

## INTRODUCTION

The year 1946 was a time of relief for most Americans. Responding to the overwhelming demands of the public, the United States government was breaking all speed records in demobilizing the huge World War II war machine; and in the back of the minds of both the public and the government was the unspoken wish to return to the uncomplicated pre-Hitlerian era when the United States could close its eyes to much of international politics. But in this same year obscure Iran and its unheard of northern province of Azerbaijan demonstrated beyond all doubt that a return to pre-war mentality was impossible. In 1946 the Soviet Union made a dramatic demand for preeminence in the eastern Mediterranean and the northern Middle East. Not only Iran but also Greece and Turkey were threatened. In response to this challenge, the United States was compelled to face the fact that, as the greatest power of the noncommunist world, its responsibilities must now embrace the entire free world, including the Middle East. Having admitted this responsibility, the United States government stood firmly behind the Iranians, and the Soviets somewhat surprisingly retreated.

But this was only the beginning. Since 1946 United States involvement in Middle Eastern affairs has been extensive. What was called for in 1946 was simple determination and forthrightness in supporting the Iranian government. What has been called for in the intervening years is an accurate comprehension of the Iranian social and political situation in order to assess correctly the consequences of less dramatic but equally vital policy decisions. Although the United States can justly claim success for the comparatively simple policy decision of 1946, the ledger since that year is far less favorable. As with postwar United States foreign policy elsewhere in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, courage and determination were not the missing ingredients. Lack of success in the non-European areas must be attributed to failures of comprehension and political sophistication.

For these failures the American social scientists must share the responsibility. But it should be remembered that the neglect of the non-European world by social scientists prior to World War II was a universal phenomenon. Although a few isolated works of excellence had been written, much of the literature about this part of the world was produced by men untrained in the social sciences. The heritage of this literature consists largely of impressionistic clichés. The task, then, of the recent investigator has been made doubly difficult because not only must he begin from scratch in his empirical investigation, but he must devote much effort to exploding clichés that are as fallacious as they are tenacious.

The problem also has an aspect of the vicious circle. Gabriel Almond has commented on the compulsion of the American people to rationalize to a position of moral righteousness the various aspects of United States foreign policy;<sup>1</sup> and this observation applies to teachers and government officials as well as to the less informed general public. Its repercussions for scholarship concerning Iran and the Middle East are serious. The United States has made foreign policy errors concerning the Middle East because of faulty situational analyses. Having made these mistakes, Americans—the public, government officials, and academics alike—seem to feel compelled to prove that their actions were morally correct, even if an Orwellian rewriting of history is required to do so. The fallacious quality of the basic analyses cannot be admitted if the position of moral righteousness is to be maintained, and subsequent analyses will be distorted. Future foreign policy will suffer, because the most fundamental prerequisite for a successful foreign policy is an accurate situational analysis. In Iran the original error was made in regard to Dr. Mohammad Mossadeq and Mohammad Reza Shah. The distortions of the Mossadeq era, both in the press and in academic studies, border on the grotesque, and until that era is seen in truer perspective there can be little hope for a sophisticated United States foreign policy concerning Iran.

This study is based on an assumption that very few would dispute: that a major key to the understanding of Iranian attitudes and political behavior is to be found in the phenomenon of

<sup>1</sup> Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy* (New York, 1960), p. 52.

nationalism. However, a further assumption may find less ready acceptance: that a misreading of nationalism in Iran is responsible for many of the basic analytical errors regarding Iran. A case in point is the very common reference to Iranian nationalism as "negative nationalism." This phrase is a gross oversimplification of an exceedingly complex phenomenon, and it leads to the very common practice in both governmental and academic circles of seeing Iranian nationalists as a negative monolith. Many of the pages that follow are devoted to developing what is distorted by this simple phrase.

But the goal of this study goes beyond providing a better understanding of Iranian nationalism. The broader purpose is to furnish a case study of nationalism which, together with other case studies, can provide a more solid basis for general hypothesizing about this vital subject. Despite the fact that nationalism has been a strikingly pervasive phenomenon in the West since the French Revolution, our understanding of it is far from complete. The rapid progress made in many areas of the social sciences as a result of improved methodology has no parallel in the study of nationalism. Part of the explanation for this lag can be found in the fact that we have experienced this phenomenon so vividly. Hitler's Germany and Mussolini's Italy, where nationalism seemed to have reached the ultimate extreme, have led many in the West to look with favor on the indications that nationalism in the West has passed its climactic point. At the same time, many others view nationalism with approval and regard it as a desirable social sentiment. For these two groups of people agreement is impossible even on definition, and definitions of nationalism are as widely divergent as value judgments passed upon it.

