntarily restrains himself from making illicit gains. However, shrewdness is valued as a weapon in interpersonal struggles involving the exploitation or manipulation of others, and many display a certain admiration for the adroit rascal. Malleance in office, commonplace throughout the government, receives little public censure. There appears to be an ingrained cynicism regarding official motives and the processes of government. Forcefulness and strength are seen as the most important qualities for leadership. The forceful man emerging in the role of leader has been a frequent feature of Iranian history. Reza Shah's meteoric rise to power in the 1920's was in this tradition.

The values relating to family and religion are those most affected by modernizing Western influences. In the case of upper and middle class groups in the cities, family life and patterns of behavior have long been changing as a result of the absorption of new mores through Western-style education and contacts with European and U.S. nationals both at home and abroad. Many of today's youth educated in the Western tradition question the nature and necessity of allegiance to traditional concepts and talk of repudiating the formalism and authoritarianism of society. Meanwhile, in urban areas modern education has achieved a symbolic value of its own as a sign of "progress" and an instrument of social mobility for those who have access to it. On the other hand, the very idea of progress, defined as material advancement, is regarded with some suspicion by devout Muslims since it is almost inevitably followed by a decline in religious observance and a breach in traditional Islamic values. The more fanatical orthodox adherents, including ultraconservative religious leaders, view any change as anathema, condemning all actions not based firmly on Islamic principles.

The rural population is not immune to the transition in values taking place. In many areas the pressure for change is constantly rising as a result of

land reform and other government programs, technological innovations, and the increasing orientation to a market economy. The substantial movement of rural people, particularly the young, from the villages to the urban centers is also having an effect, reflected in the frequent breakup of the extended family, diminution of parental authority, and weakened family loyalties. This in turn fosters a trend away from the old Islamic values in the direction of the new secularistic ideas.

Only in recent times have Iranian leaders begun to create a modern nation state out of the varied ethnic groups within the country's borders, and strong integrative forces are needed to overcome a tendency toward internal disunity. Among such forces are the Islamic religious bonds linking most of the population, a pride in the glories of Persian history and culture deeply felt by educated Iranians, and a general feeling of loyalty toward the monarchy. Despite these positive factors, some observers are convinced that large segments of the population as yet have no clear concept of Iran as a nation. During recent decades the government has attempted to expand national consciousness by stimulating pride in Iran's imperial greatness. These efforts reached a climax in 1971 with the spectacular celebration at Persepolis commemorating the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great.

The most important national symbol is the institution of the monarchy as embodied in royal tradition and in the person of the present ruler, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Shahanshah of Iran. A legal entity defined by the Constitution, the monarchy forms the apex of a highly stratified social system, and most Iranians can hardly conceive of any other type of government. In official circles, it is frequently cited as the only form of rule which accords with national tradition and the Iranian character, although there is evidence of some dissatisfaction with the imperial family and many educated Iranians believe that the Shah's power should be limited.

Despite the personal popularity of the Shah and his family, there is some resistance to government policies in many sectors. For example, although tenant farmers are eager to obtain title to land of their own under the agrarian reform program, they are likely to show little interest in changing their methods of land use; they distrust the modern techniques introduced by the government and cling tenaciously to age-old ways. Those opposing modernization are frequently supported and even guided by conservative Muslim clergy who have taken a stand against technical innovation and reform programs in general on the

grounds that they violate teachings of the Koran. Dispossessed landowners, for their part, are unhappy over the redistribution of land and other measures that they fear may jeopardize their interests. Meanwhile, certain elements of the urban lower class show continued susceptibility to demagogic appeals, unconvinced that the government is working to improve their condition. Nevertheless, the wide disparity that exists between the conspicuous wealth of the rich and the overwhelming poverty of the bulk of the population has not engendered organized protest, not only because such protest needs leadership which, under the conditions of tight control exercised by the regime, has not arisen, but also because of the Shah's visible efforts to improve living conditions.

In the past, many of the ethnic minorities, and particularly the nomadic tribal groups, have been a source of difficulty to the government. Until the 1920's, most tribal leaders exercised a large measure of independence, controlling entrance and egress routes to their respective areas, extorting payment from anyone who traversed their territories, and indulging in various degrees of pillage and banditry. When Reza Shah Pahlavi came to power in 1921, he tried to solve the problem by undermining tribal organization and by attempting to convert the nomads into sedentary farmers. The plan was put into operation without adequate preparation and was carried out by establishing martial law in tribal areas and subjecting the inhabitants to more or less systematic oppression. Some of the groups rebelled and were put down with brutality by the regime. By executing, exiling, or imprisoning tribal leaders, the government seriously disrupted traditional tribal life and organization and in the process brought economic disaster to the tribes. Toward the end of his reign Reza Shah was forced by economic considerations to modify his approach, and after his abdication in favor of his son in 1941, tribal groups were able to resume their traditional way of life, although most never fully recovered from the effects of the repression. In 1946, serious disaffection occurred among the Kurds, the Bakhtiari, and the Qashqai, who staged open rebellions which were suppressed only with considerable bloodshed. Previously, just after the end of World War II, leftwing Azarbaijani separatist groups, with the aid of occupying Soviet forces, had succeeded in establishing an autonomous republic which survived about a year before being reannexed by Iran after a formal protest against Soviet action had been presented to the newly formed United Nations. As late as 1963 there occurred a limited and unsuccessful uprising among elements of the Qashqai.

Since the mid 1950s, the general policy of the present Shah has been gradually to reduce the troublemaking potential of the tribes by disarming them and attempting to settle the nomadic groups in well-defined areas (Figure 10). Some progress has been made in the settlement program, largely in areas where conditions are reasonably favorable for agriculture. As of 1972, it appeared that the tribal minorities recognized and accepted the authority of the central government, despite the distaste of most of the remaining nomads for forcible sedentarization. The integration of the tribes into society is being facilitated by extending the agrarian reform program into tribal territories and by providing some assistance in the fields of health care, education, and community development. Assimilation has been most effective among the Kurds, the largest ethnic minority, who were long noted for their militance and rebelliousness. Today, Kurds occupy prominent positions in the

government, as well as in commerce and the professions. Although most probably still regard themselves as Kurds first and Iranians second, they appear increasingly willing to accept the fact that they are part of the Iranian nation.

Lower class Iranians, particularly the vast rural population, view the world outside the kinship group, or at most the local community, with considerable distrust and suspicion and have little understanding of it. The attitudes of educated upper and middle class Iranians, most of whom have had some contact with people from Europe and the United States as well as with nationals of neighboring countries, reflect to a considerable extent their response to actions of the particular foreign country concerning Iran.

In modern times, the strategic location of Iran and its rich oil deposits have caused international rivalry among the great powers for influence in the area, a situation which has bred cynicism and suspicion among politically conscious elements. Today, at least among government leaders, there is a trend toward neutrality in foreign affairs, stemming from the fear that the country could otherwise become an arena of war, and also from the conviction that it is possible to play off the great powers against each other to the benefit of Iran. Nevertheless, official relations between Iran and the United States remain close, based on a friendship that encompasses both commercial ties and mutual security arrangements. Although young intellectuals criticize the U.S. role in Vietnam, and leftist elements among them castigate "U.S. imperialists," the prestige of the United States is generally high, reflecting an admiration for its advanced technology and an appreciation of its long record of assistance. Additionally, the fact that many of the elite are graduates of U.S. universities helps to create an atmosphere in which U.S. advice is solicited and accepted.

While maintaining close relations with the United States, the Shah and his ministers have been attempting a rapprochement with the Soviet Union, despite a continuing fear of Communist subversion and memories of Russian aggrandizement at the expense of Iran. Increasing numbers of Iranians reportedly have come to feel that Iran and the U.S.S.R. have sufficient interests in common to warrant closer ties between the two nations.

Attitudes toward the United Kingdom are ambivalent, combining a mixture of dislike and suspicion on the one hand and respect and grudging admiration on the other. This ambivalence is traceable to Iranian experience with British policy toward Iran for more than 100 years—a policy which has



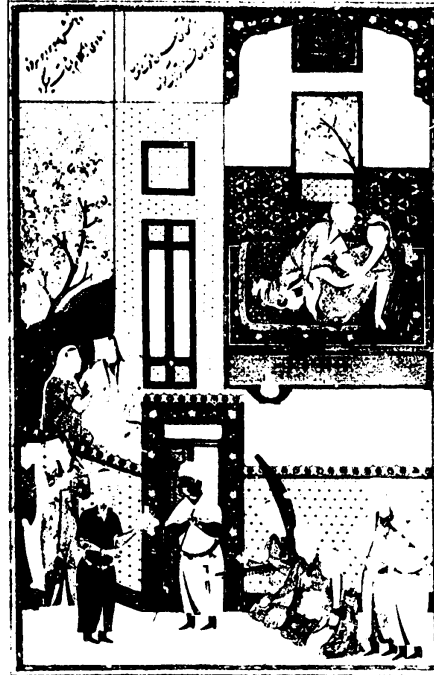
FIGURE 10. Iranian Kurds on the move near Nahabad. These women rest against rugs lashed around their belongings. (U/OU)

fluctuated from intense interest to near indifference, from intervention to neglect, and from support of revolutionary movements to the defense of established authority.

Religious affinities notwithstanding, Iranians have shown little solidarity with Arab peoples and have tended to remain aloof from Arab-Israeli disputes. There is considerable resentment of anti-Iranian manifestations on the part of Egypt and Iraq, and of Arab states in southern Arabia; one factor in this situation is Iran's desire to assume a protective role in the strategic Persian Gulf area. Good relations prevail with neighboring Muslim non-Arabic nations, specifically Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Turkey. Favorable attitudes toward Pakistan and Turkey are enhanced by mutual membership in the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). Iran is also a charter member of the United Nations and most of its specialized agencies, several of which have sponsored programs in the country.

Iranians are not a militaristic people and can claim no significant military victories since the 18th century. Popular attitudes toward the military have shifted over the past several decades. During the reign of Reza Shah the army was highly feared among the bulk of the population because of its harsh measures to secure internal order. The present Shah has made a determined effort to improve the image of the military and to a large extent has succeeded, mainly by employing it in various civic action programs.

C. Population (U/OU)



With a high birth rate and a high but declining death rate, Iran's population, estimated at 30.8 million at the beginning of 1973, has doubled since the beginning of the 1940's, with most of the increase occurring since 1955. The rapid population growth since 1955 has resulted in an increasingly youthful population and in an age structure highly conducive to accelerated growth in the future. With the number of women entering the principal reproductive years increasing each year, the population can be expected to continue to grow rapidly during the remainder of the 1970's and during the 1980's whether or not Iran's nascent family planning program succeeds in lowering the birth rate. At the current rate of growth—approximately 3.0% per annum—the population is increasing by about 1 million persons each year and, if this rate persists, will reach 50 million in 1989. The burgeoning population absorbs a significant portion of

the economic gain being realized and, unless curbed, threatens to retard the Shah's plans to further develop the economy and ease the pervasive poverty. Moreover, because of the large number of children who must be supported by those in the productive years, the dependency burden also serves as a major drag on efforts to raise levels of living.

Population growth has resulted almost wholly from natural increase, the volume of both immigration and emigration being insubstantial. Because births and deaths, especially the latter, are underregistered, official vital rates do not accurately reflect these events, and it is difficult to ascertain prevailing birth and death rates precisely. During the 1950's and the 1960's the birth rate apparently was fairly stable, ranging between 45 and 48 per 1,000 population. For 1971, it was placed at 45. The death rate, responding to improved access to health and medical facilities, declined from about 25 per 1,000 population in the 1950's to an estimated 15 per 1,000 in 1971. Better health conditions also are the major factor in the decrease in the infant mortality rate, which fell from about 217 deaths of children under age 1 per 1,000 live births in 1950 to approximately 160 in 1970. Despite improvement, the infant mortality rate is still very high. The death rate, too, is high, given the age structure of the population. A large proportion of the population is in the younger ages where death rates are low. If Iran had the same age distribution as the United States, for example, the death rate would be even higher.

As a result of the declining death rate, life expectancy at birth has risen about one-half year during each of the last 20 years and is presently about 50 years. It is higher than in neighboring Afghanistan and Pakistan, but lower than in the adjacent countries of Iraq, Turkey, and the U.S.S.R.

Since 1966, the Iranian Government has sponsored a family planning program, seeking to stem rapid population growth. In mid-1970, the government adopted the ambitious goal of reducing population growth to 1% per year by 1990. The program is coordinated by a High Council of Family Planning within the Ministry of Health, which operates more than a third of the 1,300 clinics offering family planning services. Almost one-fourth of the clinics are operated by the Health Corps, one of the several government-sponsored revolutionary development corps. The others are run by a variety of public and private entities, including the Ministries of Defense and Labor, social service organizations, private industrial firms, and Iran's Family Planning Association. In conjunction with an educational

program designed to make the populace aware of the implications of rapid population growth, the clinics provide advice on family planning matters and acquaint clients with a range of birth control methods. In practice, they emphasize the use of oral contraceptives, which are taken by approximately 80% of all new acceptors. Pills are also available through commercial channels. Despite a trend toward smaller families in urban areas, rural parents, largely unfamiliar with birth control methods, still want many children, and the success or failure of the family planning program has yet to be determined.

1. Size and distribution

Iran's most recent census, conducted in November 1966, recorded a population of 25,785,210,³ a 36% increase over the 18,954,704 enumerated a decade earlier. By 1 January 1973, the population had grown to an estimated 30,805,000. Thus, Iran had more than three times the population of Iraq and 1.7 times the population of Afghanistan, but its population was only four-fifths as large as that of Turkey, slightly more than one-half as large as Pakistan's, and only one-eighth as large as the Soviet Union's.

Iran is one of the least densely settled countries in Asia. At the beginning of 1973, it had a population density estimated at 48 persons per square mile, a figure lower than that of any of its neighbors, except the Soviet Union, and some 17% below that of the United States. The national average, however, masks the markedly uneven distribution of the population. More than two-thirds of Iran's inhabitants live on about one-fourth of the land, that is, north and west of a line drawn roughly between Gorgan, near the Caspian Sea, and Bandar-e Shahpur, on the Persian Gulf. In general, population concentrations are heaviest in the northwestern tip of the country, along the fertile Caspian coastal plain, an area of dense rural settlement, in the region surrounding the capital city of Teheran, and along the slopes of the Zagros Mountains (Figure 11). Density declines toward the east and southeast, with much of central and eastern Iran, which consists largely of mountainous or desert terrain, having a small population. The three easternmost provinces—Baluchestan, Sistan, Kerman, and Khorasan—comprise 41.7% of the total area of Iran, but in 1966 accounted for only 15.0% of the total settled population (Figure 12). In contrast,

³The census reported 25,078,923 settled residents, 244,141 "unsettled" persons, and 462,146 nomadic tribespeople. In general, data on the characteristics of the population have been published only for the settled residents.

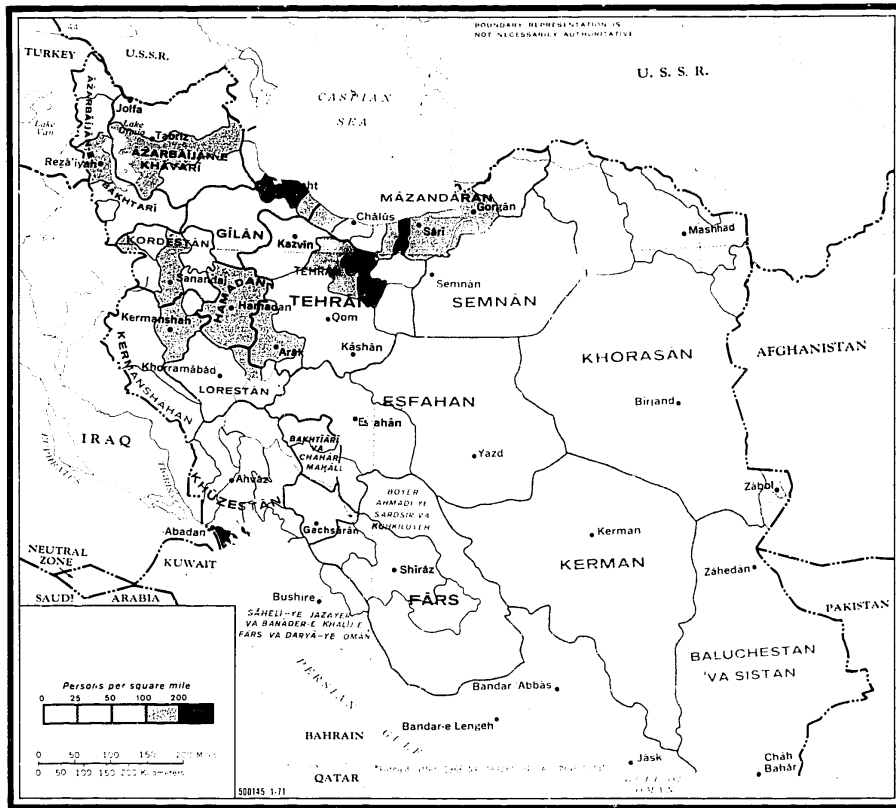


FIGURE 11. Population density, 1966 (U/OU)

the four provinces of the far northwest—Azarbaijan-e Gharbi, Azarbaijan-e Sharqi, Gilan, and Kordestan—constitute only 10.4% of the total area but made up 23.9% of the population in 1966. Adjacent Tehran Province, containing the seat of the national government, accounted for almost one-fifth (19.7%) of the total settled population in 1966, on 5.6% of the land. Among the administrative divisions, Azarbaijan-e Sharqi, Mazandran, and Tehran provinces, as well as Hamadan Governorate, all recorded densities in 1966 in excess of 100 persons per square mile, with some local densities within these administrative divisions being many times higher. Semnan Governorate had the lowest density in 1966—6.6

persons per square mile. Density was also low in Baluchestan va Sistan, Kerman, Saheli-ye Jazayer va Banader-e Khalij-e Fars va Darya-ye Oman (Coastal Province), and Khorasan. In all of these divisions large areas are virtually uninhabited.

