



IRAN



Reza Shah PAHLAVI (b. 1878, acceded 1925, abdicated 1941, Died 1944)

ried 1. ————— Unknown

Hamdam-es-Saltaneh (1902-) m. 1. Hadi Ataibi 2. Engineer Behrun 3. Amir-As

Amir Reza

Cyrus

Simin Dekht

ried 2. ————— Tadj-ol-Molouk

Shams (1917-) m. 1. Feridun Jam (div.1941) 2. Mehrdad Pahlbod Mohammed R (1919-)

Shahbaz (1946-)

Shahryar (1949-)

Shahrazad (1952-)

Mahshid Mer Khalili (adopted. b.1938-)

married

1. Fawzia (div. 1948)

2. Soraya Esfandiari Bakhtiari (div. 1958)

3. Farah Diba

Shahnaz (1940-) m. Ardeshir Zahedi (div. 1964)

Reza (1960-) Farahnaz (1966-)

Zahra Mahnaz (1958-)

ried 3. ————— Turan Amir-Soleimani

Ghulam Reza (1923-) m. 1. Homa Alam (div. 1954)

2. Maniheh Jahanbani

Mehrnaz (1949-51)

Bahman (1950-)

Maryam (1964-) Azar (1965-)

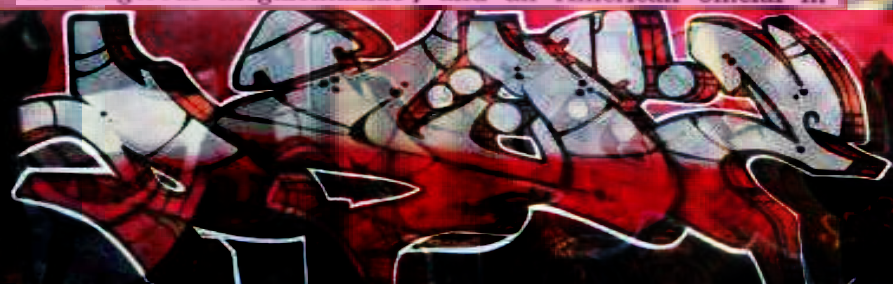
ried 4. ————— Esmat-ol-Moluk



who were princes in Russia but lost everything during the revolution,' said a leading businessman. 'They know the same could happen here. **Tehran high society, the most snobbish and incestuous in the world, will always be devious enough to flatter whoever is in power and it performed its rituals around the Shah with precision.** His courtiers wear several different types of uniform, depending upon the occasion and their status. There are twenty-five heads of protocol – but only one supreme head. Orders are carried out with rigorous attention to detail and an **enthusiasm which causes embarrassment.** Once, when the Shah visited the university of Tehran, he asked casually whether a student with long hair was a boy or girl. Next day, all male students were ordered to have their hair cut short. A courtier told me a story, presumably apocryphal, which illustrates the Iranian desire to please. 'The Shah asked for someone's hat. Later one of his ministers came in with it. But the hat was still on the man's head, which **had been cut off.**'

His Imperial Majesty Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Aryamehr, Shahanshah, is the Light of the Aryans and King of Kings, in addition to the Shadow of God, and for thirty-eight years his autocratic rule over thirty-five million cynical, backward, corrupt and charming people was a performance of unrivalled cunning or, as his many enemies would say, brutality. He had a precise knowledge of the fickle nature of his countrymen, and the duplicity of 'friends' abroad. He was so powerful and feared in his own country, and so courted by nations who realized his whims could affect the lives of millions outside Iran, that diplomats and businessmen in Tehran rarely mentioned him by name in case they were overheard. To Americans he was 'Ralph' or 'Pepe' (he and the Empress Farah were 'Ken and Barbie' or 'George and Martha'). The French called him 'Smi', an acronym for Son Majeste Imperial. The British referred to him as 'the man on the hill' or, more conversationally, 'Fred'. To his detractors, he was the Shit of Persia.

He was likened to a combination of Croesus, Dr No and Goldfinger. A State Department profile in 1950 said 'his indecision is monumental and his moral courage debatable'. Twenty-five years later, the CIA described him as 'a brilliant but dangerous megalomaniac', and an American official in



Tehran added that he 'has a reality problem'. In fact, he was a leader trying to keep an equilibrium between what he wanted to do, what was acceptable, and what was possible, in a country where paradox is the only consistency.

He initiated some of the more advanced social programmes in the world, yet he prohibited criticism of himself or his decisions. He claimed to draw support from ordinary people, yet surrounded himself and his sixty-strong family with a servile court of 1500 costing at least \$15 million a year, whose comic mannerisms would be the envy of any amateur dramatic society and whose protocol requirements made the British royal family seem like mere understudies in the diminishing cast of world monarchies. He has a Zurich bank account, extensive investments in England (including a £500,000 house near Windsor for the Crown Prince), France and the United States, which make him the world's richest ruler. He says his wealth has been made over to the Pahlavi Foundation, a charitable trust. Charities have certain tax advantages, of course. He had food flown from Paris to his villa on Kish Island in the Gulf – yet many of his villagers were starving on five grammes of protein a week and, it was alleged, adults searched for undigested oats in horse droppings¹ and children were sent to graze for their lunch.² He reads all the latest military magazines, yet relaxes by talking to chickens and cows and playing with an electric train set he bought in Switzerland. He claims to be deeply religious, yet he curtailed the power of the mullahs (clergy) to such an extent that they became a focus for all forms of dissent as well as his most implacable enemies. He believes religion can be 'the root of backwardness' and, asked once what happens when the conflict between him and mullahs became intense, he replied with only the trace of a smile, 'I send them away. I send some of them a very long way away.'

He has held power longer than any other world leader with the exception of the Emperor of Japan, in spite of a brief exile and several assassination attempts. Initially the money rush provided enough high-level flattery to convince him the days of humiliation were over. In 1973, there were twenty-three official visits to Iran by leading foreign politicians and heads of state – and by 1975 there were ninety. Like his people, he is

Some people might think it was a bribe.

'Well, the British Government paid the money. You did it. And you didn't know about it?'

He paused again, sucked in his breath, shook his head, and said nothing.

Corruption charges had already been brought against Mr Hoveyda, General Nassiri, and several former cabinet ministers. It appeared everyone was being sacrificed so that he might remain on the throne.

'What can I say? The government asked ... well, the Easterners ... that these people should be arrested. They really insisted, against your better judgement?'

'Well, I took the risk, don't that you do whatever you think is best. But they insisted.'

