

SIS

THE SOCIETY FOR IRANIAN STUDIES

NEWSLETTER

Volume III, No. 1
March, 1971

Address all communications to the Secretary to the Society for Iranian Studies, P. O. Box 24766, Los Angeles, California 90024, U. S. A.

Approval of the Society's New Constitution

The amendments to the Society's constitution which were put to the vote of the membership have been approved by a majority. The new Constitution provides for an enlarged Council of nine members with three-year, rotating terms. The Executive Committee of the Council will consist of three members (an Executive Secretary, a Treasurer, and the Editor of Iranian Studies) to be elected by the Council from among the Society's members. Due to the wide geographic dispersion of the members and the difficulty of achieving a quorum at the Annual Meetings, the new constitution provides for mail balloting on all elections and all major decisions.

Results of the Council Elections

The Election Committee (Professors Kenneth Luther, Ch., Jerome Clinton, Donald Croll, and Farhad Kazemi) has announced the results of the Council elections as follows: The terms of the Council members were determined by lot.

Amin Banani, University of California at Los Angeles
(1971-72)

Ali Banuazizi, University of Southern California (1971-73)
James A. Bill, University of Texas at Austin (1971-72)
Jerome Clinton, University of Minnesota (1971)
Richard W. Cottam, University of Pittsburgh (1971-72)
Farhad Kazemi, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (1971)
Kenneth A. Luther, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor (1971)
Jacqueline Mintz, Yale University (1971-73)
Majid Tehranian, New College (1971-73)

The Most Recent Arrest and Trial of Intellectuals in Iran

The Newsletter has received an article on the most recent series of arrests and trials of students and intellectuals in Iran. While the Society is Constitutionally committed to the defense of freedom of inquiry and expression, we have decided against the publication of the article in the hope of receiving a less polemical and more complete analysis of the current events. In the meantime, however, we should like to express our deep concern for the conditions of civil liberties and academic freedom in Iran. We also hope to have an informative article on the subject in a future issue of Iranian Studies.

Annual Report of the Secretary

ON THE STATE OF THE SOCIETY FOR IRANIAN STUDIES

With the passage of 1970, the Society has completed its third year of existence and embarked on the fourth. As the Society's outgoing secretary for the past three years, this may be an appropriate occasion for me to take stock of the Society's purposes and activities of the past with some reflections on the future.

Purpose and Future of the Society

The Society came into being in September of 1967 when a group of Iranian social and humane scientists gathered together at Yale University to establish an association for the encouragement of "the study of Iranian culture and society, including history, language, literature, social economic and political problems of Iran." It is significant to note that the Society came into life at a time that the Middle East Studies Association

of North America was also in the process of formation but that in contrast to that association, our Society was primarily initiated by native scholars. Both associations, along with those other area studies associations formed at about the same time or shortly thereafter, were responding to a need for scientific societies that could serve the following purposes:

- (a) to take area studies out of the intrigues of government and quasi-government sponsored institutes and research,
- (b) to establish the autonomy of area studies as a legitimate field of scientific enquiry, and
- (c) to provide a forum for communication across the varieties of traditional academic disciplines concerned with a given culture-area.

The fundamental purpose of our Society, as indeed of all other scientific associations, was and remains to be the maintenance and safeguard of the autonomy of science as a profession. In a world that is torn among a complex and contending variety of partisan factions, the pursuit of truth for its own sake and for the sake of alleviating human suffering (as the highest calling of science and scientists) has been always under constant pressure and attack. And the task has often become even more difficult by those among the scholars' own ranks who have preferred the kudos of the state or popularity with the most current intellectual fashions to their own calling as scientists. Scholarship could be pursued even without scientific associations, but what the scientific associations have a responsibility to uphold are the standards of their profession against encroachments from within and without. For this reason, our Society also set "the safeguard of freedom of inquiry and expression" as one of its fundamental purposes. This commitment, however, need not and should not be allowed to reduce the Society to a partisan and polemical level.

Early in the life of our Society, it became clear that our purposes would be best served with an increasing internationalization of the Society's membership. A membership drive in North America has succeeded in bringing most of the specialists into the Society's fold. Membership drives outside of North

America should also actively solicit the membership of scholars in Iranian studies in other parts of the world, but it should be noted that even without an active drive we have already many members outside of the North American continent.

