



حزب مشروطه ایران

The Constitutionalist Party of Iran
CPI

**A PARTY
FOR PRESENT AND THE FUTURE
OF IRAN**

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Introduction

Constitution and Constitutionalism

Since 1994/1373, when the Constitutionalist Party of Iran ("The Constitutional Movement of Iran" at the time) was officially founded; its charter, bylaws, and platform have been the subject of much debate. This booklet tries to articulate on the party's worldview and its programs, reflecting our intellectual development of the past few years. After a brief analysis of the Constitutional era it goes on to discuss the new Constitutionalist platform and strategy in subsequent chapters.

In the present discourse, political philosophy and practical solutions sometimes come together. A political party ought to have clear ideas about governance; and these ideas should be based on a certain worldview, a political philosophy. Offering slogans and conflicting strategies, has no place with us. Ideology with "I", meaning a core idea encompassing all phenomena and explaining all questions, is a thing of the past and it is time to be pragmatic in social and economic matters. Flexibility and yielding to the realities of life and practical experience are the hallmarks of any successful political program. However this is not the same as compiling a collection of mutually exclusive slogans; and in every platform certain values take precedence.

We are not today in a position to have detailed programs for all the problems and it is not necessary. But as a sample of what we have in mind and to highlight our values some cases are dealt with in more detail.

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In the Persian political usage, the word "Mashrouteh" (Constitution or Constitutional) has been confused with the word "Mashrout" (conditional) due to their similarity; and at the first glance, it implies a government that does not hold unconditional power. However, even the most despotic governments are bound to abide by written and unwritten laws and customs, which limit the power of a ruler (for example, the Saleec Law, the succession of the first male progenitor to the throne). In the final analysis, even history's most powerful dictators had to abide by the rules of the "balance of power" and could not do whatever they wished.

The word "Constitution" found its way to the Persian political jargon in the latter part of the 19th Century through the Ottomans who themselves had derived it from the French word "Chartre" itself derived from the Latin Cartula or Carta. The name given to a board, unto it decrees were inscribed." Magna Carta," the first "Constitutional Law" of the world limiting the power of the kings which was given to the House of Lords in the 13'h century by the king of England, means the Grand Board." The Constitutional Law in its present form and meaning, started with the American Revolution. Today, all countries possess one. In the U.K., the common law and existing legislature, are doing what a constitutional law does in other countries and its government is indeed one of the most lawful in the world.

In Iran the intellectuals of the time, translated the term "constitutional government" as "hokoomat e mashrooteh," a lawful government that derives its legitimacy from the popular will, versus a despotic monarchy. In the literature of the era of the constitutional movement, "mashrooteh" and "Constitution" were both used in parallel. In a "government of law" or "constitution," the form of the government has no importance, because both monarchical and republican forms are based on a parliamentary system.

Those intellectuals, as the first generation of Iranians to be exposed to western thought, decided to bring about a fundamental change in the society, by establishing rule of law and freeing the country from arbitrary powers of the king and the royals. The Iran of the epoch was a country that was in total chaos, existing more as a geographic entity -- no army, no finance, no communication or educational infrastructure to speak of -- with a primitive rural economy and a mass of illiterate people living in unhealthy conditions. The role played by the then small Iranian middle class of that era, which, single-handedly, took the task of modernizing Iranian society, is unparalleled in our history.

The project devised by those intellectuals who were known as the Constitutionalists went far beyond the mere form of government. Rightly so, they gave priority to the political problem of Iran, but reform of the government was only the first step of an overall program to preserve the independence and integrity of the country and for pushing Iranian society forward to the level of the most advanced countries in the West. This is why the Constitutional Movement of Iran is known not only as a democratic revolution but also the beginning of the movement for Modernity in Iran. For the Constitutionalists there was no distinction between democracy and Modernity. Democracy, like nationalism, social and economic development, and social justices was just one of the components of their project for modernizing the country. Their efforts in all aspects of that project were at an unprecedented scale in Iranian society.

Whatever we have today in our limited ways, goes back to that era, from mass education to political parties; from newspapers to novels and theatre; from railroad to heavy industry; from medical coverage to equality between men and women; from the political rights of the religious minorities to de-centralization of local government. It is true that the Constitutionalists' plans were not wholly materialized at the time. It is also true that the Iran of today has gone back in many ways to the Iran of pre-1906, the Constitutional Revolution, but that movement has always been and remains the moving force of a society in search of progress.

Even today we are essentially preoccupied with the very same central issue of defining Modernity, its meaning and applications; how to catch up with the most advanced societies of the West. We are still faced with the same conflicting dilemmas of decentralization of power and the rule of the people versus a centralized theocratic system, nationalism versus separatism, versus globalization; economic progress versus the dominance of Bazaar; social progress versus gender inequality; Shiites versus followers of other persuasions; and finally, social justice versus the ever-growing gap between the rich and the poor. Our society is now ready as never before to embrace Modernity and reach the goals that naturally surpass those sought by the Constitutionalists. However the problem in its essence has not much changed; and the Constitutionalists' project is still the best for Iran.

From 1941 /1320, many writers divided the era of Constitutional Movement into 3 periods according to their own partisans and ideological preferences: The 1st "Mashrooteh" from 1285/1906 to 1286/1907 and the bombardment of the parliament building. The 2nd "Mashrooteh" from 1288/1909 to 1299/1921 and the coup d'Etat of the 3rd of Esfand (1921, the rise of Reza Khan, later Reza Shah, to power.) The 3rd "Mashrooteh" from 1320/1941 to 1333/1953 and the fall of "Mossadegh" These authors sum up the entire history of the Constitutional Movement to the periods of the parliamentary supremacy. According to them, "Mashrooteh" or Constitutionalism existed when the parliament was able to exercise power. Reducing the modernization and reform movement in Iran to only one of its elements, does not conform to the real dimensions of the movement and the true role played by the parliament during much of its few years of ascendancy. In reality, the period between the last decade of 19th

through the 7th decade of 20th century should be known as the Constitutional or “Mashrooteh” Era. During this period, the notion of modernization and development dominated the entire national discourse, transforming the traditional Iranian society from its 1000 + year old beliefs to the extent that even the current reactionary Islamic theocracy is nothing but a deviation of the movement and in certain fundamental fields, it is serving the Constitutionals' objectives.

Parliament was the principal achievement of the Constitutionals. However, at the peak of its power, the parliament was not able to accomplish more than successfully resisting imperial expansion. After its 2nd term and the amendment of the electoral law, big landlords in smaller cities controlled the election results. Thus, parliament was not the true representative of the people and its power was indeed an obstacle to progress. In addition during the years before the emergence of Reza Shah, Iran, as a country with a feudal system, was a disintegrating land with some of its provinces under foreign occupation. Even banks and custom houses were managed by expatriates and their respective governments.

During the first 15 years of “Mashrooteh”, most often, parliament was not even in session and the cabinets had a median life span of no more than 2 months and 23 days. In the years after the occupation of Iran the parliament did not play its role any better. Most of the cabinets were short lived and the parliamentarians in general only concerned with their personal interests and ready to play into the hands of different power players. Even Mossadegh, who was critical of Reza Shah for bringing the parliament under his control, called it "the house of thieves" in his own time; and in his hostility towards the parliament, went as far as dissolving the very parliament whose members were elected during his premiership, ignoring the Constitution itself.

In order for democracy to work in a country, an independent judiciary, able to maintain law and order, the rule of law, and a certain degree of economic and social development must exist. In third world countries, only those with strong central governments could eventually reach a certain degree of democracy. Even some of the former colonies, especially those under the British Empire were in better shape than Iran of that period. There has been much talk about democracy in India. But India at the time of its independence had a considerable educational and administrative infrastructure; its judiciary was the envy of any third world country. There were absolutely no correlations between the situation in India and Iran of eight decades ago, where Mullahs and bureaucrats were doing to people whatever they wished.

