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# **Occidentalism and Historiography in Modern Iran: Fereydun Adamiyat, One of Twentieth-Century Iran's Foremost Historians, and His Assessment of the Rise of National Socialism in Germany and the Fall of the Weimar Republic**

Oliver Bast

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OCCIDENTALISM AND HISTORIOGRAPHY IN MODERN IRAN: FEREYDUN  
ADAMIYAT, ONE OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRAN'S FOREMOST HISTORIANS,  
AND HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE RISE OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM AND THE FALL  
OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

By Oliver Bast

*University of Manchester*

*Abstract*

Turning away from the stance initially adopted by scholars of Iran who had been inspired by Said's *Orientalism*-thesis, a line of academic enquiry that one might call "Iranian occidentalism", i.e. the study of Iranian perceptions—or perhaps, (re)constructions—of the West, has been gathering considerable momentum in the last decade or so. While work has been done on several different facets of this "Iranian occidentalism"—e.g. its manifestations in travelogues, poetry and prose literature, the arts, or academic philosophy—no attention has so far been paid by scholars to the question, how, if at all, historians working in Iran have studied the history of the Occident in their academic writings. This essay addresses this question and breaks new ground by analysing the rare instance of one of twentieth-century Iran's most venerated historians—the "father of modern Iranian history", Fereydu Adamiyat (1920–2008)—writing on a completely non-Iran related, major topic within modern European history—the rise of National Socialism in Germany and the fall of the Weimar Republic. This analysis begins by explaining Adamiyat's account of the destruction of Germany's democracy in the 1930s in its unexpected context—a book on social democratic thought in Iran at the time of the Constitutional Revolution (1906–11) published in Tehran for the first time in 1975. It then proceeds to assess Adamiyat's account of the triumph of National Socialism in 1930s Germany in terms of its merits as a contribution to scholarship, before enquiring into the potential of a present-day political agenda on the part of Adamiyat, who chose to write on this particular topic at a specific time, during the mid-1970s, when Iran seemed to have reached a level of stability and (sudden) wealth that could not have been more different from the troubled final years of the Weimar Republic. In so doing, this essay does not only open up an entirely new chapter in the study of Iranian occidentalism, but also makes an original contribution to another burgeoning field, the study of the development of history as an academic discipline and as a politically contested body of knowledge in twentieth-century Iran.

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*Keywords*

Occidentalism, historiography, twentieth-century Iranian history, social democracy, Weimar Republic

**[A] Introduction**

Iraj Afshar, to whose memory this volume is dedicated, played a huge role in the historiography of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Iran. His manifold contributions, not least as a tireless editor of primary source publications, will continue making an impact on the field for decades to come. Hence Afshar's name is often and justifiably mentioned in the same breath as other celebrated twentieth-century scholars of modern history who worked in Iran, such as Mohammad Taqi Bahar Malek osh-Sho'ara (1884–1951), Ahmad Kasravi (1890–

1946), or Seyyed Hasan Taqizadeh (1878–1970). Arguably, the name of Fereydu Adamiyat (1920–2008), a renowned authority on the intellectual history of Iran’s Constitutional Revolution,<sup>1</sup> historian of the 1890–91 Tobacco Revolt,<sup>2</sup> and above all, author of the perennial classic *Amir Kabir va Iran*,<sup>3</sup> has acquired a similar prominence in the field and beyond. Indeed, writing in the tenth volume—entitled *Persian Historiography*—of Ehsan Yarshater’s ambitious multi-volume project *A History of Persian Literature*, Fakhreddin Azimi dedicates an entirely separate section to Adamiyat in his substantial chapter on Iran’s historiography during the Pahlavi period (1921–79).<sup>4</sup> And although very critical in his assessment of Adamiyat on whose methodological limits he (rightly) dwells, Azimi cannot but conclude that “[no] criticism should detract from [...] [Adamiyat’s] enormous contribution; two generations in Iran have come to view serious historical enquiry as represented, if not pioneered, by him.”<sup>5</sup> Yet, despite the fame he shares with them, Adamiyat differs from Bahar, Kasravi, Taqizadeh, and Afshar on three important counts. Firstly, Adamiyat is unique in this group of scholars, who have gained recognition as the most well-known historians in twentieth-century Iran writing on the modern period, in that he is the only one of the five who held a Ph.D. in History, namely a doctorate in diplomatic history from the London School of Economics and

<sup>1</sup> Adamiyat’s key works in this area include, in order of their first publication (please refer to the bibliography for full details): *Fekr-e azadi va moqaddameh-ye nehzat-e Mashrutiyat* 1340/1961–62; *Andisheh-ha-ye Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani* 1346b/1967–68; *Andisheh-ha-ye Mirza Talebof Tabrizi* 1346c/1967–68; *Andisheh-ha-ye Mirza Fath’ali Akhundzadeh* 1349/1970–71; *Andisheh-ye taraqqi va hokumat-e qanun: ‘Asr-e Sepahsalar* 1351/1972–73; *Maqalat-e tarikhi* 1352/1973–74; *Fekr-e demukrasi-ye ejtema’i dar nehzat-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran* 1354/1975; *Ide’uluzhi-ye nehzat-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran* 1355b/1976–77; *Afkar-e ejtema’i va siyasi va eqtesadi dar asar-e montasher nashodeh-ye dowran-e Qajar* 1356/1977–78; *Majles-e avval va bohran-e azadi* 1369/1990–91.

<sup>2</sup> Adamiyat F. 1360a/1981.

<sup>3</sup> In 2010 *Amir Kabir va Iran* (1323–24/1944–45) saw its 10th edition. It first appeared in 1944–45 in three volumes as *Amir Kabir va Iran: varaqi as tarikh-e siyasi-ye Iran*. A significantly corrected, improved, and greatly augmented edition was published in 1334/1955–56 by Entesharat-e Khvarezmī, which also published all subsequent editions. The 1334 edition forms the basis of the book as we know it, although Adamiyat further expanded the third edition published in 1348/1969–70 and the fourth edition, which came out in 1354/1975–76. On *Amir Kabir va Iran*’s publication history, content, and reception see Azimi 2012: 297–98.

<sup>4</sup> See Azimi 2012: 296–305. Adamiyat shares the distinction of having a dedicated section in Azimi’s far-ranging chapter with only three others, Hasan Pir-Niya, Abbas Eqbal-Ashtiyani, and Ahmad Kasravi.

<sup>5</sup> Azimi 2012: 305. Azimi’s assessment of Adamiyat’s role in the development of the discipline of history in Iran is comprehensive and critical, yet also sympathetic; it seems to get the measure of the man and the historian. On Adamiyat’s contribution to the historiography of modern Iran, see also the numerous assessments in Dehbashi 1390a/2011–12: 403–736. A dedicated, though smallish historiographical monograph (Haqdar 1383/2004–5) analysing Adamiyat’s oeuvre, forms the very first volume in a special series of monographs entitled *Andisheh-ha-ye Irani*.

Political Science.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, despite holding this doctorate he, unlike the others, never held a

formal position in an institution dedicated to academic teaching and research; Adamiyat

initially pursued a successful career in diplomacy that included ambassadorial positions in The

Hague and New Delhi as well as roles with the UN, before resigning from the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs in the late 1960s or very early 1970s and becoming an independent scholar.<sup>7</sup>

Thirdly, he stands out among his eminent fellow historians because not only did he write

<sup>6</sup> See the biographical précis located at the end of this article. Adamiyat's student records, photocopies of which are in our possession, reveal that Adamiyat's initial application to the LSE in the autumn of 1945 was not for a Ph.D. but for a Certificate in International Studies. Although he had missed the application deadline for the Certificate, the LSE was prepared to consider his application and arranged for Adamiyat to be interviewed by Professor Charles Manning (1894–1978), Montague Burton (formerly Cassell) Professor of International Relations. Having conducted the interview, Manning did not recommend Adamiyat for admission to the Certificate and Adamiyat's application was rejected. After speaking to Adamiyat again in the spring of 1946, Manning was now prepared to take him for the Certificate starting in the autumn, but in the meantime Adamiyat (having corresponded with Mahmud Mahmud, see Gurney 2011–12: 118) had changed his mind, telling Manning that he wished to undertake a Ph.D. in diplomatic history instead, upon which the LSE Postgraduate Department encouraged him to consider submitting an application for a Higher Degree. This Adamiyat did, submitting his application on 25 June 1946 including a reference by his superior, the then Iranian ambassador to London and fellow historical scholar, Seyyed Hasan Taqizadeh. Yet even then it was not plain sailing for Adamiyat's application. Although his intended supervisor, Professor Sir Charles Kingsley Webster, who had interviewed Adamiyat, had formed a very positive view of him—stating on the interview form that “Mr. Adamiyat may very well worth while [*sic*] as a research student” because to him he seemed “exceptionally well qualified to undertake research”—Webster had severe doubts that the Higher Degrees Committee of the History Board would accept Adamiyat as his B.A. degree was not in history. He feared that they would insist on Adamiyat obtaining a relevant qualification first, which he felt was unnecessary for Adamiyat's project. By referring to Seyyed Fakhreddin Shadman (1907–67) who, Webster stated, had been in a similar position as Adamiyat and *was* accepted, Webster was determined to persuade the historians. This seemed to have been a very tall order even for a scholar of Webster's status because, although Adamiyat's application to study for a Ph.D. under Webster's supervision had received the general go-ahead from the School's Committee on Higher Degrees on 29 July 1946, further correspondence throughout the summer between Webster and Lionel Robinson, Reader in Diplomatic History and Dean of Postgraduate Studies, who was also very supportive of Adamiyat, reveals that Webster continued to fear that the Higher Degree Committee of the History Board might block Adamiyat because of his lack of a degree in history, combined with the allegedly low status of the institution from which he had received his B.A. In this context Webster notes that Shadman's degree while also *not* in history was at least from Paris. In his criticism of his fellow historians' narrow-mindedness, Webster was astonishingly prophetic when he declared that “[...] as the History Board take the line that no one shall have a degree of M.A. or Ph.D. in History who has not done all English history, we will tell them that they will lose most of their most promising students.” There was therefore some debate between Webster and Robinson whether it was not better to get Adamiyat's application to the Higher Degree Committee of the Economics Board for a Ph.D. in international relations, where according to Robinson it “would [...] go through.” Fortunately for the historiography of modern Iran, Webster eventually managed to get Adamiyat's application through the History Board's Higher Degree Committee and on 21 October 1946 the Academic Registrar of the University of London informed Adamiyat that he would be permitted to register for a Ph.D. in history under Webster's supervision. See also Gurney 2011–12: 118–28 who also draws on Adamiyat's student records and deals with Adamiyat's student days in great and interesting detail; he states that Adamiyat's application for the Certificate in International Studies was unsuccessful because of a combination of its lateness and period-related capacity issues at the LSE (the School was giving priority to returning soldiers), while in actual fact the LSE would still have been happy to admit him had it not been for Charles Manning's negative assessment of Adamiyat after the interview. On Shadman, who undertook a Ph.D. in history at the LSE between 1936 and 1939 and later taught history at the University of Tehran as well as serving as a Cabinet Minister in the 1940s and 1950s, see Ali Gheissari's entry on Shadman in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

<sup>7</sup> See the biographical précis located at the end of this essay for details.

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extensively on topics either directly or indirectly related to the history of Iran and/or the Persianate world but, unlike them, he also—on at least one occasion—wrote specifically on the modern history of Europe.

This essay is related to the third of these three distinctions that mark out Fereydon Adamiyat from his peers: the curious, yet so far virtually unknown and hence unstudied case of one of Iran's most celebrated scholars of modern Iranian history writing on the fall of the Weimar Republic; in other words, it will analyse a rare instance of a highly renowned Iranian historian writing on a totally non-Iran related, central topic within modern European history. Thus this essay is of significance for two distinct, yet related, areas of scholarly interest to which it seeks to make a contribution: the twin issues of orientalism/occidentalism; and the study of the historiography of modern Iran.<sup>8</sup>

#### **[A]Iranian occidentalism and the study of the historiography of modern Iran**

There is a great deal of scholarship dedicated to analysing what researchers have been detecting as practices of orientalist “othering” in *contemporary* Western representations of Iran. This includes the critical analysis of artistic productions such as works of literature<sup>9</sup> or film,<sup>10</sup> but can also be found in studies concerning present-day Iran's coverage in the Western media<sup>11</sup> and scholarship<sup>12</sup> as well as in analyses of the relations between the West and the

<sup>8</sup> What the “historiography of modern Iran” refers to in the context of this essay is the history of the academic discipline of history, historians, and history writing (on whatever topic) in Iran since 1921; a useful point of reference regarding the different meanings of “historiography” is Elton Daniel's introduction to the entry “Historiography” in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

<sup>9</sup> A prominent example among many is the way a number of critics have chosen to read Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003). For exponents of this particular reading see Bahramitash 2005, where one of the two chosen case studies is Nafisi's book; Rastegar 2006; Hamid Dabashi's fierce polemic against the book in *Al-Ahram*, see *Al-Ahram Weekly On-line* (1–7 June 2006, no. 797, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/797/special.htm>, accessed 29 August 2015), which sparked a nationwide controversy among intellectuals in the United States; and Marandi 2008. For a case of a work of literature in French see Nanquette 2009.