Most of the population of Iran is sedentary, but the 1966 census recorded more than 240,000 persons of no fixed abode and over 460,000 nomadic tribespeople. Although the 1966 figure for nomads is believed to represent a rather sizable undercount, there is no question but that the nomadic sector of the population is declining numerically, as more nomads settle down. The settled population of rural Iran lives primarily in compact villages, of which there are more

FIGURE 12. Population, area, and population density, by administrative division, 1966 (U/OU)
(Area in square miles)

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	POPULATION	PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION	AREA	PERCENT OF TOTAL AREA	PERSONS PER SQUARE MILE
Province:					
Azərbaycan-e Gharbi..... (West Azerbaijan)	1,087,411	4.3	16,857	2.6	64.5
Azərbaycan-e Sharqi..... (East Azerbaijan)	2,606,314	10.3	25,908	4.1	100.6
Baluchestan va Sistan.....	502,626	2.0	70,107	11.0	7.2
Ostan-e Sahel-ye Jazayer va Bandar-e Khabije Fars va Darya-ye Oman..... (Coastal Province)*	601,581	2.4	36,375	5.7	16.5
Central (Tehran).....	4,984,828	19.7	35,336	5.6	141.1
Esfahan.....	1,705,483	6.7	58,602	9.2	29.1
Fars.....	1,462,708	5.8	51,466	8.1	28.4
Gilan.....	1,755,396	6.9	11,115	2.2	124.4
Kerman.....	772,703	3.1	74,509	11.7	10.4
Kermanshah.....	789,807	3.1	9,478	1.5	83.3
Khorasan.....	2,518,526	9.9	120,979	19.0	20.8
Khuzestan.....	1,617,024	6.4	21,963	3.9	64.8
Kordestan.....	619,796	2.4	9,652	1.5	64.2
Mazandaran.....	1,815,270	7.3	18,288	2.9	100.9
Governorate:					
Bakhtiari va Chahar Mahal.....	300,576	1.2	5,722	0.9	52.5
Faramdari-ye Kolla Boyer Ahmadi-ye Sardisr va Kohkiluyeh.....	161,918	0.7	5,506	0.9	30.0
Hamadan.....	889,892	3.5	7,788	1.2	114.3
Ham.....	201,937	0.8	7,042	1.1	28.8
Lorestan.....	691,796	2.7	12,117	1.9	57.1
Semnan.....	207,907	0.8	31,505	5.0	6.6
All Iran.....	25,326,502	100.0	636,285	100.0	39.8

NOTE: Excludes nomadic tribespeople. Total population figure differs from that given in text. No explanation for this discrepancy is available.

*Formed after 1966 by a merger of two governorates.

than 50,000, are typically small and consist of a cluster of dwellings surrounded by farmland. Location is highly dependent upon the availability of an adequate supply of useable water. Where the supply of water has been generally plentiful, villages often have expanded into small towns; where it has been exhausted, villages have been deserted.

Although the population is still predominantly rural, the proportion of the population living in urban centers (localities of 5,000 or more inhabitants and those, irrespective of population, that are *shahrestan*—county—seats) has risen steadily. Whereas the urban population was estimated to have accounted for about 22% of the total population in 1940-41, the proportion

had increased to 31.4% in 1956 and to 38.0% in 1966. It was estimated at 43% in 1971. During the 1956-66 intercensal decade, the urban population grew at an average annual rate of 5.1%, while the rural population (including nomads) increased at an average rate of 2.1% annually. The proportion of the population considered urban in 1966 ranged from a low of 9.4% in Boyer Admadi-ye Sardisr va Kohkiluyeh Governorate to a high of 70.3% in Tehran Province. Three provinces—Esfahan, Khuzestan, and Tehran—registered larger urban than rural populations in 1966. In contrast, rural residents outnumbered city dwellers by margins of more than three to one in nine administrative divisions.

In 1956, there were 91 communities in Iran that were classified as urban; in 1966, there were 271, divided by size class as shown in the following tabulation:

SIZE CLASS	NUMBER OF URBAN PLACES	AGGREGATE POPULATION	PERCENT OF TOTAL URBAN POPULATION
500,000 and over	1	2,719,730	27.8
100,000-500,000	13	2,947,285	30.1
50,000-100,000	15	1,068,042	10.9
30,000-50,000	22	853,804	8.8
20,000-30,000	22	539,746	5.5
Under 20,000	198	1,665,639	16.9

As indicated, in 1966 some 27.8% of the total urban population lived in Tehran. The population of Tehran made up 10.5% of the total population of the country and was growing faster than that of any other major urban center (Figure 13). Such growth confronts the government with serious problems in areas such as housing, transportation, food distribution, and public services.

Although migration from the countryside is not yet of great magnitude, it accounts for much of the growth in urban centers. It was revealed by the 1966 census that 86.2% of the settled population were residing in the district in which they were born and another 4.9% were living in the same province but in a different district. Persons born in a province other than that of their residence in 1966 constituted a significant proportion of the settled population only in Tehran

(22.8%), Mazandaran (12.3%), and Khuzestan (11.7%), all areas of prime economic opportunity. The proportion of residents born outside the city of Tehran was 48.9%. According to official Iranian calculations, Tehran's growth during 1956-66 derived from an average annual rate of natural increase of 2.6% and an average annual rate of in-migration of 3.4%. Migrants to the capital tend to settle in the populous southeastern and southwestern parts of the city. These vast slums are characterized by wretched overcrowding in substandard housing which lacks most of the basic amenities.

2. Age-sex structure

Iran has a very young population. Furthermore, the median age has been falling, primarily as the result of the high birth rate and a declining infant mortality rate. Whereas the median age was 20.2 years in 1956, it had dropped to 17.2 years in 1966 and was estimated at 17.0 years in 1970. The figure for 1970 was more than 11 years lower than the median age in the United States.

Of the total estimated population of 28.7 million at midyear 1970, approximately 13 1/2 million, or 45.7%, were under age 15 and 16.2 million, or 56.6%, were under age 20 (Figure 14). In contrast, only 1 million, or 3.5%, were age 65 or older and only 3.1 million, or 10.9%, were age 50 or older. All together, 49.2% of the population were in the dependent ages (conven-

FIGURE 13. Growth of cities of 100,000 or more inhabitants in 1966 (U/OU)

CITY	POPULATION			AVERAGE ANNUAL RATE OF GROWTH, 1956-66
	1956	1966	1971*	
Tehran	1,512,082	2,719,730	**3,230,000	6.0
Esfahan	254,708	424,045	440,000	5.2
Mashhad	241,989	409,616	425,000	5.4
Tabriz	289,996	403,413	420,000	3.4
Abadan	226,083	272,962	280,000	1.9
Shiraz	170,659	269,865	280,000	4.7
Ahvaz	120,098	206,375	215,000	5.6
Kermanshah	125,439	187,930	190,000	4.1
Tajrish	na	157,486	170,000	...
Rasht	109,491	143,557	150,000	2.8
Qom	96,499	134,292	140,000	3.4
Hamadan	99,909	124,167	130,000	2.2
Rezaieyh	67,605	110,749	120,000	5.0
Ray	na	102,828	110,000	...

na Data not available.
 ... Not pertinent.
 *Official Iranian estimate.
 **Other estimates of the population of Tehran range upward to 4 million.

FIGURE 14. Estimated population, by age group and sex, midyear 1970 (U/OU)
(Population in thousands)

AGE GROUP	POPULATION			PERCENT DISTRIBUTION			MALES PER 100 FEMALES
	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	
0-4	2,608	2,551	5,159	18.1	17.9	18.0	102.2
5-9	2,178	2,121	4,299	15.1	14.9	15.0	102.7
10-14	1,831	1,806	3,610	12.7	12.7	12.7	101.6
15-19	1,576	1,548	3,124	10.9	10.9	10.9	101.8
20-24	1,232	1,204	2,436	8.5	8.5	8.5	102.3
25-29	916	917	1,863	6.5	6.5	6.5	103.2
30-34	771	771	1,548	5.4	5.4	5.4	100.0
35-39	688	659	1,317	4.8	4.6	4.7	101.1
40-44	574	573	1,146	4.0	4.0	4.0	99.0
45-49	487	487	974	3.4	3.4	3.4	100.0
50-54	430	430	860	3.0	3.0	3.0	100.0
55-59	341	341	688	2.4	2.4	2.4	100.0
60-64	287	288	575	2.0	2.0	2.0	99.7
65-69	201	229	430	1.4	1.6	1.5	87.8
70 and over	258	315	573	1.8	2.2	2.0	81.9
All ages	11,116	11,216	22,332	100.0	100.0	100.0	101.2

tionally defined as 0-14 and 65 or older), compared with 50.8% in the working ages (15-64). The resulting ratio of 968 persons in the dependent ages per 1,000 in the working ages was approximately 57% higher than that of the United States. In countries such as Iran, however, the formal dependency ratio tends to overstate the actual degree of dependency, as many children under age 15 are engaged in some form of work activity and many persons age 65 or older continue to work because of economic necessity.

Iran's population profile for 1970, compared with that of the United States (Figure 15), shows that the proportion of the population under age 5 was more than double that of the United States, attesting to Iran's much higher fertility rate. In fact, Iran had a larger proportion of persons in all age groups under 30 than the United States. Conversely, the proportion of the U.S. population in the middle and older ages was markedly higher than that of Iran. For example, the proportion of persons age 65 or older was almost three times higher in the United States than in Iran.

Although later information is unavailable, the 1966 census revealed significant differences in the age structures of the settled urban and rural populations (Figure 16). Children under age 10 comprised 36.0% of the rural population but only 31.5% of the urban population, a reflection in part of the higher fertility rate in the countryside than in the cities. Persons in the 10-29 age group constituted 37.3% of the urban population and 31.5% of the rural population. This

phenomenon stems from the movement of youngsters, especially boys, from rural to urban areas for schooling and from the migration of young adults to the cities in search of employment. There was little difference in the age structures of the urban and rural population in age groups 30 and over, although rural areas had a slightly higher proportion of such persons than the cities. The dependency ratio in urban areas was 94.6; in the countryside it was 1.061.

According to the 1966 census, there were 107.3 males per 100 females (108.2 in urban areas and 106.4

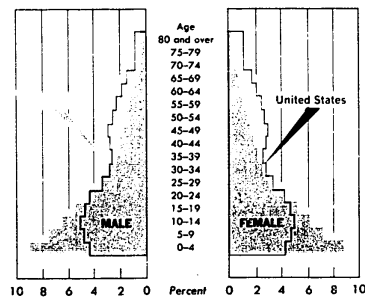
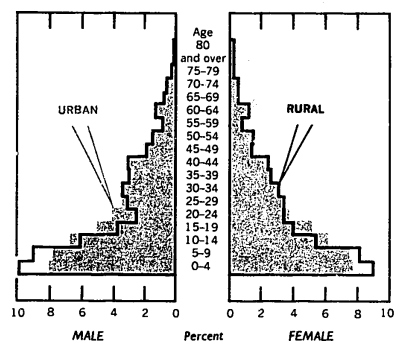


FIGURE 15. Age-sex structure, Iran and the United States, 1970 (U/OU)

D. Living and working conditions



NOTE: Excludes unsettled population (numbering 244,141 for both sexes) and nomadic tribes (numbering 462,146 for both sexes) for whom age data were not recorded.

FIGURE 16. Age-sex structure, by urban-rural residence, 1966 (U/OU)

in rural areas). The ratio is high and appears to have resulted from an underenumeration of females, especially in the 0-14 and 30-49 age groups. As calculated by the United Nations, which "corrected" the census results for an underenumeration of females as well as for apparent errors in the reporting of ages, the Iranian population at midyear 1970 comprised an estimated 14,416,000 males and 14,246,000 females, or a ratio of 101.2 males per 100 females. Males predominated in all age groups under 30, females in all age groups 60 or over.



Having benefited only a little from their nation's remarkable economic growth of the past 2 decades, most Iranians, notably the peasants, live in extreme poverty. For them, employment opportunities are scarce, housing conditions are poor, malnutrition and serious illnesses are commonplace, and welfare services are either inaccessible or inadequate. While industrialization and the exploitation of petroleum resources have added impressive sums to the value of national output, the conditions under which most people live have not improved appreciably over the centuries. And, although society's middle sector has grown somewhat in response to industrial expansion, inequities in the distribution of wealth have actually widened the gulf which has long separated the masses of poor from the small group of urban residents who live in luxury. Concomitantly, among people in the middle sector, the attainment of higher living levels has lagged behind expectations, a circumstance that can be ascribed in large measure to the inadequacy of personal incomes. (C)

In 1972, the vast bulk of wage and salary earners, including virtually all blue-collar workers and many white-collar employees, were being paid at a yearly rate of less than Rls200,000, or US\$2,640. Reflecting among other things the comparatively low rate of participation in the labor force, notably in its wage sector, and the very low income of the agricultural labor force, average personal earnings were much lower than that figure on a national basis. Having doubled during the period 1941-72, the average annual per capita income was equivalent to US\$325 in

the latter year. As indicated by the following tabulation of earnings (in U.S. dollars), however, gross disparities existed in the levels of annual income among workers in the cash economy during 1972.

Blue-collar workers:	
Unskilled	460-790
Semiskilled	920-1,190
Skilled	1,190-1,980
White-collar workers:	
Lower level	1,320-1,900
Mid-level	2,640-3,960
Upper level	4,920-7,590

White-collar workers generally earned three times the amount earned by their blue-collar counterparts—a differential that is largely the basis for the prestige accruing to those who engage in nonmanual occupations. Pay rates for blue-collar workers in the private and public sectors have generally been comparable, but the earnings of civil servants have lagged behind those of white-collar workers in private industry. Thus, despite its preeminence as an employer, the government, which paid an estimated 39% of total personal earnings during 1969, has not been a trendsetter in wages and salaries. The greatest inequities in income, however, are evidenced by comparing the earnings of urban and rural workers. (C)

While a large segment of the rural population lives outside the money economy, the income of wage earners in agriculture is said to be one-fifth, or perhaps even one-sixth, that of the typical urban wage earner. Substantial disparities in pay also exist in the administrative ranks, blue-collar supervisors having been paid at a minimum rate of US\$1,980 per annum in 1972, while individuals in the uppermost echelons of management, whether in government or private industry, earned between US\$9,240 and US\$13,200. (C)

In addition to cash, most salary and wage earners receive several types of fringe benefits, in cash and in kind, which increase the value of earnings by as much as 60%. Family allowances and year-end bonuses, as well as the awarding of special grants in the event of a marriage, birth, or death within the employee's immediate family, are customary. In addition to housing and schools, some of the larger employers provide health, transportation, and recreational facilities for workers and their dependents. (U O)

Personal incomes have risen by about 5% a year since the late 1960's, but the consumer price index (Figure 17), which is based on the needs of low and moderate income urban families, has increased at a somewhat lower rate. Inflation has been controlled by

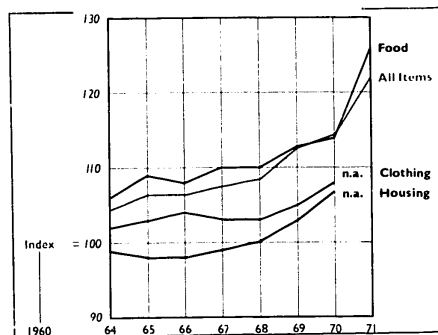


FIGURE 17. Consumer price index (U/OU)

government measures, including price controls and subsidies, designed to stabilize the cost of certain items of prime necessity to the consumer. Consequently, price increases have probably posed more of a hardship for middle and upper income families, whose aspirations for higher levels of living are predicated on obtaining improved housing (during a period of spiraling rents and construction costs) and acquiring greater quantities of durable goods (many of which are imported and costly). To offset this, it has become increasingly necessary for more than one member of each household to obtain employment, a practice that also has been commonplace among lower class families wishing to improve their lot. The intense competition for jobs resulting from this trend, which has been fueled by the heavy migrations of rural inhabitants, has contributed to widespread unemployment and underemployment in the cities. (C)

According to a survey of household expenditures conducted in 1969, roughly four-fifths of urban families spent the equivalent of US\$2,640 or less per year, attesting to the predominance of low income families. More recently, the International Labour Organisation (I.L.O) estimated that families comprising the top 10% of income earners accounted for 40% of the nation's private expenditures. Conversely, families in the bottom 30% were responsible for only about 8% of total private expenditures, proportions which illustrate the low levels of consumption that prevail among most wage earners. Whether in urban or rural areas, most wage earners devote the bulk of their income to food purchases, although rural dwellers channel a substantially higher proportion of family funds for that purpose than do urban families. Housing costs, which constitute the second most important item of expenditure among urban working

class families, require only a small fraction of the rural wage earner's funds, as indicated by the following percentage distribution of household expenditures during the years 1969-70: (C)

	URBAN	RURAL
Food	51.4	66.5
Housing	17.0	3.3
Clothing	6.4	6.0
Other	25.2	24.2
All items	100.0	100.0

The prevalence of poor living conditions and high unemployment, combined with a weakening of family ties that has attended urbanization, have brought about change in the nature and pattern of social problems. While the incidence of violent personal crimes is low and that of crimes involving property, such as theft, fraud, and pickpocketing, has evidently tended to decline as a result of effective police countermeasures, drug addiction is a pressing problem, and the number of psychiatric disorders and suicides—most of which are related to family conflicts—has risen. (U/OU)

Drug addiction is officially regarded as the most pressing social problem. Having been as high as 2 million prior to the imposition of a 14-year ban on the cultivation of poppies in 1955, the number of opium smokers has been greatly reduced, albeit other forms of drug addiction have spread. Drug addicts, most of them users of opium and its derivatives, were estimated at 200,000 to 300,000 as of October 1971. Prior to the prohibition of poppy growing, opium smoking was widely practiced in rural areas, mainly by older men who met to indulge their habit on a daily basis. By the late 1960's, addiction to opium and other drugs was more prevalent in urban areas than elsewhere, and most of the addicts were young people with higher than average schooling. The new generation of users reportedly has preferred heroin over opium; there may have been as many as 50,000 heroin addicts in 1971, the bulk of them concentrated in Tehran and other large cities. Young persons in the capital have also begun smoking hashish. (C)

Mainly in response to the large-scale smuggling of opium into Iran from Turkey and Afghanistan, in 1969 the government rescinded its ban on poppy cultivation. Strict acreage and harvesting controls were established and severe punishments were promulgated for those convicted of illegally trafficking in opium and other narcotics. The Opium Monopoly, a government unit which ostensibly maintains complete control over the processing and disposition of the drug, was also established. The agency distributes

opium to pharmacists for resale to registered addicts, estimated at 105,000 in 1972. The death penalty may be inflicted for trafficking or possessing more than 10 grams of heroin or 2 kilograms of opium. By the end of 1972, 133 offenders had been executed and numerous others imprisoned. During 1969-70, moreover, one-third of all court cases dealt with narcotics offenses. (C)

Under the iron rule of Reza Shah, the incidence of crime was kept at a low level. During World War II and the immediate postwar period, however, the relaxation of police powers coupled with the effects of inflation and the scarcity of goods caused an upsurge in criminal activities, especially in the cities. Urban crime was gradually brought under control during the 1960's, although the depredations of bandits and other armed gangs operating in rural areas continued into the early 1970's. While there is little information on juvenile delinquency, most young offenders have been apprehended for petty larceny. (U/OU)

Prostitution is illegal in most cities, but many brothels are tacitly permitted to function, presumably because of bribes to the police. Streetwalkers, however, are subject to arrest. Since a sizable number of urban residents have no fixed abode, vagrancy is widespread in the larger cities. Authorities periodically round up vagrants and beggars and send them to government-operated labor camps, where some vocational training is offered. Gambling, a popular form of recreation, is generally conducted in private homes, making its curtailment difficult. (U/OU)

While street crimes by and large are under control, the government has been preoccupied with corruption and dishonesty in official circles, activities which are not popularly construed as offensive or serious. Similarly, income tax evasion among the wealthy, a common practice, is not regarded as a criminal act, and few cases are prosecuted. (U/OU)

1. Health and sanitation (U/OU)

Considerable progress has been achieved in the fields of health and sanitation since the 1950's. New health and medical care facilities have been built, and the proportion of villages in which medical services are available has risen. Increasing numbers of medical and paramedical personnel have been trained. Moreover, the government, with the cooperation of foreign and international agencies, has instituted programs aimed at the control or eradication of such diseases as malaria, tuberculosis, schistosomiasis, and smallpox, and it has mounted indoctrinational campaigns designed to upgrade personal hygiene and environmental sanitation (Figure 18). Nonetheless,



FIGURE 18. Educating the public. Posters illustrate recommended habits of personal hygiene. (U/OU)

public and private efforts in the fields of health and sanitation have been inadequate in relation to the need. Dietary deficiencies, contaminated water and food supplies, overcrowded housing, poor personal hygiene, ignorance, and insufficient medical and sanitation services continue to contribute to low levels of health and to a high incidence of preventable disease. Budgetary limitations combine with the country's rugged and arid terrain to slow the extension of modern medical facilities and to hinder the implementation of disease control measures.