The Constitutionals realized the enormity of the task of establishing democracy in a backward country early on, and almost all of them found the solution in a powerful hand. Reza shah came to power with general support – except for a small minority -- and as proved in practice, was the most successful in implementing most of the objectives of the Constitutionals. Whatever he did during the next 20 years, were in essence what had been advocated in the programs of the Constitutionalist parties, parliamentary discussions and the writings of journalists and authors of the time.

The main issue then was the priorities: an independent Iran in its proper boundaries with a strong central government, and an extensive social and economic development program; or democracy for a thin layer of politicians and intellectuals mostly in Tehran, controlling the parliament and press; and disorder, lawlessness and stagnation in the society as a whole?

After the Coup d'Etat of 1921, many of those politicians and intellectuals did not hesitate to opt for a strong government. The Constitutionalist Movement had won

because the society wanted to modernize, but the constitutional government had failed because it could not realize its ideals. Reza Shah too did not achieve what he was after, partly due to scarcity of resources available to him, and partly because of too much reliance on brut force in leading a people who after centuries of oppression was thirsting to feel responsible for itself, and for participation. However, he had succeeded in administering one of the greatest turnarounds in Iranian history. He had saved his homeland from inevitable disintegration. By organizing an effective civil service and a powerful military (by the standards of the time,) he had created a modern nation-state, uniting a divided land and its diverse ethnic groups; had transformed the government machinery into the instrument for progress and development; created a modern day economic, educational, and communications infrastructure; and emancipated women. This last reform along with Mohamad Reza Shah's Land Reform and the revolution of mass education, and putting an end to Feudalism in Iran under the Pahlavis, form the greatest social revolutions in Iranian history. He had dealt such a devastating blow to the clerical dominance in education and judiciary that even the Islamic republic has not been able to completely overturn it.

Most of Mohammad Reza Shah's 37 years rule was spent in conflicts and crises that left little opportunity to follow up the Constitutionalists' modernizing goals. Only during the last 15 years of his rule, and aided by greater resources, that effort resumed with breakneck speed and unprecedented dimensions; characteristics that underlined its strong and weak points. Once again, an all powerful king from Tehran embarked on a vast plan of social and economic progress that for the first time since the peak of the Safavid era, enabled Iran to enter the economic "take off " stage in the latter part of the 2nd Millennium. But, due to concentration of decision making and the narrow perspective of the project, not only it resulted in corruption, waste, and improper priorities, it also caused political weakness and social vulnerability, the extent of which became finally apparent in the Islamic revolution.

Concentration of the entire decision making process in a single man, with all the shortcomings of a normal person, led to every kind of excess, erroneous judgment, nepotism and cronyism in public affairs; to the extent that a small circle around the shah and a group of politically connected capitalists had the lion's share of the national wealth. It is easy to influence a single person who makes all the major and minor decisions on a daily basis. The emphasis on progress, primarily from a quantitative and statistical standpoint, prevented the development plan to reach the depths of the society, and the maximum exploitation of immense resources that for the first time was at our disposal. Iran's development in those years was not impressive enough and was lacking in harmony. A greater deficiency and imbalance emerged in the political arena.

One of the monumental contributions of the Pahlavi monarchs was to create a modern and dynamic middle class for the first time in Iran. An industrial and democratic society could not be realized without this class. During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, the new middle class had developed to such an extent that could, hand in hand with a reformist monarch like Mohammad Reza Shah, have built an industrial democratic society. However this middle class, instead of finding its deserved place in the society, not only was blocked by different political obstacles, was openly humiliated by the political leadership. At least, from the 60s, Iranians could not be accused of being unable to rule themselves and still needing some supreme leader who knows it all, better than anyone else, to preside over their fate.

In the middle of all these great achievements and excruciating shortcomings, the Constitutional era came to an end by the Islamic evolution that crystallized all cultural, social, and political failings of Iran. However, that experience with Modernity was

profound enough not to be erased by any means and under any Regime. Resurgence of the dormant Iranian nationalism and a justified pride in the 3000 years history of the land, in its present name of Iran, was one of the characteristics of this Modernity. Abolition of feudalism, emancipation of women and peasants, and the emergence of a middle class were other aspects of it. Iranians have never experienced such standard of living either before or after. The Iranian society acquired all the trappings of modern day living, albeit insufficiently, and Iran regained its place in the international community. The Constitutionals, from every camp, and with all their transgressions and shortcomings, did a great service to their country, the extent of which becomes more apparent with the passage of time.

Nevertheless the undeniable failure of the Constitutionalist project in its first phase until the Islamic Revolution demanded a thorough re-evaluation both in theory and practice. This re-evaluation began immediately after the Islamic revolution, resulting in the formation of what is called the New Constitutionalism and has become the foundation for the political programs of the present Constitutionalist Party of Iran. The New Constitutionalism indeed reflects the original message and significance of the Constitutionalist Movement. That message is Modernity, which has been obscured in the partisan politics of the past decades; by those in both camps who successfully gave a one-dimensional interpretation of our recent history. Constitutionalism had a much deeper and more extensive meaning than what was instilled in people's mind particularly after the World War II. It was reduced into just a form of government, and a despotic one at that, by the Opposition; and a mere ceremony, and a forced one, by the Regime itself. It was one of the major failings of the Pahlavi Monarchy that as an offspring of the Constitutional Movement and the one that realized most of the farfetched aspirations of the Constitutionals, so much tried to ignore it.

As indicated earlier, nationalism (the sense of belonging to, and pride in, one nation, one country,) liberty, progress, and social justice, in an integrated whole, made the Constitutionalist project. At the onset of the 20th century, intellectual and political leadership of the Movement saw these four elements as a whole. The New Constitutionals have taken this project in its entirety, cleansing it of the philosophical and political contradictions and shortcomings experienced in the seventy years of Constitutional era; re-modeling it in its 21st century form.

CHAPTER 1

NATIONALISM



Nationalism was the most important characteristic and the driving force of the Constitutional Movement, in the age of Imperialism and in a country that every Power had its own plans on it, a preserving and defensive nationalism in a dangerous world. The Constitutionalists' starting point was to defend the country from foreign dominance and to maintain a unified and independent Iran. Democracy and socioeconomic development, later on termed as "Liberty" and "Progress" by the historians, were only the means toward this higher end.

The outburst of nationalistic sentiments demonstrated in this epoch's literature is perhaps the only explanation of the unusual participation by a significant group of clerics, at least at the beginning of the Constitutional Movement. During the Qajar dynasty, the clergy, hand in hand with the king and the princes, exercised full control over people. They had no individual or collective motive to join a movement that was poised to reduce the power of the Shah and his court. The Constitutionalists, however, managed to attract them to their cause by pinpointing the humiliation of a Muslim nation falling under the yoke of Christian Empires.

The nationalistic upsurge of putting "Iran" ahead and above of all, came from a natural sentiment, which is still shared by almost all Iranians. It also addressed a need. "Iran" is all we have as Iranians. It is the embodiment of all the struggles and sacrifices and exceptional achievements of a hundred generations of Iranians. The greatest of these achievements is the survival of the country, without which, "Iran" would be no more than a historical name. This is not the so called jewel-studded land of the song, and its people are not superior to other nations, but it was a tremendous feat to preserve, in the span of almost three thousand years, in such a crossroad of armies and tribes, such a vast and varied land between two seas, with its resourceful and resilient people. It has been an exceptional triumph of spirit for this nation to preserve its national identity against all odds and still being able to raise its head in pride. What is a higher duty, and closer to the nature of things, to preserve this piece of land, hardened in the furnace of history; to elevate this tested and weathered people again to their deserved heights?

We embrace nationalism in its preserving, not expansionist; and democratic, not Fascist form. Although "nationalist" and "democratic" are not necessarily interwoven, their organic connection could not be overlooked. One can be nationalistic but without democratic mentality or beliefs; and there have been many leaders who could not reconcile democratic methods with the task of advancing and defending their land. Nationalism in the Europe of the New Age – since 17th century -- has developed both in democratic and un-democratic traditions. There were times when un-democratic nationalism had the upper hand. But victory has at last been with the democratic tradition. The former, in central Europe, resulted in two world wars and the Holocaust. It still is the greatest enemy of eastern European nations and ethnic groups.