'It can't not have been a happy time?'

'Well, you can look at this thing from ... different ... many angles. He sighed again.

I asked if he thought his dream were now shattered.

'To see what the future will be very early to judge now.'

'It doesn't take a poet, does it?'

'But the minute ...'

'Do you think you are perhaps misunderstood?'

That was the longest I pined of our discussion, as far as content of his explanations. Finally, his words came back to me almost inaudibly as I tried to come to grips with the reasons for his massive disorientation.

'Yes,' he said at last. 'And I don't know ... why.'

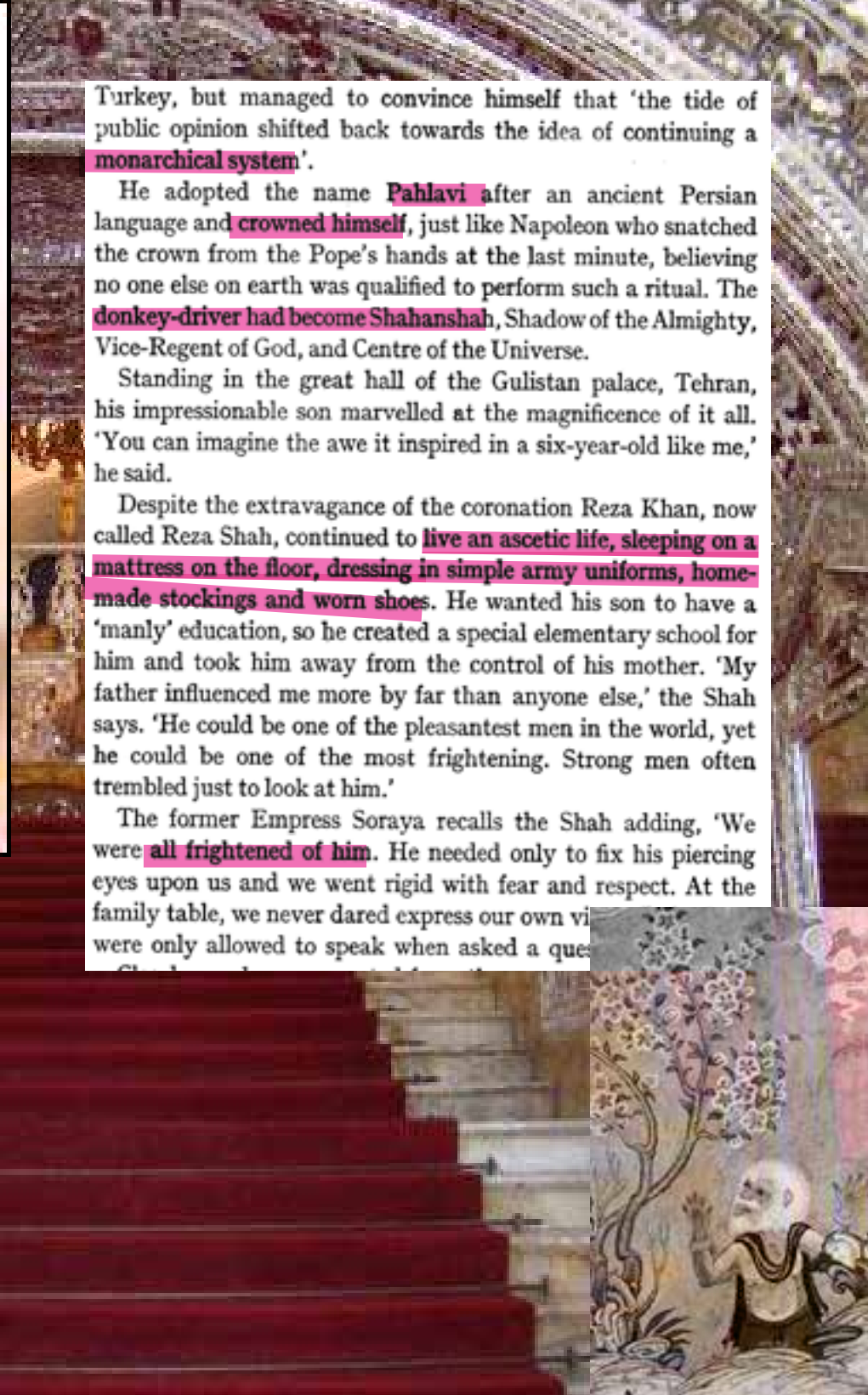




in a small house in what is now the red-light district of south Tehran, Mohammed Reza was the first son of Colonel Reza Khan and his second wife Tadj-ol-Molouk (see Appendix). The colonel, who had joined the Persian Cossack Regiment when he was fourteen, illiterate, and a donkey-driver, 'had risen from the ranks and was renowned for his strong personality, iron will, and extraordinary capacity for leadership, and was clever and ambitious',¹ useful qualities at a time when Iran was bankrupt, demoralized, and increasingly under the control of Russia.

Colonel Reza Khan first led a military coup against the government and then, in 1925, deposed the last of the Qajar dynasty kings, Ahmad Shah, who had decided prudently not to return from an extended holiday in Switzerland and the south of France.

At first, Reza Khan wanted to declare a republic, emulating his hero Kemal Atatürk two years previously in neighbouring



Turkey, but managed to convince himself that 'the tide of public opinion shifted back towards the idea of continuing a **monarchical system**'.

He adopted the name **Pahlavi** after an ancient Persian language and **crowned himself**, just like Napoleon who snatched the crown from the Pope's hands at the last minute, believing no one else on earth was qualified to perform such a ritual. The **donkey-driver had become Shahanshah**, Shadow of the Almighty, Vice-Regent of God, and Centre of the Universe.

Standing in the great hall of the Gulistan palace, Tehran, his impressionable son marvelled at the magnificence of it all. 'You can imagine the awe it inspired in a six-year-old like me,' he said.

Despite the extravagance of the coronation Reza Khan, now called Reza Shah, continued to **live an ascetic life, sleeping on a mattress on the floor, dressing in simple army uniforms, home-made stockings and worn shoes**. He wanted his son to have a 'manly' education, so he created a special elementary school for him and took him away from the control of his mother. 'My father influenced me more by far than anyone else,' the Shah says. 'He could be one of the pleasantest men in the world, yet he could be one of the most frightening. Strong men often trembled just to look at him.'

