Chapter - 1

Socio-Cultural Scenes in Iran in Modern Times

Ethnic feature of Iran is complex. Centuries of migrations, and transfers of people have obscured physical distinctions among Iranians and have eliminated identifiable Persian, Kurdish or Turkish characteristics. The mixed population is at best identifiable by language, religion or tribal affiliation.

The Persians are the largest and the most important single ethnic group in Iran, and approximately half of the Iranian population speak some dialect of Persian as a native language. Mostly townspeople and settled farmers, Persians dominate the heartland of Iran-Zamin. Their language, their artistic traditions, their Shia Islam,\(^1\) and their ancient traditions of urban and village life have shaped the Iranian-Islamic civilisation that is characteristic of the Iranian plateau. Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashad and Kerman are the main towns where Persian is spoken. Persians originally predominated in Tehran, but now its population contains many non Persian immigrants.

Other Iranian ethnic groups comprise about 20% of the population. An estimated 2.5 million Kurds live in the west and north west of Iran, in

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\(^1\) Shiism) One of the two main branches within the Muslim tradition, the other much more numerous one being the Sunni community. Shiism refers back to Ali, the cousin and son in law of Mohammad, as its original leader, and the word Shia originally meant the partisans of Ali'. Shiism is mainly present in Iran, Iraq and the Indian continent.
the provinces of Kurdestan, west Azerbaijan and Kermanshahan (Bakhtaran). Other Kurdish communities are found in northern Khorasan, and outside Iran in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and the former USSR. The Kurds speak one of the Iranian languages of obscure origin and claim to be descendants of pre-Islamic Medes. Linguists divide Kurdish into two dialect groups: the northern Kurmanji, spoken south of the town of Mahabad (which lies just north at lake Urmia), and the southern Sorani, spoken from Mahabad south. The majority of the Kurds are settled farmers, although some are city dwellers and others live a nomadic life. The Kurds are distinguished from other Iranians by the language and by the fact that most of them are attached to Sunni Islam. Kurds have traditionally followed tribal leaders and sheikhs of great Sufi orders such as the Naqshbandiyeh and the Qadariyyeh.

All Iranian central governments must come to terms with the uniqueness of the Kurds. As a people with their own literary tradition, history, language, and social organisation, the Kurds have not always been willing subjects of a Persian speaking Shiite central government. Harsh climate and rugged terrain add to the difficulty of controlling the Kurdish regions. Nevertheless any Kurdish autonomy or independence movement faces serious difficulties. Despite the differences between Kurd and Persian, the Kurds have historically identified themselves with Iran. Within the Iranian mosaic one of their traditional roles has been to guard the western and north-western edges of the Iranian heartland.
Approximately half million Baluchis inhabit southeastern Iran, one of the poorest regions of the country and are part of a larger community living in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Like the Kurds the Baluchis are mostly Sunni Muslims, and live as settled farmers and nomadic pastoralists.

Other Iranian-speaking tribal groups inhabit the central Zagros ranges between Kermanshah in the north west to Shiraz in the southeast. About 1 million people collectively known as Lors, live in the provinces of Lorestan, Bakhtiyari and Kohkiluyeh. Although called by different names throughout this region, all of these tribal peoples speak dialects of Lori an Iranian language of the south western group. Whereas the Iranian Kurds and Baluchis are both part of ethnic groups that are divided along a number of countries in the Middle East, the Lors live almost exclusively in Iran.

Traditionally the Lor Peoples guarded the approaches to the Persian heartland against invaders from the west and southwest. Unlike the Sunni Kurds and Baluchis, the Lors share an attachment to Shia Islam with their Persian and Turkish neighbours.

The Gilakis and Mazendaranis inhabit the plain and foothills of the Caspian littoral, speak distinct (north western) Iranian languages, and preserve a unique folklore. About 2.5 million townspeople, farmers, and fishermen live in this fertile region. Except for a few Sunni communities in

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2 Lor, Bakhtiyari, Boir Ahmad.
the isolated Talesh hills overlooking the south western corner of the Caspian Sea, these people are overwhelmingly Shia. They are economically, culturally and politically among the most advanced peoples of Iran. Although physically isolated from the Persian heartland by the high ranges of Alborz Mountain the Gilakis and Mazenderanis are closely integrated into the overall Iranian mosaic. Although Gilan was the location of a short lived armed uprising (The Jangali (“forest people”) movement) after the World War I, in which participants demanded national reforms and regional autonomy, the inhabitants have usually identified their interests with those of the Iranian nation as a whole.

Other group of Iranian speakers live in scattered areas around the country. Although some of there languages are popularly referred to as dialects (Lahijeh), most linguists believe that these people speak distinct Iranian languages. These are the south-western Iranian languages of the garmisirat in Fars, for example Bastaki and Khonji, there are the north western language of the central plateau, for example, the dialects of Kohrud and Miameh; there is the Tati language group in Azerbaijan, a north western Iranian language spoken in an overwhelmingly Turkish region and there is the language of Semnan, which is famous among Persians for being hopelessly intelligible.
After the Persians, the Turks of Azerbaijan are the most important ethnic group in Iran. The language of Azerbaijan sometimes called Azari or Lorki is similar to the language of the Azerbaijan state, where the Baku dialect is considered the standard form. It is more distantly related to the Turkish of Istanbul and the Turkish republic. Azerbaijanis live in northwestern Iran as townspeople and settled farmers in some of the nation's most important industrial, commercial, and agricultural regions. Business-minded emigrants from this region live throughout Iran—much of the Tehran Bazaar, for example, is traditionally Turkish speaking.

These energetic people have helped bring outside commercial, cultural, and political influences into Iran. The Azerbaijanis' ethnic affinities with the Turks of Istanbul and of the Caucasus have given them a window on European politics and commerce as well as a tradition of trading with Europe. They wield power beyond their numbers in transport, distribution, and both wholesale and retail trade.

The Azerbaijanis are also strong supporters of the Shia tradition. Ardibil, one of the major towns of eastern Azerbaijan, was the ancestral home of the Safavid kings who with the support of the Turkish tribesmen from Azerbaijan and eastern Anatolia took control of Iran in the early sixteenth century and established 'Twelver' or Imami Shiism as the state religion. The Azerbaijan's deep attachment to Shia Islam, although
dividing them from their Sunni Kurdish neighbours, has helped them forge
strong ties with other Iranians especially the Persian speakers of the
heartland. These bonds have also limited the effectiveness of nationalistic
feelings of Azerbaijanis to identify with the (Sunni) Turkish peoples of
Anatolia and Central Asia.

There is no clear geographic boundary between Turk and Non-Turk
in Iran, Mixed populations of Turks, Kurds, Persians, Gilakis, and others
live within the various ethnic groups.

The best known Turkish tribal group is the Qashqai in southern
Iran. Speaking a language related to Azerbaijani and organised into six
major divisions (taifeh) the Qashqai nomads migrate twice a year between
the low lands south and west of Shiraz and the higher elevations between
Shiraz and Isfahan Relations between the central government and the
Qashqai who traditionally follow their tribal leaders, have always been
uneasy. The number of Qashqai, like the number of other ethnic groups is
uncertain. Published figures vary between 200,000 and 600,000.