In our own country, un-democratic nationalism, despite its tremendous achievements, failed in its goals and again and again met with disastrous defeats. Putting an individual or an oligarchy above the people, and gradually instead of people, at its best prevents popular mobilization, and at its worst leads to political and moral corruption. Even the most ardent patriots and nationalists could not deny the rights of the individuals who make up a nation -- along with history and culture, in other words, the national memory and heritage -- without intellectually undermining themselves. It is true that a nation is more than the sum total of the individuals comprising it. But could it be also against that sum total? Could it be said that individuals have no part in that collectivity? Is it

possible to ignore the individual citizens who are real, and only think of the State or Nation, which is an abstract concept; and give them no other right than sacrificing themselves for a goal set by the leadership?

Politicians and propagandists always tend to concentrate on and publicize the best and brightest spots and periods of any historic era. This is the “art” of narrowing historical outlook, and serves the purpose of deceiving oneself and others. The most alarming form of this can be detected in the radical Islamist, fundamentalist movement. They narrow the scope of their analysis to the first two generations and completely overlook the harsh realities of 1400 years of Islam in the realm of thought and action. In the name of a “realized utopia,” a “glorious past” that could be brought back, they are creating Irans, Turkeys, Algerias, Afghanistans and Pakistans of the world. However in a broader and longer-term perspective the cult of personality or Ideology is always overshadowed by democracy. (That Age, after all, was not so golden. Of the first four Califs, “the Rashedin,” only Abubakr, who soon passed away, died a natural death. All the rest were assassinated, and by Muslims. The reign of the last two of them was steeped in corruption (Othman) and civil war (Ali.) The Golden Age became possible only by conquest and pillage on an exceptional scale and for a limited time.)

Democracy, meaning popular participation in governance, has in the long run outperformed even the best of dictatorships. Today we are witnessing its worldwide and probably final triumph over regimes in which people, in the name of an abstract collective (Nation, Class, Umma, Mass) or a transcendental right (the right of a superman called Imam, Fuhrer, King, Leader) have been deprived of their sovereign rights. Societies where people, those under-educated, un-informed, busy with making ends meet masses, have been in control of their destiny, have enjoyed more stability and strength and faired better. As a Greek philosopher noted wisely 2500 years ago: “People may not make good judges, but they can elect great ones”.

The fathers of Constitutional Movement were influenced by the European progressive ideas, before being poisoned by Fascism and Marxism-Leninism. They, from theoretical point of view, defeated religious traditionalism and the first waves of fundamentalism for the next fifty years. We, as their children, four generations later, have those life-giving sources and the sweet and mostly bitter experiences of those four generations at our disposal; and can, with firmer feet and clearer eyes pursue the path opened to humanity by the most enlightened minds and societies.

Nationalism, as we perceive it, influences the Party’s political program in the fields of foreign and cultural policies.



A - Foreign policy:

Twenty first century will be the age of interdependency; the constant interaction of patterns of thought and action and, in some cases, the inevitable assimilation and conformity. This phenomenon has been called “globalization”. It goes without saying that it will work to the benefit of the most advanced and developed countries and civilizations. There have been three courses of action in relation to this phenomenon: joining this process in full force, as has been done by the European countries, North America, Japan, south Korea, New Zealand; adjust oneself to it, like India, China, a few east Asian lands and one or two Latin American nations; or stay out like the rest of the world. In this respect, the Muslim countries have taken the unique position of not only refusing to participate, but also defiantly rejecting globalization; using Islam as a shield for all the forces of obscurantism and reaction.

However globalization is another, more developed form of Modernity, that started six centuries ago and with which the Muslim world has been engaged in a losing battle for the past three hundred years. “Islam against Modernity or as a substitute to Modernity” has been a strategy for failure and backwardness. Islamic conservatives have only been able to slacken the pace of Modernity to the detriment of their people (Saudi Arabia is one example; Afghanistan is another, catastrophic example.) The Islamic fundamentalists who wanted to make a revolutionary force out of Islam have inflicted so much damage to Islam in Iran, Turkey and Algeria that political Islam will never recover from it. No culture has been able to resist Modernity.

It is futile to reject, stay aside and bring up the walls against globalization. This is the irresistible trend in world economy and culture, because it is the very nature of progress itself. To deny it, is neither practical nor does any good to nations. Joining globalization will not jeopardize Iran’s national identity or interest. Two hundred and one hundred years ago we had the same situation vis-à-vis Modernity. The conservatives hindered modernization and reforms, because it was supposedly in conflict with our “Iranian-Islamic” identity, meaning those characteristics of the Iranian society used by the ruling groups for suppressing people. (We have but one identity and that is Iranian.) Today, in spite of the Islamic revolution and government, we are more Iranian, and better Iranians. We must join globalization and take a seat on the saddle; in other words become a player and not merely a puppet, and help to moderate its excesses. The circle of winners in this global economy is widening. We want to be included in this circle and help others in our region.

While we will go along with the mainstream of world economy and culture in every respect, we will strive to enhance Iran’s contribution and its presence in this process and at the same time preserve Iran’s distinct identity in a world of ever uniformity. We cannot build a dam around us against this rising tide. Those reactionaries, who denounce the free enterprise and the multinational corporations, are wasting their time. Without taking part in the accelerating progress, they are mere petty consumers and can go on living thanks to the same corporations and Capital. We cannot eliminate multinationals and they are ever proliferating; but we can have our own multinational corporations. Capital is bound to expand and concentrate and if it is not monopolistic and works to our national interest, it is not bad at all. Iran should be hospitable to the inflow of capital, technology and management at the highest possible level, until we became players in our own right.

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Iranian foreign policy is based on one simple ideology: promoting Iranian national interest. But this could be interpreted in many ways. Some could even invade other countries under this pretext. Iran is situated in a region, most turbulent and unstable and politically and culturally backward. Of our neighbors Turkey and Iraq are in a state of national crisis and the latter will remain so for the foreseeable future. Afghanistan is a catastrophe called a country. The Republic of Azerbaijan has fallen to the stranglehold of the remnants of the communist Mafia. Pakistan, in the grip of Islamic fundamentalism and perpetual political crisis, could at any given moment, like Afghanistan, send hundreds of thousands of refugees into an affluent Iran.

In the Persian Gulf, which until the eighties had become more of an Iranian lake, the American symbolic presence, due to the unwise and aggressive policies of Iraq and the Islamic Republic, has expanded to the establishment of a full carrier battle group (the fifth fleet has been organized for this purpose.) Now Iran’s southern neighbors in Persian Gulf can feel secure under its shadow. In central Asia and the Caucasus

everywhere there are danger points and we are still in a way dealing with Russia and its ambitions- although fortunately for the first time in three centuries we do not have a common border with her and this permanent danger has been removed.

In such a volatile region, a genuine foreign policy requires much more than repeating formulas about reciprocal and friendly relations with neighbors and other countries or compliance with the U.N Charter. We neither have any commitment nor owe any thing to others and do not expect any favors. Defending the rights of the Palestinians or the Shiites of southern Lebanon or the Shiite and Muslim minorities in other countries is not our obligation. It is irrelevant what percentage of the population of our neighbors are Shiite or how many Muslims live in Bosnia. Iran's resources, apart from humanitarian interventions, should be utilized to improve the lives of the people within its borders and to expand our trade and culture beyond. In western And central Asia and the middle east and, fact that we are not a revisionist nation and do not advocate any redrawing of international borders, unlike many others, makes us a stabilizing force for the whole region. As we did before the Islamic revolution, our presence should deter others from acts of aggression against each other. We should start this by setting an example. An Iran that pursues a non-aggressive policy and at the same time fiercely defends its national territory, for example in Persian Gulf, would undoubtedly curb such irresponsible regimes as former Ba'athists in Irak. We obviously would not tolerate any country's aggression in our region.