<sup>10</sup> One example among many others is Mousavi 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Recent examples include Fayyaz and Shirazi 2013; Izadi and Saghaye-Biria 2007. For a more recent example in the context of a broader study see Boyd-Barrett 2015: 103–17.

<sup>12</sup> See for example Marandi and Tari 2014.

Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to this great interest in analysing orientalism at work vis-à-vis Iran among those researching contemporary matters, however, it appears that among historians, especially those of the modern period, the issue of Western orientalisng/othering in perceptions of Iran has received somewhat less attention.<sup>14</sup> Yet, what has been really flourishing by comparison is research that turns away from the stance adopted by the proponents of the orientalism framework, that is, studies that look at Iranian perceptions, representations, and—potential—(stereotyping) othering of the West. In recent years examples of this trend have included: Farhang Jahanpour’s “Reverse Orientalism: Iranian Reactions to the West”;<sup>15</sup> *Iran Facing Others* edited by Abbas Amanat and Farzin Vejdani;<sup>16</sup> Naghmeh Sohrabi’s *Taken for Wonder: Nineteenth Century Travel Accounts from Iran to Europe*;<sup>17</sup> David Motadel’s “The German Other: Nasir al-Din Shah’s Perceptions of Difference and Gender during his Visits to Germany, 1873–89”;<sup>18</sup> James Clark’s “Abd-All h Mostawf in Russia, 1904–1909”;<sup>19</sup> M.R. Ghanoonparvar’s “Nineteenth-Century Iranians in America”;<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> An important case in point here is the scholarship of Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, Professor of Global Thought at the School of Oriental and African Studies; see, for example, Adib-Moghaddam 2011. For other examples see Samiei 2010; Venetis 2010.

<sup>14</sup> A recently published major collection of essays (Ansari 2014) having as its main title *Perceptions of Iran* illustrates this state of affairs. It seems fair to say that most readers, on seeing the somewhat elliptical main title of the volume will assume that the perceptions that are at stake will be those of *others*, presumably Westerners. I certainly did. It therefore came as a surprise that only three out of the 11 essays in this volume are specifically and exclusively concerned with others’ perception of Iran (none of which concerns the modern period); the remainder deals essentially with Iran’s perceptions, either of itself or, in one case, of the West. Having made this point it should be acknowledged firstly, that there has been an increasing interest among modern historians in analysing the question of orientalism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western scholarship on Iran and, secondly, that there has been a recent upsurge of work on Imperial Russian/Soviet orientalism vis-à-vis Iran. Relatively recent examples for the former include (in reverse order of publication): Ansari 2013: 209–17; Warne 2013; Jenkins 2012; Dabashi 2007 (most of the debate related to orientalism in this work takes place in the extensive and often highly polemical footnotes); Rizvi 2007; Afary and Anderson 2005; Van Den Bos 2005. Regarding British orientalism vis-à-vis Iran in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one should also note Ross 2009; Nash 2005: 107–69 (also on Lord Curzon and E.G. Browne); and in particular Mansour Bonakdarian’s related work (1993 and 2006; the latter is a study that presents challenges to the orthodox theory of orientalism). As for the recent upsurge of scholarly interest in Russian/Soviet orientalism vis-à-vis Iran, this can be traced in Cronin and Herzog 2015; Cronin 2013: 1–10; Volkov 2014; Andreeva 2007; and Brintlinger 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Jahanpour 2014. For a case of “actual” Iranian orientalism see Cole 2007. A complex case in this regard is the question of Iranian representations of Japan in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, given that Japan might be considered “Western” in a conceptual sense but is evidently non-European and located to the east of Iran; see Haag-Higuchi 1996; Pistor-Hatam 1996.

<sup>16</sup> Amanat and Vejdani 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Sohrabi 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Motadel 2011: 563–79.

<sup>19</sup> Clark 2002: 189–213.

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and Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi's *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and Historiography*.<sup>21</sup> These works offer a refreshing perspective on Iranians' perceptions of the West because they aim at transcending the approach that one might call the "borrowing ideas and practices from the West" paradigm.<sup>22</sup> The representations of the West produced by Iranians that these studies draw on for their analysis do not cover only the obvious genre of travelogues—although these figure most prominently—but a host of different genres of writing, including fiction<sup>23</sup> and philosophy;<sup>24</sup> history writing is not one of them, however.<sup>25</sup> Thus, the analysis of how a renowned historian working in Iran writes the history of Germany breaks new ground. As such it is intended to make a fresh contribution to the burgeoning field of enquiry into the history of Iranian representations and (re)constructions of the West, which one might call the study of "Iranian occidentalism".<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Ghanoonparvar 2002: 239–48.

<sup>21</sup> Tavakoli-Targhi 2001. Particularly relevant here are the following chapters: "Persianate Europology" (pp. 35–53) and "Imagining European Women" (pp. 54–76). See also his "Eroticizing Europe" (2002: 311–46). Tavakoli-Targhi who began publishing on these issues in the early 1990s is a pioneer of the study of Iranian occidentalism; see for example Tavakoli-Targhi 1990: 73–87.

<sup>22</sup> An interesting hybrid position between occidentalism and orientalism is occupied in this regard by studies that focus on forms of Iranian "self-orientalising" that occurred as a result of the interaction with (Western) modernity. Jalal Al-e Ahmad's famous polemic *Gharbzadegi* (*Al-e Ahmad, 1341/1962*) seems to be the obvious starting point for such literature, yet in 1948 Fakhreddin Shadman, Fereydu Adamiyat's predecessor as an Iranian Ph.D. student in Diplomatic History under Webster at the LSE, dealt with similar issues in an arguably more interesting way than Al-e Ahmad, in his *Taskhsir-e tamaddon-e farangi* (1326/1948). Noteworthy on Iranian "self-orientalising", other than the book by Tavakoli-Targhi already quoted, are Zia-Ebrahimi 2011: 445–72 and Motadel 2014: 119–46.

<sup>23</sup> For an early example of an analysis of the genre of prose fiction see, for example, Ghanoonparvar 1993.

<sup>24</sup> See for examples, Gösken 2014, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Lloyd Ridgeon studies an Iranian historian's critique of a Western historian, which would arguably fall under Iranian occidentalism, but the criticism concerns what the Westerner wrote about Iran; it is not the case of an Iranian historian writing on Western history; see Ridgeon 2004.

<sup>26</sup> Occidentalism as a conceptual notion became very prominent soon after the publication of Buruma and Margalit's *Occidentalism* (2004) although much of the essence of the concept—though not the name—was formulated by Sadiq Jalal al-Azm in his influential essay "Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse" (1981), while Hanafi's *Muqaddima fi 'ilm al-istighrab* (An Introduction to "Occidentalism", 1991) is often referred to as the foundational text for the concept, at least in the context of the Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim world. While al-Azm and Hanafi, and even more so Buruma and Margalit, writing, as the latter two did, in the shadow of 9/11 (the first time Buruma and Margalit wrote on "Occidentalism" was in an eponymous essay in the *New York Review of Books*, 17 January 2002: 4–7), were concerned chiefly with Eastern (re)constructions of the West as an enemy, the notion has evolved to be applied by students of many different types of potential Eastern representational otherings of the West, the East in this context being by no means limited to the Middle East; indeed, if anything, the scholarship on Japanese and Chinese occidentalism appears to be trumping the rest in terms of volume. It is this, more general and multi-faceted approach that is meant by a field of enquiry that studies Iranian occidentalism. This approach differs from a study of mere perceptions because it is as interested (if not more so) in how the perceptions contribute to (auto-)constructions of the perceiver, i.e. the self, as it is in constructions of the perceived, i.e. the other. For a brief account of the genesis and evolution of the concept of occidentalism, see

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The second field to which we are hoping to contribute is the study of the historiography of modern Iran, an area that has also been gathering serious momentum recently. It is an ironic twist, which would appear to lend extra relevance to our endeavour, that no one other than the author whose writing our essay seeks to analyse—Fereydu Adamiyat—pioneered this field, in the modern sense of the term, *inside* Iran when he published a damning report on the state of academic history in Iran that first appeared in Tehran in the journal *Sokhan* in 1967,<sup>27</sup> followed in 1971 by a revised version in English under the title “Problems in Iranian Historiography” in *Iranian Studies*.<sup>28</sup> In the forewords of most if not all of his works of history, Adamiyat also engaged in some reflections of a general historiographical nature, and in the late spring (Khordad) of 1981, ten years after “Problems in Iranian Historiography”, he published another, even more caustic, dedicated historiographical treatise that attracted a great deal of attention: *Ashoftegi dar fekr-e tarikhi*.<sup>29</sup> Unlike Adamiyat’s 1971 essay, however, *Ashoftegi* is less concerned with history as an academic discipline than with the widespread (ab)uses of history that Adamiyat detects in the hegemonic political discourse of the day, at a time when one particular faction of the heterogeneous assembly of forces that had contributed to the Revolution of 1978/9 was making speedy progress in establishing itself forcefully as the sole ruling group at the expense of the others.<sup>30</sup> The targets of Adamiyat’s scathing criticism in

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Woltering 2011: 3–13. It is worth noting too that the recent growth of interest in the study of Iranian occidentalism is not only evidenced by the above-mentioned list of recent major works, but can also be gauged by the sheer number of occidentalism-related Ph.D. theses that have been completed in the US in recent years, as the ProQuest doctoral dissertation database reveals.

<sup>27</sup> Adamiyat F. 1346a/1967. A key point in the criticism formulated by Adamiyat concerned the lack of trained historians that would be able to carry out work to recognised academic standards. Ironically however, fellow historians demonstrated that some of Adamiyat’s own work was *greatly* lacking in terms of exactly those rigorous academic standards. See Amanat 1989: 10–11 and Chehabi 2009: 162–164 who illustrate several instances of outright bias as well as related manipulative handling of primary sources on Adamiyat’s part.

<sup>28</sup> Adamiyat F. 1971. For a critical analysis of Adamiyat’s despairing critique of the state of history in Iran, which also puts it in its contemporary context by discussing comparable assessments that were made around the same time by two other well-known Iranian historians who were working and writing outside Iran—Firuz Kazemzadeh (writing in 1962) and Hafez F. Farmayan (in 1974)—as well as shedding light on some of the peculiarities of Iran’s intellectual climate of the 1960s and 1970s, see Gheissari 1995 (for Adamiyat and historiography in context see esp. 39–46).

<sup>29</sup> Adamiyat F. 1360b/1981. This work is not a fully-fledged book but a 22-page pamphlet.

<sup>30</sup> The month of publication, Khordad, given in Adamiyat’s impassioned pamphlet coincides with the crackdown on political plurality in the run-up to the eventual impeachment of President Abolhoseyn Banisadr by a Majles

*Ashoftegi* include the philosopher Ahmad Fardid whom Adamiyat mocks by putting Fardid's title of Professor in inverted commas;<sup>31</sup> the Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, Mehdi Bazargan, a professor of engineering turned politician and Islamist ideologue who had however also been dabbling in the humanities;<sup>32</sup> and, first and foremost, the celebrated public intellectual Jamal Al-e Ahmad who was long dead at the time Adamiyat was writing, but whose by then universally famous polemic *Gharbzadegi*<sup>33</sup> together with the domestically influential collection of essays *Dar Khedmat va Khianat-e Rawshanfekran*,<sup>34</sup> had been quickly gaining—much to Adamiyat's fury—quasi-canonical status in the aftermath of the Revolution.<sup>35</sup> In the introduction of *Ashoftegi* Adamiyat, the historiographer, also makes programmatic pronouncements on the purpose of history<sup>36</sup> and we will therefore return to this impatient treatise below in our assessment of Adamiyat, the historian, writing on the fall of the Weimar Republic.

In the wake of Adamiyat's pioneering effort of 1967, the small field of Iranian historiography received further important impulses from Iraj Afshar, to whom this special issue is dedicated and whose review essays entitled “Tazeh-ha va Pareh-ha-ye Iranshenasi”, appearing regularly first in the journal *Kelk*, and then later in *Bukhara*, were lauded by Ehsan Yarshater as “[...] the most readable and the most informative section of Kelk and Bukhara [...]”, in which Afshar did not refrain “[...] from expressing his critical evaluations and providing guidance

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dominated by the Khomeinist Islamic Republic Party (IRP), that was passed on 31 Khordad 1360 (21 June 1981) and swiftly approved by Khomeini on the following day, which led to Banisadr being forced to flee the country shortly afterwards.