An estimated 250,000 Turkomans live near Iran’s north-eastern
frontier with the former USSR on some of Iran’s richest agricultural land.
The Turkomans, best known for their carpets and horses, speak a language
that is distinct form the Turkish of Azerbaijan, and most are followers of
Sunni Islam. Other Turkish groups are the Afshars in western Iran and
Kerman; Shahsevens of Azerbaijan and the Qom region; and the Turkish tribes of south eastern Fars who are part of an Arabic - Persian - Turkish Federation called the Khamseh ("five tribes").

There are other ethnic groups. Approximately 1 million Arabs are in Khuzestan, along the Persian gulf coast, and in isolated regions of khorasan. The Khuzestani Arabs share the dialect and the Shia creed of the inhabitants of southern Iraq; the coastal Arabs are mostly Sunni and speak a dialect resembling that of the Arab side of the gulf. In southern Fars the Arab Sheibani and the Arab Jabbareh tribes are part of the Khamseh federation. The small groups of Arabs in Khorasan are mostly members of tribes living along the northern edge of Dasht-e-Kavir.

Other small groups of Semitic speaking peoples inhabit Iran. The Assyrians in the Northwest and the Jews in Kurdestan and west Azarbaijan speak a collection of dialects known as neo-Aramaic. There are perhaps no more than 50,000 speakers of these dialects living in Iran, although Arabic speakers can be found among Iranian, Iraqi, and Turkish immigrants to Israel.

Among the peoples of Iran who make up distinct social classes are the members of various religious minorities. These are the Christians, the Jews and the Guebers or Parsees. The Christians consist of the Armenians, the Nestorians, (followers of Nestorians, Bishop of Constantinople (D.C.
451) who taught the doctrine of two persons (one human, one divine) as well as two natures in the incarnate Christ. They formed a separate church which survived in parts of Persia as the Assyrian church and in India, as the Christians of St. Thomas,) and the adherents of indigenous Christian, churches. Of these the Armenians make the largest community. They are to be found in the northern Iran. Particularly in Azerbaijan, where there are pockets of their concentration in villages, towns and cities. The most considerable number of them outside north western Iran are found in Isfahan, in a suburb called New Julfā which was established during the rule of Shah Abbas, when the king transferred a colony of Armenian artisans and craftsmen from Julfa, on the Araxes to Isfahan in order to provide skilled workmen for the embellishment of the capital. The Armenians have been a privileged class, and though the dominant Iranian culture cuts across some of their indigenous rights, nevertheless they have been fully absorbed into the local cultural element.

Armenians have lived peacefully in Iran, against the backdrop of their persecution in neighbouring Turkey. Armenians honestly prefer services of the state. The greatest travails of the Armenians had been due to the depredations of the Kurds with whom, in Anatolia, they have long been at odds, partly because of the machinations of the Ottoman Sultanate, and partly because of the willingness of the Armenian population to
support foreign intervention particularly, Russian in times of national crisis. As in Turkey, the Armenians have been inclined to look to Russia as protector of their interests, and however justified, it has been an action inviting scepticism of the nationalists and has therefore been a friction ground for the relationship between them and the common mass.

Another minority group is the Nestorians, remnants of the once populous Assyrian nation, adherents to what is perhaps the oldest Christian rite the church of the East, have been cut short to a small number in current times. Their concentration largely has been in the Northwest, around Mosul in Iraq and the Urmaih plain in Iran. Their general living conditions comes closer to the lifestyle of the Kurds. At many occasions, the concept of national sovereignty has brewed up in their consciousness but they are too small and weak to give it a serious dimension.

Apart from the above mentioned social minorities - Armenians and Nestorians-there are followers of Roman Catholic and indigenous Protestant churches, drawn not only from older Christian faiths but also from Islam and Judaism. Their status is somewhat at par with the other Christians, except that Muslim converts were subject to persecution from the fellow members. Then there are other restrictions heaped on them but in modern period their freedom remains somewhat un tarnished. Apart from these minorities, the Jews have been an element in the Iranian society.
Distinctively Jewish in their faith, tradition, domestic life and profession, in physical appearance they can hardly be distinguished from the Persians.

In Hamadan, the Jews maintain and worship what is asserted to be tombs of Esther\(^3\) and Mordecai\(^4\) of Biblical tradition. Because of lack of evidence of any archaeological element, the belief that Hamadan was the site of ancient Ecbatana rested entirely upon the existence of this Jewish colony and its tradition. The Jews in Iran have suffered greater disabilities than the Christians, partly because the Jews, unlike the Christians, have not enjoyed the interest in their welfare on part of powerful nations.

In general anti-semitism has come down in modern times, though considerable revival of this feeling occurred during the rule of Hitler in Germany when many Iranians adopted the views of the Nazi party.

The Guebbers are adherents to the ancient Zoroastrian faith, descendants of those who refused to accept Islam. Many of them fled to India where they live a rich life. Those who continued to live in Iran have for centuries suffered various disabilities because of their faith, but after the coming of Reza shah Pahlavi their conditions got tremendous

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\(^3\) Esther, A cousin and foster daughter of the Jew, Mordecai, became the King of Ahaseurus (Xerxes 1) and prevented the extermination of Jews by the order of Haman, a king’s officer.

\(^4\) A Biblical hero, described in the Book of Esther as a Jew in exile in Persia (C. 5th Century (BCE) who gained the favour of king Xerxes after uncovering a plot against him.
amelioration. The policy of Raza Shah Pahlavi to revive national spirit by recalling the ancient glories, benefited the Parsees as they represented the purest strains of the Pre-Islamic Persians and adhered to the ancient faith of Darius and Cyrus.

In 20th century Iranian society and culture changed much due to both internal aspirations of the people and contact with the west. The most distinct and remarkable change has been the emancipation of woman. Outwardly it has taken the form as in the case of the men, of modernisation of dress. For centuries Iranian women had been shrouded in black and unbecoming veils, covering the whole body from head to foot even more thoroughly than in most Moslem countries; they were only permitted to leave their houses during certain hours, and in general were not taken as active members of the community. But with the opening of the new era it was natural this should be one of the first anachronisms to be dismantled.

In Afghanistan, King Amanullah’s attempts to release women from their abysmal conditions met with hostility and resultingy in Iran the process got a retardation. However the king - Reza Shah went on with his efforts. Initially the government officials were encouraged to persuade their wives and daughters to follow the new fashion. By the end of the 1930s it was in full swing; teachers and schoolgirls were not allowed to take veil and army

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Amanullah Khan (1892-1960) Emir (ruler) of Afghanistan (1919-29) Third son of Habibullah Khan, he seized the throne on his father’s assassination and concluded a treaty with the British, but his policy of westernization led to rebellion (1928). Abdullah had to flee, abdicated 1929, and settled in Rome, Italy.
officers were prohibited to be in company of veiled women. Delivering a speech on January 8, 1936, the Shah said,

I am extremely pleased to see women who as the result of knowledge and study have come to know about their true position and to understand their rights and privileges..., the women of our country, because of their exclusion from society, have been unable to display their talent and ability - indeed and might say that they have been unable to do their duty towards their beloved country and people or to show their service and devotion as they should; but now in addition to their distinctive privilege as mothers they are going to enjoy the other advantages of society.