Situated in one of the world's most volatile areas, Iran needs a strong defensive force not inferior to any potential rival. The existing military chaos and the divided armed forces -- the Army and the Revolutionary Guards -- has deprived our country from its needed defensive capabilities. The humiliated Army of Iran should be restored to its deserved position and given its appropriate share of the national resources. The Revolutionary Guard should be absorbed into a unified military, and instead of its intended role as a means of suppression, plays its part in defending national sovereignty and territory.

Iran's unique strategic position in the region -- access to two seas; communication crossroad to central Asia, the middle east, Europe, the sub continent; the land rout of a new Silk Road; close to most of the world's oil and gas reserves; in the middle of a market of a billion and several hundred million people -- is our winning card. Our country can exploit this position to become a major player in world arena. For this to happen, we require an intelligent foreign policy and developing a modern communication network and industrial and financial infrastructure.

As far as world powers are concerned -- America, European Community, Russia, Japan and soon China and India -- they all can help us in our progress. Western countries specially have many useful things to teach and give us. From the tiny Finland to the super power America. We bear no animosity towards countries richer and more powerful than ourselves. We only want to catch up with them as much as we can. Among these, Russia is our competitor in Caucasus and central Asia, but has common interest in fighting terrorism and because of proximity, could be one of the greatest sources of technology transfer and trading partners for Iran.



B - Cultural policy:

On the cultural front we should again replace the policy of regression and inward looking by a policy of inclusion and outward movement. To brag about the glories and achievements of the distant past -- in a world that its cultural products, at least in technology, doubles every ten years -- only helps to keep us in our eight hundred years

old deep sleep. Iranians have all the potentials to once again join the forefront of the world's culture. Only in the past two or three generations, we have been able to bring a degree of modern culture (science, arts, way of life) to the Iranian masses. In the world arena we are just starting to contribute. Educating masses of the people and developing talents, acquiring the new technology, expanding national cultural infrastructure and opening our doors to the best of the world's technological and cultural products would be our answer to the question of preserving national identity. To have a future as a distinct nation we have no other way but to become a cultural and economic power in our own right. Throughout history, our culture and economy blossomed when we were commuters of the global highway. Our "acculturation" (adoption of foreign cultural influences) in the last two centuries, though reluctantly, has changed our national lives forever, but it has not damaged our national identity. To the contrary, today we are more conscious of our Iranian-ness and so is the international community. This precisely is what is meant by national identity, and not just the mental habits of a certain group or a generation during a certain time span, no matter how long that may be.

Chapter 2

Liberty



Nowadays, the notion of liberty is so universal that any emphasis on democracy seems redundant. There is ample evidence of successful democratic governments throughout the world and they can easily be learned from. Majority rule; minorities changing into majority; pluralism; the separation of church and state; equality under the law; freedom of speech and assembly; are alphabets of modern day's governance and those societies which have not complied are in constant crisis and are struggling to reach that point.

The new trend in today's understanding of liberty is the growing influence of human rights on government and sovereignty. By government we mean the authority given to the representatives of the people or acquired by the governing apparatus to exert over public affairs and social relations. Sovereignty is a right; government is the means to exert this right. Historically, that authority could not be contravened. All governments even democratic ones, confined by the law, have enjoyed vast powers that are under attack from the standpoint of human rights. Until recently, ownership and control over audio-visual media; the licensing of media by governments; police surveillance over the citizens (e.g. tapping phones) were considered as necessary and commonplace. Today, the governments' powers, wherever it infringes human rights, is diminishing. In democratic societies, state-control over media does not exist any more and the courts of law play a major role in protecting citizens' rights. Many of the rules set for regulating socio-economic relations are being eased or eliminated.

The impact of human rights on sovereignty is equally significant. Sovereignty, is similar to ownership, an abstract concept, and has two manifestations: first, as the right to govern, for instance the sovereign right of the people, i.e. democracy; or divine right of kings, theocracy, or oligarchy (Iran and China.) and second, as the sovereign right of a state over its territory and people, i.e. national sovereignty. The state according to the international law has a free hand inside its territory. However with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights signed by all member states of the UN, and especially after the adoption of the Covenant on the crimes against humanity, that has been ratified by many parliaments in the member states, as well as the establishment of the International Tribunal, national sovereignty has also been curtailed. The international community assumes the right to prevent by force and punish those governments that commit crimes against their own people. The leaders of such governments could be arrested and persecuted in countries that have ratified the Covenant.

Liberty for us exists only in the framework of human rights, in other words democracy limited by human rights. No laws even by a majority or in the name of religion can violate individual rights under the Universal Declaration. For this concept the world is indebted to the writers of the American Declaration of Independence, who says all people are equal at creation and have inalienable rights. The powers of government, which includes the executive, legislature and the judiciary, should be as limited as possible and an independent judiciary safeguarding the rights of the people and the government. We also, with all our emphasis on national sovereignty, defend the right of international organizations to interfere in internal affairs of states for protecting human rights.

Liberal democracy as developed in the West during the past two hundred years and still developing, is what we have in mind for Iranian system of government. The most important institution in such a system of government is the parliament, which reflects the will of popular majority in its resolutions; and the executive is responsible to it. For a democracy to work properly, first of all the parliament should be both democratic and

efficient. A good electoral law is crucial in this respect. Electoral systems are either absolute majority or proportional. In absolute majority a candidate that takes fifty per cent plus one vote wins all. In proportional systems the seats are divided according to the proportion of votes won. A proportional system is more suited for societies with more fragmented politics and greater danger of clashes. However, it should be moderated, as in the German model, by a relatively high minimum (five per cent in that case) so that any one who wins less than that would not take a seat. Likewise the candidates should deposit a certain amount of money to be confiscated in the case of not winning the minimum percentage. These precautions are necessary so to prevent the trivialization of our electoral process, like so many other things, and all the more necessary in a country prone to proliferation of political groups and a thousand candidates for presidency. We have the example of so many parliaments at the mercy of fringe groups (Israel, Italy before recent partial corrections) to take our lesson. To eliminate the influence of money and special interest in politics, free radio and television time and public financial support should be provided to the parties according to their share of the vote.

It is self evident that in a liberal democracy the form of regime, monarchy or republic, is not important (Spain or Portugal.) So is the case with a dictatorship (Saudi Arabia and Syria.) Nevertheless we prefer a constitutional monarchy rather than a republic, since it is more compatible with our enduring traditions. In our view the task of preserving democracy, which needs nurturing for a long time, would be more attainable under a monarchy than a republic. In response to those who indicate that democratic or parliamentary monarchy in Iran has never been successful, suffice to say that, in the past, all political tendencies, even those considered the epitome of the rule of law and democracy, proved to be authoritarian and intolerant. What makes the future of Iranian democracy more secure is the considerable social infrastructure and the maturity of Iranian society, as well as the valuable experiences of the last hundred years; most of all the 20-30 million strong Iranian middle class of educated men and women who culturally, if not economically, come under this category.

Those who from a strictly logical point of view see a contradiction in emphasizing monarchy's traditional value and at the same time believing in a constitutional monarchy, have a point. After all there is precious little constitutional in our monarchical tradition. But it is what all constitutional monarchies in Europe and elsewhere have achieved. They have, in a historical moment that could last for years or generations, adjusted a traditional institution, which, in spite of its longevity, has been able to go along the flow of time and totally different conditions, so combining both tradition and Modernity. Our people were not able in the past to hold on to a constitutional government, but if something have not succeed in the past, there is no reason that it should not succeed in the future, even though it dose not seem "logical." We recognize the heir to the throne of the Pahlavi monarchy, as the next constitutionalist monarch of Iran. However, it is up to the Iranians to choose the future form of their government. As in all other cases, we will abide by the will of the people.

Freedom of speech and political, professional, social, and cultural associations of all kinds are the obvious prerequisites of a democracy. However freedom of speech is conditioned by civil responsibility enforced by the courts; and freedom of association means that nobody could be coerced into joining a party or union or council.