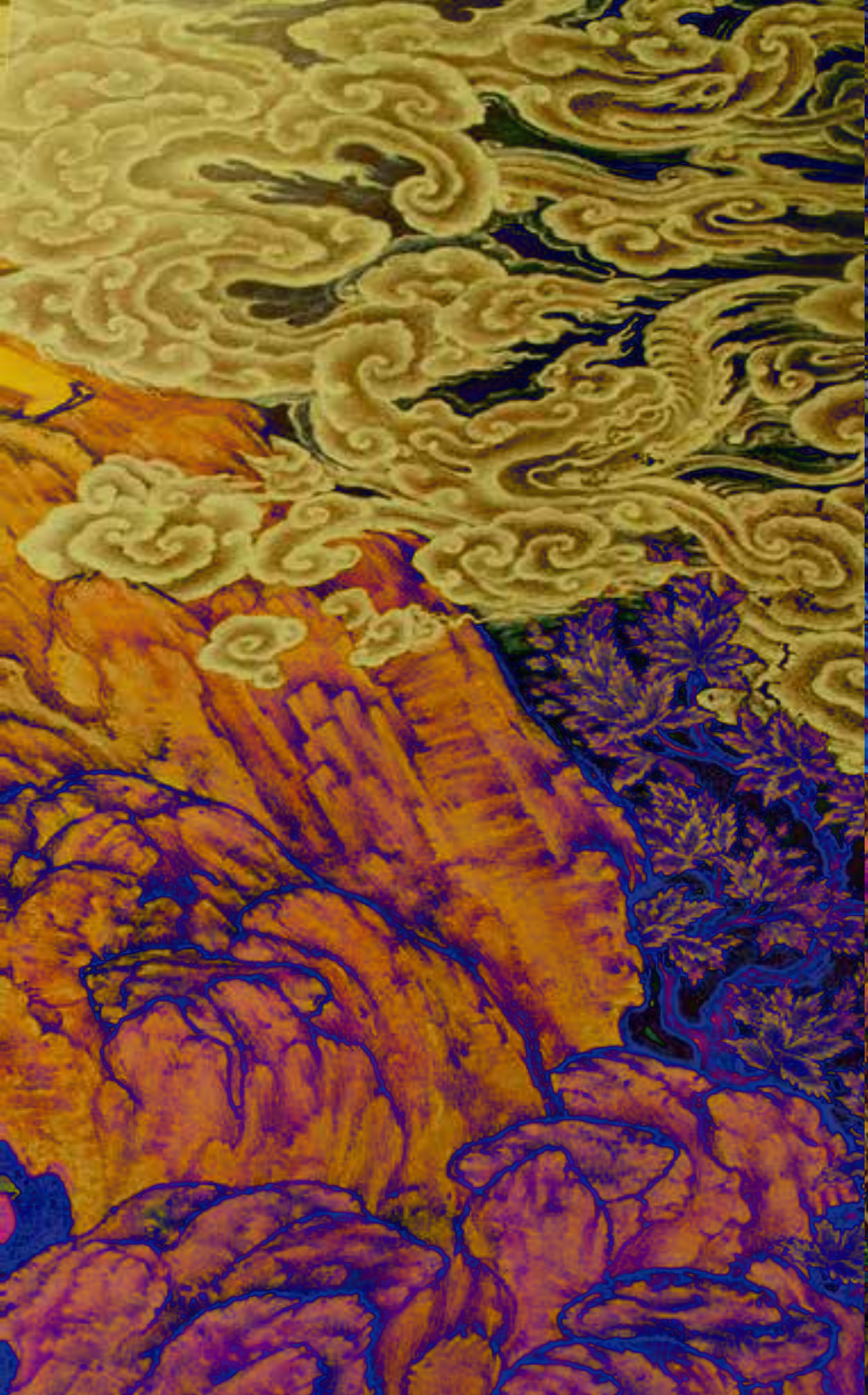
The former Empress Soraya recalls the Shah adding, 'We were **all frightened of him**. He needed only to fix his piercing eyes upon us and we went rigid with fear and respect. At the family table, we never dared express our own views. We were only allowed to speak when asked a question.'



روسیه کان مزد مارچ
نهنگی نوبیر راه شیران مرو
رسیدست با مایه نیشان شلوس
سمه کرزداران پر خاخنر

Reza Shah began the practical task of **modernizing** the country, once more following examples set by Kemal Atatürk. He developed a **railway**, whose punctuality made him inordinately proud, began **health and educational systems**, and resisted the efforts of Lord Curzon to turn Iran into a protectorate. 'Father did not trust foreigners in general, and Westerners in particular,' says the Shah today. Nevertheless, modernization meant 'westernization', and as Atatürk **banned the veil for women and insisted men should cut their beards and dress in European style** Reza Shah followed the example in the most dramatic way he could devise. One day he **ordered his wife and eldest daughter, Shams, to accompany him to the opening of a new teachers' college without wearing the traditional chador**. 'For my personal feelings, I wish I had died today, but for the country I take you there like this,' he explained in the car on the way to the ceremony.³ A few days later, a priest in the religious city of Qum denounced the Empress for her action. Reza Shah went straight to the mosque and **beat the priest so hard that his metal stick bent**. He had a notoriously **violent temper**. It is claimed he **kicked one minister to death, and threw another out of the window**.