<sup>31</sup> Adamiyat F. 1360b/1981: 2.

<sup>32</sup> This led, for example, to a book on “Human Thermodynamics”; see Bazargan 1335/1956–57.

<sup>33</sup> Al-e Ahmad 1341/1962.

<sup>34</sup> Al-e Ahmad 1343–47/1964–5–1968–9.

<sup>35</sup> In his fierce attack on the two writings (on which see Gheissari 1998: 74–108, Nabavi 2003, and Vahdat 2001: 213–220), which is in essence a defence of Enlightenment values and the political principles of liberal democracy, Adamiyat argues that Al-e Ahmad, whom he depicts as essentially a charlatan, lacked the knowledge, academic training, and necessary depth of thought for the sort of analysis that he had attempted. It culminates in the damning verdict that both texts amounted to “[...] nothing else but wallowing in ignorance and aimless obscurantism.” (Adamiyat F. 1360b/1981: 9).

<sup>36</sup> Adamiyat F. 1360b/1981: 1.

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for corrections and additions where necessary [...]”.<sup>37</sup> The journal *Iranian Studies*, where [the English version of](#) Adamiyat’s pioneering piece had appeared in 1971, also played host to historiographical interventions on several other occasions, with Abbas Amanat’s essay “The study of history in post-revolutionary Iran: nostalgia, illusion, or historical awareness?” marking a major milestone<sup>38</sup> in the development of (modern) historiography into a recognised branch of the academic study of modern Iranian history. In the subsequent decade, the field began to grow thanks especially to the efforts of three scholars: Afsaneh Najmabadi who pioneered making gender a central plank of writing Iran’s modern history; Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi who championed hitherto neglected approaches to the study of the historiography of modern Iran, such as discursive analysis, post-structuralism, and narratology; and Touraj Atabaki, whose 2003 programmatic inaugural lecture at the University of Amsterdam asked, “Who Writes Whose Past in the Middle East and Central Asia”, which led Atabaki to identify three main types of essentialism that in his opinion gravely hampered the historiography of the Middle East, most notably the reductionist focus on religion— Islam—as the sole prism through which to make sense of the past<sup>39</sup> and against which he emphasised the need for equally considering notions such as class, ethnicity, and political ideologies. It was Atabaki’s continued interest in modern Iranian historiography that led to a conference in Oxford in 2004 that was arguably the first major collective stock-taking of the state of this field, giving rise to the publication in 2009 of *Iran in the 20th Century: Historiography and Political Culture*.<sup>40</sup> This collection of essays in conjunction with the relevant chapters in Charles Melville’s 2012 volume on *Persian Historiography*, by Azimi

<sup>37</sup> Yarshater 2011: 583–84.

<sup>38</sup> Amanat 1989. See also Amanat’s relevant entries on the historiographies of the Qajar and the Pahlavi periods in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Of note in this regard are also two substantial survey/review articles by Mansoureh Ettehadieh (Nezam-Mafi); see Ettehadieh and Sadeq 1997; Ettehadieh and Erfaniyan 2001.

<sup>39</sup> The other two being “over-generalisation” and Eurocentrism. Atabaki also emphasised the need to turn away from an obsession with elites towards social history and the history of everyday life, with a focus on the lower echelons of society; see Atabaki 2003.

<sup>40</sup> Atabaki 2009.

(Pahlavi period)<sup>41</sup> and Amanat (Qajar period),<sup>42</sup> as well as the relevant chapters in Ali Ansari's 2014 volume *History, Myths and Nationalism from Medieval Persia to the Islamic Republic*<sup>43</sup> will go on serving as important points of reference for anyone interested in modern Iranian historiography. Thus, at the time of writing, the study of historiography is a well-established branch of the wider field of modern Iranian history that has now begun to yield book-length studies on very specialised aspects of the field, such as Farzin Vejdani's study of how disparate localised historico-mythical awareness(es) combined with secondary-school history curricula and a flourishing print culture, which allowed newly arising ideologies—for example, feminism—to be articulated, were intertwined with the development of Iranian nationalism(s) in the first half of the twentieth century,<sup>44</sup> or Anja Pistor-Hatam's work on Iran's modern historiography of the Mongol period.<sup>45</sup> There is great diversity in the concrete facets of modern Iranian historiography that this flurry of recent work has been addressing, but one characteristic unites all of these studies as well as the above-mentioned pioneering analyses: they are limited in that they are concerned exclusively with writings on the history of Iran and/or of other parts of the Persianate world. Viewed against this background the innovative proposition made by this essay becomes palpable once more: by analysing the rare case of an Iranian historian writing on the history of a part of the world that lies firmly outside the Iranian/Persianate perimeter, this essay ventures into a specific area of the burgeoning field of modern Iranian historiography that is still uncharted territory.

Therefore, in summing up the above attempt at locating the following analysis within the two fields to which it seeks to make a contribution—the study of historiography in modern Iran

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<sup>41</sup> See Azimi 2012.

<sup>42</sup> See Amanat 2012.

<sup>43</sup> Ansari 2014; see first and foremost the chapter written by the editor, and the chapters by Pejman Adolmohammadi, David Motadel, and Anja Pistor-Hatam.

<sup>44</sup> Vejdani 2014.

<sup>45</sup> Pistor-Hatam 2014.

and the exploration of Iranian occidentalism—we must conclude that we are breaking entirely new ground not just within one but within both of these fields.

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### [A]Source criticism

The rare case of an Iranian historian writing on an aspect of the history of an area outside the Persianate world involves an opinionated assessment of the reasons for the rise of National Socialism in Germany and the consequent fall of the Weimar Republic, which Adamiyat provides in a totally unexpected and unlikely location. Neither listed in the table of contents nor announced in any other way—in the introduction for example—the piece takes the form of a self-contained section within a larger chapter of one of Adamiyat’s “classics” pertaining to the Constitutional Revolution, his *Fekr-e demukrasi-ye ejtema’i dar nehzat-e mashrutiat-e Iran* (Social democratic thought in Iran’s constitutionalist movement), which was published by Payam Publishers in Tehran and went through two editions in quite rapid succession in the mid-1970s, with the first edition coming out in Farvardin 1354 (mid-March–mid-April 1975)<sup>46</sup> and the second, unaltered, edition giving the autumn of the year 2535, i.e. 1355, which is the autumn of 1976, as its date of publication.<sup>47</sup> Both editions contain a preface by Adamiyat dated Bahman 1353 (mid-January–mid-February 1975).<sup>48</sup> Payam then brought out a slightly revised<sup>49</sup> third edition in 1363/1984–85<sup>50</sup> (i.e. after the Revolution), which was also reprinted abroad at least once by Navid Publishers in West Germany.<sup>51</sup> Finally, a fourth edition was published by Gostareh Publishers in the spring of 1388/2009,<sup>52</sup> one year after Adamiyat’s

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<sup>46</sup> Adamiyat F. 1354/1975.

<sup>47</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976; henceforth referred to as *Fekr-e demukrasi*.

<sup>48</sup> It is important to give the exact dates as they are of relevance to our interpretive analysis of the text that concerns us in the context of the period of its production, as will become clear below.

<sup>49</sup> No noticeable changes were made to the section of the book that is of concern to us.

<sup>50</sup> Adamiyat F. 1363/1984–85 (3rd rev. ed.).

<sup>51</sup> Adamiyat F. 1364/1985–86.

<sup>52</sup> Adamiyat F. 1388/2009.

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death.<sup>53</sup> The references given in the following analysis refer to the book's second edition of autumn 1976, which is, as previously stated, identical to the first one of spring 1975.

It might seem odd to find an analysis of the failure of the Weimar Republic in Germany c. 1930–33 in a book dedicated to the Constitutional Revolution in Iran c. 1905–11, but the book that contains this analysis is itself somewhat odd and not quite what its title seems to suggest. Indeed, rather than being a monograph dealing with the role of social democratic thought in Iran's constitutionalist movement as the book's title would suggest, it consists of two entirely self-contained sections of roughly equal lengths, with the connection of the second section to the book's ostensible topic being rather tenuous. Furthermore, the first part, while undoubtedly doing what "it says on the tin", is introduced by the author merely as a chapter of a forthcoming substantial book of his, the title of which he indicates as *Ide'uluzhi-ye Nehzat-e melli-ye Mashrutiyat-e Iran*,<sup>54</sup> which begs the question, why did Adamiyat choose to pre-publish this chapter separately in a different book from the one to which he had assigned it?

A closer look at the structure and content of *Fekr-e demukrasi* is essential in order to appreciate the context in which Adamiyat places his account of the fall of the Weimar Republic. As mentioned above the first section, comprising 148 pages divided into five chapters,<sup>55</sup> can be considered to be dedicated to social democratic thought during the Constitutional Revolution, although for the most part—with the exception of the fourth chapter entitled "Taraqqi-ye fekr-e demukrasi-ye ejtema'i" [*"The progress of social-*

<sup>53</sup> Despite going through at least four editions and thus being rightly considered as one of Adamiyat's classic texts related to the study of the Constitutional Revolution, the book is only dealt with very cursorily in the above-mentioned dedicated historiographical monograph on Adamiyat's work, in which it receives far less attention than certain other of his writings (see Haqdar 1383/2004–5: 285–89); neither does it get much attention in any of the historiographical essays contained in Dehbashi 1390a/2011–12.

<sup>54</sup> The first volume of this book came out in 1335/1976–77, but the printed book's title omitted the crucial word "melli" [*"national"*]; see Adamiyat F. 1355/1976–77. The second volume only appeared in 1369/1990–91, long after the Revolution, as *Majles-e avval va bohran-e azadi* (= vol. 2 of *Ide'uluzhi-ye nehzat-e Mashrutiyat-e Iran*).

<sup>55</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 3–151.

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[democratic thought](#)”<sup>56</sup>—it reads more like a brief history of the emergence and activities of social democrat groupings in the context of the Constitutional movement, rather than an in-depth analysis of social democrat ideology.

In the second part of the book, entitled “Mohammad Amin Rasulzadeh – A social-democratic thinker” and comprising 128 pages, however, Adamiyat presents an exposition of three pieces [written](#) by Mohammad Amin Rasulzadeh (M h m m d m i n R s u l z a d e h ; Mehmed Emin Resulzade).<sup>57</sup> Baku-born Rasulzadeh (1884–1955) is arguably most famous for being the leader of the Mosavat, the dominant ruling political party of the Republic of Azerbaijan<sup>58</sup> during that Trans-Caucasian state’s short-lived first period of independence between 1918 and 1920.<sup>59</sup> Yet as manager, main contributor of intellectual and other content, and editor-in-chief between August 1910 and August 1911 of the influential newspaper *Iran-e Now*—the daily organ of the radically (left-)liberal Democratic Party (Ferqa-ye Demokrat-e Iran), published in Tehran between August 1909 and December 1911—Rasulzadeh was also a very prominent figure in the Iranian Constitutional movement until he was forced out of Iran in August 1911 by a government that had succumbed both to pressure from Russia and to the exhortations of Rasulzadeh’s domestic political enemies, who pointed the finger at his foreign origin and accused him of being a spy.<sup>60</sup> Only one of Rasulzadeh’s three texts, however—and therein lies part of the “oddness” of Adamiyat’s book—which Adamiyat states is undated but according to him can be identified as having been penned in 1910, relates more or less directly to the “nehzat-e Mashrutiat” [[“the Constitutionalist movement” of 1906-11](#)] of the book’s title. The

<sup>56</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 95–126.

<sup>57</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 155–283.

<sup>58</sup> It is of note that throughout the related parts of *Fekr-e demukrasi* Adamiyat studiously avoids calling the Republic of Azerbaijan by the name it had given itself during that period.

<sup>59</sup> See Swietochowski 1985: esp. 129–84, which covers the period of (fully) independent statehood of the Azerbaijani Republic from May 1918 until the Soviet takeover of late April 1920. Technically Azerbaijan remained a separate Communist state until March 1922 when the three, by now all Communist-led, Transcaucasian republics of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan joined up to form the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, which in December of that year became a founding member of the USSR.

<sup>60</sup> See the entry on the newspaper *Iran-e Now* in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. On Rasulzadeh’s role in the Constitutionalist movement, see also Abadian 1376/1997–98.

same cannot be said of Rasulzadeh's other two texts that Adamiyat chose for his analysis; they were both written much later, in Istanbul in 1926, and have nothing to do with the "nehzat-e Mashrutiat" [of 1906-11](#).