We must not imagine indefinitely that one half of the community of our nation need not be taken into account, in other words, that one-half of the country’s working power should be idle. A census of women has never been taken as though women were a separate community and not to be reckoned as part of Iranian society.

You, my sisters and daughters, now that you have entered society, and have taken this step for the advancement of yourselves and your country - you must understand that your duty is to work for your country; the happiness of the future is in your hands. You will have to educate the race of the future, you will be able to be good teachers and bring up good citizens.

From this day the women were regarded as an inseparable part of the society. The move met with universal approval, the young women welcomed the new atmosphere, and only the older women did make a silent protest by refusing to appear out of houses. For months the official attitude was backed by press with articles fully supporting the new freedom given to the women. Photographs of women athletes, women students, women film stars and women aviators have been a regular feature.
The new outlook was also reflected in the official attitude towards marriage. In Islamic law the rights and initiative are all with the husband, though if he has more than one wife he is bound to treat each of them equally well in all aspects, but whereas divorce for him is comparatively easy, for the wife it is impossible. Iranian views on this has never been in accordance with those of strict Islam. In the better classes of the Iranian society, the attitude towards women in regard to marriage has been very modern. Reza Shah brought in new laws to give the institution of marriage a constitutional cover. The wife was given the right to sue for a divorce if her husband had failed to reveal the existence of other wives before the wedding or married again without her consent. Medical fitness in both sides was made obligatory by the state. However the underlined impetus was provided by the furtherance of education and literacy.

At one time the only career open to women was teaching. Then medicine and nursing were added, and women students in the University took up law and journalism, and even went abroad to continue their studies. The Anglo-Iranian oil company was one of the first organisations to employ women typists and clerks, but other departments and firms followed suit. Many women have entered industry, and women went on to become pilots. In the entertainment world there has been less encroachment; there came up a few female singers and entertainers, but the
Islamic strictures on theatrical performances has remained in Iran more firmly than elsewhere.

Commercial character of the country is equally important. The bazaar, or merchant, element has always been important in the social structure. But the most powerful class in Iran is that of the great landowners. The Iranian agricultural system is predominantly feudal. This feudalism was produced by some of the same factors which produced feudalism in Europe. The cultivator generally is not a serf and is free to leave his land and move elsewhere. In practice the land is farmed by family in succession. The landlord owns the entire village land and a landowner’s wealth is measured by the number of villages of which he is proprietor. The land owners often do not go to their villages which are managed by stewards. They prefer to live in Tehran or the larger cities. Despite their wealth and position, their social life is still patriarchal and limited to relatives and members of the clan. They provide officers for the army and administrators, for the civil government. The Iranian parliament or majlis, is largely composed of landowners. While the land owners comprise the principal ruling class, theirs is not a vested interest.

Generally apart from the landowner is the merchant class or the bazaar, as it is universally known though wealthy merchants will invest their wealth in villages, and landowners may embark in trade. In the case of
the bazaar, wealth is more fluid, and the merchant class ranges from the peddler with his wares upon his back, to the powerful tājir and sarraf who may have their argosies in a dozen distant ports.

The bazaar is well organised into guilds and chambers of commerce. It is one of the vocal element in Iranian society and is in constant touch with the commercial swings in the business world. In times past, and even more recently, the power of the bazaar, particularly when in tandem with the clergy, has been sufficient to dethrone political leadership. So potent was the bazaar that in 1294 it compelled Kaikhatu to abandon a project for the issuance of paper money; in 1891, in alliance with mullahs, it carried out a boycott in protest against a tobacco monopoly that Nasiruddin Shah had granted to foreigners, and compelled the monarch to rescind the concession. Again the constitutional movement in Iran, which obtained the grant of the constitution in 1906 was largely stimulated by bazaar agitation for reform.

The Moslem clergy\(^6\) has always been a powerful element in the political, social and economic life of the country. A principal duty of the Moslem is the giving of alms, as a result a great body of wealth and estates have become the property of various shrines and religious institutions. The

\(^6\) Properly there is no Moslem clergy, since ordinations is not an element of Moslem theology: The term clergy is here, used to indicate collectively the members of the various hierarchies, such as Mullahs, mujtahids, Uléma and their like.
Koranic law has always remained the fundamental law of the land, and as expanders of this law the Mullahs exercised enormous influence in the affairs of the state. Since the revolution of 1906 the application of the Shariat, or religious law has been limited; the pious foundations have been brought under state control. The power and influence of the clergy has been moulded and reformed as not to regress the progress of the other social groups.

Among the elements in Iranian life that give it its characteristic democratic quality is the fact that there is no hereditary nobility, and no laws of primogeniture such as have perpetuated families in England and to lesser extent America. Inheritance is uncertain, since polygamy is still legal though rare; and though under recent legislation women enjoy certain statutory rights of contract, actually their social and legal position is dependent largely upon the will of the husband. Under the Koranic law, a share of the estate must go to each heir, with the proviso that in such division a male shall receive the portion of two females. The exclusiveness of nobility has been further affected by which the sovereigns at times past elevated favourites to position and honour by means of the gift of a title in this connection, the following from S.G. Wilson's "Persian Life and Customs" may be quoted:

7 Koran, Sura IV Women.
"Men can readily change their social status. A ballet dancer was the favourite dancer of Fath Ali Shah. The son of a fellah may be visier tomorrow, lowly birth is not a bar to the highest position. An adventurer presenting a rifle to a prince is dubbed Khan, A carpenter, tailor, or photographer is paid for his services with a title ... The official world has an infinity of titles conferred by the Shah, indicating some relation to the government by the use of the words Doulah, Mulk, and Sultanah, as the Eye of the Government, the Guide or the Righteousness of the state, the faithful of the Sultan. Physicians received their titles such as the Sword, the Confidence, the Fidelity of the Physicians".

The cultivators of the soil are the unfortunate though not the neglected class in Iran. Patient, frugal, unlettered and some oppressed, they tend the fields and grow the crops of wheat, barley and rice, the grapes, melons and the various sorts of nuts and fruits, which feed the city, and to some extent exported. In times they have been conscripted in the army. The other social group, artisans of the town suffer a poverty greater than that of the cultivator they work in wood, leather, silver, and brass; they weave rugs and execute the fine. "Khatam", or 'nailhead' inlay work, all in cramped quarters where the light and ventilation is poor, their food is dear and their diet limited. Nevertheless, since industry is primarily individual and household, they enjoy a relative independence and as they generally market their wares direct, they are quasi-members of the merchant class and share its opportunities. A depressing element of Persian crafts is that

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8 New York, 1885, p.181 and footnote.
children are put to work at an early age. An important factor, however, is the characteristic of this craftsmanship, its fineness of detail, for which the fingers of the children, are particularly suited. This is specially in rug weaving.