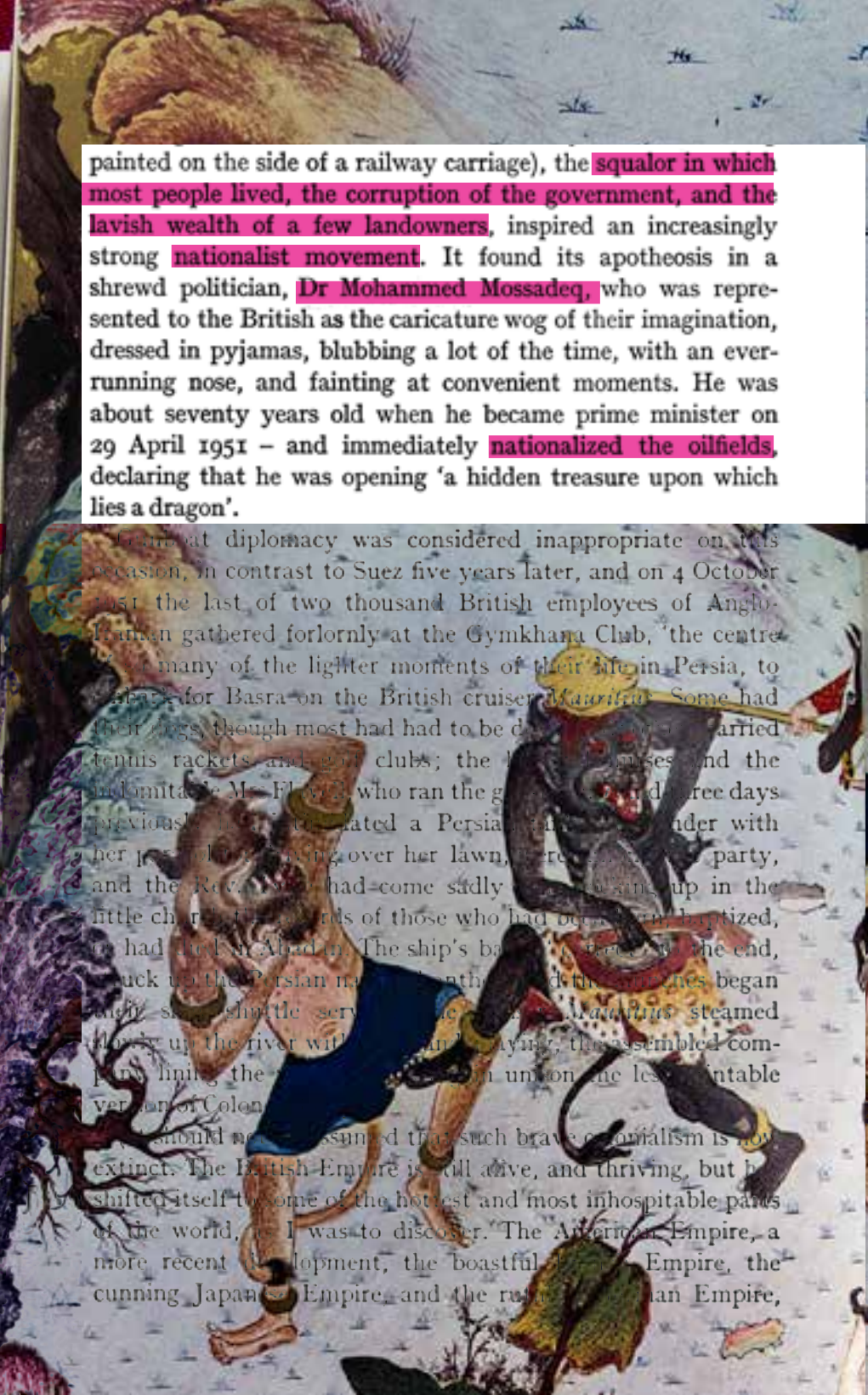
The Shah declined the military gifts and, at the end of the war, **Russian designs** on his country were made explicit when they refused to leave until President Truman exerted strong pressure. **British troops**, on the other hand, departed by an agreed date but considered their part ownership of the country was taken for granted.

When the Shah visited England in 1948, he and Ernest Bevin discussed the future of Iran. The Shah remembers, 'I said we had minerals in Kerman. He exclaimed, "Oh, **in our zone?**" I had to tell him that the whole of Iran was the zone of a free country. He was very embarrassed and tried to explain, "No, no, that's not what I meant." But he did.'

It was an easy mistake to make. For years, Iran had been a **useful source of revenue for the British Treasury**, thanks initially to a high-living adventurer, William Knox D'Arcy, who made a fortune from the Morgan gold strike in Queensland, Australia, and then retired to live opulently in Grosvenor Square, London. In **1901, the then Shah gave him a sixty-year oil concession covering five-sixths of the country.**

No oil was found, however. At the beginning of 1908, with five dry wells completed, George Reynolds, the geologist chosen by D'Arcy to take charge of the exploration, is said to have received a cable telling him to return home as funds were exhausted.⁵ There is no copy of the telegram in official records, but in view of what happened five months later, it is not impossible that it was removed. Reynolds refused to accept the order and, on **26 May 1908, oil gushed fifty feet above the top of the derrick at Masjid-i-Sulaiman** (the Mosque of Solomon), **one hundred and fifty miles north-east of Abadan. It was the beginning of the oil industry in the Middle East, and the first flickering indication of the money rush that was to come.**

The local Bakhtiari tribe, which had demanded protection money during the drilling, was given three per cent of the profits in return for maintaining law and order, and **the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (later Anglo-Iranian, then British Petroleum) was formed. By 1950 it was paying the Iranian government £16 million in royalties – and £50.5 million in tax to the British government.**



... painted on the side of a railway carriage), the squalor in which most people lived, the corruption of the government, and the lavish wealth of a few landowners, inspired an increasingly strong nationalist movement. It found its apotheosis in a shrewd politician, Dr Mohammed Mossadeq, who was represented to the British as the caricature wog of their imagination, dressed in pyjamas, blubbing a lot of the time, with an ever-running nose, and fainting at convenient moments. He was about seventy years old when he became prime minister on 29 April 1951 – and immediately nationalized the oilfields, declaring that he was opening ‘a hidden treasure upon which lies a dragon’.

Grand diplomacy was considered inappropriate on this occasion, in contrast to Suez five years later, and on 4 October 1951 the last of two thousand British employees of Anglo-Iranian gathered forlornly at the Gymkhana Club, ‘the centre of so many of the lighter moments of their life in Persia, to embark for Basra on the British cruiser *Mauritius*. Some had their dogs, though most had had to be debarred; others carried tennis rackets and golf clubs; the local courtesans and the indomitable Mrs Floyer, who ran the gymkhana, and three days previously had entertained a Persian ruler and his harem with her pet bulldog, strolling over her lawn, there gathered for a party, and the Reverend had come sadly to pick them up in the little chariot for the souls of those who had been born baptized, or had died in Abadan. The ship’s band, at the end, struck up the Persian national anthem, and the *Mauritius* began their slow shuttle service to the Gulf. The *Mauritius* steamed slowly up the river with a band playing, the assembled company lining the riverbanks, from union the less printable version of Colonel


It should not be assumed that such brave colonialism is now extinct. The British Empire is still alive, and thriving, but has shifted itself to some of the hottest and most inhospitable parts of the world, as I was to discover. The American Empire, a more recent development, the boastful Japanese Empire, the cunning Japanese Empire, and the ruthless Chinese Empire,

Unfortunately for Dr Mossadeq, he had chosen the wrong time to fight. There was **no world shortage of oil**. Anglo-Iranian organized a boycott of Iran by other major companies who were happy to comply because they realized that if one Middle East country succeeded in nationalization, the others would follow. Even when Mossadeq offered oil at a quarter of the market price there were no buyers. Finally, in **June 1953, he was forced to ask President Eisenhower for an American loan**, adding the Red Threat as an inducement. The **Russians**, he said, were willing, even eager, to provide economic and military aid. For a month Eisenhower did not reply, giving America's answer to the Red Threat – the CIA – time to plan their activities. Allen Dulles, head of the CIA, flew to Switzerland where he met Princess Ashraf. Meanwhile, a colleague of Dulles arrived in Tehran 'to see some old friends'.

