

From the Editor

The reign of Reza Shah (1925–1941), the overall theme of this issue of our journal, has been markedly understudied—this despite its crucial place in the making of modern Iran. The dramatic changes in the Reza Shah period—secularism, centralization, development of the infrastructure, and the growth of mass education—had their roots in the Constitutional period. At the expense of undermining liberal political reforms, Reza Shah and his reformist clique nurtured a state and society anchored by a thriving middle class and an overbearing military. Severed from the religious underpinnings and values of Iran's past, the ethos of Reza Shah's era was embodied by a state-sponsored nationalism. In these twofold processes one can trace the predicaments that led to Iran's recent revolution.

While in this issue Clawson and Ehlers & Floor examine aspects of communication and urban development, Matthee's article offers an overview of educational policies. Chehabi and Faghfoory, on the other hand, study the impact of the social and religious policies of the Reza Shah period on Iranian society, the one aiming to demonstrate attempts at social uniformity by means of dress, and the other tracing the ulama's declining status. Zirinsky's article, the second in his study of Presbyterian education during the inter-War period, highlights the stifling pressure exerted by the state. Ashraf's review essay on Ja'far Shahribaf's voluminous work on trades and urban life in Reza Shah's Tehran aptly illustrates some of the above themes. Ettehadieh and Bayat's review of the recent publication of document collections complements our focus on the Reza Shah period, with the promise that serious study of this important area is now within sight.

I would like to thank Willem Floor for his initial help in bringing together three of the above articles, which were originally presented in a panel on Reza Shah's Iran chaired by him at MESA in November 1989.

My thanks are also due to Farhad Kazemi for his invaluable efforts in putting together the symposium papers on "Iranian Domestic Politics in the Post-Revolutionary Period."

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