



# S.I.S. NEWSLETTER

## A Publication of The Society for Iranian Studies

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Volume XVI, No.1 March 1984

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Address all communications to:

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### SIS 1984 Council Election

The following have been elected to serve on the SIS Council for the 1984-86 term: Willem Floor, Nikki Keddie, and Farzaneh Milani. They replace Lois Beck, William Hanaway, Jr. and M.A. Jazayeri, whose 3-year term ended in December 1983.

The 1984 Election Committee consisted of Hafez Farmayan and Abazar Sepehri, to whom we offer our thanks. John Lorentz has stepped down as Treasurer after having done a superb job for 3 years. Eden Naby has been elected by the Council to take over the responsibilities of Treasurer.

### Constitutional Amendment - Article III

An overwhelming majority of members who responded to the proposal to amend Article III of the Constitution voted to differentiate between voting members and non-voting members. The new membership categories are:

Regular Members . Regular Membership shall be open to persons who have received a doctorate related to Iranian studies and/or who have taught in Iranian studies and/or who have made a scholarly research contribution to Iranian studies. Applicants shall be admitted to regular membership by approval of the Executive Committee.

All individuals (other than student) who joined the Society prior to January 1, 1984 may elect to become a regular or an associate member.

Student Members . The Executive Council may admit as Student Members registered graduate and undergraduate students interested in Iranian studies who may need such qualifications as may be established by the Council.

Associate Members . The Executive Committee may elect as Associate Members persons interested in the study of Iran and who meet such qualifications as may be established by the Council.

Family Members . Couples who have been admitted individually as members will be considered Family Members and will pay reduced annual dues.

Institutional Members . The Executive Committee may elect as Institutional Members institutions interested in the study of Iran and who meet such qualifications as may be established by the Council.

Privileges of Members . All members shall be entitled to attend the public meetings of the Society. Moreover, each Member, other than the second Family Member, shall be entitled to a copy of each number of the Society's periodical(s) issued during his membership. Only Regular Members and Student Members in good standing shall be eligible to vote and to serve on committees. Only Regular Members in good standing shall be eligible to be officers and to serve on the Council.

## Membership Dues

Approximately one-third of SIS members have not sent in their 1984 membership dues and of those, about one-third are still in arrears for 1983. Please help keep down administrative costs involved in sending reminders by mailing in your dues now.

## 1984 MESA Meeting

Message from Michael E. Bonine, Executive Secretary, MESA

The 18th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association will be held November 28 to December 1, 1984 at the Sheraton-Palace Hotel in San Francisco, California.

Since MESA is an interdisciplinary and internationally recognized organization, it hopes to attract scholars from all fields to participate in the annual meeting.

To encourage more students to attend the annual meeting and to become members, MESA is offering a membership and registration package to non-members for \$25. Normally, a student membership in MESA is \$20 a year and pre-registration for student members is \$12.50 at the meeting. Besides being able to attend the meeting, this would also entitle them to a (1) subscription to the International Journal of Middle East Studies (2) subscription to the MESA Bulletin (3) subscription to the MESA Newsletter (4) reduced prices for MESA publications.

Further information may be obtained from: MESA, Dept. of Oriental Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721 (602/621-5850).

Additional MESA Meeting Information

Sheraton-Palace Hotel in downtown San Francisco (639 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94105; 415-392-8600): single rooms begin at \$63, double & twins begin at \$71. It is advisable to reserve early at the Sheraton-Palace to get the best rates.

Airfare: Mcgettigan's Corporate Planning Services (1609 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103; 800-523-4614) is arranging special airfares -- below supersaver rates.

Announcements

Members are encouraged to send in any item of interest for publication in the newsletter.

1984 Annual Dissertation Awards

MESA wishes to announce the opening of the competition for the 1984 Annual Dissertation Awards, one in the Humanities and one in the Social Sciences:

- \* Dissertations must be nominated by the author's sponsor/advisor.
- \* Dissertations must be accompanied by a letter of acceptance.
- \* Applicant must specify for which category he/she is applying, Humanities or Social Sciences.
- \* Applicant need submit only one copy of the dissertation, although if he/she has two or three copies this would facilitate the reading by the Committee. The copy (or copies) will be returned.
- \* The winner in each category will receive \$200.00.
- \* The awards are for dissertations accepted from July 1, 1983 to July 1, 1984.
- \* Deadline for the submission of dissertations is August 1, 1984.