The text that Adamiyat dates to 1910 (which would mean that it was produced while Rasulzadeh was still in Iran) carries the title *On the Future of Democracy* (Dar Ayandeh-ye Demukrasi). Rasulzadeh initially wrote it in Persian.<sup>61</sup> The other two pieces were written in (Ottoman) Turkish. Adamiyat bases his discussion of the latter two on Persian renderings that were provided by a translator, Ma'il Bektashi, whom Adamiyat names and thanks in the preface of the book. These pieces are entitled *The Failure of Revolutionary Socialism* (Eflas-e Susialism-e enqelabi) completed on 3 February 1926 and *On the Political Situation in Russia* (Dar Owza'-e siyasi-e Rusiyeh) completed on 15 January 1926. Adamiyat fails to provide bibliographical references for any of the three treatises, which also means that the reader is *not* given the original titles of the two pieces in Turkish. We are told, however, that *On the Future of Democracy* and *The Failure of Revolutionary Socialism* were published together, amounting to a total of 70 pages (there is no indication of the individual length of each of the two pieces) in Istanbul in 1928,<sup>62</sup> while *On the Political Situation in Russia*, which amounts to 45 pages, was published in the same city two years earlier, in 1926.<sup>63</sup> Adamiyat is very keen to underline the academic value of these texts, which he characterises as "scholarly" ('*elmi*) and philosophically ambitious. In his view they bear clear witness to Rasulzadeh's high degree of expertise in the theory and history of politics.<sup>64</sup>

Adamiyat's presentation of these three treatises by Rasulzadeh is located in the introductory section of the second part of his book. This introduction precedes the actual exposition of the

<sup>61</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 166.

<sup>62</sup> [We have traced the book in question as](#) Resulzade 1928 ( *htilalci Sosyalizmin flası ve Demokrasinin Gelece i*).

<sup>63</sup> [We have traced the book in question as](#) Resulzade 1926 (*Rusyada siyasi vaziyet*).

<sup>64</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 167.

three texts, which takes the form of three dedicated chapters. The introductory section also contains a sketch of Rasolzadeh's political life, an annotated list of other potentially relevant writings by the latter, and some reflections on the method with which Adamiyat approaches Rasolzadeh's writings.<sup>65</sup>

An assessment of Adamiyat's treatment of Rasolzadeh's texts in the three chapters reveals this method to be somewhat peculiar: Adamiyat mixes paraphrasing Rasolzadeh's writing with verbatim quotations but the latter are entirely lacking any bibliographical references, while the former does not distinguish clearly enough between mere exposition of Rasolzadeh's text, on the one hand, and Adamiyat's own, often opinionated and sometimes meandering, commentary on the other. Thus, before too long the reader loses track of who is actually speaking and confusion begins to set in.<sup>66</sup> Another peculiarity of Adamiyat's approach is his proclivity to leave the realm of strictly academic discourse in order to attack current ideological enemies whose actual identity he is careful not to divulge. An illuminating example of this practice is a passage in the first of the three chapters, where Adamiyat briefly leaves his discussion of Rasolzadeh's 1910 writings on liberalism in the treatise entitled *On the Future of Democracy*, to launch a scathing attack on "[t]hose who 50 years after [...] [Rasolzadeh wrote his text] aim to condemn Liberalism out of hand without going to the trouble of acquiring even some preliminary notions as to the meaning of Liberalism." According to Adamiyat these enemies of liberalism "[...] are in such a state of ignorance that they do not see any need for thought and reflection. Apart from their obvious lack of knowledge it is also the case that their un-scholarly understanding [of liberalism] is illogical and therefore leads them to reject and belittle it."<sup>67</sup> The reader is left to guess which group of denouncers of liberalism Adamiyat might have had in mind here, but the context (not least the

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<sup>65</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 155–68.

<sup>66</sup> For a very concise summary in English of the most important parts of Adamiyat's exposé of Rasolzadeh's writings, see Vahdat 2001: 92–95.

<sup>67</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 177, n. 2.

section of Adamiyat's book that our essay is concerned with and to which we shall turn our attention below) seems to suggest that he might have targeted what he saw as Iran's Moscow-beholden orthodox Communists and their sympathisers, who naturally rejected liberalism as a concept put forward by the bourgeoisie to mask their control of the state, which is a tool used to maintain their ruling status. Taking into account the severity of the above-mentioned attack on Al-e Ahmad and Ahmad Fardid, which Adamiyat would launch a few years later in *Ashoftegi*, it is also possible that Adamiyat's ire in making this comment was aimed at the third-worldist rejection of liberalism as a Western notion, which was very much in vogue at the time that Adamiyat was writing.<sup>68</sup> Finally, if here we read liberalism as meaning Western-style liberal democracy, Adamiyat's remark could also have been aimed at the Shah, who when Adamiyat was writing, tended to defend his increasing, and seemingly very successful, authoritarianism in the face of questions about the lack of democracy in his country, not only by rejecting liberal democracy as currently unsuitable for Iran, but by openly mocking democracy and the Western states that adhered to it for what he considered their obvious weakness, which would before too long lead to their downfall.<sup>69</sup>

Having shed some light on its context, let us now turn our attention to Adamiyat's account itself. His writing on German history is located in the "odd" second part of the book, in the chapter that is dedicated to Rasulzadeh's *On the Failure of Revolutionary Socialism*,<sup>70</sup> a sizeable part of which dwells on social democracy in Germany. Given that Rasulzadeh completed his treatise in early 1926, it obviously says nothing of the tragic fate that befell Germany's social democratic movement in the 1930s. Adamiyat, however, with the benefit of

<sup>68</sup> On the peculiarities of the intellectual climate at that time, with all its illiberal fads and the flourishing of venerated "gurus" who were successful in passing off gibberish as profound wisdom, see for example, Gheissari 1995: 48–54.

<sup>69</sup> See for example, Oriana Fallaci's now famous interview with the Shah in *The New Republic*, 1 December 1973, where a hubristic Shah is responding to the interviewer's insistence on the issue of Western-style liberal democracy with the following outburst: "But I don't want that kind of democracy! Haven't you understood that? I don't know what to do with that kind of democracy! I don't want any part of it, it's all yours, you can keep it, don't you see? Your wonderful democracy. You'll see, in a few years, what your wonderful democracy leads to."

<sup>70</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 197–251.

hindsight and for reasons that we will attempt to gauge below, feels compelled to continue where Rasolzadeh left off.<sup>71</sup> It is at this point in the second part of his book that Adamiyat stops what has been essentially—notwithstanding his rather intrusive and occasionally meandering comments—a process of summarising the writings of someone else. He now proceeds to give an, albeit brief, self-contained historical account that is entirely his own.<sup>72</sup> In this unexpected précis Adamiyat discusses the reasons for the rise to power of National Socialism and the fall of the Weimar Republic. Although it is not based on primary research into the subject but “merely” on secondary literature,<sup>73</sup> Adamiyat’s assessment presents a genuine and original verdict that does not pull its punches. With this text Adamiyat stands out as unusual among the Iranian historians of his generation for expressing himself, and with quite some vigour, on a historical issue that is neither located within the Persianate world nor even somehow related to it. For that reason alone Adamiyat’s discussion of the fall of Weimar merits closer inspection. Therefore, in the following, I will firstly provide a summary of his assessment. Secondly, I will appraise Adamiyat’s account in terms of the historiography of the Weimar Republic: how historically accurate is Adamiyat’s writing and what, if any, are its historiographical merits on the issue itself? Thirdly and finally, I will attempt to gauge the contemporaneous significance of this text’s publication in mid-1970s Iran. This raises the question, why, writing in mid-1970s Iran, did Adamiyat include this assessment of the demise of the Weimar Republic in his chapter on Rasolzadeh’s 1926 piece on the “failure of revolutionary Socialism”? Was there a contemporary, mid-1970s political subtext to his ostensibly historical writing?

### **[A]Exposition**

<sup>71</sup> “Bahs-e Rasolzadeh tamam shod, amma goftar-e ma na tamam mand” [“Rasolzadeh’s text ends here but our analysis has not yet been completed.”]; Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 242.

<sup>72</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 242–51.

<sup>73</sup> There is, in fact, very little of it in the very few footnotes that Adamiyat provides, which will be discussed below.

Adamiyat's account consists of two distinct parts. In the first part he briefly describes the Weimar Republic, which is portrayed as a social democratic model state.<sup>74</sup> In the second part he discusses the rise of the National Socialists and the eventual destruction of Germany's social democracy in the resulting fall of the Weimar Republic, the responsibility for which Adamiyat lays firmly at the feet of the German Communists and their party's ideological ringmasters at the Comintern in Moscow and hence, ultimately, Stalin.<sup>75</sup>

Let us look at the two parts in more detail. In part one, Adamiyat has nothing but praise for the Weimar Republic, which he characterises as a social democratic state with a very high degree of acceptance and support among the German population. He dwells on three aspects that in his opinion illustrate the republic's character as a true, advanced social democratic state: firstly, Weimar's superior constitutional order; secondly the high level of education and social awareness of Germany's working class along with its strong commitment to democratic principles; and thirdly, the republic's respect for international norms and its trust in universal organisations such as the League of Nations.

Adamiyat opens his discussion of Weimar's constitutional arrangements with a reference to British historian G.P. Gooch who, Adamiyat claims, belongs to those according to whom the Weimar Republic was the "most democratic state of its age",<sup>76</sup> before quoting the preamble of the Weimar constitution verbatim, only leaving out "einig in seinen Stämmen" (admittedly difficult to translate [into Persian](#)).<sup>77</sup> He then states that social democracy was the "official philosophy" of the republic. Thus the constitution enshrined the principle of socialisation,

<sup>74</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 242–46.

<sup>75</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 246–51.

<sup>76</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 243. Adamiyat does not support this statement with a bibliographical reference, but it can be surmised that Adamiyat's statement is based on G.P. Gooch's *Germany* (1925: 198). While Adamiyat makes it look as if this was Gooch's own assessment, however, Gooch actually wrote: "The Weimar Constitution is often described [! O.B.] as the most democratic in the world [...]."

<sup>77</sup> The preamble reads: "Das Deutsche Volk, einig in seinen Stämmen und von dem Willen beseelt, sein Reich in Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit zu erneuern und zu festigen, dem inneren und dem äußeren Frieden zu dienen und den gesellschaftlichen Fortschritt zu fördern [! O.B.], hat sich diese Verfassung gegeben." ["The German people united in its tribes and inspired by the will to renew and strengthen the Reich in liberty and justice, to serve domestic and external peace, and to promote social progress, has adopted this Constitution"], *Die Verfassung des Deutschen Reichs* ("Weimarer Reichsverfassung"), 11 August 1919.

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advocated scientific planning of the economy, and provided for workers' unions to be recognised as legal entities. Adamiyat also highlights the existence of a specific set of labour laws that were separate from civil law in the context of which he also dwells on Weimar's commitment to the "principle of mediation" aimed at keeping the social peace.<sup>78</sup>

Adamiyat then turns his attention to the post-First World War German working class, which he claims was (alongside Austria's working class) the best educated in Europe. They benefitted from the impressive legacy of German socialist thought and their "social consciousness" was the result of "free and critical debate" and "class solidarity". Thus the Social Democrat and Christian labour unions were important pillars of the Weimar Republic.<sup>79</sup>

Adamiyat also makes much of what he characterises as the Weimar Republic's emphasis on the role of the rule of law in international politics and on the virtues of arbitration in order to resolve bilateral conflicts, through which Germany attained the status of a valued member of the League of Nations. He states that the adherence to the principle that international law ought to be binding in exactly the same way as national legislation was exemplary for the noble ideals of social democracy. Even the Soviet Union could not bring itself to support this radical approach to international relations, Adamiyat claims with reference to his own diplomatic career.<sup>80</sup> Elsewhere in his text he also indirectly contrasts what he lauded as Weimar's exemplary approach to international relations with the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923, which he describes as illegal under international law and in breach of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles; according to Adamiyat, it fostered extremist nationalism in Germany and strengthened the hand of the Republic's domestic enemies.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 243.

<sup>79</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 243.

<sup>80</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 244.

<sup>81</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 246.

It is to those enemies of the Weimar Republic that Adamiyat dedicates the other half of this account; having painted a rosy picture of Weimar Germany as a social democratic paradise, he now analyses how this model of social democracy succumbed to the National Socialists.

Adamiyat dismisses out of hand a number of explanations for the rise of National Socialism in Germany, which he considers “bizarre” and at odds with objective historical analysis. Thus for Adamiyat, the victory of National Socialism cannot be traced back, as he claims had been suggested, to the legacy of philosophical thought such as Kantian idealism, Hegelian worship of the State, Fichte’s romantic nationalism, Nietzschean nihilism, or even Rousseau. He also dismisses the idea that Nazism’s cultural roots were apparent in the music of Wagner.