Until the 20th century, almost no organized health services existed in Iran. Virtually the only medical practitioners in the country were herbal and

traditional religious healers. Since the early 1900's, however, a public health service has been established, augmented by private endeavor, and medical and nursing schools have been opened. During the 1950's, the government began an expansion of health facilities, with assistance from agencies of the United Nations and the U.S. Government, and this expansion has continued under the impetus of the government's economic and social development programs. Despite the extension of health care facilities into the countryside, modern medical care is still unavailable to large segments of the rural population. Whereas 1 million rural Iranians had access to health care facilities in 1962, by 1971 the number had climbed to 8 million—between 45% and 50% of the rural population—according to a statement by the Shah. The goal of the Fourth Development Plan in this field is to provide such access to 65% of rural residents by March 1973.

Since the mid-1960's, official efforts to extend modern medical care to rural areas have been greatly facilitated by the Health Corps, established in 1964 as one of several revolutionary development corps. Most of its personnel are secondary school graduates who fulfill their military obligation by working in health and sanitation in Iran's villages; others are physicians drafted for 2 years' service. A total of approximately 6,600 Health Corps members worked in rural areas in the period 1964-71, serving in clinics and dispensaries and manning mobile health units.

Despite improved availability of health care, the typical villager depends in whole or in part on traditional medicine, which involves reliance on herbal remedies passed down from generation to generation, and on incantations, "magic" formulas, and Koranic verses that are thought to ward off illness and effect cures. For serious illnesses, rural residents may consult both modern and traditional practitioners. Most villagers, and many townfolk as well, are fatalistic about sickness, viewing the state of their health as God's will; those in the more remote areas continue to attribute physical and other misfortune to evil spirits. Traffic in talismans is common, even among elements of the population in Tehran. Dental services generally are unavailable in rural areas. Local barbers normally extract teeth; they also routinely perform circumcisions.

Iranians in general show little concern about environmental sanitation, and most are basically ignorant of the relationship between personal hygiene and good health. Throughout much of the country the water supply is inadequate, and water shortages are frequent. Moreover, water pollution is a major health

problem, most sources being contaminated. As of 1970, piped water systems were operational in parts of Tehran and 29 other urban centers and in more than 600 villages. Only in Tehran, Shiraz, and four other cities, however, were water treatment facilities available. Most of the rural population continue to rely on rivers, springs, irrigation ditches, or *qanats* (series of dug-well shafts and interconnecting tunnels) as sources of water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. In urban areas without piped water systems, inhabitants draw their water from open conduits known as *jubes* (Figure 19). Inasmuch as both urban and rural sources of water also are commonly used for washing clothes and the disposal of human waste, they are a major factor in the high incidence of disease. In some villages, deep wells that provide potable water are now in use, and it is official policy to increase and improve the supply of water to the population. Large-scale projects, representing public, private, and international commitment, are now underway to achieve this goal.

In general, waste disposal in both urban and rural areas is unsatisfactory. Tehran and other large urban centers have sewerage systems serving the modern sections, but only Abadan has a modern sewage treatment plant. Elsewhere, untreated waste from sewers is discharged into nearby rivers or streams. Cesspools and latrines also are used, particularly in small cities and towns and in the older sections of the major cities. In some cities, the same *jubes* which are

used for water supply are also used for disposal of human waste. Villagers relieve themselves indiscriminately by roadsides or streams. The larger cities have routine garbage and trash collection in the modern sections, with the material disposed of by dumping outside the city limits. In other parts of the larger cities, in the smaller urban centers, and in the villages, garbage and trash is burned, buried, or left to rot in community dumps.

Sanitary conditions in food processing facilities, markets, dairies, and slaughterhouses are poor. Government inspection of all meat is required by law but is only sporadically enforced. In some of the modern facilities in Tehran, food is processed and packaged under hygienic conditions, but these operations are the exception to the rule. Primitive marketing conditions in most areas are a major health problem, with foodstuffs normally being displayed in the open air, subject to contamination by dirt, insects, and handling by customers. Poor sanitary conditions in nearly all parts of the country contribute directly to the high incidence of gastrointestinal and other ailments.

The registration of diseases nowhere approaches completeness, but health authorities list gastrointestinal disorders, influenza, trachoma and other eye infections, malaria, tuberculosis, venereal diseases, measles, mumps, and whooping cough as major health problems. Other widespread diseases include typhoid and paratyphoid fever, diphtheria, scarlet fever, poliomyelitis, meningitis, leprosy, and helminthiasis. According to health officials, childhood diseases were the leading cause of death in the late 1960's, followed by gastrointestinal ailments and respiratory diseases.

Although there has been a substantial increase in the number of medical and paramedical personnel since 1960, they are still in short supply, except in Tehran. According to a press account, early in 1972 the country had some 8,970 physicians, or roughly 1 for every 3,300 inhabitants. In 1960, the ratio was 1 for every 4,100. Almost half of the country's medical doctors are located in the Tehran area, however, and another 25% practice in other major cities. No more than one-fourth live in small towns and villages, but even this proportion indicates significant progress in official efforts to bring medical care to the country's rural residents. In 1962, for example, only an estimated 3% of all physicians practiced in the nation's small towns and villages. Financial inducements to those willing to practice in the countryside having met with limited response, the government now drafts doctors for service in rural areas or makes such service a requirement for those who obtain their medical schooling at government



FIGURE 19. *Jubes* in Tehran. These open conduits serve as sources of water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. They are also used for washing clothes and for the disposal of waste. (C)

expense. Not all physicians in the rural areas are happy with these arrangements, and some are reported to be lax in the performance of their duties as a result.

As of 1970, about 43% of Iranian physicians had been educated within the country, the rest being graduates of medical schools in at least 19 different countries. In general, locally trained doctors lack the professional qualifications of those trained in the West. Medical training in Iran is regarded as poor; classrooms are crowded, and the curriculum emphasizes lectures with little practical application. Few students are able to read foreign-language medical literature, and little medical literature is available in Persian. Each year, a number of Iranian students pursue medical studies abroad, but many of those who graduate remain in the country in which they were trained. It was reported in 1970, for example, that there were nearly 2,500 Iranian physicians practicing in the United States and West Germany alone.

According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics for 1970, there were 1,630 dentists, 1,002 veterinarians, 3,166 pharmacists, 1,571 midwives, 2,888 nurses, 609 assistant midwives, and 5,974 assistant nurses in Iran.

During the years 1958-69, the number of hospitals in Iran more than doubled and the number of hospital beds rose from 20,345 to 27,424. Nonetheless, new construction during the period no more than kept pace with population growth, the bed-to-population ratio (1.0 per 1,000) being the same in 1968 as it was in 1958. According to a statement by the Shah early in 1971, however, the number of beds at that time approximated 35,000, or 1.2 per 1,000 population, and the Fourth Development Plan calls for 45,000 beds by March 1973. If this goal is reached, the bed-to-population ratio will be 1.5 per 1,000, a figure still inferior to that of Iraq and of Turkey, but far superior to the ratios prevailing in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

As of 1968, almost all of Iran's hospitals were located in urban centers, and over 40% of the total number of beds were in the Tehran area alone. Only 27 hospitals were designated as rural, and these institutions had an average of only 20 beds each. The distribution of hospital beds by type of hospital facility for 1968 is shown in the following tabulation:

TYPE OF FACILITY	NUMBER	NUMBER OF BEDS
General hospitals	331	18,846
Tuberculosis sanatoriums	9	3,516
Mental institutions	10	2,090
Maternity hospitals	13	1,046
Leprosariums	2	677
Pediatric hospitals	6	552
Rural hospitals	27	552
Narcotics addiction center	1	145

Hospitals are operated by various government entities, including the Social Insurance Organization (SIO), and also by universities, private firms, and religious and welfare organizations, including the Red Lion and Sun Society (RLSS), Iran's equivalent of the Red Cross. Conditions in Iran's hospitals vary widely. Some of the larger facilities, particularly those affiliated with a university, are generally well equipped and adequately staffed. Most smaller hospitals, however, lack many of the basic necessities and are overcrowded and understaffed.

According to the Shah, Iran had some 2,500 health clinics and dispensaries early in 1971, as compared with 1,100 in 1962 and 850 in 1958. Moreover, there are some 500 mobile health units. Many of the health facilities in rural areas are staffed in part by members of the Health Corps.

2. Diet and nutrition (U/OU)

The production of foodstuffs has kept pace with the increase in the population since the mid-1950's, but the nutritional levels of the Iranian people have risen only slightly. Moreover, such improvement as has been effected has been primarily quantitative rather than qualitative. Although starvation is not a problem, much of the population is malnourished and the typical diet is unbalanced, being high in carbohydrates and low in such protective nutrients as protein, vitamins, and minerals. Deficiencies in protein of animal origin, vitamin A, vitamin C, riboflavin, calcium, and iron are particularly marked. Poor nutrition combines with popular ignorance of food values to produce a high incidence of infant anemia, night blindness, pellagra, rickets, and scurvy. Chronic malnutrition is a major cause of low productivity among low-income families.

In general, persons living in the northwestern part of the country have a more varied and nutritious diet than those who live in the food deficit areas of central and southeastern Iran. Middle and upper class elements in the northwest have access to many kinds of food, and their diet is generally the best in the country. In rural areas, the diet varies with the seasons, the intake of calories declining from a high in late summer to a low in late winter and early spring. Near-famine conditions often occur among rural residents in Baluchestan va Sistan and in areas along the Persian Gulf. The nomadic population subsists almost wholly on cereals and products from their herds.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, which has set the food requirement for countries like Iran at 2,400 calories per day, per capita consumption of calories in the country stood at 1,950 in the mid-1960's; it is believed to have risen slightly

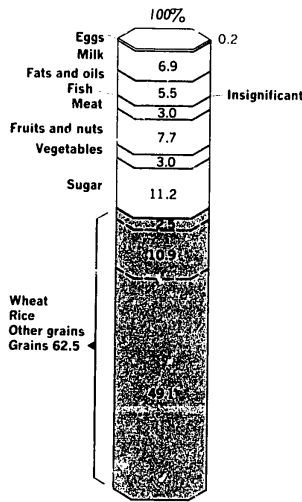


FIGURE 20. Per capita consumption of calories (U/OU)

since that time. Grains account for almost 63% of the total caloric intake, with wheat alone making up almost 50%. In contrast, meats comprise about 3% of the total (Figure 20). Protein intake in the mid-1960's was estimated at 52.1 grams per capita per day; only 22% was of animal origin.

The basic diet for most Iranians consists of wheat bread, goat cheese or yogurt, and sugared tea, supplemented in season by fruits and vegetables. In the Caspian Sea area, rice is customarily substituted for bread. Per capita consumption of meat is low. Mutton and goat meat are most commonly consumed, although some beef, veal, and poultry is eaten. Because of the Islamic proscription, pork is rarely a part of the diet. Fish is normally consumed only by persons living near the Caspian Sea or the Persian Gulf, and not in large quantities. Fruits and nuts are popular; the former include apples, melons, oranges, grapes, dates, and figs. Cucumbers, tomatoes, beans, and peas are common vegetables.

The Food and Nutrition Institute, established in 1961, is charged with responsibility for raising the dietary level of the population. Some of the institute's programs are designed to make Iranians aware of food values; others seek to alleviate nutritional deficiencies by enriching foods, such as wheat flour.

3. Housing (U/OU)

Iran's housing stock ranges from the rustic to the luxurious (Figure 21), but only a small segment of the

population is adequately housed. The typical dwelling unit is built of primitive materials, is overcrowded, lacks ventilation, and is largely devoid of modern sanitary and other conveniences. Furthermore, the shortage of housing is acute in urban areas, where home construction has not kept pace with population growth. Iran's housing problem is of such magnitude that official efforts to alleviate it have had almost no impact. The government has built homes for civil servants, has constructed a few low-cost housing projects, and has increased funds available to the Mortgage Bank of Iran, but it relies heavily on private initiative for home construction. In some areas where no potential for private investment exists, however, the government has agreed to finance a limited number of homes. Operating through the Ministry of Housing and Development, established in 1964, it is also attempting to promote higher standards in home construction and to encourage the building of larger dwellings (Figure 22).

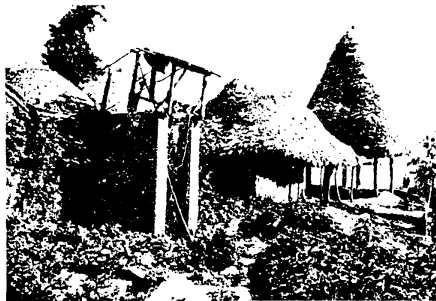
Most of the nearly 4 million dwelling units counted in the 1966 census were made of brick, usually kiln-fired brick in urban areas and sun-dried mudbrick in the countryside. Fewer than 1% of all units were made of reinforced concrete, but this construction material is becoming more popular for new houses in the cities. Wood or stone construction is encountered in some rural areas. Traditional urban homes are one- or two-story dwellings, inevitably with a walled courtyard. Two or more families, each with its own private room or rooms, may share the same unit and use the common courtyard. Windows and doors in the dwelling open only onto the courtyard, whose entranceway is secured by heavy wooden doors. Many urban residents, particularly recent migrants from the countryside, live in shacks which they have built for themselves of whatever scrap material was available.

The typical rural house is a simple structure, commonly built of mudbrick or wood and straw mats. Mudbrick dwellings are the norm in those arid areas of the country where timber is scarce. Along the Caspian coast, houses are constructed of wood, mudbrick, or a combination of the two. Thatch roofs are common in this area. Near Tabriz, brick homes predominate. The nomadic peoples live in tents. In the west and south these tents are usually rectangular; the Turkoman of the northeast and the Shabsavan of the northwest dwell in yurts, circular structures, easily disassembled, that consist of felt strips stretched over a dismantlable wooden framework.

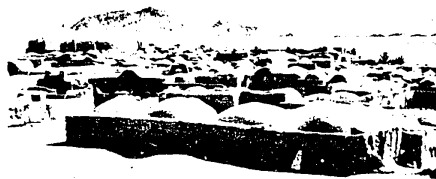
Overcrowding is customary except in the homes of the well-to-do. Houses are typically small, with rural homes being smaller than those in the cities, as shown in the following tabulation which gives the percentage



Typical mudbrick and thatch hut of the Caspian area (C)



Brick and thatch dwelling and outbuildings, Gilan Province (U/OU)



Typical village housing in the southeast. Roofs are vaulted because of the scarcity of timber. (U/OU)



Circular yurt of the nomadic Shahsavan tribespeople (C)



Rectangular tent of Kurdish nomads. Tents normally are woven of goats' hair. Reed mats are used as room dividers and to create storage areas adjacent to the tent. (C)



Modern housing in Tehran. Multistory apartments do not yet have wide appeal. (C)



Traditional urban dwellings, Ahvaz. Courtyards, which provide a degree of privacy, are used for cooking and other family activities. (U/OU)

FIGURE 21. REPRESENTATIVE HOUSING



FIGURE 22. Poor housing in Hamadan (U/OU)

distribution of total permanent dwelling units in 1966 by number of rooms:

ROOMS	URBAN UNITS	RURAL UNITS	ALL UNITS
1	9.8	30.1	23.3
2	26.5	30.9	29.5
3	20.6	15.8	17.4
4	18.8	9.8	12.5
5	9.9	4.8	6.5
6 or more	14.4	8.6	10.5

In 1966, Iranian households averaged five persons. The average number of persons per room was 2.3, but this figure masked the fact that about two-fifths of all households lived in one-room structures and that another one-third lived in two-room dwellings. More than 9,000 families of eight or more members lived in one-room houses. In both urban and rural areas, kitchens are uncommon. Cooking is done outdoors (Figure 23).

The majority of homes in Iran have few amenities. In 1966, only 25.4% of all permanent dwellings (68.6% in urban areas and 3.7% in the countryside) were served by electricity. As shown in the following tabulation, 15.1% of all units had piped water within the dwelling; most of these were in urban centers:

	URBAN UNITS	RURAL UNITS	ALL UNITS
Piped water within dwelling	37.8	0.7	13.1
Piped water outside dwelling	19.6	1.6	7.6
No water source on premises	42.6	97.7	79.3

Household furnishings are spartan; household equipment is limited to necessary utensils for cooking. Only in the homes of the well-to-do are such items as refrigerators and electrical labor-saving appliances found.