Beneath the artisans, are the mass of unskilled or semiskilled labourers: porters, houseservants, masons, gardeners, labourers, and scavengers, who exist on a pittance, live in hovels and yet for all their miserable poverty, maintain a certain independence and insouciance that elevate them above their fellow beings of similar class in neighbouring countries, such as Egypt or India. Among the members of each of these professions for an occupation, however lowly, constitutes in Iran a, 'profession - exists a freemasonry form of guild solidarity, which yields them a certain pride and standing.

Of recent years there has appeared in the Iranian cities, as a result of the attempts of modernisation, a new class of society, the factory proletariat. State owned or state supported enterprise introduced a variety of mass industries - 'Mass' in relative sense, of course and the determination of the Shah to magnify his reign brought a great influx of population to the cities - Tehran increases day by day all with the effect of creating a large social element.
Apart from the existing social groups, based largely on ethnic, racial, regional and economic grounds, Iranian languages also notifies the social distinctions. The first short story in Persian language, 'Farsi Shakar Ast'. (Persian is Sugar) primarily deals with the different modes of Persian language being spoken by varied social elements. This short story underlines the fundamental subject of variety of social groups based on different expressions of Persian language.

Persian is Sugar draws attention to some aspects. First there are social distinctions related to whether one’s mother tongue is Persian, Azerbaijani, Turkish, Kurdish, Gilaki, Armenian, Arabic or another language. Second there is the issue of relative prestige the particular Persian dialect spoken e.g. Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashad, Kerman and Hamadan. Third there is the distinctiveness of the Persian spoken by native speakers of other languages in Iran such as Turkish or Armenian. Fourth there is the issue of formal education distinguishing the Persian of the villages from the Persian of the bazaar merchant the government clerk,

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9 Iranian languages are part of the Indo-European family - Indian, Iranian, English, Armenian, Greek, Italic, Celtic, Tocharian, Balto-Slavonic, Albanian, German and probably Anatolian - outside of Iran, Iranian speakers include Kurds in Iraq, Turkey, Syria and the former USSR; Ossetes in the Caucasus; Tajiks in Central Asia and Afghanistan Pashtuns in Afghanistan and Pakistan and Baluchis in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Oman and the Persian Gulf Emirates, The Persian languages spoken within present day Iran are divided into major groups, the south western, of which Persian is the most important and the north western which includes Kurdish Baluchi and the Caspian languages.
and the university graduate. Fifth there is the significance of exposure to languages spoken beyond Iran’s borders, e.g. Arabic, English, French, and German. Sixth there are the interrelated issues of levels of politeness formality and familiarity which are communicated differently through different dialects and styles of Persian.

From the story which provides facts about language and social distinctions in Iran, we can come to know that (i) the Persian language (Farsi) and Persian (Fars) Iranian culture (as opposed to Turkish Iranian culture, for example) are dominant in Iran; and upward mobility is almost non existent for individuals unable to deal in the Persian Iranian cultural context with the Persian language, (ii) that the Persian spoken by the educated people of Tehran is modern standard Persian i.e. the standard dialect in relation to which other dialects of Persian sound more or less provincial, whether it is one’s dialect or not, one has to be able to adjust to or use it in order to make use of radio, television, the Press, and of Tehran, the centre of nearly everything in Iran, (iii) that in so far as sophistication in speaking the Tehran dialect of Persian depends in part upon and increases with amount of exposure to formal education. Functional literacy in Persian is indicative in one’s speech of social status; and (iv) the world beyond Iran’s borders is naturally open to those Iranians who can operate linguistically in it, which mean through English. In places such as Tehran
and Isfahan in particular, an Iranian status, upward mobility, and power within Iran can depend in part on being comfortable with English texts and speakers. In short, the narrator of ‘Persian Is Sugar” at least relative to the persons interacting with him in the story and presumably in other situation is a member of the enviable minority of Iranians whose speech reveals them as male, middle aged, urban(e), prosperous, Muslim, literate in Persian, Arabic, and English (French at that time), conversant in English (at that time French), and educated speakers of modern standard Persian. In other way, sex, age, religious orientation, geographical, ethnic, and family origins, level of education, wealth, occupation, ability to speak a foreign language such as English, and an ability to speak a language of an Iranian minority are all important factors that are reflected in once speech and that reflect significant social distinctions.

Feature film in Iran, has partially explored the principal indigenous, social, ethical and psychological developments and has made Iranians to believe in the desirability and inevitability of modernisation along western lines.¹⁰ Infatuation with the west led to the imitation and assimilation of its cultural products. Cinema in Iran came through the efforts of Muzzafaruddin Qajar (1896-1907). However due to illiteracy and

orthodoxy of religious establishment, and also due to pathetic social conditions, cinemas did not take a smooth run.

Attempts were made to establish film training schools. A Russian-Armenian, Avans Ohanian (Oganians), made the first Iranian feature film, based on Danish comedy called, "Abi and Rabi, 1930." Ohanian's second film, "Hajji Aga, the Movie Actor" (1932) for the first time presented the dichotomy between traditional religious attitudes and the more modern ones current among the upper classes. Ebrahim Moradi directed, "The Capricious Lover (1934)", in which the themes of capriciousness of the wealthy, the lure of the modern cities and their corrupting influence on the villagers were illustrated.

World War II put an end to the production of local films Ismail Khan produced the first Persian language sound film in Iran, "The Tempest of Love." This and other sentimental melodramatic love stories, such as 'Disgraced' (1949) began a new trend. Few socially conscious films were produced. Among them were Farrokh Gaffary’s feature, "South of the Town" (1958), a realistic portrayal of the slums of Tehran, and Ebrahim Golestan’s "Mudbrick and Mirror (1963) a realistic portrayal of the life of average people. Meanwhile the Pahlavi king continued to tighten the noose round the neck of film producers and directors. However the Ministry of Culture supported the emerging, "New Wave" film makers. Many themes
popular with mass audiences emerged during this period. Modern life in 
"The Eighth Day of the Week" (1974), family revenge in, "Qaisar" 1969, 
sex and violence in "Prostitute" (1969), village vs city in "Mr. Gullible" 
(1970), the poor against the rich in "Man from Tehran" (1966), Mistaken 
identity in, "Salute to Love" (1975), and western influence on the Iranians 