General Norman Schwarzkopf who, as head of the New Jersey State Police, had been in charge of the hunt for the Lindbergh baby kidnapper, had also been in Tehran from 1942 to 1948 reorganizing the police, a task he performed with such dramatic efficiency that he was known as the 'Gang basher'. He professed surprise that he was referred to as 'this notorious agent of **American intelligence**', and left Tehran after forty-eight hours, having **met the Shah** and other leaders of the anti-Mossadeq faction.

On 6 July 1953, thirty-seven-year old Kermit Roosevelt, a grandson of Theodore Roosevelt, arrived in the Qazvin-Shirvan region, and entered the country. He had a 'Scar on the left cheek' – the Iranian immigration authorities copied the passport entry for 'distinguishing features'. Roosevelt's job was to mastermind Mossadeq's plan but he found the **Shah depressed** and undermined Mossadeq's public boast that 'I have muzzled the Shah'. The Shah was made to sell government land to his father, had to sign a receipt if he wanted to borrow the crown jewels, was confined to his palace by **guards loyal to Mossadeq**. The resulting

Roosevelt, a
Qazvin-Shirvan
region, and
he had a
Scar on the left
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Roosevelt's
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Mossadeq's
public boast
that 'I have
muzzled the
Shah'. The
Shah was
made to
sell govern-
ment land
to his father,
had to sign
a receipt if
he wanted
to borrow
the crown
jewels, was
confined to
his palace
by guards
loyal to
Mossadeq.
The result-
ing

A vertical strip of the American flag runs down the left side of the page. The background of the page is a large, slightly wavy American flag.

boredom encouraged his enthusiasm for childish practical jokes. He threw lifelike toy spiders and frogs at women guests, and made uncannily realistic imitations of dogs barking during film shows. He was disillusioned and ready to leave the country. Not, it appeared, the sort of man for whom revolutions are planned.

Roosevelt sent for Princess Ashraf, who returned to Tehran incognito on 25 July 'to encourage us to act', according to Soraya. This 'encouragement', alternating between shouts, threats, and curses, inspired the Shah to nominate a new prime minister, General Fazollah Zahedi (the father of Ardeshir), in place of Mossadeq. Unhappily, as so often happens in Iran, the plan was disclosed prematurely and Mossadeq was able to denounce it as an attempted coup d'état.

The Shah left Tehran hurriedly for his summer palace at Ramsar on the Caspian Sea. From there he and Soraya were forced to flee to exile in Rome. Meanwhile an uprising was organized in Tehran, financed with CIA money variously estimated as anything between \$70000 by the Shah himself to \$19 million by others⁷ which was distributed in ten-rial notes to those who shouted 'Javid Shah' (Long live the Shah). Three days later Mossadeq was overthrown.



It was clear now, even to Anglo-Iranian and the British government, that **American influence** in Iran was paramount and some reward would be expected for organizing the coup. But what? There was a world oil glut, and the Iranian boycott had in fact been a disguised benefit both to the companies and to the Arab countries – particularly to debt-ridden Saudi Arabia, which had been able to sell more oil. Moreover production costs in Iran were considered high in an industry with extraordinary profit margins: fourteen cents a barrel compared to eight cents in Saudi Arabia and six cents in Kuwait. Today, each barrel costs about thirty cents to produce.

Eventually, it was agreed that the **National Iranian Oil Company** formed by Dr Mossadeq would remain owner of the **oilfields and refineries, and sell to a consortium**. The arrangement gave Iran a considerably increased income – from almost nothing to **\$490 million** over the next three years – but it was soon insufficient to pay for the Shah's plans.





Nineteen Points of the Shah-People Revolution

1. Land reform.
2. Nationalization of forests and pastures.
3. Sale of government factory shares to support land reform.
4. Introduction of profit-sharing system in factories and workshops.
5. Reform of electoral law.
6. Formation of literacy corps.
7. Formation of health corps.
8. Formation of development corps.
9. Formation of equity courts.
10. Nationalization of natural water resources.
11. Reconstruction of the country.
12. Administrative and educational revolution.
13. Expansion of ownership-base of industrial and manufacturing units.
14. Price stabilization and campaign against profiteering.
15. Free education.
16. Provision of free nutrition and care for all children from birth up to the age of two years old.
17. Provision of health insurance to general public.
18. Rise in land prices will not exceed inflation.
19. Assets of all civil servants must be openly declared.

By 1961, overspending and widespread corruption resulted in a budget deficit of \$500 million. 'Let me tell you bluntly,' said the Shah, with psychic disillusion, 'this king business has given me nothing but a headache.'⁸

He needed money to implement what later became the Shah-People Revolution, a nineteen-point programme whose basic socialist principles appear a contradiction in a country where communism is outlawed. They are milestones on the way to what the Shah sees optimistically as his Great Civilization (see Appendix) but were ambitious beyond the capabilities of a country whose income was controlled by foreigners with their shareholders in mind.

The consortium agreed to a book-keeping manoeuvre in order to help overcome the Shah's immediate financial difficulties. Accounting procedures were changed from the Gregorian to the Persian calendar, which began in March, thus providing an additional three months' money in one year. 'The Shah frittered away Iran's oil through the sixties, then ruined the world by upping the price in the seventies,' says one of the consortium's senior members whose opinions, although necessarily biased, are echoed by others outside the industry. 'He made the world believe there was an ever-increasing supply of cheap oil. He pushed us all the time to produce more, and the world has still not learned to withstand the shock of the sudden price rise. He has made more mistakes than anyone when it comes to volume and price.' Certainly, the Shah's later talk about oil as a basis for 70000 different products, and 'too noble to be used just for making electricity and heating houses', seems a conversion initiated more by expedience than long-cherished scientific idealism.

Flamboyant declarations are an essential requisite to rebuilding a nation, however, and the Shah had returned from his few days' exile with reawakened faith both in himself and his country. He began to demand respect and, perhaps to disguise the parvenu nature of his 'royal' line, he put increasing emphasis on the distant past, back to 559 BC when the Persian Empire under Cyrus the Great stretched from Greece to India.