Despite the increasingly international character of the Society's membership, however, we have a special function and obligation with respect to the scholars in Iran. Even though our membership in Iran is still quite small, the Society should consider it as one of its central functions to increase its membership there, to provide a channel of continuing communication and fellowship between Iranian and non-Iranian scholars, and to work for the safeguard of freedom of inquiry and expression of scholars in Iran in the same way that it does elsewhere. The infrastructures of a scientific culture are still too tenuous in Iran to withstand the enormous pressures for intellectual conformity generated by a rapidly changing society. It is my belief, therefore, that in the interest of scholarship as well as scholars everywhere, the Society should in the future extend what assistance it can to alleviate the elements of intellectual repression in Iran. This may seem too heavy a charge for such a young association, but the Society could ignore it only at the peril of becoming too irrelevant and insensitive to the fostering of a genuinely international community of scholars.

Constitutional Reform

In view of its expanded membership and responsibilities, the Council of the Society proposed certain amendments to the Constitution of the Society which were later approved by a majority of the Society's members. The amendments have (a) expanded the size of the Society's Council from seven to nine, (b) established a basis for continuity and change in the Council's membership by fixing three-year rotating terms, and (c) designating an Executive Committee of three (Executive Secretary, Treasurer and Editor) for the Council. In addition, the new Constitution requires that all major decisions of the Society be taken by mail balloting of the entire membership. This gives us one of the simplest, most direct and democratic Constitutions of any scholarly association.

Publications and Programs

The Society has successfully continued the publication of its journal, Iranian Studies, and an occasional Newsletter. The quality of content and printing of Iranian Studies markedly improved during the past year. The size of the journal has been slightly enlarged, its pages have considerably increased, and its articles have shown an impressive improvement in depth and breath of coverage.

Due to financial limitations, however, the journal has fallen somewhat behind its publication schedule. The main burden of publishing a scholarly journal of quality despite limited financial and technical resources has consequently fallen on the shoulders of an able and hard-working editor. The Society has been extremely fortunate to have the dedicated services of Professor Banuazizi as an editor but, if the journal is going to survive and improve, it must be supported by much greater financial and editorial assistance than it receives at the present time.

To broaden its editorial base, the Council has already decided to extend an invitation to a group of recognized specialists in Iranian studies to join its Editorial Board. But the problem of financial support for the work of the Society is a more serious one and calls for the immediate attention of the newly-elected Council. Many possible programs of the Society, including the sponsorship of our biannual Conference, have been delayed mainly by lack of funds.

Finances

Despite the financial pressures that all scholarly activities in the United States have suffered during the past few years and despite the particular problems of a young associate, the Society has financially survived and is a going concern. As the following financial statement for 1969-70 reveals, we have accomplished this feat by reducing the Society's expenditures to the bare essentials.

FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE SOCIETY

June 11, 1969 - June 31, 1970

Deficit of the treasury at the time of the last report \$ 25.83

REVENUES

Membership Dues	\$ 656.00
Individual Subscriptions	127.50
Institutional Subscriptions	<u>471.40</u>
Total Revenues	<u>\$1254.90</u>

EXPENDITURES

Iranian Studies

Reprinting of Vol. I, No. 1.....	\$ 119.00
Vol. II, Nos. 2-3	427.00
Vol. II, No. 4	<u>382.00</u>
Subtotal (1)	\$ 928.00
Attorney's Fee for the Incorporation of SIS	150.00
P. O. Box Rent	13.50
Printing Forms and Stationery	31.30
Postage	56.50
Miscellaneous (envelopes, rubber stamp, etc) ..	<u>21.85</u>
Subtotal (2)	\$ 123.15

Total Expenditures \$1201.15

BALANCE: \$1254.90 - 1201.15 - 25.83 = \$27.92

In the coming years, the Society should make serious efforts to increase its revenues from the following sources: increasing membership, particularly in the contributing and supporting categories, increasing individual and institutional subscriptions to Iranian Studies, educational advertisements for the journal and, last but not least, exploring educational foundation support for the work of the Society.

The Society has been already incorporated in the State of Florida and is in the final stages of receiving a tax-exempt status from the U.S. Federal Government. Once this status is achieved, all contributions to the Society will be tax deductible.

The financial well-being of the Society is obviously an indispensable condition for the success of its work. Nevertheless, the present scarcity should in no way discourage us in our task. As evidenced by the quality and increasing size of the membership that the Society has elicited, there is a lively interest in and commitment to the work of the Society. In a year or two, inshallah, the Society will be well on its way towards a sound financial base.

It has been a great satisfaction for me personally to see the Society grow from its initial stages of development into a recognized association of scholars from many nationalities and academic disciplines with a common interest in Iran and Iranian studies. Beyond itself, the birth and continuing progress of the Society is also another encouraging proof for the vitality of an international community of scholars that is united in pursuit of truth and its application for the betterment of human conditions.

Respectfully submitted,

Majid Tehranian
Secretary to the Society