Democracy is incompatible with concentration of power. Democracy means to empower as many people as possible. Democratic institutions were formed as a counterweight to the concentrated power of governments. In addition, devolution of power leads to greater efficiency because more capabilities were mobilized at every

level. Concentration of power should not be confused with centralization. There are central organs even in the most democratic entities to coordinate or accumulate resources, while concentration entails stripping the parts of a collective from individual initiative and voluntary action. The imperatives of promoting democracy and achieving development, requires ever more devolution of governmental power. There is also another imperative.

As indicated earlier, we are in a region that is suffering from historical instability. Its borders were drawn by colonial powers or as a result of foreign invasions; and the whole region is prone to foreign manipulation and centrifugal pressures. Iran itself between 16th to 19th centuries, was all the time carved out in its four corners - from the battle of Chaldoran when the Ottomans annexed the greater portion of Kurdistan, to the Russian expansion into Iranian lands of Caucasus and central Asia. Throughout the 19th century the British redrew Iran's eastern and western borders according to their colonial designs, including the one-sided river border settlement of "Shatt ol Arab" and cessation of Persian Gulf islands. As a result, most people living on our borders have relatives on either side. This can be a good opportunity for the expansion of cultural and economic ties; a source of constant tension and possible conflict with its neighbors as well. In the past, the government reacted by concentrating all power in Tehran. The Constitutionalist realized the pitfalls of this solution and suggested the creation of locally elected provincial and regional assemblies.

Today, we need to go even further by allowing division of power between central and local governments and by giving the locally elected authorities all the powers to make local decisions. They should also have their fair share of national resources, which will simultaneously strengthen national unity and democracy. The borders of a province should be determined by the will of the local people and with regard to economic development.

Our policy on devolution or local government is based on three principles:

1- The principle of one country, one nation. Iran is not a multination country. No "nation" has been forced to join Iran; it is a country that different people, with different languages and religions have inhabited from the dawn of history, and have defended it hand in hand and have left us this much of the fatherland. We under no circumstances will allow any further diminishing of its borders. Iran, within its current borders has always been the core territory of any Iranian state, from the time of the Medes to present day. Its name in various forms of the root word "Aria" dates back to some 3000 years ago. Such a country could not be called multination, and since, most of Iran's ethnic groups have ruled Iran, sometimes for centuries, it would be hard to talk of national or ethnic injustice.

2- The principle of indivisibility of sovereignty and divisibility of government. By that we mean the preservation of territorial integrity, one law for all, and a government representing the whole of Iran. The official language of the country will be the national tongue, i.e. Persian. But Iran will not have a centralized government. Each region, province, town, and village will administer local affairs through its own elected organs, and a senate, with equal number of representatives from each region will consist the legislator along with parliament. In development projects those less endowed regions will have priority to catch up with others.

3- The principle of cultural and civil rights of different religious and ethnic groups. In accordance to the Covenants of civil and cultural rights attached to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we acknowledge the rights of all Iranians' to speak and

be educated in whatever language, with access to the mass media in their mother tongues, and to preserve their customs and to practice any religion. We recognize no ethnic or religious minorities because there would not be any special right for the majority; only the majority of voters, which is a temporary phenomenon.

Federalism, for a country like Iran with its history of central government, is an artificial solution and a threat to its national integrity. The terms autonomy and self-determination, revives the unhappy memories of the World War II, when foreign occupation forces were trying to dismember Iran under those banners. Any unnecessary insistence on such heavily laden terms would complicate the essential task of devolution of power and preservation of Iran's ethnic groups.

Chapter 3

Development



Development is relatively a new, post-war term. Before that Iranians used terms such as progress and advancement. What is meant by development is for a country to achieve the “take off” stage; the stage of being able to solve its own problems and reach modern standards without outside assistance. Development is a multi faceted process, encompassing economy, politics, and culture.

A- Economy

In political economy our first priority is to replace Ideology with pragmatism. Iran now has a population of some 65 million, half of which living at around or below poverty line - even by Iran’s low standards. It also has one of the weaker economies in the world that can barely survive thanks to oil exports. Such a economy could only be invigorated by applying, in an intelligent and innovative way, those strategies and policies that have proven effective in other similar conditions. There is no room for retrying failed experiments.

A pragmatic economic policy has the following characteristics:

1- To encourage private enterprise, taking the government out of economic activities, and deregulation of economy to the necessary minimum. The society’s productive forces should be unshackled and the field for competition opened up. People should not be denied the fruits of their work in the name of justice or “national interest.” At the same time, by expanding the ownership of enterprises by the masses of people, especially the workers, through the ownership of public corporations, the national wealth must be spread across the society. If capital market takes the place of bank credits or bank ownership, companies will increasingly would go public and issue stocks of their companies.

2- The role of government in economy should be essentially confined to investment in public services; regulating capital market in cooperation with private sector, and protection of consumers, producers, and the environment. In Iran, due to the vital role of the oil revenues, as long as the income tax does not cover public expenditure, or the greater part of it, there is no alternative to government control of the oil industry. Also it would be advisable for a while to have the government control of the power sector, railway system, and postal services. However, state enterprises must be privatized whenever possible. To reconstruct the nation’s industrial base and enable it to compete in the world markets, the government can help by expanding educational, research and physical infrastructure of the economy; and providing different industries with assistance in R&D, directly or particularly with participation of universities and research institutes. Protectionist policies are useful only for a limited time and in industries with a chance to compete. An industry relying on the crutches of protective tariffs and government subsidies is useless. Strategies of import replacement should be adopted in a limited way, because in the final analysis its costs would be too high. In today’s economy autarky is out of question and there is no other choice than division of labor and concentration on industries where there are structural advantages (natural resources, a proximity to consumer market, labor force...) There is no need for each nation to be self-sufficient in every thing. Manipulating currency rates, imposing quotas and controls that bread black market practices should be excluded from the economy.

Although the service sector, from electronic trading, banking, and insurance to restaurants, has an ever-increasing role in national economies, Iran should become a manufacturing nation. With a large domestic market and access to a huge area and a trained and potentially capable work force, Iran has many advantages not least of which its natural resources and great economic potential. These are factors in creating a sizable industrial base in the region.

There are two key elements to Iran's industrialization. The first is education: to train a labor force familiar with modern knowledge and technology; skills that make workers employable. The second is transfer of modern technology and business management that comes partly through foreign investments; something very much needed in Iran. We should not resent foreign investors' profits. A country that is a mere importer of goods and services is poorer than the one who thanks to foreign capital would become an exporter. A comparison between South Korea and Thailand with present socialistic countries or state capitalisms of the past shows the differences.

The government's task is collecting taxes, not paying subsidies. People should stand on their own feet and the government should turn from provider into accountable to the people. Taxes have a more important role than paying for public expenses, and regulating economic fluctuations or even reducing income inequalities. It is impossible to democratize a political system without an efficient tax system. A society that does not pay enough taxes is a "rentier" one, with a government not relying on popular contribution. A government that could continue without adequate taxation would not be responsible to its people and depends on factors or forces other than its people (ample resources of oil, foreign backers, multinational companies). With taxation comes responsibility and accountability. However fiscal policies should not merely be for providing income or leveling inequalities. Even those policies should serve producing wealth, such as encouraging investment, savings, and charitable contributions. In the name of protecting the less fortunate, free enterprise should not be squeezed out of producing wealth, and force out the capital, expertise, and know how. No iron curtain can prevent brain drain and capital flight.



B- Civil society:

Civil society is voluntary organizations including political parties, and the existence of a space for the people to work together, without government interference, on issues of their choice. Civil society is also citizens' rights and duties and civilized social relationships; it is an open and inclusive society based on individual rights and responsibilities. Civil society is essential for pluralism, which is as important to democracy as majority rule. Strengthening its institutions is necessary for curbing the excesses of government and market forces. In such a society, participation in and campaigning for any cause, and school of thought would be allowed, as long as it does not involve in advocating violence, mixing religion with politics, and resorting to arms.