'Ours is the world's oldest continuous civilization except that of China,' he said. 'Our empire was flourishing centuries before that of Rome, and it was in fact we who showed that it was possible to govern and administer on such an extended scale.' He claims several pastoral inventions for Iran: the windmill, tulips, peaches, lucerne, roses, narcissus, lilacs, jasmine, sherry, sherbet, backgammon, and polo. As a final proclamation of his authority he decided to crown himself – just like his father – on 28 October 1967. 'Now, at last, I feel I have something to show. There is no pride, no job, in being king of a poor, divided, occupied land,' he said and, regretting his inability to invite many heads of state as witnesses, he added, 'We simply have not the means to accommodate them. By 1971 when we celebrate the 2500th anniversary of the Persian Empire, we might be in a position to ask everyone.'

He was, and he did, but not everyone accepted. President Nixon sent Spiro Agnew, later to become a frequent business visitor to the Middle East. Prince Philip and Princess Anne represented Queen Elizabeth. Jacques Chaban-Delmas stood in for Georges Pompidou. There were, though, nine kings, including Haile Selassie who brought his black chihuahua wearing a diamond collar, five queens, thirteen princes, eight princesses, sixteen presidents, three prime ministers, two governors-general, two foreign ministers, nine shaikhs, and two sultans mingling with the six hundred guests who came from sixty-nine countries. 'We want people to see what Iran is,' explained Empress Farah. 'Other countries pay so much money for public relations, and we are getting it free.'

Not quite. The meal of quail's eggs stuffed with caviare (the Shah ate artichokes, as he is allergic to all the most famous food) crabs, mushrooms, saddle of lamb, veal, and fresh fish was cooked by one hundred chefs between the new Grand Hotel de Paris, the Hotel de Ville in Monte Carlo, and the Palace Hotel, St Moritz. The total cost of the celebrations was between 20720000 and 220000000 million, depending upon items included. The Shah dined extravagantly. The cost was less than for the twenty-fourth inauguration of a President, he told me.

A ruler who saw his country's income rise in one year from



beating which would have prevented most normal people from returning, still travels merrily back and forth to Iran.

It would be naïve to assume that SAVAK is totally without fault, for as an ambassador commented, 'No one seriously denies there has been torture, not even the Shah. But if it exists now or did exist as much as is alleged you would meet people, as I have done in other countries, with their fingernails plucked out and so on.'

The Shah himself says there are three thousand SAVAK officers and tacitly defends the occasional act of brutality when he makes the distinction between what should happen to those who endanger his security and those who plot against the state. 'In case of betrayal of one's country I should say anything goes. There is not a single man, though, who has been shot who has planned against myself. I have never pardoned anyone who has plotted against the country in order to put it in the hands of a foreign power.'

He admits his secret police operate abroad, and is flattered that their reputation is more substantial than their results, thanks to a universal desire to believe in the super-efficiency of bogeymen. 'ARE SHAH'S SECRET POLICE WATCHING ME? DEMANDS MP' was the headline of a story in the *Sunday Times* on August 19, 1976 about Labour member of parliament, Stan Newens. The Confederation of Iranian Students had occupied the Iranian consulate in Bonn and German agents 'found' documents instructing SAVAK agents to investigate the relationship between dissidents and the MP. 'There is no evidence to prove the documents are genuine,' Mr Newens was reported as saying, 'but I have known these people for a very long time, and I have never found them so far to mislead me.'

He has campaigned vigorously against the Iranian government to 'mitigate the harshness with which it treats its opponents. It is an uphill struggle. It is particularly uphill because Mr Newens has never been to Iran. I don't accept that handicap,' he told me. 'For me to go to Iran for a fortnight and pretend I'm an expert would be nonsense.'

I asked if he really believed that the Iranian government would keep watch on him. 'I do not believe for an instant that the Iranian government would interfere with a British member

of parliament. It would be madness. I have never said that I have been watched. I have no evidence. I have a letter, and a translation handed to me by a member of a group. It could be a forgery. That sounds like James Bond - not that I have ever seen a James Bond film or have any interest in such things.'

Mr Newens talks about the 'reign of terror' in Iran, and says 'the regime has never relented'. I asked what he meant. 'I would have thought the evidence for torture is not all that difficult to prove. There is a very considerable amount of evidence to support it.' When I asked for details of one recent case, he replied, 'I believe there has been a change. For all practical purposes, it has stopped.'

That is as doubtful a proposition as some of the allegations of torture suggested by Amnesty International, who noted the 'atmosphere of fear' in their *Briefing on Iran*, published in November 1976, an eleven-page pamphlet written by a well-meaning woman from Hampstead, London, Anne Burleigh, who has never been to Iran and admitted, 'We know very little about the country, and have great difficulty in getting information.'

The man allegedly in charge of torture was at school with the Shah - 'my special friend was a boy named Hussein Farzadist.'

I went to see him

at the corner of a suburban street in Teddington, Surrey, and casually watching as cars pass by. There are no signs to indicate that the detached house they are standing in is the home of one of the most feared yet least-known leaders of the Islamic Revolution.

Two tall men, immaculate in grey lightweight frocks, greeted me in the driveway and asked me to accompany them upstairs. One walked in front, the other behind, at a safe remove. They chatted amiably about the difficulty of driving in the rain, the weather, the appalling traffic conditions in Tehran. They had fun in anecdotes tinged with the melancholy of their Iranian backgrounds.

We walked along a corridor into a small room, as so many of the houses in the area are. An old-fashioned hat stood in a corner, and a



\$4.8 billion to \$18.5 billion could perhaps be excused the orgy of indiscriminate spending which took place, but it laid the foundations for future problems. 'It was like a chap who did not know he had an uncle being sent a telegram to say that not only did he have an uncle, but that the uncle had left him \$20 million,' says one of the Shah's few close confidants. 'What would you expect him to do?'

Apart from massive spending on weapons, loans were promised throughout the world: \$1.2 billion to the British Water Authority, \$1 billion to France in advance payment for nuclear reactors, \$1 billion to the World Bank, \$3 billion to Italy for joint ventures, \$7 billion to developing nations in Africa and Asia, a \$3 billion trade agreement with Russia. He tried without success to buy into Pan American for \$300 million, offered \$75 million credit to the Grumman Corporation which produces F-14 fighters for Iran and the United States Navy (his offer was declined because foreigners cannot buy into US defence contractors), bought nine jumbo jets from TWA for \$16.6 million each (and sold one back to the company for \$22 million in 1977, before it had even left the TWA hangars in Kansas), spent \$100 million on twenty-five per cent of the German company Krupp. 'Americans buy minority interests in European companies, and this astonishes nobody,' he said in reply to criticism, 'but when we buy this little twenty-five per cent, so-called liberals profess to be shocked.'