4. Work opportunities and conditions (C)

a. The people and work

Despite rapid urban growth and industrialization, the single largest contingent of workers (estimated at nearly 43% of the labor force in 1972) remains in agriculture or stockraising, once the nation's leading economic activities. Largely because of the rugged terrain, meager water supplies, and poor and eroding soil, conditions of work and of life in general are harsh in the rural sector. In an effort to bring about improvement while simultaneously dismantling an archaic pattern of land tenure, the government has enacted a program of land redistribution; additionally, it has extended the irrigation network, introduced a limited amount of mechanization, and provided some technical assistance to farmers. Nonetheless, the land reform program has not proved to be a panacea and primitive methods of cultivation and animal husbandry persist (Figure 24). Thus, in overpopulated agricultural districts, adjustments in land tenure and applications of technology have not significantly altered a situation in which most farming families must choose between overcultivation, which over the long run is attended by a stagnation or decline in production, and migration to the towns and cities. A third alternative, the cultivation of specialized crops for distant markets, is largely infeasible in view of the inadequacy of the nation's transportation and



FIGURE 23. Because most homes lack kitchens, food is commonly prepared outdoors. The Yamut woman above is baking bread, the staple of the Iranian diet. (U/OU)



Peasants harvesting potatoes on a semiarid plain (U/OU)



Bakhtiari tribesmen turning the soil. The wide black trouser is a distinctive item of male apparel among these seminomadic people. (U/OU)

FIGURE 24. PRIMITIVE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

Because of the poor quality of pastureland, nomadic herdsmen must forage their livestock over a wide area (C)

marketing systems. The government, moreover, has given less emphasis to rural development programs in order to concentrate its resources on urban public works and on expanding the petroleum and allied industries.

Numerous farm families have chosen to migrate to the cities in hope of finding work and better living conditions. Mainly as a result of this movement, however, the urban labor pool has grown at a substantially faster rate than job opportunities, with the result that unemployment and underemployment have soared. Official Iranian estimates of the urban unemployment rate in 1972 ranged between 5.5% to 12.0%, but even the latter proportion is thought to understate the magnitude of the problem.

The rural to urban migration, moreover, has not substantially relieved unemployment and underemployment in the countryside. According to a report prepared by the ILO early in 1972, from 27.8% to 31.6% of all agricultural workers were unemployed. The extent of rural underemployment, which fluctuates widely in accordance with the agricultural cycle, is equally large, if not larger. Underemployment is not only acute in the rural sector, but it also is widespread in urban areas, as most private commercial and service firms are overstaffed; a surplus of workers, particularly in the ranks of the unskilled and semiskilled, also is found in the civil service and in government enterprises. On a national basis, and taking into account the impact of both unemployment and underemployment (including the large number of persons who are self-employed on a casual basis), a U.S. authority has estimated that, as of mid-1972, the proportion of workers who were productively employed on a fairly regular basis probably amounted to between 60% and 75% of the labor force.

Largely because of the high rate of population growth and limitations in the capacity of agriculture



to absorb more workers, prospects for reducing unemployment in the immediate future are dim. As acknowledged in the government's Fifth Development Plan (21 March 1973-20 March 1978), between 1.3 and 1.5 million jobs, or as many as 300,000 jobs per year, would have to be generated during the period to accommodate new entrants into the labor force. Inasmuch as the preceding plan's goal of creating 200,000 jobs annually appears to have fallen short, it can be concluded that full employment is not within reach and that the rates of unemployment and underemployment will remain high.

In view of a severe competition for jobs among men with dependents, the expansion of employment opportunities for women, another objective of government planners, may also be elusive. As of 1972 men in the labor force outnumbered women by almost 7 to 1, a ratio that had remained essentially unchanged since the 1966 census, albeit manpower surveys and censuses alike grossly underenumerate the extent of participation by women, especially as unpaid family workers in agriculture and in cottage industries. While there are more women than men in a few occupations, namely nursing, weaving, laundering, and domestic service, considerable opposition exists to the employment of women in jobs outside those fields. The expansion of modern industries and services, however, has somewhat undermined this resistance by creating a demand for women trained in secretarial and other office skills or in social work, and the growth of the educational system has increased opportunities for women in teaching; nonetheless, as of 1970 about 60% of all primary school teachers were men. On the other hand, few women have entered professional occupations in medicine and engineering, and only a scant number serve as judges, mayors, or village leaders. Largely reflecting the low rate of participation by women in blue-collar occupations, women comprised only 4% of the total number of workers covered under the SIO-administered social insurance program in 1969.

Most of the growth in job opportunities during the 1960's and early 1970's occurred in the government service and in the industrial, construction, and commercial sectors of the economy. In the years 1966-72, the government work force, comprising all categories of civilian employees as well as military and police personnel, increased by an average of about 49,000 persons annually, with many of the new entrants placed in public enterprises and construction projects. In the latter year, some 955,000 workers, or almost 11% of the national labor force, worked for the government; about two-thirds of these were civilians. Even though the low levels of skill that prevail in the

labor force have probably tended to slow the rate of industrial expansion, the growth of job opportunities in certain modern industries has been similarly dramatic.

Semiskilled and unskilled personnel constitute upward of 90% of the industrial work force. Nationwide, roughly one-half of the employed population is estimated to be illiterate. Illiterates, however, are more heavily concentrated among the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed; according to the 1966 census, about 77% of the unemployed were illiterate. Limitations in the availability and quality of domestic technical and vocational instruction have forced numerous Iranians to seek such training abroad. But, once trained, many have failed to return to their homeland. Thus, in order to partially satisfy the need for technicians and other skilled personnel, the government has found it necessary to relax its policy of barring the entry of alien workers. As of March 1971, some 15,000 aliens were employed in the country, the vast bulk of them in positions officially categorized as "essential." Foreigners in "essential" jobs are obliged to train their Iranian counterparts. While striving to combat illiteracy and to upgrade and expand technical and vocational training programs, the government and some of the larger private employers have also liberalized fringe benefits and instituted other incentives, including profit sharing and worker cooperatives. These measures, designed to increase productivity, also have the purpose of overcoming the antipathy toward manual labor which is shared by many urban workers, especially the more highly educated (Figure 25).

The trend toward modern industrialization notwithstanding, a majority of nonagricultural workers continue to be employed in small firms, including cottage industries, where conditions of work are substandard and the length of the workday often exceeds statutory limits. Despite its importance, the petroleum industry, for example, employed only 40,000 workers in 1972, or about 0.5% of the national labor force. Three years earlier, nearly two-thirds of all workers engaged in the manufacturing and processing industries worked in firms having fewer than 10 employees, as indicated by the following distribution of places of employment and workers according to plant size:

NUMBER OF WORKERS	PERCENTAGE OF PLANTS	PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS
9 or less	97.1	63.7
10-49	2.5	12.5
50 or more	0.4	23.8
All workers	100.0	100.0



FIGURE 25. Petroleum refinery workers. Such workers represent one of the most highly skilled and best paid groups. (U/OU)

The poor working conditions that prevail in the small establishments, combined with widespread inefficiency, a lack of worker discipline, the use of antiquated equipment, and high rates of employee absenteeism, result in low productivity. According to an analysis of productivity, more than two-thirds of the nation's industrial output emanates from the larger firms (10 or more workers), which comprise only about 3% of the total number of plants and employ 36% of the total industrial labor force.

b. Labor legislation

Although it applies to only a small segment of the work force, Iran's labor legislation is progressive. The Labor Law of 1959, which has been amended to broaden provisions concerning conditions of work, especially as they relate to industrial safety, is the basic piece of labor legislation. Essentially applicable to firms in the industrial and modern commercial sectors

only, the law does not cover agricultural workers, unpaid family workers, the self-employed, and civil servants. Although it provides for a 6-day, 48-hour workweek, most white collar employees work 5 1/2 days, the length of the workday being curtailed on Thursdays. Many unskilled blue-collar workers, on the other hand, work 60 hours or more per week, while semiskilled workers average about 54 hours. Friday is the day of rest, and 13 legal holidays are observed yearly. Up to 4 hours of overtime work per day are authorized, at 35% above the basic wage. Except for workers in the petroleum industry, there are no provisions for added compensation for nightwork. Workers must be granted a maximum of 12 days of paid leave per year, and, where climatic conditions are harsh, workers receive twice that amount. Employers are obliged to provide adequate sanitation facilities and emergency medical treatment. In practice, some of the large enterprises provide worker benefits beyond those required by law: the petroleum companies, for example, pay 135% above the regular wage rates for overtime work and provide 120 days of annual leave. Conversely, many of the smaller concerns do not abide by the requirements, particularly insofar as working hours and safety practices are concerned.

Provisions pertaining to the employment of women and children are also contained in the Labor Law. Persons under 18 and women are not authorized to engage in nightwork, and children under 12 cannot be legally employed. Violations of the latter regulation have been commonplace, however, especially in the privately owned carpetweaving and textile establishments, many of which have been prosecuted for the infractions. While the legal minimum age requirements and stipulations concerning working conditions are generally observed in government workshops, most carpet and textile production emanates from private establishments, including family shops, where child labor is an ancient and widespread practice, although they are particularly conspicuous in the weaving industries, minors also are employed in numerous other activities requiring a wide range of skills (Figure 26). An estimated 878,000 children age 10-14, a substantial proportion of them under age 12, were employed in 1972.

The Labor Law contains an unusual provision which prohibits worker dismissals unless the employer is able to place the discharged worker in a job providing equal or better pay and other benefits. The provision has given rise to numerous disputes between labor and management. To avoid compliance, employers often hire workers under short-term contracts or for probationary periods. Although

C



Many youngsters perform simple tasks, such as sorting tobacco at a curing barn

FIGURE 26. CHILD LABOR (U/OU)

government-operated employment exchanges were established in the main cities in accordance with the law, most recruiting and hiring is done by word of mouth, often using the services of labor brokers and recruiters who frequent the bazaars.

Minimum wage legislation was first enacted in 1946, but was not enforced until 1969, when wage schedules were promulgated. Inasmuch as skilled workers normally are paid wages above the minimum levels, unskilled laborers outside family enterprises constitute the bulk of those benefiting from the law. In fact, at the time the wage schedules went into effect about 75% of all workers earned wages higher than the minimum rates. Taking into account regional variations in the cost of living, the minimum wage schedules are reviewed and adjusted every 2 years if necessary. As of March 1971, following the first increase in minimum wages, the rates were fixed at Rls60, Rls65, and Rls70, respectively, in each of the nation's three wage zones. The highest minimum wage applies to workers in Zone 1, which comprises the capital and other major urban areas; secondary cities are generally covered under Zone 2, while Zone 3, mainly contains provincial towns and villages.

In accordance with the Profit Sharing Act of 1963, industrial workers other than railroad and public utility employees and those in the petroleum companies must share in employer profits up to a



Young boy engraving a silver vessel with the aid of a primitive type of lathe. Whether in silversmithing or carpet weaving, children's small fingers are said to facilitate the elaboration of intricate designs, despite the use of crude working tools.

maximum of 20% of each establishment's net earnings. The government has estimated that as of mid-1972 nearly 280,000 workers in both the public and the private sectors shared in profits. Although government officials have widely publicized the implementation of the act, there have been indications that many workers were not receiving the full amounts to which they were entitled. Mainly because of this, a new bill designed to tighten the regulations and to broaden the scope of the basic act was being prepared in 1972. Under the proposed legislation, workers in establishments having 10 or more employees would be entitled to share in profits. The government has estimated that 500,000 workers will be affected by the new law. Another provision of the law authorizes the government to sell shares in the ownership of public enterprises to individual workers.

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is responsible for enforcing the labor legislation.

Compliance with health and safety standards is supervised by the Ministry's inspection corps, the effectiveness of which is said to be hampered by a shortage of adequately trained personnel. Before they begin operations all newly organized firms must be approved by inspectors. The few qualified inspectors carry out their work mainly in the large, modern establishments, where they focus on compliance with industrial safety practices. Working conditions are said to be good in such concerns, especially in those operated by foreign companies. In many of the small shops, on the other hand, conditions are poor, largely because the operators are unable or unwilling to abide by the health and safety regulations. In addition, the workers' low level of education is a handicap to them in understanding the complex provisions. Collective bargaining over profit sharing, for instance, is frequently delayed because workers and managers alike are unable to apply the formulas used in determining each worker's share. Employees, moreover, are generally not safety conscious and frequently violate existing rules.

Civil service legislation has existed for 50 years, but regulations concerning the status and rights of government workers are officially acknowledged to be "chaotic." Part of the problem results from the numerous categories and subcategories of employment contained within the service. Five bills designed to reform and rationalize the Civil Service were introduced in parliament during the 1960's. One of these, known as the Civil Service Code, was conditionally approved in 1966 and delivered for use on an experimental basis prior to receiving final sanction. A lengthy and comprehensive document, the code at last report had not been fully implemented or finally approved. Among other provisions, it recognizes two categories of employment, established and contractual; prescribes the use of entrance examinations in recruiting; requires a uniform pay schedule; stipulates that salaries shall be adjusted in accordance with changes in the cost of living; and lists various types of fringe benefits, the cumulative value of which is not allowed to exceed the amount of salary.

c. Labor and management

Although not permitting the emergence of a genuinely free labor movement, the government, in keeping with its development objectives, has allowed some workers to organize into syndicates which represent their interest before management. The syndicates, evolved from ancient guilds of craftsmen, artisans, and tradesmen, generally represent workers employed in the same occupation or in a single place

of employment. In some instances, individual organizations have combined to form regional "unions," which are also structured along occupational lines; in addition, the government has held out the possibility of allowing the formation of labor federations which would operate at the national level. Although Iran is a charter member of the ILO and some of the country's labor organizations have been affiliated with international labor entities in the past, the government has restricted labor's external activities since the late 1950's. Labor delegates selected by the government attend ILO meetings and serve as nonmember observers at activities of such groups as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the International Federation of Petroleum and Chemical Workers. The government also maintains close surveillance over the domestic activities of labor groups, and only those certified with the National Intelligence and Security Organization (SAVAK) are permitted to function.

The government's policy toward labor organizations has been conditioned by its experiences with the Communist-oriented unions that formed during and after World War II, when Soviet forces occupied northern Iran. At that time, the syndicates were transformed into the Communist United Council of Trade Unions, which was suppressed as part of a general crackdown on leftist elements during the years 1953-54. Unaffiliated Communist syndicates, however, continued to operate for a few years thereafter, during which time the government encouraged the formation of non-Communist labor groups to counteract the influence of the leftists. Failing in this effort, the government abolished all labor organizations in 1957. While labor syndicates were subsequently allowed to form and to engage in collective bargaining, these new organizations were enjoined from participating in political activities, although their spokesmen occasionally have been allowed to express a preference for, or to cooperate with, political parties. Actually, nearly all syndicates are affiliated with the Iran Worker's Organization, a branch of the Iran Novin Party, the party representing the Shah and the government.

Representing only a small portion of the country's estimated 2.5 million urban workers, nearly 400 syndicates were in operation as of August 1972, somewhat over 70% of them—with a membership exceeding 80,000 workers—located in Tehran. Little is known about the strength of union type organizations, but in 1971 preparations were underway to form several national labor federations. The most influential syndicates represent factory workers, civil

servants, teachers, and transportation workers; the petroleum workers' syndicates are among the nation's largest and oldest; large blocks of workers, including some 400,000 construction laborers in Tehran, are unrepresented. In addition to the government's reluctance to allow free trade unionism, the low rate of participation in organized labor can be ascribed in part to the individualism of most workers, who tend to shun group activities. Also, many workers are unaware of the possibility of improving their lot through organized channels.

In general, relations between labor and management are characterized by a paternalistic approach on the part of the employer toward his employees. Usually determining the terms and conditions of employment unilaterally, the employer enjoys a superior bargaining position, except in the larger urban concerns which are subject to a greater degree of surveillance by government labor inspectors. In times of illness or other personal difficulties, the paternalism and generosity of the employer is important to the workers who are not protected by labor legislation.

Mechanisms for the settlement of disputes between labor and management are stipulated in the Labor Law. Disputes involving an individual worker are arbitrated by a tripartite board consisting of representatives of the employer, the worker, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Collective disputes are subject to preliminary negotiations between representatives of labor and management; if the parties are unable to arrive at a settlement, the dispute is referred to a tripartite arbitration board. The terms of settlement are ultimately subject to the approval of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. In practice, the ministry usually intervenes and dictates a settlement when an industrial dispute threatens the public interest or when the issues at hand affect workers throughout an entire sector of industry. Since 1964 the government has been legally empowered to assume the management of concerns that are shut down by strikes or industrial disputes.

At the initiative of the more active syndicates, labor disputes have tended to concentrate on issues designed to bring about the enforcement of the labor statutes. As a customary tactic, syndicate spokesmen proclaim their support of the Shah's modernization goals in the face of opposition by "reactionary" employers. While usually attempting to apply remedial measures to the grievances expressed by organized workers, the government generally uses forceful intervention only as a last resort, or to curb unauthorized political activities. Having condemned labor unrest, in 1971

the government announced that severe measures would be taken against factory operators who interfered with the implementation of its socioeconomic programs; its announcement was prompted by a series of costly labor stoppages, some of them attended by violence. In some instances, such as the strike by textile mill employees in April 1971, the government has ordered management to meet the workers' major demands. Government intercession in that particular episode followed a violent confrontation between the strikers and local police and resulted in the arrest of the plant manager on charges of inciting a riot. In an earlier strike, which involved petroleum workers at the Abadan refinery, the government threatened workers with severe consequences if they did not call off the strike and ordered management to provide full pay for all workers during the 2-week duration of the stoppage. In addition to these major strikes, there have been numerous lesser ones, including some that were not authorized by syndicate leaders. Most have been promptly settled following intervention by officials of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The ministry's intercessions, moreover, have tended to favor the workers, whose demands are almost always at least partially met.

Employers' syndicates, which numbered 60 in 1971, represent the interests of management. The Council of Owners of Industries and the Truck Owners and Transportation Syndicate, both of which operate in Tehran, as well as the Esfahan Textile Industry Syndicate are among the most important. Entrepreneurial interests are represented by the approximately 4,000-member Chamber of Commerce, Industries, and Mines which operates at the national level and has offices in the capital and 18 other cities. Small-scale tradesmen, shopkeepers, and artisans have traditionally belonged to guilds, the membership of which has been declining. Neither the chambers nor the guilds, however, usually become entangled in the problems of labor relations. The chambers serve as forums for exchanging business and technical information, while the guilds represent their members' interests before the government and the public; additionally, the guilds establish standards of quality and provide welfare and burial services for their members. In 1970 some 110 guilds, representing about 120,000 members, were affiliated with Tehran's High Council of Guilds. Although the guilds are ostensibly apolitical, they are said to wield considerable influence in politics, especially at the local level. Most officials of guild high councils, in Tehran and other cities, are Iran Novin supporters.

5. Social security

a. Welfare services (U/OU)

Although the government is gradually extending modern welfare services, progress is retarded, in part, by a popular disposition to ascribe personal hardships to fate, or *taqdir*, and by the paramount role the family plays in attending to needy individuals, including the infirm, elderly, orphaned, and destitute. According to the Islamic faith, moreover, almsgiving is considered a fundamental obligation. Consequently, much charitable work is supported through a network of trust funds, or *evkaf*, operating within the institutional framework of Islam. In times of natural disaster, Iranians of all classes have responded readily to appeals for collective assistance to relieve the plight of victims.