Adamiyat is equally unprepared to accept that Nazism was somehow intrinsic to the “nature of the German race”. As for the argument that the triumph of Nazism was a result of Germany’s defeat in the First World War and the subsequent falling of Germany’s fate into the hands of the short-sighted and unreasonable politicians of France and Britain, Adamiyat concedes that given this, the emergence of extremist nationalism was only “natural” but again, he is not prepared to accept it as a valid explanation for the Nazis’ rise to power.<sup>82</sup>

Indeed, for Adamiyat, none of these attempts at explaining the National Socialist takeover holds water. On the contrary, he knows exactly who is to blame: “The most important factor in bringing them [the National Socialists] to power was the conspiracy of the Communist International aimed at bringing down Weimar’s Social-Democratic state.”<sup>83</sup> Thus for him, the National Socialist attainment of power was to a large degree the result of “[a] backlash of Germany’s society against the policies of stirring up trouble and creating unrest pursued by the Soviet-controlled Communist International and the terror that this had been instilling [into the German population].”<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 247, n. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 247, n. 1.

<sup>84</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 247, n. 1.

Adamiyat draws up a long list of crimes with which he charges the Communist International. Thus he accuses the Comintern of dividing Europe's labour movement. Furthermore, it incited the European Communist parties into uprisings, conspiracy, and strife, which meant that these quasi-remote-controlled parties were alien bodies within their home countries, showing little regard for the objective interests of the population. This in turn allowed the extreme right to portray themselves as the true defenders of national interest. The most serious crime that Adamiyat adds to the Comintern's balance sheet is that it forced social democratic parties everywhere in Europe into a two-pronged struggle, having to fight both the extreme right and the extreme left.<sup>85</sup>

Against the background of this assessment of the nefarious role of the Comintern, he tells the tragic story of Germany's Social Democratic Party being eventually crushed between the National Socialists on the right and the Communists on the left. Adamiyat claims that it was the National Socialist party that introduced the hitherto unknown concept of political assassinations into German politics—a claim that he proves by referring to the  killing of Karl Liebnecht and Rosa Luxemburg, at which point he also specifically notes Luxemburg's rejection of the Leninist concept of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.<sup>86</sup> He then dwells on the disastrous impact on the situation in Germany of the Comintern's doctrine of social Fascism, according to which social democracy was an even greater enemy of the working class than Fascism, which had to be fought mercilessly.<sup>87</sup> This meant that “following their orders from Moscow, the German Communist Party engaged in agitation, plotting, inciting unrest, launching strikes, and even direct attacks on the state”.<sup>88</sup>

Adamiyat notes that in this way, Russian Communism became an ally of Hitler's National Socialism in the fight against Germany's social democracy. The leadership that headed the

<sup>85</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 245–46.

<sup>86</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 247.

<sup>87</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 247–48.

<sup>88</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 249.

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German Communist Party after its earlier more independent and critically minded leaders had been killed, lacked in intellectual ability and thus the party, the national foundations of which had been severely undermined, nailed its colours firmly to the hollow mast of the Communist International, only—eventually—to fall prey to Fascism. Adamiyat adds, somewhat cryptically, that the case of Germany's Communist Party was by no means unique, but that several other branches of world Communism, which lacked any national roots, had also become servants of foreign masters and had thus fatally betrayed the national movements in their countries. Adamiyat does not state which countries he has in mind, leaving his readers to draw their own conclusions, and merely adds, perhaps even more cryptically: "Indeed, the experience of that age has not remained unrepeated."<sup>89</sup>

Before concluding his discussion on the fate of the Weimar Republic and Germany's social democracy, Adamiyat takes some pleasure in pointing to the apparent irony that Stalin was not only totally wrong in his dialectic expectation that the German proletariat would, by dealing one decisive revolutionary blow, bury National Socialism on the corpse of social democracy (thus killing two birds with one stone), but that if it had not been for the capitalist system coming to save the dictatorship of the proletariat, Hitler, the "Führer", who was in essence a chip off the same block as the "Great Leader" of Communism, would have finished off Stalin's regime too.<sup>90</sup>

This is followed by a sober conclusion about the ultimate destiny of German social democracy, which in Adamiyat's view was synonymous with the Weimar Republic. It amounted to the destruction of socialism, and there is no doubt in Adamiyat's mind who is to blame for this. For him, the fall of the Weimar Republic was due to the triumph of Fascism: "[...] one of the 'achievements' on the report card of the Comintern, an organisation that had

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<sup>89</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 250.

<sup>90</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 250–51.

been nurturing and fostering Fascism for its own ends, because, essentially, it was Fascist itself.”<sup>91</sup>

### [A] Assessment as history

Although the section of Adamiyat’s book summarised above only runs to a handful of pages and is not based on primary source research, close reading suggests that he clearly conceived it as a serious piece of academic history. There can be only very few, if any, professionally trained Iranian historians working at that time—or indeed any time—who have written in such an explicit way on Germany’s modern history. But what are we to make of Adamiyat as a historian of Germany?

Let us begin by assessing his account on a methodological level. Although Adamiyat slips in the occasional footnote, not all of which are related to cited material, there is no systematic referencing. Thus we have only very few clues to the literature on which Adamiyat relies. All in all, in terms of explicit, if incomplete, bibliographical references only three works are mentioned. Firstly, Prinz Hubertus zu Löwenstein’s *The Germans in History*,<sup>92</sup> the much acclaimed publication of which coincided with Adamiyat’s first attempt to gain admission to the LSE in 1945 and which Adamiyat might have read back then, but which at the time that Adamiyat was writing in the mid-1970s could no longer be considered “cutting edge”.

Secondly, a reference to Harold Laski’s *Reflections on The Revolution*,<sup>93</sup> which is used for making the case against the Comintern, even though Adamiyat otherwise dismisses Laski as someone who for a long time had been making light of Soviet crimes.<sup>94</sup> Harold Laski, a one-time highly influential chief ideologue of British socialism and Nehru’s academic mentor was a very popular professor at the LSE during Adamiyat’s Ph.D. days, and has been referred to

<sup>91</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 251.

<sup>92</sup> Löwenstein 1945.

<sup>93</sup> Laski 1943.

<sup>94</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 249.

with far more reverence by Adamiyat in other publications.<sup>95</sup> The third and last work that gains an explicit reference is the fourth volume of the English edition of the *Collected Works* of Josef Stalin. From a remark in the main body of the text it is also clear that Adamiyat must have used G.P. Gooch's *Germany*,<sup>96</sup> a well-informed descriptive analysis of the emergence and early days of the Weimar Republic, which attracted a lot of attention at the time of its publication in 1925. There is no reference to this book, although at one point Adamiyat (mis)quotes Gooch (as mentioned above). A historical account of the fall of the Weimar Republic written in the mid-1970s and based on very few works, the most recent of which dates to 1945, can hardly be considered an empirical contribution to the field of German history.

Furthermore, Adamiyat's account also contains a number of misconceptions and factual errors that cannot only be blamed on the fact that his sources were far from representing state-of-the-art research in the field at his time of writing. For instance, his stating that Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were killed by the National Socialist Party is factually incorrect, because not only did the party not exist at that time (15 January 1919),<sup>97</sup> but the officer who was responsible for the execution of the two Communist leaders, Captain Waldemar Pabst, although a man of the extreme right throughout his life, was a supporter of a corporatist type of Fascism à la Engelbert Dollfuss's Austro-Fascism, which in turn was to a degree modelled on Italian Fascism; he was therefore not at all keen on the ideology of the National Socialist Party, which he never joined but in which he nevertheless had very influential friends, including, most notably, Hermann Göring. He got into trouble with the Nazi regime several times, and escaped to Switzerland in 1943. Furthermore, at least according to Pabst's own testimony in 1962, his ordering the execution of Liebknecht and Luxemburg had been given

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<sup>95</sup> See Gurney 1390/2011–12: 126–28.

<sup>96</sup> Gooch 1925.

<sup>97</sup> The NSDAP was established on 24 February 1920: admittedly its precursor, the DAP, had been founded already on 5 January 1919 but the activities of the DAP, like those of the early NSDAP were limited to the city of Munich.

the tacit, if not explicit, approval by the leadership of the SPD.<sup>98</sup> Adamiyat also implies that their assassination, especially Luxemburg's, immediately led to the leadership of the German Communist Party falling into the hands of the Stalinists, who would later contribute gleefully to the destruction of the Republic, while in actual fact the complete control by the Stalinists personified by Ernst Thälmann, who had become chairman in 1925, was only achieved by 1928 at the earliest. Writing on the disastrous consequences of the Comintern's doctrine of social Fascism, Adamiyat refers to Dmitriy Manuilsky,<sup>99</sup> but gives his name as Mauilski.<sup>100</sup> Adamiyat's rosy depiction of the Weimar Republic as a social democratic paradise effectively run by benevolent moderate Socialists is obviously also very far from the historical realities faced by Germany's working class between 1919 and 1933. This was especially so during the period of hyperinflation and after the impact of the world economic crisis began to be felt in Germany. In addition, the majority of cabinets formed during the life-time of the Weimar Republic were not headed by a member of the SPD. Furthermore, at the level of the Reich-Presidency, the right-wing Conservative Paul von Hindenburg held the office of President for a longer period of the overall lifetime of the republic, namely 1925-1933 than the SPD leader Friedrich Ebert who was President from 1919 to 1925. In his depiction of Weimar as a social democratic model state Adamiyat was, on the one hand, clearly influenced by Gooch's work, which naturally does not cover the period after 1925, and on the other by apparently taking the Weimar Constitution as a true reflection of the actual reality in the country. Adamiyat could obviously not rely on the level of scholarship that exists today,<sup>101</sup> but even at the time he was

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<sup>98</sup> This was known at the time Adamiyat was writing. On Pabst see Gietinger 2009.

<sup>99</sup> Secretary of the Executive Committee between 1928 and 1943 and main proponent—on Stalin's orders—of the Comintern's extreme anti-social democrat line that wrecked even the potential for a united front of the KPD and SPD.

<sup>100</sup> Adamiyat F. 1355a/1976: 248, n. 3.

<sup>101</sup> For an overview of the state of historiography on the Weimar Republic up to c. 2012, see the chapter entitled "II. Grundprobleme und Tendenzen der Forschung" in the 8th edition of the Weimar specialists Eberhard Kolb and Dirk Schumann's university textbook *Die Weimarer Republik* (2013: 155–278). The 6th edition was translated into English and published as *The Weimar Republic* (2005). Our own critical approach to Adamiyat's discussion of the reasons for the destruction of Weimar's social democracy remains informed by the interpretation of this question put forward by another major authority on the Weimar Republic as well as on the

writing he could have given a more nuanced, mainly factually correct, and properly referenced account.

Notwithstanding the obvious weaknesses of Adamiyat's account, looking at his key contention it becomes obvious that Adamiyat is trying to make a contribution that transcends the outdatedness of his secondary sources.

Löwenstein—Adamiyat's apparent main source for the later years of the Weimar Republic—focuses extensively on the nefarious role of Nazism, whose dangerous potential he had recognised much earlier than most when he was himself still in Germany in the 1920s. By contrast, it is very clear that for Adamiyat, who says virtually nothing about the National Socialists, it is far more important—indeed absolutely key, it would appear—to put the blame for the destruction of the Weimar Republic and thus of democratic socialism firmly on the Communists, that is to say on the Comintern and Stalin's Soviet Union, on whose orders the KPD (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands) leaders had been acting. Indeed, Adamiyat in his indictment of Communism, goes further than merely stressing the catastrophic impact of the Stalinist doctrine of social Fascism insofar as it split the Left and prevented the creation of a united front against the Nazis. Thus, Adamiyat is more radical than his (acknowledged) sources on two counts. First, he boldly equates Nazism with Communism: the Comintern is a fascistic organisation and there is in essence no difference between Stalin and Hitler. Second, he conceives of the rise (and eventual triumph) of National Socialism in Germany as a reaction to Moscow-style Communism; other explanations are either dismissed or not mentioned.

As for the first of these two points, it is likely that Adamiyat was influenced, directly or indirectly, by Hannah Arendt's theory of totalitarianism, which<sup>102</sup> had been debated for quite a

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German labour movement, Heinrich August Winkler (2003). For an English-language version of Winkler's assessment see an article that seems to have stood the test of time: Winkler 1990: 205–27. Winkler also developed this argumentation in his April 1992 inaugural lecture at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, which I, then one of Winkler's undergraduate students, had the pleasure of attending; see Winkler 1993.

<sup>102</sup> Arendt 1951.

while by the time Adamiyat was writing, although other than the general point concerning the structural similarity of Nazism and Communism, there is little reference in Adamiyat's text to any of Arendt's contentions, especially regarding the issues of imperialism and anti-Semitism. As such, therefore, Adamiyat is far from being revolutionary when he equates Nazism with Communism.<sup>103</sup> It must be said, however, that at the time he was writing, in the mid-1970s at the height of *détente*, the concept of totalitarianism had started to fall out of fashion with academia and was rejected—at least temporarily—for being merely a tool of propaganda in the hands of unabashed Cold Warriors rather than an academic theory. Seen against this background, Adamiyat's emphatic embrace of the theory of totalitarianism seems, after all, significant, not least because Adamiyat is anything but the typical Cold Warrior. It would appear, however, that this significance does not lie so much in Adamiyat, the historian, assessing an aspect of German history but rather in Adamiyat, the politically concerned intellectual, commenting on an aspect of Iranian contemporary politics. This will concern us in the third and final part of our discussion of Adamiyat's text.