For further information, please write to MESA, Dept. of Oriental Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ 85721.

Nemazee Fellowships to Support Iranian Studies

Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Hassan Nemazee, a program has been established at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) to promote Iranian studies and assist Iranian scholars and students. The program has two principal components:

1) It seeks to identify outstanding Iranian scholars in the history, culture, economics, and politics of modern Iran and facilitate their entry into the American academic world. It does this by creating the Nemazee Fellowship, which would enable its holder to spend one year at Harvard's Middle East Center to do research and teach in his/her field of interest.

2) The program also provides Prize Fellowships, designed to encourage outstanding students of Iranian origin to apply to Harvard and to study there.

A special committee has been established to administer the program. In order to identify scholars who may be eligible for a Nemazee Fellowship under the first part of the program, CMES will hold a series of colloquia in 1984-85 on the history, economics, and politics of modern Iran. Qualified scholars with an interest in modern Iran will be invited to participate in these colloquia.

In addition to promoting knowledge of modern Iran, the series is designed to provide an opportunity for Iranian scholars to present their work and make contact with the academic community in the greater Boston area.

Consequently, Iranian scholars are hereby invited to apply for participation in the series through presentations in any of the above-mentioned fields.

The successful candidates will spend a few days at Harvard before and after their presentation as guests of the Committee. Their travel expenses and a modest honorarium will also be provided.

Applications, including a curriculum vitae and the topic of the proposed presentation, should be sent by May 20, 1984 to: Chairman, Nemazee Fellowship Committee, Harvard University, University Hall 17, Cambridge, Ma 02138.

Qualified students of Iranian origin may also contact the Committee at the above address to apply for Nemazee Prize Fellowships.

#### NEH Funding for the Iranian Oral History Project

The National Endowment for the Humanities (a federal agency which supports the study of such fields as history, philosophy, literature, and languages) has awarded \$300,000 in outright and matching funds to the Iranian Oral History Project (IOHP) at Harvard University. This award follows a grant of \$50,000 provided by the Ford Foundation.

The effort to document the contemporary political history of Iran was begun in the fall of 1981 at Harvard's Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES). The project, which will provide primary source material for scholars researching Iranian history, will include personal accounts of approximately 150 individuals who observed and participated in important national events and decisions during the last four decades.

They are being selected and interviewed from a master list of 350 people. Ranging in ages from 30 to 90 years old, they include former prime ministers, members of parliament, judges, student leaders, cabinet ministers, writers, and academics.

The collection will be preserved at Harvard's Houghton Library and will be available to researchers after the interviews have been completed in the summer of 1986.

For further information, please contact Habib Ladjevardi, Director, Iranian Oral History Project, Harvard University, CMES, 1737 Cambridge Street, Cambridge, MA 02138.

## Iranian Xerox Literature in Europe

By Wolfgang Behn, Islamic Bibliographer  
Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

Non-commercial publishing has been on the increase for a number of years, and the low cost of duplicating is an undeniable factor of this phenomenon. Dissatisfied with commercial publishing, dissidents of various hues have been exploring alternative ways to voice their opinions. The problem these groups are facing is similar, irrespective of their field of action, be it social (ecologists, gay movements, women's liberation, squatters, claimants or other action groups), or political (anarchists, national liberation movements, minority rights's groups, extra parliamentary opposition), or literary: unorthodox movements are frequently denied publication for political reasons. But cheap duplicating techniques now make it possible to produce a 250 page book in a print-run of five hundred at a unit cost of less than one pound and fifty pence. Since the average booklet from the alternative presses consists of hardly more than one hundred pages, its production cost is less than one pound a piece. Pressure groups are therefore enabled to print the results of their research, and work with an immediacy that questions the very role of publishing in the modern age.