Much of the disagreement results from a failure of qualitative analysis. Too frequently nationalism is spoken of loosely as an ideology without explaining how nationalism per se warrants such a classification. The definition of nationalism as used in this study is a belief on the part of a large group of people that they comprise a political community, a nation, that is entitled to independent statehood, and a willingness of this group to grant their community a primary and the terminal loyalty. Thus defined, nationalism which clearly insists on independence and dignity for the nation

furnishes a part, but only a part, of the value system of the individual members of the community.

It is a major contention of this study that very little is to be learned about nationalism by viewing it in isolation from the other elements of a value system. Those who condemn nationalism frequently do so by confusing it, under the name of integral nationalism, with the complex political value system which characterized Hitler's Germany. Comparing this system, the dominant features of which related to leader adulation, racism, and nationalism, with the American value system, the dominant features of which relate to liberalism, democracy, and nationalism, it can be seen that nationalism is the constant and liberalism the primary variable. A rapid conclusion might even be that since nationalism is a constant it is therefore of a neutral hue and fails to give any normative coloring to the system. Such a conclusion overlooks the obvious fact that nationalism does generate a propensity to look to the community rather than to the individual and hence does reinforce and accentuate collectivist tendencies in any system. In a community in which liberal norms calling for a maximum of respect for the dignity of the individual personality are firmly entrenched, the collectivist propensity of nationalism is largely offset by the individualist propensity of liberalism. But in a community where these liberal norms are only weakly held, nationalist values can in fact be among the instruments used to destroy the hold of individualist values.

There is also substantial disagreement regarding the date of the appearance of nationalism on the world scene. Most authorities focus on the French Revolution as the critical era, but many others, particularly historians, are too much aware of evidence of national consciousness prior to that time to be able to accept the French Revolution as the beginning of the national era. This dispute is probably not a serious one since the two schools are really speaking from different definitions of nationalism. Yet the basis of the dispute needs to be spelled out if the real importance of nationalism is to be understood.

Men living in the society of other men will almost invariably include in their value systems a devotion to the welfare of one or several socio-political groups. Many years, even centuries, before

the French Revolution there were men in England and France and elsewhere whose horizons were large enough to embrace an awareness of being a member of a people, and for some there was great pride in and loyalty to that people. To describe such men as nationalists is perfectly reasonable. But if the term "nationalism" is defined broadly enough to include this early period then those using such a definition must further refine their meaning to take into account the very substantial differences in the social and political impact of nationalism when it is a primary value of the very few and when it is a primary value of a large section of the population. Those who prefer to consider the French Revolution as the beginning of the nationalist era are defining nationalism as a phenomenon of mass politics in the era of the nation state. "Nationalism" in this study is used in the latter sense. Iran, in fact, is an excellent example of a state in which national consciousness can be clearly identified for many centuries. But the importance of nationalism as a primary determinant of Iranian attitudes and political behavior is largely confined to the twentieth century.

Iran is also an example of those states in which the participation in the political life of the state by a broad section of the population followed by more than a century the development of mass political participation in Western Europe and the United States. Therefore, at a time when nationalist values were central values for most Europeans and Americans, the concept of nationalism was an esoteric one for the vast majority of Iranians. There were, however, even in the late nineteenth century, Iranians who understood nationalism and held nationalist values regarding Iran which were in every sense comparable to the nationalist values of, say, contemporary Frenchmen toward France. These early nationalistic Iranians played an important role in Iranian political developments. Since their own political behavior was determined to a considerable extent by their nationalistic values, nationalism in Iran was an important determinant of political behavior and attitudes well before the development of mass political participation.

Not at all accidentally, those Iranians who constituted the early nationalists were also the men who could be classified as modernists. The objectives of a strong central government sincerely dedicated to ending the feudalistic landholding system, sloth and cor-

ruption in government, and the wholesale distribution of Iranian resources to foreigners were objectives closely related to the values of nationalism; they were also the universal objectives of Iranian modernizers. Nationalistic values therefore had an easy appeal for modernizers. But it would be a serious distortion to conclude that nationalism from the beginning was confined to the modernizers. This distortion is as common inside modernist circles in Iran as is the "negative nationalism" distortion among Americans concerned with Iran. Those Iranians who today call themselves "Nationalists" believe that they alone are the defenders of nationalism. In truth, however, most of the bitter enemies of the "Nationalists" include in their value systems nationalistic values.

Once introduced in Iran, nationalism carried a dynamic quality of its own. Traditional elements who hoped to preserve the status quo did not look upon nationalism as an ally of the enemy. On the contrary, nationalistic values gradually began to incorporate themselves in the value systems of traditional leaders; nationalism began to be a determinant of the political behavior of the traditional elements, even though it coincided far less with the self-interest of this group than with that of the modernists.