Nothing could stop his determination to make Iran within a generation the world's fifth most powerful nation, after the United States, Russia, Japan and China. One day in August 1974, he met his cabinet in the conference room of the Ramsar Palace, from where twenty years previously he had flown to humiliating exile, and said in a flat, undramatic way that he had decided to double the money spent on the Fifth Development Plan, which ran from 1973 to 1978. Immediately Iran had \$68800 million to spend, instead of only \$35500 million. It did not seem to matter that there were not enough qualified people to administer such a massive increase – after all, he had ordered twenty atomic reactors even though Iran had only four resident technicians.

Money could overcome every problem and the most important



education. He decreed that it was to be all children, regardless of the fact that an additional thirty thousand teachers. Hoveyda explained that students could within two years televised lessons would via Iran's own satellite. But most of the have electricity. No problem. 'We will Next there was an order that school-glass of milk and a piece of cake every and the capability of the dairy industry, with the importation of dried milk.

Politically too the Shah became unpredictable. In March 1975 he announced that Iran would have only one political party, a decision which made very little practical difference because the two existing authorized groupings were know as the 'Yes' and 'Of course' parties. But it caused embarrassment to Prime Minister Hoveyda, who was campaigning hard for a summer election at the time, and involved the Shah in tortuous explanations as he had always declared himself opposed to a single-party system.

The following year, by a decree effective on 21 March, the Iranian New Year, he altered the calendar. It had been based on the date of Muhammad's flight from Mecca to Medina (the *hijra*). Now, it had to coincide with the reign of Cyrus the Great (see Appendix), a reversion which many Iranians were surprised to note 'reaffirmed their basic faith in the glorious monarchy', according to an advertisement in *The Times*. It served no tangible purpose and, if anything, put Iran even further away from the Western civilization whose advantages the Shah was trying selectively to emulate. When, in the autumn of 1978, religious pressure forced him to revert to the Islamic calendar, there were no brave advertisements.

But perhaps the most symbolic act, a plan conceived in pique, or with a sense of humour, was an attempt to buy seventeen per cent of British Petroleum when the British government sold part of its shareholding in the company during the summer of 1977. The day before the issue closed, the National Iranian Oil Company, under direct orders from the Shah, sent an application for the whole lot and a cheque for £200 million.

'It was sheer bloody stupidity,' said a former director of BP. 'Not even a lunatic would do that sort of thing, when the British government had made it quite clear that the shares would be spread among as many people as possible. It was arrogant, high-handed, and inept. But he is so vain, isn't he? He is shut up in his palaces all the time, and has to rely on visitors for a view of what's going on in the world. Most people don't dare tell him what is happening.'


It was difficult for him to avoid noticing for himself. As his spending became legendary, more and more people tried to become beneficiaries. Imports quintupled, bringing \$93-billion worth of goods in five years. Ships waited two hundred and fifty days to unload, and the government had to pay \$1 billion demurrage fees a year. Fruit went mouldy, and was thrown into the Gulf. Cargoes of rice cooked themselves gently into pilaff in the steamy holds of freighters. Even when goods were cleared, there were not enough trucks to take them to their destination. So the Shah bought four thousand from an American firm for \$6000 each. He did not realize they were too large for the roads, lacked adequate spare parts and, more important, Iran did not have enough trained drivers. The trucks were still unused in 1978, rotting up to their axles in sand.

A modern railway system was planned by the Shah to carry passengers at 150 miles an hour along thousands of miles of the most modern track and signalling devices in the world. For political expediency, the main projects were awarded to four countries: Britain, France, West Germany and the Soviet Union. In addition, the Russians, Danes, Swedes and Norwegians were working on smaller contracts.

It soon became impossible to co- and, whilst Iranian State Railways months, competing nations began regard to each other. The German right, whilst others went on the left what would happen when the line

'There is no doubt the country was hurt in a number of ways,' said a European Commission spokesman. 'But the exploitation was hardly one-sided. The conditions of work and living standards were so widespread that

Others lost millions in aborted contracts. Some respected businessmen did not dare enter Iran for fear of arrest followed by an unfair trial. The Iranian government, meanwhile, thought it was a target for the biggest rip-off in history. 'It's okay for people to try,' the Shah told me, 'but it is up to us not to be duped.'

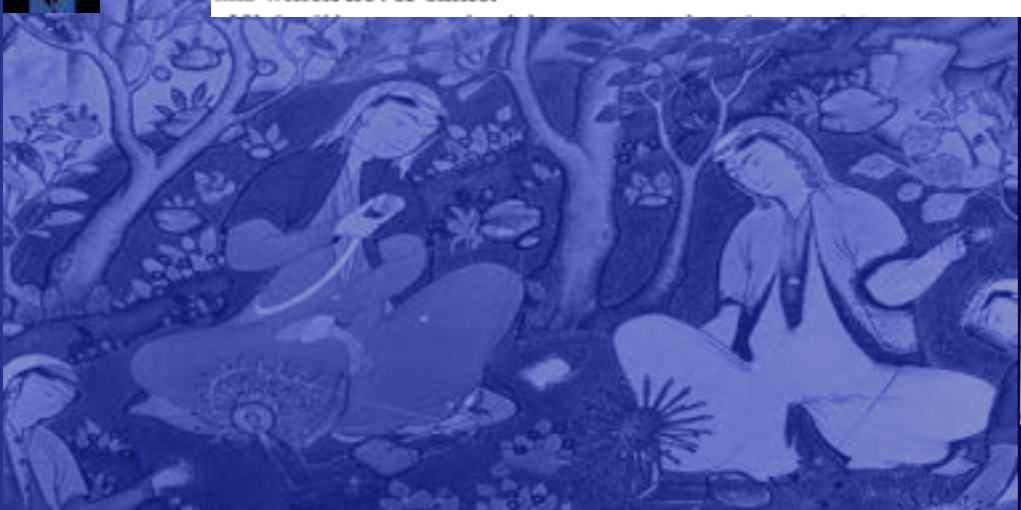


of power are so conclusive as an ability to drive at sixty miles an hour, unharmed, through downtown Tehran, and few demonstrations of Iran's bleakness are so evocative as the Park Hotel to which we sped. There, at the usual table in the dining-room, were the Irish chargé d'affaires, Donald Hurley, his French wife and their seventeen year-old son heroically struggling with the limited menu as they had for the last eight months whilst he tried in vain to find a house. They had never been out of Europe before he became Ireland's first representative in Iran. He thought of himself as John the Baptist as he attempted to improve his country's £22.5 million trade imbalance.