The government began to establish some welfare programs in the 1920's, during the reign of Reza Shah. Since that time, members of the imperial family have been personally involved, as sponsors and donors, in various welfare activities. Much of the crown's support for those endeavors is channeled through the RLSS and the Imperial Organization for Social Services (IOSS), although the latter of the two agencies derives most of its revenue from the proceeds of a nationwide lottery. Largely because of the imperial family's longstanding involvement in charity work and welfare projects, many people have come to regard all public socioeconomic betterment as personal gifts from the Shah. In addition to being endowed directly by the crown, many private charitable organizations receive subsidies from the central government. In the public sector, municipalities are legally required to perform certain welfare functions, including the operation of orphanages, nurseries, and winter hostels for the indigent. In 1970, 10 such facilities were operated by the municipality of Tehran.

Founded in 1942 as the first secular organization of its type, the RLSS, whose honorary president is the Shah, is the nation's most important welfare and charity agency. Besides administering hospitals and health dispensaries, the society operates a variety of other facilities, including child welfare centers, a rehabilitation center for paralyzed children, orphanages, and a workshop for manufacturing artificial limbs. The Association for Protection of Deaf and Dumb Children is supported by the RLSS, as is a youth service club which had a membership of 80,000 in 1970. An affiliate of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the RLSS played a major role in coordinating and effecting relief operations

following the earthquakes in Khorasan (1968) and Fars (1972) and the floods in Khuzestan (1969).

The IOSS, an agency operating under the patronage of Princess Ashraf, the Shah's sister, specializes in providing health care and guidance on sanitary practices to low-income families through a network of hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries. Additionally, it maintains two rehabilitation centers for opium addicts. Established in 1947, the organization also operates several schools for training nurses, underprivileged children, and the blind and administers the largest pharmaceutical plant in the country. Another entity, the Pahlavi Foundation, was established and perpetually endowed by the Shah in 1961. The foundation supports a number of educational and cultural activities, some of them revenue producing, as well as the Farah Pahlavi Charity Organization, which, in turn, operates 70 child welfare institutions of various types. A number of additional agencies specialize in child care. These include the National Association for Protection of Children, which maintains centers for the care and instruction of retarded or otherwise handicapped youngsters and, in collaboration with the RLSS and CARE, supports a school lunch program; the Mother and Infants Protection Institute, which receives a substantial portion of its income from a special tax on motion picture tickets; and the Association for the Guidance and Support of Deficient Children. Other leading welfare agencies include the Society for the Protection of Lepers, the Anti-Tuberculosis Society, the National Society for Campaign Against Cancer, the National Society for the Protection of the Aged, the Association for the Support of Invalid Persons, and the Society for Aid to Prisoners.

Concentrated in the capital and other large cities, the welfare institutions are not readily accessible to a large segment of the population. Rehabilitation services for the handicapped, for instance, are unavailable outside Tehran, and one-fourth of all family counseling agencies are located in the capital. Additionally, the quality of welfare services is deficient. Whether public or private, the effectiveness of welfare services is hampered by poor planning and bureaucratic indecision. In order to facilitate coordination between public and private agencies, as well as to raise the quality of the services they purvey, the government plans to establish a High Council for Social Welfare sometime during the 1970's.

b. Social insurance (C)

In accordance with the Social Insurance Law of 1960, the national social insurance program provides

comprehensive coverage, albeit to a small segment of the population. Being essentially confined to wage and salary earners in industrial and certain commercial occupations, the program is administered by the SIO, an agency of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. Benefits are provided for sickness, maternity, temporary and permanent disability, retirement, and death; family allowances are also authorized. The program is supported by a contribution equivalent to 18% of the insured worker's wages, 13% coming from the employer and 5% from the employee; the government does not contribute. Insured persons are entitled to a minimum of 6 months of free medical service, although this period can be extended upon certification by the SIO's Medical Board. Covered men are eligible to retire at age 60, women at age 55, provided contributions have been made for at least 10 years; the minimum age requirement is lowered to 55 for men who have contributed to the fund for 30 years or more and for those employed in "unhealthy regions" for 20 to 25 years. The pension is equivalent to a minimum of 5% of the average earnings during the 2 years preceding retirement, while the maximum is equivalent to 100% of earnings. Wives and children of insured workers are eligible for survivor benefits. The cost of family allowances, which amount to Rs100 per month for each child after the first, is borne entirely by the employer. In addition to administering numerous hospitals and clinics, as of 1969 the SIO operated 42 branch offices and 21 agencies.

As of October 1972, about 835,000 workers, or 8.7% of the labor force, plus an estimated 2.5 million dependents were covered under the program, indicating that the government's goal of insuring 2.2 million workers by 1971 had fallen far short. Reflecting the concentration of insured workers in the capital as well as a poor distribution of welfare services elsewhere in the nation, in 1969 roughly 58% of the SIO's personnel were assigned to facilities in Tehran Province. Although 96% of all employers who participated in the program in that year were in the private sector, 32% of the insured were government workers (other than established civil servants), suggesting that the employees of public enterprises participate in the program to a greater degree than those in private industry.

Established civil servants employed on a full-time basis are insured under separate schemes, namely the Civil Servants Pension Fund and the Civil Servants Insurance Organization, the latter of which provides health coverage. Each plan embraces roughly one-half of all government workers, a substantial proportion of

them teachers, and both have been plagued by financial deficits and have required heavy government subsidies to keep from foundering.

As an adjunct of the rural cooperative program, the Iran Joint Stock Company has administered a life and accidental disability insurance program for villagers since 1968. Although the annual premium amounts to only Rs400 and the sum payable to survivors of the insured breadwinner is Rs40,000, fewer than 5,000 persons had enrolled in the plan within the first 2 years of its operation.

E. Religion (U/OU)



Islam is by far the most important religion in Iran, and Islamic precepts constitute an important force uniting Iranians of varied racial and cultural origins. Muslims comprise over 98% of the country's inhabitants. More than 90% of the population, including the various Persian-speaking peoples and

the Azeri-speaking Turkic groups, belong to the heterodox Shia branch of Islam, while no more than 8% of the total, mainly Kurds, Turkomans, Baluchis, and Arabs, are orthodox Sunni Muslims. Since the 16th century, Iran has been the citadel of the Shia world, which comprises perhaps 8% of all Muslims. The Shia faith has tended to isolate Iran from the rest of the Muslim world, and pan-Islamic sentiment accordingly has not been widespread. In the past, friction between Shiites and Sunnis was pronounced, but it has subsided during the 20th century. Most non-Muslim Iranians profess belief in one of the Christian denominations or in Bahaism, Judaism, or Zoroastrianism. Although these religions have few adherents, they have had a significant impact on the religious fabric of Iranian society.

The Constitution formally recognizes the dominant Imami sect of Shia Islam as the state religion and specifies that the Shah, who rules in the name of the 12th and last Shia Imam, must promote Imami Shia doctrines. According to the Constitution, all parliamentary legislation must be in harmony with Islamic principles; Cabinet officials are required to be Muslims; and, with a few exceptions, parliamentary deputies must also be Muslims. Although there has always been some prejudice against non-Muslim minority groups, freedom of worship is guaranteed as a civil right, and the Constitution formally recognizes Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and Christianity as minority religions. (Bahaism has not been so recognized.) Accordingly, one seat in the Majlis has been set aside for a representative of the Zoroastrian community, one for the Jews, one for the Assyrian Christians, and two for the Armenian Christians (Figure 27).

Shia Islam originated in the political struggles involving the successors to the Prophet Muhammad, who died in 632. The dominant faction of the Prophet's followers, the Sunnis (after *Sunnah*—the

practices of the Prophet) insisted that the caliphs succeeding Muhammad be selected by consensus of the Muslim community or its representatives. On the other hand, the Shiites (after *Shiat Ali*—party of Ali) held that the Prophet had designated Ali, his son-in-law and cousin, and, by implication, Ali's descendants as successors, called Imams. Bitter conflict ensued between the two parties, marked by civil war and assassinations of the rival leaders, including Ali himself. During the centuries following Ali's death in 661, the Shiites fragmented into countless sects and subsects. Most Shiites, including the Imamis (also known as Jafaris, after Jafar al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam, who died in 765), recognized Ali's descendants as their Imams, of whom there were 12. The murder of several Imams by the Sunni caliphs provided the Shiites with saints and martyrs, the most important after Ali himself being Husayn, Ali's second son.

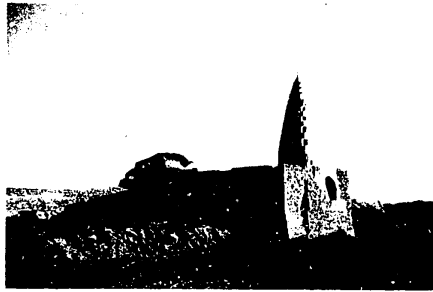
At the heart of Shia doctrine is the primacy given to the role of the Imams, who are considered to be infallible and the appointed successors of Muhammad to guide the Muslim community. In contrast to the Sunnis, who believe that divine revelation ceased with Muhammad, the Shiites regard the Imams as completing God's revelations. According to the Shiites, only the Imams know the inner, hidden meaning of the Koran, and they will serve as intercessors on Judgment Day between God and the believers. Imami Shiites believe in the existence of an immortal Hidden Imam, the 12th, who went into concealment as a child in about 874, and who will reappear one day as the Mahdi (rightly guided one) to establish peace and justice throughout the world.

On the more practical level, the Shiites espouse the doctrine of *taqiyyah* (dissimulation), which permits those in danger of religious persecution to deny their faith. Although the doctrine is not unique to the Shiites, it has been most frequently invoked by them because of their persecution by the Sunni majority. The Shiites also permit *mutah*, or temporary marriage, provided that a dower is specified and that a time period for the union (usually less than 1 year) is fixed. The Sunnis regard *mutah* as adultery. (*Mutah* in Iran, however, was outlawed by the Family Protection Law of 1967.)

Besides the predominant Imamis, there are two other small Shia sects in Iran, neither of which has more than a few thousand adherents. The Ismailis, sometimes known as Sevener, recognize only seven Imams, the last of whom they consider the Mahdi. Since 1957, their international spiritual head has been Aga Khan IV. Fewer in number than the Ismailis, the Shaikhis are followers of Shaikh Ahmad Ahsai, who

FIGURE 27. Religious affiliation of the population, 1966 (U/OU)
(Number in thousands)

RELIGION	NUMBER OF ADHERENTS	PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION
Islam	25,362	98.3
Christianity	234	0.9
Judaism	68	0.3
Bahaism	60	0.2
Zoroastrianism	21	0.1
Other	40	0.2
Total	25,785	100.0



Typical small rural mosque. Most villagers in central and southern Iran attend weekly religious services in these simple brick or mud structures. (C)

Large mosque in Esfahan. Dome is elaborately adorned with mosaic. (U/OU)

FIGURE 28. REPRESENTATIVE MOSQUES



claims direct contact with the Hidden Imam. The Shi'ahs venerate all 12 Imams, but diverge from the main body of Shi'ites on many points of theology.

Islamic mysticism (Sufism) has flourished in Iran among both Shi'ites and Sunnis. Sufi brotherhoods emphasize a personal, direct approach to God, and mystics who appear to be the most successful in reaching God are viewed as saints. The brotherhoods have included mendicant orders, such as the famous whirling dervishes, and organizations of middle or upper class Muslims seeking contemplation and meditation. Those orders still active in Iran reportedly include the Gonabadi, the Nehmatollahi, the Ebrahimi, and the Nawshahbandiya. Sufi poets have made significant contributions to Persian literature.

Like all Muslims, the Shi'ites accept certain basic articles of faith and religious practice. These include belief in one eternal God, Allah; recognition of Muhammad as the special Prophet of God and of his teachings as recorded in the Koran and the *Hadith* (traditions); and observance of the "five pillars" of the faith—recital of the creed, "There is no God but God and Muhammad is his Prophet," to which Shi'ites add, "and Ali, God's friend"; performance of prayer and ritual; almsgiving; fasting; and pilgrimage (hajj) to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

Devout Iranian Muslims observe the prescribed prayers at specific intervals, preceded by cleansing of the hands, arms, and feet. Prayers are normally spoken in Arabic, the language of the Koran. The Shi'ites offer prayers three times a day—at sunrise, noon, and sunset—rather than five times, as is the Sunni practice. Although the illiterate peasant may have little

conception of their meaning, prayers are an integral part of his daily life and punctuate the day's labor. Shi'ites are less inclined than Sunnis to pray in congregation in mosques or in other corporate groups.

There are about 20,000 mosques in Iran, ranging from relatively primitive and unadorned mud or brick structures in the rural areas to elaborate domed edifices in the cities (Figure 28). Village mosques frequently serve as local community centers, while religious schools are often conducted within both rural and urban mosques. Mosque functionaries vary in number from one for each village mosque or group of mosques to several in each of the larger urban mosques.

All Muslims are expected to give part of their income to the poor. They are also supposed to donate a fixed portion of their income to a mosque or religious organization in the form of a tithe. Among the Shi'ites, this "imam's share," comprising one-fifth of their income, is to be donated to descendants of the Prophet

for charitable works and assistance to the destitute. Only wealthy or exceptionally devout Iranian Muslims actually pay this title in full, however.

Iranian Muslims celebrate 16 religious holidays, 10 of them unique to the Shiites. The most important Shia holiday is *Ashura*, commemorating the martyrdom of Husayn, which falls on the 10th day of the lunar month of *Muharram*, a 30-day period of mourning. This period is observed by processions of mourners, acts of self-flagellation, and the reenactment of the tragedy through the *tazieh*, a sort of passion play. During Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar calendar, both Sunnis and Shiites are required to abstain from food, drink, and all pleasures of the flesh from dawn to dusk. The breaking of the fast each night is a festive family occasion. Ramadan concludes with the three-day celebration of *Id al-Fitr*.

As elsewhere, pilgrimages to Mecca and other holy places are prominent aspects of Iranian Islam. In 1972, 30,299 Iranians made pilgrimages to Mecca, thereby earning the title of hajji. Shiites also accrue special merit in visiting the shrines at Karbala and An Najaf in Iraq where Husayn and Ali are buried, respectively; at Qom in Iran where the sister of the Eighth Imam is buried; and at Mashhad, dedicated to the Eighth Imam. The annual number of pilgrims to the major Iranian shrines is estimated at over 1 million. Of more immediate significance in the daily religious life of the population are the numerous lesser Shia shrines called *imamzadehs*, which commemorate local religious personalities, mostly Sufi mystics. Such shrines are within easy reach of almost every village.

For many Iranians, the five pillars represent only the formal aspect of Islam. The popular religion of the peasants and urban lower classes combines superstitious beliefs and rites, many of them pre-Islamic, with Islamic tenets and practices. Shiites, for example, believe that spirits of the deceased Imams are capable of performing miracles, and Sunnis have similar beliefs. Many peasants wear charms and amulets to counteract the influence of the "evil eye." In contrast, neither formal Islam nor folk beliefs seem to have much appeal to the better educated urban Iranians. Most Westernized Iranians appear to be only nominal Muslims, but they generally avoid displaying their failure to observe fasting during Ramadan.

The Shia clerical hierarchy is more highly stratified than that of the Sunnis. At the base of the religious establishment are the mullahs, a term usually applied by Shiites to members of the lower clergy, many of them poorly educated and drawn from the lower social stratum. Numbering approximately 10,000 in Iran they conduct prayer services in the mosques, teach at



FIGURE 29. A mullah lecturing in Islamic law. Mullahs are generally bearded and wear turbans and long, flowing gowns. (C)

religious schools, and preside at various ceremonial functions (Figure 29). Religious leaders, teachers, and scholars, on the other hand, are normally referred to as *ulama*, to whom the Shiites grant greater doctrinal authority than do the Sunnis. Among the *ulama*, those who adjudicate questions of religious conduct are classified as *mujtahids* (estimated by the government to number about 100); a few especially learned *mujtahids* carry the honorific title *ayatollah*. Heading the religious establishment is a paramount leader known as the *pishva-ye-moslemeen*. Chosen by the *ulama* through a form of consensus, ostensibly for his piety and religious scholarship, he must be acceptable to the governments of both Iran and Iraq, which also has a large Shia community. The position has been vacant since the death in 1970 of Ayatollah Seyyed Mohsen Hakim.

Religious training is still conducted primarily in the traditionalist Shia theological schools (*madrasahs*), most of them secondary and postsecondary institutions affiliated with prominent mosques. Enrollment in these schools is believed to number well over 10,000. The curriculums of the *madrasahs* include Arabic grammar, mathematics, jurisprudence, and philosophy, and have changed little throughout the centuries. Large seminaries are located in Mashhad, Tabriz, Esfahan, and Shiraz. The largest and most important seminary, the School of Theology at Qom, with about 5,000 students, stresses conservative political and religious attitudes and rote learning of the Koran. By contrast, the Faculty of Theology (Divinity College) at the University of Tehran, with an enrollment of about

750 and a faculty of 20 in 1970, offers programs for both Shiites and Sunnis in foreign languages and science in addition to theology. Its professors attempt to follow a middle road between reform and tradition. By and large, however, graduates are not esteemed by the traditionalist clergy, who consider them to be too subservient to the government.

There are three major sources of financial support for the Shia establishment in Iran: income from the *awqaf* (charitable foundations or endowments), donations from the faithful, and government aid. Charitable foundations have been established by devout Muslims who bequeath funds, land, or business property for religious and charitable activities, generally in the name of a shrine or prominent cleric. Believers also donate money to the ulama for general religious or other purposes specified by the benefactor. The ulama may engage in private economic ventures, with the result that before the agrarian reforms many had acquired considerable landholdings. On the village level, the mullahs depend on their congregations for support, but occasionally they receive government assistance. A National Endowments Organization under the Office of the Prime Minister is responsible for supervision of endowments, assistance to religious scholars, and upkeep of holy places.

Most Shia clergy have been conservative, if not reactionary, in political-religious outlook and at times opposed both Reza Shah and the present Shah. There has been considerable religious opposition to certain aspects of his White Revolution, especially the land reforms and the Family Protection Law. Extremist Shia Muslim factions have violently opposed the government; in 1965, Prime Minister Hasan-Ali Mansur was assassinated by a religious fanatic. (According to the government, Sunni clerics did not join the Muslim clerical opposition during the 1960's.) Although clerics still exercise considerable social and political influence, they do not enjoy the privileged position which they once had; particularly before Reza Shah curtailed their powers in the educational and judicial fields.