This study is an effort to describe and analyze the impact of nationalism on Iranian political behavior and political attitudes as Iran moves into the era of mass political participation. Since a basic theoretical assumption of this study is that the properties of nationalism can best be understood by observing the interaction of nationalist values with other values of any value system, no attempt will be made to theorize about Iranian nationalism in isolation. Instead, the generalizations that are suggested will deal with some consequences of the interaction of nationalist and other values.

Definitions of nationalism in the pre-World War I period, when nationalism was largely confined to states in which the populations were relatively homogeneous, very often called for the existence of a definite territory, a common and distinctive historical and cultural tradition, a common language, a common religion, and a belief in racial homogeneity. Today far too many examples can be found of nationalisms existing without several of these factors to include any of them in the definition. Even the territorial require-

ment had to be dropped, since the Jews can claim to have embraced nationalism before they had anything more substantial than a memory of territory. But the elimination of these requirements from the definition should not suggest a lack of importance. Any people who believe they are part of a community that deserves their terminal loyalty must be convinced that this community is distinctive. And strongly cohesive factors must be present if this belief is to persist. If none of the above listed factors were present, nationalism could not endure. Even if only territory and one other factor were present, as is largely true in Pakistan today, the hold of nationalism would be a tenuous one. Conversely, if all these factors were present the receptivity of a people for nationalism and the prospective longevity of nationalism would be greatly enhanced. Even here, however, the dynamic quality of nationalism asserts itself. Although the cohesive base for nationalism may be barely adequate, nationalism once introduced will alter it and usually, but certainly not always, will increase its cohesiveness. The essential starting point for a study of nationalism is, first, an exploration of these cohesive factors to gain an insight into the base of receptivity and, second, an investigation of the impact of nationalism once it appears on that base.

Even when most or all of the cohesive ingredients are present, there is no assurance that nationalism will find much receptivity. If, as was true in Iran at the turn of the century, only a tiny percentage of the population has a frame of reference broad enough to comprehend nationalism, then obviously receptivity is sharply limited. In Iran this point was accentuated because the small percentage which was politically aware was dominated by a basically traditional element; and although nationalistic values were eventually accepted by members of this group, they gained acceptance only after they had been thoroughly entrenched in the value systems of the modernizers. It is unlikely that nationalism could ever gain entrée to a people if the only channel open to it was the traditional elite structure which was contented with the status quo.

The early history of Iranian nationalism illustrates this narrow base of popular receptivity. But it illustrates as well the point that once nationalism gains a foothold within a people, a dynamic interaction occurs in which the base of appeal is sharply altered,

usually in the direction of an expanded receptivity. An illiterate and politically inert peasant is denied an understanding of the nation of Iran simply because his horizons are too narrow. But once he is shaken out of his inertia and his traditional values are challenged, he easily absorbs nationalistic values. He leaves his village to seek economic opportunities in the city, and there he seeks a new group identification. With his broader perspective he can comprehend the nation, and at this point the nation can fulfill a basic psychological need. Thus the nationalistic politician has the opportunity of personifying the aspirations of the newly awakened citizen. As the politician's power grows, he will advocate policies to hasten the spread of political articulateness. Traditional politicians threatened in this way may, and often do, respond by seeking to outdo the modernists in utilizing a nationalist line, coupling it with an appeal to traditional values. The sum of the process is a rapid expansion of the popular base for nationalism.

There are significant elements of the Iranian population that are essentially nonnational; their terminal loyalty is to a unit other than the nation. In this study three such groups will be considered: religious minorities, the tribes, and the regional autonomists. In the prenationalist era these groups were able to maintain a good deal of autonomy. But their position must inevitably be changed with the infusion of nationalist values into the population. As the nation-state becomes increasingly an object of primary loyalty for the majority, the position of the nonnational groups will deteriorate. Even when an individual member of the majority couples liberal values with his nationalist values and is therefore tolerant of diversity, he is likely to express this tolerance in a willingness to see the integration of the nonnational group into the nation rather than in a continuance of an autonomous status. His antiliberal counterpart would almost certainly turn to persecution. Under the impact of nationalism, therefore, the nonnational groups seem to have only two alternatives. Either they can move in a direction of integration within the nation, in which case the nation for them would become a primary and the terminal loyalty, or they can move into an increasingly perilous isolation from the majority. The case of Iran should give some indication of the factors that would compel various nonnational groups to choose different alternatives.