Before coming to this, let us look at the second main point made in Adamiyat's text—the contention that German National Socialism and Soviet Communism were not only structurally identical, but the former was essentially a *reaction* to the latter. We should remind ourselves here that Adamiyat speaks of the impact of the “terror” that various *actions* by the Communists had instilled; in essence it appears that for him Nazism is not a reaction to the *ideology* of Communism but rather to a set of *deeds* committed by the Communists wielding political power in the USSR and through control of the Comintern. One cannot note this

<sup>103</sup> The same premise also prevails in Ernst Nolte's *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (1963), an English edition of which appeared in 1965 as *Three faces of fascism: Action Française, Italian fascism, National Socialism*, translated by Leila Vennewitz (well-known for translating into English the oeuvre of German novelist Heinrich Böll, who could not have been further removed from Nolte in terms of his political views) and could thus have been consulted by Adamiyat. Among other things, Nolte conceives of Fascism as an anti-modernist response to the frighteningly modernist (and universalist) ideology of Marxism; in other words, at this stage, Nolte speaks of a *response* to an *ideology*, not of a (quasi-causally linked) reaction to *concrete* deeds of the proponents of that ideology. This distinction is of interest below.

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second main point of Adamiyat's assessment of the rise of Nazism without being reminded of the famous *Historikerstreit* that occurred in Germany in the mid- to late 1980s. When in June 1986, more than ten years after Adamiyat's study was published for the second time, the German academic Ernst Nolte, a scholar who had established himself as one of the world's leading experts on the subject, made essentially the same point as Adamiyat (albeit alongside several further related and unrelated claims especially as regards the Holocaust) in a text that was published on the cultural pages of Germany's leading daily newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*.<sup>104</sup> Nolte's intervention triggered a veritable firestorm of an intellectual debate that not only engulfed the guild of Germany's professional historians, it set ablaze the entire cultural establishment of the Federal Republic—the *Historikerstreit*. Indeed, far more than a mere “historians’ dispute” ensued, after the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas had been piqued by Nolte's piece into publishing a few days later, in the highly influential weekly newspaper *Die Zeit*, a biting polemic sharply denouncing what he perceived as the growth of revisionist, “apologetic tendencies” among Germany's modern historians; according to him, they were trying to relativise the crimes committed by Nazi Germany, including the Holocaust, with the ultimate aim of fostering among the (West) Germans a positive (i.e. no longer weighed down by eternal shame over the Nazi period) German national consciousness as a tool of (right-wing) ideology. While the *Historikerstreit* was ostensibly fought over Nolte's—and thus Adamiyat's—thesis that Nazism in Germany was essentially a quasi-inevitable reaction to the real Bolshevism that existed in the Soviet Union and the concrete policies that had been pursued by its leaders, hindsight suggests that what was ultimately at stake in this dispute was the historical self-conception of the Federal Republic. As such one might conceive of the *Historikerstreit* as a latter-day *Kulturkampf* (“culture struggle”) that marked a watershed in the intellectual history of the Federal Republic of Germany, which was to have repercussions—unknowable, and probably even unimaginable,

<sup>104</sup> Nolte 1986; see also [Anonymous \(ed.\) 1987: 39–47](#).

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for the dispute's protagonists back in 1986–87—in the wake of the fall of Communism and the emergence of the so-called Berliner Republik after Germany's reunification.<sup>105</sup>

Was Adamiyat, the Iranian historian, a protagonist *avant la lettre* of the German

*Historikerstreit*? It cannot be denied that Adamiyat's text predates the debate by several years.

<sup>105</sup> It is difficult to summarise the controversy succinctly for the purposes of this essay. In 1980 Nolte had made a similar argument to the one he made in *FAZ* in June 1986, but this had gone largely unnoticed. When Nolte redeveloped his argumentation six years later in *FAZ*, the Federal Republic had changed. With the *Bonner Wende* of 1982, the German Social Democrats, who had been in government in a coalition with the Liberals for more than 10 years, were removed from power due to a *renversement des alliances* of the Liberals who had decided to switch their support to the Conservative Christian Democrats led by Helmut Kohl. In the wake of this there seemed to be a general move to the Right in Germany, a development that was echoed on an international level when superpower détente was completely abandoned under US President Ronald Reagan and the world entered a second Cold War, the frontline of which ran through a divided Germany. This also meant that West Germany's military strategic importance increased once more due to NATO's decision to counter (perceived or existing) increased Soviet threat levels by stationing more atomic weapons in West Germany. Against the background of these domestic and international developments, left-leaning intellectuals like Jürgen Habermas, who might have assumed that the spectre of a renaissance of (extremist) German nationalism had been exorcised once and for all since the late 1960s while their own left-leaning discourse(s) had been acquiring quasi-hegemonic status in the country's public arena, began to fear that a momentum was building up towards a concerted effort on the part of the Right to change this state of affairs. Such a change, they feared, would be achieved by the Right arguing that after more than 40 years, a line should finally be drawn under the crimes of Germany's National Socialist past—not least when compared with the devastating record of Bolshevism—which in turn would allow the Right once more to foster among the population a non-complicated, straightforward, and ultimately very dangerous sense of national pride that would henceforth be no longer encumbered or indeed, no longer made impossible by the so far prevailing sense of guilt over Germany's criminal record of the Second World War, including, of course, the Holocaust. It seems that for Habermas this worrying trend appeared to be spearheaded by Nolte's provocative text that hinted at the existence of a causal link between the earlier occurring murderous excesses of Bolshevism and the National Socialist crimes, including the Holocaust, that had only occurred after them. It appears to have been for this reason that Habermas published his angry rejoinder in *Die Zeit*, this time also bringing in references to Nolte's earlier essay. Habermas, however, did not limit his attack to Nolte. Since he wanted to show that there existed a concerted effort on the part of the Right, he singled out three completely unrelated historians who were known for their more conservative outlook—Klaus Hildebrand, Andreas Hillgruber, and Michael Stürmer. According to Habermas they were all part of the same right-wing revisionist tendency, with Habermas effectively making these three and Nolte—with whom none of these three had much to do—into a "Gang of Four" of collaborating right-wing revisionists and apologists. While Stürmer was close to the government of the time and had been publicly grappling with the problem of West Germany's relationship with the nation and the national, the other two, especially Hillgruber, were not involved in politics at all. Hillgruber was chosen because he had written on the fate of the civilian population of German East Prussia towards the end of the Second World War with a degree of heuristic sympathy for the latter, while his nearby colleague Hildebrand's only "crime" had been to have mentioned in a review article that one of Nolte's earlier yet similar writings was of certain interest. This of course meant that the quarrel would not remain limited to Nolte and Habermas, and before too long the dispute would not only engulf the German guild of historians as a whole, but also see the involvement of several venerated figures of Germany's intellectual life, such as Rudolf Augstein, the founder and then editor-in-chief of the influential news magazine *Der Spiegel*, who denounced the probably least "guilty" of the "Gang of Four", Andreas Hillgruber, as a "constitutional Nazi" (Augstein 1986). For the interventions of all the most important voices that made themselves heard in the controversy, the majority of which were more inclined towards Habermas, see Anonymous (ed.) 1987. The dispute continued into 1987 without the two sides finding at least some common ground; any attempts at mediation remained unsuccessful. The "Gang of Four" kept insisting that their motivation had been purely academic and utterly apolitical, while Habermas and his supporters kept on trying to expose their ulterior motives. In the end, history caught up with the historians: the Cold War would be brought almost to a close over the course of the following year, and by the end of the next the Wall had come down; the national question was suddenly on the agenda and no longer an abstract notion. The above is based on Anonymous (ed.) 1987, Kailitz 2009: 279–302, and Evans 1997: 221–24. (The latter title is based on a review published earlier by Evans of Imanuel Geiss's *Der Hysterikerstreit* [1992], a useful and rather polemical book, which Evans, however, dismisses.)

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It is also interesting to note that Michael Stürmer—one of the four historians whom Habermas had cited as examples in his denunciation of the neo-conservative revisionists’ apologetic tendencies in their attempts at rekindling national pride among the Germans—had, like Adamiyat, studied at the LSE. Furthermore, there can be no doubting Adamiyat’s own strong nationalist convictions.

Yet, while it is indeed tempting to describe Adamiyat’s text on Germany as a precursor to a major historiographical-political debate within Germany, such an assessment would be at best only partially true. The issue of the *Historikerstreit* that attracted the greatest attention and was its most contentious as well as its most-remembered aspect was the question of the singularity of the Holocaust. In other words, the controversy very soon centred on Nazi crimes *after* Hitler had come to power. On those crimes, including the Holocaust, however, Adamiyat is silent, as his account only covers the period *before* the *Machtergreifung* (Nazi seizure of power); his [sole](#) focus is on the “crimes” of the Comintern and thus Stalin’s Soviet Union.

And it is this anti-Comintern virulence, with its explicit charge against the Soviet Union of being responsible for the destruction of Germany’s once mighty and successful labour movement and thus having, as Adamiyat puts it, destroyed socialism in Germany, which evokes associations that seem to put Adamiyat into a camp that could not be further from Ernst Nolte and his actual or imagined (by Habermas) “neo-conservative revisionist” colleagues, that of the Fourth International. Was Adamiyat a Trotskyite? Few statements could sound more improbable, yet it is surprising to see how closely the anti-Comintern tenor of Adamiyat’s analysis rhymes with the spirit of an expansive, two-volume history of the rise of Nazism and the fall of the Weimar Republic, published in Britain in 1975—the same year that the first edition of Adamiyat’s book appeared. The work in question is *Fascism in Germany* by Robin Blick (published under the pseudonym Robert Black),<sup>106</sup> a leading Trotskyite

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<sup>106</sup> Black 1975.

intellectual of his day who later also published a thorough critique of Leninism. In the introduction to his polemical, yet very well-documented book that also provides a detailed critique of the relevant historiography of other left-wing tendencies than his own, Blick claims that his work, while not intending “[...] to supplant the many and brilliant writings of Leon Trotsky on the rise of National Socialism and the policies which facilitated its victory [...]” sought “[...] to place in the hands of the reader something that is not available in any other book in the English language—a thoroughly documented analysis, not only of German fascism itself, but its political antecedents dating from the failure of the 1848 Revolution, through the era of Bismarckian Bonapartism up to the outbreak of the First World War.”<sup>107</sup> Yet, in only a few lines further below, Blick himself tells the reader that the actual purpose of his work was to make the charge “[...] that Soviet foreign policy [...] played a vital, *indeed decisive* [my emphasis] role in the rise to power of German fascism.” Indeed, Blick leaves no doubt as to the question of who was to blame for the Nazis’ rise to power in Germany: “Stalin and his Bonapartist clique.”<sup>108</sup> Did Adamiyat draw on this major study from a Trotskyite point of view? Judging by the date that Adamiyat provides at the end of his introduction, Bahman 1353 (mid-January–mid-February 1975) and which presumably coincided with the completion of his manuscript, it seems not very likely that he would have seen Blick’s book of which we only have the year—1975—but not the month of publication. This is unless of course Blick’s book came out at the very beginning of 1975 or was available earlier than the officially given year of publication suggests; after all, Blick’s introduction to the book is dated as early as 28 June 1973. Thus it is conceivable that ahead of publication, Blick discussed his forthcoming book’s thesis in the public realm and echoes of this then reached Adamiyat. Furthermore, as to whether Adamiyat might have been influenced by *Fascism in Germany* specifically, it must be noted that while Blick’s study is the first that sets out to make the specific charge against the

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<sup>107</sup> Black 1975: v.

<sup>108</sup> Black 1975: v.

Stalinist Soviet Union in a sustained and well-documented, or as Blick puts it, “scientific” manner, the essence of this assessment was put forward in the 1930s by none other than Leon Trotsky. Obviously, Trotsky did not write as a historian but as a politician but Blick, for all his pretence at writing history, had a political agenda. He does not even attempt to hide it, as can be seen by the utterly presentist reasoning that characterises his introduction. For example, a paragraph that explains the rise of Hitler, pointing out how “disoriented petty-bourgeois and declassed workers and youth [...] will follow anyone, however ‘mad’ [...] who seems to offer them a clear cut and swift solution to the crisis that is tormenting them [...]” is followed immediately by (and thus linked to) some dark musings about the alleged increasing attractiveness of a liberal “catch-all programme” among “former Conservative voters who are looking for a leader well to the right of Edward Heath”.<sup>109</sup> If there can be no doubt that Blick clearly had a political axe to grind, what about Adamiyat? The issue of a political agenda leads me to the third and final part of our discussion of Adamiyat’s brief account on the Nazi rise to power in Germany, which is an attempt at understanding what, if any, [present-day political concerns](#) Adamiyat might have had at the time [of writing](#).