The expression of social themes was important element in the films. 
The institution of family is represented in films as an important enduring 
organ. Relationship among family members are complex. The mother - 
son bond is very strong, almost oedipal. There is subservience of the son to 
the father. The father is the strong man in the family. The woman must 
remain pure self sacrificing, resigned, decent and generous. There are 
‘other’ sexy and amoral women outside the family who service husbands 
and sons and endanger the family unity and stability. These women and 
their tempted victims are inevitably punished and in the end the family 
grants forgiveness to its transgressors and accepts them back. "Expectant" 
(1959) and "The One Hundred Kilo Bridegroom" (1962) are examples of 
these theme. Revenge is an important theme in films like, "Golnesa " 
(1952) "Rape" (1972), "Sadeq the Kurd" (1972), "Tehran Nights" (1932). 
In these four films, crimes of passion are justified, since the culprits have 
stained the honor of the family.
The traditional concept of arranged marriages appeared in, "The Tempest of Love." But the theme took new dimensions. In "The Outlaw" (1953) the girl defies the rule of the family and tradition, but in the end is forced to relinquish and repent. As time passed western influence in Iran increased. This motif of defiance by both women and men was seen more and more frequently: the traditional theme was transformed and evolved to the point of displaying free choice of the marriage partner and premarital sexual relationship. Examples are, "Thirty ones" (1974) and "Honeymoon" (1976). The concept of village versus city appeared in, "Disgraced", the story of Maryam, a peasant girl with a village fiance, who is seduced by a man from city named Ahmad. Ashamed, Maryam leaves the village for the city, where she becomes a famous singer. Fate and perseverance pay off in the end, and the village fiance is able to revenge himself on the culprit, after which the long lost lovers return to the village and wed happily. Many variations of this theme were developed through the years, but the basic message remained: praise of indigenous values and condemnation of western values. Recent example of this theme are, "Mr. Gullible and Baluch" (1972).

Many movies took as their subjects the differences between the poor and the rich, but almost none of them dealt deeply with the social and economic bases of these differences, instead they were a framework around
which to weave an intricate melodramatic or comic nexus of relationships and adventures. "Return" (1954), "The Stars Shine" (1961), and "The Bride of Tehran" (1967) provide variations on this theme. The situation permitted film makers to land the qualities of the poor and abhor or ridicule those of the rich. For the most part, the poor are honest, simple, religious, hard working and ethical, while the rich are dishonest, lazy, materialistic, unhappy, cruel and unethical. Many of the latter qualities were associated also with modern and western influence.¹¹

The class differences between the peasants and the landlords also were submerged in plots and intrigues, like those whereby a landlord would prevent the marriage of his daughter to a peasant. Sometimes, the peasants through hardwork would achieve a measure of wealth and qualify to marry her. "The Nightingale of the Farm" 1958 provides an early and popular example.

In some of the movies, e.g., "Aras Khan" 1963 and "Farman Khan" 1967, the villagers who are fed up with the village head or the tribal chief’s cruelty and oppressions are mobilised by a heroic villager, take their lives in their own hands, and successfully fight their oppressors. Other films involve individual vindication as the motive behind the uprising against the power of the landlords, such as, "Gol Aqa" (1967).

¹¹ Ibid. p.347.
Another perennial social conflict commonly interpreted as personal conflict by film makers was that between the cruel and lascivious factory owner and the worker and his family. These stories were usually resolved in favour of the workers, in such films as "Sincerity" (1970) and "The Starless Sky" 1971.

According to Iranian movies, both traditional and modern, power emanates from two principal sources: money and muscle. Money corrupts and forces men and women, young and old, to resort to crime and a variety of other evils. "Long live the Aunt" (1953), "The One Million Toman Man" (1956), and "Tunnel" 1968 are examples of this theme. Muscle power often represented by the boisterous and heavy handed behaviour of neighbourhood toughs, has alternately provided protection to the poor, the weak and the wealthy. "The Generous Tough Guy" (1959), "Man with the Felt Hat" (1961), "Neighbourhood Tough Guy" (1964), and "The Song" all show variations on this character and identity. In earlier films like the, 'Tough Guy' character was often portrayed as a helpful, selfless individual, inclined to support the weak against the powerful interests in later years he has developed more as a nuisance, prone to drinking, fighting and rabblerousing. The former portrayal is in the line with the traditional view of the toughs and their role in Iranian society while the latter may be interpreted to represent symbolically state and its modus operandi. The
theme of traditional versus modern living is shown in “Hajji Aqa, the Movie Actor”. This movie depicts the life of a religious and traditional man. Hajji Aqa, who is firmly against cinema. In the course of a number of events, Hajji changes his mind about cinema and finally accepts the participation of his daughter and her fiance in the movie. A reviewer in the daily, “Etta/at” proclaimed that the movie had, “...many shortcomings. It was dark, the faces were dark, and from a technical standpoint the film was not satisfactory”. Apparently the reviewer did not consider it sufficiently important to comment on the fact that the movie had for the first time set up a conflict between the traditional, religious stance and the emerging “modern” point of view which was gaining hold among the upper class of Iran.

The traditional, religious way of life, as represented by many “Hajji Aqa” types throughout the history of the movie, was backward, closed-minded, inflexible, filled with greed, and the character was fanatical, irrational, ridiculous, capricious and even lascivious. This particular stereotype appeared as a standard element in the feature films both early and recently, in films such as, “The Grass is Greener” (1975). Other movies sought to depict, with differing degrees of realism and insight, the modern life style in Iran; e.g. “Accusation” (1955), “Wild city” (1970), “The Eight Day of the Week”, and. “Report” (1976). These films are set in
the city, and the lives portrayed are basically those of young upwardly mobile individuals, who are often affected by western influences, including a touch of loss of identity and alienation. Song and dance are two of the earliest and most enduring features of Iranian films. They were employed in the film, "The Lor Girl" and with variations continued until the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the revealingly positive response to these elements in the movies seems to have encouraged the filmmakers to find a place in their movies for a few sequences devoted to revealingly clad women singing and dancing lasciviously. From the 1950s onwards these motifs were expanded to include entire movies about cabarets and nightlife, female singers, and the corruption, money, sex and violence which are part of life in the world. Examples are, "A Ray of Hope" (1959), "Luck", "Love and Chance" (1962), "Prostitute" (1969) and "Penance" (1972).

The police and security forces are often portrayed as alert, rational, efficient, humane individuals.12 "The Shadow" (1960), "The Night of the Hunch back" (1964) and, "Sergeant Gazanfar’s family" (1972) demonstrate the positive and humane qualities of the police and the security forces during a decade which was marked by ever widening activities of the secret police (SAVAK), and the establishment of an oppressive and unjust police and judicial system.

12 Ibid., p.351.
Iranian contact with the western countries increased (especially through students travels abroad), which led to the domination of those countries on the Iranian culture. One character frequently shown was the “foreign bride” who unaccustomed to Iranian culture, sometimes represented a comic element. In most cases despite many traditional and religious objections to the marriage between a foreigner and an Iranian, the love existing between the Iranian and his foreign bride, prevailed. “Play of love” (1960) “The Foreign Bride” (1961), “Gift from Abroad” and “Mehdi Meshki” and “Hot Pants” (1972) all employ variations on this theme.