Since the late 1960's, the Shah and his government have attempted to suppress religious opposition without alienating Muslim sensibilities. To prevent religious leaders from obtaining an active political following the government has resorted to bribery and threats, control of the Shia shrine at Mashhad, supervision of all public activities by clerics, as well as detention by the police of clerical opposition figures. At the same time, the royal family has maintained a posture of public piety. Although the Shah has been

unable to appoint a new paramount religious leader who would be acceptable to the traditionalists, he has taken care to solicit clerical approval of parliamentary legislation. Moreover, since 1967 the government has supported programs for the restoration and refurbishing of Shia religious centers.

In August 1971, the Shah issued a decree establishing a Religious Corps, to be drawn from those with a background in religious studies who are eligible for military service. Modeled after other revolutionary corps, it is designed in part to provide moral and religious guidance, particularly in the rural areas. Corps members are to receive basic military training as well as specialized religious instruction. While serving in the military, corpsmen may be appointed as instructors in religious schools, religious affairs officers in the army, marriage counselors, and officials in the National Endowments Organization.

The popular base of support for the clergy vis-a-vis the government remains in the traditional bazaar areas of Tehran and other large cities. The piety of some shopkeepers and artisans has bordered on fanaticism, and occasionally their zeal has been exploited by extremist clerics against the government or other vulnerable targets (such as the "British imperialists" during the 1950's). Within the capital city, however, these elements are declining in number and influence as modern education and economic progress erode the traditional bazaar as a distinct urban community. Moreover, clerics are under pressure to accommodate the government, particularly as its programs for social reform and economic development are proving successful. Nonetheless, most clerics in the early 1970's were said to be critical of the government because of the reduction of their political influence and the secular nature of the regime.

Adherents of Iran's minority religions—Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Bahaiism—altogether number no more than 2% of the total population. The great majority of Christians are members of the Assyrian and Armenian minorities. Assyrians are divided among the Nestorian, Catholic, and Protestant churches, while most Armenians belong to the Armenian Orthodox, or Gregorian, Church (Figure 50). The Gregorian Church serves as the center of each Armenian community in the country, preserving popular consciousness of the Armenian cultural heritage and historical traditions. In 1958, the Iranian Government forced the Armenian church to sever its longstanding ties with the Catholicate of Etchmiadzin in Soviet Armenia, and since then the church has been affiliated with the Catholicate of Antilyas in Beirut, Lebanon. The



FIGURE 30. Armenian Orthodox church, Tabriz. Church is constructed in style typical of Armenian churches in the Middle East. (U/OU)

Nestorian Assyrian Church (also known as the Assyrian Church of the East) is the sole remnant in Iran of the Nestorian sect which flourished in northwestern Iran between the fifth and 12th centuries. This church is gradually dwindling into oblivion, however, with its priesthood uneducated and financial resources too limited to support any activities. Iranian Catholics follow either Latin, Armenian, or Chaldean (Assyrian Catholic) rites, each of which is headed by a separate bishop. In 1971, Catholics operated 16 schools and eight charitable institutions, and were estimated to have 30,000

adherents, including more than one-third of the Assyrians. Almost all of the approximately 8,500 Iranian Protestants are affiliated with offshoots of U.S. Protestant denominations. The most active Protestant group has been the Evangelical Church of Iran, supported by U.S. Presbyterians; in 1968, it had 41 churches and maintained several schools and hospitals. Other active denominations include the Episcopal Church of Iran, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Assemblies of God.

The Iranian Jewish community—located in Tehran, Shiraz, Hamadan, Esfahan and Abadan, with smaller numbers in other urban centers—is one of the oldest in the world, dating back several thousand years. Iran's Jews are orthodox in religious practice, and their communities are governed by rabbis administering Mosaic law; their quasi-judicial positions are recognized by the government. Until the beginning of the 20th century, Iranian Jews lived in ghettos, and only in recent years have they been admitted to professions, such as medicine. Since the mid-1950's, both U.S. and international Jewish organizations have provided medical and educational assistance to impoverished Jews, with the result that the community today is virtually 100% literate, and supports its own schools, medical facilities, and religious personnel. International Jewish organizations have also assisted Iranian Jews desiring to emigrate to Israel; since 1948 about 50,000 such Jews have emigrated. The Jews have frequently been denounced by Muslim zealots for "Zionist intrigues."



FIGURE 31. Zoroastrian temple, exterior (left), and interior view showing altar (right) (C)

Zoroastrians live in close-knit communities in Tehran, Yazd, and Kerman. Their contemporary religious tenets and practices are similar to those that prevailed in the past. The prophet Zoroaster, who lived in the seventh century B.C., propounded a dualistic theology based on the principle of a constant struggle between good and evil. This conflict is represented in Zoroastrian temples by an eternal flame on the altar which symbolically confronts the powers of darkness (Figure 31). Popular during the Achaemenid period, Zoroastrianism became the state religion of the Sassanian Empire. During the period between the Arab conquest and the 20th century, Zoroastrians were a persecuted minority, required to wear distinctive dress, forced to live in prescribed areas, and excluded from certain occupations. Under Reza Shah, the Zoroastrians were accorded a more favored status and they are now employed in business and banking as well as farming. During the late 1960's, Zoroastrians financed construction of one of Tehran's modern middle class suburbs.

Bahaism, whose following is estimated to number about 60,000, is the only minority religion not recognized by the government. It originated during the mid-19th century in Iran as an offshoot of the persecuted Babi sect, which was itself an outgrowth of the Shaikhi movement. Bahai doctrines emphasize personal ethics and have the ultimate aim of bringing about universal peace through conversion to Bahaism. The movement was persecuted by Shiites from the period of its inception through the early 20th century. Today the government tolerates the Bahaists, but officials still urge them not to proselytize. Fanatical Muslims often denounce the Bahaists along with the Jews for exercising an "insidious influence" on government policy and Iranian society in general. The urbanized Bahai community is relatively well educated, and most of its adherents are engaged in business or the professions.

F. Education (U/OU)



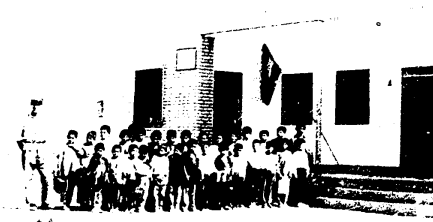
Although significant progress has been made in the field of education since the end of World War II, particularly since the inception of the White Revolution, illiteracy remains widespread and the educational system continues to be plagued by serious shortcomings. Iranian education at all levels is characterized by inadequate physical plant, poorly trained teachers, and curriculums and teaching methods ill suited to present-day needs. Moreover, the persisting aversion to manual labor on the part of those with any schooling is a major obstacle to the fulfillment of basic manpower requirements. Overwhelmingly, secondary school and university students aspire to white-collar employment. Because of the limited demand on the part of students, vocational and technical training has been largely

neglected. Consequently, no level of the school system is producing graduates with the technical or vocational proficiency appropriate to the development objectives of the government. At the same time, the system is turning out an oversupply of academically oriented secondary school graduates. Only about one-third of those who do not continue their studies at the level of higher education find immediate employment; the rest, frequently disillusioned, are often susceptible to the blandishments of antigovernment agitators (Figure 32).

Despite a near doubling of the literacy rate between 1956 and 1966, occasioned by increased access to schooling and by the program carried out by the Literacy Corps, the level of literacy remains low, with the number of illiterate persons age 10 and over actually rising from almost 11 million in 1956 to nearly 12 million in 1966. Overall, 28.1% of the population age 10 and over were recorded as literate in 1966, compared with 14.9% in 1956. Because large numbers of those claiming literacy in 1966 had less than the 4 years of schooling normally deemed necessary to impart functional literacy, the rate for functional literacy in 1966 was probably in the 15% to 20% range. Literacy rates for 1966 varied significantly by sex and urban-rural residence (Figure 33). They also varied according to age, younger elements within the population being much more likely to be able to read and write than older persons. The highest rate of literacy occurred among young men in the cities, the lowest among elderly women in the countryside. Tehran Province, 49.5% of whose inhabitants age 10 and over were literate, had by far the highest rate of literacy of any of the administrative divisions.

Because most Iranians, especially those over age 25, have had little or no access to schooling, the level of educational attainment is very low. As implied by the 1966 census, about 72% of the population age 10 and over had never attended school, 17% had attended but failed to complete the primary cycle, 5% had terminated their studies with the completion of the primary grades, and 4% had entered but failed to finish secondary school. Only 2% had completed secondary training, and less than one-third of those had any college or university experience. In a nation of over 25 million inhabitants in 1966, there were but 74,000 university graduates, all but 2,200 of whom resided in urban areas. Almost 9 out of every 10 were men.

In its efforts to raise levels of literacy and educational attainment and at the same time produce the body of skilled manpower requisite for economic development, the government has opened many new



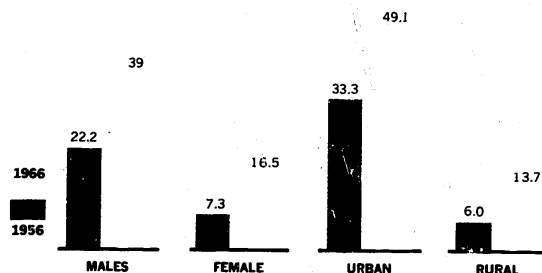
Village primary school built by the Literacy Corps (C)

FIGURE 32. SCHOOL PLANTS

School for nomad children (U/OU)



FIGURE 33. Literate population, age 10 and over, 1956 and 1966 (U/OU)



schools and has provided encouragement for the establishment of additional private schools. The number of primary schools, both public and private, rose, for example, from about 5,400 in 1950/51 to nearly 24,000 in 1969/70. As a consequence of this expansion, enrollment in all kinds of schools has soared (Figure 34), primary school enrollment increasing by nearly 350% in the 20-year period and that of academic secondary schools rising more than tenfold. Yet the system has been unable to cope with the vast increase in the school age population, and compulsory primary training, long a professed objective of the government, has not been achieved except in a few major cities. In 1969/70, no more than 60% of the relevant age group were enrolled in primary school; for secondary schools, the proportion was about 22%. Although these figures represent a significant improvement over those for 1950/51 (28% and 4%, respectively), they point up the formidable task confronting Iran's educational authorities.

In 1969/70, some 67,000 students were pursuing higher education in Iran, 39,000 in the country's eight universities and 28,000 in numerous technical colleges and other "higher education centers." Additionally, there were more than 25,000 Iranian students abroad, about one-third of them in the United States. The

1969/70 enrollment figure for Iranian institutions was more than 12 times larger than that of 1950/51, but even expansion of this magnitude has failed to keep pace with the growing demand for university training. In 1969/70, for example, nearly 48,000 secondary school graduates competed in examinations for 8,325 entrance places in the various institutions of higher learning.

Enrollment statistics at all levels continue to reflect the advantage enjoyed by urban children and, particularly, boys. City children, although they may not complete primary school, now generally have access to such schooling, and most boys, at least, attend classes for 3 or 4 years. Each year the number of girls enrolled in schools throughout the country has risen. The proportion of girl students to total enrollment has also increased, but as of 1969/70 girls still were outnumbered by boys by almost two to one at the primary level, by more than two to one at the secondary level, and by three to one at the level of higher education. Some rural parents, as well as the more conservative families in urban areas, see little value in educating their daughters and therefore keep them out of school despite official encouragement that all children attend.

FIGURE 34. Enrollment, by type of school (U/OU)

TYPE OF SCHOOL	1950-51	1955-56	1960-61	1965-66	1967-68	1969-70
Kindergarten	3,773	6,077	22,006	13,711	15,208	20,214
Primary school	650,355	823,983	1,136,169	2,208,671	2,575,667	2,916,266
Secondary school	82,097	142,113	281,928	556,829	674,058	897,443
Vocational school	1,410	1,614	9,348	15,160	16,273	23,335
Teacher training school	na	2,481	4,593	4,738	6,693	9,275

na Data not available.

The Literacy Corps, founded in 1962 by the Shah, is a facet of the government's effort to combat illiteracy and lack of educational opportunity. Composed of selected men of draft age who fulfill their military obligation by teaching in rural areas, the corps offers a program designed to bring illiterates up to second-grade level. It operates in villages in which no formal school has been established, teaching both children and adults. Considered one of the most successful programs initiated by the government, the Literacy Corps as of 1971 had trained nearly 1.4 million persons to read and write simple texts; functional literacy is rarely imparted, however. Between 1962 and 1971, more than 70,000 corpsmen had served in various parts of the country. A women's wing of the corps was established in the late 1960's.

Despite widespread illiteracy, learning traditionally has been held in high esteem. From earliest times, scholars, poets, philosophers, and physicians served as advisers and confidants of kings, and early Persian institutions of learning and their scholars were known throughout the Middle East and in Europe. Traditional schooling was based chiefly on Islamic theology. Higher education consisted of years of studying theology, philosophy, mathematics, and the Arabic language. A lesser education was provided to a few who might become clerks, scribes, or storekeepers. These persons were taught to read and write, learned to use the abacus, and memorized the classic Persian epics and passages (in Arabic) from the Koran. This pattern of education persisted until the mid-19th century when some attempt was made to provide Western-type training for future military officers, but it was not until the reign of Reza Shah that education was even partially secularized and gradually began to be regarded as a government responsibility. The current Shah has provided the main impetus for a complete reform of Iranian schooling, his aim being to expand and modernize educational facilities in order to support the country's industrialization and to avoid student unrest and alienation.

Education is the prime means of social advancement in Iran, and is generally so recognized by most Iranians. With few exceptions, parents encourage their sons to attend school if it is economically feasible. Increasing numbers also enroll their daughters. Some parents, however, prefer to send their sons to a Koranic school (*maktab*). These institutions concentrate mainly on traditional studies; they are operated by Muslim functionaries and receive no government support. Other private schools, which may or may not receive subsidies, are supervised by the government; these schools, which play an especially important role

at the level of secondary education, are operated by a variety of sponsors, including Christian missionary groups, private firms, and the Armenian, Assyrian, and Jewish communities. Generally, these private schools follow the official Iranian Government curriculum but have supplementary courses in foreign languages.

The cost of public education is borne primarily by the national government, with local funds sometimes being used to defray the cost of constructing and maintaining a school building. Since 1968, the government has devoted between 18% and 22% of its total current expenditures to education, and these funds have been augmented by grants and loans from various U.N. agencies and from foreign governments. Despite the amount spent on education, it has been inadequate to the needs. Many villages still have no school, and existing schools are overcrowded, often necessitating two shifts. Older buildings are commonly in need of repair, and few schools even approach those in developed countries with respect to equipment and amenities. Although the supply of textbooks has been greatly expanded, they are still in short supply. Furthermore, many texts are irrelevant to the world of the rural child. At the secondary level, equipment is limited, laboratories and libraries being particularly deficient. Most vocational schools are also very poorly equipped, a situation which reflects directly on the quality of training received in such schools.

Although there has been a substantial expansion of teaching staff there is still an acute shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in the primary grades and in the vocational schools. Many primary school teachers have had little schooling beyond the level at which they teach. Moreover, pupil-teacher ratios are very high, classes of 50 to 80 students being common. Because of these handicaps, teachers tend to conduct classes in an authoritarian manner and to emphasize rote learning.

The low salaries which are paid to teachers discourage many young persons from entering the teaching profession and thus contribute to the teacher shortage. Higher salaries are available in other occupations, a fact that has tended to lower the social status of teachers, the prestige traditionally accruing to the teacher in the community notwithstanding. In 1971, in an effort to make teaching more attractive, the government announced that it would seek to provide such fringe benefits as bonuses, housing, access to cooperative stores, and increased opportunities for further training at government expense.

The structure of Iranian education is in the process of reorganization. When measures decreed in 1968 are

fully implemented, the system will provide for 1 year of preprimary (kindergarten) training, 5 years of primary schooling, 7 years of secondary education (divided into a 3-year junior cycle and a 4-year senior cycle), and higher education offered in universities, institutes, and technical colleges. In addition, certain vocational programs are offered. Primary school graduates are eligible for admission to a 1- or 2-year "simple" vocational program that is terminal. Graduates of the junior secondary cycle, also known as the educational guidance cycle, may enter a 2-year terminal program designed to train semiskilled workers. The preparation of teachers is conducted in a variety of programs at special schools offering either secondary or postsecondary curriculums, or at the universities. Farsi (Persian) is the official language of instruction, although some university courses, especially those of a scientific or technical content, are given in English. Education is tuition-free in the primary and junior secondary schools. The school year extends from mid-September to mid-June, with classes normally meeting 6 days a week.

The primary and junior secondary curriculums are standard. At the senior secondary level, however, students may choose academic studies that are preparatory for university training, or they may select technical courses (agriculture, commerce, and industrial arts) that prepare them for admission to technical colleges.

Unlike the nation's primary and secondary schools, which are operated or supervised by the Ministry of Education, Iran's institutions of higher learning, except for the private National University of Iran, come under the purview of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. Four of the eight universities were established before 1950, beginning with the University of Tehran in 1934. Total enrollment in each of the eight for the 1969/70 school year was as follows:

University of Tehran	17,079
National University of Iran	5,054
Tabriz University	4,326
Esfahan University	3,594
Pahlavi University	3,116
Mashhad University	2,995
Arya Mehr Industrial University	1,530
Gondishapour University	1,250

Thousands of other students, as indicated, were pursuing postsecondary studies at technical colleges, teacher training schools, and other centers of higher education in 1969/70. Males accounted for 75% of the total enrollment.

With the exception of Pahlavi University in Shiraz and the National University of Iran in Tehran, Iran's

universities are modeled after the traditional French university, and, according to observers, suffer from many of the same shortcomings that U.S. educators attribute to French higher education. Too much emphasis is said to be placed on memorization and repetition rather than creativity; and the year-end examination is all important. Faculties and schools are largely autonomous, with a resulting duplication in course offerings and library holdings. In general, the basic difficulties of Iranian universities have been administrative chaos, overspecialization, and too heavy emphasis on humanities and the arts, with little priority given to original, independent scholarship. The National University of Iran and Pahlavi University are helping to provide a new pattern; both are influenced by progressive areas of U.S. higher education, with full-time professors, frequent examinations, faculty interest in the students, and active student participation in the learning process. Pahlavi University has received U.S. Government support.