### **[A]Contemporary significance**

It goes without saying that no historian can ever write entirely *sine ira et studio*, in other words without reflecting [in his writings](#), at least to some degree, [the discourses of the day](#). In the case of Adamiyat’s piece, however, what really is at stake regarding the potential contemporary significance of this passage’s publication in mid-1970s Iran is its near total irrelevance in relation to what seems to be the book’s stated subject matter. Looking at the book’s title, the lack of a link between a study of social democratic thought in Iran’s turn-of-the-twentieth-century Constitutionalist movement and an account of the Nazi rise to power and fall of the Weimar in Germany seems obvious. Yet, even for the analysis of Rasulzadeh’s

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<sup>109</sup> Black 1975: iv–v.

mid-1920s writing on socialism, which has itself only a rather tenuous link to the book's apparent topic, there does not appear to be an obvious reason for Adamiyat to attach [to this](#) his very opinionated denunciation of the Comintern and the Soviet Union for destroying the Weimar Republic. Adamiyat positions his account in response to what he summarises as Rasulzadeh's exhortation of the early Weimar Republic as a key example for a general Western European trend towards democracies grounded in a revisionist, reformist socialism that has abandoned class struggle and rejects the notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus Rasulzadeh's trust in the strength of Weimar's democracy was indeed premature in 1926, given what would happen in Germany less than 10 years later but from Adamiyat's mid-1970s perspective, Rasulzadeh's general trend toward social democracy in Western Europe must have appeared to have been confirmed, not least also in (West) Germany. Yet Adamiyat makes no reference to the fact that at the time he was writing, (West) Germany [under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt \(SPD\)](#) was governed once more by Social Democrats with the [Bonn government led by the ideological and political heirs of Bernstein, Kautsky, Ebert, and Scheidemann](#).

Thus it seems justified to ask whether there might have been [present-day](#) motives for Adamiyat to choose to attach to his exposition of Rasulzadeh's 1926 text an account that describes the fate of the Weimar's social democracy as a victim, not so much of Nazism itself but of Communism and of the Soviet Union. Did Adamiyat take the time to develop this sad tale about the vicious deeds of the USSR and its loyal Communist henchmen abroad as a parable commenting on issues closer to home?

One clue can be found in Adamiyat's above-mentioned, somewhat cryptic reference to several other branches of world Communism lacking any national roots, and—like the German Communist Party—becoming servants of foreign masters, thus fatally betraying the national movements in their countries. This appears to be a thinly veiled attack on the Tudeh Party.

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Formed at a time when Soviet troops occupied Iran, the party was undoubtedly conceived by Adamiyat as having been artificially implanted into Iran by Stalin. But what about the Tudeh's "betrayal of the national movement"? There can be little doubt that Adamiyat had the summer of 1953 in mind. Thus when Adamiyat states that the bitter experience of the effective delivery of a democracy into the hands of its tyrannical butchers by the Stalinist Soviet Union and its local Communist agents "had not remained unrepeated", it would seem that in his view one of these "repetitions" was Mordad 1332 (August 1953). Was he alluding to the tale of the fall of the Weimar Republic as a parable of the fall of Mossadegh? For Adamiyat to draw such parallels is less surprising than it might seem at first glance because, a) the Soviet Union, especially when Stalin was still alive but also in the period immediately following his death in March 1953, was rather hostile to Mossadegh, who in turn made no bones about his hatred of Communism; and b) the Tudeh Party in the summer of 1953 appeared to have been pursuing extreme policies—and especially so in the very confusing days following the Shah's failed attempt to dismiss Mossadegh by mere decree on 15 August 1953—that seemed to suggest that they were indeed, to paraphrase the illusory hopes of the proponents of the Stalinist doctrine of social Fascism in 1933, trying to bury the Shah's imperialist puppet regime on the corpse of Mossadegh's regime of petty bourgeois nationalism in one revolutionary fell swoop. Thus, while such a comparison makes sense from the perspective of Adamiyat writing in the mid-1970s, what is astonishing is that he dared to publish it at that time, since in this reading of the account as a parable, the pro-Shah forces, were effectively equated with the Nazis.<sup>110</sup>

This begs the question whether Adamiyat's telling, in 1975, of a parable warning what he describes as the treacherous nature of the Soviet Union and its local executive agents, might have had a further, more immediately contemporaneous meaning. With the benefit of hindsight (knowledge of the 1978/9 Revolution and its aftermath), one might be tempted to

<sup>110</sup> It is worthy of note in this context that after the 1978/9 Revolution, Adamiyat did indeed characterise Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's regime as having had 'fascistoid' tendencies, see Adamiyat F. 1360b/1981: 4.

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read Adamiyat's anti-Communist account of the Comintern helping the Nazis' rise to power and thus causing the destruction of what he described as the most precious achievement of Germany's anti-monarchical November Revolution (i.e. the Weimar Republic), as a prophesy of the role played by the Communist Tudeh Party in the aftermath of Iran's anti-monarchical February Revolution. The Tudeh, which was then as beholden to Moscow as was the KPD in the 1930s, at this point actively supported the rise to power of one particular—Khomeinist—faction from the broad spectrum of revolutionary forces, at the expense of other factions including, arguably, the “national movement”, which Adamiyat had hinted was a victim of Moscow-led Communists, only to pay, as did the KPD, the ultimate price for its policies. Tempting as it is, such a reading would attribute to Adamiyat a degree of foresight that he could scarcely have had at the time he was writing. Certainly, there can be no doubt that as a former diplomat and ambassador he was highly politically aware, while as an LSE-educated historian he was a perceptive analyst of political developments. As such he might have sensed more strongly than others at the time—the apparent zenith of Pahlavi power—that an abrupt change was imminent. Had this indeed been so, the expectation that the Communists would once more play a major role on the political stage is hardly surprising—if there were at the time genuine fears among non-left-wing Iranians of a revolutionary regime change, they would certainly have involved the Communist Left as the protagonists of such change. Yet by all accounts, very few people, if any, expected that if such change was to occur it would bring the radical Islamists to power and usher in a theocracy. Therefore it seems far-fetched to read Adamiyat's account of the fall of Weimar as a parable on what the “national movement” he referred to seems to have have experienced—being cheated out of enjoying the fruits of “its” revolution by the Khomeinist faction that was actively supported by the Iranian Communists on Moscow's orders, just as the German Social Democrats lost the achievement of their revolution, the Weimar Republic, to the Nazis due to the policies pursued by the German

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Communists also on the orders of Moscow. As tempting as it may be, especially with the knowledge of the anti-clerical line that Adamiyat takes with *Ashoftegi* and *Shuresh bar emtiaznameh-ye Rezhi*, one can probably not justifiably read the Nazi Party of Adamiyat's account as a metaphor for the (future) IRP (Islamic Republican Party), at least not when taking into account authorial intent at the time of writing (1975). Be that as it may, there can be no doubt that the clear, very strong anti-Communist, anti-Soviet message, in Adamiyat's account is (also) due a contemporary political agenda on his Adamiyat's part. It might become comprehensible against the background of his reportedly harbouring ambitions to launch a social democratic party in the short period of somewhat greater political freedom and openness that preceded the Revolution.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, Adamiyat's alleged ambition to create Iran's version of the SPD might be the clue not only for gauging the motivation for his writing on Germany's Social Democrats before the Second World War and their downfall alongside the Weimar Republic, but also for understanding the whole rather "odd" book that is *Fekr-e demukrasi*!

### [A] Conclusion

In the above we have inverted the usual gaze of research into Modern Iranian historiography by turning our attention to a rare instance of a renowned Iranian historian writing on the history of a European country and on a topic that is, at least ostensibly, completely unrelated to the history of Iran. Firstly, we have made a critical summary of the text; secondly we have analysed it in terms of its relative merits in relation to the historiography on the topic it addresses before asking, thirdly, whether the author, in writing this account of non-Iranian history at the time that he did, might have (also) pursued a discernible present-day agenda that would somehow have linked this ostensibly completely non-Iran-related piece of historical writing to Iranian affairs.

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<sup>111</sup> Dehbashi 1390a/2011–12: 173.

What are we to make of the results of this analysis in relation to the two overarching fields mentioned at the start, the study of Iranian occidentalism on the one hand, and the historiography of modern Iran on the other?

In terms of immediate historiographical merit, in relation to the historiography on Germany, we have seen that Adamiyat's piece—while not meant to be a primary source-based contribution to the field of modern German history—puts forward a clearly formulated, genuinely independent argument culminating in a very outspoken, unambiguous verdict. It appears that with this stern judgment, notwithstanding the severe factual and methodological shortcomings of the text and taking into account certain important qualifications, Adamiyat does not only situate himself within the international historiographical debate of his day but anticipates it by several years, becoming in 1975 a precursor—of sorts—to the major German historiographical controversy that was the 1986 *Historikerstreit*. What follows from this in relation to the issue of occidentalism?

If we take occidentalism to be orientalism's mirror image, that is, the stereotyping of the West as a (usually hostile) "other" against the foil of which to construct oneself, then it can be safely said that Adamiyat does not partake in any form of occidentalism here, because he writes about the West as most Westerners would have done; there are no traces of othering in Adamiyat's writing. Thus Adamiyat's case allows us to draw the conclusion that historians and other scholars based in the West, especially those working on Iranian history, who at best fail to recognise—if not deliberately ignore—works produced by their colleagues in Iran, do so at the peril of their scholarly integrity because they would be perpetuating orientalist tendencies that were seemingly abandoned long ago. On the other hand, researching the histories of particular areas, regions, or states should never be the sole privilege of the members of those nations: as much as Germans are welcome to participate in writing the

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history of Iran, the same principle must apply to Iranians participating in writing the history of Germany.

We have also shown that a reading of Adamiyat's text as a parable on Iranian domestic affairs is highly plausible. Therefore his account that is ostensibly pertaining to the West, is in this case, arguably also (or perhaps even majorly!) quite strongly linked to the East. Indeed, in this regard, Adamiyat's text is a kind of latter-day, inverse *Lettres Persanes*: when he writes about the fate of the German labour movement and its parties at the time of the Weimar Republic, Adamiyat is actually writing about the (potential) fate of the labour movement and its (potential) parties in his own mid-1970s Iran.

#### *Biographical précis*

For a description of Adamiyat's life and career see Dehbashi's [attempt at a short biography in the \*Yadnameh\* edited by the latter](#) (1390a/2011–12: 13–19). For a concise account of Adamiyat's life story in English see Azimi 2009: 329–31. Unless otherwise indicated, the following biographical précis is based on these two texts. It is intended to give the reader an overview of Adamiyat's personal trajectory; his importance as a historian has been dealt with elsewhere in this essay. Further insights into Adamiyat's biography can be gleaned from the contributions located in the first section of the *Yadnameh* edited by Adamiyat, in which friends, disciples, and former colleagues reminiscence about their encounters with Adamiyat in mainly very short pieces.