Some movies involved references to western countries, others showed Iranians who had returned from study or business trips to the west or depicted Iranians in foreign countries. “Hajji Jabbar in Paris” (1961), “Swallows Return to their Nests” (1963), “Three Rabble Rousers” (1966), “Ricardo” (1968), “It happened in USA” (1971), “An Isfahani in New York” (1972) and “Golnesa in Paris” provide examples of this theme. In general these films tended to ‘empahsize the earlier infatuation and admiration of western lifestyle and superficial trappings which reflected both a portion of Iranian people and media.\(^\text{13}\)

Dissenting voices were made by writers towards official attitude towards progress in Iran. The illogical result of the total control and

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p.352.
manipulation of media and other forms of cultural and artistic expression, can be pointed out by quoting at length from an English version of an open letter dated June 13, 1977, written by forty Iranian writers and addressed to Iranian Prime Minister, Amir Abbas Howaida: “Mr. Prime Minister in our society, culture and intellectual and artistic creativity are at a standstill and stagnate ..... All the articles of the constitution.... have been for sometime totally suspended and abrogated by the state and organisations under its control..... The existence of these liberties (of thought, association and the Press) for several hundred years has led to the cultural movement and the intellectual, political and social development and maturity of people of various countries throughout the world whilst today we have become the consumers of their material and intellectual products as a result of the suspension of the freedom and the consequent intellectual stagnation, and have thus been afflicted by a total cultural sterility.”

Many of the Iranians took the support of the governmental organisations to produce an impressive number of films which realistically portrayed Iranian life. A number of these film makers were themselves writers, poets, dramatists, such as Ebrahim Gulestan, Feraidun Rahnema, Naser Taqavi and Bahram Baizai. Other directors in research for indigenous topics and stories, adopted recent Iranian novels and short stories, providing such movies as “Ahu’s Husband” (1966) directed by Davud Mullahpur based on a novel by

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14 Ibid., p.353.

A number of films depicted portraits of the village and city life in harsh realism; e.g., "The Cow", "A Simple Event" (1973), and "Still life" (1974) all directed by Sohrab Shahid Saless; "The Report" directed by Abbas Kiarostami; and "Broken Hearts" (1978) by Ali Hatami. Some films took the method of symbolism in times of political and social oppression. "Tranquillity in the Presence of Others", and "City of Fables" (1972) directed by Manucher Anuar, and "The Stranger and the Fog" (1974) by Baiza'i all utilised symbolism of one sort or another to depict and criticise the social and political system.\textsuperscript{15}

A number of film makers based outside Iran focused on the devastation of the indigenous cultural values and institutions by western countries or by westernized Iranians. "The Postman" (1970) "The Earth", and "The Mongols" (1973), "Far From Home" (1975), "The Journey of Stone" (1977) and "O.K. Mister" are all examples of this theme. Royal and social corruption were the themes of "Prince Ehtejab" and "The Cycle". In

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.354.
"Down pour" the themes were social conditions and government repression and in "Tangsit" individual revenge evolved into a one man armed insurrection against the powers that be.

The long history of Iranian features films showed the society through different angles. A review of the themes and characters presented by Iranian feature films suggests a complex set of social and moral values that truthfully reflects the establishment's modernisation and westernization policies. Some of the film lauded westernization and modernisation, a few films condemned indiscriminate westernisation, and some extolled the traditional Iranian values. The set of values and attitudes which emerged contained a mixture of values, indigenous and modern, but more often than not they ridiculed and disparaged the traditional values and urged their abandonment in favour of more modern western attitudes.¹⁶

Landlords, village chiefs, and others representing the old feudalism with whom the Shah was in conflict, were portrayed as arbitrary, cruel, greedy and lascivious. The rich often did not fare much better. On the other hand the peasants the workers and the poor were shown as simple, honest and hard working. The conflict between the rich and the poor was represented crudely, often immersed in a milieu of revenge and personal motifs. Two purposes served by this silver screen class warfare. One

¹⁶ Ibid., p.356.
effect was to mollify and pacify the mass of poor people who continued to exist in varying degrees of depravation and exploitation. On the other hand it helped to maintain the high level of mistrust and contempt between the modern, educated elite and the masses.

Many socially significant issues were ignored in the movies. Poverty, the destruction of agriculture, migration of peasants to townslums, oppression, police terror, censorship, the plight of tribes and ethnic minorities, inequality, injustice, social and royal corruption, exploitation of the dispossessed, disruption of indigenous culture, the undermining of religion were not considered or explored in the Iranian cinema.

Thus, indigenous cinema never assumed the function of a social barometer, reflecting the people’s needs problems and aspirations, but it clearly served as an indicator of the government cultural policy. The result was that the reaction of the Iranians to this mosaic of their society in films was not uniform.17

Before the coming of constitutional revolution in Iran, education was largely traditional with maktabs (village schools) and Madrasas (theological schools) being at the base of educational system18 Darul Funun was founded in 1852. In 1873 a school of languages was started in

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17 Ibid., p.358.
18 The Iranians, How they live and work, John Abbot. p.129.
Tehran, and in 1876 the second college to be sponsored by the Government was founded in Tabriz with European as well as local teachers; this was followed by military colleges in Isfahan in 1883 and in Tehran in 1886. In 1897 the first girl's school appeared at Chalyas near Kerman. But in the following year the first organised development in national education took place - the formation of the council for national schools, whose members included many prominent men of the day. Ten schools were started by them during that year. Most of them were organised along similar lines; a typical one devoted a year each to the study of alphabet, Persian, Arabic and Mathematics. In 1899 a college of political sciences (under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and in 1900 a school of Agriculture (with a Belgian director) was started.

The revolution of 1906 brought little more in the educational world than an attempt to reorganise what had already been achieved.¹⁹ The Education Acts of 1910 and 1911 distinguished between private schools, the religious colleges the National Schools and the foreign mission schools and public schools founded and run directly by the state. Foreign teachers were henceforth forbidden to teach in primary schools (a measure directed against Russian influence), though of course they continued to teach in secondary and higher schools. Thirty students were sent to Europe to study

¹⁹ Iran Today, A.B. Rajput, Lahore, 1945, p.132.
Education, a secondary curriculum was drawn up, and for the first time an official interest was taken in education of girls. Figures for 1911 show that there were 76 boys schools with 8344 pupils and 47 girls' schools with 2187 pupils; in addition there were two secondary schools and three higher colleges. In 1919 the grant for education was doubled, but it was left to the Government of Reza Shah Pahlavi to undertake fundamental reorganisation of the national systems.

The general trend of this reorganisation has been to bring all education under direct state control, and although the non-state schools have been allotted to remain, they have the qualifications required of state teachers, the buildings and equipment must confirm to the Ministry's standards, and the curriculum must include all the officials subjects, so that the pupils may be qualified to enter the state examinations', these include Persian, Arabic, Iranian history and geography. Since 1932 no foreign school has been allowed to take primary pupils of Iranian nationality, and Persian must be used as the medium of instruction in all subjects specified above.

The Ministry of Education, set-up in 1911, consists of nine departments, the most important of which deals with primary and secondary schools and with higher education. Another section controls the work of the physical training council, while another is concerned with the
nation's historical and archaeological treasures. In 1922 a Board of Education was set up, composed of ten members appointed by the Minister from the headquarters and teachers of higher and secondary schools.