The lights dimmed. Candles were lit, mainly for atmosphere but also in anticipation of the inevitable power failure of up to four hours each evening. A British trio began to play, the same tune as every other night.

A love like ours is a love that's hard to find
We've come too far to leave it all behind . . .

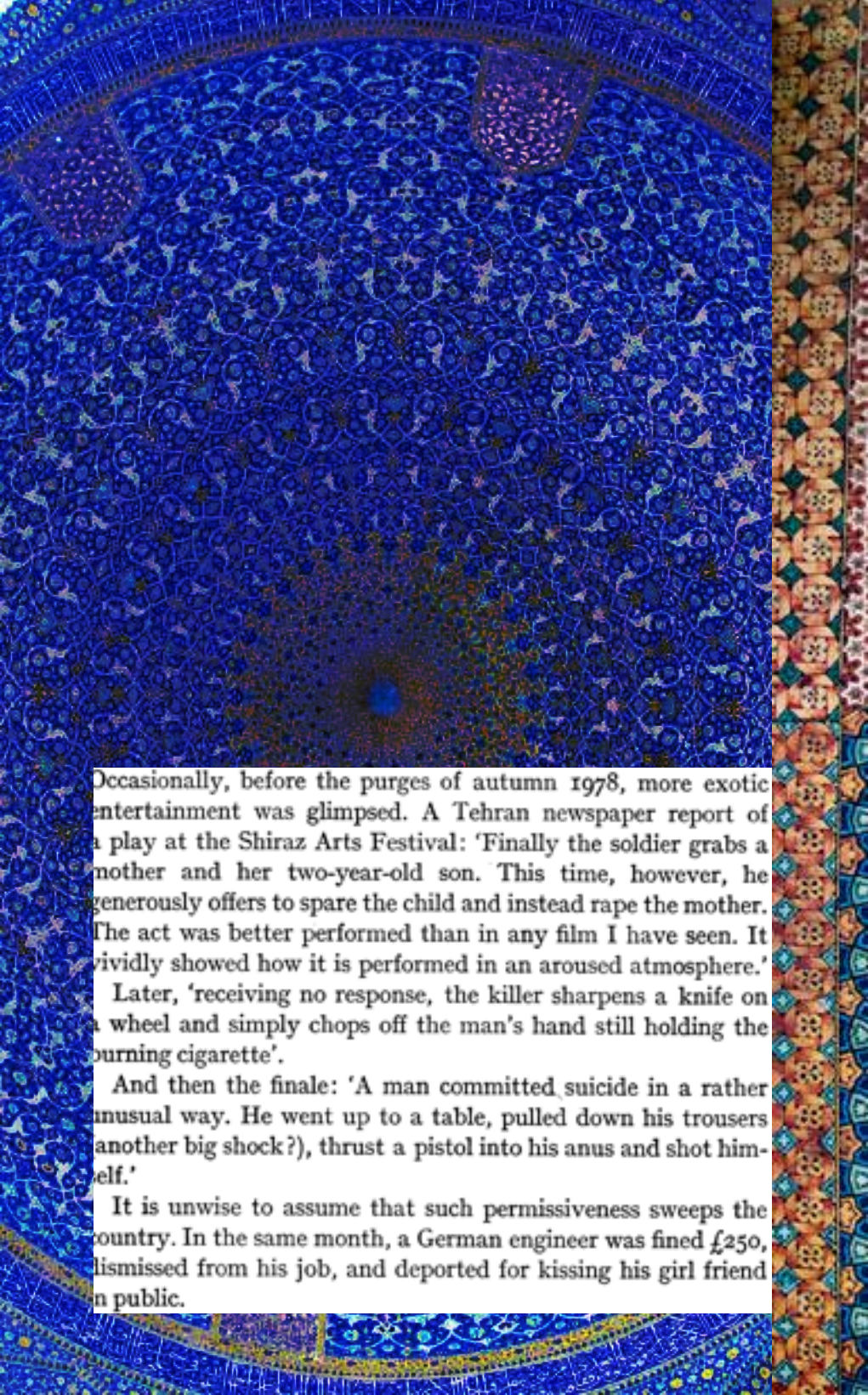
A solitary middle-aged couple danced selfconsciously, watched by scavenging salesmen from all over the world, who drummed their fingers on food-stained tablecloths, drank another vodka lime, and glared at the waiter who hovered, expecting a tip additional to the fifteen per cent already added to an overpriced bill. They cursed their offices for demanding impossible results on inadequate expenses and wondered if they could survive another day in a drab room haunted by the drone of the air-conditioning (if it worked), waiting for promised telephone calls which never came.



و زان کس که خوشتر بود شاه	که در خون شینخ پیشگاه	بر و بر ز دیار دست و کم
او در خسته و پای کج کرد	یکی خردی سپهر و دگر	



نور و	چشمک است کین ویر در گنج	و بر و دای سیاه شد	نور و شوم تا سوکای کرد
نور و	نیزیم کی که به بند بند	بر او و آن که به بند بند	سیدار مار و نور و سیاه
نور و	چنان خاست کانی کس سپهر	از کاسیای و رنگ گشت و تن	که تا به جیب سر و کلاه شد
نور و	نیزیم ز دست آن در	صکاس زود آتش و فزاد	و بری ز دیار ابل جشد



Occasionally, before the purges of autumn 1978, more exotic entertainment was glimpsed. A Tehran newspaper report of a play at the Shiraz Arts Festival: 'Finally the soldier grabs a mother and her two-year-old son. This time, however, he generously offers to spare the child and instead rape the mother. The act was better performed than in any film I have seen. It vividly showed how it is performed in an aroused atmosphere.'

Later, 'receiving no response, the killer sharpens a knife on a wheel and simply chops off the man's hand still holding the burning cigarette'.

And then the finale: 'A man committed suicide in a rather unusual way. He went up to a table, pulled down his trousers (another big shock?), thrust a pistol into his anus and shot himself.'

It is unwise to assume that such permissiveness sweeps the country. In the same month, a German engineer was fined £250, dismissed from his job, and deported for kissing his girl friend in public.