Fereydu Adamiyat was born on 23 August 1920 or perhaps on 20 July 1920 (the latter is the date that Adamiyat provided in his application form for Ph.D. study). From 1939 to 1942 he studied Political Science, gaining a B.A. degree from the University of Tehran. The research that he undertook during his undergraduate studies led to the publication of his first book, *Amir Kabir va Iran: varaqi as tarikh-e siyasi-ye Iran*, which came out in three volumes between 1944 and 1945 (1323 and 1324), including a foreword by the historian Mahmud Mahmud and, judging by information gleaned from library catalogues, appears to have been reprinted almost immediately. Having joined the Iranian Foreign Ministry in 1940 while still at university, it was during a diplomatic posting to London, where he served as third and later second secretary at the Imperial Iranian Embassy, that Adamiyat studied for a Ph.D. at the LSE between 1946 and 1949. Aided by a reduced workload at the embassy, headed by Seyyed Hasan Taqizadeh at the time he first enrolled at the LSE, Adamiyat, whose initial idea for a topic had been "Anglo-Persian Relations 1814–1856", worked on a project entitled "Diplomatic Relations of Persia with Britain, Russia, and Turkey, 1815–1830" under the supervision of Sir Charles Kingsley Webster (1886–1961), Stevenson Professor of International History at the LSE from 1932 and a prominent diplomatic historian with a special focus on the first half of the nineteenth century (a monumental two-volume study of Palmerston's foreign policy published in 1951 being arguably his most famous work), who had also worked as a high-ranking advisor for the Foreign Office, especially in the context of the establishment of the United Nations, and would serve as President of the British Academy between 1950 and 1954 (see Webster's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of*

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*National Biography*). Adamiyat was considered a good if not an excellent student by his supervisor, as is revealed in a progress note from mid-1949 in Adamiyat's student records' file: "He has continued to be a diligent and careful student and I have much enjoyed supervising him. This dissertation, while not brilliant, should earn him a good degree." (I am very grateful to Dr Roham Alvandi [London] for making Adamiyat's student records at the LSE available to me in photocopied form. John Gurney, who covers Adamiyat's student days in London in his meticulously documented text "Doktor Adamiyat dar Landan" [1390/2011–12: 105–38, esp. 118–28 dedicated to Adamiyat's Ph.D. studies], has also used Adamiyat's LSE student records extensively. Gurney's text also sheds light on the intellectual climate at the LSE in particular and in London more generally.) After he was awarded his doctorate in December 1949, Adamiyat continued his diplomatic career, which was to include work at Iran's UN mission in New York as well as ambassadorial postings to The Hague and New Delhi, but not, as some claim, to Moscow (see e.g. Dehbashi 1390a/2011–12: 222, 318). (It was Tahmures Adamiyat, elder brother of Fereydu, who served as Iranian Ambassador to Moscow between 1963 and 1965; see *Vezerat-e omur-e kharejeh* [1988]: 36, as well as Adamiyat T. 1368/1989–90). Adamiyat is said to have suddenly resigned from the Foreign Ministry well before reaching retirement age, to lead the life of an independent scholar. The exact date of Adamiyat's abrupt resignation cannot be confirmed (both Dehbashi and Azimi are vague on the timing); it is not even possible to be certain in which year he took early retirement. The same is true for the reason that triggered it. Writing in Dehbashi's *Yadnameh*, Abdorreza Houshang-Mahdavi (1390/2011–12: 171–86), a former colleague of Adamiyat at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, states that Adamiyat had asked for his retirement in a provocatively presented three-word letter (which Houshang-Mahdavi quotes verbatim but without providing a reference; 1390/2011–12: 172) on returning from his posting to India in 1965 in the month of Tir (mid-June–mid-July). Furthermore, Houshang-Mahdavi also claims that no one, apart from the Shah himself, had ordered Adamiyat's immediate recall from New Delhi. According to Houshang-Mahdavi, the Shah was furious after Ardeshir Zahedi (who was at that time Iran's ambassador to the UK) had sent the monarch a book containing the memoirs of John F. Kennedy's ambassador to India, in which the ambassador, the Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith (1908–2006), who had met Adamiyat while in post in New Delhi, had referred to Iran's ambassador in India as having been critical of the situation in Iran and having had differences with the Shah in the past. Houshang-Mahdavi provides a verbatim quote of what, he claims, Galbraith wrote on Adamiyat, but fails to provide a reference (1390/2011–12: 172–73). Houshang-Mahdavi's account of the Shah having angrily recalled Adamiyat from India because of a passage in Galbraith's memoirs is doubtful, if one takes into account that it was only in the autumn of 1969, *i.e.* more than four years after Adamiyat's return from India, that Galbraith's memoirs—or to be more precise the diary that he had kept in India—were published for the first time (1969); a UK edition published by Hamish Hamilton came out in London more or less at the same time. Having consulted the latter, a reference to the Iranian ambassador to New Delhi can indeed be identified in the book. Galbraith writes: "Later I received the Ambassador from Iran. He is busy writing his memoirs. I asked him about the minor revolution now being made in his country. He expressed himself as uninformed but favorable. He said, encouragingly, that everything happens for the best in Iran." (1969: 117). This is clearly not exactly what Houshang-Mahdavi's verbatim "quote" from Galbraith's memoirs states, but if one reads between the lines of Galbraith's ironic note, which refers to the land reform that had been started at the beginning of the 1960s, and about which Galbraith knew from Harvard colleagues who were involved as advisors to Iran (1969: 38), it would appear that the Iranian ambassador to India might not have been overly enthusiastic about events back home. The ambassador referred to, however, was *not* Fereydu Adamiyat. Galbraith records this meeting in his diary on 17 May 1961, but

Adamiyat only arrived in the spring of 1963; indeed Adamiyat's tenure in New Delhi overlapped with Galbraith's only by a few months, as the latter's tenure came to its "natural" end in July 1963. (Galbraith did not "resign" after Kennedy's assassination in November 1963 as Houshang-Mahdavi wrongly claims; 1390/2011–12: 172). The Iranian ambassador that Galbraith refers to was Seyyed Morteza Moshfeq-e Kazemi (1904–78), author of the famous novel *Tehran-e makhuf*, who served as ambassador to India between early 1958 and autumn 1961 (Vezerat-e Omur-e Kharejeh [1988]: 85) and whose memoirs were eventually published in two volumes (Kazemi 1971–73). Dehbashi *also* claims that there was a passage about Adamiyat's opposition to the Shah in Galbraith's memoirs, providing (again without a reference) the same quote as Houshang-Mahdavi. Unlike the latter, however, Dehbashi does *not* allege that the publication of Galbraith's memoirs (1969) had led to Adamiyat's recall from India by a furious Shah and Adamiyat's subsequent retirement in 1965. Indeed, Dehbashi and others writing in the *Yadnameh*, e.g. 'Abdolhoseyn Azerang (1390/2011–12: 24), Sergei Barseqian (1390/2011–12: 318), and Farshad Qorbanipur (1390/2011–12: 222), contradict Houshang-Mahdavi and state that after his return from India, Adamiyat continued to work for the Foreign Ministry as a (senior) political advisor. Azerang, however, stands out from the others with his claim that Adamiyat requested retirement from the ministry once he had heard that Ardeshir Zahedi was about to become Foreign Minister, which the latte did on 22 Dey 1345 (12 January 1967), remaining in this post until September 1971 (Vezerat-e Omur-e Kharejeh [1988]: 24). This suggests that Adamiyat would have retired at some point in the autumn of 1966. A document reproduced in facsimile in the appendix of Dehbashi 1390a/2011–12 can be interpreted as evidence that Adamiyat was still employed by the Foreign Ministry in August 1968 (1390a/2011–12: 1050–51; for the transcript of the text, see 767–68; the text of this document was also published in issue 42 of the journal *Shahrvand-e emruz* dated 25 Farvardin 1387 [13 April 2008]). The document in question consists of two pages of letter-headed, official Foreign Ministry paper, being a carbon copy (*ru-nevesht*) of a typed letter signed "Fereydun Adamiyat". This carbon copy contains an initialled (the Persian letters *feh* and *alef*, i.e. 'F.A.') marginal note written in what must be Adamiyat's own hand. In this letter dated 5 Shahrivar 1347 (Tuesday 27 August 1968) addressed to the Foreign Minister (then Ardeshir Zahedi), Adamiyat refers to a conversation with the Minister on 24 August 1968, in which the Minister had suggested that Adamiyat should state in writing his reasons for not accepting his appointment to the post of Iran's representative at the (fourth session of the) United Nations' Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression. This committee was set up in 1952 with the aim of reaching an internationally agreed definition of the crime of aggression in international law. It is noteworthy that Adamiyat had been instrumental in the inception of this committee, because the original draft resolution, on the basis of which this committee was eventually established, had been jointly elaborated earlier in 1952 by France, Venezuela, and Iran, the latter on this occasion being represented by Adamiyat. Before reconvening in the summer of 1968 in an enlarged format with members from 35 states (including Iran) for the fourth and last time (a definition of aggression would eventually be agreed on by the UN in 1974), this committee had already held three previous sessions (initially with 15, secondly with 19, thirdly with 21 members), during the first of which (1952–54) Iran, represented by Fereydun Adamiyat, had also been a member; Iran was *not* a member during sessions 2 and 3. Interestingly, during the deliberations of this first session of the Committee, Adamiyat stood out from the other delegates by his unique suggestion that any definition of what constitutes "aggression" within international law should also include the crime of "economic aggression". (On the Special Committee on the Question of Defining Aggression including the relevant UN documents containing references to Adamiyat, see Ferencz 1975, also available online at [www.derechos.org/peace/dia/](http://www.derechos.org/peace/dia/)). The fact that Adamiyat, when he wrote to

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the Iranian Foreign Minister in late August 1968, used letter-headed official Foreign Ministry notepaper strongly suggests that Adamiyat was still an employee of the Ministry at the time. It also seems unlikely that Foreign Minister Zahedi would have wished to appoint Adamiyat to a UN position as sensitive (due to the Cold War context) as this in the summer of 1968, if Adamiyat had resigned from the Ministry two or three years earlier in a fit of pique, as claimed by both Azerang and Houshang-Mahdavi. Adamiyat might, however, have fallen from grace precisely as a result of having written this letter, as it amounts to strong—albeit indirectly expressed—criticism of Iran’s then steadily growing closeness to the United States, the government of which, alongside that of the USSR (over the invasion of Czechoslovakia) and Israel (over the Six-Day War), Adamiyat charges with the crime of aggression (over Vietnam). To increase the confusion about the timing and reasons for Adamiyat’s early retirement even further, Qorbanipur (1390/2011–12: 222), Barseqyan (1390/2011–12: 318), and the BBC Persian’s online obituary for Adamiyat ([www.bbc.com/persian/arts/story/2008/03/080329\\_mf\\_adamiyat.shtml](http://www.bbc.com/persian/arts/story/2008/03/080329_mf_adamiyat.shtml), accessed 25 August 2015) claim, again without either a date or reference, that Adamiyat retired from the Foreign Ministry after writing a letter of protest against the Iranian government’s acquiescence in the independence of Bahrain. If this is true, Adamiyat, who had published a monograph on the history of the Bahrain question (1955) and was *indeed* an expert on the matter, would still have been employed by the Foreign Ministry, if not until May 1970 when both Iran’s Parliament and Senate formally endorsed Iran’s relinquishing of her claim on Bahrain (it declared independence on 15 August 1971), *than* at least until 6 January 1969, because it was on that day that the Shah, who had hitherto always displayed utter intransigence on Iran’s sovereignty over Bahrain, completely surprised everyone—including, it would seem, his closest advisors—by hinting in a newspaper interview that Iran might *after all* be prepared to accept Bahrain becoming an independent state if that was what the Bahrainis wanted. General agreement over the issue was then reached in secret negotiations between Iran, Britain, and the UN by the end of 1969, with the public learning about the outcome for the first time *only* on 28 March 1970 (for further details see Alvandi 2010: 159–77).

To sum up, although this is a major event in Adamiyat’s private and public life, on which a lot hinges in terms of interpreting Adamiyat’s politics, we do not know exactly *when* and *why* Adamiyat suddenly and in a fit of pique (assuming this is true) sought early retirement from the Iranian Foreign Ministry. What is certain, however, is that after his return from India in the summer of 1965, whether still an employee of the Foreign Ministry or not, Adamiyat must have found ample time for historical research, because his output grew exponentially with numerous major articles and two important monographs all being published in the period between 1965 and 1970 (see the detailed bibliography of Adamiyat’s works in Dehbashi 1390a/2011–12: 34). A further six books (including one jointly written with Homa Nateq and a collection of essays) came out in the 1970s—all before the Revolution, in the run up to, during, and after which, Adamiyat successfully claimed the position of a public intellectual. This meant the publication of three further books on modern Iranian history, including two monographs (1981 and 1990–91) and a passionate historiographical pamphlet (1981) *after the Revolution*. Before too long, however, and despite his established reputation as an ardent anti-Imperialist, Adamiyat’s stubbornly secular nationalism, which was not prepared to reject (Western) Enlightenment values and the principles of liberal democracy, would get him into trouble with certain influential groups within the Islamic Republic; this apparently led to his pension payments being stopped at certain times and even forced him into a spell of exile in Europe after a case had been brought against him at a Revolutionary Court. Thus Adamiyat stayed in Europe, mostly in Oxford and London, between October 1991 and May 1993. His return was due to three reasons: a) he

was unable to extend his UK visa, which he had overstayed, let alone gain the right to remain in the UK; b) the case against him in Iran had been dropped; and c) life in exile had proved not to be very pleasant for him (see Gurney 1390/2011–12: 105–29, whose very well documented text meticulously dispels certain myths that had been in circulation about this period in Adamiyat’s life). Azimi states (2009: 333) that even after Adamiyat’s return to Iran, only the intervention of “a senior government official” finally brought an end to the ongoing harassment and pressure that Adamiyat had been subjected to. In response, Adamiyat ceased to publish any more books on Iranian modern history; Adamiyat’s last book, published in 1995–96 (1374), is a *History of Thought from the Sumerians to Greece and Rome* (Adamiyat, F. 1375/1995–96), which saw several reprints. He died on 29 March 2008 at the age of 87.

*Oliver Bast*

*University of Manchester*

*Division of History*

*School of Arts, Languages and Cultures*

*University of Manchester*

*Oxford Road*

*Manchester M13 9PL*

*United Kingdom*

*oliver.bast@manchester.ac.uk*

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