Kindergartens were not envisaged in the original education acts and the first actually appeared in 1918; a government kindergarten was founded in Tehran in 1933, and from this date they were officially incorporated in the national system. They cover the period from 4 to 7 years of age and provide three to five hours a day of games, eurhythmics drill, singing, dancing, reiteration. At the age of 7 the child comes under the compulsory scheme, and enters the primary school. Throughout the school system the student spends one year in each class, and in the primary stage there are normally six of these classes, lasting six years. Uniforms were introduced in 1935, the boy wearing grey flannel suits with berets, while the girls wear tunics of similar material. Mixed schools are now quite common, though the first was only started in 1935 but the curricula for boys and girls differ slightly. Boys study Persian, scripture, mathematics, history and geography (mainly of Iran) and elementary Arabic, girls do less of these and include drawing and sewing. The courses are covered by a special series of school books published by the Ministry - an example of the insistence on uniformity which is to be seen throughout the whole system.
Secondary education is not compulsory, and many pupils who have obtained their primary certificate pass straight into some form of employment. The secondary course (which was first drawn up in 1921) lasts for six years, after which entrance to the university is possible (in the case of girls the last year is spent in a special university entrance class). The first three years of the course are the same for all students; both boys and girls study languages, scripture, mathematics, science history and geography, and in addition boys are taught physics chemistry and most advanced mathematics, while girls learn domestic science, child welfare and sewing. Leisure time is occupied by games, music and production and plays. The primary purpose of Iranian education - the turning, out of a good member of a corporate society - is clear from these curricula.

Secondary education is not free, but the fees are very low and many exemptions are granted - to the children of teachers and lower grade Government employees, and to those reaching a certain standard in their primary examinations. The lower secondary certificate qualifies the student not only for entrance to the second part of the course but also for the state technical schools and the first grade of Government service.

In the second three years the student specialises. The immediate purpose of this part of the course is preparation for the university or for one other of the High Schools, but the full secondary certificate also qualifies
for second grade Government service and is accepted in French, German
and in some British and American universities instead of Matriculation.
The main divisions are arts and science, the first covering Persian, Arabic,
foreign languages, history, geography and philosophy, while the second
includes mathematics, physics chemistry, science and a foreign language.
The Arts student passes on to the university faculties of Arts or law, the
Science student to the Scientific, Technical or Medical Faculties; or they
may enter one of the high school, whose primary function is the training of
teachers. There are a number of other schools within the secondary
framework commercial, technical, economics, industrial, agricultural
painting, and religion and philosophy - all of which may prepare students
for the appropriate university faculties as well as for specific occupations.
Higher education for girls concentrate mainly on the production of
teachers; they may either specialise in education and psychology and then
qualify at once as teachers or may go through a more general course and
pass on to the entrance class of the University, one of the Teacher’s high
schools or various colleges of nursing. Recently a more general course
lasting two years has been instituted for girls who do not propose to go on
higher studies; besides the usual subjects it includes handicrafts,
housekeeping, childwelfare and health.
The Tehran University Act was passed on May 30, 1934, and on June 25 the first sod was cut. The foundation stone was laid by H.I.M., the Shah on February 5, 1934 - a red letter day in the history of Iranian culture, and one which is celebrated annually as festival of education. The buildings were planned on spacious lines and included five faculties - Arts, Science Medicine, Law and industry. A sixth faculty - that of Divinity - is housed in Sepahsalar Mosque built in 1882 and a seventh Fine Arts has been added recently. The main part of the Medical building was completed in March 1937, the law building on March 15, 1941 while the others are under construction. The university is controlled by a Board composed of the Principal and Vice principal, and the Head and one Professor from each faculty; each faculty in its turn has a similar board of professors and lecturers of whom there are twenty grades in all.

Primary importance has been attached to the technical faculties of Medicine and Industry. The former includes a preparatory course lasting one year, followed by main course of five years, attached to it are schools of dentistry and dispensing. The industrial course lasts for four years and covers chemistry, mechanics, electricity, civil engineering and mining, the law course lasting three years combines the subjects formerly covered by the Colleges of Political Science (1899), Law (1920) and Commerce (1925). In Science and Arts (which are combined with higher Teachers
colleges) there are ten and seventy subjects respectively; a pass in three (in science) or four (in Arts) is necessary for a degree. Fine Arts gives a choice of architecture, drawing and sculpture. Finally there is the three years divinity course covering philosophy, religion and literature. A university degree qualifies the holder for Grade III Government service.

Teachers' colleges had been founded in Tehran as long ago as 1918 - for women as well as men - but little fresh progress was made until the Teachers Training Act of March 1934. This plan to set up twenty five Teachers' colleges in the course of the next five years, and by 1936 nine boys and two girls colleges (with a total of 697 students and 62 teachers) had already been started; the Act was passed in 1939 and now there are 36 throughout the country. The same act encouraged would be teachers by granting special privileges and concessions to the profession. The normal qualification is full secondary certificate, though the lower one is usually accepted the course lasts for two years and, provided that the aspirant has reached the age of 20, he may now teach in the primary schools. Nothing less than the full secondary certificate is accepted in Higher Teachers' college in Tehran which supplies most of the secondary teachers. The college includes the two university faculties of Arts and Science; it is free and in 1940 there were eighty boarders. Students who come from the university as well as secondary schools, can specialise in one of the eight
subjects - Persian language and literature, history and geography, archaeology, foreign language, philosophy and educational theory, mathematics, physics and chemistry and natural science. Women students were admitted on equal terms after the "Emancipation" of 1936 (though they pass through a special entrance class first), and from 1940 domestic science has been added to the subjects that they may study. Regarded as the "corner stone" of the university, this college is organised on community lines. Upto 1940 612 students had graduated, and there were 550 in that year. The qualified teacher may pass through ten grades in all, spending two or three years in each, and generally retires at the age of 50.

Technical training has followed rather a line of its own, the most extensive part coming under the direction of the Ministry of Industry. The primary schools ignore the usual curriculum, and instead provide instruction in such things as carpet weaving, inlay work, hand textiles, agriculture, furniture making and carpentry. In the secondary stage the student enters one of the technical schools of which the most popular is the industrial school. Here he spends four years in general theory and practice and two years in training for some particular occupation, to which he may pass on immediately. For more ambitious there is the industrial college, where there is a choice of a three years course in machinery, chemistry, mining or metallurgy, followed by a year in an appropriate factory. There
is also a range of schools of arts and crafts, one group covering carpet making and designing, miniature painting and book illumination, enamel and inlay work, tiles and textiles the other more modern arts such as drawing, sculpture, industrial carpet weaving, mosaic, pottery and architecture. These studies may be continued in the Tehran college of Art. Finally mention must be made of the schools of dyeing which provide recruits for carpet factories, textile and spinning works, and Girls Technical school in Tehran, whose building is one of the most striking features of modern city.