In Iran with its longstanding culture of violence that has corrupted politics and poisoned social and even family relations, and especially after the 1979 revolution that has sunken Iranian society to the infernal depths of violence, the advancement of civil society needs radical and innovative decisions. We are against the death penalty; and to root out violence from Iranian politics, reject the whole concept of political crime, which is meaningless. People cannot be persecuted and punished for having beliefs or taking political stands or decisions or holding political office; except in case of abusing power or committing crimes against humanity. Iran's politics and society should come out of the vicious circle of bloodshed and vendetta; and from the deadly heritage of Islamic Republic. To this end we propose, once and for all, the formation of the "Court

of Truth” or the court of condemnation without punishment, to bring all leaders, operatives, and servants of the current regime to justice, to uncover the crimes and their perpetrators. Obviously, all national wealth that has been looted must be returned. This would be a bitter medicine that nevertheless should be taken for the sake of our present and future national well-being.

Inequality in human ability is a fact of life. Even totalitarian persecution and terror has failed to erase its consequences. But equality in rights can be established. Iran does not have a racial problem; however religious or gender biases, which are our most disgusting pretexts for discrimination should not have a place in our society either. An Iranian is, first and foremost, an Iranian individual and then any thing else. Our society is now mature enough to respect the freedom of religion and preserve the rights of all faiths -- including the freedom of dress -- and distract religion from legislation and public education.

In the light of this, equal rights for women are an attainable goal and Iranian women have already started their struggle for it. Work outside the house is a woman’s right, and sharing the burden of house keeping is a man’s duty. Women must enjoy the same educational opportunities as men and the labor market should be as open to them as to men. Discrepancy in men and women’s payment must be eliminated and the government should, with the participation of the people themselves establish a network of day care centers for the children of workingwomen.



C- Education

Education: is both the greatest equalizer and source of inequality in today’s world, both on the national and international levels. In the age of high technology, one cannot overcome backwardness but to attain that technology. Technology could be bought, however, like industry, unless it became native, backwardness would remain. The solution is in education; reaching to the level of the most advanced countries which, for us is well attainable. The largest share of national budget should go toward free education, general and technical, education. Higher education would be free for those who have the intellectual requirements but not the financial means. The private sector should also be encouraged to invest in this field. The educational program, albeit basically uniform, has to be flexible and take the needs of different social segments and parts of the country into consideration. Emphasis should be on an extensive program of apprenticeship with the participation of industries, on German lines, to train a skilled work force.

Formal education and apprenticeship is only one part of the educational program; equally important is sports, and arts. Raising the country’s Cultural standards and exposing the masses to the best in world Culture are the other and no less important parts. We who, for long, had been world-class producers of culture are now entangled in a race against banality and backward looking. The government without becoming the cultural arbiter, can cultivate potential artistic talents of the masses by measures such as extensive Cultural education; creating a national network of cultural institutions - libraries, museums, exhibition centers, concert halls, operas, theaters, cinemateques, culture houses and the like. In this field, again, policies that make cultural creation dependent on government should be refrained from. Only those who create works of distinction could be rewarded -and only afterwards; and by independent and competent bodies.

Charter 4

Social Justice



In the field of social justice the final word was said by the 17th century English man, Jeremy Bentham: greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. In our time, technology has so much advanced that could provide all people to a degree of welfare and comfort unimaginable in the past. Today the problem is political and cultural: governments should work for people and people should be educated for living in this “Brave New World.” Even the poorest countries, if in their outlays and the use of their national resources give priority to providing people’ needs and increase their economic potential, could reach a satisfactory standard of living. The greatest happiness for the greatest number of people has two preconditions: first, preparing the necessary conditions for creating wealth; second, the society be made responsible for individuals.

Iran has all the potential to become one of the richest countries, and raise the living standard of its masses to one of the highest in the world: an extensive territory between two seas, the highway of western and central Asia and the middle east; a large body of intelligent, hard working people; a considerable internal market and overland access to a market that encompasses from the sub continent to the middle east and Persian gulf; a cultural and economic infrastructure that, even though not at a high level, could be improved with no great difficulty; and natural resources, looked upon with envy by many countries.

These assets could be utilized by Iranians provided that they:

First, participate in public affairs i.e. politics, and leave their destiny not in the hands of any authority, be it a leader or king or Imam, so that in policymaking the priority is given to the interest of the greatest number of people.

Second, equip themselves with the highest levels of education and technical skill, upon which the modern world is dependent and no political system could get our country to where it deserves without it.

Third, do not seat idle and depend on government for their well -being; work as much as they could and should and expect due security and rewards.

Government is people’s representative and trustee, not their nanny from cradle to grave. There are, and always will be, those who are unable to support themselves. It is the duty of society and the government as its representative to help them. But the rest should work hard to earn their living and also pay for the cost of the extended social welfare programs. A rentier society cannot live by even the world’s fourth oil, and second natural gas reserves. Oil and gas are an additional factor in Iran’s development, like what it was in Reza shah’s time; it should not be the mainstay of administrative expenditures. Welfare programs, if they dilute the difference between working and not working, or the good and bad in work, would lead to stagnation, brain drain, capital flight, and idleness. In our view, social justice must go hand in hand with economic development and creation of wealth, and none of them must be sacrificed.

We will follow these strategies to achieve that goal:

1- We give equal opportunity to all, so each individual, cold, according to her or his abilities, pursue the road to happiness; education and technical training for everyone, to whatever level of her or his intellectual capacity; fair and legal protection for employees and employers, consumers and producers; opening up the field for productive activities without unnecessary regulations, and a tax system that does not discourages creation of

wealth. The government should care for the well being of all and especially those who are deprived and left behind.

2- We provide comprehensive health and retirement insurance, as well as coverage for unemployed and disabled.

Employers, employees and the government share the burden of welfare programs. Law sets minimum wage and maximum working hours, but enterprises must have a free hand in hiring, firing, and work schedule. Those who lose their job would come under public sponsored programs of apprenticeship and reeducation and until they find another employment, be compensated by unemployment insurance, in accordance to their previous salary. Obviously, if someone declines taking new, appropriate job offers or undergoing reeducation, or participating in social work, would have lesser benefits. Our goal is to give free hand to enterprises in employing people without fear, and to the employees the flexibility in scheduling their own working hours. The new economy has transformed working conditions. Many people have part-time jobs or work from their homes.

We do not want to create conditions that, in the name of protecting workers' rights, only lengthens unemployment queues, and suits a workers' aristocracy. In today's competitive world, producers and entrepreneurs need freedom of action.

3- We establish a system of obligatory health insurance for all residents of Iran. Health insurance should be privatized and insurance companies obliged to insure everybody. The government would partly or wholly pay for those who could not afford their premium. Responsible government agencies, as in other fields, are for supervision over the working of the insurers, hospitals and health institutes, and protecting the rights of patient and not establishing and running such institutions.

Chapter 5

Campaign Strategy



The Islamic Republic with its archaic seminarian worldview, its despotic and unworkable constitution, and mafia type power structure, is a barrier on the way of joining the progressive world under any political program. To oppose it in its ideological and political totality, and empower the people to take hold of their destiny, is the first priority for any oppositional force. We are engaged in all aspects of this struggle, not to redeem our past, but because the ultimate goal of fighting the Islamic republic is basically the same as the Constitutional movement, i.e. a fight against political despotism and cultural backwardness --the twin causes of Iran's centuries' old slide. We are essentially those same Constitutionalists but try to be better and more knowledgeable and progress with the times.