Because of restricted enrollment opportunities and because some fields are not fully covered in Iranian universities, many Iranians continue to seek higher training abroad. Of the more than 25,000 students pursuing advanced education in foreign lands in 1969-70, about 8,000 were in the United States, 5,000 in West Germany, 3,000 in the United Kingdom, 1,400 in Austria, 1,200 in France, and 1,100 in Turkey. A high proportion of those trained abroad fail to return to Iran, resulting in a "brain drain" that the country can ill afford. The loss of professional manpower has been particularly acute in such fields as medicine. Many are deterred from returning because of fear of conscription, lack of job opportunities, better salaries and facilities outside Iran, or the acquisition of a foreign wife. Other reasons include a lack of research facilities at home, as well as inefficiency, favoritism, discrimination in hiring, and a strongly enforced seniority system which takes little note of ability. Government authorities have long been concerned about the drain of talent and have sought to induce graduates to return by exempting them from the draft and by promising to employ the most able as teachers in the universities. The problem persists, however.

G. Artistic and intellectual expression (U/OU)



Iran is foremost among the Muslim nations of the Middle East in artistic and cultural expression. Throughout the centuries, the strength and richness of Iran's culture has, in large part, preserved the nation's ethos in the face of numerous invasions. In the early centuries, the intruders, whether Turk, Mongol, or Arab, were rapidly Persianized and, since the late 19th century, cultural elements borrowed from the West have been given a distinctly Persian cast. Many arts and crafts, however, have suffered from an awkward imposition of Western styles on native forms.

Because of stagnation in the arts over the past two centuries, Reza Shah initiated a program to encourage a cultural revival, an effort which has been greatly expanded by the present Shah. In 1964 the Ministry of Art and Culture was established to centralize cultural activities and to promote official objectives. In 1971 the Fourth Development Plan allocated Rls 1.5 billion to the Ministry for the support of museums, cultural

centers, and libraries; training in the arts and in cinematography; publications on cultural affairs; cultural relations with other countries; and related artistic activities. Routine functions of the Ministry include the promotion of art festivals, exhibits, and concerts; the continuation of archaeological excavations; and the provision of training in the fine arts, music, and dance at a number of secondary schools. A High Council of Art and Culture is responsible for the coordination of cultural programs between the Ministry and other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Information. In addition, the Ministry of Art and Culture has revived the Imperial Foundation of Iranian Academies (the *Farhangestan*), founded in the 1930's by Reza Shah to make Iranians more aware of their historical heritage and to preserve the Persian language from the encroachments of Arabic.

There are 22 museums in Tehran and the provinces, but the largest and finest collections of Persian antiquities are located abroad. However, a law now requires that 50% of the antiquities excavated by foreigners be transferred to the Iranian Government. As a result, many museums have expanded their collections, particularly the Archaeological Museum in Tehran, founded in 1935.

Despite government encouragement of the arts, few contemporary artists and writers can earn a living from the sale of their works, although they enjoy a social status similar to that of their counterparts in the West. Lacking financial security and dissatisfied with government policies limiting freedom of expression, most of the better known writers have either failed to return to Iran after completing their education abroad or have left the country for self-imposed exile in Europe. Many have been attracted to leftist political ideology during the reigns of the present Shah and his father.

1. Literature and drama

Little Persian literature of the pre-Islamic era survived the wholesale destruction that followed the Arab invasion of the seventh century. Of post-Islamic literature, classical Persian poetry, written from the 10th through the 15th centuries, has been universally acclaimed. Indeed, E. M. Forster, the eminent British novelist and literary critic, has termed it one of the four supreme bodies of poetry in the Indo-European languages (the others being ancient Greek, French, and English). Even today the classical poems are widely memorized and quoted, often to support an idea or argument. Many popular quiz shows on radio and television center on the contestants' ability to

recognize and complete any one of thousands of classical verses, to match a verse with one of similar sentiment from another poet, or to declaim it in accepted style. Classified as either epic or lyric, Persian poetry is characterized by stringent verse patterns and conventional imagery. Ambiguity is so pervasive that it is almost impossible to translate even a line without neglecting at least one of its meanings.

The first major epic poet, generally regarded as the greatest of all Persian poets, was Abul Qasim Firdausi (c.935-1020). His monumental epic, the *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), which required 30 years to complete, preserves in some 60,000 verses the mythology and history of pre-Islamic Persia. Even illiterate tribesmen know some of these verses by heart, and pupils today study the epic in the fifth grade. The *Shahnama* is credited with restoring Persian national pride and self-respect in the aftermath of the Arab conquests.

Of the classical lyric poets the most famous are Saadi (c.1184-1291) and Hafiz (c.1325-90). Saadi's poetry is basically didactic, instructing in morals and ethics through anecdotes and fables. His best known poetic work, *Bustan* (Orchard), has been popular for centuries. Hafiz, considered the greatest lyric poet, was a religious mystic whose *divan* (collected works) numbers more than 600 poems. Much of the imagery associated by the West with Persian poetry stems from the works of these two poets. Jalal-ud-din Rumi (c.1207-73), perhaps the best of the Sufi mystic poets, moved from Iran to Konya (in present-day Turkey) where he produced both poetry and prose; he also founded the Mevlevi dervish order whose members are popularly known as whirling dervishes. Omar Khayyam (1044-1132) is regarded in Iran primarily as a mathematician and astronomer. However, the popularity in the West of his *Rubaiyat*, translated by Edward Fitzgerald, revived his poetic reputation in Iran.

Between the 16th and the 19th centuries, the quality of classical poetry declined, although Persian poets and mystics found receptive audiences in the Muslim courts of India, which became a virtual second home for Persian literature. Despite the impact of Western culture on literary forms in Iran during the past 100 years, much verse is still written in the traditional idiom. Since the end of World War II, however, young poets revolting against the classical tradition have produced modern poetry of a highly personal nature which discards rhyme, meter, and conventional imagery.

Although prose has never attained the praise accorded classical poetry, some traditional works are of high quality, notably Saadi's *Gulistan* (Rose

Garden), famed for its wit and wisdom; *Kalileh va Demneh*, a 12th century collection of fables; and the *Darabnama* (Book of Darab), a 15th century epic tale. A considerable quantity of other prose works, some of them erudite, were produced, including histories and chronicles, religious and philosophical literature, and works on medicine, mathematics, lexicography, travel, and geography. During the late 19th century, European novels and short stories, both genres previously unfamiliar in Iran, became popular through translations, primarily from French. One novel having a major impact was *Haji Baba of Esfahan* by James Morier, an Englishman with long experience in Iran. First published in 1825, *Haji Baba* is a humorous satire. The Persian translator, a traditional scholar and fierce critic of the religious and political establishments, used his translation to attack these powerful institutions. The book apparently had some influence on the Iranians who later staged the Constitutional Revolution of 1906. *Haji Baba* is still popular in Iran and its style is followed by many authors.

Prose has become the preferred form of literary expression during the 20th century. Developed in close accord with contemporary social and political trends, most novels and short stories are concerned with themes of social protest, governmental corruption and tyranny, social irresponsibility and opportunism, the inferior status of women, and the hypocrisy of the Muslim clergy have been fruitful subjects for many writers, particularly during the period 1905-20. Little imaginative prose was published during the next two decades, however, mainly because of the despotic nature of the reign of Reza Shah. The writers who remained in Iran generally produced chronicles or second-rate historical novels relating to the nation's past glories or conducted studies of folklore.

Modern Iranian literature is little known in the West, but a few short stories and at least one novel have been translated into English, French, and German. Many works, however, have appeared in the Soviet Union, perhaps because they often reflect discredit on the Iranian establishment. The best known modern Iranian author in Iran and abroad is Sadeq Hedayat (1902-51) whose writing career spanned three decades. Before his suicide in Paris, Hedayat produced 90 stories and reviews in both Persian and French ranging from surrealist tales and scholarly works on Zoroastrianism to a tract on vegetarianism. Most of his works were written in France because of his disaffection with the regime of Reza Shah. The most widely publicized is his novel, *The Blind Owl*, published in 1937. Indirectly a self-

revelation, the book portrays the tragic existence of an impoverished minor artist with an unfaithful wife and his escape into a drug-induced dreamworld. Although a translation received critical acclaim in France, the novel aroused less interest in the English-speaking world. Hedayat's other works show an amiable and rather mild satirical approach to Iranian society, except when he is dealing with the themes of corruption, superstition, and religious cant.

Of several contemporary authors who have sought to emulate Hedayat, one of the most notable is Bozorg Alavi (b.1904) whose reputation is based on three collections of short stories written between 1934 and 1952. One of the founders of the Communist Tudeh Party in Iran, he has been a professor at Humboldt University in East Germany since 1950. Sadeq Chubak (b.1918), an employee of the National Iranian Oil Company in Teheran, is also known for his short stories. Most of his characters are drawn from the dregs of Iranian society and their most repellent qualities emphasized. Chubak has also translated Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*—an indication of his versatility. Another prominent writer is Jalal Ali Ahmad whose novel, *The Curse of the Soil*, provides insight into the problems of village society. In 1961 a hitherto unknown author, Ali Mohammad Afghani, published *Mrs. Ahu's Husband*, considered by Iranian critics as a landmark in modern Persian literature. Set in Kermanshah in the 1930's, the novel concerns the problems of a polygynous household and handles a wealth of characterizations with great skill. The book has been turned into a highly regarded film.

The Iranian theater, largely confined to Teheran, is inspired almost exclusively by Western drama. European and American plays are popular, as well as original Persian plays which are similar to Western productions, including those of the *avant-garde*. A number of professional playwrights, unknown outside of Iran, have had their plays produced, but some of the most successful dramas have been written by amateurs. In sum, the modern theater seems to lack self-confidence and to be striving for a *modus vivendi* between foreign influences and traditional values.

One strictly Persian dramatic production, however, is the *tazieh*, a religious drama usually performed during *Muharram* the Islamic month of mourning. This popular play usually depicts the martyrdom of Iman Husayn on the plains of Karbala in Iraq some 1,200 years ago. More than 200 different versions are known, including some that indicate pre-Islamic roots. The opponents of Husayn, for example, sometimes appear as Roman legionnaires, Frankish knights, or Ottoman Janissaries; one play has no religious content

at all but recounts the victory of a Persian army over a Roman army led by Crassus. In some remote parts of the country, the *tazieh* is the *Tragedy of Siawush*, a play about one of Iran's pre-Islamic mythological heroes.

2. Music and dance

Traditional Persian music—classical, popular, and folk—is widely enjoyed, although in urban areas, particularly Tehran. Western music has a considerable following. With the support of the Ministry of Art and Culture, Iranian musicians are endeavoring to preserve and promote traditional music as well as to develop indigenous forms based on Western styles.

Classical music, known as *musighiyeh assile* (noble music) or *dastgah*, originated in antiquity. Described as similar to early Greek music, some works have survived from the Zoroastrian hymnology of the pre-Sassanian era. Following the Arab invasions, however, classical music was performed infrequently because Islamic theologians condemned all music not played for religious purposes. Nevertheless, throughout the centuries it continued to be passed down from master to student. In the 16th and 17th centuries, moreover, Persian musicians are known to have had access to the caliphate courts.

Persian classical music differs from Western music in several respects. In contrast to the diatonic and chromatic octaves used in the West, it has a scale of 25 quarter-tones which, in addition to creating a more complex melody, cause the instruments to sound out of tune to Western ears. The lack of rhythm and harmony, moreover, appeals to Iranians by enhancing the music's mystical quality but accounts for a certain monotony not always pleasing to Western listeners. In addition, the music is improvised, the performer having learned several hundred basic melodies, many of which he uses to embellish a theme; thus, he composes as he plays in much the same way that a jazz musician elaborates on a theme. Improvised compositions depend not only on the personality and mood of the performer, but also on those of the audience. Ideally, classical music is played in an intimate setting where the listeners are close enough to influence the musician by signs, facial expressions, or even words. In the past it was performed in private homes, the royal court, or Sufi meeting houses.

In traditional performances the music is played by one instrumentalist or sung by a single vocalist accompanied by a solo instrumentalist. Most songs are classical verses by Saadi, Rumi, or Hafez. The instrument generally used is either the *setar*, a single-bodied three-stringed instrument; the *tar*, a double-



FIGURE 35. A roadside musician plays the *kamancheh*, a native instrument frequently used in performances of classical music (U/OU)

bodied six-stringed instrument; the *kamancheh*, another stringed instrument played with a bow (Figure 35); or the *zarb*, a single-headed drum. Especially popular for virtuoso performances today is the *santur*, or dulcimer, a zither-like instrument played with a flexible mallet. Other instruments, some of them dating from ancient times and still played by tribespeople, include native versions of the oboe, trumpet, and kettledrum.

Since the early 1920's, when a school of music was founded by Ali Maqi Waziri, a musician trained in Europe, modern developments in music have increasingly affected indigenous forms. Waziri introduced harmony and other Western modes, and initiated written scores. Because younger musicians now prefer to play from scores, classical music is losing much of its spontaneous improvised character. Today, in fact, most Iranian music—described as classical

employs harmony, is played on Western instruments, and is scored for orchestration. In 1940, patrons founded the Philharmonic Society of Tehran which sponsors a wide range of programs. Since the late 1960's, Western artists have performed in the newly constructed Rudaki Hall (Figure 36), which also houses the Tehran Symphony Orchestra.

Popular or modern Persian music ranges from light classical songs to cabaret ballads. The former are often related to classical forms but are simpler, less free, and distinctly rhythmic. There are many gradations in popular music down to the most commercial, sentimental, and repetitious of songs. Western popular music is also highly favored, especially by urban youth.

Folk music and dancing are popular with all levels of the population. Folk dancing, which has changed little in a thousand years, is usually performed by men (Figure 37) and is always a feature of festive occasions celebrated by villagers and tribespeople. Interest in native music and dance is encouraged by the government through the Iranian Music and Folk Dance Company whose professional dancers include women (Figure 38). The folklore branch of the Ministry of Art and Culture collects and preserves folk music. The government also sponsors the National Iranian Ballet.

3. Architecture and the fine arts

Few peoples can equal the record of the Persians for continuous artistic activity, which dates back to 4000 B.C. From their location at the center of the ancient civilized world, the Persians were in contact with the arts of many civilizations. The designs and techniques of major cultural areas such as India and China were modified and blended with those from the West until distinctive Persian styles emerged in architecture, painting, and sculpture, as well as numerous handicrafts. A simple form which has been richly decorated is the single most distinctive feature of the traditional Persian arts.

The earliest surviving architectural relics are those of the Achaemenid era, the most important being the tomb of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae and the ruins of Persepolis (Figure 39). Constructed of stone, the buildings of this period are characterized by their grandiose size and the use of the *talar*, or columned portico. Architectural details include carved bas-reliefs of human and animal figures which are a composite of native forms and those of Egypt, Babylonia, and Asia Minor. During the Parthian and Sassanian periods major innovations were introduced which had a



FIGURE 36. Rudaki Hall in Tehran, a modern concert hall and opera house (U/OU)



FIGURE 37. Papi tribal dancers in native costumes (U/OU)

lasting impact on Persian architecture. Although no significant monuments have survived from the former period, the use of arches was developed together with long, vaulted, tunnel-like halls. Sassanian architecture is represented by palaces, fortresses, Zoroastrian fire temples, and special memorials, many ornamented with bas-reliefs depicting royal triumphs. At this time the Persians solved the technical problem of building a round dome over a rectangular base.



FIGURE 38. An Iranian dancing girl. Arm and hand movements portray the theme of the dance. (U/OU)

Broadly speaking, the architecture of Islamic Persia was based on the vault and dome construction of the Sassanian era, although decoration was restricted by the Islamic ban on representations of human and animal forms. The Safavid period, particularly the reign of Shah Abbas the Great (1587-1629), was an era of great architectural accomplishment. Mosques constructed at Esfahan at this time feature such pre-Islamic styles as domes, arcades, and vaulted halls, all covered with mosaic tilework in brilliant colors and intricate designs (Figure 40).

After the death of Shah Abbas the quality of Persian architecture slowly deteriorated. In the 19th century, as a result of European influences, a mixed form with columns, windowed halls, and elaborate interiors became popular for public buildings and the homes of the wealthy. Increased contact with the West since the mid-1920's and the introduction of new building materials have altered Persian architecture significantly. Many new edifices, particularly government buildings, reflect modern Western styles, although a modified version of the *talar* is often retained (Figure 41). Contemporary architects, in fact, have been criticized for designing buildings with a shoddy mixture of European and Persian styles. Most new buildings, however, have none of the characteristics which have made traditional Persian

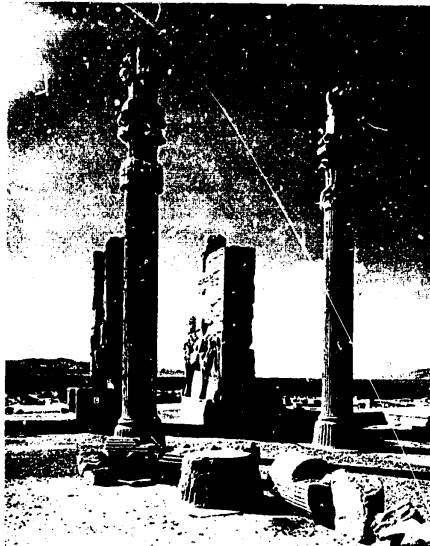


FIGURE 37. Typical columns from the ruins of Persepolis. Note the bas-relief of a horse carved on the side of the wall. (U/OU)

architecture internationally famous. A few architects are trying to blend the best of the traditional styles with the best of the foreign.

Because of Islamic strictures, traditional Persian painting was primarily a decorative art emphasizing line and color in a wealth of floral and geometric patterns. This type of painting is best exemplified by Persian miniatures which reached their zenith in the Timurid period. Universally admired, the Persian miniature stresses exquisite ornamentation and elaborate design in which the massing of intricate detail forms an overall pattern. A few Timurid miniatures depict people, possibly a result of Chinese influence.

During the 19th century, Persian artists trained in Europe introduced Western techniques in painting. Portraiture became popular, even winning the patronage of the Qajar court. The most important artist of the era and still a major influence on contemporary art was Kamalol-Mulk, who led a realist school of painters which dominated Persian art until early in the 20th century. Another gifted artist, Hossein Behzad, refined the art of miniatures by

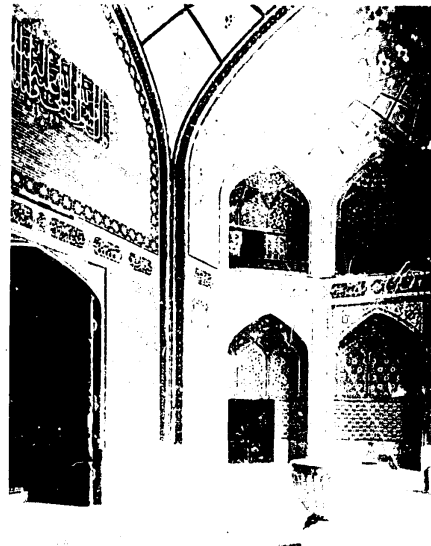


FIGURE 40. Dome chamber of a mosque in Esfahan constructed during the reign of Shah Abbas the Great. Brightly colored mosaic covers the ceiling and walls. (U/OU)

purging it of Chinese and Mogul influences. The most outstanding Iranian artist today is Hossein Zenderoudi (b.1937), a neotraditionalist who resides and exhibits in Paris. In general, the teaching of Western techniques of art in present-day Iran has been most influenced by 20th century French schools, both neotraditionalist and modernist. There is a small art-minded public in Tehran, and several art galleries exhibit the works of some 50 recognized artists.