There are other technical colleges directed by other ministries more closely concerned with them. The Ministry of Education is itself interested in only two of them the School of Commerce and Economics and the Academy of Music. The former is reckoned equivalent to the higher part of the secondary grade and after three years study the student may pass on to the faculty of law and Economics. The Music Academy takes pupils at the primary stage, and for the first six years gives the normal primary course together a certain amount of musical theory and practice. In the secondary grade specialisation begins in the fourth year, and includes conducting and orchestral work, singing and instruments, and teaching. This is followed by a higher course of four years’ duration, with a diploma at the end of it.
The Ministry of Agriculture runs a Veterinary and an Agricultural college, both at Karaj. Students spend 2-3 years and then go on experimental stations, or they may study education and psychology as well, and teach in the agricultural primary schools. The Ministry of war trains the officers in Tehran Military college, whose students are drawn from military secondary schools at Tabriz, Mashad, Isfahan, Shiraz and Kermanshah, the course lasts for 2 years and covers infantry, artillery, cavalry, engineering and commissariat after which the cadet passes out as lieutenant. The Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telegraphs, and Interior also have colleges of a similar kind. All these colleges are free.

Education in Iran is an all-embracing affair involving old as well as young, it plays its part in the general design of bringing public opinion into line. Adult education began to be taken seriously in 1936, when every school was instructed to organise night classes for adult workers. The object was to provide every citizen with the ability to read and write, and with a modicum to knowledge of the world around him. The course lasts for two years, and the passing out certificate is generally taken as equivalent to that of the fourth primary class. Each student is expected to attend ninety-six classes in each year; during the first year he learns reading, writing and simple arithmetic, during the second general
knowledge, health and hygiene, arithmetic, civic knowledge, Iranian history and geography, and simple prose and poetry selections.

It will have been noticed that comparatively little importance is attached to religious teaching, and a great deal to ethics - particularly of citizenship and patriotism. This is characteristic of the whole attitude of the regime (Pahlavi regime) towards religious questions. The tendency has been to weaken the hold of Islam upon the people than to make a direct, attack on it. At one time the Shah was inclined to follow Turkey in her declaration of a ‘lay state’ but opposition from the Mullah proved stronger than he had expected, and he was obliged to withdraw. It became clear that the power of the Mullahs, which was founded as much on their monopoly of literacy as on spiritual worth, was likely to prove a serious obstacle to social reform and the unification of nation, “Undermining” tactics therefore became the order of the day. The religious clause remained in the constitution, laws were framed so as not to infringe openly the Islamic code, and anti Islamic propaganda was forbidden, the Shah even visited the shrines at Qum, Kerbela and Najaf. On the other hand compulsory religious teaching in the schools was dropped before 1930, and the status and dignity of Mullahs was weakened by the increasing opportunities for education and by certain restrictions on dress and appearance. The decision to nationalise the religious endowments though a logical development of
the Shah’s policy towards religion, is nevertheless most significant, when the one time strength of these organisations are remembered. In 1935 the public performance of the annual Taziye or passion play was severally controlled and counter attractions provided, and a little later the mosques in Isfahan were thrown open to visitors- Moslem and non Moslem alike.

Liberal opinion also turned more and more to characteristically Iranian doctrines of Zoroastrianism, and extremists even maintain that by the ousting of this ancient faith Islam destroyed the nation’s true culture.

Attitude towards religion cannot be judged out of its context in modern Iranian social and political ideas. This combine in a form of ‘nation worship’ which has its roots in the autocratic rule of the Achaemenids, and which is quite strong as anything in Europe today. Every opportunity is taken to exalt the state over the individual and the ‘interests of the nation’ are thrust before him in all his activities. Anything that helps to increase national unity is encouraged and anything that tends to divide is suppressed. So while unorthodoxy of a nationalist character is welcomed, religious which are neither Islamic nor Iranian fare less well.

Every possible medium is used to strengthen this nationalist outlook. The introduction of a new flag and a national anthem, the abolition of the flowery titles so beloved of nineteenth century Iran, and the insistence on the use abroad of the correct name. ‘Iran’ rather than the
specific attempt to control the ‘collective mind’ of the public was the institution in January 1939 of the Bureau for the Education and Guidance of Public opinion. This committee consisting of representatives of the university, adult education, the Scout organisation and the press censorship was charged with the encouragement of the nationalist spirit through the media of the press, pamphlets, books, public lectures held regularly throughout the country, plays and the cinema, broadcasting, music and national songs - in fact, all the recognised varieties of popular culture.

In a speech on June 29, 1940 HIM the Shah made it clear to a gathering of editors and journalists that it was not possible for Iran to stand aside from the current of events, and that her people must not only be instructed in the facts about national and world affairs, but also be assisted to understand and interpret them. The press has been striving manfully to comply with this order. All news has to pass through the filter of the official Pars News Agency so that there is no difficulty over censorship. There is average of over 300 daily and weekly newspapers and magazines throughout the country. Every town of any size has at least one, and there has thus sprung up a provincial press of a prolificity rare even in Europe. The circulation of these are small even the leading papers of Tehran 'Ettelat' (Information) and 'Iran' which are read throughout the country,
do not exceed 15,000 pieces apiece. Control of the press consists less in direct censorship than in ensuring that the editor has the right educational qualifications and mental make up and sufficient capital. A number of ministries - Education, War Agriculture, Industry, etc. publish their own monthly magazines, and there are several illustrated and cultural periodicals of a more or less popular nature.

There has been little development in art, except in the matter of architecture (and sculpture in so far as it serves as ornament for buildings). In conformity with the nationalist spirit, the new design in building is modelled, not on the Islamic tradition, but on the pillars and carvings of the Achaemenid palaces at Persepolis and the Sassanid Arch of Ctesiphon in Iraq; the Police Headquarters and the National Bank in Tehran are good examples. This heritage is considered to be of the greatest value in strengthening the national traditions, and every effort is being made to preserve for the nation the relics of the past. The Antiquities Act of 1930 brought all excavation under the control of the Government (thus cancelling the monopoly that had for years been in French hands); there are now several expeditions in the country, including those at Persepolis and Ra'y from Chicago university. No remains may be taken out of the country, but must be handed over to the Archaeological Museum in Tehran, set up by the same Act. Provision was also made for the repair and
maintenance of ancient monuments, and up to the end of 1932 247 buildings were scheduled as historical, of which 82 were pre-Islamic; it is significant that non Moslems place of worship (as well as mosques) are included among the buildings to be preserved. The National Museum contains a library which possesses a number of valuable manuscripts.

Music is the other branch of art that has received encouragement. Mention has already been made of the College of Music, and in 1939 a special department was set up, with a number of European professors, which publishes a monthly review, collects old songs and folk tunes and encourage modern composers; so far there has hardly been time for any noteworthy developments, though these are a number of talented songwriter. There is a significant change of outlook here; orthodox Islam banned the use of music, and although this no longer holds in any but the more primitive Moslem countries, and the gramophone is ubiquitous, yet it is only rarely that official interest and patronage has been given. The attitude of the Iranian Government is that music can be an instrument both of propaganda and of popular culture.