Our campaign strategy is defined by our goals. Since there is an organic relationship between the goal and the means, and people and groups are made by what they do and how they are doing it, anything that has the mark of political despotism and cultural backwardness, would in fact strengthen the very world view and political system that we are fighting against. Thus, two approaches are left aside at the very beginning; those that used to dominate political discourse in the first decade and half after the revolution. First, using religious beliefs and symbols; and the second, to resort to arms or violence in political struggle. Platforms, declarations and speeches do not show and define what political groups are; it is their behavior, which shapes them all the time and becomes their nature. Even if they sincerely believe in what they say, the daily contradiction between their thought and deed, leads to cynicism and hypocrisy, eventually leaving nothing of the original beliefs. Not one instance of armed or violent struggle -- which essentially means the rights of one group or ideology at the expense of all others -- has led to democracy and pluralism. The experience of innumerable movements has shown that strategy and tactics of the struggle has a direct bearing on the outcome. The end does not justify the means; it is shaped by it and becomes its servant.

A political organization with the aim of bringing democracy and pluralism to Iran, would not deal with its rivals and opponents through shouting matches or stones and sticks. The right of self-defense is something else, but to resort to violence because others have done so in other times and places, is not a legitimate reason for advocating undemocratic practices. A political, popular struggle has no need for Fascistic or Hezbollahi methods. In the same connection, if some groups want to fight Mullahs by brandishing Islam and the martyrdom of Karbela as their weapons, either they believe in such things in politics and statecraft, and only want to implement their own brand of Islam; in that case they would not be different from the Islamic government, and unavoidably would treat the people and religion on the same principles; or are hypocrites and try to mislead people which makes them worse than the Islamic government, because the latter at least says what it wants.

Our strategy, popular political struggle against the regime, could only succeed if it goes along with the people. No need to stress that when the masses of people are concerned, the first precondition for success is to have their confidence. This confidence comprises moral and political factors, all of which necessary. Honesty and telling the truth and putting every thing over the table is one factor; to convince people about one's competence and correctness of positions and methods is another; with reflecting popular demands again going along with their movement is yet another factor. But here again honesty must take the front seat. There may, arise though rarely, situations when even a majority of people go astray. A political group, if it has the courage of its conviction and does not mind contradicting that majority, would better serve the people and enhance its

own credibility. It is imperative to avoid hypocrisy, and resist submission to the lure of short-lived fads and even popularity. Especially when mobilizing all popular energy and sacrifice for common good is needed, as is in today's Iran, when the whole truth is told, people would be more ready to fight and sacrifice.

A party's platform and the positions taken by it, should present the best available and most practical solutions for the nation's problems. Outlandish claims, general statements, and repeating clichés; putting emphasis on sheer emotion, have been effective in Iranian society for a long while. However our people have matured and distinguish responsible opinion and action from demagoguery or idle talk.

Acting and thinking responsibly requires going to the depth of issues and move forward with the times and intellectual and political developments. We try to bring the individual parts of our program and action into an integrated whole. As a result we are not all things to all people and would not enter into a beauty contest with others. It is not an auction for us; we would not outbid others in talk or promise. No one could ever outbid Khomeini who promised to give every Iranian her or his monthly share of the oil income. We tell people beforehand that achieving our goals and enacting our party program needs sacrifices by all and would come only after a long, hard struggle full of disappointments; and not only that. Even after the overthrow of the Islamic regime all of us have to work over the limit, and be paid below what we deserve, to reconstruct Iran after this ruinous regime.

In a popular struggle what is important is mobilizing people and take advantage of internal and external factors to wear down and destroy a corrupt, unpopular ruling group. The theoretical foundations of this strategy are the belief in a democratic future for Iran; the Islamic Republic's increasing vulnerability; and the inadequacy of repression for sustaining corrupt and despotic governments. The Iranian society of today has no relation to what it was twenty or forty years ago; deep sociological changes and the unprecedented political education of the great masses, is going to somewhat cure our society's historic political weakness. People's victory over the clerical regime is only a matter of time.

The tactics employed in this struggle are as follows:

1- Underlining the regime's weak points, setbacks, and crimes, especially in the field of terrorism and human rights that are important for mobilizing world opinion so that other states put pressure on the Islamic Republic and link the expansion in their relations to improvement in human rights in Iran.

2- Strengthening the activities of the regime's democratic and progressive opponents everywhere.

3- Supporting Iranian people's struggle under the leadership of students, and taking advantage of the regime's internal contradictions; concentrating attacks on the leaders of political and financial mafia, and suppressive elements; distinguishing between different tendencies both in the Iranian society and inside the governing elite that has transformed it from a monolithic structure. This is a development well understood by many people in Iran and taken into practical account.

4- Expanding cooperation of different and differing groups in advancing the cause of human rights and democracy in Iran, and preserving the country's independence and integrity.

5– Increasing indirect dialogue with the forces of freedom and progress inside of Iran and advancing their struggle in practical and theoretical fields. We welcome any development in the Islamic Republic leading to more empowerment of the people. The difference between the two ruling factions lies in that whatever the Hezbollah, the more powerful mafia, pursues is detrimental to the people, while some of the goals of the reformers could be beneficial. Nevertheless there exists a fundamental difference between the struggle from within and without. We working outside of Iran do not have to observe the rules of game in the Islamic Republic. We can voice what they are unable to express; but should not in anyway engage in internal politics of the regime, as it leads nowhere but to discredit. Now with the rise of a third force that is independent of both government factions, the struggle for secularism enters a new phase on which rests the future of democracy in Iran.

Although returning to Iran and taking part in the popular struggle is the wish of any opposition group, we only return on our own terms: when the machinery of suppression is dismantled in the course of struggle, and people could defend their freedom and security, and we could take part in political contest with all other tendencies in free and equal conditions.

Our effort is directed towards bringing down in a step-by-step process, and without chaos and bloodshed. This process has already started, but the opposition could not guaranty a peaceful outcome. If Hezbollah persists in imposing itself at all costs and brings popular disgust and wrath to the point of explosion, nobody could withstand it. We support the right of people in defending themselves, our abhorrence of violence notwithstanding.

Chapter 6

A Different Worldview



All platforms and legal preparations, in the absence of a profound cultural change, a change in our view of the world, would be insufficient. Iran is a third world, Islamic, and Middle Eastern country and here is where lies the problem; in these very adjectives. We are in such a sorry state, because we think with a third world mentality, live by Middle Eastern standards, and have allowed ourselves to be defined as an Islamic society. Our values and the way of looking at things have been Islamic and Middle Eastern and that of third world and we are in the regrettable situation that we find ourselves. If we wish to get away with this unhappy fate we should, even if we cannot interfere with our geography, migrate from our spiritual world.

Belonging to third world is another term for backwardness. Dwellers of third world are those left behind the caravan; in appearance they have similarities with more advanced societies, while in reality are still stuck in their medieval swamp, imprisoned by irrelevant traditions and bygone eras, imbedded in violence of all sorts: man to woman; government to the governed; master to servant. Third world denizen is a victim and an oppressed one, with no fault or shortcomings. His oppression goes back to the time of his encounter with the West – the same West that forced him to realize the true dimensions of his centuries' old corruption and haplessness. He does not lose a moment to blame the West, but even in his victory in the struggle for liberation, still is obsessed by a belief in the providential power of the same West and considers and makes himself a puppet of it.

An Islamic society by definition entails a very limited perception of personal freedom and responsibility, which go hand in hand. As an Islamic society, and not a country with a mostly Moslem population, Moslems automatically live in a more closed space. The Islamic society is a sacred one – whatever the scale of the corruption, rampant in such societies – its value system and deep-rooted institutions could not be scrutinized by free thought. Whatever its stage of development, it has a strong millennial element in it. It has a predestined fate; its salvation lies in the paradise of the world beyond this one, and its future goes back to a past that was superior to whatever there is and shall be in the future. There is always, deep in the people's heart, a supposedly credible alternative, superior to them all, to every failed worldview and policy.

In its third world attributes, the Islamic society is even more steadfast than other third world denizens. If in a third world society it is time honored value systems and beliefs that put obstacles to progress, Islamic society also adds its sacred laws especially in the vital field of Human rights. Governing a society according to Shari'a could lead it anywhere, but not to Modernity. All efforts by Islamic thinkers of all colors from late 19 century to reconcile Modernity and Shari'a have been in vain. Nobody has been able to find a theoretical foundation for Modernity in Islam. To modernize Islam has remained the impossible dream of those who see the dead end and still stand over there.