If all this applies to the situation in western countries, how much more so to the countries of the Moslem world. The political systems of most of the Islamic countries from Morocco to Bangladesh contribute in no small way to the existence of exile publishing. The notion of freedom of the press as we know it has no equivalent in most of these countries. Since publishing is generally state controlled and closely supervised, dissident writers must search for alternative ways to conventional publishing. These efforts to by-pass the machinery of censorship have given rise to a new literature of dissident, the "xerox literature" produced under difficult and even dangerous conditions by people who have no access to the normal means of printing and publication.

One look at the shelves of bookshops like Collet's (66 Charing Cross Road, London) or Le Tiers Mythe (21, rue Cujas, Paris 6e) demonstrates the diversity of political agitation in the Moslem world. The variety of the Middle Eastern alternative presses equals that of their western counterparts. Their products encompass a wide spectrum and all types of publications from posters, broadsheets and wall-papers to tracts, books, and periodical literature. Most difficult to collect, and process bibliothecally for that matter, are posters and similar material as displayed at student unions or demonstrations. Such items are of prime interest to sociologists, but only a small fraction is ever available at selected bookshops; such material must be collected on the spot.

Is this literature well covered in our libraries? A look at our collection shows to what extent it has been neglected except by a few. How many anti-Shah books (as opposed to books on the White Revolution and the Iranian monarchy) did the average library acquire prior to the Islamic revolution? How many publications with a positive view of the Kurds as opposed to brigands? The difficulty for library acquisition arises from the dichotomy of the situation. Whereas the authors of xerox literature want to keep the retail price low, many booksellers find that the marginal profit makes these publications commercially uninteresting. Most bookshops are concentrating on a quick turnover these days so that they have little interest in stocking the products of non-commercial suppliers. Certainly no bookseller depending primarily on sales catalogues can justify including items worth less than two pounds. This, then, is the reason why so little of the xerox literature is being offered by the great

international booksellers of Islamic material, and why particularly the products of the Middle Eastern exiles are such evasive literature.

Little of this material finds its way to alternative or radical bookshops, but for institutional acquisition the latter are the only practical, though by no means convenient, suppliers. Years of experience have demonstrated that supportive arrangements between an alternative bookshop and a library work only in isolated instances. Few of these bookshops are willing, or have the organization, to produce a monthly listing of exile publications or to keep samples of the material for librarians to view when they visit the shop to select titles. When dealing with Iranian material, one is confronted with the insurmountable barrier of the script. Since competent personnel is virtually non-existent, arrangements which can be made for western material are ruled out for publications in Persian. In the final analysis, there is no alternative to regular personal visits to make the selections on the spot. Even then disappointment cannot be avoided.

The reason institutional acquisition does not always guarantee results is that the off-bookshops are less profit-minded than their regular counterparts. Thus the professed willingness to cooperate with libraries often turns out to be less than useful. Some alternative bookshops fail to understand that a librarian's attitude towards their publications might differ from their own and, consequently, object to institutional collecting. In order to succeed, one sometimes has to play their game when the political toleration does not compare to that of traditional bookshops. As an extension of this, there are ideological limits to the stock of the alternative bookshops, and this is reflected in the availability of Iranian material too. This political intolerance might take forms that make it advisable to dress for the occasion. It is superfluous to dwell on the obvious, to wit, when visiting unconventional bookshops your appearance must somehow match the expectations of the political group you are dealing with. Of course, there are limits to your adaptability. You never know what to expect when visiting a women's liberation or a gay bookshop, though women are more likely to hear the boring question, "what are you doing to-night." Still, in spite of all precautions and best intentions you might be suspected of CIA connections and refused sale as it happened to one librarian at Collet's, London, at the height of the anti-Shah movement.

It is typical of all alternative bookshops that they offer a limited stock of Iranian publications, and of foreign material for that matter. This applies equally to Berlin, London, and Paris. On account of limited staff and marginal profit, not even the large ones, Collet's and Le Tiers Mythe, will accept mail orders. Unfortunately, both are virtually the only alternative bookshops which have been offering exile literature in Persian over the years.