Calligraphy, once a significant art form, declined rapidly after the invention of the printing press. Because of concern that the art might be lost altogether, the government initiated its revival in the late 1940's by arranging courses in the art under the direction of one of the few remaining masters. At present, instruction in calligraphy is offered in some seven institutes. Nastaliq is the most popular style and the one in which masterpieces have been produced since the 15th century, the middle of three centuries known as the Golden Age of Persian calligraphy. Although calligraphy has attracted few notable artists, it is perhaps of more interest to the general public than any other of the arts.

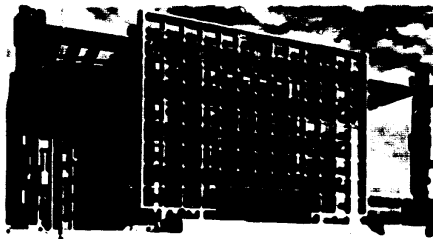


FIGURE 41. The Senate building in Tehran, a modern structure which has an adaptation of the traditional *talar*, or colonnaded portico, on either side (U/OU)

After the Persian peoples were converted to Islam sculpture came to a standstill. Following the relaxation of Islamic injunctions and the introduction of Western techniques, the first contemporary sculptor to achieve recognition was Moul-Hassan Saheb, whose sculptures are rendered in the classical style. At last report, he was at work on a statue of Averroes, a 10th century Persian philosopher, for the University of Utah. The most notable sculptor in Iran today, however, is Parviz Tanavoli. Educated in Italy and the United States, he taught at the Minneapolis School of Arts from 1962 to 1964 and is now a member of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran. His works have been exhibited throughout Europe and in the United States and India, and examples have been purchased for a number of collections, including that of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Although deeply rooted in Persian tradition, Tanavoli's bronze statues appear grotesque to many viewers. Students may study sculpture at the School of Fine Arts at Esfahan as well as at the University of Tehran, but all sculptors of any stature have continued their education abroad.

4. Handicrafts

For centuries, Iranians have been considered highly skilled artisans, producing pottery, glazed tiles, metalwork, textiles, and carpets of superb quality and design. Examples of pottery and bronze works, largely weapons and figures of animals, survive from the prehistoric era. Although the quality of many crafts gradually declined after the 18th century when Western influences were imperfectly assimilated, high standards were restored during the reign of Reza Shah. Today, artisans of superior capacity still practice their

trades, continuing their solid reputation as the best craftsmen of the Middle East. Some ceramics are as highly regarded as ever, and the best carpets compare favorably with famous examples from the past.

By the 15th century, Persian ceramics had become a major art form. Although the clay used was coarse, glazes were developed to a high degree of perfection, and the coloration, especially the blues ranging from turquoise to cobalt, became world famous. Chinese influence was characterized by a variety of geometric and stylized floral designs. Chinese influences introduced during the 16th century were particularly strong in the 17th century when Abbas the Great imported a number of Chinese artisans. Figure 42. In addition to vases, ewers, vessels, and similar objects, Persian potters produced brilliantly colored tiles, notably during the Timurid era. Metalwork was another highly developed craft, dating back to the exquisite work in gold and silver of the Achaemenid period and the magnificent dishes and plates of the Sassanid era. A number of items are famous for their ceramics and metalwork, Isfahan being known for blue

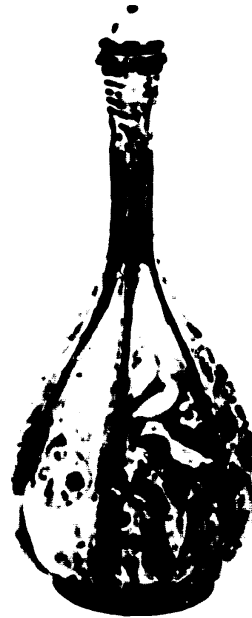


FIGURE 42. Lustrous-painted ceramic bottle made in Esfahan during the reign of Shah Abbas, early 17th century (U/OU)



FIGURE 43. Weavers at work on a large carpet in Kerman (U/OU)

pottery. Open for glazed painted articles, and Etahen for metalwork in silver and other metals.

Persian carpets have been famous for centuries. Those dating from the reign of Akbar the Great when weaving reached its peak, are prized as museum pieces today. After a decline in the 19th century, Persian businessmen exploited the market with profit-laden and products. Persian carpets are again valued for their skilled craftsmanship, quality of material, and beauty of design. Kashan carpets, for example, are especially sought for delicacy of handwork. Kerman carpets for silks, softness of material. Figure 43, and Etahen carpets for highly ornamental design. Although the classical carpets were handmade of soft wool from the neck or stomach of the sheep and colored with vegetable dyes, many carpets are now machine made and chemically dyed. One cause of the shift to the growing feeling against using children, generally girls, between age 5 and 10, as weavers because of their small fingers, children can be more knots per square inch than can adults.

II. Public information (C)



Progress in raising the level of communication via the printed word is slow, and difficult because of the low rate of literacy among adults and the pattern of settlement, whereby about three-fifths of the population live in more than 50,000 villages. Nonetheless, radio and television have expanded rapidly since 1960, as has telephone service. For these media, however, the necessary funds for optimum expansion are lacking, and the gap between supply and demand grows greater as the services continue to fall far short of public and private demands. Villages still rely on word of mouth as a prime channel of information, exchanging news, rumors, and gossip in village markets, tea houses, and other public gathering places. Schoolteachers and other educated persons in the rural communities are looked to as reliable sources of information on national developments, and their opinions are generally received with respect.

Virtually all public communications media are subject to control by the Ministry of Information, which acts as both supervisor, agency, and producer.

participation, reflecting the official view that the government has the "responsibility to guide public thinking." Radio and television services are virtually a state monopoly, and much of the news distributed nationally is controlled at its source through the *Pars News Agency*, a key component of the Ministry. In addition, all newspapers and periodicals are subject to censorship, having been regulated by legislation and various decrees since the early part of the 20th century. The press, which is especially sensitive to the views of the royal family, is also subject to guidelines suggested by a committee composed of representatives from SAVAK and the Ministries of Information and Interior. Publications may be suspended and their publishers and editors jailed for printing material officially interpreted as an incitement to subversion, an attack on Islam, an offense to the royal family, or an affront to a religious or racial minority. The government exerts further leverage on newspaper publishers through its allocation of official advertising, on which most newspapers depend for a large part of their support. Motion pictures are also subject to censorship and may be banned from showing on much the same grounds as those which apply to publications.

The impact of the press on the literate sector of the population diminished during the 1960's, the total circulation in 1970 falling below that of 1960. One factor in this situation was the increasing popularity of radio and television, but perhaps equally important was the growing negative reaction to the lack of independence on the part of the newspapers and their generally low journalistic standards. Iran's press has often been described as dull and listless. The country has no influential or authoritative paper similar to *Al-Ahram* in Egypt.

Tehran dominates the newspaper scene as most daily newspapers are published there, and the less frequently issued papers in the provinces tend to depend on the major Tehran dailies as a source of news. As of 1970, some 20 dailies were being published in the capital, along with about the same number of weekly newspapers, and there were more than 80 registered provincial papers. No reliable statistics are available on circulation, but in 1970 the total circulation of all dailies was estimated at 200,000, and that of weeklies at 50,000. The most important publications are controlled by two chains, one owned by the Masudi family and the other by Dr. Mostafa Mezbahzadeh. Together, the two chains claim 70% of the total newspaper circulation.

Almost all newspapers have small circulations. The outstanding exceptions are the country's two

prominent dailies, *Ettelaat* (Information) and *Kayhan* (World), representing the Masudi and the Mezbahzadeh interests, respectively. Both are afternoon papers, published in Tehran, with circulations estimated at 80,000 to 85,000 each. *Ettelaat* is the more staid of the two, noted for its political commentary and its ability to attract popular writers to its columns. *Kayhan* has a more flamboyant style and tends to make feature stories of daily events. Both are published in Persian. A newspaper owned by *Ettelaat*, the *Tehran Journal*, is published daily in French and English—and the Mezbahzadeh enterprise issues *Kayhan International*, a well-regarded English-language morning paper. Each chain has about 500 distribution outlets in the provinces, and each publishes an airmail edition for circulation abroad.

The government-operated *Pars News Agency* collects and edits domestic news for distribution to newspapers, radio and television, and foreign press representatives in Tehran. It also subscribes to the major international wire services, including the *Associated Press*, *United Press International*, *Reuters*, and *Agence France-Presse*, selecting and editing material for release. The TASS service, which is free, was rarely used until 1970, when the Soviet Embassy lodged an official complaint with the Ministry of Information, alleging an "excessively pro-West bias" in the Iranian press. Thereafter, the Ministry began to issue a limited amount of TASS material, most of it dealing with nonpolitical matters.

Magazine-type periodicals, concentrated largely in Tehran, increased in number between 1960 and 1970. Of the 224 periodicals appearing in Iran in 1970, only 28 were issued in the provinces. Many publications of this type are low-circulation journals, bulletins, and newsletters sponsored by government agencies or private organizations. The most successful mass-circulation magazine is the weekly *Zan-e-Ruz* (Today's Woman), published by the Mezbahzadeh chain; its circulation has been estimated at about 80,000. Other popular periodicals are the two Masudi weeklies, *Ettelaat Banovan* (*Ladies' Information*) and *Ettelaat Haftegi* (*Information Weekly*), each with a circulation reported to be in excess of 30,000. The two women's magazines have achieved a proven formula which mixes advice on adjusting to the modern life style with some glamour features and gossip about popular personalities, particularly those in the entertainment world. A number of periodicals focusing on special interests, such as sports and hobbies, have small but faithful followings, as do a few scholarly journals and magazines with an

emphasis on literature and the arts. A variety of foreign periodicals is available in Iran. Most of these are purchased by resident foreigners, but some Iranians read U.S., French, German, or U.K. publications.

Development of a book publishing industry has been seriously impeded by the small size of the reading public. The industry has also been hampered by the absence of a distribution system to supply books on a regular basis to outlets in the provincial cities. In addition, the cost of purchasing hardcover books has been prohibitively high. However, book sales have increased notably since 1961 with the introduction of paperbacks. An Iranian publisher regards a hardcover book as successful if its initial of 2,000 copies is sold within 3 years; in 1969, many paperbacks were selling between 3,000 and 10,000 copies in 6 months. The number of books published annually has also increased. In 1967-68, 1,200 titles (excluding textbooks) were published, with a total printing of approximately \$50,000. About one-third of the books published in any one year are classified as "Iranian literature." Other leading subject categories are foreign-language literature, science and technology, and the social sciences. No surveys have been made to determine reading preferences, but Persian classics, both prose and poetry, and translations of foreign-language novels appear to be consistently popular among book purchasers.

In 1970 Iran had some 20 bonafide book publishers, as distinguished from small printing establishments and government publishing operations. Most are located in Tehran. The best known and most important of these enterprises are Franklin Book Programs, Inc., a U.S.-sponsored nonprofit organization; the Translation and Book Publishing Institute, affiliated with the Pahlavi Foundation; and Tehran University Press. Since it began operations in Iran in 1957, Franklin Book Programs, in cooperation with AID, has issued large quantities of textbooks. It has also published Persian translations of numerous foreign books, including many English-language novels imported from the United States and the United Kingdom. The Translation and Book Publishing Institute specializes in translations of foreign works; Tehran University Press deals primarily with books of a technical and scientific nature. As of the mid-1960's, a firm known as Ibn Sina was the principal publisher in the field of Persian literature, religion, and philosophy. The only bookstores of significant size are in Tehran. Booksellers outside the capital and its environs are unable to make a living from the trade and are forced to work at an additional occupation to support themselves and their families.

In 1969 there were 75 libraries in Iran, more than half of them situated in the capital. An undetermined number are public facilities, and several are affiliated with institutions of higher education. The largest library in the country is that of the University of Tehran. Consisting of a complex of specialized faculty libraries, it had total holdings of about 400,000 items by 1970. Other important libraries are the National Library, noted for its rare Persian and Arabic manuscripts; the Majlis Library, composed of several donated private collections focusing on Islam and on Arabic culture; and the Senate Library, which has a well-known collection of works on Persian/Iranian culture. In 1970, the National Library contained some 100,000 volumes. The Majlis and the Senate libraries are much smaller. A number of mosques, foundations, and cultural associations maintain their own small collections and the information services of several foreign countries (including the United States) have limited library facilities for use by the public. Many of the latter are well patronized, reportedly catering to more readers than most of the government-operated public libraries.

Radio has become the primary medium of public information, largely because of the steadily increasing availability of the transistor. Today it is possible for many rural people living in areas with no electricity to listen to programs on comparatively inexpensive, battery-operated sets. In 1964 it was estimated that there were 2,250,000 radio receivers in the country. By 1970 the number had risen to about 3 million, representing a ratio of 105 per 1,000 persons. The total radio audience in 1970 was estimated at approximately 12 million persons, including those who listen to broadcasts over wired speakers in public gathering places.

Since May 1971, administration of government radio and television services has been consolidated to form a joint radio-television authority—National Iranian Radio and National Iranian Television (NITV) under the Ministry of Information. Headquartered in Tehran, the state radio network includes both domestic and international services.

As of 1970, it operated 18 mediumwave and 13 shortwave transmitters and maintained affiliated stations in provincial cities as well as in the capital; it was expected that by the end of the Fourth Development Plan (March 1973) there would be 46 FM, shortwave, and mediumwave transmitters having an aggregate output of 4,835 kilowatts. As of the present writing, because new transmitters are almost continuously being installed, there are no readily available statistics on their number and power. There are only two broadcasting facilities functioning

outside the government system: a private station sponsored by the National Iranian Oil Company in Abadan and the U.S. Armed Forces station in Tehran which broadcasts to U.S. military personnel. The programming of the privately operated facility is subject to review by the Ministry of Information.

The principal domestic service of the state broadcasting system is represented by *Radio Iran*, which serves the entire country, broadcasting 24 hours a day. Its daily schedule includes news and commentary, varied entertainment and cultural features, information programs directed at specific groups (e.g., women, youth, farmers, workers), and a considerable amount of music, both Iranian and foreign. Advertisers are permitted to buy time but do not sponsor programs. At the beginning of 1973, local stations were known to be operating in Abadan, Ahvaz, Bandar Abbas, Chalus, Esfahan, Gorgan, Kerman, Kermanshah, Khorramabad, Mahabad, Mashhad, Rasht, Rezaieh, Sanandaj, Sari, Shiraz, Tabriz, Tehran, and Zahedan. Programming consists of broadcasts relayed by *Radio Iran* as well as some features originating locally. Several of the provincial stations provide programs in languages other than Persian in order to serve various ethnic groups within listening range of their transmitters. Some relay material in Arabic, Turki, Urdu, Baluchi, Armenian, and Kurdish from *Radio Iran's* international service, known as the Voice of Iran. Attempting to build up the image of Iran abroad with programs that extol Iranian culture and the virtues of the Shah's regime, the Voice of Iran broadcasts in a number of languages in addition to those mentioned above, including English, French, and Russian. The government is planning to expand the international service considerably. With this in view, a new 1,000-kilowatt shortwave transmitter was being built in Tehran in 1971. Persian-language broadcasts are beamed to Iran from a number of foreign countries, but they do not appear to attract many listeners among the general population. The British Broadcasting Corporation's Persian Service reportedly appeals to some politically conscious Iranians.

In general, the Iranian Government has used radio with skill, viewing it as an important informational link between government and people and as a prime means of strengthening national unity. In addition to focusing many programs on Iranian culture, *Radio Iran* increasingly is employing the medium for educational purposes, for fostering artistic talent, and for promoting support for the Shah's programs of economic and social development.

Although radio remains the most important public information medium, its influence is now being

lessened by the impact of television on the affluent, educated sector of the urban population. The government has operated NITV since 1967, following the termination of a commercially operated monopoly granted in 1958 to Habib Sabet, a prominent businessman. Today, the only television facilities outside the NITV are a Ministry of Education station providing educational programming to secondary schools, and a U.S. Armed Forces station which presents programs of special interest to the U.S. military and to members of the American community resident in Tehran.

By early 1973, the NITV network, which had six known stations in April 1970, had grown considerably and was still growing. An incomplete list of stations known to be operating at the beginning of the year includes: Abadan, Ahvaz, Arak, Bandar Abbas, Bushire, Daran, Dezful, Esfahan, Kazerun, Kermanshah, Mahabad, Mashhad, Rasht, Rezaieh, Shiraz, Tabriz, and Tehran. Television receivers are estimated to number about 700,000, or 23 per 1,000 population, and estimates of the total viewing audience range from 4 million to 5 million. From Tehran, NITV programs consist of news reports, special shows for children, informational and cultural films produced by the government, and some entertainment features, including live variety shows and filmed imports from the United States. Among the best of the programs are government films introducing viewers to the history and culture of little known areas of Iran. The provincial stations are supplied with NITV videotaped material from Tehran, but, like their radio counterparts, they also produce some local programs.

More than 15 radio and television assembly plants were in operation in Iran in 1970, about half of them located in Tehran. Production of radios is estimated at 200,000 annually, and in 1970 about 80,000 television sets were turned out. Television sets are high priced, costing two or three times as much as they do in the United States, presumably because of the expense involved in importing parts and training technicians, who are in short supply. Television is therefore still a luxury limited to well-to-do urban residents. Demand is constantly increasing, however, and the medium is already exercising considerable influence on behavior and taste in the cities.

Motion pictures are a highly popular form of entertainment in Iran and have some significance as a channel of information. In 1971 there were 345 motion picture theaters in the country, 124 of them in Tehran. In addition, about 300 mobile film units operate under government sponsorship. The total annual audience may be as high as 80 million.

Because the Iranian film industry is small and the quality of its production is poor, most motion pictures shown in commercial theaters are imports, the United States being the leading source. Foreign pictures generally are accompanied by dubbed-in Persian sound tracks, although U.S. films are usually shown at least once with the original English track. The Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Art and Culture produce documentary films which are sometimes seen in commercial theaters but are more often shown in mobile units and on television.

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