Middle East is more than a vague geographical definition. Like third world it is a state of mind; it is a third world that is Arab and Moslem. However the Middle Easterner, in his particular cultural and political atmosphere, even if not Arab and Moslem is known for his anti western, especially anti American sentiments. This enmity, he has learnt from his history – a history, subjective and selective. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which is the most complicated and ancient in the world, has made him totally and one-sidedly anti Israeli and by definition, anti Semite.

We are, all in all, living in these three worlds and along with them have come to the end of the road. Third world, that finds its most complete embodiment in black Africa, is facing the terrible hopelessness of its situation. Islamic world in its last stand against Modernity has ended up with the absolute guardianship of the supreme cleric, Taliban, and Ben Laden. In the Middle East a combination of stagnant conservatism, obsession with Palestine, and Islam as national identity, is condemning more and more societies to Islamic fundamentalism.

Iran is spiritually outside these worlds. Our society has advanced enough to be able to understand the meaning of responsibility; remove violence from the realm of social and political relations; block Islam from interfering in politics and running the country; and free itself from the hold of Middle Eastern politics – as in this case has done Turkey with a much more devote population than Iranians. We deserve a better life and are not bound to keep ourselves at the level of these people, in the lower echelons of world civilization. Third world could remain entangled in its tradition and postpone its salvation. Islamic world can look at Islam as its identity and an alternative to failed strategies and deepen its backwardness. Middle East can put the blame of its own political and cultural shortcomings on American and Israeli shoulders and make its future a hostage to the Palestinian issue.

We no more wish to be identified with these “worlds:” do not want third world as our standard of progress, Islamic world as defining our culture, and Middle East as our political framework. Our national identity aside from history and language does not depend to any part of our culture. We can interfere into this culture and our identity would remain intact. The world is awash in strife and calamity and there is no reason why Palestine should become our most important problem. The future of our country, if it is to be better than its present, lies in making our exit from these worlds: turning our back to third world; getting away from Middle East; forgetting Islam as a way of life and not a personal tie with the creator. We have to become a first world country because essentially are not inferior to them. An Iranian anywhere, as soon as having access to the cultural means of the West, catches up with the westerners.

We are less burdened than many third world people. Islamic world has never been our universe, as has been for the Arabs. We have always remained Iranian, neither forgetting those two hundred years of Arab killings and pillage, nor the fifteen hundred years that preceded it. Islam is the religion of many of us but not our existence. We are too different from Arabs. It is not a matter of superiority or inferiority; it is a distinction that fourteen hundred years of Islam has failed to erase.

Middle East should be left to the defeated and failed, those who in every defeat, find new reasons to stick to the main reason of their failure. It is a dead weight on our wings; a true cultural and political quagmire and we should free us from it. We must know and understand the Middle Eastern countries and have the best of relations with them, like the rest of the world, but ours is another way.

Iran of tomorrow should be built right now. The Cultural campaign that has become a priority for us as a political party, could be fought in these freer environments and extend to Iran. We are not alone in this endeavor. Apart from the Islamic government and Hezbollah, meaning the mainstay of religious obscurantism and dictatorship, Iranian people are more and more alienated from a culture and politics that breeds violence, suppression, and superstition.

Chapter 7

A Party of Center right



The Constitutionalist Party of Iran, among other Iranian political organizations outside of the country has the distinction of being founded in exile from the scratch. The others have either come out of Iran or are breakaway groups from organizations founded in Iran. Its other distinction is that it is not a party of cadres; indeed a dearth of cadres is its greatest deficiency. It is a party comprised of Iranian exiles of all walks of life and for this reason has few other equals in its organizational reach. Its third distinction is total transparency. The full name of all party officials and its internal debates and differences are open, as are the doors of its gatherings.

The party's organization in accordance to its principles is democratic and its administration localized. Members of the party in each city are organized in branches or cells. The cells are smaller, unofficial party units and can join the nearest branch. A council elected annually by the members of the branch is in charge of its affairs, and has considerable freedom of action in the framework of party bylaws and platform. Party activity, is essentially conducted by branches themselves and they are encouraged to cooperate with other political tendencies. The congress (party convention) is the supreme authority in the party, and is made up of the members of the branch councils. The congress, every two years, elects the central council, which is the ruling body, and sets general policies and can change the party bylaws and platform. In addition, each year at least one continental conference, working as a forum, is convened.

The constitutional tradition in Iran had never found its proper political party. Parties of the Constitutional Revolution remained small, and did not survive unfavorable circumstances and their own lack of experience. The Pahlavi monarchy did not tolerate any independent center of power and considered parties either as enemy, nuisance or stage managers for arranged elections. Even a constitutional party in the more limited and undemocratic context of those days) founded by Mohammad Reza shah himself went out of favor, and sooner than others, because it was striving for popular political participation. In a regime that was an inheritance of the constitutional revolution there was no place for a constitutionalist party. The oppositional parties while attacked the monarchy from the constitutionalist standpoint, did not think of forming a party on that line (there still is this ironic dichotomy in exile politics; on the one side condemning monarchy for its deviation from constitutional principles, and neglecting constitutionalism to the point of avoidance; on the other side; claiming a monopoly over constitutionalism ignoring many of its principles (as was the case during the monarchy.)

The Constitutionalist Party of Iran by reviving and updating the whole range of the Constitutionalist's message, in its political platform, which is in line with the general center right tendency, tries to fill a large gap in Iranian politics. This is a party that is a direct descendant of a movement which has been the driving force for change in Iranian society: in its unshakable resolve to defend the integrity of the fatherland; in giving people the right to rule themselves, nationally, and direct their affairs locally, under a constitutional monarchy; in separating religion from state wanted by the most progressive constitutionalists. It is like its revolutionary predecessors intent on catching up with the modern world in a constitutional monarchy; and coping with today's world, in development, prosperity, and social justice. Looking to the west; learning the ways of thinking and living of a civilization that has removed savagery from relations between the government and governed, man and woman, employer and employee, is almost as much relevant to us as it was to Iran of a hundred years ago.

The historic principles of Iranian constitutionalism, as far as can be seen, are valid for twenty first century; they can be a solid bases for up to date political programs. The Party's program is a center right one, in its emphasis on national unity and integrity; the government's role as the society's representative in matters of economy and regulating social relations; in its balance between economic development and social justice. It can significantly differ from the center left; while its differences with hot headed radicals--the royalists of the old school, Aryan nationalists, and Islamists on the Right, and Marxist-Leninists, anarchists, and those advocating the dismemberment of Iran on the Left -- are too obvious and unbridgeable to need mentioning.

This program is far from perfect and we are following with great interest what in economic and welfare policies are experimented and discussed in the more advanced countries. It is too soon for us to busy ourselves with day to day details, but it is our guiding principle that wherever private enterprise and individual initiative proves inadequate, the government's duty begins, and the criteria here is public good. The experience of the US, that is the freest environment for individual initiative, and has created the world's most dynamic society, proves that private sector comes too short and goes too far. On the other hand the excesses and shortcomings of the welfare state in Western Europe has proved a formula for extensive abuse of national resources -- encouraging idleness and dependence, working against entrepreneurial spirit. Rigid labor regulations has reduced productivity and increased unemployment; punitive taxation has resulted in capital and brain drain; and the crushing burden of welfare spending has everywhere led to all out revisions of welfare programs.

Nobody is bound to chose between these two models; especially now that in both the US and Western Europe they themselves, since seven decades ago, have been trying to correct their policies. The Democratic party's (and to some extent the Republican party's too) leftward leaning in the great movements of New Deal and New Society, and the sharp tilt to right among western European social democrats, in the past two decades are all signs of a continuous attempt to reconcile the supremacy of private enterprise, to the social responsibility of government.

We have created a party for the present and future of Iran.



C.P.I.

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