Since alternative bookshops are generally listed neither in trade guides nor in the yellow pages, they are not always easy to locate. As a general rule, one may suppose their existence in every university city. You might need a lead to the first alternative bookshop from the one in your home town. If you are lucky, you obtain the address from a conventional bookshop. However, one should not give up at the first negative reply. It is amazing how ill-informed some booksellers are about alternative bookshops in their own location.

Some alternative bookshops have shopping bags with the addresses of shops in other cities. But this information is not always reliable because many go out of business after two or three years. The disappointment is particularly great when it concerns bookshops in foreign countries. Sometimes you do find the bookshop but discover that it no longer carries the material you are looking for. For years, Maoist bookshops were a safe source for Persian literature. However, they no longer stock material in Arabic script because of personnel



problems.

There are a number of Arab bookshops in London and Paris, but they are of a different genre altogether. They offer primarily devotional and scholarly literature and must be classed among the conventional bookshops.

The prime source for collecting xerox literature are student unions and restaurants as well as demonstrations and other public meetings such as Speaker's Corner in Hyde Park. The individual and corporate authors of this literature are a less reliable source because most of them prefer to keep their address anonymous. Contact is usually by means of a post office box or poste restante.

But the poor organization of most of the exiles is a constant source of disappointment, though with some effort one is usually able to procure the important publications. Generally problematic are tracts and pamphlets, in other words monographs of, say, less than ten pages. Because of these difficulties, the systematic collecting of these ephemerae in Europe is basically confined to the Bibliotheque de Documentation Internationale Contemporaine, Nanterre.

The crux of the problem is exile periodicals. There are probably no more than a handful of Iranian serials to which a library can subscribe in the ordinary way. The editorial staff of most of these periodicals is subject to such fluctuations that reliable subscriptions cannot be guaranteed. Such collecting is time-consuming and full of surprises. As a rule, you take all the risks and prepay every order. It is inevitable that occasionally you send cash and never hear anything. Of course, also the reverse can happen; you send money and receive the complete set just before the periodical ceases publications.

The situation is particularly bad in the case of daily newspapers (of which, admittedly, there are not many). For months I had been collecting the Tudeh Party's "Mardom", the paper of the Iranian communists. The people who sold it knew me and would keep a copy for a day or two whenever I was unable to collect the latest issue. The disappointment came when I went on holidays. I had asked them to put aside one copy of each issue for three weeks; but although I had been known to them for a number of years, they did not bother to do it. It is certainly disappointing to have such long gaps in the run of a daily, but to avoid this you would have to sacrifice your holidays.

An alternative means of purchasing is the commissioning of students. Since there is no discount on xerox literature, a thirty-percent commission charge will have to be added in your calculation. This is still cheaper than obtaining the material from an international Islamic bookseller. The problem with this type of arrangement is how to find a suitable person. On first sight Moslem students would seem to be the obvious choice because of their familiarity with Persian. The disadvantage is that they are unlikely to have equally good relations with all the political groups. Although the prime purpose of the xerox literature is the dissemination of information, the distribution is frequently restricted to their own followers. For this reason it is preferable to entrust an interested westerner with the commission since such a person is less likely to encounter suspicion.

Even under ideal conditions all these arrangements are time-consuming. All acquisition of xerox literature presupposes a strong motivation on the part of the librarian. Frequent visits out of town cannot be avoided if comprehensiveness is intended.

A few words must be said about the volume of this type of literature. Next to nothing is ever listed in the respective national bibliographies because of the disrespect for the legal deposit regulations; they cannot be enforced in the case of publishers with no fixed address. For this reason it is difficult to obtain an accurate figure of Iranian xerox publishing. The main post-war Iranian exile publishing started in 1953. The last twenty years alone have seen

more Persian books and periodicals published abroad than in the whole of the preceding years. An indication of the magnitude of Iranian exile publishing is the production in 1980. Over three hundred monographs averaging 110 pages were published in that year alone; the number of periodicals which started publication since the establishment of the Islamic Republic certainly exceeds two hundred.