This study may also be of value in general considerations of the relationship of religion and nationalism. Observers have long noted that the existence of a common, especially a unique, religion is a great source of strength for nationalism. At the same time, it is clear that an individual's religious values and his national values may stimulate different and sometimes conflicting behavior. Both sets of values satisfy basic needs and are likely to be held by a broad section of the population, including the least aware politically. Any conflict developing between the two sets of values would have the potential of being fundamentally disruptive. This picture is further complicated by the probable coexistence of religious and secular authorities for whom jurisdictional lines are blurred. As an overwhelmingly Moslem country, Iran adds to this picture adherence to a theology which offers no recognition of the concept of separation of church and state. If a conflict of the two sets of values is likely anywhere it should occur in Iran; and Iran should furnish a meaningful case study of the interaction of religious and national values.

When nationalism appeared on the Iranian stage at the turn of the century, an involved struggle for hegemony in Iran was taking place between England and Russia. Although Iran had a more than nominal independence, Anglo-Russian interference in Iranian affairs was extensive and largely overt. Furthermore, this interference was both tolerated and utilized by prenationalist Iranian regimes. The result was a bizarre situation in which a form of indirect colonial control existed in the hands of two imperial powers whose relative positions were in constant flux. Whereas prenationalist Iranian statesmen could view this situation casually, their nationalistic successors had a different perspective. Not surprisingly, neither the English nor the Russians recognized this altered perspective and its impact on Iranian attitudes and beliefs. But this impact was profound.

The situation was further complicated by the obvious preference of the pre-Bolshevik Russians and the British for the traditional-minded Iranian statesmen. External interference was therefore linked in the minds of many Iranians with the efforts of the traditional leaders to stave off the modernist challenge. The consequence was that the entire traditional elite structure was enveloped in a suspicion of treason. Although the Iranian case has many

unique features, the nationalist response there to the alliance of the traditional class and the imperial power has features that are to be recognized wherever indirect rule was resorted to through traditional elements.

The final section of this book is an analysis of the general impact of nationalism on Iranian political developments in the twentieth century. A central proposition suggested by this section is that given optimum circumstances, nationalism can be a primary instrument for the inculcation of liberal norms in a rapidly developing nation, even though historically there is no liberal tradition. Optimum circumstances exist (a) when the modernizing forces in the country are numerically strong enough and well enough placed to constitute an alternative to the traditional elite structure; (b) when a dominant section of the modernizing forces accepts both liberal and national values; and (c) when awareness has appeared among a sufficiently large section of the hitherto politically inert so that this group can, when allied with the modernizers, provide sufficient strength to challenge successfully the dominant traditional elements, but before this group has become so large that a demagogue who might seek and win their backing would have the strength to overturn both the traditional and modernizing elite groups.

Without question those individuals who have recently become politically articulate will be more receptive to nationalistic values than to liberal values. Nationalistic values can be understood very easily, but comprehension of liberal values requires both a good deal of political sophistication and a real interest in the political process; the newly awakened are not likely to have either. Modernizing leaders, however, are natural allies of the newly awakened, who, although inarticulate, will almost always be dissatisfied with the status quo. Nationalism, coupled with programs of economic and social reform, therefore becomes the basis of the appeal of the modernizing leaders to the newly awakened. After achieving power, the modernizers will probably then proceed to establish a parliament and liberal institutions of free elections, political parties, and civil rights. In time these institutions will achieve symbolic significance and will become the means by which those individuals who are awakening politically can be channelled into the political process.

However, if the traditional elements are able to turn back the challenge of the modernists, the prospects for the inculcation of liberal values in the immediate future will be dim. The growth in political awareness is a trend of such force that it is doubtful that any government can do more than slow it down. The point will soon be reached at which the newly awakened need only find the requisite leadership to overturn the entire elite structure; and that leadership will be readily available in the form of demagogues for whom nationalism will certainly be a primary tool. To control this situation the traditional element must either turn to terror or provide the demagogic leadership for mass manipulation or a combination of both. In any case, the dynamics of the situation will destroy the old elite structure. If terror is utilized primarily, power will move steadily away from the traditional elements of government and toward the terror apparatus. If demagoguery and mass manipulation are relied upon, power will quickly gravitate into the hands of the demagogue and his allies. The triumph of liberalism in such a situation would require the accident of the appearance of a charismatic leader who was devoted to liberal values.

A basic assumption of this study is that nationalism was not a significant force in Iran prior to the 1890's. The roots of nationalism, of course, extend into the extraordinarily rich Iranian civilization down to and beyond the Achaemenid period. Without question many insights could be gained regarding the quality of Iranian nationalism by a thorough exploration of this civilization. However, such an exploration is beyond the scope of this study and the competence of its author. Generalizations about Iranian history made in the pages that follow, therefore, refer only to the period of Iranian history from 1890 to the present.

Since this study follows a topical rather than a strictly chronological format, Chapter 1 is designed to give the reader who is not familiar with modern Iranian history a quick look at the most important political developments from 1890 to the post-Mossadeq period.